

# Does The Monitor Theory Provide An Adequate Model For The Second Language Classroom?

(7)

Methods and Materials

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Monitor Theory rests on five hypotheses: 1) there is a distinction between second-language learning and second-language acquisition, and acquisition is more important; 2) there is a natural order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes; 3) conscious learning results in the use of the Monitor, which requires time, a focus on form rather than meaning, and knowledge of the rule; 4) subconscious acquisition results from understanding structures which are slightly beyond the student's current level of proficiency, and requires large quantities of comprehensible input; and 5) input must pass through a "filter" which is influenced by the student's motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.

Stephen Krashen has analyzed seven teaching methods to determine the extent to which they meet the requirements for optimal input, consistent with Hypothesis 4 of the Monitor Theory. The methods studied include

Grammar-Translation, Audio-Lingualism, Cognitive-Code, the Direct Method (de Souza's method and modern versions by Barcia, Pucciani and Hamel), the Natural Approach, Total Physical Response, and Suggestopedia. Of these, he concluded that the latter three are worthwhile and encourage acquisition. Other methods, such as Discourse Analysis, Immersion, Bilingual Education, Community Language Learning, Delayed Oral Response, the Silent Way, the Functional-Notional Approach, and English for Specific Purposes, were not evaluated by Krashen.

Since methods cannot bring language into the lives of students without compatible materials, administrators and teachers need to establish a working set of criteria by which they may estimate the potential instructional value of any particular text. Curriculum design provides such guidelines for textbook selection, based on proficiency levels, length and intensity of the course, purpose of the students, qualifications of the teacher, and goals and objectives of the institution. Many of the above-mentioned methods, particularly the older ones, have received widespread attention. This has resulted in a large number of textbooks being published with these methods in mind. Others, including the newer methods, may not have generated such a large body of texts, possibly because of their newness, or possibly because the principles involved cannot be easily transported outside a limited set of specialized materials. This is at least partially true of the three methods preferred by Krashen.

The purpose of this paper is to examine methods and materials design as they relate to the Monitor Theory. Although Krashen includes learning in his analysis, Hypothesis 1 limits its importance and shifts the emphasis to acquisition. For this reason the discussion will be limited to acquisition unless such limitation leads to a breakdown in the logical flow of ideas. Methods not analyzed by Krashen will be evaluated according to

his own criteria for optimal input. Curriculum design will be discussed and evaluated, and problems involved in designing textbooks compatible with the Monitor Theory will be considered.

## 2 . THE MONITOR THEORY

The mainstay of Krashen's Monitor Theory is comprehensible input, which he claims is necessary for subconscious language acquisition, if it contains structures that are slightly beyond the student's current level of competence. According to Krashen, linguistic aids to comprehension in second-language teaching include a slower rate of speech and clear articulation, use of high-frequency vocabulary, less slang and fewer idioms, with simplified syntax and shorter sentences. Non-linguistic aids to comprehension include the use of objects and pictures, and discussion of topics that are familiar to the student. Krashen emphasizes communication in second-language teaching, and believes that if the student focuses on the message, and comprehends it, the other requirements for optimal input will naturally follow.

The second aspect of optimal input for acquisition is that it conceals the fact that the message is encoded in a foreign language by making it highly interesting and relevant to the student. Krashen believes that students pay little or no attention to meaning in pattern drill, thereby invalidating mechanical drill as an effective tool for acquiring language. Furthermore, he states that American foreign language required courses fail to provide the same motivation as an English-as-a-Second-Language class, because the foreign language student will have little use for the language outside the classroom. The second-language student, on the other hand, can put the language to immediate use as soon as he steps

through the door, making the classroom activities highly relevant if not always interesting.

Krashen believes that since all the students may not be at the same level of acquisition, a grammatically sequenced presentation may fall short of providing optimal input for acquisition. If each structure is presented only once, with a possible brief review, the student who fails to acquire it will be left out in the cold. This is contrasted with communicative input, which is said to guarantee a natural review of its unsequenced material. Krashen points out the awkward quality of language which results when textbook authors attempt to contextualize a given vocabulary or grammatical item, and claims that focus on the message tends to eliminate this awkwardness. He also thinks that grammatically sequenced materials assume that we know the order of acquisition, and he does not believe that language should be taught according to any such order.

