



RESEARCH ARTICLE

**COMPENSATION STRATEGIES FOR VOCABULARY LIMITATIONS IN BIPA LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF VIETNAMESE LEARNERS**Nila Agustin Prianti¹, M. Isnaini², Arif Setiawan³, Nguyen Thi Thu Hang⁴^{1,2,3}Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang⁴Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam**Article History**

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In the context of learning Indonesian as a foreign language, limited vocabulary often becomes one of the main obstacles that hinder learners from communicating effectively. To overcome this limitation, learners frequently employ various communication strategies that allow them to maintain interaction despite gaps in linguistic competence. Understanding how these strategies are used is essential for improving the effectiveness of Indonesian language teaching for foreign learners (BIPA). This study aims to identify and analyze the compensation strategies employed by BIPA learners in Vietnam when dealing with limitations in Indonesian vocabulary during classroom interactions. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. The study was conducted at Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam, involving Vietnamese students enrolled in an Indonesian language class. Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation of learners' utterances during learning activities. A total of 20 instances of learner utterances and communicative behaviors indicating the use of compensation strategies were identified and analyzed. Data analysis followed the qualitative analysis model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that BIPA learners employ several types of compensation strategies to maintain communication. These strategies include code-switching, lexical borrowing, lexical approximation, circumlocution, and gestural strategies. Among these strategies, lexical borrowing from English was found to be the most frequently used, indicating the role of English as a linguistic support in communication. Nonverbal strategies such as gestures were also commonly used to clarify meanings when learners lacked appropriate vocabulary. The study suggests that compensation strategies play an important role in sustaining communication and supporting the development of learners' communicative competence. Therefore, BIPA instruction should adopt communicative and contextual approaches that allow learners to utilize such strategies while gradually expanding their vocabulary repertoire.

Introduction

The development of foreign language learning in the era of globalisation has driven increased interest among the international community to learn various languages, including Indonesian. Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is a language learning program specifically designed to help non-Indonesians learn Indonesian as a second or foreign language (Tiawati & Dwinita, 2024). This program not only serves as a means of language learning but also as a tool of cultural diplomacy that introduces Indonesia's identity and culture to the world. In recent decades, the BIPA program has developed significantly and is offered in various countries through educational partnerships, language institutions, and universities.

These developments indicate that the Indonesian language is gaining more attention in the context of international language learning. Several educational institutions in Asia, Europe, and Australia have introduced BIPA programs as part of their efforts to expand access to Indonesian language education for the global community (Arlianti & Jon, 2024). Vietnam is one of the countries that has shown significant progress in implementing BIPA programs. Alongside growing economic, educational, and cultural cooperation

Corresponding Author: M. Isnaini, Email: m.isnaini@unm.ac.id
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia.

between Indonesia and Vietnam, there has been an increasing interest among the Vietnamese public in learning Indonesian. This can be seen in the implementation of BIPA programs at several universities in Vietnam, including Ho Chi Minh City Open University, which is one of the institutions actively offering Indonesian language education to foreign students.

In the process of second language learning, learners often face various linguistic challenges, especially in mastering vocabulary. Vocabulary is one of the fundamental components of language competence because it serves as the foundation for speaking, reading, writing, and understanding a language. Limited vocabulary often becomes the main obstacle for second language learners in conveying ideas effectively. When learners do not have sufficient vocabulary, they tend to experience difficulties in expressing the meanings they wish to convey, thus making the communication process less fluent (Fitriansal et al., 2026). Nevertheless, limited vocabulary does not always lead to a breakdown in communication. In real-life communication situations, second language learners often use various strategies to bridge the gap between their linguistic competence and the communication needs they face. These strategies are known as compensatory or communication strategies, and learners use them to maintain communicative interactions despite language limitations.

Studies on communication strategies in second language learning have been widely discussed in the applied linguistics literature. Tarone defines communication strategies as efforts made by speakers to convey meaning when the appropriate linguistic form is not available in the target language. These strategies arise as a result of negotiating meaning between the speaker and the interlocutor in communicative situations that experience linguistic gaps (Tarone, 1981). Additionally, Faerch and Kasper explain that communication strategies are deliberate plans used by speakers to solve communication problems when communicative goals cannot be directly achieved through available linguistic resources. Within this framework, communication strategies are divided into achievement and reduction strategies, each reflecting learners' efforts to maintain communication or avoid certain linguistic difficulties (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). From the perspective of language learning strategies, Oxford classifies compensation strategies as part of learning strategies that enable learners to overcome limitations in linguistic knowledge through various alternative means of communication, such as using synonyms, borrowing vocabulary from other languages, using context, and utilising non-verbal cues (Oxford, 1990). These compensation strategies allow learners to remain actively engaged in communication, even when their language proficiency is limited.

