

A synchronic corpus study of as if-clauses and as though-clauses in adverbial, complementation and monoclausal constructions

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Diplôme : Master en langues et lettres modernes, orientation générale, à finalité didactique

Année académique : 2018-2019

URI/URL : <http://hdl.handle.net/2268.2/6668>

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Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres

**A synchronic corpus study of *as if*-clauses
and *as though*-clauses
in adverbial, complementation and
monoclausal constructions**

Sous la direction de Van linden An

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Mémoire présenté par
Scius Mathilde
en vue de l'obtention du grade
de Master en langues et littératures modernes, orientation générale

Année académique 2018-2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all people who have contributed, in one way or another, to the successful completion of this dissertation.

I am grateful to An Van linden for her supervisory work, her availability and her wise counsel and support all along the achievement of this work.

I would also like to thank Lieselotte Brems and Robert Möller for the interest they have in this dissertation.

Finally, I thank my family for their support and encouragement, with special thoughts for my parents without whom none of these five years of study would have been possible.

Thank you all.

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INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of the study

The present dissertation provides a synchronic study of *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses in adverbial, complementation and monoclausal constructions. The two subordinators have received significant attention in the literature on subordinators and their diachronic development has been explored (cf. López-Couso & Méndez-Naya 2012a, 2012b, 2015 and Brinton 2014). Moreover, scholars have thoroughly studied their syntactic structure and they claim that *as if* and *as though* can be used to introduce adverbial clauses of comparison or to introduce complement clauses (cf. Quirk et al. 1985; Declerck 1992; López-Couso & Méndez-Naya 2012a, 2012b, 2015 and Brinton 2014). *As if* and *as though* can also occur in independent clauses or on their own. However, the subordinators have consistently been treated together and the semantics they convey have not been studied systematically.

I have three aims with this study. The first one is to compare the two subordinators and see to what extent the findings on *as if* apply to *as though*. This will serve to prove whether it is pertinent or not to treat them together and not distinguish them. The second aim is to study the meaning conveyed by *as if* and *as though*. My dissertation will try to show that the two subordinators do not solely express comparison when they are used in adverbial and complementation constructions and that monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* express other meanings than the denial one. The last aim of this dissertation is to determine which of the two subordinators has moved furthest down the cline of grammaticalization.

I will study *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses in adverbial, complementation and monoclausal constructions in Present-Day British English. The added value of this

dissertation is the use of larger samples for Present-Day English. I will study a total of 800 instances of *as if* and *as though*, whereas the previous corpus studies have studied a smaller number of instances (cf. López-Couso & Méndez-Naya 2012a, 2012b). Moreover, I will combine a general search for *as if* and *as though* with a more fine-grained study of independent constructions, for which I will study a total of 278 instances. Finally, I will analyse in detail the semantics conveyed by *as if* and *as though*.

1.2 Outline of the dissertation

In Section 2 of this dissertation, I will discuss the existing literature on the subordinators *as if* and *as though*. I will first describe the development and the history of the two subordinators. Then, I will broach the different types of constructions in which the subordinators occur. To close the section, I will introduce the research questions that this dissertation will seek to answer.

In Section 3, I will present the corpus that has been used for the present study and I will discuss the methodology used to extract the examples. In Section 4, I will describe the results of the corpus study and I will analyse some of the examples retrieved. I will begin with the general study of *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses and then, I will tackle the more fine-grained study of independent *as if*- and *as though*-clauses.

Section 5 will deal with the discussion of the results. The discussion will focus on the research questions. I will compare the two subordinators. I will reveal what meanings are conveyed by *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses. I will also show which of the two subordinators has moved furthest down the cline of grammaticalization. Finally, in Section 6, I will close the dissertation and summarize the main findings.

BACKGROUND

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 *Development of the comparative subordinators as if and as though*

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, both *as if* and *as though* introduce finite and non-finite clauses and they mean ‘as the case would be if’ (OED, s.v. *as*, adv., and conj., Phrases, P1 a. *as if* (a)-(b)). Quirk et al. (1985: 1110) mention that the original function of *as if* and *as though* is to introduce adverbial clauses of comparison, as in (1), and they state that *like* can be used in the same way. These adverbial clauses of comparison can be omitted since “they belong to the periphery of sentence structure, functioning as adjuncts or modifiers” (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015: 189). Example (2) shows that adverbial clauses of similarity are introduced by *as* and *like* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1110). Besides the comparison and similarity meaning, clauses of comparison and clauses of similarity can also express a manner meaning when the verb is dynamic, as in (1) and (2) (Quirk et al. 1985: 1110).

