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Tu pełna zgoda, ale... Investigating Concessive Marking in Spoken Polish

Abstract

The action-oriented concept of Concession seems not to have received any attention by discourse analysts studying Polish conversational data. It is therefore the aim of this article to demonstrate the usefulness of this analytical model in discourse-pragmatic studies of spoken Polish and to open a forum for discussion on how the Concessive relation – one of the organising principles of spoken interaction and text-forming strategies in written communication – is realised by Polish speakers in various communicative settings. Towards this end, the study focuses on common ways of marking acknowledgments and rebuttals attested by real-life data (private conversations and radio talk) and it demonstrates patterns which are realised by speakers negotiating meaning in informal and semi-formal contexts. The analysis clearly shows that, trying to mitigate the possible negative effect of disagreement, Poles usually follow the *tak, ale* schema, even though disagreement-agreement patterns are attested as well. As regards the type of marking, it is found that while countermoves are associated predominantly with *ale*, acknowledgments are cued by modal adverbs, evaluative adjectives, deixis, prosody and repetition. Finally, it is concluded that application of the interactional model of Concession in contrastive analyses of Polish and English can not only further discourse analysts' understanding of the organisation of spoken interaction, but it can also have a bearing on language instruction and acquisition.

Keywords

Concession, Concessive markers, mitigation, spoken Polish

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł wskazuje na przydatność dialogicznego modelu koncesyjności – zakładającego sekwencyjne występowanie twierdzeń, potwierdzeń i kontrtwierdzeń – jako narzędzia opisu mówionej polszczyzny. Jego celem jest ponadto otwarcie dyskusji na temat sposobu, w jaki Polacy realizują wzmiankowaną relację w różnych kontekstach komunikacyjnych. W polu zainteresowania znalazły się więc znaczniki sygnalizujące potwierdzenia i kontrtwierdzenia, a także schematy, zgodnie z którymi mówiący negocjują znaczenia podczas interakcji. W analizie wykorzystano autentyczne przykłady użycia, w tym rozmowy prywatne oraz audycje radiowe. Na podstawie tych danych wykazano, że rozmówcy, którzy próbują złagodzić możliwy niepożądany skutek niezgody czy kontrtwierdzenia, często realizują schemat *tak, ale* (zgoda–niezgoda), choć odnotowano także odwrócone

schematy typu niezgoda–zgoda. W odniesieniu do rodzajów znaczników zauważono, że podczas gdy kontrtwierdzenia są sygnalizowane głównie przez *ale*, potwierdzenia współwystępują z przysłówkami modalnymi, przymiotnikami wartościującymi, znacznikami deiktycznymi, elementami prozodycznymi oraz powtórzeniami. Autorka sugeruje ponadto, iż zastosowanie interakcyjnego modelu koncesywności w badaniach kontrastywnych nad językiem polskim i angielskim może pozwolić nie tylko na zgłębienie wiedzy o organizacji języka mówionego, lecz także mieć zastosowanie w nauczaniu języka angielskiego.

Słowa kluczowe

koncesywność, mówiona polszczyzna, relacja przyzwolenia, złagodzenie wypowiedzi, znaczniki koncesywności

Introduction

Though not a novel mode of describing English talk-in-interaction, the action-oriented concept of Concession¹ seems not to have received any attention by discourse analysts studying Polish conversational data.² And yet it can be a useful analytical tool facilitating description of recurrent interactional schemata and markers associated with mitigated disagreement, that is the act of conceding claims advanced by the interlocutor. This being the case, this article sets out, firstly, to demonstrate that the dialogic model of Concession can be successfully applied in analyses of spoken Polish and, secondly, to show that the Concessive relation, as realised in contemporary Polish, may be cued by a wide range of devices, which do not necessarily fall within the category of markers traditionally described as concessive (such as *choć* and *choćby*).³ Thus, since the interactional concept of Concession has proved successful in descriptions of spoken English, it seems that it may well be applied in studies of Polish conversational data, especially given that both Polish and English are Indo-European languages and that concessivity itself appears to be a ubiquitous and universal feature of communication,⁴ which, as suggested by Rudolph (1996: 385), might even be considered “the most interesting achievement of human intellect.”

¹ Whenever the words “Concession” and “Concessive” are capitalised, they refer to the discourse-pragmatic relation as defined by Barth-Weingarten (2003). The lower-case words “concession” and “concessive,” by contrast, denote the traditional semantic-syntactic relation.

² To the best of my knowledge.

³ As attested by frequency counts, *choć* is the primary concessive marker in Polish, while secondary markers include: *choćaby*, *choćby*, *choć*, *aczkolwiek*, *jakkolwiek*, *(po)mimo że/iż*, *acz*, *(po)mimo to*, *jednak(że)*, *niemniej*, *ale*, *lecz* and *a* (Grochowski 2006).

⁴ For a typological study of concession see Crevels (2000).

