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## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: A CASE STUDY BETWEEN LECTURER AND STUDENTS IN ONLINE ENGLISH COURSE

by

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*Received: September 21, 2021,*

*Reviewed1: September 27, 2021,*

*Accepted: October 13, 2021,*

*September 22, 2021*

*Reviewed2: October 7, 2021*

*Published: October 20, 2021*

### **Abstract:**

*The Covid-19 pandemic is the main reason in doing online learning. The change in this learning process is one of the efforts to stop the spread of the virus. Lecturers and students must adapt with this changes so that the learning process can run well. Many problems that arise in online learning can be solved if the lecturer has good communication strategies and styles during the online learning process. This study aims to analyze and explain some problems that arise in online English course and some communication strategies between lecturer and students to improve the quality of learning. This is a qualitative study with case study method. The subjects of this study were a lecturer and 10 students of the 4th semester Management study program who took English courses. Data collection in this study was done by observation and interview. The result showed that the problems are learning burnout, students' frustration, and obstacles in providing feedback from students. The communication strategy between lecturers and students during the online courses is very important, such as lecturer should plan the learning process as well as possible and create a creative, varied, and innovative way to foster student enthusiasm in learning, lecturer should apply two-way communication that providing opportunities for students in responding either in the form of questions, discussions, or comments, and implement a collaborative learning system strategy in the form of project based learning (PjBL) and problem based learning (PBL).*

**Keywords:** *Communication strategy, online English course*

## INTRODUCTION

After WHO announced Covid-19 as a global pandemic, the Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Education and Culture issued the instructions to schools and universities to carry out the teaching learning process at home. Learning at home is learning that is done at home by utilizing various existing media (Wijaya et al., 2020). In Indonesia, nearly 25 million

school-age children participate in studying at home (Daheri et al., 2020; Purwanto, A et al., 2020). The policy is based on the Circular of the Minister of Education and Culture dated March 24, 2020. This change in the learning process is one of the efforts to stop the spread of the virus. Lecturer and students must adapt to these changes so that the learning process can run well.

The shift from face-to-face learning to online learning requires an adaptation process that is not easy. Learning at home during the COVID-19 pandemic was very different from face-to-face learning. This could lead to boredom. As a result, student's interest and learning motivation decreased (Siagian, R. E. F, 2015). Lecturers and students are also required to learn how to use online learning media or e-learning, and must be able to use the online platforms such as zoom, google meet, and etc. Beside that, there is a technological challenges such as some students without unsupport internet access to participate in online learning; this gap is visible across the region. In addition to problems in terms of technology, another problem that cannot be ignored is the communicating problem between lecturers and students, especially in delivering learning material. Maki and Maki (2007) concluded that, to be effective, online instruction required strong methodology and opportunities for students to interact with each other and the instructor.

Communication is a transaction, a symbolic process that requires people to regulate their environment by building relationships between human beings through the exchange of information to strengthen the attitudes and behavior of others and try to change those attitudes and behavior (Cangara, 2007). The communication strategy includes everything needed to run a communication program to the target audience in order to achieve the expected goals. The communication strategy in the communication requires a suitable way so that the objectives of the program are achieved (Widodo, Aan, Permatasari, 2020). Referring to the journal article Communication Theory: An Underrated Pillar on Which Strategic Communication Rests written by Betteke van Ruler: Communication strategies "should not be limited to formal messages, while actions also have meaning and, therefore, must be part of strategic communication."

The communication strategy in this study is the lecturer's communication strategy in delivering the learning material, especially in the online English course. And also, students' communication strategies in receiving and responding to material, as well as discussing online. Communicating successfully means to pass on meaningful messages to the listeners.

In order to achieve a successful level of communication in situations, where learners face problems when there is a mismatch between their communication goals and their linguistic resources, they tend to use devices to improve their level of communication; these devices are called Communication Strategies. (Oweis, 2013). In the learning process, ideally communication messages can be understood well by the recipient, in this case the message is learning material. Can all students receive material in the form of modules, documents, or power points? How much do students understand about the material only by reading the material? If there are things or materials that are not understood, can students get answers directly? These questions need to be solved to get the more comfortable teaching and learning process.

