Errors in the Use of Indonesian Language Register by Foreign Learners in BIPA Learning

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Abstrak	
Kata Kunci: BIPA; Ragam bahasa; Kesalahan berbahasa.	Pemilihan ragam bahasa yang tepat sangat penting dalam pembelajaran BIPA. Namun masih banyak pemelajar asing yang kesulitan menyesuaikannya dengan konteks komunikasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mendeskripsikan jenis-jenis kesalahan dalam memilih ragam bahasa yang dilakukan oleh pembelajar BIPA dan (2) mendeskripsikan faktor-faktor penyebab kesalahan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode Systematic Literature Review (SLR) terhadap delapan sumber akademik selama 15 tahun terakhir dengan topik kesalahan pemilihan ragam bahasa dan pembelajaran BIPA yang diperoleh dari Google Scholar dan Science Direct. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jenis kesalahan mencakup ketidakmampuan membedakan ragam formal dan informal, keterbatasan pemahaman bentuk bahasa informal, adanya interferensi bahasa asal, kebingungan memahami perbedaan ragam bahasa, kecemasan berbicara, penggunaan ragam formal pada situasi informal, kesalahan pemilihan kata yang menimbulkan ketidaksopanan, serta penggunaan ragam informal dalam konteks formal. Kesalahan pemilihan ragam bahasa Indonesia tersebut dilatarbelakangi oleh kurangnya kemampuan membedakan ragam bahasa sesuai lawan bicara, minimnya pembelajaran praktis, keterbatasan kosakata yang memicu interferensi, banyaknya dialek lokal, rasa gugup dan takut salah, lemahnya pemahaman tata bahasa, kekeliruan dalam memilih kata sesuai konteks, serta perbedaan standar kesopanan antarbudaya. Temuan ini menunjukkan perlunya pengembangan bahan ajar yang lebih kontekstual dalam pembelajaran BIPA untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berkomunikasi pemelajar asing.
Abstract	
Keywords: BIPA; Language register; Language error.	The appropriate use of language register is crucial in BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers) learning. However, many learners still struggle to adjust their language choice according to the communication context. This study aims to (1) describe the types of errors made by BIPA learners in choosing language register and (2) describe the factors causing these errors. Using a qualitative approach with the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, the study analyzed eight academic sources from the last 15 years, obtained from Google Scholar and Science Direct, focusing on errors in language register selection and BIPA learning. The findings reveal common errors, including difficulties distinguishing formal and informal registers, limited understanding of informal expressions, interference from native languages, confusion in recognizing language register differences, speaking anxiety, inappropriate use of formal registers in informal settings, impolite word choices, and use of informal registers in formal contexts. Contributing factors include

limited awareness of audience-based register selection, insufficient practical learning, restricted vocabulary leading to interference, the influence of local dialects, nervousness and fear of mistakes, weak grammar knowledge, inappropriate word choices, and differing cross-cultural standards of politeness. These findings highlight the need for more contextual teaching materials in BIPA to enhance learners' communicative competence.

INTRODUCTION

The use of appropriate language register plays a crucial role in communication, especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts (Lo Bianco, 2010; Актамова, 2024; Hung & Khoa, 2022). Language register, as a form of linguistic adaptability, not only reflects a speaker's ability to adjust to situational and cultural contexts but also serves as a medium for building relationships, maintaining politeness, and avoiding communicative misunderstandings. In the Indonesian context, the richness of language register, ranging from formal to informal, requires speakers to be sensitive and responsive to the dynamic interplay of social norms, roles, and cultural expectations.

In the context of learning Indonesian as a foreign language (Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing, or BIPA), mastery of appropriate language register usage is not merely a matter of linguistic competence, but also of sociocultural awareness (Asteria et al., 2023; Aini et al., 2025). BIPA learners are expected to choose and use appropriate language registers depending on the interlocutor, setting, purpose, and relationship, yet this often proves challenging for those from linguistic and cultural backgrounds without equivalent sociolinguistic norms or with limited exposure to authentic Indonesian contexts. The difficulty lies not in memorizing forms but in selecting expressions that fit the interaction, as seen when a learner addresses a lecturer with *kamu* instead of *Anda* or *Ibu*, or uses *aku* in a presentation where *saya* is expected, choices that may unintentionally signal disrespect or excessive familiarity and reveal the deep cultural weight carried by seemingly simple words.

