



Utilize Podcasts as Literacy and Educational Media

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Abstract

The use of digital media during the Covid-19 pandemic has helped us to continue carrying out activities and social connections during the period of activity restrictions. Podcasts are digital media used by numerous people to find various information needs. This study aims to explore the use of podcasts as learning media as well as media literacy. The method used in this paper is descriptive qualitative with in-depth interview data collection techniques for podcasters who use podcasts for literacy and educational activities. In triangulation, the researcher also interviewed the students who listened to podcasts as a medium for literacy and learning. The results of this study indicate that podcasts have benefits as a source of information for literacy and education. During the Covid-19 pandemic, podcasts are complementary to digital-based learning media such as zoom, G-meet, or MS-Team, commonly used in learning activities. Podcasts have the flexibility to be listened to in various places and situations. Podcasts are also equipped with a rewind feature to allow listeners to understand a topic better.

Keywords: Covid-19, learning medium, literacy, podcast

Introduction

The development of communication technology has changed almost all aspects of human life. One of the significant changes is in the broadcasting field. The digital era encourages the convergence of broadcast media, which provides changes in the handling, provision, distribution, and processing of all forms of information, both visual, audio and data. Dwyer (2010) stated that convergence is a condition towards a single meeting point converging. The definition of convergence is two or more objects that meet/unite at a point of focusing the eye's gaze on a significantly close place. Media convergence is a process whereby new technologies are accommodated

by pre-existing media, communication, and cultural industries.

Audio broadcasting media, such as radio, are also facing convergence. Audio media has a place for loyal listeners in the digital era. As a broadcasting medium, radio has more predominance than other media. The radio is suitable to be heard on any occasion. In the digital era, audio media such as radio has converged broadcasts by streaming and delivery to a new broadcast format called podcasts.

Reuters Institute, in 2016, published research on "Media, Journalism, and Technology Predictions," which revealed the

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opportunities for the rise of audio format media via the internet. Meanwhile, in 2016, Nielsen delivered the results of a survey regarding radio penetration in Indonesia of 38% in the third quarter, and in 2020 it is predicted to become the "new golden age of audio." The Nielsen survey strengthens the Reuters Institute's research (Zellatifanny, 2020).

Radio and podcasts have slightly different listener characteristics. In content and platform selection, podcast listeners are more active than radio listeners—greater freedom and involvement in choosing the content that podcast listeners choose. Meanwhile, the radio only needs to be turned on by the listener. (Berries, 2016). The following are the results of research conducted by daily social in 2023 smartphone users regarding the use of podcasts.



Figure 1 Survey about the podcast in Indonesia
(Source: GDILab)

The results of research conducted by DailySocial & JakPat (2018) show that podcast enthusiasts in Indonesia are increasing. As many as 68% of the 2,032 smartphone user respondents stated they were familiar with podcasts. Meanwhile, 81% of respondents stated that they had become connoisseurs of podcast broadcasts over the

last few months. Meanwhile, around 43% of respondents stated that they regularly access podcasts. Regarding content, around 56% of respondents stated that radio and podcasts are equally interesting audio content. Respondents interested in podcasts are higher than in radio, with precisely 25% enthusiasts, while the radio is only 18%. There are several reasons why respondents prefer podcasts. First, podcast content is more varied by 65%. Secondly, it is more flexible (on-demand) by 62% of respondents. Third, as many as 38% of respondents prefer to enjoy podcasts more than visual content. Most respondents, equal to 79%, choose to listen to podcasts after working hours at home, with an ideal duration of 10-20 minutes. The various content that respondents select is (1) entertainment, (2) lifestyle, and (3) technology. Applications commonly used to access podcasts are Spotify (52%), SoundCloud (46%), and Google Podcast (41%) (Nugroho, 2021).

Podcasts are audio programs available on the internet. At the beginning of the podcast's existence in early 2005, the podcast directory was added by Apple to the iTunes software version 4.9. Quoting Phillips' opinion (in Susilowati, 2020), podcasts are digital audio documents produced and distributed online through various platforms to be disseminated to the public. The audio document is in digital format. This type of podcast program is an original recording in audio or video format.

Furthermore, Podcast programs are present in the format of recordings of television shows, radio shows, lectures, performances, and so on. The advantage of listening to podcasts for listeners is that they can enjoy a variety of unique content from around the world for free. For podcasters, the podcast program is quite effective in increasing more listeners (Apple.com, 2019)

During the pandemic, podcast utilization increased by 25% compared to before. PPKM (Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions) is one of the reasons people choose podcasts as a medium of entertainment and fulfilling information needs. The use of digital learning media during the pandemic is increasing in the academic field. Podcasts as digital audio media are used as literacy and educational media. Some teachers who are also podcast producers utilize podcasts as a medium for learning and literacy.

