UNIVERSIDADE DE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA

GRAO EN LINGUA E LITERATURA INGLESAS 2013/2014

USC
UNIVERSIDADE
DE SANTIAGO
DE COMPOSTELA

Concession Relations in Argumentative Discourse:
The Case of Written Reviews

Paula Huertas López

TRABALLO FIN DE GRAO REALIZADO BAIXO A
DIRECCIÓN DE MARÍA DE LOS ÁNGELES GÓMEZ
GONZÁLEZ

UNIVERSIDADE DE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA

GRAO EN LINGUA E LITERATURA INGLESAS 2013/2014

Concession Relations in Argumentative Discourse:

The Case of Written Reviews

Paula Huertas López   María de los Ángeles Gómez González

INDEX

1. Introduction

It can be said that coherence relations in general have been studied throughout the years. Nevertheless, far too little attention has been paid to those relations by themselves separately. This is the case of concession, which was studied generally in relation to other topics, but not sufficiently in terms of its own specifics. There are several contrastive studies between languages (e.g. Taboada and Gómez-González, 2012; Olmos and Ahern, 2009; Grote, Lenke and Stede, 1997; Vergaro, 2008), but most of them do not take into account a language or a genre by itself. For instance, there have hardly been any controlled studies regarding concession in the argumentative written genre (Taboada and Gómez-González, 2012; Taboada, Carretero and Hinnel, to appear).

Being aware of the aforementioned gaps in this field of study, the aim of this essay will be to strictly analyse the concessive markers *but* and *although* in the argumentative written genre, particularly those of book and film reviews on the internet. Indeed, no research has been found that gave in depth examination to these markers in this specific genre of English.

This study will begin by giving an overview of the previous literature concerning the argumentative genre and written reviews, and then it will focus on the literature on concession. In the first part of the theoretical background, that regarding argumentation, a brief overview will be given about the characteristics of both the argumentative genre and written reviews. In addition, the main functions of the genre and subgenre will be described. In the second part, that on the subject of concession, the main issues addressed will be the following: 1) definition of the relation, 2) comparison to other logico-semantic relations, 3) concessive markers, 4) concession within *the framework of Rhetorical Structure Theory* (RST), 5) its function within discourse, 6) *Appraisal Theory* in relation to concession and 7) a brief summary.

In order to support these issues and strengthen the study of concession in the argumentative genre, this essay will then go on to an analysis of a series of online written reviews about eighteen books and eight films. This examination will be

accomplished by considering the frequency of use of particular concessive markers (*although, but*),[1] the contexts in which they are placed (both discursive and within the relation), and also their semantic and pragmatic meaning. This practical study of concessive relations will be divided into two parts. The first will regard methodology and aims, whereas the second will focus on results achieved.

Finally, the last section will provide a conclusion giving a brief summary and a critique of the questions that arose during the study.

2. The argumentative genre: The case of written reviews

Texts in the argumentative genre are characterised by expressing an opinion in order to convince the target of certain facts or ideas which the speaker considers most proper. In other words, as explained by Grize (1990: 41; cited in Amossy, 2005: 89):

> In the common meaning, to argue is to provide arguments, thus reasons, for or against a thesis […] But it is also possible to conceive of argumentation from a broader perspective and to understand it as a process that aims at exerting an influence on one's opinion, attitude, even behavior. It is however important to insist on the fact that the means are discursive.

This kind of text is normally used when it is necessary to defend the speaker's opinion or to prove a thesis, like reviews of objects or events, forums, debates, and rallies, among others.

For our purposes here we shall focus on one exponent of the argumentative genre, namely that of book and film reviews (for details on the corpus, see section 4). Reviews 'cannot but rely on argumentative strategies', due to the fact that they do not only inform, but also present 'opinions, comments or evaluations in relation to what is being reviewed' (Matos-Mendonça, 1998: 108). Indeed, it can be stated that these texts are usually appreciative and motivating as they tend to introduce the negative or

---

[1] Due to restrictions on space and time, this paper cannot provide a comprehensive analysis of every concessive marker which is found in the selected corpus.

positive opinion with the intention of convincing others whether or not to watch or read something.

As with other argumentative texts, reviews present arguments in favour of the opinion of the speaker. Besides, they often include the reasons why any contrary arguments will not be valid. For this reason, connectors that express opposition are often resorted to, one of the most common being (as will be shown in section 3.5) those expressing 'concession', as in (1) below:

(1)   … *although* the ending was a happy one, it was also a little sad and I felt let down.[2] [B, no3]

In (1) above the author denies the expectation of the reader that the book could be pleasant. The presence of this positive contra argument actually reinforces the assertiveness of the negative argument, which is the main point that the author tries to convey.

Example (1), as well as the evidence supporting this investigation, shows that written reviews depend very much on the argumentative genre. In fact, the main functions of written reviews are related to this genre. They are 'informative, forming of opinions and critical' (Matos-Mendonça, 1998: 108), insomuch as they present actual facts on the book or movie as well as incorporate the personal opinion of the speaker and a critique.

3. Concession: An overview.

3.1. A definition

The concept of *concession* is often associated with relations formed by two clauses where a specific type of contrast is given: one of these clauses implies the non-

---

[2] Unless otherwise specified, examples given are extracted from my corpus and the samples are marked with their source: 'B' for 'Books' and 'M' for 'Movies'. The overall opinion of a review will also be taken into account, where if it was rated positively or negatively it will be noted beside the reference as 'yes' or 'no' respectively. The number of the review will be indicated as well. Furthermore, italics in every example are used to highlight the marker.

possibility of the other. Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1098) explain that 'the situation in the matrix clause is contrary to expectation in the light of what is said in the concessive clause' and Taboada and Gómez-González (2012: 2, 19) qualify this description as follows:

> a relation that joins two clauses or units in a potential or apparent contradiction [and] helps writers and speakers express opinions, while mitigating their strength, or acknowledging potential alternative viewpoints.

To better understand the different aspects of concession, let us consider example (2) below:

(2)   Betty isn't fond of Watson's subversive tactics, *although* the rest of her classmates including valedictorian Joan Brandwyn (Julia Stiles) find them refreshing. [M, no1]

Taking into consideration that all of Miss Watson's classmates, including the best student (Joan Brandwyn), agree with her rebellious tactics, it is expected that Betty shares this opinion as well. However, in concessive constructions the expectation is denied. Thus, 'contrary to expectation', Betty isn't fond of Watson's subversive tactics despite the fact that everybody else is. There are various reasons why the matrix clause might be contrary to expectation. Perhaps the tactics used by Watson are very different from those that Betty would use, and thus she disagrees. Betty could feel jealous of Watson and hence she wants to discredit her or any number of other explanations to these effects.

3.2. Concession and other logico-semantic relations

Concession is considered as being very complex, because 'its meaning involves other relationships in the background: contrast, cause and concession' (Livnat, 2012: 78). Indeed, there are several authors that put concessive clauses in relation with other rhetorical relations, as shown in Table 1 (König and Siemund, 2000; Verhagen 2000; Rudolph, 1996; Izutsu, 2008; König, 1985; Foolen, 1991; Lakoff, 1971).

Table 1. Relations connected to 'concession'

Causal relations
Opposite relations
Contrast or Adversative
Corrective
Concessive-conditional relations

3.2.1. Concessive and causal relations

König and Siemund (2000: 342, 344) state that 'concessive constructions are somehow the negative […] counterpart of causal constructions', providing the following example:

(3)   (a) / The house is no less comfortable *because* it dispenses with AIR-conditioning. /

    (b) / The house is no LESS comfortable / *although* it dispenses with AIR-conditioning. /

A negated clause where the negation also affects the causal clause, like in (3a), can often be reworded as clause (3b) where the negation excludes the concessive clause. Alluding also to the examples in (3), Verhagen argues that both concepts causality and concession 'should be construed as parallel' (2000: 362).