Krashen feels that relevant, comprehensible input can bring students to a higher level of acquisition if it is not artificially sequenced, and if it is supplied in sufficient quantity. Just how much is sufficient is not clear, but he thinks that this aspect of language teaching has been seriously underestimated in the past. He cites studies which show that a beginning student produces language after about ten hours of comprehension practice; yet the amount of time necessary to achieve minimal-to-working professional proficiency may range from 720 to 1,950 hours of classtime.

Although the quantity of input is important, Krashen emphasizes that unless the Affective Filter is low, the student will not benefit. He says that insisting on early production and correcting errors in the early stages is sure to raise the Affective Filter. By keeping the topic interesting, and by keeping the input comprehensible, the Filter may remain low and allow the input to reach the student.

A final goal of classroom input is to provide the student with the linguistic competence necessary to function in the informal environment. Krashen says that the student may learn to control the quantity of input by learning greetings and ways of continuing the conversation. The student may also control the quality of input by asking the native speaker for help in explaining parts of the conversation, or by using "back-channel cues" such as nodding the head or using pause fillers to indicate that the student is following the conversation. Krashen believes that although some of these tools for conversation management may be learned, most must be acquired in the same way that grammar is, through comprehensible input.<sup>1)</sup>

Although the above criteria for optimal input may appear extremely attractive on the surface, a closer examination of its elements as they interact with each other will show that Krashen's theoretical proposal is inherently self-defeating. Beginning with the basic ingredient of comprehensible input, the following discussion will briefly treat of the many troubling interactions found in Krashen's hypotheses. This criticism is not exhaustive, but the extraordinary claims of the Monitor Theory, if accepted at face value, could lead the language teacher and student into a vague wasteland where productivity is at best accidental.

Krashen maintains that comprehensible input can be facilitated by the use of less slang, fewer idioms, and a slower rate of speech. This seems obvious, but the side effect presents a contradiction in terms of some other elements of optimal input. For one, students express high interest in learning slang and idioms, which are also present in natural communication. One could probably do without slang, but take away the idioms, and we are left with the "boring and wooden language" which Krashen seeks to avoid by rejecting grammatical sequences. Sequencing, on the

other hand, while it may not provide natural communication, is sure to assist in comprehension, if the student has kept up with the sequence from the beginning. Finally, a slower rate of speech, although helpful for comprehension, does nothing to prepare the student to converse with native speakers, who rarely demonstrate the patience which the student encounters in his second-language teacher.

Krashen admits that "it is fairly easy to think up examples of input that, while comprehensible, are universally perceived to be uninteresting and irrelevant."<sup>2)</sup> One aid to comprehensible input is the discussion of topics which are familiar to the students. While this may create interest, it also inhibits the development of conversation management, since it limits students to topics about which they are knowledgeable. This kind of limitation runs counter to the principle of diversity, which is necessary in all teaching and teaching materials. Yet total diversity for the sake of interest is undesirable because it reduces the rate of comprehension as well as being uneconomical.<sup>3)</sup>

Economy, however, does not seem to be an integral part of the Monitor Theory, which stresses vast quantities of comprehensible, interesting input. Yet increasing the quantity of input increases not only the possibility that comprehension is lost, as in total diversification, but it results in loss of interest. Whereas the theoretical advantages of a grammatical syllabus allow for a limited set of rules to be applied to a large number of situations, the Monitor Theory hopes to apply a large amount of input to a reduced set of linguistic principles.<sup>4)</sup>

While Krashen feigns to differentiate between quantity and quality in second-language input, the "quality" amounts to little more than the L2 performer trying to manipulate the conversation so that he can understand it. This type of conversation management is fine in the limited

number of situations in which the student can control the conversation, but it places a great strain on him to remain in control, and if that control is lost, the conversation is likely to disintegrate. The use of "back-channel cues" to indicate comprehension can also backfire if they are counterfeited by the L2 performer who doesn't want to appear ignorant. True quality of input would offer the student something he could use in the real world; it would lower the Affective Filter by maintaining interest and relevance; it would retain comprehensibility by selective quantity, rather than by "carpet-bombing" the student with input, hoping to increase the frequency in which he understands a structure that is slightly higher than his current level of proficiency.

