

ROLE OF PODCAST IN PROMOTING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY: AN ANALYSIS

MS Thesis



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2024

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Declaration

The thesis has been submitted as a partial fulfilment of MS in Media and Communication Studies to the department of Media and Communication studies. I solemnly declare that this is my original work and no material has been plagiarized and my material quoted from a secondary source has been provided with proper citations and references.

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Date: 15th May 2024

Acknowledgment

All glory is to Allah Ta'ala for blessing me with the fortitude to do my work within the time frame given to me. I can't quite put into words how I feel about my esteemed and respected supervisor and teacher, Dr. Ayesha Sadaf, who has always supported me throughout my academic career and not just during this research work. I also want to express my gratitude to my other teachers for all their support and guidance. Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to all fellows for their help while I was studying in the department.

Dedication

My heartfelt devotion is dedicated to my family, who has always supported me, especially devoted to my mother and my friends for help. To my distinguished instructors, Dr. Amrat Haq, Dr. Qurat-ul-Ain Malik, Dr. Aniqa Ali, my dearest supervisor Dr. Ayesha Sadaf.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to analyse the Role of Podcast in Promoting Linguistic Diversity. Data was collected from 298 participants belonging to the International Islamic University Islamabad via survey questionnaires. Public sphere theory and culturalist theory was used in this research study to examine the role of podcast in promoting the linguistic diversity. Survey method was used to collect the responses from the respondents in this quantitative study, by using five-point Likert scale the response rates were examined. Respondents were categories in the category of age and gender. SPSS software was used for the statistical analysis of the data. Demographic, Reliability and correlation analysis test was conducted. The statistical results show that of the value of Cronbach alpha for Podcast promoting linguistic diversity has been observed is $0.731 > 0.7$, the value of linguistic diversity is $0.740 > 0.7$, while the value of audience perception is $0.677 < 0.7$ which is around about to 07. So, this analysis shows that data is reliable for the other analysis. The values are between the range of Cronbach alpha threshold. So, all the variables are reliable for this study. Similarly in the correlation analysis value between linguistic diversity and podcast promoting linguistic diversity is $.565^{**}$ which is showing a positive, strong association and significant impact of PC on LD. Whereas, the correlation between audience perception and podcast is $.626^{**}$ which is significant at 0.01 level. which is showing a positive, strong association and significant impact of PC on AP. Hence, after findings of current research, hypothesis of the study is accepted Study also revealed that there was majority of the respondents who has positive thoughts about the podcast.

Keywords: Media, Podcast, Linguistic Diversity, Audience Perception

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

With the rise of digital media, the way we consume information and entertainment has changed dramatically. One of the fastest-growing mediums of digital media is podcasting, a form of audio due to their convenience and versatility, allowing listeners to access a wide range of topics, genres, and perspectives from around the world.

A podcast is a digital audio or video file accessible through the Internet, encompassing a wide range of content such as music, news, or narrative storytelling. According to the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB), podcasting is defined as "an episodic series of digital audio/video files that users can download and listen/watch.

These files are often available for subscription, enabling automatic downloads of new episodes through web syndication to the user's local computer, mobile application, or portable media player. Essentially, a podcast is a digital medium featuring episodes that centre on a specific theme, and individuals who host and produce these episodes are commonly known as "podcasters." This format allows for convenient consumption, offering users the flexibility to stream or download episodes based on their preferences and interests (Digital, 2017).

Podcasting is not very old. The term "podcast" was first used in 2004. Even though podcasts are a recent thing, they have become really popular worldwide. In 2004, a Google search for 'podcast' gave 6,000 results; in 2005, it was 60 million, and in 2021, it's more than 1.9 billion. This shows that more and more people are making and listening to podcasts all around the world.

We don't know for sure if podcasts will keep growing, stay the same, or decrease in popularity. But in the future, there will be chances for podcasts to change and adapt to new trends and

expectations. New audio technology and tools are also being developed, which could change how podcasts are made and experienced. (Jemily Rime, 2022).

In the early days, podcasts were only about audio, but things have changed. Nowadays, many podcasts also have a video part, like showing the hosts or using images and info graphics. Both audio and video have their advantages and offer different options. Audio podcasts are easier to access because you can listen to them anywhere. Videos, on the other hand, can only be watched in specific situations. Making an audio podcast needs less equipment, and you can put it on different platforms. But video podcasts can help you reach a new audience. Some people who don't usually listen to podcasts might watch videos on platforms like YouTube or Twitch. Videos also let you share information that might be hard to explain in just audio. When you're deciding on the format for your podcast, think about your goals, who your audience is, and what resources you have. Using behavioural targeting can help you figure out which type of podcast is more interesting for your target audience. (intuit, n.d.)

In 2019, approximately 165 million people were estimated to have listened to podcasts, and this number keeps growing as more individuals tune in for the latest advice and news, making podcasts an integral part of our daily routines. The podcasting industry gained popularity in 2006 when Steve Jobs showcased how to record a podcast using GarageBand, sparking competition. That same year, Ricky Gervais set a Guinness World Record with over a quarter of a million downloads in the first month. However, a few years later, Adam Carroll surpassed this record with 59 million unique downloads. In a significant milestone, Apple announced 1 billion podcast subscribers in 2013 (Chafroud, 2020). As technology advanced and people's interest in podcasts grew, the popularity of podcasts increased because of podcast listeners. While there are hundreds

of podcasts available in Pakistan, including eon podcast, Junaid Akram podcast, KPK Podcast Youth Club and many more.

These podcasts have gained significant popularity and recognition among the audience. They cover a diverse range of topics, from current affairs to entertainment, and have managed to capture the interest and engagement of a wide audience. Podcasts play a significant role in modern media, offering a versatile and accessible platform for the creation, distribution, and consumption of audio content. Here are some key aspects of the role of podcasts in media:

Diverse Content

Podcasts cover a wide range of topics and genres, from news and education to entertainment and storytelling. This diversity allows for niche content that may not have a place in traditional media, catering to specific interests and audiences.

