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# The Intersections of Translational Hermeneutics and Narrative Hermeneutics: The Foundational Considerations

**Abstract.** The majority of translation theories re-emerging from the works of contemporary philosophers suffer from a lack of well-organized textual/semiotic analysis tools. Although such theories are specifically important because of their postulates, their incoherent methods normally make them difficult to be used or even sufficiently understood. Hermeneutic theories, however, have been re-visiting and re-constructing their principles, showing a remarkable tendency toward methodological and empirical investigation guided by their philosophy. Translational hermeneutics, as a major movement, has suggested six fundamental principles. Although this contribution systemizes and simplifies hermeneutic conceptions, it still needs to construct a lingual analytic system for practical translation. Seeking to address this problem, this study views the six principles in the light of narratology and suggests a unified organization based on Ricoeur's narrative theory by breaking the principles into a cognitive-existential dimension (subjectivity, historicity, phenomenology) and a lingual/semiotic dimension (process character, holistic nature, reflection). This framework processes both minimal and maximal language variables and addresses practical and pedagogical considerations.

**Keywords:** translation studies, narratology, practical translation, assessment, Ricoeur, textual analysis, Continental philosophy, translation theory.

## 1. Introduction

Despite the significance of hermeneutic conceptions in translation studies, there seems to be a perceived gap between hermeneutics and practical translation, *at least* from the perspective of textual analysis methodology. Numerous researchers, practitioners and language users prefer lingual analytic systems that can guide them through actual practice. Meanwhile, in the background of translation studies, the majority of hermeneutic theories/models have addressed literary translation, ignoring instrumental, functional or professional texts (yet see Stolze 2011 for translation practice). *Translational hermeneutics*, although rooted in Schleiermacher's philosophy of interpretation, has been taking shape as a twenty-first century theory/practice of translation (Stolze, Stanley and Cer-

cel 2015). What distinguishes this movement from other lines of philosophical theorizing lies in its tendency to frame a systematic and scientific analysis of translation (Kharmandar 2017).

In an important introductory paper, Cercel, Stanley and Stolze (2015: 17-40) have identified six major principles of translational hermeneutics, namely subjectivity, historicity, phenomenology, process character, holistic nature, and reflection. A central question is how these principles can be incorporated into a practical system which is philosophically compatible with these principles, especially beyond dominant linguistic theories. There are numerous questions to be addressed if such general and abstract principles are to be used by practitioners of translation and translation studies readers. For instance, users need a “medium” through which they can work with such issues as subjectivity, phenomenological postulates, and textual holism. Among the major streams of language studies, narrative seems to provide a flexible system, as it can process existential (being part of a history, cultured-ness, individual identity), cognitive (e.g. schemata, roles, props, entry conditions), and lingual (textual configuration) dimensions.

The purpose of this study is to suggest a primary design that could help the users of translational hermeneutics to view the six principles in terms of an analytic mechanism of narrativity. As such, the principles are divided into two sub-groups: the cognitive-existential and the lingual/semiotic. Following a review of the bases of translational hermeneutics, the study puts together the foundational notions of narratology and unifies them in a translation-specific version of Paul Ricoeur’s narrative theory. The major elements of this method are the architecture of narrative (preconfiguration, configuration, reconfiguration), the confirmatory procedure (wager, verification, transformation), sedimentation versus innovation, and narrative and practical wisdom (φρόνησις, phronesis). To highlight the practical and pedagogical uses of the framework proposed, a whole section is devoted to various concerns which are presented in the form of critical questions.

## 2. Principles of translational hermeneutics

Translational hermeneutics is an incorporation of theoretical conceptions and practical methods of interpretation inspired by the works of major Continental philosophers. Along with Schleiermacher, this theory of translation/interpretation actively relies on the conceptions suggested by Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Derrida and Eco. Considering the philosophical depth of this movement, as well as the practical methods it has recently proposed, it can gradually develop into a considerable school of translation studies, if it sustains its contributions (Kharmandar 2017). One of the specifications of translational hermeneutics lies in its systematicity and organization in analyzing texts; these features are particularly important because the majority of philosophical (or more accurately philosophically oriented) translation theories are usually criticized for a lack of rigor in their analytic apparatus.

Although translational hermeneutics has been developing over the past decades, the first Symposium (Stolze, Stanley and Cercel 2015) can be regarded as a formal beginning in the development and consolidation of this movement. The first Symposium, held in Cologne in 2011, included 17 papers (written in German and English) by authors from different countries. The first paper in

the volume addresses the general concerns of a theoretical/methodical framework that considers various issues observed in translation. As an initial step, Cercel, Stolze and Stanley (2015) suggest six founding principles that underlie the hermeneutic act of interpretation in translation: subjectivity, historicity, phenomenology, process character, holistic nature, and reflection. In this section, these notions are briefly explored.