### 3. METHODS

One of the most intriguing questions that can be asked about language teaching is whether it can be considered a science or an art. Likewise second-language production, a series of linear combinations which correspond to a seemingly endless range of situations, might be subject either to a strict set of empirical formulae or to the creative capacity of the human intellect. If language is to be taught and learned as a science, the method used in the classroom needs to incorporate the principles of the scientific method. If it is to be taught as an art, more creative methods need to be adapted. The Monitor Theory, although dressed in scientific terminology, tends to favor the artistic approach to language teaching and learning. Krashen's general rejection of classroom methods implies that he prefers a holistic, second-language experience to a limited foreign language course. In the absence of any specific method which has arisen from the input/acquisition hypothesis, Krashen has suggested a few recent methods which

offer a classroom approach consistent with his doctrines. These, as well as a few traditional methods, are analyzed herein according to the criteria for optimal input detailed above. The following is a more complete account of trends in second- or foreign-language teaching during the post-war period, including scientifically oriented as well as artistically oriented methods.

The Monitor Theory reflects the social changes prevalent in contemporary American society. This is not unusual, as language itself is an instrument which gauges society. Similarly, theories of language and teaching methods offer an accurate measure of the beliefs and social attitudes of any given generation. During the 1950s Eisenhower played golf, parents watched television, and Benjamin Spock raised their children. Charles Fries theorized that language was a set of vocal habits, and the accompanying Audio-Lingual Method taught language patterns first by practice, with little attention to meaning. When the patterns were established, their use could be expanded by combining patterns and adding vocabulary.<sup>5)</sup>

After a decade of relative calm, American society entered a period of upheaval, marked by undeclared wars, racial strife, and a growing drug culture. Noam Chomsky attacked the concept of language as habit, theorizing that meaning contained in a deep structure could be changed to an audible surface structure through a set of transformational rules. Since this system was meant to describe an idealized native speaker, the Cognitive-Code method which resulted did little to move the foreign language teaching profession away from the dominant Audio-Lingual Method.<sup>6)</sup>

The 1970s were generally marked by a number of short-lived crazes, none of which had any permanent social impact, being for the most part idle pastimes for a nation awaiting its next significant cause. In language



teaching, the theoretical basis of the Audio-Lingual Method had been challenged, but the absence of a generalized model left a vacuum which dozens of methodologists rushed to fill. The first of these, based on psychological research concerning first-language acquisition, concluded that a second language was not teachable, that it could only be acquired. The second asserted that communicative competence presupposes linguistic competence, and that the primary function of language is to communicate. The third sought to analyze discourse, and concluded that the rules of conversation go beyond the sentence and beyond language. The fourth created an immersion model, and proceeded as if the students were native speakers, teaching all subjects in the second language. The fifth, an adaptation of the immersion model, provided a balanced development of both languages, and became known as the Bilingual Education Model. The sixth, Community Language Learning, was based on the methods of clinical psychology. During the learning session, students would ask the teacher how to say things in the second language. The seventh, Total Physical Response, assumed that all aspects of language could be imbedded in the imperative, and that a non-verbal physical response led to listening comprehension and long-term retention. The eighth claimed that the classroom should be devoted to input in the target language, with homework being the traditional drills and exercises. In this Natural Approach, the focus was upon topics of personal interest to the students. The ninth advocated a delayed oral response, in which the teacher presented material orally as many times as needed, while the students remained silent and transcribed the material. In the tenth, the Silent Way, new material was presented only once. This made use of colored rods and other devices, while the students, sitting quietly, made a great effort to retain the material, knowing it would not be repeated. The eleventh, Suggestopedia, used relaxation tech-

niques to overcome the students' defensive mechanisms. The twelfth, the Functional-Notional Approach, based its syllabus on categories of meaning rather than on form, and was designed to enable the student to use the language for practical purposes. The thirteenth, conceptually related to the Functional-Notional Approach, involved a limited corpus, designed for efficiently teaching English for specific purposes, usually directed toward occupational objectives. The fourteenth proposed a set of universal learning stages which transcended traditional views of the student as beginner, intermediate, or advanced.<sup>7)</sup>

As detailed above, Krashen denies the value of a grammatical syllabus when the focus of second-language teaching is upon acquisition. He says that the goal of the Audio-Lingual Method is over-learning of patterns to be used in performance, and although it does provide comprehensible input, comprehension is not necessary for performance. Krashen also believes that the Audio-Lingual Method will result in inductive learning, which is not compatible with the focus upon acquisition of the Monitor Theory.