The difficulty in selecting the appropriate language register is one of the prominent issues faced by foreign speakers in learning Indonesian. Many learners tend to use informal expressions in formal contexts or vice versa, often unintentionally (Nisa et al., 2025). This phenomenon can result in communication that feels awkward, inappropriate, or even disrespectful, thereby hampering the achievement of communicative goals and hindering the building of interpersonal relationships. In cross-cultural interactions, such

linguistic missteps can be interpreted as a lack of politeness or social competence, despite the speaker's good intentions (Yan et al., 2024).

The classification of language register in Indonesian generally includes formal and informal register, which are associated with specific linguistic features, vocabulary choices, and syntactic structures (Wijana, 2022; Mardikantoro, 2023). The formal register is typically used in academic settings, speeches, formal letters, and public presentations, characterized by standardized grammar, complete sentences, and minimal use of colloquial expressions (Damirjon & Yuldasheva, 2025). On the other hand, the informal register appears in daily conversations among peers, family members, or close acquaintances, and is marked by more relaxed syntax, the use of slang or regional expressions, and flexibility in structure (Djalolovna, 2025; Octaviani & Purwarno, 2021; Syakhrani & Aslan, 2024).

In understanding the dynamics of language register selection, the theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978) is highly relevant. According to this theory, speakers tend to employ certain linguistic strategies to maintain the positive face (desire to be appreciated) and negative face (desire not to be imposed upon) of their interlocutors. In this light, choosing the appropriate language register is an act of politeness and a reflection of the speaker's sensitivity to social hierarchies, interpersonal distance, and communicative intentions. Misuse of language register, therefore, may disrupt face needs and lead to pragmalinguistic failure, especially among foreign learners still unfamiliar with Indonesian sociocultural conventions.

Several recent studies have highlighted persistent difficulties faced by BIPA learners in choosing appropriate language registers across different social contexts. Lestari and Jazeri (2022) reported that many BIPA learners still struggle to distinguish between formal and informal registers in actual speech acts. Similarly, Prasetia (2024) emphasized the importance of developing communicative competence in informal registers, especially as learners aim to engage meaningfully with native speakers in everyday interactions. Nisa et al. (2025) observed that learners often default to informal language, sometimes even incorporating English terms, when speaking with fellow foreign learners, regardless of the communicative context. This tendency is more prominent among those who acquired Indonesian independently or without formal instruction in their home countries. Such disparities in learners' backgrounds result in varying degrees of awareness about register use, making explicit and contextualized instruction in language variation a pedagogical priority.

The importance of sociocultural context in language learning is increasingly emphasized in recent language education paradigms. Multilingual pedagogy that values cultural diversity and encourages contextualized language practice becomes a strategic approach to addressing learners' difficulties in selecting appropriate register. In BIPA classes, it is essential to not only teach grammar and vocabulary but also to raise learners' awareness of Indonesian cultural norms, power relations, and expectations in different social interactions. This approach is in line with the view that language is a social practice embedded in specific cultural frameworks (Kramsch, 1998).

Building on this perspective, it becomes increasingly important to ask why a focused investigation of register use among BIPA learners is necessary at this particular moment, both in relation to current trends in language education and to the expanding role of Indonesian in global communication. Bahasa Indonesia is recognized as one of ASEAN's official languages, and there is a growing presence of BIPA programs that attract learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The rise of digital communication has further blurred the boundaries between formal and informal registers, making it increasingly urgent to equip learners with the competence to shift registers fluidly across academic, professional, and everyday interactions.

Given the complexity and significance of this issue, this study aims to explore the phenomenon of inappropriate selection of Indonesian language register by foreign learners in the BIPA context. Specifically, the objectives of this research are: (1) to describe the types of errors made by BIPA learners in choosing language register and (2) to describe the factors causing these errors. These objectives are framed within the broader aim of improving the effectiveness of BIPA learning, particularly in fostering learners' sociopragmatic competence and intercultural sensitivity.