3.2.2. Concessive and opposite relations

Concessive relations have been included in the so called 'opposite relations' along with contrast or adversative relations and corrective relations (Rudolph, 1996; Izutsu, 2008). However, limits between concessive and contrast relations have often been blurred and thus Biber (1999) considers that contrast and concession are so close that he includes them in one single category called 'contrast/concession'.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned connection between concession and adversative and corrective relations, it is important to note the differences between

them. Therefore opposition relations will be explained and illustrated in order to see their dissimilarities. Firstly, *contrast or adversative relations* have been described as a 'semantic opposition' (Foolen 1991; Lakoff, 1971; Izutsu, 2008):

(4)   John is rich, *but* Tom is poor. (Izutsu, 2008: 648)

In example (4) the first adjective is semantically and directly opposed to the second one, since one is regarded as positive and the other as negative. On the other hand, *concessive relations* have been regarded as a 'denial of expectation' (Foolen, 1991; Lakoff, 1971):

(5)   *Although* John is poor, he is happy. (Izutsu, 2008: 649)

In contrast to example (4), in example (5), the first unit may imply the expectation that John would not be happy since he is poor, but in the second unit, this expectation is rejected by the assertion that he actually is happy.

The other opposition relation is the *corrective* (Foolen, 1991; Izutsu, 2008), also very close to both adversative and concessive. As its name suggests, this relation concerns the correction of an aspect within a sentence:

(6)   John is not American *but* British. (Izutsu, 2008: 649)

In (6) 'British' is not semantically opposed to 'American' and the *but*-clause does not deny any expectation. Instead, it simply corrects what has been said before (John's nationality).

These three categories, contrast, concessive and corrective, as stated by Izutsu (2008), share a common characteristic in that the items opposed imply a sort of 'mutual exclusiveness', namely, that one of the items in the sentence is opposed to, excludes and/or clashes with the other to different extents. As a difference between the three, contrast clauses are more flexible within a sentence, that is, that they can be reversed, and the conjunction can be modified or even omitted without any change in meaning, while in corrective relations this is impossible and in concessive relations this flexibility involves some changes in meaning (Izutsu, 2008). Furthermore, in both contrastive and

concessive relations, the units that form the sentence are actually given in reality, whereas in corrective relations, only the corrective clause is given as factual, while the content of the main clause is presented as untruthful. In diachronic studies, such as that by König (1985), concessive relations have been seen as a specification of adversative relations. While most languages tend to have adversative markers, they do not always have the concessive ones due to concessive normally involving a more specific contrast than the adversative, and therefore being perceived as more developed (König, 1985).

3.2.3. Concessive and conditional relations

In addition, concession has also been related to conditional relations to the extent that there is even a subclass of conditionals, called 'concessive conditionals',[3] which share characteristics with both relations. Besides being considered a kind of conditional, they are also sometimes regarded as a type of concessive. This subclass 'relate[s] a series of antecedent conditions to a consequent, [which is] asserted to hold under any of the conditions specified by the antecedent' (König, 1985: 3, 4), as in example (7a):

(7)   (a) Even if nobody helps me, I'll manage. (König, 1985: 3)

       (b) Whether somebody helps me or not, I'll manage.

       (c) I'll manage, even though no one is going to help me.

In example (7a) the antecedent conditions, which are opposite one to another, do not prevent the assertion of the consequent: it does not matter if the speaker gets help or not. In this way condition and concession interact. Indeed, as shown in my own rewordings (7b) and (7c), it is even possible to rephrase the example in full conditional and concessive structures, respectively.

---

[3] For the objectives of our study, concessive conditionals will be analysed since they hold similar properties to other concessives such as the 'incompatibility between two situations' (König, 1985: 5).

3.3. Concessive markers

Turning to concessive markers, it is important to first differentiate between *typical* and *atypical* concessive markers. Typical concessive markers are always used as concessive, such as (*al*)*though, in spite of* or *despite*. Atypical concessive markers include dual purposed markers, such as the conjunctions *but, while* or *whereas,* which can also be used as adversative:

(8)   (a) Concessive *while*: His name is Kit Harrison and *while* she can't stand him and at the same time she can't help but like him – just a little. [B, yes11]

       (b) Adversative *while*: John likes math, Bill likes music, *while* Tom likes chemistry. (Izutsu, 2008: 648)

Example (8a) expresses a 'denial of expectation': if 'she can't stand him', then she is expected not to like him, but she does. In contrast, in (8b) there is no expectation rejected. The clause introduced by *while* is semantically opposed to the previous ones, causing 'math', 'music and 'chemistry' to be contrasted from a semantic point of view.

This investigation will follow the analysis made by Taboada and Gómez-González (2012), and therefore the following list of concessive markers organised by their word class is adopted:

(a)   Conjunctions and conjuncts: *albeit, although, but, but even so, come what may, despite (everything), despite the fact that, even if, even though, even when, even while, howbeit, much as, though, when, whereas, whether, while*.

(b)   Sentence adverbials: *above all, after all, all the same, and even then, anyway, at any cost, even, even yet, for all that, for one thing, however, in any case, in spite of all things / everything, nevertheless, no matter what, nonetheless, of course, only, over all, rather, regardless, still, too, withal, yet*

(c)   Gerunds introducing subordinate clauses or noun phrases: *admitting, allowing that, even supposing, granting (all this), supposing, without considering*

(d)   Prepositional phrases with certain prepositions: *against, aside from, distinct from, even after / before / as / with, in contempt of, in defiance of, in spite of, in the face of, notwithstanding, regardless of, without regard to*

3.3.1. The case of *but*

Oftentimes markers are difficult to classify due to differing opinions about their function within the clause. Lakoff (1971) studies the plausibility of *but* being classified as both a contrast and concessive marker. Quirk (2008) asserts that oftentimes the boundaries between contrast and concession are blurred and that they often share common markers. However, in his own work *but* is not considered a concessive marker. Rudolph (1996: 5) proposes a list of 'concessive connectives' in which *but* is not included, but other contrast connectives, like *however* or *notwithstanding*, are. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) explore some 'semantically related constructions' to concession, in which they include the coordination with *but*. Other authors, such as Izutsu (2008), state that the main usage of *but* is the negation of expectations (being the concessive usage), and that the two other uses, contrast and correction, are developed from its main meaning.

These differing opinions arose because previous studies did not agree in their classification of opposition relations: Lakoff (1971) only distinguished the adversative and concessive meanings while others like Foolen (1991) and Grote, Lenke, and Stede (1997) considered the existence of three opposition relations, contrast, concession and correction, which differed in pragmatic terms rather than in semantics.

In this investigation, following the approach of Taboada and Gómez-González (2012), *but* will be considered a concessive, adversative and corrective marker, being included in the three categories of opposition. However, for our purposes here, only the concessive *but* will be analysed.

3.3.2. The case of *although*

Previous studies on *although* are considerably unanimous. It has been regularly regarded as a typical concessive marker (Livnat, 2012; Olmos and Ahern, 2009; König 1985; Sidiropoulou, 1992). From the point of view of word class, *although* has been generally considered a subordinating conjunction expressing concession (Downing and Locke, 2006; Quirk *et al.*, 2008; Izutsu, 2008; Grote, Lenke and Stede, 1997; König, 1985). However, it has been also regarded as a preposition by Huddleston and Pullum (2002). In this study, *although* will be noted as a subordinator which functions as a concessive marker.

