sciences related to linguistics – ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive linguistics – and also contributed significantly to the formation of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity.

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HERMENEUTICS AND ALGORITHMIC MEDIATION: ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS

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Hermeneutic literature understands interpretation as an event of historical situated comprehension of meaning. For Gadamer, understanding is not a methodological operation but an ontological event based on the interpreter's existing understanding and created through a 'fusion of horizons' [1]. There is never interpretation beyond tradition; rather, interpretation occurs within a historically conditioned horizon which facilitates and constrains meaning. So, understanding is not a neutral process.

The "surplus of meaning" in textual discourse further complicates this consideration, as Ricoeur highlights [2]. A text always exceeds any one interpretive act; all meaning is open, layered, historically expandable. This surplus renders such formalization impossible in its entirety. Interpretation requires judgement, understanding and sensitivity to context, and reaction to ambiguity.

Large-scale computational scrutiny thus conflicts with the framework proposed. Moretti's concept of distant reading represented an epistemological departure in literary theory that suggested moving from close reading of text to structural analysis of large corpora [3]. Scale becomes a methodological variable. Rather than go into detailed readings for every work, researchers find patterns, frequencies, distributions.

Scaling like this does not directly disallow hermeneutics. Research in digital humanities has shown that computational tools can sit alongside interpretive reflexivity as it is placed within a larger analytical framework [4]. However, large language models bring a qualitatively different layer. They don't just find patterns; they produce linguistically intelligible explanations that sound like interpretive discourse.

The philosophical hard part is: where is the difference between statistical generation and interpretive comprehension? Research on LLMs indicates that such systems function through the predictive probabilistic sequence of tokens instead of through intentional understanding [5]. They lack historical context, experiential reality, and semantical intuition. In this respect the outputs of LLM cannot be used interchangeably with those of hermeneutic acts.

But their epistemic impact is significant. Floridi's philosophy of information sees contemporary reality as constituted by processes of information [6]. From such a perspective of an informational ontology, algorithmic systems are agents in an infosphere. While informational agency does not operate as interpretative subjectivity does, these systems nonetheless organize epistemic contexts. They shape what is visible, retrievable and salient.

This conclusion is congruent with Ihde's theory of technological mediation. Technologies are not neutral instruments, but act as mediating factors of perception and structure experience [7]. Translating this model to textual analysis, LLMs serve as mediators that change the appearance of texts in the eyes of researchers. They filter, summarize, cluster, prioritize. So meaning is made available via infrastructural pathways, not direct engagement.

Consequently, the classical hermeneutic circle is structure reshaped. Instead of a dyadic relationship (interpreter and text) interpretation becomes triadic (text, algorithmic mediators, and researcher). Computational hermeneutics stresses that digital systems now are not only embedded in, but are also contributing to the production of cultural meanings [8]. Interpretation is dispersed through human and technical activities.

One of the manifestations of this evolution is the scaling of qualitative analysis. Extensive empirical studies demonstrate that LLMs can be useful for large-scale qualitative coding if implemented in reflexive research designs [9]. In these cases, the model acts as an analytical filter that filters the data prior to human analysis. Yet, scaling also brings with it epistemic dangers, such as reduced contextualization, infrastructural opacity and integrated prejudices.

The restrictions of formalization are hence the point. As Hodge (2015) contends, interpretive complexity does not follow full procedural specification [10]. Meaning can't be completely mapped out into a rule-based, probabilistic system. Hermeneutic understanding is context-specific, historical, and normatively grounded.

These implications suggest that algorithmic mediation transforms but does not eliminate hermeneutic practice. Interpretation is still a human task, supported by technical structures. The problem is in how to define whose hermeneutical legitimacy is maintained by means of the algorithmically-assisted interpretive approach.

This is legitimate due to reflexive consideration of the interpreter's historical position [1]. It requires the acknowledgment of the excess of meaning which surpasses algorithmic reconstruction [2]. It requires an analysis up to the scale to be combined with close reading in order to maintain contextual nuances [3]. It needs infrastructure transparency about when and how the model design was conducted [8]. Lastly, it demands epistemic modesty and that algorithmic outputs are statistical and provisional [10].

In this context, large language models are at best infrastructural extensions of interpretive conduct rather than substitutes for hermeneutic appraisal.

Conclusions.

Large language models are not the objects of interpretation, yet they reformulate the structural circumstances for the process of interpretation. The shift from a straightforward face-on hermeneutic encounter to a construction in an infrastructurally mediated way signals a major epistemological reorientation.

Historicity, pre-understanding and surplus of meaning classical hermeneutic principles hold true as essential to assess algorithmic practices. In this regard, they provide normative safeguards against reduction of understanding to a statistical pattern recognition.

Scaled analysis extends the analytical space of humanities research by providing access to corpora that have so far been beyond the capabilities of either close reading or textual close reading. Yet scale must be matched with methodological reflexivity and philosophical clarity.

The process of algorithmic mediation is thus to be grasped as infrastructural engagement in meaning production rather than free interpretation. Hermeneutic responsibility, however, is still undeniably a human phenomenon.

The hermeneutical future is to create integrated hermeneutic frameworks that situate digital infrastructures critically while protecting the ontological scope of meaning understanding. The minimal conditions for such integration are reflexivity, transparency, contextual validation, and epistemic modesty.

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