

# THE CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF APPROACHES IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Motcho Prosper ATCHADE  
Université d'Abomey / Calavi- BENIN

## RESUME

Si l'objectif principal de l'acquisition d'une seconde langue est de former les apprenants à être en mesure de lire des articles, des livres, des revues, etc., qui ont trait à leur domaine d'intérêt ou de parler ou écrire la langue cible, différentes approches doivent être utilisées pour atteindre ledit objectif.

Un programme dont l'objectif est de former les apprenants à communiquer oralement avec les locuteurs d'une langue maternelle déterminée doit être différent de celui où l'accent est mis sur la précision grammaticale dans l'emploi de ladite langue.

Différents apprenants ont différentes habiletés : certains apprennent mieux en écoutant, d'autres en voyant ou en touchant ; certains ont une mémoire photographique, d'autres par contre ont une mémoire auditive. Toutes ces différences doivent intervenir dans les approches utilisées pour enseigner ou apprendre une langue cible.

C'est pourquoi, cet article s'est penché sur l'analyse conceptuelle des approches relatives à l'acquisition ou à l'apprentissage d'une seconde langue. Il est à noter qu'il n'y a aucune approche parfaite pour toutes sortes d'apprenants dans toutes circonstances. Cependant, il est conseillé aux enseignants de connaître particulièrement les habiletés à enseigner, les programmes à enseigner ou à apprendre, l'ordre dans lequel ces programmes doivent être exécutés pour faciliter l'apprentissage ou l'acquisition d'une seconde langue.

*Mots clés* : Approche ; programme procédural ; programme basé sur une démarche technique ; programme basé sur des tâches spécifiques ; programme synthétique et programme analytique.

*Key words* : Approach; procedural syllabus; process syllabus; task syllabus; synthetic syllabus; analytic syllabus.

## INTRODUCTION

If the main aim of the second language course is to teach the learners to be able to read books and articles in their own field, the approach will be different from the course in which the main aim is to equip the learners to communicate orally with mother-tongue speakers of that language. A course which aims chiefly at fluency, without worrying too much about accuracy, will be different from one in which the main aim is the correct use of the language.

Different learners have different abilities: some learn

better through the ear, others through the eye. Some have good photographic memories, others good auditive ones. Some are able to communicate easily and fluently in speech in their own language, others are not.

All these differences need to be reflected in the approaches we use to teach or learn a language. That is why in this article, I would like to deal with the conceptual analysis of approaches in the second language acquisition. I would like to say from the beginning that there is no one perfect approach for all learners in all conditions. However, it is advisable

to be concerned in second language acquisition (SLA) with the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught or learned, and the order in which the content will be presented.

## II - TASK-BASED SYLLABUS TYPES

I think the choice of the unit of analysis in syllabus design is crucial for all aspects of a language teaching/learning program. A variety of units, including word, structure, notion, function, topic and situation continue to be employed in synthetic, type A, syllabuses. While each is relevant for analysis of the target language and its use, native-like linguistic elements find little support as meaningful acquisition units from a language learner's perspective. Task has more recently appeared as the unit of analysis. Three new task-based syllabus types appeared in the 1980s: (a) the procedural syllabus, (b) the process syllabus and (c) the task syllabus. They are distinguishable from most earlier syllabus types by the fact that part of their rationale derives from what is known about human learning in general and for second language learning in particular rather than, as is the case with lexical, structural, notional, functional, and relational syllabuses, primarily from an analysis of language or language use. All three reject linguistic elements (such as work, structure, notion or function) as the unit of analysis and opt instead for some conception of task.

Syllabus types can be divided into two classes, synthetic and analytic (Wilkins, 1976). Synthetic syllabuses segment the target language into discrete linguistic items for presentation one at a time. Wilkins (1976), advocates that "Different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the structure of language has been built up... At any one time, the learner is being exposed to a deliberately limited sample of language" (p.2). synthetic refers to the learner's role: the learner's task is to re-synthesize the language that has been broken down into a large number of small pieces with the aim of making his learning task easier; so it relies on the learner's assumed ability to learn a language in parts which are independent of one another, and which also integrate or synthesize the pieces when the time comes to use them for communicative purposes. Analytic syllabuses offer the target language samples which, while they may have been modified in other ways, have not been

controlled for structure or lexis in the traditional manner. So, analytic approaches are organised in terms of the purposes for which people are learning and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes. Analytic refers not to what the syllabus does, but to the operations required of the learner. Analytic syllabuses are those which present the target language whole chunks at a time, without linguistic interference or control. They rely on (a) the learners' assumed ability to perceive regularities in the input and to induce rules, and (b) the continued availability to learners' innate knowledge of linguistic universals and the ways language can vary, knowledge which can be reactivated by exposure to natural samples of the L2. Procedural, process and task syllabuses are all examples of the analytic syllabus type.

