



Promoting the Natural World: A Relevance-Theory Perspective on Gabriel's Song 'Down to Earth'

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Abstract:

Nature has always been a profound source of inspiration for humanity. Its ability, beauty, and intricacy to sustain life have sparked countless speeches in a variety of cultural contexts. As a powerfully expressive medium, music has the capacity to uplift and shape perceptions of the natural world. Peter Gabriel's song 'Down to Earth' makes a powerful statement about the need for environmental stewardship and humanity's relationship to the natural world. Through the application of Relevance Theory, this study aims to investigate how Gabriel's song successfully communicates its ecological message. Relevance theory deals with making inferences from what individuals say and determining which of those interpretations is most relevant to an individual. The study seeks to explore how explicit content might be interpreted to convey an implied meaning and how these can work to maximize the effect. The results demonstrate that the examined song encourages deliberate and useful responses to environmental problems by efficiently and concisely conveying its message in order to attain its optimal relevance. With its straightforward words and expansive ideas, the song has successfully conveyed its message. *Down to Earth* is a popular and effective song that promotes environmental awareness. It was played throughout the end credits of *WALL-E*'s movie and hence perfectly fits its main theme.

Keywords: *Down to earth song, Relevance theory, nature, explicature, implicature, cognitive principle, communicative principle*

1. Introduction

Music has always been a potent tool for honoring nature and raising awareness of environmental issues. It has the power to evoke, create and awaken feelings in the listeners and audience (Kyriazakos, 2019: 58). The present study tries to investigate Gabriel's song 'down to Earth' through the lens of Relevance Theory. This theory states that "As speakers, we intend our hearers to recognize our intention to inform them of some state of affairs. As hearers, we try to recognize what it is that the speaker intends to inform us of" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 23). The listener's cognition and reactions are what cause this level of understanding. Both interlocutors (speakers and listeners) share common cognitive environments during communication. Inferences are made to determine levels of relevance when interlocutors interact. When a statement relates to the background knowledge that a person has access to and how that knowledge leads to conclusions that are significant to them, it is considered relevant to that person. Similarly, an input is considered relevant if processing it within the framework of presumptions results in a favorable cognitive outcome (Nwapa, n.d: 73). In addition to showing how explicit content can be interpreted to convey an implied message, the study aims



to shed light on how the song can be used as a means of promoting environmental awareness. It looks into how the meaning that is implied has been interpreted and what influences this understanding. The main questions that the study tries to address are:

1. How does the song communicate its explicature and implicature meanings?
2. What environmental message does the song try to convey?
3. How might the singer's message be received by the audience?

Since songs, in general, are usually characterized by metaphorical and poetic language, it is hypothesized that Gabriel's song employs very strong implicature to grasp its hidden meaning and produce the intended relevance. Hearers need to exert a lot of effort to recover the communicator's intended meaning. By encouraging readers to engage with ecological issues from a personal perspective and fostering a transformative environmental ethos, Gabriel's song can be better understood by listeners when analyzed through the lens of relevance theory.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Songs Promoting the Natural World

The relationship between nature and music is an intriguing one. Artists have traditionally drawn inspiration from nature. Composers are often inspired by nature, especially by its majestic magnificence and tremendous beauty. Because of its boundless diversity, composers are always inspired to create music that reflects the interaction between nature and humanity. Musicians and singers from a variety of genres have utilized their platforms to draw attention to environmental concerns and encourage audiences to consider how humans affect the environment. Examining these genres frequently exposes a diverse range of environmental themes, from celebrations of nature's beauty to grave warnings about climate change (Biek, 2023).

Composing a tuneful and catchy song is necessary, but creating music that unites people is even more crucial. In other words, a song needs to be composed with the intention of influencing the listeners rather than only serving as a vocalist or musician's presentation. After all, because a good musical song can evoke different emotional states in the listener, it creates a unique, desirable relationship of interaction and messaging between the musician and the listener (Kyriazakos, 2019: 58). Words alone may not evoke the same emotional response as musical pieces that highlight the wonders of nature and the effects of climate change. Listeners are more receptive to the messages of songs that emphasize environmental advocacy when they are accompanied by compelling images and narratives. Through the creative power of music, the text's visual component awakens viewers' consciousness and helps them comprehend the seriousness of ecological issues (ibid: 59).