Accessibility

One of the defining features of podcasts is their accessibility. Anyone with a smartphone or computer can access podcasts, making them a democratized form of media. This accessibility has contributed to the democratization of information and the amplification of diverse voices.

On-Demand Consumption

Unlike traditional radio or television, podcasts are on-demand, meaning listeners can choose when and where to consume content. This flexibility accommodates busy schedules and global audiences, enabling people to engage with content at their convenience.

Long-Form and In-Depth Content

Podcasts often provide a platform for long-form discussions and in-depth explorations of topics. This allows for more nuanced conversations, detailed analysis, and comprehensive storytelling that may not be possible within the time constraints of traditional media formats.

Community Building

Podcasts can foster communities of like-minded individuals. Listeners often feel a sense of connection to podcast hosts, creating a more intimate and engaging experience compared to other forms of media. This sense of community can extend to online forums, social media, and live events related to the podcast.

Languages represent human diversity, with over 7000 worldwide. But more than half are endangered, facing a bigger crisis than biodiversity. Each language has a special history and faces unique challenges. Besides specific threats, there are general factors affecting many languages, but there haven't been enough studies on what causes languages to be endangered.

Languages become endangered not just when speaker numbers decrease due to things like genocide or displacement but also when people stop using their heritage language and switch to a different one, like through colonization or migration.

We look at the "language ecology" of each language, considering fluent speakers, contact with other languages, usage, education, and recognition. Documentation, like dictionaries, is crucial for language upkeep, and we give each language a score based on available resources. (Bromham, 2021).

Pakistan is a diverse nation with multiple cultures, languages, and ethnicities, and it hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations. The country also exhibits geographic, educational,

and socio-economic variations that influence media and ICT usage. The survey focused on four states: Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and the North West Frontier Province, excluding Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Pakistan Administered Kashmir. Southern Pakistan, concentrated along the Indus River, includes Karachi, the most populous city. In the north, cities like Faisalabad, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad form a populous arc. While the survey represented both urban and rural residents, 35 percent of Pakistanis live in urban areas. Ethnic diversity is notable, with Punjabis being the largest group, followed by Pashtuns and Sindhis.

Furthermore, six major languages and over 59 others are spoken, with Urdu and English as national languages. While Urdu serves as a lingua franca, the survey revealed diverse linguistic preferences. The majority identified as Muslim, and urbanization is fostering increased Urdu usage, particularly in the growing middle class. (AudienceSpaces, 2010).

In Pakistan, traditional media has limited coverage of regional languages due to the scarcity of regional channels. Examples of such channels include Khyber News and Kashish TV, which cater to specific linguistic groups but are insufficient to cover the diverse linguistic landscape of the country. This limitation restricts the representation and transmission of all regional languages. As English has long been the dominant language in many parts of the world, and Urdu as the main language is spoken in Pakistan. There is a recognition that there are many other languages that are spoken by significant numbers of people and that these languages should also have a place in the media landscape. Podcasts offer a unique solution to this issue by providing a platform without language restrictions. People can create and share content in any language, which promotes linguistic diversity. As these podcasts are distributed via the internet, they can reach a global audience, thereby enhancing the visibility and appreciation of regional languages and cultures.

This ability of podcasts to support linguistic diversity and cultural representation aligns with UNESCO's emphasis on the importance of digital platforms in preserving and promoting cultural diversity in the digital era. UNESCO highlights those digital technologies, including podcasts, play a critical role in safeguarding and revitalizing endangered languages and cultures by providing broader access and enabling the sharing of cultural expressions worldwide (UNESCO, 2015).

Podcasts have witnessed a tremendous surge in popularity over the past decade, with millions of episodes covering a wide range of topics and languages readily available to listeners across the globe. They offer a unique opportunity for individuals to engage with diverse perspectives, narratives, and linguistic expressions. Unlike traditional media, podcasts allow for more inclusive and participatory communication, enabling listeners to interact with podcast creators and fellow listeners through comments and feedback. (Rime, 2022).

Podcasting, with its low entry barriers and global reach, has the potential to promote linguistic diversity in the media. Podcasts allow individuals to create and share content in their native language, providing a platform for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard. This can lead to the preservation and revitalization of endangered languages, as well as promoting language learning and intercultural exchange. (n.d., The Guardian, 2022).

Podcasts have emerged as an increasingly popular medium for sharing information and entertainment. They offer a flexible and accessible format for people to listen to audio content, and can be easily downloaded and streamed on a range of devices. Given the global reach of podcasts, there is an opportunity to use this medium to promote linguistic diversity in media. By creating

podcasts in a range of languages, podcast creators can provide a platform for speakers of different languages to share their perspectives, stories, and experiences (Lee, 2009).

Listening to podcasts in your target language is indeed beneficial, especially if you have some understanding of the language and enjoy the topic. It serves as motivation to stay exposed to the language since not understanding a foreign language can make us feel out of control. As someone pointed out, the significant gains come from grasping the language's rhythm, speech patterns, and pronunciation. While acquiring vocabulary is less crucial, it still adds to the overall language learning experience. (Quora, 2022).

Audience perception refers to the ways in which individuals or groups interpret and make sense of media content. This concept encompasses the attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and evaluations that audiences form about the media they consume. One key definition comes from McQuail who describes audience perception as the cognitive and affective responses of individuals to media messages, shaped by personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts. He emphasizes that these perceptions are not uniform but vary significantly among different audience segments (McQuail, 2010) .

Livingstone highlights the active role of audiences in interpreting media content. She argues that audience perception is influenced by the interpretive frameworks that individuals bring to their media consumption, which are shaped by their social and cultural contexts. Livingstone points out that audiences do not passively receive media messages; instead, they actively engage with and construct meanings from these messages (Livingstone, 1998).

Liebes and Katz further explore this concept by examining cross-cultural differences in audience perception. Their study on the reception of the television series Dallas reveals that

different cultural groups interpret the same media content in diverse ways, based on their unique cultural narratives and social structures (Tamar Liebes, 1994).

