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 9940 572 462

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 ijirset@gmail.com

 www.ijirset.com

Self-Remembering in Everyday Lives

Surbhi

Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi, India

ABSTRACT: Humans are born storytellers. We live and die with stories. Stories help in facilitating Self Remembering as it is an essential part of our lives and helps in defining our narrative identities. Narrative identities define who we are and it is an interesting process to understand how they are managed and formed by people. There are multiple ways to study life stories and how it leads to formation of narrative identities. In this research paper focus is paid on three major modes to understand the concept of life story and narrative identity- Biographies, Autobiographies and Memoirs

KEYWORDS: Autobiographies, Narrative Identity, Life Story, Self-Remembering

I. INTRODUCTION

Fisher (2009) used a term to describe human beings as “*homo narrans*” which signifies that we are born storytellers. Atkinson, 1998 says that telling stories is a very basic part of our behavior and we are unaware about its salience in our lives. Rosenthal, 2003 argues that when people are encouraged to express their stories in safe spaces it helps them to explore nuances in their narratives. Different from other interviewing techniques, the life story approach uses minimal questions and probing only where required. (Atkinson, 1998). This procedure helps the participant as they are able to observe themselves and develop an insight into their life stories as they are being expressed in a safe space.

II. CULTURE INFLUENCE ON LIFE STORY DEVELOPMENT

Culture plays an important role in our lives, and research has shown that cultural expectations and conventions influence an individual's life story development. In terms of the archetypal life story, cultural norms and expectations have also been termed as "cultural life script" and "cultural concept of biography". Habermas and Bluck (2000) defined the "Cultural Concept of Biography" as cultural members' expectations about which events will be most powerful, when they will occur, and hence are most likely to be included in the life biography. Bernsten and Rubin (2004) define the "cultural life script" as the actual occurrences and timings that people of a society expect to occur in a prototype life.

From a theoretical standpoint, the cultural concept of biography relates to life tales from various civilizations, although cultural life script varies among cultures. Mixed research has been found in this area, whereas Bohn and Bernsten (2008) discovered that the impact of culture or its importance grows when one recalls events from their life story, implying that cultural life scripts work as a search engine when recalling occurrences. Habermas (2007), on the other hand, has stated that while cultural variables impact the inclusion of events in a life story, individual characteristics are as essential.

Thus, cultural standards appear to have a major impact on what experiences are remembered and how they are remembered. This would show which experiences are more likely to be remembered and have a higher impact on the individual, therefore being included in the life story. Autobiographical reasoning, or how an individual processes experiences for inclusion in their life story, is equally crucial.

III. WAYS TO STUDY SELF REMEMBERING AND LIFE STORY DEVELOPMENT

There are three main ways to study self- remembering- biography, Autobiography and Memoirs. They are defined as follows:

Biography

It is considered as an objective account of one's life and here the author is not the subject. It is written by someone else in someone else's lives. It can be possible that the subject is not alive or may be living today. If the subject is alive, it

makes it an easy process to collect and reproduce the data. - as interviews will be the easiest mode. But if the individual is not alive then it becomes a cumbersome process since it involves doing a lot of research before beginning to write.

It includes the key details of a person's life and how it has shaped the person into who he or she is. There will be information on his/her childhood, schooling, education, personal and professional lives. Biographers use different kinds of sources for writing the text like reference books, essays, blogs, photos, interviews etc. It has been observed that although it is written but it can be produced in other formats like short movies, novels, music composition etc.

The goal of biography is to take the reader through the life story of the subject, it talks about how a person has navigated in their life and how with every passing event they have learned their life lessons.

Autobiography

In autobiographies the author is the subject or the main character of the story. Very few times it happens that it is written by someone else. Since it is considered as a life story of the author the theme can be anything ranging from a personal to religious account, the intent is to convey it to their children.

Purpose of an author is to portray the achievements and life experiences of the author. It uses the first account of the person to describe the story as it is written from the point of view of the author. The timeline of autobiography also begins from the earliest recollection of memory till the present-day life. It includes information about the birth place-where they are born and brought up, memories with family, life experiences, career, achievements in life and challenges faced.

On the rarest occasions it is created from memoirs or a person's diaries. If content from diaries is being used then the author should be careful to organize the content in an order and try to form a cohesive story.

The main difference between a biography and autobiography is - that biographies are objective accounts written by someone else while autobiographies are subjective accounts written by the authors themselves. Events and stories being shared by authors holds a personal meaning for the individual.

Memoirs

Memoire is the French Word from which "Memoir" comes. This is similar to the autobiography as it is also a subjective account of a person. This form of life story is usually in the form of diary entries or first account from a family or from a close friend who had access to personal diaries.

Memoirs aim is to establish an emotional connection and be more reflective in its content. Author uses their personal knowledge to describe events of their lives, and accounts of intimate and emotional information are given and discussed. It includes stories, challenges or struggles faced by a person,

It has been observed that this type of writing life story accounts are being preferred by famous people like celebrities, politicians etc. Memoirs do not make use of research more, biographies and autobiographies are more research centered. It is not required in a memoir that the story is in chronological order.

Table 1: To understanding the differences between the three texts:

Biography	Autobiography	Memoir
About a person's life	About one's life	About a specific time in one's' life
Objective	Subjective	Subjective
Restricted feelings and thoughts	Access to personal thoughts and feelings	Access to personal thoughts, feelings and reflections
Can be written anytime	Usually written in later life	Can be written anytime

Motive is to inform about a person's life	Motive is to explain the thought process behind actions and decisions	Motive is to understand the motion of a person
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IV. CONCLUSION

Self- Remembering helps in forming narrative identity and is an important concept for understanding the self of an individual. Biographies, Autobiographies and Memoirs have proved to be of immense success in this research area and has proved to be as effective methods.

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