

# UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION\_THEORY



Berger and Calabrese (1975)

# URT

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- Explains how communication is used to reduce the level of uncertainty between people engaging in initial interactions.
- initial interactions - to increase their ability to make predictions about one another in order to explain the outcomes of the interaction.

# Uncertainty

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- 1. Cognitive uncertainty refers to the uncertainty associated with beliefs and attitudes that we and others hold.
- 2. Behavioral uncertainty refers to the “extent to which behavior is predictable in a given situation.”

# Proactive and Retroactive

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- 1. Proactive processes consist of attempts to reduce uncertainty prior to a communicative episode.
- 2. Retroactive processes apply sense-making tools to events that have already occurred.

# Related concepts

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- Berger and Calabrese identified seven concepts that are related to uncertainty:
- Verbal output
- Nonverbal warmth
- Information seeking
- Self-disclosure
- Reciprocity of disclosure
- Similarity
- Liking

# Phases of Interaction

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## **Entry phase**

- a. This is the first stage in an interaction between strangers.
- b. Interaction is guided by implicit and explicit rules and norms (e.g., shaking hands, asking "How are you?").

## **Personal phase**

- a. Parties in a conversation start to communicate more spontaneously.
- b. More personal information is disclosed during this phase.

## **Exit phase**

- a. Individuals make decisions about whether they wish to engage in future interactions with this person.

