

## THE HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH TO TRANSLATION

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Departing from the definition of translation as a personalized activity, the article discusses the problem of the understanding for translation purposes against the backdrop of hermeneutics. Comprehension is an ongoing process, guided by the hermeneutical circle of relevant knowledge and learning. Hermeneutical translation competence involves the readiness for self-critical reflection, the openness for constant learning, the ability to integrate new cognitive input, the courage for linguistic creativity, and an empathetic identification with the message.

Translation via a hermeneutic approach implies great responsibility. We know that interpretation is somewhat subjective and incomplete, but readers assume that they receive the content of a translated text in as faithful a manner as possible. For this purpose the translator needs holistic dimensions of orientation in the text being presented. And for the translation as text production rhetorical aspects have to be observed. The task of translating is a complex integration of various dimensions.

### IS THERE A BRIDGE?

Translation is often defined as a bridging of cultures. This bridging of cultures by translation has been the intention of translators for centuries. There is a need to prepare a way for messages to pass from one cultural setting to another in a comprehensible way. It is worth questioning whether this translational work done by human beings happens without any transformation – be it of the message, of the target culture or of the translator him/herself.

By translating an authored, and thus culture-bound, text we enable the “growth of texts” by giving them another audience (Steiner 1975, 317). The message of those texts is enlarged, if not transformed, by their different interpretation. The bridge here is somewhat ungraded and rough.

Through translations the target culture is being enriched through the influx of novel ideas. This may even have an impact on the literary polysystem (Even-Zohar 1990). The

assumed bridge between the cultures is actually a waterfall, because translation as a process is always mono-directional.

Turning finally to the people who perform the translating we can pose the question as to what their contribution to building bridges involves. They are domesticating foreignness because they present it just as they have understood it. Translators are cognitively living in two cultures – the foreign and their own, rather than building bridges over or between them. They themselves are the bridge and not necessarily a solid one.

Translation also has an effect on the person performing the various translations. The translator is constantly transforming himself in various ways. As Steiner explained, the experience of translating may disturb the translator and even silence his own voice (Steiner 1975, 325). But it may also enlarge his or her horizon, as any translation confers a new knowledge input. The translator is growing as a person.

Translation is not “navigating on a sea of words between languages and cultures” (Bassnett 2000, 106) but rather the translator’s task is to represent a message, understood from a text in another language. We then have to strictly distinguish between the mere comprehension of that text and the strategic move of writing a translation. The goal of that task is to facilitate communication between people of different cultures. The issue of comprehension will be involved, as one will only translate what and how one has understood.

## THE ROLE OF HERMENEUTICS

The main factor in the process is the translator himself with his knowledge of languages, cultures, technical features and writing strategies. The focus is on translation competence as a deeply subjective phenomenon regarding comprehension and writing, and this situation is best analyzed against the background of hermeneutics (Cercel 2009).

Hermeneutics as a modern language philosophy has often been described as a theory of comprehension. However, it does not explain “how we understand”, or “what we understand”, rather it tackles the question of “whether we can understand at all”. Hermeneutics asks about the conditions of understanding, and the personal act of comprehension, then, is seen as an event that happens (or not). The point of departure in the hermeneutical philosophy is the individual as a historical and social person who wants to orient him/herself in the surrounding world, to understand others, and act in the society. This is relevant for translation.

Hermeneutics distinguishes – from a personalized world view – between objects/facts, with their cognition and human activity, with its inner motivation, i.e. between objectivity and subjectivity, analysis and evidence, strategy and impulse, rationale and intuition, inference and impression, proof and argumentation. In his book *Hermeneutics and Criticism* (1838/1998) Friedrich Schleiermacher stressed that thought and volition do refer to each

other in the acting person, but are also ineluctably separate. Any conviction is contestable, an intention may not be realizable, and rules are not automatically a maxim of action.

Schleiermacher gave some suggestions on how to gain firm ground for understanding a text. He mainly designated four factors of a “hermeneutical process”: grasping a text message, its conditions of origination, its situational background, and its placement within a larger text type entity. This produces a dynamism of the textual “object”. Schleiermacher calls here for a combination of “grammatical analysis” with genre comparison in the language, and a “divinatory understanding” of the individual text as a psychological exegesis of the passage in its context. The divinatory and the comparative method are closely interlinked, and there is an interplay between rules and intuition. There will be phases of understanding more driven by methodology and others where intuition is the principal strength.