Subjectivity, no matter how vaguely defined, can be called the central problem of all philosophy, because any important issue (e.g. consciousness, ethical action, memory, knowledge organization) would depend on how the subject is perceived. Subjectivity points to the dynamic nature of truth for the interpreter, especially when factors such as cognitive capacity and life experience are included in the evaluation (Cercel et al. 2015: 25). To examine and unify divergent interpretive possibilities, hermeneutics relies on argumentation and the accumulation of shared (communal) knowledge (Ricoeur 1976). A hermeneutics of subjectivity:

[I]s interested above all in the meaning the object takes on for someone within a particular context of experience. Moreover, the categories of hermeneutic understanding, rather than being imposed by the subject on the object, emerge from the encounter with the object or [...] the "other," as it gives itself in relation to the knower" (Franke 1998: 66).

Historicity represents one of the foundational principles of any hermeneutic theory. The historicity of human understanding can have two very broad senses (Cercel et al. 2015: 25-6): (a) understanding moves along a dialogical process regulated by community and agency; and (b) corpora of recorded history lead to the formation of interpretive traditions (a process called *traditionality*) which define conventional meaning. If such meaning is violated, through channels such as translation, social agents may react to it differently; in the majority of cases, innovation, conflict or censorship may result (Kharmandar 2016, 2018b).

Phenomenology emphasizes the role of individual perception and the way things appear differently to different people, or how an individual may discover new visions upon multiple re-visions:

... things (ideas and objects) are not "as they appear to us", as we can see them. The personal "seeing as" means that there is no direct access to the world, to reality. We need to cognitively transcend our own perspective. For the purpose of translation, this means that a self-critical attitude of the translator has to be exercised by changing one's perspective and trying repeatedly to better understand (Cercel et al. 2015: 27).

Gadamer's (1960) notion of "prejudice", inspired by Heidegger's philosophy, suggests that all understanding needs to rest on some form of pre-understanding. The negative emotional load usually associated with prejudice may lead some readers of hermeneutics to imagine that pre-understanding remains un-critical throughout the whole procedure of understanding. Exactly on the contrary, hermeneutic thinkers have focused on the limits of human comprehension to emphasize the importance of ethical/critical interpretation.

Process character clarifies that the way a text, along with its building-blocks, can be translated is not limited, and there might be various possibilities to render a source text. Upon examination, the translator may implement “further improvement” or find a “better formulation” (Cercel et al. 2015: 27). This possibility implies that a translation can improve on an original configuration as well, because a source itself is a single possibility which can be re-stated and re-configured (as in paraphrasing or adaptation). It also sets a basis for comparing translations and their solutions.

Holistic nature (Cercel et al. 2015: 27-8) has been one of the characteristic features of hermeneutics since Schleiermacher; holism emphasizes the balance of part-whole relations. This important feature can be thought of as the engagement of mechanical structures in the form of machines or even biological organs. In such constructs there is a balance between the components and the entirety of the system. Of course, in textual/semiotic interpretation, re-assessing part-whole relations may appear to be more complicated. A translator must re-examine her choices against the larger body of the lingual/semiotic entity she is dealing with (or in some cases against a hypothetical story-world). In many cases, the holistic nature can appear as a critical evaluation of the original text, which might reveal flaws in the original part-whole harmony.

Reflection is concerned with an evaluation of cultured-ness and situationality, especially as far as socio-lingual and socio-aesthetic issues are concerned: “The translator should be aware of his social and cultural position, whether and how he may be able to motivate the decision for a certain formulation based on factual criteria” (Cercel et al. 2015: 28). The fact that translation involves some degree of critical reading suggests that one translation might be more strategic than others. If a translation is seen as a narrative or a lingual/semiotic collection, it may be equipped with various distinctive qualities such as rhetorical devices, stylistic revisions, poetic conventions, or typographical variations. Strategic decisions reveal the translator’s awareness of how situations or horizons of understanding can influence a translation.

An interesting specification of these six principles is that they can internally influence each other, while being clearly distinguished. For instance, although reflection is more concerned with external qualities of the text, holistic nature deals with the text itself as an endogenous configuration. As a result, a literary translation may appear to be strongly coherent as far as its internal elements are concerned, but stylistically prosaic from the perspective of literary critics (for a study on the relationship between translation and literary criticism see Kharmandar 2018a). Furthermore, although both process character and reflection try to achieve improvement, they are concerned with different issues; the former deals with the optimality of solutions, whereas the latter addresses the strategies of re-contextualization.

