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Golebiowski, Zofia. 2011. Scholarly criticism across discourse communities. In Salager-Meyer, Françoise and Lewin, Beverly A. (ed), *Crossed words: criticism in scholarly writing*, Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, Berlin, Germany, pp.203-224.

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Scholarly Criticism across Discourse Communities

1. Introduction

The importance of the skill of arguing successfully and managing the persuasive impact of academic writing cannot be underestimated. Academic argumentation requires presenting novel frameworks and challenging existing paradigms. There is an accumulating body of research demonstrating that the avoidance of hostile peer criticism and the attenuation of propositional strength of scientific claims in academic prose are expectations that members of Anglo-American and, increasingly, international academic discourse communities share. Exceptions have been reported only in genres of evaluative orientation, such as reviews and comments (Lewin 2005). In order not to be perceived as too assertive or be accused of making bold claims without sufficient grounds, writers tend to employ strategies aiming at toning down the strength of their argumentation. Caution in making strong and straightforward assertions is related to the positions academic writers adopt in their research discourse communities and, at a broader forum, the communities of their readers. This leads to authors making their own scientific claims conditional on acceptance by their discourse communities, and results in describing the works of others in uncertain terms, refraining from outright scholarly criticism.

The strategies aimed at reducing the certainty and precision of propositions have been usually researched under the rubric of “hedging”. The findings of these studies, however, tend to be inconsistent and, in some instances, contradictory. It has been argued that the discrepancies in the reported results may be related to the level of scientific novelty of the informative material, the academic discipline, the degree of the critical/polemic nature of examined texts or the scholarly

and social status of their authors (see Markkanen/Schröder 1997; Namsarev 1997; Wilss 1997). Yet, it is possible that the inconclusive, and sometimes hard to interpret results are caused by the lack of universally accepted criteria about what constitutes a “hedge” and the fact that “hedgies” play different roles in different languages and cultural traditions (cf., Clyne 1994). The absence of a clear definition of a “hedge” results in difficulties in obtaining a satisfactory *tertium comparationis*: different analysts tend to target different research objects, all subsumed under the rubric of “hedging”. In spite of various attempts to redefine the concept of hedging (Blum-Kulka/Olshtain 1984; Prince 1982; Rounds 1982; House/Kasper 1981), or to use it very narrowly (Skelton 1997), there is a general discomfort among linguists as to what the term precisely designates. Because of its functional variation across language cultures, it also seems to be an inappropriate concept to be used in intercultural comparisons. The view proposed in this chapter is that there is no clear list of hedges. Instead, I argue that text may acquire a hedging quality through its rhetorical organisation and that the downtoning of the propositional strength of argumentation and the attenuation of criticism are achieved through relational configurations.

The reported study explores how native English speaker (NES) and native Polish speaker (NPS) authors writing in English mitigate peer criticism, and how they position themselves in their research communities as well as vis-à-vis their audience through the utilisation of textual relational structure. I look at a specific type of relational structure – viz. concessional textual configurations which express authorial evaluative positioning through conceding and mitigating claims. I examine the function of the relation of Concession in the linguistic realizations of peer criticism, in the weakening or restricting of claims and forestalling objections, and consequently, in assisting in the achievement of acceptance of the writer’s argumentation by the community of readers.

The study reported in this chapter is intercultural. It aims at contributing to the studies of intercultural variation of the organisation of academic texts that examine the relationship between textual structure and cultural rules of appropriateness in academic discourse. In my investigation of the rhetoric of critique I compare the mode of occur-

rence of concessive relations in research articles written in English in the Anglophone and Polish research communities of sociology. I investigate how native English and native Polish writers employ concessive configurations for the purpose of the evaluation of previous research and peer criticism, and how such structures are related to the value attached to politeness and solidarity among the participants of academic discussion.

2. The study

2.1. Methodology

The view of concessive relations presented in this chapter is a discourse view. I study Concession as a text relation, examining its discourse organisational functions and exploring its expression through textual context and configurations. The definition of Concession used here is based on the one suggested in the Framework for the Analysis of the Relational Structure of texts (FARS) proposed by Golebiowski (2002), and subsequently discussed in Golebiowski (2007 and 2009a). Conceding is one way in which speakers and writers express potentially controversial or opposite views. In a concessional schema, the writer recognises the simultaneous existence of two potentially incompatible perspectives, acknowledges another point of view, and concedes in the context of making his own potentially contrasting point. Like its predecessor, Rhetorical Structure Theory (Mann/Thompson 1992), FARS provides a functional account of the text organisation in terms of the writer's communicative purposes. It assumes that coherence in discourse is reflected in its relational structure. The relational taxonomy of FARS entails the clusters of coherence relations listed in Table 1.