Studies related to communication strategies have been widely studied by previous researchers. Smith (2003) examines communication strategy use among adult learners of English in a computer mediated environment. The data suggest that learners use a wide array of communication strategies during task-based CMC and that the CMC environment shapes this use. Learners also employed various compensatory strategies while navigating the tasks. Moreover, Oweis (2013) reviews and discusses the theoretical background of the study of Communication Strategy in language learning. After reviewing studies about CSs, most of these studies focused on the types and identification of CSs used by learners of a second or a foreign language. The results of such studies may provide additional insight into the nature of learner's ability and the construct of language proficiency itself. Several previous studies have shown that some strategies used by teachers to engage in online learning. Martin, Bolliger (2018) examines student perception on various engagement strategies used in online courses based on Moore's interaction framework. The strategies used by the teacher to increase students' interest in learning were to provide students with an understanding of the importance of learning, to make learning material brief, clear, and interesting, to use simple and interesting media, and to conduct regular and continuous evaluations. Online learning, students get something fun, but they lack togetherness with their friends. (Sutarto, Sari, Fathurrochman, 2020). Communication strategy used by the lecturer and students in online learning have never been done by previous researchers. The results of this study are expected to be used as a reference for teachers in solving some problems in online learning.

If lecturers and students have good communication strategies and styles during the online learning process, then all problems in online lectures can be resolved. The lecturer

must be able to create creative and innovative learning methods and media, while students are required to be active in the learning process. The purpose of this study is to analyze and explain the communication strategy between lecturer and students in online English course. The following research questions guided the study:

1. what are the problem that arises during the online English course?
2. what are some communication strategies to improve the quality of learning?

## **METHOD**

### ***Design***

This is a qualitative study with case study method. A case study analyses persons, groups, events, decisions, periods, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods (Gerring, 2006). Moreover, a case study is a research strategy which the researcher research an event, program, activity, process of a group or individual (Chaiklin, 1991).

The case just focuses on time and activities, and the researcher collects the information completely by using some collecting data procedure based on the time which had been given. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., activity, event, process, or individual) based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2012).

A case study applies when a "how" and "why" question is posed to a set of present events that is impossible or at least difficult for the researcher to control. The case study method can be used if the researchers have little information about the things being studied, the focus of research is an ongoing phenomenon, and there are many sources of data (Yin 2002).

### ***Participants***

The subject of this study was a master's degree lecturer who has a good level of English and 10 students in the 4th semester of Management Study Program STIE Gentiara Bandar Lampung consisting of 6 female and 4 male students. The researcher purposely chose the 4th semester because the students have English Course in this semester, especially English for Economics (ESP) to meet non-probability sampling. They students have basic knowledge of English for daily communication or survival English.

### ***Instrument***

The first instrument in this study is observation. The researcher observed the courses's activities online as a part of participant electronic observation (Turmudi, 2021a). The observation was conducted when the teaching learning process was running. In here, the researcher acted as participant's observant.

Then, the second instrument is interview. The researcher interviewed the subject orally by using video call. In this case the researcher did the structured interview. Fatmawati (2016) stated that a structured interview is a priority organized interview and well-planned. The interview is starting from: determination and selection of the object to be interviewed, time and place of interview, the core themes and topic that will be asked, the composition of the principal questions to be asked, devices and data storage media to be used. Questions were given to know more about the communication strategy between lecturer and students. There are 6 English questions asked to the students related to the communication strategy in online courses. Then, the researcher recorded and transcribed the interview's result.

This study used two types of data sources, that is primary data and secondary data. Primary data is collected through participant observation during the courses, and through in-depth interviews with students who took online English courses for one semester, the even semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. While secondary data is obtained through literature review that supports this research.

### ***Data Collecting Technique***

Data collecting technique is the most strategic part of research to obtain the data. Therefore, the researchers not only use a single technique but triple technique (triangulation) so that can collect adequate and relevant data.

To gain data, the researcher collected data through observations and interview. The researcher observes the courses's activities online or electronic observation (Turmudi, 2021). While doing the observation, the researcher noted the important activities on observation sheet. The activities observed are the communication strategy that uses in the courses. Observation sheet is used as the tool of observation.

Then, the researcher interviews the 10 students orally by using video call in the end of the semester. Questions in the interview section were developed related to the communication

strategies.

### ***Data Analysis Technique***

Criteria content analysis (CCA) as proposed by expert (Miles et al., 2014) is used by the researcher. The CCA is the right technique to harvest the findings because the data types are not discourse analysis, conversation analysis but content analysis.

The procedures of the data analysis are through the following steps: (1) the observation's notes are analyzed and collected by listing the criteria and categorizing afterward, (2) the interview is transcribed and coded with certain description to find the result, (3) the document notes are matched with the observation and interview script as a process of triangulation, (4) all the three data are wrapped to display in the findings.

