

An Analysis of Decision-Making, Nature, and Emotions in Robert Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' and William Wordsworth's 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' Through Relevance Theory

Roseline Jesudas, Zakiuddin Mohammed

Department of Languages and Translation
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Northern Border University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract

This paper examines Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," using relevance theory to assess how the poems enhance their relevance for readers. The aim is to examine how the poems use communication techniques that fit the context, create inferences, and enhance meaning. Using Relevance Theory as a foundation, the study delves into themes like choices, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection portrayed in the works. This research employs qualitative research methods to evaluate how Frost and Wordsworth convey meaning effectively, sparking interpretations from readers. This research aims to enhance understanding of how poets use language and imagery to connect with readers, emphasizing personal choices, nature's impact on emotions, and the interplay between solitude and connection in poetry. The findings indicate that poets frequently use their personal experiences and emotions to craft works that deeply resonate with readers.

Keywords: Relevance Theory, communication techniques, nature, emotion, solitude

Introduction

In literary analysis, poems are like complex tapestries woven with language nuances that draw readers into rich themes and communication strategies. Each poem comprises a myriad of linguistic elements, including metaphor, simile, rhythm, and diction, which collectively craft an experience that transcends mere textual interpretation. This study uses Relevance Theory, developed by cognitive scientists Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, to reveal the profound meanings in poems and how poets use language to evoke emotions and engage readers' minds.

Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken"

Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" is a poignant exploration of choice and individuality, encapsulated in the metaphor of a traveler confronted with a fork in the woods. At first glance, the poem depicts the practical act of decision-making. Nevertheless, using relevance theory, we can navigate the layers of meaning inherent in Frost's language and imagery.

This poem's structure, comprised of four stanzas with a consistent ABAAB rhyme scheme, carries a rhythmic quality that mirrors the act of contemplation. The initial imagery of diverging roads symbolizes the crossroads of life, suggesting themes of uncertainty and the inevitability of choices. Frost's deliberate use of the phrase "the road less traveled" invites readers to engage in inference about the nature of decision-making: is the less conventional path inherently more rewarding, or is it merely a subjective reflection of the speaker's regret and longing?

As readers delve deeper, Frost's repeated assertions of his choice's significance resonate with personal experiences of longing, nostalgia, and the burden of choice. The final lines, where the speaker reflects on how his decision "has made all the difference," compel readers to consider the weight of their choices. Here, relevance theory highlights how the interplay of linguistic elements—metaphor, imagery, and

sound—engages readers in constructing a shared understanding of the complex emotional landscapes that define their own life choices.

William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

In contrast, William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" evokes distinct thematic elements centered around nature, solitude, and emotional connection. The poem opens with a powerful simile, comparing the speaker's solitary state to a solitary cloud drifting over valleys and hills. This imagery invites readers to experience the speaker's isolation yet simultaneously alludes to the potential for connection with the beauty of nature.

Relevance Theory illuminates the nuances of Wordsworth's language as readers seek to draw connections between the poet's emotional state and the broader themes of transcendence and inspiration. The description of daffodils as a 'host' dancing in the breeze captures both the external scenery and the speaker's inner emotions. Through vivid imagery and personification, Wordsworth creates a scene that simultaneously conveys joy and nostalgia.

As the poem unfolds, the recollection of the daffodils becomes a source of solace for the speaker. This movement from solitary wandering to a vibrant memory emphasizes the interconnectedness of nature and human emotion. Wordsworth's language choices encourage readers to think about their nature experiences and the emotions they evoke, creating a deep connection across time and place.

Thematic Elements and Reader Engagement

Exploring choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection through relevance theory reveals how Frost and Wordsworth use language and imagery to evoke emotions and prompt reflections. The emotional weight of Frost's contemplation of choice parallels the serene beauty and emotional depth of Wordsworth's reflection on nature, yet both invite readers into a space of introspection.

Exploring these canonical works through relevance theory enriches our understanding, shedding light on how linguistic choices evoke layered interpretations and emotional responses. It emphasizes the poems' long-term relevance and the interpretive opportunities they provide to audiences over time and distance. Ultimately, through Frost and Wordsworth, we come to appreciate poetry not only as an art form but as a vibrant dialogue that bridges the personal and the universal, the past and the present, the individual and the collective human experience.

Relevance Theory: A Framework for Understanding Poetry

According to Relevance Theory, the principle of relevance guides human communication, guiding individuals to seek information that maximizes cognitive gain while minimizing cognitive effort. This principle is evident in poetry, where readers derive meaning by exploring thematic elements and language choices.

This framework helps readers see that poems go beyond words; they are living creations that evoke emotions and prompt reflection. The poet's intention and the reader's background knowledge interact to create a dynamic experience that both constructs and interprets meaning.

The relevance theory framework, introduced by Sperber and Wilson (1995:224–231), distinguishes between the descriptive and interpretive functions of language. This framework views all spoken words as interpretive, reflecting the speaker's thoughts to varying degrees of accuracy. These thoughts can be either descriptive, aiming to accurately depict a situation, or interpretive, focused on conveying meanings beyond the literal content. Descriptive thoughts can reflect real-world situations through direct statements or idealized constructs, such as requests. In contrast, interpretive thoughts go beyond just representing facts to convey additional thoughts or intentions.

