

2. The Place of Concession in Contrastive Structures

Abstract. The author assumes that concession is a form used to express denial of expectation. That assumption allows him to formulate the hypothesis that the various functions involved in concession are interpreted by positions occupied by concession within a contrastive structure. The study argues that concession plays a role in two positions in a contrastive structure. (1) Between the precedent and the antecedent (as the main relation in a contrastive structure), and (2) as a subordinate relation embedded in the conclusion (inside either the precedent or the antecedent). Since a contrast represents a semantic-pragmatic relation here, the study considers concession also as a semantic-pragmatic phenomenon. The author has elaborated a notational mechanism to assist description, presented under the term *double syllogism* (Békési 1991, 1994). According to the mechanism, the conjunction *de [but]* is used to express, or establish, a relation between two syllogistic arguments, rather than two clauses.

The train of thought presented below is based on some major elements in JÁNOS S. PETŐFI's TeSWeST theory (PETŐFI 1975, 1991). Accordingly, causal relations (*tehát [thus]*, *hiszen [~as]*) participating in the environment of the structure created by a *de [but]*-relation are considered here as parts of implication operations. In this way, we are able to assign general knowledge to an utterance relating to a specific state of affairs. (The 'deep structure' connection between these two implications, i.e., the specific and the general implication, is marked by the ET symbol.)

The propositional stratification of a canonical meaning structure, that is, hierarchic integration of performative-modal, world-creating, and descriptive propositional levels, is also derived from JÁNOS S. PETŐFI's theory (PETŐFI 1996a, 270–275). Furthermore, a great number of considerations presented here are based on TeSWeST. Without them, and also without the numerous pieces of advice kindly provided by JÁNOS S. PETŐFI, the train of thought presented below could not have been formulated, or, at any rate, it would have been much less complete and coherent.

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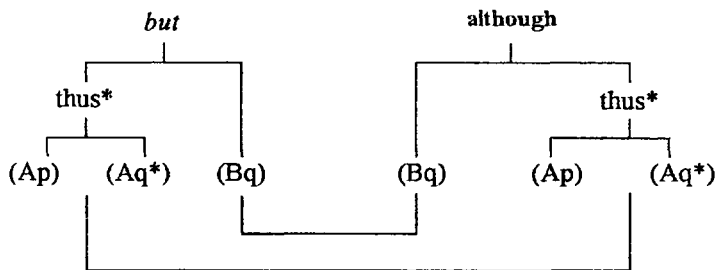
Concession plays a role in a contrastive relation in two places: between the antecedent and the succedent (representing the main relation of a contrastive structure), and embedded in the 'conclusion' (as a subrelation inside the antecedent or the succedent).

2.1. Concessive relation as a main relation

Here, the role involves a succedent location; therefore, the structure thus obtained is also referred to as 'concessive relation in post-position'. Concessive relation represents the main relation of the sequential variant of a restrictive contrastive structure (denial of expectations: LAKOFF 1971, 131–142; RUDOLPH 1996.). This is illustrated in (1) and Scheme [I].

(1) *A miniszterek cserélődtek, de a titkárnő megőrizte állását.* [The ministers shifted about, but the secretary kept her job.] (DORFMÜLLER-KARPUSA 1982, 100–110)

un[I]



FACT
 (Ap) The ministers shifted about,
 thus*
 EXPECTATION
 (Aq*) the secretary will lose her job,
 but
 FACT
 (Bq) the secretary kept her job.

FACT
 (Bq) The secretary kept her job,
 although
 FACT
 (Ap) The ministers shifted about,
 thus*
 EXPECTATION
 (Aq*) she should have lost her job,

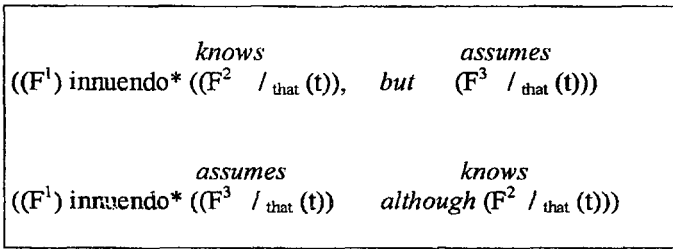
Scheme [I] allows one to formulate a number of conclusions; at least one of them, the semantic-pragmatic conditions and syntactic consequences of a sequential change, should already be pointed out.

2.1.1. Apparently, (2) contains a semantic condition. Here, the two 'world-creating' propositions (*assume, know*) can follow each other linearly only in accordance with their place occupied within the system. Thus, the conjunction *pedig* [although] could not replace *de* [but] in a *tudja, de feltételezi* [*knows but assumes*] arrangement; the conjunction *de* could not play a role in a linear arrangement resulting from *feltételezi, pedig tudja* [*assumes although knows*]. (Here we leave aside the variants obtained by applying negation.)

