The Tagseme as a Component of Structural-Semantic Sentence Complexification

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Abstract: This study addresses the concept of structural-semantic sentence complexification. One of the elements of this complexification are tagsemes, which are represented by syntactic constructions that possess implicit predicativeness, convey an additional message and are associated with interrogative semantics. In modern linguistics, there is no single universally accepted approach to dealing with this area of study. The author attempts to examine the tagseme as a factor of structural-semantic sentence complexification by way of contrastive analysis. By itself, the problem of differentiating between simple, complex and complexified sentences remains a matter of debate in modern linguistics, despite the fact that linguists do not rule out the existence of complexified sentences. The article investigates this linguistic phenomenon through the prism of structure and deep semantics undelying it, which is of indubitable importance in the analysis of implicit predication. Tagsemes represent a separate structure within the general question and are set off by punctuation and intonation; yet they continue the semantics of the general question, wedging themselves in not only structurally but content-wise, forming a single syntactical entity and repeating the main part in a condensed form. This phenomenon is observed in both English and Tatar, which will here be compared with the former, but the difference is that it is encountered more rarely in Tatar. The article also addresses its communicative and contextual specifics, which enables a comprehensive investigation of the linguistic phenomenon in question.

Key words: Tagseme · Complexified sentence · Semi-predicative contsruction · Pleni-predicative construction · Structural-semantic complexification

INTRODUCTION

The concept of disjunctive (tag) questions as a factor of the structural-semantic complexification of simple sentences hasn't yet been addressed in modern linguistics until now. However, the subject of compression of structures in complex sentences and transformation of disjunctive questions into complex sentences has been investigated in the works of Y.N. Vlasova [1].

Some linguists maintain that sentences containing disjunctive questions are complex. For instance, L.S. Barkhudarov states that "a disjunctive question is but a declarative sentence followed with an elliptical general-question sentence" [2].

B.S. Khaimovich and B.I. Rogovskaya base their conclusion on a comparison of the category of presentation with the category of information as they consider disjunctive questions to be complex sentences of a special kind, in which the main clause is declarative and the subordinate clause is a structure with reverse predication [3].

There is another opinion on sentences considered to be disjunctive questions worthy of mention. B.A. Ilyish believes that they can be interpreted in two ways: as simple declarative or as compound sentences consisting of two sentences – declarative and interrogative [4].

The subject of the "disjunctive question" has been addressed in the works of R. Noguchi who claims that the disjunctive question is an independent declarative or hortatory sentence and is by no means a part of a sentence [5].

This linguistic phenomenon has been investigated by way of contrastive analysis in Arabic and English, where disjunctive questions are addressed in the context of the structure of a general interrogative sentence, as a part that has a predicative signification [6].

According to S.H. Lau, the disjunctive question, if viewed through the example of the Chinese language, is a functional, utility construction that caters to the main

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interrogative sentence and complements it structurally and semantically [7]. While B. Lee believes that disjunctive questions carry no referential or denotative signification and are mainly used to convey emotive and/or epistemic nuances within a particular discourse context. [8].

In investigating this linguistic phenomenon , we suggest adopting the term *tagseme*, which is a syntactic conjunctive dependent unit that requires affirmation or negation of the main declarative sentence and structurally and semantically reflects, in a folded implicit form, the pleni-predicative part of the sentence. We are inclined to consider the term "disjunctive question" as inappropriate within the context of the concept being investigated, as the term "disjunctive question" is related, primarily, to the term "alternative question" and is considered in syntax as an interrogative sentence, whereas the tagseme pragmatically expresses the semantics of covert approval or agreement. The sender looks or waits for a positive verbal reaction in the receiver's reply, expressing his/her intention in the semantics of a hidden implicit question, which iconically repeats the main sentence. The disjunctive question structurally and semantically splits the sentence in two independent parts, whereas in our case they are pleached into the general semantics of the sentence, which complements and expands the main idea.

We believe that syntactic units called *tagsemes* should be considered as a factor of the structural-semantic complexification of sentences with a compressed structure, which contains a predication in a folded form. Such constructions can be made up of various types of deep structures, which are traced to base structures. Consequently, the tagseme is a product of asyndetical connection of two or more semi-predicative constructions. When the surface structure of the tagseme consists of two predicative units, where the first unit comes as a full predicative line and the second unit is folded into a semi-predicative line, it's, most of the time, the second one, which comes as a semi-predication, that undergoes compression. Furthermore, there are several types of semi-predicative constructions. Let's take a look at them.

The construction that expresses a folded predication is a compressed structure underlain with deep structures traced to the base matrix structure. For example: "*On your knees and trousers down. Solves all, does it? (J. Fowles). That's the line now, is it? (J. Fowles). "Oh, that's it is it?" Hugh replied awkwardly (K.S. Prichard). "She's not so bad, is she?" (W.S. Maugham). "...I'm practically grown up, aren't I?" (W.S. Maugham)."*

They are lovely, aren't they?" I said over my beer (G. Greene).

