Navigating English-mediated online discourse: Communication strategies of Indonesian EFL learners in online discussions

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Abstract - For non-native English speakers, effective and meaningful communication in English can pose challenges due to potential limitations in their communicative competence. Such challenges can cause communication breakdowns if not effectively managed. This complexity is compounded when English communication occurs in an online setting, where technological issues and lack of social presence may disrupt the communication. This study aims to explore the communication strategies utilized by Indonesian EFL learners when participating in online group discussions. The data were collected from six groups of first-year English Department students involving a total of twenty-two students engaged in 20-minute online discussions per group. The analysis focused on the discourse produced by the participants during these discussions observing the strategies employed by the participants. The findings indicated that Indonesian EFL learners predominantly applied achievement and compensatory strategies. These strategies encompassed code-switching, circumlocution, approximation, the use of all-purpose words, word foreignizing, and appealing for help. Among these strategies, code-switching emerged as the prevailing strategy for Indonesian EFL learners engaged in online group discussions. While conversing, code-switching was automatically and naturally used, particularly when referring to Indonesian acronyms and names. At last, implications and future directions are addressed.

Keywords: communicative competence, communication strategies, English language learning, group discussion, online learning

1. Introduction

Effective communication serves as a pivotal prerequisite for individuals to perform information exchange and partake in meaningful dialogues (Bahang, 2018). Consequently, research endeavors aimed at understanding the strategies underlying effective communication among individuals employing diverse discourse modalities, such as English, hold substantial merit. Inadequate mastery of the English language can lead to communication breakdowns, and it indicates the urgency of endowing students with the necessary skills to adeptly navigate communicative challenges and cultivate reciprocal competencies in English discourse.

Enhancing students' proficiency in using English for effective communication can be achieved through the implementation of diverse strategies, including active engagement in discussions. Leveraging technological advancements, online platforms have made it feasible to facilitate discussions in a virtual environment such as through online synchronous discussions. The utilization of online synchronous discussions yields numerous advantages such as encompassing a sense of ownership and cognitive enhancement for students (Peterson et al., 2018) and the development of critical thinking and English writing skills (Rinekso & Muslim, 2020) which ultimately leads to heightened student engagement in the learning process (Wolverton, 2018). Nevertheless, the implementation of synchronous online discussions is not without its challenges, particularly in terms of potential misunderstandings that may arise (Rinekso & Muslim, 2020). Online language learning may lead to feelings of frustration (Wardana *et al*., 2022) as well as social isolation and anxiety which eventually hinders language learning (Culpeper & Qian, 2020). These challenges may also occur in online communication, particularly for non-native English speakers who are characterized by limited vocabulary and English language proficiency. In dealing with these challenges, language learners' communicative competence and the use of appropriate communication strategies during online synchronous communication may facilitate them to effectively sustain communication and convey messages in English.

Communicative competence indicates an individual's ability to use language as well as receive and make meanings of it both in oral and written forms (Rahman, 2020). The notion of communicative competence was originally introduced by Canale & Swain (1980). This model comprises four primary components. The first component is grammatical competence which encompasses learners' grasp of language elements such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The second component is sociolinguistic competence which necessitates learners' comprehension of the sociocultural norms influencing language usage, including politeness and register. The third component, discourse competence, entails learners' proficiency and ability to structure sentences to create diverse genres of texts. Lastly, strategic competence pertains to learners' knowledge of and ability to use both verbal and non-verbal strategies employed to overcome communication challenges. Communicative competence relates to a language learner's capacity to effectively and accurately use a language to achieve communication goals. A communicatively competent individual will have the ability to use a language effectively by being able to communicate intended meanings and understand messages conveyed by others (Zambrana, 2020). Hymes (1992 as cited by Meenambal & Meenakshi, 2022) stated that communicative competence is the basis for potential learning and this competence can be achieved through interactions with others. In their work, Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrel (1995) proposed a conceptual framework for communicative competence, represented as a pyramid encompassing an inner circle and enclosed by an outer circle consisting of discourse competence, linguistic competence, actional competence, socio-cultural competence, and strategic competence. Strategic competence includes a comprehension of communication strategies and their employment. This competence requires the knowledge of when and how to employ specific communication strategies to achieve intended outcomes in a variety of linguistic contexts.

