

**Discursive –semiotics criticism of Personification as  
a process in literary discourse:  
A case study of “a bunch of flowers” by Choobak<sup>1</sup>**

Pantea Nabian<sup>2</sup>  
Hamid Reza Shairi<sup>3</sup>

Received: 2016/02/03  
Accepted: 2017/09/06

**Abstract**

Attributing human traits to non-human entities is traditionally described as personification. In this article, we set out to go beyond the limits of this definition. We hypothesized that personification is a process which is formed by many factors in a context and without considering these factors, we can't draw an appropriate conclusion which matches with the real nature of discourse. A short-Persian story entitled “a bunch of flowers”, by Choobak, a famous Iranian writer, was chosen to be analyzed on the basis of discursive-semiotics, to show how the process of personification forms. It was estimated that manipulative and tensive-function, adversative process and protension factor affect the formation of the process of personification. At last, the results supported our hypothesis. Our findings revealed that the process has a minimal and a maximal side.

---

<sup>1</sup> . (DOI): 10.22051/JLR.2017.8535.1062

<sup>2</sup> Ph.D. in General Linguistics, Language and Literature Faculty, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran; [nabian@sbiau.ac.ir](mailto:nabian@sbiau.ac.ir)

<sup>3</sup> Associate Professor in Linguistics and Semiotics, Faculty Member of French Language Department in Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, Iran (corresponding author); [shairi@modares.ac.ir](mailto:shairi@modares.ac.ir)

This article tries to show that personification forms as a process within a text and there are many factors which help this formation happen. While the process of personification is taking place, an object can manipulate the subject in a way that leads the subject to become more and more passive and lose his abilities as a human. The object gradually puts the subject in a position that he has no humanistic trait such as the power to choose, the power to act or even think. We have to consider that there are many linguistic factors playing crucial roles in this process. In the story, we showed how a letter as an object gets personified and the reader of the letter as a human gets depersonified. This is why we considered this process as a two sided axis. The human whose humanistic traits decreases gets near to the minimum side of axis and the letter whose humanistic abilities increases gets closer to the maximum side. We also tried to go further than the traditional description of personification to show how it works and to prove that there are many linguistic factors which are important in forming the process of personification. In the story, the reader is threatened and he loses his ability to control and think just because of the words and sentences in the letter. Finally he finds himself in a situation that the letter has the power to control him and even it is able to kill him. It should once again be emphasized that personification cannot take place without a context.

**Keywords:** Discursive-semiotics; Personification process; Contemporary literature; Tension.