The analytic/synthetic distinction is partially reflected in a second classification by R.V White's (1988) Type A and Type B syllabuses. However, whereas Wilkins' categories turn on differences in the way input and learner interact, White's conceptualization is broader, capturing differences in two general approaches to course design, instruction, language learning and evaluation. Type A syllabuses focus on what is to be learned: the L2 Type A syllabuses, White points out, are external to the learner, other-directed, determined by authority, set the teacher as decision maker, treat the subject matter of instruction as important, and assess success and failure in terms of achievement or mastery. Type B syllabuses, on the other hand, focus on how the language is to be learned. They involve no artificial pre-selection or arrangement of items and allow objectives to be determined by a process of negotiation between teachers and learners after they meet, as a course is in progress. They are thus internal to the learner, negotiated between learners and teachers as joint decision makers.

For Long and Crookes (1992), syllabus designers who choose a linguistic element (e.g. word, structure, notion, or function) as the organizational unit commit themselves to a synthetic, Type A, syllabus; and for them, this approach is artificial because the samples are written to conform to a set of linguistic specifications and so, do not reflect how people speak or write the language concerned. They think that beyond the lack of authenticity, synthetic, Type A, syllabuses are flawed because they assume a model of language acquisition unsupported by

research findings on language learning in or out of classrooms. Where morphosyntax is concerned, research shows that people do not learn items in the L2 one at a time. Nor, in principle, could languages be learned in that way given that many items share a symbiotic relationship: learning English negation, for example, entails knowing something about word order, auxiliaries, and how to mark verbs for time, person, and number. Progress in one area depends on progress in the others. In sum, according to Long and Crookes, synthetic syllabuses suffer from some generic problems, most obviously their static target language and production orientation. SLA research offers no evidence to suggest that native-like exemplars of any of these synthetic units are meaningful acquisition units, that they are acquired separately, singly, in linear fashion, or that they can be learned prior to and separate from language use. So, while it also involves the acquisition of the social and cultural knowledge, language learning is a psycholinguistic process, not a linguistic one in a synthetic, Type A, syllabus. But, what about analytic syllabuses?

#### **A- Procedural syllabuses**

Procedural syllabuses illustrate analytic syllabuses. The procedural syllabuses are associated with the work of Prabhu, Ramani and others on the Bangalore/Madras communicational Teaching Project. Prabhu (1987) denies the sufficiency of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), but he supports the idea that students need plenty of opportunity to develop their comprehension abilities before any production is demanded of them. Prabhu (1987) recognises that acquisition of a linguistic structure is not an instant, one-step procedure, and claims with Krashen that language form is acquired subconsciously through "the operation of some internal of abstract rules and principles.(p.70). When the learner's attention is focused on meaning, for Prabhu, the basis of each lesson is a problem or a task. It seems to me that this definition of task is fairly abstract, oriented towards cognition, process and pedagogy. For Prabhu, task should be intellectually challenging enough to maintain student's interest, for, that is what will sustain learners' efforts at task completion, focus on meaning, and as part of that process engages them in confronting the task linguistic demands, since difficulty is initially a matter of trial and error. The examples of tasks Prabhu provides are of the kind familiar in the many variants of communicative

language teaching, which is not task-based in the analytic sense. They include calculating distances and planning itineraries using maps and charts, assessing applicants for a job on the basis of biographical sketches, and answering comprehension questions and dialogues. These are not necessarily activities students will ever need to do or do in English outside the classroom, although they may be useful for language learning. In the same way, activities in a procedural syllabus are preset pedagogic tasks, not related to a set of target tasks determined by an analysis of a particular group of learners' future needs. So, it seems to me that two main problems can come out with the procedural syllabus as pointed out by Prabhu (1987):

*1-In the absence of a task-based needs identification, no rationale exists for the content of such a syllabus. It is impossible for anyone to verify the appropriacy of particular pedagogic tasks for a given group of learners without objective evaluation criteria, one of which must surely be relevance to learner needs.*

*2-Grading tasks difficulty and sequencing tasks both appear to be arbitrary processes, left partly to real-time impressionistic judgements by the classroom teacher (p.85).*

After dealing with the procedural syllabuses, I would like to turn now to process syllabuses.

