

From Quotation to Concession: The Case of East Circassian

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1 Introduction

Many languages have “concessive” connectives such as *but* and *although* that connect two matrix sentences. Such connectives are truth conditionally equivalent to conjunctions, but carry an additional, non truth-functional interpretive component that conveys, in some sense, a “contrast” between the conjuncts (König 1991; Winter & Rimon 1994; Azar 1997; König & Siemund 2000; Iten 2000 *inter alia*). For example, in Winter & Rimon’s (1994) formulation, *although* is analyzed as a connective that takes two propositions, conjoins them, and carries, as part of its conventional meaning, the implication that the second conjunct implies the negation of the first.¹ Schematically, the intuition about *although* can be summarized roughly as in 1.

- (1) q although p
 - a. Assertion: $q \wedge p$
 - b. Implication: $p \rightsquigarrow \neg q$,

2 shows how this intuition applies to a concrete example.

- (2) The police opened fire although the protest was peaceful.
 - a. Asserts that the police opened fire and that the protest was peaceful.
 - b. Implies that, as a default, if the protest is peaceful the police don’t open fire.

This paper describes a puzzling and previously undocumented quotative concessive adverbial found in East Circassian (or Kabardian, Northwest Caucasian), exemplified in 3.² This adverbial differs from familiar concessives in several intriguing ways.

¹This is, as Winter & Rimon (1994) point out, only a rough characterization of what they call *restricted* connectives like *although*. It does not, for example, apply to more general contrastive connectives like *but*.

²This paper is based on data from two dialects of East Circassian: Kuban, spoken in the village Khodz, and Besleney, spoken in the village Ulyap, in the Republic of Adygea, Russia. The construction under discussion has the same distribution in the two dialects, so examples from the two are used intermittently, with the corresponding dialect marked in parentheses after the translation. The data was collected by the first author during two trips to the region in the summers of 2015 and 2016, in collaboration with researchers from HSE and RSUH in Moscow. The authors are grateful to the speakers of East Circassian for sharing their knowledge of the language. Additional thanks go out to Yuri Lander, and to audiences at the *Concessives vs. adversatives: opposing opposition* workshop in Bremen and at the *Construction of Meaning* workshop at Stanford.

The glosses are in accordance with the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with the following additions: CS – causal; DIR – directional; DYN – present tense on dynamic verbs; FCT – factive; GER – gerund; JUS – jussive; MAL – malefactive; MOD – modal future; OPT – optative; PR – possessor; PREV – preventative; PRVB – preverb; RE – refactive

- (3) [[deɤ^w wə-d-ew-pê] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] ž'əyə-m
 good 2SG.ABS-LOC-DYN-climb PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV tree-OBL
 wə-de-mə-pê
 2SG.ABS-LOC-NEG-climb(IMP)
 ‘Although you may climb well, don’t climb the tree.’ (Kuban)

The East Circassian quotative concessive adverbial cannot be analyzed in the way proposed for *although* and other matrix concessive connective like *but* by Winter & Rimon (1994), for two reasons. The first is that, unlike these connectives, sentences with the quotative adverbial entail neither the matrix sentence nor the complement of the adverbial (henceforth its *prejacent*). The matrix clause is not entailed because it is not declarative and does not have assertive force. The sentence in 3, for example, does not entail (and cannot be uttered to assert) that the addressee will not climb the tree, but rather directs her not to do so.³ The prejacent, while declarative, is similarly not entailed. An utterance of 3 does not commit the speaker to the proposition that the addressee climbs well.

The same issue, in fact, arises for English in examples like those in 4, which involve a possibility modal in one conjunct and a directive in the other.

- (4) a. You may be a good climber but don’t climb the tree.
 b. Although you may be a good climber don’t climb the tree.

Second, as we show in detail below, the adverbial is restricted in its distribution in ways that connectives like *although*, and their equivalents in East Circassian, are not. Our main goals in what follows are to describe the distribution and interpretational effects of this quotative concessive adverbial, point out some of the theoretical issues these effects raise, and propose a preliminary analysis, identifying areas of indeterminacy that call for further empirical investigation.

Our main claim is that the quotative concessive is associated with a presupposition and a selectional restriction, which account for the limits of its distribution. Specifically, we argue that the concessive quotative presupposes that the (individual denoted by) the quotative subject is epistemically committed to the prejacent *p*, and that it selects for a matrix modifiand that commits the speaker to a dispreference for a contextually salient proposition *q* that is, in the context of utterance, implied by the prejacent *p*.

2 The main descriptive generalizations

This paper discusses a type of clausal adjunct in the Kuban and Besleney dialects of East Circassian, a Northwest Caucasian language. While East Circassian (also known as Kabardian) is primarily spoken in the Russian republics of Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkariya, the dialects under discussion are spoken in the Republic of Adygea and display a number of areally distinct features (see e.g. Ashkhamaf 1939; Kumakhov 1969 on the dialectology of East Circassian varieties and Moroz 2021 for a recent discussion of phonetic and phonological distinctions). East Circassian, along with the closely related West Circassian, is typologically classified as polysynthetic and head marking, with ergative alignment in case marking and verbal indexing. The language displays free word order with a tendency for head finality, with embedded clauses being strictly verb-final (see Arkadiev & Lander 2020 for a recent overview).

³Winter & Rimon (1994:6) are aware of non-declarative arguments of contrastive connectives, but bracket them out.

