

THE CASE FOR NOTIONAL GRAMMAR LEARNING

Iris Schaller Schwaner

This paper attempts to establish the tenets of notional grammar with regard to teaching and learning. It contrasts the ELT-related body of thought underlying this approach with various SLA theories not primarily associated with teaching concerns. In particular, it presents a working-model which combines a partial notional grammar (English future time reference) with a cognitive information processing framework.

The purpose of this contribution¹ is to examine the explicit and tacit theoretical assumptions regarding how grammar learning takes place and can be facilitated within a notional approach to grammar teaching. This is done with reference to other language learning/acquisition theories in order to ascertain the extent of theoretical support for notional grammar teaching. Before clarifying and explaining the concept of notional grammar and the context in which the teaching approach can be located, an amplification is necessary concerning the concepts of theory involved here. As is already apparent from the above, a distinction is made between ELT-related claims and assumptions that constitute the body of thought which informs this particular approach and theories in the traditionally narrower sense, which are not primarily associated with language teaching concerns. Neither this distinction itself nor the unidirectionality of this paper's objective is meant to imply, however, that the former type of theory is inferior to or dependent on the latter one.² On the contrary, the following considerations are based on the claim that interesting insights may be gained by treating both types of theory as equally viable. It is hoped that the reader will gain a greater awareness of the relevance of teaching-related concerns in the study of second language acquisition.

In the following, I will first comment on the characteristics of the theory of grammar involved in the notional approach. Secondly, I will briefly outline its theory of teaching. Thirdly, I will describe the ways in which notional pedagogical grammar seeks to facilitate learning, i.e. the learning theory behind the notional approach. Fourthly, I will consider the question of whether the principles and practice advocated within the paradigm of notional pedagogical grammar meet with support outside the paradigm. It remains open to discussion whether the theoretical proposals taken into account here can serve as underpinnings for a notional approach.

¹ This paper has arisen in the context of an empirical study I am currently involved in which deals with pedagogical grammar in Austrian ELT textbooks and the interlanguage performance of learners using these textbooks.

² Cf. the distinction made by Stern (1983:23-26) between what he calls T2s and T3s.

1. The notional theory of grammar

The term notional grammar, as it is used here, refers to a meaning-priority approach to grammar teaching whose central aim is to give prominence to notions, i.e. to the grammatical meanings or concepts conveyed by grammatical forms, in didactic target language descriptions and in the organization of pedagogical grammars.

The interpretation of notional grammar presented here is inspired and very much influenced by Newby (1981, 1985) and Kettemann (1989 and earlier). Its current version still shares a number of basic assumptions with Newby (1989b, 1991) but is not to be equated with Newby's Notional Grammar Theory. My own application of the notional grammar approach is restricted to the meanings of the verb phrase in the expression of future time in English (cf. Schwaner, forthcoming).

In general, the concept of a meaning-based grammar can be traced back to Jespersen's (1924) idea of a *Sprechergrammatik*, the tenet of which is that grammar is a systematic representation of how reality is conceptualized by (the speakers of) a language (Hüllen 1971:88). In addition to this traditional connection, the notional approach is also akin to proposals suggesting a link between cognitive linguistics and EFL grammar teaching (cf. Taylor 1989).

The role and status of notions must be viewed as being linked to the assumption that the grammatical forms used in an utterance reflect the conceptual content and communicative intention of the speaker via their meanings. These meanings are regarded as inclusive. If one assumes that grammar encodes the most recurrent features of context, one must also take into account that grammar can never be fully explicit in signifying links with context. Pragmatic inference is always involved. Although pragmatic meaning itself is basically warranted by semantic meaning, pragmatic meaning also feeds into semantic meaning and may at some point become semantic meaning.³ In other words, the conceptual grammatical meanings or notions that are associated with grammatical forms are not exclusively a matter of semantics in the sense of the meaning side of the linguistic code but there are also pragmatic elements. While this provides motivation for Newby's four separate layers of meaning⁴ it does not exclude the possibility of treating meaning in a unified way, taking "account of pragmatic features as they occur, alongside semantic features..." (Catford 1983:31).