- (1) She treats me *as if* I’m a stranger. (Quirk et al. 1985: 1110; italics mine)
- (2) She cooks a turkey (*just*) *as* her mother did. (Quirk et al. 1985: 1110; italics mine)

The adverbial semantic space can be divided into thirty-two interclausal relations and Comparison and Similarity are two of them (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 313). There is a close connection between Comparison and Similarity and according to López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 313); they react in a similar way in some cases. For example, both the adverbial clause of comparison in (1) and the adverbial clause of similarity in (2) answer ‘how’-questions (‘how does she treat me?’) (López-Couso and

Méndez-Naya 2012a: 313). Moreover, as mentioned by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 313), Similarity is involved in Comparison. The fact that some subordinators, such as *like* and *as*, can express both comparison and similarity is accounted by the affinity between the two semantic relations (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 313). Nonetheless, the subordinators preferred for the semantic domain of comparison are “complex subordinators combining an element of Similarity (*as*) with an element indicating hypotheticality (*if, though*)” (Kortmann 1997: 328). In other words, *as if* and *as though* are the favoured subordinators in order to express comparison (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 314).

The two subordinators can also function as comparative connectives which introduce finite declarative complement clauses, as in example (3) to (5) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 315). According to López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 322), this complement use of *as if* and *as though* is “very likely derived from the original adverbial use”. Moreover, the clauses introduced by *as if* and *as though* involve a “hypothetical comparison” (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015: 192). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 322) found that the complement clauses come in different patterns, which will be discussed in Section 2.3.2.1.

- (3) ... and as time passed it seemed *as if* the strange little man had never been there. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 174; italics mine)
- (4) It seemed *as though* she were always auditioning. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 174; italics mine)
- (5) ‘cause some people seem [*as if*] they’re older... (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 174; italics mine)

Even though the *as if*- and *as though*-clauses in those three examples look like adverbial clauses, López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012b: 174) argue that they “fulfill a number of structural and semantic criteria that show that the complement analysis for the clauses at issue is preferable”. For example, the complement clauses introduced by *as if* and *as though* are “obligatory constituents in clause structure and cannot be omitted without affecting the grammaticality of the sequence” (**and as time passed it seemed*); they can be replaced by a finite complement clause (*And as time passed it seemed that the strange little man had never been there*) or non-finite one (*'cause some people seem to be older*); they can co-occur with prototypical complements, such as *that* (*He felt as if every home was topped by burning oil and **that** every muscle was ready to dissolve into jelly*); and they can pronominalize (*It seemed so*) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 316, 2012b: 175–177). However, they cannot occur in sentence-initial position (**As if the strange little man had never been there seemed*) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 316, 2012b: 175–177).

Besides introducing adverbial clauses and complement clauses, *as if*- and *as though*-clauses can also appear on their own as independent clauses, as in examples (6) and (7) (Brinton 2014: 98). *As if*- and *as though*-monoclauses can also be connected to the following sentence, as shown in (8) (Brinton 2014: 99).

- (6) *As if* Notting Hill’s ladies who lunch were not already spoilt for choice when it comes to exclusive shopping experiences. (Brinton 2014: 100)
- (7) Doug has exposed me. *As though* somehow I’m the bad guy in this. (Brinton 2014: 98)

- (8) *As if* this wasn't bad enough, Anon was also the sitting target for an unceasing barrage of surreal orders which came from a remote and fantastical place called GHO. (Brinton 2014: 99).
- (9) *As if* pregnancy wasn't uncomfortable *enough*. (Brinton 2014: 100)

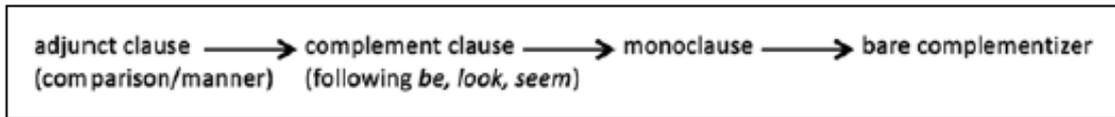
As Brinton (2014: 99–100) says, “monoclausal *as if* can be short and relatively simple”, as in (7), or they “can also be long, complex, and novel”, as shown in (6). Examples (8) and (9) show that a frequent collocation with independent *as if*- and *as though*-clauses is with the adverb *enough* (Brinton 2014: 100). It is agreed that monoclauses “develop from a process of insubordination; this involves loss of the matrix clause and reanalysis of the original subordinate clause as a main clause” (Brinton 2014: 102). Section 2.3.3 below will focus on insubordination and the monoclausal use of *as if* and *as though*.

