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Investigating Cognitive Effect and Effort in Understanding the Isolation and Alienation Theme in The Great Gatsby Using Relevance Theory

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Abstract

This study analyzed the cognitive effort and effect experienced by readers of The Great Gatsby novel and viewers of its film adaptation. The study aims to investigate how relevance theory clarifies the cognitive processes of readers and viewers in interpreting themes of isolation and alienation, particularly through analyzing cognitive effort and effect. The study explores the disparities in cognitive engagement between readers and viewers, emphasizing the influence of multimodality on their perception of isolation and alienation. This study tries to answer the following questions: (a) What differences exist in the cognitive effort required to comprehend the theme of alienation and isolation between those who read the book and those who see the movie version of The Great Gatsby? (b) In what ways can relevance theory contribute to the explanation of the cognitive processes that readers and viewers go through in order to acquire a comprehension of the feelings of isolation and alienation displayed in The Great Gatsby narrative? According to the research hypothesis, readers of The Great Gatsby experience greater difficulty grasping the theme of

isolation and alienation than viewers, as they must rely on more complex mental imagery and inferences.

In contrast, film viewers achieve optimal relevance regarding isolation and alienation more efficiently, due to multimodal cues such as visuals, sounds, and actor expressions, which reduce cognitive effort. Relevance theory, as presented by Sperber and Wilson (2002), underpins the evaluation of cognitive effort and effect in this study. A thematic sample was selected for analysis from F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and its film adaptation directed by Baz Luhrmann (2013), featuring Leonardo DiCaprio and Carey Mulligan. Findings suggest that readers require greater cognitive effort to comprehend themes of isolation and alienation, as they must rely solely on textual descriptions. This requires them to actively engage in mental imagery, deduce meaning from descriptions, and interpret complex cues in *Gatsby*'s relationships and surroundings, which may lead to a more analytical and nuanced experience. Conversely, film viewers experience heightened cognitive effects due to multimodal components, such as visuals, sound, and performance.

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مجلة علمية فصلية محكمة، تصدر عن كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية / جامعة الموصل



بحث في الاثر الادراكي والجهد في فهم موضوع العزلة والاعتراب في رواية غاتسبي

العظيم باستخدام نظرية الملائمة

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الملخص

معلومات الارشفة

تَحَلَّل هذه الدراسة الجهد الإدراكي والأثر الذي يختبره قُراء رواية غاتسبي العظيم ومشاهدو النسخة السينمائية منها. وتهدف الدراسة إلى التحقيق في كيفية توضيح نظرية الملائمة للعمليات الإدراكية التي يمر بها القراء والمشاهدون عند تفسير موضوعات العزلة والاعتراب، لا سيما من خلال تحليل الجهد الإدراكي والأثر. تستكشف الدراسة الفروقات في التفاعل الإدراكي بين القراء والمشاهدين، مع التركيز على تأثير الوسائط المتعددة على تصوراتهم لموضوعات العزلة والاعتراب. تحاول هذه الدراسة الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية (أ) ما هي الاختلافات في الجهد الإدراكي المطلوب لفهم موضوع الاعتراب والعزلة بين أولئك الذين يقرؤون الكتاب وأولئك الذين يشاهدون النسخة السينمائية من غاتسبي العظيم؟ (ب) بأي طرق يمكن أن تساهم نظرية الملائمة في تفسير العمليات الإدراكية التي يمر بها القراء والمشاهدون لاكتساب فهم لمشاعر العزلة والاعتراب التي تظهر في سردية غاتسبي العظيم؟ وفقاً لفرضية البحث، يجد قراء غاتسبي العظيم صعوبة أكبر في فهم موضوع العزلة والاعتراب مقارنةً بالمشاهدين، لأنهم يعتمدون على صور ذهنية أكثر تعقيداً واستدلالاتاً. في المقابل، يحقق مشاهدو الفيلم الملائمة المثلى بشأن العزلة والاعتراب بشكل أكثر كفاءة بفضل الإشارات المتعددة الوسائط مثل الأصوات البصرية وتعبيرات الممثلين، والتي تقلل من الجهد الإدراكي. وتستند نظرية الملائمة، كما قدمها سبيريير وييلسون في عام