Of the several possible ways of theoretically conceiving grammatical meaning, I have chosen the polysemous fuzzy set approach developed by Coates (1983). Drawing on this

³ Widdowson, personal communication. On grammar, meaning and context cf. Widdowson (1990:82-104).

⁴ He presents a Semantic Layer Model in which there are four separate layers of meaning: a cognitive, a notional, a relational and a pragmatic layer which interrelate in communication (cf. Newby 1991:163).

framework and on several other descriptive accounts⁵ it has been possible to distinguish seven different meanings of the four most frequent constructions used in English to express future time. The table below illustrates this by enumerating the linguistic labels used to signal the different meanings, listing a few of their characteristics in key words and giving examples of the use of each form in its future time related meaning(s). This represents a simplification, however, which obscures the capability of the fuzzy set approach to deal with descriptive and theoretical problems (e.g. core and peripheral examples of the same meaning or neutralization, merger or ambiguity between different meanings). What this list does illustrate, and this is essential to keep in mind, is that there is no 1:1 relation between grammatical forms and grammatical meanings and that in English, there is a choice of form related to a conceptual choice that is involved in the expression of future time.

Table 1: English forms and notions related to future time (examples from Coates 1983; Wekker 1976)

Will *Prediction: paraphrase 'I predict that...'; marker of future time; may additionally convey varying degrees of certainty; used with harmonic combinations.

- 1) *It will be lovely to see you.*
- 2) *They'll probably be bored with me anyway.*
- 3) *Well, I'll be back tomorrow, I should think.*
- 4) *I think the bulk of this year's students will go into industry.*

Will **Resolve: animate subjects, agentive verbs, majority 1st person subjects; special pragmatic uses: promise, threat, rarely: command.

- 1) *I'll keep an eye open for it.*
- 2) *"But I will bring you more today, I promise".*
- 3) *"Any more of that talk and I will be down amongst you".*
- 4) *Alright then, I'll see you this afternoon then.*
- 5) *Imperiously, he cut her short. "We will discuss the matter later", he said.*

Will **Willingness: animate subjects, agentive verbs, focus on subject's state of mind; paraphrase 'willing, want', negative: 'refuse'; special uses: imperatives, insistence, metaphorical use.

- 1) *Because we can't find a publisher who will do the whole thing.*
- 2) *"Will you listen to me and stop interrupting!"*
- 3) *...it's so bloody expensive that he won't eat anything except the largest most splendid piece of meat.*
- 4) *...look, if you I will play it this way...*
- 5) *Oh, for god's sake, the key won't go into the lock.*

⁵ For example Leech²1987; Quirk et al. 1985; Edmondson et al. 1977; Wekker 1976 etc. (cf. Schwaner, forthcoming).

Going to *Interpreting Signs: indication of future event/state is present; inference, process of deduction, interpretation of evidence.

- 1) *Everyone looked impressed and Mother said proudly, "Julia's going to be clever".*
 - 2) *She's going to have twins.*
- Going to* **Intention: animate subjects, agentive verbs; paraphrase 'intend'; premeditation, forethought; (merged with Interpreting Signs: directive).
- 1) *"I'm not going to marry someone who leaves his pyjamas on the floor!"*
 - 2) *"What are you going to do about it?"*
 - 3) *"You are going to do this job for me without any more argument".*

Present progressive Arrangement: human agency stated or implied; definite arrangements made.

- 1) *'Under Milk Wood' is being produced at the Mayfair Theatre at the end of next month.*

Present simple Fact: calendar, schedule, programmes; complete determination, categorial statement of fact.

- 1) *At 6.25 we speak to a young mother whose husband was killed in Ulster 2 years ago.*
- 2) *Next month, the Concord sets out on a sales promotion flight to the Lebanon.*
- ...

