

# Communication Strategies of Private University Students in Malang in Adapting to Online Lectures During Pandemic

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## Abstract

The pandemic situation has been going on for almost a year. Starting from March 2020 to 2021, we are still in the same situation. Online teaching and learning activities that carried out are preventive measures taken to protect educators and students. However, the journey and process of teaching and learning activities brings its own challenges for educators and students. All policies and strategies are carried out so that the comfort in the running process is still felt like during face-to-face lectures. However, in reality the challenges of the online learning process such as the results of research and news coverage cannot be avoided. This is the background for research that focuses on Communication Strategies of Private University Students in Malang in Adapting to Online Lectures During Pandemic. The subject of this research is communication study program. The focus of the study on communication strategies was chosen because the researcher wanted to get data in the form of student communication styles to lecturers through various media, the media used to support their learning, and other findings from the communication approach that had not been revealed previously. This study uses the Theory of Uncertainty Reduction and Communication Accommodation as a supporting theory. The approach used is descriptive quantitative with survey method.

## Keywords

Communication Strategy, URT Communication, Pandemic, Education

## 1. Introduction

The pandemic has been going on for almost a year. Starting from March 2020 until the change in 2021, still in the same situation. Pandemics bring many things to happen and adjustments that must be made by various parties including academics in the institute. Adaptation among academics is certainly in response to government policies on limiting activities that have the potential to involve crowds and increase the chances of transmission of the covid-19 virus. The policy issued by the government in this case is the Ministry of Education and Culture is a learning and

teaching activity carried out online or online. Online teaching and learning activities are carried out as preventive measures taken to protect educators and also students (Suprpto 2017, Surya et al. 2018). However, the journey and process of teaching and learning activities brings its own challenges for educators and learners. Because it is faced with many adjustments ranging from technological adjustments, how to communicate, how to learn, how to teach, and spirit and motivation in understanding the subject matter ( Briliana et al. 2018, Bukata et al. 2017).

Higher Education Institution or University is one of the Educational Institutions that also have to adjust to the existing situation Based on data obtained from online media kumparan.com mentioned that 65% of students during online lectures are constrained by networking. 26% resistance about time, 7% resistance about mobile / laptop, and 2% other obstacles. The consequences of learning online during face-to-face sessions in zoom or google meet often make students turn off the camera and not listen to their teaching lecturers. Quoted from kumparan.com tells a lecturer who is also the owner of a TikTok account @tyasnastiti, revealing the outpouring of his heart that is often not disturbed during online lectures. In one of the videos uploaded, there is a recording of one of the online lecture sessions that he had via Google Hangout. While watching the results of the lecture session, he only realized that his students only turned on the camera when he came out of the video call room. It appears that one of his students even danced in front of the camera.

Some previous research on the impact of online learning activities experienced by students also shows how online learning is a challenge that attacks students' motivation and learning spirit. As research conducted by Rahmawati, Muslima and Putri, (2020) entitled Learning From Home in perspective of Student Perception of the Covid-19 Pandemic Era resulted in the finding that 54% of respondents stated that it was difficult to understand lecture materials and as many as 46% stated that the relationship with lecturers was less close. The lack of relationship between lecturers and students scientifically is also volunteered by Vera (2020) in her research entitled Communication Strategies of Lecturers and Students in Improving the Quality of Online Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic. The results showed that there is a tendency for students to feel bored and experience cultural concussion in the learning process. So that lecturers apply two-way communication, giving students the opportunity to respond in the form of questions, discussions and comments on what is conveyed by lecturers. Lecturers also act as motivators and initiators so that students remain passionate in online learning.

The impact of online learning as a study entitled Systematic Review: The Impact of Online Lectures During the Covid-19 Pandemic on Indonesian Students shows that 1) online learning still confuses students (2) students become passive, less creative and productive, (3) the buildup of information / concepts in students is less useful, (4) students experience stress, (5) improved students' language literacy skills. The current conditions are not easy for all parties including the academic community in various higher education institutions. All policies, strategies are carried out so that comfort in the process continues to be felt like during face-to-face lectures. However, in reality the challenges of the online learning process as the results of research and news are inevitable.