### 3. Narrative and translation

#### 3.1. Narrative

Several lines of active research have contributed to and expanded the realms of narrative theory/applications. Narratology represents a field of studies that explores various dimensions of story-

telling. Although narrative was once associated with literary theory, today narrative analysis is no longer bound to literature. Narrative is used in a diversity of disciplines, such as sociology, international politics, management, and law, to name a few (see Heinen and Sommer 2009; Meretoja 2014). As a result, studying narrative in everyday life and everything attached to it is becoming a new trend of narrative analysis. As Fludernik (2006/2009: 1) explains: "Narrative is all around us, not just in the novel or in historical writing. Narrative is associated above all with the act of narration and is to be found wherever someone tells us about something." Narrative can help us understand how textual/semiotic entities are interpreted and used in a specific line of thinking. In fact, one could argue that the meanings of the words we use in our narratives are decided by their positioning in our stories (or schematic perception). Emphasizing this fact, Mcquillan (2001: 11) tries to highlight the scope of narrativity:

If the process of narrative is momentarily considered outside of the restraints of novelistic, filmic, or historiographic form, it is possible to discern that the general structures of textuality are also general structures of narrative production. Narrative is both the *minimal unit* [emphasis added] of meaning and the cognitive process which makes meaning possible.

Such descriptions seek to unravel the particular significance of narrative as a growing, practical way of structuring and analyzing human experience or even existence (Meretoja 2014: 89). Narrative can also be used to investigate scientific (clausal) relations in the course of events (Norris et al. 2005: 550), which is a property that can fundamentally help trace the sequence of actions in a purposeful frame. As a cognitive process narrative can help re-examine the validity of borders that distinguish minimal and maximal lingual variables, especially as a linguistic presupposition (e.g. semantic typology of lexical items) (Safavi 2016). Notions such as classes, ranks, parts of speech and the like give the impression that an interpreter's understanding of word meaning is simply decided through structural divisions. There are, however, some fundamental problems to be considered here.

Do words (e.g. *football* and *evolution*) convey the same degree of information? If readers/listeners need various degrees of concentration (or cognitive effort, see Westbrook & Braver 2015) to possibly perceive the meaning of the different things they experience, then how can one be sure that semantic segmentations and formularizations are necessarily accurate? How can we verify how many networks of signification may be triggered in an interpreter's mind when trying to make sense of a single word, sign or symbol? Let us, for instance, consider an introductory note describing Albert Einstein's (1897-1955) notion of *Relativity*:

Einstein's original calculation of the deflection of light from a distant star, grazing the Sun, as observed here on the Earth, included only those changes in time intervals that he had predicted would occur in the near field of the Sun. His result turned out to be in error by exactly a factor of two. He later obtained the "correct" value for the deflection by including in the calculation the changes in spatial intervals caused by the gravitational field (Firk 2003: 44).

To understand most, rather all, of the notions, we must have some image of how they are interpreted by their narrators. That is, the words we see (e.g. time intervals, spatial intervals, gravitational field) are links that represent something beyond them. Understanding Relativity basically depends on how we perceive the plots and sub-plots that constitute these notions. Another problem is that it would be extremely difficult to “predict” how much cognitive effort different people need to understand a language structure. This intersubjective variance suggests that words are constantly subjected to interpretation to make sense of. Researchers who believe in the cognitive or existential dimensions of narrative, especially within multidisciplinary frameworks (Fludernik 2006/2009; see also Heinen and Sommer 2009; Meretoja 2014), argue that the use of narrative in everyday human life depends on how people put the elements (words, signs, symbols, inscriptions, objects) they perceive in an interpretable frame of components, which might be interconnected by a slight trace of a plot.

Moreover, narrative can help us view social construction as a mode of worldmaking, which is an interesting way of seeing how social agents and generally people come to recognize their roles and influences on each other. In narrative theory, the concept of worldmaking clarifies the way narratives configure a sphere within which words and other elements are interpreted:

Such worldmaking practices are of central importance to narrative scholars of all sorts, from feminist narratologists exploring how representations of male and female characters pertain to dominant cultural stereotypes about gender roles, to rhetorical theorists examining what kinds of assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes have to be adopted by readers if they are to participate in the multiple audience positions required to engage fully with fictional worlds, to analysts (and designers) of digital narratives interested in how interactive systems can remediate the experience of being immersed in the virtual worlds created through everyday narrative practices (Herman 2009: 106).

As can be seen, the notion of worldmaking has no boundaries and can apply to social, literary and digital realms of investigation. As a result, instead of a formalistic linguistic approach to language constructions, narrative provides the possibility to inspect meaning relations from a cognitive perspective. Emmott and Alexander (2009), for instance, have investigated schemata in the context of narrative theory. They primarily use the notion of script as a “temporally-ordered schema”; providing an example, they explain that, “a restaurant script would contain knowledge of the actions and sequence of ordering food, paying bills, and so on” (ibid.: 412-3). They also enumerate several other related notions:

[M]ost scripts have further “slots” to describe the “roles” (customers, waiters, chefs, etc.), “props” (menu, table, food, money, bill, etc.), “entry conditions” (customer is hungry, restaurant has food, etc.) and “results” (customer is no longer hungry, restaurant has less food, etc.) within the script. A “plan” ... consists of knowledge about sets of actions needed to accomplish objectives and is used in non-stereotypical situations where there is no adequate script available (Emmott and Alexander 2009: 413).

