

Metadiscursive parametering with position and cooccurrence: the case of 'adverbial *though*'

Discourse Markers : Markers in Discourse and Markers on Discourse
Université de Lorraine, Metz campus, 21st-22nd June 2024.

0. Introduction

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1. Remarks on *though*

2. The problem

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4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

5. Concluding discussion

1. Remarks on *though*

In comparative constructions:

(1) It's *as though* the show had become somehow more spectacular. GUD 2665

In compound concessive constructions:

(2) Setting up production facilities in a new target market will often be risky, *even though* labour might be much cheaper in the targeted country. A60 1033

(3) *Although* production controls were never tight at London Films, he reduced costs and increased production. A7L 1013

(4) *Al-pau3* I coupe 3if pat I wolde. in C. Brown, Religious Lyrics of 14th Century (1924) Oxford English Dictionary.

1. Remarks on *though*

As a concessive conjunction

(5) *Though* she may be old now, Lady Amory has lost none of the original excitement and enthusiasm which she shared with Sir John [...] G2L 632

(6) It is certainly good for me physically, *though* I am a little dubious about its ultimate good. ABL 1345

(7) Separate schools for ethnic groups, *though* permissible in law, were not supported either. H8D 409

1. Remarks on *though*

"Adverbial" *though*

a "conjunct" (Quirk et al 1985: 632), a "linking adverbial" (Biber et al 1999: 850-851), a "conjunctive adjunct" (Dupont 2021: 25 sq)

"the informal conjunct *though*" (Quirk et al 1985: 632), "*Though* is much more common overall in conversation and in fiction than in news and academic prose" (Biber et al 1999: 850 & 886)

"At E[nd position], we often find [...] the informal *anyhow*, *anyway*, and (especially) *though*" (Quirk et al 1985: 643)

1. Remarks on *though*

"Adverbial" *though*

(8) Mr Mills: I certainly I I think the percentages there are er er are accurate er taken from the the diagrams, but I wouldn't accept the er the follow on, the conclusions which are are drawn in that paragraph, clearly.

Mr E Barnett You accept the percentages *though* do you? (S J9U 394-395)

(9) 'I want that booze delivered today,' Woolley said.

'No doubt you do, major.' Hawthorn chuckled grimly. He could afford to. 'You're going the wrong way about it, *though*. Don't you usually salute a superior officer?' (W HRA 2463-2469)

1. Remarks on *though*

Concessive discourse marker

A concessive utterance typically marks the fact that a speaker:

- 1) endorses a representation p , in the context of a representation q ;
- 2) does so in the context of an acknowledged preexisting representation of some incompatibility between p and q ;
- 3) attributes this preexisting representation to some other enunciative instance (cospeaker, speech community...).

1. Remarks on *though*

Though q, p. / q. p, *though*.

"In the case of the informal conjunct *though*, we seem to have an abbreviation of a concessive clause [...]. Thus with:

I'm afraid he doesn't eat much these days – but he looks pretty fit, *though*.

we are expected to understand something like the clause disjunct [...]:

... pretty fit, *though* I have said that he doesn't eat much."
(Quirk et al 1985: 632 and 641)

2. The problem

writing that is informal or intended to resemble speech. For example, in fiction linking *though* occurs in informal descriptions or dialog, and in news passages it occurs with other informal language" (e.g. note the use of colloquial *romp*, in the final example below):

I may be exaggerating about the machine gun *though*: I don't think they had one between them. (FICT)

Morning came, and I got up. That doesn't sound particularly interesting or difficult, now does it? I bet you do it all the time. Listen, *though*, I had a problem here. (FICT)

When, *though*, you marry into the Royal Family, one romp too many means headlines you and they could very well do without. (NEWS) (Biber et al 1999: 851)

2. The problem

"Surprisingly, *though* is also sometimes used as a linking adverbial in more formal written prose, for example:

All old Mali had actually ever done *though* was appropriate his fair share of what he had hoed and sweated to grow. (FICT)

Right now, *though*, he faces the most critical time in his managerial career. (NEWS)" (Biber et al 1999: 851)

2. The problem

Finally, from a stylistic perspective, the relatively common use of the English conjunctive adjuncts *though* (163 pmw), *still* (152 pmw) and *anyway* (42 pmw) in written texts – exemplified in (30) to (32) – is also startling. These three markers have usually been associated with spoken language or informal types of discourse [...] It is therefore somewhat surprising to find them in quality newspaper editorials, a written register which has been said to rank relatively high in terms of formality [...]

