

A Corpus-Based Analysis of Independent *Although* and *Though* Clauses: Their Commonalities and Differences

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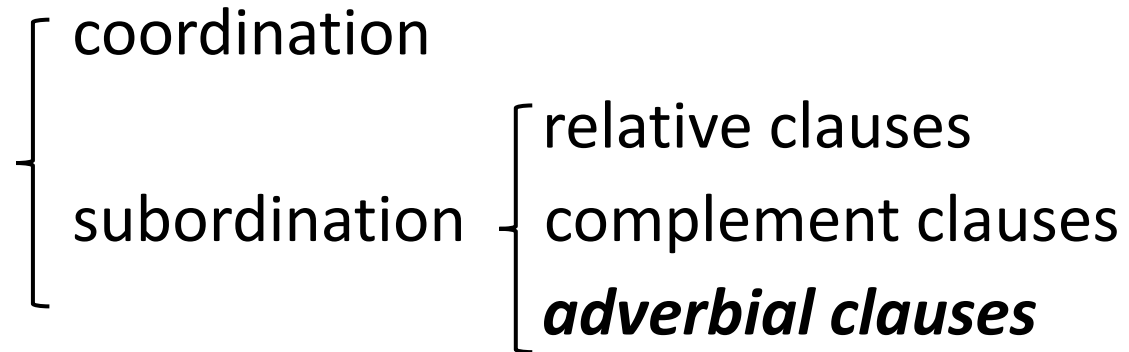
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1. Introduction

(1) Traditional analysis of complex sentences:



(2) Irene: (...) That's asinine, Henry.

Henry: **Because** you don't understand, see, because it's – it was done that way- =

Irene: I don't understand WHAT?

(Schiffrin 1987: 200)

(3) (I wonder) **If** you could give me a couple of 39c stamps please

(Evans 2007: 380)

(4) Insubordination: “the conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses.”
(Evans 2007: 367)

(5) CRUZ: (...) And CBO, in fact, projected that, in the first two years, premiums would rise 10 to 20 percent.

DICKERSON: **Although** it did say then they would go down.
(COCA, SPOK, CBS, 2017)
(cf. Mizuno2018)

(6) SEVERINO: (...) Some say they can't imagine Brett Kavanaugh behaving the way that she described. Her own friend...

CORNISH: **Though** none of those people have said they don't believe it happened.
(COCA, SPOK, NPR: *All Things Considered*, 2018)
(cf. Mizuno 2020)

(7) Previous studies on concessive clauses:

- semantic analyses: König (1994), Rudolph (1996), Crevels (2000)
- pragmatic approach: Sweetser (1990), Azar (1997)
- discourse-functional study: Barth (2000), Noordman (2001)

(8) *Although* and *though* are alternants, the latter slightly more informal.

(Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 736)

(9) When used as subordinators, *though* and *although* are synonymous. (...) Conversation and fiction show a slightly greater use of *though*.

(Biber et al. 1999: 845)

Table 1: Three types of concessive relations (König 1994)

	Standard concessive	Rhetorical concessive	Rectifying concessive
<i>although</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>though</i>	✓	✓	✓

- Almost no study has compared *although* and *though* with respect to the following two points:

(A) How frequently *although* and *though* clauses occur independently without their main clause.

(B) What kind of functions independent *although* and *though* clauses have.

The goal of this paper

→ to examine the commonalities and differences between independent *although* and *though* clauses in spoken discourse with regard to the two respects in (A) and (B) above.

2. Data

The data were collected from the Spoken section of *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) compiled from 1990 to 2019.

Table 2: *Although* and *though* in the Spoken section of COCA

	the number of the tokens in the spoken section of COCA
<i>although</i>	11,836
utterance-initial <i>although</i>	1,183
<i>though</i>	45,747
utterance-initial <i>though</i>	518

【Independent *(al)though* clauses】

- (10) CRUZ: (...) And CBO, in fact, projected that, in the first two years, premiums would rise 10 to 20 percent.
DICKERSON: **Although** it did say then they would go down. (COCA, SPOK, CBS, 2017)
- (11) SEVERINO: (...) Some say they can't imagine Brett Kavanaugh behaving the way that she described. Her own friend...
CORNISH: **Though** none of those people have said they don't believe it happened. (=6)

