

RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES THROUGH NARRATIVE

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to present new directions and research strategies through critical analysis of the academic tendencies of existing social science and humanities. The narrative theory of human experience is adopted as a theoretical rationale for critical analysing existing social sciences and humanities. Since the 1970s and 1980s, the academic tendencies of the humanities and social sciences have been transformed into the narrative turn. We focus on the new integrity of humanities and social sciences in light of the narrative theory that approaches the totality of human life. The narrative theory for academic inquiry makes use of the position of Bruner, Polkinghorne, Ricoeur

Methodology: We reviewed the literature related to the research topic and took an integrated approach to the philosophical analysis of core claims.

Main Findings: As a result, the narrative theory has a characteristic approach to human life and experience as a whole, and it is possible to integrate by narrative ways of knowing.

Implications/Applications: Based on this narrative theory, existing humanities and social sciences need to be reconstructed into narrative science. And a narrative method or narrative inquiry is useful as its specific inquiry method. As a narrative science, humanities and social sciences can be implemented by the integration of human experience and narrative epistemology. It has the advantage of integrating the atomized sub-sciences into the narrative of human experience according to this new method. Also, in-depth research on concrete exploration strategies is expected in the future.

Keywords: Social Science, humanities, narrative theory, narrative science, narrative ways of knowing Bruner Polkinghorne, Ricoeur.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Research

Humans have long questioned humans and the environment surrounding humans, that is, various phenomena. Humanity has explored the phenomenon to understand and interpret it that is the subject of doubt. A variety of disciplines have emerged depending on the viewpoint of the phenomenon, how to deal with the phenomenon and the type of presentation what have learned about the phenomenon. And they have developed and built their own inquiry method according to their characteristics. Each research has a unique way of exploring, and the social science and humanities fields also have distinctive exploratory methods. Humans have benefited from this method of inquiry and have been helped to understand the phenomenon.

Despite the many contributions of such methods of inquiry, however, certain parts of it have been revealed. The academic tendencies of the existing social sciences and humanities encouraged the disconnection between the disciplines. And they tend to ignore human experience. They also have a tendency to ignore the integrated relationship between human experience and society. Since the 1970s and 1980s, the academic tendencies of the humanities and social sciences have been transformed into narrative turns. However, the academic trends of the humanities and social sciences are still divided into academic degrees (Paulino, Gatpandan, Rosas, & Daniel, 2017). As a result, it has the problem of approaching scholarship from the unstructured separate stance. Because of these problems, this shows a lot of limitations in integrating the totality of human life, and academic researchers are also showing a trend of approaching academic inquiry activities from separate stance (Reza, Rusidah, & Forasidah, 2017).

In connection with the above discussion, the purpose of this paper is to present new directions and exploration strategies through critical analysis of the academic tendencies of existing social science and humanities. Therefore, this study adopts the narrative theory of human experience as a theoretical rationale for critically analysing existing social science and humanities. This study focuses on the new integrity of humanities and social sciences as the narrative theory approaching the totality of human life in a narrative manner in order to improve separated attributes existing social sciences and humanities. Therefore, this study explores the academic tendencies of social science and humanities and their limitations. And this study develops by studying the narrative theory and discussing the future direction of the study of social science and humanities with implications from narrative theory.

Review of Literature

Because the narrative is the most fundamental lifestyle of human beings, it has great importance in human life. Human life consists of various experiences. Such experiences consist of meaningful contents through story form given by narrative.

Meaningful experiences help to understand human life and actions. In short, narrative is a way of understanding life as a story in which people live by giving meaning to experiences that make up human life ([Kang, 2016](#); [Mansouri & Mhunpiew, 2016](#); [Thipayasothorn, Pongchomporn, Jantaragant, & Nokyoo, 2016](#); [Hashem, 2016](#)).

This narrative has recently received attention in the field of disciplines dealing with human and social issues. This is the fundamental structure of human experience, which is recognized in various fields such as literature, history, linguistics, pedagogy, sociology, nursing, and law.

