



COMMUNICATION STYLES ANALYSIS OF THE HOST ON EDUCATIONAL YOUTUBE CHANNEL FOR TODLER AND CHILDREN "KINDERFLIX"

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital communication technology has encouraged the emergence of interactive learning media such as YouTube, which is increasingly used for early childhood education. One of the educational channels, Kinderflix, combines educational and entertainment elements (edutainment) through an expressive and engaging host. In this context, communication style plays a crucial role in delivering messages effectively to young audiences. This study aims to analyze the communication style of the host on the Kinderflix YouTube channel by applying Mead and Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism theory and Norton's communicator style framework. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method using purposively selected data from Kinderflix videos, verbal transcripts, and nonverbal observation notes based on educational relevance and interactivity. The findings reveal that the Kinderflix host applies three main communication styles: assertive, responsive, and attentive (child-centered). The assertive style is used to give clear directions, the responsive style builds emotional connection through empathy and praise, while the attentive style adapts language, tone, and gestures to children's developmental characteristics. The synergy of these styles creates an interactive, engaging, and effective communication pattern that enhances understanding and learning motivation among early childhood audiences.

Keywords: *Communication Style, Early Childhood, Symbolic Interactionism, Educational YouTube, Kinderflix*

Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi komunikasi digital mendorong munculnya media pembelajaran interaktif seperti YouTube yang dimanfaatkan untuk pendidikan anak usia dini. Salah satu kanal edukatif, Kinderflix, memadukan unsur pendidikan dan hiburan (edutainment) melalui peran pembawa acara yang ekspresif. Dalam konteks ini, gaya komunikasi menjadi kunci keberhasilan penyampaian pesan kepada audiens anak-anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gaya komunikasi pembawa acara pada kanal Kinderflix dengan menggunakan teori Symbolic Interactionism dari Mead dan Blumer serta teori gaya komunikasi Norton. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan data berupa video Kinderflix, transkrip verbal, dan observasi nonverbal yang dipilih secara purposif berdasarkan relevansi pendidikan dan interaktivitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembawa acara Kinderflix menerapkan tiga gaya komunikasi utama, yaitu asertif, responsif, dan atentif (berpusat pada anak). Gaya asertif digunakan untuk memberikan arahan dengan jelas, gaya responsif membangun kedekatan emosional melalui empati dan pujian, sedangkan gaya



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atentif menyesuaikan bahasa, intonasi, dan gestur dengan karakteristik perkembangan anak. Sinergi ketiganya menciptakan komunikasi yang interaktif, menarik, dan efektif dalam mendukung pemahaman serta motivasi belajar anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: Gaya Komunikasi, Anak Usia Dini, Symbolic Interactionism, YouTube Edukatif, Kinderflix

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital communication technologies has fundamentally transformed how people access information, interact, and learn. One of the most prominent phenomena in the last decade is the growing use of YouTube as an informal, interactive, and easily accessible learning medium for all age groups, including young children. YouTube has evolved from a mere entertainment platform into a significant educational channel that supports children's cognitive and social development (1).

The emergence of educational YouTube channels provides alternative learning media that are more visual, dynamic, and contextual compared to conventional formats. Among these channels, Kinderflix stands out for its unique combination of educational and entertainment elements delivered through an engaging host. In such productions, the host functions as the primary mediator between educational messages and young audiences; thus, the effectiveness of the message delivery largely depends on the host's communication style (2).

Communication with early childhood audiences differs significantly from adult communication. As stated by Littlejohn and Foss, communication is a social process in which individuals use symbols to create shared meanings within a specific context (3). Children at the preschool stage are still developing their linguistic and symbolic interpretation abilities, making them more responsive to communication that is concrete, expressive, and visually supported. Therefore, the host's communication style must be adapted to children's developmental characteristics so that messages can be understood effectively.

Communication style is generally understood as the way individuals express themselves through verbal and nonverbal interactions. Norton defines it as "the way one verbally and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood" (4). He identifies ten dimensions of communicator style: dominant, dramatic, animated, open, friendly, attentive, impression-leaving, relaxed, contentious, and precise. Among these, animated, friendly, and attentive styles are considered most effective

when communicating with children, as they foster warmth, engagement, and emotional connection (5).

In addition, this study employs the Symbolic Interactionism framework, initially proposed by George Herbert Mead and further developed by Herbert Blumer. The theory explains that meaning is constructed through symbolic interactions in which individuals interpret social actions and symbols to build understanding of their surroundings (6). Within children's media, the host functions as a sender of symbols—through language, gestures, expressions, and tone of voice—that are interpreted by children to form understanding. This symbolic process becomes a foundation for children to internalize values, behaviors, and perceptions of social reality (7).