3.4. Concession in RST

Within *the framework of Rhetorical Structure Theory* (RST) concessive relations comprise two units or spans: a *nucleus* and a *satellite*. The former is regarded as 'the situation affirmed by author' and the latter as 'the situation which is apparently inconsistent but also affirmed by author' (Mann and Taboada, 2004-2014). In other words, as noted by Taboada and Gómez-González (2012: 22), the nucleus is the span where a positive thoughtfulness is given, while a 'potentially conflicting situation' is presented in the satellite. It must be taken into account that there is no one-to-one correspondence between syntactic and rhetorical status. Thus, 'nucleus' cannot be identified with 'main clause' nor 'satellite' with 'subordinated clause.'

According to Taboada and Gómez-González (2012), the canonical order is that of the satellite going in first position and the nucleus in the last, as in (9), although the satellite can occupy other places in the sentence, either at the end, or even more rarely, the middle, as shown in (10):

(9)   [Satellite]…*although* "The Grinch" was not all that great, [Nucleus] I found it watchable. [M, no16]

(10)   Remember when Paul Newman is fighting that big guy in the boxing match, and [N] he won't give up, [S] *even though* he knows he is defeated? [M, no4]

As already mentioned in previous subsections, concessive and adversatives relations are very close. Besides their differences in semantic terms, they also differ in structure. While concessive structures are comprised of a nucleus and a satellite, adversative structures are multinuclear relations and are made of two spans, neither of them being central (Mann and Taboada, 2004-2014)[4]. Furthermore, concessive relations are regarded as hypotactic constructions whereas contrast relations are considered as paratactic constructions, both spans being at the same syntactical level. Another difference between them in structural terms is that in concessive relations both spans allow an exchange. However, in contrast relations spans are not interchangeable. Overall it can be summarised that adversative and concessive relations not only differ in semantics, but also in pragmatics and syntax.

3.5. The discourse functions of concession

Considering now the discourse function of concessive constructions, Grote, Lenke and Stede (1997) distinguish three main uses depending on the intention of the sentence: 'convince the hearer', 'prevent false implicatures' and 'inform about surprising events':

(11)   'Convince the hearer': *Although* you are correct that Windows is cheap I nevertheless wouldn't buy it, because it has many bugs. (p.93)

In example (11) a counter-argument statement is introduced ('although you are correct that Windows is cheap') in order to help reinforce the speaker's argument of convincing the hearer not to buy Windows.

(12)   'Prevent false implicatures': Windows is very cheap. That doesn't mean you should buy it, *though*, because it is full of bugs. (p.94)

In example (12), in order to fulfil Grice's cooperative principle and not lead the addressee to a false implicature (which will be 'buy Windows, since it is cheap'), the speaker introduces a concede ('that doesn't mean you should buy it, though, because it is full of bugs'). As opposed to (11), 'the conceded fact is new to the discourse and the

---

[4] Other studies based on the RST, such as that by Salkie and Oates (1999), have argued that there are two kinds of contrast, one of them being a multinuclear relation and the other a nucleus-satellite relation. Thus, concession would be a subtype of the latter.

hearer is not assumed to hold a specific attitude towards that fact' (Grote, Lenke and Stede, 1997: 94). Nevertheless, this pragmatic classification can be used in argumentation as well, as shown in (12).

(13)   'Inform about surprising events': *Although* it was December, no snow fell and the temperature rose to 20 degrees. (p.94)

What the speaker in (13) does is to emphasise about the uncommonness of the statement and 'it has nothing to do with increasing the hearer's positive regard or preventing false implicatures' (Grote, Lenke and Stede, 1997: 94).

The first intention, 'convince the hearer,' would be fruitful in the argumentative genre, since it is obviously very important to express the author's opinion in contrast with the negated statement. Indeed, argumentative texts try to convince the hearer/reader by giving strong assertions. Using the model of previous authors (Grote, Lenke and Stede, 1997), this intention has a specific structure in which the satellite goes first and the nucleus last, thus giving credence to this as the structure of concessives in the argumentative genre. Although the second intention, 'prevent false implicatures', is not hearer-centred, it can also be productive in the argumentative genre:

(14)   Kiss the Girls was OK, *but* there were too many unbelievable points about it that made it a bad story all together. [B, no24]

In order to prevent the implication that the addressee should read the book, the writer introduces a concede. However, the usage of the third intention, 'inform about surprising events', is more or less unbeneficial in the argumentative genre.

3.6. *Appraisal Theory* in relation to concession

Following in the line of pragmatics, it is important to make reference to *Appraisal Theory*[5] (White, 2005). This framework will be taken into account when analysing concessive relations. For the purposes of this study the classifications in figure 1 will be

---

[5] *Appraisal framework*, is a specific approach which analyses 'the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships.' (White, 2005)

applied to concession. Therefore, concessive relations can be analysed with regards to 'attitude' and 'engagement'.

Figure 1. Classifications according to Appraisal Theory
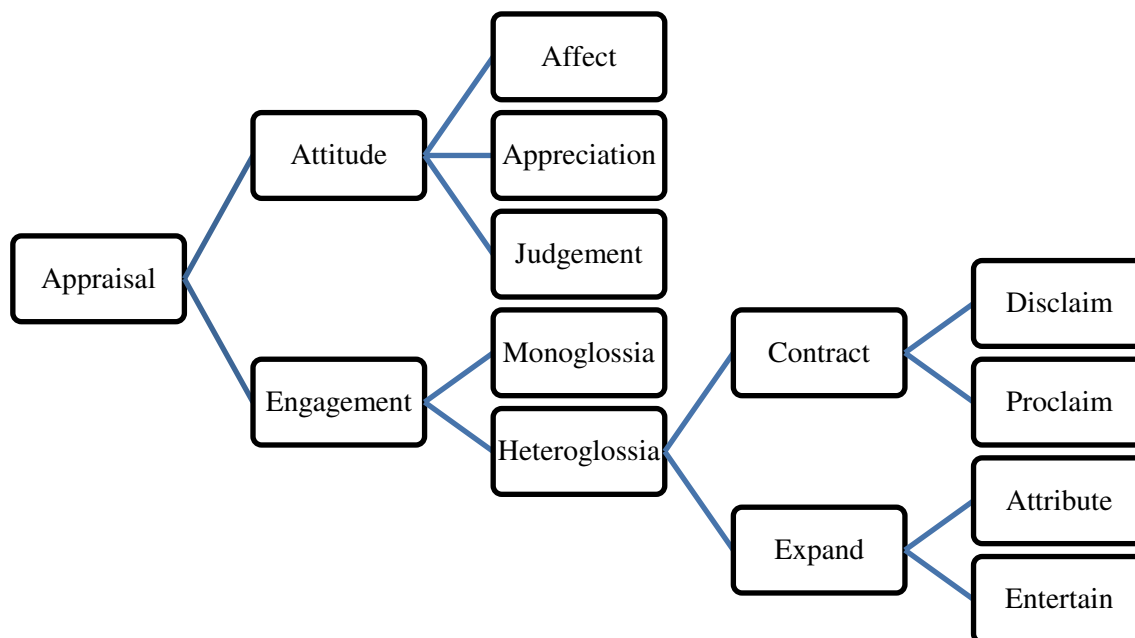
The first aspect of *Appraisal Theory*, attitude, concerns the positive or negative evaluation of 'some person, thing, situation, action, event or state of affairs' (White, 2005). There are three subtypes of attitude: affect, judgement and appreciation. 'Affect' refers to the speaker's emotions towards the items mentioned above. 'Judgement' involves 'rules or conventions of behaviour' (White, 2005), that is to say that it involves ethical evaluation. Lastly, 'appreciation' is the aesthetical evaluation of 'the form, appearance, composition, impact, significance etc. of human artefacts, natural objects as well as human individuals' (White, 2005).

