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presented. But this is only part of what we have been trying to achieve. The main purpose of the article has been to make the reader conscious of the manifold possible relationships between hermeneutical thought and the doctrines held in various neighboring disciplines. To this aim, the similarity between hermeneutics and linguistic concepts was postulated and taken as evidence that the two disciplines have a close relationship with one another. Finally, the relevance of hermeneutic to discursive, psychological and pedagogical fields was introduced. In fact, by looking for traces of hermeneutics in several other more practically oriented disciplines we have aimed at bringing about a transition from mere theorizing to real practice. Ultimately, it is hoped that this introductory paper will pave the way for other such investigations into different aspects of the partially-neglected field of hermeneutics.

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agent who has to decode every moment of what happens inside this big context, and if we consider the students as the bits and components – of course extremely complicated ones – of this context, the manner in which the teacher interprets, reflects on and reacts to each and every individual student's conduct may lead the class in a particular direction. The sum of proper interpretations may help the teacher reach at a satisfactory reading of the whole context of class and accordingly the whole system would proceed in a proper manner.

However, any single mal-interpretation will have its bearing on the way the teacher interacts with the students and may cause negative reactions on the part of students. A plain example can be when a student nods out of the fear of being asked a question by the teacher, while this may be interpreted by the teacher to be a sign of understanding what he is presenting. So, you would agree that the class environment is replete with many such instances of interpretation, reinterpretation or misinterpretation. The feedback you get from the students may ease the process of interpretation to some degree, but since human beings are quite complicated creatures with somewhat unpredictable behavior and since no two similar reactions have the same meaning in varied circumstances, it would seem a painstaking job to cope with all these intricacies in a classroom setting. These complexities are doubled if we mull over the other part of the story and consider the students and their diverse interpretations of the teacher's performance in class.

Another perplexing case rises when a teacher is faced with the reactions of the students in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual class. This would demand not only an awareness to assign appropriate interpretations to different bits and pieces of students' behavior, but also a capability to attend to the minutiae of each individual's cultural and linguistic wealth. That's why we are urged to believe a familiarity with at least' the very rudimentary elements of philosophy, hermeneutical thought and, to go one step further, with critical thinking can guide a teacher in taking spontaneous but at the same time proper and promising decisions; decisions that can influence the entirety of class setting.

Concluding remarks

In the present article we have been grappling to provide a reader-friendly conception of hermeneutics. In so doing, first a probe was made into the origin of the term. Afterwards, a succinct account of different schools of thought held by several key hermeneutic philosophers was

constructivism is the notion of *constructive alternativism* based on which "there are infinite possibilities for conceptualizing events. As their previous sets of constructions prove unsatisfying, people are free to creatively develop entirely new dimensions of meaning" (p.5). This is particularly relevant to Derrida's conceptualization of hermeneutics and his idea of autonomy of the text from its author which, as was mentioned earlier, gives the reader a sort of liberty and independence to create lots of possible meanings for the text in the course of his reading. Furthermore, Ricoeur's unique standpoint is thought to be quite pertinent to the issue at hand, where he emphasizes the role of subject in the text according to which the reader is said to have a key role in vitalizing the text.

Hermeneutics and pedagogy

Now that the theoretical foundations of hermeneutics are partly set and some of its traces in the other fields are discussed, it is time to cast an eye on the other side of the coin and consider some practical aspects, if there should be any, pertained to a knowledge of philosophy in general and of hermeneutics in particular for a language practitioner (teacher). There is no doubt at least a bit of privilege as to a teacher who has some familiarity with such philosophical underpinnings. If once the knowledge of psychology and psychological theories aided (and still does aid) the adherents of disparate methods of teaching, today in the wake of the post-method era it is the strength and appropriateness of spontaneous decisions in the course of teaching – a sense of plausibility as Prabhu (1990) puts it – that governs our pedagogy, and this sense of spontaneity, autonomy and plausibility is with the teacher only when s(he) has at least some degree of familiarity with the proper way of thinking and dealing with the upcoming (and at times impending) circumstances.

