

ABSTRACT

Fatia Aziza. 2220101030126. Enhancing Spoken English Proficiency: Exploring Student Challenges and Conversation Strategies in Academic Speaking Course. Thesis. English Language Education Department, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Antasari State Islamic University. Advisor: Drs. Saadillah, M.Pd., 2026.

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This research explores on students' challenges and conversation strategies in the Academic Speaking course at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. Speaking is considered the most difficult language skill because it required the simultaneous integration of linguistic proficiency, cognitive processing, and psychological preparation in real time. The purpose of this study is to investigate how students describe their experiences with challenges in an English conversation, as well as the strategies they employ to overcome them. A qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design was used, and data were gathered through semi-structured narrative interviews with four undergraduate students. The data was analyzed using thematic narrative analysis methodology. The data show that students had difficulty across two dimensions: language issues, which included restricted vocabulary, The findings show that students faced challenges on two categories: linguistic challenges (limited vocabulary, grammar difficulties, and pronunciation problems) and psychosocial challenges (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation). To address these problems, students actively employed three types of conversation tactics: message modification strategies, achievement strategies, and time-gaining strategies. These findings show that students are active, adaptable communicators who devise innovative strategies to maintain communication despite language limits, and that classroom atmosphere has a significant impact on either increasing or decreasing speaking anxiety. Academic Speaking teachers should provide psychologically secure learning environments, provide explicit communication strategy instruction, and develop activities that simulate spontaneous oral interaction.