The quotative concessive adverbial is transparently derived from the lexical verb *ž'əʔen* ‘say’ composed of the root *ʔe* ‘say’ and the prefix *ž'(ə)-*, which is only used in combination with this root. The verb *ž'əʔen* ‘say’ is a transitive predicate that can index up to three participants (in the absence of additional applicative morphology): the ergative agent, the absolutive theme, and the addressee (5).⁴

- (5) Aslən Ø- qə- z- ž'- jə- ʔ -a -qəm zə-g^were
 Aslan 3ABS- DIR- 1SG.IO- PRVB- 3SG.ERG- say -PST -NEG one-INDEF
 Ø-qə-zərə-k^we-ne-r
 3ABS-DIR-REL.FCT-go-FUT-ABS
 ‘Aslan did not tell me that someone will arrive.’ (Besleney)

The quotative concessive adverbial is formed from *ž'əʔen* ‘say’ through the addition of the suffix *-w(ə)*, which, among other usages, may mark temporal adjuncts, as exemplified with the literal usage of the verb *ž'əʔen* ‘say’ in (6); see Klimenchenko (2014) on clausal adjunction in the Besleney dialect.

- (6) [a-r Ø-ž'ə-p-ʔ-a-w] neməč'
 that-ABS 3ABS-PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-PST-ADV other
 Ø-ž'-ew-mə-ʔe-ž'
 3ABS-PRVB-2SG.ERG-NEG-say-RE(IMP)
 ‘Having already said that, don’t say something different.’ (Besleney)

The quotative concessive adverbial co-varies in ergative agreement with the perceived attitude holder (usually, the external argument of the matrix predicate; 7), but is incompatible with any other morphology typically associated with the lexical verb, such as overt tense marking (cf. the absence of the quotative concessive interpretation with the past tense form of the adverbial in 6) or agreement with the addressee (8).

- (7) a. [a-r ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] w-jə-pχ^wə-m
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.IO-say-ADV 2SG.PR-POSS-daughter-OBL
 s-jə-cvetok-xe-r Ø-p-Ø-je-mə-βe-č
 1SG.PR-POSS-flower-PL-ABS 3ABS-LOC-3SG.IO-DAT-NEG-CAUS-pick(IMP)
 ‘That said, don’t let your daughter pick my flowers.’ (=addressee is the perceived attitude holder)
- b. [a-r ž'-jə-ʔ-wə] Sajəde s-jə-cvetok-xe-r
 that-ABS PRVB-3SG.IO-say-ADV Saida 1SG.PR-POSS-flower-PL-ABS
 Ø-p-jere-mə-č
 3ABS-LOC-JUS-NEG-pick
 ‘That said, may Saida not pick my flowers.’ (=Saida is the perceived attitude holder)
 (Besleney)

⁴The directional prefix *qə-* has a variety of functions. In this example of the verb *ž'əʔen* ‘say’, it functions as an inverse marker, indicating that the indirect object outranks the agent on a person hierarchy; see Arkadiev (2020) for details.

- (8) [a-r qə-(*z-)ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] wə-xe-mə-ha
 that-ABS DIR-*(1SG.IO-)PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV 2SG.ABS-LOC-NEG-enter
 zə-x^we-saqə-ž'
 REFL.IO-BEN-beware-RE(IMP)
 ‘That said, take care not to go in the water.’ (Besleney)

In addition to the morphological constraints, the quotative concessive adverbial differs from the lexical verb *ž'əʔen* ‘say’ both in what it can take as prejacent, and in what it can modify.

Similarly to *ž'əʔen* ‘say’, it may select a clause that is headed by a finite predicate without any markers of subordination (9a), an adverbial-marked clause (9b), or an absolutive-marked demonstrative pronoun which refers to a contextually salient prejacent, as shown in (8).

- (9) a. [[žane-r Ø-qə-b-wəx-a] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 dress-ABS 3ABS-DIR-2SG.ERG-finish-PST PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 Ø-š'-we-mə-ʔaɐ
 3ABS-LOC-2SG.ERG-put.on(IMP)
 b. [[žane-r Ø-qə-b-wəx-a-**w**] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 dress-ABS 3ABS-DIR-2SG.ERG-finish-PST-**ADV** PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 Ø-š'-we-mə-ʔaɐ
 3ABS-LOC-2SG.ERG-put.on(IMP)
 ‘Don’t put on the dress thinking that you have finished (sewing) it.’ (Besleney)

Both types of complement clauses commonly occur with the verb *ž'əʔen* ‘say’ and are semantically characterized as not presupposing the truth of the embedded utterance: thus, both sentences in (9) are appropriate in a context where the dress is not finished. This is in contrast with factive-marked complements, as exemplified by the interpretational difference between (10a) and (10b) (Ershova 2012, see also Serdobolskaya & Motlokhov 2009 on a similar contrast in West Circassian).

- (10) a. se Ø-s-ŝ-a-qəm [a-bə txəλə-r
 I 1SG.ERG-know-PST-NEG that-OBL book-ABS
 Ø-**zer**-jə-hə-ž'-a-r]
 3ABS-**REL.FCT**-3SG.ERG-bring-RE-ABS
 ‘I did not know that he had brought the book.’ (Presupposed: The book has been brought.)
 b. se Ø-s-ŝ-a-qəm [a-bə txəλə-r Ø-jə-hə-ž'-a-**w**]
 I 3ABS-1SG.ERG-know-PST-NEG that-OBL book-ABS 3ABS-3SG.ERG-bring-RE-**ABS**
 ‘I did not know if he had brought the book.’ (He might not have.) (Besleney; Ershova 2012:70)

Unlike the lexical verb *ž'əʔen* ‘say’ (11), the quotative concessive is incompatible with factive-marked prejacent: the sentence in (12) only has a literal interpretation where the clause headed by the adverbial form is a temporal adjunct.