One may wonder what the knowledge of philosophy has to do with our way of instruction, and why a teacher needs to develop a rich philosophical background in order to be a success in his profession. Though the claim may appear a little bit unusual, we had better convince ourselves that the teacher does gain from a familiarity with these philosophical axioms. Let's elaborate on the issue more by way of considering the possible effects of a familiarity with hermeneutics on the teacher's and students' general attitudes toward the class. If we think of the class as a living text, or better put a context, and of the teacher as an

in a 'configuration' or complex structure" (Piaget, 1950, pp.62-63). To put it more simply, then, Gestalt theory is based on the idea that 'a whole is more than the sum of its parts'.

Out of this theory, which is the basis of what we know today as Gestalt psychology, emerged the constructivist school of psychology. Though Piaget is widely known as the first originator of constructivism, Kelly (the founder of personal construct psychology (PCP) is regarded as the first figure to make a systematic use of constructivism in clinical psychology.

Though there is little consensus among psychologists as to what constructivism is really composed of, there is at least one central percept to which nearly all constructivists subscribe and that is human's active participation in the construction of knowledge. To use Raskin's words, then, "all constructivist psychologies share the belief that none of the many ways of understanding that people have developed provide a God's Eye (i.e., purely objective) view of the world" (2002, p.3).

One working typology of constructivism is that put forth by Chiari and Nuzzo (1996), in which they introduce two broad categories of constructivism, namely *epistemological* and *hermeneutic* ones. In epistemological constructivism knowledge is considered as "a compilation of human-made constructions" (Raskin, 2002, p.3). Von Glaserfeld's radical constructivism and Kelly's personal construct psychology fall within this category. Though a concise introduction to Kelly's theory will follow, no account is provided of Von Gaserfeld's framework here, as it is of no concern to the present discussion.

In contrast, hermeneutic constructivists regard knowledge as a historically founded sort of interpretation, one which is "contextually verifiable rather than universally valid, and linguistically generated and socially negotiated rather than cognitively and individually produced" (p.4). Examples of hermeneutic constructivism include Gergen's social constructionism and Maturana's radical constructivism, the description of which would not concern us here.

Now that a brief account is provided of different types of constructivist psychology it is easy to see the commonalities between them and hermeneutical traditions formerly introduced. The most amount of overlap is thought to exist between hermeneutics and the second category introduced above under the title of hermeneutic constructivism. However, Kelly's personal construct psychology as an instance of epistemological constructivism is also of great resemblance to a hermeneutical framework. A key concept in Kelly's version of

language has on other participants in the act of communication.
(p. 301)

The fact that pragmatics is oriented toward grasping the intended meaning of the speaker renders it quite analogous in focus with hermeneutics which is also after reaching at the right sort of interpretation of an utterance. Yet, this resemblance in terms of the pursued goals gets even more palpable with the two main sub-branches of pragmatics, that is *pragmalinguistics*, i.e. "the resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meanings" (Rose & Kasper, 2001, p.2), and *sociopragmatics*, i.e. "the sociological interface of pragmatics" (Leech, 1983, p.10).

More common grounds can be traced by investigating the way hermeneutics relates to the newly-developed field of critical discourse analysis, which deals with issues like language, ideology and power, discourse and sociocultural change, textual analysis in social research as well as with critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1995). To put it another way, critical discourse analysis is after finding the linkages between linguistic-discursive practices on the one hand and the wider socio-political structures of power and domination on the other (Kress, 1990).

Also as Fairclough contends critical discourse analysis "aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discourse practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes" (1995, p.132). So, the view critical discourse analysts hold of discourse is not an ordinary one, rather it is one originated from a critical look at the processes involved in an instrumental and ideological use of language. Once more what we do in critical discourse analysis is a sort of interpretation and hence a knowledge of hermeneutics would prove to be invaluable in reaching at proper analyses of the intended discourses. In this regard, Husserl and Habermas's notion of life world seems to be of some relevance, though this is not to suggest that other hermeneutic philosophers' views are irrelevant.

