
PHENOMENOLOGY IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Ely Satiyasih Rosali¹,
Candrika Adhiyasa²

Universitas Siliwangi¹, Universitas Gadjah Mada²
ely@unsil.ac.id

A. Introduction

When someone observes a phenomenon or symptom, he then consciously or not, interprets. He interprets the world that "tells" to himself. The world exhibits an abstract quality, and can only be grasped by certain methods of thought. One method of thinking in an effort to capture the meaning of a phenomenon or symptom is phenomenology. Phenomenology is an "activity" that connects the subject and object. The two then interact, and the subject gets interpretation through his experience of observing the object. Phenomenology emphasizes experience. Subjects are emphasized to directly observe certain phenomena or symptoms and then "feel" them. This "feeling", or what can be called meaning (the process of producing meaning), is closely involved with language, with narrative.

The father of the philosophy of phenomenology is Edmund Husserl, whose most important work was published in the late 19th and early decades of this century. Husserl was interested in the development of a radical philosophy, in the literal sense of the word: a philosophy that explores the roots of our knowledge and experience. In particular he said that scientific knowledge has been separated from everyday experience and from activities in which experience and knowledge are rooted, it is the task of phenomenology to restore this relationship (Craib, 1986: 126-127).

Phenomenology has a close relationship with the philosophy of idealism. That is, phenomenism emphasizes the conceptual realm in assigning value to an empirical phenomenon. Sugiharto (2020) in Mohamad et al (2021) that Husserl's phenomenology was later developed by Heidegger and the philosophers who followed him (Gadamer, Ricoeur, and so on) into a hermeneutic tradition. He also continues that further reflection on the equally important phenomenology actually came from the philosopher Merleau-Ponty. Departing from Husserl's idea of the life-world (the basic, primary, real world is the world of lived experiences). Ponty shows that perception is our primordial contact with the world, the only mode for forming the meaning of reality (Being).

To be able to form the meaning of reality, the subject must have an open attitude to life. He no longer allows himself to be ensnared by his ideological attributes and seeks to capture the denotative meaning of the object. Capturing the "language" conveyed by the object in order to capture its essence. Thus, phenomenology eventually moves periodically from an attitude of life in experiencing something to a scientific method for producing qualitative meaning after experiencing the thing (object).

B. Concepts of Phenomenology

Phenomenology, as the name implies, is the science (logos) of visible things (phenomenon). Thus, every research or every work that discusses the appearance of anything is phenomenological (Bertens, 1987: 3). Phenomenology is a framework of thinking that puts forward the analysis of the meaning of certain experiences, especially in capturing reality—events or symptoms that appear. Events or symptoms that appear so far are limited to something empirical, meaning that they can be captured by the five senses and then given the burden of meaning by the subject who has the capacity to judge it, in this case the subject is the researcher.

The term phenomenology means the study of the way in which phenomena things we are aware of appear in our heads, and the most basic way of arising is as a continuous stream of sensory experiences that we receive through our senses (Craib, 1986: 128). For example, we see an earthquake event from the perspective of the victim, we can explore the perspective of the victim about the earthquake without being fixated on the concept of the earthquake itself scientifically, for example from a geological point of view.

Phenomenology as a form of idealism is solely interested in the structures and workings of human consciousness and its basics, although it is often an implicit assumption, that the world we live in is created by the consciousnesses that exist in each of us. Craib, 1986: 127). If the earthquake was a natural phenomenon, then the explanation needed in the phenomenological analysis does not stop there. He seeks a human awareness of the reality of the earthquake, and captures the meaning of the victim in interpreting the earthquake that hit him, which can then be interpreted as a natural disaster. Previously, an earthquake was a mere natural phenomenon, but if it causes harm (material, psychological, etc.), then it turns into a natural disaster. Changes from

natural phenomena to natural disasters occur because of a collective meaning about these phenomena.

1. Phenomenon

Etymologically, the term phenomenon comes from the Greek, *phaenesthai*, which means to raise, exalt, or show itself. Phenomena can also be referred to through the etymology of phenomenon which means "that which appears from appearance" or "shows".

There are several meanings of phenomena, including objects of perceptual experience, which are observed, which appear in our consciousness, objects of sensory experience or those that appear to our five senses, and a fact or event that can be observed (Zaprulkhan, 2018: 74).