Interactional model of Concession

In its essence, the Concessive relation is conceived as a tripartite sequence of moves which are realised interactionally (for a detailed description of the model see Couper-Kuhlen 2000 and Barth-Weingarten 2003). To use the authors' (Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 1999: 30) words, the Concessive pattern involves three steps: "first, a move which states something or makes a point; second, a conceding move which acknowledges the validity of this statement or point; and third a countermove which claims the validity of some potentially incompatible statement or point." Prototypically, the initial statement is made by Speaker A, whereas the conceding and the countering are carried out by Speaker B, as shown in Figure 1.⁵

Speaker	Move	Realisation ⁶
A:	X (claim)	<i>You see, this is the problem with the police these days: lack of basic education. It's spelled 'wrong' not 'calm'.</i>
B:	X' (acknowledgment)	<i>Yes, yes, we are all stupid thugs, I know.</i>
B:	Y (counterclaim)	<i>Except, I've truly never met a stupid bobby. I've met some unpleasant ones, but never one who I thought was thick, because you can't do this job if you're thick.</i>

Figure 1. Cardinal Concessive schema

It should also be noted that alongside extensions of the core schema (i.e. sequences comprising a greater number of moves), variation in the number of interactants is possible too. Consider, for instance, Figure 2 illustrating a Monadic schema, where both the acknowledgment and the counterclaim are produced by the same speaker.

Speaker	Move	Realisation
	0 (implied claim)	[The article on the improvement of higher education in the UK which is being commented on by the interactants includes noteworthy information regarding the matter in hand.]
A:	X' (acknowledgment)	<i>There are some good and valid points about improving the quality of HE,</i>

⁵ A similar approach is adopted by Antaki and Wetherell (1999), who recognise a three-part structure in what they call "show concessions," consisting of a proposition-concession-reprise triad.

⁶ The instances of the realisation of Concession in English shown in Figures 1–3 come from the dataset compiled for the purposes of the analysis in Szczyrbak (2011). Even though the data typify asynchronous online communication, they reveal similar Concessive patterns to those found in spoken English.

Speaker	Move	Realisation
A:	Y (counterclaim)	<i>but no discussion of the Coalition's own policy, which is merely glossed over, presumably because no more money could be found, and it must therefore be accepted as the will of Parliament, which is unfortunately the current position.</i>

Figure 2. Monadic Concessive schema

Further, unlike monadic schemata, in the case of which the initial claim is not explicitly stated and can only be inferred, in Pseudo-dyadic patterns, as in Figure 3, the same speaker produces all the three moves, including the initial claim which triggers off the interactional exchange.

Speaker	Move	Realisation
A:	X (claim)	<i>I don't think it is patronising to suggest things are taken out of context, as I see it happen time and again.</i>
A:	X' (acknowledgment)	<i>I'm not saying that it happens in every case where the police are portrayed in a negative light,</i>
A:	Y (counterclaim)	<i>only that sometimes bits get edited out to make things look worse than they are.</i>

Figure 3. Pseudo-dyadic Concessive schema

Needless to say, it is only after the accompanying stretches of talk are analysed that a given sequence of moves can be described as Concessive⁷ and, further, for the Concessive relation to be realised, both acknowledgments and counters must be recognised, as acknowledgments alone do not constitute a complete schema.⁸ It might also be mentioned that the length of moves varies, since these can be realised as paragraphs, sentences, clauses, single words, or just syllables.

Next comes the issue of Concessive marking, constituting the main focus of the present study. Interestingly, unlike the semantic-syntactic approach (represented, for instance, by Grochowski 1976, 1982, 2006; König 1988, 1989, 1991; Rudolph 1996; Di Meola 1998; Crevels 2000; Iten 1998, 2000 and König and Siemund 2000), according to which interclausal relations are classified as concessive based on a fixed set of markers (e.g. *chociaż/choćby* in Polish, *even though/although* in English or *obwohl* in German), marking associated with the interactional model comprises various categories of signals and therefore

⁷ Cf. the next-turn proof procedure in Conversation Analysis.

⁸ Interestingly, in some cases, acknowledgments are not signalled by explicit markers and yet they can be reconstructed from the argumentative schema, as will be explained further in the article.

defies straightforward classification. To substantiate the above claim, in the remainder of the article I will demonstrate that Polish speakers (just as users of English), follow similar interactional schemata, and, further, that Concessive markers found in conversational Polish (similarly to spoken English) do not constitute a homogenous set, but rather, that they subsume signals not typically thought of as concessive.

3. Data and methodology

In the analysis I draw on authentic spoken data representing private talk and media discourse, including conversations I heard among my friends and relatives alongside excerpts from radio discussions and interviews, collected between September 2013 and May 2014. Following my experience of analysing Concessive marking in English and my native speaker intuition regarding Polish, I collected examples (between 10 and 20 in the respective categories analysed in this paper)⁹ which, in my view, reflect common agreement-disagreement configurations which can be observed among Polish speakers in everyday communication. It should be noted, however, that since the analysis is qualitative, the data used in the study are not to be viewed as representative of spoken Polish in general. Rather, they are used to demonstrate possible variation in interactional Concessive signalling, which clearly differs from the semantic-syntactic description of interclausal concessive marking.