In Tatar: *Shamil synap karap tordy: beleme, yukmy?(Ya. Zankiev)*

Bu adymy anyn olgayuy zhitdiltenue ideme, elle yapa-yalgyz kalyp tipken kaynar yoregenen uyanuy, butennerden de zhylylyk ezleve ideme? (Ya. Zankiev)

In each of these cases, in the English samples, the compression of the secondary predication, which is expressed by a tagseme, is governed by the structure of the pleni-predicative part, with which it is conjoined within the complexified sentence. The expression plane of the semi-predicative constructions makes for the completeness of the content plane in close liaison with the content plane of the full predicative part, where the semi-predicative part conveys an additional message, i.e. forms a structural-semantic unity with the former.

Furthermore, we may come across cases of a different sort, although much more rarely, when both the pleni-predicative and semi-predicative parts can be compensated. Thus, our sentence is a product of the joining of two predicative lines, which are, respectively, represented by the predicative part and the folded one, both underlain with deep structures traced to base matrix structures.

We'll take a look at some samples from Tatar:

Mine de kystadylar, barmadyn, baramy son? (Ya. Zankiev)
Shamil belen ber-ber hel buldymy elle?
Ul keshe bulachak. Ul inde tozele bashlady. Min garrantiya birrerem. Bez, utrrau halyky, garrantiya birrerbez. Birrerbez? (T. Minnullin)
Bu uryn bush tugelme? (M. Amir)

In the Tatar language, tagsemes can come as adverbs, conjunctions, particles, repetition and parentehtical constructions, which repeat the structure of the sentence in a folded form, getting conjoined into a single structural-semantic entity.

Thus, simple sentences in Tatar are complexified through tagsemes or tagseme constructions, which convey additional predicativeness in a folded form.

There have been documented a great many instances of semi-predicative constructions, where both parts, pleni-predicative and semi-predicative, are traced to the same base structure. Here are some examples to illustate this point.

> *"Powerful headlights, aren't they?" (A.J. Cronin).*
> *"...Heavy, isn't it?" (A.J. Cronin).*
> *"Funny chap, wasn't he?" (W.S. Maughm).*

L.S. Bakhudarov considers such structures as an example of syntagmatically restored elliptical sentences. He notes the originality of these constructions, which, in his opinion, lies in that "…they contain two elliptical sentences, which mutually make up for each other" [9].

However, research has shown that by far not in all cases the completeness of the content of tagseme constructions depends on the micro-context, i.e. the scope of the sentence as such. In many cases, a broader context is needed to make out the content of the construction. This can be illustrated through the following examples:

> *"You never do, do you?"*
> *"I've tried not to be" (G. Greene).*
> *"...I can do it – things I'm ashamed of afterwards. You can too, can't you?" (C.P. Snow).*

Let's take a look at some samples from the Tatar language:

- *Anda tormede Tashtimer Yortlybayev utyra….*
- *Belem. Kagazleren kurdem.*
- *Kituche egetler anyn yanyna saubullashyrga kerseler nichegrek bulyr iken?*
- *Keshe uteruchene kyzganyp kersennerme?*
- *Anysy dores, lekin meselenen ikenche yagy da bar bit ele…*
- *Yarar, kararbyz. Sez de tagyn ber kat uyilyi torygyz: kirekme busy elle yukmy?*
  (Ya. Zankiev)

In the given dialogue, which occurs in Yakub Zankiyev's novel "The Dawns of the Irtysh", tagsemes structurally and semantically weave themselves into the fabric of the discourse, forming a dialogical unity, wherein the pleni-predicative structures of the preceding statement are expressed in a condensed form.

We should also point out those situations where both compressed structures are traced to the base structure. The subject (or the subject group) is non-existent in the first transform, whereas in the second transform it's expressed by a pronoun (which is often the case with tagsemes). Such cases could be divided into two groups:

- the verb-predicate in the pleni-predicative part is used in the imperative mood, whereas in the compressed part there is an auxiliary verb, which is a function word in the indicative mood.
- the verb-predicate in both the predicative part and the second, compressed, part is given in the indicative mood.

The first group of cases is standard in modern English. For example: *Hand me my shoes, will you?*

The structure of sentences containing tagsemes can be complexified, for which reason surface structures in this type of sentences should be considered as a product of the joining of not two but three or more semi-predicative structures into a single syntactic unit. Here we can point up the following cases.

