

Monitor Theory and Its Implications to Language Teaching

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Abstract

The paper were developed to see the significance of the four hypotheses of Monitor Theory and their implications on Language teaching. They are stated as follows. Comprehension precedes production. Production is allowed to emerge in stages. The syllabus consists of communicative functions. Activities foster a lowering of the affective filters.

Keywords

Monitor Theory; Implication; Comprehension.

1. Introduction

Monitor Theory can also be called Krashen's the Natural Approach that based on the idea that the way a child learns its L1 should constitute a model for the teaching and learning of L2. It consists of five hypotheses that are Acquisition Learning Hypotheses, Monitor Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis. The basic principles of the Natural Approach are:

Comprehension precedes production.

Production is allowed to emerge in stages.

The syllabus consists of communicative functions..

Activities foster a lowering of the affective filters.

If we understand the five hypotheses deeply, we can understand teaching and our students better, in such case, we can benefit much from them and make great progress in our teaching. Now let's discuss the five ones one by one from two aspects (theory and implications to teaching).

2. Theory and Implications

2.1. Acquisition Learning Hypothesis

2.1.1. Theory

Comprehension precedes production and it sets the basis for the whole rational of the Monitor Theory. It claims that they are two distinctive ways of developing competence in a second or foreign language. The two ways are acquisition and learning. " We have all observed children acquiring their first language easily and well, yet the learning of a second language, particularly in an educational setting, often meet with great difficulties and sometimes failure. We should therefore be able to learn something from a systematic study of the first learning experience." (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:48) Formal teaching is necessary for "learning" to occur, learning, according to the theory, cannot lead to acquisition. So what are the differences between acquisition and learning? Let's read the following table.

Table 1. Three Scheme comparing

| Aspects \ Differences | Learning | Acquisition |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Process | Conscious | Unconscious |
| Focus | Form | Meaning |
| Stress | Accuracy | Fluency |
| Input | Selected/Limited | Natural/Unlimited |
| Setting | Formal | Informal |

2.1.2. Implications to Teaching

- 1) We should provide language teaching in an unconscious way as much as possible.
- 2) We should teach grammar through meaning or in the context, thus grammar learning is not boring but interesting.
- 3) Error correcting is necessary but should not be too much. As a teacher, we shouldn't only aim at accuracy sacrificing fluency.
- 4) Whatever helps comprehension is important. Visual aids are useful, as is exposure to a wide range of vocabulary rather than study of syntactic structure.
- 5) The language exposure of acquisition is far more than learning, therefore we should try our best to provide students rich language environment.

2.2. Monitor Hypothesis

2.2.1. Theory

It claims that spontaneous L2 output can only be initiated by the acquired system, while the learned system can only be used as a 'monitor' to self-correct the output so as to improve the accuracy of L2 performance. Three conditions limit the successful use of the monitor:

1. The learner must have sufficient time so that she is able to think about and apply conscious grammatical rules' (Arnold, 1999:3).
2. Focus on form, or correctness rather than focus on meaning.
3. Knowledge of rules. The performer must know the rules.

2.2.2. Implications to Teaching

- 1) We shouldn't always focus on knowledge learning, we should help learners to learn language by themselves and develop their learning autonomy.
- 2) We should increase students' linguistic awareness. (Kalyuga , 2003)
- 3) Incorporating both meaning and form into language teaching, not only providing learners with explicit knowledge of the L2, but also creating opportunities for the learners to engage in meaningful communicative or pseudo-communicative language use.
- 4) Raising learners' awareness of monitoring as a useful learner strategy and integrating monitoring to language teaching.

2.3. The Natural Order Hypothesis

2.3.1. Theory

Production is allowed to emerge in stages. The acquisition of grammatical structures (rules) proceeds in a predictable order, some rules tend to come early and others late. Research is said to have shown that certain grammatical structures or morphemes are acquired before others in first language acquisition of English, and a similar natural order is found in second language

acquisition. Errors are signs of naturalistic developmental processes, and during acquisition, similar developmental errors occur in learners no matter what their mother tongue is. (Cañas, 2003:7)

2.3.2. Implications to Teaching

We should follow natural order as much as possible.

2.4. The Input Hypothesis

2.4.1. Theory

It claims to explain the relationship between what the learner is exposed to of a language and language acquisition. It stresses the importance of comprehensible input in SLA. I+1 is the key to effective SLA. To lead to acquisition, the input must contain structures a little beyond the learner's current level of competence. Krashen considered the learner's current competence as I and the next level as I+1. The Input Hypothesis involves four main issues.

First, the hypothesis relates to acquisition, and not to learning.

Second, people acquire language best by understanding input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence.

Third, the ability to speak fluently cannot be taught directly; rather, it "emerges" independently in time, after the acquirer has build up linguistic competence by understanding input.

Fourth, if there is a sufficient quantity of comprehensible input, I+1 will usually be provided automatically.

2.4.2. Implications to Teaching

- 1) We should follow ZPD(Zone of Proximate Development) of students as much as possible.
- 2) The level of input is very important; input shouldn't be too easy or too difficult. When we teach, we should consider both qualitative input and quantitative input.
- 3) We should choose the materials that build on what the learners have already known and those motivates the students and build up their confidence.
- 4) As much comprehensible input as possible must be presented. A teacher should employ both linguistic and extra-linguistic means to facilitate comprehension.
- 5) Conversation is a very good way to obtain input, so the teacher takes advantage of students' knowledge of the world by discussing topics familiar to them.

2.5. Affective Filter Hypothesis

2.5.1. Theory

It mainly concerns the effect of an L2 learner's affective factors, or emotional and psychological state on SLA. Activities foster a lowering of the affective filters. Krashen sees the learner's emotional state or attitudes as an adjustable filter that freely passes, impedes, or blocks input necessary to acquisition. A low affective filter is desirable, since it impedes or blocks less of this necessary input. Here, affection includes motivation, self-confidence and anxiety.

2.5.2. Implications to Teaching

- 1) In order to lower the affective filter, student work should center on meaningful communication rather than on form; input should be interesting and so contribute to a relaxed classroom atmosphere.
- 2) Give students permission to use the language with less than perfect performance and help students realistically assess their performance.
- 3) Be very clear about classroom goals and help students develop strategies to meet those goals.

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3. Conclusion

Above all, introducing Krashen's the Natural Approach as a pedagogical intervention had a positive effect on the students' learning. The paper were developed to see the significance of the four hypotheses. Comprehension precedes production. Production is allowed to emerge in stages. The syllabus consists of communicative functions. Activities foster a lowering of the affective filters.

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