Relational cluster	Delicacy within cluster
Elaboration	Extension, Amplification, Explanation, Reformulation, Instantiation, Addition
Causal	Cause, Circumstance, Condition, Evidence, Means
Adversative	Concession, Contrast (Contrastive, Collateral, Comparative)
Assessing	Conclusion, Evaluation, Interpretation
Facilitation	Framing, Organising (Introduction, Enumeration, Advance Organising)
Digression	Explanation, Instantiation, Addition, Extended Reference
List	Collection, Sequence

Table 1. FARS taxonomy.

As seen in this table, Concession is a part of the Adversative cluster, alongside the Contrast subgroup that comprises Comparison, Contrastive and Collateral relations. The difference between Concessive and Contrastive relations is that Concession accepts both propositions presented in a relational schema (cf., Mann/Thompson 1992; Couper-Kuhlen/Thompson 2000: 405), while Contrastive schemata present propositions that are contradictory (cf., König 1985, Snoek Henhe-mans 2001). The canonical order of sequencing in Concessive schemata is Concession (Antecedent) followed by Consequent, whereas in Contrastive schemata this order is more flexible. In Contrastive schemata, both propositions can be of even textual prominence, but the very nature of Concession assumes a functional imbalance of two adversatively placed propositions. The Antecedent presents a potential or actual situation, which is generally incompatible with the situation presented in the Consequent. The Antecedent cannot function as the focus of the utterance (König/Siemund 2000), its role is to facilitate the introduction of the Consequent.

Depending on its place in the textual hierarchy, Concession, in a way similar to other FARS relations, may link clauses, paragraphs or groups of paragraphs. Researchers have disagreed as to whether Concession relations are semantic (König/Siemund 2000; König 1985), or rhetorical (interactional) (Barth 2000; Couper-Kuhlen/Thompson 2000; Mann/Thompson 1987; Thompson 1985). I view them as being

both semantic and interactional, combining the semantic approach that focuses on the meaning of the concessional relations independently, and the interactional approach that addresses their functioning in relation to context. However, my focus is predominantly on the presentational/interactional function of concessions. In this dimension, the conceding part of the schema serves as a strategy to mitigate a possible imposition inherent in the act of disagreeing with or dismissing previous theories or views, and/or positing new points and interpretations. Such a rhetorical/presentational role of Concession relations is connected to the value attached to politeness and solidarity among the participants in academic discussion (cf. Schiffrin 1987, 1990). Potentially face-threatening acts (FTA's), such as disagreement and criticism, tend to be preceded by face-saving moves (cf. pragmatic theory of politeness, Brown/Levinson 1987). As will be shown in the course of this chapter, concessivity displays an inherently interactive nature, with Concessive relations modulating FTA's present in text that includes adversary or novel content.

2.2. Corpus

The following research articles have been selected for close description. In the course of the chapter, I refer to them as text 1, text 2 and text 3, respectively.

- Text 1 *Are social classes dying?* Paper written by native speakers of English and produced in the Anglophone American sociological discourse community (Clark/Lipset 1991);
- Text 2 *The dying of class or of Marxist class theory?* Paper written by a native speaker of Polish and produced in the Anglophone Australian sociological discourse community (Pakulski 1993);
- Text 3 *The Pragmatic Shift in Polish Social Consciousness. With or Against the Tide of Rising Postmaterialism?* Paper written by a native speaker of Polish and produced in the Polish sociological discourse community (Ziółkowski 1994).

The examined corpus comprises discourse stretches amounting to 18,950 words. The selected texts satisfy the criteria for parallelism, as

defined by Duszak (1998) and Hartmann (1980), and comparability, as explicated by Krzeszowski (1989, 1990). They represent the same genre, exist in comparable communicative contexts, and the circumstances leading to their production have been similar. All three texts constitute research articles written in English within the discipline of sociology. The topic of all texts is societal change and their titles pose questions addressing various aspects of this change. All texts propose novel claims which are in opposition to former theories and previously held views. In terms of academic reputation, their authors enjoy similar academic status – all four are scholars of authority, held in high esteem by their readership.