Hermeneutics and gestalt psychology

According to Gestalt theory "mental systems are never constituted by the synthesis or association of elements that exist in isolation before they come together, but always, from the outset, consist of organized wholes

between the two fields of hermeneutics and linguistics. This is why Hopper (1988) tends to talk of hermeneutics as one of the two key underlying structures of a knowledge of linguistics, with structuralism constituting the other main element.

To better grasp this interrelatedness, it would suffice to go through some instances of occurrence of the term language in the above-mentioned accounts provided of different hermeneutical philosophers. In this regard a mention can be made of Schleiermacher's emphasis on linguisticity hypothesis and his doctrine of inseparability of thought and language or Heidegger's overemphasis on the focal role of language in clarifying meaning. Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutics is another case in point in which language is said to constitute the groundwork for all sorts of understanding, and regarded as the main source of our endless dialog with the universe. Other philosophers whose works we have outlined in this article have also paid heed to this crucial function language plays in all sorts of interpretation, though some might have failed to include a direct reference to the word language in their accounts.

After all, it is hard to imagine how we can separate language from a thoroughgoing interpretation of texts, regardless of the kind of notion we hold in mind of the orientation this interpretation might take. So, language would remain a key link in our interpretation whatever stand we take with regard to the interpretive procedures.

Hermeneutics and discourse-oriented studies

The close relationship between the two fields of hermeneutics and linguistics becomes even more evident when we consider the vitality of this interpretive framework for various subfields of linguistics like pragmatics and text/discourse oriented studies. Hence, two main areas of concern here would be pragmatics and critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Pragmatics as a self-contained discipline was first introduced by the philosopher Charles Morris (1938) and later developed by Carnap (1938, 1959). A presumably comprehensive definition of the term pragmatics is provided by Crystal (1997) where he contends pragmatics is

the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constructions they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of

explanation (which is representative of the linguistic aspect of text), **understanding** (by which he means understanding the meaning of the text) and **appropriation** (which involves the preoccupation of the interpreter with the text with the aim of making the text more understandable to the reader). He believed that these three stages must occur in succession and hence devised the term *hermeneutical arc* as a substitute for the notion of hermeneutical circle which was acknowledged by Heidegger and Gadamer. Ricoeur regarded the text as a general category independent of its three constituent parts of author's intention, social and cultural circumstances at the time of its emergence as well as its primary addressee. Therefore, his view of text interpretation is a holistic one.

Kaplan (2003) in his book entitled *Ricoeur's Critical Theory* discusses the debates between Habermas and Gadamer in order to indicate the way in which Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics and moral-political philosophy provides us with a better framework. He holds that Ricoeur's unique version of critical theory goes beyond Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy and Habermas's critical theory. The following table attempts to provide a succinct illustration of different approaches to hermeneutical thought discussed above.

Philosopher	Hermeneutic tradition
1. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)	Interpretive Hermeneutics
2. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)	Psychologically-Oriented Hermeneutics
3. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)	Phenomenological Hermeneutics
4. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)	Ontological Hermeneutics
5. Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002)	Dialogical Hermeneutics
6. Jurgen Habermas (1929-)	Presupposition-Dependent Hermeneutics
7. Jacques Derrida (1930-)	Hermeneutics of Deconstruction
8. Jean Paul Gustave Ricoeur (1913-2005)	Hermeneutics of Suspicion

Language as a central issue in all hermeneutical probes

Of the close relationship between hermeneutical thought and linguistics there is sure no doubt, at least due to the ubiquitous reference (either direct or indirect) made to the term language in nearly all hermeneutical philosophers' works referred to thus far in the course of this article. This much emphasis on the role of language in hermeneutical probes suggests the possibility of a mutual and constant interdependence

in the western world – of what has come to be known as *logo-centrism*, i.e. the significance and superiority of speech over writing. Instead, he holds a view to the opposite and maintains that meaning is present in writing in the same way it is found in speech, the only distinction being that in writing the meaning is hidden in the text, though still prone to perception. To put it in a nutshell, Derrida's linguistic wealth leads him to the idea of autonomy of the text from its author; this thought gives the reader a sort of liberty and independence to create lots of possible meanings for the text in the course of his reading, and this is in line with the motto saying 'there is no ultimate meaning for a text'.

