

Qualitative Research: Hermeneutical Phenomenological Method

Investigación cualitativa: Método Fenomenológico Hermenéutico

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Summary

This article shows fundamental notions of one of the qualitative research methods, we refer to the hermeneutical phenomenology based on the theories of Van Manen, Raquel Ayala and Miguel Martínez. This approach leads to the description and interpretation of the essence of lived experiences, recognizes the meaning and importance in pedagogy, psychology and sociology according to the experience collected. This method constitutes rigorous and consisted processes of the ethical dimensions of the daily experience, which are difficult to be accessed by other usual research methods. In this contribution, we present some methodological notions focused on the principles of phenomenology and its phases: previous stage or clarification of budgets, collecting the experience lived, reflecting on the lived experience or structural stage and, finally, writing-reflecting on the lived experience evidenced in individual and group physiognomy or also called phenomenological text.

Keywords: Qualitative Research; Phenomenology Hermeneutics; Life experiences.

Resumen

Este artículo presenta nociones fundamentales de uno de los métodos de investigación cualitativa, nos referimos a la fenomenología hermenéutica sustentada en las teorías de Van Manen, Raquel Ayala y Miguel Martínez. Este enfoque conduce a la descripción e interpretación de la esencia de las experiencias vividas, reconoce el significado y la importancia en la pedagogía, psicología y sociología según la experiencia recogida. Este método constituye procesos rigurosos y coherentes de las dimensiones éticas de la experiencia cotidiana, difícilmente accesibles por otros métodos usuales de investigación. En esta contribución, se presenta algunas nociones metodológicas centradas en los principios de la fenomenología y sus fases: etapa previa o clarificación de presupuestos, recoger la experiencia vivida, reflexionar acerca de la experiencia vivida o etapa estructural y, finalmente, escribir-reflexionar acerca de la experiencia vivida evidenciada en fisonomía individual y grupal o llamada también texto fenomenológico.

Palabras clave: Investigación cualitativa; fenomenología hermenéutica; experiencias vividas.

Introduction

The phenomenological approach to research emerges as a response to the radicalism of what is objectifiable. It is based on the study of life experiences, regarding an event, from the subject's perspective. This approach is based on the analysis of the most complex aspects of human life, of what is beyond the quantifiable aspects. According to Husserl (1998), it is a paradigm that tries to explain the nature of the things, the essence and the veracity of the phenomena. The aim is to understand the complexity of the lived experiences. This understanding is in turn aimed at raising awareness and finding the meanings surrounding the phenomenon. In order to conduct a research under this approach, it is indispensable to know the conception and principles of phenomenology, as well as the method to approach a field of study and the mechanisms for the search of meanings. Knowing the experiences through stories and anecdotes is fundamental because it allows us to understand the nature of the context dynamics and even transform it.

Aguirre and Jaramillo (2012) stated that phenomenology is a philosophical discipline and a method. Husserl said little about the social sciences; however, some of his students established important relationships between the phenomenological discipline and some social sciences.

With reference to the study of social facts, it is a priority to conceive realities as a dynamic of factors and agents that integrate an organized, interactive and systemic totality, whose study and understanding requires the understanding of that internal dynamic structure that defines it, requiring the use of a qualitative-structural methodology as Martinez pointed out (1994).

In general, the different aspects of the educational field have been undertaken from three scientific rationalities: analytical-empirical, theory-critical and hermeneutical-phenomenological. The last one aims to stop those aspects that spread what is objectifiable, which, in the field of education, are numerous. But the importance of this dimension lies not only in the quantity, but also in the transcendence and influence in the educational endeavor or social fact.

Construction of the Sense against Scientific Naturalism

If some central notions of phenomenology are simplified, as the philosophical reflection, without meticulous details of the Husserl thought of (2008), founder of this approach, it is possible to place its critical position in front of contemporary science, emphasizing suppositions and slogans of scientific naturalism, besides the objectivist pretensions of science. From this position, the phenomenological approach raises the need to address and analyze a field relegated by science and that, however, is a condition of itself and of all knowledge: the active life of meaning construction carried out by human subjectivity, process origin of the search for knowledge.

