

## Now You See Them, Now You Don't:

### THAT/DAT/DASS /∅ Complements in English, Dutch and German

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In English, Dutch and German, verb-complement phrases may feature an introductory complementizer (1)-(3):

- (1) I thought THAT he was angry.
- (2) Ik dacht DAT hij boos was.
- (3) Ich dachte DASS er wütend war.

In English and German, but also increasingly in spoken or highly informal written Dutch the complementizer slot may be ∅ (4)-(6):

- (4) I thought ∅ he was happy.
- (5) Ik dacht ∅ hij boos was.
- (6) Ich dachte, er war wütend.

A notable difference in these sentences is the position of WAS/ WAR, due to word-ordering differences in subordinate clauses among the three languages. In addition, DAT is obligatory in standard Dutch, spoken or written. It cannot be deleted (2). However, while (5) with ∅ mirrors (4) and (6), (5) in Dutch is only informal.

Among the variety of verbs and verb phrases that take such complements are notably verbs of cognition (THINK, Dutch DENKEN, German DENKEN), emotion (FEEL, Dutch VOELLEN, German FÜHLEN) and indirect discourse (SAY, Dutch ZEGGEN, German SAGEN,) and phrases such as (from English) 'It seems', 'It appears to me', 'I am of the opinion', 'It is likely', (from Dutch) 'Het schijnt', 'Het is waarschijnlijk', (from German) 'Es scheint', and 'Es ist wahrscheinlich'. In English, depending on the individual phrase and register, THAT can often be deleted, whereas in Dutch DAT is obligatory (7a-b):

(7a) Het schijnt DAT hij boos was./\*Het schijnt ∅ hij boos was.

(7b) Het is waarschijnlijk DAT hij boos was/\*Het is waarschijnlijk ∅ hij boos was.

Another area of both convergent and divergent complementation is with what we call 'complex' complements (as opposed to the structurally 'simple' ones above), in which a phrase or clause intervenes between the sentential main clause and the matrix clause of the complement (8)-(11):

(8) He was concerned THAT in August and September job growth had slowed down.

In spoken and informal written English, a second, iterated THAT may appear before the matrix complement clause (8), this is the actual form of the quote on CNN:

(9) He was concerned THAT in August and September THAT job growth had slowed down.

In spoken Dutch, an iterated complement is also possible:

(10) Hij was bezorgd DAT in augustus en september DAT DAN de banengroei zou vertragen.

Our research indicates that the addition of DAN ('then') in (10) approximates a semantic relationship between an iterated THAT in many of our English data samples and THEN, although our research thus far reveals no examples of THAT and THEN co-occurring.

In spoken German, an iterated DASS is not excluded, however without the addition of an extra adverb:

(11) Er war besorgt, DASS im August und im Septemer DASS sich das Beschäftigungswachstum verlangsamt hatte.

Areas of both convergence and divergence in complementation in the three languages may result from a universal grammatical architecture. The actual production of iterative complementizers most likely depends on both intra-sentential and pragmatic factors.