Ricoeur and the Hermeneutics of suspicion

The last eminent figure to be discussed here is the great, impressive philosopher of the twentieth century, Paul Ricoeur. He is renowned as Atkins (2003, p.1) points out "both in the unusual breadth and depth of his philosophical scholarship and in the innovative nature of his thought". Atkins then continues like this: "Ricoeur is a post-structuralist hermeneutic philosopher who employs a model of textuality as the framework for his analysis of meaning, which extends across writing, speech, art and action". Ricoeur's approach to hermeneutics is widely known as the hermeneutics of suspicion since, as Atkins contends, "discourse both reveals and conceals something about the nature of being" (ibid).

Dauenhauer (2002, p.1) speaks of a major methodological shift in Ricoeur's approach in the following manner: "[Ricoeur's] writings prior to 1960 are in the tradition of existential phenomenology. But during the 60s Ricoeur concluded that properly to study human reality one had to combine phenomenological description with hermeneutic interpretation" (brackets added). This shift as he puts it "did not require him to disavow the basic results of his earlier investigations. It did, however, lead him not only to revisit them but also to see more clearly their implications".

For Ricoeur text is the outcome and product of speech. In other words, text is a written outcome of speech and hence it is through writing that we can record speech. Moreover, an objective view of the text, according to Ricoeur, leads to the annihilation of the text, while he himself endorses a viewpoint which emphasizes the role of subject in the text; this is so because the reader is said to have a key role in vitalizing the text.

Interpretation in Ricoeur's words is composed of three stages of

thirties by Husserl) which determines the totality of our world view and social acts. This lifeworld is seen by him as a vision horizon and a knowledge repertoire which is passed from one generation to another. Any attitude towards the phenomenon is said to take place in the framework of this lifeworld.

Habermas states that an interpreter is faced with a set of presuppositions and prejudices while dealing with a text. The thought horizon of any interpreter entails, according to him, his lifeworld as well as his prejudices and presuppositions which are said to play a key part in his perception and appraisal of the affairs. In Habermas' view our interests are of a considerable influence on our semantic horizon. For instance, an interest in power (will to power) is a substantial presupposition in the interpretation of certain phenomena. To cut a long story short, then Habermas, like Gadamer, is against objectivism in text comprehension and does not regard the interpreter as someone free from his prejudices and presuppositions.

Derrida and Hermeneutics of deconstruction

Derrida is one of the post-structuralist thinkers whose work is mostly likened to that of Foucault. For Derrida a text is composed of a set of signs to which different readings can be assigned. In other words, he believes a text can not be regarded as a set of propositions which can lead us to the ultimate meaning of a text; each time a reader peruses a text several meanings are created by him, but the ultimate meaning of the text is never attainable. In other words, the text has no single ultimate meaning.

Derrida is celebrated and illustrious chiefly for his theory of deconstruction which is also associated with the name of another big philosopher, i.e. Friedrich Nietzsche. Deconstruction, in its broad sense, is a reaction against structuralism. To structuralists, a literary text has certain signs and features which can direct the reader toward understanding it. For them (i.e. structuralists) a text is composed of a stable semantic system which provides the reader with certain principles for understanding. Deconstructionists, on the contrary, suspend the relationship between mind and meaning. It is illogical, according to them, to think of a stable, unwavering meaning for the text. In other words, since text lacks integrity of meaning, no heed should be given to reconstructing the meaning of a text.

