

Proposed title: **Concessive connectors as discourse markers: The case of *although* and *obwohl***

Abstract

Both the English *although* and the German *obwohl* are most typically known for their function as concessive connectors found at the onset of a clause.

In the past few decades, discourse markers have become “a growth industry in linguistics” (Fraser, 1999, p. 932), and studying their textual functions, both well-known and emergent, interacts with the established theory and brings new insights.

While investigating final *though* from a grammaticalization perspective, Barth-Weingarten and Couper-Kuhlen (2002) detected a textual function of *although*, not as prominent as in *though*, and related to a “restriction or correction with respect to a chunk of prior discourse” (Barth-Weingarten/Couper-Kuhlen, 2002, p. 352). They claim this observation can be made for German *obwohl* as well, and indeed, Günther (1999) notes an emergent use of *obwohl* as a discourse marker to initiate a correction in what had been said before.

Auer (2005) remarks on the increase in syntactic and semantic distance between propositions linked with a discourse-marking *obwohl*. There is no pattern of concession to speak of, as the scope of the discourse marker is broadened beyond the clause(s).

This goal of this paper is a quantitative investigation of this emergent use of *although* and *obwohl*, and a comparison between the two languages and what this development means. Spoken English and German corpora (from TalkBank.org and the FOLK corpus respectively) are searched for tokens of *although* and *obwohl* with a concessive and discourse-marking function, so a quantitative comparison can be made between the functions.

Since this work is done within the framework of grammaticalization theory, the quantitative analysis is followed by a discussion of how this process fits into the existing theory.

Keywords: grammaticalization, English, German, discourse markers

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