



Phenomenology: Application for the exploration of the live experiences of participants and historical text

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Abstract

Phenomenological research tries to describe and interpret meanings of experiences to a certain degree in-depth about the historical and sacred scripture and tried to explore the live experience of people about the phenomenon. There are mainly two types of phenomenology such as heuristic transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. The heuristic transcendental phenomenology was used first by Husserl as descriptive or psychological or empirical phenomenology and it was developed as heuristic transcendental phenomenology. In heuristic transcendental phenomenology, Suspension or Reduction, Bracketing (epoche) is used to place researchers' preconceptions about the phenomenon at the edge of the writing. The hermeneutic phenomenology is used to understand the meaning of historical scripture such as Veda, Kuran, Bhagvat Geeta, Ramayan and other old scripture through the learning cycle being reflective and critical. So phenomenology works as the philosophy and qualitative research design to guide the whole research process.

Keywords: *hermeneutic phenomenology, transcendental phenomenology, heuristic study, live experience, historical study*

Introduction

Phenomenology is mainly used to explore the live experiences of participants. It tried to explore the event of the participants what they think, do, and experience in the live-related phenomenon. Phenomenology was used as the research design in this study. "Phenomenology is the study of the primal, lived, pre-reflective, the pre-predicative meaning of an experience" (van Manen, 2017, p. 776). According to Erumit, Akerson, and Buck (2020), phenomenological research is the "explanation of phenomena consciously. According to phenomenologists, a person cannot reflect on experiences while still experiencing them. Therefore, phenomenological research is interested in lived human experiences that are already lived through in the past"(p.5). S/he further tried to describe and interpret meanings of experiences to a certain degree in depth. The outcomes of phenomenological research should be complete reflective text that may lead to other questions that can be answered through identification or critical examination. It is defined by Peoples (2021) as the study or understands of peoples' perceptions and perspectives of any particular situation (p.17). So this phenomenological study support understanding the life experience and practices of science teaching in a school as well as university-level science class.

There are found different types of phenomenological study but Peoples (2021) classified mainly two types of phenomenology in research i.e. Heuristic transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. The heuristic transcendental phenomenology was used first by Husserl as descriptive or psychological or empirical phenomenology and it was developed as heuristic transcendental phenomenology. In heuristic transcendental phenomenology, Suspension or Reduction, Bracketing (epoche) is used to place researchers' preconceptions about the phenomenon at the edge of the writing (Peoples, 2021). The Hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology was the philosophical idea of Heidegger. It focuses on the hermeneutic circle and uses an iterative process to determine the concept of the participant about the phenomenon (Peoples, 2021). There is no bracketing the experiences of the researcher about the

phenomenon. As said by Vagle (2018), there are so many types of phenomenons but I have tried to explore here the heuristic transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology to understand how they support to explore the historical documents as well as to explore the new events about the phenomenon.

Heuristic transcendental phenomenology

Phenomenology is a design to explore my participants' lived experiences, knowledge, and subjectivity about the phenomenon. Patton (2015) stated that "a heuristic is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher i.e. heuristic is grounded in phenomenology"(p. 194). The phenomenology was first introduced by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) as a different philosophical perspective and expanded by Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Creswell, 2007) in the initial phase and popular in the social and health sciences to study "how people describe things and experience them through their senses"(Patton, 2015, p.191). There are two approaches to phenomenology are highlighted, 1 (hermeneutic phenomenology, and 2)empirical, transcendental, psychological phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994)for the discussion (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth., 2018)which are seen as appropriate for both type of textual and empirical study.