Neither is Krashen satisfied with the Cognitive-Code approach. To begin with, its emphasis upon the four skills runs counter to Krashen's optimal divisions of the teaching program into "acquisition" and "learning" branches of a tree diagram. He believes that the "competence which precedes performance" is not the tacit knowledge of the native speaker, but it is conscious knowledge, therefore promoting use of the Monitor. Since learning is overemphasized, material is grammatically sequenced, there is little comprehensible input, and there is error correction on all output, Krashen feels that the Cognitive-Code has little bearing on second-language acquisition.<sup>8)</sup>

One of the basic hypotheses of the Monitor Theory deals with the Acquisition-Learning distinction. Krashen seems to agree with the concept

that language is not teachable, and extends this to mean that it is only partially and less than ideally learnable. He bases much of his theory of acquisition on evidence taken from studies of first-language acquisition. Indeed 34 of the 209 titles listed in his bibliography deal with first- or second-language acquisition in children. He thinks that second language input should resemble "caretaker speech", that it should correspond to the "here and now" principle, and that it should be roughly tuned to the "i+1" level of acquisition.<sup>9)</sup>

A recurrent theme in Krashen's writing is that the student should focus on meaning rather than form. In other words, the Monitor Theory stresses communicative competence. "Language acquisition," writes Krashen, "occurs only when comprehension of real messages occurs..."<sup>10)</sup> The role of the teacher, then, is also to focus upon meaning: "If we focus on comprehension and communication, we will meet the syntactic requirements for optimal input."<sup>11)</sup>

Whereas acquisition and communicative competence fall in line with the tenets of the Monitor Theory, Krashen argues against the learnability of conversational competence. He says that the rules of Discourse Analysis are too complex, that they vary according to the social context, and that the rules are not available in Monitor-free situations. Although one of the goals of the Monitor Theory classroom is to develop tools for conversation management, Krashen takes the non-analytical approach to this aspect of language learning.<sup>12)</sup>

Krashen states that the use of subject matter, such as mathematics, has the full potential for encouraging acquisition. This approach combines a limited vocabulary with considerable extra-linguistic support to produce comprehensible input. Although it is not necessarily interesting, it is highly relevant and has the potential for a great quantity of input. It is not

grammatically sequenced, but it may require some anxiety on the part of the student. Since it focuses only on the topic, or message, it assumes that vocabulary and syntax will follow.<sup>13)</sup>

The Bilingual Education model limits the quantity of input by giving equal time to the student's native language. However, this may increase comprehension. Although Krashen mistakenly labels the Immersion programs "Bilingual", apparently because native speakers of one language are learning in another language, the difference lies in the fact that Bilingual programs teach the subject matter in *both* languages. As far as the Monitor Theory is concerned, the only real difference is in the quantity of input received by the student.

One of Krashen's hypotheses states that students will be able to receive input more efficiently if they are not hampered by their "Affective Filters". Conditions which tend to lower this filter include high motivation, self-confidence, and low anxiety.<sup>14)</sup> The Community Language Learning technique creates a situation that encourages a low Affective Filter. Since this method requires the students to ask how to say something in the target language, it is basically a method for developing tools for conversation management. It is also highly interesting and relevant, since the material derives from the students' needs and wishes. Students focus on meaning, which keeps the content from becoming grammatically sequenced.<sup>15)</sup>

Krashen considers Total Physical Response to be highly beneficial for acquisition, mainly because its focus is upon providing large quantities of comprehensible input, and because its physical activities prevent students from using their cognitive learning modes. He admits that it fails to be interesting or relevant, that it is still grammatically sequenced, that it does not provide tools for conversation management, and that it probably leads to inductive learning. Although Krashen thinks that a physical re-

sponse is an accurate indicator of whether the message is understood, it is often possible that the response is merely a mimic of group activity in order to keep an individual student from appearing out of place. Nonetheless Krashen judges Total Physical Response as having high potential for producing acquisition.<sup>16)</sup>

The Natural Approach fits the requirements of the Monitor Theory precisely because it was designed to do so. Originally a dining-room method, it was adapted to the formal environment of the university second-language classroom, invalidating Krashen's criticism that "its only weakness, according to SLA [Second Language Acquisition] theory, is that it remains a classroom method, and for some students this prohibits the communication of interesting and relevant topics."<sup>17)</sup> At some point Krashen will have to realize that he cannot change the system entirely, and until he accepts the fact that language will continue to be taught in classrooms, he should not brutalize those who are trying to implement his theories.