This is what then becomes a research background that focuses on student communication strategies in adapting to online lectures during the pandemic. The focus of the communication strategy study was chosen because researchers wanted to get data in the form of students' communication styles to lecturers through various media, media used in supporting their learning, as well as other findings that from communication approaches have not been revealed before.

## **2. Communication Strategy**

Communication Strategy in understanding how the communication strategy referred to in this research, first we understand what is a strategy. Why do humans have almost every interaction and social activity strategised? How is strategy understood as part of the communication process? Here is a presentation of the concept of communication strategy.

Strategy is a way that is done by a person or group to achieve a certain goal. According to Steyn strategy can be interpreted as thinking, a logic of thinking behind an action. Drucker explained that strategy is an indication of an organization's future positioning, where it will decide what to solve rather than how to resolve (Steyn, in the International Public Relations Journal 2002).

Meanwhile, Mintzberg (1987) defined the strategy into five uses, namely: a. strategy is a plan. It is a conscious action, a clue to dealing with a particular situation. b. strategy is a ploy. It is a particular maneuver used to outwit an

opponent or competitor. c. strategy is a pattern. It's a pattern in the flow of action. In this case strategy is a consistency of attitudes, behavior of someone who is intentional or unintentional. d. strategy is a position. It is a means of allocating organizations in an environment. e. strategy is a perspective. It's an integrated way of looking at the world.

Strategy is a concept that has important implications that a strategy concept that is abstractly in everyone's mind and only for those who have interests, interests and interests will seek to realize the strategy (Akbar 2013). Strategies are carried out in various domains, in the fields of marketing, entertainment, work, family relationships, friendships, learning. But the strategy certainly cannot work as it should when it cannot be communicated to others properly (Coe et al. 2017, Coudray et al. 2020, Dolan 2020, Faqirah 2020, Greenstein 2012.).

Communication strategy is influenced by many factors in the process, such as the personal factor of the perpetrator in this case is the perception in the communicator to the communicant. Closeness of relationships personally, information, and culture is a factor behind the choice of communication strategies carried out. Communication is the social process by which individuals use symbols to create and interpret meaning in their environment (West, 2008:5). Communication can also be understood as the process of exchanging the meaning of the communicator delivered to the communicant. Communication always involves two or more people interacting with different backgrounds that influence the strategy of each communicating person. Communication strategy is influenced by many factors in the process, such as the personal factor of the perpetrator in this case is the perception in the communicator to the communicant. Closeness of relationships personally, information, and culture is a factor behind the choice of communication strategies carried out. Communication is the social process by which individuals use symbols to create and interpret meaning in their environment (West, 2008:5). Communication can also be understood as the process of exchanging the meaning of the communicator delivered to the communicant. Communication always involves two or more people interacting with different backgrounds that influence the strategy of each communicating person.

According to Berger and Calabrese, there are two types of uncertainty from the initial encounter: Cognitive and Behavioral. Cognitive uncertainty refers to the degree of uncertainty associated with beliefs and attitudes. Behavioral uncertainty is the limit to where behavior can be predicted in certain situations. The point is that in order to interact smoothly and can be understood by the other person, then one must be able to predict how the other person will behave. Then to overcome this is to communicate by exchanging information between communicators and communicant. A person in reducing his uncertainty will certainly use strategies in communicating with his interlocutor.

The uncertainty reduction strategy as mentioned by Berger is a Passive, Active, Interactive strategy. Passive strategy is a strategy that is done with unobtrusive observations. Active Strategies reduce uncertainty in ways other than direct contact, usually done by asking for information through third parties. Interactive strategies are an active way to engage in conversation. Conversations involving self-opening, direct questioning and other information-seeking tactics (West&turner, 2008:184).