The phenomenological approach projects a radical criticism of scientific naturalism, which assumes that the object of science is to find laws that govern reality, where the person is conceived as another object of nature. This posture implies that even psychology can fall into assumptions by treating consciousness as something that can be reduced to laws. Phenomenology explains that consciousness, treated as an object, limits this pretension: human subjectivity is the foundation of all scientific knowledge. Therefore, there is a logical error in trying to explain the foundation through what it has founded. It is then a question of understanding what new approach subjectivity requires in order to be understood.

Naturalism has an objectivist position of science, which conceives the object of knowledge as a product separated from subjectivity. Moreover, this paradigm of science tries to separate any subjectivity characteristic from the knowledge. Phenomenology, on the other hand, shows that with this action it loses the foundation of its own proceeding. In order to validate science, it is necessary to address the question: how does conscience constitute knowledge? Based on this, it has been proved that there is no possibility of an object if there is no consciousness. The object is the equivalent of a conscious life, that is, every object is the object of a consciousness. Science can only work on a previous original "dation", which is a condition of all objectivity.

As for phenomenology, it is understood not only as a practice prior to scientific work, but also as a methodology that admitted a new modality of approaching knowledge which provided its best results, applied to human sciences or social sciences. The following questions are proposed to be resolved as an approach: how to study this subjectivity and how to approach the production of meaning that is inherent to it.

Phenomenology Principles and Characteristics.

The first principle determined by Husserl (quoted in Villanueva, 2014) to approach subjectivity, is the epoché or placing in parentheses the supposition of the natural attitude, present in our habitual rapport to the world as in the science itself: the acknowledgement of the world as something given or its facts, as a reality itself, existing beyond the consciousness that thinks, values or feels them.

In other words, "the epoché refers to the elimination of everything that limits us from perceiving things as such, since the natural attitude, due to its objective nature, prevents us from doing so. To apply the epoché, refers, to abstain or to do without" (Villanueva, 2014, p.220).

This principle does not imply questioning the world as if it existed, nor does it reduce it to the thought of the subject. On the contrary, it tries to stop thinking under these terms, with the

objective of being able to observe the life of the consciousness that is behind the objects understood as given things: to approach how this represents them, the meaning it assumes for it. In short, what original sense they possess or how they become objects of consciousness.

According to San Martín (1986), different types of epoché are needed in the development of phenomenological analysis. In spite of this, it may be asserted that its essential figure is to grant a condition for a new knowledge, to suspend the natural state. It is admitted to perceive the world and its objects as a fragment of the experience of a consciousness that gives them meaning. It implies being warned of a tendency of the consciousness to see the world as already constituted and to forget its own activity, to make it anonymous.

Phenomenology arises as an analysis of the phenomena or significant experience shown (phainomenon) to the consciousness. It is distanced from the knowledge of the object itself disassociated from an experience. For this approach, the most important point is to understand that the phenomenon is part of a significant whole and there is no possibility of analyzing it without the holistic approach in relation to the experience to which it belongs.

Villanueva (2012) stated that "the phenomenological reduction is another central process of the phenomenological method" (p.48). This presents different definitions according to Husserl.

The reduction focuses on perceiving and describing the peculiarities of the consciousness experience and systematically understanding how this subjective world is constituted. This process of knowledge demands both a description and an analytical interpretation. The essential objective is to reconstruct the articulating axes of the consciousness life, but this can only be done by deepening into its experience. It requires describing and understanding experience from its own organizational logic.

Basis of Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

Barbera and Inciarte (2012) pointed out that phenomenology originated in the Greek word phenomenon which means "something that shows itself, and manifests that it can become visible by itself" (p. 201). Phenomenology is a philosophical current developed by Edmund Husserl in the middle of the 20th century. According to Patton (quoted in Latorre, 1996), this approach focuses on how individuals understand the meanings of lived experiences. The approach arises as an opposition to naturalism, since it observes the individual and eradicates all the observer's intentionality and intuition.

