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THAT COMPLEMENT CLAUSES IN ENGLISH

English complementation has received a great deal of attention from linguists of various theoretical persuasions. In the huge body of literature engendered on this subject both its semantic and syntactic aspects have been investigated, with the focus either on the matrix verb as a driving force behind complement distribution (both syntactically and semantically), or on the conceptual import of the complement itself. Needles to say, the present paper cannot do justice to the number of insightful studies proposed in this area. Instead, sellected analyses will be here presented, which assume that the choice of a complement type is not syntactically driven by the matrix verb but, rather, that it is a semantic phenomenon and, moreover, that all contrasts between the complement types, i.e. between *that*, to V and Ving clauses, as in *"Try to imagine that you are sitting on a cloud.", "He imagined to be blind.",* and *"I can't imagine asking him for money.",* respectively, can be accounted for in terms of meaning, or the complement's conceptual import. In particular, the present paper zooms in on *that* complement in English. Its aim is threefold. First, the semantic contribution of *that* complement, in the light of Vendler's 1967, the Kiparskys' 1970, Bolinger's 1968, 1972, 1977, 1984, Wierzbicka's 1988, and Frajzyngier and Jasperson's 1991 explications, will be briefly discussed (Section 1). Further, main clause *that p* vs. main clause p contrast will be brought to the fore and discussed, particularly in the light of Bolinger's 1972 claims (Section 2). Finally, the paper aims to examine how the following characterisations of *that* clauses are reflected in literary texts. In particular, the distribution of *that* complements in *'Harry Potter and the Goblet Fire'* by J.K. Rowling will be studied and related to two modes of discourse: characters' utterances and narration (both the narrative and description). In addition, the Polish translation by Andrzej Polkowski will be considered and the invalidity of some characterisations of English *that* clauses for Polish *że* clauses signalled (Section 3).

1. The meaning of that complement in English- selected analyses

Complementation has been found particularly intriguing to those lingu-
ists who find philosophically distinct categories, such as fact, action and
event, useful for the analysis of natural language. Vendler 1967, for exam-
ple, distinguishes events from propositions (or facts) on both philosophical
and linguistic levels. In his descriptions, *that* complement structure introdu-
ces a proposition or a fact, while events are consistently expressed with
either gerundive or infinitive structures. The Kiparskys 1970 make a paral-
lel distinction, between factive and nonfactive classes of predicates. Factive
verbs, whose complements may be said to name propositions, characteristi-
cally take *that* complements.

Working within a different framework, Bolinger (1984:47) characterises
that complement to presuppose information 'The information may be affir-
med, doubted, denied, or emotionally reacted to, but there is always a repre-
sentation of knowledge'.

Wierzbicka's investigation of *that* type, in turn, starts with her observa-
tion that the complement is most felicitously used with *know* and *say* predi-
cates or their semantic derivatives. Consider:

   I knew / realised / saw / felt / said / implied / mentioned that....

Of the two, the *know* type appears to be more basic – *say* clearly implies
'knowledge' while the reverse is not true:
(1)   (a)   *She says that Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan.*
      (b)   *She knew that Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan but she re-
mained silent.*

Wierzbicka proceeds to generalise that *that* frame occurs after predica-
tes where a component 'know' can be plausibly reconstructed, as in the
sentence below:
(2)   (a)   *He said that Mary was sick.* →
      (b)   *He said this : one can know this : Mary is sick.*

Wierzbicka further enlarges on the nature of that knowledge : in contrast
to first-person oriented *to* complements and third-person oriented *for-to* com-
plements, the speaker refers to the message conveyed by *that* complement
clause as factual, knowable, and objective, i.e. person-neutral, or public.