This research holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge in applied linguistics, especially in the intersection between language teaching, pragmatics, and intercultural communication. It also provides insights into how politeness theory and sociolinguistic concepts can be operationalized in second language learning contexts. Practically, the findings of this study can inform BIPA teachers and curriculum developers about the types of pragmatic challenges learners face, thereby guiding the development of more contextually sensitive teaching materials and classroom strategies.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, utilizing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, examine, and analyze previous findings related to language register errors made by learners of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing, or BIPA). The SLR method was chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of the types of errors and the influencing factors discussed in existing literature. This approach allows for the synthesis of various perspectives on pragmatic competence, sociolinguistic awareness, and contextual language use in BIPA learning environments.

The data sources consisted of national and international scholarly articles and thesis focused on BIPA learning dan language errors. Articles were gathered systematically from academic databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and Science Direct (Scopus) using keywords including "BIPA," "language register," "language errors," "pragmatics," and "foreign learners." Inclusion criteria required that articles: (1) discussed language errors in BIPA context, (2) were published between 2010 and 2025, and (3) were available in full text. Opinion pieces, non-peer-reviewed content, and irrelevant works were excluded. Article selection involved a thorough screening of titles, abstracts, keywords, and full content. Selected sources were organized using Mendeley Desktop for citation management. To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation by comparing and cross-checking findings from various national and international articles published within the 2010 until 2025 period. The data analysis in this study followed a series of systematic steps to ensure clarity and consistency. These steps are summarized in the table below.

Step	Data Analysis Procedure	Expected Outcome
1	Categorize data sources based on type, year of publication, and language	Initial overview of the characteristics of relevant studies
2	Enter data from the sources into a table focused on the research objectives	Well-organized data aligned with the research focus
3	Describe the data organized in the table	Identification of patterns of register-use errors
4	Relate the data to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory	Interpretation of the pragmatic implications of register-use errors
5	Draw conclusions from the descriptive analysis	Comprehensive overview of register-use errors among BIPA learners

Table 1. Data Analysis Steps

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the misselection of language register by foreign speakers in the context of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) learning. These errors often arise due to a mismatch between the communicative context and the language register used—whether formal or informal. The studies examined in

this review include journal articles, conference proceedings, and undergraduate theses that explore how BIPA learners use the Indonesian language from various perspectives, such as pragmatics, language variation, and speaking anxiety. The following table summarizes the eight primary sources that serve as a foundation for the results and discussion of this research.

Data Type	Source	Year	Language
Conference Paper	Dikstrasia	2022	Indonesian
Journal Article	Journal of Education Research	2024	Indonesian
Journal Article	Jurnal Kredo	2018	Indonesian
Journal Article	Journal of Pragmatics	2011	English
Journal Article	Prosiding Konferensi Berbahasa Indonesia Universitas Indraprasta PGRI	2025	Indonesian
Journal Article	Hasta Wiyata	2025	Indonesian
Journal Article	JBIPA	2024	English
Undergraduate Thesis	Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang	2025	Indonesian

Table 2. Grouping by Data Source

From these eight sources, it is evident that most of the studies are written in Indonesian and focus on the context of language register usage by BIPA learners in real-life communication, both in the classroom and in everyday practice. The study by Lestari and Jazeri (2022) highlights speech act errors from an interlanguage pragmatics perspective, indicating that BIPA learners often fail to align their expressions with Indonesian politeness norms. Meanwhile, Prasetia (2025) and Nisa et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of understanding informal register and the social context in determining appropriate language use.

Further analysis shows a strong need for more contextual and communicative teaching strategies. Nurhamidah et al. (2024), in their article written in English, offer an innovative perspective by addressing this issue through the lens of language variation in BIPA instruction. On the other hand, Wildaniyah (2025) highlights psychological factors, such as speaking anxiety, that may influence the selection of language register, especially in formal situations. These findings support the notion that errors in choosing appropriate language register among BIPA learners are influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by context comprehension, affective factors, and cross-cultural communication experience. Additional insights are offered by Ristyandani et al. (2024), who point to the role of first language interference in phonological errors that disrupt clarity and affect formality; by Budiawan and Rukayati (2018), who underline how psychological factors, vocabulary limitations, and grammatical challenges shape inappropriate register use; and by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011), who highlight the impact of differing politeness norms across cultures that may lead learners to adopt informal or overly direct tones in formal communication.