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معلومات الاتصال

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2002، إلى تقييم الجهود الإدراكية والآثار في هذه الدراسة. تم اختيار عينة موضوعية للتحليل من رواية غاتسبي العظيم لفرانسيس سكوت فيتزجيرالد ونسختها السينمائية التي أخرجها باز لورمان في عام 2013 والتي قام ببطولتها ليوناردو دي كابريو وكاري موليجان. وتشير النتائج إلى أن القراء يحتاجون إلى جهد إدراكي أكبر لفهم موضوعات العزلة والاعتراب لأنهم يعتمدون كلياً على الوصف النصي. ويتطلب منهم هذا الانخراط بشكل نشط في تشكيل صور ذهنية، واستنباط المعاني من الأوصاف، وتفسير الإشارات المعقدة في علاقات غاتسبي وبيئته، مما قد يؤدي إلى تجربة أكثر تحليلية وعمقاً. على العكس من ذلك، يختبر مشاهدو الفيلم تأثيرات إدراكية معززة بفضل المكونات المتعددة الوسائط مثل الأصوات البصرية والأداء.

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1. Introduction

Relevance theory, much like communication-related principles of cognition, is built on generalizations. The cognitive generalization posits that human brain is structured to seek out and identify essential elements in their environments. In contrast, the communicative generalization focuses on the expectations that arise from communication acts (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). The claim regarding cognition suggests that the mind is designed to maximize relevance, meaning that individuals strive to extract the most meaningful information with the least cognitive effort. In terms of communication, the theory argues that when individuals engage in ostensibly inferential communication, they expect the conveyed message to be as relevant as possible. This means that the message must be at least relevant enough to justify the effort required to process it, while also being the most relevant option available, given the individual's abilities and preferences. A more detailed analysis of this generalization will explore how certain types of communication lead to relevance-guided comprehension, the heuristic approach, and the assumptions of optimal relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 2004).

1.2 Cognitive Effort and Cognitive Effect

According to Wilson (2009), processing effort refers to the mental effort required to transform an input into cognitive outcomes. This effort includes representing the input, retrieving contextual information, and determining any cognitive effects or implications. In essence, the total effort required is the sum of the mental energy needed for perception, memory retrieval, and making inferences. The amount of effort needed to process a given stimulus typically varies. For instance, all other factors being equal, a longer sentence will generally require more effort to process than a shorter one. As Forster and Chambers (1973) note, processing a rare phrase or an uncommon interpretation of an ambiguous word takes more effort than processing a familiar one. The complexity increases when considering that identical inputs may require varying degrees of processing effort depending on the context. The clarity of the stimulus affects how easily it is perceived, the accessibility of the contextual assumptions affects how easily they are retrieved from memory, and the inferences needed to derive implications are context-dependent. Additionally, the consequences it supports can vary in complexity and significance depending on the context. According to Sperber and Wilson (2004), the more mental effort required to analyze a stimulus or phenomenon, including obtaining contextual information, the more likely it is that the stimulus or phenomenon will be perceived as familiar.

Festinger (1957) posits that all actions, whether conscious or unconscious, fall within the realm of cognition. This encompasses activities such as thinking, perceiving and reasoning. The scope of cognition includes a wide range of processes, including but not limited to observing the environment, acquiring new information, forming judgments, and understanding spoken language, among others. The term cognitive effect refers to the various phenomena that illustrate how our actions, environments and social networks influence and alter our thoughts, perceptions, reasoning, and emotions. In other words, it encompasses a broad array of phenomena.

