Students Uncertainty Reduction Strategy During Online Lectures

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Abstract

Student learning methods have changed to online lectures during the pandemic. Of course, this is a new challenge for students to adapt to new learning methods. During the adaptation process, problems arise that give uncertainty. The researcher wrote that this study aims to determine strategies for reducing student uncertainty regarding the information conveyed by lecturers during online lectures. This study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive research type. Researchers collected data using survey methods and carried out sampling techniques using the entire number of samples. According to uncertainty reduction theory, uncertainty can be reduced by communication. The problems experienced by students during online lectures are boredom, technical problems, and difficulty understanding the material. Uncertainty will cause feelings of discomfort therefore humans will tend to be encouraged to reduce uncertainty. Reduction with 3 strategies, namely passive, active, and interactive. The passive strategy is carried out by students observing someone when communicating with others, the active strategy is done by looking for information on their own or asking friends, and the interactive strategy is done by asking directly to the lecturer concerned. Despite facing challenges during online lectures, students managed to find strategies to reduce them.

Keywords
Students, online, lectures, methods and uncertainty reduction strategies.

1. Introduction
In early 2020, the teaching and learning process in Indonesia was held with an online learning system with the aim of reducing the number of cases of *Covid-19*. Of course, the implementation occurs because of the pandemic situation and conditions that are not possible for onsite study. The online learning system must be followed by teachers or lecturers and students starting from the kindergarten, elementary, junior high, high school, and students are no exception. It is including parents should accept this situation to support prevention action for pandemic situation. The adaptation process experienced by students in adjusting online lectures is not easy, but it is not an obstacle for them to be familiar with the online lecture system.

Various problems of online lectures are faced by every student, especially obstacles in terms of communication. According to Shannon & Weaver (1949) communication disorders occur when one of the elements of communication does not function effectively. Communication obstacles during pandemic lectures are indeed the most important obstacles to the learning from home system including; difficulty understanding the material due to bias between teachers and students or no offline study friends; saturated with monotonous online learning that causes students to understand prefer to play mobile phones or do other activities; difficulty focusing because the conditions of the learning environment are not conducive; and technical glitches that are beyond the control of students.

Problems during the online lecture process cause negative effects related to emotional fatigue such as no sense of spirit, discomfort such as turning off the camera and microphone, and a decrease in student activeness achievement. So many articles discussing how to adapt to online lectures, one of which is as reported by Caldera News that to adapt to online lectures can be done in a way; always connect with friends to complete the burden of tasks together; set the time with by not procrastinating; rest with small activities such as hobbies; and set targets by setting a priority scale (Syasa H 2020).

Based on the description of existing problems, researchers are encouraged to conduct research related to student uncertainty reduction strategies during online lectures of Private university students in Malang majoring Communication Science during the pandemic and what factors are the focus of student adaptation during college. So, the formulation of the problem that will be answered in this study is about the strategy to reduce the uncertainty of Communication Science students in obtaining information during online lectures.

2. Literature Review

Researchers collect reference studies through similar studies or previous studies that have been conducted by other researchers. Similar research is used as a reference material to obtain reference materials and comparisons and to anticipate if there is similarity in research. Here is a summary of information from similar studies:

1. Pradnya Aisyah Paramita Research Results (2018).

Pradnya Aisyah Paramita 's research (2018), titled "*Reducing Uncertainty of Disclosure of Feelings of Couples Involved in Cyber Romantic Relationships* (*CRR*)". Research uses qualitative methods with descriptive research types and case study methods. The problem that the focus of the study is the reduction of uncertainty in revealing the feelings of couples who get acquainted online in cyberspace / internet which means that the two have not known each other before.

Summary of the results of the study is that uncertainty in the CRR arises because, differences in way of thinking, family background, number of siblings, the state of parents, harmony or not of the family, family economy, experience in pairs, environment friendship, difference in principle. To overcome or minimize uncertainty couples can use 3 ways, namely with passive strategies (observing the person), active strategies (looking for information without asking directly to the person concerned. Done by asking the environment around family, friends / colleagues, and interactive strategies (relying on direct communication with the individual).