Types of Errors in Choosing Language Register Made by BIPA Learners

Research on the teaching of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing or BIPA) has grown significantly along with the increasing interest of foreign nationals in learning the Indonesian language. One of the main challenges in this educational context is the learners' ability to appropriately use various language registers depending on the communicative situation. Errors in choosing the correct language register frequently occur and directly impact communication effectiveness, perceived politeness, and cultural appropriateness. To better understand the nature and patterns of these errors, the author conducted a review of eight academic articles. The following table summarizes key information from each reviewed article.

No.	Title	Author	Source	Type of Error
1.	Tindak Tutur oleh Pemelajar BIPA di Muslim Santitham Fundation School Thailand: Kajian Pragmatik Bahasa Antara	Lestari & Jazeri	Dikstrasia	Learners are unable to distinguish or select between formal and informal registers in speech acts.
2.	Bahan Pengayaan BIPA Berbasis Bahasa Nonformal: Studi Kasus Kelas BINON di BIPA UI	Prasetia	Prosiding Konferensi Berbahasa Indonesia Universitas Indraprasta PGRI	Learners have limited understanding of informal language forms.
3.	Ragam Bahasa Pemelajar BIPA dalam Menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia Menurut Teori SPEAKING D Hymes	Nisa, Febrian, & Muzaki	Hasta Wiyata	Native language still influences learners' use of Indonesian registers.
4.	Language Variation in BIPA Teaching: Innovative Solutions for Effective Language Learning in Communication Competencies	Nurhamidah, Lustyantie, & Chaeruman	JBIPA	Learners are confused in distinguishing formal and informal Indonesian in daily life.
5.	Analisis Kecemasan Berbicara (Speaking Anxiety) Mahasiswa BIPA pada Praktik Komunikasi Formal	Wildaniyah	Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang	Learners experience speaking anxiety in both formal and informal communication.
6.	Kesalahan Berbahasa di Kelas Berbicara BIPA 3 KBRI Moskow 2023	Ristyandani, Budiawan, & Kurniawan	Journal of Education Research	Learners use formal registers in informal contexts.
7.	Kesalahan Bahasa dalam Praktik Berbicara Pemelajaran Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing (BIPA) Di Universitas PGRI Semarang Tahun 2018	Budiawan & Rukayati	Jurnal Kredo	Word choice errors causing impoliteness in formal situations.
8.	"Please answer me as soon as possible": Pragmatic failure in non-native speakers' e-mail requests to faculty	Economidou-Kogetsidis	Journal of Pragmatics	Use of informal registers in formal contexts.

Table 3. Type of Error

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that BIPA learners demonstrate various types of errors in the use of language registers. These errors include difficulties in distinguishing between formal and informal registers, limited understanding of non-formal language forms, the influence of learners' first languages, and affective issues such as speaking anxiety that hinder communication. In addition, contextual mismatches are common, such as using formal registers in informal situations or vice versa, as well as lexical errors that create impressions of impoliteness in formal interactions. Even in written communication, foreign learners experience pragmatic failure when they use overly informal language in academic or professional contexts. This variation shows that register problems are not merely linguistic issues but are closely tied to sociopragmatic awareness and sensitivity to politeness norms in Indonesian society.

The findings of Lestari and Jazeri indicate that many BIPA learners in a Thai school context were unable to distinguish or appropriately select between formal and informal registers in speech acts, which often led to responses that felt awkward or mismatched with the situation. This difficulty became evident when learners greeted, requested help, or closed conversations without adjusting to social distance or communicative goals. As a result, utterances that should have expressed respect sounded overly casual, and conversely, casual exchanges sometimes became too rigid. Such mismatches highlight a gap in sociopragmatic competence, even when grammatical accuracy was achieved.

