INDEPENDENT LEARNING THROUGH YOUTUBE: PUPPETRY ARTS LEARNING FOR THE DUO PUPPETEER BROTHERS

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Abstract

As one of the Indonesian honors, puppetry arts are supposed to be socialized and preserved for future generations. It needs creative, interactive, and digital-based media due to the fast and unstoppable global changes. This research aimed to demonstrate the use of YouTube as one of the interesting and interactive media platforms in learning the puppetry arts independently for the duo puppeteer brothers, Prama and Rafi. By applying a qualitative research design with narrative analysis, this research had literally observed, virtually interviewed, and digitally documented a set of questionnaires to the duo puppeteer brothers. Several data were also collected from secondary sources such as YouTube channels and online news. Unlike other little puppeteers who learn the puppetry arts in a studio, the results revealed that the duo puppeteer brothers had never joined any puppetry arts studio. At the age of 16 and 13 years old, they have been learning the puppetry arts through YouTube channels for years to identify different styles of professional puppeteers in performing the puppets’ shows. Using YouTube channels, the duo puppeteer brothers enjoy the puppetry arts learning and could preserve the national noble values and culture.

Keywords: cultural preservation; independent learning; little puppeteer brothers; puppetry arts learning; YouTube channel
INTRODUCTION

Along with the fast and unstoppable global changes, different learning contents are abundant in the digital and online platforms; YouTube has become one of the most popular channels that support people in learning anything they wish (Kennedy, 2016). Since the launch in 2005, YouTube channels have encouraged people at any level of age to learn independently by following the creative and interactive contents of specific issues (Imathiu, 2018; Mujianto, 2019). Moreover, during the pandemic and the emergency online learning where teachers and students have been searching for the best suitable platforms to pursue a qualified learning process; they have indicated the YouTube channels as one of their favorite learning media for its simple, interactive, and attractive media (Mansyur, 2020; Pratiwi & Puspito Hapsari, 2020; Sari, 2020).

However, there were still several obstacles in utilizing YouTube as the online media learning, particularly for learners who lived in remote areas with limited devices and limited access and unstable internet connections (Agung & Surtikanti, 2020). Despite those barriers, YouTube has provided the viewers to enjoy any specific issues or subjects with various interesting contents, both in formal education circumstances and non-formal circumstances, including learning the arts and cultures (DeWitt et al., 2013; Pangestika & Yanuartuti, 2020). In fact, learning through watching the YouTube channels could bring full excitement for the learners in learning independently (Astuti et al., 2021) yet persuaded the effectiveness of the learning outcomes (Kaunang, 2020).

Based on the aforementioned reviews, this study was conducted to recognize the phenomenon of the duo puppeteer brothers who have been learning the puppetry arts independently through YouTube. The phenomenon was interesting since young generations scarcely learned the puppetry arts learning while a noble and modern technology is needed to allure the young generations (Ramdhani & Ahmad, 2017; Ruastiti et al., 2020). For years, the duo puppeteer brothers have been learning the puppetry arts independently without joining any puppets’ studios or communities. The phenomenon was increasingly interesting when the researchers found that the duo puppeteer brothers were not speaking in Javanese language since the duo puppeteer brothers were born and grown up in Jakarta. Although they have Javanese blood from their grandfather of their mother, they have never been communicating in Javanese. Therefore, this study was carried out in accordance the research framework that covered the family circumstances relationship to the duo puppeteer brothers in the puppetry arts learning. Based on the belief that parents are the architects of the children’s future achievements, this research would be comprised in research settings and experiences of the duo puppeteer brothers, chronologically.

1. How did the duo puppeteer brothers begin in the puppetry arts learning?
2. How YouTube encourage and support puppetry arts learning for the duo puppeteer brothers?
3. Why is independent learning the selected learning style for the duo puppeteer brothers in the puppetry arts learning?