- (11) aslan Ø-qə-z-ž'-jə-ʔ-a [nwebe Ø-**zerə**-mə-k^we-ne-r]
 Aslan 3ABS-PRVB-1SG.IO-3SG.ERG-say-PST today 3ABS-**REL.FCT**-NEG-go-FUT-ABS
 ‘Aslan told me that he won’t come today.’ (Besleney; Ershova 2013:79)

- (12) [[wə-**zerə**-x^we-saqə-r] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] š'e-r
 2SG.ABS-**REL.FCT**-BEN-beware-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV milk-ABS
 Ø-jə-mə-k^wət
 3ABS-LOC-NEG-spill(IMP)
 'Don't spill the milk while saying that you're being careful.'
 *'Although you may be careful, don't spill the milk.' (Besleney)

The quotative concessive can only modify matrix clauses in a directive mood, e.g. the imperative in (13b), and is incompatible with roughly equivalent modal statements (13c-13d).

- (13) a. Context: Zara wants to eat a piece of spicy sausage, says: "This isn't spicy, I can eat this." Marina thinks that Zara is wrong. She says:
 b. [a-r ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] a-r wə-mə-šx
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV that-ABS 3ABS-2SG.ERG-NEG-eat(**IMP**)
 'That said, don't eat that.' (Besleney)
 c. (# [a-r ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]) a-r Ø-p-šxə χ^{wə}.ne-qəm
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV that-ABS 3ABS-2SG.ERG-eat can-NEG
 '(*That said,) you can't eat that.' (***modal**)
 d. (# [a-r ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]) a-r Ø-p-šxə-n-wə
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV that-ABS 3ABS-2SG.ERG-eat-MOD-ADV
 Ø-qə-p-x^wa-z-de-qəm
 3ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-BEN-1SG.ERG-allow-NEG
 '(*That said,) I forbid you to eat that.' (***indicative**)

Even with directive matrix clauses, the quotative concessive is restricted to negative ones, unlike the concessive connective *šač'e* 'although', which may modify indicative and non-negative matrix clauses. Thus, the quotative concessive may be used in (14a), where the matrix predicate is negated, and is not appropriate in the absence of matrix negation (14b): the corresponding positive meaning must be expressed with the use of double negation (14c). This is in contrast with the general concessive connective (14d).

- (14) a. [[a-xe-r Ø-q-w-e-žə] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 that-PL-ABS 3ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-DAT-call PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 wə-mə-k^we
 2SG.ABS-NEG-go(IMP)
 'Don't go thinking that they're calling for you.'
 b. # [[a-xe-r Ø-q-w-e-žə-qəm] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] k^we
 that-PL-ABS 3ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-DAT-call-NEG PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV go(IMP)
 Intended: 'Go, even though they're not calling for you.'
 c. [[a-xe-r Ø-q-w-e-žə-qəm] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 that-PL-ABS 3ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-DAT-call-NEG PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 wə-**mə**-k^w-wə wə-**mə**-š
 2SG.ABS-**NEG**-go-ADV 2SG.ERG-**NEG**-do(IMP)
 'Don't not go thinking they're not calling for you.'
 d. [[a-xe-r Ø-q-w-e-žə-qəm] **šač'e**] k^we
 that-PL-ABS 3ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-DAT-call-NEG **although** go(IMP)
 'Go, even though they're not calling for you.' (Kuban)

In some cases, the matrix can be a positive imperative with a negative adverbial modifier (15).

- (15) a. Context: The daughter says: “I’ll stop by the store and by the school, maybe chat with some people.” The mother responds:
 b. [a-r ž’ə-p-ʔ-wə] z-we-mə-pλə-h-wə k^we
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV REFL.ABS-2SG.ERG-NEG-look-LOC-ADV go(IMP)
 ‘That said, go without getting distracted (lit. while not looking around)’ (Besleney)

Besides imperatives, the quotative concessive is compatible with other directive moods, such as the preventative, jussive, and cohortative. The preventative mood is expressed with the suffix *-q^we*, combined with the modal future marker *-n(ə)*, which is described by speakers as conveying a warning about a yet unrealized action on the part of the addressee (16).⁵ The jussive prefix *rje-* conveys directive force towards a third person participant (17).⁶ The cohortative is expressed with a causativized imperative, where the addressee is the causer and the causee is first person plural (18).

- (16) [[we ž’əž’e wə-š-ew-pswe] ž’ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 you far 2SG.ABS-LOC-DYN-live PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 wə-qə-č’erə-x^wə-q^we-n
 2SG.ABS-DIR-LOC-lag-**PREV-MOD**
 ‘Don’t let yourself be late just because you live far.’ (Kuban)
- (17) [[χerjəne-r Ø-p-q^wət-a] ž’a-ʔ-wə]
 swing-ABS 3ABS-2SG.ERG-break-PST PRVB-3PL.ERG-say-ADV
 Ø-qə-p-šə-**rje**-mə-nač’e-xe
 3ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-MAL-**JUS**-NEG-tease-PL
 ‘May they not tease you just because you broke the swing.’ (Kuban)
- (18) a. Pshimaf tells Aslan: ‘Let’s go play outside!’ Aslan agrees, but warns Pshimaf about the other boys outside:
 b. [a-r ž’ə-p-ʔ-wə] d-a-d-we-mə-βe-žeg^w
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV 1PL.ABS-3PL.IO-COM-2SG.ERG-NEG-CAUS-play
 ‘That said, let’s not play with them (lit. don’t make us play with them)’ (Besleney)

The quotative concessive may also be used with a weaker type of directive – the optative mood marked by the suffix *-tere* in Besleney and *-šeret* in Kuban, which expresses the wish or hope for the corresponding action to be realized (19).

⁵As far as we are aware, the only written mention of the suffix *-q^we* (the West Circassian cognate of *-q^we*) is in Rogava & Keraševa (1966:308), where it is characterized as having a preventative meaning in combination with either the modal future marker *-n(ə)* or the conditional subordinating suffix *-me*.