The teaching method which does not require the student to speak in the early stages is said to reduce anxiety, leading to a low Affective Filter, and increasing the amount of comprehensible input which reaches the student. TPR and the Natural Approach follow this procedure. "In these methods, class time is devoted to providing comprehensible input... students are not expected to produce in the second language until they themselves decide they are 'ready'."<sup>18)</sup> Krashen cites the Delayed Oral Response as evidence of the "superiority of such 'input methods'."

Another method which delays oral production is the Silent Way, which emphasizes phonics and grammatical structures. In this method learning, which is conscious, is hard work, and the student constantly uses the Monitor. The psychological basis for this method predicts that much of the work takes place during sleep, when the mind is apparently idle. This

method fails to provide input in sufficient quantity, places great strains on the Affective Filter, and forces the over-use of the Monitor, making it incompatible with the Monitor Theory. Krashen mentions but does not discuss the Silent Way.

The method which Krashen considers most likely to lead to acquisition is Suggestopedia. He says its greatest success is in lowering the Affective Filter, but that it is also effective in providing interesting, relevant, comprehensible input. Although grammar is included, it is not sequenced; conversation management is not mentioned explicitly. This method introduces "conditions that lower the Affective Filter and that allow the subconscious language acquisition system to operate at full, or near full capacity and efficiency." <sup>19)</sup>

The Functional-Notional syllabus is not addressed directly by Krashen, but since it provides an alternative to grammatical sequencing, it should be very attractive to Monitor Theory proponents. Moreover, its aim is communication, taking the focus off form and placing emphasis on the message. The Natural Approach, consistent with many precepts of the Monitor Theory, has the aim of helping students perform tasks and communicate ideas, which makes it essentially a Functional-Notional method. As such, the Natural Approach, following a Functional-Notional syllabus, would tend to develop tools for conversation management, again, consistent with the Monitor Theory. English for Specific Purposes is similar to the Functional-Notional Approach, but it includes only selected input. This selectivity most likely increases instrumental motivation, and provides for a high degree of interest and relevance for students with occupational goals.

The concept of Universal Learning Stages may be of some relevance to the Monitor Theory, not in the limited area of acquisition, but in the

larger and more realistic interchange of Acquisition and Learning. This concept predicts that there are four stages which occur simultaneously at all levels of instruction, whenever new materials are introduced. The first stage, consistent with the Monitor Theory, is "listening with understanding". Of course it must be appreciated that this requirement holds true for the effectiveness of all input, whether the goal is acquisition or learning. The second stage is "assimilating the language system". This system would seem to include all aspects of language, i.e., grammar, functions, notions, paralinguistic features of conversation, gestures, etc. Since assimilation does not require that rules be made explicit, it also is compatible with the Monitor Theory. The third stage, "development of basic skills", most likely fits into the Learning segment of the Monitor Theory teaching program. The final stage, "using language for some purpose outside the classroom", also fits the general attitude of the Monitor Theory that acquisition takes place in the real world. The language student who confines his experience to the classroom will never find fulfillment until he takes his language into the outside world.<sup>20)</sup>

#### 4. MATERIALS

One of the most serious problems which the Monitor Theory has encountered is that many of the textbooks which are currently available have been written with the Audio-Lingual Method in mind. This is a result of the supply and demand principle which governs the publishing industry: since the profession for so many years had required Audio-Lingual textbooks, it would have been unprofitable to publish anything else. In recent years new companies have begun to change the direction of second-language textbook publishing, some with more success than others.

Established companies have reacted by changing direction, by overhauling older editions, or simply by "papering over" texts which still essentially hold to the Audio-Lingual Method.

How is the teacher or administrator to know what is the best textbook? Certainly not every text is right for every course. One must consider whether the course is an intensive course or a general course, and the length of the session. Moreover the general status of the teacher and students plays an important part in textbook selection. One must take into account the resources and facilities available to both the teacher and the students. Finally, the goals and objectives of the curriculum must be considered when making a decision as to which text is appropriate for the course.

