TAGMEMICS
(An Introduction to Tagmemics Concepts)

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Abstract :

The tagmemics is a unit comprising a function and a class of items fulfilling that function. It is most suitable in describing languages and applied to the description of a very large number of hitherto unrecorded languages. Tagmemics differs from alternative systems of grammatical analysis in that it defines the basic units of language (tagmemes) as composite elements, one part being the "slot," or "function," and the other the "filler," or "class." One such tagmeme, at the syntactic level of analysis, might be the noun-as-subject (in which the noun is a class that "fills" the subject "slot" in a construction). This article also introduce how tagmemics show for a syntactical counterpart to the phonological and morphological terms, phoneme and morpheme-something at the sentence level which could function as a key identifying unit in the same way that these well- established terms functioned

Keywords:

tagmemics, syntagmeme, etic, emic

A. Introduction

The word grammar has first begun with the Greek philosophical speculations and has come to mean "the art of speaking and writing correctly".[1] It presents the fundamental entity of developing one's ideas in expressing his concepts and perceptions toward his environment. The ideas cannot be understood unless they are put in well arrangements of constructions called grammar.

However, in present development of language teaching, the teaching of grammar seems to create a controversial issue among teachers, applied linguists and syllabus designers. Some of them like to teach grammar explicitly, others prefer to teach implicitly, and still some others prefer not to talk about it at all. If grammar is regarded as "a taboo" by some linguists, it is also overtly appreciated and warmly embraced by some others, and it is even reestablished.

My personal perception on teaching grammar in general seems to be primary importance in language

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[1]Moumene Ahmed , *"Case grammar and its implication to developing writing skill"* (www. webrew.dz/mg/pdf/, 1999), p. 1

learning especially those who do not speak the language as a native one. Learners cannot combine words into phrase and sentences to form meaningful means of communication unless they are introduced to the abstract mechanisms that manage the important characteristics of the language. Thus the question that should be raised is not whether the grammar should be taught or not, but what type of grammar to teach and how to teach it.

One of the very important grammars need to be taught is tagmemics. It is an interesting topic of a grammar construction by denoting a new combination of the previous grammar models, such as traditional grammar, structuralism, transformation, and case grammar.[2] The central concept of the tagmemic is the tagmeme, defined by the relation between a syntagtic "slot" or function, such as subject or object, and a class of units, such as noun phrase or pronoun, that can "fill" it,[3] role or the function in a position, and cohesion or the relation to other units and wider context. [4] The tagmemics produces the concept of "Emic" and "Etic". Both of them refer to the ideas

in viewing the tagmemics arrangement from inside and outside the sentence provided.

The uniqueness of the tagmemics is that, it can be applied into every language and it may be used in different fields of study, such as social science and psychology. The tagmemics parts: slot, filler class, role, and cohesion may occur in every language and lead it to the universality in language construction. While the tagmemics use for social and psychological aspect is its "emic" and "etic". The emic and ethic concepts may be applied in social since in term of approach encountered.

This paper tries to describe the tagmemics briefly involving the definition of tagmemics, types of tagmemics construction, syntagmeme, and emic and etic.

B. The Nature of tagmemics
1. Definition of tagmemics

The word tagmemics is originally derived from the word "tagmeme". It comes from the Greek word *tagma* meaning "arrangement".[5] It refers to the function or slot of a grammatical unit and the class of words fills the slot. Matthews [6] defines the tagmemics is "the relation

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[2]Soeparno, 2008. *Aliran Tagmemik*, (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2008), p. 1-3

[3]Matthews, P.H., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 371.

[4]Randal, Allison, *"Tagmemics: an introduction to lisnguistics for Perl Developers or "Wouldn't know a tagmeme if it bit me on the parse"*, 2002, p. 13

[5]Cook, S.J., Walter A. *Introduction to Tagmemic Analysis*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1969), p. 7.

[6]Matthews, P.H., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 372.

between a syntactic 'slot' or function, such as subject or object, and a class of units, such as noun phrase or pronoun, that can fill it. Robins[7] gives a following definition of the tagmemics by stating that "A tagmeme is a place in a structure (syntactic or morphological) together with the formal class of elements occupying that place (often referred to in the literature as a 'slot' with its 'filler').

