THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL READING AND EXISTENTIAL-PHENOMENOLOGY

By

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ABSTRACT

This study reviews an overall theoretical framework of two major phenomena: reading and existential-phenomenology. Nine different predominant theories in reading education, their attributes, effective reading techniques and educational studies of learners' experiences towards effective reading will be examined with some basic issues to grasp the progression of learning theories applied throughout the centuries to assist learners and instructors to overcome difficulties with reading. Literature on existential phenomenology will be reviewed to display this approach and its importance in a research. The reviews of these theories and the approach lead to the proposal for the studies outlined subsequently in the thesis.

Keywords: Existential- Phenomenological Approach, Reading Experience, Effective Reading, Perception.

INTRODUCTION

Reading research and theory are becoming increasingly sophisticated. The earliest experimental study of reading was carried out by Anisson, the director of the French National Printing Office at the end of the 18th century (Venezky, 1975). The initial object of the experiment was to find out the most readable method. Experts were given two specimens written in two different types of styles: one in a modern Roman style (Didot), the other one in a late Renaissance style (Garmond). It was found out that the Garmond type was more readable. Systematic study of human reading behavior synchronized with the experimental study of human psychology: Wundt's laboratory in Leipzig in the late 1870's (Venezky, 1975). This study focused on sensation, perception, and reaction of the learners. The last one of these, reaction experiment, led to a focus on reading: Eye movements and oral responses to given items in order to see the speeds of various mental events.

Contemporary reading research has turned from basic process to teaching and testing. It is a mixture of influences from different areas such as cognitive psychology, linguistics, anthropology, computer science, social psychology, learning theory, educational practice and so on (Pearson, 2002, p.39). These influences may range from the most abstract to applied situations. It is stated that current research in reading has at least two definable thrusts (Pearson, 2002): The first one is the attempt to grasp the basic nature of reading processes and the second one is the increasingly intense search for better methods of teaching for the goal of improving education. There are four common goals of reading research (Pearson, 2002, p.45): First, research to generate a theory of reading, second, research to generate a model of reading, third, research to collect data to generate a theory of reading and the fourth one, research to make instructional decisions.

This study focuses on the EFL learners' experiences towards effective reading with an existential phenomenological approach. Academic reading is different from other reading processes, in that it requires specific techniques such as highlighting, paraphrasing and so on. Most researches are still given in journals and book chapters. Academicians should follow these journals and books day by day. There is no other way to reach the researches performed in the world. Learners apply some strategies that they have experienced while reading and they improve themselves and use different strategies when they experience different things. It is their experience that leads them to use the strategies, and the strategies applied vary

from learner to learner. In other words, the learners should be evaluated one by one. Therefore, the existential phenomenological approach was performed to see the differences among the learners.

The Reason Why Experience is Used in this Study

Learning possesses human value or meaning only if human being engages in it existentially (Colaizzi, 1978a). Postman & Egan (1949, as cited in Colaizzi 1978a, p. 120) stated that "Learning is defined and measured as progressive improvement in performance as a result of practice". This shows that learning theory is derived from performance data. Due to the freedom by inferential reasoning and diverse types of performance data investigated, the psychology of learning is characterized by many theories which allow the fact that a single type of performance data is available to some theoretical explanations (Colaizzi, 1978a). Learning is sometimes a slow process and sometimes the vice-versa. Hence, there is a real problem for experiment. It will be better to describe the genuine learning of the individual own self first. Colaizzi (1978a) defined the structure of genuine learning as:

" *...that activity whereby the learner extracts from material his learned-content, which is a meaning-idea of which he had no previous knowledge and which he posits as true"* (p. 125)

Colaizzi (1978a) also stated that traditional learning experiments do not investigate genuine learning as it is not an easy task that can be evaluated in laboratories. Yet, this is not the case. In fact, genuine learning, as mentioned above, is an individual concept, and it is difficult to evaluate all the learners within a same test or so on. In other words, learning is something related to the individual learner and should be evaluated with regard to the individual.

Some people say that experience does not exist. They argue that s/he has experience but inside him/her. Yet, this is not the case. Colaizzi (1978b) described experience as:

"(a) objectively real for myself and others, (b) not an internal state but a mode of presence to the world, (c) a mode of world presence that is existentially significant, and (d) as existentially significant, it is a legitimate and necessary content for understanding

human psychology" (p. 52).

As seen above, experience is real and unique to the individual and is not an internal situation; on the contrary, it is a mode of presence to the world. Each learner has his/her own experience. Thus, experience is existentially significant and a necessary content for understanding human psychology. In other words, experience is very crucial for every individual as s/he approaches the target item from his/her own experience of perspective.

As for the perception, Merleau-Ponty (1962) described perception as the form of consciousness. Perception is a conscious event; hence, if there is a perception towards something, it means that s/he has learned consciously and there is an authentic learning or genuine learning. In other words, in order to say that something is genuine learning, there must be perception by the individual own self, and this perception can be evaluated through the existential individual's approaches and experiences with regard to the target task.

The reason why the term 'experience' was preferred to the term 'strategy' is that there are several, sometimes even many strategies for any task but not all of them are available to each individual. Some certain strategies do not make any sense to some whereas they make sense to the others. Strategies are very crucial and beneficial in any case but it does not mean that if a person uses that sort of strategy, s/he will succeed. On the other hand, experience is the thing which shows the way by which each person approaches to the target task. People approach situations in different ways. Each person's approach will show how s/he perceives the target task. In other words, individual's experiences could be flexible depending on her/his perception of the particular task.

