In the name of God

Yazd University

Faculty of Science

Department of English

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the

Degree of m.Sc. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

The Function of Versification in Writing Skill from a Semantic point of view

Advisor: Dr. Anita Lashkarian

Reader: Dr. Ali Jabbari

Student: Shabnam Fallahy

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In Him we trust

"Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them."

Francis Bacon

To my beloved **DAD and MOM**,

who make this study become a reality;

and

To the memory of my beloved **GRANDPA**.

Acknowledgement

I should express my thanks to my advisor, Dr. Anita Lashkarian for her deep helps to this study.

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I also have to acknowledge my gratitude to Dr. Koorosh Safavi for his invaluable instructions to my research.
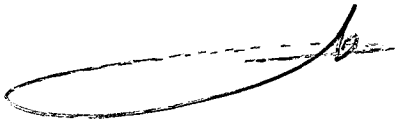
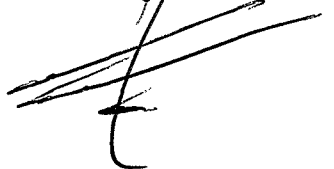I am dedicating my thanks and love to my beloved Dad and Mom who make this study become a reality, this thesis with all of its shortcomings is belonged to their ever-lasting love and helps.

I also thanks to all of the students who took part in tests and help me conducting my research.

And last but not least I am expressing my ever-gratitude to all of my teachers in the past, present and future.

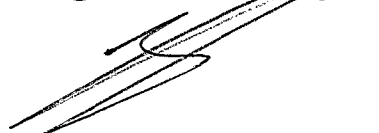|	صورتجلسه دفاعیه پایان نامه دانشجوی دوره کارشناسی ارشد	شناسه: ب/ک/۳
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امضاء:

The Function of Versification in Writing Skill from a Semantic Point of View

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of versification on the formation of a written text from a semantic point of view. Meanwhile, the subjects' performances on the formation of a written text are going to be considered semantically.

The subjects in this study were 77 students of both English language and literature (N=40) and English translation (N=37) at the University of Allameh Tabataba'i, who were randomly selected. First, they were (112 candidates) given the performance test (CELT Comprehensive English Language Test) in order to be leveled as a homogeneous group. The test was administered in one session for them. Then two sets of cloze tests were administered in two sessions with an interval of two weeks in between for the selected group, which focused on the semantic aspect of writing, while the effect of versification was concurrently tested through two types of tests, rhythmic and un rhythmic, so that the positive or negative role of versification would be determined on the semantic aspect of the so-called written passages.

A series of one way analyses of variance run on the test results indicated that, there was indeed a significant difference in performances of the so-

called group. That is, the students' level of semantic knowledge was influenced by the element of versification which appeared as elements of rhythmic and un-rhythmic, in the given passages. Worth mentioning that the passages were selected from among advanced texts. Therefore, the first null hypothesis of this study was rejected and the second abstract hypothesis of the study was approved. One way ANOVA also revealed that the students performed significantly different on different written types.

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Title   **Page**

Chorus of the Pities

Semichorus I

To Thee whose eye all Nature owns,

Who hurlest Dynasts from their thrones,

And liftest those of low estate

We sing, with Her men consecrate!

II

Yea, Great and Good, Thee, Thee we hail,

Who shak'st the strong, Who shield'st the frail,

Who hadst not shaped such souls as we

If tendermercy lacked in Thee!

Thomas Hardy

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. A Short Summary of the Background

Writing is regarded as an interactive process between the text and the writer. The past several years have seen a phenomenal growth of interest in text as a unit of language, beyond the sentence level, that is, a professional movement and theoretical perspective that embodies a set of applied beliefs governing learning and teaching, language development, curriculum, and the social community. "Whole Language Teachers" believe that all language systems are interwoven. They avoid the segmentation of language into component parts for specific skill instruction. The use of strategies taught in meaningful contexts is emphasized. Assessment focuses on authentic demonstrations of students' work. The Whole Language Movement has produced much interest, activity, and controversy and has had a major impact on how the reading education community thinks and talks about instruction. Before dealing with what and how much has been done in the vast scope of writing and all the related subjects, we have to briefly talk of it, in itself; that is, what is writing and what is writing process? It shall be re-stated and have to be re-stated part of the following discussion in the writing section of this study, since it directly stands as the core of that section, but to review the literature on the said domain, this much is being pre-stated here:

The first question, "what is writing?", is a matter of cliché. No doubt it is an interactive process according to Chastain (Developing Second Language Skills, 1988) between the text and the writer, and in later stages, between the author and the reader and so forth. No doubt it has rules to be followed, processes to be dealt with, skills to be learnt, different types to be known, different levels to be reached, and above all a true nature, stands up-right and unable to be deformed.

Based on what has been stated so far, we will naturally come to this conclusion that, writing is that famous interactive process, leads to one product which this study limits it to prose, the process of forming it wants to be smoothed through versification, for a particular subject, under special circumstances and in a very limited scope. In short, the first step of a rather too long way.

And writing process-not to re-mention that, it stands as a cliché too to be regarded as a question- can be defined as the many aspects of the complex act of producing a written communication; specifically, planning or prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (Chastain, 1988). Yet this is not exactly the point we have in mind to discuss. Writing process, defined in the previous lines, is something quite academically interviewed. Besides there is another term, "the process of writing", interwoven in writing process. One may wish to add that, having all the steps of writing, mentioned in the definition of writing process in mind, something else, something quite abstract, non-definable

maybe, involved in the process of writing which not only stands as a process, but also stands as a preliminary step to the academic processes of writing. Some say psychological aspects which are delved into the strictly academic perspectives, entitled under different names and terminologies such as willingness, creativity, interest, even neurological aspects which are indeed beyond the gist of this study to be considered in detail and something non-investigated maybe to be defined as some say in the matter of their own prescriptions.