The authors of text 1 were born, educated and working in an English speaking country. The author of text 2 was born and educated up to tertiary level in Poland, followed by some work in Polish academia. His doctoral studies were undertaken in Australia (supervised by a Polish-born professor of sociology) and he has been a part of the Australian academy for the last three decades. The author of text 3 was born and educated in Poland and, apart from sporadic visits to universities in English-speaking countries, has spent his working life in the Polish academy.

3. Analysis of discursal concessiveness

I will analyse and describe the utilisation of Concession relations by the authors of the studied texts and provide textual illustrations of characteristic concessive structures. Although the corpus selected for the study is limited to only three research papers, sociology, often seen as an “oppositional” science, is rich in antithetical rhetoric, and the selected texts provide multiple examples of adversative relational discourse including concessional configurations.

3.1. Text 1 (NES, Anglo discourse community)

Concessions constitute 7.5% of all relational schemata of this article. They are the second most pervasive relations (after Amplifications, which constitute 13% of all relations). They are also the most frequently occurring Adversative subcategory, comprising over 44% of relations in the Adversative cluster, by far exceeding the authors' rate of utilisation of other Adversative relational categories, with Collaterals comprising 28%, Constrasts 20%, and Comparisons 8% of relations in this cluster.

Concessive relations are particularly pervasive in the article's introductory section which prepares the groundwork for the presentation of the authors' main thesis. The authors critically review past class theories introducing a series of potentially face-threatening propositions which refer to the waning and declining nature of the concept of class. Examples 1 and 2 illustrate concessive structures employed in the review of prominent class theorists. Both the statement about Marx, that the recognition of instances of "relationships between class position and the attitudes of class members" did not change his theory, and the criticism of Weber, that he did not break from Marx in his writings, are preceded by concessive statements. Segment 1A comprises an acknowledgement that Marx recognised exceptions in his views on the relationship between class position and attitudes of class; and 2A concedes that Weber broadened the concept of class.

- (1) A Marx never actually said that there would necessarily have to be a relationship between class position and the attitudes of class members. But if he recognised 'exceptions' in his historical and journalistic writings,
B they did not change his main theory.
- (2) A Writing about class, Weber broadened the concept,
B but did not essentially break from Marx.

In the section following the review of Marx and Weber, the paper argues that there has already been a significant move towards discarding the concept of class and encapsulating the fragmentation of stratification. Supporting their claim with multiple examples of class theory

and social stratification, the authors engage in a debate with such class theorists as Dahrendorf, Wright, Giddens, Parkin, Dahl, Clark, Ferguson and Shils. The polemic is facilitated by the introduction of concessional rhetorical strategies which open up the space for the discussion. The debate includes layers of modulated criticism comprising expressions of deference and respect towards the class researchers whose theories are being appraised. Concessional configurations, with other modulatory rhetorical devices (e.g., justifications, explanations as well as the choice of lexis), enable a dialogic alternation and facilitate presenting of positions which differ from and challenge previous theories and points of view. For instance, in Example 3 the claim that many theorists have already altered the concept of class (3B) is conceded by an acknowledgement that this is “not immediately obvious” and by an additional explanation that the lack of clarity is caused by the authority accorded to Marx and Weber (3A).

- (3) A If one looks at class theories in recent decades, it is striking how much class has changed. This is not immediately obvious since most theorists claim direct descendance from Marx and Weber.
 B But many have in fact fundamentally altered the concept of class toward what we term the fragmentation of stratification.

To modulate further, writers employ Concessive recursiveness. Example 4 illustrates this phenomenon, i.e., the embedding of concessional relations within larger concessional relational schemata, which further strengthens the concessive style. There are two layers of concessional configuration: the claim that Dahrendorf retained the term (4B) is conceded by his possible abandonment of the class concept (4A); and the claim about Dahrendorf’s redefining of the term (4C) is conceded in 4B.

- (4) A Dahrendorf might have abandoned the concept of class,
 B but instead retained the term
 C while redefining it to include all sorts of groups in political or social conflict: “class” signifies conflict groups that are generated by the differential distribution of authority in imperatively coordinated associations’ [sic] (Dahrendorf 1859:204).

