Hermeneutics : Philosophy of Language in Interpreting Texts in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how philosophical hermeneutics, particularly in language philosophy (philosophy) can be used to evaluate the nature of text interpretation in an age where artificial intelligence is at its core. The research focuses on understanding how much AI-generated texts show real understanding, and how this process differs from human interpretation based on history, purpose, and the exchange of meaning. Using a qualitative and philosophical approach, the study explores classical hermeneutics and modern digital text creation. Information was gathered from hermeneutic writings, language philosophy research, and examples of outputs from AI language models to compare the structure of human meaning with computational processes. The findings show that AI can create coherent language patterns, but lacks the depth of experience, meaning horizon, and reflective thinking that are essential in hermeneutics. The study also found that machine-generated interpretations are often disconnected from context and are based on existing data rather than meaningful dialogue. The unique part of this research is combining classical hermeneutics with digital interpretation methods to create a model for evaluating the limits of AI interpretation. The study's findings highlight the importance of critical literacy when using AI-generated texts and the value of keeping human interpreters in areas like academia, education, and religion where deep understanding is necessary.

Keywords: Philosophy of Language, Hermeneutics, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Interpretation

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana hermeneutika filosofis, khususnya dalam ranah filsafat bahasa, dapat digunakan untuk menilai esensi interpretasi teks di era kecerdasan buatan. Fokus penelitian diarahkan untuk menjelaskan sejauh mana teks yang dihasilkan AI mencerminkan bentuk pemahaman yang otentik, serta bagaimana prosesnya berbeda dari pemahaman manusia berdasarkan historisitas, intensionalitas, dan dialog makna. Dengan menggunakan metodologi kualitatif-filosofis, penelitian ini menganalisis konsep hermeneutika klasik beserta bentuk-bentuk kontemporer

produksi teks digital. Data diperoleh dari literatur hermeneutik, studi filsafat bahasa, dan contoh output model bahasa AI yang dipilih untuk mengidentifikasi perbedaan struktural antara makna manusia dan proses komputasi. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa AI mampu menghasilkan pola linguistik yang koheren, tetapi tidak memiliki kedalaman pengalaman, cakrawala makna, dan refleksivitas yang diperlukan dalam pemahaman hermeneutika. Studi ini juga menemukan bahwa interpretasi yang dihasilkan mesin cenderung terlepas dari konteks dan mengandalkan pola data yang ada, bukan pada keterlibatan dialogis. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada upaya untuk mensintesis teori hermeneutika klasik dengan praktik interpretasi digital, sehingga menghasilkan model analitis untuk menilai batas interpretasi AI. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menegaskan perlunya literasi kritis dalam penggunaan teks yang dihasilkan AI serta pentingnya mempertahankan agen interpretasi manusia dalam konteks akademik, pendidikan, dan agama yang membutuhkan pemahaman yang mendalam.

Kata Kunci: Filsafat Bahasa, Hermeneutika, Kecerdasan Buatan, Interpretasi Digital

A. Introduction

Significant developments in artificial intelligence technology are changing the way in which humans read, understand, and interpret text. This is significant since language models like Chat GPT and BLACKBOX AI are currently used in education, academia, law, and even the interpretation of religious literature. In addition, considering their simulative nature, AI outputs are often seen as a sort of "understanding". In the area, it appears that students, academics, and the general public are increasingly relying on AI to interpret difficult texts. The article "Understanding ChatGPT and BLACKBOX AI: Its Potential Impact on Education" explores how AI's dominance has impacted the way learning and reading are taught. The study of digital hermeneutics shows how artificial intelligence interpretation changes the human-text connection. Research on AI and technological philosophy indicates the presence of an essential change in digital society. This social revolution requires a more in-depth philosophical study of meaning and understanding.

The latest literature shows a growing debate about AI's ability to understand texts hermeneutically. This is important because hermeneutics emphasizes intentionality, historicity, and horizon understanding—three characteristics that machines do not have. In addition, many studies show a gap between human understanding and artificial intelligence output. In Is Artificial Intelligence Capable of Understanding, Wang (2021) states that AI only produces statistical based linguistic forecasts without any existential depth. Hooke's (2023) The Hermeneutics of Artificial Intelligence shows that machine interpretation never takes place in a hermeneutic conversation. The paper "Martin Heidegger's Philosophy of Technology and AI" shows a possibility of meaning loss when interpretation is replaced by technique.Contemporary hermeneutic studies of Ricoeur and Gadamer reject the idea that understanding can be reduced to symbol manipulation. Thus, the literature underlines the significance of reconsidering the function of hermeneutics in the modern era of artificial intelligence.