For the purpose of supporting one’s interpretation of a text to expound its meaning, Schleiermacher (1998, §6) established several alternating antinomies of analysis as a method. There is, among others, a circle of comprehension or “interpretive circle” between the whole of the text and the single element in it, or a circle between the constitution and the actual effect of the text when the author might have had other intentions than those that are visible from the written text to the present reader. This methodological approach corresponds to well-known aspects of text analysis via the lexis, semantics and pragmatics usually applied for strengthening one’s interpretation (Thiselton 2006, 191). But Schleiermacher maintains that there is always an additional aspect of intuition, since understanding is an art. He comments, “The rules of analysis have no recipe for their application. It remains an art” (Schleiermacher 1998, 283). Truth reveals itself intuitively in a person’s mind.

The basis for this to happen is an awareness of the topics treated and of the language concerned. Without any uniting bond no understanding will be possible. The art is based on relevant knowledge, since a naïve interpretation cannot be acceptable, e.g. for responsible translation. This is also the basic idea of Relevance Theory (Sperber, Wilson 1986).

It is the place of the so-called “hermeneutical circle”: I will only understand something if I already know a part of it, when there is a common basis. This observation is not trivial because it means that a merely linguistic analysis of a text does not lead to its meaning, just as the pure perception of a strange phenomenon does not result in its adequate interpretation. The “difficulty” of a text is a relative concept, not to be described as a textual quality. It depends on the reader’s capacity. This means that the translator has to be aware of his or her own personal horizon of experience and knowledge and must widen it phenomenologically by learning and entering into unfamiliar horizons, e.g. to foreign cultures and scientific disciplines.

There is the historical context in which the strange text was written, and there is the context in which the interpreter stands. It is impossible for the interpreter to eliminate his or her own context by means of pure objectivism. But precisely by becoming aware of the

modern context and its influence on the way one reads the text, one may then come to a fresher, more accurate, and deeper understanding of the text.

The hermeneutical circle as the interpretive horizon is a bond between the reader and the text, and we cannot get away from it. However it does not fence us in, because we may always learn new things and thus transcend the original circle. That is what happens in understanding: an enlargement of our horizon, which prepares the basis for further understanding at the same time. The truth of a text thus revealed is historically determined (Thiselton 2006, 747). There is no quasi-objective, ever-unchanged truth in social communities. Truth is only found dialectically, in a discussion process within a group, valid for a certain period of time, and ever remaining open for new interpretation.

When we have enlarged our own horizon of knowledge, we will be able to grasp a text's message that was written against another horizon. Hans-Georg Gadamer in his work *Truth and method* (1960/1990) speaks of a "fusion of horizons" at which point comprehension happens. And this process is ever dynamic as individuals are placed in a historical situation and their conscience is continuously growing.

## COMPREHENSION AS AN ONGOING PROCESS

George Steiner (1975, 7ff) remarked long ago that language is historically determined, that it is changing in history. The time factor causes a constant creative move within languages: Today I speak differently than yesterday because I have learnt something in the meantime. The individual character of humans tends towards a creative expression, and this develops the language further on. We can observe an endless repetition of ideas in different expressions, a reworking of language by itself, when classical works are again and again reinterpreted, commented with other words, and translated. We have to relinquish the goal of a full equivalence between originals and translations.

The message is a virtual entity permanently bound in language. Comprehension is an ongoing cognitive process and any new attempt will transform the first cognitive representation of the source text's message. We call this "interpretation" and this process is not fixed, not even in an individual person. Any rereading by the same person may lead to a deeper understanding of the message by grasping more aspects of its potential content. This is called the helical movement of understanding (Stolze 2011, 66). The meaning is rather a potential to be displayed. Understanding by reading does not destroy that text, an idea that was introduced by Steiner (1975, 313), it rather helps to unveil its potential. Some acts of comprehension put us close in front of a text, others offer more distance to it. Various aspects inherent in a text with its meaning potential (which has been fixed by the author in a certain written form) come to light or fall into the background. And any new act of reading, any change of perspective, will lead to a slightly different view – until there is sufficient comprehensive understanding.

This is true for literary translation just as it is for translation in communication for specific purposes. On any given occasion the result depends on the translator's knowledge and learning capacity. The fact that different translators will produce slightly different translations is generally accepted due to it being our daily experience. But this effect is also true for one and the same translating person, given the factor of time.

