

## Cummins' and Krashen's Theories and Principles of Second Language Acquisition

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This paper will compare the cognitive approaches of Jim Cummins and Stephen D. Krashen. Cognitive methods (Chomsky, 1959) stress the ability of an individual to use creatively order and rules in language. Thus, an essential property of language is that it provides the finite means for expressing innumerable thoughts and for describing infinite ranges of new situations.

Cummins (1979) suggests that face-to-face Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) take young students learning English as a second language about two years to master.

Moving to the opposite end of the continuum, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) involves language that is context-reduced and highly demanding cognitively. Context-reduced communication relies heavily on linguistic cues alone and involves abstract thinking. It is what we think of as traditional academic instruction at secondary and adult levels. Cummins has found that when language-minority students work academically only in L2 (second language), it takes them from five to seven years to master commonly accepted norms in context-reduced aspects of English proficiency. Furthermore, skills in context-reduced language developed in the first language automatically transfer to the second language. All current linguistic research supports the theory of a Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) for both languages (Cummins, 1981).

He also proposes that the proficiency in a second language is related to the first language level (threshold hypothesis). He says that the development of skills in a second language is a function of the speaker's first language competence (developmental interdependence hypotheses).

He points out first and second language cognitive academic proficiencies are interdependent through manifestation of a CUP in both languages. He also says that instructors who add the primary language and culture of minority students to their curricula empower students in acquiring the target language.

Both Krashen and Cummins seem to be concerned with the level of first languages. The former says it is the "first language level," and the latter calls it a "Common Underlying Proficiency." It seems to me that such kinds of levels include physiological nature, intelli-

gence, and cognitive ability. In teaching another language, if educators are required to think about the level of the student's cognitive ability, they will have additional problems in terms of economy and policy.

Krashen (1981) has five hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning, the Natural Order, the Input, the Monitor, and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. In describing the Monitor model, Krashen claims that adult second-language learners have two means for internalizing the target language; subconscious language acquisition and conscious language learning. Acquisition is the natural process by which children learn first and second languages. Learning is the conscious process through which the learner attends to determining forms and to figuring out rules.

He suggests that the learning system operates in the form of a Monitor (editor), which the learner uses only when he or she: (1) has enough time to think about and consciously apply grammatical rules, (2) is focused on form and correctness, and (3) knows the rule.

Before I describe the application of these two theories, the distinction between English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) should be clarified. The primary distinction is in how much English the students are exposed to outside of their English class. EFL is taught in countries where English is not generally spoken, like China or Japan. In EFL teaching, the teacher is usually the only available English language model.

In order to implement teaching the target language, Cummins implies applying BICS and CALP, in both ESL and EFL classes, to communicative competence (paralinguistic, sociolinguistic, grammatical, strategic, and discourse competence). I think that at the discourse level, teachers have to know the cultural differences in ways of thinking. For example, most Japanese college students don't ask "why." Thus, their opinions sometimes seem illogical, as they come from a comparatively high-context culture.

Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) will be helpful in acquiring sociolinguistic, paralinguistic grammatical, and strategic competence. Although Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) can be applied to mastering discourse competence, in Japan, even at college level, most students continue studying BICS. Teachers should encourage them to use English properly and academically.

According to Krashen, in applications and modifications for second language instruction, the Natural Approach (focusing on the meaning of genuine communication) applies to both ESL and EFL. Despite some obvious differences between second and foreign language study, there is a fundamental similarity between them: both languages need to be acquired with comprehensible classroom input. He also suggests that most adult learners differ from

children in that they have a greater ability to consciously learn grammatical rules.

In my experience, it seems better to apply selectively these two theories to language teaching, in both ESL and EFL classes, depending upon the developmental stages of the students. For example, at the level of BICS, students can study more practical things, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax through basic communication with sociolinguistic, paralinguistic, grammatical, and strategic competence. The semantic meaning and functional meaning with strategic competence can be studied at the stage of CALP, in student-oriented atmospheres. At college and university levels, teachers should let students have opportunities to express themselves in both writing and speaking English by using appropriate materials.

During these lessons, the teacher can try to supply meaningful and reasonable (authentic) teaching materials in terms of the Input Hypothesis (i.e., students learn by understanding a bit beyond their current level of competence). The teacher can also apply the Affective Filter Hypotheses for the student's best acquisition in a class where anxiety is low and defensiveness is minimal, that is, where the "affective filter is low."

In Japan, learning English is currently becoming more popular among all kinds of people, from young children to mature adults. Japanese students are often afraid of making mistakes in English classes and of scoring getting low on tests. In other words, their "affective filter is high."

When I consider both Cummins' and Krashen's theories, Cummins' seems to be more skill-oriented, while Krashen's concerns how to teach a second language psychologically. Actually educators need both ways.

I believe that when instructors teach the second language, whether in ESL or EFL classes, they should consider as the main guidelines for a lesson plan: the students' backgrounds (their native language, culture, age differences), their environments (home, community), their English proficiencies in four skills with authentic materials (listening, speaking, reading, writing), and communicative goals to improve the students' lives.

## REFERENCES

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