

HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY広島大学

Reading Assignment for Class 5

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND COMMUNICATION II

外国語習得とコミュニケーション II

**Submission Information**

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1. Summary

This paper (Kayi-Aydar, 2014) explores how social positioning influences (L2) learning in an academic ESL classroom through 9 student participants, while especially focusing on two talkative students, Ahmad and Tarek. The study was conducted in an ESL oral skills class with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and used data that were analyzed through positioning theory. Social positioning refers to the roles, status and rights people assign to themselves and others during interactions, which significantly impact communication and learning. In fact, long-term positioning leads to formation of identity, as Tarek did not become a humorous man overnight, neither did Ahmad become a loner over the course of few days.

Ahmad and Tarek, though similar in their talkative and dominant participation styles, experienced contrasting social outcomes due to their positioning within the classroom. While Tarek initially faced resistance from peers, he gradually gained acceptance by adapting his behavior, using humor, and forming friendships. In contrast, Ahmad, despite being articulate and knowledgeable, became increasingly isolated as his frequent contributions and advanced proficiency were perceived by peers as arrogance. This difference highlighted how social positioning shaped their access to meaningful interactions, with Tarek benefiting from supportive relationships and Ahmad becoming an outsider.

This emphasizes the teachers’ role in managing classroom dynamics and overseeing equitable participation. The teacher, Betsy, responded positively to Tarek’s participation, despite Tarek affecting other’s learning due to his constant interruption of Betsy’s speech during class, and discouraged Ahmad’s, inadvertently doubling down on his peers’ negative perceptions of him. This shows that teachers influence how students view and interact with each other, which in turn affects learning opportunities for themselves and others.

To address these challenges, teachers should establish clear participation norms early, assign roles that help dominant students contribute more inclusively, and teach strategies for managing interactions with outspoken peers. By doing so, teachers can create an environment where all students feel valued and can equally benefit from classroom interactions, which likely ends up supporting better L2 learning outcomes for all students.

# References

Kayi-Aydar, H. (2014). Social positioning, participation, and second language learning: Talkative students in an Academic ESL classroom. TESOL Quarterly, 48(4), 686-713. doi: 10.1002/tesq.139