Wilson and Sperber (2004) define positive cognitive effects as anything beneficial regarding an individual's worldview. What relevance theory refers to as the benefits of cognition relates to the advantageous changes in a person's cognitive system when processing information in context. These changes include enhancements to the mental representation of the world. Conversely, adverse cognitive effects do not contribute to true relevance; instead, they may affect how relevant an input appears.

These effects occur when alterations to mental representations reduce their utility for cognitive functions or tasks, particularly when they deviate from accurately representing reality (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

The integration of new information into our existing body of knowledge can take many forms, as noted by Sperber (2005). These forms include adding new pieces of information, revising or updating existing beliefs, adjusting subjective probabilities regarding uncertain evidence, and reorganizing existing knowledge for easier future retrieval. Consequently, Sperber provides explanations for three categories of cognitive effects:

1. To reinforce and support an existing assumption.
2. To disprove and eliminate an existing assumption.
3. To interact inferentially with existing assumptions to generate new conclusions (Sperber , 2005).

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction: This part of the research is deemed crucial, since it elucidates the data collection techniques and the methodologies employed by the researchers to demonstrate the impact of relevance theory on readers and viewers.

2.2 Data Collection

The data chosen for the present study analysis is collected from F.Scott Fitzgerald's novel and the (2013) film adaptation directed by Baz Luhrmann, featuring Leonardo DiCaprio and Carey Mulligan. The data is qualitative in nature. The researchers selected a depiction of Isolation and Alienation in both the text and the film to support the major theme of the novel and ideas.

2.3 The Model

The model of this study was proposed by Sperber and Wilson (2002). According to the model, every piece of communication incorporates two distinct points of view: the writer's and the reader's. The current study will approach the model from two directions, focusing on the cognitive efforts and effects, to better understand the recipient-side difference between the model's employment in the film and the novel.

Below is the description of the model as employed to analyze the film and text from the writer's, reader's and viewer's perspective:

The writer's perspective

- Both explicature, which means "explicit meaning," and implicature, which means "implicit meaning," indicate how the writer employs components of the text that are either explicit or implicit.
- Ad hoc concepts (newly created meanings) are essential to demonstrate how the writer introduces new ideas or language that become more significant as the story progresses.
- Informative meaning (relevant information) is essential to emphasize occasions in which the writer offers information clearly and to evaluate how this information adds to the overall meaning.
- Communication meaning (intended message) elucidates how the writer intends to convey specific meanings via the use of language and the utilization of narrative elements.

The reader's perspective: The focus in this part will be on readers who have read the novel, and their comprehension will be started by using one or more of the following paths:

- Extraction of informative meaning which clarifies how readers take information from the text and understand the relevance of that information.
- Understanding the communicative meaning shows how the reader recognizes the writer's message via the narrative, considering both the explicit and the implicit components.
- Ostensive meaning (intended meaning behind an utterance) depicts how readers derive meaning from the text by noticing apparent clues, such as symbols or specific information.
- Interpretation of Ad hoc concepts (newly introduced concepts) demonstrates how the reader processes the new ideas and incorporates them into their narrative comprehension.

- Cognitive efforts and effects: At this level, three crucial factors—descriptive imagery, narrative structure, and language engagement—will significantly influence the understanding and interpretation of the text. Using descriptive imagery, the researchers aim to analyze how the language of the novel and imagery captivate readers, causing them to recall relevant information and construct mental representations of the story. Researchers who focus on narrative structure explore how different elements of the framework of a novel—such as chapter arrangement, flashbacks, and narrative perspectives—shape readers' comprehension and interpretation of the plot. They also consider how the rhythm, pacing, and sequence of the text affect the way readers process information and form expectations about what will happen next. Additionally, narrative techniques like interior monologue and dialogue play a significant role in shaping the linguistic engagement of the novel with the audience. Furthermore, the use of metaphor, symbolism, and irony in the text is examined for its influence on the reader's interpretation and understanding.