⁶Lander & Bagirokova (2022) classify the cognate form in West Circassian as a weak imperative. Previously this form has been standardly labeled as a type of optative (e.g. Kumakhov 1971:235-238; Kumakhov & Vamling 2009:45; Matasović 2010:51-52; see also Kuznetsova 2009 on West Circassian), but it conveys a stronger force in the dialects under discussion. For example, it is incompatible with a context where the speaker has no control over the activity denoted by the jussive-marked form:

- (i) weš’x Ø-qə-**rje**-š’x
 rain 3ABS-DIR-**JUS**-rain
 ‘May it rain!’ (Can be uttered as the speaker waves a magic wand; not appropriate as a statement of general desire.)

- (19) [[a.p.x^wed-wə Ø-p-ſ-a] ž'-a-ʔ-wə]
 thus-ADV 3ABS-2SG.ERG-do-PST PRVB-3PL.ERG-say-ADV
 Ø-qə-p-ſe-neč'-a-xe-ſeret
 3ABS-DIR-2SG.IO-MAL-tease-PST-PL-OPT
 ‘If only they would not tease you thinking that you behaved in this way!’ (Kuban)

Finally, the quotative concessive is a root phenomenon: it may not modify embedded propositions, even if they are imperatives framed as indirect speech (20).

- (20) wəne-m sə-q-Ø-jə-mə-k^wə-re sabjə-xe-m [(#[a-r
 house-OBL 1SG.ABS-DIR-3SG.IO-LOC-NEG-go-CVB child-PL-OBL that-ABS
 ž'-a-ʔ-wə]) ja-λač^we
 PRVB-3PL.ERG-say-ADV 3PL.PR+POSS-foot
 ø-ja-mə-βe-wəçənə-ž'-ə-n-wə] Ø-ja-ž'-je-s-ʔ-a
 3ABS-3PL.ERG-NEG-CAUS-damp-RE-MOD-ADV 3ABS-3PL.IO-PRVB-DAT-1SG.ERG-say-PST
 ‘Before leaving the house I told the children not to get their feet wet.’ (Besleney)

To summarize, the quotative concessive in East Circassian displays a number of properties which distinguish it both from standard concessive subordinators like English *although* or East Circassian *šhač'e* and from the lexical verb *ž'əʔen* ‘say’. Unlike the lexical verb, it may not index the addressee or combine with overt tense marking and may only select for non-presuppositional embedded clauses, i.e. clauses headed by a finite and adverbial-marked predicate, but not by a factive-marked predicate. Unlike typical concessive subordinators, it may only modify utterances in the negative polarity which convey directive force. The following section sketches an analysis to explain these distributional generalizations.

3 The analysis

Descriptively, an utterance by a speaker S of a sentence with the quotative concessive conveys that S takes the quoted agent A (typically, but not always, the addressee) to have belief B that motivates or supports a preference for an action. We call the belief that S attributes to A the *attributed belief*, the preference she presumes A to have the *attributed preference*, and the action or eventuality that is the content of the attributed preference the *projected eventuality*. To exemplify these components, consider 21:

- (21) [[pš'edje ž'-ə-w wə-qe-težə-ne-qəm] ž'-ə-p-ʔwə] kwed.re
 tomorrow early-ADV 2SG.ABS-DIR-get.up-FUT-NEG PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV much
 wə-š'-ə-mə-s
 2SG.ABS-LOC-NEG-sit(IMP)
 ‘Even though you won’t be getting up early tomorrow, don’t stay up too long.’ (Besleney)

Here, the attributed belief is that the addressee does not need to get up early. The projected action is the addressee staying up late, and the attributed preference is a preference for the addressee to stay up late. Overall, what the speaker is communicating in this example is that, on the assumption that the addressee’s belief that they won’t get up early tomorrow, they do not think this belief warrants a preference, which they attribute to the addressee, that they stay up late.

As mentioned, the concessive component of sentences with the concessive quotative is weaker than that of concessive connectives like *although*. While the speaker in 21 is likely to believe the

prejacent which she is conceding, she need not believe it, and the utterance does not epistemically commit her to it. This is shown clearly in 22, where the matrix sentence clearly presupposes speaker commitment to falsity of the prejacent. This lack of speaker commitment explains the fact that the prejacent is incompatible with factive marking (cf. 12).

- (22) [[žane-r Ø-qe-b-wəx-a-w] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 dress-ABS 3ABS-DIR-2SG.ERG-finish-PST-ADV PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 Ø-š'-we-mə-təʒe jə-č'e č'ede-ž'ə-n x^wə.je
 3ABS-LOC-2SG.ERG-NEG-put.on(IMP) POSS-edge sew-RE-MOD must
 'Don't put the dress on thinking that it is finished, the hem still needs trimming.' (Besleney)

An utterance of a sentence with the quotative concessive modifier, then, gives rise to the three inferences in (23).

- (23) a. ATTENUATED CONCESSION: The speaker entertains, but does not commit to, the attributed belief.
 b. DISPREFERENCE: The speaker disprefers the projected eventuality.
 c. PRETEXT DENIAL: The speaker believes that the attributed belief does not motivate the attributed preference.

The main theoretical question raised by the quotative adverbial, as far as interpretation goes, is what the status of these inferences is and how they arise. The proposal we sketch here, which is rooted in Winter & Rimon's (1994) aforementioned analysis of unrestricted concessive connectives, is that the adverbial carries a presupposition, and is conventionally associated with a selectional restriction, which can also be thought of as a felicity condition. We state these two components in 24, where p is the content of the prejacent of the adverbial, and q is the attributed preference.