(30) No doubt, all would find the reality of government tougher than the theory of opposition. What is clear, *though*, is that the challenge is the same whether these countries elect new leaders or stick with the old ones. (Mult-Ed-EN – The Guardian) (Dupont 2021: 235)

2. The problem

though also displays a markedly higher frequency of use in rhematic 1 [i.e. between subject and predicate] position [...] – as in Example (132) – than the other seven English C[onjunctive] A[djuncts]. This result is also very surprising, since this marker has frequently been claimed to be strongly associated with the sentence-final position. Yet, while *though* is indeed the C[onjunctive] A[djunct] with the highest proportion of rhematic 3 [i.e. final] occurrences in the corpus [...] this position remains far (viz. seven times) less common than the rhematic 1 slot. ...

2. The problem

... One possible explanation for this may be that the statements formulated on the position of adverbial *though* have so far been founded mainly on the analysis of spoken data. Thus, in this specific case, mode would also appear to play a significant role on CA placement.

(132) The Bigley family, whose hopes and fears have been cruelly manipulated by the terrorists, deserves all our sympathy. Their anger, *though*, should be directed not at Tony Blair, but at the murderers. (Mult-Ed-EN – The Telegraph.)" Dupont 2021: 364)

2. The problem

- 1) Is adverbial *though* significantly more frequent in informal, spoken discourse than in more formal, written material?
- 2) Are there significant differences in the position of adverbial *though* according to the mode of discourse (spoken or written) the register, etc?
- 3) Does the position of adverbial *though* correlate with differences in value and, if so, what is the relationship between such differences and mode, register, etc?

3. Data collection and exploration

British National Corpus

Hoffmann, Sebastian, et al. *Corpus linguistics with BNCweb: a practical guide*. Peter Lang, 2008.

Metatextual information

POS annotations

Choice of statistical methods

Valuable resource for spontaneous oral

3. Data collection and exploration

Relative frequencies of adverbial though in spoken and written texts "though_AV0"