After examining the novel, a comparable model will be applied to analyze the film. However, adjustments will be made to account for the viewer's perspective, and the analysis will proceed accordingly: the cognitive efforts and effects will address memory retrieval, inference, mental imagery and multimodal engagement. The researchers indicate that film frequently gives the audience a plethora of visual and auditory information to aid memory retention. Cognition has an effect on the viewer's memory retention and retrieval processes, which help them establish connections or understand how the story develops later on. For instance, people remember and rethink earlier scenes because of an apparently little detail introduced early in the film but turned out to be relevant later on. Viewers participate in inferential processes, such as assuming things and drawing conclusions, when they infer meaning from what they see in films. Films can have cognitive effects when they shape viewers' interpretations of characters, story points, and themes by guiding their inference-making processes. For instance, viewers may deduce characters' motives or guess what will happen next based on oblique verbiage or subtle visual clues. Films make people visualize what they see on screen, called mental imagery. The term "mental imagery" refers to the mental pictures and scenes that are formed by the viewers in their mind as a result of the sensory information that they take in. This pertains to the manner in which the brain mimics and visualizes experiences. When studying a cognitive impacts of the film, looking at how the sound and images work together to draw the viewer into the story is important this is called multimodal engagement.

For instance, the viewer can get more emotionally invested in the plot through striking visuals and stirring soundtracks.

3. Data Analysis

Gatsby is physically separated from the society he made such an effort to join. He is alone in his pool and home. His emotional and social isolation is underscored by the fact that no one is by his side in his final moments. Despite his immense riches and numerous social events, his solitary presence in the pool symbolizes his disconnection from reality. The fact that Wilson shoots Gatsby is also noteworthy (Tredell, 2011). Wilson attributes his misery and isolation to Gatsby, but he is misguided. Wilson is separated from society due to his poverty and the loss of loved ones, whereas Gatsby is isolated by his ambitions and wealth. Tragically, their distinct destinies converge, simultaneously highlighting the devastating impact of their estrangement. The cinematography of the film further emphasizes this idea. The stark contrast between the grandeur of Gatsby's estate and his lonely figure in the pool highlights his sense of isolation, adding drama to his tragic end (Clerici, 2014). The analysis of the Isolation and alienation theme will proceed as follows:

A. The Writer's Perspective in the Novel and the Film

1. Explicature and Implicature: In *The Great Gatsby*, explicature is conveyed through vivid descriptive language that offers detailed information about Gatsby's environment, actions, and mindset. For instance, his solitary figure floating in the pool exemplifies his physical isolation. These details create a clear image of his separation from others. The novel's implicature is more complex, allowing readers to infer Gatsby's deepest emotions, his unspoken longing for Daisy, and the significance of the green light by considering the overarching themes and narrative elements. Through these inferences, the theme of isolation and alienation is subtly communicated.

The film adaptation translates the explicature of the novel into visual and auditory forms. Key elements that highlight Gatsby's isolation include scenes of his being alone in the pool, the calming sound of water, and the stark contrast between his peaceful surroundings and the abrupt interruption of a phone call and shooting. Together, these elements make his physical solitude visually powerful. In contrast, the implicature of the film relies on visual symbols and sound cues, such as the green light, the unanswered phone call, and audio effects to convey deeper emotional meanings.

Unlike the descriptive language of the novel, these symbolic components invite viewers to infer Gatsby's unfulfilled desires and emotional isolation. The differing uses of explicature and implicature between the novel and the film underscore how each medium uniquely portrays the themes of alienation and isolation.

2. Ad hoc Concept: Ad hoc concept is classified as follows:

1. The telephone ringing generates an ad hoc concept of "false hope." Gatsby takes the call as an indication that Daisy wants to talk to him. Sadly, his hope is dashed because the call never provides the intimacy he craves. The chasm between his ideals and his actual life symbolizes that Gatsby is so alone.
2. The shadow of Wilson on the wall provides a visual representation of the ad hoc concept of "looming death." The shadow symbolizes a lurking danger unseen by Gatsby. It builds the feeling of impending doom and the inevitable consequences of Gatsby's actions by implying that his fate is already determined before Wilson ever walks on screen.
3. The death of Gatsby, together with Daisy's absence, symbolizes the ad hoc concept of "unattainable dreams." Even though Daisy shows no signs of wanting to be with Gatsby, he dies, holding on to the hope that she will. Encapsulating the notion of lost hopes and solitude, this last disconnection emphasizes Gatsby's deep estrangement and the eventual futility of his goals.