* Epistemic modality

** Root modality (Volition)

2. Notional theory of teaching

The very general context in which the notional approach can be located is that of communicative language teaching (cf. Canale/Swain 1980 and Canale 1983), or, more precisely, the now dominant trend in CLT that aims at the development of grammatical competence as an integral part of communicative competence.⁶

An explicit consideration of teaching is vital, because it can serve as an indication of the kind of instruction that is ideally tied up with the notional approach. It should thereby be possible to avoid a misconception frequently found in second language acquisition research. Instruction cannot be viewed as one invariable factor - a point being increasingly acknowledged and criticized in the literature (cf. Ellis 1990:158, 172, 201 and Larsen-Freeman/Long 1991:322).

⁶ For slightly more detailed comments on formative influences on and goals of CLT cf. Schwaner (1990:110f).

Notional grammar teaching is not simply form-based or meaning-based. Notions are not to be taught in the abstract nor are they to be inferred solely from communicative activities. The underlying assumption is that in natural language use, attention is paid to language only to the extent that the achievement of indexical meaning is secured, i.e. the establishment of external relations. It is argued that these conditions of natural language use are not the conditions needed for learning due to the lack of particular attention paid to language itself. Therefore, notional grammar teaching relies on activities that, in the initial stages, are designed to draw attention to one conceptual meaning of a specific form at a time in a context in which this form is prototypically used to express this one meaning and in which it fulfills a communicative or problem-solving purpose. This represents a clear departure from conventional form-focused activities, as well as from interaction without linguistic focus. Provision is made for "doing at the service of knowing" (cf. Widdowson 1990:161-166, 171).

Explicit grammar teaching in terms of explanations also plays a role. Whereas diagrammatical devices are used as symbolic representations of conceptual meaning in Brumfit/Windeatt's (1983) *Communicative Grammar*, Newby 1989a uses linguistic labels in *Grammar for Communication*. The labels, e.g. 'Intention' for one meaning of *going to* or 'Prediction' for one meaning of *will* are employed as consistently as possible. The explanations in which they are utilized purport to simulate the mental operations involved in the use of a particular form by the native speaker or verbalize the salient perceptions which trigger its use. Consider, for example, the explanation for *going to* expressing 'Intention' in the Austrian textbook *Ticket to Britain 1*: "So kannst du ausdrücken, daß du die Absicht hast, etwas zu tun" (TB1:48) or for *going to* 'Interpreting Signs' in Newby (1989a:98) "Ich verwende *going to*, wenn es gewisse Anzeichen dafür gibt, daß etwas geschehen wird. Diese kann ich sehen, spüren, riechen usw. Der Zeitpunkt ist dabei unwichtig."⁸ The point of the explanations is to make the learners aware - in a step by step fashion - of the meanings that can be expressed by a form or what is to be understood when a form is used.

A notional grammar approach does not only offer explicit information on the prototypical values (Widdowson 1990:171) of forms. It also offers opportunities for acting on this information, for using a form repeatedly in a context where its use is semantically and pragmatically motivated. The practice guidelines are these: establish a context in which conceptual meaning becomes accessible to the learner (metalinguistically, diagrammatically, pictorially, by establishing prototypical situations); provide linguistic repetition of the form that expresses this conceptual meaning; recycle with different functions, with varying degrees of control, and include different skills and

⁷ 'With this you can express an intention to do something' (my translation).

⁸ 'I use *going to* when there are certain signs [indications] for the fact that something is going to happen. These I can see, feel, smell etc. Time [whether near or remote future] is unimportant for this' (my translation).

different kinds of discourse which fulfill varying purposes.⁹ The effect to be thus achieved is the "...accommodation of the two cardinal principles of repetition and purpose, which in combination provide for the internalization of grammar as a resource for use" (Widdowson 1990:176) as well as the gradual development of new conceptual networks.

A theory of teaching of course presumes an underlying theory of learning. This will be discussed in the following section.

