

## Principal Tenets, Critiques and Educational Implication of Hermeneutics

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### Abstract

*Hermeneutics is perceived as the art of interpretation. It focuses on interaction and language: it seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the participants. It involves the recapturing of (lie meanings of interacting with others. recovering, and reconstructing the intentions of the other actors in a situation. The purpose of using hermeneutics is to aid human understanding It helps the qualitative researcher in business and management to understand what people say and do. and why. So Hermeneutics is the activity of interpretation of text because every reader is an interpreter, lie can analyze as he like. Hermeneutics helps a researcher to produce a story that is believable. There are many different ways to analyze qualitative data among them. hermeneutics is one. This paper discusses the principal tenets and critiques of hermeneutics explaining its philosophical root(s) and the research components with its educational implications in contrast to the other sociological theories in the Nepalese scenario using data from secondary sources.*

**Keywords:** Hermeneutics. Principal tenets and critiques, philosophical root(s). Research components. educational implications. Nepalese scenario.

Received : 21 Aug. 2018

Accepted : 23 Sept. 2018

### Introduction

Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation of meaning and sense in human actions and production (Danner. 1997:4: Moller, et al. 2003: 110). The Greek word “hermes” arises from the Greek mythology and means to explain something clearly (Moller. et al. 2003:111). Hermeneia means interpretation

in the Greek language. Today. hermeneutics is defined as “the art and science of interpreting the meaning of texts’ (Runes 1986. p. 141). Thus it can he rightly assumed that it is From the Greek culture that we inherited the term.

It was not until the times of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) that hermeneutics

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experienced it's most radical and significant change. Heidegger's intention was to "uproot the entire tradition of philosophy" based on Cartesian assumptions. Heidegger sought to pose again the pre-Socratic question of being as opposed to the question of knowing (Gadamer 1981. p. xiv). This implied a whole change of direction in hermeneutics. namely, a transformation along with philosophy in the transition from epistemology to ontology. Hermeneutics, then, has been altered by two different movements: first. the movement from a regional to a general hermeneutics. and second. the transition from epistemology to ontology.

Hermeneutics is primarily concerned with understanding and interpreting the meaning of a text or text-analogue interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics, is an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study. This object must, therefore, be a text, or a textanalogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory - in one way or another, unclear. The interpretation aims to bring to light an underlying coherence or sense (Taylor 1976: 153) Hermeneutics focuses primarily on the meaning of qualitative data, especially textual data. The purpose of using hermeneutics is to aid human understanding. It helps the qualitative researcher in business and management to understand what people say and do, and why. So Hermeneutics is the activity of interpretation of text because every reader is an interpreter, he can analyze as he like. Hermeneutics helps a researcher to produce a story that is believable. There are many different ways to analyze qualitative data. Hermeneutics is one approach to analyzing and interpreting qualitative data.

It is hermeneutic as it is based on interpretation and it is dialectic as it compares different points of view in order to achieve a higher-level synthesis. The main purpose of this process is not to justify your own way of thinking or to identify the shortcomings in the others way of thinking. The main aim is to reach a consensus and if that is not possible, it at least provides the participants with a wider range of information that can be used even at a later stage.

### **Objectives**

This paper discusses the principal tenets and critiques of hermeneutics explaining its philosophical root(s) and the research components with its educational implications in contrast to the other sociological theories in the Nepalese scenario.

### **Methodology**

This paper uses data from secondary sources. Mainly data are taken from books, journals articles, thesis and reports related to the topic using library methods visiting library and different websites.

### **The philosophical root**

The philosophical root of hermeneutics is related to interpretivism and constructionism. Interpretive paradigm allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants. In seeking the answers for research, the investigator who follows interpretive paradigm uses those experiences to construct and interpret his understanding from gathered data. Specifically, interpretivism supported scholars in terms of exploring their world by interpreting the understanding of individuals. Interpretivists believe an

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understanding of the context in which any form of research is conducted is critical to the interpretation of data gathered. (Willis, 2007: p.4). According to Willis (2007), interpretivism usually seeks to understand a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed. Interpretivist researchers seek methods that enable them to understand in depth the relationship of human beings to their environment and the part those people play in creating the social fabric of which they are a part. (McQueen (2002: p.17). Hence, interpretivists do not prefer using the methods that offer objective or precise information, Instead, according to McQueen (2002), interpretivists view the world through a series of individual eyes” and choose participants who “have their own interpretations of reality to encompass the worldview (p.16).

### **Research components of Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics emphasis on interpretation emerged in the context of a culture which gave truth priority over interpretation in order to render interpretation problematic. Hermeneutics focuses on interaction and language: it seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the participants. The research component of hermeneutics can be discussed as mentioned below:

#### **Ontology**

Ontology refers to the study of being and the nature of the reality (Crony, 1998: Cohen et al. 2000). It is concerned with what kind of world we are investigating with the nature of existence with the structure of reality as such (Guba and Lincoln, 1983 p. 83). It state that ontological assumptions arc those respond to the question what is there that can be known or what is the nature of reality.