What happens when a technical text is interpreted and translated in a naïve way as general language is shown in the example below:

• **Technical Text**

*Non ferrous scrap treatment.*

We attest that the O. scrap plant operates under the authorization n° 750... of the province L.

After maximum recovery of metallic parts, due to state of the art technology, the remaining non-metallic steriles are dumped on Class I authorized site of NNNN.

Correct terms in German:

*Nichteisenschrott*

*Schrottverarbeitungsfirma*

*Genehmigungsbescheid*

*Rückgewinnung*

*Nach Klasse I zugelassene Deponie*

• **Layman translation**

*Nicht-Alteisen Behandlung oder Die  
Behandlung von Nicht-Alteisen*

Wir bestätigen, dass die O. Altwarenfabrik unter der Referenznummer (Lizenz-nummer) 750... des Gebiets/der Gemeinde L. arbeitet.

Nach einem Maximum an Wiederherstellung/Recycling von Metallteilen, gemäß dem neuesten Stand der Technik, werden die restlichen Nicht-Metall (steriles?), nach meiner Genehmigung, auf dem (Bau-)Platz von NNNN abgeladen.

*(Übersetzungsbüro)*

## THE HERMENEUTICAL TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

Elements of a hermeneutical translation competence therefore include the readiness for self-critical reflection, the openness for constant learning, the ability to integrate new cognitive input, the courage for linguistic creativity, and an empathetic identification with the message. Only then will the message be translated in an authentic way by the translator as a co-author.

And again, this capacity, this translation competence is growing constantly. It depends on the given knowledge and the current learning process and input of experience, which is never static. And the learning input, even from other sources, will transform any subsequent translations of the same text by a translator into an everyday experience. When we read our works from last week, we instantly see errors, inadequacies, bad style, etc. and revise them.

The hermeneutical approach to translation, which places the person of a translator in the centre, will always reflect on the aspects of phenomenology (Lakoff 1987, 5). Things,

foreign ideas, and texts appear to us and are categorized by us in a way determined by our given knowledge and world view and ideology at that moment. This has consequences for our competence and for our attitude to the work. It presupposes that the translator first should have an understanding of both cultures concerned in the translation, as he or she will be rooted in one of them, the other being strange to him or her.

Translation via a hermeneutic approach involves great responsibility. We know that interpretation is somewhat subjective and incomplete, but readers assume that they receive the content of a text translated in as faithful manner as possible. The translator will reflect on their own standpoint and ask whether there is given enough knowledge to translate that text responsibly, so that specialist communication is continued or literary messages can gain a new audience. Self-criticism is important, and at the same time the awareness that the final goal of a fully identical translation cannot absolutely be reached due to the influence of history. The translator will conduct much research to get an “informed understanding” by ever better entering into the world of a foreign culture or of an unknown technical domain. This is not impossible, but it’s never completed. Future transformation of texts, translators and the target audience are involved. We cannot discuss a relationship of equivalence between a source text and a target text, since the latter is yet to be established.

## FIELDS OF ORIENTATION FOR TRANSLATORS

For this purpose the translator needs holistic dimensions of orientation since Schleiermacher established that every element in a text is ruled by the whole entity of sense. Regarding the comprehension of a text we will look at and try to collect information on the *cultural background*, *the discourse field*, *the conceptual world with key words*, and *the predicative mode*. Any cultural aspects are reflected in the form of texts and can be detected. In later formulating the translation rhetorical aspects will be decisive, i.e. *the medium*, *coherence*, *stylistics*, and *function of the target text*. Our goal is precision in rendering the text’s message by translation in an adequate way for target readers.

As an example, we might refer to traditional literary translation where many early translators did not consider it important to conduct detailed research into unfamiliar cultures. This led to text manipulation and ethnocentric interpretation (Bassnett, Lefevere 1998). If I did not know whether a text in the English language came from Southern Africa, from India, or from Britain, I might misunderstand certain features or I might fail to clarify some implicit references to the local culture.

In the process of understanding the message, we will have to consider the text as a whole. Initially, we will only arrive at an understanding of some constituting parts of a text, and further research may be necessary before we can present the message responsibly in its entirety.

The holistic approach to texts in literature and in specialist communication is similar but the required knowledge base is different. Literature is embedded in a culture, whereas specialist communication focuses on a technical domain. Fields of orientation in reading will guide us.

