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## The Pursuit of Meaning: Epistemological Approach to Subject Analysis and Consistency Between Cataloguers in Determination of Subject Matter of Documents

Narges Neshat<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** Librarians always use Subject Headings and thesauruses as Controlled Vocabulary. This means that cataloguers must select a single subject when referring to these sources for a single document. But by looking at most of the library catalogs, such an assumption is not confirmed and two cataloguers have attributed two different subjects to a single document. Why is this? Why are two catalogers/ indexers who see the same text and the same Standard Subject Heading or Controlled Vocabulary unable to agree on the subject matter of the document?

**Methodology:** Because the main problems of the representation of documents are concerned with meaning and language, the subject analysis is here explored from a philosophical perspective and thereby provides an understanding of the subject analysis process. The presentation of this analysis is based on the framework of Gadamer's hermeneutic and Wittgenstein's interpretive theory.

**Findings:** This is part of the author's publications on philosophical issues in information science, especially on hermeneutics and the interpretive aspects of librarians' work, that have followed by an epistemological approach to subject analysis in cataloging and indexing.

**Conclusion:** Discussing meaning-making and subject analysis as an epistemological concept and as found, for instance, in cataloging and indexing which reflect expressions of that prejudice, may provide an opportunity to indexers and cataloguers to explore the interpretive aspects and hermeneutic uncertainty and consider as a concept in a part of their field of work.

**Value:** The meaning of a text or subject matter in a book may result from the interaction of sense-the cataloger's or author's mind on one hand, and engaged lingual system (SH, Classification systems, CV, or any other documentary tools), social environment and social-cultural atmosphere on the other hand.

**Keywords:** *Subject Analysis; Subject indexing; Philosophical Perspective; Meaning-Making; Uncertainty; Epistemological Aspect; Hermeneutics; Gadamer, Hans- Georg; Wittgenstein, Ludwig; Language Issues*

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## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

Subject Headings(SH) and Classification Schemes have been developed with the presumption to provide consistency among catalogers' operations. Because when similar information follows the same pattern, the recall of information retrieval will be increased. Hence, the consistency concept has exceeded the cataloging field and has been the subject of several research even in the indexing area. But despite all the attempts, it appears many users have failed to retrieve their required information and they believe that subject indexes are unable to provide needed information. Why is that?

### Purpose

Librarians always use Subject Headings and thesauruses as Controlled Vocabulary. This means that cataloguers must select a single subject when referring to these sources for a single document. But by looking at most of the library catalogs, such an assumption is not confirmed and two cataloguers have attributed two different subjects to a single document. Why is this? Why are two catalogers/ indexers who see the same text and the same Standard Subject Heading or Controlled Vocabulary unable to agree on the subject matter of the document?

### Methodology

Because the main problems of the representation of documents are concerned with meaning and language, the subject analysis is here explored from a philosophical perspective and thereby provides an understanding of the subject analysis process. The presentation of this analysis is based on the framework of Gadamer's hermeneutic and Wittgenstein's interpretive theory.

### Findings

Both semiology and semantic dimensions must be considered while reading a text. Word understanding involves semiology that may be possible through the structuralistic method and linguistics utilization. But in semantics, we encounter a lingual system of a text helping us signify the text words. This aspect concerns text content produced by discourse and also text messages revealed in the discourse framework. Although this step will not be irrelevant to an interpreter's prejudgment, semantic/ text comprehension derived from it as well as the subject matter (as a keyword offered by either an end user or an indexer or a text producer) attributed to it, maybe along with his/her presumptions.

The fact that there is neither starting point nor an endpoint to understanding and interpretation is a fundamental element of hermeneutics on which Gadamer subsequently draws. Still, understanding must begin somewhere - and these "somewhere" are what are called "fore-structures" or "pre-conceptions".

Therefore, interpretation differences will be an undeniable reality. That, sometimes, we face-recognizing a reality with various views, is an issue in which history, science, and philosophy are the most prominent witness to it. According to Rumi's Masnavi<sup>1</sup>:

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1. Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī / also known as Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī, Mevlānā/Mawlānā and Mevlevī/Mawlawī (1207-1273), Persian poet

"Everyone became my friend from his opinion / None sought out my secrets  
from within me" (Persian poet).