	though_AV0	though_CJS
Spoken	406.92 pmw	76.75 pmw
Written	97.55	381.8 pmw

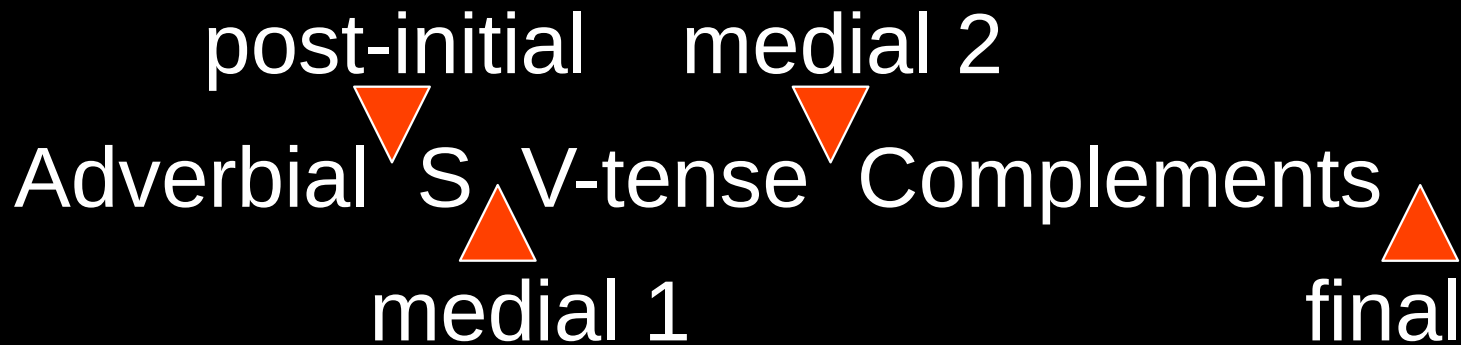
3. Data collection and exploration

Spoken or written			
Category	No. of words	No. of hits	Freq pmw
Spoken	10,409,858	4,236	406.92
Written	87,903,571	5,354	60.91
Total	98,313,429	9,59	97.55
Derived text type			
Category	No. of words	No. of hits	Freq pmw
Spoken conversation	4,233,962	2,980	703.83
Other spoken material	6,175,896	1,256	203.37
Fiction and verse	16,143,913	1,811	112.18
Other published written material	17,924,109	1,260	70.3
Newspapers	9,412,174	563	59.82
Unpublished written material	4,466,673	243	54.4
Non-academic prose and biography	24,178,674	971	40.16
Academic prose	15,778,028	506	32.07
Total	98,313,429	9,59	97.55

3. Data collection and exploration

Relative frequencies by position of adverbial
though in spoken and written texts

though_AV0 thinned to 1000 random hits



3. Data collection and exploration

Post-initial adverbial *though*

(10) Seriously *though* we've got to get people into this theatre on a more regular basis. (S) D91 72

(11) In one market, *though*, western companies have been denied the walk-over they expected: newspapers. (W) BMB 2099

3. Data collection and exploration

Medial 1 *though*

(12) What I'd like to agree on *though* is at least a date (S) J9Y 759

(13) Simon, *though*, did not appear to be annoyed. (ACB 1542)

3. Data collection and exploration

Medial 2 *though*

(14) It's quite important *though* to do it fairly neatly
(S) JSA 966

(15) I have to say, *though*, that everyone at *Guitarist* was aware of similar stories, as were many other people I have spoken to since receiving John's letter. (W) C9J 2392

3. Data collection and exploration

Final *though*

(16) Cos that whole building is like looks like metal and er glass *though* doesn't it? (S) JJS 702