**Table 1.** Fields of orientation: reading

<b>Translator's reading</b>		<b>Literature</b>	<b>Specialist communication</b>
understanding	Cultural background	Culture with its history, time, author's environment	Epoch of text, area of sciences or humanities with state of development
	Discourse field	Social setting in culture, communicative situation, author's ideology	Special domain, level of communication (expert/lay), text type
	Conceptual world	Titles, key words, semantic word fields, cultural associations, metaphors, thematic axes	Terminological conceptualization (definition vs. convention), section of special domain
	Predicative mode	Speaker's voice, verbal tense, focusing, idioms, style register, irony, quotations, intertextuality	Form of information presentation (active/passive), speech acts, sentence structure, formulaic language, use of footnotes

Instead of proceeding to an initial 'text-analysis' of language and grammar structures, e.g. particles and hypotaxes, translators will – in positioning their text – ask themselves: What knowledge base do I have (in this field)? Am I able to understand this specific message? From which country/people does it come? What do I know about their *cultural background*? In general language texts, as well as in literary texts, the social place of a specific group, its *discourse field*, and the cultural rooting of people are important elements, as no culture is a homogeneous entity. Every field of communication has its specific concepts and ideology and these recur in texts.

Then there is the category of semantics regarding the *conceptual world*. The key to finding adequate formulations for meanings in particular areas of human activity is awareness of the subject being treated, which is set in a particular word field (isotopy) and presented through specific terminology or key words. A coherent text normally has

a theme appearing in a network of semantic relations (Stolze 1992, 133). A description of these relations provides the translator with context-specific semantic strategies for presenting the meaning of the text, which is often already hinted at in the title. A first step for drafting the translation could thus be the determination of a word field and the search for corresponding lexemes within that field in the other language. Visual imagination will help in the process of searching for expressions. Semantic compatibility within word combinations is also important for the preservation of the idiomatic coherence of a text; otherwise it will be difficult to re-capture the overall cognitive scene of the source text.

Each text also shows a certain *predicative mode*. There are idioms and phrases that should find adequate equivalents in the translation, since mood and focus tell us something about what was important to the author and what was not. The form of information presentation with speech acts and sentence structure is an essential element of the specialist texts being observed. The point is to consider such elements and not to overlook them in the process of translation. Once a text has been understood to the translator's satisfaction it can also be translated.

## PRESENTING THE MESSAGE WITH EMPATHY

Translators are responsible for presenting the message derived from a source text to target culture readers in a way that those people may interpret and react to it according to their own interests. It is never the translator's task – except when especially commissioned – to offer them an ethnocentric interpretation of the original, or to explain every detail for them, leaving aside all obscure aspects. This would rather be a weakness due to a lack of reflection.

The competent translator will ask him or herself whether the understanding offered might not be a subjective interpretation, requiring deeper research for a more authentic understanding and presentation of the message. Thus, the translator's task is to preserve the primary loyalty to that message. Like a co-author he or she will present it as if it were their own opinion, with empathy. And just as in reading an original text, the reader will decide whether the translated message is acceptable for them or not.

“When I know what to say, I will find the right words for it.” The cognitive representation of the message, when it is first understood, leads to an intuitively produced appearance of target-language words and formulations as linguistic frames for the mental representation, in which this message is reproduced (Stolze 2011, 141). Ideas attract frames. Such a cognitive movement is an ‘autopoietic’ process, not completely controllable by consciousness; the message simply changes its linguistic form as words are found for it (Fillmore 1977). ‘Poiesis’ implies the transformation of something rather than creation out of nothing. And ‘autopoiesis’ is a characteristic feature of living



systems, such as human beings when they act as translators; intuition is a core aspect of translation.

The responsible and professional translator will have to motivate his/her decision about how best to formulate the message. Any ‘foreign’ idea, once grasped, can certainly be expressed in another language, but translation is neither a subjective pleasure for linguists, nor a narrow ethnocentric interpretation that risks being misunderstood. The translator is a responsible co-author.

Text production with a purpose is following rhetorical rules that have already been presented in antiquity: *inventio* – *dispositio* – *elocutio* – *memoria* – *actio*. One has to know what to say, then find an adequate disposition of the arguments, in an eloquent style, using the right media to be convincing in order to realize the planned action with a coherent text (Knappe 2000). This may be observed in translation as well; however there is no new creation of the message. The message being translated has first been understood and analyzed by the translator. So the translator’s revision of an initial draft might begin with checking the *coherence* of the text, considering its *medium*, then looking at the *style* used in the target language as to whether this is adequate for the disposition of the intended message coming from the foreign culture. Obstacles to comprehensibility due to alterity have to be overcome.