There are various ways of knowing how humans understand things and phenomena. Recently, the importance of narrative knowledge in human science has been emphasized ([Polkinghorne, 1988](#); recite in [Kang, 2016](#)). This narrative is a way of thinking that deals with the fundamental problems of human life and has the potential to supplement the existing method of inquiry of social science and humanities.

Research Methodology

The research method used in this study is the integrative forms of inquiry proposed by [Short \(1991\)](#). The integrative forms of inquiry is a method of philosophically analyzing core claims by reviewing and integrating literature that meets specific needs. The narrative theory, which is the core of the academic inquiry of this study, especially analyzed the literature on using the position of Bruner, Polkinghorne, and Ricoeur. At the same time, this study conceptually approached using the philosophical analysis style proposed by Short. To perform integrative forms of inquiry, literature review, philosophical analysis, and concept analysis of core research issues were conducted.

HISTORICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

Historical Characteristics of Social Science and Humanities

The characteristics of social science and humanities can be divided into three categories ([Kwon & Kim, 2003](#); [Kang, Jeon & Shin, 2016](#)). First, the inquiry method of social science and humanities seeks the logical basis of the phenomenon of human and society based on scientific knowledge from the value point of view. This includes quantitative inquiry based on the deductive approach used primarily in natural sciences and qualitative inquiry developed in an inductive way. These inquiry methods have scientifically proven indicators, such as objectivity, validity, and rigor, or a formalized justification process.

Second, in the inquiry method of social science and humanities, epistemology takes a positivism perspective and a stereotyped framework. Discussions in social science and humanities focus on what is 'right' and what is 'essence'. And the logical approach to approaching 'right' and 'essence' is relatively formalized and premise of positivism epistemology in this process.

Third, the inquiry method of social science and humanities sees human perception as a process of scientific knowledge or a process of perception based on reason on the ontological level. Thus, they perceive human thought as a process with certain rules or systems that can be proven. And they argue from the point of view of reason as the strongest basis for explaining human behavior.

The Academic Tendencies of Social Science

[Kang \(2016\)](#) explains the academic tendencies of social science as follows. This section focuses on psychology and sociology.

First, the tendency of psychology is as follows. Modern psychology has been influenced by science, especially chemistry. Modern psychologists have distinguished the elements that constitute human consciousness, just as the elements are divided into parts according to the chemical reductionist viewpoint. The way to study human psychology through this distinction was not satisfactory. Behaviorism emerged as an advance on this, starting from the premise that animal behavior can be applied to humans. And behaviorists excluded human consciousness from the study and studied only the behaviors that appear outside. This method of research has moved away from the human mind, which is the central theme of psychology. Cognitive psychology, a field that has arisen against this activism, has assumed that human consciousness is like a computer. However, unlike computers, human minds with agency and intention were not understood as cognitive psychology.

Second, the tendency of sociology is as follows. The most widely accepted theory of sociology, functionalism, was founded by Comte and Spencer. It was later developed by Durkheim, Pareto, Malinowski, etc., and became a comprehensive sociological theory by Talcott Parsons. This positively looked at the differentiation of social functions from the standpoint of social maintenance and development and presupposed consensus among the groups in making the educational structure. Conflict theory, on the other hand, is rooted in the ideas of K. Marx and M. Webber and has developed a challenging and critical view of functionalism by neo-Marxists. Conflicted people perceive that all groups that makeup society have different purposes and interests. And the conflicts between such groups arise naturally due to the inconsistency of the objectives of each other, which contributes to social development through dialectical relationships.

The Academic Tendencies of Humanities

[Kang \(2016\)](#) explains the academic tendencies of humanities as follows. This section focuses on literature, history, and philosophy.

First, the trend of literature is as follows. Literature research methods generally have the following characteristic. First, research methodology that reflects the uniqueness of literature is rare. The identity or essence of literature, the relationship between literature and human nature, and the problem of human psychology mediated through literature must be projected into literary research methodology as a characteristic of literature, but such forms are not seen in existing literature research methods. Second, most research methodology of literature reflects the tendency of philosophy. Philosophy is openly accepted by most scholars as the foundation of all disciplines. However, focusing on the uniqueness of literature only in literature, humans need a research methodology based on the viewpoint of literary existence, speaking existence, and narrative existence. Third, there is lack of discussion about human thinking style and existence style in literature research methodology. In the process of inquiry and logic of study, the way of thinking and existence consciousness of human beings should be implied in the viewpoint of the academic field ([Kamaruddin & Sulaiman, 2017](#)).