To avoid communication breakdowns, language learners must have an understanding of communication strategies within the context of interaction. In situations of linguistic difficulty, speakers employ these strategies to convey their intended message (Corder, 1981, as cited in Dornyei, 1995). These strategies are referred to as communication strategies. Communication strategies deal with a set of strategies or tactics selected by a speaker and an interlocutor as a means of communication to perform certain speech tasks (Lychuk *et al*., 2023). Bialystok (1990, as cited in Putri, 2013, p.30) proposed the taxonomy of communication strategies which include avoidance or reduction strategies, achievement or compensatory strategies, and stalling or time gaining strategies. Avoidance or reduction strategies include message abandonment and topic avoidance. Achievement and compensatory strategies are

similar to communication strategies proposed by Thornbury (2005). At last, stalling or time-gaining strategies relate to the use of fillers or hesitation devices.

Thornbury (2005) categorized eight communication strategies. Circumlocution is one such strategy, in which students describe unfamiliar terms in the target language using related concepts. For example, a learner may use "I get a red in the face" to refer to timidity. In the word coinage strategy, learners create new words in the target language based on their comprehension of morphological rules in a technique known as word coinage. For example, a learner may create the term "investigation" to refer to "investment", even though this term is not officially included in dictionaries. Word foreignizing is another strategy in which learners adapt phonologically the terms from their native language to the target language. For example, the Indonesian term "modal" which means capital, could be modified to sound like the English word modal", even though their meanings are distinct. Approximation is a communication strategy possibly employed when learners do not know the exact term, they approximate it by substituting a similar word. For example, a student may substitute "work table" for "workbench". In cases of vocabulary deficiency, learners use all-purpose words such as "thing", "stuff", "make", "do", "what do you call it", and "what is it" to mitigate the lack of vocabulary. Code-switching is a strategy whereby language learners incorporate words or expressions from their native language into their target language discourse. In paralinguistic strategies, learners use paralinguistics, which includes mime, gestures, facial expressions, and aural imitation, to convey intended meanings when linguistic barriers exist. Appealing for help is another communication strategy. When students of a foreign language encounter difficulties due to a lack of vocabulary, they can employ the strategy of requesting assistance. This involves asking peers or instructors questions such as "How do you say?" to bridge language gaps.

The notion of communication strategies holds great significance in the realm of foreign language learning and acquisition (Selinker, 1972). Thornbury (2005) suggested that strategic competence can be attained through the use of communication strategies, which entail the ability to formulate, convey, and address communication-related challenges. Notably, the application of communication strategies may differ when engaging in face-to-face English conversations versus online discussions where physical presence is not feasible. Several recent studies have examined the utilization of communication strategies in conventional face-to-face communication in the context of English language learning (Abbasi & Nosratinia, 2018; Chew *et al*., 2018; Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020; Komariah *et al*., 2020; Roohani *et al*., 2020; Ugla *et al*., 2019; Vafadar, 2020), limited attention has been paid towards communication strategies within the synchronous online method. Additionally, prior studies investigating the phenomenon of synchronous and asynchronous online discussions have been conducted with various foci, such as students' engagement (Galikyan & Admiraal, 2019; Truhlar *et al*., 2018), motivation (Bailey *et al*., 2020), and perceived challenges (Rinekso & Muslim, 2020). However, little attention was given to the exploration of the employment of communication strategies during online discussions. Building upon this foundation, the authors expressed their interest in further investigating the employment of communication strategies during discussions conducted in English among Indonesian English as foreign language learners through synchronous online platforms. Specifically, this study was conducted to address a research question on what communication strategies were employed by students during synchronous online discussions when practicing spoken English.

2. Method

The present study was conducted under a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach, as outlined by Creswell (2012), proves comprehensive in comprehending individual cases and providing an all-encompassing understanding of a particular phenomenon. Within the context of the study, the qualitative approach was selected to delve into the communication strategies employed by Indonesian students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during online synchronous discussions.

The study focused on twenty-two out of thirty-nine first-year students majoring in the English Department at a university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The twenty-two participants were selected to be the research subject based on their participation in the synchronous online group discussion. The other students were eliminated from the study due to two reasons: (1) they preferred to join conventional face-to-face discussions, and (2) one group joined the synchronous online discussion, yet they underwent poor connection which interfered with the flow of the discussions resulting in difficulties to observe. They were enrolled in a listening and speaking course during the first semester of the 2021/2022 academic year. The course involved grouping students into small groups of 3-4, where they engaged in online group discussions on various topics in English. This served as English-speaking practice. Throughout

these online discussions, the participants' spoken interactions were meticulously recorded and documented. The data were collected to conduct an in-depth analysis of the communication strategies the participants employed during synchronous online discussions.