(2) „¹Az ember a végzettel szemközt mindig lapító állásfoglalásban él: ²tudja, hogy van, *de* ³feltételezi, hogy az ő életében és az ő személyére nem érvényes.” [¹Man always lives with a hidden assumption toward destiny: ²he knows that it exists *but* ³assumes that it is not valid in his life and for him as a person.] (Márai 2001. 136)

The linear row of syntactic (surface) description clearly shows that the 'restrictive' *de* [but] conjunction turned into a concessive *pedig* [although] as a result of the change of order of propositions *tudja* [*knows*] and *feltételezi* [*assumes*]; (at the same time, it is also apparent that the type of concession thus obtained will preserve its level, i.e., it represents a 'coordinative' relation).

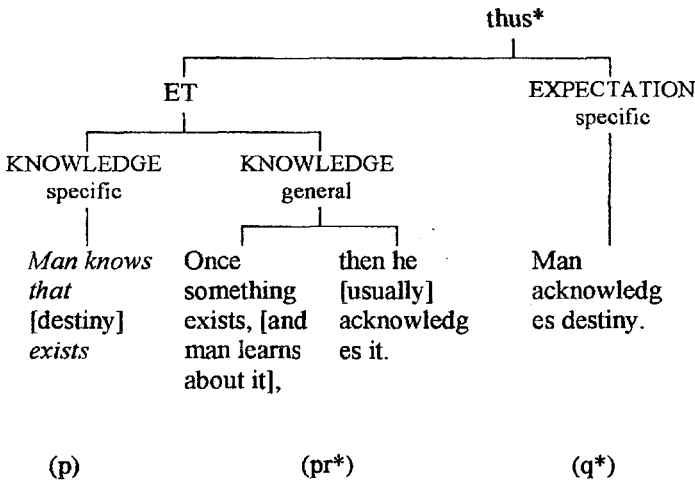
(LegendE: F¹, F², F³ = first, second, third main clause block; (t) = objectival clause; slash indicates subordination asterisk is used to denote an implicit component.)



We can make the implicit 'conclusions' of the two propositions, each fulfilling the roles a 'minor premise', visible in the semantic description under [IIa] and [IIb]. They appear to move together with their 'minor premises' in the course of change of order.

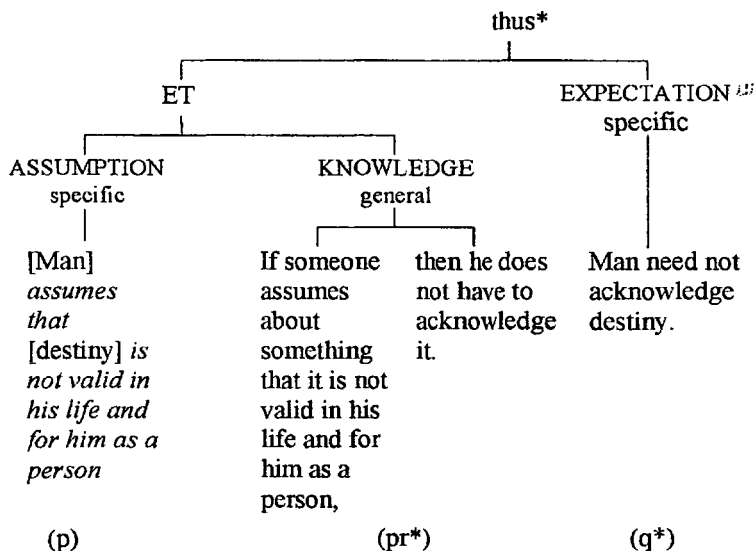
[IIa]

„Man knows that destiny exists, ...”



[IIb]

„[Man] *assumes that* [destiny] *is not valid in his life and for him as a person.*”

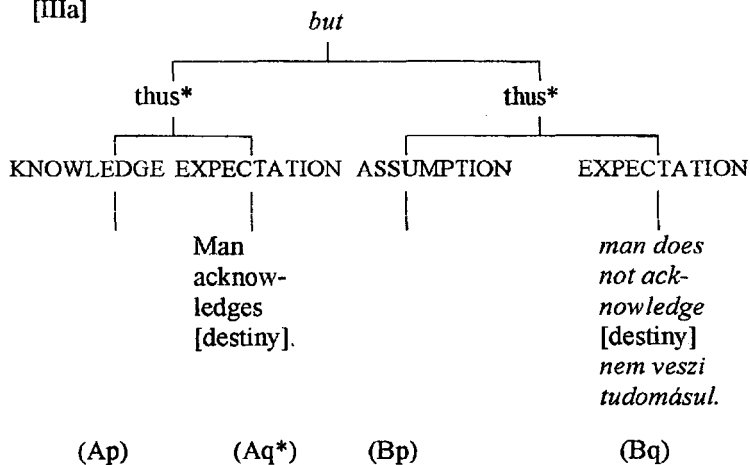


[IIa] and [IIb] allow us to draw a simplified scheme of the two — 'restrictive' and 'concessive' — contrastive structures whose order can be changed.

Simplified scheme of restrictive contrast

„*Man knows that* [destiny] *exists, but he assumes that ...* [thus he does not acknowledge it].”