### **3. Communication Accommodation**

Communication accommodation is a theory that focuses on the role of verbal and non-verbal communication in conversation and is based on the belief that people from different cultural communities will adapt their communication to accommodate others. Accommodation is defined as the ability to adjust, modify or regulate a person's behavior in his or her response to others. This theory pays attention to the interaction of understanding people from different groups by assessing the language, nonverbal behavior and paralinguistic use of individuals. Through the theory of communication accommodation, understanding between people from different groups becomes an important part of the creation of communication goals (West, 2008: 217).

Accommodation theory states that in the confluent people have a choice. These options will then be labeled convergence, divergence, and over-accommodation. The first process is convergence. It is a strategy in which individuals adapt to communicative behavior to each other. People will adapt to speech speed, pauses, smiles, eye gazes, other verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Convergence depends on perceptions of the speech and behavior of others. Convergence is also based on attraction. The second process is divergence, which is a strategy used to highlight verbal and non-verbal differences between communicators (West, 2008:222).

Divergence occurs when there is no attempt to show similarities between speakers. Divergence occurs because it wants to maintain social identity, then related to power and different roles in conversation (Anaktototy et al. 2020). Divergence often occurs in conversations when there is a clear difference in roles in the conversation. Divergence also occurs because it assumes the interlocutor has unpleasant attitudes or shows an ugly appearance. The third process is excessive accommodation, which is a label given to speakers who are considered by the listener to be too excessive. Excessive accommodation can occur in three forms: sensory over-accommodation, overdependent accommodation and intergroup over depending (West,2008:225-228) (Ahmad et al. 2017; Aji et al. 2016).

#### 4. Methods

This research is descriptive type with quantitative approach and research techniques used are surveys using questionnaires as data retrieval tools. The survey conducted later will use a semi-open questionnaire so that it still allows respondents to provide answers based on their experience out of the core question.

The data used in this paper is primary and secondary as the focus of the done analysis. In this study, primary data was obtained from the results of a survey conducted on private university students in Malang City. Meanwhile, secondary data in this study is obtained from the results of literature studies and other sources that support and relate to the problems studied such as textbooks, journals, articles, the internet, and others.

There are two types of research data, first the primary data which is the main data in the research sourced from selected respondents. As has been explained that the method used is a survey with a questionnaire as a standard for the collection of data. Questionnaires filled out by conducted when the lecture is conducted online

#### 5. Results

##### 5.1 Students Experienced

This research uses the research subjects of Communication Science students of The 23rd and 24th Generation. This is due to the difference in experience between the two. Communication student Angkatan 23 is a student who has experienced onsite lectures but must turn online due to the pandemic that entered Indonesia since mid-March 2020 (Figure 1). Meanwhile, the 24th Class students have never experienced an onsite lecture. It is seen from the results of the survey that 57.1% of students who answered that they never felt college onsite.

Apakah anda pernah merasakan kuliah on site sebelumnya?

56 responses

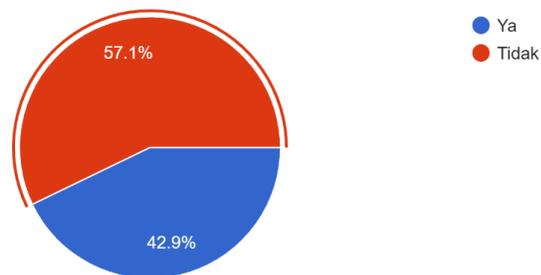


Figure 1. Students experienced on lecture

But even so, both students from Force 23 and 24 75% stated that lecturers have explained the lecture material well. That means students agree that online lectures do not reduce the performance of lecturers in explaining lecture materials. It's just that the situation is not conducive to making the learning media change from onsite to online (Figure 2).