Or:

Through their views, they find different visions: One calls it "D" and the other calls it "A".

Epistemologists determine some effective factors as follows:

- differences between individuals' mental ability or their understanding competency;
- conception reserves;
- relative effects of cultural/ social environment;
- orientation and conclusion upon various situations dealing with realities;
- diversity of different knowledge systems;
- prejudices and presumptions;

various views and approaches.

## Conclusion

Discussing meaning-making and subject analysis as an epistemological concept and as found, for instance, in cataloging and indexing which reflect expressions of that prejudice, may provide an opportunity to indexers and cataloguers to explore the interpretive aspects and hermeneutic uncertainty and consider as a concept in a part of their field of work.

## Value

The meaning of a text or subject matter in a book may result from the interaction of sense- the cataloger's or author's mind on one hand, and engaged lingual system (SH, Classification systems, CV, or any other documentary tools), social environment and social-cultural atmosphere on the other hand.

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## 1. Introduction

One of the most important issues for better storage and retrieval of information is subject analyses, which have been considered since the past time to the present. The small card catalogs (5.5\*7.5) from the Charles Ammi Cutter (1837-1904) until now, which computerized catalogs have a strong presence, have been main research tools in libraries for years and numerous rules on their formulation have been developed and many standards have been suggested as well. A review of these rules and standards indicates that their final goal may be to the consistency of cataloging and library catalogs.

Also, the internationalization of rules shows that uniformity and consistency of catalogers' operations will be important not only in a single library at the national level but at the global level.

Subject Headings(SH) and Classification Schemes have been developed with the presumption to provide consistency among catalogers' operations. Because when similar information follows the same pattern, the recall of information retrieval will be increased. Hence, the consistency concept has exceeded the cataloging field and has been the subject of several research even in the indexing area. But despite all the attempts, it appears many users have failed to retrieve their required information and they believe that subject indexes are unable to provide needed information. Why is that?

Librarians always use Subject Headings(SH) and thesauruses as Controlled Vocabulary (CV). CV can be defined as "a list of terms that have been enumerated explicitly" (ANSI/NISO, 2005, p. 5) to organize and represent information to facilitate information retrieval.

This means that catalogers must select a single subject when referring to these sources for the same book. But by looking at most of the library catalogs, such an assumption is not confirmed and two catalogers have attributed two different subjects to a single book. Why is this? Why are two catalogers/indexers who see the same book and the same Standard Subject Heading or another CV unable to agree on the subject of the book?

Subject analysis in cataloging has been the focus of debate among librarians and professionals for over a century. As Olson acknowledged (2008, 53), "professionals need to understand their catalogs and must know these things critically, and beyond mere acceptance of standards".

Patrick Wilson (1968), Claire Bagtol (1986), and Jens Erik May (2000) are among the few people who have dealt with multiple interpretations of meaning in indexing and cataloging.

Their findings and the findings of other researchers in the area of information science, social psychology, and psycholinguistics indicate that the source of the problem might lie in the background and culture of each indexer or cataloger.

Hutchins (1978) believed that The literature on indexing and classification contains remarkably little discussion of the processes of indexing and classifying. We find a great deal about the construction of index languages and classification systems, about the principles of classification, about the correct formulation of index entries . . . and about the evaluation of indexes and information systems. But we find very little about how indexers and classifiers decide what the subject of a document is, how they decide what it is "about" (Hutchins, 1977, 172). While librarians

especially catalogers and indexers should have a clearer understanding of the problems related to the process of subject analysis and subject determination.



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Šauperl (2004) developed a general model of the indexing process from observations and interviews of 12 catalogers in three American academic libraries. His study revealed that catalogers are aware of the author's, the user's, and their meaning, but do not try to accommodate them all. On the other hand, they make every effort to build common ground with catalog users by studying documents related to the document being cataloged, and by considering catalog records and subject headings related to the subject identified in the document being cataloged. They try to build common ground with other catalogers by using cataloging tools and by inferring unstated rules of cataloging from examples in the catalogs. This article tries to follow the consistency of catalogers to make meaning and determine the subject for documents with the epistemological approach of Gadamer and Wittgenstein.