Some further characteristics of *that* complement emerge when Wierz-
bicka adopts Vendler's 1967 and the Kiparskys' 1970 methodology for classi-
fying clauses by the logical semantic categories, such as action, state, fact,
event, implied in the meanings of the complements.Consider:
(3)   (a)   *John believed [the proposition] that Jane died.*
      (b)   *Mary regretted [the fact] that Jane died.*
      (c)   *[the possibility] that they would come was unlikely.*
      (d)   **Mary enjoyed [the action] that she was eating the steak.*
      (e)   **John relished [the state] that he was sick.*
      (f)   **[The process] that the Germans collapsed was gradual.*

In this light, *that* complements are clearly atemporal: propositions, facts and possibilities do not refer to time, while actions, states and processes, whose semantics are necessarily temporal, never combine with *that* complement clauses.

Finally, Frajzyngier and Jasperson's 1991 characterization of finite complementation in English stems from their fundamental assumption that, cross-linguistically, complementizers have specific communicative function: they signal the *de dicto* and *de re* domains encoded in language. Specifically, *that* clauses are believed to belong to the *de dicto* domain, while gerunds and infinitival complements are stated by Frajzyngier and Jasperson to be necessarily in the *de re* domain, where *de re* can be defined as such semantic structure in any language in which reference is made to the elements of the real world. Symmetrically, 'the term *de dicto* refers to a semantic domain in which reference is made to the elements of speech rather than to the elements of reality.' (1991: 135).In their analysis of the two clauses below:

(4)   (a)   *I saw that he was sleeping.*

       (b)   *I saw him sleeping.*

the first is claimed to indicate indirect evidence, from the *de dicto* domain and not from the real world, while the second, marking the *de re* domain, is held to convey the message from the real world, hence the following inference about the essence of the contrast 'information obtained through speech is not as reliable as information obtained through direct observation.' Frajzyngier (1991: 226-227).

Summing up the foregoing characterisations, the message conveyed by *that* complement clause has been referred to as factual (introducing a fact/ proposition, never an action, state or a process), hence atemporal, and it has been analysed to presuppose knowledge/information - person-neutral in nature, hence public , and in this sense objective. Finally, the information has been claimed not to be necessarily reliable, being obtained through speech and not through direct observation of the state of affairs in the so called 'real world'.

2. *That* complementizer omission/retension

Whether sentences (5a) and (b) below are completely synonymous and, if not, how exactly they differ, has been a much debated issue.

(5)   (a)   *Harry knew the interview was over.*

       (b)   *Harry knew that the interview was over.*

For contrasting views, compare Rosenbaum 1967 and Bolinger 1972 below.

Early transformational stand defies any difference between clauses (5a) and (b). Rosenbaum (1967) makes three points that are remarkable:

First, complementisers are derived in the underlying structure either through the operation of context-free rewriting rules or they are introduced transformationally by means of Complemetizer Placement/Deletion Transformation.

Second, complementizers bear no relation to the semantic output of the sentence: '... The complementizers seem, in general, not to affect the semantic interpretation of the complement scene.' (Rosenbaum 1967:28)

The third point, particularly noteworthy in this section, concerns that complementizer, which surfaces in some contexts but not in others. Rosenbaum states that there is a structure sensitive that deletion transformation which operates, usually optionally, only where the complementizer immediately follows either the verb (with an NP intervening) or the predicate adjective in the main sentence. (1967 : 39) (cf. (6))

(6)   (a)   *I think that John is coming. I think John is coming.*

        (b)   *It is strange that John came late. It is strange John came late.*
Implied, there is the assumption that the absence of the deleted element does not affect the semantic interpretation of the output.

Dwight Bolinger's 1972, 1977, 1984 suggestive and insightful investigations into semantic contrasts effected by different syntactic types of complements are premised upon the view that synonymy per se does not exist: 'a difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning' (1968 : 127), or, if viewed from a diachronic perspective, 'every contrast a language permits to survive is relevant, sometime or other' (1972 : 71). Hence, a sentence with and without **that** should exhibit a semantic distinction. Consequently, his observations of **that** omission gradient in both standard and non-standard, formal and informal English lead him to believe in the following driving forces behind the omission/retention of **that** complementizer, all of them semantic/functional in nature:

