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Interpreting concessive adverbial markers in English and Norwegian discourse

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1 Introduction

The term ‘marker’ in the title indicates that my concern is with non-truth-conditional ‘function words’ rather than with members of open lexical categories; ‘adverbial’ says something about their syntactic privileges; ‘concessive’ means that their contextual relation to the proposition expressed by the sentence that they modify equals that of the relation between an English main clause and an adjoined concessive or concessive conditional clause, typically starting with although and even if, respectively: given the truth of the embedded clause proposition P one might not expect the main clause proposition Q to be true (for extensive discussions of concessive relations and concessive conditional relations, see e.g. Haspelmath and König 1998; König 1988, 1989; Iten 1998, 2000). The term ‘connective’ would also have been appropriate, because it emphasises the fact that my concessive markers are supposed to connect with some aspect of the context of the utterance, whether it is an entity activated in the preceding discourse or one recoverable through an inferential search outside the local discourse but within the speech participants’ shared context. In a recent paper (Fretheim 2001) I called them concessive ‘anaphora’, because just like personal pronouns, or the temporal or conditional pro-forms and , they must be ‘enriched’ by association with the conceptual meaning of an ‘antecedent’.

The markers that I am referring to are English concessive adverbials like nevertheless, even so, all the same, still, yet, anyway, and after all, and the Norwegian concessive adverbials likevel (or the virtually synonymous allikevel) and for det (literally: for that). This paper falls into two main parts. In the first part it will be shown that likevel can perform all the clearly concessive functions of all of the English markers listed here. I am going to focus especially on the difference between English after all and the rest of the English concessives on the one hand and the ways in which likevel can come to mean either ”after all” or ”nevertheless” on the other hand. Echoing Fretheim (forthcoming a) I assume a linguistic underdetermination of the meaning assigned to tokens of likevel in utterances produced in communicative events, and I assume that the gap between encoded lexical meaning and utterance meaning is bridged by context-driven inference.

For my purpose I am going to adopt the relevance-theoretic account of the division of labour between semantic coding and pragmatic inference (Sperber and Wilson 1986, 1995), and between conceptual semantics and procedural semantics (Blakemore 1987; Wilson and Sperber 1993). It will be argued that concessive markers encode a specific procedure for the addressee to follow in order to efficiently derive an interpretation of the utterance in line with the communicator’s informative intention, an interpretation which according to Sperber and Wilson (1995) is heavily constrained by the propensity of humans to presume that an ostensive stimulus is relevant enough (i.e. has enough positive cognitive effects) for it to be worth the addressee’s effort to process it.

\(^1\) Anyway in addition has certain uses which can only be labelled ‘concessive’ if we stretch the concept beyond established linguistic usage, and likevel is not a suitable Norwegian gloss for those uses of anyway. Similarly, after all can modify either the premise or the conclusion in a non-demonstrative deduction, and likevel is not normally used for the former function (cf. Fretheim forthcoming a).
Norwegian may be said to compensate for its sparsity of concessive markers, compared to their large number in English, by letting the syntactic position of likevel in the sentence and the accentual pattern and intonational phrasing imposed on the utterance do the job of indicating how the concessive marker is to be linked to its antecedent structure. English instead allows its speakers to make a choice between different lexical entries which provide analogous procedural information about how to identify the intended antecedent of a given concessive anaphor. In the second part of the paper I address the special challenges that the second of my two Norwegian concessive markers, for det, present to the investigator. It will be proposed that for det probably differs from all English concessives – anaphor-like connectives as well as clauses – in its ability to be included within the scope of a negation operator. My observations contradict what has generally been held to be true of the nature of concessives relative to scope of negation (cf. the positions taken by both König 1989, and Iten 1998).

2 Constituent order and prosody in Norwegian – mainly lexical choice in English

2.1 'Local' and 'distant' concessive relations

English even so and nevertheless/nonetheless are concessive markers which instruct the addressee to link them to an antecedent proposition expressed in the immediately preceding discourse. That so in even so serves an anaphoric role is hardly a controversial claim, as this lexical entry is composed of the scalar particle even, which takes care of the concession, and a pro-form so, which narrows the reference down to a strongly activated higher-order entity referring to some state of affairs. But if even so is an anaphor, then nevertheless is one as well, despite its less transparent morphological composition; its pragmatic function is very similar to that of even so.

After all, i.e. the focal after all that can be translated into Norwegian as likevel, is a concessive marker which instructs the hearer not to direct his attention primarily toward possible candidate antecedents in the local discourse but to search for the intended antecedent outside the current conversation, for example among propositions stored in the hearer’s long-term memory. In order for there to be a concessive relation between two propositions P and Q, the context-building concession associated with P cannot logically contradict the main clause proposition Q; rather, the contrast between P and Q rests upon some sort of pragmatic incompatibility, on the speaker’s metarepresentation of someone’s (e.g. the interlocutor’s) belief that Q is not expected to be true in a context where the truth of P is presupposed or stipulated. An utterance-final accented after all tells us to process the proposition expressed by the utterance as a conclusion based on some newly acquired information which the speaker judges to undermine her former belief that Q could not be true.