From the definitions above, it can be understood that the tagmemics is a type of arrangement of sentence function named 'slot' and the kind of word class put in it. As an example is the sentence *he loves Jill.* This sentence has three tagmemes: subject filled by pronoun *he*, predicate filled by transitive verb *loves,* and object filled by (proper) noun *Jill.* This example of a statement is formulated using abbreviations by means of symbols to represent the function or functional place (slot) followed by a colon, followed by in turn by a symbol representing the class of 'filler': +S:pn+P:tv+O:n. For the noun or pronoun in a subject slot and object slot, there is a possibility of writing the tagmemics by using this model: +S:n/pn+P:tv+O:n/pn.[8] This example can be extended into wider level of application. The tagmemic symbols can be seen in appendix.

The notion of tagmemics as a basic unit of grammar, first presented by Kenneth L. Pike in 1954. He described how he had arrived at the notion of the tagmeme by working with artificial languages with a constant lexical inventory but varying grammatical structures, and contrasts his use of the word 'tagmeme'.[9] A tagmeme is basically a composite of form and meaning, a "unit-in-context." Where many other linguists only wanted to study the objective form of language (that is, its "etic" aspect), Pike felt that the interesting thing was how language actually functioned for users in real life—its "emic" aspect.
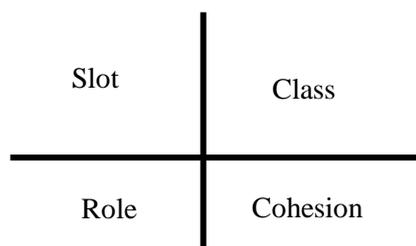
There are two episodes of the tagmemics development: the first phase and the second phase. The first phase of the tagmemics is still incomplete because it just involves two dimensions: slot and filler class.[10] The later is more complete and it consists of four features: slot (where the unit can appear), filler class (what type of unit it is), role (how the unit functions), and cohesion (how the unit relates to other units). [11]

[7]Robins, R.H., *General Linguistics*, (London: Longman, 1980), p. 279.
[8]Ibid., p. 29.

[9]Cook, S.J., Walter A. *Introduction to Tagmemic Analysis.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1969), p. 13.
[10]Soeparno, 2008. *Aliran Tagmemik*, (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2008), p. 5.
[11]Randal, Allison, *"Tagmemics: an introduction to lisnguistics for Perl Developers or "Wouldn't know a tagmeme if it bit me on the parse".* 2002, p. 10.

Randal[12] shows the placement of the four figures of the tagmeme into a picture in the following lines.

Slot	Class
Role	Cohesion

The picture above shows that the slot describes where the unit appears or where the unit goes. The filler class shows what type of unit it is or what kind of unit it is. The role explains how the unit functions or why this unit is here or what's its function. The cohesions demonstrates how the unit relates to other units and to the wider context.

Tagmemic becomes a very interesting object of study because it has specific characteristics, a combination of all theories of language. The traditional grammar analysis on function is placed in the slot, and the structural grammar on its surface structure is put in filler class. While the case grammar is presented in the role position and the rationalist is taken as cohesion. [13] This model of selection for a certain category in the previous theories elicits a new label for the tagmemics, called *elective*.

2. Types of tagmemics constructions

As it is known that tagmemes are function-forms which are distributed in the constructions in which they occur, tagmemes have many types. They are: obligatory or optional to construction, nuclear or peripheral to the structure, distributed in fixed or movable positions.[14]

(1) Obligatory or optional construction

Obligatory tagmeme construction is a tagmeme that occurs in every manifestation of the structure in a given data. It is marked with a plus (+) sign to indicate that it must occur whenever the construction occurs. In other word, the tagmeme must be completed by a word to clarify its meaningful purpose. As an example is the sentence *they kiss flowers.* This sentence is called obligatory construction because it needs an object. The word *kiss* needs an object, *flower.* This sentence can be formulated with +S:pn+P:tv+O:n, that is to say a noun subject is followed by a transitive verb predicate, and this must be followed by a noun object.

Optional tagmeme, on the other hand, is a tagmeme that occurs in some but not all of the manifestations of the construction. It is marked with a plus/minus (±) sign to indicate that it may occur, but need not necessarily occurs, whenever the construction occurs.