- The sentence is a product of joining three or more semi-predicative constructions by way of transformation, conjunction and the use of coordinating conjunctions - and, but, or, etc. As a result, we get a sentence wherein either the second or the third of the joined sentences is compressed. For example: *"...And you don't want to lose a good home, do you – and I don't blame you…" (J. Cary).*
- The sentence is formed as a result of connection of three or more semi-predicative lines by way of such procedures as inclusion, the use of subordinating conjunctions, substitution, etc. In the given case, the sentence which is a disjunctive question is a three-member structure which consists of semi-predicative structures and is joined up asyndetically. Furthermore, the compressed part is normally joined with the predicative line in the complexified sentence. This accounts for the formation of the compressive structure, wherein tagsemes are represented by a function word – an auxiliary verb, which normally is a substitute for the lexical verb in the first part and whose person, number and tense features correspond to those of the verb in the pleni-predicative part. For example:

- *"You see, don't you?" she cried. (S. Maugham).*
- *"...I haven't had everything I should like, have I?" (C.P. Snow).*
- *"...You don't know where she's gone, do you?" (J. Cary).*

Sometimes in such cases, the compressed structure occupies an interpositive position in the complexified sentence, coming right after the full predicative part. Apparently, this is what points up the fact that it's conjoined with the pleni-predicative part. For example:

- *"You'll stay with me, won't you, even if I'm not sick?" (G. Greene).*

It should be noted that there are times when a pronoun different from the one in the transform it's conjoined with is used in the position of a pleni-predicative unit in the compressed tagseme part.

- *"...I don't know what it's all about, do you?" (G. Greene).*
- *"I think building's lovely, – don't you?" she said.*

As has already been stated above, it's quite customary to asyndetically join the pleni-predicative part to structures represented by semi-predicative constructions in the tagseme's three-member structure. Transforms are really rarely joined using conjunctions, which is a general trend in the modern English language and is treated by some linguists as omission of conjunctions and conjunctive words. Например: *"...You do think that I'm a fool, don't you...?" (G. Greene).*

- *"It is not exactly what you're used to, is it?"*

There are times when in the three-member formation of a similar kind they use a structure which is a result of so-called "complex condensation".

> *"You don't mind me asking, do you?" (G. Greene). "You don't mind my taking you for a tart, did you, dear?" (E. Waugh).*

In point of fact, here we have two compressive structures whose specifics are different.

Thus, we deem that tagsemes , which are crucial not so much in terms of the communicative function as the emotional one, constitute a special problem in communicative syntax. Tagsemes deserve to have varied characteristics when it comes to thematic-rhematic organization considerations. What is common about tagsemes is their wide use and, as was fairly pointed out by C. Barber, their normativeness: "Therefore, it is rightful to interpret them as "elliptical/fragmentary" sentences and presume that they are to be considered solely in correlation with the 'full' form" [10].

A reaction to a question is normally a rhematic element as it contains new data and is maximally informative.

For example: *'You didn't believe it, did you?' (R. Ludlum)*

Let's examine the communicative structure of what at first glance seems to be a semantically and structurally simple question. So, at the surface level we mark one predicative line - *You didn't believe it*, while the second part is a question and doesn't repeat the full structure but is represented by a folded predicative unit, the isolated structure *did you* (is it true?).

Apparently, it would be expedient to just consider these structures as built by the thematic-rhematic principle and not treat them as one- or two-part structures, for that's a different kind of approach – formal-structural. Responses in the first part carry the theme-condition, while in the second part there is the rheme, which contains the main information requested by the inquirer.

We can find instances of this type of formation in the Tatar language: *Elmender. Vakyt zhitte, disenmeni? Ezhel. Eye, shulay. (T. Minnullin)*

In the above excerpt from a play by the famous Tatar playwright Tufan Minnullin, *Almandar of the Village of Almandar*, an old man called Almandar is engaged in a dialogue with his Death, when he asks a question expressed by the pleni-predicative structure *Vakyt zhitte*. The second part of the sentence is expressed by the tagseme *disenmeni?*, which doesn't repeat the structure of the preceding part but comes as a folded construction in the form of the semantics of affirming or agreeing with the semantics of the main statement *Vakyt zhitte*. A phenomenon of this kind can be interpreted in terms of the theme and rheme being present in the situation.

Thus, we can claim that although tagsemes are separate structures within general questions and are set off punctuationally and intonationally, they continue the semantics of the general question, wedging themselves in not only structurally but content-wise as well. In other words, they constitute a single entity, repeating the main part in a condensed form. This phenomenon is

characteristic of the English language, whereas in Tatar it occurs more rarely. In English, tagseme structures tend to engage verb forms, while in Tatar such questions can come in the form of adverbs, parenthetical words, or particles.

Thus, tagsemes are elements of structural-semantic complexification. In English, they come in the form of compressive structures repeating the question, whereas in Tatar such structures don't exist and are instead substituted with parenthetical words, adverbs, conjunctions and particles. However, tagsemes in both languages impart additional predicativeness to the sentence, which makes it complexified.

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