In conclusion, the phenomenon is a visible and understandable reality, there is nothing that covers that reality and us (the subject). However, reality itself can only be understood by the consciousness of the subject. Without awareness, reality will not reveal any meaning and only store value in itself, or what in Immanuel Kant's language is called *Das Ding an Sich*.

2. Awareness

Humans live with awareness (consciousness). Through this awareness, humans can recognize themselves and recognize the world. Awareness includes inward and outward study, and allows the interaction between subject-object, thereby enabling the creation of certain knowledge or certain meanings of a phenomenon or symptom, both empirical and non-empirical.

Consciousness is the active giving of meaning. We always have experiences of ourselves, of identical awareness of ourselves. The world as a linkage of phenomena is anticipated in the awareness of our unity and that the world is a means for us to realize ourselves as consciousness (Hasbiansyah, 2008: 168).

Capra as reviewed by Keraf (2014) says that humans have a Second Level of Consciousness (consciousness), while Cognition, which is a cognitive process and involves all experiences of perception, emotion, intuition, and the five senses, occurs and is experienced by all beings, life, not just humans. While Level Two Consciousness involves self-awareness in assessing objects and even subjects in order to carry out the abstraction process. Here it is emphasized, man knows that he knows. Sihotang (2018: 96) says that awareness is what moves people to knowledge. Knowledge here is not limited to the meanings of a phenomenon, but allows humans to examine radically all processes in a phenomenon.

3. Intentionality

Intentionality is the ability of consciousness to show something different from a certain material or activity. That is, intentionality is an unusual interpretation, which is different from the general one. Intentionality believes that an act of consciousness has quality. That is, an interpretation and production of meanings about reality has value.

4. Constitution

Constitution is a process of interaction between phenomena and consciousness. Because of the process that connects phenomena with consciousness, this activity is called constitution. The Constitution does not recognize, or rather does not involve, the concept of *Das Ding an Sich*, but emphasizes that there is no knowledge of a phenomenon that is not connected with the consciousness of the subject. That is, constitution is a process when consciousness provides an interpretation of a particular phenomenon, which can thus provide a knowledge or meaning about the phenomenon.

5. Epoche

Sociologists or any scientist for that matter are only interested in the world insofar as it has meaning and so we must understand how we make it meaningful. This is achieved by putting aside what we already assume we know, and then going through the process of understanding it. Such exclusion from our knowledge is sometimes referred to as "phenomenological reduction"; sometimes also referred to as "confinement" and in more technical literature it is called *epoche* (Craib, 1986: 127). "Phenomenological reduction", the abandonment of our knowledge of the world, said by Alfred Schutz will leave the "stream of experience" (stream of experience).

Epoche itself is an action to get rid of the ideological attributes of the subject (researcher) in studying a phenomenon. These ideological attributes are for example initial perceptions, religious judgments, or the tendency of beliefs (religious) of the subject (researcher). That is, *epoche* is an action to get rid of the ideological tendencies of the subject and promote neutrality in studying a phenomenon.

6. Reduction

Moeryadi (2009) states that in Husserl's phenomenological method, reduction is needed so that with intuition we can capture the nature of objects. It is these reductions that

remove all distractions if we are to reach *wesenschau* (seeing—intuitively—the essence). The first reduction, getting rid of everything that is subjective. Second, getting rid of all knowledge about the object being investigated and obtained from other sources. Third, get rid of all knowledge reduction. Everything that others have said should, for the time being, be deleted.

7. Intersubjectivity

Smith et al (2009) wrote that according to Heidegger, another view in the concept of phenomenology is about the person (person) who always cannot be removed from the context of his world (person-in-context) and intersubjectivity. Both are also central in phenomenology. Intersubjectivity relates to feelings of sharing, over-lapping, and the natural relationship of actions in the universe. Intersubjectivity is a concept to describe relationships and estimates of the ability to communicate with others and make sense in others. Relatedness-to-the world is a fundamental part of the phenomenological concept.

C. Phenomenology as a Research Method

Phenomenology, at first, is the study of philosophy and sociology. Edmun Husserl himself, the main initiator, wanted phenomenology to produce science that could be more useful for human life, after science had been in crisis and dysfunctional for a long time. Phenomenology, then, developed as a kind of research method applied in various social sciences (Hasbiansyah, 2008: 163).

Phenomenology is interested in identifying this problem from the world of meaningful sensory experience to the world full of meaningful objects, something that initially occurs in our individual consciousness separately and then collectively, in the interaction between consciousnesses (Craib, 2001). 1986: 129). Each individual is likely to have different interpretations, therefore it is necessary to have a tabulation in collective interpretation in order to create the necessary indicators, in order to achieve research that has a systematic and complete structure.