Here, Manen (2016, p .7)and Eberle (2013, p . 184)focus on human science researchers in education as to be the study of philosophies and stated that hermeneutics and phenomenology are human science approaches that are rooted in philosophy; they are philosophies, reflective disciplines. The epistemological and theoretical implication of doing hermeneutic and phenomenological research, I felt it is more scientific and relevant for 'textual' study(Creswell, 2007). But, for analyzing the empirical data using a phenomenological approach, Moutaskas's (1994)empirical, transcendental or psychological phenomenology (Creswell, 2007, p .59)which focuses less on the researcher and more on a description of the experience of participants, doing 'bracketing 'or 'epoch of investigators' earlier experience towards the phenomenon as far possible (Creswell, 2007, p .60; Creswell & Poth., 2018, p . 126).

According to Wiersma and Jurs (2009), phenomenology is the study of phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing them in everyday life. The phenomenon may be a program, and organization, or culture (Patton, 2015, p .191).But Eberle (2013)quoted a phenomenon as an appearance or experience (p .185). So it is not only observing and noting the outlooks of behaviour, but attempting to understand the subjective experience of the aspect behaviours .Bogdan and Biklen (2011)also suggest that the phenomenological situation is studied through "qualitative approaches that depend on the phenomenological point of view .It attempts to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations and based on an interpretive understanding of human interaction"(p. 25). In this sense, phenomenology for me is to reduce individual experience with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence and identify the human perspectives as a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

As Moustakas (1994, p. 1) and Eberle (2010) stated, the ethnographic study requires extensive fieldwork and the lengthy period of intimate study, intense rapport building, and residence in a given social setting, is impossible in all studies. The ethnographic study is generally carried out a shared and learned pattern of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a cultural setting group and extended participated observation is done by immersing in day to day lives of the participants (Creswell, 2007, p .68).

So as suggested by Wairsma and Jurs (2009), the naturalistic type of heuristic and transcendental phenomenology tries to explore the research aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the meaning of our everyday experiences(Manen, 2016) and to be conducted in a natural setting and participants can be involved in separately as co-researcher (Participants are taken as co-researchers in phenomenology) capturing the view of their experience in their own words separately; as the sources of knowledge for the transformers into an idea (Moustakas, 1994).Manen (2016) further tried to justify phenomenology as science and stated that "it is asystematic, explicit, self-critical, and intersubjective study of its subject matter, our lived experience"(p .11).

Figure 2 .Procedures for Conducting Phenomenological Research, Creswell & Poth, 2018

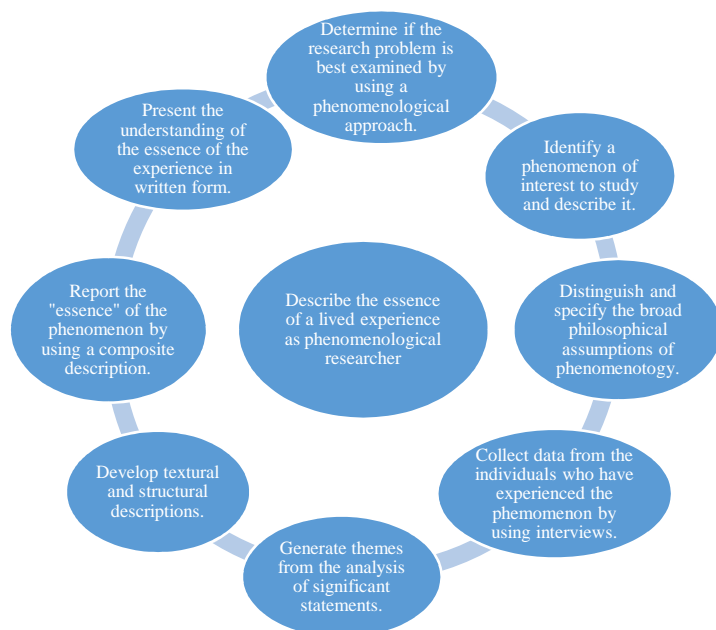
So, I have considered it as a heuristic transcendental phenomenology for the systematic search of the scientific phenomenon in human nature, however, it is being social science and meaning-making of the live human world rather than natural science .It supports the observer of what is happening as it naturally occurs in society. In materialistically doing research itself everyday practical concerns as parents, teachers, teacher educators, psychologists, child care specialists, or school administrators, heuristic transcendental phenomenological method is seen appropriate. Herein is the chart below that shows ways of conducting phenomenological research.