The other aspect of the *Appraisal Theory*, engagement, comprises the ways in which speakers 'adjust and negotiate the arguability of their utterances' (White, 2005). It can be classified as 'monoglossic' or 'heteroglossic'. In monoglossic expressions 'no alternative view or openness to accept one is present'; in contrast, in 'heteroglossia' several alternative views are in some way referred to (Trvanac and Taboada, 2012:304). Heteroglossia itself is divided into two forms: 'contract' and 'expand'. 'Contract' takes place when there is a limited number of possible opinions, and can be seen to 'disclaim'

where an expression rejects 'some contrary position', or 'proclaim', where the speaker 'sets [himself] against, suppresses or rules out alternative positions' (Trvanac and Taboada, 2012:304). 'Expand', in contrast to 'contract', refers to the possibility of unlimited opinions towards an issue. Like 'contract', it is divided into two subtypes as well, being 'entertain' and 'attribute'. In 'entertain' the position presented by the speaker is just one of the possible positions while in 'attribute' 'the proposition is presented as externally grounded, in the words of another speaker' (Trvanac and Taboada, 2012: 304).

3.7. A summary

To summarise, several general observations can be gleaned from the aforementioned. Firstly, in concessive relations a mutual exclusivity takes place between two spans. Secondly, although it is predominantly considered a coherence relation in its own, concession is often related in meaning to other coherence relations, such as contrastive, corrective, causal or conditional. Thirdly, there is a great number of concessive markers, including conjunctions, sentence adverbials, gerunds and prepositional phrases. Fourthly, the archetypical structure in concessive sentences is that of a nucleus and a satellite, with the prototypical order being that of the satellite placed in the first position. Fifthly, the main discourse functions of concession in the argumentative genre are those of convincing the recipient/addressee and preventing false implicatures. Lastly, concessive relations can be analysed following the *Appraisal Theory*.

4. Aims and Methodology

The general purpose of this paper is to show how concession works in a specific case of argumentative texts, that of the written reviews (and more specifically that of book and film reviews). In order to achieve this objective, several aspects must be analysed: the frequency of use of the chosen markers (*although, but*), their position, their semantic characteristics, and their pragmatic features. Thereby, in completing this section of the

study a detailed explanation of each concessive marker analysed is given for each of the aforementioned terms. Taking into account that some of the reviews analysed are positive and others negative, this will also be a comparative study between recommended and not-recommended written reviews, that is, between argumentative texts for and against. In order to accomplish this comparison, their pragmatic features are utilised.

The corpus analysed is made of 100 written texts compiled in 2004 in the *Simon Fraser University (SFU) review corpus*,[6] which concerns the opinion that people gave in online reviews about books and movies. The SFU review corpus includes reports taken from Epinions.com dealing with other topics such as cars, computers, cookware, hotels, music, and phones. The particular corpus of this paper is comprised of fifty texts evaluating books and fifty looking at films, being half of them positive (with the tag of 'recommended') and the other half negative (with the label of 'not-recommended'). As expected from an open platform such as Epinions, the written style is considerably informal. They criticise varied films such as 'Bad Santa,' 'The Cat in the Hat', 'Mona Lisa Smile', 'Gothika', 'Elf', 'Calendar Girls', 'The Last Samurai', and 'Haunted Mansion'. Amidst the numerous books reviewed, titles such as 'The Davinci Code', 'The Wedding', 'A Painted House', 'Frankenstein', and 'The House of Thunder', are just a few examples.

The book and film reviews were chosen due to the fact that they seemed to be the most developed in both length and argumentation. Still, these reviews tended to be quite dissimilar. In terms of length, for instance, there are some that only occupy three or four lines (M, yes16; B, no10), while others fill almost two pages (B, no14; B, no24; B, yes15; M, yes5; M, yes23) or even more than two pages (M, no1). Regarding concession, there are a number of short reviews (e.g. B, no20; M, no19), and some longer ones that do not contain any concessive markers. The most remarkable example of the long reviews (B, yes6) occupies almost an entire page and uses no concessive markers.

---

[6] Available from https://www.sfu.ca/~mtaboada/research/SFU_Review_Corpus.html

In order to fulfil the above-mentioned objectives, various steps were taken. Firstly, concessive relations were extracted from the corpus and classified taking into account the coherence markers and their context. Secondly, the frequency of use of each marker was noted. The most frequent of these markers were selected to be analysed independently and more in depth. Thirdly, their context was examined. A marker's position was studied within the context of the whole text, whether placed in the summary of the book/movie (descriptive stage) or in the comment about them (evaluation stage). As well, the position they held within the concessive relation itself was taken into account (which will be classified following the terms laid out in section 3.4 as 'Satellite–Nucleus' or 'Nucleus–Satellite'). Fourthly, semantics was analysed to determine the plausible semantic contexts in which the chosen markers (*but, although*) can appear. Lastly, in order to explore the pragmatic meaning, the *Appraisal Theory* and other aspects such as polarity (which was labelled as 'positive', 'negative' or 'neutral'), the effect that the introduction of concession had on the whole sentence, as well as its function (see section 3.5) were noted. On account of this, whereas the semantic meaning will be to some extent objective, the pragmatic meaning will then be considered more subjective. The main results gleaned from this analysis will be abridged in the next section.

5. Results

As shown in Table 2, the selected markers (*but*, *although*) were the most recurrent in my corpus. From a total of 352 concessive relations realised through concessive markers, 237 comprised of the markers *but* or *although*, which is slightly more than two thirds of the total. Due to the higher number of times these markers appeared, they were chosen for analysis so as to increase the reliability of the conclusions inferred. Furthermore, it will be interesting to see the differences in how *although* and *but* work in concessive relations, since they are typical and atypical concessive markers respectively.

Table 2. Concessive markers and their frequency in the corpus

Marker	Number of times
but	198
although	26
while	20
even	16
however	15
yet	10
even though	9
despite (the fact that)	7
though	7
even if	5
regardless	4
of course	3

Marker	Number of times
still	3
when	3
at least	2
if	2
only	2
otherwise	2
in any case	1
no matter	1
rather	1
too	1
unless	1

Focusing on each review in particular, it can be stated that some writers seem to have certain preferences in their use of a particular marker. This is the case of [M, no1] where the writer uses *although* seven times, which is almost a quarter of the total usages in the corpus, as reported in Table 2. Other authors tend to use *but* systematically, which is not as surprising as the case of *although* since *but* is the most recurrent concessive marker and it is used at least eight times more than *although.* Indeed, there are very few reviews in which this specific marker was not utilised. Out of a total of 87 reviews with concessive markers, there are only five in which *but* is not employed.

5.1. *But*

5.1.1. Frequency

But was the most frequent marker used in my corpus, as noted in Table 2. Indeed, it appears even more times than all other markers combined. While *but* is adopted 198 times, the rest of the markers are only employed 141 times in the totality of my corpus. When focusing on the differences of the use of *but* across positive and negative reviews, it can be stated that *but* is utilised in a similar manner for both positive and negative

reviews, as shown in Table 3. Hence, it seems that there is no special reason to use the marker in one kind of review and not in the other. Examples (15) and (16) illustrate the usage of *but* in positive and negative reviews respectively.