The main idea in sociological phenomenology is said by Craib (1986: 145) refers to another part of the social world which seems to consist of separate fields of study: realism of general meanings. Sociological-phenomenology certainly has the same material object: social phenomena, but in the dimensions of the social sciences in their respective disciplines such as economics, politics, history, etc., of course there will be differences in formal objects, different perspectives in studying social phenomenon.

Kuswarno (2009) describes the nature of relevant qualitative research describing the position of phenomenology and distinguishing it from quantitative research as follows:

- ✦ Exploring values in the experience of human life;
- ✦ The focus of research is on the whole, not on the parts that make up the whole;
- ✦ The purpose of research is to find the meaning and nature of experience, not just looking for explanations or looking for measures of reality;
- ✦ Get a picture of life from the first person point of view, through formal and informal interviews;
- ✦ The data obtained are the basis for scientific knowledge to understand human behavior;
- ✦ Questions are made to reflect the interest, involvement, and personal commitment of the researcher;
- ✦ Seeing experience and behavior as a unity that cannot be separated, whether it is a unity between subject-object, or between parts of a whole.

1. Research Procedure and Focus

In essence, phenomenological research is focused on human interpretation of reality or phenomena. Phenomenology seeks to find answers about the meaning of a reality or phenomenon. Hasbiansyah (2008) revealed that there are two main things that are the focus of phenomenological research, namely:

- a. Textural Description, what is experienced by the research subject about a phenomenon. What is experienced is the objective aspect, factual data, things that happen empirically.
- b. Structural Description, how the subject experiences and interprets his experience. This description contains a subjective aspect. This aspect concerns the opinions, judgments, feelings, expectations, and other subjective responses of the research subjects related to their experiences.

2. Determination of Informants and Research Locations

Determination of informants in phenomenological research is emphasized on the capability of informants to then be able to articulate their life experiences. The selection of informants was done by purposive sampling, or the sample was selected through previous considerations.

Creswell (1998) said that the number of informants was sufficient as many as ten people, and the most important thing was the occurrence of data redundancy or data

saturation. That is, the resulting data are sorted and selected and classified according to their respective identities. While the selection of research locations is determined based on the presence of the informant.

3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research, because the main purpose of research is to obtain data. Without knowing data collection techniques, the researcher will not get data that meets the data standards set (Sugiyono, 2016).

The main data collection techniques in phenomenological studies are as follows:

a. Interview

In-depth interviews were conducted with informants to uncover the currents of consciousness. In the interview process, the questions asked do not have to be structured, in a sense, provide room for the necessary flexibility as long as they are relevant to the data required, and are carried out in an atmosphere that does not have to be formal.

b. Participatory Observation

Participatory observation is carried out to optimize the ability of researchers in terms of motives, beliefs, attention, unconscious behavior, habits, and so on by involving themselves in the process of "experiencing" a phenomenon or symptom. Participatory observation as an observation allows researchers to see phenomena or symptoms identically as they are seen by the research subject. This technique is especially needed if the researcher is not too familiar with the environment, culture, and other backgrounds related to the object under study.

c. Study of literature

This technique is an effort to collect secondary data through various research results (especially textual ones) such as books, magazines, reports, files, documents, books, or any type of secondary information as long as it is related to the object of research.

d. Documentation Study

Documentation study is a technique used to analyze through documents related to the object of research. The form can be in the form of books, pictures, and data from electronic media.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

Creswell (1998) describes data analysis techniques in phenomenological studies as follows:

- a. The researcher fully describes the phenomena/experiences experienced by the research subjects;
- b. the researcher then finds statements (interviews) about how people find the topic, details these statements and the treatment of each statement has an equal value, then the details are developed by not repeating;
- c. the statements are then grouped into meaningful units, the researcher details the units and writes an explanatory text about the experience accompanied by careful examples;
- d. The researcher then reflects his thoughts using imaginative variation or structural descriptions, looks for all possible meanings and through divergent perspectives, considers the frame of reference for the symptoms (phenomenon), and constructs how the symptoms are experienced;
- e. the researcher then constructs the entire explanation of the meaning and essence of his experience;
- f. researchers report their research results. The report shows that there is a unity of meaning based on the experiences of all informants. After that, then write a description of the combination.

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