- (24) a. Presupposition: the quoted agent is epistemically committed to p .
 b. Selectional restriction: there is a contextually familiar q such that, in the context:
 (i) the issue 'whether q ' is unsettled and
 (ii) The attributed belief p motivates q and
 (iii) The matrix modifiand S expresses the speaker's preference for $\neg q$

That the quoted agent's epistemic commitment to the prejacent is a conventional rather than pragmatic inference is evidenced by its uncancellability, demonstrated in 25.

- (25) [[wered de^w Ø-qə-ž'ə-b-ew-ʔe] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 song good 3ABS-DIR-PRVB-2SG.ERG-DYN-say PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 prazdnikə-m vəstupat' Ø-š-ew-mə-š (# wered de^w
 celebration-OBL perform 3SG.IO-LOC-2SG.ERG-NEG-do(IMP) song good
 Ø-qə-ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə we w-jə-feš Ø-χ^we-ž'-qəm)
 3ABS-DIR-PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV you 2SG.PR-POSS-certainty 3ABS-become-RE-NEG
 'Don't perform at the celebration even though (you think) that you sing (lit. say songs) well. #You yourself don't think you sing well.' (Kuban)

While we refer here to the quoted agent's epistemic commitment to the prejacent as a presupposition, we intend the term in a way that does not draw a clear line between presupposition

and conventional implicature. “Presupposition” here is intended to cover backgrounded, uncontested (or “not at-issue”) content that is automatically treated as common ground between the interlocutors, whether or not that content is informative.

The presupposition we associate with the adverbial is weaker than the presupposition often attributed to concessive connectives in the literature. König & Siemund (2000), for example, assume that connectives like *although* presuppose their prejacent.⁷ Such a presupposition is clearly too strong for the quotative concessive. It is, on the other hand, natural that a concessive marker that is grammaticalized from a quotative verb should commit the speaker only to the quoted agent’s epistemic commitments. We propose that the ATTENUATED CONCESSION inference – the inference that the speaker entertains, but does not commit, to the prejacent – is a consequence of this presupposition. In uttering a sentence with the adverbial, the speaker makes it common ground that the quoted agent believes the prejacent, but does not herself commit either to its truth or to its falsity. The resulting common ground can then be pragmatically inferred to allow the truth of the prejacent as a possibility.⁸

The selectional restriction we posit in 24 is meant to capture the concessive effect of the adverbial, and it, too, differs somewhat from the way in which this effect is usually analyzed in the literature. The main reason for this difference is that existing analyses of concessive connectives are tailored to connectives in which the conjuncts are indicative, in which case the “concessive” effect – the contrast between the two connected clauses – can be stated in terms of the propositions they express. For example, König & Siemund (2000), building on and revising König’s (1991) intuition that concessives are the duals of causal connectives, analyze *although* as in 26.⁹

- (26) Although p , q
- a. Presupposition: $p, p \rightarrow \neg q$
 - b. Assertion: $p \wedge q$

As discussed above, this cannot be adopted for the concessive quotative, because its modifiand is not declarative but directive, and hence does not express a negatable proposition (directives, in an intuitive sense, are not true or false). Furthermore, the quotative adverbial seems to be restricted to modifiands whose directive force is negative.

This latter restriction to negative directive force is perhaps the most intriguing property of the quotative adverbial. The selectional restriction we propose captures this property, but it does not explain it, and we currently have no explanation to offer. What makes this restriction especially interesting is that sensitivity to negation can be observed in various languages in concessive or closely related contrastive constructions. Japanese has a strikingly similar quotative morpheme that has been grammaticalized into a concessive expression that heads an adjunct clause. This quotative, exemplified in (27), is described and analyzed in (Suzuki 2008). Like the Besleney quotative concessive, the Japanese grammaticalized quotative seems to be restricted to negative (though not necessarily directive) contexts (Makino & Tsutsui 1995:103-105).

⁷For this reason, they point out, the term “concessive” is, generally speaking, a misnomer. Expressions of contrast like *although* are not generally used to concede anything.

⁸An interesting question is whether a more precise and developed analysis along these lines could be developed that would extend also to English cases involving existential epistemic modals such as those in 4 in the introduction. We cannot address this question here.

⁹The material implication is meant to capture the fact that the implication from the prejacent of the connective to the negation of the matrix is in some sense generic or modalized, or, in the terminology of Rimon and Winter, default.

- (27) [mainichi jugyō-ni dete-iru kara to **itte**] majime-ni benkyō shite-iru
 everyday class-to go.out-PROG from COMP **say.GER** serious-ADV study do-PROG
 koto-ni-wa nara-**nai**
 thing-DAT-TOP become-**NEG**
 ‘Even though he goes to class every day, it doesn’t mean that he is studying seriously.’
 (Makino & Tsutsui 1995:104)

A closely related construction in English is the concessive modifier *just because*, discussed in Bender & Kathol (2001), which similarly can only occur with sentences headed by the negated verb *mean*, as in 28.¹⁰

- (28) Just because you are rich doesn’t mean / *means you can say whatever you want.

If the concessive quotative adverbial were restricted to modifying negative imperatives, it could simply be said to select for them, leading to a much simpler selectional restriction. As was shown above, however, the restriction is not to negative imperatives *per se*, but more generally to sentences that have negative directive force.

Intuitively, “negative directive force” is a sentential force that directs the addressee to refrain from carrying out an action that is under their control. To make this notion somewhat more precise (though still informal), we follow Condoravdi & Lauer’s (2012) analysis of imperatives as self-verifying assertions that commit speakers publicly to what they call an “effective preference” about the addressee’s actions. Effective preferences are action-guiding preferences that, unlike simple bouletic preferences, have to be consistent (since an action cannot be decided on based on contradictory preferences). Formal details aside, the core intuition of this analysis is that a sentence with directive force $\text{IMP}(p)$ has the content that there is an assertion at speech time that commits the speaker publicly to a preference for p over $\neg p$. By uttering this sentence, the speaker automatically becomes committed to the preference, since her own utterance is precisely such an assertion at speech time.

