WOLFGANG H. STRAUSS: PROBLEMS OF DESCRIBING A SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE METHODOLOGY AS A BRANCH OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

1. Place, concerns, purposes, and aims of Foreign Language Methodology

We refer to Foreign Language Methodology as being the methodology of teaching and learning a foreign language in an organized and institutionalized course of instruction as well as in guided self-study. Thus, the correct abbreviation for the discipline which is concerned with the analysis and synthesis of all the problems involved in these processes would be FLTLM (= Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Methodology). In order to avoid such a quantity of capital letters we shall stick to FLM as a more practicable and widely used indication of our subject.

The place of FLM as a special branch of the social sciences is to be defined at present primarily from the pedagogical point of view, but modified also according to linguistic, psychological and philosophical aspects. FLM exists within a network of findings from all these sciences and applies these findings together with its own to form a more effective organization of the foreign language teaching and learning process in secondary education, in LSP courses in tertiary education and in the training of foreign language student-teachers. Therefore, we may state that FLM is a special branch in the field of pedagogics. It has the same constituents that determine the process of education in general which are: the teacher and the learner; the aims, the results, the organization, the subject-matter and the methods of this process (cf. STRAUSS 1976).

The particular concerns of FLM are to investigate and describe these constituents in their very special modification and functioning in a particular educational process, in the process of foreign language acquisition. This process aims at ensuring the acquisition of a certain degree of linguistic competence by the individual foreign learner within periods of varying duration and is characterized by the continuous cognitive and communicative activities of foreign language teachers and foreign language learners in the particular language in certain institutions (secondary schools, polytechnical + other colleges, universities).

We may now describe the purposes of FLM. These purposes are:

- the investigation of the general and particular features of all processes of cognitive and linguistic activities performed by foreign language teachers and foreign language learners in the course of the process of instruction which may further the acquisition of communicative ability in the language, including the educational modifications of the teachers' and learners' personalities in this course of inter-related mutual influence;
- the investigation of the objective and practical motives and conditions of the process of cognition in the teaching and learning of the foreign language in its quality of reflecting the objective reality of this particular educational process;
- the analysis and presentation of the aims of the instructional language course in different institutions and at different levels of linguistic competence;
- the selection, analysis, re-ordering and presentation of the subject-matter in different institutions and at different levels of
linguistic competence (types of subject-matter, components of communicative ability, educational aspects);
- the organization of the process of instruction in different institutions and at different levels (methods, techniques, time available) - the conditions under which the instructional process will take place in different institutions at different levels of linguistic competence (curriculum, text-books, handbooks, media available, arrangements of the lessons, etc.).

These interrelated aspects form the substantial structure of FLM as a special branch of the social sciences. All these aspects have to be investigated and analysed in their historical development and in their systematic structure and in their interactions. Thus, within the system of pedagogics, FLM is the particular in relation to the fundamentals of pedagogics, general didactics and the theory of education as the general. In other words: pedagogics as a whole has FLM as one of its parts in the sense that all the constituents and features which characterize the whole are also to be found in the part in a very specific and modified manner.

Consequently, a methodological approach of, for instance, investigating the training process of foreign language student-teachers and gaining deeper insights into the structure and functioning of this process will be a part of FLM research as a whole. In one of the separate parts of this particular process, the methodological training of the student-teachers, there is one significant difference to be recognized. Whereas in all the other particular processes the main objective is the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and communicative ability at a certain level, we have here as the main aim the development of teaching ability in the foreign language for the student-teacher (as we have the aim of acquiring translating and interpreting ability for student-interpreters). Further activities for the improvement of linguistic competence are an important factor, but they are subordinate to the more complex aim of acquiring teaching ability.

So in this area of FLM which is concerned with answering the question of how best to equip the student-teacher to teach his language to pupils or adults, to organize effective learning processes, etc. the methods of developing teaching ability play the most important part. The main aim of investigation and analysis of teaching and learning processes under this particular aspect is the acquisition of methodological competence by the foreign language teacher. This methodological competence will be acquired through active participation in teaching. Only in the process of continuous teaching (or: methodological) activity, will skills and habits of foreign language teaching competence (fltc) be formed and consolidated. As in any kind of activity, this activity will be carried out through actions and operations (= partial actions). In a narrow sense, fltc as the aim and anticipated result of the training of foreign language student-teachers is limited first of all to the training programme in methods courses (in theory) and teaching exercises (group teaching practice and long teaching practice). It has to be developed mainly during these parts of the training. But in a somewhat wider conception, fltc includes also the acquired knowledge and abilities in the foreign language, in linguistics, in literature, regional studies etc.