(1)-(5) are all formed as sequences of two utterances, where the first one is invariant and the following one changes slightly from one version to the next, in the linear order of elements and in the number and distribution of focal accents (marked by small caps).

(1) Bilen koster 220.000. Likevel kan vi kjøpe den.
"The car costs 220,000. Even so we can buy it."

(2) Bilen koster 220.000. Vi kan LIKEVEL KJØPE den.
"The car costs 220,000. We can still buy it."

(3) Bilen koster 220.000. Vi kan LIKEVEL kjøpe den.
a. "The car costs 220,000. We can buy it after all."

2 The final form of this paper owes much to my contacts with Nana Aba A. Amfo and Stig Johansson.
3 Metarepresentation is the use of a representation to represent another representation, through a relation of resemblance between the two.
b. “The car costs 220,000. We can still buy it.”

(4) Bilen koster 220.000. Vi kan kjøpe den LIKEVEL.
   a. ”The car costs 220,000. We can buy it after ALL.”
   b. ”The car costs 220,000. We can buy it nevertheless.” (marginal)

(5) Bilen koster 220.000. Vi kan KJØPE den LIKEVEL.
   ”The car costs 220,000. We can buy it nevertheless.”

Likevel is a lexical entry which has one non-anaphoric concession component and one anaphoric higher-order entity component. The data in (1)-(5) tell us something about the intended anaphoric anchoring of the marker. An initial likevel, as in (1), is a failsafe indicator that the two consecutive utterances are to be processed as concessively related. It differs from (1’)– where there is an optional resumptive likevel (= ”nevertheless”) in the main clause – only in that the information about the price tag on the car is asserted rather than just metarepresented in a conditional clause marked as concessive (and therefore not truth-conditional).

(1’) Selv om bilen koster 220.000, kan vi (likevel) kjøpe den.
   ”Even if the car costs 220,000, we can (nevertheless) buy it.”

(2) is likely to be comprehended exactly like (1), not because a post-finite (middle field) likevel cues the same inferential processing as an initial likevel but because both the concessive adverbial and the infinitive kjøpe (”buy”) are made prosodically prominent by a phrase-accent, a fundamental frequency ($F_0$) peak marking the right edge of an Intonational Phrase (IP). An IP is the immediate constituent of the Intonation Unit (IU) in the intonational hierarchy, and when there are two of them within an IU in Norwegian speech, the hearer is being advised to identify one as that part of the utterance where its new information is expressed and the other one as that part which contains information presented as activated for speaker and hearer alike. Which one of the two IPs contains new information and which one given information is determined not by grammatical rule but by pragmatic inference (Fretheim 1987, forthcoming b). Utterance number two expresses the same proposition in all sequences (1)-(5), and the concessive likevel does not affect its truth conditions. KJØPE den (”buy it”) consists of an infinitive form with word-accent followed by an enclitic personal pronoun; the pitch peak for focal phrase-accent is aligned with the enclitic pronoun but lends special accentual prominence to the preceding accented infinitive. The focal phrase-accent is there to indicate that the infinitival complement contains non-recoverable information, it constitutes the information focus of the utterance. The preceding concessive also has a focal phrase-accent, aligned not with the word-accented first syllable of likevel but with its final unstressed syllable. That accent gives the same degree of prosodic prominence to likevel as the next phrase-accent in the utterance gives to KJØPE den; however, as one of the two IPs is supposed to be processed as activated, the hearer can do no better than to establish mentally an antecedent-anaphor relation between the proposition ”The car referred to costs NOK 220,000” and likevel.

(5) is likely to be processed in the same way as (2). There the infinitival complement KJØPE den (”buy it”) precedes likevel but as long as the distribution of focal phrase-accents is the same as in (2), the difference in linear order will not affect the hearer’s pragmatic processing of the utterance; in other words, the information structure is the same in (2) and (5). The hearer will understand that the proposition of the preceding utterance is what he is being told to process as a concessive adjunct to the main clause. In English the assumption
that there is a local discourse link between the anaphor and its antecedent can be conveyed by a variety of lexically different markers, such as *even so* in (1), *still* in (2), *nevertheless* in (5).

The second sentence in (3) has a proso-syntactic form which makes it less determinate than (1), (2) or (5) from the point of view of information structure. The linear order of syntactic elements is that of (2) but the focal phrase-accent on the infinitival complement is eliminated. On prosodic grounds, then, *likevel* in (3) could be interpreted as a narrow information focus on the concessive; the syntactic position of *likevel* in (3) is medial, however, which permits the hearer to link *likevel* locally, as in (1), (2) and (5). Thus one can process *likevel* in (3) either as an anaphor whose antecedent is the proposition of the preceding declarative or as a (less prototypical) anaphor whose antecedent is outside (3). In the former case there is an inferred concessive relation between the propositions of the two consecutive utterances and the hearer is likely to deduce the implicature that someone – presumably the speaker – expected, or hoped that the car would be less expensive. In the latter case there is rather an inferred causal relation between the same propositions and a concessive relation between two higher-level explicatures (see Wilson and Sperber 1993) “I believe that we can buy the car” uttered at time \( t \), and “I believe that we cannot buy the car” uttered, or possibly just entertained as a thought, at a time prior to \( t \). The information that the price is 220,000 is then used as a premise in a deduction which causes the speaker to give up the former assumption that buying that car was an unattainable goal. If this is what the speaker intended to communicate by uttering (3), then the utterance gives rise to the opposite kind of implicature, namely that the car is less expensive than the speaker had expected or believed. Due to the linguistic underdetermination of the intended link between *likevel* and the mutually manifest context, the question whether *likevel* means ”nevertheless” or ”after all” in (3) can be resolved only if certain contextual premises are taken into consideration, premises which cannot be deduced directly from whatever cues come from the verbal stimulus itself.

