

# The Enlightenment of International Chinese Teaching based on Krashen's Monitor Model Theory

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## Abstract

Krashen's monitor model theory includes "five central hypotheses", namely: "hypothesis of 'acquisition' and 'learning'", "natural acquisition order hypothesis", "monitor hypothesis", "input hypothesis" and "affective filter hypothesis". These hypotheses introduce the rules and processes of the second language acquisition from different aspects. Based on introducing the five hypotheses of Krashen's monitor model, this paper takes the case of second language learning as the object of discussion and puts forward the enlightenment of this model to international Chinese teaching.

## Keywords

Krashen; The monitor model; International Chinese teaching; Teaching enlightenment.

## 1. Overview of Krashen 's Monitor Model

Since the 1960s, foreign countries have begun to study second language acquisition and tried to systematically describe and explain the whole process of second language acquisition. American scholar Krashen put forward the theory of monitor model which reflects the process of second language acquisition in the early 1980 s. This theory has a wide influence on the field of second language teaching and even the field of linguistics. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the advanced nature of Krashen's monitor model and to guide international Chinese teaching.

### 1.1. Hypothesis of "Acquisition" and "Learning"

Krashen believes that "acquisition" and "learning" are two ways for adult second language learners to acquire and master a second language. The so-called "acquisition" is a kind of "subconscious language acquisition", that is, learners acquire the knowledge of second language rules in an unconscious situation. The knowledge acquired through "acquisition" is called "procedural knowledge", which is acquired through "implicit learning", and is stored in the language area of the left hemisphere of the brain to "automatically process" language. On the contrary, "learning" is a kind of "conscious language learning", and the knowledge acquired by it is called "declarative knowledge", which is acquired in the way of "explicit learning". The knowledge learned is mainly used for "controlled processing" and not necessarily stored in the language area of the left hemisphere of the brain.

**Table 1.** Chart of differences between "acquisition" and "learning"

	Kind of knowledge	Ways of mastering	functions
Acquisition	procedural knowledge	implicit learning	automatically process
Learning	declarative knowledge	explicit learning	controlled processing

Through the above introduction of "acquisition" and "learning", the boundary between the two is distinct. Although these two both belong to the ways by which second language learners

acquire second language rules, Krashen has made a clear division of them and believes that the knowledge of “acquisition” and “learning” cannot be transformed, which is the so-called “no interface view”.

### 1.2. Natural Acquisition Order Hypothesis

“Natural acquisition order” means that children follow a similar acquisition order when acquiring mother tongue rules and language items. Krashen believes that adults also have a natural acquisition order when learning a second language. Learners from different cultural backgrounds follow a very similar second language acquisition order in the process of learning a second language. It is worth noting that the natural acquisition order is different from the learning order of language knowledge. The order of natural acquisition is dominated by the learner's internal syllabus and has nothing to do with what kind of learning order the students follow in the learning process. In Krashen's view, the syllabus followed in classroom teaching has no effect on the natural acquisition order of learners. Although learners learn the language rules in the classroom, they will not use them until they have learned them; perhaps some language rules have already been learned in the classroom, but only when they match the learner's internal syllabus and are truly acquired by the learner, will they appear in the learner's language communication.

### 1.3. Monitor Hypothesis

In Krashen's view, “monitor” is the role and function of the learner's “learning” knowledge, that is, the supervision and control of language output. When learners express themselves in their mother tongue, they can blurt out without thinking, and will not worry about whether they are wrong. However, when learners express in a second language, they will unconsciously check their language output before, during and after expression, and pay attention to whether their words are correct. This “check” or “attention” is monitor. Of course, Krashen believes that “acquisition” is responsible for output and “learning” is responsible for monitor, so “monitor” is for “learning”. Therefore, Krashen put forward three conditions for using monitor: sufficient time, attention to language forms and understanding of grammatical rules. He also divides learners into three categories according to the degree of learners' monitor of language output: over-monitor, under-monitor and reasonable monitor.

### 1.4. Input Hypothesis

The input hypothesis is the core part of Krashen's whole language acquisition theory because it answers the most important question in the field of language teaching: how people acquire a language. Krashen believes that the ability to use language is naturally formed rather than taught, and the acquisition of this ability must be through understanding information or accepting comprehensible language input. Therefore, comprehensible input is the key to language acquisition. So, what is comprehensible input? If the learner's current level is “i”, then comprehensible input should slightly exceed the learner's current level, that is, “i+1”. If learners can contact many language materials with the level of “i+1” in the process of acquisition, they can naturally and unconsciously acquire new language knowledge. Of course, comprehensible input is not random input, and more is better. Attention should be paid to input quantity, input quality, input mode and input conditions. Therefore, Krashen points out that the input hypothesis should pay attention to four aspects: first, the input hypothesis is for acquisition and has nothing to do with learning; secondly, only “i+1” can help learners acquire new language structures. Again, the “i+1” process can be automatically implemented based on a large number of valid comprehensible inputs; finally, the ability to speak is natural, not taught.

