

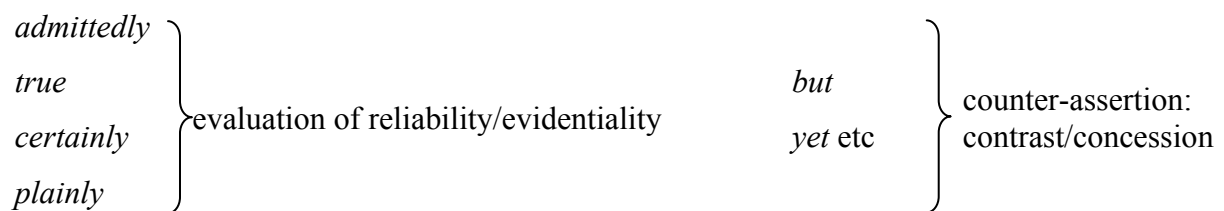
## ‘Discontinuous evaluation’\*

This paper presents a few working notes on what I call ‘discontinuous evaluation’. The term refers to the presence of two evaluators (i.e. linguistic devices of expressing evaluation) in a text, in cases where the first evaluator ‘prospects’ (Sinclair 1995) the second. Such a prospective relation contributes to the creation of cohesion in text.

For the purposes of this paper *evaluation* is defined as the expression of speaker opinion, which may relate to a number of evaluative parameters (Bednarek 2004). For example, speakers may express evaluations relating to

- the truth of a proposition (reliability)
- the source of speaker knowledge (evidentiality)
- their expectations (expectedness, includes the notion of contrast/concession)
- positive/negative attitude (emotivity)

As Thompson & Zhou (2000) note “there has [...] been little investigation of the [...] role of evaluative lexis in creating cohesion” (Thompson & Zhou 2000: 123; see also Bublitz 2002: 27 and Lemke 1998 on evaluation and cohesion). Their research points to the cohesive power of different kinds of evaluations and also identifies combinations of “preparatory” signals and “completing” signals, as for instance *admittedly ... but* (Thompson & Zhou 2000: 126). Some other examples of such a relation which are mentioned by Thompson & Zhou (cf. also Martin & White forthcoming, chapter 3) are:



Such cohesive relations which might be termed ‘discontinuous’ clearly deserve further attention. Another possible candidate is *of course ... but*, whose cohesive character is shown nicely in the following example:

“I just wanted to say that we would **of course** be very sorry to lose you, you’ve been a tremendous asset to the Department, even in the short time you’ve been here. I really mean that.”  
“Thank you,” says Robyn dully, untwining her fingers.  
“**But?**”

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“But?”

“I think you were going to say something beginning with *But*.”

“Oh. Ah. Yes. But I just wanted to say that I, we, shouldn’t at all blame you if you were to start applying for jobs elsewhere now.”

(Lodge 1988: 64, emphasis mine)

Similarly, the combination of contrastive evaluators (*but, although*) with contrastive DO-emphasis (Quirk et al 1985: 1371) might be included as an example of discontinuous evaluation:

- But IDS’s aides admitted that some influential Tories still wanted him removed. One of them, MP John Maples, is set to be hauled before party whips for “career development talks.” **But** IDS **did** get a longer standing ovation than Tony Blair at last week’s Labour Conference. It went on for eight minutes 48 seconds – more than a minute ahead of Mr Blair. (*The Daily Star*, 10.10.2003)
- Her marriage had ended in divorce less than two months earlier. **Although** the letter may shed no light on the cause of her death, it **does** offer some insights into her state of mind. (*The Times*, 21.10.2003)
- He offered no explanations as to why he did not draw it to the attention of the French authorities, who conducted an inquiry into the Princess’s death, or, indeed, the British coroner Michael Burgess, who will hold an inquest into the death of the Princess and her companion, Dodi Fayed. **But** he **did** write: “Whatever the situation, the lack of an inquest to date, and the attempt by Scotland Yard and the CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] to destroy my reputation with my Old Bailey trial in 2002 has led me to make the contents of that note public.” (*The Daily Telegraph*, 21.10.2003)

This kind of DO-emphasis appears to relate to the writer’s concession of a positive statement in contrast to some described negative state of affairs (*some influential Tories still want IDS removed; the latter may shed no light on the cause of her death; he offered no explanations as to why he did not draw it to the attention of the French authorities ... or indeed the British coroner Michael Burgess*). In so doing, the writer seems to say that ‘I grant you that at least’: *he got a longer ovation, it offers some insights, he wrote: “...”*. Note also Biber et al’s (1999) comment that

emphatic *do* usually marks a state of affairs in **contrast** to some other **expected** state of affairs, which is by implication denied [...]. This contrast can be explicitly marked by the use of connectives such as *but, however, nevertheless, and although* (Biber et al 1999: 433, emphasis mine).

Finally, some of the examples mentioned by Hunston & Francis (2000: 227ff) in the connection with clause collocation and prospection are worth mentioning in the context of discontinuous evaluation (they also make use of the notion of discontinuity):

- *So far so good* (an evaluation of positive evaluation) prospects contrasted (*but*) negative evaluation
- *you might expect* (an evaluation of expectedness) prospects contrast (*but*)

Consequently, it seems that contrast can be prospected by different kinds of evaluations: evaluations of reliability and evidentiality (*true, admittedly, certainly, plainly*) prospect a counter-assertion which is evaluated as even more ‘true’ or relevant; evaluations of

expectedness (*of course*) can prospect unexpectedness (*but*); evaluations of contrast (*but, although*) can prospect evaluations of contrast/concession (*do*-emphasis), positive evaluations (*so far so good*) can prospect contrasted negative evaluations (*but*) and evaluations of potential expectedness (*you might expect*) can prospect contrasted propositions. In all such cases a basic relation of prospected contrast is involved, though this relation is realized in very different ways depending on the kind of evaluation that is expressed by the first evaluator.

Although I have limited my observations to evaluators in this paper, the discontinuity of cohesive relations is not limited to evaluations (cf. the additional examples in Thompson & Zhou 2000 as well as in Hunston & Francis 2000) and certainly deserves further attention within linguistics.

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