## ORIENTATION FOR WRITING

The translator tries to find adequate words for the message as best as s/he has understood it. Understanding leads to a first draft of a translation that represents an overview of the message as a whole. In order to make it more accurate for target readers, the first draft will then be reviewed in several stages.

Many researchers view text production as a problem-solving process, following Hayes and Flower (1980) who defined the process of professional text production by distinguishing the phases of planning, e.g. that of tentatively translating one’s ideas into text structures, and of reviewing the solutions according to clear communicative goals. Draft writing and reviewing are repeated several times in a cyclical movement, until a final text is produced that corresponds to the initial writing goal. When translating, this goal is achieved with an authentic presentation of the original message.

The significance of the various qualities must be reassessed with each new translation task; there are no general rules, as every correction results in a subsequent correction at another point. The specific difficulty regarding translation as text production is the coordination of the various features that all contribute to the intended meaning of the text as a whole. Such features are designed gradually, in the constant reviewing and reformulating process of the first draft. There are some fields of orientation as presented below.

**Table 2.** Fields of orientation: writing

<b>Rhetorical writing</b>		<b>Literature</b>	<b>Specialist communication</b>
	Mediality <i>memoria</i>	Genre, text shape, pictures, verse order, print form	Medium, layout, illustrations, space available, structural markers, script fonts
	Coherence <i>actio</i>	Titles, semantic web, word fields, synonymy, paradigmatic compatibility of lexemes, allusions	Equivalence of scientific terminology, specification of scholarly concepts, technical word compounding
<b>Formulating</b>	Stylistics <i>elocutio</i>	Expressiveness, tense, prosody of emotion, metonymy, metaphors, word play, alliteration, suspense, rhyme	Functional style, phraseology. standard text blocks, passive voice, directives, speech acts, controlled language, quotations
	Function <i>dispositio</i>	Author's intention, structuring, audience design, cognitive scene created	Macrostructure, parallel text types, addressees' expectation, intelligibility, topic discussed
	Alterity <i>inventio</i>	Topics foreign to target culture, taboos, revolutionary statements, unknown realia, emotional objects from source culture, connotation of colors etc.	Inadequate formulations by interference, statements unsuitable for technical communication, observance of legal rules

One will have to observe the *medium* used for the translation. The shape of the text plays a role, problems of space in the layout are apparent and might determine the translator's decision. In specialist texts, the internal relationship to illustrations and the layout prerequisites often pose a particular writing problem. Script fonts and structuring signs might have a different appeal in various cultures. Texts belong to a certain genre, and awareness of genre norms, as they are cognitive formulation schemata, will be necessary. When we have the description – through parallel texts for instance – of the characteristics of target texts, then text production can follow a model based on that.

The *coherence* of a translation text is decisive in order to create the intended cognitive scene in the readers' minds. Titles, a semantic web, word fields, synonymy, paradigmatic compatibility of lexemes, allusions all have to be considered, as sense

is being created by repetitive semantic aspects in lexemes (Stolze 2011, 157). The equivalence of scientific terminology, the specification of scholarly concepts, and technical word compounding are central in specialist communication as they mark the authenticity of such texts.

*Stylistics*, then, is a core subject in translation revision. In concrete poetry, for instance, the text may be arranged in a special form; there may be rhythm, regular meter, verse order or even pictures contained in the text. Metaphors and wordplay, aesthetics and emotion are a well-known topic of literary studies. Text organization in a macrostructure, intelligibility and adequate forms of address, style, institutional background, and thematic progression are some of the relevant rhetorical features (Antos 1989, 13) which can be described in stylistic forms at the text level.

Quotations will be respected and checked carefully, as intertextuality is an aspect of meaning. In LSP texts, linguistic speech acts are marked to indicate directives or legal obligations; this is done through special terms and phrases that are employed in translation. An interesting aspect is the passive voice, which is often used in LSP texts. Sometimes, the translator has to go beyond strict grammar rules that discourage the frequent use of the passive voice, invoking accessibility; in brief, the passive voice must not be eliminated in the translation of specialist texts for so-called reasons of clear understanding.