The scene primarily conveys these ad hoc concepts. However, the setting and the viewer's perspective might bring up more subtleties. For instance, the portrayal of Gatsby's body may highlight his "vulnerability" or "exposure," capturing his last state of powerlessness. The atmosphere and the lack of familiar or comforting presence might enhance the feeling of "desolation." Combining these ideas furthers the investigation of Gatsby's sad conclusion in the scene.

The writer employs different types of ad-hoc concepts, both broad and narrow, to convey meaning in the scene. Viewers then encounter these concepts, each requiring different levels of interpretation. Broad ad-hoc concepts are more abstract and depend on the viewer's understanding of overarching themes. For example, the ringing phone evokes a broader concept of false hope, extending beyond the phone itself to symbolize Gatsby's pursuit of the unattainable. This idea reflects Gatsby's lifelong struggle with unreachable ambitions, embodying the broader notion of the elusiveness of the American Dream. In contrast, narrow ad-hoc concepts are more specific and limited in scope.

Wilson's shadow on the wall, for instance, represents a clear and immediate threat rather than a deeper symbolic meaning. It directly conveys the impending danger of Wilson's presence, which ultimately leads to Gatsby's death.

3. Informative and Communicative meaning: The informative meaning in this scene focuses on key plot details and vivid descriptions. Fitzgerald tells us that Gatsby is in his pool, unaware of Wilson's approach, before being shot. Set on a sweltering summer day, the scene captures Gatsby's longing for Daisy and his connection to the past. The green light Gatsby sees before his death symbolizes his unattainable dream. Fitzgerald uses descriptive details, such as the tranquil water and Gatsby's solitary figure, to emphasize his isolation, while the expectation of a phone call introduces a sense of false hope. These elements lead the reader to absorb the most relevant information and experience the emotional weight of Gatsby's death. This explores the deeper meaning of the scene and the writer's intentions. These themes— isolation, the dream's futility, and Gatsby's inevitable fall—make up the communicative meaning. Writing Gatsby alone in the pool is a way to convey his social and emotional isolation. The tragic outcome of Gatsby's dogged pursuit of an unattainable goal is brought to light by the fact that he is shot while staring at the green light.

In summary, the writer employs these aspects to direct the reader's and viewer's perspective, establishing an air of inevitable doom and heightening the emotional resonance of Gatsby's demise. What makes the scene so meaningful is the way the instructive elements are balanced with the larger communicating aim.

B. Relevance Theory within the Written Text :(The Reader's Perspective)

This part will demonstrate how descriptive language, narrative structure, and linguistic engagement lead readers to achieve optimal relevance by understanding communicative meaning and interpreting ad-hoc concepts.

1. Descriptive Imagery: Fitzgerald's writing is rich in detailed descriptions that create vivid mental images for the reader. The cognitive effort refers to the mental energy expended by the reader to analyze the text and construct these images. For instance, Fitzgerald describes sensory elements such as the tranquility of the water, the warmth of the day, and the atmosphere, which is both calm and tense. Readers must engage their imagination, which can be emotionally taxing as they anticipate the tragic outcome. These details compel imaginative involvement, while the resulting emotional impact on the reader is termed cognitive effect.

The stark contrast between the serene pool water and the brutality of Gatsby's death enhances the scene's emotional resonance and memorability. This contrast intensifies the emotional impact, evoking profound feelings of loneliness and sadness through depictions of Gatsby floating in the water, the sudden entrance of Wilson, and the finality of the gunshot. For instance, the calmness of the water before the shot evokes the idea of a calm before the storm, heightening the tragic event's impact. Ultimately, the reader engages in a cognitive effort to process the detailed descriptions that emphasize the themes of isolation and alienation.