The type of course will often dictate the scope of material to be selected. A three-level text will not be appropriate for a course lasting one month, unless there are three levels of proficiency. A single volume with limited content will probably not be sufficient for a general course which lasts one or two years. There is, therefore, the overriding necessity to match the estimated number of hours of instruction contained in the materials with the anticipated length of the session. Any discrepancy will result in students being frustrated at not completing the text, or in teachers spending a disproportionate amount of time in researching and preparing supplementary materials.

Another important consideration in textbook selection is the general status of students and teachers. Are the students children or adults? Are they the same age? Are they a homogeneous group in terms of proficiency, sex, occupation, social status, or native language? Where will they use the language...as a second language, a foreign language, or for travel or study purposes? What topics and situations will most likely be encountered?



What will they have to *do* with the language? Will the emphasis be upon listening, speaking, reading, or writing? Likewise the status of the teacher must come under scrutiny. The training and experience of the teacher will sometimes favor one text over another, just as the inexperienced teacher will probably enjoy greater success using the Audio-Lingual Method than with Suggestopedia. Is the teacher full-time or part-time, and what is his total work load? Is the teacher a man or a woman? What is the political, social, religious, and economic relation between the teacher and students? These and other factors contribute strongly to decisions about textbook selection.<sup>22)</sup>

A third consideration is the extent of resources available to the teacher and students, such as a language laboratory, audiovisual equipment, a resource library, or in the case of deficient textbooks, duplicating equipment. The language laboratory can be either a broadcast system, where all students listen to the same program, or a library system, where students listen individually. The equipment may be audio passive, which requires only listening; audio active, in which the student must respond; or audio active comparative, which requires the student to record his response and compare it with the original. Language lab software must be evaluated not only for its quality—content, distortion, wow and flutter, length, rate of speech, quality and variety of speech (whether American or other); but also for its intent—whether it is meant to prepare, reinforce, or extend what is taught in class. It may include a video component, which corresponds to the audio component, and must be evaluated accordingly. New developments in technology allow for the slowing down or speeding up of the rate of speech (without the bothersome growl or chipmunk effect), which greatly assists in listening comprehension.<sup>23)</sup>

In light of the previous discussion on Methods and the Monitor Theory,

it seems that goals and objectives might be organized along *structural* lines if the focus of the course is to develop specific linguistic skills. This approach has the advantage of being easy to teach, to understand, and to test. A further advantage is the wealth of existing materials that have been organized with the goal of teaching to a grammatical syllabus. This approach would welcome the use of the Audio-Lingual Method or Cognitive-Code, and does not exclude the Silent Way, Total Physical Response, or Suggestopedia.

A more difficult approach in terms of teaching, understanding, and testing in large classrooms, would be to organize the course along *Functional-Notional* lines. This would increase the difficulty because a Functional-Notional syllabus is concerned as much with a system of social behavior as with a linguistic system. Materials need to include "sign-posts" which clarify for the students the specific purpose of each learning activity. A Functional-Notional syllabus does not necessarily exclude any of the methods mentioned earlier, but four approaches have been suggested for its adaptation: a) purely functional (routines and patterns); b) structural/functional (grammatical sequences); c) functional/structural (not for beginners); and d) thematic area organization: functional, notional, or topical.<sup>24)</sup>

Another means of organizing the curriculum would be to focus on neither structural nor functional goals and objectives. Here the *process* of language learning takes precedence over the *product* of learning. Stevick writes, "Although I do not tell them so, the linguistic material presented during that time [the first week of class] is only a vehicle for getting acquainted and for finding and reducing anxieties. Even during the remainder of the course, the first question is 'How are they learning?' and the second is 'What have they learned?' It is now content, and not morale,

that I tend to ignore unless it threatens to cause trouble. Needless to say, I still give much attention to content; what has changed is the focus." <sup>25)</sup> Goals and objectives based on *morale* would necessarily be the most difficult to define, implement, and assess. Such a course would favor the use of Suggestopedia as a method, but would not exclude some of the other "warm fuzzy" methods, such as Community Language Learning, mentioned by Stevick.<sup>26)</sup> Materials seem to be almost superfluous, but would also need to be designed with the students' psyche in mind.