As regards methodology, data analysis was carried out against the background of several analytical approaches converging with the interactional model of Concession discussed above. Naturally, the fundamental assumption which underlies the current study is that when interacting, speakers engage in the negotiation of meaning or, as explained by Grice (1975) in the co-operative principle, that they contribute to the talk exchange when it is required and for the purpose of that exchange. The study also draws on the idea of *mitigation* or *mitigated disagreement*, discussed, for instance, in Fraser (1980), Locher (2004) and Glaser (2009), given that markers found in acknowledgments can rightly be described as “mitigators.” Also Hyland’s (1995, 1996, 1998) concept of *hedges* and *hedging*, i.e. linguistic devices or strategies intended to lessen the possible negative effect that the dispreferred speech act of disagreement might have on the listener (cf. Pomerantz 1984, 1986) appears to be useful for describing acts of acknowledgment, “softening” the pragmatic force of the accompanying counterclaims. Likewise, the “dynamic” approach to adverbs, as proposed by Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer (2007), suits the purposes of this study, since many of the signals turn out to be modal adverbs used to

⁹ Except for the category of multimodal marking, where only two examples were found.

background (i.e. concede) alternative viewpoints. As the researchers hold, “alternative viewpoints” need not be explicitly stated; instead, they can be evoked or anticipated arguments¹⁰ which are traceable in the actual talk. That is why, they argue, modal adverbs should be regarded as vehicles for interpersonal meanings and, consequently, interpreted in the context of other utterances, whether real or anticipated. Last but not least, overlapping with the above-mentioned approaches, the broader notion of *stance*, as defined by du Bois (2007), should necessarily be mentioned among the concepts underpinning this study too. As the linguist contends, stance is to be conceived not as a static construct, but rather as an interactional phenomenon. In his words, “stance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field” (du Bois 2007: 163). Conveniently, Concessive schemata operate as discursive mechanisms which are particularly useful for the positioning of subjects and the evaluation of objects, which, more often than not, is possible thanks to the recruitment of a number of markers enabling speakers to arrive at a coherent interpretation of the moves produced by their interlocutors.

4. Concessive marking in spoken Polish

Descriptions of primary concessive markers in contemporary Polish can be found in previous studies dealing with the said relation (see, e.g., Pisarkowa 1974; Grochowski 1976, 1982, 2006). However, to date, no research into spoken Polish has drawn on the interactional model linked to a variety of markers and co-occurrence patterns. In light of the foregoing, an attempt at describing ways in which Polish speakers mitigate disagreement by acknowledging opposing standpoints is by all means justified, even more so given that earlier descriptions of Polish concessive markers rely on invented examples rather than authentic data. This being the case, the following sections illustrate a wide range of Concessive markers found in spoken Polish as well as their positional mobility and functional flexibility. As the data indicate, among individual categories of devices, adverbs plainly come to the fore as important signals introducing the acknowledging move, while other choices include adjectives, deictic expressions, repetition, prosody or even image. As will be shown, with regard to markers associated with rebuttals, *ale* is clearly preferred, although

¹⁰ In the same vein, representing the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, van Eemeren *et al.* (2007: 10) hold that “even if the role of the antagonist is not actively filled, it is possible to analyse the protagonist’s argument as a contribution to a critical discussion intended to meet (possible) doubts or criticism.”

a, *tylko* and the formal *aczkolwiek* are found in this role too. Predictably, the data clearly mirror speakers' preference for the prototypical agreement-disagreement pattern (see, e.g., (1)), even though reversed disagreement-agreement configurations are also noted (as in (19)).

That said, in the following real-life examples I will demonstrate various patterns of interaction and, more precisely, ways in which Poles, in informal or semi-formal contexts, signal alignment with their opponents' views in order to advance their own arguments.

4.1. *Tak, ale* schema

To start with, (1) and (2) below exemplify the *tak, ale* schema (reflective of the *yes, but* pattern in English) including the agreement markers *dobra* and *zgoda*, which might as well be substituted by *tak*, *okej* or *jasne*, to name but a few devices which are used by Poles to say "yes."¹¹ For instance, the conversation in (1) took place among two brothers, A and B. Brother A is accusing Brother B that he hit him. Brother B unwillingly admits that it is true that he touched Brother A (*Dobra, dotknąłem cię*), but at the same time he denies having hit him (*ale cię nie uderzyłem!*).