Derrida also rejects the widespread post-platonic belief – mostly held

Gadamer and dialogical Hermeneutics

Gadamer, the Polish philosopher, is one of the pupils and followers of Heidegger, and hence no doubt that his standpoint in hermeneutical issues is very close to that of his precursor, Heidegger. Gadamer established the ontology of understanding; his philosophical hermeneutics focuses mainly on the process of understanding. In fact, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is indicative of the fact that the course of our experience in the world is a hermeneutical one involved in an ongoing process of interpretation and understanding. In this framework language constitutes the groundwork for all sorts of understanding, and is regarded as the main source of our endless dialog with the universe (our being).

Furthermore, according to Gadamer, the major function of hermeneutics is what he calls the *fusion of horizons*, one of these horizons being the horizon of the interpreter's understanding and the other that of the text itself; one of which belonging to the past and the other to the present time. Therefore, understanding is the outcome of a constant dialog between the interpreter and the text (Weinsheimer, 1985).

As is pointed out in his invaluable work entitled *Arbeit und Methode*, language possesses two principal functions in the process of interpretation; first that language curbs our interpretive power and keeps us from reaching at the perfect meaning of the text, even if the text in question is our own. The second function of language relates to its role in enabling us to get a partial access to the textual meaning. This latter function of language is referred to differentially as the dialogical conversation, fusion of horizons, or the creative communication between reader and text. Yet, we as interpreters can never achieve a perfect and objective interpretation since we are involved in the interpretive situation due to the limitations imposed on us by our historical circumstances and linguistic particularities.

Habermas and presupposition-dependent Hermeneutics

As Lye puts it "Jurgen Habermas introduces a more political note into the problem of historical understanding, in that the embodiment of understanding in the text can include sedimental violence, systematically distorted communication" (2003, p.4). In his unique approach to hermeneutics, Habermas employs the notion of *lifeworld* (used in the late

Heidegger and ontological Hermeneutics

Heidegger was the pupil of Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. He took account of neither Schleiermacher's universal methods for hermeneutics nor Dilthey's attempt to enhance the methodology for humanities. Nonetheless, he built on and extended the efforts of his predecessors and had an extraordinary influence on the development of contemporary hermeneutics. Heidegger's approach is not based on epistemology; rather he has an ontological orientation in his work. He regards understanding not just as a method of knowing but also as a way of being. Thus, for him the goal of hermeneutical understanding is something beyond the mere interpretation of texts and historical facts and its main goal, according to him, is to understand being itself (Weinsheimer, 1991, p.7).

Heidegger puts forth a new version of hermeneutics known as *hermeneutics of facticity* which is an interpretation of human being and everyday life (Graig, 1998, p.387). In his outstanding early work entitled *Being and Time* Heidegger introduces the German term *Dasein* by which he aims to recapitulate the essence of our being. Heidegger believes that *Dasein* (our being) is at times revealed to itself through the process of understanding. Understanding is not possible without interpretation and interpretation calls for the question of language. Therefore, it could be claimed that the rudimentary issue in Heidegger's phenomenology is the relationship between language and being.

Although Heidegger went through a period of shift in his theory, the role of language in his works did not dwindle. Rather a more focal role was assigned to language and language took on an extensively general sense in Heidegger's hermeneutics. He employed language in its broadest sense and applied it to anything used to clarify meaning. In Heidegger's view an utterance or a sentence in conversation is as indicative of the meaning as is a piece of music or a social institution. Since every phenomenon expresses a certain meaning, he goes on to make the big claim that all is language and the being is language-like and we live in language. Heidegger's reading of hermeneutics is also known as ontological hermeneutics in that he rejected the ordinary meaning of hermeneutics as a theory of interpretation and turned it instead to a theory of existential understanding.

employed by humanities as opposed to natural sciences. This is known as his major influence on hermeneutics, as he differentiated humanities from natural sciences and believed that the humanities must be studied with their own specific method; therefore, according to him all those who tend to resort to the method of study common to experimental sciences to explore the humanities are on the wrong track.

As a consequence, in Dilthey's version of hermeneutics the understanding of text is regarded as a function of knowing the person who expresses himself in the text, i.e. the author, and this is why hermeneutics turns into a psychological issue. Thus, what matters in Dilthey's theory of hermeneutics is the psychology of the author, rather than the independence of the text which is put in the periphery. This feature of Dilthey's work is thought of as a unique aspect in that the majority of hermeneutical theories today put the text in the foreground of attention, and are not that concerned with the author himself.