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[12]Ibid. p. 11.
[13]Soeparno, 2008. *Aliran Tagmemik*, (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2008), p. 10.

[14]Cook, S.J., Walter A. *Introduction to Tagmemic Analysis.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1969), p. 17.

Such as in the sentence of *John eats (meat)* can be presented in the formula +S:n+P:tv±O:n, that is to say that a noun subject is followed by a transitive verb predicate, and this may or may not be followed by a noun object.
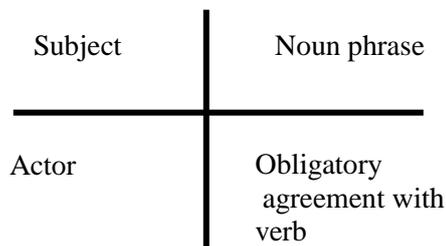
(2) Nuclear or peripheral construction

Nuclear construction is defined a tagmeme that is diagnostic of the construction in which it occurs. It may be either obligatory or optional tagmeme. A peripheral tagmeme, in contrast, is a tagmeme that is not diagnostic for the construction in which it occurs. It is always optional. The peripheral tagmeme is sometimes called satellite or marginal tagmeme.

All obligatory tagmemes are nuclear, but not all nuclear tagmemes are not obligatory; all optional tagmemes are not peripheral, but all pheripheral tagmemes are optional. The application of these two rules comes the tree-way classification of tagmemes as stated by Longacre[15]: (1) nuclear and obligatory; (2) nuclear and optional; and (3) peripheral (and optional).

The application of these classifications can be seen in the figures below:
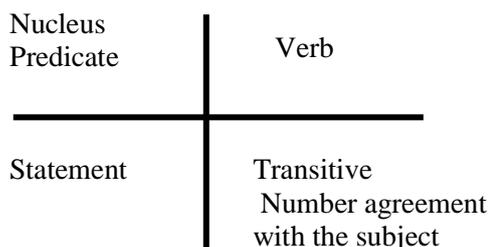
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[15]Longacre, Robert E. "Some fundamental insights of tagmemics". In *Language* 41, (1964), p. 19.

Figure 1

Subject	Noun phrase
Actor	Obligatory agreement with verb

The monkey eats banana

The figure above shows that the word *the monkey* filled the slot as subject and its class is noun phrase. The role for the word the monkey is as an actor and it is in an obligatory position.
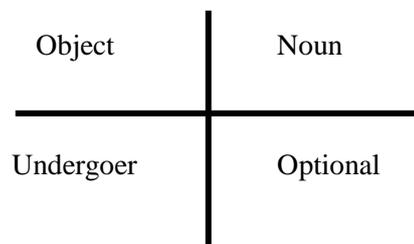
Figure 2

Nucleus Predicate	Verb
Statement	Transitive Number agreement with the subject

The monkey **eats** banana

The function of the word eats is as nucleus predicate and its class is verb. The role of eat is as a statement and it is a transitive.

Figure 3

Object	Noun
Undergoer	Optional

The monkey eats **banana**

The function of the word banana is as subject and it filled by noun. Its role is as undergoer

(object) and it is optional, can be replaced by other words in similar class.

(3) Movable or fixed order of construction

Tagmemes are generally assumed to occur in the position in which they are represented in a fixed linear sequence, string. In the case of languages with movable word order, the statistically prominent order is represented in the string, but the movability of the tagmeme must be indicated. This construction is labeled by a formulation below.

tCl=(+S:n+P;tV+O:n) ± L:loc ±T:tem

A teacher drink coffee in the canteen at 10 am

If the tagmeme has two and only two fixed positions in the string, the alternate positions may be represented by writing the tagmeme in each position, in an either/or notation such as ± A….±A. If the tagmeme is freely movable within the string, one device used is an arrow written above the movable tagmeme. If, in the same situation, the tagmemes are freely movable, but may not interrupt the nucleus, or SPO complex, then the nuclear element may be enclosed in parentheses to restrict the movability tagmemes.

