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Module: **Psycholinguistics**

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Course Title: **Krashen’s Five Hypothesis**

1. ***Introduction***

* "Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill."
* "Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication- in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding."
* "The best methods are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are 'ready', recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production."
* "In the real world, conversations with sympathetic native speakers who are willing to help the acquirer understand are very helpful.”
* The Natural Approach (NA): The most striking proposal of the NA theory is that adults can still acquire second languages and that the ability to 'pick up' languages does not disappear at puberty. Thus, Krashen's contribution to Chomsky's LAD proposition is that adults follow the same principles of Universal Grammar. The theory behind the NA implies that adults can acquire all but the phonological aspect of any foreign language, by using their ever-active LAD. What makes adults different from children is their abstract problem solving skills that make them consciously process the grammar of a foreign language. Therefore, adults have two paths to follow: Acquisition and learning.

1. ***Theoretical Basis of the Natural Approach***

***•*** The Natural Approach is regarded as a comprehension-based approach because of its emphasis on initial delay (silent period) in the production of language. What is novel is that the NA focuses on exposure to input instead of grammar practice, and on emotional preparedness for acquisition to take place.

***2.1. Theory of Language***

* Krashen regards 'communication' as the main function of language. The focus is on teaching communicative abilities. The superiority of 'meaning' is emphasized. Krashen and Terrell believe that a language is essentially its lexicon. They stress the importance of vocabulary and view language as a vehicle for 'communicating meanings' and 'messages'.
* According to Krashen, 'acquisition' can take place only when people comprehend messages in the TL. Briefly, the view of language that the Natural Approach presents consists of 'lexical items', 'structures' and 'messages'. The lexicon for both perception and production is considered critical in the organization and interpretation of messages. In Krashen's view, acquisition is the natural assimilation of language rules by using language for communication. This means that linguistic competence is achieved via 'input' containing structures at the 'interlanguage + 1' level (i +1); that is, via 'comprehensible input'.

***2. 2. Theory of Language Learning***

* "There are two independent ways of developing ability in second languages. 'Acquisition' is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language, ... [and] 'learning' ..., [which is] a conscious process that results in 'knowing about' [the rules of] language" (Krashen 1985:1).
* The Acquisition-Learning distinction is the most fundamental of all the hypotheses in Krashen's theory and the most widely known among linguists and language practitioners).

**(a)The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis**

* According to Krashen there are two independent systems of second language performance: 'the acquired system' and 'the learned system'. The 'acquired system' or 'acquisition' is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act.
* The 'learned system' or 'learning' is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. According to Krashen 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'.
* Krashen believes that the result of learning, learned competence (LC) functions as a monitor or editor. That is, while AC is responsible for our fluent production of sentences, LC makes correction on these sentences either before or after their production. This kind of conscious grammar correction, 'monitoring', occurs most typically in a grammar exam where the learner has enough time to focus on form and to make use of his conscious knowledge of grammar rules (LC) as an aid to 'acquired competence'.
* The way to develop learned competence is fairly easy: analysing the grammar rules consciously and practising them through exercises. But what Acquisition / Learning Distinction Hypothesis predicts is that learning the grammar rules of a foreign/second language does not result in subconscious acquisition. In other words, what you consciously learn does not necessarily become subconsciously acquired through conscious practice, grammar exercises and the like. Krashen formulates this idea in his well-known statement that "learning does not become acquisition". It is at this point where Krashen receives major criticism.

**(b)The Natural Order Hypothesis**

* According to the hypothesis, the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predicted progression. Certain grammatical structures or morphemes are acquired before others in first language acquisition and there is a similar natural order in SLA. The average order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as an 'acquired' language is given below:   
    
  -Ing--------Aux---------Irregular------Regular Past  
  Plural----->Article---->Past---------->3rd Sing.  
     
    
  The implication of natural order is not that second or foreign language teaching materials should be arranged in accordance with this sequence but that acquisition is subconscious and free from conscious intervention (Ellidokuzoglu, 1992).

(c) The Input Hypothesis

* This hypothesis relates to acquisition, not to learning. Krashen claims that people acquire language best by understanding input that is a little beyond their present level of competence. Consequently, Krashen believes that 'comprehensible input' (that is, i + 1) should be provided. The 'input' should be relevant and 'not grammatically sequenced'. The 'input' should also be in sufficient quantity as Richards pointed out:
* ".. child acquirers of a first language are provided with samples of 'caretaker' speech, rough - tuned to their present level of understanding, ..[and] adult acquirers of a second language [should be] provided with simple codes that facilitate second language comprehension." (Richards, J. 1986:133)