(17) How different it all seemed back in September, *though*. (W) FR9 853

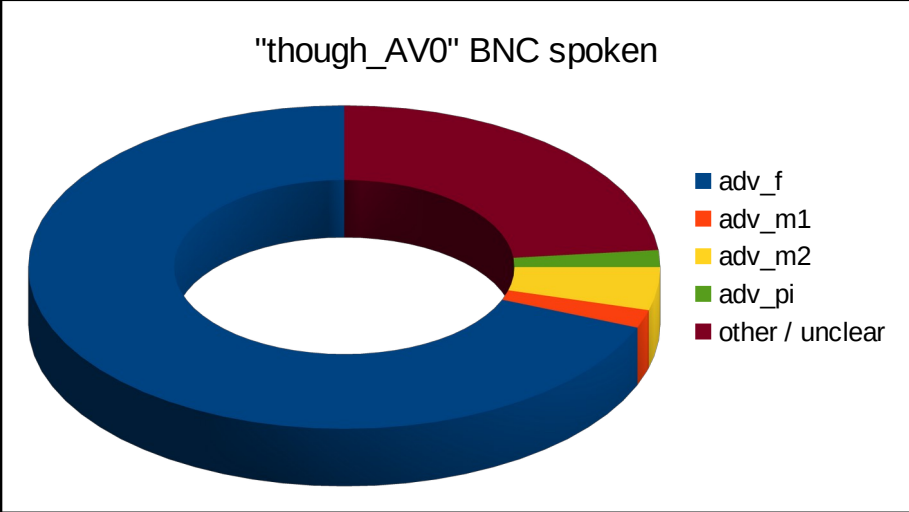
3. Data collection and exploration

Frequencies of adverbial *though* by position

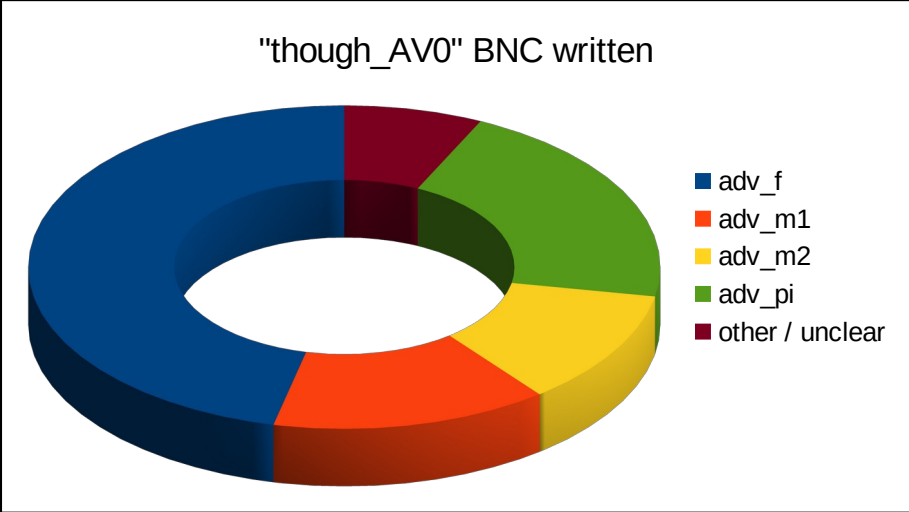
	adv_pi	adv_m1	adv_m2	adv_final	other/ unclear	total
spoken	17	18	43	689	233	1000
written	208	142	115	464	71	1000

