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Deixis Phenomena and Appreciation in Frost's Poems

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Abstract: English poetry is a treasure house of the English national thoughts, a poet expressing his feelings and thoughts about nature, society and life, and an important means for English learners to know English culture. English poetry, as a common style, has its own stylistic features, such as paying attention to the beauty of rhyme and rhythm. The appreciation and study of English poetry is usually carried out from the perspective of aesthetics or literature. Of course, some literary theorists also emphasize the pragmatic purposes of poetry, such as enlightenment, pleasure, imitation, self-expression, etc. In view of the textual features and pragmatic effects of poetry, this paper will analyze the pragmatic effects and appreciation of the English poem "Dwelling in the woods on a snowy night" from the perspective of deixis in pragmatics.

Keywords: *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,* Deixis phenomenon, Pragmatic effects, Appreciation.

1. Introduction

English poetry is the treasure house of the English nation, the expression of the poet's emotion, and the poet's reflection on nature, society and life. It bears the rich language knowledge and traditional culture of English-speaking countries, and is full of profound philosophy and wisdom of life. It is one of the important ways for English learners to learn about English culture. As a common style, English poetry has its own stylistic characteristics, such as paying attention to the beauty of rhythm.The appreciation and study of English poetry is usually carried out from the perspective of aesthetics or literature.Sun Bingtang appreciates its artistic characteristics from the stylistic perspective, and expounds it through three levels of language: lexical form, rhythm and rhetoric, to highlight the linguistic charm of poetry and reveal the thematic significance of poetry (Sun Bingtang 2014). From the perspective of pragmatics and stylistics, Luo Yimin analyzes the unique pragmatic and stylistic features of poetry (Luo Yimin 2003). Based on the stylistic features and pragmatic effects of poetry, this paper will take the English poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* as an example to analyze the deixis and its pragmatic effects in poetry and appreciate them.

2. Robert Frost and His Work

Robert Frost was an American poet whose work is well known for its vivid imagery, focusing on rural life in New England in the early twentieth century. He was born in San Francisco, California, and educated at Dartmouth College and Harvard University.

Frost is one of the most celebrated poets in American literature, and is widely regarded as one of the greatest of all time. His poetry is characterized by its simplicity, its use of everyday language, and its focus on nature and rural life. He often used traditional forms such as blank verse and sonnets, but also experimented with free verse.

Frost won four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry and was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for his contribution to American literature. He was also the first poet to read at a presidential inauguration, when he read at John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961.

Frost's best-known works include "The Road Not Taken," "Mending Wall," "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," and "Nothing Gold Can Stay." His work has been widely anthologized and has been adapted into plays and films.

3. Deixis Phenomenon

Deixis is one of the contents of pragmatics. According to Levinson, "the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structure of language itself, and the most obvious way is through deixis" (Levinson, 1983). The deixis phenomenon here refers to the deixis pointing to meaning, which expresses something in a specific context in verbal communication. For example, in daily conversation, when we point to something and ask, "What is this?" This is an indicator. Deixis can connect the context of the speaker and the listener, and achieve the effect of "approaching the speaker". Without deixis, verbal communication will be vague, as Fillmore emphasized: "The importance of deixis for discourse understanding may be best illustrated by what happens when this kind of information is lacking" (Fillmore 1975). According to the research of Fillmore and Levinson, deixis can be divided into five types: personal deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis and social deixis.

Here, this paper will focus on analyzing the personal deixis in the poem *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening.*

Person deixis refers to the mutual address between the two sides of the conversation when they convey information, that is, through public or implicit personal pronouns, the person or thing involved in the discourse is connected with the speaker, the hearer or the third party, indicating the relationship between them.

Person deixis can be divided into three categories: first person deixis, including the speaker, implies the participation of the speaker itself, and uses first person pronouns, including I, my, we, etc; Second-person deixis, including the listener, may or may not involve the speaker himself, but uses second-person pronouns, such as you, your, your, etc; The third person deixis, which includes the non-speaker or the listener, often refers to participation other than the first or second person, using the third person pronouns such as he, she or it.

The poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* mainly uses the first person deixis *I, my, me* and the third person deixis *He, his, it*. First of all, *I, me, My,* which are used in the first person, are embodied in the following poem: *Whose*

woods these are I think I know. He will not see me stopping here. My little horse must think it queer. But I have promises to keep. And miles to go before I sleep. And miles to go before I sleep. These first-person deixises first express the participation of the speaker "I", that is, the story in which the hero stops in the forest to enjoy the snow on a snowy night, while thinking about the unfinished promises to keep, the unfinished road to go, and finally decides to get on the road. This first person "I" can be fictitious, that is, the protagonist created by the author can also be understood as Frost himself. He expresses his life experience and feelings through landscapes. Especially when we understand Frost's life, we can better understand the "I" perception in the poem. Frost's life experienced many ups and downs, and his road to poetry creation was not smooth. Frost led a very hard life in the first half of his life. After graduating from middle school, he experienced college dropout, part-time work, and dropping out again. During the following ten years of operating the farm, he worked hard to make ends meet and insisted on writing poetry. After selling his farm and moving to England, he wrote a lot of fresh and simple poems, but no one noticed them. It was not until 1913, with the support and encouragement of some British and American poets, that Frost finally published his poetry collections "The Will of a Teenager" (1913) and "The North of Boston" (1914). After that, his poems came out one after another, and his reputation was greatly enhanced. Therefore, influenced by his life experience, many of Frost's poems describe the natural scenery on the surface, but they are often good at expressing feelings through the scenery. The vivid description of the rural scenery triggered the poet's thinking and understanding of the philosophy of life. The use of the first person in the last two sentences of the poem, on the one hand, is the poet's own idea at that time. It literally means that he wants to continue on the road and get out of the forest as soon as possible. On the other hand, it implies a profound philosophy of life: life is just a hasty trip. Although the scenery on the road is beautiful, he can't stay forever, because there are unfinished road and unfinished responsibilities and obligations in front of him. In addition, "I" can also be understood as the participation of the addressee, which makes the addressee feel immersive. It is like stopping a horse and stopping in the forest with the poet, enjoying the beautiful scenery and feeling life at the same time. The first person narrows the distance between the speaker and the listener, and resonates with readers.

Secondly, the third person deixis in the poem uses *it, His, He* respectively, which is reflected in the following poems: My little horse must think it queer. His house is in the village though. He will not see me stopping here. To watch his woods fill up with snow. He gives his hardness bells a shake. In particular, it is very vivid to use He, his to refer to ponies rather than represent animals.The anthropomorphism of animals seems to be a vivid dialogue between the poet and the pony: the pony doesn't understand why its owner stopped. It gently shook the bell and asks, "Master, why did you stop?""What's the problem? "

The master looked at the beautiful scenery in the forest for a while, and then gave his rational answer: "Although the scenery here is beautiful, we still have unfinished commitments, and we still have to go on and on."Here, the poet seems to project the thought of "I" on the third person horse, and vividly expresses his own thoughts through the pony's curious thoughts: the journey is not over yet, "we" still have unfinished responsibilities and obligations, and "we" should not stay here, but keep going. It is this application of personal instructions that has made the meaningful philosophical implication of poetry.

In addition to the typical personal deixis, there are many time deixis and orientation deixis in the poem Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening. First of all, according to Fillmore (1975), in most languages, time deixis can be used as the basis for calculating and measuring the time system, such as the natural and meaningful cycles such as day and night, the moon, seasons and years.

These units can be used not only as measured values relative to a fixed point of interest (mainly including the center of the indicator), but also as a calendar for locating events in "absolute" time relative to an absolute starting point, or at least for some parts of each natural period designated as a period (Fillmore, 1975).

The words such as "on a snowy evening", "darkest night of the year" and "before I asleep" all indicate the time and activities of the poet at that time.

