
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Ecological Discourse Analysis of *Border Town* from the Interpersonal Function Perspective: A Literature Review

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| ABSTRACT

Facing the current needs of socially sustainable development and ecological civilization construction, how to devote ourselves to the conservation of the ecosystem has become the focus of an increasing number of scholars. In the field of linguistics, the study of ecological discourse has become a new direction. Ecological Discourse Analysis is to reveal the ecological means of discourse through language analysis in order to prevent the ecological damage of human action. Halliday's approach emphasizes the role of language in ecological issues and the impact of language on ecological relationships, and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) lays stress on describing and analyzing linguistic facts in order to construct reality. Accordingly, this thesis conducts an ecological analysis of Shen Congwen's classic book *Border Town* under the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics to explore the ecological relationship between man and nature reflected by the novel, with the expectation that this thesis will further arouse people's awareness to environmental issues, lead people to rethink the role that human and nature play respectively and provide a new research direction for ecological discourse analysis.

| KEYWORDS

Ecological Discourse Analysis, *Border Town*, Appraisal system, Ecological ideas

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

As a local literature writer rich in ecological feelings in the modern Chinese literary circle, Shen Congwen's *Border Town* leads readers into a simple and primitive and divine poetic world in West Hunan: the idyllic scenery of the small town of Chadong, the straightforward and simple of Hunan locals, the natural world full of wildness and vitality. Characterized by romantic rural narratives, *Border Town* reveals the author's strong ecological feelings. Based on the unique status of *Border Town* in the Chinese literary circle, many scholars have previously interpreted it from the perspectives of language characteristics, artistic techniques, aesthetics, character image, and translation analysis.

In recent years, with the "ecological turn" of humanities and social sciences, a small number of scholars have made preliminary explorations on the ecological meaning of the discourse of *Border Town* based on the theoretical perspectives of emerging disciplines such as ecological aesthetics, ecological translation, and ecological literature. However, under the framework of the Appraisal system in SFL, it is rare to study this work from the perspective of interpersonal function in linguistics. Based on the Appraisal system of SFL, this thesis makes an ecological analysis of *Border Town*, aiming to explore how the author construes the language to show the coexisting relationship between humans and nature and unveils its ecological ideology about animals, society and nature. This thesis adopts qualitative and quantitative research to conduct an analysis of the ecological relationships between different pairs. The data is marked up according to the Appraisal system of SFL for the purpose of paving the way for the following analysis.

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2. Literature Review

Section 2.1 introduces the development of ecolinguistics and presents an overview of the research under Haugen's and Halliday's paradigms. Section 2.2 reviews the studies on *Border Town* from different perspectives in detail.

2.1 Previous Studies on Ecolinguistics

2.1.1 Early Ecological Thought to Language

Once, man did not have to concern about the protection of his environment. There were few people on the earth, and natural resources seemed to be unlimited. Things have been different from the beginning of the scientific revolution, which has led to lots of ecological issues around the world. Under the circumstances, increasing numbers of scholars have begun to view the world and human activities from an ecological perspective. So, many interdisciplinary subjects relating to ecology have emerged, such as social ecology, ecological literature, and ecolinguistics.

The relationship between language and environment has been of interest to many scholars for many years. As early as the 1830s, Humboldt (1836) opened up a discussion on the diversity of human languages, which has helped greatly in the study of the diversity of human thought. It is linguistic diversity that gives human thought its enormous potential for development. All human activity is, of course, internal, including language. However, the external world can have an impact on internal activities in some form, thus further substantiating the interaction between internal activities such as language and the external environment.

There is a long history of research on language and ecology. In 1912, Edward Sapir, a famous American linguist and anthropologist, made a preliminary discussion on the issue of language and environment. He gives priority to the "physical and social environment" of language. The physical environment consists of "geographical characters, such as the topography of the country, climate, and amount of rainfall, and the economic basis of human life". The social environment comprises mold of life and the thought of each individual (Sapir, 1912, p. 227). Though the "environment" here has a different meaning from the current ecological meaning, it is a valuable attempt by ecolinguists to research the relationship between language and ecology. Sapir's insight has gotten rid of the mere description of the structure, meaning and phonological system of language from a pure linguist's perspective.