[IIIa]

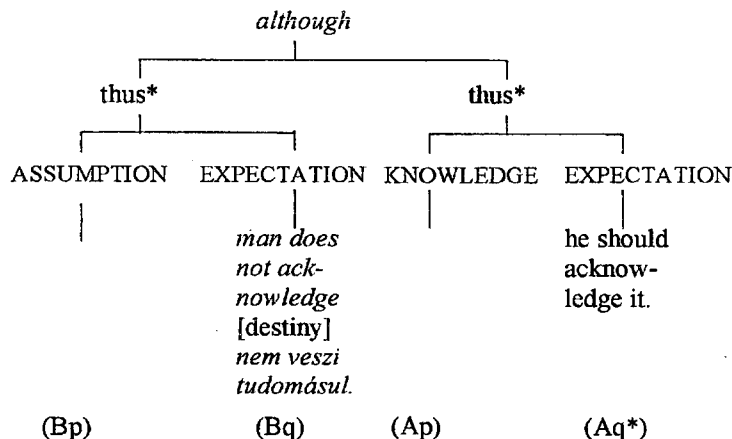


Simplified scheme of concessive contrast

„*Man assumes that [destiny] ... is not valid in his life although he knows it exists... [thus] he should acknowledge it.*”

„*Az ember feltételezi, hogy [a végzet] az ő életében ... nem érvényes, pedig tudja, hogy van, [tehát] tudomásul kellene vennie.*” [*Man assumes that [destiny] ... is not valid in his life although he knows it exists... [thus] he should acknowledge it.*]

[IIIb]



It can be seen from Schemes [IIIa] and [IIIb] that concessive contrast modifies the meaning structure of restrictive contrast through one modal item, viz., conditional mood. Conditional mood involves a negative 'conclusion' of the antecedent: „*Man does not acknowledge [destiny], although he should acknowledge it.*”

2.1.2. The next example marked (3), again, illustrates a semantic correlation in which various levels of 'certainty' are distinguished. In the last sentence of (3), the conjunction *de* [but] relates an 'assumable' proposition (*it looks*) to the *biztos* [sure] which is an antecedent. The change of order of these two 'world-creating' propositions prescribe the use of the concessive *pedig* [although] instead of *de* [but].

(3) „ – Mit csinál a vágánybenéző?

– Jönne egy vonat, a torony leszól, hogy az állomás hanyadik vágányára járatná be, ő odáig nem lát, én odamegyek, és benézek, vagyis megállapítom, hogy üres-e az illető vágány, visszajelzek, és akkor a toronykiadja az engedélyt.

– Nem volna elég egy műszer, amelyik jelezné a vágány foglaltságát?

– **Biztos**, hogy elég volna, **de úgy látszik**, hogy én olcsóbb vagyok.”

[– What does a track checker do?

– When a train is coming, the tower tells me which of the tracks of the station it would want the train to use, but it cannot see that far, so I go there and check, that is,

I establish whether the tracks are empty, then I signal and the tower issues the permission.

– *Wouldn't an instrument signaling busy tracks be enough?*

– *Sure it would be enough but it looks like I am cheaper.*" (Moldova 1977. 49)

Swapping the antecedent and the succedent in (3) results in a change from ((Ap) *de* [but] (Bp)) into ((Bp) *pedig* [although] (Ap)):

„– *Nem volna elég egy műszer, amelyik jelezné a vágány foglaltságát?* [*Wouldn't an instrument signaling busy tracks be enough?*]

– *Úgy látszik, hogy én olcsóbb vagyok, pedig biztos, hogy elég volna.* [*It looks like I am cheaper although that would surely be enough.*]"

The two 'world-creating' propositions in the piece of news cited under (4) are located on two poles of an identical 'world' (somebody *acknowledges* vs. *denies* something). The news is based on the concessive *denied that...*, *although* did *acknowledge* that... structure; similar to (2) and (3) above, they can be reconstructed as an *acknowledged that... but denied* that ... structure.

(4) „*A nyomozás során a fiatalok tagadták, hogy a milliót ők vitték volna el, bár azt elismerték, hogy kisebb összegeket elcsentek.* [*During investigation, the young people denied that they had taken the million (forints) although they acknowledged that they had stolen smaller amounts.*]" (Délmagyarország, October 5, 1998)

Separation of the antecedent and the succedent in (4) into a subordinating structure according to a similar pattern once again emphasizes the level-preserving, coordinative position of 'post-positional' concession. From a structural point of view, either the *de* [but] or the *bár* [although] conjunction could be replaced with the coordinating *viszont* [however] conjunction that fulfills a 'contrastive' role:

tagadták, hogy ..., elismerték viszont, hogy ...

[*they denied that ... however they acknowledged that ...*]

elismerték, hogy ..., tagadták viszont, hogy ...

[*they acknowledged that... however they denied that...*]

A relation of contrast established through the *viszont* [however] conjunction would, of course, result in a different interpretation (similarly to different interpretations of contrast expressed using *de* [but] and *bár* [although]). Here, however, we'll focus on the identity of the antecedent and the succedent of a contrastive structure in terms of level, rather than on the difference in interpretations. A more significant issue related to this, i.e., a description of the difference between 'prepositional' and 'postpositional' concession will be discussed in Section 3 of this paper.