(I)   clearing up ambiguity

(7)   (a)   *The man did it was a friend of mine. (dialectal).*

        (b)   **The man left the car for me was a friend of mine.*

(II)   high/low frequency of the matrix verb with **that** clauses

High frequency verbs require no **that**, even if they are fairly complex, see below:

(8)   (a)   *He said he liked it.*

        (b)   *He claimed it was no good.*

        (c)   *He gave us to understand it was in perfect condition.*

        (d)   **They represented it was in perfect condition.*

        (e)   **They chortled it was only a joke.*

This is closely connected with the degree of formality in verbs: it is informal expressions that tend to be high in frequency. Hence, Bolinger concludes: 'It is probably safe to say that the omission of **that** characterizes relaxed speech to some extent regardless of the verb (...). By and large ... a **that** is proportionally more likely with a proportionally more formal verbs.' (1972: 22)

(III)   the degree of familiarity of the information introduced by the complement clause **That** introduces what is unexpected. Consider:

(9)   (a)   *He asserted it was true.*

        (b)   **He asserted he saw them enter a hotel.*

        (c)   *He asserted that he saw them enter a hotel.*

(IV)   the function an expression has in its pragmatic context.

Function is probably one factor behind familiarity and frequency of expression in certain contexts. Conversation opening phrases, for example, automatically allow the omission of that, not by virtue of the frequency of the verbs or the familiarity of the message but by virtue of their function as conversation openers alone, Bolinger maintains. Consider:

(10)   (a)   *It seems everyone's gone home.*
     (b)   *I'm afraid we've picked the wrong bus.*

Likewise, clearing up ambiguity can be taken to perform the pointing function, while formality is translated by Bolinger into speech level function.

(V)   semantics of the verb

That retention or omission yields different interpretations of the two examples below:

(11)   (a)   *I guarantee he will.*
     (b)   *I guarantee that he will.*

where (11a) makes a prediction, while the speaker in (11b) makes himself responsible for the fulfilment.

Importantly, Bolinger makes an observation that clauses in which *that* is retained imply 'extra objectivity ' or 'greater remoteness'. *That* appears to act as a buffer, which has the effect of setting off *that* clause at a greater distance. Bolinger hypothesises that it reflects the demonstrative character of that – a remnant of its historical source. His elaborate explanation of the anaphoric relationships of *that* complementizer goes as follows:

'I suggest a first encounter between two speakers and a first communicative exchange between them, not preceded by any message in any form, verbal or gestural. Suppose you observe a stranger struggling to mount a tire. Feeling charitable you go over to him and say I thought you might need some help. Under the circumstances, I thought that would be inappropriate. But if the other person looks at you as if wondering why you came over, you might explain by saying I thought that you might need some help. That refers to the question that has been posed.' (1972 :58).

Finally, a historical source of *that* complementiser, referred to in the paragraph above, should be briefly discussed.As Jespersen puts it: 'It is historically wrong to say that the conjunction *that* is omitted in sentences like I think he is dead. Both constructions, with and without *that*, evolved from a parataxis of independent clauses, but in one of them the demonstrative that was added.' (Jespersen (1928 : 9), quoted in Bolinger (1972 : 9)).Consider Old English structures, such as:

(12)   þa on morgenne gehierdun þæt$_1$, þæs cyninges þegnas þe him beæftan wærun þæt$_2$ se cyning ofslægen wæs þa ridon hie þider.
    'When in the morning the king's thanes who had
    been left behind heard that he had been killed,
    then they rode up there.'
                  (Chron A (Plummer 755.23)
                  quoted in Hopper and Traugott (1993 : 186)

in which pronominal character of **that** is recorded, as in þæt₁, which is a pronoun anticipating the complement clause following þæt₂.þæt₂ functions here as the complementizer.

It can be generalised, then, that that complementiser started out as the object pronoun of the matrix verb, as in: gehierdun ʈċt , and was copied into the complement clause, thus becoming reanalysed in the process of grammaticalization from a pronoun to a complementizer 'that had a whole clause within its scope', Hopper and Traugott (1993 : 187). Interestingly, Hopper and Traugott (1993 : 187) find þæt ... þæt markings of the interdependency of the two clauses 'reminiscent of oral language and of strategies clarifying interdependencies in the flow of speech'.