Many empirical studies have shown that communication strategies play an important role in second language acquisition. Foreign language learners often use strategies such as code-switching, lexical borrowing, circumlocution, and the use of gestures to maintain communication when faced with vocabulary limitations (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). These strategies enable learners to sustain the flow of communication while simultaneously developing communicative competence in the target language. In the context of BIPA learning, several studies have also shown that learners employ various communication strategies to overcome linguistic difficulties during the learning process. For example, research indicates that foreign language learners often use another language in which they are more proficient as a source of linguistic compensation when faced with limited vocabulary in the target language (Nguyen & Thu, 2016).

Nevertheless, most research on communication strategies in BIPA learning focuses on the learning context in Indonesia or on learners from certain countries, such as South Korea and Japan. Studies that specifically examine the compensation strategies of BIPA learners in Southeast Asia, especially in Vietnam, are relatively limited (Muhiri et al., 2023). In fact, the context of language learning in Vietnam has its own characteristics because most Vietnamese learners also have a fairly good command of English. This condition allows English to function as a source of linguistic compensation in the communication process; thus, it has the potential to produce different patterns of communication strategies compared with learners from other countries. In addition, most previous studies have focused more on the pedagogical aspects of BIPA learning or on the linguistic difficulties experienced by learners; studies that specifically analyse the compensation strategies that emerge in BIPA classroom interactions are limited (Asteria et al., 2024). Therefore, more in-depth research is needed to understand how BIPA learners use compensation strategies in real communication situations during the learning process.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify and analyse the compensation strategies used by BIPA learners at Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam. The research focuses on various forms of compensation strategies

that emerge during learning interactions, both in the form of linguistic strategies, such as code-switching and borrowing vocabulary, and nonverbal strategies, such as using gestures to clarify meaning. This study theoretically contributes to the development of studies on communication strategies in learning Indonesian as a foreign language, particularly in the context of BIPA learners from Vietnam. Practically, the findings of this research are expected to provide an overview of the patterns of compensation strategies used by learners in the learning process, which can serve as a basis for BIPA instructors to design more adaptive and responsive teaching approaches to meet the needs of Indonesian language learners abroad.

Materials and Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the compensation strategies employed by learners of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) to overcome vocabulary limitations during the learning process. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of communication strategy use within the context of natural classroom interactions. Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore learners' linguistic behaviour contextually and to understand how they utilise various linguistic and non-linguistic resources to maintain communication (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative descriptive approach is also widely used in applied linguistics research because it enables researchers to systematically describe language phenomena based on empirical data obtained from real communication situations (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2018).

This study was conducted at the Ho Chi Minh City Open University in Vietnam, which is one of the higher education institutions that offers the Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) program. The BIPA learning environment at this institution was chosen as the research location because classroom interactions provide learners with the opportunity to use Indonesian directly in authentic communication situations. The learning activities in BIPA classes serve as the primary source of observation, as during these interactions, learners often encounter linguistic gaps that lead to the use of various compensation strategies.

The participants in this study were Vietnamese students taking beginner-level Indonesian language classes in the BIPA program at Ho Chi Minh City Open University. These learners are foreign speakers who are studying Indonesian as a second or foreign language. The research participants were selected purposively, considering their active involvement in Indonesian language learning activities. Purposive sampling is often used in qualitative research because it allows researchers to select participants who are considered to have information relevant to the research focus (Palinkas et al., 2015).

No	Participant Code	Gender	Study Program	BIPA Level	Length of Time Learning Indonesian
1	P1	Woman	Foreign Language	Basic BIPA	6 months
2	P2	Male	Asia Studies	Basic BIPA	6 months
3	P3	Perempuan	International Relations	Basic BIPA	7 months
4	P4	Laki-laki	Economy	Basic BIPA	6 months
5	P5	Perempuan	Language and Culture	Basic BIPA	8 months
6	P6	Laki-laki	Tourism	Basic BIPA	7 months
7	P7	Perempuan	Southeast Asian Studies	Basic BIPA	6 months
8	P8	Laki-laki	International Relations	Basic BIPA	7 months

Table 1. Research Participant Profile

The research data consists of the utterances and communication behaviours of learners that demonstrate the use of compensation strategies in learning interactions. These data were obtained from various classroom communication situations, such as discussions about hobbies, conversations about daily activities, discussions on the topic of food, as well as interactions related to specific objects or places. Based on the results of data collection, a total of 20 examples of utterances and communication behaviours were obtained, showing the use of various forms of compensation strategies by BIPA learners. These data include

the use of English as a substitute for Indonesian vocabulary, the use of descriptive explanations to clarify certain concepts, the use of words with similar meanings, as well as the use of gestures or body movements to clarify communicative intent.