## 2. Subject analysis

In Controlled Vocabulary (CV) systems (e.g. Subject Headings, Thesaurus, and est.) certain terms assigned as subject index expressions are allocated to any record. An expression, often, introduces one subject, and a particular subject is usually introduced by one single expression.

A retrieval system utilizing controlled vocabulary and developing cross-reference systems, may benefit from an authority file. Subject authority files follow two goals: a) integration, and b) uniformity assurance on subject headings and cross-references.

For choosing subject matter in any subject system, content analysis of a document includes three steps: 1) specifying the main subject of the work to be indexed or cataloged; 2) realizing various subjects or thematic aspects as well as their relationships; 3) representing both of them through the index language utilizing Subject Headings or another Controlled Vocabulary.

It is relatively obvious that when two catalogers start subject-assigning to a similar text, they choose the different subject matter. In other words, when one compares two terms belonging to the same document developed by two cataloguers, he/she discovers that the indexers or cataloguers have a disagreement over their judgment about more appropriately providing document content. Undoubtedly this disagreement derives from uncertainty existing in any information storage and retrieval. Although in an information system, similar documents indexed by two or more indexers could not be found, in monothematic texts there is broad disagreement so, it is too difficult to find their thematic similarity by suggesting topics to them.

Since consistency (or inconsistency) on similarity (or dissimilarity) of suggested subject matter to a single document by catalogers, reflects his judgment type to the contained information in the document, consistency could be considered a measurement tool of similarity or dissimilarity level for different individual reactions to the same information process.

A catalog or an index can be reviewed from two points of view:

A) Storage philosophy, and B) retrieval philosophy

The Subject analysis would be connected to the relevance concept. Relevance is often considered a correlation indicator between an information system and an information seeker (during retrieval), but the such a connection can be evaluated between descriptors and document content (during storage). A cataloguer selects a subject matter or descriptor for the content of a document, he/ she thinks, reflects the concept and subject of the document. The relationship between a concept of a document



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and the selected term for it, will be an important issue upon indexing, cataloging, or any information storage and retrieval systems.

Frohmann, who argues that indexing takes two steps, the first of which focuses on determining the subject of a document and the second of which focuses on converting that identified subject into the language of an indexing system, has pointed out that (Frohmann, 1990, 82).

From a retrieval point of view, a necessary condition for a successful search and access to the required document is the relationship between terms used by users and terms used in a system. Failure in developing such congruence leads to the reduction of comprehensiveness in the relevant materials. The failure may occur through one of the following reasons:

1. The author is unable to express clearly the subject of his/ her book, or the cataloger cannot understand the subject.
2. The subject search structure in the system may be designed in a way that a user is unable to benefit from it easily.
3. The engaged technology in a system for subject storage and retrieval is not efficient (Oddy, 1996).

Wilson says determining the subject matter of the book depends on the cataloger's interpretation of the author's intentions (Wilson, 1968). As he argues, ...What seems to us to stand out depends on us as well as on the writing, on what we are ready to notice, what catches our interest, and what absorbs our attention. The writer has some control over our sense of what dominates what, and the better the writer, the more control he has; but he does not have total control (1968, 82).

In other words, the dominant aspect, the subject, or thing treated in a document varies from person to person and we "cannot expect that everyone's attention will be dominated by the same things" (Wilson, 1968, 83).

Therefore, when two or more catalogers/indexers separately assign a descriptor to a single document, they believe that their chosen subject refers to the content of the document. So, it can be pointed out that the degree of consistency of the subject chosen for the same document indicates how much the cataloguers agree on the correct understanding and representation of the content of the same document.

Consistency will be the agreement level of cataloguers upon comprehension and representation of document contents. A poor level of this agreement may result from some differences in experiences, practical skills, scientific knowledge and dexterity, motivational and environmental factors, administrative or organizational restrictions, etc. (Neshat and Horri, 2008). Some scholars have noted in LIS literature how little is known about the subject to determine the process. This conclusion is highlighted by Farrow (1991, 164), who, after a thorough investigation of the problem, concludes that,

... there is in any case a need for more research into the indexing process itself . . . It is surely remarkable that so little is known about so basic a professional activity.