1.2 Problem Statement

The problem addressed by the study is the lack of linguistic diversity in media, because Mainstream media, such as television, radio, and print journalism, often focus on dominant languages and dialects as we have few regional channels including AJK TV (Kashmiri), Apna TV (Punjabi). This can create a lack of representation and visibility for linguistic and cultural minorities, leading to feelings of marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination.

While there are efforts to promote linguistic diversity in media, there are still significant challenges in achieving this goal. Traditional media outlets may not have the resources or infrastructure to support content in a wide range of languages, and there may be a lack of awareness or interest in promoting linguistic diversity.

Podcasts have emerged as a potential solution to this problem, as they offer a flexible and accessible platform for sharing content in a range of languages. However, there is still limited research on the effectiveness of podcasts in promoting linguistic diversity in media, and how they can be leveraged to support speakers of underrepresented languages.

The aim of this study is to explore podcasts can contribute to promoting linguistic diversity in media as many languages across the globe face underrepresentation in mainstream media, including podcasts. Although podcasts offer a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, this study aims to investigate the role of podcasts in promoting linguistic diversity. The study will use a survey to analyse audience interest towards podcast in different languages.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To understand the role of podcast in promoting language diversity from the podcast listener's perception.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that as we can see the Urdu and English are the dominant languages and we barely see the content in regional languages on main stream as well as on social media. But now in the social media especially podcast providing a platform for speakers of underrepresented languages to share their stories and perspectives. Therefore, people from all over in Pakistan as well as abroad, tend to consume the content this helps to combat language-based discrimination. Plus, by listening the content in other languages makes that language diverse so in this manner we can say podcast can promote linguistic diversity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Related Literature

Linguistic diversity means that there are many different ways that people can speak and communicate with each other. Just like there are many different colours, shapes, and sizes of toys, there are also many different languages and ways of speaking. Linguistic diversity definition usually connotes differences concerning language, and they are usually right. The most basic definition is that of difference concerning the language used by people from different cultures and backgrounds. Linguistic diversity helps to preserve the under representative languages or losing those languages which are comparable to the extinction of a particular species that you cannot bring them back (Toke, 2023).

Despite the immense value of languages, more than half of all languages are in danger of falling into disuse, with devastating impacts for the global linguistic diversity and the situation of language communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples. As part of its action to implement the United Nations resolution (A/RES/74/135), UNESCO is the lead United Nations agency for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages in collaboration with UNDESA and other relevant agencies (UNESCO, unesco, 2021).

Podcasting provides a platform for underrepresented voices and perspectives to be heard. The low barrier to entry and accessibility of podcasting means that anyone can create and share their own content. This allows individuals and communities that may not have access to traditional media outlets to share their stories and perspectives. Additionally, podcasting allows for niche topics and discussions that may not have a place in mainstream media to be explored and shared.

As such, podcasting has the potential to amplify diverse voices and perspectives and to promote cultural and linguistic diversity in media. (Nielsen, 2021).

In Pakistan as per record of 2022 there are 77 established languages in Pakistan. Of these, 68 are indigenous and 9 are non-indigenous. In terms of their vitality, 4 are classified as 'institutional', 24 are 'developing', 30 are 'vigorous', 15 are 'in trouble', and 4 are 'dying'. Numerous regional languages are spoken as first languages by Pakistan's various ethnolinguistic groups. Languages with more than a million speakers each include Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki, Urdu, Balochi, Hindko, Gujari, Pahari-Patwari, and Brahui. There are approximately 60 local languages with fewer than a million speakers. (WikiPedia, 2023)

Podcasts can help to break down linguistic barriers by providing a platform for cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. Podcasts can be created in multiple languages and can be accessed from anywhere in the world. This allows for individuals and communities to share their experiences and perspectives with a global audience, promoting greater cultural awareness and understanding. Additionally, podcasts can help to challenge stereotypes and assumptions about different cultures and languages, promoting greater inclusivity and diversity in media. (Figueroa, 2022).

Several case studies and research have been conducted to demonstrate the impact of podcasts on promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in media. For example, in a study by (Lam, 2020), podcasting was found to provide a platform for underrepresented voices to share their experiences and perspectives. The study found that podcasting has the potential to promote greater cultural and language awareness and understanding, and to challenge stereotypes and biases about

different cultures and languages. According to Stuber, the podcasts can promote greater understanding and empathy across diverse communities. (Stuber, 2019).

To effectively promote cultural and linguistic diversity in podcasting, several best practices and strategies have been identified. These include creating content that is accessible and relevant to diverse audiences, including diverse voices and perspectives in podcast production teams, and promoting and amplifying diverse voices through social media and other platforms. (Coleman, 2018).

Over the past 30 years, the academic world has become more reliant on English-language sources, placing scholars under pressure to engage with the English-language publication system. This system prioritizes topics relevant to the dominant cultures of the English-speaking world.

Scholars who focus on themes specific to local cultures, which may have limited interest in the broader academic world, may face disadvantages compared to those working on highly cited topics in the English-speaking world. The assessment of scientific output based on citation numbers in databases tends to discriminate against publications in languages other than English.

Research articles written in English and published in multilanguage journals receive more citations than articles in other languages published in the same journal. The pressure to increase citation counts compels scientists to publish in English rather than their native language. Journals share a similar motivation, leading them to abandon local languages in favor of English. To enhance citation rates, it is advantageous to collaborate with authors from developed countries and publish in journals from these countries.

The quest for higher citation counts also encourages scholars to cite texts in English. However, this trend of neglecting native languages and sources in non-English languages

contributes to the decline of native cultures and a reduction in cultural diversity Indigenous and small cultures may suffer from insufficient research attention as a consequence of these practices, further exacerbating the cultural imbalance in academic knowledge.