The data collection techniques in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly observe learning activities in BIPA classes and to identify the use of compensation strategies that emerge in learners' communicative interactions. Observation is one of the primary techniques in qualitative research, allowing researchers to obtain data directly from participants' behaviour in natural situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition to observation, this study also used semi-structured interview techniques to obtain additional information regarding learners' experiences and perceptions related to vocabulary difficulties in learning Indonesian. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to gather more in-depth information because they provide space for participants to explain their experiences more freely while still remaining within the framework of the research questions (Adams, 2015). Technical documentation was used to complement the observation and interview data. Documentation in this research included field notes, recordings of classroom conversations, and learners' written work that demonstrated the use of compensation strategies. The use of various data sources enabled the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied.

The research instruments used in this study included observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and data documentation sheets. The observation guidelines were used to record various forms of compensation strategies that emerged during the learning process. The interview guidelines were used to gather information about the learners' experiences in dealing with vocabulary limitations and the strategies they used to overcome these difficulties. The documentation sheets were used to organise the utterance data and communication behaviour obtained during the data collection process.

Data analysis in this study was conducted through several stages, referring to the qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and organised data relevant to the research focus, namely, the compensation strategies used by BIPA learners to overcome vocabulary limitations. Data unrelated to the research focus were eliminated so that the analysis could be conducted in a more targeted manner. The next stage is data display, which involves arranging the reduced data in the form of thematic categories based on the types of compensation strategies used by the learners. At this stage, learners' utterances and communicative behaviours were classified into several categories of communication strategies, such as code-switching, lexical borrowing, lexical approximation, circumlocution, and nonverbal strategies in the form of gestures or kinesics. Presenting the data in thematic categories makes it easier for researchers to identify patterns in the use of compensation strategies that appear during learning interactions.

The final stage is drawing conclusions and verification, which involves interpreting the research findings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how BIPA learners use compensation strategies in the communication process. At this stage, the researcher examines the relationship between the types of strategies used and the communicative situations underlying them to provide an overview of the patterns of compensation strategy use in Indonesian language learning by learners from Vietnam. To ensure data validity, this study applies the techniques of method triangulation and source triangulation. Method triangulation is conducted by employing several data collection techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing data obtained from various participants and different communication situations. The use of triangulation in qualitative research is important to enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings (Denzin, 2012). Thus, the research results are expected to have an adequate level of validity and be able to provide an accurate picture of the compensation strategies used by BIPA learners to overcome vocabulary limitations during the learning process.

Results and Discussion

Observations on Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) learning activities at Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam, show that learners actively use various compensation strategies to overcome their limited Indonesian vocabulary. These strategies appear in different forms of communication, both verbal

and nonverbal. Based on the analysis of observation data and classroom conversation documentation, several types of compensation strategies used by the learners were identified, including code-switching, lexical borrowing, lexical approximation, circumlocution, and nonverbal strategies such as gestures or kinesics. The frequency distribution of the use of these strategies is presented in Table 2.

No	Types of Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lexical Borrowing	7	35%
2	Gestural Strategy	5	25%
3	Circumlocution	4	20%
4	Code-Switching	2	10%
5	Lexical Approximation	2	10%
	Total	20	100%

Table 2. Frequency of Compensation Strategy Use by BIPA Learners

Table 2 shows that lexical borrowing was the dominant strategy used by BIPA learners in Vietnam. This can be seen in the use of English vocabulary in Indonesian sentences, such as food, coffee, libraries, markets, spoons, and teachers. The dominance of this strategy indicates that English functions as a support language that helps learners maintain communication when they have difficulty finding appropriate Indonesian vocabulary. The least frequently used strategies were code-switching and lexical approximation, each of which appeared in only two instances. This indicates that learners borrow words directly from English more often than replace the entire sentence structure with another language. Learners use these strategies to maintain the flow of communication when they have difficulty finding the correct Indonesian vocabulary. These findings show that learners do not halt communication when faced with linguistic limitations but instead seek alternative strategies to ensure that their message is conveyed effectively.

