























enables hermeneutics to communicate across boundaries and fosters dialogue between individuals or groups with different backgrounds or viewpoints. Moreover, hermeneutics requires critical exploration. Hermeneutics encourages critical analysis of texts and symbols, allowing for a deeper exploration of their implications and interpretations. This critical approach helps to uncover layers of meaning and challenge assumptions, leading to a richer understanding of the text. It should be noted that hermeneutics is not only about understanding and interpretation but also about applying the insights gained to real-world situations. It allows for applying textual understanding to contemporary issues, ethical dilemmas, and practical challenges (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Whitehead, 2004).

#### *Scholarly-oriented research-based purposes of the hermeneutics*

The research-based purpose of hermeneutics involves utilizing its methodologies and principles to conduct rigorous and systematic investigations into the interpretation and understanding of texts, symbols, and cultural phenomena. In a research context, hermeneutics serves several vital purposes. It should be noted herein that there may be concrete and close associations between the research-based goals of the hermeneutics and the generic aims of the qualitative researchers. To justify, for instance, hermeneutics copes with textual analysis. In other words, hermeneutics provides a framework for analyzing texts in depth, examining their linguistic, historical, and cultural context to uncover layers of meaning. Research in hermeneutics often involves close reading and interpretation of texts, identifying themes, symbols, and rhetorical devices to elucidate their significance. As known, the qualitative research paradigm has been informed by many scholarly-oriented fields and disciplines that inform these fields of inquiry (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Whitehead, 2004).

Similarly, hermeneutics encourages interdisciplinary approaches to research, drawing on insights from philosophy, literary criticism, anthropology, sociology, and theology. Researchers may apply hermeneutical methods to diverse texts and cultural artifacts, exploring connections and patterns across disciplines. Like naturalistic inquiries, the hermeneutics perspective tries to establish a historical understanding of a phenomenon under investigation. Hermeneutics facilitates historical understanding by situating texts within their historical context and tracing the evolution of ideas over time. Researchers use hermeneutical methods to uncover the historical background of texts, discerning how social, political, and cultural factors shape their meaning. Critical reflection, as a fundamental explorative goal of hermeneutics, involves a deep and thorough examination of one's thought processes, assumptions, and biases during the interpretive act. Hermeneutics, which is the study of interpretation, particularly of texts, encourages researchers to continuously question and analyze the lenses through which they view and interpret their subjects. This reflective practice entails researchers engaging in self-reflexive analysis, actively considering and articulating how their personal backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints might shape their interpretations. By doing so, they aim to uncover and understand the preconceptions and biases that may influence their understanding of the texts they study. This process helps to ensure that the interpretations are not merely projections of the researchers' views but are grounded in a more objective and balanced understanding of the text.

Moreover, critical reflection in hermeneutics seeks to mitigate the impact of subjective biases. Researchers strive to recognize and address these biases, adjusting their interpretive approaches to minimize their influence. This practice enhances the validity and reliability of the research findings and fosters a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the texts. Critical reflection in hermeneutics is an ongoing, iterative process that demands constant vigilance and self-awareness from researchers. It involves a commitment to transparency and honesty about one's interpretive stance, fostering a deeper engagement with the text and promoting more rigorous and insightful scholarship. By continuously reflecting on and refining their interpretive methods, researchers contribute to a more robust and credible body of knowledge (Paterson & Higgs, 2005; Reiter, 2006; Thirsk & Clark, 2017).

Furthermore, the hermeneutics perspective can be applied to research purposes. Hermeneutics is applied in various research contexts, including literature, theology, jurisprudence, psychology, and education. Researchers may use hermeneutical methods to analyze legal texts, interpret religious scriptures, explore psychological narratives, or examine literary works, among other applications. Like the ground theory approach in qualitative research, the perspective of hermeneutics can be used for theory development. Hermeneutics contributes to the development of theoretical frameworks for understanding interpretation and meaning-making. Researchers engage in theoretical inquiry, refining concepts such as authorial intention, reader response, textual ambiguity, and the hermeneutical circle, advancing our understanding of how meaning is constructed and communicated (Gillo, 2021; Peck & Mummery, 2018; Rennie, 2012).

#### *Combining qualitative research perspective with hermeneutic perspective*

Combining qualitative research with a hermeneutic perspective can lead to a rich and nuanced approach to understanding human experiences, texts, and cultural phenomena. First and foremost, qualitative research often emphasizes the importance of context in understanding phenomena. When combined with a hermeneutic perspective, researchers delve deeply into the context surrounding texts or experiences, considering historical, cultural, and social factors that shape meaning (Gillo, 2021). This contextual approach enriches interpretation by comprehensively understanding the background against which texts or experiences are situated.