The text's *function* should be realized, as it is a part of the author's intention or given by a special commission. The function is revealed in the particular macrostructure of the text. Thus, discourse markers which may structure the message, such as the pronoun chosen to represent the speaker's perspective (*I, we, the anonymous one*) should always be observed, as well as the exact tenses used (Stolze 1992, 233). A correspondence to parallel text types and the observance of the addressees' expectations will enhance intelligibility of the text regarding the scientific topic discussed.

Finally the role of *alterity* in the translation will come into focus. Topics foreign to the target culture, taboos, revolutionary statements, unknown realia, emotional objects from the source culture, connotations of colors etc. have to be verified for their adequacy in the translation. One will have to decide on their possibility, adaptation, elimination or explication. Inadequate style by interference, statements unsuitable for technical communication can still be revised at this stage, and any legal prescriptions for the design of texts have to be observed.

All these discourse-specific rules will be considered in the translation. The goal of translation is to create the scene in the reader's mind, or to continue a specialist communication. Therefore, the translator will focus holistically on the text as a whole, and not on grammar structures.

In the revision of the first draft of the translation, all these fields of orientation play an important role as they are interrelated, and never equally valid. The translator will

have to decide in each individual case which problem is dominant. Multi-faceted texts may need to be considered at several levels of complexity. As the potential of the various languages is different, the translator will have to make a hierarchy of the various aspects for formulating the translation text.

Since literature as general language communication is situated in society – and is informed by its cultural particularities and linguistic creativity – it should exploit the full potential of language. The need for linguistic creativity and visual freedom is strongly present, and the translator needs courage and confidence in his/her own idiomatic proficiency. Specialist communication, on the contrary, is situated in a certain working area within a domain or discipline that relies on a particular scientific conceptualization. This makes texts possibly more difficult to translate when translation is an internal communication among scholars or scientists, and the person translating is not part of that group.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Only if the professional translator is fully responsible and committed to his/her task, will the reader accept the translation as an adequate text. Translation should enable readers to look beyond the text structures into the socio-cultural background, making it possible for them to enter a literary world created by a novel, or to continue a specialist communication initiated by the original text. Why should readers ask for a translation, when it does not – empathetically – represent the original for them?

Of course, numerous studies on language and translation have been published already. However, often their focus is only on external subject matters or specific features, such as different cultural concepts, stylistic qualities, analysis of macrostructure, the problems of lexicography, etc. The point where all these individual different aspects come together is their interrelation in the translator him/herself as a professional person who acts on the texts holistically and tries to produce an adequate translation apt for further interpretation by readers.

The translator's work is based in hermeneutics, since one needs to understand the text without necessarily being a member of the original addressees. Whereas authors often speak intuitively about their topics, translators will particularly focus on the language form, in order to achieve precision in their writing.

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## HERMENEUTINIS POŽIŪRIS Į VERTIMĄ

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariant vertimo teksto suvokimo problemą remiamasi apibrėžtimi, kad vertimas – tai veikla, kurioje visų pirma atsispindi vertėjo individualybė; siekiant vertimo kalba perteikti originalo teksto mintį, pasireiškia teksto suvokimo, kaip hermeneutikos raiškos, aspektas. Atskleidžiama, kad suvokimas yra nebaigtinis procesas, kurį stimuliuoja hermeneutinis atsinaujinančių žinių ir mokymosi ciklas. Hermeneutika paremta vertimo kompetencija – tai pasirengimas savikritiškai reflektuoti, siekis nuolat mokytis, gebėjimas aktyvinti naują kognityvinę patirtį, kūrybos ryžtas ir empatinė vertėjo asmenybės raiška perteikiamoje informacijoje.

Hermeneutinis požiūris į vertimą visų pirma reiškia didelę vertėjo atsakomybę: vertėjai žino, kad teksto interpretacija yra subjektyvi ir neišsami, tačiau skaitytojai tikisi, kad tekstas išverstas taip ištikimai laikantis originalo, kaip tik įmanoma. Kad pasiektų tokį tikslą, vertėjai turi taikyti holistines teksto orientacijos dimensijas, taigi turi atsizvelgti ir į retorinius teksto pateikimo aspektus. Vertimo užduotis – tai sudėtinga užduotis įvairias teksto vertimo dimensijas sujungti į vieną visumą; šios dimensijos kaip holistinio požiūrio sritys ir aptartos šiame straipsnyje.