The main purpose of the training in LFM is the acquisition of fltc in this narrow sense. It can be developed and exercised only by continuous teaching activity on the part of the foreign language student-teacher. We understand fltc according to GAL'PERIN (1976) and KOSSAKOWSKI (1978) as a complete action, which comprises actions of orientation, realization and of checking. Of all these, those of orientation are of major importance for the teacher. They include the ability to recognize specific objectives, to identify these objectives and make them concrete.
for teaching purposes, to work out a real programme of action, to regulate the realization according to the programme of action and to check the results.

Hence, the quality of the orientation, i.e. the anticipatory programme of action, determines the quality of planning and realization of the whole chain of actions. To enable the student-teacher to carry out acts of orientation and planning by himself is therefore one of the most important aims of the training in FLM. The training in realization and checking in the limited teaching practice during the students' course at the university is possible only at a basic level, whereas further completion and consolidation of these aspects of his fltc will be possible only during his teaching in school (cf. STRAUSS 1980).

Taking into consideration all the aspects of pedagogical ability which were mentioned above, we shall define fltc. now as the complex and systematically integrated performance of the personality of the foreign language teacher, which enables him to carry out the tasks which will have to be solved by him in planning, realizing and evaluating teaching actions in the fl instructional course successfully and in individually modified ways. This includes the implementation of objectively-rational and subjectively-rational elements of actions as well as pre-rational and even irrational actions (FUCHS-KITTOWSKI et al. 1976). In the goal-determined acquisition of fltc during the studies in FLM we consider only the rational actions for effecting the planning and realizing of a given section of instruction; but to be realistic, we have to accept that pre-rational and irrational actions can occur in the teaching practice of fl teachers and student-teachers as well.

2. The interrelation and interaction of laws, principles, methods, and rules in FLM

Foreign language instruction at different levels is a special case of a pedagogical process. Pedagogical processes are special cases of social processes in general. This means that general social and pedagogical laws and principles function in foreign language instructional courses in a specific way. For example, the general law of progression and regression functions in foreign language teaching and learning processes so that the individual learner will advance in acquiring a sufficient level of language command as a result of continuous communicative ability inside and outside the classroom, whereas she/he will fall back immediately when there are interruptions in this process of active learning and practice of the language due to social, professional or individual reasons. In the latter cases regression would mean that the learner of an L₂ could fall back almost to zero in her/his individual linguistic competence, especially after lengthy interruptions.

The process of fl instruction is determined by numerous laws which have been discovered in FLM as well as in its neighbouring sciences, for example by philosophical, linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical laws. It is impractical to consider all these laws in the light of their relevance for this special kind of educational process. It is more convenient to concentrate the main assertions of these laws into a manageable number of principles which function in the flt-process in a twofold way.

We consider principles of FLM according to KIRCHHOEFER (1974) as mental creations which contain at least two components: 1) they prescribe
a certain norm which must be observed in the realization of the FLTL-process, and 2) they function as a kind of indeterminate demand for arranging the FLTL-process. For the derivation of principles in the special branches of the social sciences one has to proceed from the systematic coherence of law and aim, that is, every principle has to be described according to three aspects:

1) the objective determination and the coherence between the principle and the underlying laws must be shown;
2) the main demands of the principle must be proved;
3) it must be demonstrated how the principle could be realized in the FLTL-process, i.e., conditions of application, heuristic rules, sequences of operations will have to be made evident on the basis of examples.

Only when these assumptions are observed, can principles be made practicable for the increase of effectiveness of the FLTL-process. The phenomena which can be used to make principles as mental creations effective for FLTL-processes are "methods" and "rules".

Methods are considered to be intellectually formed prescriptions of future actions and as real forms of moving the subject-matter of FLTL alike (cf. NAUMANN 1980). Principles alone cannot alter the substance in FLTL, only methods can. This is achieved by means of techniques, rules, exercises, and objective means (= teaching aids). In this connection "techniques" are considered to be the detailed operations of how to present, comprehend, and consolidate the subject-matter (e.g., vocabulary), which are performed repeatedly. "Rules" are then the concrete instructions about how to realize the relevant sequences of mental and linguistic operations in a distinct order. "Exercises" are repeatedly-performed analogous (homogenous) acts with the aim of practising, reinforcement, recapitulation, systematization or checking. "Means" are objective means which support the teaching and learning process by visual, aural and audio-visual stimulation and the subjective means of the individual teacher (behaviour, facial expressions, gestures) (cf. GUENTHER 1975).