Both qualitative research and hermeneutics prioritize interpretation and sense-making. Researchers utilizing these perspectives engage in interpretive analysis to uncover underlying meanings, symbols, and themes within texts or qualitative data. They recognize that meaning is not fixed but is constructed through dialogue between the text and the interpreter and within the broader socio-cultural context. Qualitative research often involves direct engagement with participants or texts. Researchers adopt a hermeneutic perspective approach to this engagement as a dialogical process, where understanding emerges through interaction and interpretation. They value participants' perspectives and seek to understand their lived experiences within their cultural and social contexts (Nigar, 2020).

Both qualitative research and hermeneutics acknowledge the role of the researcher's subjectivity in the interpretive process. Researchers employing these perspectives engage

in reflexivity, critically reflecting on their assumptions, biases, and preconceptions that may influence interpretation. They recognize that interpretation is not value-neutral and strive to be transparent about their positionality. Qualitative research often adopts a narrative approach, focusing on the stories and narratives of participants. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method that studies stories or narratives to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences and construct their identities. It involves collecting and analyzing personal accounts, often through interviews or written documents, to explore the meanings and interpretations that people attach to their life events. Narrative inquiry emphasizes these stories' context and temporal aspects, acknowledging that they are shaped by cultural, social, and historical factors (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In narrative studies, researchers pay close attention to the structure, content, and function of narratives and how they are told. This method allows for a rich, detailed understanding of individual experiences and can reveal insights into broader social and cultural phenomena (Riessman, 2008). It is beneficial for exploring complex, nuanced aspects of human life that more traditional research methods might overlook. When combined with a hermeneutic perspective, researchers explore the narrative structures and themes within texts or qualitative data, recognizing the narrative as a means through which meaning is conveyed and constructed. Qualitative research and hermeneutics encourage the integration of theory and data in the interpretive process. Researchers draw on theoretical frameworks to guide their analysis while allowing the data to inform and enrich theoretical understandings. This iterative process of theory-data interaction enhances the depth and complexity of interpretation. Integrating qualitative research with a hermeneutic perspective offers a holistic approach to understanding human experiences, texts, and cultural phenomena. It combines the rigor of qualitative research methods with the interpretive depth of hermeneutics, leading to nuanced insights and a deeper appreciation of meaning and context (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Pérez-Vargas et al., 2020).

#### *Combining member-checking validation strategy with the hermeneutic perspective*

Combining a checking validation strategy with a hermeneutic perspective can enhance the rigor and credibility of interpretive research. Member checking, a qualitative research method, involves verifying the accuracy and validity of findings by returning them to participants for feedback or validation. For instance, Birt et al. (2016) discussed the application of member checking in health research and explored its effectiveness in enhancing the trustworthiness of qualitative data. Hermeneutics emphasizes the dialogical nature of interpretation, viewing understanding as emerging through dialogue between the text and the interpreter. Similarly, member-checking involves engaging participants in a dialogue about the researcher's interpretations. By incorporating member checking into the hermeneutic process, researchers invite participants to contribute to interpreting their experiences, ensuring that their perspectives are accurately represented (McConnell-Henry et al., 2011). For example, Doyle (2007) illustrated member checking in research with older women, detailing how the process helps negotiate and validate the meaning of the data collected.

Hermeneutics recognizes that meaning is co-constructed through interaction between the text and the interpreter. Member checking aligns with this perspective by acknowledging

the importance of participants' contributions to the interpretive process. Through member checking, researchers validate their interpretations against participants' lived experiences, enriching the depth and authenticity of the findings (Carlson, 2010). For example, Koelsch (2013) provided an example of a study involving educators where member checking was used as an iterative process. Participants were involved in several rounds of feedback, which allowed for a deeper co-construction of meaning and helped mitigate researcher bias. Hermeneutics encourages researchers to be reflexive about their biases and assumptions that may influence interpretation. Similarly, member checking requires researchers to be transparent about their interpretations and open to participant feedback. By integrating member checking with a hermeneutic perspective, researchers engage in reflexive dialogue with participants, critically examining their interpretations and considering alternative perspectives (Turner & Coen, 2008).

Member checking enhances the trustworthiness and credibility of interpretive research by allowing participants to validate or challenge the researcher's interpretations. This iterative validation process contributes to the research's rigor, strengthening the findings' validity and reliability. By incorporating member checking into the hermeneutic process, researchers demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability, enhancing their interpretations' credibility (Bradshaw, 2001). Hermeneutics recognizes interpretation as an iterative process that evolves. Member checking facilitates this iterative approach by allowing researchers to refine their interpretations based on participants' feedback (Buchbinder, 2011). By revisiting interpretations in collaboration with participants, researchers deepen their understanding of the phenomena under study and produce more nuanced and contextually grounded interpretations. In summary, combining a member-checking validation strategy with a hermeneutic perspective enriches the interpretive process by fostering dialogue, co-construction of meaning, reflexivity, and trustworthiness. This integrated approach enhances the rigor and credibility of interpretive research, yielding insights that are more authentic, nuanced, and contextually situated (Madill & Sullivan, 2018).