Finally, the subordinator *as if* can be found on its own; that is, functioning as a conjunction-only. This use is thought to have derived from the monoclausal use of *as if* and it is called “exclamatory *as if*” by Brinton (2014: 93, 95). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *as if* is used on its own (i.e., without a clause) in colloquial English and it is “[t]ypically used as a sardonic response to a stated or reported suggestion” (OED, s.v. *as*, adv., and conj., Phrases, P1 a. *as if* (c)), as in examples (10) and (11). Regarding *as though*, the Oxford English Dictionary does not mention it being used on its own (OED, s.v. *as*, adv., and conj., Phrases, P1 b. *as though*). Figure 1 below shows the development, postulated by Brinton (2014: 108), of the comparative subordinator *as if* into exclamatory *as if*.

- (10) ‘Maybe he’ll come up and speak to us.’ ‘Oh, *as if*!’ contradicted Laura. (OED, s.v. *as*, adv., and conj., Phrases, P1 a. *as if* (c))

- (11) When she finds her cheating hubby in bed with another woman (*as if!*)
 Isabella moves to Los Angeles. (OED, s.v. *as*, adv., and conj., Phrases, P1 a.
as if (c))

Figure 1: Development of exclamatory *as if* (Brinton 2014: 108).



2.2 History of the comparative subordinators *as if* and *as though*

The subordinators *as if* and *as though* emerged in Early Middle English. Instances (12) and (13) represent two of the earliest examples of the subordinators (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 314). *Like* used as a subordinator became available in Late Middle English (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 314). As said earlier, the main function of *as if* and *as though* was to introduce adverbial clauses of comparison. Regarding *like* as a subordinator, “in Middle English and for the most part in Early Modern English, too, *like* could serve this function only as part of complex subordinators involving *as*”, for instance *like as*, *as like* and *like as if* (Kortmann 1997: 371). Example (14) shows *as like* expressing the meaning ‘as if’ (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 314). The Old English links *swelce* and *so* were also used to express the meaning ‘as if’ but their use decreased when the subordinators *as if* and *as though* appeared (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 315). As for the link *as* expressing ‘as if’, López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 315) say that it persisted longer than *swelce* and *so* and that examples were still found in the early nineteenth century.

- (12) þe33 berenn Hælennd Crist *Alls iff* þe33 karre wærenn Off wheless fowwre

‘they carry Christ *as if* they were a cart of four wheels’ (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 314; italics mine)

- (13) hit bigon to cleaterin al & to cleouen. to-bursten & to-breken *as þah* hit were
bruchel gles

‘it began to clatter and to crumble, to burst and to break *as if* it were glass’
(López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 314; italics mine)

- (14) To ... bere a candell brennyng in procession [on Candlemas day] *as lyke*
they wente bodely with our lady. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a:
315)

The complementizer use of *as if* and *as though* emerged later than their primary use (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 177). According to López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012b: 177), *as though* was the first subordinator to be used as a complementizer. It appeared in the Late Middle English period, while the complementizer *as if* emerged in complement constructions in the Early Modern English period (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 177). Examples (15) and (16) show some of the earliest representations of complementizer use of the subordinators (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 322). As López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 322) note, the complementizer and the adverbial function of *as though* coexist in example (15).

- (15) Wið þis þa þuhte hit *as þah* a þunre dunede. & com a culure se briht as þah
ha berande. of heauene.

‘Then it seemed *as though* a thunder thundered, and a dove came from
heaven, as bright as though it was burning.’ (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya
2012a: 322; italics mine)

- (16) The Fellow looks *as if* he were broke out of Bedlam. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 322; italics mine)

As mentioned previously, *as if*- and *as though*-clauses can also appear on their own as independent clauses. López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 324) show that monoclausal *as though* emerged before monoclausal *as if*. The former appeared in the period 1500–1570, while the latter appeared in the period 1570–1640 (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 324). Example (17) is one of the earliest instances of an independent *as if*-clause (Brinton 2014: 105). The insubordinated use of *as if* and *as though* became more frequent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though they were relatively rare (Brinton 2014: 105).

- (17) *As if* a Commonwealth could consist where the force were in any hand which justice had not the authority to command and govern. (Brinton 2014: 105).

