Stephen Krashen
Acquisition vs. learning

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The acquisition/learning hypothesis

The are two ways / modes of L2 development:

- Subconscious language acquisition
- Conscious language learning

The result of language acquisition … is subconscious. We are generally not consciously aware of the rules of the languages we have acquired. Instead, we have a ‘feel’ for the correctness. Grammatical sentences ‘sound’ right, or ‘feel’ right, and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated.

[Krashen 1982: 10]

We will use the term ‘learning’ henceforth to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. In nontechnical terms, learning is ‘knowing about’ a language, known to most people as ‘grammar’ or ‘rules’. Some synonyms include formal knowledge of a language or explicit meaning.

[Krashen 1982: 10]
The monitor hypothesis

Language learning involves a 'monitor', i.e. a control system that can alter the output of the acquisition system according to learned rules:

Prerequisites for the monitor:
- Knowledge of rules
- Sufficient time
- Focus on correctness
The monitor hypothesis

Krashen (1981) distinguishes three different types of monitor users:

- Monitor overusers
- Monitor underusers
- Optimal monitor users

The acquisition and learning systems are influenced by …

- Acquisition is influenced by attitude/motivation
- Learning is influenced by aptitude/ability
The input hypothesis

L2 acquisition is crucially determined by 'input':

Humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input.

[Krashen 1985]

- The ideal input goes just a little bit beyond the learners current knowledge.
- Language comprehension plays a more important role in language acquisition than language production.
The natural order hypothesis

Subconscious L2 learning proceeds in particular orders:

We acquire the rules of language in a predictable order.

[Krashen 1985]

The noun phrase accessibility hierarchy:

1. The man who lives next door. subject
2. The man who I saw. object
3. The man to whom I gave the book. indirect object
4. The man about who(m) I spoke. object of preposition
5. The man whose wife had an accident. genitive attribute
The active filter hypothesis

The influence of the input on the acquisition system is affected by the ‘active filter’, i.e. non-linguistic factors of L2 acquisition:

- Anxiety
- Motivation
- Self confidence