Insertion Concessive
An interactional practice as a discourse grammatical construction

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Abstract

Concessive practices are a recurrent phenomenon in conversation. This paper investigates one variant of them: tripartite sequences which involve a first assertion, an inserted concession, and a reassertion of the original standpoint. This interactional practice may be produced by one speaker only or in a dialogue with another participant whose contribution triggers a conceding move from the speaker. The argument is made that the practice in question, Insertion Concessive, has such distinct sequential and formal properties that they warrant an account of the practice as a discourse grammatical construction. The tripartite sequences follow recurrent polarity and subjectivity patterns and are operated with a finite set of linguistic markers which signal concession (in the conceding part) and contrast (in the reasserting part). The study relates directly to interactional approaches to Construction Grammar, accounting for formal and semantic regularities which go beyond the limits of a single sentence. The data is drawn from corpora of everyday and institutional conversations in Swedish.

Keywords: Concession, Conversation, Discourse, Social interaction, Constructions

1. Introduction

This paper investigates an interactional discourse pattern which involves a distinct three-part sequential structure. The speaker first makes a claim of some sort (part one), she or he then inserts a concessive move which acknowledges other or alternative viewpoints on the subject matter in question(part two), and finally, the speaker recycles the original assertion in a more or less verbatim manner (part three). This cyclic discourse pattern consisting of three moves – assertion, concession and reassertion – is a recurrent phenomenon in conversation, especially in reasoning and arguing activities in which opinions and evaluations are expressed and also expected. The example below, taken from an informal discussion with two high school students and a moderator,[1] illustrates the pattern; the three sequential parts are indicated in the right margin. The topic at this point of the discussion is what and where to study after high school, one of the options being *Hanken*, the Swedish school of economics in Helsinki (The extract is translated from Swedish and somewhat abbreviated).

(1)   HUSA:03. Discussion in a high school. M is the moderator, A is a student.
  1 M: you don't want to study at Hanken?
→2 A: no I haven't really intended to study at Hanken.
         [*Part 1: claim*]
→3   the only thing I know is that language
         [*Part 2: concession*]
  4   teaching is quite good there
  5   so one could study languages if one hasn't been
  6   accepted anywhere to study
→7   but I haven't really planned on it sort of
         [*Part 3: reprise*]

The speaker (A) first confirms the moderator's assumption: she says that she has not really intended to study at Hanken. She then extends the turn in line 3 and admits that she has limited knowledge of Hanken as the only thing she knows about the school is that the language teaching is quite good; indeed, this could be a reason to study languages at this school in case one has not been accepted anywhere else to study. The speaker's concession, however, is followed in line 7 by a slightly rephrased recycling of the original assertion: she states that she has not really planned to study at the school in question.

Example (1) above shows a case in which the speaker's actions of asserting, conceding and reasserting are realized in one multi-unit turn at talk. The second move of the turn, which contains concessive elements of some sort, functions as a response to the assertion put forward in the first move. The conclusive third move then may be seen as a response to the concession; the speaker now repeats her or his original standpoint, thereby insisting on this standpoint and downplaying the relevance of the concessive viewpoints. When we look at the resulting internal sequencing of the multi-unit turn, the concessive move has the character of an insertion between the speaker's first and last words on the subject matter, which is why we term this pattern Insertion Concessive.[2] We will return to example (1) in section 4 with a more detailed analysis, i.e. in extract 4.

Another variant of Insertion Concessive exhibits the same three-part sequential structure. In this variant, however, the structure is realized in two

different turns. The concession and the reassertion are produced as one turn, but this turn is separated from the turn containing the speaker's original assertion. This is because the two closely linked actions of conceding and reasserting are arguably triggered by some activity, such as a comment or a question, from another party to the interaction. The conceding move thus functions as a response to a possibly challenging reaction to the opinion, evaluation or description put forward by the speaker earlier in the exchange. In section 4 we will consider two extracts containing the other-triggered variant of the concessive practice.

Our study of various realizations of Insertion Concessive has revealed a use of distinct lexical markers in the conceding and reasserting moves respectively. The concessive move is initiated with or contains adverbs and particles such as *a/ja* 'yes, well,' *visst* 'sure,' *förstås* 'of course,' formulaic expressions such as *de e klart (att)* 'it's obvious (that)' or reservations such as *de enda ja vet* 'the only thing I know,' as in (1). The reassertion is most often initiated with the adversative conjunction *men* 'but' and is sometimes accompanied by the resuming adverb *i alla fall* 'in any case.' These regular features manifest the interplay between fixity and productivity with which speakers link and weave their actions together in the local contingencies of interaction in progress (cf. Tannen 1989: 36).

Our aim in this paper is to analyze Insertion Concessive as a construction-like interactional practice; that is, we will demonstrate the regular features associated with it: these features include the sequential patterning of the practice as well as recurrent lexical elements and sensitivity to polarity patterns. What we are suggesting is a holistic model in the vein of construction grammar, which allows for an inclusion of lexical and grammatical attributes and values, as well as for an abstraction of pragmatic knowledge. The latter is crucial for the cognitive identification of Insertion Concessive as an available linguistic resource.

2. Discourse and interaction as constructions

In an interactional discourse perspective, the notion of a construction may be necessarily more fluid than in decontextualized and derivational accounts of grammatical relations and structures like generative grammar. The idea of an emergent grammar, as postulated by Hopper (1998), represents a radical step in a discourse grammatical direction. As discourse in its spoken mode unfolds in real time, so also do the syntactic projects which are realized through bits and increments which the speaker has experienced in concrete speech situations on previous occasions (Auer and Pfänder 2011: 4). The speakers rearrange pieces of pre-fabricated constructional entities or routines which they have become familiar with rather than derive them from a set of abstract constructional rules generating new, never before heard sentences, (cf. Tannen 1989: 36). In such a view, grammar manifests itself as a collection of sedimented subsystems, the nature of which is unfinished and undeterminate (Hopper 2001: 26, 28). Nonetheless, the subsystems offer a form of stability which enables the speakers to produce new combinations of constructional pieces in a structured, albeit perhaps not canonical grammatical manner.