## 1.5. Affective Filter Hypothesis

The Affective Filter Hypothesis, also known as the “Shielding Effect Hypothesis”, refers to some psychological barriers in the learner's mind that prevent learners from making full use of the comprehensible input they receive to acquire language, including three types of affective factors: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.

Motivation: The learning purpose of students affects the learning effect.

Self-confidence: Self-confidence makes learners perform better.

Anxiety: Low anxiety contributes to second language acquisition.

Krashen believes that the stronger the learner's learning motivation is, the stronger the self-confidence is, the lower the anxiety is, the weaker the filtering of language input is, the more input is obtained, and the better the effect of second language acquisition is. On the contrary, the weaker the learner's learning motivation is, the weaker the self-confidence is, the higher the anxiety is, the stronger the filtering of language input is, the less the input is obtained, and the worse the effect of second language acquisition is. This hypothesis draws people's attention to the emotional factors that affect second language acquisition, and establishes the “cultural infiltration” model, which has a great influence on the study of second language acquisition.

## 2. Teaching Enlightenments

When discussing the theory of Krashen's monitor model, it is not difficult to find that many problems in the current international Chinese teaching are related to this. This theory provides inspiration for us to solve these problems.

### 2.1. Hypothesis of “Acquisition” and “Learning”

The viewpoint of this hypothesis is indeed reasonable and scientific, but there are also some doubts. Taking Korean as a second language learning as an example, I have mastered a certain number of commonly used Korean vocabulary and expressions and often used in daily life before formally and systematically learning Korean. Before this, I had never participated in any Korean learning courses, so these contents were not learned through the teacher's explanation and practice in the Korean class, but in the process of watching Korean movies and TV dramas, I was unconsciously instilled, and the accumulation of quantity eventually changed qualitatively, resulting in one day I blurted out and learned this knowledge inadvertently. But after the official start of Korean learning, I accepted the system of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar learning. From pronunciation to vocabulary and grammar, teachers will use various teaching methods and teaching methods to teach language rules in every class. In this way, I have gradually mastered the pronunciation of Korean, expanded my vocabulary, and can use Korean grammar rules to say more advanced sentence patterns. In the initial stage, I found that the knowledge I learned is very simple, and there are many that I have mastered before I accept learning. However, with the deepening of learning, vocabulary became more and more difficult and grammatical structure became more complex, the learning became harder and harder.

From this example, before the formal learning of Korean, the commonly used words, and expressions that I have learned and can use are indeed “acquired” knowledge that I have acquired subconsciously. However, after the beginning of Korean class, those systematic and standardized knowledge belongs to “learning”. Whether these two methods can be transformed into each other is debatable. The author believes that the accumulation obtained through “acquisition” in the early stage is scattered and unsystematic, and these accumulations are transformed into real knowledge through “learning” in Korean class, thus realizing the transformation from “acquisition” to “learning”. The knowledge learned in the classroom may be very unskilled at the beginning of the study, and it needs to be conceived in the brain before speaking; however, with the continuous practice and the increase of proficiency, this

knowledge has been fully mastered. At this time, it can be blurted out when it is used again. This is the transformation from “learning” to “acquisition”.

The implications of this hypothesis are as follows: first, create a good classroom environment and atmosphere, so that students can “acquire” language in a subtle way. Just as I learned Korean expression under the influence of characters when watching Korean dramas, students will also be influenced by these “silent languages” in an environment with a strong Chinese atmosphere. Perhaps students can “painlessly” acquire some language knowledge in the cumulative infiltration. Therefore, the arrangement of classroom environment is very important.

Secondly, efforts should be made to help students transform “learning” knowledge into “acquisition”. The fact that a student learns certain grammatical rules in class does not mean that he / she can use them in communication, that is, the student only knows the knowledge, but does not learn how to use it. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to designing a large number of meaning exercises in the teaching process to help students “internalize the knowledge they have learned” in order to “externalize it in practice”.