Selama perkuliahan online, anda merasa dosen sudah menjelaskan materi perkuliahan dengan baik?  
 56 responses

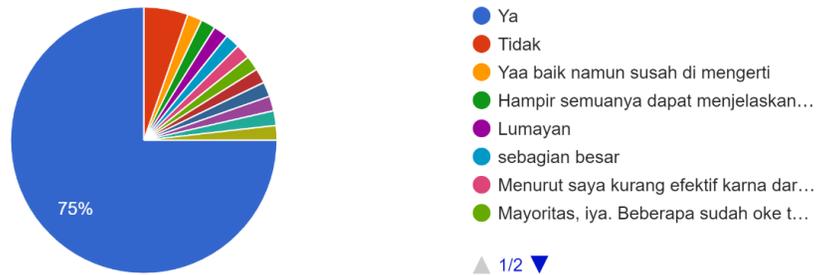


Figure 2. Students experience

However, although students agree that 75% say lecturers have delivered the lecture material well. However, students still have problems understanding online learning. This is recorded as many as 36.4% of students who find it difficult to understand learning done online

Anda merasa sulit dalam memahami pembelajaran yang dilakukan secara online?  
 55 responses

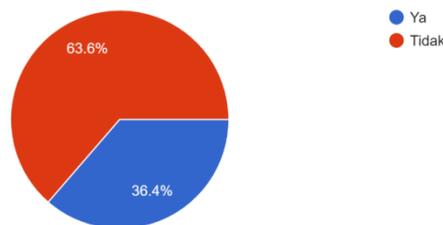


Figure 3. Students experience on lecture materials.

## 5.2 Communication Strategy

In this section, we will discuss how student communication strategies during online learning during pandemics. The communication strategy that is carried out refers to the strategy of reducing uncertainty in communicating. The first strategy is to be active (Aulia 2018). Active strategies in reducing uncertainty are done by actively finding out the source of information through someone who is not the first source but has a good relationship to be able to explain the information needed. A total of 3.6% of respondents chose active strategies as a way of learning during a pandemic.

The second strategy is passive. Passive strategies in uncertainty reduction are demonstrated by a person's way of obtaining information through his or her own efforts. As in this study, 73.2% of respondents chose to use passive start-ups. This number is mostly used. Students find out for themselves the answers to the difficulties faced even though there are times when they ask friends if they find difficulties.

Meanwhile, the third strategy carried out by students, which is 23.2% is an interactive strategy. Students perform a more interactive communication action because they directly contact the lecturer to ask questions and discuss the difficulties faced (Figure 4).

Apa yang anda lakukan ketika bingung dan tidak memahami materi belajar?

56 responses



Figure 4. Communication strategy

Based on the data findings, 75% of students do prefer to look for information and also ask their classmates rather than have to ask directly to lecturers (Figure 5).

Anda lebih suka bertanya langsung pada teman daripada dosen untuk membantu proses memahami materi belajar?

56 responses

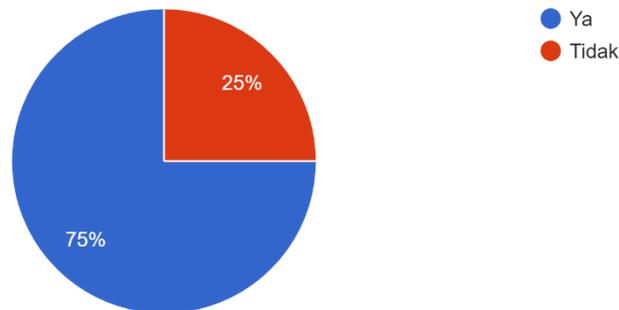


Figure 5. Communication strategy on information.

There are a variety of reasons students prefer to ask their classmates, each respondent reveals why:

"Because usually a friend's answer is faster to understand but has to find other sources to make sure the answer is right or wrong" Respondent 1

"Less comfortable asking lecturers if online, because of embarrassment to ask lecturers" Respondent 2.

