**Statistical Analysis**

**Topic # Hermeneutics**

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**Introduction**

**Definition**

Hermeneutics as the methodology of interpretation is concerned with problems that arise when dealing with meaningful human actions and the products of such actions, most importantly texts. As a methodological discipline, it offers a toolbox for efficiently treating problems of the interpretation of human actions, texts and other meaningful material. Hermeneutics is more than interpretive principles or methods we resort to when immediate comprehension fails. Rather, hermeneutics is the art of understanding and of making oneself understood.

[Modern hermeneutics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermeneutics#Modern_hermeneutics) includes both verbal and nonverbal communication as well as [semiotics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semiotics), [presuppositions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presupposition), and pre-understandings. Hermeneutics has been broadly applied in the [humanities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanities), especially in law, history and theology.

Hermeneutics was initially applied to the interpretation, or [exegesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exegesis), of [scripture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_texts), and has been later broadened to questions of general interpretation. The terms hermeneutics and exegesis are sometimes (incorrectly) used interchangeably. Hermeneutics is a wider discipline which includes written, verbal, and non-verbal communication. Exegesis focuses primarily upon the word and grammar of [texts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Text_(literary_theory)).

### Hermeneutics, in general terms, is the art of interpretation. As such, hermeneutics has a rich history and can now be identified with four major strands: conservative, critical, radical, and moderate.

### **History of Hermeneutics and semantics**

Hermeneutics predates the scientific study of semantics described above by some historical distance, originating in German Enlightenment philosophy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Etymologically derived from the Greek for ‘**translate’ or ‘interpret’**, it is similarly concerned with meaning in a very general sense.

Finally, with the desire of Enlightenment philosophers to proceed everywhere from certain principles and to systematize all human knowledge, hermeneutics became a province of philosophy. Following the example of Aristotle… Enlightenment philosophers viewed hermeneutics and its problems as belonging to the domain of logic.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, under the various influences of [Romanticism](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/romanticism), secularism, materialism, vitalism and [phenomenology](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/phenomenology), hermeneutic studies became oriented towards psychological, historical and subjective aspects of interpretation. Although treatment of hermeneutics differs from author to author, it can be distinguished from semantics in being:

* + Oriented more towards the holistic meaning of texts, rather than the individual meaning of smaller linguistic units such as sentences or words
  + Focused on historical and humanist explanations of interpretation rather than scientific and objective, truth-functional accounts
  + More closely connected with traditional approaches to language rhetoric, grammar, biblical [exegesis](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/exegesis) and language genealogy than semantics.
  + Directed towards the internal rather than external ‘side of our use of signs’ towards how signs are understood, rather than, conversely, how concepts can be signified.
  + Interested in disruptive [semantic features](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/semantic-feature) of meaning ambiguity, paradox and contradiction are not features to be ‘explained away’, but rather are intrinsic characteristics of an account of meaning.

**Types of Hermeneutics**

There are five different types if hermeneutics. They are: Natural, Normative, Scientific, Philosophical and Depth. I will be explaining what these all mean and give examples of each.

**Natural hermeneutics** is the unreflective interpreting of texts, ads, media and just about everything else. This is spontaneous understanding and it is not reflected upon later. For example, the people walking the streets in New York City are constantly being bombarded with ads. These people see these ads every day and they recognize and interpret them but they don't really stop and think about them. They see a billboard on their way to work and they know and break down what is on it. In their mind they would say, "Oh that's a woman in a car" or "That's a beer ad." We do this almost subconsciously.

**Normative hermeneutics** is text interpretation as a special skill. Certain bodies of text require a person to be educated in order to understand and interpret them. An example of this is lawyers. This profession requires the person to have been educated in law. They need to be able to understand the endless amount of laws in this world. Any average person can pick up a book of laws and read it but they would not be able to understand a large portion of the book but a lawyer would be able to break down and interpret the entire thing.

**Scientific hermeneutics** is in short the scientific method. The main example of this is coming up with a hypothesis, researching about the study, looking up how the study has been done before, conducting the study and recording the results.

**Philosophical hermeneutics** is the general philosophy of existence. It does not have to do with what we do but with who we are. We as humans naturally attempt to interpret our own existence. An example of this is when philosophers try to figure out who we truly are and why we are here.

**Depth hermeneutics** goes below the waking consciousness. It states that people want to be liberated from all forms of domination and oppression. An example is the fact that people that are not oppressed do not want to be but do not think about it until they are.