3. Data collection and exploration

though_AV0 spoken



though_AV0 written



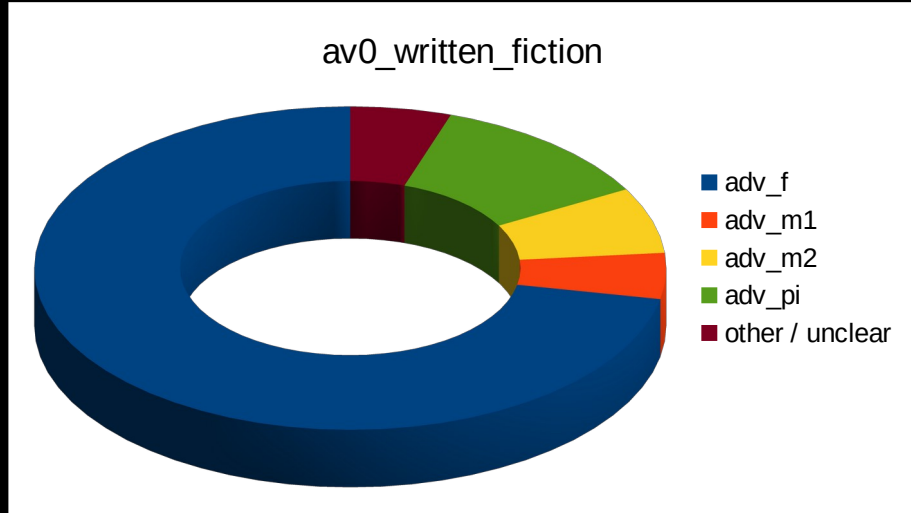
3. Data collection and exploration

though_AV0 in fiction and other-than-fiction

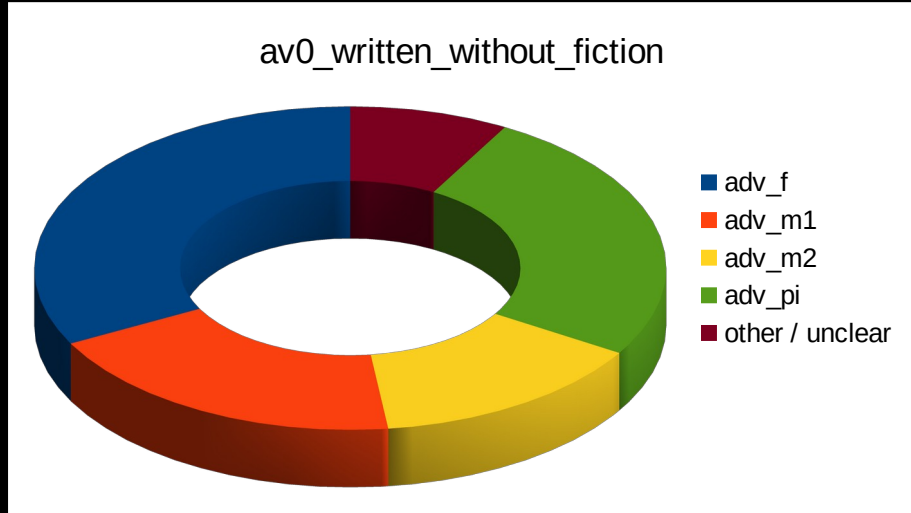
	adv_pi	adv_m1	adv_m2	adv_final	other / unclear	total
fiction	41 (11.7%)	16 (4.6%)	23 (6.6%)	251 (71.9%)	18 (5.2%)	349 (100%)
other-than-fiction	167 (25.7%)	125 (19.2%)	93 (14.3%)	213 (32.7%)	53 (8.1%)	651 (100%)

3. Data collection and exploration

though_AV0 w_fiction



though_AV0 wo_fiction



3. Data collection and exploration

2) Are there significant differences in the position of adverbial *though* according to the mode of discourse (spoken or written) the register, etc?

Yes. The position of adverbial *though* appears to depend closely on the nature of the sample.

3) Does the position of adverbial *though* correlate with differences in value and, if so, what is the relationship between such differences and mode, register, etc?

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Preliminary considerations

A concessive utterance marks:

- 1) the endorsement by the speaker of a representation p , in the context of a representation q ;
- 2) this endorsement is itself placed in the context of an acknowledged preexisting representation of some incompatibility between p and q ;
- 3) which is attributed to some other enunciative instance (cospeaker, speech community...).

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

$\langle \langle \langle p \underline{\in} q \rangle \underline{\in} \text{Sit}_2 \rangle \underline{\in} S_0 \rangle \underline{\in} \langle \langle p|q \rangle \underline{\in} S^* \rangle \rangle$

1) $\langle \langle \langle p \underline{\in} q \rangle \underline{\in} \text{Sit}_2 \rangle \underline{\in} S_0 \rangle$ p is located relative to q in a situation of reference Sit_2 by the speaker S_0 .

2) $\underline{\in} \langle \langle p|q \rangle$ the relation in (1) is located in turn relative to a preexisting incompatibility between p and q, expressed as $\langle p|q \rangle$.

3) $\underline{\in} S^* \rangle \rangle$ which is located in turn relative to some other enunciative instance.

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

- 1) considerations of exceptionality,
- 2) considerations of speaker stance,
- 3) considerations of intersubjective management

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Final position: intersubjectivity

(16) Cos that whole building is like looks like metal and er glass *though* doesn't it? (S) JJS 702

(17) How different it all seemed back in September, *though*. (W) FR9 853

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Collocates of a thinned and sorted subset of occurrences of final adverbial *though* taken from the spoken section of the BNC calculated by Log-likelihood

Rank	Word	Total No. in spoken texts	Expected collocate frequency	Observed collocate frequency	In No. of texts	Log-likelihood value
1	n't	126,275	34.121	110	66	107.6234
2	it	253,864	68.597	169	87	107.2056
3	n	5,817	1.572	17	14	50.2114
4	.	589,872	159.391	244	123	40.9356
5	funny	1,669	0.451	9	7	36.8522
6	nice	6,246	1.688	14	13	34.6852
7	good	16,689	4.510	21	19	31.729
8	?	157,883	42.662	84	67	31.6932
9	int	611	0.165	5	5	24.4822
10	is	105,1	28.399	55	39	19.7328

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Collocates of the sequence "(_V++ n't _PNP|in n it|int it) \?" in the spoken section of the BNC calculated by Log-likelihood

No.	Word	Total No. in spoken texts	Expected collocate frequency	Observed collocate frequency	In No. of texts	Log-likelihood value
1	though	5,04	19.618	381	123	1567.0848
2	nice	6,25	24.327	288	99	909
3	's	199,26	776.092	1556	270	621.3485
4	good	16,69	65.001	334	124	561.2853
5	bit	12,32	48.000	255	115	442.1691

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

(16) A They still use brick don't they?