To collect the data for this research, an online observation of the English discussion process among the participants without intervening in the discussion was conducted. The discussions took place synchronously using Microsoft Teams and were video recorded with the participant's consent. The data in the form of utterances and non-verbal cues obtained from the observations were transcribed and analyzed using conversation analysis (CA) to categorize the expressions uttered by the participants into various types of communication strategies according to Thornbury's (2005) classification of communication strategies includes research design, data collection instruments, participants/sample, procedure of data collection, and data analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

From the analysis of the observational data, six communication strategies were found during a group discussion among first-year EFL students. These strategies included code-switching, circumlocution, approximation, appealing for help, word foreignizing, and the use of all-purpose words. Different from conventional face-to-face communication which enables speakers and interlocutors to use non-verbal communication, the findings revealed the absence of meaningful paralinguistic features as non-verbal communication as a result of limited visibility on camera. Additionally, the participant's use of the six strategies indicates their dependability on themselves in maintaining communication during the synchronous online discussions due to limited responses and engagement from their interlocutors. The subsequent section presents the findings associated with each communication strategy, accompanied by relevant conversational extracts. In terms of the coding, St. stands for Student to refer to a specific participant uttering the excerpt, and Gr. stands for Group indicating which group the participant belonged to during the online group discussion.

a. Code-switching

Foreign language speakers occasionally use their native language while using a second language, whether involuntarily or deliberately. In the online group discussions among the participants, certain instances of Indonesian utterances were observed to have been employed by the participants during the discussions.

> *"Okay, my material is about PPKM cancellation for the new year". (St. E/Gr. 1)*
> *"I want to talk about PPKM. The government canceled the PPKM." (St. E/Gr. 7)*
> *"With the cancellation of PPKM during Christmas and New Year because we can see the number of COVID-19 patients in Indonesia has started to decline even though the cancellation I am not sure there must be rules set for people who travel out of town, they have already vaccinated doses 1 and 2 and negative PCR results. Thank you". (St. A/Gr. 1)*
> *"Luhut said, or Mendagri said, improving the health or handling the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia was considered by the government in the cancellation" (St. E/Gr. 1)*

During the online discussions, two different groups, namely Group 1 and Group 7, engaged in discussions on the COVID-19 pandemic and its multifaceted impacts. Analysis of the provided excerpts showed the utilization of two Indonesian terms by the participants. The initial term "PPKM" is an abbreviation for "*Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat*" translating to "Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement". This term pertains to the Indonesian government's measures to restrict outdoor activities as a means of mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Notably, in their descriptions of this phenomenon, Students A and E from Group 1 and Student E from Group 7 seamlessly incorporated the term "PPKM" to denote this restriction initiative. Their usage did not appear to stem from challenges in accessing the term; rather, they employed it spontaneously and confidently. Additionally, Student E of Group 7 prefaced "PPKM" with the article "the" implying its incorporation as an English term. Further instances of Indonesian words were also discerned, including "*dosis*" the Indonesian equivalent of "dosage" in English, and "*Mendagri*" an Indonesian acronym referring to the Minister of Home Affairs.

Within the context of varied online discussions on various topics, the participants also incorporated Indonesian vocabulary. In the discourse concerning different levels of secondary education, Student C of Group 4 contested, "I don't agree with the motion that *SMK* is better than *SMA*, based on the quality of education. *SMA* has quality higher than *SMK*" (St. C/Gr. 4). Notably, the student used the term "*SMA*" to denote general high school and "SMK" to refer to vocational high school. An interesting finding is that the utilization of these Indonesian terms occurred spontaneously, implying that the participant's usage of the Indonesian terms was not motivated by challenges in locating English equivalents.

The previously discussed Indonesian terms employed by participants in the online discussion in a spontaneous manner signified that their usage might not be prompted by challenges in locating English equivalents. It contradicts with the case of Student B from Group 5, who articulated Indonesian phrases due to encountering difficulties in expressing the intended message in English. Student B elucidated, "I want to talk about toxic seniority when we usually meet in *OSPEK*…..I agree that culture of *apa ya..sopan santun* must be maintained" (St. B/Gr. 5). The term "*OSPEK*" refers to an orientation program for newly enrolled university students. While the utterance of "*OSPEK*" emerged effortlessly, demonstrating no linguistic obstacle, Student B encountered difficulty in conveying the term "politeness". Consequently, the Indonesian phrase "*sopan santun*" was employed in its stead. This substitution indicated a communication challenge, underscored by Student B's inclusion of "*apa ya*" akin to "what is it" as a discourse marker followed by a pause. Student B resorted to Indonesian words and expressions to avert communication breakdowns.