Sperber and Wilson discuss two types of interpretive use: actual, which is tied to specific individuals or groups, and desirable, which focuses on thoughts that are relevant for communication. Actual interpretive use includes thoughts or spoken words linked to particular individuals, groups, or prevailing social sentiments. Examples include reported speech, reported thoughts, and instances of irony, all of which are often referred to as echoic interpretations. On the other hand, desirable interpretive use emphasizes relevant thoughts that, while not exactly matching the speaker's beliefs, are important for effective communication. This category includes scientific speculation and questions aimed at gaining more information and insight.

The relevance theory framework highlights the role of interpretive communication in communication strategies. It emphasizes the preference for interpretive modes over direct assertions. Sperber and Wilson (1995:153-158) posit that speakers deliberately choose communication cues to effectively realize their communicative intentions. Through interpretive communication, individuals not only convey messages, but also imbue them with emotional depth. While direct statements can show attitudes, interpretive approaches communicate messages in a way that prompts responses reflecting the speaker's emotions. Therefore, we view interpretive communication not only as an explanation tool but also as a demonstration tool, a concept we will expand on in the paper's conclusion. Using the analytical framework of relevance theory, this study will examine how the influence of tense shapes ideas of time, memory, and choice in Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." In conclusion, this study examines how these writers use tense to influence the reader's comprehension of their themes. This study also investigates the influence of tense on the overall meaning and interpretation of the poems.

Since its original release in 1986, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* has sparked a considerable amount of both support and criticism regarding its implications for literary analysis. It is reasonable to expect that a theory such as relevance theory, primarily focused on everyday communication, could also provide valuable insights into interpreting literary texts. According to relevance theory, understanding the importance of relevance in interpretation is a key aspect of the process. This concept suggests that focusing on relevance influences how we communicate and think, which can be understood through cognitive effects and the effort needed to process information. Instead of succumbing to irrelevant agendas that merely use literature as illustrative examples, a literary critique should concentrate on pertinent aspects shaped by context, terminology, hypotheses, and cognitive frameworks (Wilson, 2018, pp. 185-186).

Relevance theory asserts that an utterance's semantic meaning does not fully determine its interpretation and is insufficient for successful communication. Consequently, even the simplest expressions require the listener or recipient to draw inferences. The challenge for proponents of relevance theory lies in clarifying how the closed formal system of language provides sufficient cues that, when paired with contextual information, facilitate effective understanding. Willson (2014) essentially views understanding spoken words as interpreting the speaker's intended meaning. In other words, speakers communicate in a way that assumes listeners will infer the most relevant meaning based on the available information.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" through the lens of relevance theory, focusing on how the poems enhance their significance and meaning for readers. The research aims to explore the communication techniques employed in the poems that align with their contextual elements, create inferences, and enrich the thematic content. It investigates key themes such as choices, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection, using qualitative methods to assess how effectively Frost and Wordsworth convey meaning. Ultimately, the study seeks to deepen the understanding of how poets leverage language and imagery to engage readers emotionally, highlighting the interplay between personal choices, nature's influence on emotions, and the relationship between solitude and connection in poetry.

In 1994, Adrian Pilkington presented a thesis titled "Poetic Thoughts and Poetic Effects: A Relevance Theory Account of the Literary Use of Rhetorical Tropes and Schemes." The primary objective of this thesis is to explore the elements that contribute to the effectiveness and distinctiveness of literary, particularly poetic, communication in the realm of literature. The central inquiry revolves around identifying the key components that underlie literary communication's success and uniqueness within literature. This inquiry, which encompasses both prose and poetry, aligns with the fundamental question L.A. Richards poses in the introduction of "Principles of Literary Criticism": "What adds value to the reading experience of a particular poem?" (Richards, 1924:1). The intricate ways in which language conveys meaning and emotion within a literary work provide the answer to this question.

Yus (2003) explores the theory of relevance, asserting that conversational participants rely on a fundamental interpretive principle as the foundation of this cognitive framework during discourse. This theory focuses on how people understand and interpret messages based on their shared experiences in conversations. This shared understanding enables a predictable interpretive process, giving communicators more control over the ultimate understanding and appreciation of their humorous messages. Expanding on this idea, Zohra (2016) highlights the importance of the intended meaning in understanding literature. She

states that readers try to find the meaning the author has included in the text, considering the context they have. Statements that strongly connect with readers or listeners are not only attention-grabbing but also more likely to be seen as humorous, according to relevance theory. This interplay of relevance and interpretation underscores the intricate relationship between authorial intent, audience perception, and the successful delivery of humor in communication.

Barbara MacMahon's 2001 study delves into the benefits of analyzing poetic voice using relevance theory. According to her, this method provides a structured cognitive framework that improves our grasp of voice in poetry. Furthermore, MacMahon points out that this theory also helps explain the links between different types of communication, shedding light on the subtleties of expressive language. This emphasis on two distinct aspects highlights the importance of relevance theory in analyzing voice dynamics in literary settings.