According to Husserl (1931) cited in Cypress (2017), phenomenological reduction is the process whereby "empirical subjectivity is suspended, so that pure consciousness may be defined in its essential and absolute being "(p .258). He further stated that this type of bracketing the empirical knowledge leaves pure consciousness, pure phenomena and pure ego as the residue of phenomenological reduction (p .258).Here, bracketed judgment is called epoch or suspension and placed within the bracket help to separate what facts to essential being and helps to understand the phenomenon as experienced by the participants in the study.

A. *Hermeneutics interpretation of historical scriptures*

The word hermeneutics is related to the Greek deity, Hermes, the messenger that brought the gods 'divine messages to humans. Hermes not only god divine messenger verbatim but also acts as an interpreter to render the meaning of the word (Lacity & Janson, 1994, p .149). Hermeneutic began as a science of interpretation of religious, sacred, or ancient texts(Wernet, 2010, p. 234); its practical application is a critical interpretation of a text, especially of scripture that is written in the ancient period. Lacity and Janson (1994) further add that the goal of hermeneutics is to exactly translate the text and discover the intention contained in the text by identifying the intention of the author and placing his or her meaning within its historical and cultural context(149-150), these rule, however, reflect the background of an interpreter, although they are presumed to capture author's intention . In the beginning time, it was used as a theory of interpretation of the Biblical (Crotty, 1998; Mallery, Hurwitz, & Duffy, 1987) scripture and then gradually extended to interpret the other historical texts (Smith, 2007, p .3).

Historically it was associated with the interpretation of ancient philosophical and historical documents, careful analysis of words, grammar, sentence structure and knowledge of the time and culture in where they were produced yielding a progressively deeper understanding of the text (Crotty,1998; Lacity & Janson, 1994). Hermeneutic is one of the methods of interpretive paradigm (Mallery et al., 1987, p .1) that grounds the meaning of texts in the intentions and histories of their authors in their relevance of readers .It regards texts as a means of transmitting experience, beliefs, and judgments from one subject or community to others (Mallery et al., 1987). But, Wernet (2010),critiques that "hermeneutics no longer only deals with the arrow topic of textual understanding but widens to the question of understanding as a fundamental principle of human action and everyday life encounters "(p .234).



Furthermore, I understood that hermeneutic is known as a science of interpretation and is situated under the interpretive paradigm (Crotty, 1998). This method had originally been used by theologians to investigate the inner meaning of sacred texts (Crotty, 1998, p. 101). Most scholars are found to make use of the hermeneutic for the study of Vedic literature and cultural system as well (Frazier, 2010). Frazier further added that the eastern philosophy entails mainly "Sanskrit philosophical reflection in the Upanishad, Bhagvat Geeta, and Brahmastra" (p. 6). Vedic scripture is a major foundation for studying other eastern philosophies so that the hermeneutic is chosen as a major method of study for data generation of Vedic literature with a different world view.

Most western scholars have also provided the hermeneutic framework for the analysis of different types of text. Lacity and Janson (1994) provided the text analysis approaches by a positivist, a linguistic and an interpretivist interpret (p. 141). They further critiqued that hermeneutic and intentional analysis exemplifies interpretivist assumption and here "when the researcher cannot directly interact with originators of the text, as in the case of an ancient manuscript, the researcher tries to understand how the author, as well as his or her culture and experiences, influence text interpretation" (p. 140). Interpretivist approaches are also concerned with the contextual circumstances that influence authors as well as the contextual circumstances that influence researchers' interpretations. They believe that a researcher must learn more about the author, his or her culture, social reality and the period to understand the text (Lacity & Janson, 1994; Smith, 2007).

