NEO-TAGMEMICS. By Darlene Bee, edited by Alan Healey and Doreen Marks. Ukarumpa, Papua: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1973.

Reviewed by Lawrence Reid, University of Hawaii

When those of us who knew her heard in early 1972 that Darlene Bee had died in an airplane crash in New Guinea our initial shock and grief was mixed with a sense of frustration that there would be no further input from one of the more intellectually gifted and enquiring minds in the Summer Institute of Linguistics. We did not realize at that time that Bee had had taped and transcribed, all of her lectures on grammatical theory and method at the intensive course of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Auckland, New Zealand.

These lectures and notes, which she had planned on publishing as a course textbook, were with her when she died and were subsequently recovered from the crash site. They have been carefully edited and presented in this work.

Bee called the theory she was developing *neo-tagmemics* 'in order to highlight its roots in the basic underlying principles of tagmemics, and at the same time to indicate its independence from the superstructure built upon these principles by Pike and Longacre' (vi).

A careful reading of this book reveals that the theory that Bee was proposing is in fact not too much different from Pike's original proposals in his *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behavior* (1967). It does however differ in significant ways from the later developments of tagmemics as proposed by Pike, Longacre, Crawford, and others.

The theory is tagmemics in the early Pikean tradition in that it recognizes the tagmeme as the primitive in syntax, what Bee calls the threshold unit in syntax. Tagmemes are the units of function plus form which together make up syntactic constructions (Pike's *hypertagmemes*, Longacre's *syntagmemes;* Bee does not use these terms) which are clauses, or simple sentences. The function of a tagmeme is no longer just the formally marked surface structure case, but in some senses includes also various underlying case relationships. Bee says, 'We are using the term TAGMEME to cover the kinds of relationships that are traditionally referred to as cases, but I am including a much finer distinction than is usually covered by that term' (73).

Thus, for example, she distinguishes between a GOAL tagmeme and a DIRECT OBJECT tagmeme in the sentences 'I painted a house' and 'I painted a picture', also in 'I planted the garden' and 'I planted the corn'.

Bee rejects the use of the term tagmeme as it is used in much of the later tagmemic literature as any function-form correlate regardless of the hierarchy or the level in the hierarchy in which it occurs. There is therefore no talk of 'phonological tagmeme' or 'phrase-level tagmemes'.

Bee's theory is also tagmemics in that it is oriented toward a tri-modal view of language. As originally proposed by Pike, the three modes of language are three simultaneously co-occurring hierarchies of structures. Since he viewed language as a unit of behavior, it was describable like any other significant unit in terms of its features, its

manifestations, and its distribution. Whereas Pike and other tagmemicists have related the three hierarchies to these three aspects of a unit (the phonological hierarchy is the manifestation mode of the unit language, the lexical hierarchy is its feature mode, and the grammatical hierarchy is its distribution mode), Bee considers phonology as a whole the manifestation mode of language, semantics as the feature mode, and syntax as the distribution mode. She also considers each of these branches to be themselves units with their own tri-modal structure. Thus for phonology, phonetics is its manifestation mode, phonological units are its feature mode, and the phonological hierarchy is its distribution mode.

In Bee's model, the three hierarchies consist of a series of levels, primary, secondary, tertiary, etc. in ascending order. The primary level consists of those units which she feels native speakers are to some degree aware of: syllables in the phonological hierarchy, words in the lexical hierarchy, and clauses in the grammatical hierarchy. These units in turn are composed of units from what Bee calls the threshold level of each hierarchy, units which the unsophisticated native speaker controls but is generally unaware of. These are the phoneme, the morpheme, and the tagmeme. At a lower level still are phonetic, semantic, and syntactic components or features.

Bee's theory is also tagmemics in its emphasis upon the wave-like characteristics of structures, whether they be phonological, lexical, or syntactic. Not only syllables have onsets, peaks and codas, so do words and clauses.

One final characteristic of the theory which is basically tagmemics is its recognition of the etic versus emic status of units, and the heavy emphasis upon methodology to determine what the emic units are within each of the hierarchies.

In what ways then is Bee's model different from other tagmemic viewpoints? One way is the different view of the lexical hierarchy than is normally taken. To Bee, the units in this hierarchy are not lexical units per se, i.e. lexemes, but words and combinations of words, that is phrases and, at the tertiary level, idioms.

Another key difference is the recognition of various types of transformational rules which relate structures within and between the hierarchies. A third difference is methodological. It treats most problems of interpretation as problems of disambiguation. Two phones are no longer 'suspect' in that they may belong to either one or two phonemes, they are 'ambiguous', in somewhat the same sense that two similar structures may be ambiguous in that they may represent one clause type or two. Bee attempts also to carry over traditional phonemic interpretation principles and procedures to analysis in the other two hierarchies. Specifically she takes the four premises in Pike's *Phonemics* (1947) and considers them applicable to any emic unit, phonological or otherwise. These four premises she restates as: (1) units tend to be modified by their environments; (2) units tend to have a range of free or unsystematic variation; (3) units tend towards a symmetrical relationship within a system; (4) unambiguous sequences of units provide a reference point for the resolution or interpretation of ambiguous segments and/or sequences of segments.

Tagmemics was born from the experiences Pike had in attempting to describe Mixtec in Mexico. Longacre's field work on Trique stimulated the theoretical changes apparent in his work. Bee's work on Usurufa led her to the modifications that she proposed. Tagmemics has been and will continue to be a useful tool for linguists in field work situations. It may never have the explanatory power of modern generative

theories, but then linguists trained only in the latter theories frequently do not have the sharpened analytical skills needed for tackling the analysis of exotic languages that a grounding in tagmemic principles and practice provides. We can only regret that Bee did not live long enough to complete the exposition of her ideas, which have been so well presented in this little volume by the editors, Alan Healey and Doreen Marks. Linguists, field linguists at any rate, would no doubt have been richer for it had she had time to develop her materials further.