Concessive structures tend to become less frequent closer to the heart of the article, where the uncertain style employed in the more heteroglossic introductory section is no longer essential. Here the language becomes less flexible, with crucial theoretical propositions presented in a more direct and unmodulated manner. However, as seen in the concessive recursiveness of Example 5 from the middle section of the paper, concessive style does not completely disappear. The statement that “one should not overstate the changes” (5B) is conceded in 5A. Caution exercised by the authors is seen in their multi-voiced discourse utilised in their search for support from other researchers. Both propositions, the claim about the trends towards the declining of the concept of class in 5A, and the expression of caution about not overestimating the changes in 5B, are supported by references. Another concessive relation is embedded in the Consequent segment: although “‘materialists’ and ‘postmaterialists’ do not differ in their concern for having enough money” (5C), post-materialists “are distinguished by their relative youth, wealth, education and by their concern for ideology” (5D).

- (5) A These trends are congruent with the ‘post-industrial trends identified by Daniel Bell and Alain Touraine, and the ‘post-materialist’ (earlier termed ‘post-bourgeois’) patterns identified by Ronald Inglehart (1990) – stressing ‘self-actualisation’ via aesthetic intellectual and participatory concerns. Scott Flanagan (1980) suggests a shift from traditional consciousness to libertarian consciousness.
- B But one should not overstate the changes:
- C Alan Marsh, analysing British data, finds that ‘materialists’ and ‘postmaterialists’ do not differ in their concern for having enough money, which both share.
- D The post-materialists, however, ‘are distinguished by their relative youth, wealth, education and by their concern for ideology’ (Marsh 1975: 28).

3.2. Text 2 (NPS, Anglo discourse community)

Concessions constitute 4.3% of all relational schemata in this paper. Although they are the 7th in the frequency of relational occurrence in this text, after Collections, Amplifications, Digression Additions, and

Cause, they are its most frequent Adversative relations. They comprise 38% of relations in the Adversative cluster, with 28% of Collaterals, 20% of Contrasts and 8% of Comparisons.

In a way similar to their distribution in text 1, concessive schemata appear predominantly in the introductory section of this article. Text 2 constitutes a rejoinder to text 1 and it is in this section where most of various reservations to claims forwarded by Clark and Lipset and by those who produced responses to their paper are presented. The author's critical appraisal of Clark and Lipset's article is substantially modulated by accompanying descriptions of its merits. Example 6 provides an illustration of a potentially face-threatening move redressed by a face-saving move of Concession. The indication of the need to "elucidate" Clark and Lipset's conclusion and theoretical framework is preceded by an acknowledgement that their arguments are "poignant and persuasive".

- (6) A Although Clark and Lipset's arguments on social change are poignant and persuasive,
 B their conclusions as to the utility of the class concept, and the theoretical frameworks in which these conclusions are coated, need elucidation.

However, the employment of a similar concessive structure in Example 7, found further on in the text, is less mitigated: in the concessive segment AB only "aspects" of Clark and Lipset's arguments are "persuasive", and even these are "hardly original".

- (7) A While these aspects of Clark and Lipset's arguments are persuasive,
 B albeit hardly original,
 C their criticism of the Weberian tradition, especially its relevance for the analysis of stratification and conflict in industrialised West, is much less convincing.

Both examples 6 and 7 show the author refraining from being too assertive or confrontational in his choice of lexis and in his efforts aimed at downtoning through adjectival detensifying: Clark and Lipset conclusions only "need elucidation" (6B), and their critique of the Weberian tradition is "much less convincing" (7C).

The demonstrations of respect for other researchers who have written responses to Clark and Lipset's paper are also observable in the reviews of the theoretical treatment of class. However, the language utilized is less uncertain than in the evaluation of Clark and Lipset, whose views are never openly dismissed. Example 8 illustrates the appraisal of the rejoinder by Hout et al. (1993), where a considerably evaluative statement ("they *insist* on retaining some key elements") and an almost insulting one, suggesting an inability to perceive ("they *ignore* the central issue in Clark and Lipset", 8B) are mitigated and modulated by a concessive acknowledgement in the antecedent (8A).

- (8) A Although the authors [Hout et al.] acknowledge that 'class structures have undergone important changes in recent decades, with the rise of post-industrial societies'
- B they insist on retaining some key elements of the Marxist class concept, and they ignore the central issues in Clark and Lipset of the fragmentation and relative importance of class inequalities and class conflicts.