Outstanding singers are representative of a long-standing custom in which they use their platforms to spread messages that encourage audiences to become more environmentally responsible. Their songs frequently contain urgent calls to action, appealing to the feelings that raise awareness of environmental deterioration on a societal level. Focusing only on American songs, some of the best songs from the 1970s include 'Take Me Home, Country Roads' by John Denver, 'Mercy Mercy me' by Marvin Gaye, and 'Big Yellow Taxi' by Joni Mitchell. This is especially true after Earth Day was established at that time (Salt-Hunt, 2023). As one moves into the 1980s, it becomes evident that songs that support nature have incorporated more subtly



expressed environmental messages into popular music. Written in the late 1980s but released in 1995, Michael Jackson's 'Earth' song was one of the decade's most outspoken environmental protests, addressing issues including animal suffering and deforestation. Songs addressing global issues became more popular in the 1990s such as 'Fall on Me' by R.E.M alternative rock band. Artists continued to draw attention to environmental issues throughout the 2000s, namely promoting the natural world. These songs show how music continues to reflect and influence how society views the environment. Miley Cyrus's 'Wake Up America' urges listeners to acknowledge and confront environmental challenges, whereas Jack Johnson's 'The 3 Rs' encouraged environmental stewardship through recycling and conservation, among many other songs that appeal for nature (ibid). This discussion makes it abundantly evident that songs about nature, from the old decades to the present, focused on portraying nature as a gift that humans must take care of. A plea to return to nature and appreciate its pristine qualities and Edenic qualities can be heard in the majority of these songs. This also applies to the song investigated in the current study.

2.2 Gabriel's 'Down to Earth'

In collaboration with Thomas Newman, Peter Gabriel wrote 'down to Earth' song and sang it with the Soweto Gospel Choir. Released in 2008, the song was featured at the closing credits of the Pixar/Disney movie *Wall-E*. This uplifting song conveys a powerful message of reestablishing a connection with the natural world. The movie's theme, in which a robot called Wall-E (short for Waste Allocation Load Lifter: Earth-Class) was abandoned on Planet Earth to pick up trash, was perfectly complemented by this message. In the year 2805, the planet is abandoned, and WALL-E is left alone until the Axiom spacecraft sends a probe called EVE (short for Extraterrestrial Vegetation Evaluator: Earth-Class) was sent by the Axiom starship to try to rehabilitate the planet and to return to a healthier and more sustainable world (Newman, 2023). The song's ecological message, which centers around encouraging environmental awareness and addressing humanity's detachment from environmental concerns, is consistent with the movie's theme. The song was widely praised for its integration of eco-conscious themes and earned an Academy Award nomination for best original song, reinforcing its impact as an anthem for sustainability (ibid).

2.3 Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory (RT), introduced by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in their seminal book *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* in 1986 and republished in 1995, is one of the primary theories in cognitive pragmatics (Wearing, 2014: 87). Since the RT does not maintain the premise that pragmatic principles are maxim-like, it might be viewed as a 'post-Gricean' approach (Clark, 2013: 155). It asserts that since statements establish expectations of relevance, people assess the importance of utterances without the need for any kind of maxim (Renkema and Schubert, 2018: 25). The hallmark of the theory, hence its name, is that human cognition is driven by relevance in the sense that information is processed selectively based on the search for contextual effects, or information that will affect one's existing knowledge in some useful way or will allow to construct an inference (Evans, 2019: 381).

Within RT, *relevance* is defined in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort. Other things being equal, the more cognitive effects a stimulus has, the more relevant it is, and



conversely, the more effort required to achieve those effects, the less relevant it is (Clark, 2013:157). Using Clark's (ibid) example, it is possible to illustrate how Beth can supply different answers:

(1) Andy: Have you checked the weather forecast for tomorrow?