John Trim, a British scholar, put forward the term "language ecology" to research the variation within a speech community (1959, p. 24). In the 1960s, driven by the book *Silent Spring*, "ecology" was given the meaning of "environmentally friendly". Voegelin (1964, p. 2) refers to "linguistic ecology", which "represents a shift of emphasis from a single language in isolation to many languages in contact". In linguistic ecology, one should begin with a particular area instead of a particular language and begin with a comprehensive focus on all the languages in this area instead of selective attention to some languages. They break the traditional wisdom of focusing on a certain language in a certain area. In this article, he (1964, p. 3) explains the differences between interlingual ecology and intralingual ecology.

2.1.2 Research Approaches to Ecolinguistics

The 1970s witnessed the development of ecology, showing the trend of ecological generalization. One of the manifestations of ecological generalization is the mutual integration of ecology with other disciplines (Zhao & Huang, 2017, p. 15). Under such a trend, many linguistic scholars initiate the study of ecolinguistics.

Ecolinguistics, a new interdisciplinary subject, is defined as 'the study of the impact of language on the life-sustaining relationship among humans, other organisms and the physical environment.' (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014, p. 105). They argue that life-sustainable relationships between humans, between humans and other non-human organisms, and between humans and the natural environment are all influenced by language. They propose the term "ecological discourse analysis" or "the ecological analysis of discourse" (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014, p. 104).

Fill (1998, p. 3) gives a comprehensive review of ecolinguistics in his article, and he proposes that these two perspectives (Haugen's and Halliday's) are influential in that they triggered two models of ecolinguistics. Meanwhile, He (1998, p. 3) states that these two approaches are complementary rather than exclusive.

(1) Haugen's metaphorical approach

The term "linguistic ecology" only takes on a more tangible meaning after Haugen used it in an academic report *On the Ecology of Language* in 1970, and it had a decisive influence on the creation of "ecolinguistics". Haugen takes "ecology" as the "flag of the environmental protection movement" (Haugen, 1972, p. 329). Language ecology studies the interactions between any given language and its environment. In addition, "language only exists in the mind of its users, and it only functions in relating these users to one another and to nature, i.e. their social and natural environment." (Haugen, 1972, p. 325). The language environment could be shaped by society and the attitudes of language users. Haugen (1972) argues that all languages are based on interaction among human beings, society and the natural environment in the language ecosystem, and all can do the same thing as living

creatures. This metaphor compares the relationship between living creatures living environment to language and environment. Haugen's approach is a metaphorical model.

The "Haugen model" of the ecolinguistics approach is mainly aimed at maintaining linguistic diversity, which covers any given language and its environment. The environment is not only psychological, i.e.; the language interacts with other languages in the psychology of the bilingual or multilingual speaker. It is also social in a sense that language as a tool of communication interacts with other social environments, such as language community. The research is concerned with how ecology affects language ecology and the relationship between linguistic diversity and cultural diversity, including studies of linguistic diversity, language world system, linguistic human rights and language rights.

In the 1970s, the loss of linguistic diversity and the situation of endangered languages became more widespread and serious. Many scholars gradually began to expand the scope of their research from specific regions to the world, and the number of researchers increased. Haugen's ecologically metaphorical paradigm is widely popular in the 1980s. Following Haugen's metaphorical introduction of the term 'linguistic ecology', a number of researchers based on this paradigm began to focus on linguistic diversity.