All the process, however; uses manual calculation instead of using N-Vivo and Qualitative Data Analysis with certain technique manual data analysis as adopted from Tumudi (2020b) and manual arrangement of references without referencing tool or Manual system by coping reference sources from Scholar Google (Turmudi, 2020a).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Findings***

The current study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the problems that arises during the online English course?
2. What are some communication strategies to improve the quality of learning?

There are several problems that arise from students during one semester of online lectures. Based on the results of observations and interviews that have been conducted, the main problem is learning burnout. Learning burnout is an obstacle in the learning process; boredom arises because the students experience changes in the learning process from face to face in class to online where students are required to study independently.

It requires a high level of discipline for each student. Besides learning burnout felt by students, frustration with the circumstances is also experienced because they cannot understand the material provided by the lecturer. Learning burnout arises after they feel the

lack of progress.

In addition to several problems that arise from students, lecturers also experience obstacles in providing feedback from students. Giving feedback is considered slow because lecturers cannot immediately find out student responses which they usually find through student body gestures when teaching in face-to-face learning. When carrying out learning activities from home, the focus and attention of students may also be reduced so that the message or material conveyed by the lecturer cannot be fully accepted by the students. To overcome these obstacles, a communication strategy between lecturers and students is needed during online courses.

Lecturer and student communication strategies in improving the quality of learning as follows; the first strategy is that the lecturer must plan the learning process as well as possible so that students can understand the learning material. At the beginning of the meeting, the lecturer should inform students about the learning objectives or learning outcomes that to be achieved in one semester. By conveying the learning objectives, students can understand the learning process that will be run, students also can carry out their learning actions more independently, and it makes the lecturer easy to select and arrange the teaching materials.

In addition, teaching materials used in online learning should be available, usually in the form of modules or textbooks. Previously, lecturer just gave the handout or worksheet in every meeting but it was not efficient because it can be damaged or lost easily. The lecturer should make the interactive module or textbooks to engage the student's interest in the learning process.

To reduce learning burnout in the learning process, the learning materials used can also be added in the form of audio-visual. By watching directly through videos related to the material, it is also hoped that students will become more aware of the material being taught. Lecturers can also apply learning methods according to the characteristics of students being taught so that students interested to the the material that delivered by the lecturers. It means that the communication target is the millennial generation who are used to using new media so that lecturers are also required to be able to adapt with it.

So far, the lecturer only used monotonous media and used less varied media. For example, using Whatsapp group media, LMS (Learning Management System), and video conferencing ZOOM. Even though, there are still many modern social media that can be used as the teaching media such as YouTube, Instagram, and others game applications like Kahoot,

bamboozle, etc. Some of these media can attract students' attention in joining the learning process. Before starting online learning, lecturers are required to be proficient in using learning media so that learning can be carried out more optimally. So that lecturers must first learn new systems during online learning. Lecturers can first analyze the media used, such as what features are supported, and how to operate.

The second strategy is communication management, management here is how lecturers and students apply learning discipline, what needs to be considered is the problem of time, commitment of lecturers and students, design of learning outcomes, and others that are related to the course.

Lecturers have guided the online learning process as much as possible, one of through online face-to-face discussions or synchronous learning through various available applications. However, creativity and innovation are still required to make the learning process more interesting. Based on interviews conducted by researchers, there are several student opinions during online courses, including the following:

Student 1: "I prefer the lecturer explaining the material first, then if I don't understand it, I read books or other references that are notified by the lecturer."

Student 5: "It's better to hear the lecturer's explanation because if we don't understand, we can ask questions directly. Especially if the lecturer adds an explanation with some examples."

Other students' opinions were that students feel embarrassed to express their opinions or asking questions, they were worried about being considered stupid by their friends, there were also those who were worried about the attitude and communication style of the lecturer who was one-way, not giving students the opportunity to discuss.

Student 4: "When I didn't understand the material but was immediately given an assignment, I felt even more confused. But I don't ask to the lecturer directly, I'm more comfortable ask to my friends after the course was finish."

Student 7: "Sometimes I feel bored when the lecturer only explains the material too long. So, sometimes I followed the classes while doing other activities, but the lecturers don't know what we're doing at home."

In this case, the lecturer is expected to change the style of communication during online learning, two-way communication needs to be applied, if the student is passive, the

lecturer's task as a facilitator is stimulating students to become more active in the online learning. Lecturers can change their strategies by forcing students by asking simple questions while the lecturer explaining the material. It turns out that this method is quite successful. Students feel that they get attention from the lecturers, which is also can improve their eager to learn.