For Husserl (1992), "phenomenology grants a new descriptive method and an aprioristic science that is broken down from it and is destined to supply the fundamental organ for a rigorously scientific philosophy" (p.52). In other words, it formalizes a criticism to science regarding the working method, based on measurable quantities and quantifiable facts without being aware of what is being done. On the other hand, Heidegger (2006) sustained that "phenomenology emphasizes the science of phenomena. This is based in allowing and perceiving what is shown, as it shows itself and as much as it shows itself. Consequently, it is an objective phenomenon, thus it is true and scientific at the same time" (p.99). Phenomenology aims to carry out an exhaustive investigation and reach the root, that is to say, the field where the experience is materialized, the "thing itself", as things are for the consciousness.

Likewise, Bolio (2012) stated:

The sense and meaning of the world and its environment is subjectively formed, where the world is valid for those who experience it and question about how reason has operated and applied. From this self-critical and controlled reasoning which is applied objectively and methodically to the world, it makes sure to construct an "objectivity" which transcends the

individual who has verified it. It is there, at the service of other subjectivities, even though its author is no longer there. (p. 24).

In other words, the phenomenological method admits to explore in the person's consciousness, that is to say, to understand the essence itself, the way of perceiving life through experiences, the meanings around them and are defined in the individual's psychic life.

In summary, phenomenology leads to finding the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, which is present in each instant of human experience. Transcendence is not reduced to the simple fact of knowing the stories or physical objects; on the contrary, it tries to understand these stories from the perspective of values, norms and practices in general, as Rizo-Pattern pointed out (2015).

On the other hand, the term "hermeneutics" comes from the Greek verb *hermeneuein* which means "to interpret". Gadamer, the father of the philosophical hermeneutics, sought to integrate the progress of science and thought by means of language. In reference to what Aguilar pointed out (2004), Heidegger stated that "language is the house of being", the hermeneutics is in the search to understand the other, not only through conversation, but also in what is behind of what is not said.

Dilthey (quoted in Martínez, 2014), the main exponent of the method, defines it as the process that allows disclosing the meanings of the things found in the person's consciousness and interpreting them through the word. He also states that the person's written texts, attitudes, actions and all kinds of expression lead us to discover the meanings.

Sandoval (1996) stated that:

Gadamer emphasizes the linguistic character of understanding since interpretations are enunciated linguistically but at the same time understanding falls into the categories of thought that the language has facilitated. Ricoeur adds the concept of "hermeneutic circle" - perfected by Dilthey - which describes the movement between the way of being the interpreter and the being that is revealed by the text. (p. 67).

Vélez and Galeano (2002) claimed that hermeneutics is an approach that explains behavior, verbal and non-verbal forms of behavior, culture, systems of organizations and reveals the meanings it contains, but preserving the singularity. They also mentioned that hermeneutics is present throughout the research process in the construction, methodological and theoretical design, as well as in the interpretation and discussion of the results.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Education.

The word pedagogy comes from the Greek "paidos" which means "child" and "agein" which means 'to guide, to lead'. Therefore, pedagogy is based on priority actions, procedures and methods for the solution of existing problems in the teaching-learning process. At the same time, it is a multidisciplinary science that merges areas such as philosophy, psychology, anthropology, sociology and economics. It emphasizes the role of philosophy, since, through it, the individual is recognized as a part and a transformer of the world.

We can also speak of education in the same context. Guzmán (2007) mentioned that educere comes from "to place another out of a certain state" and ducere implies "to guide", which is a personal process, followed by a social process that takes place between the one who teaches and the one who learns through the transfer of values, knowledge, customs and forms of behavior. In this way, the individual's integral development is achieved by applying these learnings to the society's demands.

Van Manen (2003) expressed the following:

Phenomenology in education is not simply an "approach" to the study of pedagogy. It is not limited to offering simple "alternative" descriptions or explanations of the educational phenomena but rather the human sciences focus on reflexively recovering the bases that, in the deep sense, provide the possibility of our pedagogical concerns with students. (p. 189).

The experiences, compiled by the hermeneutic phenomenology and then translated into descriptions, will be effective to analyze the pedagogical aspects in which the educator must be deeply interested in the events that occur in the classroom and optimize the pedagogical practice. In this sense, phenomenology is born from the education reality. It describes what is essential from the external and internal experience (analysis of consciousness).