Finally, with reference to the set (1)-(5), an utterance of (4) is very likely to be processed as meaning ”The car costs 220,000, so we can buy it after all”. The competing interpretation ”The car costs 220,000, but we can still buy it” would presumably be selected only if there happens to be extraordinarily strong extralinguistic support for it. The focal-phrase accent in the second utterance in (4) is on the infinitival complement and there is no such phrase-accent, just a word-accent, on the preceding concessive marker. As it is sentence-final, the phrase-accent will be understood to indicate that the focus of information is broad. The focus is on the entire linguistic structure, which here implies that the new information is the positive proposition formerly believed to be false, or rather the speaker’s attitude to it, the higher-level explicature ”I (now) believe that we can buy the car referred to”.

### 2.2 Likevel – after all and the notion of focus

What exactly does it mean to say that a non-truth-conditional function word like *likevel* is the focus of information in a given utterance of the second sentence in (4) (which is repeated here for convenience)?

(4) Bilen koster 220.000. Vi kan kjøpe den likevel.
   a. ”The car costs 220,000. We can buy it after all.”
   b. ”The car costs 220,000. We can buy it nevertheless.” (marginal)

After all (NB! the non-focal use of *after all* which cannot be glossed as *likevel*), the speaker presents her information that they can buy the car as a non-recoverable thought, and how,

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4 It is possible in Norwegian to say something like *Vi kan fremdeles kjøpe bilen* (”We can still buy the car”) where temporal *fremdeles* (”still”) is intended to be taken concessively rather than strictly temporally, but I think it is fair to say that Norwegian has not developed the kind of polysemy that characterises the English adverb *still*. 


then, can the utterance-final conceptually underspecified concessive marker be associated
with the focus? As Jeanette Gundel says in a recent paper (Gundel 1999), there are at least
three different notions of focus that have occupied the minds of linguists, namely
psychological focus, semantic focus and contrastive focus. Let us take a look at each one of
them.

"An entity is in (psychological) focus if the attention of both speech participants can
be assumed to be focused on it because of its salience at a given point in the discourse”
(Gundel 1999: 294). This is what has come to be known to many as the cognitive status "in
focus", due to the terminology introduced in some other important work by Gundel and her
associates (Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski 1993). An entity that is in psychological focus can
be referred to by linguistic expressions like anaphoric pronouns (sometimes even zero
pronouns), which have little conceptual content. An entity in focus is necessarily in the
current awareness of the speaker and the hearer at the time of utterance. This description can
be said to fit the object pronoun referring to the car which is at the center of attention in (4),
and, trivially, the plural subject pronoun which includes reference to the speaker; it does not
apply to the focally accented item likevel, whose pragmatic purpose is to activate the fact that
the speaker formerly believed, and had presumably also announced, that it would not be
possible to buy the car.

Gundel’s semantic focus is to do with what is presented as new information. In the
second utterance in (4) the new information is clearly the speaker’s asserted opinion that they
can afford to buy the car. That this in fact implies that she has changed her opinion is not
really presented as new information, because that assumption follows as an entailment once
you are being told that it is possible to buy the car and have been made to re-activate the
stored assumption that the speaker used to believe the opposite.

Both Gundel’s psychological focus and her semantic focus are important notions for
anyone interested in the relations between the language code and cognitive processes in
utterance comprehension, but in order to understand what is going on in (4) we should turn to
her third kind of focus – contrastive focus. In (4), and even in (3) for that matter, there is a
highlighting of the marker likevel due to the fact, noted above, that the speaker intends to
make the hearer re-activate a certain assumption, namely the assumption that the speaker
formerly believed something which is inconsistent with the information supplied in the
preceding declarative. Due to that information the speaker now draws the conclusion that they
can indeed buy the car, which conflicts with her attitude before she received the information
about the price. We can infer that this is not the first time the hearer has been engaged in a
discussion with the speaker whether or not it might be possible to buy that particular car. For
the speaker there has been no conclusive evidence for a final judgment until she was informed
of the price, which is evidently less than what she had believed or feared. The relevance of the
utterance-final and focally accented likevel in (4) is that it draws the hearer’s attention to two
things, (i) the concessive relation between the speaker’s current conviction and her former
belief, and (ii) what she perceives as a cause-consequence relation between the information
presented in the first utterance and her conclusion in the next. It is important for the speaker to
bring her former propositional attitude into the current awareness of the hearer, because it is a
crucial part of the context that the hearer must base his processing of the speaker’s second
utterance on. Gundel’s term ‘psychological focus’ is reserved for entities that the hearer’s
attention is already centered on. She does not use it with reference to entities that the speaker
wishes the hearer to bring into his focus of attention. The purpose of what she calls
contrastive focus on the other hand is to bring some entity, including possibly higher-order
entities like propositions, into the hearer’s focus of attention, to make it a psychological focus.
Although her paper includes no illustration of contrastive focus applied to an item that has no
bearing on truth conditions, it seems to me that the utterance-final focally accented likevel in
(4) and after all in the English translation are obvious candidates for contrastive focus in her sense.