Husserl and phenomenological Hermeneutics

Husserl, who is widely considered as the establisher of phenomenology, was a follower of Descartes and Kant's doctrines in rethinking knowledge. In this rather Cartesian aim, he believed in a presuppositionless foundation for knowledge. He based his ideology on the indubitability of the relation of knower and known. He attempted to account for the experience of world by setting out for a journey from inside human beings and by way of finding out, at first, about the internal facts of human knowledge. Of course, it must be noted here that Husserl was quite reluctant about the terms 'internal' and 'external' as both are intentions, in the first instances.

Husserl's phenomenology, therefore, "is a method for rigorously identifying the essence of the internal world of the thinking self ... it strives to discover internal essences through reductions of phenomena of experience to the essential elements of experience" (pp.4-5). It was said earlier that Husserl was among the adherents of Descartes' Philosophy. There is, however, at least one clear difference between his phenomenological perspectives and those of Descartes; while Descartes tended to think of certain indubitable propositions as the basis of knowledge, Husserl's starting point was an immediate perception or vision of the things at our disposal. To put it another way, Husserl preferred to begin from the phenomena themselves and hence tried to take us back to the things in their entire originality.

The other notable characteristic of Schleiermacher's work is the heed he paid to and the insistence he put on what he called the *linguisticality hypothesis* according to which human beings are thought to be fundamentally linguistic creatures and human understanding is said to be rooted in that linguistic nature (Wildman, 1994-2003). At the outset, Schleiermacher had a language-centered reading of hermeneutics in his mind and hardly took account of the psychological aspects. He thought of language as the presupposition for hermeneutics and hence whatever we need to perceive in hermeneutics is nothing but language per se. This much emphasis on the role of language in interpretation comes from his idea of the unity and inseparability of thought and language. Later on, Schleiermacher underwent a shift in his viewpoint and moved away from an emphasis on the language-centered hermeneutics and toward a psychologically-oriented one. This occurred because he didn't think of language and thought as equivalent concepts anymore.

Another principal issue in Schleiermacher's work is what is known as *hermeneutical circle*, based on which we can get the parts by looking at the whole and vice versa. For instance, the meaning of a word is understandable with regard to the sentence of which the word is a part, and the sentence itself is only perceived in terms of the words comprising it. In accordance with this thought Schleiermacher held the view that we are able to understand an author belonging to the past better than he himself does, since we can view him in a broader historical scope compared to the past. In effect, we are aware of the whole of which the author is only a part and that's why we can perceive that part (the author) better.

Dilthey and psychologically-oriented Hermeneutics

As referred to earlier Schleiermacher highlighted both linguistic interpretation and psychological interpretation of the text, while putting more emphasis, in the very beginning, on the linguistic perspectives and linguisticity hypothesis. Dilthey, however, as the main link between the nineteenth century Romantic hermeneutics and twentieth century tradition of hermeneutics, objected to Schleiermacher's viewpoints regarding the configuration of knowledge in the framework of time span and according to linguistic rules. In Dilthey's eyes hermeneutics turns into a sort of theoretical and observational psychology that investigates not only the meaning of text, but also the characteristics of its producer.

Furthermore, in Dilthey's mind hermeneutics has a method to be

required circumstances for any kind of understanding. In what follows a brief account is provided of some outstanding figures who have contributed to the emergence and progress of the field of hermeneutics. An attempt is made throughout this account to observe the chronological order of appearance of these philosophers.

Schleiermacher and interpretive Hermeneutics

Schleiermacher is the pioneer and originator of modern hermeneutics. Modern hermeneutics is after a general method for the interpretation of all sorts of texts; it is of a universal scope and goes beyond its traditional focus on theology and philology and creeps into other areas like sociology, aesthetics, historiography, law, and the human sciences (Weinsheimer, 1991). Schleiermacher made an effort to devise some general principles by means of which to be able to interpret any sort of text regardless of its subject matter; hence he is regarded as the first one to introduce hermeneutics as a science in its own right. Prior to Schleiermacher several types of distinct hermeneutics co-existed, and therefore his great deed was to bring these separate kinds of hermeneutics together and create a general and universally applicable version of hermeneutics.