Mackey(1980) discovers that the emergence and development of communication and mass media have facilitated the spread of standard languages around the world at the expense of the loss of local languages. At the time, languages on the verge of distinction attracted the attention of scholars in linguistics and became a hot topic. Denison (1982) argues that the preservation of endangered language species should be given the same importance as the preservation of endangered species. Finke (1983) proposes the concept of a "linguistic world system", emphasizing that innovation in the language is threatened by the way we use it, just as innovation in life is threatened by the way we treat nature. Mühlhäusler (1996) uses the metaphor of linguistic ecology to examine the transformation of Pacific language regions in response to social change and to explain how linguistic ecology maintains linguistic diversity. Li Guozheng(1987), a domestic scholar, also began to use ecological principles to study Chinese issues. Subsequently, during this period, domestic writings on "language ecology" or "ecolinguistics" appeared, and the disciplinary framework of ecolinguistics was gradually established.

In the 1990s, although the popularity of Haugen's ecologically linguistic paradigm waned, the paradigm is still used by researchers in many ways. In the following decades, Haugen's paradigm was combined with other research methods such as psychology, ethics, philosophy and biology to focus on linguistic diversity and the state of being of languages. Harmon (1996) discusses natural and cultural diversity from a psychological and philosophical perspective. He argues that diversity is necessary for the survival of all species in nature, and therefore linguistic diversity is also necessary for human survival. From a human rights perspective, Skutnabb Kangas (Tove, 2000) points out that the current linguistic diversity is getting worse. He concludes that the diversity of species is linked to the diversity of languages. Under this philosophy, language is seen as an isolated entity unrelated to the outside world. Therefore, the solution to this problem is to change people's conception of language so that they see it as part of natural and social activities and focus on its relationship to other activities. Sutherland (2003) applies biological research methods to the study of linguistic extinction. He finds that the rate of language extinction in the same country or region is directly proportional to the rate of species extinction, meaning that countries or regions with higher rates of language extinction also have higher rates of species extinction.

With the modernization and standardization of Mandarin in China, many minority languages and dialects are in danger. As a result, many researchers have focused their attention on this topic. Gao Lin (2009) studies language policy and conservation of linguistic diversity and endangered languages in China from the perspective of ecolinguistics, aiming to apply language policy and planning to protect endangered languages and maintain linguistic diversity in China. Xu Jia (2010) studied the endangered Chinese language with the aim of discovering patterns of language change and proposing measures to preserve linguistic diversity. Shang Jinbin (2018) explores the hazards of the Tujia language on the basis of eco-linguistic theories.

As He and Gao (2020) argue, ecolinguistic researchers in the Haugen model often use modern instruments to record, measure and analyze languages and to investigate the survival and development of languages with an aim to maintain the diversity of languages. As an important vehicle and component of culture, the diversity of languages can contribute to the diversity of human cultures, which is an important pathway to promote the sound development of the entire ecosystem, as is shown in Figure 2.1.

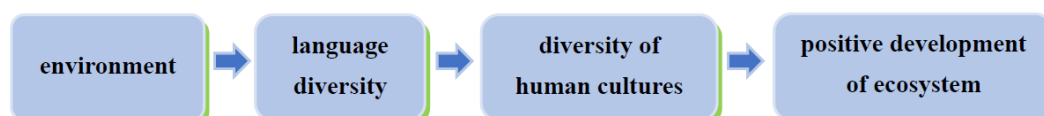


Figure 2.1 Haugen's metaphorical approach (He & Gao, 2020, p.133)

(2) Halliday's non-metaphorical approach

Halliday (1990) clearly discusses the relationship between environment and language from a different perspective, which arouses an increasing number of scholars' attention to the impact of language on ecology. Unlike the metaphorical model, which focuses on issues such as language survival, linguistic diversity and language planning, the non-metaphorical model by Halliday emphasizes the role of language and linguistics in environmental issues and highlights the social responsibility of linguists. He discusses the relationship between language systems and ecosystems; warning applied linguists to be concerned about classism, growthism, species extinction, pollution and other similar issues (Halliday, 1990, p. 36).