3. The learning theory behind the notional approach

This paper assumes an interface position, which means that Krashen's (1982 and elsewhere) distinction between 'learning' and 'acquisition', which is widely used (though often not in Krashen's mutually exclusive sense) among ELT professionals, is not maintained. A strict separation of an acquisition that is natural and useful and a learning that is useless for communication would be incompatible with the notional approach. It is not denied that one can, in general, distinguish between L1 learning-like processes and intentional learning taking place in ways that are not attested in L1 learning; however, the existence of two unconnected systems is challenged. My main reason for questioning Krashen's argumentation depends on his concept of grammar teaching, which has very little to do with what is envisioned here.¹⁰

The concept of pedagogical grammar as such is based on the assumption that, in humans with developed cognitive faculties, learning a foreign language is to a considerable degree a cognitive process of perceiving, structuring and understanding. A processed and structured presentation of the target language can have facilitative effects on this (Bausch 1979:18). However, facilitative effects can also be attributed to the kind of target language input the learner is provided with in a foreign language learning context (Rutherford 1987:14). In a notional approach, the effects of both exposure and explicit grammar instruction are taken into account. Basically, this is done by cyclically exposing the learner to target language samples in which one meaning-form complex is particularly prominent and by involving her in linguistic interaction focused on this meaning+form. At the same time there are also explicit explanations of the kind described above, which sensitize the learner and further understanding. Initially, the principle of one meaning at a time is observed.

The crucial point to keep in mind with regard to the effect of notions in learning is related to this. The concepts or notions of grammatical forms are hypothesized to play a dominant role in the form-function mapping of a specific language. Where grammar

⁹ The actual stages and the sequencing are described in Newby's *Notional grammar and how to teach it*. The concomitant shift from systemic to schematic knowledge is discussed in Widdowson (1990:177).

¹⁰ For more detailed criticism cf. Widdowson (1990:20-23).

involves choice (e.g. tense, aspect, modality), a conceptual choice is involved as well. The amount of variability in the use of one specific form in the language of learners has often been noted in research and has been explained as being due, in part, to inconsistent form-function mappings. As Ellis (1990:49) puts it:

The learner frequently uses two or more forms to perform the same set of functions. The learner needs to discover the functional restrictions that apply to each form and only when this has been achieved can acquisition of the forms be said to have taken place.

Why does it take time to develop target language-like form-function mappings, what does it mean to discover the functional restrictions that apply to each form, and what is involved in the persistent non-target language-like use of certain verb forms by German-speaking learners of English?

According to Rivers (1979:53-55), the answers to these questions are to be found in the fact that the learner has to grasp and internalize the fundamental semantic concepts of the target language which may be different from those of the respective L1. She argues that it is the task of FLT to help the learner understand the new concepts and develop new "conceptual networks".

Similarly, Sharwood Smith (1988) argues in that it is necessary to introduce important conceptualizations of the target language which differ from those in the L1, to offer the learner

....not only structures but the spectacles with which a native speaker of the target language views what he or she talks about. ... It should then be possible to 'motivate', for the learner, structures which are problematic because native language spectacles make the underlying notional or functional distinction seem odd or trivial... (Sharwood Smith 1988 [1981b]:167)

This is exactly the issue enforced by notional grammar. By identifying meanings separately and teaching them gradually and systematically they are made accessible to the learner since they capture the salient perceptions that lead to the encoding of a form (Newby 1991:193f.).

To sum up, notional grammar seeks to facilitate learning in various ways: by offering the right kind of input; by explicitly raising awareness of meanings; by sensitizing learners to target-language form-function mappings; and by attempting to influence the learner's intake through focusing her attention and involving her in linguistic interaction in which the communicative value of forms can be realized.

4. Support from outside the notional paradigm

The question at stake is if the above can be related to theoretical considerations which are not directly concerned with the notional approach. In the following I will reconsider

certain issues (such as consciousness raising, the effect of instruction, the concepts of consciousness, the role of input and explicit knowledge, and practice) in the light of theoretical assumptions made outside the notional paradigm. Whether these can actually serve as underpinnings of the notional approach, however, is open to discussion.