(15)   I would have liked to have read it sooner, *but* unfortunately I had "prior commitments" ranging from work-related projects to Harry Potter. [B, yes23]

(16)   Perhaps it is because I don't agree with most of the political views of the main players of the books, *but* seemed that there was a bit too much whining about how the rich and the government tend to dismiss the homeless as riff-raff. [B, no13]

Table 3. Frequency of *but* in positive and negative reviews

Positive Reviews	Negative Reviews
97	101

When talking about frequency it is also important to compare the range of occurrence of *but* as a concessive marker and as a marker of other types of coherence relations, such as contrast and correction. As claimed by Izutsu (2008) and as shown in Table 4, the most frequent use of *but* tends to be that of concession. In effect, concessive *but* is adopted almost twice as many times when compared to adversative and corrective uses, as noted in Table 4. Based on this evidence it can be deduced that the main usage of *but* (at least in the argumentative genre) is the 'denial of expectation':

(17)   I don't think he's funny at all on SNL, *but* I was willing to give him a chance. [M, no6]

Table 4. Frequency of *but* across discourse relations

Concessive uses	Other uses
198	104

5.1.2. Position

With regard to position within the text, the most frequent place occupied by concessive constructions with *but* is that where an evaluation is accomplished. However, there is a

18

small but significant number of instances where *but* is placed in the descriptive stage of reviews, as reported in Table 5. These results are not really surprising, since as explained in previous sections (e.g. 2 and 3.5) argumentation relies very much on concession, as shown in (18). Examples (18) and (19) below illustrate the usage of *but* within the evaluative and descriptive stages respectively:

(18) I think Alec Baldwin (Quinn) and Kelly Preston (Mom) do an adequate job, *but* I feel that their romantic relationship and the undercurrents of jealousy that come with it are entirely inappropriate for the story. [M no11]

(19) It takes quite awhile for Frannie to find out *but* Kit is not who she thinks she is. [B, yes11]

Example (18) is a representative case of concession used to evaluate: the writer is giving his opinion about two actors and their relationship within the story. In order to do so, he uses verbs such as 'think' and 'feel', and evaluative adjectives like 'adequate' and 'inappropriate'. In contrast, example (19) describes the actions of the characters in the story and does not analyse them.

Table 5. Different positions of *but*

Position	Evaluation	Description
Within the text	165	33
	S-N	**N-S**
Within the relation	198	0

Turning now to position within the concessive construction, those samples with *but* follow the prototypical structure of concession, being satellite first and nucleus last in terms of the *RST* (see section 3.4). Indeed, no instance has been found where the nucleus occupies the first position, as noted in Table 5. From this data, it can be asserted that *but* is a prototypical concessive marker when referring to structure within the concessive construction. Therefore, the following will be a typical example of concession achieved through the usage of the marker *but*:

(20)   Of course, there is no absolute necessity to wrap everything up neatly by the end of an hour and a half, *but* it is nice to see at least the beginnings of a resolution on most of the issues. [M, yes2]

In (20), as well as in the rest of cases where *but* conforms a concessive structure, the *but*-clause is the one for which the author has positive regard (the nucleus), whilst the previous clause seems to be incompatible with it, yet still holds (the satellite).

5.1.3. Semantic meaning

As noted in section 3.3.1, there is no unanimous opinion about the meaning of *but*. The problem with this marker is that it can express different discourse relations depending on the context. It can be used to mean that something is 'contrary to expectation' of (in the concessive sense), 'semantically opposed' to (in the adversative sense) or 'correcting' (in the corrective sense) something else (as explained in 3.2.2). Instances of all three cases have been found in my corpus, the concessive usage being the most recurrent (as noted in 5.1.1). Examples (21), (22) and (23) below illustrate the three opposition relations, being concession, contrast and correction respectively. In order to determine which of the three usages *but* is performing in a text, it is crucial to examine the context in which it occurs. What the *but*-clause does in concessive constructions is to negate the expectation that arises from the first clause.

(21)   There were several, obvious glitches and mistakes (that should have been handled in editing *but* were not). [M, no9]

(22)   I read the book cover to cover, enjoying it well enough in spots, *but* wincing in others… [B, no4]

(23)   The only problem lied not with Caan's performance *but* the character itself… [M, yes11]

In example (21) the expectation of fixing the mistakes in editing is immediately denied in the *but*-clause. In the case of (22), the semantic opposition between 'enjoying' and 'wincing' leads to the classification of this instance as an adversative or contrast relation, where *but* functions as a coordinator between the two nucleuses. In (23) what

comes after *but* is a correction of what comes before: the problem lied indeed with the character itself and not with the performance.

5.1.4. Pragmatic meaning

From the point of view of pragmatics, it is important to analyse *but* in relation to evaluation and the attitude-engagement divide as posited in *Appraisal Theory*, polarity, as well as discourse effect and function. What follows presents an analysis of how these pragmatic dimensions of *but* vary across positive and negative reviews.

5.1.4.1. Evaluation according to *Appraisal Theory*

Following *Appraisal Theory*, *but* was examined on attitude and engagement, as represented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results on *but* according to attitude

	Positive	Negative	Total
Judgement	28	65	124
Appreciation	59	34	62
Affect	10	2	12

Firstly, regarding attitude, the most frequent subtype was that of judgement, namely the ethical evaluation:

(24) If ever there was a pregnant premise for comedy, a naïve, six-foot-tall elf set loose in unforgiving New York City ought to be it. *But* Will Ferrell is not the man for the job. [M, no7]

While this holds true for negative reviews, the main attitude in positive reviews is not that of judgement but of appreciation, the aesthetic evaluation (see Table 6):

(25) The script could have used some tightening near the end, *but* as I said, the "letter" made up for it a bit. [M, yes25]

From the results in Table 6, it seems that positive reviews make their arguments on the aesthetic evaluation of the form of the book or film that they are recommending. In contrast, negative reviews appear to be grounded on an ethical evaluation on the behaviour of the characters, actors, writers and directors of the books and films that they are against.

To the category of engagement, the prototypical position is that of disclaim, as reported in Table 7. In argumentative texts it is important to set one's argument against a contrary opinion, and thus disclaim is very frequent:

(26)   The rights to Seuss' words might be yours, *but* his legacy is not. [M, no11]

In (26) the speaker is holding his position against what is expressed in the satellite. There are also several cases where the counterpart of disclaim, proclaim, is presented. All these examples occur in the positive reviews. In these instances the speaker does not set his argument against a contrary position, but against an alternative opinion:

(27)   I have read some (few) reviews that didn't rate this book kindly, *but* I felt very differently. [B, yes17]

Apart from disclaim and proclaim, there are a few cases where entertain takes place, mainly in negative reviews. This occurs in (28) where the opinion held by the speaker is only one of the unlimited opinions about the topic:

(28)   I don't know, *but* it's probably illegal in all forty nine states. [B, no15]

In this kind of example, the speaker introduces expressions that refer to the more or less probability to occur, such as 'probably', 'may', 'might' and 'seem', among others. Besides these three kinds of engagement, there are a small number of instances where monoglossia occurs, all of them taking place in negative reviews:

(29)   I like a story that is based on facts. And learning a little about those facts along the way can be fun. *But* we didn't need to know the level of details presented here to appreciate the dilemma the heroin was dealing with. [B, no19]

From these results it can be concluded that disclaim is very frequent among both positive and negative reviews, since in these cases the speaker tends to hold against

some specific contrary opinion. As for the others, proclaim only occurs in positive reviews, and entertain and monoglossia only occur in negative reviews, as shown in Table 7. However, it seems that there is no particular reason why these subtypes are used more in one kind than in the other. This is mostly due to there being too few samples in order to properly examine this case.

Table 7. Results on *but* according to engagement

		Positive	Negative	Total
Heteroglossia	**Disclaim**	80	87	167
	Proclaim	16	0	16
	Entertain	1	11	12
Monoglossia		0	3	3

5.1.4.2. Polarity

According to polarity, concessive structures were labelled as positive, negative or neutral. The most frequent type seems to be that of negative polarity while the less frequent is the neutral, as illustrated in Table 8. Nevertheless, it is important to notice how polarity works in each of the different kind of reviews.