Beth: a. Yeh, I did.

b. Yeh, I did. It's going to be sunny all day.

c. Yeh, I did. It's going to be sunny all day and it was sunny on this date in 1864.

(1a) has some relevance for Andy because he can derive effects from it. He now knows that Beth has looked at the weather report and has some evidence of the conditions for tomorrow. (1b) is more pertinent than (1a) because he can derive further effects (that it is predicted to be sunny and whatever follows from that). All other factors being equal, (1c) is less meaningful than (1b) since Andy must analyze the second conjunct, from which nothing significant follows (importantly, given that nothing follows for Andy from information about the weather conditions on the same day in 1864). This example shows how the meaning of any utterance is determined by its maximal relevance to the context. RT includes the assumption that processing typically ceases after a relevant and satisfactory interpretation is reached since the brain operates for optimal efficiency (Robson and Stockwell, 2005: 61). This issue of maximization of relevance governs the two principles proposed by RT. The first is the *cognitive principle of relevance*, which states that human cognition is typically geared toward maximizing relevance (it yields significant cognitive effects for minimal mental effort) (Wilson and Sperber, 2004: 610). The second is the *communicative principle of relevance* which states that interpreters assume that the stimulus is optimally relevant (the speaker assumes the listener will find the message worth the cognitive effort required to process) (Clark, 2013: 157)

Relevance Theory is an inferential theory that aims to explain the cognitive processes by which hearers recover speakers' intended meanings (Elder, 2021: 64). Communication is seen as an ostensive-inferential process in which the communicator uses ostension to ensure relevance and the receiver uses inference to find it. According to this argument "the communicator produces a stimulus which makes it mutually manifest to the communicator and audience that the communicator intends, by means of this stimulus, to make manifest or more manifest to the audience a set of assumptions" (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 63). Therefore, some sort of ostensive behavior reveals the communicator's objective. For instance, you could lift your arm and tap your watch to let your partner know 'it's time to leave a party you're attending'. This action wouldn't qualify as communication if it was not ostensive (Evans, 2019: 380). This example alludes to the issue that a speaker's assumptions can be divided into two categories: *explicature* and *implicature*. An utterance comprehension begins with an explicature and concludes with an indeterminate sequence of implicatures of diminishing strength (Croft and Cruse, 2004:100). An explicature is "a combination of linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual features" (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:182). In order to generate an explicature from a stimulus, one must rely on a number of inferential processes, including disambiguation, reference resolution, saturation, free enrichment, and figurative interpretations, in addition to the linguistically encoded meaning of the utterance (ibid: 11). Conversely, implicatures relate to the implicit or inferential meaning. They are entirely inferred in the sense



that they are not explicitly communicated (Schmid, 2012:65). To illustrate how implicature can be derived from an utterance, one can cite Sperber and Wilson's (1995: 194) example:

(2) Peter: Would you drive a Mercedes?

Mary: I wouldn't drive ANY expensive car.

In this exchange, Mary fails to answer Peter's question directly (because Peter's utterance is a 'yes-no question' a straightforward 'yes' or 'no' would provide a direct answer). By using the presumption of relevance, Peter can deduce Mary's intended meaning and presume that she has responded to the question in the most relevant manner. The fact that a Mercedes is an expensive car is the result of Mary's statement interacting with Peter's encyclopedic knowledge. This information interacts with Mary's claim that she wouldn't drive any kind of expensive car, leading to the explanation that she wouldn't drive a Mercedes (Evans and Green, 2006: 462). The fact that there are different degrees of implicature in the search for relevance is a significant issue that is worthy of mentioning here. Implicatures can be very strong, strong or rather weak. Since there are numerous hidden meanings that must be inferred from the text, the hearers must supply very strong implicatures for the communication to be deemed relevant. Although the hearer is strongly urged to supply strong implicatures, they are not actually compelled to do so because the hidden meaning is obvious but still requires some work on the hearer's part to create relevance. Weaker implicatures are not required, but when they are provided, they do have meaning, that is, meaning is almost obvious and doesn't need much interpretation (Vandaele, 2021: 464).