This article explains at least some aspects related to the subject analysis process and consistency among librarians in understanding and determining the subject matter, and proposes an epistemological approach to understanding this process.

### **3.Epistemological approaches**

Epistemology is the area of philosophy that investigates how human beings know what they know and, as such, it seeks to give a theoretical account of what constitutes



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knowledge. In recent years, the epistemological foundations of cataloging, classification, and indexing have increasingly become a subject of interest within the field of knowledge organization (e.g. Vickery, 1986 ; Oddy, 1996; Hjørland, 1998; Mai, 2000, and est.)

why are two people who see the same document unable to agree on the subject of the document?

Two interpretation approaches are offered here as a framework for understanding the epistemological aspect of subject cataloging and consistency among cataloguers. One of them is from Gadamer's hermeneutics point of view and the second is from Wittgenstein's point of view.

### **A: Determination of the subject matter from Gadamer's Hermeneutics point of view**

According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy definition (2020), "hermeneutics is the study of interpretation. Hermeneutics plays a role in several disciplines whose subject matter demands interpretative approaches. because some disciplines' subject matter concerns the meaning of human intentions, beliefs, and actions, or the meaning of human experience as it is preserved in the arts and literature, historical testimony, and other artifacts. disciplines that rely on hermeneutics include the human sciences, social sciences, and humanities". In such contexts, hermeneutics is sometimes described as an "auxiliary" study of the arts, methods, and foundations of research appropriate to a respective disciplinary subject matter. More recently, applied hermeneutics has been further developed as a research method for several disciplines, especially in LIS.

Hermeneutics so-called "philosophy of interpretation". An interpretation that is raised in the framework of basic philosophical questions about existence and knowledge, language and history, art and aesthetic experience, and practical life. Contemporary hermeneutics is largely shaped by the "philosophical hermeneutics" of Hans-Georg Gadamer. But it also receives concepts from Paul Ricoeur in philosophical controversies with critical theory and deconstruction. But it also received contributions from Paul Ricoeur in philosophical debates with critical theory and deconstruction

As, Paul Ricoeur argues:

When reading the text, two dimensions, semiotic and semantic, should be considered. Understanding the word involves semiotics. But in semantics, we are dealing with the linguistic system of the text which helps us to signify the words of the text (Ricoeur, 1994).

Gadamer's in Truth and Method says:

... the experience of truth does not demand that we liberate ourselves from the authority of tradition, but, on the contrary, recognizes tradition as a possible source of our claims of truth. tradition is a legitimate interpretive wellspring, in the sense that it makes possible and shapes all understanding (Gadamer, 254).

The hermeneutical experience of truth is conditioned by not only tradition but also language. In Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, the relation of truth to language is described about being. Gadamer expresses this relation in a celebrated motto, "being that can be understood is language" (Gadamer, 2004b,474). According to this motto, language is primarily a 'medium' that shows us the being, or meaningful order, of the world and the things we encounter in it (Gadamer, 2004b, Part III.1). Thus, language is only secondarily an instrument that we use, among other things, to represent something, communicate about it, or make assertions about it. The experience of language as a medium takes place in what Gadamer calls



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“hermeneutical conversation” (Gadamer, 2004b, 388). The primary example of such hermeneutical conversation is a conversation between interlocutors about something; but, he believes that hermeneutical conversation also includes all interpretive experience, so that the interpretation of artworks and texts is conceived as a conversation between the interpreter and work about the subject matter of the work. In hermeneutical conversation, interlocutors may, of course, use language to represent, communicate or make assertions. More originally, however, hermeneutical conversation concerns the being of the matter under consideration.

Everyone may interpret the universe through his view and certain approach. Even our needs lead to world interpretation. For example, the books classified in a medical library are may be differently classified in a public library. A library locates a book in the "blood-diseases" category based on its clients' vision and the population's needs while the same book views the other aspects of the subject in another library. In addition, an individual may utilize research/ data evaluation strategies based on his professional, and ethnical features and other precognitions. As far as the term recognition" means, data will be recognizable and interpretable as well. Therefore, there is no single meaning behind it. Although there are various visions, "subject matter" will be a basic variable.