In a significant exploration of existential principles, Richard Furman (2007) employed autoethnographic poetry and narrative reflections as key methodologies. This study highlights the efficacy of poetry and narrative as qualitative research tools, illustrating their capacity to convey the intricacies of individuals' lived experiences in relation to complex existential themes and processes. Furman's work situates the use of these artistic forms within the broader context of expressive arts and postmodern research methodologies, underscoring their relevance and value in capturing the richness of human experience. By integrating poetry and narrative into qualitative research, Furman contributes to a growing recognition of the importance of expressive forms in understanding and articulating existential concepts.

In their 2019 study, Price and Wilson explored the application of a relevance theory (RT) framework to the analysis of metaphorical language, revealing its adaptability and effectiveness. They demonstrated that the RT approach can elucidate the processes involved in top-down interpretation of extended metaphors. Specifically, the study focused on how listeners maintain a consistent mental representation of weather events as depicted by Waits, which facilitates a more nuanced understanding of metaphorical language. This study juxtaposed this top-down processing with a bottom-up, ad hoc construction of conceptual adjustments, highlighting the differences in deriving and understanding metaphorical meanings.

In 2021, Asma Zahoor conducted an investigation into the poetry of Tariq Tasi during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, a time marked by significant restrictions on face-to-face interactions. Tasi utilized satire as a literary device to address pressing social issues through humor, irony, and ridicule. This study specifically focuses on Tasi's Urdu poetry disseminated via WhatsApp from March to May 2020, within the context of the post-COVID environment. The analysis employs the conceptual framework of relevance theory, as proposed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (2006), along with discourse analysis as a methodological approach. Findings indicate that through the rapid distribution capabilities of social media, Tasi's work effectively brings attention to contemporary social challenges and critiques human behavior, fostering a sense of connection among readers who easily relate to these themes. His poetry poignantly captures the abrupt desolation brought about by the formidable and unseen adversary, COVID-19, which has irrevocably altered the global landscape.

Ei Mon Kyaw conducted a pragmatic examination of Audre Lorde's poem "From the House of Yemanjá" in a 2023 study, using relevance theory as the analytical framework. This study employed inferential analysis alongside qualitative methodologies, with the researcher playing a critical role in the analytical process. The results revealed that Lorde's poetry adeptly leverages implied meanings derived from context and poetic devices to underscore aspects such as physical settings, character dynamics, and the poem's targeted readership. Ultimately, the study posits that Lorde's skilled integration of contextual elements serves to enhance the depth of her poetic expression, enabling profound symbolic interpretations of her literary oeuvre.

Research Gap

The studies discussed above cover a range of applications for relevance theory. They analyze poetic voice, metaphorical language, existential themes, and the impact of social media on poetry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although these studies offer valuable insights into poetic expression and interpretation, there is a research gap in examining canonical works like Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" through relevance theory.

1. **Focused Examination of Canonical Texts:** The current studies do not explore how relevance theory applies to classical works by canonical poets such as Frost and Wordsworth. Despite the focus on

contemporary poetry and diverse methodologies, this framework has not rigorously analyzed the thematic elements specific to these foundational texts.

2. **Thematic Interplay:** Many studies emphasize relevance theory's usefulness in understanding poetic voice and metaphorical language. However, there is a lack of exploration into how it can illuminate themes like choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection in Frost and Wordsworth's poetry. This provides an incomplete understanding of how these poets engage with and convey these themes.
3. **Communication Strategies:** Previous research touches on communication dynamics in poetic texts but lacks a thorough exploration of the specific strategies employed by Frost and Wordsworth that align with the contextual elements of their poetry. This analysis may facilitate a deeper understanding of how these poets effectively engage readers and enhance comprehension through their work.
4. **Correlation with Personal Encounters:** Previous studies mainly delve into thematic exploration without incorporating the authors' personal experiences and their resonance with readers. This provides a potential avenue for in-depth analysis of recurring motifs in the texts and their emotional impacts.
5. **Modern Relevance:** Finally, contemporary studies emphasize the relevance of poetic expression in today's context. However, there is a need to assess how Frost and Wordsworth's works still offer meaningful insights to modern audiences, especially through the lens of relevance theory.

Significance of the Research

This study not only fills a critical research gap in the exploration of canonical texts through relevance theory but also offers valuable insights into the thematic, communicative, personal, and contemporary dimensions of Robert Frost's and William Wordsworth's poetry, enriching our understanding of these iconic works and their impact on readers across time.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to delve into the profound thematic elements prevalent in Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by employing the relevance theory framework. This analysis aims to uncover the nuanced interplay of choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection within these poetic works, elucidating how these themes resonate with readers by pursuing the following objectives:

- To examine and clarify the thematic importance of choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection in "The Road Not Taken" and "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" using relevance theory as a framework.
- To explore the communication strategies employed by Frost and Wordsworth, which complement the contextual foundations of their poems to enhance reader engagement and comprehension.
- To delve into the correlation between the poets' personal encounters and the emotional impact of their verses on readers, we identify recurring motifs that underscore their individual experiences.
- To evaluate how the poems generate inferences that enhance their thematic intricacy and significance for modern audiences.

The poems' specific language and imagery shape readers' emotional landscapes, enhancing the overall significance and resonance of these literary works.