The Halliday non-metaphorical model tends to look at the impact of lexical-grammar and discourse on the environment in terms of their ecological characteristics (He & Gao, 2020). In order to raise the ecological awareness of language users and thus contribute to the development of a healthy ecosystem, ecolinguistics should optimize the structure of lexical-grammar and discourse, as is shown in Figure 2.2.



Figure 2. 2 Halliday's non-metaphorical approach (He & Gao, 2020, p. 133)

2.1.3 Ecological Discourse Analysis

Language is an integral part of an individual's sense of self, indicating how the individual views the world as a whole. Language, therefore, reflects people's thoughts and ideologies. To some extent, the ecological crisis is also an ideological and cultural crisis. One of the most important tasks of linguists is, therefore, to establish and popularize ecological values.

Halliday approach, which tends to reflect the impact of language on the ecological environment through ecologically oriented discourse analysis, has gradually established itself as one of the dominant players in the field of ecolinguistics. His insights into ecolinguistics are often defined as eco-discourse analysis (EDA) (Poole, 2016). Alexander and Stibbe (2014, p. 104) put forward the term "ecological discourse analysis" or "the ecological analysis of discourse", which means EDA should not be confined to the analysis of ecological discourse but be used in all kinds of discourse as long as they potentially have an impact on the ecosystem.

Previous eco-oriented discourse analysis paradigms are carried out mainly through CDA, PDA and MDA. One thing that needs to be made clear is that the above paradigm of discourse analysis is not the only paradigm that reflects the relationship between man and nature. In order to conduct ecologically oriented discourse research, most scholars have tried to adopt different paradigms of discourse analysis, which mainly involve CDA, PDA and MDA.

EDA is closely relevant to traditional CDA. Language can construct reality, so Halliday (1990) argues that some ideas like 'anthropocentrism' are reinforced through language, which is also a major cause of ecological destruction. Therefore, these elements that violate the ecological harmony in the language system should be criticized, and this becomes the beginning of the analysis of ecological discourse.

The history of EDA is very short, and some of the concepts, research content, and methods covered by this field are not yet clearly or universally known. Most EDAs have mainly drawn on the paths and methods of CDA to analyze discourses related to ecological contexts. Therefore, this kind of discourse analysis is often called "ecocritical discourse analysis", which belongs to critical ecological linguistics (Carvalho 2005; Murata 2007). However, as Xin Zhiying and Huang Guowen (2013) point out, EDA cannot simply be considered as critical discourse analysis, nor can it simply be understood as a subset of critical discourse analysis.

CDA focuses on "how language use may be affirming and indeed reproducing the perspectives, values and ways of talking of the powerful, which may not be in the interests of the less powerful" (O'Halloran, 2011, p. 445). In other words, CDA is concerned with the expression, implementation and construction of social ideology in discourse and explores social injustice and irrationality, which in essence, does not go beyond the concept of "anthropocentrism"; while EDA is more concerned with the impact of discourse on human beings from an ecological perspective, showing how human beings understand themselves and the world, and the various relationships between human beings and other creatures. Kinefuchi (2018) applies CDA to intercultural communication, where he claims that the study of intercultural communication must transcend the boundaries of anthropocentrism and turn towards identity, culture, and ecology. His research shows that everything in the natural environment is interconnected and extends the scope of CDA research. Wang Jin (2020) reflects and explores the revelation of ecological discourse through CDA and points out that future research should focus on China and increase the analytical orientation of

interpretation and construction. This shows a desire to bring discourse on practical issues such as environmental justice into the research horizon.

Martin (2004) proposes a new perspective for discourse analysis, PDA, so as to make up for the deficiency of CDA. In contrast to the critical nature of CDA, PDA advocates a friendly approach to finding reconciliation and agreement in discourse. Gotaly (2000) uses it to do contrastive research on William Wordsworth's poetry and the news discourse and shows that poems convey a more positive ecological awareness than news does. Alexander (2003) shows how some of the dominant discourses in today's society, such as the neoliberal discourse, can be resisted by deconstructing the language of important globalized companies through an analysis of speech. Carvalho (2005) has clarified the influence of political ideology on climate change within news discourses by researching three British news discourses.