2. Narrative Structure: In this scene, Fitzgerald skillfully builds suspense, guiding the reader through a range of emotions and sensations. The narrative is interwoven with sensory details, periods of introspection, and shifting viewpoints, avoiding a straightforward linear progression. As a result, readers must engage critically with the text to deduce the meaning of the described events. For instance, the narrative transitions from an external description of the pool and its surroundings to an exploration of Gatsby's internal state and Wilson's looming presence in the background. By tracking these shifts, readers gain insight into the interconnectedness of the events and the need for foresight.

The complexity of the descriptions, foreshadowing, and climax requires the reader to navigate multiple layers of meaning. This structure fosters a sense of inevitability, enhancing the emotional impact and magnifying the cognitive effect. Fitzgerald heightens suspense by gradually escalating tension leading to the shooting through descriptive pauses and shifts in focus. The vivid imagery and non-linear narrative compel the reader to reflect on Gatsby's tragic fate, rendering the violence both shocking and deeply ironic. The story feels disjointed and chaotic, mirroring the turmoil of Gatsby's disappointments and the darkness of his ambitions. The shooting occurs suddenly, following a long, dream-like buildup, creating a stark contrast between anticipation and reality that evokes a profound sense of loss and despair. Overall, the intentionally non-linear and richly descriptive narrative structure demands cognitive effort from the reader, amplifying the themes of isolation, tragedy, and inevitability and leading to a heightened emotional response.

3. Linguistic Engagement: This part examines how the text guides the reader to derive cognitive effects while thoughtfully managing their cognitive effort. Through rich symbolism and vivid imagery, Fitzgerald draws readers into the scene, compelling them to reflect on Gatsby's final moments.

Readers are drawn into the detailed depictions of Gatsby's environment, his solitude, and his state of mind, forcing them to create mental images that resonate with the novel's larger themes. For example, Fitzgerald uses descriptive words like "swollen," "full," and "yellowing" to illustrate the environment around Gatsby, perhaps symbolizing his life, brimming with unfulfilled dreams. The word "swollen" suggests an overwhelming abundance, encouraging readers to imagine the setting and feel its emotional weight. In passages such as "No telephone message arrived, but the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o'clock...," Fitzgerald emphasizes Gatsby's deep sense of alienation, accentuating his loneliness in his final hours. Readers must exert cognitive effort to connect this unmet expectation to broader themes of disappointment and unrequited hope.

Lines like "He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how rare the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass" masterfully blend disorientation and isolation, capturing Fitzgerald's tone. Immersed in the strange, unsettling atmosphere of Gatsby's final moments, readers are compelled to visualize and empathize with his shattered dreams. The reader's cognitive engagement deepens the tragic realization of Gatsby's delusion and the unattainability of his desires.

To sum up, in the context of isolation and alienation, descriptive imagery, narrative structure, and language engagement collaboratively enhance the reader's comprehension of communicative meaning and ad hoc concepts. The evocative imagery, such as Gatsby's loneliness in his home, allows readers to infer deep emotional states without explicit explanation. The narrative structure, which highlights Gatsby's unrealistic aspirations and social disconnection, guides readers toward an implicit understanding of his alienation. Nuanced linguistic elements, including metaphors and symbolic references like the green light, require readers to interpret ad hoc concepts to grasp the complexities of Gatsby's desires and the broader themes of social alienation. This interaction deepens the reader's understanding of the narrative's emotional and thematic layers beyond surface-level events.

C. Relevance Theory within the Film: (The Viewer's Perspective)

The researchers clarified that viewers achieve optimal relevance through multiple pathways, including ostensive meaning, understanding communicative meaning, and interpreting ad hoc concepts.