Sharwood Smith's (1981) concept of consciousness-raising (C-R) is of overall importance. C-R is assumed to make up for the limited amount of data the learner is exposed to in the classroom and seems to explain the interaction between instruction-guided processes and 'natural' learning processes. Grammar cannot be directly instilled so that forms and notions emerge full-blown, as it were, in the learner's language. But consciousness-raising is assumed to draw the learner's attention to what is to be learned in more or less explicit ways. These range from rule statement accompanied by practice to linguistic perceptual clues and symbolic devices as well as discrimination and problem solving tasks. (Sharwood Smith 1981:161f., Rutherford 1987:160) Finally, the least explicit C-R instrument is an authentic text in which the grammatical phenomenon to be focused on occurs naturally. (Rutherford 1987:153) Concerning the issue of interface, it is assumed that consciously constructed learner output also becomes input for the learner. What has been consciously learned feeds into naturalistic acquisition processes (Sharwood Smith 1981:166f). My claim is that C-R can also apply to notions.

Ellis's (1990:171f.) *Instructed Second Language Acquisition* includes important comments on the facilitative effects of instruction. He points out that although it is often not clear how its quality has influenced such effects, instruction has been reported to facilitate the acquisition of useful formulas, some new linguistic rules and the improvement of control over existing knowledge. However, the effects cannot be clearly delimited from the effects of the learners' motivation, of the kind of input they were exposed to and of conscious attention to form as such. (Ellis 1990:165) Interestingly enough, immediate effects of instruction are assumed to be contingent upon the transparency of form-function relationships. (Ellis 1990:167) Instruction can also have a delayed effect in priming the learner for easy assimilation when developmentally ready (cf. Seliger 1979) by "rais[ing] the learner's consciousness about the existence of linguistic features which she would otherwise ignore..." (Ellis 1990:169) In other words, more or less explicit grammatical concepts are probably helpful for the learner. They will promote attention to the features concerned in the input so that they are acquired procedurally. However, individual learners may vary in the degree to which they benefit from different kinds of instruction. (Ellis 1990:171f.)

So far, a certain degree of support could be found in Ellis's (1990) Integrated Theory. However, it must be acknowledged that he assumes a non-interface position (Ellis 1990:186) in which implicit and explicit knowledge are equated with dichotomous systems in Krashen's sense and in which interaction between the two is precluded. It could therefore be counter-productive to pursue his arguments any further. On the other hand, he himself concedes that this hypothesis is controversial. His chief argument for claiming that there is a distinction is

...that the available evidence indicates that instruction is *often* [my emphasis] powerless to convert explicit into implicit knowledge. (Ellis 1990:196)

This is not a compelling argument, however, in the light of his own caveat that a lot of evidence cited in the literature may be due to the wrong kind of instruction. In addition, he admits that one's perception of the two knowledge types as dichotomous or not depends on one's theoretical position in the first place. (Ellis 1990:186) The theoretical bias presumably present in both positions may be indicative of a certain degree of arbitrariness involved, which is why there seems to be no reason, at this stage, to discount Ellis's observations altogether.

Interesting assumptions concerning the role of consciousness, i.e. focal awareness, are put forward by Schmidt (1990). 'Noticing', another term used for focal awareness, is described as the subjective or private experience of stimuli and as "the necessary and sufficient condition for converting input to intake" (Schmidt 1990:129). By means of language learning tasks, consciousness in this sense can be manipulated to focus on what is to be learned. The likelihood of noticing may also be increased by high frequency of a feature in the input. In addition, instruction may have a priming effect through establishing expectations about the target language. Concerning the age factor, Schmidt argues that the spread of focal awareness could depend on cognitive maturation, i.e., whereas children cannot avoid noticing even communicatively redundant grammatical features, adults allocate attention strategically and 'overlook' redundancies. This failure to notice may be overcome by consciousness in the sense of 'paying attention' to redundancies, so that they can be intentionally subjected to focal awareness. (Schmidt 1990:129, 142-45, 149) The facilitative potential of instruction in this is obvious.