Finally, of the two subordinators, only *as if* is used as a conjunction-only (Brinton 2014: 109). According to traditional thinking, this use of *as if* “can be attributed to so-called Valley Girl Talk, a stereotypical language variety identified in 1980s Southern California” (Brinton 2014: 94). It can also be linked to the late 1980s sketch “Wayne’s World”, from the television program *Saturday Night Live* (Brinton 2014: 94). In the early 2000s, the conjunction *as if* was used for the title of a British television series and for a number of young adult novels (Brinton 2014: 94–95). However, Brinton (2014: 95) points out that “corpus evidence reveals exclamatory *as if* to have originated in the early twentieth century, likely in American colloquial speech”.

2.3 Previous research on the subordinators *as if* and *as though*

According to López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 320), there is “no categorical semantic difference between *as if* and *as though* over the course of their recorded history”. Their corpus studies on *as if* and *as though* in Present-day English show that *as if* is more frequent than *as though* in both adverbial and complementation constructions (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 319–320, 2012b: 179). They also show that *as if* and *as though* are more common when introducing adverbial clauses of comparison than when introducing complement clauses (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 320, 2012b: 179, 2015: 191). Brinton’s (2014: 108) corpus study on *as if*- and *as though*-monoclauses demonstrates that monoclausal *as if* is much more frequent than monoclausal *as though* in Present-Day English. Her corpus study on exclamatory *as if* shows that *as if* is used as a conjunction-only and “undergoes the ‘extremes of insubordination,’ but *as though* does not” (Brinton 2014: 109). In the following sections I will discuss the different constructions occurring with *as if* and *as though* in more detail based on the existing literature.

2.3.1 Adverbial constructions

As mentioned in Section 2.1, *as if* and *as though* are mainly used to introduce adverbial clauses of comparison and they can also convey manner meaning when the verb is dynamic, see example (1) above (Quirk et al. 1985: 1110). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 321) found interesting examples of *as if* and *as though* in which the clause introduced by the subordinators “further specifies the content of a subjective predicative complement in the main clause, as shown in (18) and (19).

- (18) As I was thus musing, the bright, red sun of summer sank down behind the top of the Pentland Hills, and all looked bluish, dowie, and dreary, *as if* the heart of the world had been seized with a sudden dwalm. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 321; italics mine)
- (19) you only know that as you stand and look your heart comes into your mouth and you feel like St. Paul *as if* you were caught up into heaven and saw unspeakable things. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 321; italics mine)

At first glance, these examples look like complement clauses, yet they “belong to the domain of adverbial subordination” (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 321). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 321) find them interesting because they “seem to provide a link to the complementation structures”. If the underlined words are left out, the *as if*-clauses are no longer adverbial clauses but they become complement clauses, see examples (18a) and (19a) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 321).

- (18a) and all looked *as if* the heart of the world had been seized with a sudden dwalm. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 321; italics mine)
- (19a) you feel *as if* you were caught up into heaven and saw unspeakable things. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 321; italics mine).

2.3.2 Complementation constructions

As if and *as though* can also function to introduce complement clauses. In the following sections, I will first describe the different syntactic patterns and the predicates occurring in the matrix clause. Then, I will talk about the semantics of *as if* and *as though* in

complementation constructions. Finally, I will discuss the variation between *as if* and *as though* and the complementizer *that*.

2.3.2.1 Syntactic patterns and predicates

López-Couso and Méndez-Naya's corpus studies (2012a: 322, 2012b: 179) reveal that *as if* and *as though* complement constructions come in different patterns. In what follows, I will describe the different syntactic functions from the most frequent to the least frequent one according to López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 322, 2012b: 179).

2.3.2.1.1 Complement clauses in subject function

The most frequent complement clauses are the ones functioning as the subject of the sentence (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 322, 2012b: 180). There are two patterns for this function: (a) *it seems as if/as though...* and (b) *it is as if/as though* (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 180). Examples (20) and (21) respectively, show the two different patterns. López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012b: 180) classify example (22) as a complementation structure. However, as there is no matrix clause, I would rather analyse it as a monoclausal structure.

- (20) It seemed *as if* all our moral vigo[u]r was dying down, and as if nothing could restore it. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 323; italics mine)
- (21) It was *as though*, not for the first time, each side had listened to the other's problem and had reali[s]ed it was well-nigh insoluble. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 323; italics mine).
- (22) *As if* there was anything I could flatter him about. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 324; italics mine)

López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 322, 2012b: 180) explain that pattern (a) occurs with various predicates: *appear*, *feel*, *(not) look*, *(not) seem*, and *sound*. There are also instances of this pattern which appear “with no anticipatory *it*”, see (23) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 180). There are two predicates which commonly occur with examples of this type: *look* and *sound* (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 180).