**(d) The Monitor Hypothesis**

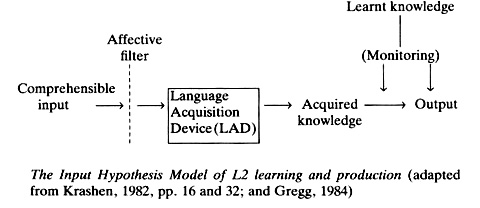
* As is mentioned, adult second language learners have two means for internalising the target language. The first is 'acquisition' which is a subconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language. The second means is a conscious learning process in which learners attend to form, figure out rules and are generally aware of their own process. The 'monitor' is an aspect of this second process. It edits and make alterations or corrections as they are consciously perceived. Krashen believes that 'fluency' in second language performance is due to 'what we have acquired', not 'what we have learned': Adults should do as much acquiring as possible for the purpose of achieving communicative fluency. Therefore, the monitor should have only a minor role in the process of gaining communicative competence. Similarly, Krashen suggests three conditions for its use: (1) there must be enough time; (2) the focus must be on form and not on meaning; (3) the learner must know the rule.

**(e) The Affective Filter Hypothesis**

* The learner's emotional state, according to Krashen, is just like an adjustable filter which freely passes or hinders input necessary to acquisition. In other words, input must be achieved in low-anxiety contexts since acquirers with a low affective filter receive more input and interact with confidence. The filter is 'affective' because there are some factors which regulate its strength. These factors are self-confidence, motivation and anxiety state.
* The expression "language learning" includes two clearly distinct, though rarely understood, concepts. One involves receiving information about the language, transforming it into knowledge through intellectual effort and storing it through memorization.
* The other involves developing the skill of interacting with foreigners to understand and speak their language. The first concept is called "language learning," while the other is referred to as "language acquisition." These are separate ideas and we will show that neither is the consequence of the other.
* The distinction between acquisition and learning is one of the hypotheses (the most important) established by the American Stephen Krashen in his highly regarded theory of foreign language learning.
* The concept of language learning is linked to the traditional approach to the study of languages and today is still generally practiced in high schools worldwide. Attention is focused on the language in its written form and the objective is for the student to understand the structure and rules of the language through the application of intellect and logical deductive reasoning.
* The teacher is an authority figure and the participation of the student is predominantly passive. In the teaching of English, for example, one studies the function of the interrogative and negative modes, irregular verbs, modals, etc. The student learns to construct sentences in the perfect tense, but only learns with difficulty when to use it. It's a progressive and cumulative process, normally tied to a preset syllabus that includes memorization of vocabulary and seeks to transmit to the student knowledge about the language, its functioning and grammatical structure with its irregularities, its contrasts with the student's native language, knowledge that one hopes will become the practical skills of understanding and speaking the language. This effort of accumulating knowledge becomes frustrating because of the lack of familiarity with the language.
* Innumerable graduates with arts degrees in English are classic examples of language learning. They often are trained and theoretically able to teach a language that they can communicate in only with extreme difficulty
* ***The Natural Order Hypothesis****: 'we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order'*
* ***The Acquisition/ Learning Hypothesis****: 'adults have two distinctive ways of developing competences in second languages .. acquisition, that is by using language for real communication ... learning .. "knowing about" language' (Krashen & Terrell 1983)*
* ***The Monitor Hypothesis****: 'conscious learning ... can only be used as a Monitor or an editor' (Krashen & Terrell 1983)*
* ***The Input Hypothesis****: 'humans acquire language in only one way - by understanding messages or by receiving "comprehensible input"'*
* ***The Affective Filter Hypothesis****:  'a mental block, caused by affective factors ... that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition device' (Krashen, 1985, p.100)*

***Acquisition        Learning***

* *implicit, subconscious explicit, conscious*
* *informal situations formal situations*
* *uses grammatical 'feel‘ uses grammatical rules*
* *depends on attitude depends on aptitude*
* *stable order of acquisition simple to complex order of learning*



1. ***Evidence for the Input Hypothesis*** (chiefly Krashen 1985a)
2. people speak to children acquiring their first language in special ways
3. people speak to L2 learners in special ways
4. L2 learners often go through an initial Silent Period
5. the comparative success of younger and older learners reflects provision of comprehensible input
6. the more comprehensible input the greater the L2 proficiency
7. lack of comprehensible input delays language acquisition
8. teaching methods work according to the extent that they use comprehensible input
9. immersion teaching is successful because it provides comprehensible input
10. bilingual programs succeed to the extent they provide comprehensible input

**a) Affective-Humanistic activities**

* dialogues – short and useful - 'open' dialogues
* interviews – pairwork on personal information personal charts and tables
* preference ranking – opinion polls on favourite activities etc
* revealing information about yourself – e.g. what I had for breakfast
* activating the imagination – e.g. give Napoleon advice about his Russian campaign

**b) Problem-solving activities**

* task and series – e.g. components of an activity such as washing the car
* charts, graphs, maps – e.g. busfares, finding the way
* developing speech for particular occasions – e.g. What do you say if …
* advertisements

**c) Games,** e.g. What is strange about … a bird swimming?'

**d) Content activities,** e.g. academic subject matter such as maths