Second, the tendency of history is as follows. The literary character of the historical narrative is revealed both in the East and the West, but in the history of the West that tendency was stronger. In the West, there was a belief that literature is superior to history, and that fictional history is more realistic than factual history. Thus, the Western historical narrative maintained literary tradition and utilized narrative, imagination, and literary power as instruments of history. However, the Enlightenment historians focused on the causal history of logical and analytical thinking, and the anal school criticized the historical narrative of Langke, which was for narrative history, as mere events and chronicles. Thus, the 20th-century historical narrative emphasized 'truth' and 'reality'. Historians thus aimed at objective descriptions of history, and narratives were devalued. Historical texts are also described in the form of expository texts, and a large amount of historical knowledge has been summarized as an oversimplification of simplification and explanation. Historical textbooks provide a lot of information to students, but they did not attract their active intervention. Historians have pursued non-narrative, aiming to be more general and universal than specific and individual. And history has changed from narrative history to problem-oriented history. At the same time, however, history perception continued as storytelling. History as science emphasizes structural conditions rather than the role of human subjects and has lost its real value because it is not understood by the public. On the other hand, history as a story describes history as a mixture of imagination, reflection, interpretation, and literature by describing and explaining historical events and processes.

Third, the tendency of philosophy is as follows. Philosophy was originally not a discipline but a discipline itself. Philosophy has long been committed to repairing the sickness of the human mind and maintaining the health of the mind since its appearance. For example, the philosophy presented a practical, non-speculative direction for the Epicurus and the Stoics of Rome, who pursued the health of the mind. However, since the modern times, philosophy has been constantly divided. And by the twentieth century, philosophy has lost its place in the treatment of mind and mind by separating psychology from philosophy. Through these processes, philosophy has gradually become more scholarly rather than practical one. However, the field of psychology did not put a link to philosophy to overcome its theoretical limit, and the new field of psychological counseling that emerged in the field of philosophy is philosophical counseling. Philosophical counseling is a process of helping a philosophical counselor to solve a client's problem by consulting with the client.

Problems

Academic disconnection

Boundaries have arisen between each discipline because of the reason for developing expertise in the development of social sciences and humanities ([Kang, 2016, p.177](#)). This continues to create specialized, granular knowledge of a particular field. The subdivision of this knowledge has provided deeper concepts and theories for the field. However, on the other hand, this caused problems that knowledge was cut off so that the origin of knowledge was unknown.

Neglect of human experience

Humanities and social sciences mainly focus on the human experience. The human experience is meaningful, and human behavior comes from these meanings. So the study of human behavior must include a quest for a semantic system that forms human experience ([Kang, 2016, p.169](#)). However, the focus of positivism in social sciences and humanities has not been able to deal with the meaning of human experience as a whole by trusting only sensory experience and empirical verification.

Ignore the integration of human experience and society

The human experience is both personal and social ([Kang, 2016](#)). Human beings are individual beings, but human beings can't be fully understood if they are seen only on a personal level. Therefore, it is the most important problem that the method of inquiry of social science and humanities separates human and society ([Kang et al., 2016](#)). For example, if the subject of the phenomenon is human, human beings are treated as objects separated from society. On the contrary, if the subject of the phenomenon in society, human beings are regarded as separate objects depending on society. In short, human beings and society are separated and interpreted separately. This problem starts from not disclosing the relationship between the researcher and the inquiry process in the inquiry process, that is, the absence of the researcher's self-reflection.

NARRATIVE-BASED RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

Conception and Nature of Narrative

Concept of narrative

The meaning of the narrative is defined in various ways ([Kang, 2005](#), [Park, 2006](#)). In the simplest case, the narrative is described as a 'story' or 'act of story-telling'. However, this is a narrow view of the meaning of narrative, and it needs to be understood broadly. The more extended meaning of narrative is the tool of 'making meaning'. The narrative is a cognitive task that creates a story and is a tool of thought of human. It also structures the human experience as a specific mode of its own, a narrative structure. In other words, it integrates events, characters, actions, emotions, intentions, and situations in the human experience as a whole. In other words, narrative is understood as a framework for structuring and communicating experiences.

