

This paper investigates the pragmatic aspects of the use of epistemic complex clauses introduced by epistemic verbs such as *to think*, *to believe*, *to find* and *to know* followed or not by the complementizer *that*. In other words, we are concerned with the pragmatic differences between the following pair of sentences:

(1) I think/believe/find/know that he'll come.

(2) I think/believe/find/know he'll come.

We assume that, from the semantic point of view, such constructions are synonymous. However, according to Goldberg's principles of language organization, "if two constructions are syntactically different and semantically synonymous, they cannot be pragmatically synonymous" (1995, p.67). Based on this principle, we postulate that the constructions above are pragmatically distinct in that they are used to express (i) different perspectives within discourse (either the speaker's, the hearer's or someone else's) or (ii) a perspective different from the one activated in discourse. In other words, constructions without the complementizer tend to be viewed as conveying the speaker's point of view on the content, whereas constructions with the complementizer are often found to relate to a perspective different from the speaker's or different from the one which is activated in the interaction.

As for the different choices in regard to the epistemic verb in the main clause, we also assume that *to think* and *to believe* tend to behave more subjectively and imply the speaker's stronger commitment with the content whereas *to find* and *to know* appear to have more intersubjective uses and involve presupposition and shared information as well as more attention towards the hearer's point of view on the content.

As regards the syntactic aspects of the two constructions, clauses with *that* tend to occur with a broader range of syntactic structures which include cleft-constructions and topicalized constructions, modal verbs and discourse and modality markers, while clauses without *that* lack such syntactic specificities.

In short, epistemic complex clauses occurring with the complementizer or not are seen as different although related syntactic constructions which, while semantically synonymous, are found to be pragmatically distinct in regard to their communicative objectives.

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