MDA is a strong analytical tool which can unveil the relationship between social meaning and all its semiotic resources (Kress, 2012). It allows for the integration of language and other relevant resources of meaning together. Arnold (2011) examines the discourse of environmental law from an integrated and multimodal perspective, using multiple approaches to protect the environment, as a unimodal approach to environmental protection is not sufficient.

As mentioned above, these studies all adopt different research paradigms, conducting ecologically oriented discourse analysis from multiple perspectives. Despite their shortcomings, they do contribute to the flourishing and development of ecological discourse research, but they cannot be considered the ultimate analytical paradigm of EDA.

Compared with CDA, MDA and PDA, EDA are not only concerned with social power, nor are they limited to inter-human relationships, but extend the field of study to the relationship between man and nature based on a certain ecological philosophy (He Wei, 2018). Therefore, it is important to provide a unique standard of thought for a better understanding of man's relationship with nature rather than subjective description and interpretation.

The ecological philosophy concept is an important guiding ideology of EDA (He Wei & Wei Rong, 2017), which is the ecological evaluation criterion for ecological discourse analysts, and it is also a systematic view used by analysts to pursue ecological harmony and co-existence, which has both individual and social characteristics, and its construction is rooted in social and cultural backgrounds.

Every EDA analyst should have his own ecological philosophy. Stibbe (2015: 14) puts forward the ecological philosophy of "living" for relevant ecological discourse, which emphasizes valuing living, well-being, now and the future, care, environmental limits, social justice, resilience and other elements designed to promote the protection of ecosystems on which people depend; Huang Guowen (2017) purposes the ecological philosophy of harmonious discourse, which contains the basic assumption of "people-oriented" and "three principles"—the principle of conscience, the principle of closeness and the principle of restraint. It combines political, economic and social development with historical and cultural factors, which highlights not only the harmony between the language system and the natural ecosystem but also the harmony of discourse in a specific cultural context (Huang & Zhao, 2017); He and Zhang (2017) put forward a "harmonious ecological sense of place" on natural ecological discourse, which aims to help analysts determine whether the discourse is protective, vague or destructive, and then promote the use of protective discourse, curb the development of destructive discourse, and guide the development of destructive discourse. He and Wei (2017) put forward the ecological philosophy of "harmony in diversity, mutual love and mutual benefit" for international ecological discourse.

As mentioned above, there are various ecological philosophies currently held by EDA. From a certain perspective, this is mainly due to the different types of ecological discourses and different contexts: some focus on various life discourses in Western developed countries (Stibbe, 2015); some focus on multiple discourses in the Chinese context (Huang Guowen, 2017); some focus on the relationship between man and nature (He & Zhang, 2017); some involve discourses that characterize today's international relations (He & Wei, 2017).

The ultimate purpose of any ecological philosophical view is to promote the benign and balanced development of the established ecosystem, and the ecological subsystems constitute a huge network of systems that promote and constrain each other; that is, we can integrate a universally applicable ecological philosophy from many ecological philosophical views. Therefore, He Wei (2018) proposes that the ecological philosophy of "diversity and harmony, interaction and co-existence" has the characteristics of high generalization and universality and is applicable to the entire ecosystem network, including natural ecosystems, social ecosystems, or subsystems in natural and social ecosystems.

Stibbe (2015) argues that EDA can draw on any applicable linguistic theory, such as systemic functional linguistics and cognitive linguistics. EDA's adoption of SFL began with Halliday's presentation at the International Congress of Applied Linguistics, "New

Way of Meaning: The Challenge of Applied Linguistics". Halliday (1990) points out non-ecological phenomena in discourse systems, such as growthism, hierarchy, and the incompleteness of the pronoun system in English. These phenomena are not conducive to the long-term survival of the earth. In view of this, Halliday calls on linguists to shoulder the responsibility of using linguistic research to deal with ecological problems and calls on linguists to pay attention to the role that language should play in solving ecological problems.