The Kinderflix channel utilizes a visually engaging and expressive communication approach characterized by cheerful, interactive, and participatory styles. The host often invites viewers to engage imaginatively, such as repeating words, singing together, or imitating gestures. This form of interaction aligns with the concept of edutainment—education integrated with entertainment—which has been shown to enhance attention and engagement among children during learning activities (2).

This study aims to analyze the communication style of the host in the YouTube channel Kinderflix using a descriptive qualitative approach. The analysis focuses on identifying verbal and nonverbal communication patterns, evaluating their alignment with Norton's communication style dimensions, and interpreting their implications for educational message effectiveness through the lens of symbolic interactionism.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the broader understanding of communication style within digital media contexts, especially in early childhood education. Practically, the results are expected to provide insights for educational content creators in designing communication strategies that are adaptive, interactive, and developmentally appropriate for young audiences (8).

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at analyzing the verbal and nonverbal communication styles of the host in the educational YouTube channel Kinderflix. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows an in-depth exploration of communication behavior and expressive elements used by the host in delivering educational messages to early childhood audiences.

The research adopts a descriptive qualitative design that emphasizes detailed observation and interpretation of communication patterns rather than numerical measurement. This approach is suitable for understanding the dynamics of message delivery, emotional expression, and interactional nuances within digital-based learning media. The object of this study is the communication style of the Kinderflix host, covering both verbal expressions—such as word choice, intonation, repetition, and speech structure—and nonverbal elements including gestures, facial expressions, tone, and body movement. The subject of observation consists of selected Kinderflix episodes that contain learning materials for toddlers and preschoolers.

Data were collected from video recordings of the official Kinderflix YouTube channel, verbal transcripts of host narration and dialogue, and observation notes documenting gestures, facial expressions, tone, and interaction flow. The selection of videos was conducted purposively based on educational relevance, interactivity, and consistency of the host's performance. Data collection involved repeated viewing, transcription, and coding of communication behaviors that appeared consistently across the observed episodes.

The analysis process included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to identify dominant communication styles and describe their characteristics in both verbal and nonverbal forms. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and repeated observations were conducted to verify consistency and strengthen the credibility of the findings.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis of Kinderflix episodes reveals that the host's communication style integrates verbal clarity, nonverbal expressiveness, and child-centered interaction patterns that aim to create an engaging and emotionally supportive learning environment. The communication process is not limited to the delivery of educational material but also involves constructing a symbolic interaction between the host and the imagined child audience.

The findings show that three dominant communication styles appear throughout the host's delivery:

1. Assertive communication, used to instruct, guide, and introduce concepts clearly;
2. Responsive communication, used to express empathy, encouragement, and emotional attunement; and

3. Attentive (Child-centered communication), used to adapt tone, language, and gestures according to the developmental level of children.

These styles do not appear separately, but dynamically intertwine throughout the narrative of each episode, forming a pedagogical rhythm that sustains attention and emotional engagement.

1. Assertive Communication Style

The assertive style represents the host's ability to deliver messages confidently while maintaining warmth and politeness. This is evident when the host introduces learning materials such as colors, shapes, and animals using simple yet directive statements like "Let's find the red color!" or "Can you count with me?"

The verbal indicators of this style include:

- a. Use of imperative sentences delivered in a cheerful tone;
- b. Clear pronunciation with moderate speed;
- c. Repetition of key terms to reinforce understanding.

This communication pattern aligns with Norton's concept of the assertive communicator, characterized by confidence, clarity, and positive dominance (9). However, the Kinderflix host adapts assertiveness into a soft-authoritative tone—assertive but non-threatening—allowing children to feel guided rather than controlled.

From the nonverbal perspective, the host reinforces verbal cues with open gestures, upright posture, and direct eye contact toward the camera. These elements visually emphasize message clarity, resembling a teacher's stance in a classroom but with more expressiveness and friendliness.

In essence, the assertive communication style in Kinderflix functions as the structural foundation of the learning process: guiding attention, framing activities, and ensuring that instructions are understood by the audience.

2. Responsive Communication Style

The responsive style is characterized by empathy, adaptability, and emotional sensitivity toward the child audience. Although Kinderflix is a one-way communication medium, the host continuously anticipates children's responses by using pseudo-interactive techniques, such as rhetorical questions ("Have you seen this color before?"), simulated pauses, and validating remarks ("Wow, you did great!").

This responsiveness functions as an emotional bridge that gives the impression of direct conversation. The host also frequently mirrors potential child reactions, e.g., widening eyes or smiling after asking a question, creating a sense of acknowledgment and inclusion.

Nonverbally, responsiveness is supported through:

- a. Facial expressiveness (smiles, eyebrow raises, and nods to simulate feedback);
- b. Rhythmic hand movements that accompany verbal affirmations;
- c. Dynamic body movement, synchronized with the storyline or song rhythm.