As described by Fermoso (1989):

Phenomenology looks for invariant aspects that lead it to generalize and discover the essence of social education. Once the invariant aspects are found, the phenomenological method unfolds all its representative capacity, that is, to describe social education and conceptualize as stipulated by the phenomenology, without prejudices or mental reservations. (p.129).

Reflecting on pedagogy leads to being aware of the methods, the techniques used and difficulties shown in the teaching-learning process. It also makes educators adopt a position and rethink about their practice, avoiding improvisation and committing themselves to be an example and a guide for the learner.

Ayala (2008) stated that the hermeneutical phenomenology is a procedure that leads the educational agents to reflect on their personal experience and professional work in order to analyze the essential aspects of this experience, giving them the required sense and importance to these phenomena. Aguirre and Jaramillo (2012) pointed out that the "phenomenology favors the understanding of the school realities, emphasizing the experience of the educational process representatives"(p.51).

Therefore, it is a priority that the teacher accepts the importance of the phenomenological method, because it leads to deeply reflect on the daily experiences, and to find the meaning of these experiences in the unique way of each individual. All this in order to have the capacity to take actions that lead to the improvement of the pedagogical practice. This practice becomes transcendental because the educational sphere revolves around the subjective dimension of the agents that are part of it, whose understanding of the senses and meanings is fundamental, since it would allow to know it, understand it, reproduce it and, if necessary, transform it.

The phenomenological analysis allows to think and investigate about the essential fields of education and to articulate them in the analysis of the complexity of human problems required by all social science, because the core of its approaches is the existence and lived experience; the world in which we are always immersed.

Due to its nature, phenomenology focuses on experiences and emphasizes the sense that surrounds the everyday, the meaning of the human being, that is to say, the experience of what we are. Phenomenology is sensitive to the problems around the world of life.

The world of life represents the reality of daily life, which is investigated under a non-naive eye. This world without categories or explanations, coming from science, is the life's pre-scientific dimension, characterized by being extremely rich, a world of experiences and experience. In this world, objective sciences are examined as cultural facts. It is the sum of borders and horizons in which worldly facts are born and established, and which have to be regenerated by experience. This study corresponds to the worldly phenomenology.

The Phenomenological-hermeneutic Method and its Relevance in Education

The relationship between phenomenology and education is established based on the notion of "sense"; taking into account that education is the transmission from a society to its members regarding the sense that a culture has given to its relationship in the world. San Martín (1986) considered that "phenomenology lies in understanding and speaking of reality from the experience of reality" (p. 9). Just like we perceive the sense transferred by education, only in the experience it is feasible to find the compilation that a society has acquired of reality.

In this way, it is established that education places in the phenomenological method not only an alternative of interpretation and comprehension, but also finds its own sense in this method. Thus, it establishes how phenomenology can re-establish the attention of educational reflection towards its own essence.

As for phenomenology, the foundation of all knowledge is the experience from the achievement of the subject-object dualism of modernity. This implies that the subject and object are not conceived as separate entities, a presupposition that modernity has determined.

As for modernity, the world is composed of facts, where the individual is a fact among others and reality is recognized as something outside the human consciousness. For phenomenology, the existence of the world's objects as something differentiated from the human consciousness is not implied, on the contrary, it is put in parentheses. The concept of Epoché arises from there (a process by which we discard or exclude from our consideration all assumptions about the world and limit ourselves to consciousness and its phenomena).

The phenomenological method is the reduction of the whole set of experiences to the consciousness of the most genuine experiences. This method stops at experience and does not presuppose the world beyond experience.

Hermeneutical Phenomenology as a Method

This approach is oriented to the description and interpretation of the fundamental structures of the lived experience, and to the recognition of the meaning of the pedagogical value of this experience. This method represents a coherent and strict approach to the analysis of the ethical, relational and practical dimensions of everyday pedagogy, which are difficult to access through the usual research approaches. In this contribution, the potentiality and particular contribution of the method for educational inquiry is exhibited and certain methodological notions and basic activities for research practice are presented.

The phenomenology in education adjusts to the experiences of the educational community agents, as well as in the understanding of the meaning and sense of these. In this method, specific procedures and techniques are supported for the information compilation and its treatment and interpretation. It is necessary to emphasize that the phenomenological approach demands, as an indefectible condition, the knowledge of the philosophical principles that sustain this theory.