B Yeah, they still use bricks. <unclear>

A Cos that whole building is like looks like metal and er glass *though* doesn't it? (JJS 700-702)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

(18) Rod So tha-- , thank you very much for that,
a little bit heated on occasion but we've got <-|->
there.

Angela <-|-> Good <-|-> *though* wasn't it?

F7G 592-593

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

(19) Ann <-|-> I <-|-> know, she's <pause> she doesn't eat that much, but what she is eating i-- everything's sweet.

James Mm.

Ann Chocolates <-|-> and <-|->

James <-|-> Is <-|-> she eating them?

Ann Pardon?

James Does she eat <unclear> *though*?

Ann Well sh-- <pause> I don't know. (KB8 3664-3670)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Medial 1 position: exceptionality

(12) What I'd like to agree on *though* is at least a date (S) J9Y 759

(13) Simon, *though*, did not appear to be annoyed. (ACB 1542)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Pseudo-clefts

(20) What I want to do *though* is is kind of thank a few people for start off. JNB 270

(21) What you will really love, *though*, is the buckets of low-down torque that the G-lader blower and intercooler create. A6X 1679

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Partitioning quantifiers

(22) Others *though* are likely to proceed towards such an arrangement. (ALM 1418)

(23) Most of them, *though*, were sympathetic and some, like Jeremy Paxman on Breakfast Time , made the whole thing that much less of an ordeal. (FS0 263)

(24) Some of it, *though*, rises well above mediocrity; and the part he played in popularising the Lake District was unquestionable. (B3H 63)

(25) One very notable exception, *though*, is Joe Satriani who, with the release of his new album, 'The Extremist', proves that the final chapter in the book of fretboard fire and fury has still to be writ. (C9K 105)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Superlatives

(26) The commonest problem, *though*, is the balance of the lines. (AT6 908)

(27) The most significant change, *though*, was the appointment of a greenhouse gases and transport campaigner. (AB6 457)

(28) The worst hazard, *though*, was that as the days went by the Sumatra seemed to become increasingly irresponsible. (A5K 151)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Unmarked exceptions

(13) She cursed herself for spoiling the closeness between them. Somehow, with her usual clumsiness, she had opened her mouth and put her foot in it. Simon, *though*, did not appear to be annoyed. His voice was polite and apologetic. .

(ACB 1540-1543)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Unmarked exceptions

(29) Morgenthau's Realist theory was, as we have said, based on six principles, outlined in an introductory chapter added only in the second edition of the book; this fact may explain why the six principles do not deal explicitly with two of the three concepts that are central to the remainder of the book, namely 'national interest' and the 'balance of power'. The six principles, *though*, do outline the basis of his theory. (W) (EDD 366)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Pronominal substitution

(13') ??He, *though*, did not appear to be annoyed.

(29') ??They, *though*, do outline the basis of his theory.

(13'') He did not appear to be annoyed, *though*.

(29'') They do outline the basis of his theory, *though*.

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Medial 2 position: stance

(14) It's quite important *though* to do it fairly neatly
(S) JSA 966

(15) I have to say, *though*, that everyone at
Guitarist was aware of similar stories, as were
many other people I have spoken to since
receiving John's letter. (W) C9J 2392

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Reporting verbs and extrapositives

(30) Remember, *though*, that this is not the end of the story. (EX6 893)

(31) I still believe *though* that he is no longer effective as a zonal defender. (J1C 149)

(32) It is clear, *though*, that there remains a very wealthy minority who cannot reasonably be regarded as 'middle class'. (EDH 1002)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

(the) X is ...