The collection of all these novel approaches suggests that narrative analysis, beyond the traditional outline of linguistics, provides a flexible method of investigating lingual, social, cultural and temporal variables that can guide a variety of relevant studies, especially those concerned with cultural studies and translation studies. Despite the wide range of the approaches and concepts proposed in every theory, a unified theory of narrative would require a philosophy of interpretation, especially one that can incorporate significant existential aspects of humanity with a lingual analysis framework. In the following sub-section, Ricoeur's original narrative theory is introduced.

### 3.2 Ricoeur, narrative, translation

Ricoeur's extended translation theory (Kharmandar 2015) builds on his original translation theory, while constructing a new philosophical framework with practical applications. The work involves a metaphysics of translation, a lingual analytic theory of narrative, and an ethical and political reading of narratives in globalization. An important feature of the work is that although it rests on a clear philosophical underpinning, it is developed in a dialogue with translation studies scholars and tries to propose methodological/practical solutions.

Apart from the question of philosophy, Ricoeur's extended translation theory has incorporated one of his most influential theories, his narrative theory, as an analytic component of the theoretical construct. This narrative theory is composed of three main stages through which a narrative is fully articulated and shared with readers: preconfiguration, configuration and reconfiguration. Of course, in his later works, Ricoeur further elaborated on pre-narrative elements/components. The central question Ricoeur tries to answer in his narrative speculation is how people shape their experience considering temporal engagements and paradoxes.

Communication of any sort involves layers of preunderstanding that rest on each other. An important principle of hermeneutics, as the philosophy of interpretation, suggests that any understanding arises from a preunderstanding. As a result, a speaker's knowledge of minimal aspects of language and the world, including words, symbols, signs, schemes and objects, cannot be free-standing (see Mcquillan 2001: 10-11). Ricoeur, in the course of his career, addressed numerous aspects of human thinking and life, creating a remarkably rich corpus of studies. One of the central issues he tried to resolve is the temporal nature of human experience. He specifically dealt with this challenging question in the three volumes of *Time and Narrative*, which have been commented on in his other works. His approach could be broadly called "narrative hermeneutics."

Ricoeur's narrative theory (1984, 1991, 1996/2016) represents an amalgamation of various elements that together create an analytic and holistic system. Although in applying his theory Ricoeur predominantly relied on literary texts, the composite of the components recognized in his work could be directly applied to any text-type (see Kharmandar 2015). Along with the lingual analytic system, Ricoeur takes an existential approach to narrativity; that is, he generally regards the formation of human identity, meaning of life, transformation of selfhood, and recognition of otherness as dimensions of a life schematized as a narrative continuum (Ricoeur 1984, 1991; see

also Ricoeur 2004 for an in-depth exploration of history, politics and narrative). This approach is remarkably different from theories that exclusively define narrative within a genre-specific frame (for instance narrative versus explanation, description or information). Narrative in his view, then, is an existential and lingual organization of temporally cumulative experience.

As a result, the notion of narrative in Ricoeur's philosophy, from a broad perspective, can fall under two main categories: a lingual system of elements and an existential continuum with cognitive dimensions. In his major work *Oneself as Another*, Ricoeur (1990/1992) proposes the notion of "narrative identity" following a profound review of Western philosophy explorations of identity. He believes that along with structure (e.g. genetic code), an individual or community develops another aspect of identity called *event*, which is a temporal variable. Selfhood, as an existential (and even psychological) concept, is constituted by event or the variability of experience. Meanwhile, selfhood can be developed only through an interaction with other people and a sense of belonging to a community which defines the meaning of existence.

Following this existential theory, there is the lingual category of narrative. A narrative revolves around the modern notion of "plot." The rigid formula (introduction, body, conclusion) suggested by Aristotle has been considerably expanded and modified in Ricoeur's narrative theory. The act of constructing a plot is called "emplotment" (see Ricoeur 1991: 21). As a result, every element in a story-line must contribute to the progression or meaningfulness of the whole. An overriding aspect of narrative is that it constitutes "practical understanding." To perceive the world in an interpretable way, we synthesize discrete words or images, whereas a lack of underlying integration of such elements cannot help us reach practical understanding.

In the first volume of *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur (1984) outlined the general framework of his narrative theory. He explained that narrative should go through three stages to be fully realized: preconfiguration, configuration and reconfiguration. As mentioned above, a story unites a composite of elements that are meant to give a particular direction to the reader's understanding. To accomplish this a narrator should first think of a blueprint of his/her preunderstanding. This primary stage is called preconfiguration, which involves structures, symbols and time frames that embody the story.