Ben Hammersley's writing on audio blogs and online radio in 2004 was the beginning of the emergence of the term podcast at that time. Ben speculated about the proper names of people distributing information via online audio. One of several names is the term Podcasting. Dave Slusher from "Evil Genius Chronicles" popularized Podcasting, a person who makes a program and distributes it via the iPod platform. Since then, "podcasting" has become a commonly used word or term. Furthermore, various websites are starting to converge with audio content. The podcast's history can also be noticed from the evolution of blogging which used a similar way of distributing text to readers. Podcasting is audio or video content on the internet. The content can be sent to a computer or portable audio player. It is effortless to use; anyone can express themselves, exchange ideas, or pitch their product. There are three types of podcasts, precisely:

1. Podcast interviews (talk shows)

Interviews or a podcast talk show featured one or more sources discussing various topics in separate episodes. Podcast interviews have their charm in terms of sources and topics as the subject

of discussion. The more trending topics of discussion will increase the attractiveness of listeners to listen. Currently, there are quite a several types of podcast interviews managed by artists or public figures who already have popularity. An example of a podcast interview is the Podcast of Deddy Corbuzier, Daniel Mananta, or Denny Sumargo channels. Podcasts are driven by artists or celebrities who present topics that are usually about the life experiences of the sources. Podcasts used for literacy sometimes also use the talk show method, which discusses various issues, such as lifestyle, gender, environment, etc.

2. Solo podcast (monologue)

The solo podcast is a program in which the host presents a different topic in each episode. The challenge of a solo podcast is that the host must be able to package the program in an exciting and varied way, considering a program without guest stars. Podcast solo programs include opinions on an issue, information sharing, or dialogue between the host and listeners. Solo Podcast is also used by teachers or educators who use podcasts to convey topics relevant to learning.

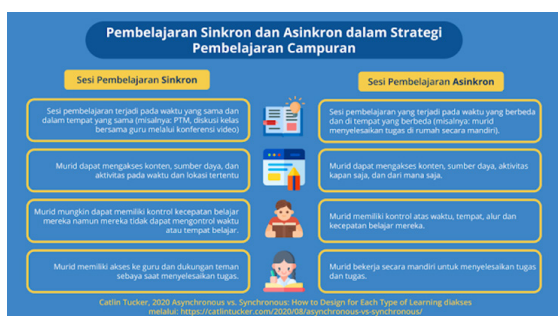
3. Multi-host podcasts

hosts multi-podcasts of more than one person to develop more impressive discussions. Multi-host podcasts usually increase podcast visitor traffic through discussions and debates on a discussed topic between hosts.

Some podcast managers are flexible about program types. Some podcast channels select the type of podcast based on the episodes discussed, with the number of sources depending on the topics discussed. Podcasts as literacy and learning media must

be distinct from their managers. The series of each episode on a channel can have a different type, they sometimes broadcast monologues, but the next episode is a talk show type. Based on the researchers' observations, the value of the podcast is primarily determined by the content and information conveyed in literacy or learning activities.

Podcasting as a learning medium is an adaptation to audio technology during the Covid-19 pandemic. Adaptation of teaching and learning activities using technology is a demand so that the process is optimal. The face-to-face learning (synchronous) process with learning to use media (asynchronous) has fundamental differences. The differences between synchronous and asynchronous learning are summarized in the image below.



Source: bestfriendsains.com

Figure 2. Synchronous Vs. Synchronous

During the Covid-19 pandemic, asynchronous learning was implemented. Transitioning from face-to-face learning to distance learning requires adaptation by both educators and students. The weaknesses of online meetings such as zoom or G-meet are signal factors and require a large quota, making the learning process not optimal. The utilization of podcasts aims to make the learning process more optimal and not monotonous. Educators who use Podcasts as learning media are carrying out literacy media supporting media in learning activities.