2.2. Concession as a subrelation of restrictive contrast

Here, concession – as a third syllogism – is embedded in the ‘conclusion’ (represented by the antecedent or the succedent). ‘Conclusion’ – when located in an initial position (either as antecedent or succedent) – allows/calls for reasoning by way of a ‘minor premise’. Reasoning may be affirmative or negative – depending on its logical quality. When it is negative, it creates a ‘concessive’ relation, while an affirmative form results in an interpretative relation. A rough scheme might look like this:

((Aq) *pedig* [although] (Cp)),
 ((Aq) *hiszen* [as] (Ap)).

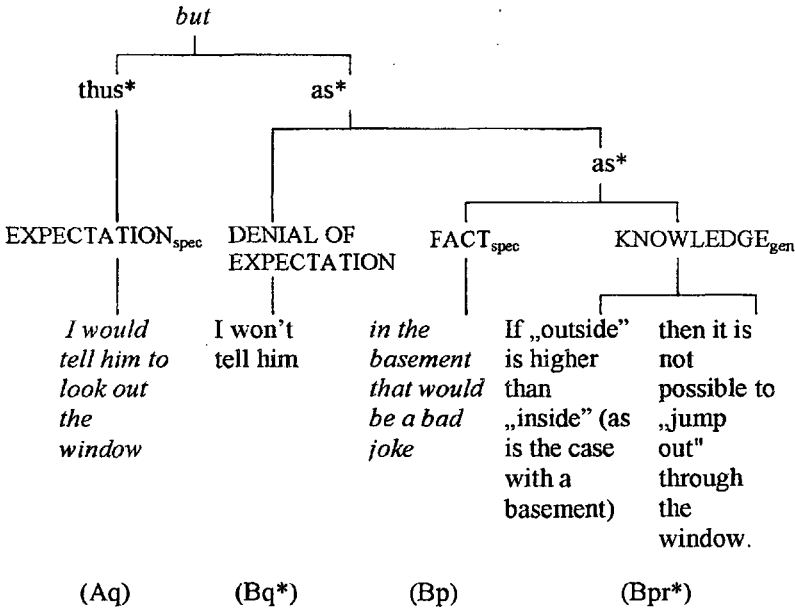
(Legend. (A) = antecedent of a restrictive contrast, (B) = its succedent. (C) denotes steps of concessive syllogistic argumentation embedded in the ‘conclusion’.)

2.2.1. Embedding of the negative concessive element

The concessive element may appear embedded in the antecedent of a ((Aq) *de* [but] (Bp)) contrast or the succedent of a ((Ap) *de* [but] (Bq)) structure. First, we’ll take a look at how the concessive element is embedded in the antecedent of a ((Aq) *de* [but] (Bp)) structure.

(5) „*Mondanám, nézzen ki az ablakon, de az alagsorban ez rossz vicc volna. [I would tell him to look out the window but in the basement that would be a bad joke.]*”
 (ESTERHÁZY 1994. 64)

[IV]



An important feature of (4) is that the 'specific fact' denoted by (Bp) here justifies the implicit 'denial of expectation', that is, (Bq*).

2.2.2. Propositional layers of meaning structure

The antecedent in Figure [IV] marked by (Aq) allows for the inclusion of a concessive detail, that is embedding of a concessive element. This, however, requires that a semantic constraint is fulfilled; the 'performative-modal' proposition *Mondanám* [*I would tell him*] accepts the concessive 'minor premise' only at its own level of meaning.

The concessive element in (5a) is embedded in the antecedent of the contrastive structure as a 'performative-modal' proposition.

(Legend. Pm = performative-modal proposition, W = world-creating proposition, D = descriptive proposition. Cf. PETŐFI 1996a, 270–275.)

(5a) *Mondanám, nézzen ki az ablakon, pedig nem vagyunk beszélő viszonyban egymással, tehát nem kellene szólnom hozzá.* [*I would tell him to look out the window although we do not speak thus I needn't talk to him*]

Pm: *I would tell him*

to look out the window

ALTHOUGH

Pm: *we do not speak*

THUS

Pm: *I needn't talk to him*

AS [BECAUSE]

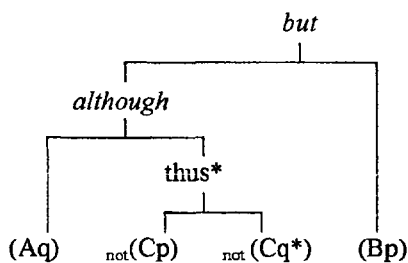
Pm: If people do not speak, they need not talk to each other.