On the other hand, as this is an existential phenomenological study, it highlights the individual's experience. This study aims to describe how each student approaches the reading or what reading means to him or her and to show what it means to be learner engaged in academic reading and to reveal existential dimension of reading. The focus is on the relationship between learner's approaches to reading and different assumptions, expectations and purposes. This study also focuses on reading experiences and tries to

reveal the complexity of the picture of reading at graduate level. Each student will be evaluated one by one since learning is unique to individual human being, for each human being has different types of learning styles. Even in Turkey, in some education units, Teaching Methods for Specific Learner has just started to be applied. In such educational units, Individual Learning Style Tests are applied before the teaching and learning processes start in order to find out the way s/he learns. Student who knows his/her individual learning style better performs better.

In conclusion, the term 'experience' is preferred instead of the term 'strategy' since the main attention will be paid to each learner and his/her experiences individually with an existential-phenomenological point of view.

Effective Reading

Irvin (1990) sets some characteristics of being an effective reader in comparison with the ineffective one (Figure 1). Irvin (1990) divides the strategies of the readers into three groups: before reading, during reading and after reading. In fact, reading process has three stages: Before, during and after. In the first stage, the reader makes preparations for the reading. S/he uses her/his background knowledge as regard the target topic. Above all, effective reader has a purpose in mind. S/he never reads aimlessly. In the next stage, the reader focuses on the text, and tries to do best in order to grasp the meaning of the text. S/he adjusts reading speed according to the level of the passage and is able to match her/his reading strategies. In the last stage, so–called after reading, effective reader assesses her/his comprehension of the passage, summarizes the major ideas, asks questions and, the most crucial one, decides whether s/he has achieved his/her goal for reading.

As for the ineffective readers, they lack either all or some of these strategies. They just think of the reading as decoding one word at a time and they read without any purpose in mind. Additionally, while they are reading, they do not pay any attention to what they are reading and do not monitor their own comprehension. When it comes to the last, after reading stage, they do not know what they have read and do not make any self-check of their comprehension.

In conclusion, being a proficient reader is necessary, if not crucial, in this information age, and people should use some techniques both in reading and writing in order to make best of their time; otherwise, they cannot keep up with the rapidly changing world. Within this context, readers' experiences affect their preference of which strategy to use and what to do when they come across a familiar topic or an unfamiliar topic. The strategies used by the effective readers help them to consider their background knowledge on the topic they are reading, summarize key ideas and self-question while reading (Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman, 2007).

Proficient Readers (Good Readers)	Ineffective Readers (Poor Readers)
Before Reading	
• Build up their background knowledge on the subject before they begin to read. • Know their purpose for reading. • Focus their complete attention on reading	• Start reading without thinking about the subject • Do not know why they are reading.
During Reading	
• Give their complete attention to the reading task. • Keep a constant check on their own understanding. • Monitor their reading comprehension and do it so often it becomes automatic. • Stop only to use a fix-up strategy when they do not understand.	• Do not know whether they understand or do not understand. • Do not monitor their own comprehension. • Seldom use any of the fix-up strategies.
After Reading	
• Decide if they have achieved their goal for reading. • Evaluate comprehension of what was read. • Summarize the major ideas. • Seek additional information from outside sources.	• Do not know what they have read. • Do not follow reading with comprehension self-check.

Figure 1. Characteristics of Proficient Readers (Irvin, 1990,p.29)

Educational Studies About Students' Experiences Towards Reading Experiences

Most of the scientific studies about reading strategies started with the advent of Applied Linguistics in the late 1950s. Even though the field of applied linguistics started from Europe and the United States, it rapidly became an international concern. Applied Linguistics is interconnected with the fields such as education, linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology.

Within the applied linguistics, scientists have also studied the reading skills. As it is well known, language learning process comprises four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Learners have always suffered from reading comprehension and they have tried to deal with these problems by dint of the instructors, instructions and themselves. During the process of language learning, learners try many strategies, and they choose and find their strategies by heuristic method. Each learner has her/his own strategies in any subject and, of course, in reading. Language learning is not an easy task and it is not merely a classroom activity. It is more than this. The learner is under the influence of his / her own culture, the culture of the target language, environment, and his / her own thoughts and so on.

In order to understand the reading experiences of the learners, we should start with the reading strategies. For, reading strategies are gained through learner's experiences. By strategy, researchers suggest that the strategies that the learners select vary from person to person, culture to culture and so on. Researching foreign language reading strategies has also showed that it is difficult to define, observe, measure, describe, and classify. Garner (1987) suggested that reading strategies are deliberate and planned activities used by readers. Reading strategies are the actions that readers select and control to achieve desired goals or objectives (Carell, Gajdusek & Wise, 1998). Young & Oxford (1997) classified them according to the part of the text on which they focus as global and local.

The classification of the reading strategies as planning strategies (before reading), attending strategies (while reading), and evaluating strategies (after reading) has flourished too much and has become more acceptable. Planning strategies section contains selecting goals, preparing, gauging, and estimating by looking at the topic. In the attending strategies category, readers focus on the target text, search, and contrast and validate the presented knowledge with their existing knowledge. At last, evaluating strategies contain evaluating, judging, testing, repeating, and revising the target text.