In Schleiermacher's account of hermeneutics, the interpreter has to put himself in the author's shoes in order to be able to understand the text and experience afresh the author's mental state. To this aim, the interpreter needs to examine the text and the author in terms of both **grammatical (linguistic)** and **technical (psychological)** aspects. In the grammatical (linguistic) interpretation, our aim is to understand the text based on the language in which the utterances of the text are expressed. Here we are after a grammatical and structural interpretation of the text. In this sort of interpretation we cope merely with the language and structural rules common to that text.

Nevertheless, in technical (psychological) interpretation we have to get closer to the author's frame of mind and examine him psychologically in order to be able to get his meaning. In essence, if we get access to the speaker or writer's thought process, it would be possible for us to know his intention of writing such a text and this way we can interpret his text. Then, in psychological interpretation the position and meaning of each particular point is realizable with regard to its relevance to the author's language and hence what matters is the author's individuality in producing the text.

hermeneutics today is the art of understanding and the theory of interpretation applied to all aspects of our lives, not only to religious and traditional texts per se.

The establishment of hermeneutics as an autonomous discipline dates back to the time of Reformation and Renaissance. The Reformation movement gave rise to the idea of hermeneia, which prevailed through the Middle Ages and prior to the Reformation in the form of allegorical interpretation of holy books. In 1654 J.C. Danhauer made an early use of the term *hermeneutica* in the title of his book. Graig (1998) tends to speak of Friedrich Ast and Friedrich August Wolf as the two influential figures who played a prominent role in the thriving movement of hermeneutics.

Ast, in his typology of hermeneutics, introduced three separate categories of understanding a text:

1. Historical level (hermeneutics of the letter): in which an attempt is made to establish the authentic text through making a comparison among the different manuscripts as well as by making use of the historical knowledge.
2. Grammatical level (hermeneutics of the sense): which refers to the mere understanding of the words and sentences in a text.
3. Spiritual level: which involves going beyond the literal meaning of the text to grasp the spirit of the author and that of his society.

Wolf, in a similar vein, contributes to the establishment of hermeneutical thought. He defines hermeneutics as the 'science of the rules by which the meaning of signs is discerned' (1831, p.290). The goal of hermeneutics, according to him, is to 'grasp the written or even merely spoken thoughts of someone else just as he would have them grasped' (p.293). To this aim, a knowledge of the language of the text does not suffice and one should add to this knowledge the historical knowledge, a knowledge of the authors' life, of the history and geography of that country. In other words, it would be preferable for the interpreter to share the whole knowledge possessed by the author.

In the post-nineteenth-century era and owing to the influence of philosophers like Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer hermeneutics turned to a methodology for the interpretation of all sorts of texts. Today, two significant viewpoints are held regarding hermeneutics. The first one is the hermeneutical tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey whose advocates view hermeneutics as a set of methodological principles lying behind interpretation. The proponents of the second perspective, on the other hand, attach themselves to Heidegger who regards hermeneutics as a philosophical probe into the

Continental philosophy is the other main approach to philosophy which also emerged in the twentieth century. Continental philosophy is associated with the work of a number of European philosophers including Foucault, Lyotard and Derrida. The basic building blocks of this tradition in philosophy are rhetoric and argumentation. In post-modern continental philosophers' view there is no fixed, certain meaning and understanding is only achieved by means of a precise analysis of language in which philosophical problems are put forth (Chapman, 2000).

