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Krashen's Monitor Model

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Krashen's Monitor Model

- The theory evolved in the late 1970s.
- The most ambitious theory of second language learning.
- It became popular among language teachers in the U.S. due to Krashen's ability to package his ideas in a way that makes them understandable to practitioners.
- Krashen's theory constitutes of a set of five basic hypotheses:

1- The Acquisition – Learning Hypothesis.
2- The Monitor Hypothesis.
3- The Natural-Order Hypothesis.
4- The Input Hypothesis.
5- The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

- Krashen maintained that adult second language learners have at their deposal two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language.

1- **Acquisition:** it is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language.

- Acquisition comes about through meaningful interaction in a natural communication setting.
- Speakers are not concerned with form, but with meaning.
- There is no explicit concern with error detection and correction.

2- **Learning:** A conscious process that results in (knowing about) language.

- Formal rules and feedback provide the basis for language instruction.
- Error detection and correction are central, as is typically the case in classroom setting.

- **Does learning become acquisition?**

According to krashen " learning does not turn into acquisition". He argued that what is consciously learned through the presentation of rules and explanation of grammar does not become the basis of acquisition of the target language. This is based on three claims:

1- Sometimes there is 'acquisition' without 'learning', that is some individuals have considerable competence in a second language but do not know many rules consciously.
2- There are cases where 'learning' never turn into 'acquisition', that is a person may know the rule and continue breaking it.
3- No one knows anywhere near all the rules.

- **Critics:**

Gregg (1984) argued that this claim runs counter to the intuitive belief of many second language learners. He also argued that at least some of the rules can be acquired.

- **Can adults acquire a language as children do?**

Yes, Krashen argued, adults have access to the same Language Acquisition Device (LAD) that children use in acquiring their first language.

- **Critics:**

Gregg (1984) pointed out that Krashen appeared to be giving the (LAD) a scope of operation much wider than is normally the case in linguistic theory.
- Chomsky (1968) argued that the ability to use (LAD) declines with age. However, it is possible to learn a language after children age by using other mental faculties as the logical or the mathematical.

The Monitor Hypothesis

- Monitor: is the mental editor.
- The Monitor is the part of the learner's internal system that appears to be responsible for conscious linguistic processing.

- **There are two functions of the Monitor:**

1- In reception:
A- when a person tries to learn a rule by reading about it in a grammar book,
B- by attending a class where the teacher describes a rule.

2- In production:
A- when a person performs a drill that requires conscious attention to linguistic form,
B- when a learner memorize a dialogue or a story.

- The hypothesis states that " learning has only one function, and that is as a monitor".
- Krashen argued that learning comes into play only to make changes in the form of our utterances, after they have been produced by the acquired system. Acquisition initiates the speaker's utterance and is responsible for fluency. Thus the Monitor is thought to alter the output of the acquired system before or after the utterances are spoken or written.

- Krashen argued that formal instruction in a language provides rule isolation and feedback for the development of the Monitor, but that production is based on what is acquired through communication, with the Monitor altering production to improve accuracy toward target language norms.

- **Three conditions for Monitor use:**

1- Time: In order to think about and use conscious rules effectively, a second language learner needs to have time.
2- Focus on form: The performer must also be focused on form, or thinking about correctness to get his message across in an understandable way to the listener(s).
3- Know the rule: This is very formidable requirement. If rules are not known (learner does not know the rule), the Monitor will not be helpful or used.

Critics:

- Hulstijn & Hulstijn (1984) pointed out that in teaching>>> form should be first before time. In their study, when the subjects were focused on form without time pressure, there were gains in accuracy. But when there was no focus on form, giving subjects more time did not make a difference in their performance.
- Houck & others (1978) ,in their studies, found out that focusing subjects on form by having them correct spelling and grammar in written composition did not result in the use of the Monitor.

- **The degree to which Monitor is used depends on the following:**

1- Learner's age.
2- The amount of formal instruction the learner has experienced.
3- The nature and focus required by the verbal task being performed.
4- The individual personality of the learner (Individual Differences).

- **There are three types of Monitor users:**

1- Monitor over-users:
Those are people who attempt to monitor all the time and constantly checking their output. The results>>>>>>
A- They may speak hesitantly,
B- No fluency.

2- Monitor under-users:
Those are people who have not learned, who prefer not to use their monitor even if they have all the conditions (time, focus on form, knowing rules. The results>>>>>>
A- They are not influenced by error correction,
B- They do not sound right/correct.

3- The optimal Monitor users:
Those are people who use the monitor when it is appropriate and when it does not interfere with communication. The results>>>>>>
A- Better communicators,
B- More accuracy.

- **<u>Adult vs. child differences in using the Monitor:</u>**

1- Children are thought to be superior language learners, because they do not use the monitor and are not as inhibited as older learners.
2- Krashen argues that adults are faster language learners in the initial stages, but young children out-perform adults with more time.

Critics:

McLaughlin (1984) argued that adults/older learners are better in both syntactic and semantic variables. It is only in the area of phonological development that younger children do better.

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