2.3 A more complex example

Now consider the invented dialogue between A and B in (6), where B’s exclamatory utterance "How nice!" supplies very central contextual information that the hearer A must bring to bear in the pragmatic processing of B’s utterance.

(6) A: Bilen koster 220.000.
   "The car costs 200,000."
B: Så fint! Vi kan kjøpe den LIKEVEL.
   "How nice! We can buy it after ALL/#NEVERTHELESS."

Likevel in (6) has the right prosodic properties and is in the right position for inferring that the speaker intends the hearer to establish a link between the current assertion that they can buy the car and the same speaker’s former belief that they could not buy it. Now notice that due to the context set up by B’s positive reception of A’s information, both the word order in (7) B₁ and the indicated 'bi-focal' intonation in (7) B₂ are infelicitous, because both instruct the hearer A to link likevel locally rather than distantly. The Norwegian versions are just as weird as the English translations with nevertheless.

(7) A: Bilen koster 220.000.
   "The car costs 200,000."
B₁: Så fint! #LIKEVEL kan vi kjøpe den.
   So fine! #Likevel we can buy it.
   "How nice! #Nevertheless we can buy it."
B₂: Så fint! #Vi kan kjøpe den LIKEVEL.
   "How nice! #We can buy it nevertheless."

Even if the concessive likevel in (7) B₂ is both sentence-final and carries a focal phrase-accent, there is another focal phrase-accent in the same Intonation Unit, which means that either the phrase-accent on likevel or the one on the infinitival complement is supposed to be identified as a piece of activated information. Since virtually all native speakers seem to find the second utterance in (7) B₂ strange, I conclude that it is impossible for them to just ignore the speaker’s unfortunate choice of intonational phrasing. The procedural information supplied by the two phrase-accents forces them to locate the antecedent of likevel in the immediately preceding utterance, but B’s positive exclamatory reaction is not the right environment for a statement that the car can be bought IN SPITE OF certain facts.

2.4 A syntactic parallel in Akan

The Scandinavian languages are not alone in having developed an 'all-purpose' concessive marker which can be contextually hooked up in a variety of ways, depending on what procedural information is triggered by its syntactic position. The Niger-Congo language Akan spoken mainly in Ghana has a concessive marker mmom with a very broad lexical meaning that underdetermines its (pragmatically inferred) meaning in context (Amfo 2001). If you’re an Akan speaker and you intend to say that it’s possible to buy the car NEVERTHELESS, then you place mmom in front of everything else in the sentence; on the other hand, if you intend to say that it’s possible to buy it AFTER ALL, then you use the same word mmom but place it at
the end – a distributional pattern which is strikingly similar to what can be observed in Norwegian, and which may be said to iconically reflect a linguistic differentiation between topical and focal information, respectively.

2.5 Focal handling of the concessive marker, yet local discourse link

I am now going to show that focal after all and the corresponding use of likevel can be found even in a situation where the antecedent of the concessive adverb is a proposition retrieved by means of a search in the local discourse structure. In such cases there is not necessarily a communicator who has come to change her opinion, and the type of discourse does not have to be dialogue, it may be written non-fiction. One example of what I have in mind, taken from the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC, Department of British and American Studies, University of Oslo), is offered in (8) where the original Norwegian text is from a book entitled Barn og foreldre ("Parents and Children", which is also the book title of the English translation) written by two professors of law at the University of Oslo.

(8) Eller det kan være slektninger etter det avdøde barns far som på grunn av odelretslike konsekvenser vil få dom for at han likevel ikke var faren.
Or it can be relatives after the deceased child’s father who on ground of allodial law consequences will get judgement for that he likevel not was the father
Or there might be relatives of the father of the deceased child who, due to alodial law considerations, would want a decision slating that he was not the father after all.