The meaning of literacy in Latin is "literatus," which means people who learn. Literacy, in general, refers to a person's abilities and skills in reading, writing, speaking, calculating, and solving daily problems. Literacy also includes a person's ability to speak. Literacy can also be interpreted as reading, writing, and thinking activities that focus on increasing the ability to understand information critically, creatively, and innovatively (Suyono, Harsiati, & Wulandari, 2017). Overall, literacy is more than just reading and writing skills but also critical thinking and utilizing knowledge sources in print, visual and digital. Literacy can also be the ability to access. Literacy goals are:

1. Increase knowledge through the activity of reading various helpful information.
2. Increase understanding in making conclusions from the information read.
3. Improving the ability to make a critical assessment of a work.
4. Creating and developing good character within
5. Increase personality values through reading and writing activities. Creating and developing a literacy culture in the broader community
6. Improve the quality of use of time to be more beneficial for users.

The utilization of podcasts as learning and literacy media is in line with the uses and gratifications theory that uses audiences as active objects in the media. This theory emphasizes that audiences have full awareness in choosing which media to use to fulfill their needs and desires (West & Turner, 2009). It is related to the research topic that teachers or students use podcasts as active objects because they consciously determine which podcasts they choose.

Herbert Blumer and Elihu Katz, and Michael Gurevitch 1974 first introduced the uses and gratifications theory. The uses and gratifications theory focuses not on media exposure but on why audiences choose to use the media. Based on research on uses and gratifications, audiences play an active role in choosing and determining which media to use to meet the audience's information needs, meaning that audiences are active participants in the communication process (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Based on this background, this research attempts to analyze podcasts as a medium for literacy and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study aims to describe how to optimize the function of podcasts as a medium for literacy and learning.

Method

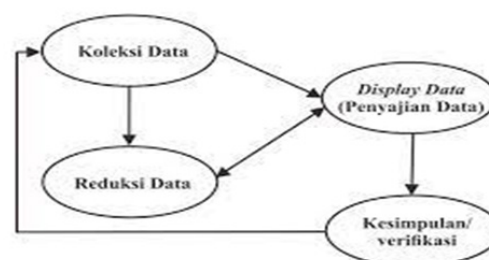
This research uses a qualitative approach. Creswell (2009) explains that a qualitative approach is a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers analyze what they see, hear, and understand. In qualitative research, the researcher is the crucial instrument in data collection.

The approach used is a case study because this research is carried out in-depth with an institution and a narrow subject. Case study research seeks to understand a phenomenon's meaning, investigate processes and gain an in-depth understanding and understanding of individuals, groups, or situations.

Data collection techniques are methods used by researchers to obtain data and information used in a study. According to Sugiyono (2009: 225), data collection can be acquired from observations, interviews, documentation, and a combination of

triangulation. Data collection techniques used in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation. The interviews were conducted with teachers who have experience using podcasts as learning media during a pandemic. In addition, the author also conveys experience in managing podcasts for learning.

According to Patton (in Moleong, 2019), there are two triangulation strategies: first, re-examining the degree of trust in research findings from several data collection techniques. Second, re-examine the degree of trust of several data sources using the identical method. Miles and Huberman (1992) describe the process of analyzing qualitative research data in Figure 3 below.



Bagan 2.1 Analisis data kualitatif menurut Miles dan Huberman
Sumber: Prof. Dr. Sugiyono 2005

Source: Sugiyono

Figure 3. Analysis Process

Figure 3 above shows the process of Qualitative Research Data Analysis, which shows the interactive essence of data collection activities, data analysis, and data collection as an integral part of data analysis activities. Data reduction is a step to conclude data, then sort the data into units of concepts, categories, and specific themes.

Results And Discussion

The beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic challenged the community to continue activities utilizing online services. Online activity demands are carried out so that the

activity purposes are still achieved without having to meet face to face. The challenges in academics at the start of the pandemic were very complex. Teachers are required to be able to organize and create a fun, non-saturated learning atmosphere and interest to students.

The researchers' findings show that people must adapt to using online meeting applications, such as using zoom meetings, Gmeet, or MSTeam, in learning activities. One of the obstacles often faced by users of these devices is spending a lot of internet quota limit. This result is revealed by Yuri (informant)

"Students often complain because they need a lot of data quota for a zoom meeting for 1 hour.

Yuri's explanation was reinforced by the uses and gratifications theory of internet users' interest dimensions, which include information, pleasure, communication, and transactions (Buenete, 2008 in Karman, 2020).