- (23) Looks *as if* it might well have been doesn't it? (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 180; italics mine)

For pattern (b), Declerck (1992: 223) states that it “express[es] what the speaker infers to be a possible interpretation of a given situation”. Moreover, he claims that it is similar to the *it is that* construction (Declerck 1992: 222). Pattern (c) will be analysed as monoclausal *as if* and *as though* in this dissertation, and will be discussed in Section 2.3.3. below.

2.3.2.1.2 Complement clauses in predicative function

The second most common clauses function as subjective predicative complements (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 323, 2012b: 182). The structure corresponds to *She looks/seems/appears as if/as though...* and it has been named “pseudo-raising” and “copy-raising” (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 323, 2012b: 182). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 323, 2012b: 182) state that the predicates occurring in this construction are *be*, *feel*, *look*, *seem*, and *sound*. Moreover, they explain that the subject of the main clause is not impersonal *it*, but a referential noun phrase, as in (24) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 323, 2012b: 182). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 323) say that “in most cases co-referentiality is established between the subject of the matrix and that of the sub-clause”, as in example (25).

(24) Plus flawless skin, smooth brow and cheeks, lips that looked *as if* you could get a shock from them. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 182; italics mine)

(25) The landlord, a plump and harassed man named Barry, looked *as if* he had spent too much time enjoying his own product. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 182; italics mine)

2.3.2.1.3 Complement clauses in object function

As if and *as though* complement clauses can also function as the object of the sentence, as in (26) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 324, 2012b: 182). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya's corpus studies (2012a: 324, 2012b: 182) found only three predicates occurring with these constructions: *feel*, *find*, and *take*.

(26) She felt *as though* her heart had been cut into pieces. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 182; italics mine)

2.3.2.1.4 Noun complementation

Finally, López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012b: 183) note the existence of nominal complementation. Example (27) shows that the “subclause introduced by *as though* complements the noun *look*” (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 183).

(27) But there was a look about her mouth *as though* she were tasting lemons. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 183; italics mine)

2.3.2.2 Semantics

The patterns and matrix verbs occurring with *as if* and *as though* were discussed above. A feature which stands out is the type of predicate that occurs in the two most common

patterns (i.e. complement clauses in subject function and in predicative function) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 324, 2012b: 183). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 324) explain that the “matrix verbs involved are, without exception, copular or linking verbs: either the copular verb *be* or verbs of seeming”. According to Noonan (1985: 113) and his taxonomy, these verbs belong to the Propositional Attitude Predicates group and “express an attitude regarding the truth of the proposition expressed as their complement. López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 325) specify that “on a scale of strength of speaker commitment, the predicates of seeming taking *as if*- and *as though*-complements represent medium modality”. However, the copular verb *be* does not belong to any of the groups in Noonan’s taxonomy (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 183). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012b: 183) note that “it is the *it is as if* construction as a whole that conveys the speaker’s inferences”. Therefore, it seems that *as if* and *as though* “lessen the speaker’s endorsement of the embedded proposition, and complement clauses introduced by them are seen as inferences gained from evidence” (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 183).

Another characteristic used to lessen the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the statement expressed by the *as if*- and *as though*-clause is the verb phrase in the subordinated clause (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 328). For example, the subjunctive, preterite and past perfect are used to achieve this aim, see (28) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 328).

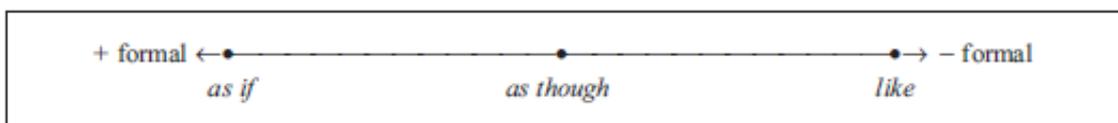
- (28) But he is happy with God. Sometimes, you know, it is *as if* he were quite near me. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 328; italics mine)

To sum up, the use of a verb of seeming in the matrix clause, the use of a hypothetical verb phrase in the *as if*- and *as though*-clause, as well as the very use of the subordinators *as if* and *as though* engender the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the proposition to be low (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 328).

2.3.2.3 Complementizer variation

As said earlier, *like* can be used in the same way as *as if* and *as though*. Thanks to the study of data from the Brown family of corpora, López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012b: 185) suggest “the existence of a cline of formality for the three comparative complementizers in written Present-Day British and American English”. According to the authors, *as if* is the most formal and *like* is the least formal (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 185). Figure 2, proposed by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012b: 186), shows the cline of formality of *as if*, *as though* and *like* in written British and American English.