The incorporation of Indonesian expressions by the participants during the online English discussions demonstrated the employment of code-switching strategies. Thornbury (2005) expounded that code-switching often arises when interlocutors converse in a foreign language while also possessing a shared native language. Analysis of the utterances and their contextual settings reveals two possible causal factors. The initial factor prompting code-switching was the shared native language amongst group members as evident in the manner in which they seamlessly incorporated words or phrases amid the online discussion. The participants such as Student E in Group 1, Student E in Group 7, Student B in Group 5, and Student C in Group 4 showed spontaneous and automatic incorporation of Indonesian acronyms indicating that their usage was not attributed to communication challenges. Notably, they instinctively used Indonesian acronyms even when conversing in English. The second factor contributing to code-switching utilization in the observed online group discourse stemmed from lexical gaps. Student B in Group 5, manifesting a lexical deficiency, encountered difficulty in expressing "*sopan santun*", which translates to "politeness" in English. To avoid potential communication breakdowns and capitalize on the shared native language, Student B opted for the Indonesian term to convey the intended meaning.

Prior studies conducted in non-English speaking contexts have consistently reported the employment of code-switching in English interactions involving both non-native English teacher-speakers and student-learners within English classrooms. Within the Indonesian context, Pangaribuan *et al*. (2020) reported that 64% of English educators predominantly employed code-switching as a communication strategy during the instructional process. Similarly, within Iranian EFL contexts, studies by Samani et al. (2015) and Nourdad and Hosseini (2022) also identified code-switching as one of the prevailing communication strategies utilized by Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

b. Circumlocution

Another communication strategy employed in the online group discussions was circumlocution. This technique involves speakers describing their intended message when they are unable to find precise English words to convey it directly. An instance of this strategy occurred when Student E from Group 2 expressed that sexual harassment was not merely the fault of men. He contended, "I want to disagree, but sometimes men are always blamed because of sexual harassment but sometimes girls maybe too more looking for their clothes like something more than enough clothes. So, males won't do sexual harassment". Although the participant likely intended to refer to "modest clothing", he resorted to describing the concept as "something more enough clothes" to convey the idea of adequately covered attire. Another member of Group 2 who brought up an issue of the COVID-19 pandemic stated:

> *"I disagree with you because this is a pandemic situation, right? If the government gives a rest for the children, maybe the parents will ask the children to go out and take a vacation and that will be worse for our world because this is a pandemic and maybe this is a good statement for just don't give take a rest for the children." (St. D/Gr. 2)*

Student D explained one of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic where the government deferred school breaks to prevent crowding during holidays. While elucidating the notion of school breaks, Student D employed circumlocution by defining it as "take a rest for the children". Similarly, another participant from Group 3 employed circumlocution to address a communication challenge. Student B detailed, "Prophet Yaqub [Jacob] was depressed back then because he was told that his son, Prophet Yusuf [Joseph] was missing. Prophet Yaqub was sad for a long time until his eyes, ee…can't see the…the…place". (St. B/Gr. 3). Student B's description pertained to Prophet Jacob's blindness. However, encountering a lexical difficulty, he employed fillers ("ee…" and "the.. the…") as indicators, ultimately conveying the condition as "his eyes, ee…can't see the…the…place".