In a manner similar to the one adopted by the authors of text 1, the rhetoric of text 2 becomes less modulated in the central part of the paper when the author presents his main claims. However, purposeful weakening of claims can still be observed. The author's caution in approaching his new classification of class theories is reflected in the employment of rhetoric that demonstrates deference before the class researchers whose positions are being evaluated. Such vigilance is seen in examples 9 and 10, taken from a considerably dialogic and heteroglossic part of this paper's discourse. The outlining of distinctions between "structural objectivists" and "actional objectivists" is preceded by acknowledgements of similarities between these groups. Classes are "ubiquitous" for both groups of class theorists, but are "hidden from an 'empiricist' gaze" for structural objectivists in 9B, and are "more tangible" for actional objectivists in 10B. In addition to concessional formations in these examples, the author utilises adjectival detensifiers (*typically* hidden, *more* tangible) and explanatory statements (text following the semicolon in 9B and colon in 10B).

- (9) A For the former [structural objectivists] (eg., Althusser), classes are ubiquitous
 B but typically hidden from an ‘empiricist’ gaze; class conflicts permeate social reality but reveal themselves only to those who use the right method of analysis.
- (10) A For the latter [actional objectivists] (e.g., Touraine), classes are also ubiquitous
 B but more tangible: they appear whenever solidary groups form and challenge the dominant values, norms and institutions.

3.3. Text 3 (*NPS, Polish discourse community*)

In text 3 only 2.5% of relations are clearly concessive. Concessions constitute only 19% of Adversatives, being the second smallest Adversative subgroup, with Contrasts comprising 44%, Collaterals 30%, and Comparisons 7% of relations in the Adversative cluster.

In contrast to styles employed in the introductions of texts 1 and 2, the introductory section of this text is almost entirely devoid of concessive formulations. Some concessional structures employed in the later part of the paper tend to play minor roles, appearing in parts of text of secondary importance, or aiming at forestalling objections through the introduction of background material or summaries of previously presented arguments. The text in Example 12, where the author positions his own interpretative dimension as relative to a previous one, illustrates a concessive schema comprising extensive foregrounding. Before presenting his interpretation of the four systems of systemic transformation in 12B, the author describes a previous, dispreferred interpretation in 12A. In spite of the utilisation of the *although* construction, characteristically employed in concessive expressions, the style of this relational schema utilises both straightforward and even confrontational language. While the new proposed interpretation is referred to as “more flexible and open”, Evans and Whitefield’s position is almost totally rejected, with the consecutiveness of their phases of change in values and interests questioned. The author considerably restricts the validity of Evans and Whitefield’s interpretation, further enhancing the contentiousness of his style by an

inclusion of lexical sarcasm (“changes *apparently* go through four consecutive phases”).

- (12) A According to the first interpretation, suggested by Evans and Whitefield, the predominance of each of the systems may be viewed as consecutive hypothetical phases and model phases of transformation – phases which point out to the basic logic and chronology of changing group interests and values. These changes – which follow in the footsteps of the “transformational honeymoon” – apparently go through four consecutive phases, beginning with the dominance of nonmaterial values, through basic choices as to the shape of the economic order and the search for detailed economic solutions, to the dominance of post-materialistic values. Although I do not reject this interpretation completely
- B I prefer a second, more flexible and open one. I believe that these four systems of interests and values not only coexist and compete with each other in societies undergoing transformation, but also manifest themselves in different ways and reflect different phenomena.

The Concessive constructions of text 3 also seem to express the author’s caution about making his claims too definite or else serve to defend him from anticipated criticisms. For instance, in Example 13 the author protects himself from possible criticism by mentioning non-existing situations, but emphasising his support for, and stressing the salience of, the information relating to the existing state of affairs which is being described.

- (13) A I am not referring here to the opposition between the official “pompous“ values of socialist ideology and the values in every day social practice (cf. Wnuk-Lipinski, 1982)
- B but [I am referring] to the duality of values experienced, and many a time implemented by the individual.

Concessional structures of this text (such as the one illustrated in Example 13) exhibit a considerable degree of binary opposition. In their binary configurations they are close to the Collateral subcategory of Adversative relations. According to Golebiowski (2002, 2005, 2006, 2009b), Collateral relations occur in the *irrealis* vs *realis* type of schemata. The *irrealis* component which presents a non-event type information is generally incompatible with the situation presented in the *realis* component, which describes a real event. Collateral rela-

tions have the capacity, in a way similar to Concessions, of fulfilling presentational functions. In advancing the argument presented in *realis* over the argument presented in *irrealis*, they emphasise support for the situation or point of view presented in *realis*.