Likevel in the Norwegian source text is inside a that-clause complement, in the middle field position between the subject and the negator, and this complement is embedded in a relative clause, which is in turn embedded in the only main clause appearing in (8). Glossing likevel in (8) as "still", "nevertheless" or "even so" would not work at all. If a concessive adverbial is to be preserved in the English translation, it will have to be after all. The main clause contains a reference to a person described as "the father of the deceased child", and in either version the main clause noun representing this person is the head of the relative clause with an embedded complement clause. The complement appears to contain a reference to the same person, by means of the 3rd p. sg. male pronouns han and he, respectively, but then at the end of the sentence the reader is all of a sudden told to imagine that the person previously described as the father has been found out not to be the father after all. The concessive relation – Even if NN was previously considered to be the father of the deceased child (P), NN is no longer believed to be the father of the deceased child (Q) – appears to be of the sort that would normally require search in the hearer’s long-term memory, but there is no long-distance link here, as the identity of P can only be established by means of inferential processing of the local discourse at hand. A contextual search for P outside the complex sentence given in (1) is unimaginable in this particular case.

2.6 Conclusion

Likevel metapresents a proposition P perceived as being normally in conflict with the proposition Q expressed by the utterance containing this marker. Likevel simply tells the addressee to identify P, which must be readily accessible due to the fact that the concessive marker is itself conceptually empty and is in need of pragmatic enrichment. This procedural meaning is all there is to the lexical entry for likevel, regardless of syntactic position, regardless of context in general. However, the syntactic position of likevel gives the addressee information that will supposedly help him to retrieve the intended proposition P. When likevel is best glossed as "after all", the communicator uses the marker to metarepresent a higher-
level explicature attributed to herself placed in a context removed from the time and place correlates of the utterance; likevel then reflects her thought at an earlier temporal stage.

English differs markedly from Norwegian in relying rather more on lexical differentiation to help the addressee find the antecedent P. It should be noted, though, that in the case of after all, its position and its prosodic handling are of vital importance, because non-focal after all modifies the premise in a deduction rather than the conclusion (cf. footnote 1), and it is only when after all modifies a conclusion that it performs a job similar to that of focal likevel.

3 Concessive, causal, or both?

3.1 Concessive for det (literally: for that)

Ekkehard König has observed that, "Concessive connectives tend to take maximal scope and are therefore not easily accepted within the scope of another operator" (König, 1988:149). That is supposed to be one major property that distinguishes concessives and concessive conditionals from causal adjuncts, whether embedded clauses or an anaphoric expression like English therefore or because of that, which appear freely within the scope of negation.

Norwegian has one specific type of concessive conditional clause and a related concessive anaphoric adverbial, which share some properties with causal adjuncts, including, as argued here, their ability to occur in the scope of the negation operator. I am referring to concessive conditional clauses introduced by means of for det om – the Prep Phrase for det (for that) prefaced to the conditional connective om – and the corresponding lexicalised anaphoric phrase for det, whose relation to for det om is similar to the relation of likevel to the most neutral, least restrictive type of concessive (including concessive conditional) clause in Norwegian, the selv om ("even if") clause. The neutrality of selv om can be illustrated by the fact that a selv om clause works not only in the 'content domain' but even in the 'speech act domain' (Sweetser 1990), as seen in (9), where the absence of a comma between the main and the subordinate clause in the Norwegian version of (9b) indicates that there is no break before a for det om clause: it is not added as an afterthought and is not a separate IU.

(9) a. Teksten din ser da fin ut, enda jeg ikke fikk tid til å se noe på den.
    the.text yours looks then fine out, even though I not got time to to look closely on it
    'Your text looks fine, even though I didn’t have time to take a close look at it.’
 b. Teksten din ser da fin ut for det om jeg ikke fikk tid til å se noe på den.
    the.text yours looks then fine out for that if I not got time to to look closely on it
    'Your text looks fine even if I didn’t have time to take a close look at it.’
 c. Teksten din ser da fin ut, selv om jeg ikke fikk tid til å se noe på den.
    the.text yours looks then fine out, although I not got time to to look closely on it
    'Your text looks fine, although I didn’t have time to take a close look at it.’

All three versions (9a-c) can be used to express a concessive relation between two propositions representing two states of affairs, namely the speaker’s not having found time to survey the draft closely before the text was submitted, and the finished submitted text looking good in spite of that. Because the two texts referred to are presumably not identical, there is a sloppy identity between anaphoric den ("it") in the embedded clause and the definite description teksten din ("your text") in the main clause. Unlike (9a) and (9b) the Norwegian version with selv om in (9c) can in addition be interpreted as expressing the meaning that the finished submitted text looks good, although the speaker has not yet had a chance to read it (the same text) properly, that is, after it was submitted. On the latter interpretation of the utterance of (9c) there is a concessive relation between two higher-level explicatures: the
speaker admits that she hasn’t been able to read the text properly yet, nevertheless she ventures to pronounce the judgement on its quality which appears in her main clause.

The higher-order entity pronoun det ("that") in for det om S is a cataphoric pronominal whose discourse anchor (antecedent) is the proposition P of the immediately following om clause. There is a parallel expression for det at S – where the element at corresponds to the English complementizer that – which introduces a causal adjunct. For det at has the same function as the unmarked (less informal and more dialect-neutral) causal connective fordi ("because").

When there is no negation in the main clause, for det om and for det at/fordi have quite different functions. Observe the contrast between the pragmatically normal (9b) and the distinctly odd (10), which surprisingly expresses the belief that the result was good because the speaker did not find time to read the text properly.

