Stephen Krashen and the Monitor Model

An Introduction
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**Stephen Krashen**, professor emeritus at the University of Southern Ca, is a highly acclaimed linguist, educational researcher and activist. Krashen is best known for his contributions to the fields of second language acquisit (SLA), bilingual education, and reading. (Wikipedia)
Stephen D. Krashen

- Cynic
- Opportunist
- Discredited
- Idiotic
- Shameless
- “a parasite on the backs of poor Latino children”
- “The Pied Piper [of the] Church of Krashen”
Major Contributions to Education

- Early proponent of bilingual education.
- Creator of “Whole Language” method of developing literacy.
- Developed the “Monitor Model” which guides most teachers in adult second language education today.
The 5 Hypotheses of the Monitor Model

- Natural Order
- Learning/Acquisition
- Monitor
- Comprehensible Input
- Affective Filter
Natural Order Hypothesis

- “It has been hypothesized that there is a fairly stable order of acquisition of structures in language acquisition, that is, one can see clear similarities across acquirers as to which structures tend to be acquired early and which tend to be acquired late (Brown, 1973; Dulay and Burt, 1975).” (Krashen)

- L1 Acquisition = L2 Acquisition (In children and adults)
Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis

- “Language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages.”
- “Error correction and explicit teaching of rules are not relevant to language acquisition.”

“Conscious language learning, on the other hand, is thought to be helped a great deal by error correction and the presentation of explicit rules (Krashen and Seliger, 1975). Error correction it is maintained, helps the learner come to the correct mental representation of the linguistic generalization. Whether such feedback has this effect to a significant degree remains an open question (Fanselow, 1977; Long, 1977). No invariant order of learning is claimed, although syllabi implicitly claim that learners proceed from simple to complex, a sequence that may not be identical to the acquisition sequence.”

Monitor Hypothesis

- Conscious learning is available to the performer only as a Monitor.
- In general, utterances are initiated by the acquired system—our fluency in production is based on what we have "picked up" through active communication.
- Our "formal" knowledge of the second language, our conscious learning, may be used to alter the output of the acquired system, sometimes before and sometimes after the utterance is produced.
Example of Monitor Model

- Teaching the intervocalic flap
- Water: /wɔ-tə/ -> /wɔ-rə/
- The rule is that /t/ becomes /ɾ/ when positioned between two vowels.
- Native speakers don’t consciously think about this rule because they usually don’t know it.
- Non-native speakers don’t have time in their speaking to think about this rule.
Example of Monitor Model

- However, the rule can help the learner notice when native speakers are doing it.
- And it can help them notice that they are NOT doing it.
- As a result, they begin to ‘pick up’ the use of the flap naturally and automatically (sometimes 😊).
Input Hypothesis

- Acquisition only takes place when receiving *comprehensible* input.
- If it is too easy, comprehension will take place, but no acquisition.
- If it is too difficult, no comprehension or acquisition will take place.
Affective Filter Hypothesis

- An attempt to explain why first and second language acquisition “look” so different.
- Affective factors (nervousness, self esteem issues, stress) can raise an “affective barrier” that prevents acquisition from taking place.
Criticisms

- Not worded in a scientifically testable way.
- \( L_1 = L_2 \) flies in the face of the critical period hypothesis, which is testable and has some strong confirmation.
- Natural Order hypothesis misses the fact that \( L_1 \) plays a large (though not all consuming) role in English acquisition.
Criticisms (Acquisition/Learning)

- Research has shown that explicit grammatical instruction does have a significant impact on the ability to learn a second language
Criticisms - Affective Filter

- No evidence it exists.
- No evidence for an increase in affective factors (stress, nervousness) around puberty, which might account for Critical Period Effect.
- No evidence that remedies for the affective filter help.