The comparison of first language learners' reading strategies and second language learners' strategies has drawn the attention of researchers. Reading strategies in first language are naturally transferred into target language learning process. Cheng (1998) studied 10 Taiwanese students to learn their reading strategies while reading in English. Two different types occurred: integrating and non-integrating. Whereas integrators used more general or top down types of strategies, non-integrators used local or bottom-up types. Cheng (1998) also indicated the importance of other factors such as personality, exposure to strategy training, language proficiency, reading interests, and academic major.

In the last half century, many studies have been carried out with regard to reading strategies. Many strategies have also been put forward by several thinkers and philosophers under some classifications such as making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, synthesizing and assessing. Moore (2005, as cited in Landford, 2009) classified these categories slightly different as questioning, visualizing, connecting, inferring, predicting, and concluding. No matter what the strategy or the terminology is, all readers need some concrete methods to start reading and understand the meaning.

There have occurred many studies related to reading strategies. Some common reading strategies are described as skimming, scanning, guessing, predicting, activating general knowledge, making inferences, separating main ideas from supporting ideas (Barnett, 1988).

As for the specific studies, Cheng (1998) argued that socio-cultural factors have impacts on participants' reading purposes, especially on their English – learning perceptions. He also observed that his participants used different types

of strategies to achieve their purposes. According to him, there are also some other factors, apart from these, which affect the development of his participants, such as personality, exposure to strategy training, language proficiency, reading interests, and academic major.

Wu (2002, as cited in Alsamadani, 2009) carried out a research to find out the difference between younger and older students' perceptions about reading, and she also looked for whether there is a distinction between native and foreign language reading strategies. Findings suggested that older and more proficient ones were more aware of their meta-cognitive skills whereas the younger and low-proficient readers usually used bottom-up strategies more. Chern (1994) also studied Chinese readers' meta-cognitive awareness when reading both in Chinese and English. He founded out that Chinese readers were dictionary dependent while reading in English, but did not have enough awareness of comprehending the meaning of the text. In another study of Cheng (2000, as cited in Alsamadani, 2009), he looked for metacognitive awareness of Taiwanese EFL College students. He founded out that the participants used global or top down strategies while reading Chinese. On the contrary, they used local reading strategies such as reading, structure syntax and word meaning when reading English texts.

As for the recent studies about reading strategies, Chiu, Chow & Mcbride-Chang (2007) conducted a comprehensive study about universal and specific learning strategies for reading, science and mathematics achievement across 34 countries. They examined effects of strategies of memorization, transfer, and metacognition for reading, science, and mathematics achievement across 34 countries. There were 158.848 fifteen-year-old participants who completed a reading literacy test and a questionnaire. 88.401 of them completed a science test, and 88.590 completed a mathematics test. Students using memorization strategies often scored lower in all subjects. Transfer was not an effect for any achievement scores. Students using metacognitive strategies often scored higher. Collective cultures had more effects on students' selection of metacognitive strategies and less effects on their own use of metacognitive strategies. Their findings show that cultural contexts can moderate the links between adolescents' learning strategies and their academic achievement.

Şen (2009) conducted a study which examined the relationship between the use of metacognitive strategies and the reading comprehension levels of students. The participants consisted of 228 individuals. The aim of the study was to find out the differences between the reading comprehension skills of students with regard to finding the main idea, guessing the end of the text and achievement scores. Some of the participants were instructed how to use metacognitive strategies and the others continued using traditional educational methods. No statistically significant difference was found for the level of student skills in "finding the main idea" and "guessing the end of the text. Yet, statistically significant increase was found in the reading comprehension achievement scores of the participants who were instructed to use metacogntitive strategies when compared with those who continued to use traditional methods.

Existentialism and Phenomenology

Existential-phenomenology

Some philosophers assert that existentialism dates back to Socrates. According to Sartre (1996), existentialism dates back to Blaise Pascal (1623-1662). After Blaise Pascal comes Main de Biran (1766-1824) and then Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Existentialism is classified into two types (Sartre , 1996):

• Theist

• Atheist

Existentialism follows a different way from the traditional philosophy. It questions 'who is human?' rather than 'what is human?'. The thing and the object that the human investigates is himself. In short, what he should ask is who I am. Does the ego just consist of physical characteristics or the roles I have in society, the people I like or hate and so on? Existentialists try to grasp the meaning and the importance of existentialism with different approaches. There is a generation gap between today's people and the former ones. In this respect, today's generation is more difficult to understand. In this very case, existentialism will

help the parents and educators understand the young. Existentialism enables to handle the identity of human being with new terms and phenomenological approach instead of the terms "traditional thinking animal and autonomous man". Philosophy of existentialism is defined as human consciousness and puts the human into the centre of thinking.

On the other hand, existentialist writers study the loneliness and despair of the individual and, in addition to this; they want the individual to recognise himself and to become himself (Sartre, 1996). In short, they try to prevent him from becoming a cog of a machine. As mentioned above, though existentialism emerged from the same source as did other movements, it has focused on different aspects. On the other hand, even existentialism shows discrepancies within itself. Thus, it will be better to study the varieties of existentialism. With regard to this movement, six existentialist philosophers, who are regarded as prominent figures in this field (Blackham, 2005) should be mentioned.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher, under the influence of a theist father, grew up in a religious atmosphere and was influenced by it. He stressed that Christianity had been corrupted and should be immediately renewed thoroughly. In other words, Kierkegaard handled God and religion from the perspective of the individual. Kierkegaard, placing the individual into the centre of philosophy, is regarded as one of the pioneers of existentialism. On the other hand, though he is said to have criticised Hegel's rationalist and systematic philosophy, he is said to be sometimes more rationalist and systematic than Hegel. Besides this, most of the terms related to existentialism have been seen in the products of Kierkegaard, such as absurd, depression, fear and anxiety.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

A philosopher who is known to have made fame for his nihilistic ideas and devotion to distraction, Nietzsche remains to be the major figure behind not only existentialism but many contemporary movements of literary criticism with his radical and questioning views. On the one hand, there is a close relationship between Nietzsche and Kierkegaard: Both were handicapped and stood for respect. Both refused the culture of their own ages and turned to the Greeks. Both were existentialists and dealt with the battle of life under the light of thought. However, unlike Kierkegaard, Nietzsche dealt with mundane things.