"Because sometimes when I'm in class I don't think about asking. But when learning alone / while doing a task suddenly there is something that is not understood. Then when I asked a friend, I felt more relaxed and more open." Respondent 3 "I tried to understand before the class that day ended. So that what I confuse does not accumulate in the future." Respondents 4

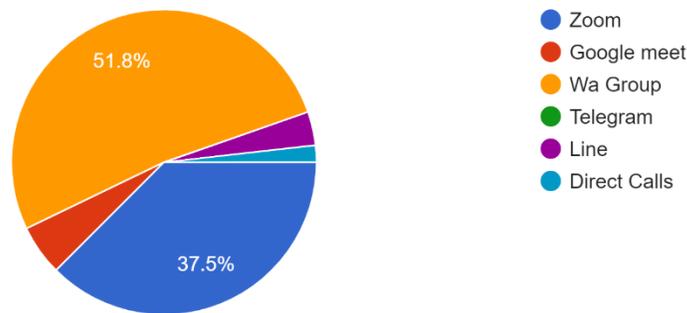
"I like to work independently before asking other people for help. That is, I will try to find answers from various sources that I can access. If after looking for answers I still doubt or have not found an answer then I will ask friends and share about the difficulties that saha experienced about one course." Respondent 5

"Often the incomprehension of the material is caused by the delivery of lecturers who confuse and use language that is difficult to understand. So, it's easier for me to figure out my own answers or share them with friends." Respondents 6

Media in communicating during online percussing is an important factor used by students to stay updated and communicate with their peers. In this study, 51.8% of students chose to communicate with lecturers or friends using the Whatsapp messenger application. The remaining 37.5% (Figure 6) chose to use zoom as a medium of interaction and communication used by students and lecturers and friends.

Jika anda harus berdiskusi dengan dosen ataupun teman, media apa yang sering digunakan?

56 responses



Dimana lokasi yang anda pilih jika sedang kuliah online?

56 responses

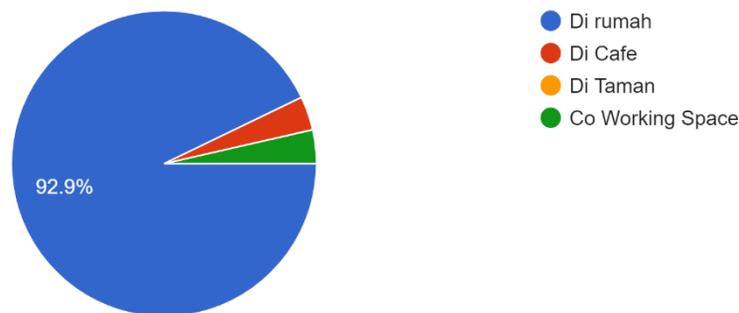


Figure 6. Communication strategy in class

The online college location that students choose 92.9% is at home. The reasons students choose home as the best place to study online are:

"More comfortable and not much interference" Respondent 1

"Because it is more comfortable and not noisy so that I can understand the material delivered by lecturers well" Respondent 2

## 6. Conclusion

Adjusting to carrying out learning activities during a pandemic is a challenge for students. Because they have to find their own sources of information and learning references. Although the lecture continues and lecturers can be contacted via mobile phone, it will certainly be different from normal learning. This is what makes students have to create their own strategies in order to adjust well during online lectures.

Based on the results of the study, the communication strategy chosen by students is a passive strategy, which is as much as 73.2% of respondents. This shows that students still have not taken advantage of the moment to discuss with lecturers. Respondents tend to find out for themselves what they need and occasionally ask friends if they think they need direction. It is unfortunate, because the openness of students to lecturers is very necessary. But on the other hand, this can also be a suggestion for institutions and educators to be able to approach their students in order to discuss and share information well. For the creation of more conducive learning activities.

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