According to the selectional restriction we posit, the quotative concessive requires the clause it modifies to express speaker **dis**-preference for the projected eventuality q which is taken in the context to be motivated by the attributed belief (for example, in 3 – the addressee’s climbing a tree because they believe they are a good climber)¹¹, and this is why only sentences with negative directive force are possible modifiands. The quoted agent’s presumed preference to realize the projected eventuality q is what we termed above the *attributed preference*. It is an attributed preference because the speaker takes the quoted agent to have such a preference, in virtue of that agent’s attributed belief. If the action q is an inaction, i.e. if what the speaker disprefers is the addressee’s refraining from action, then two negations surface, as in 29.

- (29) a. [a-r ž’ə-p-ʔ-wə] mə zə-ɓ^weg^wə-m wə-qe-**mə**-tež-wə
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV this one-time-OBL 2SG.ABS-DIR-**NEG**-stand.up-ADV
 p-šə-**q^w**en
 2SG.ERG-do-PREV
 ‘That said, this time make sure to stand up (lit. don’t not stand up).’

¹⁰The generalization about *just because* is actually more complicated. Positive sentences are acceptable when embedded in an environment that, overall, argues for their negation, as in the following naturally occurring example: *If you think that just because you’re rich you can do whatever you want, let me tell you something: no you can’t.*

¹¹More precisely, it is the speaker who takes the quoted subject to view the attributed belief as motivating the projected eventuality q .

- b. (#[a-r ž ə-p-ʔ-wə]) mə zə-B^weg^wə-m qe-tež
that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV this one-time-OBL DIR-stand.up(IMP)
'(#That said,) this time make sure to stand up.' (Besleney)

On our analysis, then, the DISPREFERENCE inference is simply the force of the matrix sentence. The PRETEXT DENIAL inference is a pragmatic conclusion that arises from the combination of the presupposition that the quoted agent has the quoted belief, and the force of the selected matrix sentence, which commits the speaker to a preference against the attributed preference to realize the projected eventuality. Consider what happens, on our analysis, when a speaker utters a sentence with the quotative concessive adverbial. For simplicity, assume the most common case, in which the quoted agent is the addressee. If the presupposition that the speaker is making is satisfied, then the context is such that the addressee has the quoted belief (e.g. the addressee thinks they are a good climber). The speaker neither commits to, nor rejects, this belief, so the common ground entails that it is possibly true and possibly not. If the utterance is felicitous, then, because of the selectional restriction, the matrix sentence is a negative directive that commits the speaker to a dispreference for the realization of an action (e.g. climbing the tree), a preference for the realization of which she takes the addressee to view as motivated by the attributed belief. In the resulting context, the speaker believes that the attributed belief does not, in fact, motivate the preference she attributes to the addressee. She therefore must believe that the attributed belief does not, in fact, motivate this action. This is PRETEXT DENIAL.

Our analysis as presented here remains preliminary. A fuller analysis would have to include a more precise formalization within a worked out model of discourse (such as, for example, the one presented in Farkas & Bruce 2010). Within such a framework, conventional and pragmatic discourse effects can be precisely modeled, notions like epistemic and preferential commitments explicitly defined, and, consequently, important interpretative phenomena we deal with here, such as attenuated concession, gain the clarity of delineation required for crosslinguistic comparison. While such an analysis must await future research, in the next section we outline some of the things we believe this analysis to reveal.

4 Some consequences

Across languages, there is a close connection between the marking of concessivity and the marking of causation, as discussed especially in König & Siemund (2000). In many of the examples we have looked at here, there is also a causal connection between the attributed belief and the attributed preference. Specifically, one way in which the attributed belief can “support” or “motivate” the attributed preference is by being causally linked to it. For example, it is natural to view an agent’s belief that they are good climbers to have a causal role in their developing the preference to climb a certain tree. If they lacked this belief, they would likely not develop the preference. As König and Siemund point out, however, there are concessive relations that are not based on a causality. Since our analysis is not built on causation, it anticipates such interpretations for the quotative concessive as well. That such interpretations are indeed available is shown by 30:

- (30) a. Context: Thinking to oneself: “Everyone around me is sick, I’m the only one who isn’t.”
Suddenly realizing that the likelihood of getting sick is very high:
- b. [a-r ž’ə-s-ʔ-wə] sə-q̣e-mə-səmežə-tere
that-ABS PRVB-1SG.ERG-say-ADV 1SG.ABS-DIR-NEG-sick-OPT
‘That said, if only I wouldn’t get sick! / I wish I wouldn’t get sick!’ (Besleney)

In this self-directed example, the attributed preference is for an eventuality that is not under the quoted agent's (= speaker's) control. The relation between the belief that the speaker is the only one who is not sick and the preference to not become sick is epistemic, not causal. In this case, therefore, there is no inference of PRETEXT DENIAL, just expression of the speaker's bouletic preferences. Such examples also show, however, that the selectional restriction of the adverbial must allow for the matrix directive to have a so-called "wish" interpretation. It must be able to express a bouletic, rather than action-guiding, preference. For a discussion of wish-interpretations of imperatives, see Condoravdi & Lauer (2012) and Kaufmann (2012). In particular, Condoravdi and Lauer show that a preference-based account of directive force predicts that "wish"-readings arise precisely when the preferred content is not under the control of the addressee (or when there is no addressee, as is the case of imperatives like *please don't rain!*).

