Research Article

Uncovering the Past Through Voices: Exploring Oral History as a Primary Source: A Case Study of the National Archives of Republic Indonesia [ANRI]

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Abstract.

This research explains the use of the oral history collection of the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI) to optimize historical information as a primary source. Sources of information with this primary category relate to information from historical actors or eyewitnesses and witnesses to an event. Oral history archives are the main content of this research. The method used is descriptive qualitative, focusing on observing the content of oral history information published on websites and various social media platforms affiliated with ANRI. This research aims to analyze the oral history collection owned by ANRI and the historical information content contained in the collection. The results of this paper describe the content of oral history, which has primary information specifications based on the information needs in the archives. This information is helpful to complement information originating from textual sources. Open access to ANRI's oral history collection helps fulfill information needs that primary textual information sources cannot fully meet.

Keywords: ANRI, archives, information services, oral history, primary sources, website

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1. Introduction

Archives and history are closely related, especially when searching for information to validate events with primary and secondary evidence. The acquisition is the main door to managing static archives, as regulated in Article 1 Paragraph 27 of the Archives Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 43 of 2009. This acquisition involves handing over static archives to archival institutions. However, oral history is also essential to supplement information from static archives. For example, in collecting information about heroes, we need primary information from them or the people involved in the hero's activities. Oral history can be a primary source of primary sources no longer exist.

Oral history involves an interview process with the perpetrators of the event, which requires the competence of the interviewer and supporting tools such as audio recording, video, and photo documentation. Historical research relies heavily on archives, information, authentic evidence, and oral information. This historical collection is essential in revealing the life journey of the Indonesian people. Archives, libraries, museums, and historical societies play an important role in preserving the truth of historical information and making it available for future generations . This information is also widely published through various media, including the National Archives website, social media, and other platforms.

Based on data, the oral history collection at the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI) is quite significant. Figure 1 shows the peak of oral history from 1982 to 1983, with 637 media tapes from interviews and 214 storytellers from 12 cities, involving 62 interviewers. This illustrates the success of an oral history program that involves collaboration between interviewers and interview partners in various cities [1].

Based on this background, the primary problem formulation uses oral history methods to optimize historical information as a primary source. The research will focus on content related to oral history, both in the context of oral history programs and interviews, with content analysis covering the ANRI website and related social networks. This will help prove various historical events and gather important information from historical figures.
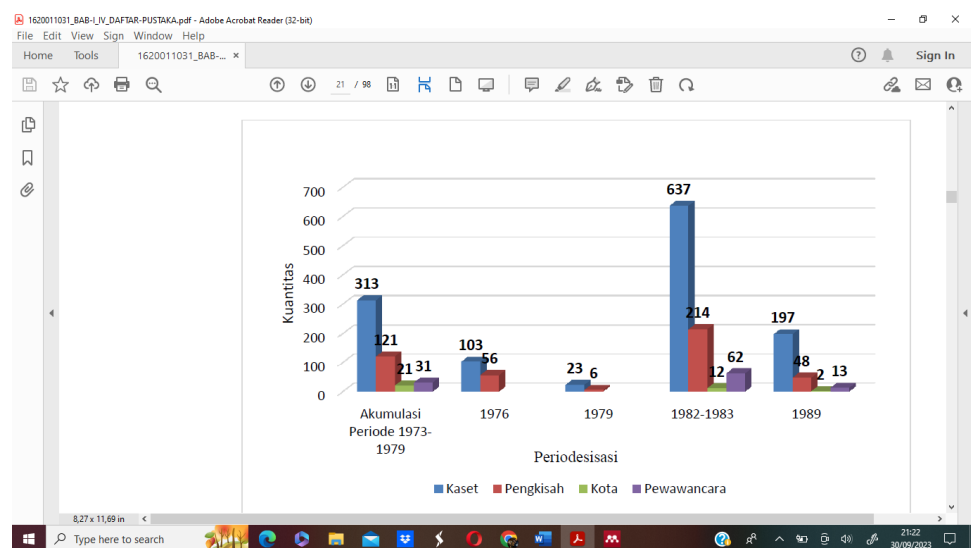

Figure 1: Oral history collection in ANRI. **Source:** *Analysed from the primary source.* .