【Subordinate *(al)though* clauses】

- (12) DESHAUNA-BARBER: **Although** I'm small, I'm powerful. (COCA, SPOK, CBS *THIS MORNING*, 2016)
- (13) DEBORAH-ROBERTS: **Though** adolescence is still years away, these girls are already imagining the future.
(COCA, SPOK, ABC *News: Good Morning America*, 2018)

【Unfinished *although* clauses】

- (14) WINFREY: Yes. Yeah, you record at night.
Ms-STREISAND: I'm a night person.
WINFREY: Yeah.
Ms-STREISAND: **Although** I...
WINFREY: I heard the last time you sang, like, in daytime on a show was like 1963 or something.
(COCA, SPOK, *Ind_Oprah*, 2005)

Table 3: Utterance-initial *although* in the spoken section of COCA

Clause type	number	percentage
Independent <i>although</i> clauses	481	40.7%
Subordinate <i>although</i> clauses	665	56.2%
Unfinished <i>although</i> clauses	37	3.1%
Total	1183	100%

Table 4: Utterance-initial *though* in the spoken section of COCA

Clause type	number	percentage
Independent <i>though</i> clauses	103	19.9%
Subordinate <i>though</i> clauses	415	80.1%
Unfinished <i>though</i> clauses	0	0%
Total	518	100%

(15) • the segment of discourse independent (*al*)*though* introduces = S2

• the prior segment of discourse = S1

(16) ⟨ S1. *Although* + S2. ⟩ ⟨ S1. *Though* + S2. ⟩

(cf. Fraser 1999: 938)

3. Results

3.1 Frequency of Independent *Although* and *Though* Clauses

Table 5 The frequency of independent *although* and *though* clauses in the data

	number	percentage
Independent <i>although</i> clauses	481	82.4%
Independent <i>though</i> clauses	103	17.6%
Total	584	100%

→ Independent *although* and *though* clauses differ in their frequency: the former is far more frequent than the latter.

3.2 Discourse Functions of Independent *Although* and *Though* Clauses

Table 6: Independent *although* clauses

Conversation	related to the prior utterance by the same speaker	104 (21.62%)
	related to the prior utterance by the addressee	347 (72.14%)
Narration		29 (6.03%)
Unclear		1 (0.21%)
Total		481 (100%)

Table 7: Independent *though* clauses

Conversation	related to the prior utterance by the same speaker	6 (5.83%)
	related to the prior utterance by the addressee	48 (46.60%)
Narration		49 (47.57%)
Total		103 (100%)

3.2.1 *Although* clauses related to the prior utterance by the same speaker

(i) Standard Concessive (cf. König 1994)

(ii) Rectifying Concessive (cf. König 1994, Günthner 2000)

(iii) Self-corrective (cf. Günthner 2000)

Standard Concessive

- background assumption of $\langle S1. \textit{Although} S2. \rangle \rightarrow$ “if S2, then normally not S1.”

(17) KATHIE-LEE-GIFFORD: So I-- both of my in-laws are dead. So--

HODA-KOTB: Any who, all right, let's move on. She is hot in Cleveland.

KATHIE-LEE-GIFFORD: They've been dead for a long time, it's not my fault, okay.

HODA-KOTB: Hot in Cleveland.

KATHIE-LEE-GIFFORD: **Although** Frank says I did kill his mother. But anyway, that's another story.

(COCA, SPOK, *TODAY SHOW*, 2012)

(background assumption: If Frank says Kathie killed his mother, it's her fault.)

Rectifying Concessive

- The *although* clause weakens the content of the previous utterance by the same speaker.

(cf. König 1994, Günthner 2000)

- (18) KOTB: (...) I mean, we're going to go through all the names, but how about Melissa McCarthy for " Bridesmaids "?
- GIFFORD: Best Supporting Actress nomination.
- KOTB: Do you remember what she did in that movie?
- GIFFORD: Yes, I do.
- (...)
- KOTB: I think that's Oscar-worthy. By the way, she's very, very, very funny.
- GIFFORD: She's very funny.
- KOTB: Everybody loves her who meets her, everyone.
- GIFFORD: Yes.
- KOTB: Yeah.
- GIFFORD: But it's hardly Meryl Streep and " Iron Lady, " right?
- KOTB: Yeah.
- GIFFORD: **Although** they're not in the same category, so she may win.
- KOTB: You never know.
- GIFFORD: You know what, everybody agrees that comedy's much more difficult to do than the drama.
- (COCA, SPOK, *NBC_Today*, 2012)

(possible inference: It may be difficult for Melissa McCarthy to win the award.)