When scient metrics refers to diversity, it typically focuses on the variety of disciplinary approaches rather than cultural or linguistic diversity. This preference arises from the fact that prevailing methods of scientific evaluation were primarily designed for "narrower" disciplines, which vary in their focus some emphasizing details and mechanisms, while others look at larger systems and processes. For instance, cognitive and experimental psychology are considered narrower, while social psychology is broader. Scholars in narrower fields may question the theoretical foundation of broader fields, while those in broader fields may feel that narrower fields lack valuable questions, getting lost in details

In the social sciences and humanities, research often benefits from an understanding of specific cultures; However, researchers from narrower fields may perceive cultural diversity as less crucial compared to their counterparts in broader fields. The limitations of current indicators, designed with a narrow focus, highlight the need for new and improved metrics. Therefore, it could be advantageous for broader disciplines to adopt newly developed scient metric indexes distinct from those used in narrower disciplines. This shift would contribute to enhancing the recognition of cultural diversity. The proposed metric in this text aims to address this need and foster a more inclusive approach to evaluating research in the social sciences and humanities (Václav Linkov, 2021).

Another study finds that the field of linguistics has undergone a transformative shift, marked by a departure from traditional perspectives on language studies. The catalyst for this

paradigmatic evolution emerged from the encounter with unprecedented and intricate linguistic data, commonly described as "messy." Originating in the mid-1990s, this unconventional data, often extracted from globalized or superdiverse contexts, challenged conventional notions of 'Languages' and disrupted foundational assumptions within the realm of (socio)linguistics.

As scholars grappled with expressions like "w84mCU@4" (wait for me, see you at 4) prevalent in mobile texting and online chatting, the limitations of standard tools of inquiry became apparent. This literature review navigates the trajectory of this transformative period, exploring the innovative and integrative views that emerged in response to the evolving linguistic landscape. Drawing on key works such as (Rampton, 1995), it delves into the theoretical and methodological shifts that have equipped researchers to unravel the details of contemporary language use.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature that informs the current understanding of language in the digital age, shedding light on the complexities and creativity embedded in the "messy" data that has become central to the study of linguistics today. Language serves as a poignant and immediate barometer of diversity, encapsulating nuances that extend beyond mere communication. The subtle variations in accent and speech patterns are revealing echoes of one's regional, social class, ethnic, and gender affiliations. The mere utterance of a different language can swiftly evoke notions of 'foreignness,' while encountering public signage in an unfamiliar language serves as a reliable signal that one has ventured beyond the bounds of their customary surroundings.

Moreover, language emerges as an acute and responsive gauge of societal transformation. The introduction of previously unheard or unseen languages in a particular locale serves as a clear and instantaneous indicator of change a declarative "I've never heard Russian spoken here before!"

embodies the palpable shift. Ultimately, language stands as the preeminent tool for orchestrating and navigating diversity. In the perpetual dance of communication, individuals adapt their linguistic repertoires to harmonize with those around them, often birthing entirely novel forms of linguistic expression. In essence, language is an intricate tapestry interwoven with the threads of diversity and social evolution. It not only mirrors the rich spectrum of human backgrounds but also mirrors the dynamic landscape of societal metamorphosis. As we engage in the ceaseless act of communication, our linguistic adaptability emerges as the compass guiding us through the diverse terrains of human interaction, fostering understanding, and occasionally birthing novel linguistic landscapes that reflect the ever-changing tapestry of our interconnected world.

Failing to navigate linguistic diversity effectively holds the potential for a consequence most individuals consciously strive to evade: misunderstanding. Alternatively, it may stem from rigid institutional frameworks governing language use, exemplified by instances where language legislation mandates the exclusive use of a particular language and/or script. In such cases, language transforms into a delicate gauge, exposing underlying conflicts, competitions, and power dynamics within the realm of diversity. A substantial enhancement to the belief that a nuanced exploration of language usage can unveil broader societal patterns comes through a discussion of contemporary developments in the study of language and society, contributing significantly to diversity studies. This exploration will focus on three interrelated sets of recent developments within our field of study (Blommaert, 2013).

Podcasts have emerged as a significant medium for information and entertainment, attracting a diverse audience with varying motivations. The study by McClung and Johnson offers comprehensive insights into the primary motives driving podcast consumption. Their research,

which surveyed 354 podcast fans, identifies key factors such as entertainment, time-shifting, building a personal content library, and social interaction as significant motivators for podcast.

A primary motivation for podcast listeners is the pursuit of entertainment. Podcasts provide a wide range of content that caters to different interests, making them a versatile source of amusement. Additionally, the convenience of time-shifting allowing users to listen at their preferred time—enhances the appeal of podcasts. This flexibility is crucial in a fast-paced world where audiences seek to fit media consumption into their busy schedules (Johnson, 2010).

Other studies have corroborated the finding that listeners are drawn to podcasts for their educational and informational value. According to Richard Berry podcasts are perceived as valuable tools for acquiring new knowledge and staying informed about various topics. This aligns with the uses and gratifications theory, which suggests that audiences actively seek media that meets their informational needs (Berry, 2017).

The social aspect of podcasting is another significant motivator. McClung and Johnson (2010) found that discussing podcast content with other fans fosters a sense of community among listeners. This social interaction aspect is supported by the work of Perks and Turner who highlight how podcasts create communities around shared interests and discussions, enhancing listener engagement and loyalty (Lisa Glebatis Perks, 2019).

Podcasts also offer a unique platform for diverse voices and niche content, which traditional media might overlook. According to Spinelli and Dann, the low barrier to entry for podcast creation allows for a broad range of perspectives and subjects, appealing to audiences with specific interests. This diversity enhances the medium's attractiveness, particularly for listeners seeking content that resonates with their unique preferences (Martin Spinelli) .

Pakistan is a nation characterized by a remarkable linguistic diversity, featuring six major languages and over fifty-nine regional languages. However, despite this rich linguistic landscape, the realms of power including government, corporate sectors, media, and education are predominantly governed by English and Urdu. This linguistic bias stems from state policies that, intentionally or unintentionally, prioritize these two languages over the multitude of others, leading to a hierarchy with profound societal implications. The privileging of English and Urdu has far-reaching consequences, particularly regarding the expression of ethnic identities through language. English, in particular, has transcended its role as a communication tool to become a potent symbol of upper-class distinction, sophistication, and power. Consequently, indigenous languages are relegated to markers of lower social strata and cultural inferiority. Some smaller languages even face the threat of extinction, jeopardized by the prevailing linguistic imbalances (Ayres, 2009).