Figure 2: Cline of formality of comparative complementizers in written British and American English (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 186).



López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 325, 2012b: 186) have studied the variation between the complementizers *as if* and *as though* and the link *that*. From a structural point of view, the variation is restricted to the patterns where the complement clause functions as the subject, as in (29), or the object of the sentence (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 325, 2012b: 186). When the clause functions as the predicate, *as if*

and *as though* vary with clauses in the infinitive, as in (30) (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 325, 2012b: 186).

(29) it doth appeare [*sic*] *that* I.S. was really and truely [*sic*] a Prisoner in the Custody of E.F. the then Sheriff Goaler or Keeper of the said Prison. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 325; italics mine)

(30) The following Letter seems *to be* written by a Man of Learning. (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 325; italics mine)

From a lexical point of view, the variation between *as if*, *as though* and *that* depends on the predicate in the matrix clause (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 186). *Look* and *sound* prefer the complementizers *as if* and *as though*, rather than *that* (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 186). On the other hand, the predicate *appear* chooses *that*, rather than *as if* or *as though* (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 187). As for the predicate *seem*, López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012b: 188) note that the choice between *as if*, *as though* and *that* varies and that “the complementizer selection with *seem* may reflect the degree of the speaker’s endorsement of the embedded proposition, which is higher in the case of *that*”. Finally, when the predicate is *feel*, the variation depends on the structure of the sentence (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 188). Clauses in subject function prefer *as if* and *as though*, while clauses in object function prefer *that* (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 188).

2.3.2.4 Secondary grammaticalization

The fact that *as if* and *as though* have developed outside their primary function in the adverbial domain and into the complementation domain is considered by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2015: 193) as a case of secondary grammaticalization. Put differently,

it refers to “increased grammaticalization of already grammatical items in specific contexts” (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 175). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2015: 193) claim that “[w]hen used in complementation structures, the links under discussion lose some of their original implications”. In other words, the subordinators are less expressive when they are used in complementation constructions than when they are used in adverbial constructions (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015: 194). Moreover, López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2015: 194) add that “their original value makes them more likely to occur with a specific type of predicate or in a specific type of structure”, that is copular verbs and the *it is as if* construction, as we have discussed in the previous section.

The fact that adverbial links may be used in complementation constructions is not restricted to English (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015: 195). This case of grammaticalization can be found in various languages (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015: 195). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2015: 195) explain that Spanish, Dutch and German use complementizers equivalent to *as if* and *as though* (i.e., *como si/como que*, *alsof*, and *als ob*, respectively). Furthermore, they say that verbs of seeming are also used with comparative links in Old Icelandic and the modern Scandinavian languages (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015: 196). This tendency is “also found outside Indo-European, for instance in Caucasian languages” (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015: 196). López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2015: 196) therefore claim that the expansion of comparative links from the adverbial domain to the complementation domain “cannot be considered a language specific phenomenon, but suggests that different languages follow similar pathways of development”.

2.3.3 Insubordinated constructions

2.3.3.1 *Insubordination*

A lot has been written on insubordination and the most important work on the subject was published in 2007 by Evans: “Insubordination and its uses”. Evans’ (2007: 367) definition for insubordination is: “the conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses”. In other words, insubordination is “the conventionalized independent use of a formally subordinate clause” (Evans 2007: 377). Evans (2007: 377) clarifies that the terms *formally subordinate* concern subordinate clauses and any of their formal features. Moreover, he claims that “the more an insubordinated clause allows independent use, the less its formal features can be taken as uniquely distinctive of subordinate clauses” (Evans 2007: 377). In other words, the use of an insubordinated clause is the most independent when it shows the fewest formal features inherited from a subordinate clause (Lastres-López 2018: 45).

Insubordinated clauses serve a number of functions. According to Evans (2007: 368), the first function includes “[v]arious expressions of interpersonal coercion, including commands, but also permissives, abilitatives, threats and warnings”; the second one concerns “[m]odal framing of various types, including the unattributed evocation of quotation or belief, and other kinds of deontic and evidential use” and the third function includes “[m]arking of various discourse contexts, such as negation, contrastive statements, and reiteration”.