The way we have formulated the selectional restriction of the quotative adverb predicts that it should be able to modify matrix sentences that are not negative directives in terms of their clause type (i.e. not imperatives, or jussives, etc.) but nevertheless conventionally commit the speaker to a dispreference. We discuss here four cases that we conjecture to be examples of this, though we do not have enough data to demonstrate this conclusively.

First, the adverb can occur with matrix sentences in which the main verb is a (presumably performative) negated deontic modal (31). That deontic modals have performative uses is uncontroversial, as is the fact that, on their performative uses, they have directive force.¹²

- (31) [[qə-z-de-ḵ^we Ø-ž'-a-ʔe] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 DIR-1SG.IO-COM-go(IMP) 3ABS-PRVB-3PL.ERG-say PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 zewe aje Ø-ž'ə-p-ʔe-n-wə šə.t-ḡəm
 immediately yes 3ABS-PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-MOD-ADV **should-NEG**
 'If you are being asked to marry (lit. if they say "go with me"), you shouldn't immediately say yes.' (Kuban)

Second, the adverb can modify matrix sentences in which the matrix clause contains the existential copula *ra* on its so-called "inferential" use. The primary function of *ra* is to mark predicates that cannot otherwise head a finite matrix clause. While bare nominals take tense and cross-reference morphology and can act as matrix predicates,¹³ pronouns, definite case-marked nominals, prepositional phrases and clausal constituents marked by an overt subordinator may not. For example, *ra* is used in 32 to mark the first and second person pronouns, which act as the main predicates of the clause.

- (32) Aslan Ø-ḡə-ž'-jə-ʔ-a se-**ra**-ḡəm djele-r we-**ra** nah
 Aslan 3ABS-DIR-PRVB-3SG.ERG-say-PST **I-COP-NEG** stupid-ABS you-**COP** more
 'Aslan said: "The stupid one is not me, but (lit. more like) you.' (Besleney)¹⁴

An interesting interpretational effect, however, arises when a matrix sentence headed by *ra* is modified by a conditional clause. In this case, the result conveys an inferential relation between the conditional antecedent and the matrix proposition, roughly translatable as "means". Intriguingly, like the English and Japanese constructions noted in the previous section, the resulting construction is sensitive to the presence of negation. Specifically, a sentence of the schematic form [if *A*, *B-ra*]

¹²On Kaufmann's (2012) analysis all imperatives are hidden performative modal statements.

¹³The Circassian languages are generally characterized as having weak part-of-speech distinctions; see e.g. discussion in Arkadiev & Lander (2020).

¹⁴The comparative particle *nah* 'more' is used here to express contrastive focus between the two pronouns.

must communicate that *B* is not a viable conclusion from *A*, or, in other words, that the fact that *A* does not mean that *B*. Because of this, the clause that corresponds to *B* must be negative (33b). If the clause does not contain explicit negation, it is understood by speakers as a rhetorical question which denies that *A* means *B* (33a). The rhetorical question reading conveyed by *ra* in 33a contrasts sharply with the declarative positive statement expressed by the finite past tense predicate in 33c, which does not feature *-ra*.¹⁵

- (33) a. [$\text{ʁ}^{\text{w}}\text{eg}^{\text{w}}\text{ə-r}$ Ø-çəne-me] weš'x Ø-q-je-š'x-a-we-**ra**
street-ABS 3ABS-wet-COND rain 3ABS-DIR-DAT-rain-PST-ADV-**COP**
‘If the street is wet, does that mean that it has rained?’ (Comment: You’re challenging whether this is true, for example, in response to a child.)
*‘If the street is wet, that means that it has rained.’
- b. [$\text{ʁ}^{\text{w}}\text{eg}^{\text{w}}\text{ə-r}$ Ø-çəne-me] weš'x Ø-q-je-š'x-a-we-**ra-čəm**
street-ABS 3ABS-wet-COND rain 3ABS-DIR-DAT-rain-PST-ADV-**COP-NEG**
‘If the street is wet, that does not mean that it has rained.’
- c. [$\text{ʁ}^{\text{w}}\text{eg}^{\text{w}}\text{ə-r}$ Ø-çəne-me] weš'x Ø-q-je-š'x-a
street-ABS 3ABS-wet-COND rain 3ABS-DIR-DAT-rain-PST
‘If the street is wet, it has rained.’ (Kuban)

As predicted by our analysis, a clause with the inferential copula *ra* may be modified by the quotative concessive adjunct if it expresses an eventuality which is dispreferred by the speaker (34) and may not otherwise (35a; cf. 35b with a conditional clause instead of the quotative concessive).

- (34) [[$\text{zə-g}^{\text{w}}\text{ere-č'e}$ Ø-qə-z-e- $\lambda\text{e}^{\text{w}}$ -a-xe] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə
one-INDEF-INS 3ABS-1SG.IO-DAT-ask-PST-PL PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
wə-ž'-wə a-r Ø-p-še-n-wə-**ra-čəm**
2SG.ABS-run-ADV that-ABS 3ABS-2SG.ERG-do-MOD-ADV-**COP-NEG**
‘Just because you were asked (to do) something, it’s not that you should rush to do it (lit. do it, running).’ (Kuban)

¹⁵Interestingly, if the overt causal morpheme *-š* is used instead of the adverbial suffix *-we* in (33a), as in i, the sentence loses its inference-denying reading, and is interpreted instead as a declarative entailing the truth of the matrix. In this case, not only does the *-ra* marked clause not require negation, it is incompatible with it.

