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Andragogy in postgraduate studies. A theoretical phenomenological dialogic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research was to understand andragogical praxis in postgraduate studies from a theoretical dialogical and phenomenological Husserlian perspective. Meetings were held with 5 key informants who had used the interactive dialogic approach appropriately. In this sense, andragogic praxis was defined as an “innovative action” for its constant adaptation to changes. It was considered “transcendental” because knowledge exceeded itself, and also “specialized” because it served different fields and educational levels. As a reflection, it was concluded that the dialogic approach promoted not only the valuation of technological tools but also the training of individuals, since it allowed achieving transcendence in the exchange of knowledge both inside and outside the university.

Keywords: Adult education; academic teaching personnel; student-teachers; adult educators. (Words taken from UNESCO Thesaurus).

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to understand andragogical praxis in postgraduate studies from a theoretical dialogical and phenomenological Husserlian perspective. In this article, I have made a description of the situation that was experienced within the context of the thing itself; I have also indicated the general purpose that was addressed highlighting the contribution that it forged based on the generation of a theoretical construct. In this sense, it is necessary to clarify that for the titling of each reality, I used

a language founded on the readings of Husserl's phenomenological writings, whose conception constitutes the primary nature of the investigative path followed. For this reason, I called this moment "The scene in its essence" and I began with the approach of the situation in terms of "Reality in its essence". To achieve my purpose, I conducted meetings with 5 key informants who had used the interactive dialogical approach appropriately.

Phenomenology constitutes a significant aspect within the research field. In this regard, Husserl (1949) leads us to specify the meaning of being from a phenomenological point of view, in which he declares the following: "pure or transcendental phenomenology is founded" not on a science of facts but as a science of essences (as an eidetic science), as a science that wants to reach exclusively "essential knowledge" and not fix, at all, "facts" (p. 8).

In this way, my idea of approaching an educational reality emerged from the subject's own vision, who after participating in an andragogic process, mediated by an interactive dialogical approach, held the essence of the thing itself. This approach constituted a training style based on dialogues and interactions through two modalities (face-to-face and virtual), which promote constant communication and permanent learning.

In view of the foregoing, for the year 2002, at Falcón state, specifically, at "Francisco de Miranda" National Experimental University, a modality was created to open the doors to undergraduate students who were waiting for the opportunity to continue their studies, but, in this case, in an educational process with characteristics of dialogue and interaction mediated by the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), and for the year 2012, some teachers started the proposal to develop virtual classrooms that served as technological support for these postgraduate students in the Education Area.

To this end, teachers had the opportunity to participate in a training, where they received an orientation based on Interactive Dialogic Learning (IDL) and elaborated the instructional designs for each subject. For this, the creation of virtual classrooms with

their respective resources and strategies were achieved; as well as such designs that would guide the andragogic learning process.

By that time, when the Master's Degree in Reading and Writing Teaching, specifically, when the 10th cohort started in January 2014, the students were informed that the process would be characterized by the development of face-to-face activities and virtual classes with meetings every 15 days for consultancies. Thus, in this way, advantages were taken of the virtual classrooms in MOODLE to use the interactive dialogical strategies for facilitating people's learning process.

It should be noted that the participants received an introductory course that allowed them to train in the appropriate use of the platform. However, there was a little of uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of this process, since it constituted a new way of learning. During this course, the participants expressed inconformity because not all teachers had carried out a mixed action that combined face-to-face and virtual strategies but many continued with a traditional monotonous process in which the facilitators used more face-to-face meetings than the online ones. For this reason, the participants considered it inconvenient, because their working hours required of a real interactive dialogical approach supported by information and communication technologies (ICT) that allowed flexibility and constant academic help so they could fulfill both responsibilities (job and study).

On the other hand, there was no specific planning of many teachers to detail the activities to be addressed during a semester, because throughout the process and without having a consensus, it modified their schedule. This situation caused discomfort to the students. Perhaps, this reality had to do with the fact that there was little supervision of the process which caused less communication gaps between the teacher and the students. Likewise, there was no constant strengthening of teacher training to achieve its optimal performance within an appropriate interactive dialogical process.

The lack of permanent strengthening could lead to monotony and the practice of a clearly traditional educational action. Likewise, it could lead to unawareness of the

learning management system where the teacher should exercise his action in the formation of student-centered environments, as well as instructional needs; therefore, it drove a lack of teaching motivation in the implementation of the modality, since the use of information and communication technologies at the teaching level was not encouraged.

In addition to the above, there had been drawbacks in terms of synchronous and asynchronous communication processes due to failures in the connection system. However, other alternative pages had been used to avoid interruption in the interactions. I consider appropriate to add that the Master in Management and Engineering Project also participated in this experience, since one of the professors in this area focused his classes on this vision.

In sum, the aspects considered for doing this study are the following: the existence of a traditional monotonous process in the majority of teachers, the demand for changes related to technological advances to facilitate the adjustment of academic and work schedules of those who are part of the andragogic process, the need for uninterrupted communication through the use of various tools to facilitate constant assistant, and other reasons which were essential to study this unique experience.