The difference in research lies in the focus of the problem. Previous research has examined the reduction of the uncertainty of couples who get acquainted online in cyberspace. While the focus of the researcher's problem now is to reduce the uncertainty of Binusian 2023 BINUS Malang students in getting information during online lectures.

2. Nurvita Febriani & Fajar Iqbal Research Results (2015)

Nurvita Wahyu Febrian & Fajar Iqbal research (2015), entitled "*Uncertainty Reduction Strategies in Interpersonal Communication Systems (Phenomenology Studies in Participants on The Job Training Program to Japan from PT. Hitachi Construction Machinery Indonesia Departure Period 2009-2012)*". This literature examines the relationship of uncertainty in communication between Hitachi *Construction Machinery Group* in Japan and Subsidiaries of PT. Hitachi *Construction Machinery* Indonesia. When the participants from Indonesia who started the training program in Japan, they felt differences such as how work, *culture*, and character that turned out to cause uncertainty.

In the study using the subjects of indonesian participants training work program at PT Hitachi Japan in 2009-2012 and there are still several other requirements. Such as a minimum of 5 years of work at PT Hitachi dam has interacted directly with Japanese citizens for more than one year. The data collection technique is by means of in-depth interviews in person that will be used as primary data. Then secondary data uses photos of activities during the work program. This study uses a qualitative type with a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology aims to analyze experiences from the point of view of people who have experienced them firsthand (Amber 2018 ; Febriani 2015; Halima 2020 ; Herdiana 2021; Paramira 2018; West 2008).

The result of this study is that the uncertainty that arises between Indonesian participants and PT Hitachi companies in Japan is caused by; (a) There are limitations in the ability of Indonesian participants to speak Japanese; (b) There are limited information of Indonesian participants in understanding the character and situation of Japanese society. With the onset of uncertainty, participants have strategies to reduce such uncertainty, including (a) Active Strategy: before leaving for Japan, participants attempt to find information first. This was done because participants had anxious feelings about the picture in Japan; (b) Passive Strategy: participants make observations of how the Japanese work. According to participants, the Japanese had a disciplined and quiet work environment because of the focus on their respective work; (c) Interactive Strategy: After getting an idea of Japan, then through this strategy participants have direct interaction with Japanese people. This interaction is done to get a definite picture / information.

The difference lies in the focus of the problem. This study examined the reduction of uncertainty arising between Indonesian participants and PT Hitachi companies in Japan. While the focus of my problem is reducing the uncertainty of Binusian 2023 BINUS Malang students in getting information during online lectures.

Based on the reference studies used by researchers can be found similarities between current research and the previous one, which lies in the study of the theory used. The study is an uncertainty reduction theory owned by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975) which explains that communication strategies can be used as a tool

to reduce uncertainty. While the difference lies in the focus of the problem and the sample used. However, it can be said that the research to be done has more value and is current compared to previous research.

3. Methods

This research used a quantitative approach with descriptive research types. The population used here is a student majoring in communication science class of 2023 from a prestigious private university in Malang City. The study sample used the overall population of 27 people. The types of data used are primary and secondary data, primary data obtained from survey results and secondary data obtained from the search for records that have been arranged in disseminated archives.

Research data collection is carried out using survey techniques by compiling questions related to problem formulation. The data obtained will be studied using the uncertainty reduction theory pioneered by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975). They say that the tool to reduce a person's uncertainty about something is through communication, so that when the uncertainty is reduced it will create conducive conditions. Uncertainty will cause feelings of discomfort; therefore, humans will tend to be encouraged to reduce the uncertainty that arises. This theory suggests that if two foreign individuals meet, their focus is to reduce uncertainty. But before that they will try to predict the choices and explain the meaning of behavior.