Code-Switching Strategy

One of the compensation strategies identified in this study is the use of code-switching. This strategy occurs when learners directly use English to replace words or expressions in Indonesian that they have not yet mastered. Code-switching usually occurs spontaneously when learners have difficulty finding the appropriate equivalent in the target language. An example of this strategy can be seen in the following conversation.

Student : “Saya suka... hmm... I like making crafts.”
 Teacher : “Membuat kerajinan?”
 Student : “Ya, membuat kerajinan.”

The statement shows that the learner begins the sentence in Indonesian but then switches to English when they do not know the correct vocabulary. The use of English in this context functions as a strategy to maintain the fluency of communication so that the message can still be understood by the interlocutor. This strategy is often found among second language learners who are at an early stage of vocabulary acquisition.

Code-switching in second language learning situations does not always indicate linguistic weakness but can be understood as a communication strategy that allows learners to remain actively engaged in classroom interactions. By using a language in which they are more proficient, learners can avoid communication breakdowns while staying involved in the learning process.

Lexical Borrowing Strategy

The most dominant strategy found in this study is lexical borrowing, which refers to the use of English vocabulary in Indonesian sentences. This strategy shows that learners utilise the language in which they are more proficient as a tool to convey their intended meaning. Some examples of this strategy’s use can be seen in the following utterances.

- Student : "Saya suka makan food Indonesia."
 Student : "Saya suka minum coffee setiap pagi."
 Student : "Saya belajar di library kampus."
 Student : "Saya pergi ke market dengan teman."
 Student : "Saya makan nasi dengan spoon."
 Student : "Saya belajar bahasa Indonesia dengan teacher."

This lexical borrowing strategy not only appears in a specific conversational context but is also found across a variety of classroom discussion topics, such as discussions about food, daily activities, and places. This indicates that learners consistently used English as a compensatory resource when facing limitations in their Indonesian vocabulary. In this utterance, the learner uses English words such as food, coffee, library, market, spoon, and teacher to replace Indonesian vocabulary such as makanan, kopi, perpustakaan, pasar, sendok, and guru. The use of these English words indicates that the learner is highly dependent on the language more familiar to them to maintain communication. Although the use of words from another language may be considered a form of interference from a linguistic perspective, in the context of second language learning, this strategy serves as an adaptive mechanism that enables communication to continue. By utilising vocabulary they are already familiar with, learners can convey messages more quickly and effectively without having to halt the conversation.

Lexical Substitution Strategy (Lexical Approximation)

Another strategy identified in this study is lexical substitution (lexical approximation). This occurs when learners use a word whose meaning is close to the word they actually want to express, even though it is not entirely accurate semantically. An example of this strategy is in the following sentence:

Student : "Saya tidur di kemah saat liburan."

In this context, the learner actually wanted to say the word "tenda" (tent), but used the word "kemah" (camp), which is considered to have a related meaning to camping activities. Although semantically the two words have different meanings, the use of "kemah" shows that the learner is trying to choose the vocabulary that most closely matches the intended meaning based on their linguistic knowledge. The lexical substitution strategy indicates that the learner has the ability to negotiate meaning during the communication process. They do not only rely on another language, but also try to use the linguistic resources in Indonesian that they already possess, even if not yet entirely accurately.

Circumlocution Strategy for Meaning Description

In addition to using substitutes or other languages, learners employ circumlocution strategies to convey concepts for which they do not yet know the vocabulary. In this strategy, learners describe an object or concept by providing a longer explanation or description. Some examples of this strategy can be found in the following utterances.

- Student : "Kemarin saya pergi ke tempat jual banyak buku."
 Student : "Saya pergi dengan kendaraan dua roda."
 Student : "Tempat orang sakit dirawat itu apa?"
 Student : "Tempat orang beli obat."

In the first utterance, the learner uses the description "a place that sells many books" to replace the word "bookstore." In the second example, the learner uses the phrase "two-wheeled vehicle" instead of the word "motorcycle." Meanwhile, in other examples, the learner describes a hospital as "a place where sick people are treated," and a pharmacy as "a place where people buy medicine."

This strategy demonstrates that learners have the ability to explain the meaning of a concept even if they do not yet know the exact vocabulary in the target language. By using relevant descriptions, learners can convey their message effectively to their interlocutors.