To counteract these imbalances and ensure the vitality and preservation of Pakistan's linguistic diversity, there is a pressing need to advocate for additive multilingualism. This approach promotes the coexistence and enrichment of various languages within the societal framework. By embracing and celebrating the linguistic diversity inherent in the nation, Pakistani languages can not only endure but thrive, becoming integral components of the country's cultural capital. A shift from the current linguistic hegemony towards a more inclusive language policy is essential for fostering a linguistically vibrant and culturally rich Pakistan. The personal experiences of individuals within Pakistan further illuminate the pervasive influence of linguistic bias. Before transitioning to a career in journalism, one individual recount their time teaching at a local school in Karachi, where there was an institutional fixation on cultivating fluent English language skills among students. This 'gora complex' an inclination towards Western ideals has been ingrained in the societal fabric since Pakistan's inception. The preference for English over local languages often

overshadows the significance of nurturing and preserving linguistic heritage, perpetuating a cycle where local languages, such as Sindhi and Punjabi, are side-lined (Hussain, 2023).

On a global scale, World Literacy Day, celebrated on September 8th each year, highlights the critical role of linguistic diversity in educational frameworks. In recent years, the focus on 'Literacy and Multilingualism' underscores the importance of incorporating and celebrating linguistic diversity in literacy initiatives. Despite progress in literacy, challenges remain, exhibiting an uneven distribution across countries and populations. Recognizing and embracing the multitude of languages spoken worldwide is pivotal for effectively addressing literacy challenges and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. The celebration of International Literacy Day serves as a reminder that fostering linguistic diversity is essential for educational success and sustainable development (Mansoor, 2005).

Pakistan continues to struggle with persistently low literacy levels, partly due to the insufficient emphasis on promoting multilingualism within the school curriculum. UNESCO had set a target for Pakistan to achieve an 80% literacy rate by 2015, a goal that remains unmet. The current educational framework, dominated by English and Urdu, fails to cater to the multilingual nature of the society. The lack of support for multilingualism poses a substantial challenge for aspiring learners, hindering their ability to meet the standards required for improved literacy rates. This linguistic barrier within the education system exacerbates the challenge, underscoring the need for a fundamental re-evaluation of the educational approach to align with Pakistan's linguistic diversity.

The prevailing imbalance in the education system, where proficiency in English or Urdu sets individuals apart, contributes to a sense of marginalization among those who cannot read and

write in these languages. Dr. Shumaila Shafket Ali, emphasizes the importance of supporting multilingualism in education as a means of recognizing and celebrating diversity. Practical measures to support multilingualism are crucial to prevent indigenous language speakers from feeling marginalized within the educational landscape. By incorporating and valuing indigenous languages, the education system can become more inclusive, fostering an environment where individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds feel acknowledged and empowered (Sarfaraz, 2019).

In the contemporary landscape of technological advancements in communication, podcasts have emerged as a prominent platform for the distribution of audio-based content. This research endeavours to elucidate the efficacy of podcasts as an alternative medium for learning and disseminating audio content. The methodology employed in this study is descriptive, utilizing interview and observation techniques to gather pertinent information.

The findings of this research underscore the growing significance of podcast media as a learning tool. The escalating development of podcast platforms has led to a substantial number of individuals utilizing them for educational purposes. The results highlight that podcasts offer a diverse and innovative approach to learning. Importantly, podcasts are recognized as an effective medium that circumvents the need for extensive effort while still delivering creative and innovative content. Creators, leveraging the podcast medium, can effortlessly share their expertise, presenting materials in a time-efficient and cost-effective manner for their audience (Tarmawan, 2021).

2.2.1 Public Sphere Theory

The public sphere theory, developed by Jürgen Habermas, is a relevant theoretical framework for studying the role of podcasts in promoting linguistic diversity in media. This theory

suggests that a healthy democracy requires a public sphere where citizens can come together to discuss and debate issues of common concern, free from government or commercial control.

According to the public sphere theory, the public sphere is a space where citizens can engage in rational-critical debate, and where diverse perspectives and opinions can be expressed and heard. Habermas argues that the public sphere can function as a forum for the formation of public opinion, which can then influence policy-making and social change (Mwengenmeir, n.d.).

Applying the public sphere theory to the study of podcasts and linguistic diversity in media, we can examine the extent to which podcasts can serve as a platform for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard and discussed. Podcasts can potentially facilitate the exchange of ideas and perspectives across linguistic and cultural boundaries, and provide a space for debate and discussion on issues of common concern.

2.2.2 Culturalist Theory

The Culturalist Theory given by Mary Douglas (1921- 2007) claims that people interact with media to create their own meanings out of the images and messages they receive. This theory sees audiences as playing an active rather than passive role in relation to mass media.

According to the Culturalist Theory, audiences are not passive consumers of media, but are active participants who interact with media content to create their own interpretations and meanings. This means that media content can be interpreted and understood differently by different people, depending on their cultural background, experiences and language. (Editor, 2020).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

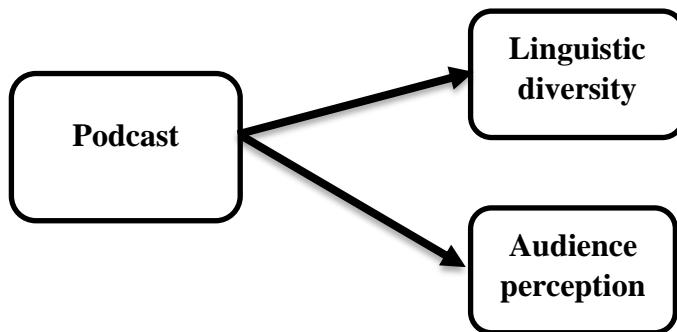


Figure 2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 As public sphere theory suggest a healthy platform for the audience to communicate and convey their ideas worldwide through a medium. Everyone can find their solutions by sharing the issues and debate easily from any higher authority. Public sphere theory is highly relatable with this research study because public sphere is a platform where everyone can easily engage to discuss issues and for debates.