Research Questions

This study delves into the exploration of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" through the lens of relevance theory, aiming to unravel the intricate tapestry of thematic elements such as choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection within these iconic poems. By addressing the following research questions:

1. How does relevance theory provide insights into the thematic elements of choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection in Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"?
2. What communication techniques do Frost and Wordsworth employ to enhance the relevance and meaning of their poems for readers?
3. In what ways do the personal experiences and emotions of the poets contribute to the overall resonance and interpretative possibilities of their works?

4. How do the poems create inferences that align with their contextual elements, and what impact does this have on reader engagement?
5. What specific language and imagery strategies do Frost and Wordsworth utilize to evoke emotional responses in their audiences?

Research Method

Corpus of the study: The subject of the study is Robert Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' and William Wordsworth's 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'

Instruments

An inferential analysis of Robert Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' and William Wordsworth's 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' is being conducted in this study using Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory as a theoretical framework. The analysis with a qualitative method is conducted to pinpoint the relevant and contextual elements from the Robert Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' and William Wordsworth's 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'. Croker (2009) defines qualitative research as "an umbrella term used to refer to a complex and evolving research methodology" having roots in various disciplines (p. 05).

Data Analysis Procedures

In conducting the qualitative data analysis, the researcher meticulously examined the poems line by line to identify relevant contextual elements. To gain deeper insights, the researcher categorized these elements using a relevance theory analysis. The qualitative data, which focuses on individuals' personal experiences, is particularly effective in uncovering the meanings attributed to various events, processes, and structures within people's lives, including their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, and presuppositions, as well as their interpretations of the surrounding social world (Van Menon, 1977).

The researcher used the Miles and Huberman (1994) methodological framework, which includes three important stages: simplifying data, representing data, and confirming conclusions, to guide this qualitative investigation. For the data reduction phase, the researcher focused on analyzing Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." The researcher meticulously analyzed each poem, focusing on words, phrases, and sentences to identify significant elements. This study subsequently organized the findings into a checklist table, which highlighted contextual aspects and enabled systematic data representation. This organization facilitated a descriptive analysis based on the identified contextual elements, guiding a deeper examination of the data.

The researcher drew significant conclusions regarding how the poets use language and imagery to establish connections with their readers, highlighting key themes in the process. Key themes identified include the emphasis on personal choices, the impact of nature on emotional experiences, and the intricate balance between solitude and connection portrayed in the poems.

Analysis: The thematic elements of choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection in Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

To analyze Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" through the lens of relevance theory with respect to thematic elements of choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection, we can break down the poems line by line. Relevance theory posits that comprehension of a text involves a balance between its cognitive effects (new insights and knowledge gained) and the effort required to understand it. This is often manifested in poetry, where the poet's choices illuminate deeper thematic connections.

Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken"

1. Choice

Example line: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood."

This line introduces the theme of choice starkly. The diverging roads symbolize pivotal decisions in life. The choice's relevance lies in its emotional weight, as it blurs the distinction between paths we take and those left unexplored.

2. Nature:

Example line: "Because it was grassy and wanted wear."

Nature is intrinsic to the poem and serves as a backdrop for the metaphorical journey. The description of a natural setting emphasizes tranquility, inviting contemplation while reflecting on the choices made in life.

3. **Emotion:**

Example line: "I doubted if I should ever come back."

This line's emotional resonance illustrates the anxiety and finality associated with choices. It highlights the inner conflict and fear of missing out on other opportunities—emphasizing deeper emotional engagement with the theme of choice.

4. **Solitude:**

Example line: "I, I took the one less traveled by."

The repeated "I" signifies a personal journey imbued with solitude. The individual decision-making process is introspective and isolating, reinforcing the idea that such choices are deeply personal.

5. **Connection:**

Example line: "And both that morning equally lay."

This line emphasizes a connection between the two paths, highlighting the complexity of choice. This connection underscores the interconnectedness of all choices, despite their apparent differences.

William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

1. **Choice:**

Example line: "I wandered lonely as a cloud."

The opening line introduces the theme of choice through the speaker's wandering experience. The choice to wander—whether physically or metaphorically—sets the stage for exploration and self-discovery.

2. **Nature:**

Example line: "A host, of golden daffodils; / Beside the lake, beneath the trees."

Nature is a central theme, celebrated for its beauty. The vivid imagery reflects how interactions with nature inspire reflection and emotional depth, aligning with Relevance Theory's premise of cognitive effects through aesthetic experiences.

3. **Emotion:**

Example line: "They flash upon that inward eye / Which is the bliss of solitude."

The emotional impact of the daffodils is significant. This line explores how memories foster an emotional connection, revealing the joy derived from solitude and contemplation—a cognitive effect that arises from recalling the beauty of nature.

4. **Solitude:**

Example line: "I wandered lonely..."

The sense of solitude is tangible in this poem. The speaker's isolation initially conveys loneliness, but it transitions into a positive engagement with nature, reflecting on how solitude can yield profound; personal insights.

5. **Connection:**

Example line: "For oft, when on my couch I lie / In vacant or in pensive mood."

This exemplifies the connection between nature and memory. During moments of reflection, the speaker rekindles his connection to nature through memories of the daffodils, highlighting how past experiences can bridge solitude with connections to deeper emotional states.

