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Krashen's Monitor Model

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

- Krashen Argued that "comprehensible input may not be utilized by second language learners/acquirers if there is a 'mental block' that prevents them from fully profiting from it".
Input -----> Filter -----> LAD -----> Acquired Competence
- If the 'Affective Filter' is down, the input reaches the LAD and becomes acquired competence.
- If the 'Affective Filter' is up, the input is blocked and does not reach the LAD.
- The 'Affective Filter' is up when the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking confidence, concerned with failure, or uncomfortable with the teacher's attitude toward him/her.
- The 'Affective Filter' is down when the acquirer is not anxious and/ or has an intent on becoming a member of the group speaking the target language.
- **Filter :**
is that part of the internal processing system that subconsciously screens incoming language (the learner's motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional states).
- **The Filter has four functions:-**
 - 1- It determines which language models the learner will select.
 - 2- It determines which part of the language will be attended to first.
 - 3- It determines when the language acquisition efforts should cease.
 - 4- It determines how fast a learner can acquire.
- The filter is thought to limit what it is that the learner attends to, what will be learned, and how quickly the language will be acquired.
- Adult learners are likely to have higher 'Affective Filter' because of the events that occur in adolescence.
- Children learners are 'less inhibited, and are likely to have low 'Affective Filter'.

Krashen's View of Classroom Language Learning & Teaching

- 1- **The principal goal of language teaching is to supply comprehensible input in order to facilitate 'acquisition'.**
 - Krashen thought that the defining characteristics of a good teacher is someone who can make input comprehensible to a non-native speaker, regardless of his/her competence in the target language.
 - Optimal input is supplied when the teacher engages the learner in real communication which the learner finds interesting.
- 2- **Teaching should be seen as a preparation for 'acquisition' in the wider world.**
 - Krashen argued that it is doubtful if the classroom can supply sufficient comprehensible input to ensure successful L2 acquisition.
 - One of the aims of teaching must be to equip the learner to manage real-life conversations.

3- The teacher must ensure that learners do not feel anxious or are put on the defensive.

- The learner has to feel relaxed and confident to ensure that the 'filter' is down so that comprehensible input gets in.
- Krashen argued that if teachers insist on learner production too soon or if they correct errors in communicative activities, the learner will be inhibited from learning.

4- Grammar teaching should be restricted to simple forms and its goal is to enable the learner to monitor.

- Grammar teaching (inductive or deductive) is of limited value because it can only contribute to 'learning' and never to 'acquisition'.
- Grammar can be taught as 'subject matter', but this is not to be confused with the main goal of language teaching.

5- Errors should not be corrected when the goal is 'acquisition' but should be corrected when the goal is 'learning'.

- Error correction has no role in 'acquisition' which only occurs as a result of the learner processing comprehensible input.
- Given that the main goal of teaching is 'acquisition', error correction is generally to be avoided.

The main principles of Krashen's 'Monitor Model' can be summarized as:

- 1- The goal is communicative skills.
- 2- Comprehension precedes production.
- 3- Production emerges when the learner is ready.
- 4- Acquisition activities are central.
- 5- The 'Affective Filter' needs to be kept low.

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Critics:

- Many scholars critiqued that it is not clear how Krashen's claim that 'learnt' knowledge does not contribute to the development of 'acquired' knowledge.
- It is difficult to see how the 'input hypothesis' can be properly tested.
- The 'monitor hypothesis' has been criticized on the grounds that it is far too restricting; learners are capable of learning and using metalingual knowledge to a far greater extent than Krashen allows for.

Final Thought

The 'Monitor Model' is undoubtedly the best known theory of L2 acquisition. For a while the theory dominated the field of L2 acquisition to such an extent that researchers felt compelled to measure their results and theoretical position against those covered by the 'Monitor Model'. The 'Monitor Model' is a courageous step in the field of second language learning and teaching that has many praiseworthy arguments. However, further research should be conducted regarding Krashen's 'Monitor Model' rather than only criticizing it.