#### **A- Process syllabuses**

Another approach to course design is the process syllabus. The early rationale for process syllabuses was educational and philosophical, not primarily psycholinguistic, with curriculum design proposals for other subject areas constituting an important influence. It is a plan for classroom work. It focuses upon three processes: communicating, learning, and the purposeful social activity of teaching/learning in a classroom. It is a syllabus which addresses the decisions which have to be made and the working procedures which have to be undertaken for language learning in a group. This process syllabus provides teacher and learners with the explicit task of selecting, subdividing and sequencing what is to be achieved in an on-going and negotiated way. This type of syllabus emphasizes upon evaluation. Once a particular working procedure is agreed, once purposes and content have been identified and activities have been undertaken, teacher and learners together share outcomes from the work.

Achievements and difficulties have to be carefully identified so that they may be related back to chosen procedure purposes and content, and chosen activities. The process syllabus thereby involves teacher and learners in a cycle of decision-making through which their own preferred ways of working, their own on-going content syllabus, and choices of appropriate activities and tasks are realized in the classroom. It is important to note that the process syllabus is unconventional in that it does not provide a plan of what is to be achieved through teaching and learning. It is a framework within which teacher and learners decide how they should best work upon subject-matter. Participation in a process syllabus leads to a creation of a particular syllabus of content in an on-going way by the classroom group. Therefore, it addresses the major problems related to the implementation of an external syllabus; how to relate such a syllabus to the internal syllabus of a group of learners and how to gradually create the classroom syllabus of that group which must be a synthesis of external and learners' syllabus. The process syllabus is the means whereby external and internal syllabuses are negotiated and through such negotiation, how a synthesized classroom syllabus may be created.

According to Breen (1987):

*"a classroom group represents the meeting-point of three types of syllabuses: there is the pre-planned – sometimes externally planned – syllabus which the teacher has to reinterpret in order to implement it with his learners. There are learner syllabuses and the third syllabus is that syllabus which is daily worked out and created by teacher and learners together which is an inevitable synthesis of the other two. The process syllabus provides a means whereby content or subject-matter can be related to how such content may be worked upon in a classroom, in other words, it gives the specific methodology related to the syllabus."* (Part II, p.162).

This outlook is reflected in Candlin's (1987) definition of task:

*"one of a set of sequenceable, problem-posing activities involving learners and teachers in some joint selection from a range of varied cognitive and communicative procedure applied to existing and new knowledge in the collective exploration and*

*pursuance of foreseen or emergent goals within a social milieu"* (p.10).

Breen and Candlin's focus was and is the learner and learning processes and preferences, not the language or language learning processes. They argue that any syllabus, preset or not, is constantly subject to negotiation and reinterpretation by teachers and learners in the classroom. Candlin (1984) suggests that what a syllabus consists of can only be discerned after a course is over, by observing not what was planned, but what took place. Both Breen and Candlin claim that learning should be and can only be the product of negotiation, which in turn drives learning.

Breen (1984) advocates replacement of the traditional conception of the syllabus as a list of items making up a repertoire of communication by one which promotes a learner's capacity for communication. He advocates incorporating a content syllabus within a process syllabus as an external check on what students are supposed to know.

Process syllabuses deal in pedagogic tasks whose availability is not based on any prior needs identification which raises problems for selection. In their work, Breen and Candlin (Breen, 1984; Candlin, 1987) advocate making the range, criteria and parameters of choice known to teachers and learners, but are keen to preserve flexibility to allow for learners and circumstances changing. It seems to me that pre-specification of syllabus content is precisely what Breen and Candlin seek to avoid, and accept that pre-specification in most syllabus and the commercially published materials that embody them suffer from all the weaknesses they allege. However, arbitrary selection is due to the lack of needs identification, not to pre-specification.