Both poems highlight the intertwined elements of choice, nature, emotion, solitude, and connection through relevance theory. The juxtaposition of personal choice against nature, as well as the emotional responses elicited by those choices, creates a rich tapestry that provides readers with opportunities for introspection. The contrast between Frost's more serious meditation on choice and Wordsworth's celebration of nature and its emotional impacts showcases different facets of the human experience, all of which resonate deeply through the lens of relevance theory.

Analysis: Communicative Techniques

Exploring the communication techniques both poets and identifying communication techniques in the following way that enhance relevance and meaning for readers.

"The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost Lines

**"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,"
"And sorry I could not travel both"
"I took the one less traveled by,"**

Communication Techniques

Frost uses the metaphor of roads to represent choices in life, making the poem relatable and engaging for readers who can relate to decision-making moments.

Narrative Voice: The first-person narrative voice creates a personal connection with the reader, drawing them into the speaker's introspective journey. The repetition of the phrase "I took the one less traveled by" emphasizes the significance of the speaker's choice, underscoring the theme of individuality and uniqueness.

William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" to identify communication techniques enhancing relevance and meaning:

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth Lines:

**"I wandered lonely as a cloud"
"That floats on high o'er vales and hills,"
"Continuous as the stars that shine"**

Communication Techniques

Simile: Wordsworth uses similes like "I wandered lonely as a cloud" to create vivid imagery and evoke a sense of solitude and freedom simultaneously, resonating with the reader's emotions.

Natural Imagery: Descriptions of nature, such as "o'er vales and hills" and "Continuous as the stars that shine," create a serene and timeless backdrop, inviting readers to connect with the beauty and tranquillity of the natural world.

Rhythmic Language: The poem's rhythmic flow enhances its musicality, captivating the reader's attention and increasing the overall emotional impact of the verses.

In both poems, Frost and Wordsworth skillfully utilize metaphors, imagery, narrative voice, and poetic devices to communicate themes of choice, solitude, nature, and individual experience. These communication techniques not only improve the relevance of their poems, but they also deepen the meaning for readers by evoking emotions, sparking introspection, and creating connections between the text and the reader's own experiences.

Analysis; Overall resonance and interpretative possibilities

Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" are two timeless pieces that resonate with readers on profound levels. The following analysis explores how Frost and Wordsworth employ communication techniques to enrich the relevance and meaning of their poems.

Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken"

1. **"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,"**

This opening line sets the scene of a traveler facing a choice, symbolizing life's decisions. The "yellow wood" suggests autumn, a time of change and reflection.

2. **"And sorry I could not travel both"**

The speaker expresses regret about the impossibility of exploring both options, reflecting a universal human experience of indecision.

3. **"And be one traveler, long I stood"**

The speaker's hesitation indicates a deep contemplation of choices, which resonates with the human struggle of choosing paths in life.

4. **"And looked down one as far as I could"**

The act of looking ahead symbolizes foresight and the desire to predict outcomes, emphasizing uncertainty about the future.

5. **"To where it bent in the undergrowth;"**

The road's bend suggests the hidden nature of life's journeys and the unknowns that lie ahead, encouraging introspection.

6. **"Then took the other, as just as fair."**

The speaker chooses one path but suggests that both paths were equally valid, illustrating the complexity of decision-making.

7. **“And having perhaps the better claim,”**

This reflects a human tendency to rationalize choices, showing how we assign value to what we choose based on our perceptions.

8. **“Because it was grassy and wanted wear;”**

The choice of the less-traveled path symbolizes individuality and nonconformity, evoking the desire to forge one's path.

9. **“Though as for that the passing there”**

Here, the speaker acknowledges that the choice is not solely about uniqueness; it hints that both choices lead to varied experiences.

10. **“Had worn them really about the same,”**

This line introduces ambiguity about choices and underscores the theme that the significance of decisions is often subjective.

11. **“And both that morning equally lay”**

The equality of the choices reinforces a sense of inevitability; our choices, while weighty, may not be as diverse as we perceive.

12. **“In leaves no step had trodden black.”**

The imagery of untouched leaves evokes freshness and the potential for new experiences, highlighting the opportunities inherent in decisions.

13. **“Oh, I kept the first for another day!”**

The speaker's hope of returning to unchosen paths showcases human nature's tendency to hold onto possibilities.

14. **“Yet knowing how way leads on to way,”**

This line reflects the awareness of commitment to a path, suggesting that choices often close off others.

15. **“I doubted if I should ever come back.”**

The acceptance of finality in choices adds a sense of melancholy and inevitability to the speaker's contemplations.

16. **“I shall be telling this with a sigh”**

The tone of nostalgia suggests that the speaker will reflect on this choice with mixed emotions, perhaps recognizing the weight of the decision.

17. **“Somewhere ages and ages hence:”**

The timelessness of choice implies that decisions resonate far beyond the immediate moment, reinforcing their impact on life's trajectory.

18. **“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—”**

The closing restates the initial choice but now imbued with the wisdom gained. It's a meditation on the nature of choice and consequence.

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth

1. **“I wandered lonely as a cloud”**

The simile compares the speaker's solitude to a solitary cloud, introducing themes of isolation and contemplation.

2. **“That floats on high o'er vales and hills,”**

The imagery here evokes a sense of freedom and elevation, suggesting a longing for transcendence and connection with nature.