In general, the previous considerations were taking into account for this research that had as a goal the generation of the theoretical foundations based on andragogical praxis in postgraduate studies under an interactive dialogical approach, and from a hermeneutical phenomenological vision.

Praxis being understood, according to González (1997, p. 185), as the process related to acts, action, activity and performance that takes place within the educational context. This term, according to Knowels' concept (1975, p. 3), added to Andragogy, implies a process in which the subjects self-manage their learning, formulating objectives that guide them to select and implement the appropriate strategies for both the didactic process and for its evaluation process to achieve optimal training. The idea was to understand from the subjects' vision, the content of the sense of their reality that, in

Husserl's terms, implies an exploration of the thing itself, through the conception of a climate of horizontal communication with key informants considering the respective essence of their conscience, with their respective forms of experiences, praxis and correlation of such praxis. Therefore, the key informants (postgraduate teachers who had participated in the Interactive Dialogic learning) were the protagonists of the transcendence through their reflections and meanings, since they gave rise to the generation of a theoretical construct that provided the constituent elements of effective andragogic praxis.

It is worth noting that not all teachers were reluctant to use this type of approach, since according to informal conversations carried out with the participants of the master's degree, the few teachers who used it fostered an optimal, interactive, attractive and socializing environment, which had allowed them to easily alternate between their work and study, prompting to meaningful learning.

Therefore, to better understand this evolution and how it could contribute at the andragogical level, through transcendental phenomenology, I scrutinized, at the hands of its protagonists (postgraduate facilitators who had used the approach), the essential manifestations that could help me generate a theory based on the interpretation of the meanings assigned by the transcendental being, trying to reach a scientific consciousness that conformed to what was given in postgraduate studies under the interactive dialogical approach; thus, in this way, I could judge the phenomenon from the intuitive knowledge and purity of the object, from whom appropriately applied dialogicity and interactivity.

Likewise, the understanding of teaching praxis was conceived from the experience on the basis of the apprehension that transcended the conscience of the self so, the educational process was interpreted from the reflections conceived by Husserl (2013, p. 293-294) as noetic (sense of the subject about the object given as such.) and noematic (object perceived as such). Under this concept, the purposes to which the response was

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given through the encounter and interaction of the researcher with the subjects were displayed.

General purpose of the investigation

To understand andragogical praxis in postgraduate studies from a theoretical dialogical and phenomenological Husserlian perspective based on the apprehension of the meanings that transcend self-awareness.

METHODOLOGY

The method of this study was based on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, considering an emergent design, which according to Merlino (2009, p. 44) "it is made as it advances iteratively through the research process, going from data to the concepts of social theory and from these to reflection and then to the data again".

All this implies that knowledge was built using inductive logic when I targeted the parties, that is, the facilitators who participated in the andragogic experience in postgraduate studies under the IDL approach in order to understand their praxis from their conscience and then built a whole based on the data provided by key informants from which categories derived in attention to the reality of the being.

To this end, in line with Merlino's consideration, my reflective intervention led to the deepening of the transcendental consciousness sense in order to enrich the constitution of the theoretical framework. Below, I summarize the methodology with its respective methods, technique and scientific rigor.

IDL- Postgraduate context theory generation process

Rodríguez in Sandín, (2003, p. 139), indicates that qualitative research generates the phases: preparatory, field, analytical and informative.

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Guba and Lincoln cited in Escudero (2003: 26), propose the criteria of internal validity as credibility, objectivity, confirmation and reliability as dependence.

In relation to this study, credibility and confirmability, from the instrumental point of view, were addressed through the procedures suggested by Lincoln and Guba (2003: 26) such as: prolonged commitment, contrast with colleagues and progressive subjectivity, which allowed me to do a constant analysis of the distorted data. After this action, the subjects verified the epojé not only the transcribed but also the ones emerged as manifestations and constituent submanifestations for the generation of the theory.

In addition, I applied the criterion of dependency or reliability, where I invited another researcher to analyze the results obtained from reality, which led to greater scientific rigor of the investigation because she followed my research protocol since its inception.

Table 1

Paradigm	Investigation Design	Method for the theory generation	Techniques to collect the information	Methods to collect the information	Key Informants	Validity and reability criteria	Analysis Strategies
Interpretative	Emergent, open and flexible.	-Fenomenológico - Hermenéutic.	-Free, targeted and in-depth-interviews.	-Notepad -Recorder	5 teachers with, at least, two years of experience at IDL Modality.	-Credibility (Internal Validity).	-Eidetic reduction. Epojé.
						-Confirmation.	-Key informant triangulation.
						-Reliability Dependence.	-External researchers. (Contrast between peers)

Taken from: García (2015)

After the methodological approach, I proceeded to expose all the matrices with the information derived from the teachers' experiences, highlighting both the singularities and the whole generated from their transcendental consciousness in line with their andragogic context.

In attention to these stages, I have contextualized my methodological guiding thread in relation to the reality studied with respect to postgraduate studies under the Interactive Dialogic Learning (IDL) approach. In this way, the theoretical generation was carried out based on the experience of the transcendental being.