The structural dimension is composed of the existential aspects of the narrative. Structures here could be seen as formulae that generally delineate the frame of the story. Who the story is about, what events occur in it, and what consequences may arise are all decided at this stage. For the sake of simplicity, structures could be seen as relations (as in a flowchart) without content. Relations, of course, have to be filled with content. Ricoeur believes that every narrative is preconfigured within a human narrative world. As a result, structures are given particular values at this stage. Norms, conventions, rules, rites, and all other culturally determined variables are taken into account in shaping the symbolic content of a narrative: "If indeed action can be recounted, this is because it is already articulated in signs, rules and norms; it is always symbolically mediated. This feature of action has been heavily underscored by cultural anthropology" (Ricoeur 1991: 28; see also Barnard 2004).



Research into cultural anthropology, cultural studies, and sociology can help a narrative analyst to identify cultural values and norm-governed behavior. Finally, the structures filled with content need to be activated by a force; in narratology the notion of “action” has long been considered to be an essential aspect of a story. For the existential dimensions of the story to move on and direct events, a blueprint of temporal relations is needed. At the last stage of preconfiguration, the storyteller must decide about how events are organized and how relations are formed through time. In a narrative, no matter how short or long it may be, time decides the momentum of actions and serves as the factor that makes progression (moving from one point to another) possible.

Following preconfiguration, a narrative producer must ultimately realize the lingual/semiotic output of the story. Although preconfigured elements determine the general outline of the story, they are not sophisticated enough to communicate meaning to readers/listeners. The configuration stage is responsible for constructing the fully designed and visible product. Numerous details must be taken care of when a story is ultimately shaped. For instance, although preconfiguration is a highly selective and unifying process, the ultimate integration of every element into a narrative whole requires a set of techniques and strategies to be implemented.

Configuration represents a mediatory stage between preunderstanding and postunderstanding, providing an objectified version of the writer’s story which can be communicated with the reader. Through configuration, the divergent elements selected to constitute the story are put in a synthesized whole. Two of the major aspects of this stage are *chronological* and *configurational* narrative times. Ricoeur believes that a well-homogenized narrative must strike a balance between these two time frames.

Chronological time constructs the episodic frames of the story as a logically successive development of events in an irreversible order. The functions of configurational time, however, are subtler and more complicated: first the chronological sequentiality of a text (e.g. a piece of news you watch on TV) suffers from a theoretical problem; does the text go on forever? Configurational time gives a sense of closure, a well-defined ending, to the narrative. It is also the factor that helps people “delineate” a text from other texts, usually by remembering it as a title, topic, theme, proverb or parable. Moreover, through configurational time, one could re-read the events in backward motion (although chronology does not presuppose such a possibility). Finally, it can reveal how the interior pieces of a text rely on each other in a non-sequential (or circular) pattern; chronology, in contrast, cannot justify non-linear internal relations (for example, how the title of a book is further clarified when the whole book is read).

Chronological and configurational times make room for implementing a multitude of textual possibilities. Texts are always in a paradoxical state because it is difficult to put them in an absolutely sequential pattern, or even determine such an ideal pattern. The internal constituents of a text may re-appear several times in different parts; the same story may be recounted in different time frames, while its beginning and closure can be modified each time it is reported.

Yet, the final judgment about the meaning and homogeneity of the narrative is made in the last stage of the narrative production. In reconfiguration, readers engage in interpreting the narrative.

Ricoeur emphasizes that readers' perception of the world and their dialectical engagement shape an important proportion of the narrative (Ricoeur 1991). That is why he recognizes reconfiguration as the factor that guarantees the life and continuity of a narrative. He further calls it the "intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader" (Ricoeur 1991: 26). This stage situates the narrative within a socio-cultural space with readers who possess accumulated knowledge (sedimentation) and need to perceive the innovations that the narrative brings to their attention. Traditionality, as a measure of how conventionalized a text is, represents one of the basic notions in hermeneutics (see Gadamer, 1960). The "dialectic" between sedimentation and innovation can be described as follows:

The range of solutions is broad indeed between the poles of servile repetition and calculated deviance, passing by way of all the degrees of ordered distortion. Popular tales, myths and traditional narratives in general stick closer to the pole of repetition (Ricoeur 1991: 25).

The way traditions, such as science or literature, constitute expectations depends on the depth of their "sedimented history." A question, from the perspective of this study, is how these conceptions can contribute to the theory and practice of translation. Of course, the organization of the components set by Ricoeur in his narrative theory cannot be directly applied to translation. In fact, "a re-folding of Ricoeur's formulaic process" (Kharmandar 2015: 84) is needed to explain how interpretation and narrative organize translation. This study suggests that textual reformulations take place in the configuration stage of narrative production. Yet, the primary stages should be distinguished from successive ones. Translation in this study is regarded as a successive narrative (as in a pseudo-causal motion). Thus, to highlight this difference, translational narrative stages are designated by numbers in the following scheme:

**Original Narrative:**

<b>Narrative production:</b>	Preconfiguration <sub>1</sub>	→	Configuration <sub>1</sub>
<b>Narrative reception:</b>	Reconfiguration <sub>1</sub>		