"A mystic and an opponent of rationalism and science" (Allen and Clark, 1970. p. 511), Nietzsche came from a Protestant family. Still, his account of God ignored ethic considerations of Schopenhauer, whom he chose as a master. He also tried hard to overcome nihilism, doubt, and pessimism.

Karl Jaspers (1883-1969)

Jaspers was influenced by such philosophers as Kant, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche but in his masterpiece "Philosophy" (1932), he put forward his own conception of existentialism. This work was banned in Nazi Germany. Karl Jaspers put forward many effective and interesting ideas: in the theoretical philosophy 'transcendentalism', 'code', 'philosophical belief', in historical belief 'period of axes' and in philosophy of politics, 'new politics conception'. Karl Jaspers, regarded as one of the pioneers of the existentialist philosophy, developed an existentialist philosophy that can analyze the potential human attitudes towards the problems of the age and the attitudes that s/he should do when s/he is subjected to death, war and crime. This philosophy can help to solve the problem of human being by means of mind. According to Jaspers, who knew the ideas and thoughts of the individual in such situations, suggested that these situations can be ignored as they cannot be made concrete. Jaspers also added that politics and the church do not provide freedom for the people but they make people equal. To him, human being should reject this and in order to deal with the world there are three rules by which an individual can grab his own ego or being: Loneliness, courage and war. The human who loses respect to social problems should be alone. Later, he has to overcome this loneliness problem by means of courage. Finally, the human being who experiences the former two has three things to deal with: death, affliction and crime. According to Jaspers, existence requires responsibilities. Jaspers also argued that the individual should reach 'the absolute' by going beyond the scholarship in order to effectuate his own existence.

Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973)

Marcel, a French existentialist philosopher, ignored idealism due to paradox when the fact is associated with the rational one. He stressed the importance of belief and tried to reveal ontological gravity of human experience. Although Marcel is known to have been a theist existentialist, it is known that there are both theist and atheist bases in existentialism. In short, Marcel has his own theology based on experience. According to Marcel, one can separate metaphysical experience and religious belief from each other. According to him, one cannot infer from nature that 'there is God', for the rational clues of God's existence do not mean anything for the atheist. In other words, guises are against belief. In short, it is human's experience that provokes hope and belief.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

According to Heidegger, a concise explanation to the question of what existence means in modern times is not given and this shows that there have been still many questions concerning the meaning of existence. Since the pre-historic times, ontological obsessions and prejudices against it led this interrogation much harder. The question of existence has been even forgotten and there have been lots of metaphysical speculations concerning this concept. Since pre-historic times and periods of Plato and Aristotle, the idea of existence which philosophers interrogate is getting more complex and complicated rather than clarified and explicit. The main reason for this stems from the fact that Antique Greek philosophers have dealt with existence as the most universal and futile concept. Thus, today, the question of "what is the meaning of existence?" is to be requestioned.

The question enlightening the meaning of existence should be considered directly by basic ontology, not by theological, mathematical, social and natural sciences that consider existence as the object of knowledge. Heidegger defines the term "existence" by the word *Dasein,* meaning the existence existing there. To make *Dasein* the object of knowledge is not to explain it from its existential character, but from its conceptual character. However, *Dasein* is not primarily the object of knowledge, but the existence which gives the shape of existing within

itself. Because of that reason *Dasein*'s existence can only be given by its existence. In this respect, as mentioned above briefly, the priority of the existence problem is based on the fact that it is basic, original, and has its own meaning.

 "What is the meaning of existence?" is the basic problem of philosophy. According to him, that question can only be answered by pointing out the existential character of existence and with the leadership of the question "What is the meaning of existence?" and for Heidegger, that question can only be solved with a methodology.

Phenomenology refers to a kind of method in terms of conceptualization and cannot determine the objects of a philosophical research in terms of its contents but can determine the method of such a research. While the contents of the method are being determined, the closer it is to reality and the more comprehensively the method's general basic character and content are determined, the higher possibility occurs to encounter the things in itself in an original way. In this respect, Heidegger, who proposes to understand the inner face of the concept of "phenomenon" as a prerequisite and apply its typical use in a legal way, emphasizes upon how the concept of "logos" should be considered to mention that how phenomenology would be the science of phenomena. According to Heidegger, the traditional concept of "logos" was not used in its original sense and meaning by the classical philosophers. "Logos" is the statement which makes the existence clear that is being discussed about during the conversation. In this respect, "logos" makes the thing that is being discussed visible and the thing that is discussed is derived from the thing that is discussed about in accordance with the authenticity of the discourse. In conclusion, the thing that is discussed turns into reality and makes itself visible for the speakers. In this respect, "logos" is considered in terms of utterance. Phenomenon is not the object of appearance or experimental instinct in Kantian view, it is to show something in itself. In this respect, phenomenology consists of logos and phenomena and it is the science of understanding the existence which gives itself to itself directly.