Student D and Student E from Group 2 effectively employed the circumlocution strategy to rephrase unknown vocabulary or phrases and convey intended meanings. This strategy aligns with Lee's (2021) the observation that repetition and paraphrasing are prevalent forms of self-repair strategies integrated within communication strategies. Student D also utilized repetition, exemplified by the phrase "take a rest for the children", which not only served as a communication strategy but also functioned to persuade interlocutors (Tymbay, 2022). Thornbury (2005) highlighted that foreign language learners compensate for unfamiliar words in the target language by using lengthier English explanations—a form of circumlocution as a communication strategy. This approach alternates silence or potential communication breakdown and ensures that interlocutors comprehend the message. The utterances provided by Students D and E of Group 2, as well as Student B of Group 3, when compensating for unfamiliar terms during speech, allowed them to maintain communication with their peers. The findings of the present study resonate with those of Ahmed and Pawar (2018), who explored communication strategies employed by Indian EFL university students. Their study identified paraphrasing as the most frequently employed strategy, with speakers describing their intentions, such as alternating "a quiet place" as "in a room that is very silent". Within the context of the observed online group discussions, the participants employed a circumlocution strategy due to encountered communication challenges, evident in the use of fillers and tentative language. However, it should be noted that circumlocution does not necessarily indicate lower English proficiency. Samani *et al.* (2015) reported that even proficient learners tended to employ circumlocution in their communications.

c. Approximation

Approximation relates to the use of general terms to denote specific objects or actions (Thornbury, 2005) for which precise target language terms are lacking. It is often observed among foreign language speakers due to potential vocabulary limitations. Approximation allowed learners to alternate vocabulary they lacked, such as younger is substituted by smaller. This communication strategy was found during an online group discussion by Student B of Group 1, who remarked, "Maybe just it, if you give your opinion about my materials, you're welcome". In this excerpt, Student B uttered the term "materials" as a broader reference to the term "motions or topics" she presented. While conveying meaning, "materials" falls within the realm of general vocabulary. This phenomenon underscores the employment of approximation within online discussions. The reality remains that many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners may not have extensive input exposure to English, consequently leading to deficiencies in having a wide array of lexical items for communication. This finding resonates with Manzano's (2018) findings who investigated Nepalese English learners, where approximation emerged as the most frequently employed communication strategy. Similarly, Ugla *et al.* (2019), in their study on Iraqi learners, reported that low-proficiency learners employed the approximation strategy more often than their high-proficiency counterparts.

d. Appealing for Help

Another communication strategy used by the participants during the online group discussions was appealing for help. This strategy entails speakers requesting help from their interlocutors when encountering difficulty in locating precise words or expressions within the target language. During the online group discussions, the teacher instructed the students to initiate a Q-A session. Student A from Group 3, serving as the moderator for the discussion, addressed the teacher with, "What is it, Miss?". His confusion regarding the teacher's instruction prompted him to seek clarification by posing a question to the teacher. Student A's utterance reflected his lack of comprehension of the teacher's direction, resulting in him to seek for help in further elucidation. This finding is in line with Domogen's (2021) findings, wherein participants in his study failed to respond to teachers' questions due to their inability

to comprehend the teacher's words. Similarly, Noviyenty *et al.* (2022) identified appealing for help as a strategy utilized by English teachers to understand spoken texts to maintain communication. In conventional oral communication, this strategy allows learners to fill out lexical gaps in the target language with the assistance of knowledgeable others. However, in the online setting, such as the present study, other factors like network issues can trigger its use as learners might miss fragments of speech due to interruptions caused by network problems. Thornbury (2005) pointed out that in communication, foreign language users communicating with peers or teachers who share the same native language often employ an appeal-for-help strategy to cope with communication barriers. This strategy is practical, as seeking help and assistance from peers or teachers can swiftly resolve issues. For instance, when encountering an unknown word in the target language, learners can directly question their peers or teachers, who might know the word's meaning. Samani *et al.* (2015) similarly identified appealing for help as one of the most frequently used communication strategies among Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in both pre-intermediate and intermediate proficiency levels.

e. Word Foreignizing
Word foreignizing refers to a communication strategy wherein a user of a foreign language pronounces a word from their native language to phonologically resemble the pronunciation of a word in the target language. In the area of English language acquisition, this phenomenon emerges when a learner believes that a word resembling English is, in fact, an authentic English word. In the present study, an instance of word foreignizing was observed during an online discussion involving a participant. Student B from Group 3 uttered, "…and then *Jibril* came. Angel *Jibril* came to, came by the…came to her and give her some motivation." In this case, the student intended to use the name "Gabriel" to refer to the angelic figure. Instead, he used the term "*Jibril*", an Indonesian expression denoting the same entity. Interestingly, the student enunciated "*Jibril*" in a way resembling English pronunciation, despite its non-English origin.