1. Memory Retrieval: From the viewer's perspective, the scene where Wilson shoots Gatsby marks the story's climax and ultimate tragedy. The careful weaving of emotional and narrative threads shapes the viewer's experience, enhancing both cognitive effort and effect through memory retrieval. For instance, viewers may recall earlier moments, such as Gatsby's fixation on the green light or his interactions with Daisy, and connect these memories to his tragic fate. This recall not only deepens their emotional response but also reduces cognitive effort if the film has successfully imprinted these scenes in their memory. However, when memory retrieval requires more effort—due to subtle or less emphasized connections—the viewer may shift into a more analytical mode, focusing on narrative and visual cues. This increased cognitive effort can either enhance understanding or lessen the emotional impact, depending on the ease of memory recall.

2. Inferences: In terms of cognitive effort, the scene begins with Gatsby appearing at ease in the water, evoking a sense of tranquility that requires little cognitive effort. However, this calm is disrupted by the sound of a phone, a major clue that sparks viewers' memory of Gatsby's fixation on Daisy, leading them to assume the call may be from her. This assumption requires moderate cognitive effort, relying on viewers' recollection of past events. When the servant answers the call, the uncertainty of whether the call will reach Gatsby demands further cognitive effort, as viewers actively engage with the suspense. As Gatsby turns to the phone, hoping for Daisy's voice, the cognitive effort is minimal because the connection is clear. The appearance of Wilson's shadow on the wall raises the stakes, heightening viewers' cognitive effort as they anticipate an impending confrontation. When Wilson shoots Gatsby, the viewers' minds are flooded with shock, particularly as Gatsby looks at the green light from Daisy's house, symbolizing his unattainable dream. The cognitive effort peaks as viewers try to connect this tragic moment with the themes of the story. Finally, understanding Wilson's suicide challenges viewers to reflect on his obsessions and despair, recognizing that both men are destroyed by their unfulfilled aspirations.

Regarding cognitive effect, viewers are reminded of Gatsby's earlier discussions of his dreams, particularly concerning Daisy. The serene setting contrasts with the underlying tension, creating an uneasy atmosphere. The phone call sparks hope for Gatsby, as viewers believe it may bring him the resolution he has been seeking, but they also sense something is off with the tone of the scene. As the servant answers the call, the tension escalates. Viewers become emotionally invested, eagerly awaiting the outcome as Gatsby's fate hangs in the balance.

The appearance of Wilson's shadow heightens the suspense, and viewers brace themselves for the impending tragedy. When Wilson shoots Gatsby, the shock is profound, as viewers witness Gatsby's dream die along with him. The final image of Gatsby gazing at the green light emphasizes the futility of his aspirations. As Wilson takes his own life, viewers are left with the devastating realization that both men's dreams have led to their downfall. This scene leaves viewers with a deep sense of hopelessness, reinforcing the themes of the novel of unfulfilled dreams and the destructive nature of obsession.

3. Mental Imagery: The mental imagery that viewers construct as they engage with the visual and narrative aspects of this scene gives rise to the cognitive effects that directly result from their interaction with the scene. Viewers' processing and emotional reactions to what they see on screen are greatly influenced by mental images. For instance:

1. The pool: Viewers see the tranquilly and seclusion of the water as a metaphor for Gatsby's emotional condition while he swims in the pool.

2. The ringing phone: When viewers hear a ringing phone, they often imagine a sense of connection and optimism. They could see Gatsby, holding the phone up to his fantasy, waiting impatiently for Daisy to ring.

3. Wilson's shadow on the wall: The viewer is left with a harsh and foreboding mental impression by virtue of Wilson's shadow on the wall. Not only does this shadow symbolize Wilson's presence, but it also foreshadows death and disaster metaphorically.

4. Gatsby's Beam at the Green Light: This scene, which takes place at Daisy's house, will evoke memories of the green light from earlier in the film.