Self-correction

- *Although* introduces a correction of the speaker's own previous utterance. (cf. Günthner 2000)

(19) NATALIE-MORALES: We're the only species that really French kisses, too.

WILLIE-GEIST: Is that true?

NATALIE-MORALES: Yes. Yes.

TAMRON-HALL: Really?

NATALIE-MORALES: Human.

WILLIE-GEIST: Is that science also?

NATALIE-MORALES: That is science.

TAMRON-HALL: We're the only species that French kiss?

WILLIE-GEIST: I don't think so. What about—

NATALIE-MORALES: I don't think you see monkeys French kissing and dogs—

TAMRON-HALL: Well, they don't speak French.

NATALIE-MORALES: **Although** my dog sometimes tries to French kiss me, right.

WILLIE-GEIST: Yeah, what about dog?

(COCA, SPOK, *TODAY SHOW*, 2014)

3.2.2 *Although* clauses related to the prior utterance by the addressee

(i) Standard Concessive

(ii) Rectifying Concessive

(iii) Disagreement (cf. Günthner 2000)

Standard Concessive

- background assumption of $\langle S1. \textit{Although} S2. \rangle \rightarrow$ “if S2, then normally not S1.”
- The situation described in the previous addressee’s utterance “is contrary to expectation in the light of what is said in the concessive clause.” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1098)

(20) CLAYSON: (...) And you thought the house was secure?

E-SMART: We thought the house was secure.

CLAYSON: **Although** the alarm was not on? (COCA, SPOK, *CBS_48Hours*, 2003)

(background assumption: If he alarm was not on, they did not think the house was secure.)

Rectifying Concessive

- The *although* clause weakens the content of the previous utterance by the addressee.
- *Although* is used to indicate the speaker's partial disagreement with the addressee.

(21) LAUER: Halle Barry, you didn't like?

Mr-KRESSLEY: Halle Barry looks great, just not as great as sometimes we've seen her. I thought the asymmetrical top looked a little unbalanced.

LAUER: **Although** it does tend to draw your eye. (COCA, SPOK, *NBC_Today*, 2005)

(possible inference: Halle Barry's fashion at the Golden Globe awards was not so great.)

Disagreement

- *Although* is used to indicate the speaker's total disagreement with the addressee's preceding utterance.

(22) CRUZ: (...) My biggest concern with the House bill is, it doesn't lower premiums. And CBO, in fact, projected that, in the first two years, premiums would rise 10 to 20 percent.

DICKERSON: **Although** it did say then they would go down. (=5)

3.2.3 *Though* clauses related to the prior utterance by the same speaker

Rectifying Concessive

- The *though* clause weakens the content of the previous utterance by the same speaker.

(23) BLITZER: You know, Ari Fleischer, the conventional wisdom out there says that Al Gore is a terrific debater and George W. Bush may not be a traffic (*sic*) debater

FLEISCHER: He is, Wolf. Al...

BLITZER: **Though** he did -- he held his own during those primary debates

(COCA, SPOK, *CNN_King*, 2000)

3.2.4 *Though* clauses related to the prior utterance by the addressee

(i) Rectifying Concessive

(ii) Disagreement

Rectifying Concessive

- The *though* clause weakens the content of the previous utterance by the addressee

(24) TERRY-GROSS: Yes. And that's why in your film if Sadness touches one of the memories, the memory turns blue and is forever changed by the sadness it's been touched by...

PETE-DOCTER: Yeah, well, now people...

TERRY-GROSS: ... Which gets to exactly what you're talking about, that memories change over time as we recall them.

PETE-DOCTER: **Though** that actually is scientifically accurate. If you were feeling sad right now and you recall a sad memory - or a very happy memory from the past, it will be tinged with more sadness based on your current feeling.

(COCA, SPOK, *Fresh Air*, 2015)

Disagreement

- *Though* is used to indicate the speaker's disagreement with the addressee's preceding utterance.

(25) KAINE: Bob Corker is my chair on Foreign Relations. I know him very well. He's a patriotic, reasonable person, and he's expressing a concern that is shared by an awful lot of members of the Senate, even Republican members.

CAMEROTA: Though they're not speaking out about it. I mean...

KAINE: They're not.

CAMEROTA: ... he's the one who's publicly saying it, but nobody else is rising to defend him or have his back.