Because Heidegger refers to the existence with the term

Dasein which means the existence itself. His making *Dasein* the object of the knowledge is not because of its existential structure but theoretical one. *Dasein*, first of all, is not an object of knowledge but it is an existence that gives existing structure to oneself. For this reason, only *Dasein*'s existence can give existence to itself. To Heidegger, *Dasein* can be with own self or alien. In other words, *Dasein* is the only creature that is able to select to be own self or not. As for phoneme, it has two conceptual meanings: first, the thing that makes oneself certain; second, the thing that points out oneself. In short, phoneme is the thing that shows oneself and makes this appear.

In this respect, the concepts of traditional philosophy cannot explain the temporality of *dasein*. For this reason, the existential analysis of the existence should be made and this is only possible by dint of phenomenological method which gives things directly to conscious and makes them obvious. Phenomenology is a method which leads to existence in terms of hermeneutic existential respect and historical respect by going through ontology. Thus, ontology is possible with phenomenology. In this respect, philosophy is a method and uses the early principles of hermeneutic approach. In short, Heidegger suggested that phenomenology is to discover the meaning of existence.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1950-1980)

Jean – Paul Sartre may be the first figure when the term "existentialism" is uttered. According to Sartre, being conscious means being conscious of something. In fact, being conscious of something means being aware of this consciousness. Consciousness, which he called pour-soi, is beyond the world and it is not a phoneme. Phoneme is the existence, called en-soi, and the source of complete existence. The relationship between pour-soi and en-soi constitutes the knowledge and activity. Knowledge is essentially an intuition which is a consciousness towards an abstract object. This is the fundamental rule of all experience.

When it comes to phenomenology, the term itself sounds a bit peculiar, and some people say that they hear the word phenomenology for the first time. Even some of them have difficulty in pronouncing this term. The term was started to be used approximately a hundred years ago. It will be better to start with answering: what is phenomenology?

Phenomenology is a philosophical doctrine which was proposed by Edmund Husserl. This doctrine is based on the study of human experience, and the considerations of objective reality are not taken into considerations in this type of study. In psychology, phenomenology is used to refer to subjective experiences or study of these experiences. Here the experiencing subject can be regarded as the person or self. It tries to describe the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness, without the help of a theory, deduction, or assumptions from other disciplines. In short, phenomenology is a qualitative research which deals with the understanding of a certain group's behaviours from that group's point of view.

According to von Eckartkartsberg (1998), the acts of consciousness give us access to our inner world, such as; perceiving, willing, thinking and remembering. Phenomenology became the study of human beings created by the stream of consciousness which is intentional. Phenomenologists have the saying: 'Consciousness is always conscious of something'. Consciousness realizes and creates meanings for the world through experience.

Even though phenomenology can be traced back to Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Ernst Mach, the term 'phenomenology' was formally first used by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) in the Introduction to the Second Value of the First Edition of his *Logiesche Untersuchungen* (*Logical Investigations*, 1900 – 1901) (Moran, 1999). Here he mentions the phenomenology of the experiences of thinking and knowing. In 1913, in the second edition of the same work he adds (as cited in Moran, D., 1999. p. 1-2):

This phenomenology, like the more inclusive pure phenomenology of experiences in general, has, as its exclusive concern, experiences intuitively seizable and analysable in the pure generality of their essence, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real facts, as experiences of human or animal experients in the phenomenal world that we posit as an empirical fact. This phenomenology must bring to pure expression, must describe in terms of their essential concepts and their

governing formulae of essence, the essences which directly make themselves known in intuition, and the connections which have their roots purely in such essences. Each such statement of essence is an a priori statement in the highest sense of the word (LI, Intro. 1, p. 249; Hua XIX/16).

Here he suggested that the experience of the human cannot be observed by means of experiments but by means of his own observation. The improvement of the person is in direct proportion with the experience and while the phenomenology describes this, it focuses on person's relation with conscious of being and his environment. According to Husserl, he himself was the founder of a new discipline; namely, a self-styled 'radical beginner'. He tried to find out phenomenology of the sub-divisions, of the field of consciousness. Husserl (1970, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg, 1998. p. 9) created his idea of "life – world": the world of everyday activities and common sense meanings. As the life – world is unexamined part of human psychology, phenomenology tries to investigate this phenomena.

Husserl was not the only one to study phenomenology. There are some other important figures as well. While Husserl focused on how we construct our reality, Alfred Schutz (1962, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg 1998. p. 9) focused on especially the construction of social reality. He challenged the phenomenology of Husserl and put the sociology and social psychology into initial point. Von Eckartkartsberg (1998) stated that Max Scheler (1874-1928) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) were two of the prominent practitioners who studied phenomenology from different aspects. Scheler (1961, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg 1998. p. 10) studied the phenomenological description and analyses of the irrational essences in experience in emotional life. His main concern was to determine the place of human being in cosmos. His phenomenology deals with the sudden apperception and emotional cognition of values: value-awareness and value-perception. His great contribution to this area was that he described the key inter-human phenomena of love, and hate and the varieties of sympathy. After Heidegger wrote *Being and Time,* phenomenology has begun to be understood through Heidegger and Husserl's works.