In other words, as it has been mentioned, a user never approaches a certain subject or text with an empty mind but he starts discovering a set of prejudices, questions, and particular expectations. Any prejudice depends on an individual's cultural/ mental situation. Prejudices are considered not only comprehension obstacles but also essential tools for it. As Gadamer points out (2004a, 271):

The prejudices and pre-meanings that occupy the interpreter's consciousness are not at his free disposal. He cannot separate in advance the productive prejudices that enable understanding from the prejudices that hinder it and lead to misunderstanding. Rather, this separation must take place in the process of understanding itself, and hence hermeneutics must ask how that happens.

The end-user has a specific semantic horizon that may not necessarily be the same as the semantic horizon of the text (Writer, book, or library system). The subject matter of the text (or book) is understood by the dialogue that takes place between these two horizons.

Now let's see this issuedifferently. The cataloger, as a media or mediator, wants to establish a relationship between the system (text) and the end user by selecting and assigning the subject matter from the CV. In such a situation, we are also faced with the semantic horizon of the cataloger, which may not match the semantic horizon of the system (text); on the other hand, the end user's semantic horizon should be taken into account, which may be compatible with both of them (system and cataloguer) does not match. Therefore, how can we talk with certainty about the relevance of the chosen subject matter and the exact response of the system to the end user's needs? So how can one say with certainty that SH or CV is the best tool for consistency of work among cataloguers?

In this way, text semantics based on a sense will be a meaning that an interpreter (indexer or cataloguer) grants because he/she puts the text against a question per his/her particular situation and so thematically interprets with predetermined expectations. This means, in Gadamer's words, that “The hermeneutical task becomes itself a questioning of things” because:

[a] person trying to understand something will not resign himself from the start to relying on his accidental fore-meanings, ignoring as consistently and stubbornly as possible the actual meaning of the text until the latter becomes so



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persistently audible that it breaks through what the interpreter imagines it to be (Gadamer, 2004b, 271).

It is quite right for the interpreter (cataloguer or indexer) not to approach the text's subject matter directly, relying solely on the fore-meaning already available to him, but rather explicitly to examine the legitimacy – i.e., the origin and validity – of the fore-meanings dwelling within him.

Catalogers and end users of any era express specific questions on a text. All people, however, do not have similar questions to get similar answers from a text. In this process, the past and future bond together, since any interpretation of a text or a system belongs to its own time, an author will never allocate his intention to a user. Therefore, a text suggests a new sense at any time considering the quality of chronological comprehension and information needs. The practical aspect of understanding is that a text/ book's meaning can be conceived differently at any moment and situation, because understanding is nothing but utilization and this will be changed concerning the user's conditions.

The fact that there is neither starting point nor an endpoint to understanding and interpretation is a fundamental element of hermeneutics on which Gadamer subsequently draws. Still, understanding must begin somewhere - and these "somewhere" are what are called "fore-structures" or "pre-conceptions".

#### **B: Determination of the subject matter from Wittgenstein's point of view**

Meaning is not a physical thing that can be perceived and does not exist outside the world of human beings. Here I would like to continue the present discussion using Necker's cube and Wittgenstein's opinion. What is the Necker cube? According to the definition provided by Martelli, Kubovy, and Claessens in 1998, the Necker Cube is an ambiguous drawing (Fig.1).

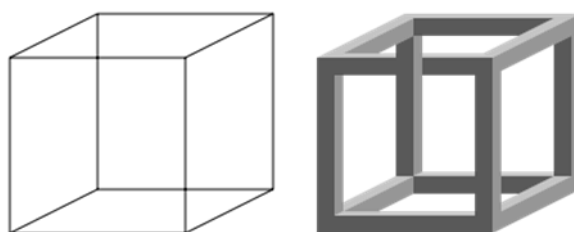


Fig. 1. The Necker Cube

Necker cube on the left, impossible cube on the right. Each part of the picture is ambiguous by itself, yet the human visual system picks an interpretation of each part that makes the whole consistent. The Necker cube is sometimes used to test computer models of the human visual system to see whether they can arrive at consistent interpretations of the image the same way humans do. The orientation of the Necker cube can also be altered by shifting the observer's point of view. When seen from the apparent above, one face tends to be seen closer; and in contrast, when seen from a subjective viewpoint that is below, a different face comes to the fore ( Martelli and et.al,1998).