If the second-language teaching profession expresses the need for materials compatible with the Monitor Theory, the publishing industry will eventually comply. To date, however, the demand has not been sufficient to generate a body of materials to satisfy even the minimum requirements of the various teaching situations which could possibly utilize the Monitor Theory. It is significant to note that whereas many Audio-Lingual texts had enjoyed a degree of success which merited the publication of hard-cover editions, few if any of the more recent publications imply the same degree of permanence. With no explicit method, moreover, it is difficult for the Monitor Theory to gain a foothold in practical classroom applications. TPR, and Suggestopedia (which are intensive courses) each have specialized materials which are not easily adaptable to generalized texts. The Natural Approach could be applied to a number of texts, but since homework runs in a traditional vein, there is no reason not to use Audio-Lingual texts in the Natural Approach classroom.

Krashen realizes that there is a gap in teaching materials. He says that "materials need to meet the same requirements that methods do... they should either supply input that is comprehensible, interesting/relevant, and not grammatically sequenced themselves, or they should provide students with the means of obtaining such input." <sup>27)</sup> A brief analysis of curriculum

design using the criteria for optimal input will illuminate some of the obstacles facing implementation of the Monitor Theory.

Some of the problems involved in designing the curriculum with the Monitor Theory in mind begin to surface when considering the levels of proficiency of the students. Aids to comprehensible input, that is, a slower rate of speech and the use of fewer idioms, tend toward redundancy as the students advance beyond the beginning level. Likewise, the repetitive nature of beginning instruction tends to be less so as the students' comprehension improves. Greetings and leavetakings, often included in the beginning lessons, are certainly not grammatically sequenced, but there comes a time when meaning defers to grammar, and a communicative syllabus depends upon grammatical distinctions to convey meanings. The length of the session is also important. The density or rarity of instruction time in intensive or long-term programs will certainly have an effect on student interest and concentration, as well as the amount of time spent outside of class as a reinforcement activity, and the effect of forgetting information which is presented *en masse*.

Krashen writes in detail of the status of teachers and students as it affects the adaptation of the Monitor Theory to second-language teaching materials. Concerning the age of students, he concludes that adults proceed faster in the beginning stages of instruction. Similarly, older children proceed faster than younger children. Regardless of the rate of acquisition, children generally attain higher proficiency than those who begin second-language instruction as adults.<sup>28)</sup> These conclusions should be qualified, however, by recalling that a true second-language experience takes place after the closure of the Language Acquisition Device, which occurs around adolescence.

As mentioned earlier, Krashen clearly favors the learning situation

which places the student in a country where the target language is spoken, where he can obtain input in his daily life outside the classroom. However Krashen believes that university students often regard an E. S. L. class as an obstacle, which is perceived as irrelevant at the intermediate level. He suggests the creation of "international classes" which would give instruction in topics of general interest in E. S. L. at the beginning level; optional E. S. L. work in grammar, stylistics and conversation plus subject matter courses at the intermediate level; and no E. S. L. instruction, integrating students with native speakers in regular courses at an advanced level.<sup>29)</sup>

Although Krashen's proposal looks good on paper, there is a wide difference between what the second-language teaching profession considers "advanced", and what is practically acceptable in university performance. Many American universities require a minimum score of 500 on the T. O. E. F. L. for foreign student admission. While this is considered an "advanced" score, in practical terms a student who has achieved this score can barely compete linguistically with even a mediocre native speaking high school graduate who does not intend to enter college. University professors agree. Although automatic failures of foreign students are rare, they are evidence of the failure of entrance examinations to adequately judge the linguistic competence of foreign applicants. This problem will persist until admissions officers cease to sacrifice academic standards in order to satisfy short-term economic quotas.

Adult E. S. L. students probably have permanent residence in mind, and are not likely to require such stringent academic preparation. Materials geared for this kind of student are prone to depict life situations, such as community services, consumer education, employment, family life, citizenship, etc.<sup>30)</sup> Since Krashen assumes that individual differences in acquisition are large, it is not probable that his theory describes a homogeneous

group in any category.<sup>31)</sup>

As a basic premise of the Monitor Theory, the curriculum, including methods and materials, is ideally divided into units of Acquisition and Learning, not the four skills of the Audio-Lingual Method. This creates anxiety among many students, whose expectations demand skills; and among teachers, whose training has prepared them to impart skills. Krashen astutely observes that curriculum and texts are usually designed by people like himself, who (paradoxically) learn quickly, and derive satisfaction from it. In contrast, students (an overgeneralization) are not as interested in structure and get their pleasure elsewhere. This casts a shadow over his sunny picture of students obtaining input by reading for pleasure. In a larger sense, Krashen writes, "serious problems...have to do with the acceptance, by teachers and students, of language acquisition as primary, and comprehensible input as the means of encouraging language acquisition. These problems are caused by the fact that acquisition differs from learning in two major ways: acquisition is *slow* and *subtle*, while learning is fast and, for some people, obvious."<sup>32)</sup>