The assumptions made by Berger and Calabrese on the theory of uncertainty are:
1.   When communicating with strangers, individuals experience uncertainty.
2.   Uncertainty requires considerable energy that it can cause stress.
3.   When two foreign individuals communicate with each other, they will indirectly each try to reduce uncertainty.
4.   The process of developing interpersonal communication through several phases, namely; the individual initiates interaction with a foreign individual; they communicate more spontaneously; The last stage to decide whether to continue the relationship or not.
5.   To reduce uncertainty, you can use interpersonal communication as the main tool.
6.   Interpersonal communication will develop and gradually, as well as the amount of information owned.
7.   Can predict the behavior of foreign individuals, through other individuals who have the same lifestyle.
(West and Turner, 2013, p. 150)

In reducing uncertainty, one can use the concept of communication strategy (Berger 1975), namely: (a) **passive strategy** by observing someone while communicating with others, (b) **active strategy** by looking for information without asking people directly. In question, so it is done by asking the environment around family, friends, or searching on social media, (c) **interactive strategies** by relying on direct communication with the individual concerned. (West and Turner 2013, p. 184).

5. Results and Discussion

The change in lecture methods during the Covid-19 pandemic from face-*to-face* meetings to online meetings led to the emergence of several challenges faced by lecturers, especially students. The challenge that affects student learning activities is the emergence of uncertainty in getting information during online lectures. Through the existing challenges, it was found that there was an adjustment through communication strategies carried out by students of communication science class of 2023. In this study will find problems, factors, and strategies used by students in reducing uncertainty.

5.1 Problems of Communication Studies Students During Online Lecture

Communication Science students' class of 2023 have previously experienced face-to-face lectures, so that they as research samples can clearly explain obstacles during online lectures. A total of 13:27 students are comfortable with flexible online lectures because they can be done anywhere, save time because they do not need to go to campus, and save costs on costs and gasoline. But even so, it does not mean that students who feel comfortable with the online lecture model do not pass adjustments for unfamiliar learning methods.

The survey results proved that 10:27 students adjusted their networks and quotas; 7:27 students adjusted the hours of sleep; and 9:27 adjust the literacy sources and communication media used during online learning. The adjustment process carried out does not deny for students to feel the problem of online lectures. On the other hand, there are 14:27 students who say that the online lecture model is not convenient for them (table 1).

Table 1. Students Communication Problems During Online Lectures

Criteria	Frequency
Students are comfortable with flexible online lectures	13:27
Students adjusted with networks and quotas (internet billing)	10:27
Students adjusted the hours of sleep	7:27
Students adjusted the literacy sources and communication media used during online learning	9:27
Students who say that the online lecture model is not convenient	14:27

The problems faced by communication science students during online lectures include:

a.   Situations and conditions that are not supportive due to noise or the atmosphere is not conducive so that students feel easily distracted and lack of focus during the online learning process

b.   The emergence of technical problems such as unstable networks that are beyond the control of students and lecturers. During online lectures 20:27 students often experience unstable networks and in the end are often late to follow the lecture schedule.

c.   Reduced interaction with classmates so that there is no close relationship with each other

d.   Not feeling campus facilities such as laboratories to practice in certain courses so that it is less effective in understanding lecture materials

With this problem, as a result students often experience uncertainty in getting information submitted by lecturers. Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975) said that communication is a tool to reduce uncertainty to create conducive conditions. Then additional assumptions that say that when uncertainty arises between two individuals, then indirectly everyone will try to reduce the uncertainty that arises. Similarly, information bias is felt during the teaching and learning process in online classes, encouraging Communication Science 2023 BINUS Malang students to look for strategies to overcome these uncertainties.

5.1 Uncertainty Reduction Strategies to Reduce Uncertainty During Online Lectures

The existing problems create a condition that is not conducive for students to do the learning process. According to the survey results 18:27, during the online lecture students felt that the lecturer explained the lecture well, 8:27 students felt good but there were still some lecturers who were less able to explain effectively, and 1:27 felt that the lecturer did not explain the material with good. However, 15:27 still finds it difficult to understand the material during online lectures (table 2).