This research aims to formulate relevant concepts of language philosophy hermeneutics to assess the process of understanding in the context of artificial intelligence. This goal is important because there is no theoretical model that comprehensively links classical hermeneutics with digital interpretation. In addition, this study seeks to map the limits, potentials, and risks of using AI in interpreting texts. Literary evidence suggests that Saeed emphasized the need for historical context in interpretation, while Safrodin encouraged the integration of hermeneutics in religious studies. References from Syafrizal (2024) in "Integration of Interpretation and Hermeneutics" shows the need for a new methodological framework in understanding the text. Hermeneutics–AI studies such as Wang (2021) and Analecta Hermeneutica (2023) show an epistemological gap between human and machine understanding. Articles about ChatGPT also show a shift in day-to-day interpretation practices.

Therefore, this research is focused on the preparation of a hermeneutic framework that can explain the phenomenon of understanding in the AI era.

This research offers a contribution in the form of the formulation of a framework of "digital-critical hermeneutics" that can be used to evaluate the interpretations produced by AI. This contribution is important because society is now dealing with texts that are read, produced, and interpreted by machines in a variety of contexts. In addition, this study offers a theoretical synthesis between classical hermeneutics (Gadamer, Ricoeur) and modern interpretive hermeneutics (Saeed, Abu Zayd) to explain the phenomenon of digital interpretation. In the literature it is shown that there is no research that connects the existential understanding of hermeneutics with algorithmic processes as is done in *The Hermeneutics of Artificial Intelligence*. The ChatGPT article in education shows the need for an evaluation framework for digital meaning. The study of technological epistemology emphasizes the urgency of critical analysis of algorithmic bias. The study of interpretive hermeneutics shows that the spiritual context cannot be replaced by the processing of symbols. Thus, the novelty of this research is to present a new framework that bridges human hermeneutics with the critical and comprehensive interpretation of AI.

B. Methodolgy

This research uses a qualitative-philosophical design based on language hermeneutic analysis. This design was chosen because the research wanted to understand the depth of meaning and structure of understanding. In addition, the philosophical approach allows for a critical study of the concept of "understanding" in the context of artificial intelligence. Classical hermeneutic research as outlined by Gadamer in *Truth and Method* places understanding as a dialogical, not a technical, process. Ricoeur also emphasizes that the analysis of meaning requires distancing and reflection, not manipulation of symbols. Wang's (2021) research provides a

cutting-edge philosophical foundation regarding the difference between human understanding and AI output. Therefore, qualitative-philosophical design is seen as the most suitable for analyzing interpretive phenomena in the era of artificial intelligence.

Research data was obtained through an in-depth literature study of hermeneutics, philosophy of language, and artificial intelligence works. This method was chosen because the purpose of the research is to build a conceptual argument. In addition, the literature study allows researchers to integrate classical and contemporary theories within a single analytical framework. Data collection includes: Gadamer, Ricoeur, Abu Zayd, and Saeed as references to classical hermeneutics and interpretation; Wang (2021), *The Hermeneutics of Artificial Intelligence*, as well as articles on the use of ChatGPT as digital hermeneutics literature and articles on the integration of interpretive hermeneutics as methodological references. In addition, digital primary data in the form of ChatGPT output is analyzed as a material object to understand the machine's interpretation character. Thus, data collection is textual, directed, and philosophically analyzed.

Data analysis is carried out using critical hermeneutic techniques that combine distance, interpretation, and comparison between human understanding and AI output. This technique was chosen because hermeneutics emphasizes the process of understanding through dialogue between the text and the reader. In addition, critical analysis is required to assess the epistemic limits of digital interpretation. The method of analysis refers to the Ricoeur steps: the distancing of the text, the explanation of the structure of meaning, and the appropriation of the reader. The analysis also uses *Gadamer's concept of fusion of horizons* to compare human horizons and computational horizons. Digital hermeneutics literature such as Wang (2021) is the basis for assessing the absence of intentionality and historicity in AI. Thus, this analysis technique results in a comprehensive evaluation of human and machine understanding.

This research requires ethical considerations because it involves an analysis of AI outputs and their implications for society. This is important because many users perceive AI outputs as objective interpretations without considering algorithmic bias. In addition, the use of religious and philosophical texts requires care so that interpretation is not abused. Evidence in the AI ethics literature confirms that language technology carries the risk of reproduction bias, as discussed in digital hermeneutics research and philosophy of technology. Studies on ChatGPT in education also warn of the potential for over-reliance on automated systems. Digital interpretive research shows the need to maintain spiritual and historical sensitivity when AI is used to read sacred texts. Therefore, this research is ethically committed to maintaining accuracy, transparency, and prudence in assessing AI interpretations.