Table 8. Results on *but* according to polarity

	Positive	Negative	Total
Positive	58	16	74
Negative	35	81	116
Neutral	4	4	8

Table 8 shows that in positive reviews the prototypical polarity is the positive one, which is exemplified in (30) below. However, there are several cases where negative polarity may take place, as in (31):

(30)   Things get moving right away, with everything happening to poor Stephanie. *But* I found myself laughing out loud many times while reading this book. [B, yes3]

(31)   I knew the trip would be scenic, *but* there would be times that I wanted to get away from it all and settle into a good novel. [B, yes1]

In (30) the positive polarity is set through 'laughing out loud', whereas in (31) the negative polarity is hold through 'I wanted to get away from it'. As shown in these opposite examples, not every single construction in positive reviews is regarded as positive. This means that writers admit that there are certain aspects of the book or movie that they do not agree with.

In negative reviews, the results occur in a similar manner to what has been explained in positive reviews but in the opposite way, as noted in Table 8. The prototypical polarity is the negative (32), but there are also several cases where polarity is positive (33):

(32)   I know this is nit-picky, *but* if Grisham is going for memorable descriptions, using questionable details is an iffy way to start. [B, no4]

(33)   …either way, it was not his best work – *but* it still held my attention through the whole [B, no13]

In (32) 'an iffy way to start' sets the negative polarity, whilst in (33) the *but*-clause holds the positive polarity. As explained for (30) and (31), in negative reviews there are also a few number of instances where the writer, in spite of not recommending the book or movie, says something positive about it and in turn gives it a positive polarity.

5.1.4.3. Discourse effect

According to Trvanac and Taboada (2012: 307) four dissimilar kinds of discourse effect are analysed, being 'downtoning', 'reversal', 'intensification' and 'no change', which are noted in Table 9.

Table 9. Effects of concession with *but* on polarity

		Positive	**Negative**	**Total**
Downtoning	**a positive**	15	7	22
	a negative	12	27	39
	total	17	34	51
Reversal	**of a positive**	15	24	39
	of a negative	31	6	37
	total	46	30	76
Intensifying	**a positive**	13	2	15
	a negative	11	22	33
	total	24	24	48
No change		0	13	13

As reported in Table 9, the most frequent effect when considering the corpus as a whole is that of 'reversal'. In negative reviews it tended to be the reversal of a positive, while conversely the most common in positive reviews was the reversal of a negative. Examples below will be a good illustration on this effect in positive (34) and negative reviews (35):

(34)   It was sort of disappointing to get to the end of the book and not know all of the characters as much as you wanted, *but* it's no biggie. [B, yes7]

(35)   Well placed, these scenes can really add to a movie, *but* when there are too many you start to expect them and they lose their effect. [M, no22]

In (34) the satellite conveys a negative evaluation, which is reversed in the nucleus into a positive one. Similarly, the first clause in (35) transmits a positive appraisal of the movie evaluated but it is changed into a negative evaluation through the second clause. However, as shown in Table 9, when analysing positive and negative reviews separately the most frequent effect in negative reviews is not the reversal, but instead the downtoning (especially the downtoning of a negative):

(36)   Robert Downey Jr's character (Pete Graham) was a bit shallow, *but* I think that may have been intentional. [M, no22]

This effect could have been used so as to not sound too harsh when doing the review. The contrary effect, that of intensifying, is recurrent in both positive and negative reviews and is most frequently used to intensify a positive in positive reviews (37) and a negative in negative reviews (38) (especially the latter, taking place 22 times out of 24 where intensifying occurs, as noted in Table 9).

(37)   This book wasn't only another good John Grisham tale, *but* a touching story of a man who realized his life had been shallow and he wanted to make a difference. [B, yes2]

(38)   The mother who was starting to doubt not only her ability to raise her son, *but* also her son's ability to accept responsibility and the things we was asked to do, now had now doubt that they would all be just fine together. [M, no14]

In (37) both spans are positive ('good tale', 'a touching story') and when combined they increase the positivity of the sentence. On the other hand, in (38) both spans are negative (the mother doubting about her abilities) and when combined they also intensify the negative feeling of the example. Furthermore, in negative reviews there are a small but considerable number of cases where no change takes place. Examples like (39) are rather infrequent.

(39)   What I don't get is why ghosts in these situations completely terrorize the people they have chosen to help them. *But* of course, who am I to argue about the way a ghost reasons? [M, no22]

5.1.4.4. Discourse Function

Following Grote, Lenke and Stede (1997) and as already explained in section 3.5, concession is claimed to perform three main functions in the argumentative genre: 'convincing the hearer', 'preventing false implicatures' and 'inform about surprising events'. Table 10 shows that in my corpus the first two are the most conspicuous. Both functions lead the reader, the first into accepting one's argument and the latter into preventing a wrong conclusion. Both functions are similarly used in positive as well as in negative reviews. The third function ('inform about surprising events') is also employed in a like manner across the two kinds of review, but it is much less frequent.

Table 10. Functions of concession with *but*

	Positive	Negative	Total
Convince the hearer	42	41	83
Prevent false implicatures	49	50	99
Inform about surprising events	6	10	16

Examples (40), (41) and (42) illustrate the three functions respectively:

(40)   … it is fantastic. I think I said that *but* I just thought that you should know that it is fantastic [B, yes10]

(41)   Luke Chandler doesn't have much dialogue in the novel *but* his descriptions of life in rural Arkansas are wonderfully detailed and insightful. [B, yes15]

(42)   I always used to be a loyal Grisham fan, *but* this book changed all that for me, and I fell I have no choice but to pan this book. [B, no12]

The writer in (40) tries to convince the reader to read the book by emphasising that it is fantastic. The one in (41) does not want the reader to think that Chandler's dialogue would be poor and thus he introduces his evaluation of Chandler's descriptions. In (42) the fact that a loyal Grisham fan decides to condemn one of his books is at least surprising.

5.1.5. Conclusions on *but*

The evidence on *but* so far provided allows us to draw seven main conclusions on the use of *but* as a concessive marker:

1. It is the most frequent concessive marker and its main role among opposition relations is that of concession.

2. It occurs mainly in the evaluation stage in written reviews.

3. Its main structure is that of concession, being Satellite – Nucleus.

4. From the point of view of *Appraisal Theory,* the most frequent subtype of attitude is judgement and the most frequent subtype of engagement is disclaim.

5. Its most repeated polarity is negative.

6. Its most recurrent discourse effect is that of reversal.

7. Its most common discourse function is preventing false implicatures (followed by convincing the hearer).

5.2. *Although*

5.2.1. Frequency

Although was the second marker most used in my corpus, surpassed only by *but*, and closely followed by *while*, as shown in Table 2. In addition, Table 11 suggests that the usage of *although* does not vary much across positive and negative reviews: the variation is that only two more tokens are found in negative than in positive reviews.

Table 11. Frequency of *although* in positive and negative reviews

Positive Reviews	Negative Reviews
12	14

Nevertheless, as noted above in section 5, in [M, no1] *although* was used seven different times, which is half of the total in negative reviews. As a result, it seems that the use of one marker or another is considerably subjective. Furthermore, the instances where *although* occur are rather limited and thus it is difficult to derive conclusions grounded on such a small number of cases. However, as examined in 5.1.1, it appears that despite a larger corpus the results are not very different. Hence, overall the most frequent markers in concessive relations (*but* and *although*) occur in a similar way across positive and negative reviews.

5.2.2. Position

Concerning position within the text, the most recurrent place where *although* is situated is in the part which deals with the writer's evaluation about the object of study. Table 12 shows that out of 26 concessive relations with *although* only three were placed within the descriptive stage of the review about the book or film being referred to.