In conclusion, RT is a cognitively oriented theory of pragmatics through which the inferential processes people employ in their daily interpretation of other people's utterances and other purposeful behaviors can be well explained (Yus, 2023: 53).

3. Related Studies

Nowadays, sustainability and lyrical contents are combined due to the power of music on people's emotion and become a fast- growing area of research, pointing out how songs can drive public awareness and behavior change. A number of studies have explored the way artists and their compositions aid environmental protection, highlighting the unique role of lyrical messages and emotional appeal in engaging and captivating listeners.

In 2019, for example, Price and Wilson conducted a significant study titled "Relevance Theory and Metaphor: An Analysis of Tom Waits' *Emotional Weather Report*". This research investigates how the application of relevance theory can enhance the examination of song lyrics. The authors apply the principles of the stylistic and metaphorical elements to Tom Waits' song '*Emotional Weather Report*' to investigate the way the lyric's figurative language is illuminated by the background knowledge of the audience. In line with the research questions, the findings demonstrate that songs are potent tools for addressing environmental messages due to their emotional effectiveness and public appeal. They also find out that a detailed analysis of a song's stylistic aspects requires not only the lyrics themselves but also the performer's persona, genre and background as these factors are essential for cultural and metaphorical understanding and interpretation.

Similarly, Soedjarwo's 2021 paper, "The Power of Song in Promoting Environmental Issues" explores how the selected songs have been used for engaging listeners and increasing their



consciousness about public environmental concerns. Their case study analyzes the language and other elements in LI Dicky's environmental-themed song *Earth* to see how they contribute to raising environmental advocacy. The research utilizes discourse analysis to examine the selected song through the lens of campaign language and awareness-raising theories. Sayer's MAST principle is also used to illustrate how these strategies strengthen the song's ability to promote environmental stewardship. Cutlip and Center's framework is also employed to analyze the song's language. The analysis reveals that the song's distinctive mood and linguistic choices are key contributors to its effectiveness in addressing ecological concerns.

Building on the preceding studies, the current research applies relevance theory to Peter Gabriel's '*Down to Earth*' to see how, as a promotional song, its lyrical content raises public environmental awareness.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Given the theoretical framework and the research questions, a descriptive qualitative method is used to show how the selected song builds consciousness of ecological issues and the natural world. It is descriptive because it tries to describe the topic at hand in its natural context, and qualitative because it analyzes non-numerical data. This method is pertinent to this study as it lines up with the aims of the study, facilitating an encompassing analysis of diverse perspectives, which quantitative methods often miss. Through this method, the research tries to present a detailed exploration of the themes and underlying messages inherent in the selected song's lyrics.

4.2 The Adopted Model

In this investigation, Sperber and Wilson's (1986, 1995) relevance theory is adopted as an analytical lens to elicit the nature-related messages embedded in Gabriel's '*Down to Earth*' and identify how they affect listeners' perceptions. In essence, the principles of relevance theory assert that the way we communicate and interpret messages is driven by the relevance of the information to our cognitive context, aiming to get the greatest cognitive effect with the least effort. The lyrics of the song are analyzed through the selected model to examine how efficiently environmental issues are conveyed without hindering clarity. Accordingly, the study tries to present a holistic understanding of how the song addresses some eco-themes via relevance theory framework.

4.3 Analysis Technique

This research explores the representation of nature in the purposely chosen song. The selected song was obtained from (<https://genius.com/Peter-gabriel-down-to-earth>) website. It demonstrates the structure of '*verse- chorus- verse- chorus- bridge-chorus- outro*'. That is, the song has 2 verses, 3 choruses, 1 bridge and 1 outro. The researchers divided the song into its sections and examined them following a thorough reading. To elaborate on the song's essential parts, one can mention that the several sections that comprise a song's lyrical composition are referred to as the parts of a song lyrics (<https://blog.delivermytune.com/parts-of-a-song-lyrics>). **The verse** is the section of the song that tells a story or provides information. The chord structure and melody usually don't change throughout the song. **The chorus** is the section of the music that is performed repeatedly. It frequently has a catchy melody and a simple chord