Schmidt (1990) also offers an interesting perspective of what he calls implicit learning, meaning learning that does not involve insight and understanding.¹¹ According to recent psychological theory, this is not characterized by unconscious induction of abstract rule systems but by "the gradual accumulation of associations between frequently co-occurring features" (Schmidt 1990:149). This could mean that a gradual accumulation of associations between forms and notions is possible.

Finally, I will turn to Hulstijn's (1990) information-processing framework. Due to the restriction that information processing or cognitive frameworks can only provide partial accounts of second language development and need to be complemented by linguistic approaches, they cannot provide more than interim models. However, Hulstijn's framework lends itself to clarifying what kinds of knowledge notions may

¹¹ It should be kept in mind, however, as Leech (1989) pointed out in *Grammar and language learning*, that a combination of inductive and explicit (discovery of rules from given data in a problem solving task) and deductive and implicit (internalization/automatization via practice in use of rules) learning should be possible.

represent and why they could contribute to automatically making appropriate conceptual choices.

According to Hulstijn (1990), information-processing approaches describe the development of skill acquisition as starting with controlled information processing. *Controlled information processing* involves the selection, coordination and subsequent integration of elementary pieces of information into procedures. This is done with a great deal of attention and short-term memory capacity. With increased practice, routines of processing develop until ready-made procedures are formed in long-term memory. "When triggered, the procedure automatically controls the execution of its composing parts" (Hulstijn 1990:31) and attention is much decreased. This then is *automatic* information processing.

Based on Anderson's (1982) model of skill acquisition, Hulstijn's description of language learning entails change on two levels. On the level of *knowledge*, *declarative* mental representations (corresponding to isolated facts) are converted (via a process of compilation) into *procedural* mental representations, *if/then* statements which correspond to the ready-made procedures mentioned above. Gradual tuning and restructuring can improve these procedures. On the level of *executive control*, there is a change from *controlled* processing to *automatic* processing of mental representations.

Thus, first and second language learning can be viewed as

...the establishment of procedural knowledge (routine procedures) through the compilation of declarative knowledge, and the gradual tuning and restructuring of procedural knowledge. (Hulstijn 1990:32)

Language learning does not simply entail speeding up the same procedures (control), but also establishing new procedures which reorganize the body of facts and rules already acquired. As an example of this reorganization U-shaped developments in child language are cited, which are accounted for by a first stage of data-driven procedures, a second stage of top-down procedures and a third phase of modulation between data-driven and top-down procedures.

Concerning the interaction of the two levels (knowledge and control) it is claimed that controlled processing can operate on either declarative or procedural knowledge, whereas automatic processing can operate on procedural knowledge only.

The crucial question with regard to foreign language learning is: how does this framework deal with explicit and implicit knowledge and what is the role of these two forms of knowledge in learning, i.e., in the establishment of procedures and the development of automatic control?

Hulstijn (1990:32f.) describes the L1 acquisition by young children as an incidental process (children have no intention of trying to remember what they hear) in which explicit knowledge does not play a role. It is claimed that repeated encounters with linguistic stimuli lead to the gradual development of implicit knowledge of forms and their corresponding meanings and functions. Controlled processing (i.e. attention

allocation) is a necessary prerequisite for learning here as well, although attention will be peripheral as compared with intentional learning. From school age onwards, however, ...humans may become capable of establishing automatic routines on the basis of explicit knowledge (for example, in a foreign language class), just as well as, or even more effectively than on the basis of implicit knowledge. (Hulstijn 1990:34)

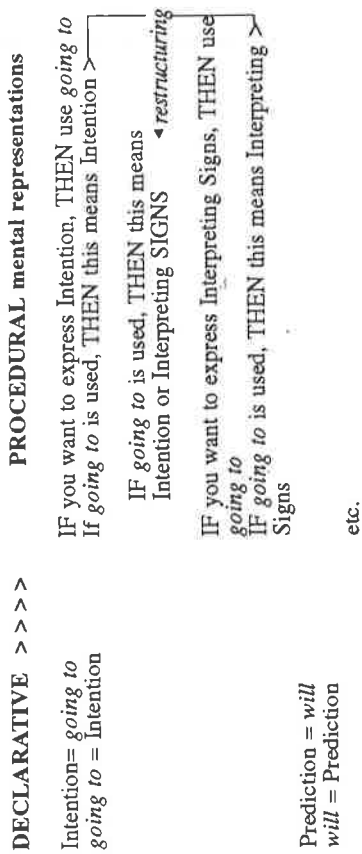
Both forms of knowledge can co-exist.