Table 12. Different positions of *although*

Position	Evaluation	Description	
Within the text	23	3	
	S – N	**N – S**	**S in the middle**
Within the sentence	13	12	1

The following examples are an illustration of these two positions respectively:

(43)   The plot is appropriately full of twists and turns, with plenty of cliff-hanging action and a highly satisfying resolution, *although* some of the inventions seem a bit much [B, yes22]

(44)   *Although* Susan can not remember important details like what her job was like, or the sound of her boss' voice, she does remember one important fact that carries through the whole book [B, no18]

These results are in accordance with those obtained from the analysis of *but* (section 5.1.2), and the expectations from previous sections (e.g. 2 and 3.5), where concession and argumentation were found to be very close, as shown in (43). This example takes place in the evaluation stage, analysing how the plot is developed and using appreciative vocabulary ('appropriately', 'highly satisfying', 'seem a bit much'). However, example (44) is considerably different. It was taken from a review with only one concessive marker and the text is more a kind of summary of the book rather than a critique about it. In fact, sample (44) just describes what Susan can or cannot remember.

In relation to position, but now within the concessive relation, the most frequent structure using *although* is the prototypical structure of concession in general, with the satellite occurring in first position (see section 3.4) as illustrated in example (45). However, in my corpus this structure was used a total of thirteen times and the opposite structure (that of the nucleus being placed first) was utilised almost as much, being found in twelve instances, as reported in Table 12. On more rare occasions, a*lthough* can also be placed in the middle of a sentence, as in (46), the sole example in this corpus. That is to say that the satellite in concessive constructions with *although* is quite flexible.

(45)   *Although* it was a bit confusing to my 4 year old why Mr. Conductor from the
        Thomas the Tank movie was in the Cat In The Hat, Alec's character did a good
        job of being the guy any kid could hate. [M, no14]

(46)   Adults have never found this necessary to enjoy Seuss' books; and spoiling the
        pristine, *although* sometimes misunderstood, image of the Cat in the Hat is a low
        blow – even for Mike Myers. [M, no11]

5.2.3. Semantic meaning

Turning now to semantics, *although* can exclusively be used as a concessive marker (as
noted before in 3.3.2). Therefore, it can only be used within the meaning of 'contrary to
expectation'. Besides, as a typical concessive marker, *although* will have the concessive
semantic characteristics regardless of the context.

5.2.4. Pragmatic meaning

Concerning the pragmatic meaning, *although* is here analysed in relation to evaluation,
polarity, effect and function. It should be noted, however, that due to the limited amount
of tokens, the conclusions to be drawn on the variability of these parameters in positive
and negative reviews should be taken with caution.

5.2.4.1. Evaluation according to the *Appraisal Theory*

According to *Appraisal Theory* (that is to say evaluation), *although* can be ascribed
either to attitude or to engagement, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Results on *although* according to evaluation

Attitude	Appreciation	15	Judgement	9	Affect	3
Engagement	Disclaim	26				

Starting with attitude, the subtype most utilised was that of appreciation, namely the
aesthetic evaluation:

(47)   The film is based on the real-life events from a Yorkshire village a few years ago, *although* the Director was keen on maintaining that the individual characters in the film are not themselves based on the real-life women. [M, yes3]

However, judgement is also common in concession with *although*, being in this point similar to *but*, whose main kind of attitude was judgement. As a result of the analysis of both markers in terms of attitude, it appears that the consideration of affect is not very usual in concession. This could be due to the fact that in argumentation the emotional evaluation is not very reliable, while the ethical and the aesthetical are.

Turning to engagement, the prototypical position is that of disclaim, as discussed for *but* in section 5.1.4.1 and as illustrated in (48) below:

(48)   *Although* I enjoyed her character in the film since she kind of played the big-sister role for other characters as well as being flirtatious, I felt the character was underwritten [M, no1]

In (48) the expression 'I felt the character was underwritten' rejects the contrary position expressed in the satellite.

5.2.4.2. Polarity

On the subject of polarity, concessive relations were tagged as positive, negative or neutral. Only two sentences were considered as having neutral polarity while the rest were split evenly into positive and negative. Therefore, it seems that there is no prototypical type, as represented in Table 14.

Table 14. Results on polarity using *although*

Polarity	Positive	12	Negative	12	Neutral	2

Table 15. Comparison of positive and negative reviews with *although* through polarity

Polarity	Review labelled as	Positive	Negative
Positive		9	3
Negative		2	10

(49)   At the end of the film, kids were calling the Cat "cool", *although* Thing One and Thing Two seemed to get more praise than the Cat himself did. [M, yes15]

(50)   *Although* I'm thrilled that they didn't have Tom doin' everybody, I felt a little cheated about his interactions with the opposite sex. [M, yes5]

(51)   I wasn't sure what to expect with "Hot Six," the first of Jane Evanovich's Stephanie Plum novels that I've read – *although* it is not the first book in the series. [B, yes4]

Examples (49), (50) and (51) above illustrate positive, negative and neutral polarity respectively. In (49) 'cool' sets the positive polarity, while in (50) the negative polarity is conveyed primarily through 'cheated'. In contrast, in (51) there is no cue which clearly indicates the positivity or negativity of the instance. Polarity is a useful way to establish differences between positive and negative reviews, albeit the instances with *although* being considerably reduced. As would be expected, polarity in positive reviews is in most cases positive, whereas in negative reviews is mostly negative, as noted in Table 15. Nevertheless, there are a few instances where the polarity is not as expected. This means that, in cases using both *but* and *although*, writers realise that not everything about the book or film they are reviewing is good or bad, but rather they admit that there are some points contrary to their main view.

5.2.4.3. Discourse effect

Analysing now the discourse effect that concession had on the polarity of the sentence, four different kinds of effect were established following Trvanac and Taboada (2012: 307): 'reversal', 'intensification', 'downtowning' and 'no change'. The most frequent effect is that of downtoning a positive, as reported in Table 16, which occurs mainly in negative reviews:

Table 16. Results on effect conveyed through *although*

Downtoning a positive	9	Downtoning a negative	5	Reversal of a negative	5	Intensifying a positive	4
Reversal of a positive	1	Intensifying a negative	1	No change	1		

(52)   Maggie Gyllenhaal delivers an excellent performance *although* she is not the
        scene-stealer many are saying. [M, no1]

What the writer in (52) does is to soften the positivity conveyed by the first clause with the introduction of the satellite. As in the concession with *but*, the less common effect in concession is that where no change takes place. Over the entire corpus there is only one instance where this effect occurs:

(53)   The design team had fun with the landscape, the houses, the trees, the cars, and
        everything under the sun (*although*, surprisingly, nothing above the sun). [M,
        no11]

In (53) there is no cue that might make a modification in the polarity of the sentence.

5.2.4.4. Discourse function

As explained in section 3.5 and 5.1.4.4, concessive constructions can be analysed according to three functions: 'convince the hearer', 'prevent false implicatures' and 'inform about surprising events'. Taking into account that the corpus of instances with *although* is smaller than that of *but*, the results gleaned are not very decisive. Nevertheless, as examined in cases with *but*, the least frequent function is that of informing about surprising events while the most recurrent were preventing false implicatures and convincing the hearer, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17. Results on functions of concession with *although*

Prevent false implicatures	16	Convince the hearer	8	Inform about surprising events	2

5.2.5. Conclusions on *although*

The findings of this study on *although* suggest that, in order to get a more detailed idea of the marker, it would be interesting to analyse a larger corpus. Nonetheless, some conclusions can be gathered:

1. *Although* is one of the typical concessive markers, but is less used than others which are atypical, yet still frequent (like *but*).

2. It appears chiefly in the evaluation stage in written reviews.

3. The satellite can be placed both in the beginning or in the end, and rarely in the middle.

4. In terms of *Appraisal Theory,* the main classifications according to attitude and engagement are appreciation and disclaim, respectively.