(1)

A:	X	<i>Zostaw mnie! Uderzyłeś mnie!</i>	<i>Leave me alone! You hit me!</i>
B:	X'	<i>Dobra, dotknąłem cię,</i>	<i>OK, I touched you.</i>
B:	Y	<i>ale cię nie uderzyłem!</i>	<i>but I didn't hit you.</i> ¹²

A similar pattern emerges from (2), where two female adults are discussing children's eating habits. Speaker A first declares her position (*Dzieci nie powinny...*), with which Speaker B seemingly agrees (*Zgoda*), but which she rebuts in the following move (*tylko że jeśli będziesz...*).¹²

(2)

A:	X	<i>Dzieci nie powinny jeść tak dużo słodyczy. Ja ustalam z nimi pewne zasady, a babcie ciągle je łamią!</i>	<i>Kids shouldn't eat so many sweets. I set certain rules with them, and the grandmas are breaking them!</i>
B:	X'	<i>Zgoda,</i>	<i>OK,</i>
B:	Y	<i>tylko że jeśli będziesz im czegoś zabraniać, to one tym bardziej będą chciały to jeść.</i>	<i>but if you don't let them eat something, they will want it even more.</i>

¹¹ Similar devices are recognised by Válková (2013: 67) in the Czech language. In her study of agreement and disagreement markers, she notes, for instance, words like *ano*, *ovšem*; *jasně*, *no jo* or *tak*, *tak*, operating as functional equivalents of the English confirmatory *Ah yes*.

¹² All the translations into English are mine.

While the foregoing examples illustrate the prototypical agreement-disagreement pattern involving two interlocutors, (3) and (4) exemplify the Pseudo-dyadic schema realised by one speaker. In both instances, unlike in the Cardinal schema, claims, acknowledgments and counterclaims are produced by the same person, engaged in what might be referred to as a dialogue in a monologue. Note, for instance, the acknowledgments produced by the speaker in (3). First, the girl states that she can't lose weight (*Nie mogę schudnąć*). Next, to justify her claim, she admits to being able to eat an entire chocolate bar (*Fakt, że potrafię zjeść całą czekoladę*), only to reject this proposition saying that she mostly eats lettuce (*ale przecież jem głównie sałatę*), from which it is to be inferred that she should be losing weight after all.

(3)

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| A: | X | <i>Nie mogę schudnąć.</i> | <i>I can't lose weight.</i> |
| A: | X' | <i>Fakt, że potrafię zjeść całą czekoladę,</i> | <i>True, I can eat an entire chocolate bar,</i> |
| A: | Y | <i>ale przecież jem głównie sałatę.</i> | <i>but otherwise I eat mostly lettuce.</i> |

An analogous pattern is shown in (4), where, in a radio interview, the speaker notes that one of Polish politicians did not criticise his party folks (*Ryszard Kalisz nie krytykował swoich partyjnych kolegów*). He then concedes a possible objection which might be voiced by his interlocutor (though it is never explicitly stated) asserting that even if Ryszard Kalisz did criticise his party folks (*a przynajmniej jeśli*), the criticism was brief (*to krótko*). From this it follows that Polish speakers follow Pseudo-dyadic patterns and, more precisely, that they anticipate possible objections and pre-emptively reject them.

(4)

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|----|----|---|---|
| A: | X | <i>Ryszard Kalisz nie krytykował swoich partyjnych kolegów,</i> | <i>Ryszard Kalisz didn't criticise his party folks,</i> |
| A: | X' | <i>a przynajmniej jeśli,</i> | <i>and even if he did,</i> |
| A: | Y | <i>to krótko.</i> | <i>it was brief.</i> |

4.2. Modal adverbs and evaluative adjectives

Anticipatory rebuttal aside, no discussion of Concessive marking would be complete, were it not for an analysis of the recruitment of modal adverbs associated with a number of interpersonal functions. To begin with, worth looking at are *oczywiście* and *rzeczywiście*, two argumentatively-oriented adverbs which also resurface in Polish conversational data. As can be noted in (5), *oczywiście*¹³ is employed by Speaker B in order to mark alignment (*Oczywiście*,

¹³ Cf. Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer's (2007: 201–202) findings which reveal that of course, the English counterpart of *oczywiście*, is by far the most frequent modal adverb of cer-

to nie ulega wątpliwości) with Speaker B's assertion (*To, co zrobiła posłanka było haniebane*). At the same time, in the subsequent move, Speaker B produces a counterclaim, in an attempt to justify the MP's conduct (*tylko że nie możemy zapominać o kontekście całej afery*).

(5)

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| A: | X | <i>To, co zrobiła posłanka, było haniebane.</i> | <i>What this MP did was disgraceful.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Oczywiście, to nie ulega wątpliwości,</i> | <i>Of course, there is no doubt about that,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>tylko że nie możemy zapominać o kontekście całej afery.</i> | <i>but we may not forget about the context of this scandal.</i> |

Likewise in (6), *rzeczywiście* is used by Speaker B to mark solidarity and partial agreement (*Coś w tym jest. Dlatego rzeczywiście propaganda była wykorzystywana do takich celów*) with Speaker A's statement (*W ten sposób próbowano po prostu wpłynąć na zmianę polityki wydawniczej w kraju.*).¹⁴ Thus, both the as-everybody-knows-meaning of *oczywiście* in (5) and the mitigating function of *rzeczywiście* in (6) attest to the dialogicity of these adverbs and, consequently, their potential to background alternative standpoints with a view to increasing the rhetorical force of counterarguments.