In Prasetia's study of the BINON class, the issue appeared in learners' limited grasp of informal language forms. Learners recognized only a small range of informal expressions, which made them sound stiff or unnatural when interacting outside the classroom. Consequently, they struggled to negotiate solidarity and closeness with peers and native speakers, especially in casual conversations or humorous exchanges, where their speech retained an overly "textbook-like" quality.

The study by Nisa, Febrian, and Muzaki revealed that first-language background and multilingual environments shaped learners' register use. In the classroom, they tended to rely on "official" forms, while outside the classroom they easily shifted into code-mixing and looser styles modeled by peers. This pattern made their control over register shifts unstable. Pragmatic transfer from the first language was also evident, as learners carried politeness strategies from their native systems directly into Indonesian, resulting in mismatches when Indonesian scales of formality were not interpreted accurately by interlocutors.

Nurhamidah, Lustyantie, and Chaeruman confirmed that learners were often confused about distinguishing between formal Indonesian and everyday informal usage.

Many understood prescriptive rules declaratively but faltered in real-life contexts, such as speaking with lecturers, greeting new acquaintances, or composing polite text messages. The gap between declarative knowledge and practical flexibility underscored the need for structured communicative experiences to help learners map the boundaries and bridges between formal and informal registers more clearly.

Wildaniyah showed that speaking anxiety in both formal and informal settings further exacerbated register errors. When anxious, learners often resorted to one "safe" pattern for all situations or mimicked whatever form came to mind without checking its appropriateness. This anxiety not only hindered fluency but also dulled sensitivity to roles, distance, and communicative purposes, which should serve as the primary guide for register choice.

Ristyandani, Budiawan, and Kurniawan highlighted the opposite tendency: learners often retained formal registers even in contexts that required informality, such as casual discussions with friends. As a result, their speech sounded overly rigid, distant, and unnatural to interlocutors who expected closeness. This pattern suggests that some learners view formal registers as a "default safe zone," but this choice sacrifices social appropriateness when contexts demand solidarity and intimacy.

Budiawan and Rukayati examined lexical errors that produced impressions of impoliteness in formal contexts. Missteps in word choice, forms of address, or request markers shifted utterances from polite invitations to commands, or from academic reports to overly casual speech. These errors were not necessarily caused by a lack of vocabulary but by insufficient awareness of the social weight and politeness values attached to particular words.

As a cross-contextual comparison, Economidou-Kogetsidis demonstrated pragmatic failures in the academic emails of non-native English speakers to faculty, particularly their use of informal forms in highly formal contexts. This phenomenon parallels register issues in BIPA, as written communication demands careful attention to address forms, request formulas, and closings, where even slightly informal tones may be read as disrespectful. Although this article is not specifically related to BIPA learning, it highlights that errors in language register use can lead to misunderstandings for the interlocutor.

Viewed through Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, these findings reveal consistent failures in balancing positive and negative face needs. Overly casual language in distant or hierarchical situations threatens the interlocutor's negative face by imposing unwanted intimacy, while overly formal speech in close relationships risks undermining positive face by rejecting solidarity. Registers, therefore, serve as tools for managing

social distance; when learners cannot properly gauge the risk of face threats, their strategies fail to align with role expectations, relational dynamics, and communicative goals.

Overall, the patterns of error can be grouped into three broad categories. First, underdeveloped calibration of formality levels, as seen in difficulties distinguishing between formal and informal registers in both spoken and written forms. Second, the influence of linguistic background and learning context, which causes learners to stabilize on one register and struggle with fluid shifts. Third, affective factors such as anxiety, which reduce situational sensitivity. Together, these elements intertwine and result in inconsistent pragmatic performance across communication domains.

The pedagogical implication is that register mastery must be taught as an explicit and measurable sociopragmatic competence rather than as a byproduct of grammar and vocabulary acquisition. Context-rich practice, clear metapragmatic feedback, and assignments across different media such as conversations, presentations, and academic emails can train learners to interpret role, distance, and purpose before choosing expressions. In this way, learners can achieve communication that is not only grammatically correct but also socially appropriate in academic, professional, and everyday settings.