Martínez (1996) stated that this phenomenon is based there, as it is shown in the individual's consciousness, which emphasizes "the significance that this method gives to the lived world" (p.168) and that forms part of the background that sustains its behavior. For Husserl (quoted in Martínez, 2008), phenomenology does not seek to discard anything represented in the consciousness. However, it prioritizes that which is 'shown', since the individual can only speak of its experience, from this it is derived that the behavior of the human being is defined by its experiences.

In relation to the objective of phenomenology, Van Manen (1999) refers as follows:

Its objective is to transform the lived experience into a textual expression of its essence, in such a way that the text's effect represents a reviving reflection and a reflexive appropriation of something significant: in which the reader comes to life with strength in its own lived experience. (p.56).

Regarding the meaning of perceived experiences, Dilthey (quoted in Van Manen, 2003) stated that "just as the body requires breathing, the soul demands full satisfaction and expansion of its existence in the reverberations of emotional life" (p.56). This means that the lived experiences are the core in phenomenology. This leads to reflect about the acts; and through the talks a meaning is established for them, emphasizing that they will have to be revealed without altering their structure.

Van Manen (2003) confirms that "phenomenology is a human science and is delimited as natural science, because the object of study are the structures of meaning of the lived world" (p.30), since as a human science it allows us to internalize and understand the significant situations of the human being and to explain how we are in our daily life. Likewise, it describes the approach characteristics, in which it emphasizes that it gives explanation to the phenomena that, represented in consciousness, reveal the nature and structure of experience as we live them without making generalizations. It gives a reflective character to daily activity; it prevents categorizing or conceptualizing the way we experience the world and tries to make the individual understand the meaning of being unique and getting to fully know oneself.

In order to approach the general principles of the essence, phenomenology explores experiential realities that are little communicable, but fundamental to understand the psychic life of each individual. Therefore, it is essential to have a systematic and detailed description that reflects on all the prejudices of the interacting parties: the researcher and the individual being studied. In this process, it is important to emphasize that access to these non-observable realities is achieved through "interpretive understanding. According to Martínez (2008), this will allow to reveal the underlying structure that gives meaning to external actions which should be considered together with the personal structure of each individual being studied. In order to achieve this interpretative understanding, it is essential to apply a variety of thought processes which will be specific according to the objectives of each stage and phase of the approach (p. 102).

Phases of the Hermeneutical Phenomenological Method

First Phase: Previous Stage or Clarification of Budgets

The freedom from prejudice that a researcher may suspect will most likely be tainted by the tradition, religion, ethical codes and culture that make up the preconceived world. In spite of this, the social pedagogues must free themselves from these, so as not to affect what can be willingly transparent. It admits the social- pedagogue to be aseptic and critical. The phenomenologist does not relegate the theoreticians, but prefers to disregard them in order to obtain freedom of thought. Martínez (2004) referred to the descent of theories as a methodologically skillful epoché, which is accomplished in this stage.

It is about establishing the budgets, hypotheses, preconceptions from which the researcher starts, and recognizing that they could intervene in the research. Similarly, it shows the theoretical conceptions on which the theoretical framework that guides the research is structured, as well as the referential, space-time and sociological systems related to the data obtained from the phenomenon under study. This will be done through answers to questions proposed about our attitudes, values, beliefs, feelings, conjectures, interest, etc., in relation to the research with the aim of avoiding their presence in the interpretation of experiences.

Second Phase: Collecting the Experience Lived

This is the descriptive phase as data are obtained here from the experience lived from numerous sources: accounts of personal experience, protocols of the some teachers' experience, interviews, autobiographical accounts and observation-description of a documentary. Openness is given to research through the writing of anecdotes, a usual methodological tool in the HP Method. We have taken Max Van Manen (2003) into consideration. He stated that "before asking others to give us a description of a phenomenon to be explored, we should try to do it ourselves, in order to have a more punctual perception of what we are trying to obtain" (p. 82). To this end we have written a personal experience (personal anecdote) as we live it with respect to our exploration (notion) of research.