(6)

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|----|----|---|---|
| A: | X | <i>W ten sposób próbowano po prostu wpłynąć na zmianę polityki wydawniczej w kraju.</i> | <i>In this way they were trying to bring about a change in the country's publishing policy.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Coś w tym jest. Dlatego rzeczywiście propaganda była wykorzystywana do takich celów,</i> | <i>There is some truth in it. That's why propaganda was indeed used for such purposes,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale też wydaje mi się, choć to moje prywatne zdanie, że...</i> | <i>but on the other hand, it seems to me, even though it's my own view, that...</i> |

It might also be mentioned that counterclaims need not be in declarative mood. Instead, they can be interrogatives, as illustrated by the Concessive sequence in (7).¹⁵ Here, again, the adverb *rzeczywiście* is used to lessen the pragmatic force of the upcoming countermove, in which the speaker suggests defiantly that the EU is, in fact, the only solution as far as the issue of CO₂ emissions is concerned (*tylko jeśli nie Unia, to kto?*).

tainty in spoken data (it is particularly common in demonstrations, broadcast interviews, non-broadcast speeches and parliamentary debates).

¹⁴ Cf. Aijmer's (2007) discussion on the multiple functions of *indeed* in English.

¹⁵ For a detailed classification of claims (including assertory, rhetorical and questory questions) see Łyda (2007: 166).

(7)

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| A: | Y | <i>Inne kraje nie redukują emisji CO₂ zgodnie z zaleceniami Unii.</i> | <i>Other countries aren't reducing their CO₂ emissions in accordance with EU guidelines.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Rzeczywiście jest tak, jak Pan mówi,</i> | <i>Indeed, it is as you are saying,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>tylko jeśli nie Unia, to kto?</i> | <i>but if not the EU, then who?</i> |

Grouped together with modal adverbs for the purposes of this study, evaluative adjectives too prove useful in cuing acknowledgments. Consider the example in (8) below, in which the adjective *celna* operates as an agreement marker. In this situation the speaker admits that his interlocutor's opinion is justified, while, at the same time, offering an alternative viewpoint mitigated by the hedge *trochę*, probably in an attempt to lessen the possible negative effect of the counterclaim.

(8)

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|--|
| A: | X | <i>Trzeba oddzielić nadawcę od treści.</i> | <i>We must differentiate between the author and the message.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Celna uwaga,</i> | <i>It's a valid point,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale ja na przykład widzę to trochę inaczej.</i> | <i>but I personally see it a bit differently.</i> |

4.3. Deixis and prosody

An interesting analytical perspective which might be introduced at this point of the discussion is that proposed by Discourse Space Theory (Chilton 2004, 2005), conceptualising discourse as space stretching along the axes of time, space and modality. As DST has it, whatever is placed at the deictic centre is close, and as such, considered to be true (and morally right) and whatever is found at the far end of one of the axes is distant and thus untrue (or morally wrong).¹⁶ Situated within this framework, *to* (*this*) and *tu* (*here*) in the acknowledging moves in (9) and (10) can be interpreted as an invitation for the interlocutor to conceptualise agreement as located at the deictic centre and disagreement as placed at the far end of one of the axes.¹⁷ Interestingly, however, the example in (9) clearly shows that “closeness” and the consequent “rightness” can be signalled both in acknowledgments (*to jest prawda*) and

¹⁶ That deixis plays an important role in positioning discourse participants has already been demonstrated in studies of political (e.g. Chilton 2004; Dontcheva-Navratilova 2011) and legal discourse (Szczyrbak 2014).

¹⁷ Note, however, that while it is perfectly natural to say *You've got a point there, but I'm of a different opinion* in English, its literal translation into Polish **Tam masz rację, ale ja mam odmienne zdanie* would sound rather unnatural. On the other hand, *Tu/W tym miejscu się zgadzam, ale mam odmienne zdanie co do...* could easily be rendered in English as *Here's where I agree with you, but I'm of a different opinion as regards...*

rebuttals (*ale także to...*), suggesting that in the speaker's view both arguments are equally valid and justified.

(9)

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| A: | X | <i>Gry komputerowe powodują, że dzieci są rozkojarzone.</i> | <i>Computer games distract children.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i><u>To</u> jest prawda,</i> | <i><u>This</u> is true,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale także <u>to</u>, że dzięki nim dzieci uczą się szybko podejmować decyzje.</i> | <i>but <u>this</u> is also true that thanks to them kids learn how to make quick decisions.</i> |

In (10), conversely, the acknowledgment contains a proximal deictic marker (*tu pełna zgoda*), whereas the counterclaim refers to “the previous issue,” which would be placed at the far end of the time axis, thus suggesting that the speaker is trying to distance himself from his interlocutor's claim.