5. There is no preference about the polarity being negative or positive, but neutral polarity remains a rarity.

6. The least frequent discourse effect in constructions with *although* is 'no change'.

7. The main discourse function of this kind of construction is to prevent false implicatures.

6. Summary and conclusions

This paper has considered the role of concession in the argumentative genre, specifically the role of the concessive markers *but* and *although* in written reviews of books and films. Therefore, it was necessary to examine the theoretical background of such concession and written reviews. Firstly, the argumentative genre, and in particular written reviews were analysed in relation to concession. Secondly, a review of previous literature on concession was discussed. In this, concession was analysed with reference to its semantic features, its connection to other coherence relations (causal, conditional and opposite relations), its markers, its structure according to the *RST,* its discourse function and its pragmatic characteristics in consonance with *Appraisal Theory*. To this end, different examples (several taken from my corpus and others from the literature reviewed) were discussed.

In order to give a detailed explanation on the chosen concessive markers a corpus-based study was performed. It included the frequency of these markers, their position within the text and the concessive relation, their semantic meaning and their

pragmatic features (which included their evaluation, their polarity, their effect and their function in discourse).

The findings from this study have shown, firstly, that the most recurrent concessive marker is *but*. Furthermore, as claimed by Izutsu (2008), its main usage is the concessive. Secondly, it was found that the prototypical structure in concession is that of the satellite going in first position (as observed by Mann and Taboada, 2004-2014), specifically in the case of *but*. This is due to the fact that by situating the nucleus at the end, it gives the sentence a more emphatic tone, thus improving the argument. Besides, since the nucleus tends to be new information it usually goes at the end of the utterance. Nonetheless, several instances were found where relations with *although* can invert this structure and even (albeit rarely) place the satellite in middle position. Thirdly, the most frequent subtype of attitude in negative reviews is that of judgement, while in positive reviews it is that of appreciation. Turning to *Appraisal Theory* parameters, the prototypical classification of concession in terms of engagement is that of disclaim. Fourthly, in relation to polarity, the outcome was fairly predictable with negative reviews being defined by negative polarity and the positive reviews being defined by positive polarity. Talking about the effect that concessive relations have on polarity, in negative reviews the most common effect is that of downtoning a negative whilst in positive reviews it is that of the reversal of a negative. Lastly, the main functions of concession in the argumentative genre are preventing false implicatures and convincing the hearer of the speaker's arguments.

A further study is needed to examine this topic in a larger corpus and to look more closely at the concessive marker *although*. In addition, it would be interesting to expand the analysis so as to include other concessive markers such as *while*, *even, however* and *yet* that tend to cluster around the argumentative genre to be able to present more conclusive results and more farfetched conclusions. But it is to be hoped that this study may serve as a stepping-stone towards that end.

7. References

Amossy, R. (2005) 'The argumentative dimension of discourse'. In: F. van Eemeren and P. Houtlosser, ed., *Argumentation in Practice*, 1st ed. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 87-98.

Biber, D. (1999) *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. 1st ed. Harlow, England: Longman.

Crevels, M. (2000) 'Concessives on different semantic levels: A typological perspective'. In B. Kortmann and E. C. Traugott (eds.) *Topics in English Linguistics.* Vol. 33: Cause, Condition, Concession, Contrast: Cognitive and Discourse Perspectives. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 313-339.

Douven, I. & Verbrugge S. (2012) Indicatives, concessives, and evidential support. *Thinking & Reasoning*, 18 (4) 480-499.

Downing, A. & Locke, P. (2006) English grammar: A university course. London: Routledge.

Foolen, A. (1991) Polyfunctionality and the semantics of adversative conjunctions. *Multilingua* 10 (1/2) 79–92.

Ford, C. E. (2000) 'The treatment of contrasts in interaction'. In B. Kortmann and E. C. Traugott (eds.) *Topics in English Linguistics.* Vol. 33: Cause, Condition, Concession, Contrast: Cognitive and Discourse Perspectives. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 283-312.

Grote, B., Lenke, N. & Stede, M. (1997) Marking concessions in English and German. *Discourse Processes*, 24 (1) 87-117.

Hall, A. (2004). The meaning of but: A procedural reanalysis. UCL *Working Papers in Linguistics*, 16, 199-236.

Huddleston, R, Mittwoch, A., & Collins, P. (2002) 'The Clause: Adjuncts.' In Rodney Huddleston, Geoffrey K. Pullum et al. (eds.) The *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 663-784.

Izutsu, M. N. (2008) Contrast, concessive, and corrective: Toward a comprehensive study of opposition relations. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 40 (4) 646-675.

Jordan, M. P. (1998) The power of negation in English: Text, context and relevance. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 29 (6) 705-752.

König, E. (1985) On the history of concessive connectives in English. Diachronic and synchronic evidence. *Lingua*, 66 (1) 1-19.

König, E. (1994) 'Concessive clauses.' In R. E. Asher (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics,* Oxford: Pergamon, 679-681.

König, E. and Siemund, P. (2000) 'Causal and concessive clauses: Formal and semantic relations.' In B. Kortmann and E. C. Traugott (eds.) *Topics in English Linguistics.* Vol. 33: Cause, Condition, Concession, Contrast: Cognitive and Discourse Perspectives. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 341-360.

Lakoff, R. T. (1971) 'If's, and's, but's about conjunction.' In Charles J. Fillmore and D. Terence Langendoen (eds.) *Studies in linguistic semantics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 114-149.

Livnat, Z. (2012) *Dialogue, Science and Academic Writing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, coll. Dialogue Studies 13.

Mann, W. & Taboada, M. (2004-2014). *Rhetorical Structure Theory*. [online] Simon Fraser University. Available at: http://www.sfu.ca/rst/01intro/intro.html [Accessed 25 May 2014]

Matos Mendonça, M. (1998). Argumentative structures and the functions of the press in music reviews. *Fragmentos*, 7 (2) 105-112.

Olmos, S. & Ahern, A. (2009) Contrast and propositional attitude: A relevance theoretic analysis of contrast connectives in Spanish and English. *Lingua*, 119 (1) 51-66.

Quirk, R. et al. (2008) 'Syntactic and semantic functions of subordinate clauses.' In *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman, 1045-1146.

Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (1973) 'The complex sentence.' In: *A university grammar of English*. London: Longman, 309-346.

Rudolph, E. (1996) *Contrast. Adversative and Concessive Expressions on Sentence and Text Level*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Salkie, R. and Oates, S. (1999) Contrast and concession in French and English. *Languages in Contrast*, 2 (1) 27-56.

Sidiropoulou, M. (1992) On the connective although. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 17 (3) 201-221.

Taboada, M. (2011) Stages in an online review genre. *Text & Talk-An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language, Discourse & Communication Studies*, 31 (2) 247-269.

Taboada, M. & Gómez-González M. A. (2012) Discourse markers and coherence relations: Comparison across markers, languages and modalities. *Linguistics and the Human Sciences*, 6 (1-3) 17-41.

Taboada, M., Carretero, M. & Hinnell, J. (to appear) Loving and hating the movies in English, German and Spanish. *Languages in Contrast*.

Trvanac, R. and Taboada, M. (2012) The contribution of nonveridical rhetorical relations to evaluation in discourse. *Language Sciences*, 34 (3) 301-318.

Vergaro, C. (2008) On the pragmatics of concessive constructions in Italian and English business letter discourse. *Multilingua-Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*, 27 (3) 255--283.

Verhagen, A. (2000) 'Concession implies causality, though in some other space.' In B. Kortmann and E. C. Traugott (eds.) *Topics in English Linguistics.* Vol. 33: Cause, Condition, Concession, Contrast: Cognitive and Discourse Perspectives. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 361-380.

White, P. R. R. (2012) *The Appraisal website*. Available from: <www.grammatics.com/appraisal/index.html>. [Accessed 07/06/2014]