(10) #Teksten din ser fin ut for det at jeg ikke fikk tid til å se nøye på den.
the.text yours looks fine out for that that I not got time to to look closely on it
#”The text looks fine because I didn’t have time to take a close look at it.”

The non-clausal anaphoric adverbials for det and likevel in (11a) and (11b) encode a concessive relation between the explicature representing the assumption that the speaker will catch the 3.30 train and some metarepresented assumption which appears to be inconsistent with that thought. (11c), in contrast, permits a context-driven enrichment of the conditional relation as causal or as concessive.

(11) a. Jeg når halv fire-toget for det.
   I reach half four-the.train for that
   ”I’ll catch the 3.30 train all the same/anyway.”

   b. Jeg når halv fire-toget likevel.
   I reach half four-the.train equally.well
   ”I’ll catch the 3.30 train all the same/anyway.”

   c. Jeg når halv fire-toget da.
   I reach half four-the.train then
   ”I’ll catch the 3.30 train then.”

3.2 The syntax of for det

For det has not acquired all syntactic privileges of the set of prototypical adverbial markers, which includes likevel as a member. It cannot appear in the middle field position and sentence-initially it is only found as a left-dislocated phrase.

(12) a. Vi henter deg klokka fem likevel/for det.
    ”We’re picking you up at five o’clock anyway.”

   b. Vi henter deg likevel/*for det klokka fem.
    ”We’re still picking you up at five o’clock.”

   c. Likevel/for det, så henter vi deg klokka fem.
    ”Even so we’re picking you up at five o’clock.”

   d. Likevel/*for det henter vi deg klokka fem.
    ”Even so we’re picking you up at five o’clock.”

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5 The accessibility of an inferred concessive interpretation of (11c) depends upon the kind of intonation employed. Both the verb når and the anaphor da should be assigned focal phrase-accent.
The lack of complete grammatical integration of *for det* in the category of adverbials betrays its origin as part of a composite connective introducing an adverbial clause.

### 3.3 *For det* and the scope of negation

Although the lexicalized phrase *for det* in present-day Norwegian can only be understood concessively, there is nothing about the way it is composed which suggests an assumed adversative relation between the proposition $P$ represented by *for det* and the proposition $Q$ derived from the meaning of the rest of the sentence. There is nothing about the preposition *for* and the higher-order entity pronominal *det* which is reminiscent of the counter-expectancy meaning associated with the item *selv* ("even") of *selv om*, and the concessive component of *for det om* clauses and the anaphoric adverbial *for det* is indeed of a weaker sort than what can be expressed by means of *selv (om)* and its anaphoric counterpart *likevel*. For *det (om)* adjuncts do not necessarily refer to a state of affairs which the speaker, given a certain set of contextual assumptions, presents as very unlikely to be compatible with the state of affairs represented by the main clause proposition. If a Norwegian speaker $A$ expresses the belief that the truth of $P$ causes $Q$ to be true, and if $A$’s interlocutor $B$ negates the metarepresented thought (attributed to $A$) that $P$ causes $Q$, then $B$ may use a causal construction and place it in the scope of negation, but he can also freely attach a concessive marker to his expression of $P$ in order to metarepresent the assumption that the falsity of $Q$ is believed to be contrary to $A$’s expectation, granted the truth of $P$. Therefore, on the assumption that the negation operator takes wide scope in (13) there is hardly any communicated difference between (13) where access to $B$’s communicated concessive relation between $P$ and $\neg Q$ is facilitated by *for det* and (14) where the same concessive relation is pragmatically inferred without the help of a linguistic cue.

(13)  
Vi flytter ikke ut for det om husleia går opp.  
we move not out for that if the.rental goes up  
’We’re not moving out just because the rental is being raised.’

(14)  
Vi flytter ikke ut fordi/for det at husleia går opp.  
we move not out because/for that that the.rental goes up  
’We’re not moving out because the rental is being raised.’

The speaker of (13) is saying that not even the announced raising of the rental is a sufficient reason to try to find a new dwelling. An utterance of (14) can be pragmatically enriched in exactly the same way, but (14) with its causal adjunct could also express the meaning that they are indeed moving out, not because they are now facing a higher monthly rental but for a different reason. In both cases we are led to infer that the interlocutor must have implied that the new rental might be a sufficient reason for the speaker to look for a new place to live. That thought is metarepresented by the speaker, who rejects it in (13) and (14) alike, though in the former the concessive nature of the embedded clause disallows the reading ”We’re moving for a different reason”. If negation is used because the metarepresented cause is the wrong one, then only a causal clause, as in (14), will do; a concessive one, as in (13), disambiguates the scope of negation in a way that the causal clause in (14) does not.