Table 2. Uncertainty Reduction Strategies During Online Lectures

Criteria	Frequency
During the online lecture students felt that the lecturer explained the lecture well	18:27
Students felt good but there were still some lecturers who were less able to explain effectively	8:27
Students felt that the lecturer did not explain the material with good	1:27
Students find it difficult to understand the material during online lectures.	15:27
Students chose to ask a friend or look for answers themselves.	21:27
Students felt more comfortable by asking friends of course with various factors, including:	19:27
Students chose to ask the lecturer concerned during teaching activities in the class or through social media.	6:27

Thus, creating an uncertainty reduction strategy carried out by Communication Science students class of 2023 in 3 communication strategies (West and Turner 2013), namely:

a.   **Passive** strategy, which is done by observing someone while communicating with others. In this strategy, what is done is that students make observations first by observing other students who ask questions. This means that students in class tend to wait for their active friends to ask lecturers. If no one asks, the student fails to get information through passive strategy, so he must go to another communication strategy.

b.   **Active Strategy**, which is done by looking for information without asking directly to the person concerned, so it is done by asking the environment around family, friends, or looking on social media. From the results of a survey of 21:27 students if they feel confused in understanding the material in the online learning process, choose to ask a friend or look for answers themselves. Here is the presentation of data from the results of the survey that has been conducted:

● Asking friends: Reducing uncertainty by asking friends is one of the strategies that many students choose. 19:27 Students feel more comfortable by asking friends of course with various factors, including:
− Language is easier to understand, the explanation is simple, and relaxed because they know more closely than lecturers, but even so students feel they must look again by themselves to ensure answers from friends. In addition, students also feel comfortable asking friends because they can equate one thought and *share* each other to resolve uncertainty together. Then some students if they still feel confused, they will ask the lecturer concerned.
− When the class takes place students do not have questions in their heads, but when the class ends or when students do their assignments just think of the questions. So, instead of asking the lecturer they are more comfortable to ask classmates.
− There is a feeling of fear of asking the lecturer, who is in the student's mind is "later mistaken for not paying attention to the class", "afraid to be asked during the next class", "embarrassed to be seen as uncomfortable to be noticed by other children when the class", and "afraid to give questions that are not weighty".

● Finding your own answers: Uncertainty reduction strategies by finding your own answersDone by students by searching from other sources *online*. Students like to explore themselves and do not want to trouble friends, if they do not find answers then he will ask the lecturer. In conducting a search from *online* sources, here are some media that students use to reduce uncertainty:

1. Internet: journals, articles, and websites (*wikipedia*, *google scholar*, news portal)
2. Social media: *Whatsapp*, *Instagram*, *Twitter*, *Youtube*
3. BINUSMAYA

c.   **Interactive Strategy**, namely by relying on direct communication with the individual concerned. In this study, 6:27 students chose to ask the lecturer concerned during teaching activities in the class or through social media. Here are the factors students prefer to ask the lecturer concerned:

1. More timesaving, because getting answers quickly without making small talk with friends. If you ask a friend, you don't necessarily understand and feel more confused.
2. Gain a clearer understanding and get answers through reliable sources. Lecturers can directly provide answers that are relevant to the material and students can ask more details about less clear materials.
In the application of passive, active, and interactive strategies carried out by students through application media, including *Zoom* 10:27; WhatsApp *Group* 15:27; and *Google Meet* 2:27 students. As previously outlined, the problems experienced by students during online lectures have the potential to raise the problem of uncertainty to get information while in class. There are also factors from the strategy carried out by Communication Science Students class of 2023.

6. Conclusion
Based on data obtained through the survey results and supported by the theory that has been outlined, researchers found answers to the formulation of uncertainty reduction strategies used by students during online lectures. In summary, the uncertainty experienced by communication science students' class of 2023 is caused by problems that arise when studying online, for example such as saturation, in focus, and technical problems. Then students feel compelled to reduce the uncertainty that exists. So, with the strategy carried out by students to reduce uncertainty during online lectures, it can be said that they are successful and able to adapt. Evidenced by the results of the discussion studied in three communication strategies, including passive (observing friends ask questions in class), active (asking friends or looking for answers themselves), and interactive (directly asking lecturers).

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