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was administered using a qualitative research design with narrative analysis (Creswell, 2012). It covered purposive respondents, detailed information on the respondents’ stories and experiences, and their life circumstances, including home, neighborhood, and school environments. The research was started with an observation; searching and classifying literature reviews related to the puppetry arts learning, the use
of YouTube, and the independent learning; and formatting a set of questionnaires. It continued to distribute the questionnaire to the research respondents and collect the research data. It involved the two young puppeteer brothers who have grown up to be teenagers, and their mother and grandfather, who have been eagerly supporting their passion in learning the puppetry arts. In order to validate the data, the research conducted a virtual interview with the respondents, then all collated data was analyzed. Finally, the collated data was interpreted in several themes of chronological settings and illustrated in narrative analysis with several images and descriptions to deliver a comprehensive understanding for the readers. The flow of the research is described in Figure 1.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the collated data from interviews and open-ended questionnaires, findings found that Prama was born in Depok on June 19th, 2005, while Rafi was born on September 21st, 2007, in the same city. Currently, Prama and Rafi live and study in Depok, where Prama joins a state Senior High School, and Rafi participates in a private Islamic Junior High School. Besides puppetry arts, Prama loves to do exercising and play music. Meanwhile, Rafi only loves to play puppetry arts. For both of the puppeteer brothers, the puppetry arts is a unique exciting art, one of the honorable national identities to be preserved. Due to the fast world changes, Prama and Rafi have been thinking that the puppetry arts need to be transformed into more modern shapes; however, traditional figures and media should not be changed. For Prama, the puppetry arts have to be preserved as its persistent stories and settings. However, for Rafi, the puppetry arts have to be preserved but need to be altered for its stories and settings due to world issues (Pratama, 2011).

Nonetheless, both Prama and Rafi agreed to preserve the puppetry arts for future generations. They greatly hoped that the millennials would identify and be proud of the puppetry arts. When people abroad have been proud of the Indonesian traditional puppetry arts, the Indonesian people are supposed to be much more self-respecting of it.

Discussion

According to the research questions, this section is divided into three different settings, namely: 1) Family circumstances for the duo puppeteer brothers to answer the first question; 2) YouTube as the learning media for the duo puppeteer brothers to answer the second question; and 3) Independent learning for the duo puppeteer brothers to answer the third question. All sections are narrated chronologically and supported by several images.
Family Circumstances for the Duo Puppeteer Brothers

The duo puppeteer brothers, Prama and Rafi were introduced to Puppetry Arts since they were at very young age. Prama at his two years old and Rafi at his three years old. In the first place, their grandfather, Prof. Dr. Sumaryoto, the Rector of Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, loved puppetry arts very much and influenced them to recognize and love the puppetry arts. Regarding puppetry arts preservation, the grandfather frequently attracted Prama and Rafi to attend puppetry arts performances. As little boys, Prama and Rafi voluntarily affirmed the offer, and somehow enjoyed the puppetry arts performances. Prama and Rafi even stayed up all night watching the performances excitedly from the very beginning to the end, as the grandfather recognized it as “kuat melek” to his grandchildren.

Unlike other little children who spent most of the time playing gadgets, Prama and Rafi devoted most of their time to watching the puppetry arts performances, whether it was a live show or recorded show. Prama even asked his grandfather to buy him a set of puppets so that Prama could practice what he had just seen from the puppets’ show. After watching the puppets’ show, the grandfather always acquired Prama with puppets, one by one. Prama was only five years old when his grandfather granted his request with a set of puppets. With the support of grandfather and Prama and Rafi’s mother, Ambar Tri Hapsari, Prama and Rafi have been driven to love the puppetry arts as their hobby, particularly for the love of puppeteers.

Moreover, the love of puppetry arts has led them to know more about one of the national honors and heritage. Through the puppetry arts with different figures and characters, different settings, and stories, Prama and Rafi have learned various values of life that influenced them in their real-life circumstances (Iswinarti & Suminar, 2019). When most millennials adore hero figures from abroad, for Prama and Rafi, the puppetry arts is an honored identity. They stated that the puppetry arts are supposed to be preserved for the next generations, and it is started from Prama and Rafi as the role model.

The passage of Prama and Rafi was one of the scarce stories in preserving the Indonesian traditional arts that were carried out in Indonesian families where the family environment is the first and the crucial circumstances for building children's identity (Wibowo et al., 2020). The preservation of Indonesian traditional arts is the society's responsibility. The local people's appreciation is needed as one of the most essential factors to respect their own value and identity (Nurdiyana, 2019). The traditional value and identity have to be introduced and brightened up by family, society, and the government, from children to adults (Suryatini & Susanthi, 2019). The collaborative work among the three components and supported by educators in formal and non-formal
circumstances are necessary to build the best characters through the traditional heritage values as the noble national values and the authentic culture as well (Suryanto, 2017).