Accounts of discourse patterns which have been offered in the tradition of conversation analysis and interactional linguistics combine fairly well with the conception of emergent grammar. Discourse, when it is analyzed in parts larger than a single sentence (or utterance), is more or less patterned, relying on a scale of fixity of form. A move of one kind, for example a question, makes a move of another specific kind relevant, i.e., an answer to the question. Moreover, the wording of an answer is typically constrained by what was produced in the question, either by (partly) repeating linguistic material from the question or by not particularly repeating it in elliptically formed answers.

Concessive practices, which are of interest in this study, develop patterns in which some form of recurrence of actions and forms may be observed. For example, Antaki and Wetherell (1999) document a rhetorical practice they call Show Concessions, which may be understood as one type of realization of the discourse construction we are focusing on in this study. In this practice, an act of conceding, just before returning to the speaker's main argument, can be used to dismiss rival claims of any sort. The characteristic pattern of Show Concessions thus involves a three-part structure: a disputable or challengeable *proposition*, a *concession* which brings in other viewpoints, and a *reprise* of the original claim. As Antaki and Wetherell (1999: 9) point out, the practice they describe is "about the rhetorical effect, not of simply 'conceding', but of *making a show* of conceding;" they thus refer to aspects of strategic planning or even exploitation in the use of the discourse pattern. In contrast, we here investigate Insertion Concessive as a general organizational principle prevalent in social interaction and not as a premediated rhetorical device (see Lindström and Londen 2013); this is why we do not refer to the instances in our data with the label Show Concession.

Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005) also make structural points about another concessive

discourse pattern which they call Concessive Repair. This practice is a resource by which a speaker may revise an overstatement by first backing down from it and then resuming, in a way repairing, the original version with some kind of downgrading. Extract (2) gives an example of the practice:

(2)   Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005: 262).

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 1 A:e↑You're at home now yourse:lf aren't you?
 2 B:Oh yes I[am.
 3 A:          [Ye:s yes: yes.
 4 B: Ye[h!
 5 A:    [Hm.t.h[hhh
 6 B:           [I'm looking- yes. I'm jus:t so glad
→7       it's an in service training ↓day tomorrow so I c'n switch off.
→8    Well. Not really switch off but you kno[w. Rel[ax. ↓
 9 A:                                 [.hhh  [↑ (Why)
10    I find they're quite hard wo:rk somet(hh)ime[s hheh ]
11    ↑ha ha↑
12 B:                                          [↑heh h]a↑
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Speaker B uses an overstatement by saying that she can *switch off* during a training day, because this could mean that she would not pay attention to the training (line 7). She backs down from this by conceding that she does not mean *really switch off* and produces a revised weaker formulation of what she means: *relax* in line 8. A schematic representation of the sequential regularities of concessive repair is as follows (Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2005: 263):

Overstatement	I can switch off
(a) *Concession*	well, not really switch off
(b) *Revised description*	but, you know, relax

Concessive Repair operates on a scale in which the overstatement and the revised description (b) take different positions, the overstatement being a stronger formulation and the revision a more moderate one. Because some revision occurs in these sequences it is legitimate to say that move (b) involves a repair of a problem source, which is the original overstatement. Concessive Repair thus provides a format by which the speaker can preserve the essence of his or her original formulation, albeit in a less categorical form, while in Show Concession, as well as in Insertion Concessive, the speaker eventually reconfirms his or her original claim.

Growing awareness of the emergent patterning of discourse and interaction has actualized a need for a usage-based, integrative grammatical model for a systematic registration of the contextually rooted regularities of spoken, dialogical language. While much work within construction grammar has concentrated on specific features of isolated (and in many cases invented) phrasal and clausal expressions, the grammatical model has nonetheless appealed to scholars working within interactional linguistics. Their interest may be based on the holistic premises of construction grammar, which do not draw a boundary between the syntax and lexis of a language; moreover, prosodic, pragmatic and other contextual aspects may be included in the attributes and parameters which constrain the shape and use of grammatical structures (Auer 2006; Deppermann 2011; Günthner and Imo 2006; Wide 2009). Not only is the boundary between lexis and syntax relaxed in a constructional sense, but also that between the sentence and larger pieces of discourse. That is, lexical and syntactic (as well as prosodic, semantic and pragmatic) regularities may be associated with the organization of textual and interactional sequences (Lindström and Londen 2008; Östman 2005). Furthermore, the view of grammar as an interactionally emergent set of subsystems (Hopper 1998) has much in common with construction grammar in which grammar is organized through networks of a large number of specific constructions rather than as a reductionist system of strongly generalized rules. This point of connection is most evident in the recognition of, in traditional treatments, peripheral constructions which consist of lexically specified parts and open slots for productive operation respectively; for example, the English *let alone* construction (Fillmore et al. 1988).

From the point of interaction in progress, it is essential that a construction is an entity with a trajectory that is projectable for the participants. Relying on their previous knowledge of the conventions of language, the interactants are able to foresee what kinds of elements follow each other in a clause, especially the longer the syntactic trajectory unfolds (Auer 2005). Similarly, the sequential trajectory of discourse constructions is projectable. For example, speakers are able to orient to the completion of a concessive repair sequence when they have identified an overstatement and a backing down from it (Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2005). Projection then offers a resource which enables the speakers to orient to the direction of interaction and to the points of speakers' turns where turn transition is possibly relevant.

