Cognitive linguistic psychology and hermeneutics *

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Hermeneutics has become the focal discipline for reflecting on the relationship of language to meaning and reality. Among hermeneutical philosophers it is particularly Paul Ricoeur who has developed an exemplary theory of language applied to human existence and practice. This theory of language shows remarkable similarities with the underlying theory and practice of the linguistic psychology that has ensued from the works of Mead (1934) and Vygotsky (1962). Bandura (1977), Meichenbaum (1977), and Ellis (1962) have extended the work of Mead and Vygotsky by incorporating their findings on the relations of language to behaviour particularly through the use of the empirical method. This approach to language has been attacked recently by Packer (1985), Faulconer and Williams (1985), and Frank (1987). In their critiques of the explanatory and empirical methods these authors have relied on the hermeneutical ontology of Heidegger (1978) and Gadamer (1975). They overlooked the seminal work of Paul Ricoeur who has addressed the issue of explanatory methods which we will show is capable of embracing a wider set of psychological findings. His proposal of a dialectic of understanding and explanation within a hermeneutical theory and practice offers a unique opportunity to elaborate an interaction of empirical procedures with what hermeneuticists call understanding. In this article we will test the avenues of such an interaction by applying the hermeneutical theory to cognitive linguistic psychology.

* The three authors contributed equally in the production of this text.
We will develop this position in three steps. In the first part the singular advance of Ricoeur's theory beyond Heidegger and Gadamer will be explored. Its focus will be on the role and determination of language. We will present Ricoeur's thesis that the appropriative force of language lies not only in the realm of understanding, as maintained by Heidegger and Gadamer, but also at the level of explanation. It will allow us to contest the proposals of Faulconer, Williams and Frank which seek to recover the ontological thrust of understanding without accounting for the empirical route to understanding. Ricoeur's dialectic of understanding and explanation can help to overcome both the seduction of prejudice and tradition in Gadamer's hermeneutics and the rhetorical seduction of Frank's therapist. In the second part we want to examine how the explanatory moment of Ricoeur's hermeneutics can be enriched and extended by a consideration of the empirical moment of cognitive linguistic psychology. In a third and final part we will show how Ricoeur's theory of general hermeneutics and the operations of cognitive linguistic psychology clarify one another especially from the viewpoint of the cognitive and language function of the depressed person. We maintain that the point of intersection between hermeneutics and cognitive linguistic psychology is Ricoeur's crucial concept of narrative text and the theoretical construct which we shall call "research story."

1. Methodical hermeneutics

The hermeneutical tradition following Heidegger proposes two dimensions of language: language as an ontological power to let-say or to manifest our Dasein, and language as a logical structure (Heidegger, 1978; Gadamer, 1975; Ricoeur, 1981). It argues that the central role of language lies in the former. The ontological approach to language maintains that the original gift of language is to reveal that which is the ground of human existence. It is Heidegger who first insisted on this capacity of language to manifest Being. Language for him is the "house of being." Humans are the beings whose meaning and existence become manifest in language. Language in such a context is not first of all a possession or a tool which I manipulate in order to communicate. "The sense of human experience is made through us but not by us. We do not dominate the meaning, but meaning makes us at