2.3.2 The second applied theory on this research is culturalist theory. According to this theory audience are the active consumers so by using media they can easily create their own meanings. And they can create a useful knowledge for the other audience. This theory is relatable with the theoretical frame work of this study.

2.3.3 Main theoretical concerns

As the mentioned two theories are relevant to the theoretical framework. Podcast is an independent variable which gives an open platform to the audience to share their area of interest. Public sphere theory also discussed this concept that everyone has full authority to discuss any point and where diverse perspectives and opinions can be expressed and heard. So, podcast is giving a such type a platform to the audience in this modern era of technology. Similarly, culturalist

theory also discussed that audience are active consumers, so by using this theory we come to know on the point that how linguistic diversity and audience perception can be examined by using podcast.

2.4 Research Questions

- What perceptions do podcast listeners hold regarding the role of podcast in promoting about linguistic diversity?
- Do podcast listeners believe that podcasts effectively providing content in languages that are underrepresented in mainstream media?
- How audience perceive that podcast feature content in various languages, such as Pashto, Urdu, and Punjabi, enhances linguistic diversity.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter is about research methodology which is a set of procedures and processes that are used to analyse data and information about the topic. This chapter provides an overview of the research design for the selection, population, sample size determination, sample with sampling techniques, research instruments, and data collection techniques. It also provides the details on how the research was conducted.

3.1 Research design

This study followed the quantitative research approach and survey method and cross-sectional research design.

3.2 Population

The population is described about as a set of individuals, events, or things, that the researchers want to investigate. The population of this study was undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in the Media Department of Islamic International University Islamabad.

3.3 Sampling

Sampling is a technique for selecting individuals from a target group. The sampling technique for this study was purposive sampling. It allows for the selection of participants based on specific criteria that align with the research objectives and questions.

A total of 400 participants were purposively selected to participate in the survey. In sample size both male and female were included to ensure the gender balance, reliability, representativeness, and statistical power within the study cohort.

3.4 Tool of data collection

Data collection refers to collecting the information related to study variables. Five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used for collecting primary data. Data collection was carried out through the distribution of the structured questionnaire among the selected participants.

3.6 Data collection (Procedure)

Questionnaire was used to collect the data as a primary resource.

3.7 Techniques for data analysis and Interpretation

SPSS software was used to analyse and interpret the data that has been obtained.

3.8 Instrumentation

The data was acquired via questionnaires that were adapted from a variety of sources. All of the questions in the survey were answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The two demographic variables considered in the surveys are age and gender.

3.8.1 Podcast Promoting Diversity (IV)

In the current research for measuring podcast promoting linguistic diversity, 06 items scale was used. The sample item includes *“Podcast effectively represent and promote linguistic diversity across different languages to Podcast listeners are aware of the linguistic diversity initiatives undertaken by podcasts in their content creation”*. The responses had been answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.8.2 Linguistic diversity (DV)

In the current study, a six-item scale was utilized to measure podcasts. The sample item includes *“Podcasts frequently feature content in languages such as Pashto, Urdu, and Punjabi to enhance”*

linguistic diversity to Podcasts are effective in providing a platform for speakers of underrepresented languages to share their stories and experiences, according to podcast listeners. A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree," was used to rate the replies.

3.8.3 Audience Perception (DV)

To measure podcast promoting linguistic diversity, a 4-item scale was employed in the current study. Among the sample items are *Podcasts that address the representation and visibility of linguistic and cultural minorities in mainstream media adequately to Mainstream media inadequately represents linguistic diversity compared to podcasts, according to podcast listeners.* Likert scales of five points, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), were used to rate the responses.

3.9 Operational Definitions

3.9.1 Podcast: A podcast is a digital audio program that can be downloaded or streamed online. It typically consists of a series of episodes that are released on a regular basis, and can cover a wide range of topics such as news, entertainment, education, and more. The term "podcast" is derived from the words "iPod" and "broadcasting," as the medium was originally associated with the Apple iPod device and the distribution of audio content over the internet. Today, podcasts can be accessed and consumed on a variety of devices, including smartphones, tablets, computers, and smart speakers

3.9.2 Linguistic Diversity: It refers to the presence of a multitude of languages, dialects, and language variations within a specific geographical area, community, or context. This diversity encompasses the coexistence of different linguistic traditions, reflecting the cultural, historical,

and social complexities of a given region or population. Researchers in linguistics, anthropology, and related fields often explore linguistic diversity as a means to study language, culture, and identity.

3.10 Implications of Research

On the basis of study's findings, it was suggested that podcast is the best medium to promote the linguistic diversity so it should be a common platform for everyone to speak in their native language.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The previous chapter was based on research methodology. In this chapter all the strategies and techniques are described. By related to the above chapter this chapter consists of descriptive, correlation, demographic, and reliability analysis. As a result, the data has been exposed to a variety of processes and techniques to add value to the literature by producing significant results.

4.1 Demographic Analysis

The study of a population based on characteristics like age, race, and gender. Demographic analysis reveals the nature and categories of study respondents, as well as the total number of people who took part.

Table 4.1

Demographic Analysis

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	148	49.7
Female	150	50.3
Total	298	100.0
<i>Age</i>		
18-21 Years	180	60.4
22-25 Years	81	27.2
26-30 Years	29	9.7
31-35 Years	02	0.7
36-40 Years	06	2.0
Total	298	100.0

There were 148 males with a 49.7% male-to-female ratio, and 150 women with a 50.3 percent female-to-male ratio. Then there were 298 participants in the Age category, with 180 respondents lies in the age group of 18-21 years, 81 respondents were in the age group of 22-25 years of age group, 29 respondents lie in the 26-30 age group, and 02 respondents in the 31-35 years of age group and 06 were in 36-40 years of age. The individuals over the age of 18-21 years made up the majority of the sample, accounting for 60.4% of the total population.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis expands a data set's characteristics. Table 4.2 shows all of the variables along with their mean, and standard deviation.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Analysis

Variable name	Minimum	Maximum	Means	Std. Deviation
Podcast	1.00	4.33	2.8669	.60781
Linguistic Diversity	1.00	5.00	3.2671	.71449
Audience perception	1.20	5.00	3.3557	.75187

n=298

The current table has explained the descriptive analysis of the variables in which minimum, maximum, means & standard deviation are mentioned. Minimum and maximum explained the highest and lower response rate on a specific variable. Mean value is showing the observation which has been incorporated like 2.8669 value of Podcast promoting linguistic diversity (IV). Similarly, Standard deviation which explained that how much data is deviating from one variable to another, in this table the values are deviating from one variable to the next.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis looks at a measuring scale's validity and consistency, evaluating how well it can yield meaningful and consistent results when the measurement procedure is repeated several times.