It is from these points of departure that we will analyze the constructional features of the discourse practice Insertion Concessive. We will start by giving a few samples of sequential analyses of the

discourse practice in Swedish spoken interaction. These micro-analyses are followed by an abstraction of the emergent patterned features of the practice, which recur from one instantiation to another; i.e. we follow a path from constructs to a construction. In considering the implications of the constructional features, we turn to a discussion of some formal variations in the discourse pattern; that is, variations which serve as indications of the speakers' orientation to parts of the concessive pattern as structurally projected. The aim of this analysis is to contribute to the tradition of construction grammar by extending the framework towards a combined discursive, interactional and constructional account. Such an approach could thus be called *Discourse* Construction Grammar, which incorporates formalized aspects of linguistic forms and interactional sequence (cf. Construction Discourse in Östman 2005).

3. A note on the data and examples

Much of the earlier work on concession in conversation has been based on data from English (e.g., Antaki and Wetherell 1999; Barth-Weingarten 2003; Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2000, 2005. Our data is derived from Swedish conversations, both mundane and institutional, and suggests that the practice we call Insertion Concessive is a generally available, rather than a language specific, organizational feature of conversation. While this study does not report quantitative results, it is based on fairly large corpora of spoken Swedish recorded in Sweden and Finland, including moderated discussions with high school students, everyday conversations, TV shows and interviews broadcast on the radio. This material amounts to about 20 hrs in duration and it yielded a collection of 50 instances of sequences with the structure assertion–concession–reassertion. References to data sources for the conversational extracts cited in this paper are found in Appendix 1.

We have carefully chosen a set of illustrative and representative examples from our collection for introductory sequential analyses and for a further demonstration of the constructional aspects of Insertion Concessive. The conversational extracts below are presented in Swedish, the original language. Below the Swedish line is a morphological glossing, and below this line an idiomatic English translation. Instantiations of the sequential triad assertion−concession−reassertion are highlighted with pointing arrows in the left margin of the transcripts. Some additional typographical conventions are used to help the reader: the speaker's original version (assertion) and the recycled one (reassertion) are represented in italics; lexical markers of concession and contrast are highlighted in boldface. A list of transcription symbols is provided in Appendix 2.

4. The practice

Studies on conversation and interaction have identified the importance of concessive practices in social interplay. Pomerantz (1984) notes that conceding serves as a means of managing disrupting viewpoints between two speakers. Consequently, we argue that Insertion Concessive, the practice of first backing down from a standpoint and then reasserting it, is essentially dialogic in nature. In the case of same-speaker concession, the conceding move serves as a display of the speaker's reasoning with her- or himself about, for example, possible alternatives, exceptions or counter-arguments to the earlier asserted standpoint. Other voices are sometimes brought in. For instance, the speaker may incorporate what other people have said or might say or think about the matter in question. Thus, the conceding move may be regarded as a kind of internal or incorporated dialogue or, to put it differently, interactionally constructed cognition (see Linell 2009: 14, 111, 119). In the case of other-triggered concession, the dialogical nature of the practice appears more expressly as the speaker's conceding move functions as a response to a (possibly challenging) comment or question from a co-participant. In the following we will first analyze two examples of Insertion Concessive produced by the same speaker, extracts (3) and (4), and then two examples of the concession being triggered by a move by a co-participant, extracts (5) and (6).

4.1 Same-speaker concession
In extract (3), earlier presented in abridged form as (1), the speaker produces a long conceding segment (lines 6-16) before recycling her brief response to the moderator's question.

(3) HUSA:03. Discussion in a high school. M is the moderator; A is a student.

1 M: ni   vill   int   studera   på
    you.PL want.PRS NEG   study.INF at

    Hanken.
    N-PROP

    you don't want to study at Hanken.

2   (1.0)

3 A: *nä*   *ja ha*   *no*   *int* (0.3)
    no   I have.PRS PRT   NEG

    no I haven't really (0.3)

→4 *ja ha*   *no int tank-t*
   I have.PRS PRT NEG think- SUP

studera   på Han*ken*. hh
study.INF at   N-PROP
I haven't really intended to study at
Han*ken* hh

5   (0.7)

→6 A: **enda som ja vet**   att de e
only REL I know.PRS that   it be.PRS

språ-
lang-

(the) only (thing) I know is that it's lang-

7   att språk-undervisning-en e   helt
that language-teaching-DEF be.PRS quite

bra   där (0.3)
good there

that language teaching is quite good there
(0.3)

8   för min bror   studera-r språk   där
for my brother study-PRS language there

endast
only

'cause my brother is studying languages
there only

9   men, .hh (0.5)
but, .hh

10 A: att på de sätt-e   sku   manju
that on that manner-DEF would.PRS GNR PRT

no kunna nångång fa-:
PRT can.INF some.day go-INF
so in that way one could, you know, really
go someday

11   å studera   språk   just om man
to study.INF language.PL just if   GNR

få-r   nå   såhär   mellan-år
get-PRS some   like.this middle-year

and study languages if one has sort of an
intermediate year

12   att   man   int ha   sluppi
that   GNR   NEG have.PRS get.SUP

nånstans   in   nånstans
some.place   in   some.place

and one hasn't been accepted anywhere

13   å   studera   å .h (0.5)
to   study.INF   and
to study and .h

14 A: vet   int   rikit va
know.PRS   NEG   rightwhat

man annars   sku   gör-a så (.)
GNR otherwise would.PRS do-INF so

(one) doesn't really know what else to do (.)

15   då   sku   de ju   va-:
then   would-PRS it PRT   be-PRS

helt   bra   men   att, (0.5)
quite   good   but   that

then it would be quite alright but, (0.5)

→16   **men att** *ja ha   no int planera de*
but   that I have.PRS PRT NEG plan.SUP it

sådä: hh.
like.that

but I haven't really planned on it sort of hh

After the moderator's question addressed to
both of the students present (line 1), there is a one
second pause. Then A takes the turn. She confirms
the moderator's assumption: she says that she has
not really intended to study at Hanken.[3] After a short
break – there is a hearable outbreath and a pause –
the speaker extends the turn (line 6). She admits that
her knowledge of Hanken is limited as the only thing
she knows about the school is that the language
teaching is quite good, referring to her brother who
is studying only languages there (which implies that
he is not a regular degree student). This conceding
move is followed by the adversative conjunction
men 'but,' which projects a contrastive utterance of
some sort (line 8). However, after a hearable
inbreath and a pause she expands the conceding
segment. She now says that one could in fact go to
Hanken someday to study languages and, using a
conditional *if–then* construction, describes a
situation when going to Hanken could be a good
thing (lines 11–15).