3. Syntagmeme

Syntagmeme is defined as "a potential string of tagmemes, whose manifesting sequence of morphemes fills a grammatical slot.[16] There are three types of syntagmemes: exocentric and endocentric, closed and open ended, recursive and non-recursive layering.

(1) Exocentric and endocentric

An endocentric construction is centered about one or more head tagmemes and marked by subordination or coordination. Such as *men and woman* for coordinative and *clever boy* for sub-ordinative. An exocentric, in contrast, is not centered. In endocentric construction, the whole construction may be replaced by a form similar in form class to the head of construction; in exocentric, where there is no head tagmeme, the whole construction does not fill the same slot as one of it part. Exocentric is marked by preposition followed by a noun or noun group such as *toward London*, *from the country*, *etc,* and conjunction followed by clause group such as *if we had the money, because it is not good, etc.*

(2) Closed and open ended

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[16]Cook, S.J., Walter A. *Introduction to Tagmemic Analysis.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1969), p. 21.

Some constructions are closed, while others seem to have no limit to their expansion possibilities. Coordinate constructions are open-ended at almost all levels except the word level, where morphemes are combined into words. As an example is this phrase:

He went to store and bought books, pencils, pens…

The tagmemics model is expressed by:

Nco=+H1:n±H2:n±H3:n…+C:c+Hn:n

In the example, the object slot, filled by a coordinate noun phrase, indicate a phrase level construction that can be extended without limit. The conjunction generally occurs before the last items recorded. The discontinuity of the construction is indicated by three dots (…) and the final expression indicates how the construction has closure. The modification structures may be open ended; and limitless number of modifier can be added at the will of the speaker. Example:

We want students who are bright, honest, deligent….

AJco=+H1:aj+H2:aj+H3:aj…

(3) Recursive and non-recursive layering

Recursive layering means that the rule re-apply to form a construction that is itself partly or wholly derived by it. Grammatical must have methods for handling recursive constructions Tagememics has this recursiveness with layering formulas, but not all cases of layering are recursive. The recursive layering formula is X→X+Y, where the same symbol occurs on both sides of the arrows or rewrite sign.

The police said the assassin shouted he hoped he had killed him

tCl=+S:N+P:TV+O:tcl/pn

Non recursive layering is an inclusion of phrase within phrase, or clause within clause, and need not be recursive. For example, an adjective phrase might be included within a noun phrase. Thus, in phrase, a *very old man*, the word *very* modify *old* in an adjective phrase. The whole phrase *very old*, is then one of the modifiers of the word *man.*

4. Emic and Etic

One of Pike's other contributions to linguistic theory is his distinction between *emic* and *etic* viewpoints. Pike coined the terms from the endings of the words, phonemic and phonetic. The "emic" view is the perspective of the insider, the native, and is concerned with the contrastive, patterned system within a universe of discourse; the "etic" view of a unit is the perspective of the outsider who looks for universals and generalizations. The "emic" view is

the view we expect from a participant within a system; the "etic" view is the view we expect of the alien observer.

Tagmemes are the essential units of grammar, but parallel to phonology and lexicon. The grammar has essential units and non-essential units. The non-essential unit is called an etic unit. It is the view of the unit from an outsider point of view. The essential unit, on the other hand, is called emic unit. It is a unit of language from the point of view of a native speaker of the language.

To make a clear description is shown by an example of a pair of synonyms, such as 'aid' and 'assist'. These words are objectively different, but the fact claims that they can be used and understood in the same way in a given context which makes them equivalent at the level of grammar. We used the terms "etic" (as in phonetic) and "emic" (as in phonemic) to describe objective and subjective units of meaning, respectively. Thus, in this example, "aid" and "assist" are *etically* different but *emically* the same. [17]

C. Conclusion

Tagmemics is a new breakthrough of learning grammar. It is developed by Keeneth L. Pike. The nature concept of tagmemics is the tagmeme. The tagmemics has four principle features: slot, filler class,

role, and cohesion. Its specific finding and contribution to the linguistic science is *emic* and *etic.*

The tagmemics development meets with two periods, the first period marked by identification of tagmemeics component of slot and filler. The latter development marked by adding the role and cohesion.

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[17]Joe Kissel, *"Tagmemics: The linguistic theory of everything" (www.dictionary*. English, 2005), p. 4.