**Translated Narrative:**

<b>Translator's reading:</b>	Reconfiguration <sub>1</sub>		
<b>Translator's narrative production:</b>	Preconfiguration <sub>2</sub>	→	Configuration <sub>2</sub>
<b>Target Language narrative reception:</b>	Reconfiguration <sub>2</sub>		

It should be noted that the formulation is not compatible with the traditional assumptions in translation studies. The numbers used to designate narrative stages only represent sequences of narrative reading, writing and reception; therefore, through an intertextual line of readings, an unknown number of works may be inspired by an original narrative. Furthermore, the original text (or semiotic entity) is not equal to the translated one. Ricoeur's extended translation theory (Kharmandar 2015) strongly criticizes equivalence. The theory, in line with the progressive movement of

narrative, assumes that there is a pseudo-causal relationship between the original and its re-readings. From the perspective of this study, adaptation, manipulation, intervention, re-writing, censorship and the like take place in preconfiguration 2 and ultimately appear as a result of configuration 2.

The translator, considering the requirements of the narrative, may decide to supplement extra information or manipulate the content or plot of the text (as in censorship). Depending on narrative progression (including characterization, frame and action), poetic conventions, cultural norms, textual expectations, social schemata, rhetorical effectiveness, stylistic variation, information load, and any other effective factor, the translator may minimally or maximally influence the text (through configuration 2). All decisions must be justified against the progression of the plot or the narrative world prefigured in the source text. Of course, in preconfiguration 2 the narrative world of the translation is constructed, and configuration 2 emerges from the translator's preunderstanding.

Following what could be called the architecture of a narrative (Ricoeur 1996/2016), one should also consider pre-narrative dimensions, especially the meaning of minimal items (e.g. single words). As mentioned above, we construct meaning by converging elements that together shape a cognitive construct (e.g. a scheme or prop). In simple words, even minimal items are part of a *lager of network* of human experience. For instance, the reason most people know the meaning of a word such as *book* is that they retrieve layers of accumulated experience associated with the notion and the way it is conventionally used in language and everyday life.

This possibility of remembering the concealed patterns that shape meanings suggests that every event of understanding is a narrative "moment," through which a scenario is retrieved to interpret empirical contexts (Fowler 1983 calls very small narrative segments "mini-narratives"). Inspired by Aristotle's notion of "practical wisdom" (φρόνησις, *phronesis*), Ricoeur (1991: 23) proposes practical understanding gained through narrative experience. Such understanding, as mentioned earlier, underlies the pre-understandings that together build the foundations of a narrative (Wilson 2014: 890). As these theoretical notions clarify, Ricoeur's translation theory can both guide the act/process of translation as far as minimal and maximal items of language are concerned.

Now let us investigate how these notions, coupled with Ricoeur's philosophy in general, can help objectify the major principles of translational hermeneutics in terms of a lingual analytic system/model. As mentioned earlier, subjectivity is the first principle; contrary to systems of thinking that artificially try to omit the human agent from their dynamics, hermeneutic philosophy underscores the role of individual/communal subjectivity in any process of interpretation. If "truth exists only as a shared knowledge within a group" (Cercel et al. 2015: 25), then the translator must primarily acknowledge that s/he is a player in a game which may involve several other players as well.

As an active agent who is ideally equipped with powers of argumentation (see Kharmandar 2016), the translator must try to construct an interpretable horizon depending on the kind of audience s/he is dealing with. The notion of narrative identity can help translators perceive how individuals and societies define themselves, and how translators should respond to cross-cultural, and other modes of, difference. Hermeneutic philosophy views subjectivity as a dialogue between self-

hood and otherness (other people and objects); the interaction between/among subjects is called “intersubjectivity.”

Historicity rests on a philosophy of temporal variance. Semiotic systems undergo changes over time, canonical works are expansively commented on, and generations actively re-define and re-evaluate their cultural heritage. To be positioned within a traditionalized system of interpretation can be one of the most challenging functions of a translator. Narratives have inter-textual relations that build augmented memory for their readers. In many cases, translators need to re-frame, even as a mere observer, the experience of being part of a macro-narrative (e.g. literary criticism, academic research, history of religion). Today, with unprecedented advancement in information technology, modes of textuality have been transcoded into symbols developing electronic communication. Databases, encyclopedias, electronic libraries, and even discussion forums are some of the major sources that can help re-formulate the history of a narrative. Electronic literacy can help professional translators make optimal decisions when trying to select the pieces of the narratives that constitute the topic they translate.

Phenomenology, or the study of the frames of consciousness, represents another highly important aspect of translational hermeneutics. If we, as historicity suggests, are part of a developing history, we could become skillful readers who can recognize symbolic patterns and communal conventions, but are not necessarily critical thinkers. How do we know that our subjective or historical positioning is correct, at least within a possible dialogic context? If translation involves a dialogue with the foreign, how can we ever attest that we can move beyond our culturally, locally or linguistically structured perception? Translation demands self-reflective activity.