This long conceding segment is immediately
followed by a slightly rephrased recycling of the
speaker's brief answer to the moderator's question in
line 1: she says that she has not really planned on it
(line 16). The transition to the concluding third turn-
part is initiated with the (repeated) compound
conjunction *men att* 'but (that).'[4] This conjunction,

typical of Swedish spoken in Finland, may be said to mark both contrast and linkage: *men* marks a contrast to and a disassociation from the preceding discourse (here the conceding move), *att* marks an explicit link backwards to something that was said or implied earlier (here the direct answer to the moderator's question) and projects a consequence of the preceding talk (cf. Koivisto et al. 2011: 86) on *että* 'that' in Finnish).

When considering the sequential moves A makes in her turn, we get the following three-parted structure for her argumentation:

Move 1 assertion:	I havent' really intended to study at Hanken.
Move 2 concession:	The only thing I know: one could study languages if one has an intermediate year
Move 3 reassertion:	But I haven't really planned on it.

Extract (4) consists of a political commentary and is part of a newscast on the Swedish radio channel in Finland. After a report on a press conference held by (former) Prime Minister Vanhanen earlier that day, the channel's political commentator is asked by the reporter to give an account of the Prime Minister's appearance at the press conference.

(4) YLE:Vega. SG is a political news commentator on the radio.

1 SG: i   manga fråg-or,   i: ställe-t
       in many question-PL in place-DEF

       för   att   ta   ställning
       for   to   take.INF position

       in many questions, instead of taking a stand

2   så to   han int ställ*ning* hh
       so take.PST he NEG position

       he didn't take a stand hh

3   >de vill   säja<   vi fick
       that want.PRS say.INF we get.PST

       lite   liksom läs-a,   lyssna
       a.little PRT   read-INF listen.INF

       >that is< we had to a little like read, listen

4   mellan rad-er-na   å   hör-a
       between line-PL-DEF   and   hear-INF

       va   han int   sa   å
       what   he NEG   say.PST and

       between the lines and hear what he didn't say and

5   hur han eh n- hur han   nyansera
       how he PRT how he   nuance.PST

       å   va   han utelämna   å,
       and   what   he   leave.out.PST and

       how he erm n- how he nuanced and what he left out and,

→6   ↑de e   ju lite   synd   me tanke
       that be.PRS PRT a.little pity   with thought

       på   den   politisk-a hh (.) debatt-en↓
       on   the   political-DEF   debate-DEF

       ↑that's a bit of a pity as regards the political hh (.) debate↓

7   för   de   e   klart att   de
       for   it   be.PRS clear that it

       e   enkl-are   om om de e
       be.PRS simple-COMP if if it be.PRS

       klar-a
       clear-PL

       because obviously it's simpler if if there are clear

→8   ståndpunkt-er. .hh >de e   klart< att
       stand-point-PL   it be.PRS clear that

       att   Matti Vanhanen   som
       that N-PROP N-PROP   as

       standpoints. .hh >of   course< Matti Vanhanen as

9   statsminister, (0.4) har   en lite annan
       state-minister   have-PRS a little other

       position   än   än   andra
       position   than than other.PL

       Prime Minister has a slightly different position than other

→10   ministr-ar i regering-en,
       minister-PL in government-DEF

       >↑men i alla fall< så så sku   jag
         but in all-PL case.PL so so would I

       ministers in the government, >↑but anyway< I would want to have

11   efterlysa större (0.5) .hh eh mera klartext
       call.after big.COMP   PRT more clear-text

       a bigger (0.5) .hh erm more plain language.

12   (.) *de   sku   var-a   bra   för   den*
       that would be-INF good   for   the

     politisk-a h (.) *diskussion-en.*
     political-DEF   discussion-DEF

     (.) that'd be good for the political h (.)
     discussion.

That the commentary has a three-part structure is easily discernible. In the first part (line 1-7), the commentator asserts that the Prime Minister did not take a stand during the press conference: the journalists had to listen between the lines and hear what he did not say as well as the nuances, which is disappointing for the political debate because, obviously, it is simpler if there are clear standpoints. After an inbreath (line 8) she produces a concessive segment initiated with the routinized formula *de e klart att* 'it's obvious that,' 'of course,' said in swift speech. The commentator admits that the Prime Minister has a different position than other ministers in the government. A transition and a return to the first part of the commentary is then initiated in line 10 with the adversative conjunction *men* 'but,' followed by the resumptive adverb *i alla fall* 'anyway,' also said in swift speech. We may note that the commentator here uses the personal pronoun *jag* 'I' and that the pronoun is stressed. In this concluding part the speaker recycles the gist of her earlier statements: she says that she would like to have more plain language – that would be good for the political discussion. The sequential discourse pattern can then be identified as follows:

Move 1 assertion:	The Prime minister did not take a stand, we had to listen between the lines; that is a bit of a pity as regards the political debate because it is simpler if there are clear standpoints.
Move 2 concession:	Of course, the Prime Minister has a different position in the government than other ministers.
Move 3 reassertion:	But anyway, I would like to have more plain language; that would be good for the political discussion.

We will return to the sequential regularities of Insertion Concessive in section 5, which is concerned with a more focused construction-oriented account. Before that, we move on to discuss cases where the co-participant is involved in the concessive sequences.

4.2 Other-triggered concession

As pointed out above, the dialogical nature of Insertion Concessive appears more expressly in cases where the concession is triggered by a contribution of another participant. An example of this is given in extract (5), taken from a casual conversation with four elderly women (of which three are active in the extract). An addition to the typographical mark-up is that the triggering move by the other party is represented in bold italics.