5. Wilson's Suicide: The mental image of Wilson placing the weapon to his mouth to take his life is strong and graphic, conveying the hopelessness he feels to a final degree. This visual signifies the end of Wilson's life and, for viewers, any hope for a resolution.

4. Multimodal Engagement: The film uses visual, aural, and narrative elements to interest viewers, each adding to the cognitive experience overall. A range of cognitive effort is required to process the visual components of the scene, including Gatsby's tranquil swimming, Wilson's sharp shadow on the wall, and the iconic green light.

For example, at first glance, the serene pool water may not seem like much. However, as the suspense increases, viewers are encouraged to deduce deeper significance from these images—Gatsby's seclusion, the imminent threat, and the unreachable aspiration represented by the green light. These images significantly impact the viewer's cognition because they make them feel something and think about themes, which helps them grasp the story better (Suleiman & Hussein, 2024).

An important auditory signal that initiates cognitive effort is the sound of a ringing telephone. Remembering the role the phone had in Gatsby's dreams for Daisy, viewers had to decide if the sound represented a chance for salvation or a terrible turn of events. The auditory mode intensifies the cognitive effect by building layers of anticipation and dread, reinforcing the narrative suspense. Auditory clues such as the gunshot and Wilson's suicide add to the viewer's emotional reaction by emphasizing the contrast between Wilson's suicide and the hopelessness of the situation.

To sum up, the viewer's capacity to attain optimal relevance regarding the theme of isolation and alienation during Gatsby's shooting in the pool is influenced by a confluence of cognitive processes and multimodal factors. As the film progresses, viewers comprehend communicative meaning by interpreting the visual and aural signals that illustrate Gatsby's isolation—his seclusion in the water, the eerie silence, and the lack of anybody to rescue him. These cues, together with his final gaze at the green light, provide viewers with a distinct ostensive meaning, drawing their attention to the tragic irony of Gatsby's unattainable aspiration and impending demise. The interpretation of ad-hoc concepts occurs when viewers associate the green light not only with Daisy but also with Gatsby's broader, unreachable ambitions, thus introducing layers of abstract significance beyond what is explicitly presented.

Memory retrieval is essential when viewers recall previous moments, such as Gatsby's longing glances at the green light or his anticipation of a call from Daisy. By merging these recollections, viewers deduce the extent of Gatsby's estrangement, not just from Daisy, but also from a society that has overlooked his aspirations and efforts. Inferences regarding his isolation are further derived from subtle aspects, such as the absence of immediate reactions to his death and the tranquility of the setting which reinforce the perception of abandonment.

The multimodal engagement of the film—incorporating visual imagery, sound design, and editing—intensifies the emotional impact, reducing the cognitive effort required to interpret various layers of meaning.

The stillness of the water, the lack of dialogue, and the stark image of Gatsby floating lifelessly evoke a mental image that effectively conveys his alienation, facilitating understanding of the theme while imparting deep emotional resonance. These features enable viewers to grasp both communicative and ostensive meanings with minimal effort, while also interacting with broader ad-hoc themes related to isolation and the American Dream. The integration of these cognitive and sensory components guides viewers to the optimal relevance of the scene and the theme of isolation.

4. Conclusions

Through the lenses of Relevance Theory, the current research has arrived at the following:

1. Readers of the novel exert greater cognitive effort to comprehend the theme of isolation and alienation than film viewers. The dependence on text necessitates that readers actively create mental picture and deduce nuanced social signals, resulting in a more analytical but intricate comprehension.
2. The sights, music, and actor expressions in a film create a multimodal impact that enhances the cognitive effect on viewers. Because of the vivid sensory clues that highlight alienation and isolation, these aspects make the ideas more approachable and emotionally powerful.
3. It is more efficient for viewers to reach optimal relevance than it is for readers to do so. This is due to the fact that the film contains multimodal signals that minimize cognitive effort, therefore directing viewers to the desired interpretation of emotional isolation and alienation. Multimodality can simplify meaning-making, according to this discovery.

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