(33) The thing is *though* there's so many people who are sending postcards won't send her one. (S)
(KC7 182)

(34) My point is, *though*, that the Braun's powerful 'thisness', that idiosyncratic sensibility, which makes it such a complex pleasure to use, does not transfer to the coffee itself. (CAF 2186)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Cleft constructions and relatives

(35) It was Japan, the most energy-intensive country in the world, *though*, that showed what can be done. AB6 620

(36) There are signs, *though*, that cricket may be sliding slowly off its pedestal in the Caribbean. ABR 1362

(37) It is a theory, *though*, which doesn't account for the language. CB0 635

(38) There was a time, *though*, when every weekend he would be off on that cycle. HGD 3192

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Post-initial position: exceptionality, stance

(10) Seriously *though* we've got to get people into this theatre on a more regular basis. (S) D91 72

(39) Obviously, *though*, he is still acclimatising to the berth at international level. (W) (K5A 4998)

(40) Clearly, *though*, despite these few shortcomings, the warning display is a useful one. (W) (BLX 821)

(41) Ultimately, *though*, her success lay neither in Commonwealth nor in Common Market affairs, but in the North Atlantic alliance. (A66 804)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

Post-initial position: exceptionality, stance

(11) In one market, *though*, western companies have been denied the walk-over they expected: newspapers. (W) (BMB 2099)

(42) When she did attack, *though*, she won most of the points, and we shall no doubt see more of it. (W) (CKM 454)

(43) Often, *though*, he nodded approval. (W) (APW 2108)

(44) Today, *though*, she looked much more ruffled than usual. (W) (H8F 1360-1363)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

(11) Not even the threat of their own unemployment was enough to persuade Ossi [East German] consumers to buy 'home-grown' products for a minute longer than they had to. In one market, *though*, western companies have been denied the walk-over they expected: newspapers. (W) (BMB 2098-2099)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

(42) Except towards the end, she reverted back to her baseline style. But, as she explained afterwards, with Seles hitting so hard and so deep, it was very difficult to play any other way against her. When she did attack, *though*, she won most of the points, and we shall no doubt see more of it. (W) (CKM 452-454)

4. Some salient configurations of adverbial *though*

(43) Then, usually, he set more puffball to smoke in underneath, to kill off all the bees, and they would move on to the next hive. Often, *though*, he nodded approval. (APW 2107-2108)

(44) ‘The elegant Eleanor’, Jessamy had nicknamed her, all those years ago. That description fitted her perfectly. Every inch of her was glossy and sophisticated. § Today, *though*, she looked much more ruffled than usual. (H8F 1360-1363)

5. Concluding discussion

Spoken conversation: adverbial *though* in final position; tags and interrogatives → intersubjectivity.

Here discourse marker *though* operates on discourse.

5. Concluding discussion

Written data:

Medial 1: partitioning quantifiers, focus (pseudo-clefts, etc.) → exceptionality.

Medial 2: 1) *verba dicendi*, extrapositives, *thing is...* → subjective commitment 2) clefting, certain relatives → exceptionality

5. Concluding discussion

Written data:

Post-initial: 1) circumstances → exceptionality; 2) stance adverbs → subjective commitment.

In these cases discourse marker *though* operates *on* discourse.

5. Concluding discussion

Concessivity: exceptions, speaker stance, intersubjective management.

$\langle\langle\langle p \in q \rangle \in \text{Sit}_2 \rangle \in S_0 \rangle \in \langle\langle p|q \rangle \in S^* \rangle\rangle$

Speaker commitment

Intersubjectivity

Exceptionality

5. Concluding discussion

"One possible explanation for this may be that the statements formulated on the position of adverbial *though* have so far been founded mainly on the analysis of spoken data." (Dupont 2021: 364.)

Yes. It appears that *though* has been categorised as spoken and familiar on the basis of its position in spoken data, at a hinge in intersubjective interaction. In written monological material, *though* imposes sequence on the discourse, with a focus on exceptionality or speaker commitment.

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