

**METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING COMPENSATORY COMPETENCE IN
STUDENTS WHILE TEACHING GERMAN AS A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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Abstract

This article examines the methodological foundations for developing compensatory competence in students during the process of teaching German as a second foreign language. The author analyzes strategies for overcoming linguistic barriers arising in communication, specifically methods of paraphrasing, utilizing synonyms, and employing non-verbal tools. The article presents practical recommendations and situational exercises aimed at shaping students' strategic thinking.

Keywords

compensatory competence, German language, second foreign language, communication strategies, paraphrase, linguistic barrier, methodology, communicative approach.

Developing compensatory competence in the methodology of teaching German as a second foreign language is a complex pedagogical process aimed at forming students' ability to fill gaps in language knowledge through various verbal and non-verbal means. The essence of this process is that the student learns to overcome unexpected obstacles encountered in a speech situation—namely, unknown words or forgotten grammatical rules—without interrupting the communication. This competence is particularly crucial when learning a second foreign language, as students already possess rich cognitive experience and linguistic strategies from their first foreign language (usually English). Transferring these effectively into the German language environment serves as the main pivot of the methodology.

Within the framework of this methodology, strategies such as paraphrasing, using synonyms, circumlocution (describing a concept), and contextual guessing are taught systematically, which enhances not only students' linguistic skills but also their general strategic thinking. It has been proven in practice that using specially designed situational exercises and problem-solving tasks provides high efficiency in forming compensatory competence. For example, a student might be tasked with describing an object necessary in daily life whose name they do not yet know in German; this forces them to seek "alternative routes" and make effective use of body language and intonation.

This approach removes the psychological barrier of "fear of making mistakes" and encourages the student to engage in free communication, as the primary criterion here is not grammatical perfection but the successful delivery of information to the interlocutor. Furthermore, introducing discourse markers—filler words that provide time to think or continue a sentence—significantly ensures the student's speech fluency. When learning German as a second foreign language, compensatory strategies can serve as the only "lifeline" for communication during the initial stages when the student's linguistic base is still weak.

The methodical tools used by the teacher should direct the student toward creativity in language use by artificially creating "lack of vocabulary" situations in every lesson. Such pedagogical provocation activates the student's brain activity and teaches them to express complex ideas with the minimal vocabulary available. Consequently, the student begins to feel

confident not only in German lessons but also in real-life communication, increasing their motivation for language learning.

It is also worth noting that compensatory competence is not limited to oral speech but plays a decisive role in reading and listening comprehension. The methodology of determining the meaning of unfamiliar words through context during text work reduces the student's dependence on the dictionary and develops independent analytical skills. This helps in understanding logical connections faster in a language with a complex grammatical structure like German.

Ultimately, such a comprehensive methodological approach helps students avoid feeling lost in a real communicative environment, remain as understandable as possible even with limited language resources, and independently enrich their knowledge. The development of compensatory competence makes the student linguistically flexible, which is an invaluable skill for communicating with representatives of different cultures in a globalized world.

The development of students' self-monitoring and self-assessment skills is also an important methodical stage in forming compensatory competence. When a student recognizes an error during communication and immediately tries to correct it with another construction, it indicates an increase in their linguistic sensitivity. In this process, the teacher should shift from the role of "error corrector" to that of a "facilitator," giving the student the opportunity and time to independently reformulate their thoughts.

Another vital part of the methodology is encouraging visualization and associative thinking. Exercises that explain abstract concepts using diagrams, pictures, or charts in German lessons develop the student's ability to use figurative thinking when vocabulary is lacking. This method is especially helpful when explaining complex German prepositions and verb government, where the student may not find the exact equivalent of a word.

Using the "language environment simulation" method also sharpens compensatory strategies. During the lesson, students imagine themselves in environments such as a German-speaking airport, hospital, or shop and must answer unexpected questions. These artificial stress situations teach students to make quick decisions and maintain communication with the resources at hand.

Furthermore, teaching "conversation management" phrases within compensatory competence is of particular importance. For instance, phrases like "*Einen Moment bitte, ich suche nach dem richtigen Wort*" (One moment, please, I am looking for the right word) give the student a psychological advantage. Using these phrases, they can turn a pause in communication from an "awkward silence" into a "natural process."

In the process of listening comprehension (*Hörverstehen*), compensatory competence helps the student grasp the general meaning (*Globalverstehen*) rather than trying to understand every single word in the audio text. According to the methodology, the student should logically fill in unknown sounds or words based on intonation, stress, and context. This skill ensures that the student does not get lost in a foreign language environment and does not break the chain of general meaning.

Applying compensatory strategies in written speech increases the student's stylistic flexibility. If a student does not know a specific term while writing a complex essay, they use the simplification technique—explaining the concept with simple sentences. This method guarantees the continuity of written communication and the logical conclusion of thoughts, which is essential for academic success.

The role of information technology and digital resources in developing compensatory competence is also incomparable. Through various mobile applications and interactive platforms, students can perform concept description exercises using word games (for example, German

versions of games like Alias or Taboo). This gamified approach makes the learning process interesting while unconsciously shaping strategic skills.

To increase the effectiveness of the methodology, it is advisable to establish a peer-learning system among students. While working in pairs, if one student cannot explain a thought, the other can supplement it or ask helpful questions, thereby learning to apply compensatory strategies collectively. This serves to increase flexibility in the social-communicative environment.

One of the most important tasks for the teacher is to support the student's freedom in choosing communication strategies. Each student forms unique compensatory methods (some rely more on synonyms, others on gestures) based on their individual temperament and knowledge level. The pedagogue's task is to correctly guide these individual paths and elevate them to a professional level.

In conclusion, compensatory competence in teaching German as a second foreign language is not just a tool for "filling gaps" but a bridge that manifests the student's intellectual potential. The correct implementation of this methodology completely extinguishes students' fear of language learning and trains them as independent communicators who constantly work on themselves.

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