Danner, 1997: Moller, et al. 200 state that hermeneutics is the science of interpretation of meaning and sense in human actions and production.

#### **Epistemology**

Epistemology concerns the views about the ways in which social reality ought to be studied. Epistemology is the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be. The knowledge is gathered by perceiving in the society. Whether there is conflict, there is some kind of discrimination and such discrimination is found out by study in the need of the people. Hermeneutics is primarily concerned with understanding and interpreting the meaning of a text or text-analogue interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics. is an attempt to make clear to make sense of an object of study.

#### **Methodology**

Methodology is the strategy plan of action process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of the methods to the desired outcomes (Crotty, 2003 p. 3). Methods are the techniques or procedures used to gather and collect data related to some research question or hypothesis. In conflict theory, survey method is used to find out the knowledge. [his object must, therefore, be a text, or a text-analogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory - in one way or another, unclear. Hermeneutics focuses primarily on the meaning of qualitative data, especially textual data.

#### **Discussion**

Hermeneutics is perceived as the art of interpretation. Hermeneutics was first employed to interpret texts: however, it has

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developed to address the meaning of human actions as a text. Hermeneutics can be used in Following sectors:

- In qualitative research studies about business and management. the ‘text’ is what people say and do.
- Interviews, documents and your own field notes record the views of the actors and describe certain events. etc.
- This material needs to be ordered, explained and interpreted in order to ‘make sense’ of the situation.
- The ordering is done according to the researcher’s theoretical position and by comparing one text with another.
- The researcher’s understanding of the whole has to be continually revised in view of the reinterpretation of the parts.

#### **Criticisms of Hermeneutics**

- a. The main advantage of using hermeneutics is that it enables a much deeper understanding of people in business settings.
- b. Hermeneutics is well-grounded in philosophy and the social sciences more generally and hence is relatively easy to justify.
- c. One disadvantage of hermeneutics is that it focuses the researcher almost entirely on text rather than lived experience.
- d. Another potential disadvantage of hermeneutics is that it can be difficult to know when to conclude a study: when does the interpretive process stop?

#### **Hermeneutics and Education**

Contemporary scholars employ hermeneutics to analyze a range of educational issues. including children’s rights, teaching and teacher education. science education, medical education, curriculum theory, inquiry-based learning. and validity in educational assessment.

In education. for example. students sometimes struggle to understand the meaning of texts. Teachers try to understand students questions and may wonder about the meaning of teaching for their own lives. Educational researchers who use qualitative and quantitative methods make interpretive judgments (albeit for different reasons) and must determine whether their interpretations are defensible. Hermeneutic theory recognizes that interpretive challenges such as these can be analyzed from various perspectives that posit different assumptions about what interpretation entails and what the goals of interpretation should be, Becoming familiar with debates in hermeneutic theory can help us appreciate the interpretive complexities we encounter every day and permit us to become more thoughtful interpreters. The main elements of hermeneutics are communication. interpretation, and understanding.

According to Gadamer’s hermeneutics it is important that application be addressed by education. because application is the most important component within understanding that affects the quality of experience. It is not until application takes place that experience is fully realized.

To have hunches about the way things are is not enough to become experienced in them. Thus. experience is the second hermeneutical idea that education must address.

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There may be the different interpretations of a single text as per the level of a person, but it should be the same interpretation otherwise wrong information may be transferred and sometime it may be harmful too. So in education sector also, we should interpret the text properly.

### **Hermeneutics in the context of Nepal**

Hermeneutics is also called the interpretation science (Byakhyasashtra in Nepali). It interprets the text as per the time. Suppose most of our readings were in the favor of kingdom system which we have to take them as patriotism but after being of republic country these readings are taken as burghesses. Similarly, Prithvi Narayan Shah was taken as a national hero of Nepal due to his contribution in unification of dispersed parts of Nepal, but now days he is taken just as an initiator of unification of his state. Likewise, the Royal family was taken as an incarnation of God. but now they are taken just as a citizen like us. So, hermeneutics is considered as art of interpretation which seeks to understand the situations through the eyes of the participants.

### **Conclusion**

Hermeneutics addresses a range of enduring philosophical questions concerning how human beings understand themselves and the social world. In the context of Nepal, Hermeneutics has assisted to produce a story that is believable. There are many different ways to analyze qualitative data. Hermeneutics is one approach to analyzing and interpreting qualitative data. The purpose of using hermeneutics is to aid human understanding. It helps the qualitative researcher in business and management to understand what people say and do, and why. Hermeneutics is primarily concerned with understanding and

interpreting the meaning of a text or text-analogue Interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics. Questions about interpretation are not simply theoretical, however. As hermeneutic analyses of education make plain, questions about interpretation are eminently practical. Questions of practice complicate interpretive theories, generating new questions for theory to clarify and explain. We can apply the themes of hermeneutics in our education too. So hermeneutics may be useful in the context of Nepal.

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