progression. The section of the song that contrasts with the rest of the song is called **the bridge**. It usually has a distinctive melody and chord pattern, and the lyrics may be twisted. The song's **outro**, often known as the coda or ending, is the final section (<https://mastering.com.wp-content/uploads/SONG-STRUCTURE>). After reading the lyrics and identifying the explicit and implicit meanings, the researchers focused on uncovering the implied messages which are not directly stated. This is done by evaluating the explicature aspects found in the lyrics of the song to show how the explicit meaning and the direct statements help convey the implied message. Afterward, the analysis is extended to the entire song to understand how these aspects (explicit and implicit meanings) work together to communicate the song's overall environmental message.

5. Analysis of Gabriel's '*Down to Earth*'

5.1 Verse 1

In the first verse, the singer introduces two rhetorical questions to which he tried to introduce the answer. The verse presents the idea of realizing and reestablishing a connection with the world and the responsibilities tied with that:

Did you think that your feet had been bound

By what gravity brings to the ground?

Did you feel you were tricked

By the future you picked?

Well, come on down

All those rules don't apply

When you're high in the sky

So, come on down Come on down

It is anticipated that the listener will inferentially construct his explicature by assigning the personal pronoun 'you' in the verse to a general indeterminate individual in which all the listeners are involved. By relating the verse to its contextual elements, listeners may fill the gap found in the line "all those rules don't apply (*to what?*)" through a saturation technique to be interpreted as "to bind or trick you". Listeners will interpret 'down' as meaning 'down to earth' if they supplement its meaning from context through an enrichment process. One may sense the tone of sorrow and disappointment that the communicator is attempting to express through the rhetorical questions he presented in lines (1) and (3). The juxtaposition of gravity and sky in these two verses amounts to the logical form that "you are bound by rules that won't be applied if you fly high in the sky". Inferring what has not been communicated through words, listeners can deduce that the rhetorical questions are not just meant to be critical; rather, they are meant to provoke contemplation about whether one's choices in life are disappointing and whether life's limitations are actually restricting one's freedom. By interpreting the metaphorical meaning of *gravity* being mapped to life's constraints and the *future* being mapped to one's decisions and expectations, one can arrive at this implicated interpretation. With its numerous repetitions, the sentence 'come on down' encourages people to face life and embrace responsibility. It's a call to get back in touch with oneself, or even with 'nature'. It is possible



to interpret these verses as ‘an invitation to come on down, to return to the simplicity, truth, and authenticity of real life’ without explicitly saying so.

Since the singer alludes to physical restrictions, life choices, and freedom through the metaphors of gravity, the future, and the sky, he assumes that there is cognitively a mutually manifest information between him and his listeners. Simply put, *‘feet had been bound’* conjures up the idea of being imprisoned, signifying a lack of individual autonomy; *‘feeling tricked’* conveys disappointment or remorse; and *‘high in the sky’* conjures up a space (either mental or physical) where traditional constraints are no longer in place. The singer makes use of these linkages because he believes his audience would understand them with minimal cognitive effort. In terms of the communicative principle of relevance, the song accomplishes relevance by using rhetorical devices (questions, metaphors) and well-known ideas (gravity, sky, rules) to express several meanings. The verse guarantees that the message is understood by a wide range of people with differing degrees of engagement by striking a balance between straightforward assertions and more profound meanings. Additionally, the phrase *‘come on down’* is repeated, reinforcing the call to action and adding emotional resonance to the message.