## 2.2. Natural Acquisition Order Hypothesis

The enlightenment of the natural acquisition order hypothesis is that the setting of the syllabus and the teaching order should consider the natural acquisition order of the learners as much as possible. The textbooks I use to learn Korean belong to spiral textbooks, and this arrangement characteristic reflects the law of acquisition order. The same grammatical item may have multiple usages in practical applications, and these usages are difficult, some are relatively simple, and some are difficult. Then in the process of teaching, we should follow the order from easy to difficult. We should start with the simplest and most basic usage. When students master it skillfully, we should reproduce this grammar point in the later learning and introduce more complex usage. This teaching method and order are logical, and the students’ acquisition effect is better. Therefore, since learners have their own language acquisition order and only use the rules that have been acquired, teachers should also try to follow the learner’s acquisition order and arrange the corresponding teaching content according to their internal syllabus, so that the learning knowledge can be matched with the learner’s acquisition order to help students learn the second language better and improve the learner’s language communication ability.

## 2.3. Monitor Hypothesis

The enlightenment of the monitor hypothesis to us is to encourage students to express more, to monitor moderately, to improve students’ opening degree, and to guide students to focus more on the fluency of language expression rather than accuracy. Taking “impulsive” language learners and “prudent” language learners as examples, in the process of learning, “impulsive” learners like to speak and practice expression, so even if there are mistakes in class, they will not keep silent, and even after class, they will always find various practical exercises to exercise their second language communicative competence. The “prudent” language learners belong to over-monitored learners. If they are not named by the teacher, they will never speak actively. Even if the teacher asks to read aloud, he will first carefully consider the pronunciation of each word in the brain, and then say it after confirming it is correct, and the words he says are always stuttering. In the long run, his acquisition effect will not be very good.

Therefore, in the teaching process, we should encourage students to speak more, cultivate students’ self-confidence, even if it is wrong. Accurate pronunciation is very important, but the cultivation of communicative competence should focus on the fluency of paragraph expression rather than the correctness of each word pronunciation. Moderate monitor helps to improve the accuracy of our language expression, but excessive monitor will hinder our progress in learning a second language.

## 2.4. Input Hypothesis

The enlightenment of the input hypothesis is that we should pay attention to helping students “jump and pick peaches” in the teaching process. In the process of learning Korean, Korean teachers often make appropriate extensions on the content they have learned. For example, after teaching a certain language point, they will do a lot of question-and-answer exercises with students. These questions are usually questions that have been asked before or involve language points that have been learned, but these questions are not static. Teachers will add some details or ask deeper to help students have a more comprehensive understanding of a topic and a wider accumulation.

Therefore, in the arrangement of teaching content, teachers should pay attention to the selection of materials with lower difficulty (i-1) or higher difficulty (i+2) and try to use the teaching content in the “zone of proximal development” of students. At the same time, a large amount of comprehensible input should be carried out in the classroom. Don't think that teachers have no effect on students' large input. On the contrary, it is the basis of students' acquisition of language rules. Because students do not begin to learn at the moment of speaking, but when the teacher outputs the language to the students, the students have begun to learn.

## 2.5. Affective Filter Hypothesis

The enlightenment of the Affective Filter Hypothesis is that teachers should not only pay attention to teaching, but also pay attention to students' emotional needs, weaken students' psychological barriers, and help students improve input efficiency and learning effect. In the process of learning Korean, I have repeatedly appeared the idea of wanting to give up learning. Because the introduction of Korean is very simple, but with the deepening of learning, the content is more and more difficult. At the beginning, the freshness and expectation of this language are also exhausted, the learning motivation is getting lower and lower, and the anxiety is getting stronger and stronger. But I kept on learning and thought, “Why did I learn Korean?” “What is the purpose of learning Korean?” and other such issues, to maintain their motivation to learn Korean; at the same time, some short-term goals will be set. After reaching the goal, even if you give yourself some positive feedback, to maintain the enthusiasm of learning Korean. Therefore, although the difficulty of learning has not decreased, the change of mentality and moderate incentive make the current learning not so difficult.

Therefore, as a teacher, we should encourage students in a timely manner, especially in the case of “Chinese is the most difficult language to learn in the world.” Teachers of Chinese as a foreign language should adjust students' learning mentality, dispel students' fear of difficulties, show more charm of Chinese, constantly stimulate students' interest and freshness in Chinese, and maintain their learning motivation.

## 3. Summary

In a word, Krashen's monitor model explains some important problems in the process of second language acquisition, including the way of acquisition, the order of acquisition, the factors affecting acquisition and so on, which plays an important guiding role in international Chinese teaching. The natural law advocated by Krashen enlightens us to improve classroom efficiency and provide high-quality language input in limited classroom time. At the same time, we should pay attention to the communicative function of language and make the purpose of language teaching functional and practical. It is true that Krashen's monitor model has some defects and deficiencies, but his theoretical research not only enlightens us in teaching methods, teaching content and other teaching aspects, but also lets us pay attention to students, the main body of language learning, reflecting a student-centered idea. From this point of view, this model has

the advantages of development and advancement, which is worthy of our continued use and development.

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