

## **From *Navazesh* (Physical Strokes) to *Navazeh* (Mental Strokes): A Look into the Concept of Stroking in Teaching a Second Language**

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### **Extended Abstract**

#### **1. Introduction**

Learning occurs best in educational settings where learners are motivated. Previous research has indicated that motivation is one of the important factors that affects learner's performance and success significantly (Dörnyei, 2105). Positive relationships between teachers and learners provide them with the opportunity to enhance their motivation. Stroke is one of the important factors that contribute to the positive relationship between teachers and learners. Therefore, it is suggested that stroke can be directly related to motivation (Francis & Woodcock, 1996). Stroke is defined as every action to acknowledge other's presence and values (Shirai, 2006). The current study was conducted to investigate the notion of stroke from different aspects and to suggest a new classification of this concept as well. In other words, we tried to explain and clarify the concepts of stroker and strokee and point out their implications in second language teaching. Hence, we explored the concept of stroke in psychology and second language teaching by proposing a new classification for different kinds of stokers and strokees. Furthermore, implications of this classification in educational contexts are presented in this study.

#### **2. Theoretical Framework**

One of the main approaches to investigate interpersonal relationships is transactional analysis (TA) introduced by Eric Bern (1960). One of the most important components of TA is stroke which is defined as recognition of other's presence and values (Shirai, 2006). Strokes are considered as noticeable interpersonal contacts that satisfy individual's emotional needs of being acknowledged by others. Bern (1988) used the term "recognition hunger" to refer to this need. There are different types of strokes: positive or negative, conditional or unconditional, and verbal or non-verbal (Stewart & Joines, 1987). Strokes are exchanged between individuals unconsciously and constantly (Borrow, 2007). It

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has been stated that if individuals do not receive positive strokes, they look for negative ones to satisfy their need for being acknowledged by others. Thus, it can be concluded that giving negative strokes is better than no strokes (Stewart & Joines, 1987). Additionally, scholars have stated that strokes can be directly related to motivation achieved through positive and negative reinforces (Pishghadam & Khajavy, 2014).

As we know, positive relationships between teachers and learners result in enhancing learners' motivation. One of the most effective factors in a positive relationship between teachers and learners is teacher care (Foster, 2008), which is closely associated with the concept of stroke. In fact, stroke is an important component of teacher care. This indicates the significant role of stroke in educational settings.

### **3. Discussion**

In this study we explored the notion of stroke in psychology and second language teaching. New classifications for different kinds of stokers and strokees are proposed in this section. Generally, a stoker is a person who gives strokes to others (giving feedback of any kind, smiling, frowning, nodding, shaking hands, and so forth.). A strokee is the one who receives strokes from others. In any interaction between individuals the position of stokers and strokees can be exchanged between them. Stokers and strokees can be classified into three groups: overstroker/overstrokee, optimal stroker/optimal strokee, and understroker/understrokee. An overstroker is a person who is willing to give a lot of strokes to other people. An optimal stroker is someone who is moderate in giving strokes to others, and an understroker is a person who is not willing to give strokes to people. In addition, similar to this classification for stokers, three kinds of strokees are expected respectively.

### **4. Conclusion and Suggestion**

The aim of the current study was to investigate and clarify the concepts of stoker and strokee and introduce a new classification for these concepts. Furthermore, implications of these notions in second language teaching are presented as well.

As already mentioned, stokers and strokees are classified into three groups. However, it seems that in every interpersonal relationships, one should consider the culture and characteristic features of his/her audience so that strokes are in line with the addressee. Hence, in educational settings particularly second language classes that are stroke-rich environments in which verbal and non-verbal strokes are given and received, teachers should know about learners' culture and characteristics, otherwise giving and receiving strokes may cause great discomfort to learners and demotivate them consequently. Therefore, teachers should increase their level of emotioncy (Pishghadam, Jajarmi, & Shayeste, 2016) toward the concept of stroke so that they give and receive strokes in educational contexts appropriately.

On the whole, it seems that personality, culture, and other factors are of paramount importance in determining individual's willingness to give and receive strokes. Therefore, future research can focus on these core components associated with the concept of stroke.

**Keywords:** Stroker, Strokee, Stroke, Teaching, Transactional analysis.

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