Specifically, the three meta-functional theories of SFL and related subsystem theories (such as transitivity system, modality system, appraisal system, etc.) have been integrated into EDA practice. For example, Bednarek and Caple (2010) used the SFL appraisal system to analyze the environmental reports of The Sydney Morning Herald in Australia; Stibbe (2015) conducted a functional analysis of the process, participant roles and modality of neoclassical economic discourse in combination with SFL; Zhao Ruihua (2016) reveals its non-human animal identity from the three levels of register, semantics and lexical grammar by analyzing the ecological assessment report of silver hake, and initially tried Multi-level analysis of EDA from the SFL perspective; Huang Guowen and Chen Yang (2017) use the theory of register, genre and meta-function of SFL to conduct EDA research on natural poetry, revealing the ecological nature of natural poetry. He Wei and Wei Rong (2017) initially constructed a transitive analysis model of international ecological discourse based on the theory of SFL; He Wei and Zhang Ruijie (2017) investigated the interaction between human and place ecological factors and initially constructed an operable natural ecological discourse analysis model. Yang Yang (2018) uses the attitude system, a subsystem of the appraisal system of SFL, to conduct an ecological discourse analysis of 10 news reports of The Guardian about the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, aiming to reveal the ideology of western mainstream media on climate and environment, which further proves the operability and practicality of the appraisal system for EDA, and calls on people to establish an appropriate ecological philosophy that is beneficial to survival.

In addition, cognitive linguistics also provides a theoretical basis for ecolinguistics (Wang Fufang 2017), which also provides a theoretical reference for EDA. Stratford (1994) emphasizes that medical metaphors play an important role in shaping ecological and environmental awareness; Stibbe (2015) tries to use Lakoff's frame theory as a guide to analyzing the cognitive language of "climate change" and "development". Based on metaphor theory, Stibbe (2015) conducts a diachronic evaluation and analysis of metaphor in natural ecological discourse.

As an independent research paradigm, EDA does not parallel with the other analysis paradigms such as PDA and MDA, but inclusion relationship and also the relationship between the whole and the part. (He Wei, 2021).

This thesis takes the relationship between humans and the environment as the core, adopts the clear analysis steps of EDA, and combines "theory, analysis and action" to guide ecological behavior. This study uses Chinese as data to try to find out how different language resources represent different ecological meanings and thus exert different ecological effects.

2.2 Previous Studies on Border Town

During the period from 1934 to 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded, there were very few people who studied *Border Town*. Wang Wei first proposes that its style is similar to "pastoral songs" in a newspaper and believed that it is influenced by "Feng" (ballad) and "Ya" (court hymn). Liu Xiwei(1991) points out that *Border Town* is an "idyllic" masterpiece. He explains the tragic elements behind the kind-hearted characters in work and also points out the lyrical features of its poetry-like language.

From the 1940s to the 1970s, in the context of political interference in domestic literature, the few literary histories that mentioned Shen Congwen did not discuss the book, and there were almost no articles on *Border Town* published in mainland China.

From the 1980s to the end of the 20th century, the research on *Border Town* developed significantly. He Yiming (1981) believes that the theme of *Border Town* is to express the honest and simple nature of the people in western Hunan, and to reflect Shen Congwen's ideal life form, thus inspiring people to abandon evil for good and seek beauty from ugliness. Chen Yongzhi (1991) mentions that the novel is centered on Cuicui's love and marriage. By describing the entanglement of love and the inevitable tragic trend of the beautiful Chadong people, the novel criticizes the unreasonableness of the old social system and the personality defects of the Chadong people.

Sun Changxi and Liu Xipu (1985) criticize the ideological limitations of "*Border Town*" and think that it uses abstract human beauty to cover up the class contradictions in real life, and the quiet and inaction atmosphere created by the work was a beautification of the order of feudal life. It is quite insightful that Ling Yu (1985) discusses and studies the tragic nature of *Border Town* from the perspective of reality and destiny.