Most investigators, researchers, experts, etc try to find a way to more easily handle the said processes (See Richman, 1997) and most practical and impractical pathways have been found.

Poet, editor, anthologist, Robert Richman has played several leading roles in the movement known as the new formalism.

"The nice thing about the New Formalism is that it appears to encompass lots of different policies. It's hard to make generalizations about which politics go with which formal choices." (Lectures, 1997).

As the poetry editor of "The New Criterion", he has offered a friendly venue for some of the strongest contemporary poets, writing in traditional forms and meters.

Richman continued this work in his 1988 anthology, *The Directory of Poetry,* which, as its introduction rather defiantly announced, featured only recent verse in strict rhyme and meter. He believes that so many contemporary poets have chosen to write in traditional forms, he says:

"Many of them write out of a heartfelt, noble desire to reinvigorate these forms for their particular generation. A minority of mediocrities jump on the bandwagon because of all the publicity traditional forms have had lately." (Lectures, 1997).

Predominance of writing programs and their positive or negative influences is one of the main controversies to be considered in the vast domain of writing. This hindrance was pointed out, since the matter of smoothing the involved processes is going to be discussed in the act of writing. Programs, which can be connoted as some kind or some version of "rule", generally speaking, and "writing rules", in particular, playing the role of strict norms, can, besides other hindrances, make the process of writing becoming more rough and rough. He states:

"My feelings about writing programs are mixed. Yes, there are far too many students in them, and yes, the corruption of teachers choosing their students for awards is loathsome, yet some undeniably good writings have emerged from them." (Lectures, 1997). The question is: what is the obscured reason? Indeed something happens. What is that something, happened in the realm of so many complexities, obstacles, difficulties, etc.

This is the step which needs to be considered in the process of writing.

Considering all the efforts in this respect and knowing that even in methodology we have known methods, making use of artistic managements to handle the process of learning, it will be speculated whether versification can somehow smooth that complex pathway to some degree or not. It is not intended here to claim a method, since it is beyond the aim of this study, and it is too out-reaching to be achieved by

this speculation, attested by too short population. It is simply meant that, disregarding the true nature of the said processes, we can smooth their difficulty by involving some means, here-in versification; bearing in mind that versification is in itself an academic means, yet academically interesting, non-deniable to everyone. It breaks strict norms somehow, a phenomenon that is interesting to all, at least in some stages, to some degree and under certain circumstances; breaking norms, set us free, be free we fly, and sky is so high, we can fly without worrying about anything, till we feel tired, not be tried by an outer force, let thought fly by rhythm, even a little revelation can be a breakthrough for the future ones.

1.2. Research Hypotheses

This study investigates the role of versification in forming a written text from a semantic point of view.

There are two hypotheses (the null hypothesis and the abstract hypothesis) that are investigated in this study.

1. There is a no impact of versification in forming a written text from a semantic point of view.

2. There is a positive impact of versification in forming a written text from a semantic point of view.

1.3. The Significance of the Study

Writing is regarded as a skill of great importance to the learner, since it provides him with access to a great quantity of further experiences of the language. Not only to the learner, but to every language users throughout the world.

Although some languages do not have a written form (Yule, 1988), hearing the word "language"-thinking and talking of language from a linguistic point of view-, we automatically remind of listening, speaking, reading and writing. We are not talking of a special language which does have a written version, its writing skill should be exclusively studied so that it is going to claim that versification can be influential in its writing processes and so forth. What is trying to be stated and shall re-stated somewhere in this study is that, without writing, reading, understanding, translating, re-formatting and any other related processes will stand non-sense, that is, there should be something, written, to be read, to be understood, to be rendered, to be re-constructed, etc.

With all the above-mentioned in mind, and with respect to the fact that quite little has been done in this area, here is the starting step when we are considering learners, in my country, in one of its universities, studying English language, does have a writing skill with the nicknames of difficulty, boring, uninteresting, etc and trying to smooth the pathway of its writing processes through versification, which we believe in its influential role, in one form of writing, prose here, and from a semantic

point of view, hoping that this speculation will be expanded in other types of writing step by step and not still in semantic aspect only.

1.4. The Organization of the Study

This study is essentially concerned with the evaluation of the role that versification plays in the formation of a written text–from a semantic point of view. Chapter one is concerned with a brief introduction. A short summary of the background is given. It will lead the readers to an understanding of the aim and significance of the study both from theoretical and pedagogical perspectives.

In chapter two, the review of the literature related to the current research is given. In this chapter, the concept of versification is introduced and its roles in forming a written text is explained. Then writing and different related views are discussed. Semantics as the other related concept to this study is elaborated and its place in the notion of writing will be designated. This chapter ends up with a discussion on the relation between versification and writing from a semantic perspective. Chapter three introduces the methodology applied in this study. This includes the description of the subjects who participated in the test and measuring instruments used in the study.

Chapter four deals with the description and analysis of the results and data collected through the test. A discussion of the results is also given.

Chapter five is the concluding chapter. It provides a comprehensive summary of the study. Moreover, it is concerned with the implications of

the study including the theoretical and pedagogical implications. This chapter ends up with the statement of the delimitations of this study, concluding remarks and suggestions for further future research.