Schematically the interrelation and interaction between laws, principles, methods, and rules can be shown as follows:

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Summarizing these reflections, one can state that the theoretical categories of law, principle, method, and the practical categories of method (method is a category of theory and practice alike. W.H.S.) technique, rule, exercise, means are necessary elements of structuring and functioning within the system of fltl as a process of continuous activity which is carried out and brought to realization by methodological acts which include communicative acts, mental acts, concrete objectifiable acts of foreign language teachers and foreign language learners.

Methodological acts are performed by complex teaching and learning actions (chains of educationally relevant actions), single (detailed) actions and operations. The most important element in regulating these series of teacher-learner actions are methodological principles which consist of structural principles for constituting theory and functional principles for arranging the teacher-learner process on the basis of a given foreign language.

Structural principles for constituting and generalizing methodological theory could be the following:

1: The principle of the creative application of philosophical fundamentals to the problems of research, training and education in the particular branch of science, i.e. in our case FLM.

2: The principle of taking into consideration the objective needs of the practice of university education on behalf of foreign language student-teacher training.

3: The principle of the continuous consideration of the dialectical relation of historical and systematic development of the theory in FLM.

4: The principle of the integrated development of the theory of FLM in relation to the process of cognition in the neighbouring sciences.

5: The principle of considering the strategy and tactics of FLM in the complex analysis of the real procedure and the descriptive functions of the theory in the training programme.

6: The principle of the unity of pedagogical leadership and the continuous increase of individual initiative in foreign language student-teacher training.

Functional principles for the methodological organization of the fltl-process could then be the following:

1: The principle of the unity of acquisition of knowledge, communicative ability, education and self-education in foreign language student-teacher training.

2: The principle of profession-oriented foreign language activity of all students in all subjects in foreign language student-teacher training.

3: The principle of the unity of presentation of the latest scientific findings (results of research, insights) and the methods of how to arrive at new knowledge and insights.

4: The principle of the priority of durable scientific knowledge the student-teacher should acquire.

5: The principle of the interrelation between the acquisition of knowledge and the development of abilities in foreign language teaching.

6: The principle of interrelated acquisition of methodological knowledge and communicative abilities in all lectures/classes in student-teacher training and of coordination with other subjects.
7: The principle of increasing the independent activity and individual initiative of the students in all forms of foreign language student-teacher training.

8: The principle of the unity of theory and practice in foreign language student-teacher training subject to the priority of the theoretical training throughout the course of studies.

9: The principle of appropriate illustration of extra-linguistic knowledge, knowledge of procedures, knowledge of social values, and knowledge of social appropriateness in all lectures/classes in foreign language student-teacher training.

10: The principle of using the foreign language as a language of instruction throughout the course of studies.

11: The principle of historical and systematic acquisition of knowledge in all lectures/classes in foreign language student-teacher training.

3. Approaches of analyzing the specific terminology of FLM

When the place, concerns, purposes, aims, and principles of FLM are relatively clear, it will be possible to eliminate specific terms which might lead to the formation of a particular corpus of an LSP in FLM which is used already by FL teachers, FL teacher trainers, FL student-teachers as well as by pupils, students, and to some extent, by parents and all the other people who come into contact with the problems of acquiring a foreign language. According to what was said above about "place", the specific language of FLM is mainly "fed" from pedagogics. Pedagogical terms are widely used in ordinary language and in everyday communication, too. This makes it difficult to state what is in fact a methodological term and what is not. Furthermore, the increasing substantial and terminological influence from various neighbouring disciplines (cf. SPIELNER 1980, STEINIG 1980) causes difficulties in constituting the specific language of FLM which will be learnable by FL teachers and FL student-teachers, which will be teachable by FL teacher trainers and which could - in its most frequently-used terms - be understood by the learners of a foreign language in general.

