Language acquisition proceeds incrementally. Certain properties of the target grammar are not acquired before other properties have been identified. The order of grammatical acquisition steps can be documented empirically from CHILDES files. The child starts with lexical items that can be identified in the situation. The child is able to acquire characterizing names and it is able to construct a binary topic-comment utterance. All grammatical markings (morphological, syntactic) are left out, although these items have an input that is 100-300 times the frequency of any lexical item. Grammatical markings are subsequently added to binary topic-comment utterances. I propose the following.

The adult input is reduced to minimal binary (topic-comment) utterances. A grammatical marking is added to such a frame, first as an option. I have called such an elementary reduced frame that requires a grammatical addition an evidence frame. See (1) for child Dutch.

(1)  topic        comment
     [ Beer <F?> (nou) slapen] → <F?> { moet, gaat, wil, slaapt }

An evidence frame does three things. For the string in (1),

(2) a. it identifies a morpho-phonological opposition <+finite>.  
     b. it identifies a corresponding syntactic form [+finite] comment initial 
                                                [+finite] comment final  
     c. it identifies a corresponding pragmatic/semantic function ‘statement’.

The lexical items that take part in this <+finite> opposition can be labeled as <+V>. If the verbal paradigm <+finite>, its syntactic context (V-second for Dutch) and its semantic function (illocutionary unit) have been acquired as standard, a new evidence frame is applicable (articles <+definite> and the category <+N> with the pragmatic/semantic function ‘reference’).

The order of evidence frames determines the order of acquisition steps. Each acquisition step consists of a morpho-phonological form and syntactic frame and a semantic opposition. For that reason my program with Remko Scha intends

(3) a. to simulate the successive input reduction 
     b. to predict the corresponding syntactic patterns 
     c. to describe the corresponding pragmatic/semantic opposition

The simulations and predictions are kept in check empirically. They should reproduce the successive stages in the child’s output as seen in the CHILDES files.

I will contrast this (inductive) approach with the inductive frames by Freudenthal et al. (2007) and Yang (2002, 2007). Yang’s frames are highly informed by a prioris. His child knows already that there are verbs. It knows that <+tense> (<+finite>) is more marked than <−tense> (<−finite>). It is not bothered by further syntactic or semantic structures. Freudenthal’s child is not informed about structure, but it is not clear how his child will proceed to the grammatical distinctions it seems to discover in a stepwise fashion. My criticism is that both learning frames are not close to what the child infact does.