- (i) [$\text{ʁ}^{\text{w}}\text{eg}^{\text{w}}\text{ə-r}$ Ø-çəne-me] weš'x Ø-q-je-š'x-a-š-jə-**ra(#-čəm)**
street 3ABS-wet-COND rain 3ABS-DIR-DAT-rain-PST-CS-ADD-**COP(#-NEG)**
‘If the street is wet, it is because it has rained.’ / *‘If the street is wet, it is not because it has rained.’ (Kuban)

More research is required to explain this stark contrast in interpretation and interaction with negation. We conjecture that inferential *-ra* and non-inferential *-ra* have different morphosyntax, a conclusion that seems further supported by the fact that the latter, but not the former, can combine with the demonstrative *a* (ii):

- (ii) a. [$\text{ʁ}^{\text{w}}\text{eg}^{\text{w}}\text{ə-r}$ Ø-çəne-me] weš'x Ø-q-je-š'x-a-š-jə **a-ra**
street 3ABS-wet-COND rain 3ABS-DIR-DAT-rain-PST-CS-ADD **that-cop**
‘If the street is wet, it has rained.’
- b. * [$\text{ʁ}^{\text{w}}\text{eg}^{\text{w}}\text{ə-r}$ Ø-çəne-me] weš'x Ø-q-je-š'x-a-we **a-ra**
street 3ABS-wet-COND rain 3ABS-DIR-DAT-rain-PST-CS-ADV **that-cop**
Intended: ‘If the street is wet, does that mean it has rained?’ (Kuban)

- (35) a. # [wə-bje ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] zeč'e-m-jə fə-we
 2SG.ABS-rich PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV all-OBL-ADD good-ADV
 w-a-λaɐ^w **ra-čəm**
 2SG.ABS-3PL.ERG-see **COP-NEG**
 Intended: 'If you're rich, that doesn't mean that everyone loves you.'
- b. [wə-bje-**me**] zeč'e-m-jə fə-we w-a-λaɐ^w **ra-čəm**
 2SG.ABS-rich-COND all-OBL-ADD good-ADV 2SG.ABS-3PL.ERG-see **COP-NEG**
 'If you're rich, that doesn't mean that everyone loves you.' (Kuban)

Third, the adverb can modify matrix sentences in which the matrix clause is interpreted as a rhetorical question:

- (36) [[sə-bje] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] adrje-xe-m ja-g^w
 1SG.ABS-rich PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV other-PL-OBL 3PL.PR+POSS-heart
 Ø-xe-b-ɐe-š χ^wə.ne
 3ABS-LOC-2SG.ERG-CAUS-diminish may
 '(You think) you can hurt other people (lit. cause their hearts to diminish) because you are rich?' (Kuban)

Fourth, the adverb can modify matrix sentences in which the matrix clause contains a negated attitude predicate:

- (37) se sə-g^wɐe-čəm a-bə wə-č-Ø-je-pč'e-n-wə [[jəpeč'e
 I 1SG.ABS-think-NEG that-OBL 2SG.ABS-DIR-3SG.IO-DAT-jump-MOD-ADV before
 wə-č-je-pč'e-f-wə š.t-a] ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə]
 2SG.ABS-DIR-DAT-jump-POT-ADV can-PST PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV
 'You may have jumped from there before but I don't think that you should jump from there.' (Kuban)

Finally, our analysis has something to say about cases where negation is not in the matrix clause but in a clause embedded inside it. In 38b, the matrix is a directive that has a negative adverbial embedded in it. As the translation shows, the interpretation is effectively that of a negative directive. Presumably, a preference for the addressee to *eat without waiting* somehow expresses two preferences: a preference *for* eating without waiting entails a preference *against* waiting before eating.

- (38) a. Context: A guest says that they will not start eating without the rest of the guests.
 The host answers:
- b. [a-r ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] [a-xe-m w-ja-**mə**-ž-wə]
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV that-PL-OBL 2SG.ABS-3PL.IO+DAT-**NEG**-wait-ADV
 šxe
 eat(IMP)
 'That said, don't wait for them, eat something. (Literally: Not waiting for them, eat something.)' (Besleney)

In 39b, the matrix sentence is a directive to give negative directives.

- (39) a. Context: Aslan tells his mother that his friends are calling for him to play with them; he still has homework to do, but speculates about going after finishing the homework or at some other time. His mother replies:
- b. [a-r ž'ə-p-ʔ-wə] ja-ž'-je-ʔe
 that-ABS PRVB-2SG.ERG-say-ADV 3PL.IO-PRVB-DAT-say(IMP)
 [wə-zerə-**mə**-žeg^wə-ne-r]
 2SG.ABS-REL.FCT-**NEG**-play-FUT-ABS
 ‘That said, tell them you won’t be playing.’ (Besleney)

Here, the attributed preference (the preference the mother attributes to the child) is telling the friends that he will play later, and, hence, a preference to go play later. Issuing a negative directive like *don’t tell them you’ll be playing* would be too weak, expressing dispreference for the telling, but not for the playing. The positive directive in 39b conveys dispreference for both.

5 Conclusion and questions

Our analysis of the East Circassian quotative concessive adverbial, beyond the inherent interest it carries for increasing our knowledge of the grammar of an understudied language, also opens up a neglected perspective on the nature of concessive markers. Descriptively, it provides another compelling example of the grammaticalization of a quotative marker into a contrastive subordinator, and puts into sharp relief a fascinating connection between concessivity and negation, which can be observed crosslinguistically. Theoretically, it provides some important steps towards expanding our understanding of contrastive markers beyond declaratives, as well as a direction for understanding *attenuated concession* – contrast without commitment to the preajacent. In the end, the analysis we proposed is very much in line with, and can be viewed as an expansion of, those developed for concession by König (1991) and by Winter & Rimon (1994).

Looking forward, it is clear that many questions remain open beyond those of diachrony and of the nature of attenuated concession. More fieldwork would be required in order to understand what exactly is happening in examples, such as were discussed in the previous section, in which the matrix clause is not, strictly speaking, a negative directive. Most importantly, the aforementioned close connection between negation and concessivity calls out for an explanation.

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