Contributing Factors Behind the Errors in Choosing Language Register Made by BIPA Learners

Errors in choosing the appropriate register of Indonesian language by foreign speakers in the context of Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) learning are complex phenomena influenced by multiple interrelated factors. Each learner brings unique linguistic, cultural, and psychological backgrounds that shape how they interpret and use Indonesian in diverse social settings. Based on a literature review of five recent studies, it becomes evident that these errors stem from insufficient pragmatic instruction, a predominant emphasis on formal language in the curriculum, first-language interference, limited exposure to authentic communication, and affective challenges such as anxiety. A deep understanding of these root causes is crucial for designing a more responsive and contextualized BIPA pedagogy.

No.	Title	Author	Source	Contributing Factor
1.	Tindak Tutur oleh Pemelajar BIPA di Muslim Santitham Fundation School Thailand: Kajian Pragmatik Bahasa Antara	Lestari & Jazeri	Dikstrasia	Inability to select appropriate register according to the interlocutor.

2.	Bahan Pengayaan BIPA Berbasis Bahasa Nonformal: Studi Kasus Kelas BINON di BIPA UI	Prasetia	Prosiding Konferensi Berbahasa Indonesia Universitas Indraprasta PGRI Hasta Wiyata	Lack of practical instruction applicable to daily communication.
3.	Ragam Bahasa Pemelajar BIPA dalam Menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia Menurut Teori SPEAKING D Hymes	Nisa, Febrian, & Muzaki		Limited vocabulary repertoire leading to interference from the first language.
4.	Language Variation in BIPA Teaching: Innovative Solutions for Effective Language Learning in Communication Competencies	Nurhamidah, Lustyantie, & Chaeruman	JBIPA	The abundance of local dialects (e.g., Betawi, Javanese) among native speakers causing confusion in distinguishing formal and informal registers.
5.	Analisis Kecemasan Berbicara (Speaking Anxiety) Mahasiswa BIPA pada Praktik Komunikasi Formal	Wildaniyah	Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang	Nervousness and fear of making mistakes.
6.	Kesalahan Berbahasa di Kelas Berbicara BIPA 3 KBRI Moskow 2023	Ristyandani, Budiawan, & Kurniawan	Journal of Education Research	Limited understanding of grammar.
7.	Kesalahan Bahasa dalam Praktik Berbicara Pemelajaran Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing (BIPA) Di Universitas PGRI Semarang Tahun 2018	Budiawan & Rukayati	Jurnal Kredo	Errors in selecting words appropriately according to communicative context.
8.	"Please answer me as soon as possible": Pragmatic failure in non-native speakers' e-mail requests to faculty	Economidou-Kogetsidis	Journal of Pragmatics	Differences in politeness standards between the host country and the learners' home countries.

Table 4. Contributing Factor

Based on Table 4, several underlying factors contribute to the persistent errors in register use among BIPA learners. These factors range from linguistic limitations, such as restricted vocabulary and weak grammatical understanding, to sociocultural challenges, including dialectal variation and differing standards of politeness across cultures. In addition, psychological aspects such as nervousness and fear of making mistakes further complicate learners' ability to make appropriate register choices. Taken together, these factors highlight that register errors cannot be attributed to a single cause but rather emerge from the complex interplay between language proficiency, cultural awareness, and affective conditions.

The study by Lestari and Jazeri revealed that many learners failed to adjust their register according to the interlocutor. The absence of clear sensitivity to whom they were speaking, whether peers, teachers, or elders, led to mismatched choices that appeared either too casual or too formal. This shows that the root cause is not only lack of

vocabulary but also insufficient awareness of the relational dynamics that govern politeness in Indonesian communication.

Prasetia pointed out that instruction in BIPA classrooms often emphasizes formal rules without providing sufficient opportunities to practice language that is immediately useful in daily interactions. As a result, learners are unprepared for real-world communication where flexibility and informality are essential, and they often default to rigid, prescriptive patterns. This imbalance between formal instruction and practical application becomes a key factor behind errors in register selection.

Nisa, Febrian, and Muzaki observed that limited vocabulary pushed learners to rely on their first language, which led to interference in their Indonesian usage. Because learners lacked a wide lexical repertoire to choose contextually appropriate words, they often borrowed from their native tongues or fell back on literal translations. This not only affected grammatical accuracy but also disrupted politeness strategies encoded in Indonesian registers.