Thirdly, locative deixis, that is, the locative information or spatial information involved in discourse, comes from the location of the relevant object when speaking. In English, the common expressions of place indication are prepositionalphrases consisting of "preposition+place noun" or "preposition+object", such as "in the east" and "upon the beach". The place indications described in the poem Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening include: "by woods", "house", "in the village", "farmhouse near", "Between the woods and frozen lake", etc. These location indicators specifically describe the poet's location at that time. Through the readers' understanding of these specific location indicators, they have a strong sense of space, especially the word "woods" appears four times repeatedly, which emphasizes that the place where the story takes place is in the "forest" and "house" appears twice, which describes the quiet and isolated place where the story takes place.

In addition, discourse deixis is also used in poetry. Discourse deixis also refers to discourse deixis, that is, choosing appropriate vocabulary or grammatical means to convey some part or aspect of discourse, such as the discourse deixis *but, that, so, etc.* In poetry, which not only expresses the relationship between lines of poetry, but also strengthens the cohesion and coherence of poetry. The discourse indicators in *"But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep."* convey the harmony in poetry, which indicate the relationship between the preceding and following sentences in poetry.

4. Appreciation of Poetry

Poetry, as a way of discourse, often pays more attention to the sense of rhythm and rhythm, and is full of musicality.Poets usually use rhythmic words intentionally, which makes the poems not only achieve a neat external form, but also express rich inner feelings.Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening is carefully used in terms of rhyme style and rhythm. The rhyme style is "aaba bbcb ccdc dddd". Each stanza includes four lines, and each line is iambic tetrameter. In terms of rhythm, the first, second and fourth lines of the first three verses rhyme, the third line of each verse rhymes with the first, second and fourth lines of the next verse, such as know, thought, snow rhyme in the first stanza, query, near, and year rhymes in the third stanza. t is worth pointing out that the four lines of the last section are all rhyming, emphasizing the emotional effect of the poem and

highlighting the theme through repeated repetition. Secondly, the rhythm of the whole poem is outstanding.For example, the most commonly used rhythm is explosives /p/ (sweep, deep, keep, sleep, sleep). The use of explosives makes the rhythm of this poem stronger and more powerful.The use of Diphthong/əʊ/and/ɪə/makes the rhythm of poetry rounder and fuller, making it easier to read. Besides, In addition, the use of alliteration, such as stopping and snowy in the title, see and stopping in the third line of the first section, watch, woods in the fourth line, sounds and sweets in the third line of the third section, and dark and deep in the first line of the fourth section, all have produced strong artistic effect through the use of alliterations.Finally, there is even the use of semi-harmonic rhymes. By repeating the same vowel or diphthong, such as his, is, in, village in the second line of the first verse, his, fill, with in the fourth line, little, think, it in the first line of the second verse, and he, give, his, if, is, miss in the second line of the third verse, all these words contain the same vowel [i], which also makes the whole poem have a strong sense of rhythm, music, and enhance the artistic appeal.

Another feature of Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening is the use of rhetoric.

Rhetoric can not only increase the charm of the poetic language, but also create a unique artistic conception. In this poem, Frost uses figures of speech such as personification and repetition.For example, in the first line of the first section of the poem, "My little horse must think it query" uses personification rhetoric to personify the horse , which vividly and interestingly expresses the poet's curiosity about this forest. The last two lines of the fourth section of the poem, "and miles to go before I sleep", appear repeatedly, emphasizing the poet's feelings, strengthening the theme of the poem, and highlighting Frost's plain language but full of rich and far-reaching implications.Besides, in terms of tense, although the story of the whole poem takes place in the past, the poet uses the simple present tense to describe it.The use of the present tense makes the whole poem's scenes more vivid and real, so that readers can better integrate into the scene, touch the scene, and reach resonance.

5. Conclusion

The phenomena of person deixis, place deixis, time deixis and discourse deixis in *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* make us understand a poem more deeply from the perspective of pragmatics. In addition, judging from the stylistic features of poetry, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* typically represents a genre that pays more attention to rhythm and sense of rhythm. Although the language of *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* is unpretentious, it has achieved the beauty of sound through careful arrangement. The beauty of both form and spirit not only expresses the meaning and connotation of poetry, but also reflects Frost's superb skill in using language, and the poet's unique feeling of nature and profound moral explanation of the objective world.

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