The non-truth-conditional modifier *bare* ("just") in (15) and (16) below indicates that the condition given in the embedded clause is not alone sufficient to bring the subject referents to the decision to break up and move somewhere else. This makes sense when *bare* modifies a causal clause, as in (16), but not really when the embedded clause is concessive. A concessive is meant to express a proposition whose truth is perceived to be hard to reconcile
with a true proposition in the main clause; the formula \(\neg Q, \text{even if } P\) represents an exception and should under normal circumstances not be compatible with the marker \textit{bare}, which points to an unfulfilled sufficiency condition when the proposition it modifies is within the scope of negation. Nonetheless, \textit{bare} is allowed to co-occur with a Norwegian concessive adjunct, provided it is of the type \textit{for det (om S)}.

(15) Vi flytter ikke ut bare for det om husleia går opp.

"We're not moving out just because (\*just even if) the rental is being raised."

(16) Vi flytter ikke ut bare for det at husleia går opp.

"We’re not moving out just because the rental is being raised."

In my opinion the fact that native Norwegians do not mind combining \textit{bare} and concessive \textit{for det (om S)} reflects an intuitive feeling that the difference between a causal and a concessive conditional clause is obliterated when such adverbial adjuncts are within the scope of a negation operator. It should be observed that \textit{bare} in (16) has the effect of eliminating the potential meaning "We're moving, but for a different reason", too, so there seems to be a real merger between the concessive and the causal type of adverbial adjunct here.

One might imagine that the striking formal similarity between (15) and (16) partly accounts for why the two structures tend to be interpreted alike, but the anaphoric adjuncts in (17) and (18) do not look similar at all, and yet they share an external negation interpretation.

(17) Vi flytter ikke ut for det.

"We’re not moving out because of that."

(18) Vi flytter ikke ut av den grunn.

"We’re not moving out because of that."

König (1989) argued that the external negation \(\neg(\text{because } P, Q)\) is equivalent to \(\text{although } P, \neg Q\). Norwegian causal adverbials like \textit{av den grunn} ("for that reason") and regular causal clauses are easily associated with concessivity when negation takes wide scope over \(P\) and \(Q\). Without a natural pragmatic enrichment process that goes from encoded \(\neg(\text{because } P, Q)\) to inferred \(\text{although } P, \neg Q\) Norwegian \textit{for det}, which originally had nothing to do with the expression of concessivity, would probably never have undergone a process of lexicalisation involving development of a conventional concessive meaning, in positive and negative sentences alike. The interesting thing is that \textit{for det} and \textit{for det om S} have not adopted all features of the concessive target construction. They preserve the ability to be included in the scope of negation which characterises their causal source.

It must be admitted that I have by no means proved that the negator takes, or can take scope over \textit{for det (om S)}. I do not wish to claim that the apparent neutralisation of the causal – concessive relation \textit{per se} provides me with a strong argument in favour of the position that a negation operator may include a Norwegian \textit{for det} adjunct in its scope, making it unique among concessives. On the other hand, it is far from surprising that it should be hard to come up with watertight arguments for the hypothesis that negation can take wide scope over concessive \textit{for det (om S)}. After all, the interpretation \(\neg Q, \text{even if } P\) where the scope of negation is restricted to the main clause proposition \(Q\) \textit{entails} the external negation reading which I have assigned to (13), (15) and (17) (but not \textit{vice versa}). And the wide scope reading can easily be strengthened (enriched) in context, so that \(P\) comes out as true and \(Q\) as false.
3.4 *For det* in positive interrogatives

I am now going to demonstrate that *for det* and *for det om S* are the only Norwegian concessives which behave like Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) in positive interrogatives. Why is concessive *for det (om S)* perfect in the interrogatives of (19) and (19′), while concessive *likevel* in (20) and the unmarked concessive conditional with *selv om S* (“even if S”) in (20′) are judged to be pragmatically unacceptable?

(19)  Vel, jeg har ikke klart å selge så mange biler som deg. Er jeg doven for det?
     "Well, I haven’t managed to sell as many cars as you. Am I therefore lazy?"

(20)  Vel, jeg har ikke klart å selge så mange biler som deg. #Er jeg doven likevel?
     "Well, I haven’t managed to sell as many cars as you. #Am I lazy nevertheless?"

(19′) Vel, jeg har ikke klart å selge så mange biler som deg. Er jeg doven for det om jeg har solgt færre enn deg?
     "Well, I haven’t managed to sell as many cars as you. Am I lazy just because I’ve sold fewer than you?"

(20′) Vel, jeg har ikke klart å selge så mange biler som deg. #Er jeg doven selv om jeg har solgt færre enn deg?
     "Well, I haven’t managed to sell as many cars as you. #Am I lazy although I’ve sold fewer than you?"

I chose “therefore” in (19) and “just because” in (19′) as English glosses for lack of better alternatives. Translating *for det* in positive interrogatives is not so easy.