**Rule of Hermeneutics**

1. The rule of **DEFINITION**: What does the word mean? Any study of Scripture must begin with a study of words. Define your terms and then keep to the terms defined. The interpreter should conscientiously abide by the plain meaning of the words. This quite often may require using a Hebrew/English or Greek/English lexicon in order to make sure that the sense of the English translation is understood.
2. The rule of **USAGE**: It must be remembered that the Old Testament was written originally by, to and for Jews. it is important to not impose our modern usage into our interpretation. It is not worth much to interpret a great many phrases and histories if one’s interpretations are shaded by pre-conceived notions and cultural biases, thereby rendering an inaccurate and ineffectual lesson.
3. The rule of **CONTEXT**: The meaning must be gathered from the context. Every word you read must be understood in the light of the words that come before and after it. Many passages will not be understood at all, or understood incorrectly, without the help afforded by the context.
4. The rule of **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**: The interpreter must have some awareness of the life and society of the times in which the Scripture was written. The spiritual principle will be timeless but often can’t be properly appreciated without some knowledge of the background. If the interpreter can have in his mind what the writer had in his mind when he wrote – without adding any excess baggage from the interpreter’s own culture or society – then the true thought of the Scripture can be captured resulting in an accurate interpretation.
5. The rule of **LOGIC**: Interpretation is merely logical reasoning. When interpreting Scripture, the use of reason is everywhere to be  
   assumed. Does the interpretation make sense? The Bible was given to us in the form of human language and therefore appeals to human reason – it invites investigation. It is to be interpreted as we would any other volume: applying the laws of language and grammatical analysis.
6. The rule of **PRECEDENT**: We must not violate the known usage of a word and invent another for which there is no precedent. Just as a judge’s chief occupation is the study of previous cases, so must the interpreter use precedents in order to determine whether they really support an alleged doctrine.
7. The rule of **UNITY**: The parts of Scripture being interpreted must be construed with reference to the significance of the whole. An interpretation must be consistent with the rest of Scripture. An excellent example of this is the doctrine of the Trinity.
8. The rule of **INFERENCE**: An inference is a fact reasonably implied from another fact. It is a logical consequence. It derives a conclusion from a given fact or premise. It is the deduction of one proposition from another proposition. Such inferential facts or propositions are sufficiently binding when their truth is established by competent and satisfactory evidence. Competent evidence means such evidence as the nature of the thing to be proved admits. Satisfactory evidence means that amount of proof which would ordinarily satisfy an unprejudiced mind beyond a reasonable doubt. Basic Concepts of Hermeneutic

According to Danner in his text Hermeneutics, there are **four concepts** of hermeneutic: understanding, responsibility of understanding, hermeneutic circle and rules of hermeneutic. These concepts are complementary each other during the hermeneutic investigation.

1. **Understanding**

The central concept of hermeneutic is the “understanding”. According to Danner , we understand how other people talk to each other, read posters, listen to music or attend a lecture. We constantly understand the gestures of other people, their words, an advertising, a music, a spiritual context. However, the gesture is not accurately “understood”, but only “explained” through of bodily movements of arm and hand, of muscle strength and energy expenditure.

Understanding is the recognition of something as human something: all sounds I recognize like words and their meanings are detected. Nonetheless, explanation is due of causes that derive of a condition of a principle, for instance, explanation of fall of a stone. Understanding can distinguish the following structural elements:

1. We identify a thing, a true sensorial operation.

2. We recognize that or this like human thing.

3. We reflexively understand its importance, the meaning of human being.

All process in an unit we call Understanding. Danner finally points out the hermeneutic concept Understanding is directed to human (intellectual) specifically on actions, linguistic structures and not-linguistic entities. Furthermore, what was identified in sensorial action is perceived as important, it is reflected and, so, understood creating a meaning.

1. **Responsibility is understanding**

Understanding is understanding of “objective spirit”. This is the common denominator of a cultural field determined historically and where comes from each topic of “objective spirit”, that is, it’s common the sum of common features of given sense that could cause the mutual understanding as reasonable as possible. The senses are really given to us like individual, but historically and socio-culturally conditioned, not a-priori as some “absolute” senses..

1. **Hermeneutic Circle**

If the Larger Understanding happens, then the recurrent movement happens manifesting of recurrent way. It is a type of circular movement, and, therefore, is called of hermeneutic circle. The movement of circle is evident, but, at the same time, it is nor a closed circular movement neither a spiral movement, strictly speaking. The hermeneutic distinction happens in movement of hermeneutic circle. However, that cannot be detected only with proximity of early opinion and meaning of text. The increase of understanding doesn’t act in a straight as a progressive step, but in a circular way. That movement is called hermeneutic circle. From methodic approach view, it is important to maintain the circular structure in mind, so interpretation requires both objective and subjective sides.

1. **Hermeneutic Rules**

Danner [7] provides some rules for understanding of a text: a) preliminary interpretation: to consider the publication of text (first ou second version), to have your own opinion about the text, and to write on general sense of text (first impression);

b) interpretation of immanent text: to search for the meaning of words and grammatical relations, to observe the logic of text, to observe contradictions;

c) coordinated interpretation: to observe the context of text; to observe affirmations and negations of hypothesis. It is worth to stand out these rules are not normative and categorical, and the understanding of author will guide the paths of text understanding.

For scientific works, Danner points out even instructions of work more practical could be given for beyond of hermeneutic rules in order to help in interpretation of text.

(1) Make sure of reading all text;

(2) Study the text sentence-by-sentence, impression after impression; so, to perform the explanation of contradictions at least;

(3) Read the text again as a whole;

(4) Consult secondary literature, possibly a similar text from the same author;

(5) Bring some reflections from general text;

(6) Create a sketch for all text;

(7) Make a draft for each part of text, as private formulation of explanation;

(8) Read again the text.