

## Code Switching and Code Cracking

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In exploring ways in which the L1 and code-switching can be used as potential resources in the L2 classroom, Cenoz and Gorter (2011), provide valuable insights for both second language researchers and instructors. First, the various approaches through which code-cracking and interaction have been studied will be mentioned. Next, Cenoz and Gorter's (2011) *Focus on Multilingualism* approach will be presented and discussed in relation to code-switching, code-cracking and interaction.

In the communicative language teaching framework (CLT) for second language pedagogy, much emphasis has been placed on the role of interaction and feedback (Mackey, 2012). By interacting with their peers, L2 learners not only have many opportunities for negotiating meaning (Long, 1996), but they also will, it is hoped, notice the mismatch between their own interlanguages and that of their interlocutors. This *noticing of the gap* is believed to facilitate second language acquisition by enabling student opportunities to 'crack the code.' Ellis (1984) succinctly sums up this viewpoint when he states:

Interaction contributes to development because it is the means by which the learner is able to crack the code. This takes place when the learner can infer what is said even though the message contains linguistic items that are not yet part of his competence and when the learner can use the discourse to help him/her modify or supplement the linguistic knowledge already used in production (p.95).

In 'cracking the code,' the L2 learner has several resources to draw upon including their L1. As Dewaele (2012) notes, code-switching occurs in the L2 classroom oftentimes when the learner is looking for a metalinguistic explanation or a translation of a word in the target language.

Of particular interest, is Cenoz and Gorter's (2011) contrast between traditional concepts of multilingualism and their revision of this model. As opposed to looking at the multilingual speaker as possessing separate modules of knowledge (the L1, L2, and L3 in isolated units), they highlight the dynamic nature of the relationship between the languages. As Cook (1992) has emphasized, the very nature of the multilingual mind is fundamentally different from that of a monolingual native speaker. In expanding on this notion Cenoz and Gorter's (2011) *Focus on Multilingualism* model accounts for the shifts multilingual individuals make in real time between the languages in their repertoire. In connecting this model to pedagogical practice, they advocate an approach which serves to develop the skills in the individual learner's languages.

Considering the importance of negotiation of meaning in cracking the code, it would seem sensible to draw upon multilingual learners' multiple resources in designing activities. Rather than regarding the use of the L1 as taboo or something to be eliminated in the classroom, students who share an L1 could provide peer scaffolding. Also, as Cenoz and Gorter (2012) emphasized, this code-switching could also foster a stronger sense of identity among learners

from the same community. Taken together, the possibilities Cenoz and Gorter's *Focus on Multilingualism* provide are quite exciting.

## REFERENCES

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