For the process syllabus, no explicit provision is made for a focus on language form and I think this is an error.

Now, what is about Task syllabuses which are based on Task-based language Teaching.

### ***B- Task syllabuses and Task-based language Teaching***

For Long and Crookes (1992):

*"This approach derives from SLA research,*

*particularly descriptive and experimental studies comparing tutored and naturalistic learning. Results suggest that formal instruction (a) has no effect on developmental sequences, (b) has a positive effect on the use of some learning strategies, (c) clearly improves rate of learning and (d) probably improves the ultimate level of Second Language Attainment” (p.18).*

These advantages for instruction cannot be explained as the result of classroom learners having received more or better comprehensible input, but insufficient for major aspects of SLA. However, awareness of certain classes of linguistic items in the input is necessary for learning to occur, and drawing learners' attention to those items facilitates development when certain conditions are met. So, a focus on form can help SLA (a) work on marked or more marked L2 forms, can transfer to imply unmarked or less marked items, (b) giving increased salience to non-salient items may decrease the time needed for learners to notice them in the input, which appears to be necessary if input is to become intake, (c) Instruction targeted at any appropriate level speeds up passage through a developmental sequence and extends the scope of application of a new rule.

The evidence of positive effects for instruction does not support a return to a focus on forms in language teaching, that is, to the use of some kind of synthetic syllabus and a linguistically isolating teaching “method”, such as audiolingualism, the Silent Way, or Total Physical Response. A focus on forms is ruled out by the evidence from SLA research of the need to respect “learner syllabuses”, and the related evidence against full native-speaker target-code forms as viable acquisition units, at the very least where beginners are concerned. On the other hand, the evidence does motivate a focus on form that is the use of pedagogic tasks and other methodological options which draw students' attention to aspects of target language code. Learner's production, both grammatical and ungrammatical, is one source of cues for teachers as to when this will be (un)productive; interlanguage-sentence diagnostic testing is another. Which aspects of the language, when, how and for which learners, all need to be precisely specified. That is why Task-based syllabuses require a needs identification to be conducted in terms of the real-world target tasks learners are preparing to undertake. Valuable expertise in procedures for conducting such needs

analyses was accumulated by English for special purpose (ESP) specialists in the 1970s and 1980s and can still be drawn upon, even though most early ESP program designers were working within a notional, functional framework.

Once target tasks have been identified via the needs analysis, the next step is to classify them into (target) task types. For example, in a course for trainee flight attendants, the serving of breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc. might be classified as serving food and beverages. Pedagogic tasks are then derived from the task types and sequenced to form the task-based syllabus. It is the pedagogic tasks that teachers and students actually work on in the classroom.

The grading and sequencing of pedagogic tasks is also function of which various pedagogic options are selected to accompany their use. It is here that some of the negotiation of learning process urged by Breen and Candlin in their work can be built into Task-Based Language Teaching, and here, too, that the findings of a number of lines of second language classroom research over some years ago are most helpful, such task-based syllabuses would imply assessment of student learning by way of task-based criterion-referenced tests, whose focus is whether or not students can perform some task to criterion, as established by experts in the field, not their ability to complete discrete-point grammar items.

Task-Based Language Teaching is distinguished by its compatibility with research findings from classroom-centered research when making decisions concerning the design of materials and methodology. However, its research base is limited and some of the second language acquisition and classroom research findings referred to may bear alternative interpretations, given the small scale and questionable methodology of some of the studies involved. Given an adequate needs analysis, selection of tasks is relatively straightforward. Assessing task difficulty and sequencing pedagogic task are more problematic. There is also the problem of “finiteness”. How many tasks and task types are there? Where does one task end the next begin? How many levels of analysis are needed? What hierarchical relationships do exist between one level and another?

Task-Based Language Teaching is relatively structured in the sense of being pre-planned and guided and thereby affects the learner's autonomy.

Like Long and Crookes (1992), I think process syllabuses, procedural syllabuses and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) differ in the rationale for their proposals, in the ways they define task, in whether they conduct a formal needs analysis to determine syllabus content in how tasks are selected and sequenced, and in the methodological options, such as group work, and a focus on form, that they prescribe and proscribe.