### **Concluding Remarks**

This review yields several conclusions in attaching the member-checking strategy to the hermeneutics. First and foremost, the review implies the importance of interpretation. The qualitative researcher with a hermeneutics lens should capture the point that interpretation is not just an additional layer of understanding but the primary means through which we engage with participants' verbal or written externalizations. This is a crucial departure from previous beliefs where participants' verbal or written externalizations were considered clear and straightforward and were thought not to require further interpretation. Therefore, a qualitative researcher adapting hermeneutics should challenge traditional or positivistic research views. Traditionally, it is assumed that participants' verbal or written externalizations with clear language and straightforward instructions do not need interpretation; their meanings are taken at face value. However, the modern hermeneutic approach challenges this by suggesting that no text (e.g., participants' verbal or written externalizations) is genuinely straightforward. Every text reading involves an interpretive act, where the reader's (coder's)



context, background, and perspective influence their understanding. In other words, from the lens of hermeneutics, the qualitative researcher should act in a way that all human-based discourses inherently involve an interpretive process. This process is not just about deciphering words or sentences but engaging with the verbal/written discourses in a manner that considers the intent behind it, the context in which it was written, and its relevance to the present. Interpretation is thus seen as an essential activity that is dynamically intertwined with comprehension, which is the primary purpose of the qualitative researcher.

Moreover, the qualitative researcher adapting the hermeneutics perspective has to interrogate the role of the reader's perspective. In hermeneutics, each reader (the qualitative researcher and the participant) brings unique experiences and cognitive frameworks to a text, which can alter the interpretation. This subjective element of text interpretation underscores the complexity of understanding texts and the need for a hermeneutic approach. Therefore, the qualitative researcher inherently needs the interpretation of their preliminary analysis by the participants. To support this, the qualitative researcher should not see hermeneutics as merely a tool for academic or philosophical analysis but as a necessary component of understanding any written or spoken material in our daily lives to invite the participants as co-interpreters or co-commentators. In this manner, as a whole, it should be accepted by the qualitative researcher that hermeneutics proposes a more reflective and interpretive approach to understanding, and this reflection and interpretation is not only the primary assignment of the researcher but also the participant as a co-researcher.

The qualitative researcher has to re-consider hermeneutics more broadly to apply this perspective in a wide-ranging sense. The modern hermeneutics emphasizes that it applies universally to all forms of text. This universality means that each invites a hermeneutic approach, whether the text is a complex legal document, a piece of classic literature, or simple everyday instructions or conversations. This approach involves examining beyond the literal meanings to uncover deeper insights and implications. In hermeneutic theory, a text is any written, printed, or digital communication that conveys a particular message or information. The centrality of the text implies that hermeneutics is not just about interpreting traditional texts but also encompasses all forms of written communication, reflecting its broad applicability. Viewing every text (the content the qualitative research analyzes and interprets) as central to hermeneutics highlights the importance of context, authorial intent, and the cultural and historical background in which the text was produced. This broadens the scope of interpretation and insists on a more nuanced understanding of all communicative acts.

In addition, the qualitative researcher has to see hermeneutics as a fundamental dialoguing tool to interact with the participant and foster the qualitative study's credibility. It can be accepted that hermeneutics facilitates an ongoing dialogue between the text (the content), the reader (the qualitative researcher), and the participant. This dialogue is not a literal conversation but an interpretive exchange where the text speaks to the reader or the participant, and the reader and the participant respond based on their understanding and interpretation as the core strategy in the member-checking strategy. In this dynamic interaction, the text (the content) is not a passive object but an active participant that

influences and is influenced by the reader and the participant. The reader's or the participant's preconceptions, experiences, and the context in which they engage with the text all contribute to this dialogue (Harvey, 2015). Therefore, the text (the content) can mean different things to different readers/participants or even to the same reader/participant at different times. This ongoing dialogue underscores that understanding a text as material analyzed in a qualitative study is never final but continuously evolves. As new interpretations emerge and contexts change, the dialogue between the text, the reader, and the participant is renewed, leading to fresh insights and perspectives. This process reflects the inherently dynamic nature of hermeneutics as a discipline and naturalistic inquiry as an interpretive way of knowing. These concepts frame hermeneutics as a profoundly interactive and continually evolving discipline that emphasizes the active role of the text, the reader, and the participant in the interpretive process. By engaging with texts through this hermeneutic dialogue, readers and participants in the qualitative research are encouraged to explore beyond the surface and to consider broader, more complex interpretations based on the dialogue they develop with texts (e.g., generated by the utterances of a participant in qualitative research) across different contexts and times.

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