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2. Methods

This research aims to carry out an in-depth analysis of the oral history collection at ANRI and reveal the content of historical information contained in the collection. We will adopt a descriptive approach that allows us to explain in detail the oral history collections available on the ANRI website (anri.go.id) and social media platforms associated with ANRI. In order to find information regarding oral history collections and information content, which is a primary source for historical writing, we will conduct comprehensive observations of content on websites and social media related to ANRI.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Oral History and Archives Program

Oral history programs in Indonesia do not stand alone; The National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia has played an important role in initiating and running this program. In 1972, ANRI took the first steps to fill the gaps in historical archives, especially around the Japanese occupation and revolution period from 1942 to 1950 [2] . Over time, the development of the oral history program did not only depend on ANRI, but also involved various parties, including researchers and historians who formed groups to investigate various segments of society. The focus of the oral history program is not only limited to historical perpetrators, but also involves the relatives and close friends of these perpetrators.

In the midst of efforts to explore history through oral interviews, the role of archives has become increasingly significant. Archives are an integral part of an oral history program, because the two are closely related. In the archive life cycle, which starts from creation to depreciation, there is an important stage, namely the transfer of archives from various institutions, whether government, private, business entities or individuals. This archival transfer stage is not only about the physical transfer, but also about completing the archival treasures with information that can be found in oral history interviews. In this way, the oral history and archival programs work together to form a caleidoscope that enriches and completes Indonesian history.

3.2. Understand Static and Ingress Archive Acquisition Procedures

Oral history in the Oral History Program at ANRI has a special place in the organizational structure, namely in the Sub III archives work unit. In this structure, Oral History plays an essential function, especially in fulfilling the information contained in institutional or individual archives that have historical value for the journey of the Indonesian nation. Oral history has become integral to ANRI's efforts to preserve and respect our historical heritage.

Initially, the Oral History program was started by ANRI in 1972 to fill gaps in the historical archives surrounding the Japanese occupation and revolutionary period from 1942 to 1950. Since then, this program has increased and involved various parties, including researchers and historians, who formed research groups. This program focuses on historical perpetrators and involves their relatives and close friends.

Oral history in an archival context is an important innovation to preserve oral information from the leading figures in an event. In this way, people can listen directly to the life stories of characters involved in an activity or event, bringing them closer to the original atmosphere when the event took place. Oral history includes various elements, from sound and video recordings to artistic and cultural documentation. Understanding oral history as part of interactive archiving work in the documentation process enriches our understanding of history by considering cultural contextual aspects, space, and time [2]. Oral history in archives not only records words but also captures the living essence of the past.

3.3. Analyzing Oral History Information on anri.go.id and Affiliated Social Media

In Figure 2, important information regarding oral history is presented by the second source, namely Tsuguta Yamashita. To search for archives related to a particular theme in the National Archives of Japan, Tsuguta has conducted oral history interviews with former diplomats and individuals who played important roles in the project. Tsuguta highlights that oral history is vital in filling information gaps, especially because the data collected from oral history are often more comprehensive. However, unfortunately, in Indonesia there are still many individuals who include their archive documents, which shows the importance of developing a better personal archiving culture in the country (ANRI, 2023a).

Figure 2: National Coordination Meeting for Synchronization and Harmonization of Archive Services Between Archival Institutions. **Source:** *Authors Documentation*.

Figure 3: ANRI's Oral History Interview with the Multifaceted Artist Putu Wijaya. **Source:** *Authors Documentation*.

In the interview documented in Figure 3, we are given valuable insight into efforts to strengthen the arts sector, especially in the world of theater, in Indonesia. Multi-talented artist, Putu Wijaya, is the main source in this interview and shares extensive thoughts on various aspects of art. Apart from being an important figure in theater, Putu Wijaya is also a prolific writer with various works in the form of poetry, short stories, essays, novels and books. Apart from that, he has also contributed to the Indonesian entertainment industry as a screenwriter for films and soap operas. Other artistic talents include painting, with more than 100 paintings produced and exhibited in various locations. The contribution

and diversity of art shown by Putu Wijaya is an inspiration for the development of art in Indonesia. (ANRI, 2023b)
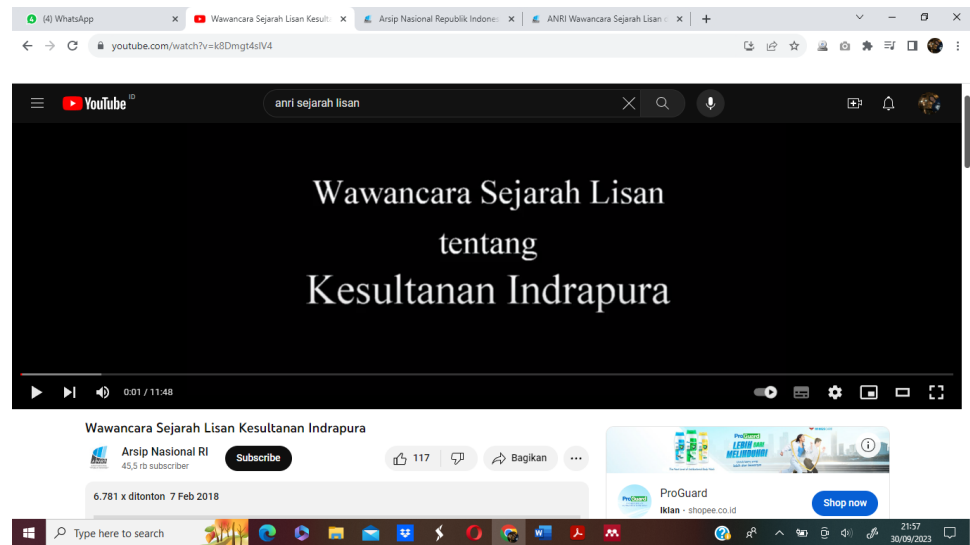
Figure 4: Oral History Interview of the Indrapura Sultanate. **Source:** *Authors Documentation*.