During observation of the Necker cube perception becomes unstable and alternates repeatedly

between a from-above-perspective and a from-below-perspective interpretation.

Both interpretations may be equally plausible from a physical point of view, however, observers usually show an a priori bias in favor of interpretation.



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Einhäuser, Martin, König (2004) have shown: "by focusing on different parts of the figure 1, one can force a more stable perception of the cube. The intersection of the two faces that are parallel to the observer forms a rectangle, and the lines that converge on the square form a "y- junction" at the two diagonally opposite sides. If an observer focuses on the upper "y- junction" the lower left face will appear to be in front. The upper right face will appear to be in front of the eyes focusing on the lower junction". Necker cubes show the claim that how our mental classification of the content of a book or a text can affect the recognition of the subject matter or the signs of that text and change the way the input is organized into perceptual signs. Wittgenstein frequently uses the word 'aspect' (Aspect) in his writings from 1947 to 1949. Wittgenstein's aspect means the way an object appears to us (Park, 1998, 131). The analysis and determination of the subject matter of the book can be explained by Wittgenstein's discussion (1958, 193) about Necker's cube.

Several places in a book, a textbook for instance. In the relevant text something different is in question every time: here a glass cube, there is an inverted open box, there is a wireframe of that shape, and there are three boards forming a solid angle. Each time the text supplies the interpretation of the illustration.

In other words, it is not the illustration itself that determines what the illustration is about. In this case, the text that supplies the illustration will direct how the illustration is understood. But even so, the context does not determine our interpretation. Wittgenstein argues (1958, 193):

But we can also see the illustration as one thing as another. So we interpret it, and see it as we interpret it.

Wittgenstein (1969) discussed the concept of knowledge in his work, *On Certainty*. His discussions and conclusions can be used as the basis for the LIS field in general and knowledge representation in particular.

#### 4. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it seems that the SH indicates or refers to the location of an object/idea/concept. A concept is a unit of thought. The semantic content of a concept can be re-expressed by a combination of other and different concepts, which may vary from one language or culture to another. What the particular body of information is about, in a document constitutes its subject. A subject can be defined as any concept or combination of concepts representing a theme in a document. The content of a book and the prior knowledge of the catalogers allow two or more possible but unique interpretations to form, and our perception automatically reverses between the content of the book and its subject.

Determining the subject matter is defined as the representation of a concept in the form of either a term derived from Controlled Vocabularies (CV) or language signs. Semiotics is the study of signs, and semantics is the study of their meaning. These work together to form a specific visual language. Visual language can be defined as a system that communicates through visual elements. It is perceived by our eyes and interpreted by our brain, which receives the signal and transforms it into sensations, emotions, thoughts, and actions. Cataloging, classification, and indexing are issues related to semiology and semantics. In library and information science, semantics is particularly important because indices, classification systems, SH, CV, and other knowledge-oriented systems are considered tools for accessing information circles which are the most specific lingual units of linguistics.

Semantics would philosophically depend on a fact approach and lingual issues as reference tools. These issues could interpret certain specifications of CV and subject matter attribution to documents. Languages tend to be fully altered. Phonetic prototypes



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will slowly change but grammatical models will change promptly and the rules transferring meaning to term will be tremendously changeable as well. Otherwise, the lingual society and communication network as main factors accelerate the alteration. These lingual features indicate the operation level of subject analysis systems. What is called representation would be, in fact, "a process in which symbol-makers (catalogers, indexers, text-producers) try to create a representation of an object or entity, either physically or symbolically, and in the process, their tendency to the object, at the point of producing the presentation, will be complex, deriving from cultural history, social, psychological symbol-maker, therefore the tendency will be concentrated considering a particular context in which a symbol-maker produces the symbol. The tendency includes the selection origin of what criterion aspect of the object will be considered, and this criterion aspect could be regarded enough as the object presented in a certain context (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

As Mai (2000,127) argued "when meaning and words cannot be separated into two different kinds of phenomena, the meaning of words cannot be defined by whatever the words refer to. The meaning of words is the very use them. Language is therefore not a tool used to speak, but the very social and cultural context in which the language is situated. In other words, "I do not speak with language, as a tool, but from language". The community we belong to has a language. Language is not something that is added to the praxis. The practice is the language. Therefore, the meaning of words and the correct use of language cannot be studied separately from the community in which the words and language are used".