4. Discussion

According to a framework prescribed for academic papers in the Anglo research discourse community, writers need to position their work against that of others. In the introductory sections in particular, in order to create a gap for their own research, they are expected to evaluate the work of others as somewhat deficient, faulty or at least in some way inadequate (cf., Tannen 2002, Golebiowski 1999, Swales 1990). At the same time, research community norms dictate deference and respect towards researchers whose work is discussed, with categorical criticism of peer research deemed inappropriate. New claims are expected to be expressed in an uncertain way, pending acceptance by research discourse community before whom authors “need to humble themselves” (Myers 1989: 13).

The examples discussed in this chapter show that all discussed writers position their research in a relevant field of study through extravocalization; however, rhetorical strategies used to introduce the voices of others vary in a considerable way. While papers produced in Anglo discourse communities both by NES and NPS authors feature pervasive concessional structures, specifically with discourse of the introductory sections culminating in the concessional strength, text 3, a product of the Polish academic discourse community, features scarce concessional configurations often bordered with Collaterals.

We saw that the NES text 1 is the most visibly concessionally structured of the three papers. The comparison of the ratio of Concession to all relations shows this text to be highly prolific in its employment of this relational type. The authors employ Concessions almost

twice as frequently as the author of text 2, and three times as frequently as the author of text 3 (see Table 2).

Texts	Rate of relational occurrence %
TEXT 1	7.5
TEXT 2	4.3
TEXT 3	2.5

Table 2. Frequency of Concessional structures.

As can be seen in Table 3, Concessions also comprise the largest Adversative subgroup in this text (44%), closely followed by text 2 (38%), with text 3 making a considerable lesser use of Concessive structures (19%).

RELATION	Text 1 (%)	Text 2 (%)	Text 3 (%)
Concession	44	38	19
Collateral	28	26	30
Contrast	20	28	44
Comparison	8	8	7

Table 3. Frequency of Adversative relations across texts.

To a large degree the concessive pervasiveness of text 1 is related to the pioneering claims it makes: it argues for the modification of class theory in view of the decline of traditional hierarchies and new social structures. Because of the importance of the concept of class in ideological confrontations, claims about the decline in the explanatory value of class analyses are likely to cause controversy. The authors thus seem to be fully aware that their novel proposal constitutes an imposition on views of class theorists opposed to their views and may, in itself, be an affront to the audience. Before presenting their novel framework, they appraise critical theories of class stratification which used to be influential, acknowledging previous research and seeking support from other class theorists. The review of class theories is followed by an argumentation about the decline of the concept of class. It is noticeable that in spite of the fact that the authors are leaders in the field, they con-

sider it in their interest to stay within reasonable consensus with members of the sociological research community in general, and class theorists in particular. To minimise tension in the academic polemic, they utilise face-saving rhetorical strategies. Such strategies are clearly visible in the concessive relational configurations of this text.

The NPS text 2, produced in Australian academia, also features a prolific employment of Concessional configurations. We saw that it is placed in the middle of the concessional frequency continuum, between texts 1 and 3, both in terms of an overall rate of occurrence of the Concessive relation, and in terms of its incidence in the Adversative relational group.

The aim of this paper is to propose a new class typology. The assigning of researchers to theoretical and ideological groupings constitutes an imposition of various degrees and is thus potentially contentious and face-threatening. Text 2 not only evaluates the framework proposed in text 1, but also takes a stand in relation to the responses of other researchers to this framework. As it constitutes a rejoinder to text 1, the nature of this paper's polemic is intrinsically critical and its rhetoric, dictated by the text's functional purpose, is deemed to be highly evaluative. Yet, the author never expresses an outright or absolute criticism. While acknowledging the views of others and making his own contrastive point, he carefully prepares room to manoeuvre between saving both his own and his opponents' faces. A considerably uncertain rhetoric shows the author's awareness of potential FTA's in his argumentation. Because of Clark and Lipset's prestige in the international research community of sociology, the writer exercises extreme caution in his appraisal of their theoretical paradigm. As a consequence, potentially face-threatening moves such as disagreement and disapproval are preceded by face-saving moves. Although, as we saw in textual examples in previous sections, the author's rhetoric tends to be less uncertain in reference to other researchers involved in his polemic, his criticism is never categorical. Interestingly, although the aim of text 2 dictates an evaluative argumentation, its overall concessiveness is still less strong than that of text 1.