(COCA, SPOK, *New Day*, 2017)

Table 8 Usages of Independent *Although* and *Though* Clauses

			<i>although</i>	<i>though</i>
Conversation	related to the prior utterance by the same speaker	Standard Concessive	✓	
		Rectifying Concessive	✓	✓
		Self-Correction	✓	
	related to the prior utterance by the addressee	Standard Concessive	✓	
		Rectifying Concessive	✓	✓
		Disagreement	✓	✓
Narration			✓	✓

4. Discussion

4.1 *(Al)though* Introducing an Independent Clause as a Discourse Marker

(26) Discourse markers “are separate from the propositional content of the sentence and function to signal the relationship between the segment of discourse they introduce, S2, and the prior segment of discourse, S1.”
(Fraser 1998: 302)

(27) Günthener (2000: 457-458):

“Although definitions vary a great deal, there are a number of characteristics which most studies on discourse markers identify:”

(i) discourse markers are predominantly a feature of oral discourse;

(ii) they are drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases;

(iii) they are usually “short items”;

(iv) they appear in utterance initial position;

(v) they are optional;

(vi) they are multifunctional, operating simultaneously on the local and global level.

- Based on the characteristics in (27), *although* and *though* introducing an independent clause appear to be instances of discourse markers.

(i) They are features of oral discourse.

(ii) They are originally subordinating conjunctions. (Quirk et al. 1985: 998)

(iii) They are short items.

(iv) They appear in utterance initial position.

(v) They are optional.

- The removal of *although* in (28) and *though* in (29) does not make the sentences ungrammatical nor change the propositional content of the sentences.

(28) CRUZ: (...) My biggest concern with the House bill is, it doesn't lower premiums. And CBO, in fact, projected that, in the first two years, premiums would rise 10 to 20 percent.

DICKERSON: **Although** it did say then they would go down. (=22)

(29) TERRY-GROSS: ... Which gets to exactly what you're talking about, that memories change over time as we recall them.

PETE-DOCTER: **Though** that actually is scientifically accurate. (=24)

(vi) They operate on both the local and global level.

(30) CRUZ: (...) My biggest concern with the House bill is, it doesn't lower premiums. And CBO, in fact, projected that, in the first two years, premiums would rise 10 to 20 percent.

DICKERSON: Although it did say then they would go down.

CRUZ: It did. But I got to tell you, if Republicans hold a big press conference and pat ourselves on the back that we have repealed Obamacare, and everyone's premiums keep going up, people will be ready to tar and feather us in the streets, and quite rightfully. (=22)

(31) TERRY-GROSS: Yes. And that's why in your film if Sadness touches one of the memories, the memory turns blue and is forever changed by the sadness it's been touched by...

PETE-DOCTER: Yeah, well, now people...

TERRY-GROSS: ... Which gets to exactly what you're talking about, that memories change over time as we recall them.

PETE-DOCTER: Though that actually is scientifically accurate. If you were feeling sad right now and you recall a sad memory - or a very happy memory from the past, it will be tinged with more sadness based on your current feeling. (=24)

4.2 Independent (*Al*)*though* Clauses and the Hypothesis of Unidirectionality in Grammaticalization

(32) Grammaticalization:

“the process whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions.” (Hopper and Traugott 1993: xv)

(33) The hypothesis of unidirectionality:

“there is a relationship between two stages A and B, such that A occurs before B, but not vice versa.” (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 95)

(34) A cline of clause combining constructions:

parataxis > hypotaxis > subordination (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 170)

【Independent clauses】

(35) CRUZ: (...) And CBO, in fact, projected that, in the first two years, premiums would rise 10 to 20 percent.

DICKERSON: **Although** it did say then they would go down. (=22)

(36) SEVERINO: (...) Some say they can't imagine Brett Kavanaugh behaving the way that she described. Her own friend...

CORNISH: **Though** none of those people have said they don't believe it happened. (=11)