BUT

W: *in the basement this would be a bad joke.*

Embedding of the concessive 'minor premise' denoted by (Cp)

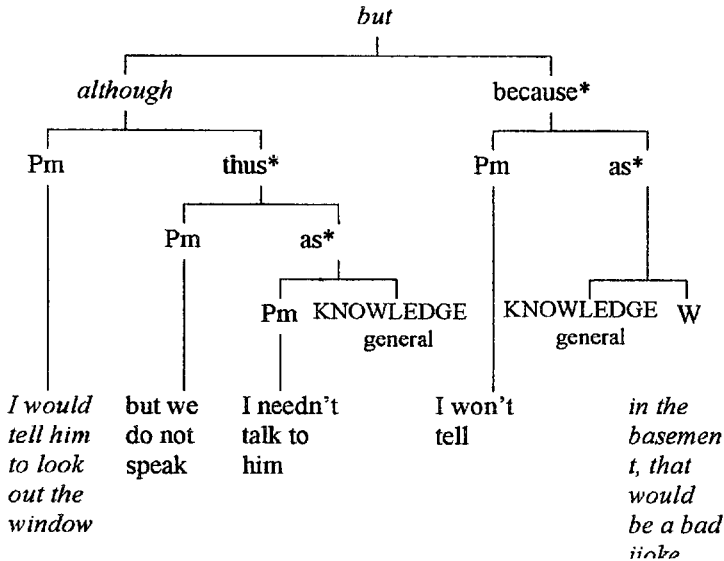
[V]



we do not
speak

The more detailed Scheme [VI] below also indicates the meaning-creating role of each proposition type in (5a).

[VI]



(Aq) not(Cp) not(Cq*) (Cpr*) (Bq*) (Bpr*) (Bp)

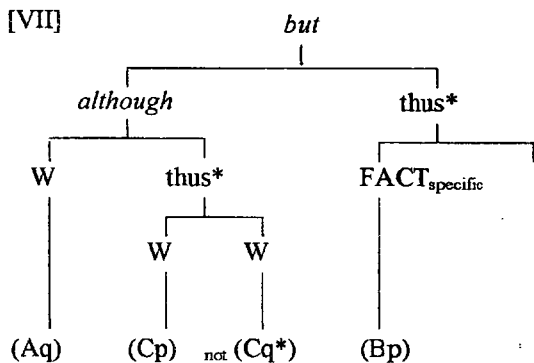
The concessive element was embedded in the antecedent of the contrastive structure in (5a) fulfilling the role of a performative-modal proposition. In (6), on the other hand, the concessive element can be embedded more readily by way of an *I must admit*-type of 'world creator'. If that is in fact the case, then the first clause in (6) (*It has occurred to me several times since then*) plays the role of 'world creator'.

(6) „Azóta többször is megfordult a fejemben, hogy oda kellene adnom az üveg francia pezsgőt az intézet volt igazgatójának, de már nyugdíjban van, a lakása pedig valahogy mindig kiesik az utamból. [It has occurred to me several times since then that I should give the bottle of French champagne to the ex-director of the institute, but he has retired and somehow his flat is out of the way.]” (Moldova, 1985. 439)

- W: *It has occurred to me several times since then*
that I should give the bottle of French champagne to the ex-director of
the institute,
 ALTHOUGH
- W: [I must admit] I, too, like French champagne,
 THUS

W: I should not think about giving a present
 BUT
 DE: [the ex-director] *has already retired*.

Embedding of the concessive 'minor premise' denoted by (Cp)



I, too, like
 French
 champagne.

2.2.3. The affirmative-reasoning 'minor premise'

Apart from the above two conditions for concession embedding (i.e., the antecedent is required to fulfill the role of 'conclusion' and the propositional role of the concessive element should be identical to the propositional role of 'conclusion'), there exists a third prerequisite. It consists in preclusion of an explicit justification for the antecedent fulfilling the role of 'conclusion'. Justification, that is, ((Aq) as (Ap)), fills the place where concession — which also plays the role of justification — could be embedded in the antecedent. This is illustrated in (7).

(7) „Lett volna [Károlyi úr számára] a lakásban is egy szoba, mióta szegény feleségem meghalt, egyedül élek, de azt hiszem, Károlyi úr nem akar embereket látni maga körül. [There would have been a room in my flat [for Mr. Károlyi, too] since my poor wife died, I have lived on my own, but I think Mr. Károlyi does not want to see people around him.]” (Moldova, 1978. p. 394)

(7) does not merely illustrate a formal obstacle. One can also recognize how close the ((Ap) as (Ap)) relation is. A 'conclusion' cannot be supplied with an affirmative/reasoning and an opposite, negative/concessive justification at the same time. The 'minor premise' may be represented either by an affirmative explanation or its opposite (concessive explanation).