(10)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|
| A: | X | <i>Należałoby się dokładniej przyrzeć wydatkom na ten cel, czy rzeczywiście były uzasadnione.</i> | <i>We should look into this expenditure, whether it was really justified.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i><u>Tu</u> pełna zgoda,</i> | <i><u>Here's</u> where I totally agree,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale co do <u>poprzedniej</u> kwestii, to mam inne zdanie.</i> | <i>but as regards the <u>previous</u> issue, I am of a different opinion.</i> |

Invariably linked to stressing the “here” and “now” in argumentation are certainly intonational cues. Accordingly, the examples in (9) and (10) are to be interpreted on the basis of their prosodic contours together with contextual information provided by the conversational frame. By the same token, the act of conceding found in the acknowledgment in (11) is realised thanks to the stress put on the word *są* marking alignment with the claim voiced by Speaker A.¹⁸

(11)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|--|
| A: | Y | <i>Wyborcy zwracają uwagę na takie rzeczy jak uśmiech kandydata czy jego barwa głosu.</i> | <i>Voters take notice of things like the candidate's smile or the tone of his voice.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Te elementy, o których Pani redaktor mówi <u>są</u> dostrzegane przez wyborców,</i> | <i>The elements that you mention <u>are</u> recognised by voters,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale tylko przez część wyborców.</i> | <i>but only by some of them.</i> |

¹⁸ However revealing, prosodic marking will not be fully developed here, although it warrants a closer examination and a study in its own right.

4.4. Partitioning

Equally meaningful to deixis and prosodic cues referred to above, the phenomenon of “partitioning” deserves a mention as well. As held by Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2000: 386), “speakers very often accomplish conceding by acknowledging only part of what the other speaker has said.” Such is the case with the example shown in (12) below, where the speaker partly agrees with their interlocutor’s proposition (*Jeśli chodzi o liczbę i rangę zabytków, to tak*) and partly disagrees (*ale jeśli chodzi o atmosferę miasta, to zdecydowanie wolę Sienę!*). As can be seen in this situation, partitioning is a useful argumentative tactic, neatly illustrating both Grice’s (1975) co-operative principle and Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness strategies, intended to protect the interlocutor’s face by acknowledging partial validity of their claims.

(12)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|--|
| A: | X | <i>Myszę, że Florencja jest o wiele ciekawsza od Sieny.</i> | <i>I think Florence is far more interesting than Siena.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Jeśli chodzi o liczbę i rangę zabytków, to tak,</i> | <i>As regards the number and calibre of monuments, it's true,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale jeśli chodzi o atmosferę miasta, to zdecydowanie wolę Sienę!</i> | <i>but with regard to the city atmosphere, I very much prefer Siena!</i> |

4.5. Repetition

Interesting observations can also be made with regard to the use of repetition with the aim of signalling alignment. The first thing to note is that speakers either “echo” their interlocutors’ words once, as in (13) and (14), or twice, as in (15). Clearly, in a solidarity-oriented move in (13), Speaker B repeats one of the verbs (*mogą*) uttered by Speaker A to support the view that children see death even when they watch the news (*Dzieci mogą też mieć styczność ze śmiercią...*). Yet, in the final move, Speaker B suggests that it is up to the parents to decide how much death-related information their children are exposed to (*aczkolwiek rodzice powinni...*).

(13)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|
| A: | X | <i>Dzieci mogą też mieć styczność ze śmiercią oglądając wiadomości, więc nie da się jej całkowicie wyeliminować z ich życia.</i> | <i>Children can also come into contact with death when watching the news, so it is not possible to eliminate it entirely from their lives.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Mogą,</i> | <i>They can;</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>aczkolwiek rodzice powinni dawkować tego typu informacje.</i> | <i>however, it is up to their parents to decide how much death-related information is provided (to them).</i> |

In a similar vein, (14) exemplifies a situation, where a speaker repeats his interlocutor's words (*nie wszystkie*) to say "yes" before ultimately saying "no" (*ale znaczna część*). Then again, such interpretation is possible only in the context of the whole conversational frame; otherwise, out of context, it would be rather unlikely to interpret the words *nie wszystkie* and *ale znaczna część* as marking agreement and disagreement, respectively.

(14)

- | | | | |
|----|----|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A: | Y | <i>Kazania głoszą nienawiść.</i> | <i>Sermons teach hatred.</i> |
| B: | X | <i>No, nie wszystkie...</i> | <i>Well, not all of them...</i> |
| A: | X' | <i>Nie wszystkie,</i> | <i>Not all of them,</i> |
| A: | Y | <i>ale znaczna część.</i> | <i>but a great share of them.</i> |

To take another example, (15) demonstrates that Polish speakers repeat, perhaps for greater emphasis, the same words twice when they acknowledge their interlocutor's argument. In the discussion about the length of the term in office, for instance, the speaker says *długa, długa* (*long, long*) to admit that it is a rather long period.