The NPS text 3, whose author is a member of the Polish academic discourse community, features the lowest frequency of concessions, both in comparison to the employment of the remaining Adver-

sative subtypes, and in terms of an overall relational distribution. This paper discusses systemic changes and the development of the normative order in Polish society in the post-communist period. In an attempt to define and interpret the societal materialistic shift in interests and values in the opening section of the paper he seeks support from previous research through extravocalization. Positioning himself dialogistically within the community of readers, he includes numerous citations and references to others' work. However, the inclusion of other voices tends to be used to uphold and add more force to the author's interpretations of the discussed concepts, rather than expressing deference before scholars whose works are discussed.

Further sections of this paper seem to suggest that the politeness of text 3 is achieved through frequent explanations and justifications of positions taken by the author, with concessive relations playing a minor role. Overall, concessive structures are much less defined than those in the two texts produced in Anglo discourse communities. Unlike subordinate concessive structures in texts 1 and 2, the rare concessive schemata of this text are on the border of being coordinate, with the author first granting some weight to one argument, and then contrasting it with another. Such a strategy of lending equal weight to two adversative propositions blurs the distinction between Concessions and Collaterals. The Collateral relations of this text perform presentational roles, in some ways fulfilling the face-saving functions. Before advancing the argument presented in the thesis, the author "defends" himself from possible criticism by presenting hypothetical possibilities and situations.

Referring to the "teutonic" writing style (which in his theory also includes Polish style), Galtung (1985) explains that in German academic writing the writer takes all necessary precautions in advance, in order to avoid the criticism of his/her peers. We clearly see this "precaution" stance in text 3, where the employment of Collateral structures fulfils foregrounding functions, introducing possible reader objections. Although Collateral relations also feature in the two texts produced in Anglo discourse communities, in text 3 they largely outnumber Concessions. As seen in Table 3, the ratio of Concessives to Collaterals in texts 1 and 2 is about 1.6 (44% Concessives to 28% of Collaterals in text 1, and 38% of Concessives to 26% of Collaterals in text 2), while it is 0.6 in text 3 (19% of Concessives compared to 30% of Collaterals).

To sum up, the texts investigated for the purpose of this study are comparable in terms of functional aims and thematic content. All are research articles written for academic audiences, and all explore societal changes offering new suggestions for their examination. Yet the analysis of the concessional relational structure of these texts reveals a variation in the way authors bring intertextual positioning into play, adopting stances towards other researchers, endorsing or disendorsing their propositions. On the basis of analyses conducted in this study we can hypothesize a considerable level of acculturation into the Anglo discourse community of the author of text 2. However, it is also possible that structures perceived in this academic discourse community as deviant might have been “edited out” by reviewers of text 2, but not by reviewers of text 3, who most likely share the author’s mother tongue and discourse community membership.

5. Conclusion

The reported study aims to contribute to the literature on scholarly criticism and intercultural rhetorical approaches utilised in this important discursal dimension. I have attempted to explore the issue of peer criticism in a relatively new light, looking at the correlation between scholarly criticism and its mitigation by the coherence relation of Concession. It would be worthwhile for more work in this line of enquiry to be pursued, including replications of analyses carried out in this study on larger corpora, both within sociology and other disciplines, across academic discourse communities and native and non-native English writing, as well as other academic genres.

It is hoped that this chapter will raise the possibility of utilising discourse analysis in the training of academic writing. Such attempts have already been made (cf. Thompson 2001) but need further expansion. Among suggestions that I would like to make is the adaptation of a more discursal approach in high level EAP and ESP courses. Teaching a full range of concessive rhetorical strategies should con-

tribute to an increased awareness of discursual possibilities enabling the achievement of more successful reader-writer homeostasis by novice and non-NES academic writers. Native English language competency does not guarantee the possession of knowledge and skills about how to manipulate the language structure of academic genres to produce the kind of scholarly prose acceptable in the community of readers. This task is even more challenging to non-NES academic writers, mainly because the purpose of academic writing is both informative and rhetorical, and the information packaging strategies, including concessive strategies, are likely to be culture bound. A lower level of the exploitation of concessive strategies by non-NES authors may result in the weakening of the rhetorical impact of their prose.

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