Even if we do not rely on explicit knowledge at the stage of automatic processing, this does not preclude that we may have explicit knowledge as well. On the other hand, we may have had explicit knowledge at the stage of controlled processing and may have lost access to it. In this information-processing framework "the construction and reconstruction of both implicit and explicit mental representations in declarative or procedural form" are thus accountable for. (Hulstijn 1990:43)¹²

So how can Hulstijn's framework be applied to notional grammar? In a tentative application of Hulstijn's framework to notional grammar as represented in the diagram below one would assume that under the conditions of peripheral and focused attention, to be brought about by the kind of instruction and input described above, the repeated and focused on elements can eventually become declarative knowledge. That is, isolated facts about the forms and meanings related to the expression of future time would gradually be accumulated as declarative knowledge of approximately the form 'Intention' = *going to/going to* = 'Intention', 'Prediction' = *will/will* = 'Prediction' etc. Controlled processing in comprehension and production practice may gradually convert the isolated facts of declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge, represented in *if/then* statements, e.g. 'IF *going to* is used, THEN this means 'Intention' and 'IF you want to express 'Intention' THEN use *going to*' etc. These procedures are not only additive, but undergo restructuring and fine tuning as well. Procedures are reorganized to summarize more and more information, for example 'IF *going to* is used, THEN this may mean 'Intention' or 'Interpreting Signs'. One may end up with a ready-made procedure which will finally automatically control the execution of its composing parts: 'IF you want to express future time THEN choose: IF 'Intention', THEN *going to*; IF 'Prediction', THEN *will*; IF 'Interpreting Signs'; THEN *going to*; IF 'Arrangement', THEN present progressive; etc.'

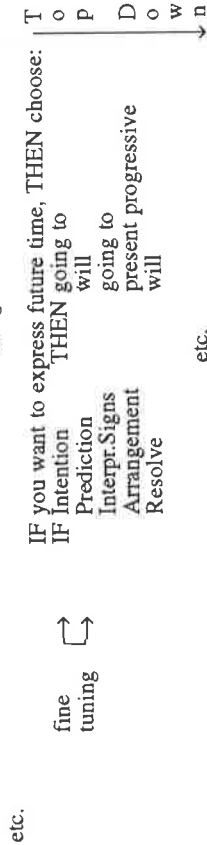
¹² A note of criticism is in order, however, concerning the inconsistency of sometimes equating declarative with explicit knowledge and procedural with implicit knowledge (cf. p.35 two direct quotations).

Diagram 1: The acquisition of English future time expressions in an information-processing framework



Interpreting Signs = *going to*
going to = Interpreting Signs

Arrangement = present progressive
 Present progressive = Arrangement



CONTROLLED >>> AUTOMATIC processing of mental representations

The most serious limitation of such an information-processing framework is that it does not account for the L1 that learners bring to the task of learning a new target language. The isolated facts described above do not in fact enter a linguistic and notional *tabula rasa*. Among the questions tied up with this observation are the

following. How does an L1 notional network that is different from the target language one¹³ affect the acquisition process? Is there a stage at which L1 notions are relexified? Can English forms be activated via German notions as long as the English ones are not always fully accessible? What are interlanguage notions like? Future research should be directed at investigating this area of notional cross-linguistic effects.

5. Concluding remark

I argued that this concrete realization of a notional approach to grammar teaching merits serious attention in the study of instructed second language acquisition. The empirical study of pedagogical grammars and interlanguage performance I am involved in will, I hope, soon yield evidence that can shed additional light on the case for notional grammar learning.

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¹³ Cf. Schwaner, forthcoming on the German notions related to the expression of future time.

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