(5)   GRIS:SÅINF:2:1. Coffee party. B is the hostess; A and C are guests.

1 B: han   ha   ju   bygg-t   till,
       he   have.PRS PRT   build-sup   to

       så   väldit   mycke¿
       so   enormously much

       he has y'know extended (it), so very much¿

2 C: ja   just   de,
       yes   right   that

       yes that's right,

3 B: och: öh:
           and erm

→4 A: ↑*de: va*   (*ja*) *lite besviken*   *på*
       that be.PST I   a.little disappointed   on

       that's what I was a little disappointed with

5   >*se*[*rru*)<?]
       PRT

       >you see<?

6 B: [se-   ]

→7 B: >***gjo:rd***↑***e***   ***ru***   ***de***<.
        do.PST   you   that

        you were.

8 A: [↑ja↓:a::?   ]

       yeah?

9 B: [>°ja   tyck-te   re   va°<]   (.)
        I   think-PST   it   be.PST

       kul,   de   va   hhhe he
       nice   it   be.PST

       >°I thought it was° (.) fun<, it was hhhe he

→10A: >**a**   inte p↑**å::**< inte *på:* alltihopa   nä
       PRT   NEG on   NEG   on everything   no

ah not with, not *with everything no

→11	**men**	*ja*	*va*	*besviken**
	but	I	be.PST	disappointed

but I was disappointed*

In line 4, speaker A says in a swiftly produced turn, and referring to what B has mentioned in line 1, that she was a little disappointed with how a person they know has extended his house. A moment later, in line 10, A partly backs down from this opinion: she concedes that she was not disappointed with everything. It is possible that the concession was not an originally designed move in A's talk but rather something that was triggered by the questioning move from B in line 7: *gjorde du de* 'you were?,' which becomes even more explicit in B's following commentary in the overlap ("I thought it was fun"). The concession thus responds to and acknowledges the other party's questioning and opposing viewpoint. However, A does not pause after having expressed the concession but goes on to produce a turn-part, which recycles her original stand, namely that she was after all disappointed. If we look at A's contribution in this sequence, a recognizable pattern with an inserted concession emerges; the co-participant's triggering move is represented in parentheses below:

Move 1 assertion:	I was a little disappointed with that.
(Trigger:	*You were?)*
Move 2 concession:	Ah, not with everything, no.
Move 3 reassertion:	But I was disappointed.

Extract (6) displays another example of other-triggered concession and is taken from the same corpus of discussions with young high school students as extract (3). Towards the end of this discussion the moderator puts forward some questions about plans for the future.

(6) HUSA:01. Discussion in a high school. M is the moderator; A and B are students.

1 M:	hu-	hu	e	de me	ba:rn
		how	be.PRS	it with	child-PL

	"tänk-er	ni	skaffa	*barn*".
	think-PRS	you.PL	get.INF	child.PL

ho- how about children are you planning to have children.

2	(0.6)		

→3 A:	*nå*	*ing-a*	*plan-er *ehh**
	PRT	none-PL	plan-PL

well no plans *ehh*

4	(0.5)

5	ja e	int	så hemst [förtjust
	I be.PRS	NEG	so awfully delighted

	i	småbarn	å,
	in	small-children	and

I'm not so particularly fond of little children and,

6 B:	[((giggling))

7	(0.5)

8 A:	#ja	vet	int#.=
	I	know.PRS	NEG

#I don't know#

→9 B:	=*du	e	hemsk**
	you	be.PRS	terrible

=*you're terrible*

→10A:	↑kanske att	ja	nångång få-r
	maybe that	I	someday get-PRS

	lust	å	skaffa	barn
	wish	to	get.INF	child.PL

maybe I'll someday feel like having children

→11	men	att,
	but	that

but,

12	(0.4)

→13A:	*de*	*finns*	*nog*	*int*	*alls*
	it	exist.prs	prt	neg	at.all

	i	*plan-er-na*
	in	plan-PL-DEF

it's not at all part of my plans

The moderator's question about having children (line 1) is addressed to both students. The word *barn* 'children' is uttered with emphatic stress, the second time also with a smiling voice, and the whole yes/no-question is said with altered voice quality. Student A takes the turn immediately. She gives a

brief and direct answer: she asserts without any hesitation that she doesn't have any such plans (the second syllable of the word *planer* 'plans' is said with a smiling voice). A slight pause (0.5 sec.) follows. The moderator does not comment on this assertion, nor does B contribute a comment or her own standpoint in the matter. Then A takes the turn again (line 5). She now provides a reason for her answer: she says that she is not particularly fond of small children. This statement ends with the conjunction *å* 'and,' which projects a continuation of some sort. However, a 0.5 second pause ensues, after which A utters *ja vet int* 'I don't know.' The use of this disclaimer at this point can be heard as signaling that she is about to back down slightly from her rather categorical and potentially provocative statement about having children (cf. Weatherell 2011 on *I don't know*). At this point (line 9) B comes in with a comment (almost in overlap), saying that A is terrible with a smiling voice. In line 10 A then produces a conceding move. She admits that she might change her mind in the future, that is, she says that maybe someday she will feel like having children. However, this conceding utterance is immediately followed by the adversative conjunction *men att* 'but' (line 11), and after a pause she recycles her short original answer to the moderator's question; having children is not at all part of her plans.

The sequential discourse schema for (6) then looks like the following:

Move 1 assertion:	(I have) no plans (to have children), I'm not so particularly fond of small children.
(Trigger:	*You are terrible.)*
Move 2 concession:	Maybe someday I'll feel like having children.
Move 3 reassertion:	But it's not at all part of my plans.

To sum up, in cases of other-triggered concession the conceding move arguably is produced as a response to a move from another party. This possibly challenging move is produced as a response to an earlier assertion by the speaker. In extract (5) the speaker is challenged after her statement that she felt a little disappointed by how a person had extended his house. She then backs down, claiming that what she said is not applicable to all parts of the extension. In the case of extract (6) one could argue that the disclaimer *ja vet int* in A's turn serves as a bridge to the concessive move and that B's comment is what definitely triggers the speaker to back down.