In Ricoeur’s extended translation theory (Kharmandar 2015), the event of (critical) understanding is roughly broken into three stages: wager (hypothesis), verification, transformation. Ricoeur believes that every act of understanding is initiated with a hypothetical examination that needs to be confirmed in the light of further information (see Ricoeur 1976: 78-81). Self-reflective translation demands finding and cross-validating perception against evidence. Subjectivity, as reviewed above, shapes a horizon of personal understanding, which is not necessarily critical on its own. It is the function of phenomenology that makes the translator aware of cross-cultural perspective, self-development, and epistemic imbalance. Ricoeur’s confirmatory procedure ideally takes place in preconfiguration 2, where the structure, content and temporal relations in the narrative are still being interpreted.

Following subjectivity (selfhood), historicity and phenomenology, which are cognitive-existential categories, there are three other principles that are visibly realized as “lingual” narrative productions. Process character is concerned with the possibility of evaluating and re-constructing currently available translation solutions. This same principle implies that the solutions suggested by translators may be transitory and need to be re-appraised. Published works (e.g. dictionaries, terminology collections, literary productions) should be re-examined against their hypothetical/actual storylines in which they are used. Worldmaking is a basic narrative activity which can help the translator identify pre-narrative or schematic items that shape a whole story. By manipulating,

replacing and comparing these items, one could arrive at better choices for translation. In practice, such solutions appear in configuration 2 (translator's final text). For instance, Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), following a critical justification, believes that the French term "mondalism" is a better translation for "globalization" (Kharmandar 2018b).

Hermeneutics is a holistic system of interpretation. Holistic nature deals with the way elements individually and collectively contribute to a larger whole. Texts, as Ricoeur's notion of configuration suggests, are amalgamations that are inherently paradoxical; that is, they unify mini-narratives that may violate sequential order and lead to circles of relations. Narrative analysis seems to be one of the most relevant methods of examining holistic consistency. In this analysis, the entire architecture (preconfiguration, configuration, reconfiguration) has to be considered. Elements of structure, such as the motives of actors or the purpose of objects, have to be examined against the socio-cultural content they represent. The way action is narrated or the experience of within-time-ness should be well-originated before the whole narrative is configured.

Reflection is the final principle in Cercel and colleagues' (2015) paper. If holistic nature is an internal narrative examination, reflection is predominantly concentrated on readership. In the extended narrative formulation suggested above, reflection shows the translator's awareness of reconfiguration 2, which forecasts readers' response. Configuration 2 is a strategic construction; it relies heavily on the information gained through preconfiguration 1 (translator's hypothetical examination, data collection, and final interpretation). All of the decisions concerning historicity, phenomenology, process character, and holism must be configured into the text as it should be culturally situated within the proper medium of presentation. Questions of poetic innovation, style, rhetoric, format, typography, layout, and other related issues, which are actualized in configuration 2, are evaluated against the expectations of narrative readers. As Ricoeur (1991, 1996/2016) emphasizes, the life of a narrative depends on its readers. Therefore, matters pertaining to re-contextualization strategies are addressed in reflection.

Table 1. A simplified version of the six principles of translational hermeneutics and their possible solutions

Translational hermeneutics principles	The translator's problems	Solution based on Ricoeur's philosophy and narratology	Type of principle
Subjectivity	How do I define my identity as an agent engaging in translation?	Gain awareness about your culture/society; explore various modes of cross-cultural difference; find yourself in an anticipatory dialogue with the text you translate.	Existential (the translator's identity)

Historicity	How should I position myself with respect to the text to be translated?	Investigate the traditions involved in the narrative; find the inter-textual relations that contribute to its formation; have access to archival memory; decide the sedimentation-innovation balance in the narrative.	Existential (the text's identity)
Phenomenology	How do I know my perception is valid?	Engage in self-critical activity through the confirmatory procedure; break the narrative into sub-plots or schemes and test hypotheses that verify your understanding through argumentation.	Cognitive
Process character	How can I improve on already existing choices?	Explore worldmaking components (e.g. schemes and scripts) in the related context and justify how new possibilities can better contribute to a whole idea.	Lingual/semiotic
Holistic nature	How should I verify the internal balance and consistency of the narrative?	Evaluate the consistency of structures, content and time frames based on expectations; see how circular relations in the narrative reinforce each other, through a chronological/configurational inspection.	Lingual/semiotic
Reflection	How should the text be situated in the world of the audience?	Use re-contextualization strategies; actively respond to the requirements of readers by considering issues of innovation, style, format, and the rest.	Lingual/semiotic

#### 4. Practical and pedagogical considerations

This section is concerned with the actual use of the theoretical frame proposed in this study; however, instead of presenting a limited number of prefabricated examples, the information here is configured as purposeful questions that address pedagogical and methodological issues. The ques-

tions can be seen as possibilities for further discussion (in the classroom), applied research, or actual practical translation. They cover some of the major concerns raised in this paper.