All three proposals have some areas of agreement, such as their rejection of synthetic type A, syllabuses and the units of analysis on which they are based, and their adoption of task as an alternative. Consequently, all share certain problems: the difficulty of differentiating tasks, especially tasks and subtasks nested within them, which in turn raises questions as to the finiteness of tasks (or task types) or their generative capacity. Another problem is the issue of task difficulty, that is, of determining the relevant grading and sequencing criteria. This aspect leads to functional categories and acquisition orders.

### III - FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES AND ACQUISITION ORDERS

Another approach in SLA is revealed by Zobl and Liceras (1994) in their article "Functional Categories and Acquisition Orders" (pp.159-180) where they analysed some earlier studies of English L1 and L2 morpheme orders. They base their analysis on current functional categories theory. For them, the recent work on functional categories provides a framework that makes it possible to undertake a principle explanation of salient differences between the L1 and the L2 morphemes orders. This framework does not make specific predictions about order of acquisition, but it enables people to see interesting syntactic parallels between bound and free morphemes within and across categories.

Applied to the morpheme order data, it allows people to see natural groupings of morphemes in terms of category membership (DP, IP), in terms of head movement (lexical and affixal) and in terms of the bound/free distinction. Zobl and Liceras also point out two important discoveries. The first, pertaining to L1 acquisition, concerns the category-specific development of functional projection. The second, pertaining L2 acquisition, concerns the cross-categorical development of functional projections, the spearheading role played by free morphemes in

their implementation, and the role of movement in the late acquisition of syntactic affixes. Affixes do not appear to have the triggering status in L2 that they do in L1, and movement of lexical heads is implemented early and independently of affix-movement. I think, this analysis meets the long-standing complaint that the L2 English morpheme order lacks generalizability and is unrevealing about L2 acquisition.

Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1974) in their article "is there a 'Natural sequence' in Adult Second Language Learning?" reveal that there is a highly consistent order of relative difficulty in the use of the functors (grammatical morphemes) across different language backgrounds, indicating that learners are experiencing intra-language difficulties; also, the adult results of the bilingual syntax measure applied to 73 adult learners of English as a second language in order to investigate accuracy of usage for eight English functors agreed with those obtained by Dulay and Burt (1973) for 5 to 8 year old children and adults use common strategies and process linguistic data in fundamentally similar ways. So, Dulay and Burt (1973) found an invariant order of acquisition in children learning English as a second language and its implications for a developmental theory imply that "people should leave the leaning to the children" (p.257); teaching syntax is not necessary. It may be the case that second language learning in children can effectively take place in the absence of a formal linguistic environment.

Adults show nearly the same rankings and a similar degree of invariance; instruction is directly related to English language proficiency in them, while exposure to English in informal environment is not. In other words, adults seem to profit from instruction, an instruction that often presents the grammatical morphemes in an order, and the most effective instruction is that which follows the observed order of difficulty, one with a "natural syllabus".

For Pica, Kanagy and Falodun, (1993), Second language L2 teachers and researchers devote a great deal of their time and energy toward getting language learners to talk. For many years teachers have relied on language lessons, directing learners to repeat and practice L2 sounds, words and structures, or calling on them to answer questions and thereby display what they learned through instruction. More

recently, teachers have also engaged students in debates, discussion role plays, and other activities focused on functional and strategic aspects of L2 use. Many researchers have operated within a format of structured elicitation, asking learners to respond to pictures, readings and questions for which range of L2 forms and functions must be supplied. Such approaches taken may not be the most suitable means of carrying out their work with L2 learners.

When viewed from the perspective of current second language teaching and learning, a more effective way to assist language learning in the classroom or to study the process of second language acquisition (SLA) is revealed through the use of communication tasks. So, Pica, Kanagy and Falodun validate the communication task as an important tool for teachers and researchers by comparing the communication task with other classroom and research activities in light of current theoretical perspectives on language learning. The theoretical perspective which supports the use of communication tasks is that which holds that language is best learned and taught through interaction-based pedagogy, classroom opportunities to perceive, comprehend, and ultimately internalize L2 words, forms and structures are believed to be most abundant during activities in which learners and their interlocutors, whether teachers or other learners can exchange information and communicate ideas.