Both semiology and semantic dimensions must be considered while reading a text. Word understanding involves semiology that may be possible through the structuralistic method and linguistics utilization. But in semantics, we encounter a lingual system of a text helping us signify the text words. This aspect concerns text content produced by discourse and also text messages revealed in the discourse framework. Although this step will not be irrelevant to an interpreter's prejudgment, semantic/ text comprehension derived from it as well as the subject matter (as a keyword offered by either an end user or an indexer or a text producer) attributed to it, maybe along with his/her presumptions.

The fact that there is neither starting point nor an endpoint to understanding and interpretation is a fundamental element of hermeneutics on which Gadamer subsequently draws. Still, understanding must begin somewhere - and these "somewhere" are what are called "fore-structures" or "pre-conceptions".

Therefore, interpretation differences will be an undeniable reality. That, sometimes, we face-recognizing a reality with various views, is an issue in which history, science, and philosophy are the most prominent witness to it. According to Rumi's Masnavi<sup>1</sup>:

"Everyone became my friend from his opinion / None sought out my secrets from within me" (Persian poet).

Or:

Through their views, they find different visions: One calls it "D" and the other calls it "A".

Epistemologists determine some effective factors as follows:

- differences between individuals' mental ability or their understanding competency;



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1. Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī / also known as Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī, Mevlânâ/Mawlânâ and Mevlevî/Mawlawî (1207-1273), Persian poet

- conception reserves;
- relative effects of cultural/ social environment;
- orientation and conclusion upon various situations dealing with realities;
- diversity of different knowledge systems;
- prejudices and presumptions;
- various views and approaches.

about what has been mentioned, it could be suggested that we as indexers, cataloguers, and text analysts involved in the sense-making process, as a result, develop our framework of the available text and then look for the distinction between it and its relevant context. It must be claimed that the meaning of a text or subject matter in a book may result from the interaction of sense- the cataloger's or author's mind on one hand, and engaged lingual system (SH, Classification systems, CV, or any other documentary tools), social environment and social-cultural atmosphere on the other hand. None of them can be easily distinguished from another. They are somehow located inside each other. meaning-makers whether cataloguers, indexers or readers, and end users of library systems, are in a particular social-cultural context, a text is also in a context, but the context and text may not be interpreted or comprehended beyond inter conceptional relationship of meaning or subject matter-understanding people (cataloguers, indexers, authors, and end users).

According to Mai's opinion (2000, viii), "the subject indexing process is ordinarily described as a process that takes many steps. Here, however, it is argued that this typical approach characteristically lacks an understanding of the central nature of the process. Indexing is not a neutral and objective representation of a document's subject matter but the representation of an interpretation of a document for future use".

Therefore, it could be concluded that:

1. Everyone's understanding is based on his interpretation formed through the subject analysis process.
2. Subject analyses and meaning-making often hold encompassing aspects and encircle everything and everyone. They are never considered objects belonging to a known subject, because to be an object some information will be involved. The information is not about one of the universal objects, but it is structural-relational that helps our practical knowledge be possible in a particular case and experience, and at the moment of the event. Therefore, it owns incidental/ relational traits. Finally, it could be mentioned that meaning, interpretation, and understanding may not be separated from each other, but they are merely labels applied based on individuals' viewpoints.

contemporary linguistics in turn, refers to the fact, that "we must understand the whole in terms of the detail of the books or text and the detail in terms of the whole" (Gadamer, 2004a, 291). This means that the understanding of elements of text or the subject of books is based on a back and-forth between individual elements in the text and the text as a whole.

The different theoretical perspectives of cataloging and indexing often underappreciate in both practice and training. We can help LIS students better understand their work when they come to the library and are involved in interpreting and determining the subject matter and preparing them to better perceptual. I hope to have demonstrated that discussing meaning-making and subject analysis as an epistemological concept and as found, for instance, in cataloging and indexing which reflect expressions of that prejudice, this approach may provide an



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opportunity to indexers and cataloguers to explore the interpretive aspects and hermeneutic uncertainty and consider as a concept in a part of their field of work.

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