Online meeting applications require an excellent network connection to carry out learning activities expeditiously. Poor internet connection causes much noise and produces a crackling sound. This obstacle resulted in learning activities needing to be thoroughly followed and the teacher's explanations not being captured clearly and incompletely. In summary, the shortcomings of online meeting applications, especially zoom, are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Weaknesses of the Online Meeting Application

No	Weaknesses of Online Meeting Applications in Learning
1	Requires a large internet quota

2	It is prone to be infiltrated by users other than students.
3	It depends on the internet connection (signal interruption)
4	Reduced interaction between teachers and students
5.	Paid application for use above the standard time of 40 minutes

Source: processed by researchers

The author observes that many teachers use podcasts as learning media from high school to university teaching levels. The pandemic has pushed people not merely to adapt to technology but also to innovate. The use of podcasts can be a technology-based teaching method significantly different from the classroom method. In the experience of teachers, conventional learning methods (face-to-face class systems) focus more on teaching formats which sometimes cause student boredom. Gardner Campbell's study shows the importance of the human voice in bringing a more personal and informal touch to the information conveyed.

Podcasts are rooted in radio traditions and the traditions of using audio for teaching and learning. Previous research has shown that Podcasts are a flexible technology that can support teaching and learning in various contexts and for various purposes (Popova, 2010). Podcasts are an audio medium that has educational capabilities to influence cognition through the sound clarity of instruction and to influence the emotional aspects of learning by conveying affinity to and connection to teaching (Durbridge, 1984).

The Uses and Gratification theory says that media users play an active role in choosing and using media. Media users try to find the best media sources to complete their needs (Nurudin, 2007). Ebersole (2000)

mentions several types of gratification using digital media in the uses and gratifications theoretical approach, specifically pursuing entertainment, gratification researching and learning, social interaction and communication, eliminating boredom, and getting information. The advantages of podcasts include being informative, attractively packaged, repeatable, can be enjoyed in various circumstances, and can increase students' imaginations. Utilization and dependence on technology during the Covid-19 pandemic led to optimizing podcast media as a learning medium.

Table 2. Advantages of Podcasts

No	Advantages of Podcasts as Learning Media
1	Data quota is efficient
2	Repeatable
3	Intimacy - Can be heard in any situation
4	It can be heard in any situation

Source: processed by researchers

The advantages of using podcasts from the research results of researchers are also in line with research conducted by Copley (2007) that podcasts help students get an overview of the topics or material that will be or have been studied to make it easier to understand. Based on the informants' experiences, students are more active in expressing opinions (opinions), criticizing, or discussing the material in class. Furthermore, podcasts as learning media can be a literacy medium during a pandemic to get closer to the campus environment or current issues. Students can hear various inspirational stories so that students have insight into developing their abilities. Meanwhile, Burns (2007) stated that podcasts have four advantages compared to traditional communication media. First, listeners can listen to podcast

content on demand, whenever and wherever they want. Second, production for podcasts is relatively inexpensive and accessible for free. Third, podcasts are easy to access with comprehensive coverage. Fourth, podcasts are very user-friendly.

Many podcast aggregators can be used, specifically directories such as iTunes, which manages podcasts and search for and downloads the latest podcasts to listeners' playback devices. The role of podcasts in the future is to improve listening skills. The ability to listen is getting helpful information and being more critical in receiving the information.

This study's results align with previous research by Idham (2021) that the increase in the number of listeners has made popular podcasts the primary source of information for listeners since the Covid-19 pandemic. Most podcast content is in conversations or dialogues to add information to the audience. Gratification in using digital media is researching and learning, seeking entertainment, communicating and social interaction, eliminating boredom, and getting information. Characteristics of storytelling podcasts can provide flexibility for listeners in choosing content and access, as well as higher intimacy compared to other media.

Conclusion

As a medium for literacy and learning, podcasts should be connected to technological advances that enable convergence. The use of podcasts during the Covid-19 pandemic shows that people's dependence on digital media is increasing. Restrictions on activities carried out during Covid-19 encouraged the optimization of various activities, including

teaching and learning. Teaching and learning activities that depend on digital media, such as zoom, G-Meet, and MS-Team, often encounter obstacles. There are obstacles to the teaching and learning process by using digital media. Podcasts make it easier for students to understand a topic of discussion. The advantages of podcasts allow students to understand a topic by listening to it repeatedly wherever they are.

The podcast is easy to access and very flexible. Podcasts are a medium that includes a variety of exciting entertainment content that can be consumed or listened to, focused alone while traveling or while doing something. Podcasts can also be used as a medium to fulfill various information needs. As a literacy medium during a pandemic, podcasts allow listeners to get various exciting information. Educators can utilize podcasts as learning media by operating existing channels. Teachers or educators can also produce podcasts explicitly used for learning when traveling or doing something. Podcasts can also be used as a medium to fulfill various information needs.

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