5.2 Chorus 1

Gabriel starts the song’s chorus by conjuring up images of mountains, rivers, birds, trees, and a breeze, among other pastoral and natural landscapes. The song’s chorus, which was written to encapsulate its main theme and message, repeated the line *‘we are coming down to the ground’* to represent humility and a return to nature:

We’re coming down to the ground

There’s no better place to go
We’ve got snow up on the mountains
We’ve got rivers down below
We’re coming down to the ground
We hear the birds sing in the trees
And the land will be looked after
We send the seeds out in the breeze

Similar to verse (1) above, reference resolution creates a sense of involvement through which the singer uses the pronoun ‘we’ to speak directly to his audience. The claim that ‘there is no place to go’ narrows one’s viewpoint to the ‘ground’. Here, the explication meets the relevance criterion by stating the ground’s significance clearly. These words convey the explication of ‘when we come down to the ground, we will see many beautiful things’. Regarding what might be deduced from these verses’ implied meaning, addressees might interpret the final two lines as a commitment to preserve the environment and help rebuild a better world. The implicature can sound like: ‘since we can see many beautiful things when we come down to the ground, we must take care of them and perform all the good deeds to protect them’.

Because the images of mountains, rivers, birds, and trees are universal and straightforward, the listeners need minimal effort to notice and understand them. Simple and repetitive phrases like ‘coming down to the ground’ reinforce the idea without needlessly complicating it. Both emotional and logical responses are evoked by the words, which highlight human responsibility



while complimenting the beauty of nature. By appealing to the audience's general awareness of environmental degradation, they subtly promote a change in behavior. The lyrics' use of well-known imagery and straightforward language particularly appeals to a broad spectrum of emotions and moral values. The positive tone 'the land will be looked after' boosts involvement by presenting environmental care as achievable and fulfilling rather than intimidating. The song's chorus emphasizes the simplicity of life on Earth and calls on people to respect and enjoy nature's beauty while encouraging a feeling of human responsibility.

5.3 Verse 2

The human tendency to flee from routines or challenges in order to avoid suffering is reflected in the song's second verse, which reveals that confronting these challenges is the key to true transformation

Did you think you'd escaped from routine

By changing the script and the scene?

Despite all you made of it

You're always afraid

Of the change

You've got a lot on your chest

Well, you can come as my guest

So come on down Come on down

As with the previous verse, the singer uses the pronoun 'you' to address his audience in a reprimanding manner, saying, 'you are afraid of change'. The communicator makes it clear that making any alterations to your scenes and scripts won't help you break free from the routine. Interpreters can deduce that the pronoun 'it' in line (3) of this verse can relate to change, which will be cataphorically mentioned in the following line. The terms 'scenes' and 'scripts' can be expanded within an enrichment process to refer to the scenes and scripts of a person's life. The use of the rhetorical question alludes to the impossibility of change. The verse could be explained to form a logical meaning like 'come and be my guest so that I can relieve you while you are afraid of change and are under a lot of stress'. The use of metaphor to map 'routine' to 'repetitive actions' indicates an urgent need for change, which can be accomplished not only through 'scripts and scenes' (physical attainment), but also through emotional and psychological transformation. The repeated expression 'come on down' may also be interpreted metaphorically in which 'down' may be mapped (not to a physical descent) to a return to life's fundamental principles. The communicator's invitation for the addressee to come down and be his guest in order to console him implies a shared responsibility that we can achieve by sharing each other's burden. The sentence 'you've got a lot on your chest' could imply a feeling of guilt or anxiety about personal accountability or, if put within its contextual information, over environmental damage and destruction. Having these contextual assumptions, one can deduce the implicit meaning as 'the only thing that can help you change and get rid of stress and fear is to come on down and be more attached to life and nature'.

By using well-known terms like routine, scene, chest, and guest, the conversational tone lowers the processing load and makes it easier for listeners to deduce deeper ideas. The verse



encourages listeners to reflect on whether their acts are truly transforming or just surface-level adjustments. The song links to the common human challenge of adjusting to new realities, especially those necessary for environmental sustainability, by alluding to a dread of change. According to the communicative principle of relevance, the singer wants to effectively communicate his message by making his point worthwhile for the audience. The audience is personally engaged and forced to consider their own routines and anxieties through the singer's use of rhetorical questions. Both literally and figuratively, the song's call to '*come on down*' encourages listeners to take responsibility, making it inclusive and inspiring. Aligning with the movie's theme, the verse parodies people's dread of change by demonstrating how escapism and technological advancements (such as leaving Earth for space, as in the *Wall-E* story) can serve as destructions rather than remedies. Therefore, the communicator combined an emotional plea '*a lot on your chest*' with a pragmatic solution '*you can come as my guest*'.