The use of technology to slow the rate of speech should be of particular interest to those who wish to utilize the language lab in implementing the Monitor Theory. Krashen agrees that the lab can be used to supplement classroom input and outside reading. He says it is easy, technologically speaking, "to use the lab as a means of comprehensible input," rather than to use it for other purposes, such as error correction. To this end he suggests taped stories, pictures to aid comprehension and add to enjoyment, lectures with notes on real topics (not imaginary kingdoms), radio programs, commercials, etc.<sup>33)</sup>

The goals and objectives of the Monitor Theory curriculum are clearly not structural, although TPR and Suggestopedia do include grammar.

Functional-Notional objectives provide the most practical alternative, since these offer a tangible syllabus to follow. Yet the goals which most consistently state the principles of the Monitor Theory, specifically the Affective Filter hypothesis, aim at student morale, and are therefore the least practical. Krashen does suggest some guidelines for authoring "readers" (a curious term, since one would expect the author of Monitor-free performance to prefer the use of "conversers"): writers should be genuinely interested in telling stories, and use whatever language is necessary for comprehension; and they should be sympathetic toward the audience. Materials can be "tested" by asking whether members of the audience understand the stories; whether they enjoy them; whether they are interesting, and whether they would read the stories if they were not assigned.<sup>34)</sup>

Again, the use of reading material does not account for the discrepancy between written and spoken English, and gives the student no tools for managing a conversation. It may reduce the quantity of input in the case of slow readers; or in the case of students who are illiterate in their native language, it may hinder acquisition entirely. If the writer is sympathetic toward his audience, and he knows the students' limited grasp of grammar, he will probably adjust his writing according to a grammatical syllabus, producing the kind of material which Krashen seeks to avoid.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study of methods and materials as they apply to the Monitor Theory should be of interest to all language teachers, regardless of their backgrounds or educational philosophies. The reason for this is clear: Krashen expresses ideas which are radically different from established approaches to language teaching, and which are likely to have some impact

upon the profession. If his ideas are proven correct, or even if they are widely accepted as valid, textbook publishers will eventually follow the market, directly influencing the choice of materials available for classroom use. Each language teacher must, therefore, formulate some opinion on Krashen's ideas, either as a means of establishing his (the teacher's) position, or to develop a knowledge base for future use.

At present, materials which put into practice the Monitor Theory are scarce. Perhaps this is because the theory does not lend itself easily to establishing goals and objectives, having no concise syllabus. Possibly there has not been enough time for its precepts to stimulate publishers' and authors' imaginations.

Future directions for materials design is not clear. The theoretical bases of Krashen's hypotheses present a weak, incoherent whole which will probably not find widespread acceptance. Comprehension, interest, quantity, and conversation management exist in a delicate equilibrium which may not always be possible to maintain in the classroom. Since Krashen depends heavily upon input received outside the classroom, his ideas cannot be expressed as a generalized theory. Finally, teacher and student attitudes toward the goals of the language classroom cannot be changed overnight, especially when the Monitor Theory offers no visible proof that acquisition has taken place. As it applies to methods and materials, the Monitor Theory does not provide an adequate model for the second-language classroom.



### NOTES

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4. Henry G. Widdowson and Christopher Brumfit, "Issues in Second Language Syllabus Design," in Alatis, Altman, & Alatis, pp.205-206.
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9. *Ibid.*, pp.22-23.
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25. Earl W. Stevick, *Memory, Meaning, and Method* (Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, 1976), p.62.
26. Stevick, 1980.
27. Krashen, p.182.
28. *Ibid.*, pp.43-45.

29. *Ibid.*, pp.172-174.

30. *Ibid.*, p.175.

31. *Ibid.*, p.68.

32. *Ibid.*, p.187.

33. *Ibid.*, pp.184-185.

34. *Ibid.*, p.186.