【Subordinate clauses】

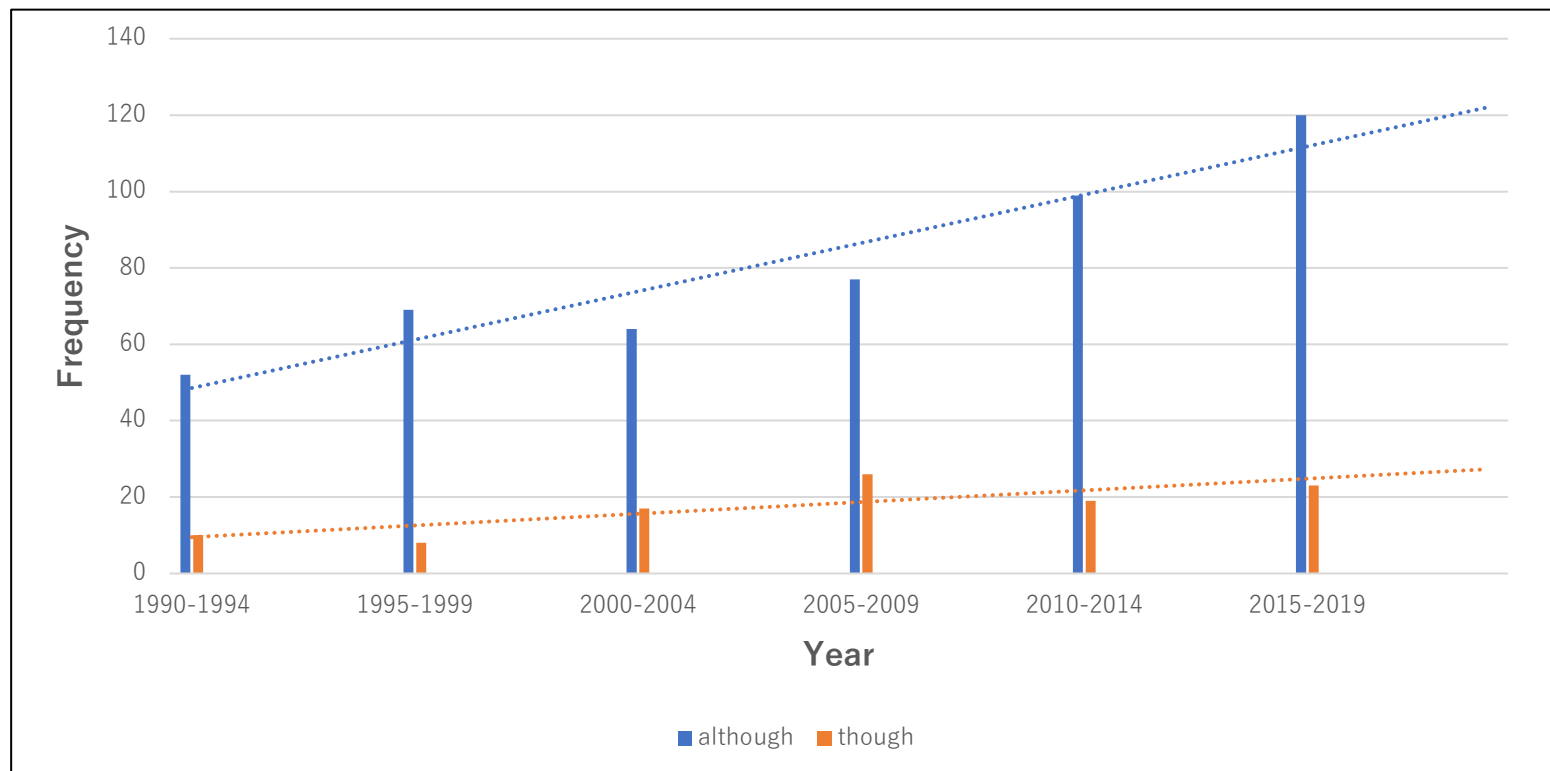
(37) DESHAUNA-BARBER: **Although** I'm small, I'm powerful. (=12)

(38) DEBORAH-ROBERTS: **Though** adolescence is still years away, these girls are already imagining the future. (=13)

Table 9 The frequency of independent *although* and *though* clauses in the data

	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	2015-2019	total
<i>although</i>	52	69	64	77	99	120	481
<i>though</i>	10	8	17	26	19	23	103

Figure 1 The frequency of independent *although* and *though* clauses in the data



5. Conclusion

- (i) Independent *although* and *though* clauses differ in their frequency: the former is far more frequent than the latter.

- (ii) Independent *although* and *though* clauses are similar in that when used in conversation, each of them can be classified into two large groups; they are related either to the prior utterance by the same speaker or to the prior utterance by the addressee.

- (iii) Independent *though* clauses are more restricted than independent *although* clauses in the kinds of usages:
 - Independent *though* clauses: Rectifying Concessive, Disagreement
 - Independent *although* clauses: Standard and Rectifying Concessive, Self-correction, Disagreement

- (iv) While both independent *although* and *though* can be analyzed as discourse markers, the former is more grammaticalized than the latter.

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