Nurhamidah, Lustyantie, and Chaeruman emphasized that the abundance of local dialects in Indonesia, such as Betawi and Javanese, further confuses learners who are trying to distinguish formal Indonesian from everyday informal varieties. Faced with multiple input sources, learners often struggle to determine which expressions are appropriate in formal versus casual contexts. This complexity underscores the challenge of learning Indonesian not only as a language but also as a mosaic of dialects and sociolinguistic variations.

Wildaniyah's findings underscored the psychological dimension of register errors, since nervousness and fear of making mistakes often caused learners to mismanage their speech. Anxiety led learners either to overcompensate by using overly formal patterns or to simplify their speech in ways that ignored context. Such emotional barriers reduce pragmatic sensitivity and prevent learners from making careful and appropriate register choices.

Ristyandani, Budiawan, and Kurniawan showed that inadequate grammatical knowledge was another contributing factor. Without a strong foundation in grammar, learners struggled to construct sentences that aligned with formal registers, and at times their attempts to sound formal backfired, resulting in unnatural or overly rigid utterances. Weak grammar also limited learners' ability to adapt their speech fluidly between different levels of formality.

Budiawan and Rukayati highlighted errors in lexical choice as a significant cause of impoliteness. Learners frequently selected words that sounded blunt or inappropriate in

the given context, which signaled insufficient awareness of politeness values encoded in Indonesian vocabulary. These mistakes indicate that lexical knowledge alone is not enough, because learners must also develop cultural insight into how words function pragmatically in interaction.

Finally, the cross-linguistic study by Economidou-Kogetsidis demonstrated that differing cultural standards of politeness contribute to pragmatic failures. Learners often transferred the norms of their home countries into Indonesian or English communication, and this led to mismatches in expected levels of formality. In the case of email requests, using informal strategies in academic settings resulted in unintended disrespect. This finding resonates with the BIPA context, where foreign learners must recalibrate politeness strategies to align with Indonesian norms.

Viewed through Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, these contributing factors represent different pathways to face-threatening acts. Limited vocabulary and grammar undermine learners' ability to manage both positive and negative face, while dialectal complexity and cross-cultural differences distort their perception of what counts as respectful or familiar. Psychological barriers such as anxiety further weaken learners' ability to apply appropriate politeness strategies in real time. Together, these factors create conditions in which learners are prone to mismanaging politeness, resulting in register errors that damage interactional harmony.

In conclusion, the causes of register-use errors among BIPA learners are multidimensional. Linguistic limitations such as restricted vocabulary and grammar combine with sociocultural challenges such as dialectal variation and differing politeness standards, while psychological factors such as anxiety add another layer of difficulty. These intertwined causes highlight the need for BIPA instruction to go beyond grammar and vocabulary to include explicit teaching of pragmatic norms, exposure to diverse communicative contexts, and support for learners' affective needs. Only by addressing these factors holistically can BIPA programs equip learners with the sociopragmatic competence needed to communicate both accurately and appropriately.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that errors in register selection among BIPA learners stem from a multifaceted interplay of linguistic, sociocultural, psychological, and intercultural factors. Beyond limited pragmatic instruction and restricted exposure to authentic communication, learners' difficulties are compounded by first-language interference, phonological inaccuracies, inappropriate lexical choices, and differing politeness norms across

cultures. Psychological factors such as anxiety, nervousness, and lack of topic mastery further push learners toward informal or overly direct expressions in formal contexts. These findings underscore the need for BIPA instruction to move beyond grammar-focused teaching and instead foster sociopragmatic competence, enabling learners to communicate in Indonesian with accuracy, respect, and contextual appropriateness across diverse social settings.

Looking forward, the development of more integrated and context-sensitive pedagogical approaches is essential. BIPA instruction should embed register awareness across curriculum components, supported by experiential learning strategies such as role-play, simulations, and performance-based assessments. This holistic direction will not only improve learners' communicative abilities but also enhance Indonesia's cultural presence globally. There is a need for contextual and plurilingual-based teaching materials to help foreign learners understand the appropriate use of Indonesian language registers according to communicative contexts.

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