3. **“When all at once I saw a crowd,”**

The sudden appearance of a crowd of daffodils embodies a moment of awakening or epiphany, transforming the solitary experience.

4. **“A host, of golden daffodils;”**

The "host" conveys the idea of abundance in nature, elevating the experience from loneliness to a feeling of unity with beauty.

5. **“They stretched in never-ending line”**

This endless line highlights the overwhelming power of nature, suggesting that beauty and inspiration are boundless.

6. **“Along the margin of a bay:”**

The bay setting suggests tranquility and a harmonious relationship with nature, inviting introspection.

7. **“Ten thousand I saw at a glance,”**

The exaggeration emphasizes the extraordinary impact of witnessing such abundance, heightening the emotional response.

8. **“Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.”**

The daffodils' personification imbues them with life and joy, reflecting the joy and vitality that nature instills in the speaker.

9. **“The waves beside them danced; but they”**

The comparison between the flowers and the waves suggests a connection between all elements of nature, reinforcing the theme of interconnectedness.

10. **“Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:”**

This line emphasizes the daffodils' dominance in joy, symbolizing how nature can evoke profound happiness in the human spirit.

11. **“A poet could not but be gay,”**

This statement connects the power of nature directly to the emotional state of the poet, suggesting that beauty inspires joy and creativity.

12. **“In such a jocund company;”**

"Jocund" conveys a sense of lightheartedness, reflecting the lifting effects that nature can have on the human spirit.

13. **“I gazed—and gazed—but little thought”**

The speaker's fixation on the daffodils indicates how immersive beauty can lead to a state of mindfulness, although it also suggests initial detachment from deeper reflection.

14. **“What wealth the show to me had brought:”**

The notion of "wealth" reflects how nature provides emotional richness, emphasizing the transformative power of the experience.

15. **“For oft, when on my couch I lie”**

This shift to the speaker's later reflections illustrates how memories of nature continue to provide solace and joy in times of solitude.

16. **“In vacant or in pensive mood,”**

This duality captures the complexity of human emotions, implying that nature's beauty resonates across different emotional states.

17. **“They flash upon that inward eye”**

The "inward eye" refers to imagination, suggesting that nature's beauty stays with us, enhancing emotional richness through recollection.

18. **“Which is the bliss of solitude;”**

The reflection correlates solitude with happiness derived from memories, uniting personal experience with wider human emotion.

19. **“And then my heart with pleasure fills,”**

The poem concludes with an affirmation of the uplifting impact of nature on the emotional self, underscoring the theme of interconnectedness between nature and human experience.

20. **“And dances with the daffodils.”**

The final line suggests unity and harmonious interaction between the self and nature, exemplifying the joy derived from those experiences.

Poets' Personal Experiences and Emotions' Overall Contributions

Personal Reflection: Both poets draw on personal experiences of solitude and decision-making, linking their individual feelings and experiences to universal human experiences, allowing readers to connect deeply with the texts.

Nature's Influence: Frost's contemplation of choices and their consequences reflects a broader tension in life that stems from personal decision-making, while Wordsworth illustrates nature as a source of joy and reflection, showing how external beauty influences internal states.

Emotional Depth: The emotional resonance in both works stems from the poets' vulnerabilities—Frost's contemplation of regret and choice, and Wordsworth's celebration of nature and reflection on solitude. This depth enables varied interpretations and personal connections from readers.

Universal Themes: Both poems address themes of choice, solitude, and the human experience, allowing for multiple layers of interpretation that resonate across different contexts, reflecting the poets' own struggles and joys.

Memory and longing: Frost's poignant sense of finality complements Wordsworth's nostalgia, showcasing how memories and experiences influence current emotional states, inviting readers to reflect on their own life experiences.

Overall, both poets utilize their personal experiences and emotions to create rich, resonant works that invite readers to engage with the myriad interpretations of choice, nature, and emotional well-being.

Analysis: Various poetic elements, including the themes, imagery, diction, and overarching contexts of each poem

The following analysis that addresses the question of how these poems create inferences aligned with their contextual elements and the impact these inferences have on reader engagement.

Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken"

1. **"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood"**

Contextual Element: The imagery of a diverging path symbolizes choices in life. The season (autumn) suggests change, reflecting life transitions.

Inference: Readers may infer that the speaker is at a crossroads in life, faced with significant decisions.

Impact: This universal theme invites reflection on personal experiences of choice, engaging the reader emotionally.

2. **"And sorry I could not travel both"**

Contextual Element: The speaker's regret hints at the human desire to explore possibilities fully.

Inference: This line suggests a longing for opportunities not taken, which resonates with anyone facing similar choices.

Impact: It invokes empathy, allowing readers to connect personally with the theme of regret.

3. **"And looked down one as far as I could"**

Contextual Element: The desire to forecast the future represents the uncertainty inherent in decision-making.

Inference: Readers might interpret this as a struggle to make informed choices.

Impact: This uncertainty captivates the reader, drawing them into the decision-making process.

4. **"To where it bent in the undergrowth"**

Contextual Element: The hidden outcome of the path suggests life's unpredictability.

Inference: The speaker recognizes that not all consequences are visible at the moment of choice.