These aspects correspond to Mehrabian's principle that nonverbal cues carry the majority of emotional meaning in human communication (10). The Kinderflix host exemplifies this by combining verbal empathy with expressive gestures, allowing children to feel emotionally seen and encouraged—even without real-time feedback.

Therefore, responsive communication in Kinderflix plays a crucial affective function: maintaining the child's emotional connection, promoting confidence, and reinforcing participation through warmth and praise.

3. Attentive Communication Style

Attentive Communication Style with child-centered style forms the philosophical core of Kinderflix's communication model. This style views children not as passive recipients of information but as active participants in the learning experience. The host adjusts language, tone, and tempo based on children's presumed comprehension level and emotional range.

Verbal characteristics of the child-centered style include:

- a. Simplified sentence structure with concrete vocabulary (e.g., "Look! The blue ball is bouncing!");
- b. Frequent repetition to reinforce memory and language learning;
- c. Use of onomatopoeic or playful sounds ("tut-tut," "wow," "yay!") to stimulate imagination and engagement.

From a nonverbal standpoint, the host employs exaggerated expressions, mimicking play-based learning techniques found in early childhood classrooms. Eye contact with the camera mimics mutual attention, while large, slow gestures enhance comprehension by pairing action with meaning.

This approach resonates with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes scaffolding—supporting children's learning by adapting communication to their

developmental zone (11). It also reflects Piaget's notion of learning through concrete experience, where children grasp abstract ideas through sensory and symbolic cues (12).

Thus, the child-centered style serves as the pedagogical layer of Kinderflix communication—balancing instruction with emotional safety and imaginative play.

The synergy between verbal and nonverbal elements in Kinderflix enhances children's comprehension and emotional engagement.

Verbal messages provide structure and cognitive clarity, while nonverbal messages reinforce emotional depth and visual appeal.

For example:

When introducing a new concept, the host combines verbal description ("This is a triangle") with a hand gesture forming a triangle;

When giving praise, the verbal expression ("Excellent!") is accompanied by a broad smile and clapping hands.

This integration supports the findings of Linebarger & Walker, who state that multimodal communication—a combination of speech, gesture, and visuals—can enhance children's retention and participation in educational media (13).

In addition, nonverbal communication also compensates for the absence of direct interaction. Consistent eye contact with the camera creates an illusion of reciprocity, making children feel as if they are engaged in real dialogue.

The communication style of the Kinderflix host reflects the evolution of children's educational media from passive television formats to interactive digital platforms. Compared to classic shows like Blue's Clues or Dora the Explorer, Kinderflix relies entirely on symbolic simulation to build interactivity (2).

This aligns with McQuail's mediated communication theory, which emphasizes that interaction can be constructed through visual and linguistic cues even without physical presence (14). The Kinderflix host plays a dual role as both educator and performer, blending instructional clarity with emotional expressiveness to create a sense of engagement.

From a communication perspective, Kinderflix embodies the communicator style dimensions proposed by Norton (9):

1. Assertive (clear, structured, confident)
2. Responsive (empathetic, supportive)
3. Attentive (adaptive to children)

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from observations, transcript analyses, and examination of verbal and nonverbal components, it was found that the Kinderflix host's communication style reflects a combination of three main approaches—assertive, responsive, and attentive (child-centered communication styles) which work synergistically to create an effective and engaging educational interaction for early childhood audiences.

First, the assertive communication style serves as the primary foundation for message delivery. The host uses clear, firm, and easily understandable language suitable for children, combined with a strong yet friendly tone. Verbal expressions such as invitations (“Let's learn together!”), soft directives, and rhythmic repetition are used to structure the learning process without sounding authoritarian. Nonverbally, the host reinforces messages through direct camera gaze, pointing gestures, upright posture, and enthusiastic facial expressions that foster attention and trust among child viewers.

Second, the responsive communication style is evident in the host's ability to provide positive reinforcement and emotional validation. Although there is no direct two-way interaction, the host effectively creates an illusion of dialogue through rhetorical questions, empathetic expressions, and affirmations such as “Wow, great job!” or “You can do it!”. These responses encourage intrinsic motivation and sustain the child's engagement by making them feel acknowledged and appreciated.

Third, attentive with the child-centered communication style is demonstrated through the use of simple, concrete, and developmentally appropriate language. The host adjusts the speech tempo, incorporates playful sounds and words, and maintains a joyful learning atmosphere. Through cheerful expressions, dynamic gestures, and musical intonation, the host builds emotional closeness while stimulating active participation from the audience.

These three communication styles do not operate in isolation but instead interact within a multimodal communication system that harmoniously integrates verbal and nonverbal elements. The assertive style provides structure and direction, the responsive style offers emotional support, and the child-centered style ensures that the message is accessible and relatable to children's cognitive abilities and experiences. This combination allows Kinderflix to function not merely as an information channel but as an interactive learning environment that fosters children's cognitive, affective, and social development in a balanced manner.

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