Nature of narrative

[Cho \(2014\)](#) explains the nature of the narrative as follows. First, narrative is a contradictory sequence of space and time described. This has a contradiction in the coexistence of everyday life that makes progress toward the endpoint, exceptionality that delays the ending, the objective time which is inoperable because it flows simultaneously with the world, and the subjective time experienced in individual life. Second, the narrative has the property of plausibility as a combination or boundary of truth and fiction. A plausible story that is not true, but exists in a possible world, is justified through metaphor and trouble.

Narrative epistemology

Narrative epistemology is related to the composition of reality, the making of meaning, and the formation of self ([Kang, 2016](#)). First, the reality is composed narratively. It must, therefore, be understood in a narrative worldview beyond a simple physical world view. Second, human beings constitute meaning through narrative. The narrative provides a framework for understanding the past events of human life and planning future actions by integrating everyday acts and events on an episode basis. Third, human beings form self through narrative. Human lives in the story of life and establish own personal identity and self-concept by using narrative composition.

Theoretical Rationale

Bruner

Bruner's epistemology is centered on narrative thought ([Kang, 2016](#)). He divided human thought into two categories: paradigm thought and narrative thought ([Bruner, 1990; 1996; Kang, 2016](#)). The former is a way of thinking that is applied to the observation of the physical world and has been emphasized in the existing social sciences and humanities. The latter is applied to grasp human intentional actions and is an idea that deals with the world of human mind. The former and the latter differ from each other in their view of knowledge. The former regards knowledge as being 'discovered', on the other hand the latter regards knowledge as being 'created' while being discovered. Most of human life follows the rule of narrative thought that constitutes and recognizes the meaning as the device of story. Therefore, in order to comprehend the whole life of human beings, the inquiry method according to the narrative thought is urgently required. In addition, Bruner emphasized the need for qualitative inquiry based on narrative thought rather than analytical knowledge and quantitative inquiry in order to understand human beings. Therefore, he says that understanding quantitative thought, analytical thought, and scientific thought in education, as well as qualitative understanding of human beings, is important.

Polkinghorne

[Polkinghorne \(1988\)](#) presents his narrative epistemology by discussing the relationship between the domain of human existence and the meaning ([Kang, 2016](#)). Human is an integrated entity of three things: the material realm, the organic realm, and the mental realm. Of these, the mental realm is coupled with the interaction between the material realm and the organic realm. Direct access to the mental realm is only possible by accessing own mental realm through self-reflection, and the language must act as a mediator to access the external mental realm. The narrative is a scheme that gives meaning to human experience and action. Narrative provides a form to understand intent and makes human existence meaningful by integrating everyday acts and events as episodes.

Ricoeur

In Ricoeur's narrative hermeneutics, 'understanding' refers to the understanding of texts, and understanding of texts refers to the understanding of other people or own lives in the text. He explains that through stories, human can understand the life of reality and establish own identity as the story has a structure similar to reality. Both story and reality have the elements of person, event, and background, and they have a common that is a structure according to time. Therefore, the story gives order and meaning through the temporal unity of the named plot to the various events that exist without order and meaning in reality. And human utilizes these functions of story to understand themselves and to secure a self-identity that Ricoeur calls narrative identity ([Kang, 2016](#)).

The theory of Bruner, Polkinghorne, and Ricoeur discussed above can be summarized as follows. Human beings are integrated into three domains: material realm, organic realm, and the mental realm, and it is the mental realm to deal with the implications of human experience. In this regard, the narrative is a useful way to make sense by giving meaning to the experience of human life. Human beings perceive and understand themselves and the world by reconstructing their experiences in a narrative structure using narrative thought. Thus, narrative is a natural and appropriate way to explore human being and phenomena surrounding human. Social sciences and humanities which aim at exploring human beings and phenomena surrounding human, need to pay attention to this narrative way.