According to Van Manen (2003), "the anecdote symbolizes one of the tools with which the hidden meanings are exposed" (p. 132), so it can be conceived as a methodological tool in the human sciences to understand a certain notion that we easily miss.

Collecting Anecdotes from Others

To request the anecdotes from the educator or another agent, we rely on Van Manen (2003, p.83) who points out that in order to access people's experiences, they are asked to write about their own experience. In this sense, anecdotes lead us to look for the relation between living and thinking, between situation and reflection. Besides, these narrations are significant for pedagogy because they function as experiential cases that allow us to make a pedagogical reflection (p.137).

Van Manen (2003, p. 82) and Ayala (2008, p.416) showed some indications to make a correct description of a lived experience.

It is described as he/she lives or has lived it, avoiding causal explanations, generalizations or abstract interpretations.

Detail the experience from within as if it were a mental state: feelings, moods, emotions, etc.

Focus on a specific event of the object of experience: describe specific situations, an adventure, an event or a specific experience.

Try to focus on an experience that stands out for its intensity as if it were the first time.

Focus on your body's answers, how certain things smell or smelt, how they sound or sounded, etc.

Avoid phrasing a narration using beautiful or bombastic phrases. The narrated experience could be recorded for practical purposes.

A complete and unbiased description of the issue under study is sought at this stage. According to Martínez (2014), narration should legitimately reflect the lived reality.

After the anecdote, the expansion and rewriting of anecdotes is planned, where the conversational interview is conducted. Therefore, questions are asked (how is the experience, what is its pedagogical value?) and a guide of questions is produced from the analysis of each protocol.

Prepared questions are not asked during this process, and, in general, it is not necessary to ask so many questions according to Van Manen (2003). Patience or silence often incite the other to gather memories and continue with the story. If we perceive a mental block, the last sentence is repeated using an interrogative tone, and in this way we make the other continue. It is therefore suggested to take into account two types of silence.

Literal silence occurs in the conversational interview. It is also called epistemological silence (linked to what cannot be said). In this respect, Polanyi (1969) stated that there is a tacit form of knowledge when we have the feeling "that we know more than we can say". Beyond what we say and write naturally, there is a large scope of what cannot be said, but which constantly attracts our attention (Van Manen, 2003).

We realize that in ontological silence our essential dilemma always returns to silence, even after the most illustrative of discourses, readings or conversations. It is in those moments that we acquire a greater and pleasant knowledge or a meaningful experience. Bollnow (1982) described it as a gratifying silence, being in the presence of truth (Van Manen, 2003).

The hermeneutic phenomenology of research is conducted through empirical (collection of experiences) and reflective (analysis of their meanings) activities. In this sense, according to Van Manen, the methods are description of personal experiences, conversational interview, and close observation.

Experiential material is collected from the descriptions of the life experience (DLE) of a group of teachers. These descriptions are collected through conversational interviews and/or writing of protocols in the form of anecdotes and accounts of experiences. In general, the following sequence is followed: conversational interview, writing of descriptions, formulation of questions, conversational interview, rewriting of descriptions, and reformulation of descriptions in the final phenomenological text (Van Manen, 1985).

Interviews and Observation in Phenomenology

The in-depth interview seeks to acquire information about the object of study, taking into account that this information is present in the biography of the interviewee. The interpretation that the studied subject has of his/her experience is gathered in this interview. On the other hand, the conversational interview seeks to obtain the lived meaning of a specific experience, relegating the subjective interpretations about it.

Close observation seeks to approach, as closest as possible, to the vital world of the observed individual to apprehend in situ the meaning of his/her life experience. On the other hand, in participant observation, the researcher seeks to introduce himself/herself into and form part of the culture and context of the study subject. Another essential difference is in the fact that close observation avoids formulating previous schemes of thought (personal or theoretical), while the participant starts from previous categories -even if they are temporary- or comes to them at the end of the process.

Likewise, a categorization of fundamental aspects of the reality is found in this type of observation, while the distinctive element of close observation at the end of the process is the production of anecdotes (Van Manen, 2003).