Nonverbal Strategy (Gestural Strategy)

In addition to verbal strategies, this study also found the use of nonverbal communication strategies in the form of gestures or body movements. These strategies are used when learners are unable to express a concept verbally; they make use of body movements to help convey the meaning. The following examples of gestural strategies have been found. A learner points to their wrist when they want to say bracelet. In another situation, the learner points to the bag they are carrying when they want to refer to the word bag. Additionally, the learner mimics the action of writing when they want to say write and imitates the motion of opening a book to explain the activity of reading. Gestures are also used to explain certain actions. For example, when a learner wants to convey the word "make," they rotate their hands as if performing the act of making something. This movement helps the interlocutor understand the intended meaning, even if the learner is not yet able to verbally express the precise word. The use of gestural strategies indicates that learners are able to utilise various modalities of communication in learning interactions. Gestures serve as visual aids that can replace verbal expressions that are not yet available in the learner's linguistic repertoire.

Dominance of Compensation Strategies

Based on the overall data analysed, the most frequently used compensation strategy by BIPA learners in Vietnam is lexical borrowing from English, followed by gestural strategies, meaning description, and lexical substitution. The dominance of the lexical borrowing strategy indicates that English serves as a supporting language in the communication processes of BIPA learners in Vietnam. These findings indicate that BIPA learners possess a fairly high awareness of strategies when facing language limitations. They do not halt communication when encountering linguistic difficulties but instead actively use various strategies to ensure that their message is conveyed. Overall, the results of this study indicate that compensation strategies are important in second language acquisition. These strategies enable learners to continue participating in communication, even when their vocabulary mastery is limited. Thus, the use of compensation strategies can be seen as an indicator of the development of learners' communicative competence in learning Indonesian as a foreign language.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) learners at Ho Chi Minh City Open University actively use various compensation strategies to overcome vocabulary limitations in the communication process. Based on data analysis obtained from classroom learning interactions, several forms of compensation strategies used by learners were identified, including code-switching, lexical borrowing, lexical approximation, circumlocution, and the use of gestures or kinesic strategies. The existence of these various strategies shows that learners do not halt communication when facing linguistic limitations but instead strive to find alternative strategies to convey their messages effectively.

One of the strategies most frequently used by learners in this study is lexical borrowing from English. The use of words such as food, coffee, library, market, spoon, and teacher in Indonesian sentences shows that learners utilise a language they are more proficient in as a source of linguistic compensation. These findings indicate that English serves as a supporting language in the communication process of BIPA learners in Vietnam. This situation is understandable given that most Vietnamese students have a reasonably good command of English, making it a common tool for cross-linguistic communication (Indrariyani & Khusniyah, 2025).

The phenomenon of using another language as a compensatory strategy aligns with the concept of communication strategies proposed by Tarone (1981). Tarone explains that communication strategies are efforts made by speakers to express meaning when they lack the appropriate linguistic form in the target language. In such situations, speakers may employ various alternative strategies, such as utilising a more proficient language or using a word with a similar meaning (Tarone, 1981).

In addition to lexical borrowing, gestures or other nonverbal strategies are another prominent strategy. In certain communicative situations, learners use body movements to replace vocabulary they have not yet mastered. For example, a learner might point to their wrist when wanting to say the word bracelet, mimic a writing motion to convey the word write, or act out the gesture of opening a book to explain the activity of reading. The use of gestures in communication demonstrates that learners utilise nonverbal communication modalities to clarify the meaning they wish to convey (Hardika & Andriyanto, 2025). This strategy can be understood as part of compensation strategies in second language learning. Oxford explains that compensation strategies enable learners to overcome their limited linguistic knowledge through various alternative means of communication, such as using synonyms, borrowing vocabulary from other languages, or using gestures to clarify meaning (Oxford, 1990). These strategies help learners remain engaged in communication, even when their language skills are limited.

Research findings also indicate the use of the meaning description strategy (circumlocution), in which learners explain a concept using a longer description. Examples can be seen in learners' utterances, such as "a place where sick people are treated" to replace the word hospital or "a place where people buy medicine" to replace the word pharmacy. This strategy shows that learners attempt to explain the meaning of a concept using the language knowledge they already possess, even though they do not yet know the precise vocabulary in Indonesian (Andriyanto et al., 2021; Dewi, 2024). This strategy aligns with the concept of achievement strategies proposed by Faerch and Kasper (1983), who state that second language learners often use various linguistic alternatives to achieve communication goals when faced with linguistic gaps. Strategies such as circumlocution enable learners to maintain communication by explaining the intended concept through additional descriptions or explanations.