In summary, then, adopting Bolinger's 1972 rather than Rosenbaum's 1967 stand on the meaning and function of **that** complementizer in English, it will be concluded that **that** retention/omission yields tangible semantic contrasts: **that** acts as a buffer, adding extra objectivity and greater remoteness to the clause. Also, it performs a semantic function in clearing up ambiguity, accompanies formal/infrequent expressions, introduces new information, serves certain pragmatic functions (e.g. of a conversation opener), or can even affect the interpretation of the matrix verb, cf. guarantee in (11a) and (b).Some of the characteristics of **that** is derived by Bolinger from its diachronic development – **that** complementizer developed out of distal deictic demonstrative pronoun **that** in the process of grammaticalization.

3. That complement clauses in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"

The analysis of a hundred successive complex that clauses out of random selection of chapters (Chapter 1,2,29,30,31), with the complementiser retained or, omitted, seems to corroborate Bolinger's analysis in many respects.

First, the role of that in clearing up ambiguity has clearly been observed. Always retained, that signals the subordinate clause when the distance between the matrix verb and the clause is considerable due to the intervening chunks and, hence, the threat of ambiguity is increased, see (13) below:

(13) (a)   *But over in the neighbouring town of Great Hangleton, in the dark and dingy police station, Frank was stubbornly repeating, again and again, that he was innocent.*

   (b)   *I want you to swear, by return owl, that you are not going to go walking....*

   (c)   *[...] he realised with a thrill of terror that it was a gigantic snake.*

   (d)   *It had been enough of a shock for Harry to discover, on his 11ᵗʰ birthday, that he was a wizard.*

Then, the degree of familiarity of the information introduced by the complement clause proves to be a pertinent factor. Consider (14) below:

(14) (a)   *...but you say it was just past the Beauxbatons carriage?*
      (b)   *You say you have names for us, Karakoff.*
      (c)   *But I've told you, I had no idea.*
      (d)   *Told you, I was joking.*
      (e)   *'I've told you' Harry repeated dully'He said he is getting stron-ger.',*

all of which are, in fact, repetitions, in the context of the book, of the previously introduced ideas.

Conversely, that is retained when Harry Potter asks Dumbledor a question and, unexpectedly, gets no answer (' that introduces what is unexpected.'), see (15) :

(15)   *Harry knew that the interview was over.*

Furthermore, the effect of extra objectivity in sentences (16a) and (16b) below, when Harry Potter observes court proceedings and makes inferences from the behaviour and body language of the accused, is achieved by retaining the complementizer.

(16) (a)   *Harry could tell that this news had come as a real blow to him.*
      (b)   *Harry could see that he was starting to worry.*

Finally, verb frequency gradient, in Bolingers analysis parallel to formal/informal register of matrix verbs, seems to play a considerable role in the distribution of *that*. That is easily omitted after *think* (18 cases), *know* (11), say (8), claim (4), *believe* (2), *bet* (1), *feel* (1), *make sure* (1). However, *that* is retained after some verbs that are not substantially less frequent: *find* (1), *remember* (1), *pretend* (1), *find out* (1), *mean* (1), *prefer* (1), *see* (2), *deny* (1), *wish* (1), *hope* (2), *assume* (1), *conclude* (1), *or even tell* (2) and *know* (4).