The participant's pronunciation of "*Jibril*" exemplifies the communication strategy of word foreignizing — a linguistic strategy proposed by Thornbury (2005). This strategy involves learners incorporating their native language words phonologically to resemble the target language. *Ugla et al*. (2019) their study found that highly proficient users tended to refrain from using the word foreignizing (0%) while low proficient users tended to engage in this strategy (0.1%). Although using phonological foreignization can hinder comprehension when addressing native speakers, it proves effective among target language users who share the same native language. This strategy serves as an alternative to avoid communication breakdown while maintaining comprehensibility.

f. The Use of All-purpose Words
The use of all-purpose words as a communication strategy was also found to be used by a participant during the online discussion. Student B of Group 2 shared her argument,

> "I exactly agree with you because the statement in Indonesia always blames the girl, right? But they never think about the boy habit, something like that. So, I just wanna say if I agree with you" (St.B/Gr.2).

In Group 2, Student B employed the phrase "something like that" to underscore her previously mentioned point. However, there is also a possibility that she had uncertainty regarding her conveyed explanation. As asserted by Samani *et al*. (2015), the utilization of all-purpose words like "thing", "something", "make", "thingie", "do", "what do you call it", or "stuff" arises when learners attempt to compensate lexical gaps where precise terminology is required.

Emergent theme: Automaticity in Code-Switching
The observations yielded interesting findings regarding the predominant communication strategies employed by participants in the online group discussions. These participants confidently and spontaneously utilized Indonesian terminology to convey concepts in English-mediated online group discussions. For instance, rather than employing the term "recess", one participant substituted it with "take a rest for students". Moreover, the observations revealed the participants' tendency to use broader English terms to refer to specific ones, such as employing "material" to denote the "topic" of discussion. A noteworthy finding pertained to the frequent incorporation of Indonesian terms and phrases by many participants during the English-mediated online group discussions. The utilization of Indonesian terms

such as "PKKM", "Mendagri", "Jibril", and "SMA/SMK" appeared to be automatic and spontaneous, implying that this choice was not a consequence of their inability to locate those terms' English equivalents. This phenomenon could be attributed to the shared linguistic background among the students, all of whom spoke Indonesian as their first language. Consequently, due to this shared linguistic and cultural background, the discussion participants rarely encountered misunderstandings. Lee (2021) posited that miscommunication potentially emerges in intercultural exchanges involving diverse social and cultural contexts among speakers. He further suggested that mutual comprehension between interlocutors may anticipate such misunderstandings.

4. Conclusion

The objective of the study was to explore the communication strategies utilized by Indonesian EFL learners when participating in online group discussions. The findings indicated that Indonesian EFL learners predominantly applied achievement and compensatory strategies. These strategies encompassed code-switching, circumlocution, approximation, the use of all-purpose words, word foreignizing, and appealing for help. Among these strategies, code-switching emerged as the prevailing strategy for Indonesian EFL learners engaged in online group discussions. This phenomenon is prevalent in conversations where all interlocutors share the same language other than English, as was the case in this study where the participants were both Indonesian native speakers and English learners. An interesting finding from this study was that the use of code-switching did not necessarily signify learners' struggles in finding appropriate words to convey meaning. Instead, Indonesian words are naturally and automatically uttered during online group discussions, particularly when referring to Indonesian acronyms and names. This automatic and natural employment of code-switching demonstrated the learners' ability to select and employ language in alignment with the context. Given the homogeneity of the discussion participants as Indonesian speakers, they showed confidence in using Indonesian terms, thereby minimizing the risk of misunderstanding.

The present study yields some implications and recommendations. Online group discussions emerge as a valuable pedagogical approach for promoting English proficiency and communicative competence among EFL learners. It can also be a promising alternative to conventional face-to-face communication since it offers flexibility and accessibility in learning. This concept, underscored by Hymes (1992, as cited in Meenambal and Meenakshi, 2022), accentuates the pivotal role of communicative competence in fostering effective learning, attainable through interpersonal communicative engagement. Educators are advised to facilitate English-speaking practices through online discourse. The adept employment of communication strategies by Indonesian EFL learners within these group discussions underscores their adeptness in effective communication, despite certain linguistic constraints. These learners indicate proficiency in conveying intended meanings and comprehending interlocutors' messages, aligning with Zambrana's (2020) assertions. Hence, educators should prioritize familiarizing students with diverse communication strategies when teaching foreign languages. Addressing the tendency to revert to L1 during L2/FL discussions, teachers can promote the substitution of Indonesian acronyms and names with English equivalents to enrich learners' vocabulary and offer global communication readiness.

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