(15)

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| A: | X | <i>Kadencja trwa do 2019 r. To jest całkiem długa perspektywa.</i> | <i>The term of office expires in 2019. It is quite a long period.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Długa, długa,</i> | <i>Long, long,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale nie trwa wiecznie.</i> | <i>but it doesn't last forever.</i> |

In addition to the examples cited above, one more interactional pattern involving repetition deserves a short reflection. As the data bear out, Poles repeat their own words (it seems to apply to nouns only), when they want to acknowledge their interlocutor's point. Note, for example, the acknowledging move in (16), where, in an elliptical construction, the speaker repeats the noun "joke" (*żarty żartami*), which might literally be translated as "jokes (are) jokes" or "jokes (may be) jokes," but which would more likely be rendered in idiomatic English as "joking aside" (this, however, is not followed by any contrastive marker and requires an asyndetic connection).¹⁹ In this move, Speaker B aligns with Speaker A who is trying to ridicule the cost refund policy of the National Healthcare Authority, but in the subsequent counter he introduces

¹⁹ I noted a similar pattern that might also be interpreted as Concessive: (X') [OK] *My tu sobie żartujemy*, (Y) *a badania rzeczywiście wykazały, że...* ((X') [OK] *We are joking here*, (Y) *but research has indeed shown that...*). Even though at first sight the declarative *my to sobie żartujemy* does not appear to be an acknowledgment, in the context of the ongoing exchange (where it prefaces contrast), it may rightly be interpreted as: *OK, I agree with you that this kind of research may appear funny, [but it has produced some tangible results].*

a “potentially incompatible statement” saying that the problem of refunding costs remains unresolved.²⁰

(16)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|
| A: | X | <i>Zatem może NFZ pokryje również koszty wakacji?</i> | <i>So maybe the National Healthcare Authority will also cover the cost of holidays?</i> |
| B: | X' | Żarty żartami, | Joking aside, |
| B: | Y | <i>a problem refundacji pozostaje nierozwiązany.</i> | <i>the problem of refunding costs remains unresolved.</i> |

4.6. Implied marking

As mentioned at the beginning of the article, individual Concessive moves do not need to be overtly marked. To support this claim, the examples in (17) and (18) demonstrate how acknowledgments can be easily reconstructed within the overall conversational frame. In the first of the two instances, Speaker A is talking about methods of bringing up children, claiming that our grandmas brought up children their way and that we bring up children our way, while Speaker B, apparently accepting the above proposition, states that one thing remains unchanged, namely the fact that the most important thing is to love one's children.

(17)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|
| A: | X | <i>Nasze babki inaczej wychowywały dzieci, my inaczej wychowujemy dzieci.</i> | <i>Our grandmas brought up children their way, we bring up children our way.</i> |
| B: | X' | [Tak] | [Yes] |
| B: | Y | <i>Ale jedno się nie zmienia. Najważniejsze jest, aby kochać dzieci.</i> | <i>But one thing doesn't change. The most important thing is to love your children.</i> |

In the latter example, in turn, Speaker A starts off the exchange saying that ignorance cannot be tolerated. In response to that, Speaker B claims that some flexibility is called for; however, we may read between the lines that he partly accepts the point advanced by his interlocutor. Oddly enough, both the implied confirmatory *tak* in (17) and the projected negative *nie można* in (18) are to be interpreted as alignment, that is as saying “I agree with you.”

²⁰ The above observations invite more in-depth investigations of various syntactic realisations and pragmatic meanings of repetition in spoken Polish, especially as its use seems to differ from that in spoken English.

(18)

- | | | | |
|----|----|--|--|
| A: | X | <i>Nie można tolerować takiej ignorancji.</i> | <i>Such ignorance cannot be tolerated.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>[Nie można]</i> | <i>[It cannot]</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>Ale przecież trzeba być trochę elastycznym.</i> | <i>But we need to show some flexibility.</i> |

4.7. Multifunctionality of marking

Relevant to the current discussion on Concessive markers, both overt and implicit, is the question of their multifunctionality, which is to be observed whenever the same signals cue either acknowledgments or rebuttals, depending on the arrangement of moves. A case in point is *ale*, which typically signals counterclaims, but which in reversed schemata introduces acknowledgments, as in (19), where the speaker seemingly agrees with the interlocutor only to back down in the following move (*ale zgoda, można ...*). What is more, when *ale* is used in this function, it tends to co-occur with other agreement markers (see the use of *zgoda, można*). Also worthy of note is the fact that in reversed patterns counterclaims lack overt marking and as such, they can be interpreted as counterclaims only in the context of the whole conversational frame.