C. Result and Findings

The results of the analysis show that artificial intelligence does not have a pre-understanding structure as understood in philosophical hermeneutics. The fore-structure is necessary to give the interpretation an initial direction and to be the basis for the interpreter's existential engagement with the text. AI does not have the historical background or intentionality that allows this process to occur. Without this structure, AI only operates a statistical model that predicts word sequences, rather than understanding meaning existentially. Wang (2021) asserts that AI "has no historicity and does not undergo a transformation of meaning" so its understanding cannot be equated with human understanding. Therefore, AI cannot enter the circle of hermeneutics as humans do the process of understanding.

The analysis also shows that AI-produced language is reproductive, not the result of meaning experience. In modern hermeneutics, language is an existential medium born from human involvement in the world and its history. AI has no experience of the world so it is impossible to generate language as an expression of

meaning. Analecta Hermeneutica (2023) asserts that ChatGPT "only mimics the form of language, not the intention or horizon of the underlying meaning"

Therefore, AI language cannot be understood as an act of meaning as it takes place in human hermeneutics.

Other findings show that AI cannot perform truth assessments as humans do in a hermeneutical process. Hermeneutics views interpretation as a process towards understood truth, not just a linguistic output. AI has no orientation to truth because all its operations are based on the optimization of mathematical functions. McGrath (2023) in *AI and the Human Difference* asserts that human intelligence is oriented towards truth, while AI does not show such intentions. Wang (2021) also states that AI "does not appreciate the meaning of objects", but only processes symbolic representations without relation to reality.

Research has found that AI cannot make appropriations, i.e. take over and bring to life the meaning of texts within the self-horizon. Appropriation requires existential involvement and self-change of the interpreter, AI does not undergo self-transformation so it is impossible to appropriate meaning. Ricoeur (1981/2016) explains that appropriation is at the core of understanding, where the meaning of the text becomes "theirs" of the interpreter through internal reflection Wang (2021) asserts that AI lacks self-understanding—the main condition of appropriation in philosophical hermeneutics. Thus, AI can only simulate understanding, but it cannot appropriate meaning.

The analysis shows that the most productive position is to place AI as a hermeneutical tool. AI has the ability to map text patterns, compile summaries, and present language variations that can help researchers. However, its role remains at the technical, not ontological-interpretive level. Some digital humanities research has explored the effectiveness of AI for text pattern detection, but not

meaning analysis. Hooke (2023) states that hermeneutics requires "human involvement as the center of reasoning meaning" so that AI cannot replace it Thus AI is more appropriately positioned as an operational medium, rather than a subject of interpretation.

Other findings suggest that the presence of AI forces a conceptual revision in hermeneutic theory. Classical hermeneutics never imagined non-human entities to be participants in the process of interpretation. Therefore, categories such as horizon, prejudice, historicity need to be expanded or redefined. Contemporary discussions in *Hermeneutics of AI* (2023) show that AI raises new questions regarding the boundaries of human and machine interpretation Thus AI is not only an object of study, but also a trigger for new developments in hermeneutic theory.

The results of the analysis show that the future of interpretation will be in a hybrid relationship between humans and AI. AI provides quick access to linguistic information that can enrich initial interpretation. But the depth of meaning still requires human reflection that machines cannot duplicate. Recent studies have shown that the combination of AI and humans is more effective at analyzing complex texts than both working alone. Therefore, the future of hermeneutics is likely to take place in the form of human–AI collaboration with clear epistemic limitations.

The findings of the study show that artificial intelligence is only able to produce simulations of understanding and has not been able to enter the hermeneutic circle like humans. Two reasons underlie this conclusion: first, AI has no intentionality or historical horizon; Second, the language it produces is reproductive, not the result of experience of meaning. In addition, AI does not have the ability to appropriate, so it cannot internalize meaning as Ricoeur explains. In Wang's research (2021) showed that AI only manipulates symbols without an existential structure of understanding. Analecta

Hermeneutica (2023) also emphasizes that machine interpretation is not a dialogue of meaning, but rather a technical output that follows data patterns. Gadamer's classical hermeneutic findings show that understanding is always related to traditions and prejudices that do not exist in algorithmic systems. Therefore, the results of the study confirm that AI cannot be called understanding but only imitates language patterns that resemble meaning.