5. Representing regularities in the discourse pattern

As we have seen, Insertion Concessive contains several regular features, most notably the circular discourse cohesion which results from the tripartite sequence, assertion–concession–reassertion. The regularities extend beyond this, forming a pattern with construction-like characteristics. The polarities of assertion and reassertion on the one hand and concession on the other are opposite to each other when a negation is introduced in the first assertion or in the conceding part. Thus, when the speaker in move 1 makes an assertion in affirmative terms, the following conceding move can be formed as a negative statement, and then the reassertion repeats the affirmative form of move 1. A polarity pattern affirmative–negative–affirmative is illustrated below, as earlier represented in extract (5):

Move 1 affirmative:	*de va ja lite besviken på* 'I was a little disappointed with that'
Move 2 negative:	*a inte på alltihopa nä* 'ah not with everything no'
Move 3 affirmative:	*men ja va besviken* 'but I was disappointed'

When the original assessment is formulated negatively we get an inverted polarity pattern, negative–affirmative–negative, as was the case in extract (3), illustrated below more concisely:

Move 1 negative:	*ja ha no int tänkt studera på Hanken* 'I haven't really intended to study at Hanken'
Move 2 affirmative:	*man skulle kunna studera språk där om man får nå mellanår* 'one could study languages there if one has an intermediate year'
Move 3 negative:	*men att ja ha no int plan<u>e</u>ra de sådär* 'but I haven't really planned on it sort of'

There is another kind of sequential regularity, comparable to the polarity pattern, in the deployment of Insertion Concessive. We can note in excerpts (3) and (4) that the conceding part is formulated in generic terms, whereas the first assertion and the reprise are produced in the first person, that is, as the speaker's subjective viewpoint. The above illustration of example (3) serves as an example of this pattern: move 1 is produced in the first person, move 2 involves the generic pronoun *man* 'one,' and move 3 returns to the first person format.

Further, some linguistic elements recurrently inhabit certain slots in the tripartite discourse

pattern. Our collection shows that the concessive part is initiated by or contains adverbs and particles such as *a/ja* 'yes, well,' *visst* 'sure,' *naturligtvis* 'naturally,' *okej* 'okay' or formulaic expressions including *de förstås* 'of course' and *de e klart (att)* 'it's obvious (that).' Many of these expressions foreshadow a backing down from what has been stated earlier, and they even present this move as something obvious and reasonable, perhaps even so obvious that it does not really count as a serious counter action for the interactional development. The reassertion again is most often initiated with the adversative conjunction *men* 'but,' or with the regional variant *men att*, and is sometimes accompanied by the adverb *i alla fall* 'in any case, anyway,' which underlines the relevance of what is being said. Both *men* and *i alla fall* are common markers of a return to the main line of an argumentation, thus simultaneously downgrading the relevance of what has been said just before (see Ottesjö 2005 for Swedish; cf. Ford and Thompson 1996: 170 on *anyways* in English).

As shown in Figure 1, these regularities may be represented in a constructional schema for the sequential trajectory of Insertion Concessive (cf. Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2005, on *concessive repair*).

(a)	(b)	(c)
{Subjective Aff/Neg _}	{*visst* Generic Neg/Aff _}	{*men* (*i alla fall*) Subjective Aff/Neg _}
	'sure'	'but (anyway)'
<P1	P2	P3>

P2 acknowledges exceptions to P1   P3 contrasts with P2, deleting its relevance

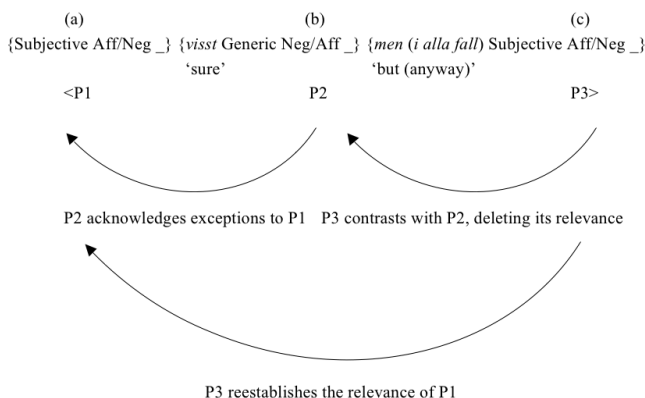P3 reestablishes the relevance of P1

Figure 1. A constructional schema for Insertion Concessive

There are filled and open slots in the constructional schema. The contents of the three sequential moves (a=assertion, b=concession, c= reassertion) can be freely formulated but the propositions (P1-2-3) concord with the general polarity pattern in which P2 contrasts with P1 and P3. Further, there is often a corresponding subjectivity–generality pattern, in which P1 and P3 are produced in the first person while P2 is represented in generic terms. Lexical linking items have at least semi-fixed positions in the tripartite structure; markers of concession, such as *visst* 'sure,' at the beginning of (b), and markers of contrast and return, such as *men i alla fall* 'but anyway,' at the beginning of (c).

In addition to the pattern abstracted in Figure 1 some further regularities can be taken into consideration. If we take the same-speaker produced

variant, which is a more prototypical form of Insertion Concessive, it is quite obvious that it constitutes a multi-unit turn where the three different moves constitute turn constructional units (TCUs) of their own (see Sacks et al. 1974). These TCUs often have the form of a clause or a series of clauses; however, some evidently responsive conceding moves may take a phrasal, elliptical form as in extract (5), *inte på alltihopa* 'not with everything.' In semantic-pragmatic terms, the three moves constitute actions of their own, that is, assertion–concession–reassertion. The actions, and the TCUs that house them, are then linked together to form a discourse unit, a complex action (see Houtkoop and Mazeland 1985 for discourse units).