**YouTube as the Learning Media for the Duo Puppeteer Brothers**

Prama - at the age of five - and Rafi - at the age of three - started to learn and practice the puppetry arts seriously and independently. The duo puppeteer brothers started to watch their favorite puppeteer, Ki Bayu Aji, through several recordings brought by their grandfather and mother. The duo puppeteer brothers asked to meet their puppeteer’s idol personally, which was finally granted when Prama was in their second year of primary school. The meeting inspired the duo puppeteer brothers to learn more and practice more. Since then, the duo puppeteer brothers have adored Ki Bayu Aji much more and never missed every performance from Ki Bayu Aji that were uploaded in the YouTube channel. When most children or teenagers watched YouTube for various movies and games, the duo puppeteer brothers watched YouTube for Ki Bayu Aji puppets’ performances to watch the shows repeatedly. Through YouTube, they were comfortable and satisfied with the visualization and the audio that they could pause and repeat anytime (Hong et al., 2016; Orús et al., 2016). In this way, the use of YouTube as the media learning had been proven as the effective media and brought positive outcomes to the learners (Cahyono & Hassani, 2019).

Learning through YouTube has been advancing yearly and bringing new excitement for young learners. The young learners could explore anything with three dimensions media that brought various colors and shapes, attracted sounds, and great contents. YouTube offers the magic of pleasure and learning sources (Setiadi et al., 2019). With the advanced technology, teachers are encouraged to catch up with the changes and utilize the digital era by integrating the digital tool and the lesson through YouTube channels (Fleck et al., 2014). Moreover, the YouTube channel facilitated diverse content from local to global issues for local audiences and global viewers (Slamet, 2014).

However, like other digital media, YouTube media would bring both sides of the coin in its utilization. Besides the benefits, YouTube content could be easily accessed and watched by young learners for any inappropriate content such as pornography and violence (Ensour, 2015). Therefore, using YouTube for young learners requires assistance from parents or family members to select proper and valuable content (Noor et al., 2020). In addition, the use of YouTube will increasingly have a positive impact when the content presented can be integrated with local values that carry messages of wisdom and kindness (F. Astuti, 2021). In this way, advanced technology with attractive media such as YouTube also contributes to building positive values of young learners’ identity (Pawestri et al., 2020), as reflected on Prama and Rafi, the duo puppeteer brothers.

**Independent Learning for the Duo Puppeteer Brothers**

When most little puppeteers join a puppets’ studio to enhance their puppeteer’s skill, the duo puppeteer brothers have been learning the puppetry arts all by themselves without joining any puppets’ studios. The duo puppeteer brothers have been learning the puppets almost every day during their free time at home and after completing their school homework. They could manage their time based on their individual needs and wants that are rarely found in the teenager level (Najeeb, 2013). That learning style is often called independent learning or learner autonomy or self-directed learning (Mckendry & Boyd, 2012).
By watching live shows and several videos, the duo puppeteer brothers were practicing the puppets’ techniques. For the duo puppeteer brothers, watching and analyzing the detail of the puppets’ performances could help them understand and practice the puppets’ settings, stories, figures, and techniques of demonstrating the puppets. At first, the duo puppeteer brothers imitate the act (Sabet) and the voice (Suluk) of their favorite puppeteer, Ki Bayu Aji Pamungkas, the son of Ki Anom Suroto, the famous Indonesian puppeteer. It was not easy and took time to accustom the duo puppeteer brothers to the techniques. Nevertheless, by practicing regularly, the duo puppeteer brothers could show the results of their hard work (Agustina & Fajar, 2019).

Through continuous activities and practices, in 2018, the duo puppeteer brothers were invited to India and Russia as the Indonesian Cultural Ambassador of the traditional Indonesian puppets (JABARNEWS, May 3rd, 2018). The achievements are the remarkable evidence that the duo puppeteer brothers has shown a Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) level at their very young age (Djiwandono, 2017; Ertürk et al., 2016). The factor of self-motivation contributed the success of their independent learning was the primary aspect that brought them to a great achievement (Putra, 2017). In fact, self-motivation is the key factor of any learning style to attain the best learners’ outcomes (Tabiati, 2016; Vibulphol, 2016).

![Figure 3 The Duo Puppeteer Brothers](source: JABARNEWS (May 3rd, 2018))

**CONCLUSION**

The achievements of the duo puppeteer brothers, Prama and Rafi, have proven the best practice of independent learning through YouTube, particularly in learning the puppetry arts. YouTube with plenty of channels from local and international sources, various content and performances with attractive visualized colors and shapes, and the sounds with different vocals, intonation, and music all bring the excitement and effective learning process. The utilization of that attractive digital media learning is supposed to assist parents or other family members to avoid inappropriate content and other misuse. The attractive digital media, the assistance of parents or other family members, and the high motivation of a learner will bring together the best learning experience and learning outcome of today’s generation. However, this research is limited for its specific subject, object, method, time, and media. Further research is needed to discover different and comprehensive perspectives.
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