5.4 Chorus 2

Being the repetitive part of the song, the second chorus reiterates the celebration of Earth's natural beauty and humanity's role in taking care of it.

5.6 Bridge

The bridge is a contrasting section that provides a break from the repetitive structure of verses and choruses (<https://blog.delivermytune.com/parts-of-a-song-lyrics>). The issue of humanity's development, progress, and ambition is introduced in the bridge of Gabriel's song. It does, however, criticize the harm that humans cause to the planet.

Like the fish in the ocean
We felt at home in the sea
We learned to live off the good land
We learned to climb up a tree
Then we got up on two legs
But we wanted to fly
When we messed up our homeland
We set sail for the sky

The bridge gives the entire song an emotional meaning by bringing the progression of humanity from aquatic life (fish in the ocean) to land dwellers (live off the good land), implying that humans are adaptable and ambitious. The communicator used the pronoun 'we' explicitly to reassure the listener that we, as humans, have progressed from our oceanic origins to the subsequent stages of learning. The saturation approach of 'to fly (to where?)' has been used to interpret this meaning as a sign of human aspiration and an unending drive for advancement. The bridge's narrative style critiques human hubris, which causes people to disregard their home planet in an attempt to reach greater heights '*set sail for the sky*'. The explicit aspects provides in these lines provide enough background information for the listener to get the implied message that humanity's reckless pursuit of progress has been made at the expense of nature. Despite these accusations, humans' sole response would be to 'set sail for the sky' and abdicate all responsibilities to the planet. The communicator wanted his audience to reconsider their values by asking them to consider the history of humanity and how progress has been



prioritized over sustainability. As a result, they should feel accountable for the environmental degradation and fix it rather than escape to the sky.

To maximize relevance to his topic, the communicator used explicit ideas of ‘ocean, land, trees, and sky’ and linked them to themes of development, ambition, and destruction. Because they are brief but full of vivid imagery, these verses have a powerful cognitive effect with little processing effort. Regarding the communicative principle of relevance, the lyrics are depicted through the employment of metaphors, such as ‘fish in the ocean’ which represents the beginning of life; ‘climb up a tree’ which depicts human evolution and progress; and ‘set sail for the sky’ which denotes human’s escape and departure. The analogies presented in these verses are universally accessible and pertinent to common human situations, even though grasping them necessitates extra cognitive work on the part of the listeners. These lyrics’ emotive wording guarantees that listeners can deduce the intended meaning without overanalyzing. The bridge of the song plays an important role within the whole song as it urges listeners to reconsider their environmental behaviors by tying the past, present, and future together with a balance of historical and futuristic imagery.

5.7 Chorus 3

The third repeated chorus reinforces the hopeful vision of humanity returning to its roots and living in harmony with the environment.

5.8 Outro

The closing section of the song, its outro, uses the imagery of birth to symbolize renewal and a fresh perspective

We’re coming down
Comin’ down to earth
Like babies at birth
Comin’ down to earth
Redefine your priorities
These are extraordinary qualities

Through the repeated use of the phrase ‘coming down’, the outro’s explicit meaning guarantees the descent from a higher realm to earth. In order to symbolize a condition of innocence and purity, this descent has been likened to a baby’s birth. Because this change of viewpoint is noteworthy and extraordinary, the final two sentences make a call to reevaluate one’s priorities. One way to understand the statement ‘these are extraordinary qualities’ is to associate the demonstrative ‘these’ with the attributes that are connected to a person’s change of priorities and viewpoints. The interpretation of these lines is based on repetition, imagery, and saturation tactics, which clearly state that ‘if we reset our priorities and come down to earth it would lead to actual regeneration and advancement for the whole world’. Listeners may go beyond this explicit content and interpret the outro ideally by connecting the descent to a genuine need for return to something pure and essential, similar to babies, in which one may start over without any preconceived notions. This can be achieved through linking the outro’s explicature meaning with the audience’s shared knowledge and the song’s context. The advice to ‘redefine your priorities’ suggests that after experiencing this epiphany, past objectives or



aspirations could no longer be relevant. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize Earth's unique features over fleeting goals. A meditative, decisive impact is produced by this repetition.