Affirmative justification:

(Aq): *There would have been a room in my flat!* [for Mr. Károlyi, too]
AS

(Ap): *since my poor wife died, I have lived on my own*

Negative justification:

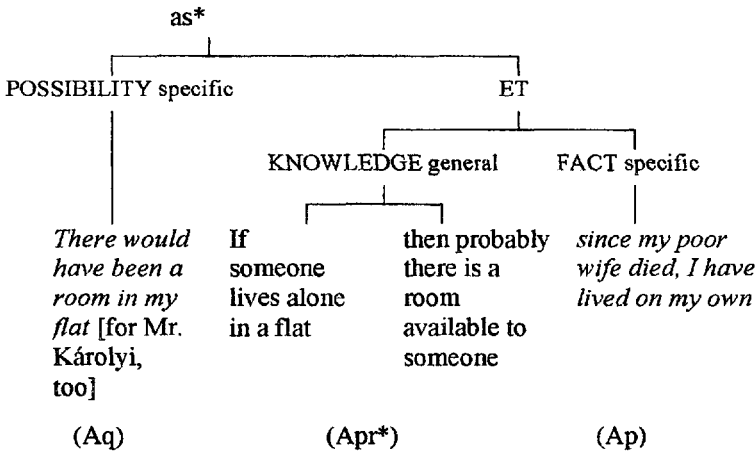
(Aq): *There would have been a room in my flat as well* [for Mr. Károlyi]
ALTHOUGH

(Cp): *I and my wife live in my flat in a rather small way.*

The fact that concession is embedded in a justification role, that is, as a (Cp) similarly to affirmative justification, is also underlined by its internal separation. 'As' in Scheme [VIII] establishes a relation directly between (Aq) and (Apr*), while 'although' in Scheme [IX] plays a similar role between (Aq) and (Cp).

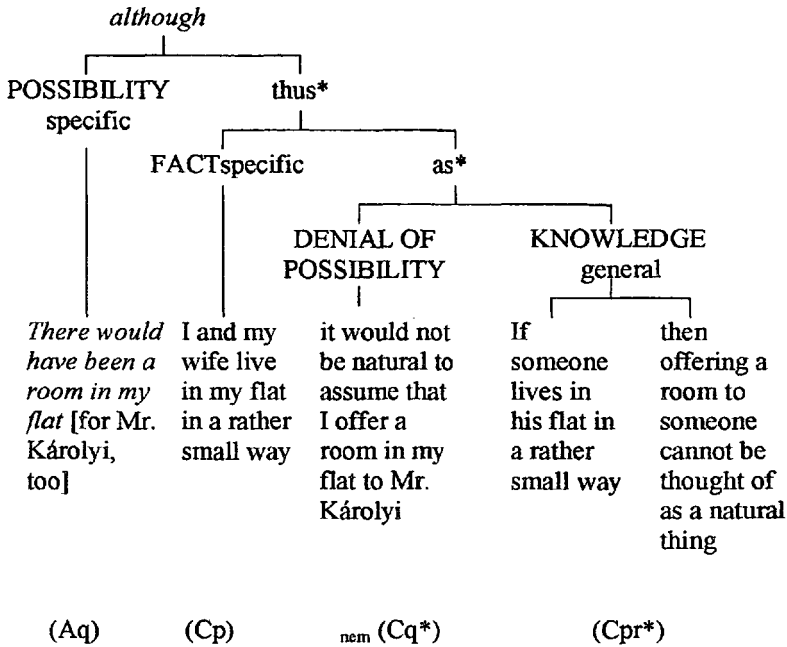
An important conclusion drawn from this difference is that the affirmative 'minor premise' belongs to the same justification as the 'conclusion', in other words, both elements correspond to antecedents (A) of the contrastive structure ((Aq) as (Ap)).

[VIII]



The element with having negative, concessive quality is the 'minor premise' of an embedded stand-alone argument, therefore it is marked by (C), that is, (Cp), rather than (Ap) or (Bp) [because (B) represents the succedent of a contrastive structure]:

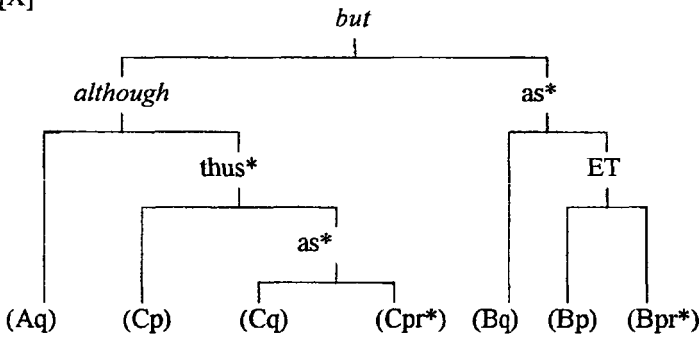
[IX]



2.2.4. Concessive syllogism may be embedded in the conclusion of both the antecedent and the succedent. They have the following structure.