In addition, this study also found the use of lexical substitution (lexical approximation), which is the use of a word whose meaning is close to the word that the speaker intends to convey. An example is the use of the word "kemah" to replace "tenda." Although these two words have different semantic meanings, the learner uses "kemah" because it is considered related to the context of camping activities. This strategy demonstrates that learners make an effort to select vocabulary that most closely matches the intended meaning based on the linguistic knowledge they possess. The findings of this study are also consistent with the classification of communication strategies proposed by Dörnyei and Scott (1997), who state that second language learners often use various strategies, such as code-switching, circumlocution, and approximation, to maintain communication when facing vocabulary limitations. These strategies serve as adaptive mechanisms that allow learners to sustain communicative interactions in linguistic situations that are not fully mastered (Jayanti, 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2025). Overall, the findings of this study indicate that BIPA learners in Vietnam possess a relatively high awareness of strategies for dealing with language limitations. Instead of choosing to halt communication when faced with vocabulary difficulties, learners actively employ various strategies to maintain interactions. This condition shows that compensatory strategies play an important role in second language acquisition, especially at the early stages of learning when learners' vocabulary mastery is limited.

The findings of this study are also in line with various previous studies showing that communication strategies are important components of communicative competence in second language learning. The use of strategies such as code-switching, lexical borrowing, and gestures represents learners' ways of adapting to the linguistic limitations they encounter during the learning process. In the context of BIPA (Indonesian language for foreign speakers) learning, these findings have important implications for teachers of Indonesian as a foreign language. Teachers should not view the use of compensatory strategies merely as mistakes or linguistic weaknesses, but rather as a natural part of the language learning process. Compensatory strategies can serve as indicators that learners are actively striving to maintain communication and develop their communicative competence (Wulandari & Konety, 2024; Widiyanto, 2021). Therefore, BIPA instruction needs to be designed with a more communicative and contextual approach, providing opportunities for learners to use various communication strategies during learning interactions. Instructors can also utilise compensation strategies as part of the learning process by providing feedback that helps learners gradually expand their vocabulary mastery. Overall, the results of this study indicate that compensation strategies are an important mechanism

for enabling BIPA learners to sustain communication despite vocabulary limitations. These strategies not only help learners convey messages effectively but also reflect the development of their communicative competence in the process of second language acquisition.

Conclusions

This study aims to identify and analyse the compensation strategies used by learners of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) at Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam, to overcome vocabulary limitations during the learning process. Based on the analysis of the learners' speech data and communicative behaviour in classroom interactions, it was found that learners actively use various compensation strategies to maintain communication fluency. These strategies include code-switching, lexical borrowing, lexical approximation, circumlocution, and the use of gestures or nonverbal (kinesic) strategies.

The research results show that the most dominant strategy used by learners is lexical borrowing from English, which serves as a source of linguistic compensation when learners do not know the appropriate Indonesian vocabulary. In addition, the use of gestures and meaning descriptions are also strategies frequently employed to explain concepts that have not yet been linguistically mastered. These findings indicate that BIPA learners do not cease communication when faced with vocabulary limitations but instead strive to use various alternative strategies to maintain interaction and effectively convey their messages.

The findings of this study theoretically reinforce the view that compensation strategies are important parts of the second language acquisition process. The use of strategies such as code-switching, lexical borrowing, and the use of gestures demonstrates that learners utilise a variety of communicative resources to bridge the gap between their existing linguistic competence and the communicative demands they face. Thus, compensation strategies can be understood as adaptive mechanisms that support the development of learners' communicative competence in second language learning.

Pedagogically, the results of this study have important implications for BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers) teaching abroad. Teachers should view the use of compensation strategies not merely as linguistic errors, but as part of the natural language learning process. Therefore, BIPA instruction should be designed with a communicative and contextual approach, allowing learners space to use various communication strategies during classroom interactions. In addition, teachers can utilise compensation strategies as a means to enrich learners' vocabulary mastery by providing feedback and more intensive communication practice.

Although this study provides an overview of the compensation strategies used by BIPA learners in Vietnam, it has several limitations. The research data were obtained from classroom interactions within a single learning context; therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to all BIPA learning contexts in other countries. Future research should involve a larger number of participants and compare the use of compensation strategies among BIPA learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Further studies can also explore the relationship between compensation strategies and learners' language proficiency levels to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of communication strategies in learning Indonesian as a foreign language.

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