The relatively distinct action status of the three components in the discourse pattern is further enhanced by prosodic realization because they can be heard as separate intonational phrases. The first move (assertion) has a terminating contour with a falling curve as in (3), or sometimes with a slightly rising curve. This may indicate that no further turn-parts are designed at this stage. The intonational termination point is the place where the interlocutor can come in, perhaps triggering a subsequent conceding move from the speaker. The second part (concession) may have parenthetical prosodic qualities, such as a faster tempo in (4) and (5). Indeed, the third part (reassertion) is usually produced without a delay or other hesitations, which indicates that this move *post* the concession is a designed part of the discourse unit.

Considered together, all these regular features constitute a recognizable and distinct discourse construction, bearing a resemblance to what is understood as a construction in the theoretical framework of construction grammar (Fillmore et al. 1988; Fried and Östman 2004; Östman 2005). The schematic representation provided in Figure 1 could be enriched, for example, with parameters taking into account the intonational features of each move in the practice to give an even more accurate account of the constructionality of it. However, we will not pursue the formalism further here.

7. Variations in the realization of the discourse pattern

Like most linguistic structures, Insertion Concessive may occur in less full-fledged forms in real contexts of language use. Some of these structural variations can indeed provide even more evidence for the construction-like status of the prototypical pattern described above. For example, there are cases in which the third part of the format, the reassertion, is anticipated and produced by a co-participant. This happens in extract (7), which is from the corpus of discussions with Helsinki Swedish high school students. The girls (A and B) have talked about an instance in which a Rom had threatened a friend of theirs with a knife. The moderator (M) asks here whether A and B have had similar personal experiences with Romas.

(7)   HUSA:20. Discussion in a high school; M is
        the moderator, A and B are students.

1 M: men   ha   ni   upplev-t
        but   have.PRS   you.PL experience-SUP

        de. (.)   själv-a↓
        it   yourself-PL

        but have you experienced it. (.) yourselves

→2 A: *nä*
        no

→3   **alltså nu**   ha: de   att
        PRT   PRT   have.PRS   it   that

        dom   just   ha   komm-i
        they   just   have.PRS   come-SUP

        well   sure   that's   (happened)   that   they've
        come

4   å   pumma   peng-ar   å,
        and   beg.SUP   money-PL   and

        to beg for money and,

5 B: jå
        yeah

6 M: jå=
        yeah

7 A: =så   ha   man   få-tt
         then have.PRS   GNR   get-SUP

        hör-a   sån-a   salv-or
        hear-INF   such-PL   salvo-PL

        =then you've heard that kind of volley of
        words

8   >att   om   man   int   ha
        that   if   GNR   NEG   have-PRS

        ge-tt<   ∘**men   att**∘
        give-sup   but   that

        >if you have not given< ∘but∘

9 M: eh [hh ((giggling))

→10B: [*int ha   dom nu   kom-mi*
        NEG have.PRS they PRT   come-SUP

        they   surely   haven't   come   at me   with a
        knife=

11A: =nä=
        =no=

12B: =*åtmins*tone**. ((laughing))
          at.least
        =at least

Speaker A responds in line 2 with a denial to
the question of whether she has been threatened with
a knife by a Rom, the pronoun *de(t)* 'it' in line 1
referring back to a knife threat discussed just earlier.
She then produces a segment that concedes that she
has had other kinds of negative experiences with
Romas. The concession ends in line 8 with the
conjunction *men att* 'but,' uttered in a soft voice,
which could project a contrasting turn continuation,
but this is not produced. Instead, speaker B offers a
continuation that contrasts with the affirmative
concession A has delivered and recycles the denial
about not having been threatened with a knife, this
time with an explicit wording (line 10). Hence, a
tripartite assertion–concession–reassertion sequence
is co-produced by A and B:

Assertion:	A:	No
		(Implied → 'I have not been
		threatened with a knife by
		them')
Concession:	A:	Well, sure, they have begged for
		money and then you have heard
		that kind of volley of words if
		you have not given (but)
Reassertion:	B:	They surely haven't come at me
		with a knife

It seems that B is able to produce the third part
because it is so strongly projected by the conceding
move and the following contrastive conjunction *men
att*. These projecting qualities probably follow from
the regular construction-like features of the
prototypical format for Insertion Concessive (see
Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2005: 274–276 on
Concessive Repair).

Another kind of variation is seen in extract (8),
taken from a medical consultation. Here the doctor
first delivers a negative answer and then, urged by
the patient, backs down from it with a conceding
move which is formulated in affirmative terms.

(8)   INK:2. Medical consultation. P is the
        patient, D is the doctor.

1 P: men   finns   de   ingenting
        but   exist-PRS   it   nothing

        som   sätt-er   fart. (.)
        rel   put-PRS   speed

        but isn't there anything that speeds up. (.)

2   sprätt   på b-   blodcir∘kulation∘
     swing   on   blood-circulation

    accelerates b- bloodcir∘culation

→3 D: ∘*egentligen*   *int*∘
     actually   NEG

    ∘not really∘

4   (0.3)

→5 P: [*finns*   *de*   *int*]   *de*?
     exist.PRS   it   NEG   that
     [isn't   there] any?

6 D: [(   )]
→7 D: **nå no** finns   de cirkulationsmedicin-er
     PRT PRT exist.PRS it circulation-medicine-PL

    well sure there are circulation medicines

→8 D: **å**   **visst** få-r   du   pr_o_va
     and   sure may-PRS you test.PRS

    de   **men**   **a:tt**.
    it   but   that

    and of course you can test it bu:t.