NARRATIVE-BASED RECONSTRUCTION OF RESEARCH

The content of the above discussion provides guidance on the future direction of research in social sciences and humanities. The research method and the role of the researcher are important in the study applying the narrative theory. In this section, I will discuss the method of research and the role of the researcher based on narrative theory.

Methodology

In terms of research methodology, three approaches are available: narrative inquiry, narrative method, and caretaker reflection.

First, narrative inquiry: The narrative inquiry advocated by Clandinin and Connelly is based on John Dewey's metaphor of life, education ([Kang, 2016](#); [So, 2004](#)). In other words, John Dewey regarded the experience as the best tool in pursuing knowledge. According to him, human experience is both personal and social, and in order to understand human beings, the human experience should be explored in relation to society ([Kang, 2016](#)). Narrative inquiry based on these ideas seeks to understand human experience as a storied phenomenon or reality. The conceptual elements of narrative inquiry can be shown as Fig 1.

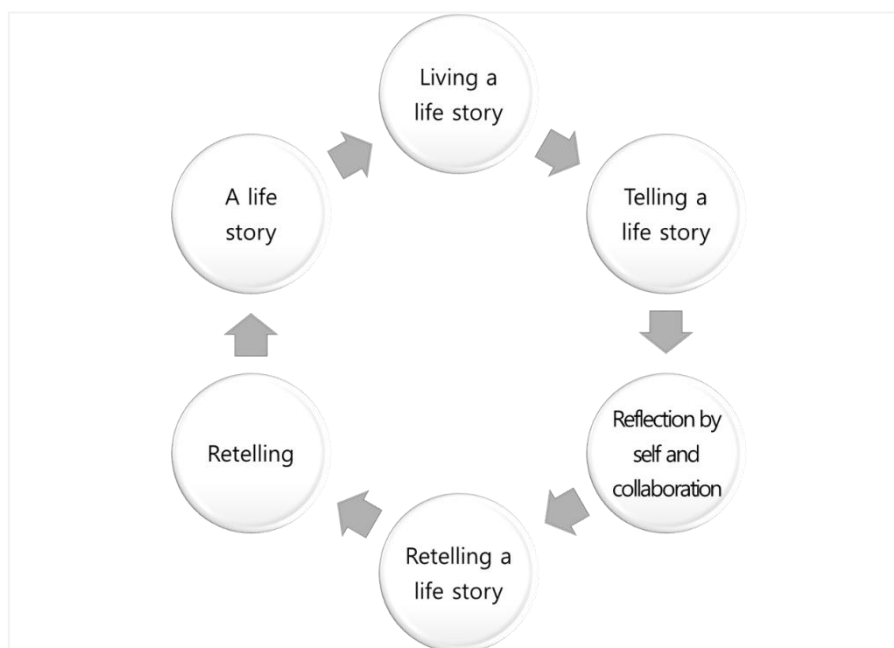


Figure 1: The Conceptual Elements of Narrative Inquiry

As shown in Figure 1, above, narrative inquiry consists of processes of telling and retelling about life experiences, and processes of living and reflection. In these processes, the meaning of experience is constituted and reconstructed. The narrative thus re-conceptualizes and interprets experiences in life as narrative structures.

Second, the narrative method: [Riessman's \(2008\)](#); Recite in [Kang, 2016](#)) narrative method is a method of inquiry focusing on composing the narrative of human experience. It focuses on the narrative analysis of texts with story forms like spoken material, written material or visual material, including subject analysis, structural analysis, dialogue/performance analysis, and visual analysis. This is based on understanding, unlike existing qualitative research methods based on socio-economic structuralism. While socioeconomic structuralism interprets research data on the basis of one common knowledge structure, understanding tries various interpretations by various cultures and knowledge structures. Thus, the narrative method shows that human experience can be given various meanings and interpretations according to socio-cultural context ([Kang, 2016](#)).