The paragraphs below try to justify the application of hermeneutic design in this study. The reviewing the literature that explains the world product of the ancient period to now. Some literature (texts) was written around 1500-1000 BCE (Osborn & O'Hara, 2010) e.g. Veda is considered the oldest written scriptural texts of the world that was compiled, reclassified, renamed and reinterpreted in India by Veda-Vyasa, but I found only to its re-re written and re-re-interpretation (Lacity & Janson) of the literature in a different language, not the language of Vedic stamp (original scripture).

Like that other religious and philosophical texts, recent pasts than Veda to me were not the original text. These Indian continental religio-philosophical texts are the development of interpretative formulae in the Indian continent and western as well which was advanced through interpretation and reinterpretation (Lacity & Janson, p. 150), the six orthodox schools of philosophies including other Vedic literature such as Upanishad, Bhagavat Geeta, Brahma sutra and different types of Puran are just products of hermeneutic of Veda. As North Whitehead (Robert, 1993, p. 248) said, "Western" philosophy is footnotes to Plato, the "Eastern" philosophy looks like footnotes to Veda.

B. Hermeneutic Phenomenology for the interpretation of the text

The hermeneutic phenomenological study is applied as the religio-philosophical texts taken as a phenomenon, and assuming that interpretation can penetrate the people's head, cultures, a system of symbols (Lacity & Janson, 1994). The hermeneutical phenomenological interpreter can interpret other people's meanings, which can be better or worse, but interpretation can never be final because it is intrinsically

incomplete. Every interpretation of a text is not a complete and final interpretation. Interpretation is itself is the subject to reconsideration with the change of time (Pollard & Webb, 2006). So that there could found different interpretations about the historical documents and meaning are made based on the meaning-making situation and knowledge of interpretation.

While concluding, it can be said that understanding the true meaning of the text of a Vedic Scripture with accuracy has always been a difficult and complex problem in all the religions of the world. However, hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, has helped us to establish certain rules, philosophies, and methodologies for the interpretation of scriptures (Pollard & Webb, 2006). It is not merely a theoretical discipline of the rules or methods of interpretation, but it is a theoretical-cum-philosophical discipline (Pollard & Webb, 2006; Wernet, 2010). It is primarily a search for meaning through these methods and principles which bring out the textual meaning relevant to the present context.

Pollard and Webb (2006) explain that hermeneutic interpreters should understand the language and words of the text. However, if the researchers do not have in-depth knowledge of the historical language, then it is tried to interpret the meaning by studying the translation of the text in other language and try to understand the authors' intention of interpretation, although previous text interpretation is seen focusing on analyzing text (Wernet, 2010). But, I do not agree with Dilthey's argument of hermeneutic to advocate the acceptance of text at face value without any critical consideration or review (Pollard & Webb, 2006). I realized that there should be critical reflectivity of interpreters about the historical documents so that their reality can be explored extremely.

Conclusion

The phenomenology of practice is also operative concerning the everyday practice of living. There are two types of phenomenology are found in practice. Heuristic transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. The heuristic transcendental phenomenology was used first by Husserl as descriptive or psychological or empirical phenomenology and it was developed as heuristic transcendental phenomenology. In heuristic transcendental phenomenology, Suspension or Reduction, Bracketing (epoche) is used to place researchers' preconceptions about the phenomenon at the edge of the writing (Peoples, 2021). The hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology was the philosophical idea of Heidegger. It focuses on the hermeneutic circle and uses an iterative process to determine the concept of the participant about the phenomenon. There is no bracketing the experiences of the researcher about the phenomenon. Hermeneutic phenomenology is mainly used to describe and interpretation of religio-philosophical texts and scripture such as Veda, Upanishad, Kuran, Bhagvat Geeta, Ramayana, etc. In the hermeneutic study, the interpretation of the historical text and events never be final and its interpretation and the meaning-making process is depended on time and space.

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