The four stages which lead to the creation of insubordinate clauses proposed by Evans (2007: 370) are shown below in Table 1. Insubordinate clauses are considered as such at stage 4 (Evans 2007: 370). However, according to Lastres-López (2018: 44), the boundaries between stage 3 and 4 are sometimes blurred. This is why earlier research

have considered in subordinate clauses at both those stages (Lastres-López 2018: 44). Evans' (2007: 370) diachronic model for the formation of subordinate clauses has been supported by some but it has also been criticized by others (Lastres-López 2018: 44). For example, Mithun (2008: 108) does not agree with Evans' claim that subordinate clauses are formed as a result of ellipsis and she explains their formation in terms of "extension of markers to functions at levels beyond the sentence" (Mithun 2008: 108). Similarly, Heine et al. (2016) argue that the creation of subordinate clauses is not restricted to the result of ellipsis and that more research has to be done on the matter (Lastres-López 2018: 44).

Table 1: Diachronic creation of subordinate clauses (Evans 2007: 370).

(1) Subordination	Subordinate construction
(2) Ellipsis	Ellipsis of main clause
(3) Conventionalised ellipsis	Restriction of interpretation of ellipsed material
(4) Reanalysis as main clause structure	Conventionalised main clause use of formally subordinate clause (Constructionalisation)

As Mato Míguez (2016: 96) points out, Romance languages allow a wide range of subordinated constructions. For example, Spanish subordinated *que*-clauses, *como*-clauses and *si*-clauses. While in contrast, in Germanic languages subordinated constructions are not as diverse. Regarding the English language:

[I]nsubordination is largely restricted to the relatively marginal use of expressive-exclamative complement clauses employed to express disapproval or regret (Quirk et al. 1985: 841; Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002: 944), as in [(31)], to monoclausal constructions introduced by *as if* [(32)], to clauses introduced by the

conjunction *because*, as in [(33)] and to the independent *if*-conditionals [(34)] (Mato Míguez 2016: 140).

- (31) *That* he should have left without asking! (Mato Míguez 2016: 140; italics mine)
- (32) My boss wants me to help my co-workers with their project. *As if* I don't have enough work to do right now! (Mato Míguez 2016: 140; italics mine)
- (33) Will you arrive on time? *Because* I want to leave early in the morning. (Mato Míguez 2016: 140; italics mine)
- (34) Uhm well uh *if* you could remind me for example what age he was when he left. (Lastres-López 2018: 42; italics mine)

Since the constructions represented in examples (31), (33) and (34) above are not relevant to the present dissertation, I will not discuss them further. Example (32) is an instance of an independent clause, which is a construction that will be analysed in the present corpus study.

2.3.3.2 *Monoclausal as if and as though*

It has been asserted in the literature that the monoclausal use of *as if* and *as though* developed from adverbial clauses introduced by the two subordinators (Brinton 2014: 95, 102). However, Declerck (1992: 223) claims that monoclausal *as if* emerged from *it is as if*-clauses, where *it is* is dropped. Similarly, López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2014a: 324, 2014b: 181) suggest that the insubordinated construction derives from complement clauses, whose *it is/seems/appears/looks*, etc. matrix is dropped. Brinton (2014: 107) argues that the development of monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* “could easily involve deletion of the dummy subject and of the semantically ‘empty’ copula verb”.

Nevertheless, scholars such as Evans (2007: 374), Stirling (1999: 289) and Heine (2012) recognise that it is difficult to reconstruct the ellipted matrix clause (Brinton 2014: 103). Heine (2012) states that “it is perhaps in most cases not possible to reconstruct the exact form of the ellipted matrix clause” (Heine 2012 quoted by Brinton 2018: 103).

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1152) call *as if*-monoclauses and *as though*-monoclauses “exclamatory clauses”. In other words, they have the illocutionary force of exclamations, as in example (35) below (Brinton 2014: 98). In their corpus studies, López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 324, 2012b: 181) found that fifteen out of nineteen instances of monoclausal *as if* and *as though* had the force of an exclamation. Moreover, Brinton (2014: 107) adds that it “expresses the speaker’s exclamatory/evaluative attitude”. From a semantical point of view, Brinton (2014: 104) claims that monoclausal *as if* has lost its original comparison meaning to denial meaning. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1151) claim that the construction expresses “indignant rejection”. Dancygier and Sweetser (2005: 229) explain that it favours negative stance verbs, as in (35). The shift of meaning from comparison to denial can be proved to be plausible “via indeterminate (or ‘bridging’) contexts”, see (36) (Brinton 2014: 104). In example (36), the meaning is ambiguous and it can be understood as comparison (*She is speaking/acting as if stability can be bought like a pair of slippers*) or rejection (*Stability cannot be bought like a pair of slippers*) (Brinton 2014: 105). It is this bridging context which facilitates the shift to the unambiguous denial meaning (Brinton 2014: 105).