(19)

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|----|----|---|--|
| A: | X | <i>Ta rzeźba przywodzi na myśl boskie dzieło stworzenia.</i> | <i>This sculpture makes you think of the divine act of creation.</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>Mnie się to kojarzy z czymś bardziej przyziemnym, instrumentalnym,</i> | <i>Well, I associate it with something more down-to-earth, something instrumental,</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>ale zgoda, można to również w ten sposób interpretować.</i> | <i>but all right, we may interpret it in this way.</i> |

Positional mobility can, on the other hand, be seen in (20), where the agreement marker *to prawda* signalling the acknowledgment is used by Speaker B at the end of the move, rather than at its beginning. Again, this statement can be interpreted as an act of conceding only in the context of what follows it, i.e. the counterclaim that the situation created by Putin, however grave, is not identical with the circumstances in which WWI broke out.

(20)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|--|
| A: | X | <i>Mamy teraz wojnę w Europie, którą rozpoczął Putin.</i> | <i>Now we're having a war in Europe, which was started by Putin.</i> |
| B: | X' | <i>Mamy problem z Putinem, to prawda,</i> | <i>We have a problem with Putin, it's true,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale nie jest to sytuacja taka jak w wypadku pierwszej wojny światowej.</i> | <i>but it is not a situation like that in the case of WWI.</i> |

4.8. Multimodal marking

The last observation concerns advertising discourse and it has been inspired by a billboard encouraging viewers to buy a glossy men's magazine. In this instance (21), we see that even an imperative can be interpreted as an act of acknowledging an imaginary speaker's potential objection. What is more, even though the agreement marker is absent, it is strongly projected by the context, and as such, it can be reconstructed by the viewer. Further still, the above interpretation would not be possible, were it not for the accompanying image showing a bald man with a beard and a moustache, on the one hand, and a tie and a suit, on the other.²¹ Thus, enriched by the interplay of word and image, the advertisement seems to be saying that you may choose your way of living, even if it entails rejecting the business dress code and being adventurous and non-conformist. In this way, while it does not deny the viewer's right to experiment with different lifestyles (acknowledgment), the billboard is encouraging them to check out one of mainstream magazines as well (counterclaim).

(21)

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|----|----|--|--------------------------------------|
| A: | 0 | [Anticipated objection: This magazine is not for me. I'm a non-conformist and I do things "my way."] | |
| B: | X' | <i>[OK] Wybierz swoją drogę,</i> | <i>[OK] Do it your way,</i> |
| B: | Y | <i>ale najpierw spróbuj wszystkiego.</i> | <i>but first try out everything.</i> |

5. Conclusions

While not claiming exhaustiveness, in the foregoing discussion – believed to bring an element of novelty and to open new vistas in discourse-pragmatic analyses of spoken Polish – I wished to demonstrate the variety and the flexibility of marking associated with acknowledgments and rebuttals in informal and semi-formal communicative settings. First and foremost, however, my goal was to show that the dialogic concept of Concession merits due recognition by discourse analysts studying Polish conversational data. As I have argued throughout the article, the relation proves to be one of the organising principles of spoken interaction and as such, it shows promise not only in terms of

²¹ As I realised soon after I started writing this article, the "bald man" billboard was not the only image used in the advertising campaign of the magazine. Another image depicted, for instance, a man with a tie and a suit and with visible scratches and plasters on his face, suggesting that he has been involved in a fight. With such visual anchorage, the accompanying slogan can still be interpreted as saying that you can "do it your way," but this time "your way" is to be re-interpreted as getting involved in fights (unlike rejecting the dress code suggested by the first billboard).

discourse-pragmatic analyses of conversational patterns in Polish, but also in the field of language instruction and acquisition, which may well be informed by contrastive studies of the way speakers of Polish and English communicate agreement and mitigate disagreement or offer “linguistic compensation.”

With regard to the type of marking attested by the data, in turn, it should be noted that, as expected, in the Concessive moves analysed there were no occurrences of traditional concessive markers, i.e. *chociaż* and *choćby*, which clearly points to the difference between the sentence-level concessive connection and the discourse-pragmatic Concessive relation and which might also be attributed to the fact that *chociaż* and *choćby* are typical of formal written discourse. More importantly, however, it has been shown that concessivity does not necessarily reside in explicit marking, but rather in the relations holding between segments of talk, regardless of whether these are overtly signalled or not. Finally, as for further research, many paths seem worth pursuing, among them quantitative corpus studies carried out with the aim of revealing Concessive marker frequencies depending on the type of genre, register or speaker identity, to name but a few of possible variables. An attempt at identifying Polish-specific realisations of Concession, if any, also appears to be a worthwhile endeavour. However, it remains to be seen whether the dialogic model of Concession finds more advocates in Polish linguistics and whether it inspires more analyses of discursal patterns which make up the texture of spoken and written varieties of contemporary Polish.

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