Table 4.3

Reliability Analysis

Variables	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Podcast	05	0.731
Linguistic Diversity	06	0.740
Audience Perception	04	0.677

n=298

Reliability has been analysed for the entire variable which was used in the current study as an individual. In above table 4.3, the value of Cronbach alpha for Podcast promoting linguistic diversity has been observed is $0.731 > 0.7$, the value of linguistic diversity is $0.740 > 0.7$, while the value of audience perception is $0.677 < 0.7$ which is around about to 07. So, this analysis shows that data is reliable for the other analysis.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

To determine the nature of the association between two variables, a correlation analysis was carried out to determine the association between the two variables.

Table 4.4

Correlation Analysis

Variables	PC	LD	AP
PC	1	0.565**	0.626**
LD	.565**	1	.705**
AP	.626**	.705**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

In table 4.4, correlation value between linguistic diversity and Podcast promoting linguistic diversity is .565** which is showing a positive, strong association and significant impact of PC on LD.

Whereas, the correlation between audience perception and podcast is .626** which is significant at 0.01 level. which is showing a positive, strong association and significant impact of PC on AP Hence, after findings of current research, hypothesis of the study is accepted.

4.5 Research Questions Results

RQ1: What perceptions do podcast listeners hold regarding the role of podcast in promoting linguistic diversity?

The above-mentioned question was the first question of this research. The results of RQ1 are mentioned in below table 4.5. 5-point Likert scale was used to analysed this research question. Findings of this RQ1 is mentioned below

Table 4.5

	Podcasts effectively represent	Podcast raising awareness	Podcast linguistic minorities and content creation	Linguistic diversity in media	breaking the homogeneity
Strongly disagree	N=44(14.8%)	N=28(9.4%)	N=13(4.4%)	N=23(7.7%)	N=34(11.4%)
Disagree	N=16(5.8%)	N=31(10.4%)	N=48(16.1%)	N=34(11.4%)	N=25(8.4%)
Neutral	N=106(35.6%)	N=99(33.2%)	N=110(36.9%)	N=90(30.2%)	N=87(29.2%)
Strongly Agree	N=113(37.9%)	N= 116(38.9%)	N=109(36.6%)	N=116(38.9%)	N=108(36.2%)
Agree	N=19(6.4%)	N=24(8.1%)	N=18(6.0%)	N=35(11.7%)	N=44(14.8%)
					N=47(15.8%)

Total	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)
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Research Question 1

In **RQ1** total six number of items were used. By using five-point Likert scale the results shows the total number and frequency of each item. The total number of respondents were 298 in this research. In first item of this RQ (podcast effectively represent), the highest number of respondents respond was 106(35.6%) which lies in the category of neutral. In the second item (podcast raising awareness), the highest number of responses were 116(38.9%) which lies in the category of strongly agree. However, in the third item (podcast linguistic minorities) the highest response rate was 109(36.6%) which lies in the category of strongly agree. In the fourth item (content creation) the highest response rate shows in the category of strongly agree which was 116 (38.9%). In the fifth item (linguistic diversity in media) the highest rate shows in the category of strongly agree 108(36.2%). In the last item (breaking the homogeneity) the highest number of respondents were in the category of neutral 87(29.2%).

RQ2: Do podcast listeners believe that podcasts effectively providing content in languages that are underrepresented in mainstream media?

The above-mentioned question was the second question of this research. The results of RQ2 are mentioned below. A 5-point Likert scale was used to analyse this research question. The findings of this RQ2 are mentioned below.

Table 4.6

Research Question 2

Podcasts address linguistic preferences and visibility and needs		Podcast listeners believe	Recommend podcast	Mainstream media inadequately represents
Strongly disagree	N=13(4.4%)	N=27(9.1%)	N=20(6.7%)	N=34(11.4%)
Disagree	N=48(16.1%)	N=39(13.1%)	N=29(9.7%)	N=41(13.8%)
Neutral	N=110(36.9%)	N=95(31.9%)	N=78(26.2%)	N=101(33.9%)
Strongly Agree	N=109(36.6%)	N= 105(35.2%)	N=127(42.6%)	N=102(34.2%)
Agree	N=18(6.0%)	N=32(10.7%)	N=44(14.8%)	N=26(8.7%)
Total	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)

In **RQ2** total five number of items were used. By using a five-point Likert scale the results show the total number and frequency of each item. The total number of respondents was 298 in this research.

In the first item of this RQ2 (podcast addresses the representation and visibility), the highest number of respondents who responded was 110(36.9%) which lies in the category of neutral. the second item (linguistic preference and needs), the highest number of responses was 105(35.2%) which lies in the category of strongly agree.

However, in the third item (podcast listener believe) the highest response rate was 127(42.6%) which lies in the category of strongly agree.

In the fourth item (recommended podcast) the highest response rate shows in the category of strongly agree which was 102(34.2%). In the fifth item (Mainstream media inadequately represents) the highest rate shows in the category of strongly agree 104(34.9%).

RQ3: Do podcasts feature content in various languages, such as Pashto, Urdu, and Punjabi, to enhance linguistic diversity?

The above-mentioned question was the third research question of this research. The results of RQ3 are mentioned below in Table 4.7. 5-point Likert scale was used to analysed this research question. Findings of this RQ2 is mentioned below.