Naturally, a few of such cases of *that* retention after frequently occuring verbs can be explained, again, with the need to clear up ambiguity, which seems to override any other principles.See the examples below:

(17) (a)   *They said in the village that he kept it for 'tax reasons'.*
      (b)   *They knew perfectly well that as an underage wizard, Harry wasn't allowed to use magic outside Hogwards.*
      (c)   *You must understand, said Karakoff hurriedly, that He Who Must Not Be Named operated...*
      (d)   *I sometimes find, and I'm sure you know the feeling, that I simply have too many thoughts.*

However, the analysis seems to point in yet another direction. In particular, it will be claimed in the present paper that *that* omission/retention gradient can be related to the mode of discourse in the literary text, with the divide occuring between characters' utterances and narration.Out of one hundred clauses noted, 36 can be classified to belong to the narrative or description, while 64 function as characters' utterances. In the former set, 26 clauses contain the complementizer (72%), while in 10 *that* is omitted (28%). Out of the latter set, only 15 clauses found in the dialogues retain *that*

(23%), while 49 leave it out (77%). Moreover, it will be interesting to note that a few clauses which make up characters' utterances and in which *that* has been retained constitute a very specific communicative situation, namely, court proceedings, formal by their very nature - arguably, reflected by a literary text. Consider the following:

(18) (a) *You have given us to understand that you have important infor-*
           mation for us.

      (b) *I know that the Ministry is trying to....*

Equally interesting, the second group of clauses, exceptional in the sense that they retain *that* even though they are parts of characters' utterances, all construe Voldemort's speeches. Voldemort, personal category presented as the king of evil, assumes the air of superiority and remoteness and part of the effect seems to be achieved by means of retaining *that* in the complement clauses (in 5 out of 6 utterances), as in the following:

(19) (a) *You are regretting that you ever returned to me.*

      (b) *I only wish that I could do it myself.*

      (c) *I do not deny that her information was invaluable.*

In contrast, Harry's, Ron's and Hermiona's (personal categories of children) utterances invariably do not contain that 'buffer' (26 out of 26 cases), for example:

(20) (a) *I know I shouldn't've.*

      (b) *I bet he'd do anything to help you.*

      (c) *Dumbledore reckons You-know-Who's getting stronger again as*
           well., and, consequently, do not give impression of formality and
           remoteness.

Finally, let us note, a significant absence of the aforementioned distinctions in the Polish translation of 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire'.The majority of the clauses under examination have been conveyed with *że* structures. Only 16% avoid *że* in the translation, and it appears that the omission has not been either semantically driven or, even, a purposeful strategy, as the translations without *że* are accompanied by considerable departures from the original, often with bits of information lost on the Polish reader. Consider the following, in which the matrix clause is consistently disregarded in the Polish version:

(21) (a) *I believe Neville visits them.*

      (b) *Nevil ich odwiedza.*

(22) (a) *He knew the Dementors could not touch him inside a memory.*

(22) (a) *He knew the Dementors could not touch him inside a memory.*

      (b) *Tym razem Dementorzy nie mogli do dosięgnąć bo znajdował się*
           w czyjejś pamięci.

(23) (a) *I'm sure you'll agree.*

      (b) *Chyba się ze mną zgodzisz.*

(24) (a) *I think we ought to start on some of these hexes this evening.*

      (b) *Wieczorem powinniśmy zabrać się do urokow.*

It follows, then, that further implications are justifiable: Polish does not make use of the subtle but tangible distinctions available in English through the mechanism of *that* retention/omission.

Concluding the foregoing exposition of *that* complement clauses in English, it will be stated, after some linguists who pursue a semantic characterisation of each complement type, regardless of the semantics of the matrix verb, that the message carried by *that* complement clause is factual, person-neutral and objective in nature, presupposes knowledge gathered from speech and not direct observation in the so called 'real world'. Then, the actual presence/absence of the complementiser proves to be a complicated, semantic/functional phenomenon, driven by such mechanisms as, for example, the need to clear up ambiguity, or to present the message as extra objective and more distant from the speaker. *That* retention/omission has been further related to modes of discourse in a literary text and the analysis pointed to a frequent omission of *that* in characters' utterances, thus effecting the lack of distance and lesser knowledge of the presented world, characteristic of that mode. Similarly, *that* is regularly retained in narration, to the effect that the knowledge of the presented world appears more objective and greater than in the formerly discussed mode and the distance of the speaker from the message is increased. Finally, it has been noted that the above, fine distinctions seem inaccessible in Polish through the syntax of complementation.

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