In the history of the struggle of the Indonesian nation, the Sultanate has a very significant role. One is the Indrapura Sultanate, presented in a broadcast on the ANRI YouTube channel (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). The broadcast uploaded by the ANRI YouTube account, as shown in Figure 4, introduces us to the history of the Indrapura Sultanate. The information obtained is not only about significant figures but also the point of view of the main actors, namely the sultan and individuals who were directly involved in the journey of the Indrapura Sultanate. In this way, this show completes the archives with a rich and in-depth perspective on the role of the Sultanate in Indonesian history.

Agus Santoso also highlighted ANRI's efforts in tracing information related to Super-semar through Oral History Interviews (WSL) activities (ANRI, 2023c). In the video presented on the YouTube channel, it is illustrated that a careful and detailed approach is needed in searching the history and archives of Supersemar. The perpetrators involved in the Supersemar incident, both as witnesses and as individuals who had a role in the incident, have been interviewed to gather information, which will then become material for research to uncover the truth about Supersemar. Superstar, translated initially as transfer of power, was an order to maintain political stability and prevent riots at that time. Therefore, the validity and true meaning of Supersemar still require further research and a clear understanding of the document's contents.

Government Spokesperson for COVID-19, dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro, in this oral history interview, can complete the treasure trove of COVID-19 archives stored at ANRI (ANRI,

Figure 5: Unlocking the Secrets of Supersemar: Insights from Classified 'TOP SECRET' Documents. **Source:** *Authors Documentation*.
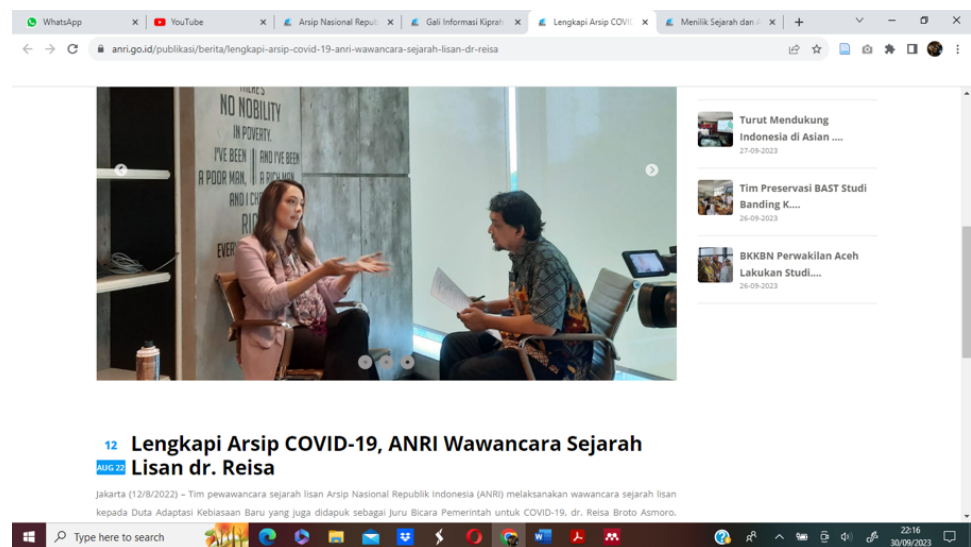
Figure 6: Oral History Interview with dr. Reisa Broto regarding COVID-19 **Source:** *Authors Documentation*.

2022b). As the spokesperson for this president in dealing with COVID-19, which was spreading at that time, making the entire country alert and continuing to carry out healing and prevention activities as well as post-Covid stabilization in various sectors, information was needed from actors involved in handling Covid-19. The results of dr. This Reisa is being kept as evidence that the COVID-19 incident has destroyed various sectors of the state and people's lives.