Phenomenology is a philosophy of practice rather than system. According to Kant, phenomenology is the science which focuses on the things apparent to human observer. Hegel is considered as true progenitor of phenomenological method. However, in addition to pioneers such as Kant and Hegel, it was Franz Brentano who influenced Edmund Husserl's use of the term. Husserl took the British tradition of empiricism from Brentano. Brentano suggested a kind of philosophical psychology or philosophy of mind. As a successive of Descartes, Brentano stated the self-evidence of our understanding the inner mental life-inner perception. Brentano focused on the relation between the object and the act with regard to the part and the whole. In other words, when we know the complex phenomenon, and then comes the part understandable though it is not explicit. In his *Descriptive Psychology* (1889), Brentano used the phrase 'descriptive psychology' or 'descriptive phenomenology' so as to show the difference between the phenomenology and genetic or physiological psychology (Moran, 1999).

The phenomenology has grown beyond the recognition of Husserl. It has become the key concept approximately in all sciences for the knowledge as a concern of critique of reason. Phenomenology puts the intuitions to the top stage of knowledge, so they become difficult to understand. Later, Husserl mentioned these intuitions as 'originary giving' or 'presentive' in his mature works. In his work, *Ideas I* (1913), he states (as cited in Moran, 1999. p. 10) his principle of all principles as:

…that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak in its "personal" actuality) offered to us in "intuition" is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there.

Original representative intuition is at the centre of Husserl's philosophy. Husserl also believed that the researches of experiences were sometimes in ordinary life. On the other hand, it should not be only regarded as that the mind is a container and memories are like pictures' images, nor should we think that conscious events are only brain events. Moran (1999) stated that according to Husserl (1913), whereas the world of our ordinary experience is a set of

formed objects of universal laws, the foundational experiences are different. In order to understand the life-world, one has to grasp the scientific world-view on one's consciousness and phenomenology is a kind of 'God's Eye' perspective or the 'view from nowhere' (Moran, 1999).

Phenomenology focuses on the aspects of experience which are ignored by empiricism. Empiricism states that the knowledge can be gained by senses and the experience. According to this theory, human beings are born without knowledge. Human brain is a tabula rasa. Humans gain the knowledge later. Neverthless, this theory ignores the aspects of experience. In short, one's horizons and background assumptions are taken into account of understanding and interpreting.

In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), Maurice Merleau-Ponty accounted for phenomenology as 'a matter of describing, not of explaining or analyzing'. Phenomenology deals with the role of subjectivity and consciousness in all knowledge. The central point of phenomenology is that we should also take the role of subjectivity into account while evaluating the experiences as scientific naturalism has done. Husserl (2003) stated that the method of information criticism is the phenomenological method..

Phenomenology is against the unobservable subjects and the naturalism. By putting the cognition to the front, phenomenologists argue that not only the object should be known but also the conscious life itself. They also suggest that the research studies should focus on accidental encounters. Most importantly, they tend to explain the events in the universe with descriptions rather than with reasons and facts. Moreover, they discuss whether Husserl's metaphysical phenomenological period and reduction is useful, even possible or not.

Realistic Phenomenology

This tendency developed in Germany from the 1920s onwards and still continues today. It focuses on the universal essences such as human actions, motives, selves and so on. The philosophers of this tendency and their contributions to phenomenology are: Adolf Reinach (philosophy of law), Max Scheler (ethics, value theory, religion, and philosophical anthropology), Edith Stein (philosophy of human sciences) and Roman Ingarden

(aesthetics, architecture, music, literature, and film). Alexander Pfänder, Herbert Spiegelberg, Karl Schumann and Barry Smith have been the successive representatives of this tendency (Embree, 1997, http://www.phenomenologycenter.org).

Constitutive Phenomenology

Husserl's *Ideen zu einer Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philophie I* of 1913 triggered this movement. The central concept of this tendency is philosophy of natural sciences. The followers of this tendency are Oskar Becker, Aron Gurwitsch, and Elizabeth Ströker.

Existential Phenomenology

It dates back to Martin Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit (1923),* whose main concept is to use an analysis of human being as a basis to a fundamental ontology different from the ones described by Husserl. The successive representatives of this tendency are Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers, John Compton, Michel Henry, Maurice Natanson, and Bernhard Waldenfels. This tendency mostly deals with conflict, desire, finitude, oppression, and death.

Hermeneutical Phenomenology

It drives from the work of Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit.* According to this tendency, human existence is interpretative. The figures of this tendency are Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Patrick Heelan, Don Ihde, Graeme Nicholson, Joseph J. Kockelmans, Calvin O. Schrag, Gianni Vattimo, and Carlo Sini. This tendency is the harmony of the former three ones.

Realistic and constitutive phenomenology first appeared and developed in Germany before and after World War I whereas existential phenomenology appeared in France after World War II. The last one (hermeneutical phenomenology) flourished in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s.

Actually, existentialism is a 20th century movement despite Kierkegaard and other philosophers of the 19th century. Yet, these philosophers influenced the latter philosophers of existentialism in the 20th century in terms of the sense of thinking. There are many commonalities among the 20th century existentialist thinkers such as Heidegger, Sartre,

Buber, Merleau-Ponty and De Beauvoir despite great diversity. The common themes of existentialism by referring to the mainstream of this approach are as follows

- The human being is at the centre of universe and he is always in relation with the others and the things.

- The human being is thrown into the world and s/he is not allowed to choose parents. People are born and they die. Actually, s/he is free to make his choices.

- As we all know, human beings are not infinite. The death is inevitable.

- Experience is the most essential thing for the human being. It is over beyond the theoretical assumptions.

- As all experience is physical and mental, they vary from one person to another.