9   (2.2)

10 D: d- d- d- di   som   nu? (.)
            they   REL   now
    t- t- t- those which now? (.)

11 D: di   som   nu   på någ   sätt
     they   REL   now   on some fashion

    ska   förbättra
    shall.PRS   improve.INF

    those which in some fashion can improve

12 blodcirkulati_o_nen   så, (0.5)
     blood-circulation-DEF   so

    #an#se-s   var-a sån-a   som
    consider.PRS-PAS   be-INF such-PL REL

    blood circulation, (0.5) #are# regarded to be
    of a kind that

13 forma-r om blodkrop#p-ar#   så
     form-PRS PRT blood-corpuscle-PL   so

    di   kommer bättre   #_u_t#   eh
    they   come-PRS good.COMP out   PRT

    reform blood cor#puscles# so that they come
    out better erm

14   (0.5)

15 P: ∘aha∘
    uh huh

The patient's agenda here is to have the doctor prescribe medicine that would stimulate her blood circulation and inhibit a feeling of numbness (line 1–2). The doctor replies briefly in line 3 that there is not really any medicine of that sort. The patient's response signals disbelief (line 5) and triggers a concessive move in which the doctor states that there are indeed blood circulation medicines and that the patient by all means may test them. This concession ends in line 8 with the contrasting conjunction *men att* delivered with prolonged, falling prosody and is followed by a pause of over two seconds. These prosodic and sequential cues of termination indicate that the doctor is finished with his argumentation, at least for the time being, and the projected return to his original, negative reply is left unsaid, probably because it seems so obvious (on turn-final conjunctions, see Koivisto 2012). The patient, who remains silent, seems to be able to draw these implications, and the doctor then moves on to describe exactly in what way the blood circulation medicines work.

To sum up, we argue that the sequence with a non-realized reprise of the original standpoint evidences the constructional quality of Insertion Concessive. When its two prior components, assertion and concession, have been recognizably produced, the third and finalizing component can be so strongly projected that it can be left in the air. Here, the simple lexical marker of contrast (*men att*) – in relation to the concession – is sufficient to explicate the projection.

9. Conclusion

Our study of Insertion Concessive in conversation adds to the cumulative evidence that concessive practices constitute one very basic resource of interaction and argumentation. In addition, this analysis of concession in Swedish contributes to a research tradition which is dominated by data from English. Indeed, the organizational power of concession is probably universal whereas the specific linguistic structures applied in concessions are language specific. However, the linguistic structures typically applied in Insertion Concessive in different languages may involve elements from similar kinds of categories. Concessive segments are introduced with markers of compromise such as *alright* in English and *de e klart* 'it is obvious' in Swedish; reassertions are initiated with an adversative conjunction such as *but* in English and *men* in Swedish.

The practice Insertion Concessive accounted for here has so many regular structural features that they justify its characterization as a discourse grammatical construction. The regularities include

lexical markers, polarity, subjectivity and contrast patterns, as well as prosodic features. At the same time, this lexically partly filled, partly open construction manifests the interplay between fixity and productivity with which speakers link and weave their verbalized actions together in the local contingencies of interaction in progress. As such, the discourse pattern which we have analyzed manifests the emergent nature of structural linguistic resources in interaction and speech production, as well as in speech comprehension, by enabling the recipient to foresee projected trajectories of the ongoing discourse. Clearly, these regularities are grammatical and recognizable for the speakers although they operate at a level broader than that of a single sentence. Construction grammar, which does not draw a boundary between lexis and syntax or between syntax and discourse, has great potential in being able to account for these kinds of open-ended and large constructional entities.

Appendix 1: Data sources

GRIS; Video recordings compiled for the project *Grammar in Conversation: a Study of Swedish*. Universities of Gothenburg, Helsinki, Linköping and Uppsala.

HUSA; *The language and attitudes among Helsinki Swedish youth.* Audio recordings collected at the University of Helsinki, Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies.

INK; *Interaction in an institutional context*. Video recordings of doctor-patient interaction collected at the University of Helsinki, Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian and Scandinavian Studies.

YLE; Recording of a program from the Swedish radio channel *Vega*, YLE. Finnish Broadcasting Company.

Appendix 2: Transcription and glossing symbols

[a point of overlap onset

]   end of overlap

=   a single continuous utterance or two latching utterances

w<u>o</u>rd   a stressed syllable

wo:rd   a stretching of a sound

∘word∘   soft, quiet voice

WORD louder voice

word smile voice, possibly accompanied with laughter

#word# creaky voice

"word" altered voice quality

>word< faster talk

<word> slower talk or drawl

(word) uncertain transcription

(   ) no hearing

wo-   a hearable cut-off

hh   a hearable out-breath

.hh   a hearable in-breath

(.)   a micro pause, less than 2/10 of a second

(0.4)   a pause measured in tenths of a second

.   falling intonation

,   level intonation

¿   slightly rising intonation

?   rising intonation

↑   prosodic upstep

↓   prosodic downstep

((giggling))   transcriber's comments

COMP   comparative

DEF   definite form/article

GNR   generic third person pronoun (cf. *one*)

INF   infinitive

N-PROP proper name

NEG   negation (cf. *not*)

PL   plural

PAS   passive form of the verb

PRS   present tense

PST   past tense

PRT   discourse particle or verb particle

REL   relative clause marker

SUP   supinum (infinite form in perfect tense)

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Notes

1 For convenience, we use the term *high school* when referring to an upper secondary school, which in the Swedish and Finnish educational systems constitutes a continuation of the nine-year compulsory school. The Swedish word for this school is *gymnasium* and it may

be considered to correspond to "senior high school" in American usage and to "open-access sixth form" in Britain.

[2] Our label Insertion Concessive is formed by analogy with concepts such as *insertion sequence* and *cardinal concessive*, which have been used in conversation analytic literature (see Levinson 1983: 304; Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2000).

[3] The speaker uses the verb *tänka*, lit. 'think' (line 4), which in combination with an infinite verb, such as *tänkt studera* 'thought (to) study' in (3), communicates an idea of planned future actions.

[4] The compound conjunction *men att*, lit. 'but that,' occurs mostly in spoken Finland Swedish. One of the typical environments of occurrence for this regional variant is in the third move of Insertion Concessive (see Lindström and Londen 2008, 2013).

Processing Information