How Do Intermediate EFL Learners Use Approximation in Their Communication?

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While foreign language learners spend years developing their competences, they sometimes need to struggle for effective communication due to insufficient linguistic resources. What helps them to keep communication channel open and overcome existing deficiencies is the use of different communication strategies. One of the most important problem areas they face is lexical deficiency to compensate which various communication strategies, including approximation, are used. This descriptive study was thus set to investigate how approximation is adopted by intermediate Iranian EFL learners. To this end, 150 EFL university students were randomly selected and required to take a placement test; then, 60 intermediate students were asked to perform 2 communicative tasks. Close analysis of the data revealed that approximation was employed by the learners in five different ways all to compensate lexical gaps. The findings of this study can be of great significance for language teachers and material designers.