The goal of human cognition is usually to maximize relevance. In other words, people concentrate on the information that most appears to be relevant to them. Invoking universal ideas, the images of 'coming down to earth' and 'babies at birth' might captivate the audience and give the lines an emotional resonance. The outro's straightforward and appealing tone makes it easy to understand. To put it another way, it accomplished its cognitive effect by fusing the presumption that it was out of this world with the new knowledge that it was necessary to descend (and redefine priorities) in order to obtain the new cognitive implications that such a descent would result in remarkable attributes.

6. Results and Discussion

Gabriel's song '*Down to Earth*' conveys its message about the environment by combining poignant, introspective lyrics with straightforward language and potent images. The song's two verses elaborate on humanity's relationship with the world, as has been analyzed through the relevance theory. To highlight the idea of going back to simplicity and taking care of the environment, the song repeated its chorus, '*come down to earth*' three times. Explanatory strategies such as reference resolution, saturation, rhetorical questions, mentioning well-known and universal concepts, and the repetition technique have all been used to arrive at such inferential conclusions. The bridge considers the problem of progress, but it can have a cost. The song's call to action and the importance of valuing Earth's unique traits over fleeting ambitions are emphasized in its outo section. Reconnecting with nature to appreciate its beauty and purity is the song's central topic. The song's criticism of human progress at the expense of nature is another significant topic, hence, there is a need to rediscover oneself and one's longing to be more connected to environment. The main theme of the entire song is the need of humility and getting back in touch with nature. Implicatures must also be obtained from context, prior knowledge, and effort to analyze the message with the help of the explicature tools. That is, in order to create relevance, the hearer is encouraged, but not absolutely compelled to provide the implicature, which is found to be strong. In other words, the song's parts exhibit some obvious ostension, which produces a cognitive environment that is somewhat similar for both the speaker and the listener. Since the song demonstrates the easy-to-grasp implicature as the singer utilized clear ostensive language to get his point across, this result refutes the study's original hypothesis, which claims that there is a very strong implicature which the listeners must provide to get the intended message.

The song's lyrics are simple and straightforward, which requires the least amount of cognitive work to understand even though the meaning is conveyed using figurative and metaphorical language. This result disproves the current study's second hypothesis. The song conveys its maximum significance by addressing topics such as reestablishing a connection with nature, the desire to learn about oneself through one's commitment to Earth, hope for renewal and the demand for action and change. Since the song addressed these requests and calls through a sense of involvement and belonging, it is anticipated that listeners will react favorably to them.

7. Conclusion

It is evident from the obtained results that relevance theory is an appropriate model for



exposing the hidden meanings in any given text. In addition to some contextual elements including context, prior knowledge, and hearers' efforts, it offers a potent insight into analyzing both explicit and implicit meanings and how the latter might be interpreted through the inferential processes involved in the former. Songs are a universal language that may be used to express ideas, feelings, and stories. Songs that celebrate nature are crucial for increasing people's awareness of it and their urge to have a stronger connection to it. Music is a vital part of the larger environmental movement because of its inherent ability to get public attention and inspire action.

By focusing on poetic themes that address urgent environmental issues, Garbriel provides inspiration derived from his own and other people's experiences, which in turn creates a noticeable social influence. In order to achieve maximum relevance, he explicitly states his communicative aims and offers enough evidence to allow the hearers to deduce his intentions. With its straightforward words and expansive ideas, the song has successfully and effectively conveyed its message. The subject and hidden meanings of the song are unique since they complement the movie's theme, making it a fitting option for the film's closing credits section.

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