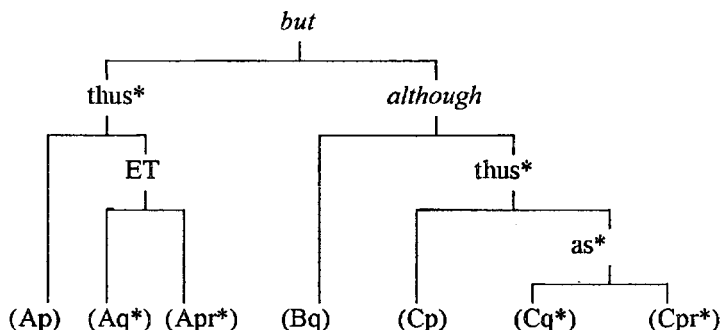
2.2.4.1. Concession embedded in an antecedent 'conclusion'

[X]



2.2.4.2. Concession embedded in a succedent 'conclusion'

[XI]



2.3. Concession in 'preposition'

The structural roles fulfilled by the concession discussed under 1 and 2 (appearing in 'postposition' in both cases) are different: one represents the main relation of the contrastive structure while the other is its sub-relation; they have one feature in common: both are components of a contrastive structure that constitutes a complete utterance. Completeness of the structure derives here from a situation where it is part of a 'monologue', representing a relatively self-contained element. Its relational structure is contextual, rather than intertextual.

2.3.1. Concession in 'preposition' is embedded in an intertextual set of relations. This is indicated by the concessive conjunction. Without *ugyan* [*albeit*], (8a) would be a stand-alone utterance independent of its intertext, expressing 'restrictive' contrast. Here, however, it makes the reader recall implicit precedents: *The woman was beautiful*.

(8a) *Albeit the woman was beautiful, she appeared conceited very much, therefore she made an antipathic impression.* (RÁCZ 1968. 264–266; PETŐFI 1996a 267–269)

When contrastive structure is created in a dialog of two interlocutors through transparent embedding, then 'conclusion' can start the dialog in the form of a consequence in preposition.

(Legend. A and B are the two interlocutors.)

(8b)

A: *The woman made an antipathic impression on us.*

B: *But she was beautiful!*

A: *Albeit the woman was beautiful, she appeared conceited very much.*

The concession created with the help of the frequently met pair of conjunctions *Ha ... is* [lit. *If ... too; Even though/if...; However...*] is also based on implicit concession.

(9)

A: – Féltél. [You were afraid.]

B: – „**Ha féltél is, a helyzetet megálltam.** [Even if I was afraid I coped with the situation.] ”

(József Attila: Kész a leltár)

(10)

A: – Nem születél magyarnak. You were not born a Hungarian

B: – „**Ha nem születtem volna is magyarnak,**
E néphez állanék ezennel én.”

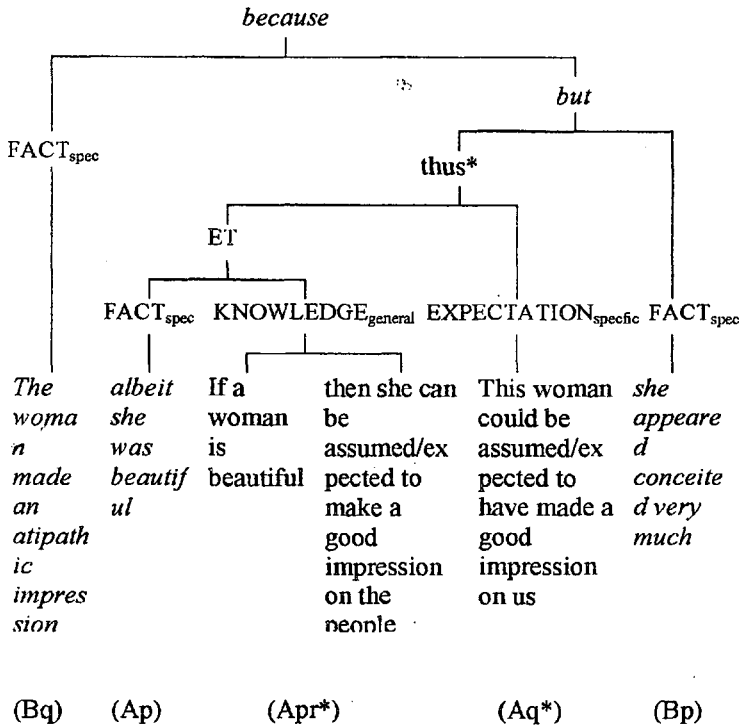
Even if I had not been born a Hungarian now I would stand by this people

(Petőfi Sándor: Élet vagy halál)

(A philological note. The conditional past form of the first line of the citation „evokes” the implicit precedents. Does the poet refer to his „non-Hungarian” origin explicitly anywhere in the poem?)

2.3.2. The intertextual relations realized in the dialog may be combined into a monolog; then the concessive structure – as an antecedent in a restrictive contrast – appears as a deeply embedded component of a ‘causal’ meaning structure. The succedent conclusion (Bq) of the contrastive structure is the succedent of the causal structure connected through *mert* [because]. This is a typical incidence of prepositional consequence.

(8c) *A nő gyönyörű volt ugyan, de nagyon beképzelt módon viselkedett.* [Albeit the woman was beautiful, she appeared conceited very much].



This time, the concessive antecedent (Ap) of the contrastive structure builds not only in a cataphoric, forward direction, but also an anaphoric direction, that is, its precedent. Knowledge of the above allows one to specify the difference between the two types contrast that appear structurally identical, i.e., restrictive and (prepositional) concessive contrast.