Impact: This realization creates a sense of suspense, prompting readers to ponder their own life choices.

5. **"I doubted if I should ever come back"**

Contextual Element: The finality of choices resonates with the notion of commitment in life decisions.

Inference: The implication is that choices define our journeys irrevocably.

Impact: This idea of permanence resonates with readers, enhancing engagement through thoughtful reflection on past decisions.

6. **"I took the one less traveled by"**

Contextual Element: Taking a different path embodies individuality and non-conformity.

Inference: Readers may infer a sense of pride or strength in choosing a unique path.

Impact: This encourages readers to think about their own choices, enhancing relatability.

7. **"And that has made all the difference"**

Contextual Element: The ambiguous nature of what "difference" signifies leaves interpretation open-ended.

Inference: This suggests that choices are pivotal but outcomes might not be clear.

Impact: This lingering ambiguity engages readers to reflect on their interpretations and the significance of their own choices.

William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

1. **"I wandered lonely as a cloud"**

Contextual Element: The comparison of the speaker to a cloud resonates with Romantic ideals of solitude and nature.

Inference: The speaker feels disconnected or isolated, embodying a common human experience of loneliness.

Impact: This direct address to emotions engages readers by relating to their moments of solitude.

2. **“That floats on high o'er vales and hills”**

Contextual Element: The lofty image of the cloud connects to nature's vastness, emphasizing beauty and transcendence.

Inference: It suggests that the speaker is yearning for elevation or transcendence.

○ **Impact:** Readers are invited to visualize a serene landscape, enhancing engagement through sensory imagery.

3. **“When all at once I saw a crowd”**

Contextual Element: The suddenness of the vision reflects epiphanies associated with Romantic poetry.

Inference: The use of "crowd" implies abundance and joy contrasting the earlier solitude.

Impact: This moment of realization captivates readers, drawing them into the emotional shift.

4. **“A host of golden daffodils”**

Contextual Element: Daffodils symbolize beauty and renewal, evoking positive feelings tied to nature.

Inference: This line evokes a sense of landscapes filled with joy.

Impact: Readers are visually and emotionally engaged with the vibrancy of nature.

5. **“They stretched in never-ending line”**

Contextual Element: The endless lines suggest the boundlessness of natural beauty.

Inference: It emphasizes the overwhelming impact of nature on the speaker's psyche.

Impact: This creates a sense of awe, engaging readers to contemplate nature's grandeur.

6. **“They danced in the breeze”**

Contextual Element: The active imagery of dancing conveys joy and liveliness.

Inference: The personification of daffodils creates a festive atmosphere.

Impact: Readers might feel uplifted, connecting to the joy that nature can inspire.

7. **“And then my heart with pleasure fills”**

Contextual Element: The culmination of the speaker's experience within nature reflects themes of connection and fulfillment.

Inference: The line implies a transformative power of nature on human emotions.

Impact: This moment of fulfillment resonates deeply with readers, encouraging them to find similar joy in their surroundings.

8. **“For oft, when on my couch I lie”**

Contextual Element: The juxtaposition of memory versus present reality highlights the lasting influence of nature's beauty.

Inference: The ability to recall this vision serves as comfort or solace.

Impact: This notion of recollection creates a poignant connection, allowing readers to reflect on their own memories of nature.

Both poems deeply engage readers in their respective contexts. Frost captures the complexity of choice and its consequences, providing an introspective journey that resonates universally with personal decisions. In contrast, Wordsworth's work evokes a celebration of nature's beauty, illustrating how such experiences can revitalize the human spirit. Both poets skillfully employ imagery, personification, and metaphor to create inferences that enhance reader connection, inviting them into a deeper contemplation of their own lives and the world around them.

Analysis: Specific language and imagery strategies do Frost and Wordsworth utilize to evoke emotional responses in their audiences

The following analysis explores how both poets use language and imagery to evoke emotional responses. Relevance theory suggests that communicators aim to provide information that is most likely to yield the greatest cognitive effect relative to the effort required to process it. This study applies this theory to examine the language and imagery used in these poems.

"The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost

Language and Imagery

Metaphorical Choices: The poem revolves around the metaphor of a fork in the road, symbolizing life's choices. Frost uses the imagery of two diverging paths to evoke a sense of contemplation and regret. The lines "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood" create a vivid picture, prompting readers to visualize their own choices.

Descriptive Diction: Words like "yellow," "diverged," and "wear" invoke seasonal imagery, suggesting change and the passage of time. This imagery elicits feelings of nostalgia and reflection, as the "yellow wood" might evoke a sense of autumn—a stage in life where decisions weigh heavily.

Ambiguity: The poem embraces uncertainty, particularly in the line, "I doubted if I should ever come back." This uncertainty resonates with readers, mirroring their own fears about choices and their permanence. The language conveys an emotional undercurrent of anxiety and possibility.

Emotional Responses: The choices represented in the paths resonate with readers' personal decision-making experiences. The emotional impact lies in the relatable nature of diverging paths, which illustrates how choices define life's direction, evoking introspection and perhaps melancholy.

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth

Language and Imagery:

Natural Imagery: Wordsworth employs powerful natural imagery, particularly with the "daffodils" fluttering and dancing beside the lake. The visual and kinetic elements create a vibrant tableau that enhances emotional connection. Phrases such as "golden daffodils" conjure feelings of warmth and joy.