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As it could be conceived in the table, I showed, in the first instance, the ideational and exploratory phases that, in correspondence with Husserl's logic, captured the teaching experience in postgraduate studies in an interactive dialogical process, which implied the essential description of the object from a noetic conception (subjective being).

Techniques and instruments to collect information

For this job, I selected the in-depth-interview. Piñero and Rivera (2012: 106) stated that this technique "is used in combination with other procedures such as participant observation, life stories, and focused testimonies, among others." Consequently, I used other techniques that allowed me to give importance to both the oral language and the gestural elements of the subject; for this reason, I took into account the observation, the taking of notes and the transcription.

In this phase, I elaborated the questions in relation to the teachers' experience in postgraduate studies under the Interactive Dialogic Learning approach and I did a theoretical review of the entry categories.

Key informants

The selected subjects were made up of five (5) teachers who used the IDL platform from the beginning to the end of the term.

RESULTS

The procedure used for the theoretical systematization consisted of presenting, firstly, the essence of each subject's experience from their uniqueness and descriptive perspective: for this, I show the emerging categories and the definition that each one contributes to the theory. Regarding the above, I quote what the subject expressed in its purity, considering the epojé, which made it easier for me to reveal the conception of consciousness about the noema.

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Theoretical scheme: Interpretive synthesis of a living and innovative transcendent Andragogy.

For Teppa (2012, p. 94), constructing theories means “reducing the original data of many social actors and particular observations to concepts and turn them into a set of related assertions that can explain and predict events and phenomena”. In the particular case of this doctoral study, I proceeded to integrate all the emerged elements that allowed me to redefine the reality studied under an innovative concept.

Table 2

Interpretive synthesis of a living and innovative transcendent Andragogy.

Emergent Theory	Concept					
		Constituent Manifestations	Overcome Weaknesses	Refined constituent Manifestations	Coitus with overcome weaknesses	Constituent Submanifestations
Specialized and innovative transcendent Andragogy.	It constitutes a virtual-face-to-face flexible action with dialogical and liberating intentionality whose primary purpose is oriented towards the					-Opening to change. -Assessment of the use of technological tools.
			Andragogical Process		Andragogic	-Andragogy as a process of mature adults' training. -Mixed approach: virtual and face-to-face.

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improvement of the being through an argumentative dialogue that promotes the generation of new knowledge and relies on technological tools that facilitate constant communication between the mediator and transcendental autonomous being.		Teacher's Performance		Practical teaching character	-Mediator supported by balanced virtual-face planning. -With a vocation for service. -Promoter of autonomy and understanding. -With values.
		Student's Performance		Autonomous character of the transcendental being	-Participant with mature attitude. -Argumentative. -Transcendental -Active. -Independent. -Knowledge generator through research. -Supported in values.
		Use of Resources		Figurative awareness of technological object.	-Emancipatory dialogical intentionality. -Economization of physical resources, space and time.

Taken from: García (2016)

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

Meaning of the parts and the whole

From my point of view, I asked myself the following question: how was the integration of the parts and the whole within the andragogical praxis? In principle, I cited my phenomenological and hermeneutical guides. By virtue of his thoughts, Husserl (2013) affirmed that the reduced singularities constitute key manifestations of the transcendence in the consciousness about the experience, while Dilthey (2000), supposes that the meaning of the whole requires the meaning of its parts and its parts the meaning of the whole. In this way, the noetic - noematic integration of the critical, eidetic and transcendental reductions in the judgment of each individual was evidenced

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because I eliminated all prejudice and focused on what was given according to the experience described.

Then, as specified in the previous section, to reduce the large amount of data emerged, I went to the "essence of transcendence", since I brought together what the subject contributed, with greater specificity and simplicity, highlighting, in this way, the relevant attributes of the experience. Therefore, both the category and subcategories that transcended derived from the judicial essence fostered from the consciousness of the beings in relation to their experiences. Now, by uniting these parts and turning them into a whole, significant manifestations derived which I characterized as constituent.

With regard to andragogic praxis under the IDL approach, teachers relied on balanced planning, that is, 50% face-to-face and 50% virtual, however, it was not fully achieved, since while a teacher achieved face-to-face communication in a great scale, another teacher fulfilled it virtuality. Despite this, everyone believed that the ideal option was to base action on balance.

From another angle, it is appropriate to point out that among the weaknesses mentioned by some teachers, the following were highlighted: resistance to the use of technological strategies by teachers and students, a situation that was gradually overcome with the dedication, guidance and constant support of the facilitators. In the same way, the abandonment of the dialogue emerged, but with the intention of rescuing it; this would be achieved through efforts made not only by teaching staff but also by coordinators, administrators and workers in the educational context.

As a conclusion, the transcendental consciences contributed to the generation of constituent demonstrations and sub-demonstrations sustained in an andragogic action where dialogue and social interaction apart from promoting the active participation of those involved, allowed the overcoming of the weaknesses that they possessed at the beginning of their experiences.

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