2.3.3. 'Postpositional' contrast and 'restrictive' contrast

3.3.1. 'Restrictive' contrast represents a unique type of contrast. The scheme of their explicit constituents is ((Ap) *de* [but] (Bq)). This type of contrast can be embedded (e.g., into a causal construction) or expanded (e.g., by a concessive construction), however, neither operation is necessary for its use as a unique type of contrast.

Its explicit succedent (Bq) representing the 'conclusion' is related to the explicit antecedent (Ap) representing the 'minor premise' through the *de* [but] conjunction. This relation consists in *de* [but] (Bq) deleting the propositional content of (Aq), whether explicit or implicit.

3.3.3.2. 'Postpositional' concession does not affect the propositional content of the antecedent, that is, it brings to the front a contrastive moment inside it. In terms of struc-

ture, this kind of concession is level-preserving (representing a change of order in a 'restrictive' contrast), maintaining a coordinative relation with its antecedent.

3.3.4. 'Prepositional' concession represents a stand-alone type of contrast only seemingly. It is doubly embedded; firstly, it is embedded in the antecedent of the restrictive contrast (as the informative 'minor premise' of the antecedent), secondly, as the deeply embedded component of a contrastive succedent in a 'causal' structure. From the point of view of linear arrangement of the utterance, this kind of concession immediately follows the 'conclusion' antecedent of the 'causal' structure; in this sense, it contains the general feature of 'concession' in that the immediate precedent of the concession is the known element of meaning with the role of 'conclusion', as illustrated in (9) through (13).

(9) „A másik oldal már kissé homályosabb. Mert menyasszonya volt **ugyan** Vörös Józsefnek az a bizonyos Bárány Etel, **de** ugyanakkor, így beszélnek, a saját juhászuk felesége körül ... itt úgy mondják, legyeskedett. [The other line is somewhat unclear. **Because although** /albeit/ that lady called Etel Bárány was József Vörös' bride, **but** at the same time, rumour has it, he was... as they put it around here, butterflying about with their own shephard's wife]" (Nagy Lajos 1968, 76)

(10) „Szükség is van ily hosszú ismeretségre. Mert a falu áttekinthetőbb **ugyan**, mint a város, **de** még mindig elég bonyolult ahhoz, hogy oly bonyolult legyen, mint maga a világ." [And such long-time familiarity is really needed. **Because although** the village is more transparent than the town, **but** [yet] it is complicated enough to be as complex as the world itself.] (Nagy Lajos 1968, 423)

(11) „Tán ő [Csontváry] maga sem járt annyira rosszul, mint képzeljük. **Mert ha**, mint mondják, festőből kverulánssá válva, kiábrándultan töltötte is élete utolsó évtizedét: a művészi hit, mámor milyen magasait járta meg addig, s művészetben és szerelemben van-e más jutalom, mint az ölelés, nőé és műzsáé, akármilyen elhagyatottság követi is." [Perhaps he /Csontváry/ himself did not come off as badly as we think. **Because even if** he spent the last decade of his life in disappointment — after having turned from a painter into a grievance-monger: he had experienced the peaks of the artist's belief and frenzy up to that time, and is there a greater reward in art and love than a woman's and a muse's embrace, no matter what depth of abandonment follows it.](Németh 1975. 381)

The *mert* [because] conjunction representing a causal relation may be omitted.

(12) „A nyelvész dolga nem olyan, mint az orvosé: **ha** megállapít is valami hiányt, nem kell rögtön orvossággal szolgálnia. [A linguist's job is not identical to a doctor's job: **even if** he establishes some deficiency, he need not provide a medicine right away.]" (Illyés 1975. II. k. 706)

(13) „Végül a sznobizmusnak is meg kell hökkennie, lassan tán fordulnia is: bár a magyar irodalom külföldi terjesztése távolról sem kielégítő, **mégiscsak** kezd kiderülni, hogy az a huszonöt év, amire mi Európától elszakadtunk, nemcsak lemaradást, de világi-

rodalmi értékeket is hozott, amire külföldön is kezdenek ráeszmélni. [Finally, snobism, too, must be taken aback, by and by even turn to the opposite: although popularization of Hungarian literature abroad is far from satisfactory, yet it is becoming evident that the twenty-five years that separate us from Europe have resulted not only in lagging behind but also in values for the world literature that people abroad are gradually becoming aware of.]” (Németh 1975. 342)

2.4. Summary

We have not dealt with a syntactic interpretation of concession, that is, the ‘independent’ clause of a main clause in this study (BÁNRETI 1983.; KENESEI 1992. 545–549), concession as a type of contrast has been treated as a semantic-pragmatic phenomenon. For this purpose, we resorted primarily to JÁNOS S. PETÓFI’s TeSWeST theory, which also offers an opportunity for syntactic interpretation (PETÓFI 1996b.). Hopefully, this aspect will be studied in the near future.

A theoretical–empirical analysis of restriction and concession. *Sprachtheorie und germanistische Linguistik*, 14.1. (2003), 3–17

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