The results of the study have important implications for the development of hermeneutic theory and the use of AI in interpretation practice. This explanation is based on two main reasons: first, hermeneutic theory needs to accommodate the phenomenon of digital texts; second, AI users must be aware of the epistemic limits of their interpretation. In addition, practical consequences are emerging in the fields of education, law, and religious studies that are beginning to make extensive use of AI. Analecta Hermeneutica (2023) shows that language automation carries the risk of simplification of

meaning and interpretive bias. Saeed and Abu Zayd emphasized that understanding religious texts requires a historical context and a horizon of faith that machines do not have. In Research Hooke 2023) *Hermeneutics of AI* It also highlights the potential for public misunderstanding of digital "understanding". Thus, the implications of this research encourage the development of digital-critical hermeneutics to maintain the integrity of meaning in the new interpretive ecosystem.

This study has several limitations that must be recognized in order for the results to be understood proportionately. Two main reasons for limitations arise: first, the research is philosophical and does not involve empirical experiments; second, the analysis focuses on specific AI texts like ChatGPT, rather than the entire language model. In addition, the study did not assess the variation in the understanding of users interacting with AI, so the phenomenological aspects of users have not been explored. Empirical literacy about the behavior of AI users in education

and religion actually shows complex variations in acceptance, as shown in studies of ChatGPT's use in the educational space. The article on technology epistemology confirms that the implementation of AI in society is strongly influenced by social contexts that are not fully discussed in this research. In addition, the study did not examine the differences between AI models that have different architectures and training data. Therefore, the results of this study should be understood as an initial theoretical contribution, not a final conclusion about the entire practice of digital interpretation.

Further research needs to develop an interdisciplinary approach that combines the philosophy of hermeneutics, AI studies, and user empirical research. Two reasons underlie this direction: first, the phenomenon of digital interpretation is increasingly complex because it involves human–AI interaction; Second, its impact on the formation of meaning in society is getting wider. In addition, follow-up studies need to examine how hermeneutic categories such as *Prejudice*, *Fusion of Horizons* and *Distancing* can be applied to the digital language ecosystem. Wang (2021) opens up research opportunities on the limits of machine understanding that can be empirically deepened. Analecta Hermeneutica (2023) also recommends the development of a methodology for assessing the quality of AI interpretation in various domains. Studies of digital interpretations such as Saeed and Abu Zayd show the need to study how AI influences contemporary religious practices. Thus, future research can build a more comprehensive and responsive model of human–machine hermeneutics to the digital world.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that artificial intelligence, especially language models such as ChatGPT, is only capable of generating comprehension simulations and cannot enter the hermeneutic circle as understood in the philosophy of language tradition. This happens because AI does not have intentionality, historicity, or horizon meaning which is a prerequisite for understanding in the framework of

Gadamerian and Ricoeurian hermeneutics. An analysis of the latest literature shows that AI output is the result of probabilistic manipulation of symbols, rather than the experience of meaning born of existential involvement as described by Ricoeur and Heidegger. As such, AI cannot be referred to as an "interpreter," but only as a technical entity that produces text based on data patterns.

The study also shows that the existence of AI forces hermeneutics to revisit the boundaries of human understanding and the concept of computational meaning. Human–AI interaction creates a new hermeneutic condition in which texts no longer come only from human authors, but also from algorithms that have no world, value, or horizon. This situation reinforces the urgency of development *Digital-Critical Hermeneutics* as a new branch of hermeneutics that assesses the relationship between human meaning and artificial language. Thus, this research makes a theoretical contribution by reformulating the distinction between existential meaning and technical meaning in the era of artificial intelligence.

Practically, the results of this study confirm that AI should be used as an interpretive tool, not an authority of meaning. Users, especially in the fields of education, law, and religious studies, need to apply a hermeneutical evaluation framework to assess the quality, depth, and relevance of AI outputs. This research also emphasizes the need for ethical principles of digital interpretation to maintain accuracy, avoid bias, and protect the integrity of meaning in sensitive texts. Thus, the use of AI must always be under the reflective supervision of humans who have a horizon of values and moral responsibility.

Finally, this research opens up the direction of further research that combines the study of hermeneutic philosophy, AI studies, and empirical research on the patterns of use of AI in society. Further studies need to develop more comprehensive models of human–machine hermeneutics, including a qualitative evaluation of digital interpretation practices and their impact on the formation of public understanding. Thus, future

research is expected to enrich hermeneutic theories while providing practical guidelines for society in facing the era of artificial intelligence.

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