Furthermore, the others results showed the learning burnout in online learning because of the difficult theoretical material and the less varied learning methods. Therefore, other strategies are needed to reduce these obstacles, for example by doing online quizzes, displaying video material, using game applications so that they do not get bored. The lecturer also have to changes the communication style in teaching from one-way to two-way communication, changes the communication style that is acceptable to students, creates a relaxed learning situation so that avoid stress while studying.

In doing online English courses for one semester, the lecturer tries as much as possible to use several strategies or methods so that students can understand the material presented. The lecturer has already used PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) method and also discussion method. These two methods that have been carried out do not make students active in the teaching learning process.

It is time for a collaborative learning system strategy in the form of problem based learning (PBL) and project based learning (PjBL) applied. PBL is a learning model which places the students as the center of learning (student centered learning). PBL teaches students to think critically and logically in solving a problem based on the knowledge that they already have. PBL will encourage students to find alternative solutions to the problems that have been given, then students are asked to choose the best solution in solving existing problems. While the PjBL Model, students are asked to think critically and scientifically, and also require students to learn independently. PjBL provides real learning situations for students, the students are asked to work on a project that will provide knowledge permanently. PjBL is a learning model with a constructivism approach.

In addition, the collaborative learning system can reduce learning burnout in the online courses. Materials, assignments, discussions, exams, are made jointly between lecturers and students. Even the students themselves make the exam questions and they themselves have to answer, the lecturer assesses the creativity of the students in making questions and finding innovations from the answers. With these several communication strategies, it is hoped that

online courses can produce the good quality results as expected in learning outcomes.

### ***Discussion***

The data showed that learning burnout, frustration with the circumstances felt by students, lecturers also experience obstacles in providing feedback from students. Some communication strategies are required to facilitate the lecture process and reduce learning burnout in the online courses, such as planning the learning process as well as possible and create a creative, varied, and innovative way to foster student enthusiasm in learning, applying two-way communication that providing opportunities for students in responding either in the form of questions, discussions, or comments, and implementing a collaborative learning system strategy in the form of project based learning (PjBL) and problem based learning (PBL).

Smith (2003) also examined the communication strategy use among adult learners of English in a computer mediated environment. Specifically, communication strategies employed during problem-free discourse as well as compensatory strategy use during taskbased computer-mediated communication (CMC) were explored. The data suggest that learners use a wide array of communication strategies during task-based CMC and that the CMC environment shapes this use. Learners also employed various compensatory strategies while navigating the tasks.

Jumiati, Gani, and Sari (2017) did the study about types of communication strategies used by the English teacher during the teaching process and explaining its implementation in the classroom. The result showed that eight strategies were used by the English teacher included three additional strategies that appeared during teaching process. The highest number of strategies used by the teacher in the classroom was stalling and time gaining strategy. Meanwhile the least number of strategies used was repetition. In addition, the teacher only implemented compensatory strategies in the class since the eight strategies were included into it.

Martin, Bolliger (2018) examined student perception on various engagement strategies used in online courses based on Moore's interaction framework. The strategies used by the teacher to increase students' interest in learning were to provide students with an understanding of the importance of learning, to make learning material brief, clear, and

interesting, to use simple and interesting media, and to conduct regular and continuous evaluations.

Thus, from the discussion above, it can be interpreted that the implementation of communication strategies was very helpful for the students in understanding the teacher's material and facilitated the teacher in overcoming the problem in communicating with the students during the teaching and learning process.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study, there are several problems that arise for students during online lectures. The main problem is learning burnout. Besides learning burnout felt by students, frustration with the circumstances is also experienced because they cannot understand the material provided, and lecturers also experience obstacles in providing feedback from students.

It is shown that the communication strategy between lecturers and students during the online courses is very important, especially to facilitate the lecture process and reduce learning burnout in the courses. This requires some strategies, such as lecturer should plan the learning process as well as possible and create a creative, varied, and innovative way to foster student enthusiasm in learning, should apply two-way communication that providing opportunities for students in responding either in the form of questions, discussions, or comments, and implement a collaborative learning system strategy in the form of project-based learning (PjBL) and problem-based learning (PBL). PBL is a learning model that places students as the center of learning (student centered learning). While the PjBL model provides a real learning situation for students, the students are asked to work on a project that will provide knowledge permanently.

### **IMPLICATION**

The suggestion that the researcher wants to convey is that other researchers can conduct further research related to communication strategies between lecturers and students in other online courses.

### BIO-PROFILE

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