

2.4. Summary

In this chapter we presented the pedagogical model for the development of inventive thinking skills in the area of foreign language education. This model is manifested in the Thinking Approach (TA) to language teaching and learning that has been developed by the author for the last eight years. According to the tradition accepted in the English language teaching, we described the TA at three levels, namely those of approach, design and procedure.

At the level of approach, we outlined the following features that make the TA different from other approach to language teaching and learning:

- Most uses of language are conventional or routine ones, i.e. people do not have to solve any non-standard or creative problems (e.g. shopping, enquiring, etc). These uses of language do not require meaning making in the real sense of it - this use of language is more about reproducing well-known meaning rather than making new ones. Routine part of language competence should not be the focus of learning – necessary skills will develop within practice centred on the development of non-routine competencies.
- The TA is primarily concerned with the development of problem solving competence which includes a non-routine or creative part of language competence. Development of problem solving competence lies at the heart of learning an interdisciplinary language of problem solving which is seen as the main aim of education.
- Problem solving in the TA context is understood in a fundamentally different way from its traditional interpretation in language teaching. Tasks connected with routine uses of language are not considered problem solving ones and traditional “problem solving” tasks as known in the field of language teaching have nothing to do with the development of problem solving competence as defined in the TA.
- The TA students are expected to learn “to think grammatically” and to strive to become masters in the field of “meaning potential”. Learning a language includes learning particular “ways of construing and portraying” world.
- The TA is based on the idea of a non-linear nature of learning and thus non-linear organisation of learning / teaching process. Instead of a linear

curriculum model the TA offers a modular course based on a number of learning technologies. Technologies serve as bases for the three vectors of the TA: (1) language as the object of study (Creative Grammar Technology); (2) communication as the object of study – language used as one of the means for solving problems (interpretation) and using language as one of the means for solving problems (Text and Film Technologies); learning as the object of learning (Self-Study Technology and Research Technology)

- The invention method promoted in TA may be seen as an integration of what is referred to as discovery and social construction method. We believe that students “discover” models rather than facts. With time, these models are integrated in students’ networks (internalised). However, for this to happen, models have to be tested and validated in the process of learning (and life) and this is seen as an essentially social process.
- Learning must be natural and as close to life as possible. Agreeing that classroom brings about many constraints and purposes of learning can be very different, we believe that learning is essentially about doing real things and thus one should not make a distinction between “ways of thinking” when learning a foreign language and “ways of thinking” when being a linguist. Another consequence of the “natural” principle is that questions to which answers are already known should be avoided in the classroom communication by both the teacher and students.
- The ultimate learning aim for the TA learner is to become one’s own mediator and thus to be able to scaffold him/herself in any kind of learning.

At the level of design, we presented five language learning technologies developed within the TA:

- The Creative Grammar Technology (CGT) where students work with language as an object of study. The CGT aims to help learners see language as a system.
- The Text and Film Technologies (TT and FT) where students learn to see communication as a problem solving activity as defined in Chapter 1 of the present thesis.

- The Self-Study Technology (SST) that aims to educate a learner who wishes and is ready to accept full responsibility for his/her learning and knows how to make learning a success.
- The Research Technology (RT) which provides learners with possibilities of transfer of knowledge and skills to new contexts and also aims at to teach them main elements of research work.
- The Yes-No Technology (YNT) that aims to help learners see how various problem-solving models work in a system.

Each technology was described through characterising its elements (types of tasks) and showing how they make a system by working together. We then demonstrated that not only each technology is a separate system but that they together also present a system and work with the technologies is always interconnected within any TA based learning. We also outlined how the “four skills” are developed in the TA and showed how the roles of students, teachers and instructional materials in the TA differ from more traditional approaches.

At the level of procedure, we provided specific examples to demonstrate how the TA differs from other approaches when implemented in a real classroom. We presented the procedures in relation to each of the technologies listed above and distinguished between two different levels of procedures: the level of task and the level of the system. Finally, we demonstrated how the TA procedures change in time.