- The majority of translation studies readers or authors make a distinction between concepts and objects, assuming that at least objects are fixed entities that do not require an active process of interpretation to make sense of. Considering the notion of scheme, try to create a network of relations underlying such objects as *pen*, *table* or *window*. Derrida believes every word to be named and defined depends on a number of relations with other words. In your network of relations, do you find a pre-narrative scope which defines the word in question? If so, then how are these objects different from concepts? Can sensory perception give “meaning” to the objects around us? If we have no (shared) experience of an object (e.g. a microprocessor), is it a meaningful entity to us or a physical mass occupying some space?
- In the relatively small book *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, Foucault (1973/1983; first published 1968) explores aesthetics, instability and chaos in the visual art created by René Magritte (1898-1967). Focus on the main propositions Foucault raises in the book; how can his ideas be read in the context of the phenomenology of perception? Extend the same propositions to the field of cross-cultural communication; if ideas are subject to interpretation in their native languages (a process called intra-lingual translation in Ricoeur's theory), how can we justify the existence of a fixed original?
- Think about a particular sport, such as basketball. What are the preconfigured structural elements that define a conventional basketball game, especially within a schematic representation (motives, number of actors, roles of the actors, their interaction)? Can you apply the same analysis (seen as a flowchart) to other areas of life, such as “applying for a visa”, “filing for divorce” or “making coffee”?
- Imagine a translator who is engaged in an academic paper edition project; from the initial stages of the project up to the final paper publication, how many subjects (actors or players) can you identify in the process? How do these layers of subjectivity interact with each other? What are their expectations? In such a project, there are normally two sets of readership involved; given the ideas of reconfiguration 1 and reconfiguration 2, distinguish the readers before and after the publication of the paper.
- In the movie *Pride + Prejudice + Zombies* (McKittrick and Steers et al. 2016), two strong narrative traditions are merged, creating a new story-world; considering the principle of historicity, guided by sedimentation versus innovation, specify the features of this movie franchise. How did the critics respond to this possible worldmaking?
- In documents translated from Persian into English, the period of three years of education after elementary school and before high school has been named differently by different translators; some suggested pre-narrative schemes are Guidance School, Middle School, Secondary Education, and Junior High School. Imagine a translator who sought to reasonably prioritize one of these choices over others; which principle of translational hermeneutics could explain this situation?

- Select an academic paper, preferably in a field of experimental science; normally you should find a pre-introductory piece called abstract. The abstract reports the final conclusions the researcher(s) observed; yet, if the abstract is the first part to the whole body of the paper, how can it contain the information belonging to another section called conclusion, which appears at the end of the paper? The sequence of the framed information is, in fact, circular. Using the narrative notion of configuration 1, try to justify this paradox in presenting information.
- In describing the difference between languages involved in translation, translation theories have suggested seemingly binary notions; they suggest that otherness may only occur in radical cases such as foreignness. Ricoeur's philosophy of difference, however, views "selfhood versus otherness" as a continuum, which may be perceived as being complementary but not binary. This suggests that people in their own culture, community or even family are perceived as "others" with respect to each other (a state called "native others" by Kharmandar 2018b). How can this philosophy substantially challenge binarism in traditional translation theories?

## 5. Conclusion

Trying to overcome a methodological problem in the hermeneutic theories of translation, this study relied on Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics, coupled with certain notions from cognitive science and narratology. Translational hermeneutics was described as being a relatively coherent and developing movement with six fundamental principles. Although these principles could be subjected to revision and expansion, the first question to be answered was how they could guide practical translation or translation quality assessment. Incorporating analytic models from other disciplines such as linguistics or literature would not particularly highlight the importance and innovation of hermeneutic theories. Of course, despite the common assumption that narrative is a literary notion, it was explained in detail that novel trends of narrative theory no longer limit narrative to literature. This fact could be lucidly observed in Ricoeur's narrative theory, as it regards narrative as an existential notion, along with a lingual one. Including some conceptions from cognitive research and narratology, the study then contextualized the six principles of translational hermeneutics into Ricoeur's extended translation theory, by dividing them into two different, although interconnected, narrative dimensions: the cognitive-existential (subjectivity, historicity, phenomenology) and the lingual/semiotic (process character, holistic nature, reflection). This framework could guide various aspects of interpretation and translation, including lingual minimal/maximal items, while bringing about several critical suggestions for translation pedagogy and quality assessment. Admittedly, this study was not meant to be comprehensive, but it could serve as a blueprint for how several complicated theoretical lines could give rise to the formation of a multidisciplinary framework. Numerous explorations would be needed to sustain and further clarify the notions/relations postulated in this study.



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