As for the term existential-phenomenology, it is mainly associated with Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. It focused on the preconscious lived-experience, namely, the phenomenon of the 'lived-body.' According to this theory, being in the world requires more than human consciousness which is human response to a perceived situation. To Spielberg (1963, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg 1998. p. 11), the aim of the existential-phenomenology is "the awakening to a special way of life, usually called authentic existence"

The contribution of Heidegger (1962, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg, 1998, p. 11) was his questioning of the traditional Cartesian subject-object distinction. Within the comparison of subject and object, there is always a gap between realms of matter and consciousness; otherwise, it leads to unsolvable epistemological difficulties. If the human being is completely aware of his own existence within the world, then he can abstain from the problem. Human beings are not separated from the world; on the contrary, they are totally involved in a complex network of independent relationships that require response and participation (von Eckartkartsberg, 1998. p. 11).

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, the person is totally responsible for his or her own choices. He claimed that each person choose himself or herself. This can be explained by existential psychoanalysis. Sartre tried to comprehend the existence of the other in intuitive and emphatic behaviours.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1968, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg 1998. p. 12) enlarged the meaning of the term 'intentionality' to contain preverbal thought or the prepersonal dimension of bodily intentions and meaning. He states that the human being is the part of the world and the world is an extension of his / her body. The body and the world are interwoven.

Although Søren Kierkegaard is the father of existentialism, one can hardly call him as phenomenologist and though Husserl started phenomenology, one cannot call him existentialist. So what is the difference between these two terms and how can such a movement, existential-phenomenology, can exist?

First of all, they both tried to study man and things in the same atomistic way. According to them, man is not more or less like an atom. The way they differ from each other is that Kierkegaard speaks of man whereas Husserl focuses on just consciousness or knowledge. Kierkegaard saw the existence of 'human being' as a subject-in-relationship-to God. According to Kierkegaard, the existence of any human being in the universe is original and unique. He claimed that regardless of what the philosophers think about the existence of human beings, it is just applicable to himself / herself. They are not valid for the others. Thus he is not so scientific and his way of thinking is monologue and the solitary mediation. In fact, his followers rejected the reproach of being unscientific as existentialism deals with the man. Philosophers cannot abstain from the universal judgments while studying the human being, so s/he is scientific in this sense.

While Husserl tried to focus on the problems of the knowledge, Kierkegaard focused on the theological-anthropological concerns. In fact, these two different thoughts occurred as a whole in Heidegger's work *Being and Time.* On the other hand, phenomenology developed itself by borrowing many topics from existentialism. So, the unified movement existential-phenomenology occurred. In other words, the pure phenomenology of Husserl was enlarged by the existentialist movement.

Existentialism and Existential- Phenomenology and Education

Existentialists follow a different method from those of

traditional philosophers. They react especially Plato and Hegel's philosophy of understanding 'individual'. In such perceptions, person gets lost in the abstract of thinking man or 'universal individual'. On the other hand, existentialism is a reaction against the industrial conception of the modern age and the absorbing nature of the technological world. In short, existentialism is a reaction against the trends of abolishing and smashing the individual in public.

What is existentialist education? It is not impossible to deal with the education independently from philosophy. There are some different approaches to existential philosophy. Thus, the important thing is to display these approaches and consider them as a whole and supply the deficiencies.

The concept of freedom has been under debate among the philosophers for centuries. Existentialism mentions about a thorough and absolute freedom. Human is free to choose his activities. He constantly tries different methods: religious deliverance, cultural escape and so on, for human cannot be free under the influence of environment. In fact, humans are not obliged to follow the methods the other people do. There is nothing to force the human to behave in such a way. On the other hand, even though sociologists and anthropologists see the man as a member of a certain culture, human sometimes objects to these cultural values. Human is the very creature who chooses what to do, which differs him from the others. Sartre's main concept is consciousness as Husserl. Actually, unlike Husserl's 'transcendental consciousness', her/his consciousness has no essence and it is based on his relationships with the universe. In Sartre's philosophy, it is not possible to improve the student's ability of choice because the person is the creature who can already make choices. Teacher can just help him for his good choice. The problem is that the education aims to evaluate the student with the predetermined measures and assessments but these are not acquirements since they are predetermined. The fact is to observe the improvement in the individual.

Whereas John Dewey focused on the human and his habitat, Heidegger just focused on the experience of the human. Both dealt with the life but considered different phonemes while handling human and the universe. John Dewey approach resembles the naturalists', but Heidegger

focused on the individual whereas John Dewey focused on the experience. According to existential phenomenology, human is not a biological, social, functional and philosophical abstraction but it is a constantly developing 'ego;' that continually occurs with his relation with his habitat, other people, his culture, society and history. Humans are always in need of ego and freedom. So he is not a complete creature.

The basic function of school is to improve individual autonomy. Actually, the problem is to select the knowledge not the educational techniques. According to existentialists, not all the things are acquired by means of education, some are by experience. In this respect, phenomenology intervenes and completes this relation. In other words, existential phenomenology has made existentialism and phenomenology come together, and it demands educational to deal with individual's experience. This complex movement accepts experience as the basis of human life according to movement. To examine experience is different from that of physical and biological analysis. In this respect, some of the studies carried out will be told in the following section in detail.

Studies of Experiences from Phenomenological and Existential-Phenomenological Perspective

Despite many studies about reading strategies, there are few studies about phenomenological ones. However, very few existential phenomenological studies have been conducted up to now. This is because these terminologies are very recent as mentioned before in this chapter. However, this approach is in the ascendancy.

Von Eckartsberg (1998) states there are two general approaches in existential-phenomenological research: empirical and hermeneutical phenomenological studies.