This latter school of philosophy is the source of what is pervasive today as Critical Theory and it is also in a direct relationship with the neighboring field of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics as a major influential sub-field of philosophy has been around for quite a while; its influences are widespread in many adjacent fields like linguistics, literature and all text/ discourse-oriented disciplines. Though the matter has been widely investigated by many scholars, there is still a need to bring it under a deeper scrutiny, especially as it concerns the relationship of hermeneutics to more practical fields like language teaching. So, in the rest of the article the crucial notion of hermeneutics will be introduced, the viewpoints of its main pioneers and progenitors will be discussed, and finally a number of practical implications of such philosophical concerns will be examined.

The origins of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, as a sub-branch of philosophy, is of a deep-seated bearing on all dimensions of language use from linguistic studies to learning/ teaching oriented approaches. A comprehensive and wide-ranging discipline, hermeneutics has its roots in ancient Greece. The term hermeneutics is mostly associated with the messenger god *Hermes*, whose responsibility was to convey the messages of gods to humans. A number of other terms are significant in this respect. The Greek words *hermeneuein*, meaning express, explain or translate, and *hermeneia* referring to the interpretation particularly of a sacred message, are indicative of the fact that the hermeneutical thought has a long history behind it.

In the very beginning, hermeneutics was deployed as the theory and method of interpreting the Bible and other difficult texts. Later on Wilhelm Dilthey extended its scope to include the interpretation of all human acts and products. In effect, he expanded the notion to embrace historical and real-life-related issues as well. So, what we conceive of

analysis and psychological studies. In the end, a brief account is given of some practical advantages of a familiarity with these philosophical concepts in pedagogical terms.

Keywords: *analytical/continental philosophy, hermeneutics, Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, Derrida, Ricoeur, pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, Gestalt psychology, pedagogy.*

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Introduction

Philosophy and linguistics are totally intermingled, integrated and inextricably intertwined. Chapman (2000) goes over the fact that there is too much philosophy in linguistics and anyone dealing with linguistics will come across certain philosophical issues in the course of his studies. If we extend this tight relationship of philosophy and linguistics to language in general then teaching and learning will not be considered any exceptions and every aspect of our pedagogy will come to be influenced by our approach to philosophy.

Philosophy has existed in one form or another throughout the long history of human life on earth and over thousands of years. We need not – and can not – deal with even a brief account of what philosophy has looked like through its long history in a concise article like the present one. So, our main concern here would be that of presenting some common grounds and linkages between philosophy and language. In so doing, an account will be provided of some pertinent aspects of the present-day philosophy with a focus on the issues germane to language, discourse and pedagogy.

Though the rise of modern philosophy goes back to Descartes (Warburton, 1999), it was only in the twentieth century that philosophy came into close terms with linguistics. The sub-branch of philosophy known as analytical philosophy paved the way for the growth of linguistics as an academic discipline. What this semi-recent approach to philosophy relies on is the detailed analysis and precise investigation of the prevailing problems. The founder of this school of psychology was the German philosopher Gottlob Frege whose work was followed later on in England by Bertrand Russell. In early twentieth century analytical philosophy underwent a transformation mostly described as the linguistic turn which gave birth to the new field of linguistic philosophy.

An Extended View of Hermeneutics: Implications for Language, Discourse and Pedagogy

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Abstract

Philosophy in its broad sense constitutes the origin and foundation of almost each and every discipline we observe in today's world. Despite the focal influence philosophical underpinnings have on an ensemble of ideological and epistemological issues in our life, this branch of human knowledge is not welcomed the way it deserves by the administrators of a number of disciplines. One such field of study is the area of language teaching in which philosophical concerns are left nearly intact. The present article is aimed at recapitulating the major impact a partial acquaintance with philosophy can have on our general conceptualizations particularly as it concerns Language and pedagogy. In so doing, a brief introduction is made, at the outset, to the two principal divisions of philosophy, i.e. analytical and continental philosophy. The concept of hermeneutical thought is then presented as an issue relevant to the school of continental philosophy, and the viewpoints of several celebrated progenitors and pioneers of this sub-branch of philosophy, i.e. hermeneutics are discussed. An attempt is made, afterwards, to introduce some traces of hermeneutics in linguistics and some of its main sub-branches including pragmatics, critical discourse

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