So theoretical categories denoting the aims, subject-matter, methods, organization, and the anticipated results of FLM as well as the most frequently occurring practical situations in foreign language instruction which are "animated" by the aim-oriented activities of the learners and the teacher are the sources from which the special terms of FLM originate. This begins with the denotations of the 'actual process, the constituents of the process and the people actively involved in that process:

- foreign language learning
- foreign language teaching
- English language teaching
- Russian language teaching
- German language teaching (as a fl)
- French language teaching, etc.
- foreign language philology
- methodology of foreign language teaching and learning
- foreign language teacher
- foreign language teacher trainer
- foreign language student-teacher
- foreign language learner
- foreign language instruction
- foreign language teaching period
- foreign language course, etc.
It can easily be seen that the attributive denominations "foreign language" or "English language", "Russian language", etc., are the linguistic items which make a common term or a term belonging to another scientific discipline (pedagogics, psychology, etc.) a specifically FLM one. This is the case with other fixed linguistic units, viz.

place of FLM
concerns of FLM
purposes of FLM
aims of FLM
principles of FLM, etc.

From "aims" as a particular theoretical category the linguistic reflections relevant for FLM are:

communicative language activity
components of communicative ability
in the foreign language
foreign language knowledge
foreign language skills
foreign language habits
foreign language teaching ability
foreign language teaching competence
target skills (in the fl)
target subskills (in the fl)
acquisition of a foreign language
target language
vernacular, mother tongue
productive skills
receptive skills
linguistic skills
oral skills
written skills, etc.

From "subject-matter" as another theoretical category specific terms could be differentiated, viz.

language item
linguistic explanations
extra-linguistic elements
vocabulary
grammar
phonetics
orthography
...
selection of subject-matter
limitation of subject-matter
gradation (grading) of subject-matter
sequencing of subject-matter
staging of subject-matter, etc.

From "method" as a fundamental category of FLM theory and practice the following specific terms could be derived:

concept of foreign language method
method, approach
technique
exercise
initial presentation
recognition
comprehension
reinforcement
consolidation
recapitulation
evaluation
testing
imitation
application
transfer
interference, etc.

The difficulty is that they are all pedagogical or psychological terms and become methodological terms only in the context of FLM thinking and FLTL practice, e.g. "initial presentation of a text", "consolidation of vocabulary", "testing of grammar", etc.

Terms like "direct method", "grammar-translation method", "natural method", "phonetic method", "reading method", "aural-oral approach", "audio-visual approach" and others denote methodological concepts which are specific to FLM and which underlie a certain language course and thus are more specific according to the substance of their denomination.

A certain number of special terms could be derived from situations of the foreign language instruction process which occur often, for example "vocabulary work", "work with texts", "work on grammar", "instruction of phonetics", "written exercises", "development of listening comprehension", "development of speaking", "development of reading", "development of writing", "setting homework", "checking of homework set", "beginning of a fl lesson", "end of the fl lesson". In such fltl situations as "vocabulary instruction" special words are used, e.g.

- lexical learning item
- presentation of vocabulary
- basic vocabulary
- additional vocabulary
- word study
- illustration
- clarification of word meaning
- paraphrasing
- definition
- word formation
- translation
- transfer of meaning
- guessing the word meaning
- systematization of vocabulary
- structural word classification
- topical word classification
- word field
- word family, etc.

In situations connected with instructional activities on grammar the linguistic nomenclature of the particular grammar is used, which means the particular number of FLM terms have a rather low rate of occurrence. As specific terms of FLM used in these situations, the following could be considered: grammar knowledge, grammar point, grammar rule, inductive method, deductive method, inductive text, abstraction, generalization, formulation of rule, application of rule, word analysis, parsing, function word, content word, etc.

A rather large amount of specifically FLM terms could also be derived from continuous activities in fltl situations which occur during a lesson as well as throughout a complete language course, as for example the "application of teaching aids" or "lesson planning". In the former, lots of technological terms like "media system, visual aids, aural aids, audio-visual aids, university television service, teaching service,
language laboratory, radio course, overhead projector, videotape, tape recorder, slide, transparency" etc. are used for methodological purposes and thus become methodologically relevant terms without really being specific terms of FLM because they occur and are used in all the other subjects of instruction as well. This is due to the heterogeneity of FLM as a discipline which focuses on the analysis and synthesis of particular fltl processes and on all the mental and linguistic activities involved in them.

Recent empirical investigations into the language of FLM have shown a statistical predominance of fixed phrases as compared with single words, in comparison to other LSP, whereby the specification with reference to FLM is very often reached by combining words or phrases belonging to other branches of science with "foreign language". So the compound "foreign language" proves to be the most productive lexical item in the process of forming an LSP for FLM and separating it from other LSP.

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