Similarly, input and interactionist theories of L2 acquisition hold that language learning is assisted through the social interaction of learners and their interlocutors, particularly when they negotiate toward mutual comprehension of each other's message meaning. To accomplish this goal, learners request their interlocutor's help in comprehending unclear or unfamiliar linguistic input, and obtain inter-language form and current. Then, they respond accordingly, through modification and manipulation of emergent and acquired L2 structures. To activate acquisition processes, this interaction must be structured to provide a context whereby learners not only talk to their interlocutors but negotiate meaning with them as well.

According to Stern (1983) "some attempts have been made to overcome the differences of approaches in SLA by analyzing methods or approaches systematically." (pp.487-8). One of these was made by Bosco and Di Pietro (1970). Setting out from

the analogy of distinctive-feature analysis in phonology which characterizes speech sounds by the absence or presence of a limited number of features, Bosco and Di Pietro identified among the most common instructional strategies eleven distinctive features and divided into eight psychological and three linguistic ones. With the help of this inventory of eleven features, Bosco and Di Pietro defined different methods by the features they have in common and features that are specific. Thus, the grammar-translation, direct method, and audiolingual methods are interpreted by Bosco and Di Pietro as displaying features. For them, the grammar-translation method is characterized by the presence of features like central (cognitive), nomothetic (emphasis on rules) and general (based on linguistic universals). The Direct Method is interpreted as functional, affective, and molar and the audiolingual method as functional, nomothetic, divergent and systematic. None of the methods are explicitly idiographic (i.e. encouraging personal expression), or explicitly cyclic. Nor do any of them aim at building up the language into a unified structure. This analysis has some pitfalls; some of the features refer to teaching techniques while others refer to goals and others again to course design, so it is not clear on what grounds the features could be attributed to a method/approach except by a process of intuitive interpretation. For example, why would the Direct Method but not the Audiolingual Method, be described as affective? However, the great value of this analysis is that it clarifies some of the options that are open to the language teaching theorists and it establishes common elements transcending different methods.

Another feature analysis of teaching approach/method was made by Krashen and Seliger (1975). It identified eight features some of which overlap with Bosco and Di Pietro's list; for example, their feature known as Discrete point is similar to Bosco and Di Pietro's distinction between "molar" and "molecular", "divergent" and "non-divergent", "unified" and "non-unified". Another example related to one of their eight features is what is called "performance channel" which refers to the separation and combination of listening, speaking, reading and writing, specific to a method. A method may demand "single" channel or a "multiple channel" approach. For instance, the Audiolingual Method gives priority to listening and speaking. This feature called

“performance channel”, coincides with Bosco and Di Pietro’s feature known as divergent versus non-divergent, i.e., the separation or non-separation of language skills. So, the analysis of features of language teaching by Krashen and Seliger was largely prompted by points at issue during the early seventies on audiolingual and cognitive theories and is therefore less comprehensive than that of Bosco and Di Pietro. Neither analysis in its entirety is systematic enough to offer to a coherent and comprehensive statement of language teaching. However, both analyses contribute useful analytical categories to a conceptual clarification of language teaching.

### CONCLUSION

About the conceptual analysis of approaches, let us say with Richards et al. (1986) that:

*“There are three views: the first and the most traditional of the three, is the structural view, the view, that language learning is a system of structurally related element for the coding of meaning. The target of language learning is seen to be the mastery of elements of this system which are generally defined in terms of phonological units, grammatical units, and lexical units. The second view of language is the functional view, the view that language is a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning; This theory emphasizes the semantic and communicative dimension rather than merely the grammatical characteristics of language, and leads to a specification and organisation of language teaching content by categories of meaning and function rather than by elements of structure and grammar. Wilkin’s notional Syllabuses (1976) is an attempt to spell out the implications of this view. The third view of language can be called the interaction view. It sees language as a vehicle for the realization of inter-personal relations and for that performance of social transactions between individuals*

*Language is seen as a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations. Language teaching content, according to this view, may be specified and organised by patterns of exchange and interaction or may be shaped by the inclinations of learner as interactors” (p.17).*

Structural, functional or interactional models of language provide the theoretical framework that may

motivate a particular teaching approach.

I accept the need for an approach based on a threefold ways (structural, functional and interactional). This is an attempt to integrate in a systematic way three strands of which each has a contribution to make to the acquisition of proficiency. The issue of course is how most effectively these three components (structural, functional and interactional) can in practice be combined so that they are integrated in a true sense and not simply three different parallel approaches.

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