Different from domestic research institutes that focus on the theme of works, foreign scholars have broader research horizons on *Border Town*. American scholar Xia Jing (2003) not only discusses the pastoral and tragic nature of *Border Town* but also explores the relationship between the two, which greatly inspires domestic scholars.

The research from the beginning of the 21st century to the present is no longer limited to the interpretation of the text of *Border Town* from the perspective of literature but jumped out of the level of literature and art from sociology, history, folklore, psychology, aesthetics and other perspectives. It opens up a new interpretation perspective for the study of *Border Town*. One is from the perspective of ecological aesthetics. Wang Li and Li Fangqiang (2005) interpret *Border Town* from the perspective of harmonious ecological beauty. The second is the aesthetic angle of folk custom. Luo Zongyu (2005) interprets it from the perspective of the value and aesthetics of folk custom itself. The third is from the perspective of social history. Feng Jing (2010) uses the method of biographical inquiry to investigate Shen Congwen's life experience, starting from his inner temperament with Miao ethnicity and interpreting *Border Town* with the Miao environment and Miao people's mentality as the care. The fourth one is from the perspective of psychology. Xiu Yimin (2009) discusses the variants of "Water of Love" to "Oedipus Complex" in *Border Town* and studies Cuicui's dream, which opens up a new perspective of psychoanalysis. Wu Zhouwen and Zhou Jingzhi (2003) analyzed the emotional mechanism of *Border Town* from the perspective of "sexual psychology" and pointed out that the deep psychological motivation for the creation of *Border Town* stemmed from the author's hidden "sexual fantasy" and deep love memory in his youth.

An emerging discipline in the wake of the global ecological crisis, ecological aesthetics is a combination of ecology and aesthetics, studying aesthetic issues from an ecological perspective. At the heart of the study of ecological aesthetics is a concern for the connection between life and ecological beauty. Ecological beauty is neither a purely artificial aesthetics nor a natural aesthetics that encompasses nature, society and humans. The emergence and development of eco-aesthetics have enabled humans to gain comfort and happiness from exploring eco-aesthetics in today's turbulent world. Moreover, the study of eco-aesthetics helps to arouse and enhance people's ecological consciousness and thus establish ecologically beneficial values for survival.

3. Conclusion

As one of the representative works of eco-literature, *Border Town* is imbued with great ecological values. This thesis aims to conduct an eco-oriented discourse analysis of the Chinese version of *Border Town* from a SFL perspective, trying to explore the ecological meaning implied in the work and further awaken readers' ecological consciousness. In a sense, the research on this topic is capable of making up for the defects of previous studies.

Focusing on the ecological relationship between humans and nature, this thesis tries to explore how Shen Congwen conveys his ecological philosophy through a specific language structure. In this novel, plenty of meaningful resources are applied to construct a harmonious and coexistent relationship between humans and nature and slightly distant but harmonious relationship between humans. The thesis then dissects Shen Congwen's attitude toward human society and nature in terms of attitude system. In this natural world that breeds harmony and poetry, there is a quiet and simple living environment, rich and diverse spiritual things, and working people who are spontaneous and authentic. It expresses the ecological philosophical tendency of "harmonious coexistence between man and nature and interpersonal ecology" and reveals the author's ecological feelings of pursuing a "paradise" in material and spiritual.

Research has no limits; thus, there is no absolutely perfect study. This thesis is also not the exceptional one. It has at least two limitations. In the first place, due to the limited technology of corpus annotation software, the implicit appraisal resources in the documentary were not analyzed, resulting in the lack of integrity of the analysis. Therefore, the author will conduct further research on the impact of implicit appraisal resources in the documentary in the future. Second, it does not conduct a very comprehensive analysis of the whole text, only taking the most representative discourses as examples to analyze based on previous experiences and intuition. In the second place, the textual function and ideational of language are not discussed in this thesis, and more energy is devoted to interpersonal function, making the analysis less systemic.

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