Table 4.7

Research Question 3

	Feature content in languages	Interested consuming content	Satisfied with the variety of languages	Share their stories and experiences
Strongly disagree	N=17(5.7%)	N=24(8.1%)	N=30(10.1%)	N=15(5.0%)
Disagree	N=43(14.4%)	N=44(14.8%)	N=33(11.6%)	N=38(12.8%)
Neutral	N=103(34.6%)	N=97(32.6%)	N=100(33.6%)	N=85(28.5%)
Strongly Agree	N=106(35.6%)	N= 102(34.2%)	N=103(34.6%)	N=115(38.6%)
Agree	N=29(9.7%)	N=31(10.4%)	N=32(10.7%)	N=45(15.1%)
Total	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)	N=298(100.0%)

In *RQ3* total four number of items were used. By using a five-point Likert scale the results show the total number and frequency of each item. The total number of respondents was 298 in this research. In the first item of this RQ3 (Feature content in languages), the highest number of respondents who responded was 106(35.6%) which lies in the category of strongly agree. In the second item (Interested in consuming content), the highest number of responses was 102(34.2%) which lies in the category of strongly agree. However, in the third item (Satisfied with the variety of languages) the highest percentage rate was 103(34.6%) which lies in the category of strongly

agree. In the fourth item (Share their stories and experiences) the highest response rate shows in the category of strongly agree who responded was 115(38.6%).

5. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The chapter 4 described the results and findings in the light of applying different statistical techniques. This chapter is about discussion, implications and future directions.

5.1 Discussion

Discussion provides the explanation and findings of results by comparing with the findings in prior studies. This study followed the quantitative research and survey method for collecting the responses from the participants. Respondents were divided on the bases of two categories age and gender in demographic variables. After this reliability test was used to check the items' reliability. Items of this study was reliable for the further analysis. Correlation analysis was applied on the variables to check the correlation between two variables either variables are significantly correlated or not. But the results of correlation analysis showed that the variables were significantly correlated. Although in the literature review, there had been a lot of research on role of podcast on linguistic diversity.

Moreover, this study survey was divided into three sections. In which first one was based on demographical variables (gender, age). Hence, the supporting theory of public sphere to the study of podcasts and linguistic diversity in media, we can examine the extent to which podcasts can serve as a platform for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard and discussed. Podcasts can potentially facilitate the exchange of ideas and perspectives across linguistic and cultural boundaries, and provide a space for debate and discussion on issues of common concern.

RQ1: What perceptions do podcast listeners hold regarding the role of podcast in promoting linguistic diversity?

It had been found that 298 respondents answered the six items based on this research question. By using five-point Likert scale the results shows the total number and frequency of each item. (see table 4.5)

RQ2: Do podcast listeners believe that podcasts effectively providing content in languages that are underrepresented in mainstream media?

In research question 2 total five number of items were used. 5-point Likert scale was used to analyse the items of this research question. The highest number of respondents who responded was 110(36.9%) which lies in the category of neutral. (see table 4.6)

RQ3: Do podcasts feature content in various languages, such as Pashto, Urdu, and Punjabi, to enhance linguistic diversity?

It had been found that 298 respondents answered the four items based on this research question. There were the highest), the highest number of respondents who responded was in feature content in languages with the frequency and percentage of 106(35.6%) which lies in the category of strongly agree. (see table 4.7)

The statistical results of the study in above table 4.3, the value of Cronbach alpha for Podcast promoting linguistic diversity has been observed is $0.731 > 0.7$, the value of linguistic diversity is $0.740 > 0.7$, while the value of audience perception is $0.677 < 0.7$ which is around about to 07. So, this analysis shows that data is reliable for the other analysis. The values are between the range of Cronbach alpha threshold. So, podcast and the other variables were reliable for this study. And similarly in the table of correlation analysis value between linguistic diversity and podcast is

.565** which is showing a positive, strong association and significant impact of PC on LD. Whereas, the correlation between audience perception and podcast is .626** which is significant at 0.01 level. which is showing a positive, strong association and significant impact of PC on AP Hence, after findings of current research, hypothesis of the study is accepted.

Previous work from literature review demonstrated that the podcast is a good medium for promoting the linguistic diversity. So according to the public sphere theory individuals can easily provide a platform for debate on any issue in country. For speaking openly on any issue or major concern this platform plays a very important role where everyone has freedom to discuss different things. As the participant are the active listener who can participate easily with this platform, they can create different content on any topic according to their choices. According to the previous literature podcast is a medium through linguistic diversity barrier can be removed easily by using cross cultural debates and dialogues. Podcasts can be created in multiple languages and can be accessed from anywhere in the world.

Linguistic diversity also helps to preserve the under illustrative languages so this is the best platform for the audience to interact with each other. So according to the previous literature one study suggested that creating content and developing diverse voices in the perspective of podcast production team are the best practices in promoting linguistic diversity by using podcast.

Podcast can be created in different languages from anywhere in the world and every person who has facility of technology he/she can share their experiences with others easily. podcasts can help to challenge stereotypes and assumptions about different cultures and languages, promoting greater inclusivity and diversity in media.

5.1 Conclusion

As the study is concluded on the point that *podcast promoting linguistic diversity* gives an open platform to the audience to share their ideas, issue and they can easily do debates on any topic without any fear from higher authority. The current study has used the variables of podcast, linguistic diversity and audience perception to check the role of podcast in promoting linguistic diversity. In light of the aforementioned literature and testing variables, it is contended that podcast has positive and significant impact on linguistic diversity and on audience perception. The research was conducted to find out whether podcast would promote linguistic diversity. Through this research it is found that podcast plays very important to promote the linguistic diversity. Therefore, it can be concluded that podcast in any language can be the promotion of your native language. Where everyone can easily share their ideas without facing the issues of languages.

5.2 Limitations of the Research

- Limitation of the study is the lack of access to the modern technology in the rural areas of Pakistan.
- As listening engagement may vary from region to region so lack of attention or interest in mother language could have negative impact on linguistic diversity.

5.3 Future Implications

- On the basis of study's findings, it was suggested that podcast is the best medium to promote the linguistic diversity so it should be a common platform for everyone around the world.
- Secondly, Podcast is an open medium, it doesn't have any limitation like main stream media. With the passage of time, it will become a popular platform on which people will share their point of view and information.

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