The second stage aims to describe the issue of study in the most complete and unbiased way. In this regard, Martínez (2008) pointed out that this stage has to reflect authentically the life reality of each of the subjects of study.

Third phase: Reflecting on the Experience Lived - Structural Stage

The purpose of this stage is to try to apprehend the essential meaning of something. Phenomenological reflection is both easy and difficult. It is easy because examining the meaning or essence of an issue is a process constantly executed in everyday life. According to Husserl (1980), when we perceive a teacher, we do not only see a man or a woman. We see an individual different from the others, especially in that aspect that makes us talk about him/her. In other words, I, like the rest of the world, have a concept of a teacher, but it is difficult to come to a determination and reflexive explanation of what "a teacher" is. According to Max Van Manen (2003), this search for meaning is the most difficult task of the phenomenological reflection.

This phase seeks to make a more direct contact with the life experience. The aim is to grasp the meaning of the fact of being a teacher, mother or father, in order to be able to fully live

my pedagogical life with the students. Therefore, when I reflect on the experience of teaching, I do not do it as a psychologist or sociologist, etc. On the contrary, Van Manen (2003) emphasized in the following sentence: "I reflect phenomenologically on the experiences of being a teacher or being a parent as a teacher or a parent. In summary: I try to grasp the pedagogical essence of a given experience" (p. 96).

The Phenomenological Subject Matter

In order to make the phenomenological reflection, it is important to have it clear that research in human sciences is the subject matter; where its concept is understood by analyzing its methodological and philosophical nature. The analysis of the subject matter is usually understood as a little confusing and very mechanical application of any method of calculation of frequencies or codification of terms selected in transcriptions or texts, or any other breakdown of the content of the protocol or documentary material. Based on these applications, there are current computer software that carry out the analysis of the subject matter for the researcher.

Van Manen (2003) indicated that the concept of the subject matter is irrelevant and that it can be simply considered a means to come to the idea under study. Human science research is responsible for the meaning, since "human being" means to be interested in the meaning, to desire the meaning. The desire refers to some attention to and deep interest in one life aspect. For example, when we perceive a child's curious behavior, we experience this "desire to give meaning," this "desire to achieve meaning". The desire is not just a psychological state. It is a state of being.

The subject matters would be like the "structure of the experiences" because when we analyze an issue, we seek to establish the subject matters, the experiential structures that make up the experience. It would be a mistake to think of the subject matters as conceptual formulations or categorical affirmations because it is sought to describe the life experience and this cannot be grasped in conceptual abstractions.

a) The Phenomenological Meaning

According to Van Manen (2003), the meaning is found in practice. It is the fact of reflecting on specific situations: Children: Our lives with children makes us contemplate more reflexive questions. The question Have I done it well? Makes us face the "particular", that is, this child, this situation, this action, following the orientation given to us by our knowledge of the universe. This is why we ask ourselves what is the meaning here of the pedagogy of the fact of being a teacher?

b) Reveling Aspects of the Subject Matters

The phenomenological subject matters are knots in the structural framework of our experiences and certain life experiences connect around them as a significant whole. The subject matters are empowered when they allow us to make phenomenological descriptions. For example, 1) when we examine a book, we "get into it," so to speak. 2) Reading a novel means that we "start to become interested" in the characters of the novel. 3) While analyzing a story, "we experience the action without having to act".

Understanding the Experience: Producing Meanings from a Same Fact

Macro-thematic Reflection of the Essential Meanings of the Experience

Reflection on and interpretation of the experiential material or production of the experiential material. At this moment, great tolerance of ambiguity and contradiction, resistance to the need to give meaning to everything and opposition to precipitation for categorizing things according to known schemes are a priority. We must set aside everything that does not emerge from the

protocol description. Otherwise, we will not see more than we already know and we will only confirm ourselves in our old ideas and even in our own judgments, as Martínez stated (2014).

The Holistic or Sententious Approach or Description of Each Protocol

Here we see texts as a whole and ask ourselves which phrase could encompass the essential meaning of the text as a whole (Van Manen, 2003). We then try to express that meaning by formulating such a phrase.

The aim is to make an overview in order to get a general idea of the content presented in the protocol. According to Martínez (2014), priority will be given to make a large number of reviews of the same protocol and for this, it is essential to try to make them with an "empty mind". The next step can be taken after making such reviews.