A Negative Polarity Item (NPI) placed in a positive interrogative is known to contribute to the hearer’s recovery of the speaker’s dissociative attitude to the positive proposition expressed. Although *for det* is not an NPI (see e.g. (11a) and (12)), its pragmatic function in a positive interrogative may be affected by its ability to be included in the scope of negation. That distinguishes it from concessives in general, and distinguishes it in particular from *likevel* appearing in (20) and the concessive conditional of the *selv om* (“even if”) type in (20′). The interrogative in (20)-(20′) is a question whether the hearer finds it appropriate to call the speaker lazy – *in spite of* the fact that the speaker has sold *less* cars than the hearer! (20) and (20′) do not permit the more normal inferential processing that stimuli like (19) and (19′) are likely to undergo. They cannot be used to express the speaker’s negative epistemic stance. Unlike *for det* in (19) and *for det om* in (19′), *likevel* in (20) and *selv om* in (19′) always take wide scope over negation and can therefore not convey the procedural information that the speaker believes the negative counterpart of the positive proposition to be true. When *for det* is used in a positive interrogative at the expense of *likevel*, speakers exploit the fact that this concessive marker is unique in its ability to be found within the scope of negation. This, in my opinion, is why *for det* can serve the same procedural purpose as an NPI in a positive interrogative, it biases the question in the same way that a real NPI does, for instance *at all* in *Did they worry at all*?

The sole function of *for det* in (19) and *for det om S* in (19′) is to provide the intended context that makes the addressee identify the question as rhetorical. It gives the hearer immediate access to the speaker’s thought that the hearer has no right to call her lazy even if it is true that she has sold less cars than him. Observe that although (21) contains *likevel*, an utterance of (21) will be pragmatically equivalent to (19), not to (20), because in (21) – where
the break indicated by the comma is crucial – likevel is not only outside the scope of negation but also, in contradistinction to likevel in (20), outside the scope of the interrogative operator.

(21) Jeg har ikke klart å selge så mange biler som deg. Og likevel, er jeg doven?
   "I haven’t managed to sell as many cars as you? And yet, am I lazy?"

The preposed likevel in (21) instructs the hearer to process the co-ordination as if the speaker had said “Even if I haven’t sold as many cars as you, I am NOT lazy”. The concessive relation is not part of what is interrogated. Likevel instructs the hearer to process the immediately following question in the context of the preceding comparative construction (a local discourse link), and to relate that information to a communicated negative epistemic attitude to the assumption that the speaker is lazy.

Now observe what happens when we modify the first sentence in (19) as shown in (22) and compare (22) with the corresponding likevel version in (23).

(22) Jeg har klart å selge dobbelt så mange biler som deg. Er jeg doven for det?
   "I have managed to sell twice as many cars as you. Am I still lazy?"

(23) Jeg har klart å selge dobbelt så mange biler som deg. Er jeg doven likevel?
   "I have managed to sell twice as many cars as you. Am I still lazy?"

Due to the new shape and meaning of the first declarative there is a new context for interpretation of the interrogative; consequently for det in (22) and likevel in (23) will now normally be processed and understood in the same way. The question may still be classified as a rhetorical question whose answer is presupposed to be negative, but the negation operator of the speaker’s higher-level explicature does not include the concessive adverbial in its scope. The concessive takes wide scope over negation as in canonical concessive constructions. That negation can take scope over for det does not imply that it has to. In both versions the speaker is challenging the hearer to tell her whether he thinks it is fair to regard the speaker as lazy, especially since the speaker has proved to be twice as good a salesperson as the hearer. The interrogative in (22) is not to be associated with a higher-level explicature communicating the speaker’s disclaimer. Rather, just as in the now equivalent version with likevel in (23), the speaker is directing the hearer’s attention to the inconsistency of the two propositions related by means of the concessive marker and to the absurdity of the hearer’s manifest attitude. This interpretation of the interrogative in (22) is possible because for det is not an NPI, even if it frequently behaves like one in triggering a dissociative higher-level explicature, as demonstrated by (19).

3.5 Conclusion

Norwegian for det is not like other concessives or concessive conditionals. Its historical source is a composite connective that comes in two shapes, with a that-clause complement and with a conditional clause. The marker for det in Modern Norwegian only has a concessive meaning but I presented some evidence that for det and for det om clauses can be semantically inside the scope of negation, and when they are, they share one interpretation with the corresponding causal adverbial av den grunn (“for that reason”, ”because of that”) and causal for det at/fordi clauses. For det is not linguistically ambiguous between a causal and a concessive reading, because its affinity to causal adverbials is manifest only in negative declaratives and in positive interrogatives. The latter are comprehended as rhetorical questions when modified by for det, because for det then functions as it if were an NPI.
This paper has considered the division of labour between linguistic semantics and extralinguistic inference in the interpretation of utterances containing the respective Norwegian concessive markers *likevel* and *for det*. Comparisons with English were made throughout the paper. Both *likevel* and *for det* must be glossed in one way in some contexts and in a different way in others, but it would be of little help to postulate a complex lexical structure based on polysemy for either of them. Rather it was shown that utterances containing *likevel* are interpreted in light of the procedural information about the intended context that is supplied by intonation and the syntactic position of the marker, while the interpretation of utterances modified by *for det* often depends on the inferred scope of negation. The arguments presented all rest on the relevance-theoretic tenet that linguistic meaning vastly underdetermines utterance meaning (even what is said in the narrow sense), and that central thought processes constrained by the principle of relevance are responsible for much more in the cognitive process of utterance comprehension than what is traditionally believed to be the case.

**References**