Third, current reflection: Pinar, who proposed the currere method, defined the currere as "a personal experience running along the course" ([Lee, 2002](#), p.76). He pursued human emancipation realized by restoring the world of direct and personal experiences ([Pinar & Grumet, 1981](#); Recite in [Lee, 2002](#)). Thus, Pinar attempts to understand the human experience

through an existential approach and emphasizes the individual peculiarities of each individual experience: regressive, progressive, analytic and synthetical. 'Regressive' is to recall the past by free associations, and 'progressive' is to discover own sense of the future. In 'analytic', individuals form self-understanding and activate self-transformation through 'synthetical' (Jung, 2016). These four stages have the purpose of understanding the special meaning of individual experiences by making the experiential history of an individual's lived experience a subject of inquiry (Lee, 2002).

Role of the Researcher

If narrative-centered reconfigurability is possible, the most important thing is the role of researchers. It is necessary to break away from existing roles. First, there is a need to pay attention to the problem of human experience in the composition of research problem. The social sciences and humanities that study human experience need to explore the semantic system that forms the human experience. In exploring the meaning of such a human experience, the narrative can act as a scheme to understand the intentions inherent in human experience and behavior.

Second, in the setting of the research methodology, it is necessary to maintain a comprehensive view that encompasses quantitative and qualitative methods. In order to understand the human being, which is the main research subject of social science and humanities, understanding of quantitative dimension and understanding of qualitative dimension should be accompanied. The method of inquiry according to the narrative thought suggests a way to comprehensively understand human life.

Third, it is necessary to carry out research that focuses on the nature and aspect of human experience. It is necessary to understand the human being in relation to individual experience and society by paying attention to the nature of personal and social human experience. In this way of human understanding, narrative enables a holistic approach based on the interaction of individuals and societies.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A NARRATIVE SCIENCE

A variety of inquiry methods are being attempted in the social sciences and humanities in order to solve the questions about human and human environment. Numerous methods of inquiry of social sciences and humanities have contributed to the process of finding answers to these questions. Recently, however, there has been a debate on the limitations of the existing inquiry methods of social sciences and humanities. This discussion is based on the fact that the existing method of inquiry did not provide a sufficient means of understanding in exploring human beings and society. In this study, we explored the limitations of the existing inquiry method and suggested a method of exploring narrative science as an alternative to overcome the limitations.

As a result, social science and humanities are explored in terms of quantitative inquiry method or qualitative inquiry method based on scientific knowledge. This method is based on the viewpoint of positivism and has a formalized framework fixed and it regards human behavior as perception process by reason. These social sciences and humanities have developed professional disciplines, but the disconnection between disciplines has been found behind them. And they are limited in that they neglect human experience by the perspective of positivism on which they are based.

On the other hand, a narrative is a form of thinking that reconstructs the human experience into a narrative structure and serves as a tool for making meaning for various phenomena. This is due to the characteristic connecting the space and the time in the story and the characteristic of creating fictions from the truth. And these characteristics make the narrative constitute reality, make sense, and form human individual identity.

Narrative epistemology based on this narrative theory is developed by Bruner, Polkinghorne, Ricoeur et al. To sum up their arguments, in the narrative view, knowledge is generated while being discovered, and narrative plays a role in constituting reality for the world to produce such knowledge. In addition, the narrative is an important tool to understand human intention by giving meaning to human experience and act by participating in mental realm of human existence. This narrative provides a realistic story structure that helps humans to understand life and establish identity.

The narrative theory above suggests the future direction of research in social science and humanity. Narrative inquiry, narrative method, and currere reflection can be used in research methods. First, narrative inquiry seeks human experience as an individual and social one, so that human experience can be explored in an integrated relationship with society. Second, the narrative method interprets the human experience in various ways according to the social and cultural context by composing human experience as a narrative. Third, currere reflection helps to understand human life as an individual and special meaning through an existential approach.

The role of the researcher is important in enabling such research methods. First, researchers should focus on human experience and behavior by using narrative schemes in constructing research problems and conducting research. Second, researchers must understand human beings in a multidimensional way by integrating quantitative research methods and qualitative research methods, and narrative should be actively utilized in these inquiry methods. Third, the researcher should grasp the essence of human experience in relation to society and approach the interaction of person and society as a whole.

It is expected that the combination of the narrative science exploration method and existing exploration method of social science and humanities will contribute to the understanding of human beings and society. The narrative research method should be carried out in a complementary manner with existing inquiry methods as another research method of social science and humanities.

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