Expressing the fundamental meaning of a text is a call to discernment. Different readers can assess different fundamental meanings and this does not indicate that one interpretation is better than the other. But it does indicate that there are more possibilities of making mistakes or perceiving them as idiosyncratic. It is here where plenty of care must be taken about the researcher's judgments.

Micro-thematic Reflection on the Essential Meanings of the Experience

Set of phrases that will get fundamental meanings of the experience.

Selective or Marking Approach

During text marking, we hear or read a text a number of times and ask ourselves: Which phrase or phrases are considered especially fundamental or revealing of the issue or experience being described? These will be the ones that we will circle and highlight.

Delimitating Natural Thematic Units or Detailed Line-by-Line Approach

According to Martínez (2014), this represents the individual physiognomy. We analyze in the detailed reading approach each phrase or group of phrases, and ask: "What does this phrase or group of phrases reveal about the issue or experience being described? (Manen, 2003). To do this, each phrase or group of phrases is carefully read. Then, the question about what each phrase or group of phrases seem to reveal about the nature of the event is posed. And finally, the thematic units are selected. An experience may have few or many thematic units. This will depend on its nature.

Determining the Central Subject Matter that dominates each Thematic Unit.

Two steps are taken in this process. Firstly, redundancies and repetitions of each thematic unit are eliminated. And secondly, the central theme of each unit is determined by clarifying and producing its meaning. The central theme should be expressed using a short phrase that still maintains the language of the subject. This activity is eminently creative. It is suggested to resort from time to time to the same informant subject to clarify the meaning (Martínez, 2014).

Expressing the Central Subject Matter in Scientific Language

The researcher reflects on the central themes, and expresses their content using an appropriate technical or scientific language. To do this, questions will be posed about each central theme, what it reveals about the subject matter being studied in that situation and for that subject, and the answer is expressed using a scientific language (psychological, pedagogical, sociological, etc.).

Here we can consult various sources to support the subject matter. These last three steps should be developed in a chart for coherence (Martínez, 2014).

Integrating All the Central Subject Matters into a Particular Structure

This step is the central and important part of the research where the basic structures of the issue being studied should be identified. This structure is the individual physiognomy that allows to distinguish the subject from all others. All the central themes of each thematic unit should be integrated into a central theme that identifies the subject with respect to the essence of the life experience (Martínez, 2014).

Fourth Phase: Writing about-Reflecting on the Experience Lived

Integrating of All Particular Structures into a General Structure

The purpose of this step is to integrate into a single description all the individual physiognomies of all the subjects being studied. With this we determine the group's physiognomy, that is, the characterizing structure of the group being studied. The formulation should be a concise but complete description of the issued being studied. The description will consist in putting, so to speak, the structure of each individual physiognomy into a general structure which represents the common physiognomy of the group. Husserl states that the purpose of the phenomenological method is to move from the particular to the universal, a complete phenomenological description (Martínez, 2014).

According to Van Manen (2003), this process is called phenomenological text. The objective is "to design an inspiring (textual) and reminding description of actions, behaviors, intentions, and experiences of the individuals as known in the world of life" (p.37). This text should outline, at the same time, the meaning of expositive and non-cognitive type. In the first case, it will refer the semantic meanings of the words and discourses of speech and writing. And in the second case, it will refer the expressive quality of the texts. In this dimension, non-cognitive or practical, the poetic language is involved: "how" is written.

The phenomenological text seeks to make the reader experience a form of "epiphany" of the meaning. In other words, the text has to provoke "a transformative effect in such a way that its deepest meaning produces a gratifying evocation to the reader's self. Epiphany refers to the sudden perception of an intuitive understanding of the life meaning of something. This experience is so significant that it move us in the central part of our being" (Ayala, 1997).

Additionally, the phenomenological sources or comparison of the final work with other studies using the same approach is reviewed in this phase. During this comparison, we find coincidences and differences with the author's reflections. With all this, our final text and understanding of the experience of offering and receiving pedagogical recognition has been enriched by entering into a "dialogue" with a penetrating phenomenological description.

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