Empirical Existential Phenomenological Studies

This is a structural organization which aims to reveal the existential general meaning of the given phenomenon in answer to the implicit research-guiding question. Empirical existential studies deal with the analysis of protocol data provided by research subjects in response to a question.

Colaizzi (1973, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg 1998) published *Reflection and Research in Psychology*: A

Phenomenological Study of Learning, in which he criticized the work of Kaam (1958, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg 1998). Colaizzi regarded Kaam's work as empirical and phenomenal but not fully completed and he also stated that Kaam's work lacked implicit horizon descriptions gathered (von Eckartkartsberg, 1998).

Colaizzi (1973, as cited in von Eckartsberg, 1998, p.30) states that the fundamental structure of a phenomenon could be categorised into two groups: individual phenomenological reflection (IPR) and empirical phenomenological reflection (EPR). In the first one, the researcher uses only her/his personal experiences but in the later one, the researcher applies her/his systematic reflections by means of descriptive protocols collected from the participants

Colaizzi (1973, as cited in von Eckartkartsberg 1998. p. 31) puts forward his organization for the empirical phenomenological research as follows and these are going to be described in detail in the related section.

- Discovering a fundamental structures of learning by IPR
- Obtaining a fundamental description of learning by the method of phenomenal study (PS)
- Obtaining a fundamental description via EPR
- Discovering a fundamental structure via EPR

How Colaizzi applied these steps are as follows:

Hermeneutical – Phenomenological Studies

Hermeneutical – Phenomenological Studies focus on the human experience as well. Here the data is collected from a spontaneous production of speech, of writing, or of art. These data vary from personal documents to literature and to art. Hermeneutical phenomenological research is broader than the empirical existential phenomenological one. There are two types of Hermeneutical phenomenological research according to Eckarstberg (1998): actual life text studies and studies of recollection and literary texts.

Actual Life-Text Studies

Actual life texts studies focus on the data and life texts collected through tape-recording such as a speak aloud, therapy transcripts, interview transcripts and dialogic ones.

Studies of Recollection and Literary Texts

This type of hermeneutical – phenomenological studies comprise the draws on personal experience in an illustrative way. The researchers try to investigate the human experience by means of the draws that the subjects draw.

Cashin, Small & Solberg (2008) carried out a research on the lived experience of fathers who have children with asthma: a phenomenological study. Eight fathers were interviewed for their experience. Their children aged between 7 and 11 years. They identified five themes: feeling relief in knowing the diagnosis, learning the ropes, being vigilant, living with concern, and being comfortable with asthma management. This study was conducted to understand the experience of fathers who have children with asthma and facilitate essential first steps to providing supportive nursing care. The findings revealed various feelings and thoughts that the fathers who have children with asthma. In other words, the findings provide new insight into the experience of being the father of a child with asthma.

Felton, Nickols-Richardson, Serrano & Hosig (2008) conducted a study on African-American students' perceptions of their majors, future professions, and the dietetics major and profession: a qualitative analysis. 28 women and 12 men participated in the study. Phenomenological analysis method was used to identify common themes and meanings. Findings revealed that African-American students in fields of study other than dietetics in this study did not choose dietetics as the most important ones for a variety of reasons. One of these reasons was a lack of awareness of the dietetics major. By means of culturally contextual targeted messages, the profession should make known the advantages of the dietetics major, careers, and profession.

Beitin, Duckett & Fackina (2008) carried out a research titled as Discussion of Diversity in a classroom: A Phenomenological Study of Students in an MFT Training Program. Their qualitative study consisted of phenomenological interviews focusing on discussions of diversity by six students from a marriage and family therapy program. They found out that students' reactions to these discussions were complex and they were under the influence of their families of origin, their perceptions of other students, their views of the professor, and their race.

As for the existential-phenomenology, there are several studies. One of the main reasons is that it is recent term. Furthermore, most of the people do not know even the meaning of the term existential-phenomenology.

Lecovin (1994) carried out an existential-phenomenological study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the meaning of an emotional abuse experience. Lecovin (1994) used an existential-phenomenological approach. There were two co-researchers. They were asked to discuss the events before, during, and after the emotional abuse experience. The two interviews tape-recorded and transcribed were given to each co-researcher. They analyzed the transcripts according to the method described by Colaizzi (1978a). Both themes and transcripts were given to the co-researchers for validation. The researchers hoped that this study would help clients who have been emotionally abused, for counseling techniques.

Claspell (1984) carried out a research titled as An Existential - Phenomenological Approach to Understanding the Meaning of Grief. The aim of this study was to investigate the experience of grief with the aim of understanding the meaning of the phenomenon. 4 men and 4 women whose ages varied from 33 to 50 were the participants. Each participant was asked to describe his or her own grief experience and to validate the analysis within the three interviews. These interviews were firstly taped, then transcribed and lastly used as the data for the study. The meaning of the grief was examined by means of existential-phenomenological approach the Giorgi's descriptive methodologies and Colaizzi's existential-phenomenological method. The results of the study were described into a phenomenological description of grief.

Lecovin (1990) also conducted a research with the existential-phenomenological approach: An existential-phenomenological approach to understanding the experience of romantic love. The aim of the study was to investigate this experience by using existential-phenomenological approach. Again the researchers were interviewed. The transcripts were also analyzed according to the method by Colaizzi (1978a).

As can be understood from the aforementioned studies, the method of Colaizzi (1978a) is mostly used in existential-phenomenological studies. The participants are given interviews and then the interviews are analyzed.

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