The interview was conducted to gather information regarding Hamdan Zoelva's work and contribution to the benefit of society, nation, and state, both on a national and international scale related to his performance and active role in law enforcement in
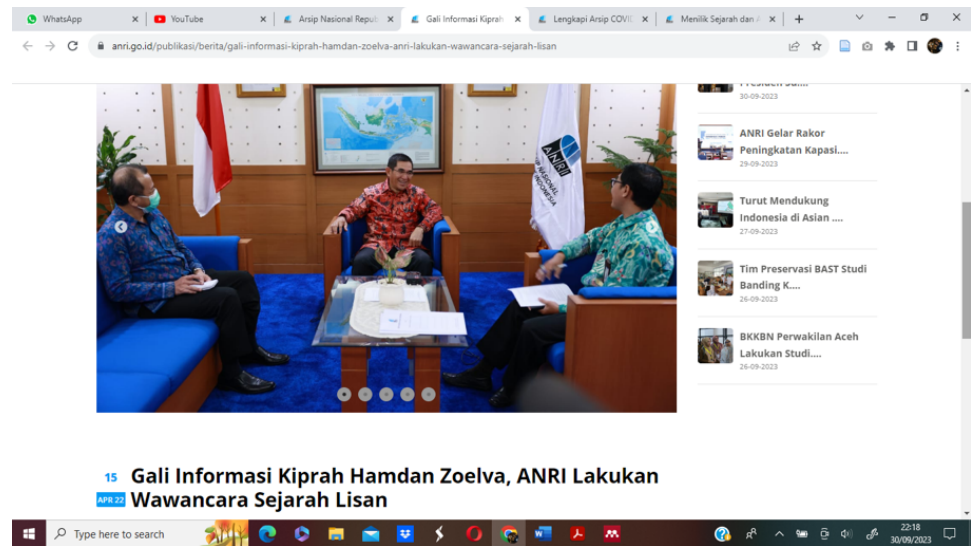
Figure 7: Oral history interview regarding Hamdan Zoelva's Work **Source:** *Authors Documentation*.

Indonesia, member of the People's Representative Council, Chairman of the Constitutional Court, Chairman of Sarikat Islam, Chairman of the Islamic Student Association Alumni Corps (KAHMI), and various other roles (ANRI, 2022a). The interviews with this figure are the same as those of figures who have contributed to the Indonesian state. Figures in politics, economics, health, arts, education, and other fields require oral information to complete existing archives.

3.4. Optimizing the Content of the Oral History Program as an Effort to Disseminate Information

The resulting content from this oral history program can be in the form of videos, sound recordings and news. However, what has been shown so far is in the form of videos and news, for sound recordings as direct results of oral history interviews with storytellers or figures stored at ANRI, in work unit III. Then, after completing the preparation of the minutes, it is forwarded to the storage section. The acquisition work unit in unit III carries out the function of interviewing then processing and publishing on websites and social media. How to optimize the content resulting from this oral history program? Explicitly optimizing this content is good from a keyword search point of view, but it needs to be optimized for the videos presented. The presentation is in tune with documentary videos which have the characteristic of telling history, the flow of life and people's lives. From this documentary video that tells history, people can understand the lifeline of an event. For example, in the oral history interview content in the Indrapura Sultanate which describes the history of the Indrapura Sultanate by taking the design

of storytellers involved in the life of the Sultanate and playing the traditions preserved in one topic.

It's different with news content which needs to be optimized so that people know about this oral history from a storyteller. Indeed, the main thing about oral history interviews conducted in an oral history interview room is that the voice is transcribed into a narrative report, just like transcribing the atmosphere of a court hearing. This narrative needs to be told in popular scientific language in a story that can later be read by the public. Not only that, optimizing the results of oral history interviews in oral history programs should be in line with developments over time, such as podcasts which are often done by YouTubers, the podcast concept can be emulated in an oral history interview which is published with the meaning that only certain things can be revealed. for public consumption. If the storyteller does not want to be published then the storyteller's wishes can be followed, unlike oral history interviews in the popular category, in this case they can be broadcast on the YouTube channel of the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia.

4. Conclusion

The results of this paper describe the content of oral history, which has primary information specifications based on the information needs in the archives. This information can be helpful to complete information that still needs to be created in the archives. Like information from the main character in oral history who is exposed to provide primary information about a significant event that was experienced. The function and benefit of using the oral history method is to publish information to the public with the help of information technology, in this case, the main website and social media website, as well as other websites connected to ANRI whose content is filled with the keyword Oral History.

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