Personification: The poem personifies the daffodils, endowing them with a lively quality that enhances the poem's emotional resonance. Phrases like "They stretched in a never-ending line" suggest abundance, evoking a sense of wonder and delight.

Isolation and Reflection: The opening lines, describing loneliness, contrast sharply with the later images of joyful nature. This juxtaposition amplifies the switch from isolation to connection with nature, evoking emotions of upliftment and solace.

Emotional Responses: Wordsworth's use of nature as a refuge illustrates a Romantic ideal—finding beauty and solace in the natural world. As the narrator reflects on his experience with the daffodils, he conveys feelings of bliss and fulfillment, tapping into universal emotions regarding the healing power of nature.

Both Frost and Wordsworth employ specific language and imagery strategies that resonate with their audiences. Frost's metaphor of the diverging paths and the associated emotional weight evoke introspection and contemplation on personal choices, while Wordsworth's vibrant nature imagery and the vivid depiction of friendship with the daffodils provide a sense of connection and emotional uplift. Each poem exemplifies how careful language choices and imagery can lead to significant emotional responses, drawing deeper connections between both the poets' experiences and those of readers.

Conclusion

This examination of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" demonstrates the complex interplay between thematic elements, language, and imagery that captivates readers. By utilizing relevance theory, both poets skillfully craft their poems to evoke cognitive responses and balance emotional resonance with the interpretive effort required from their audience.

Frost's depiction of choice evokes feelings of nostalgia, regret, and introspection, encapsulating the burden of decision-making within a natural setting. He highlights the complexity of human choices and reinforces the idea that every decision significantly shapes one's life journey through the metaphor of diverging roads. His strategic use of language and imagery evokes a sense of melancholy, encouraging readers to reflect on their own paths and the choices they have made.

In contrast, Wordsworth celebrates nature's beauty as a source of joy and emotional renewal. His vivid imagery of dancing daffodils transforms moments of solitude into connectedness with the natural world, illustrating how memory can sustain emotional well-being. The poem embodies a Romantic ideal in which the beauty of nature serves as a balm for the soul, inviting readers to cherish their own experiences of nature's magnificence.

Together, these poems encapsulate universal themes of solitude, connection, choice, and emotional resonance. Both Frost and Wordsworth engage their audiences by inviting introspection and encouraging readers to draw personal connections to their own life experiences. The distinct emotional landscapes crafted in these works reveal the power of poetry to articulate complex human feelings and experiences, emphasizing the enduring relevance and richness of their themes. Ultimately, the exploration of language, imagery, and personal reflection enhances the significance of both poems, allowing for a multitude of interpretive possibilities that continue to touch the hearts and minds of readers today.

References

1. Adrian Pilkington, 1994, Ph.D thesis, University College London
2. Barbara MacMahon, 2001 *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* Volume 15, Issue 1
3. Cave & Deirdre Wilson (eds), 2018, *Reading Beyond the Code: Literature and Relevance Theory*, pp. 185–204. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. Croker R.A. (2009). An introduction to qualitative research. In Heigham J., Croker R.A. (eds) *Qualitative research in applied linguistics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230239517_1
5. Ei Mon Kyaw, 2023, *English Education, Linguistics, and Literature Journal* , Vol. 2(1), <https://jurnal.unupurwokerto.ac.id/index.php/educalitra/index> e-ISSN 2809-5545
6. Hazel Price & Jack Wilson, 2019, *Language and Literature* Vol. 28(1) 61– sagepub.com/journals-permissions
7. Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M,1990, *Animadversions and reflections on the use of qualitative inquiry*. In E.W.Eisner & A.Peshkin (Eds.)*Qualitative inquiry in education. The continuing debate*(pp,339-357), New York: Treachers CollegePress.
8. Richard Furman, 2007, *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, Volume 7, Edition 1
9. Sperber, D. & D. Wilson, 1995 (2nd edition). *Relevance: communication and cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
10. Sperber, D. & D. Wilson, 1998. "Irony and relevance: A reply to Drs Seto, Hamamoto and Yamanashi". Carston & Uchida 1998.
11. Van Mannon.M, 1997, *Tales of the field: Onwriting ethnography* Chicago, University of Chicacogo Press.
12. Wilson, Deirdre. (2014). 'Relevance Theory', UCLWPL 2014 (University College London Working Papers in Linguistics). pp. 129-148.
13. Wilson, Deirdre. (2018). *Relevance theory and literary interpretation*, published in Terence
14. Yus, F. (2003). *Humor and the search for relevance*. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35, 1295– 1331. doi:10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00179-0
15. Zahoor, A. (2021). *Humour in Relevance Theory: A Contextual Analysis of Tasi 'S Poetry*. *Global Digital & Print Media Review*, V(II), 112-122
16. Zohra, F. (2016). *Humor, Satire and Verbal Parody in The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy: A Relevance-Theoretic Approach* NUML *Journal of Critical Inquiry* Vol. 14, (II), Dec 2016 ISSN 2222-5706 <https://industrialscripts.com/social-satire/>
17. Corpus Source <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44272/the-road-not-taken>