(35) *As if* it made any difference! (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005: 229; italics mine)

(36) “John and I have really stabilized.” *As if* stability can be bought like a pair of slippers. (Brinton 2014: 104)

2.3.4 Conjunction only

As explained by Brinton (2014: 103), exclamatory *as if* seems to have derived from monoclausal *as if*, which itself has derived from complement clause *as if*. This implies that there was a double process of omission (Brinton 2014: 95). First, omission of the matrix clause and then omission of the content of the *as if*-monoclausal (Brinton 2014: 95). Brinton (2014: 95) refers to this as “the extremes of insubordination”. Moreover, she argues that exclamatory *as if* is not covered in standard grammars (Brinton 2014: 94). As I have mentioned earlier, the definition found in the Oxford English Dictionary states that *as if* used on its own is “[t]ypically used as a sardonic response to a stated or reported suggestion” (OED, s.v. *as*, adv., and conj., Phrases, P1 a. *as if* (c)). However, the Dictionary does not mention this use for *as though* (OED, s.v. *as*, adv., and conj., Phrases, P1 a. *as if* (c)). According to Brinton (2014: 94), other definitions can be found in various online sources:

- an informal form “said to show that you do not believe something is possible” (*Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*)
 - an idiomatic form “referring to something that the speaker deems highly unlikely” (*Wiktionary*)
 - an interjection expressing “incredulity” (*WordWeb Online*)
 - a “derisive assertion that whatever is being talked about is impossible or very unlikely” (*The Online Slang Dictionary*)
 - equivalent to yeah right; “used to display disbelief”; “an expression of utter repulsion and or disgust, to be said when thoroughly [sic] annoyed” (*Urban Dictionary*)
- (Brinton 2014: 94)

Brinton (2014: 109) searched for *as though* used on its own but did not come across any example. Her corpus study of exclamatory *as if* shows that it usually occurs in recorded speech or in interior monologue, as shown in (37) and (38), but *as if* can also be found in nonspeech contexts, as in (39) and (40) (Brinton 2014: 96).

(37) “*As if!*” her mother would say, unprompted, at any time at all. (Brinton 2014: 95)

(38) “Miss me, honey?” *As if*. Where’s my crab cake? (Brinton 2014: 95)

(39) ... the refurbished Bill Graham Civic Auditorium – which out-of-town journalists seem to believe is being referred to locally as “the Bill” (*as if!*). (Brinton 2014: 96)

(40) Laurie peppered us with so many precautions about ... the dangers of hot-dogging (*as if*) that by the time we reached the summit, I was ready to stay in the van. (Brinton 2014: 96)

2.4 Summary

The links *as if* and *as though* appear in Early Middle English. They primarily occur in adverbial constructions, where the *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses are used as adjuncts. The two subordinators are used to express comparison (and, in some cases, manner).

In Late Middle English and in Early Modern English respectively, *as though* and *as if* appear in complementation constructions. The two complementizers occur in four different patterns. They occur in complement clauses in subject function, predicative function, object function and in noun complementation. *As if* and *as though* express hypothetical comparison and they convey a low degree of speaker commitment toward

the proposition of the subclause (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 188). When they are used together with predicates of seeming in the matrix clause, they express a medium degree of commitment. When there are hypothetical verb phrases in the subclause, the degree of commitment is lowered (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012b: 189).

Insubordinated *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses emerged in the sixteenth century. They resulted from the dropping of the matrix clause. Exclamatory *as if* (i.e., *as if* used on its own) resulted from an additional omission, that is, the deletion of the content of the *as if*-clause. This use appeared in the early twentieth century. The meaning expressed by monoclausal *as if* is strongly similar to the one expressed by exclamatory *as if*. Both constructions “have lost their conditional meaning, express negative epistemic stance, have the performative force of a denial/refutation, and express the speaker’s exclamatory/evaluative attitude” (Brinton 2014: 101–102).

2.5 Research questions

As mentioned previously, the literature claims that there is no difference between *as if* and *as though*. This is why scholars do not compare the two and treat them together in their research. This dissertation will show how the different construction types for *as if* and *as though* are distributed across Present-Day British English. These constructions are the adverbial, complementation, monoclausal and bare complementizer constructions. For ease of analysis, a comparison between *as if* and *as though* will be made. I will compare the two subordinators so as to answer the question: “to what extent the findings on *as if* apply to *as though*?”.

Regarding the semantics, the literature claims that the meaning of *as if* and *as though* develops from comparison to denial. The two subordinators express the hypothetical comparison meaning when they are in adverbial and complementation constructions. The denial meaning is found in monoclausal *as if* and in conjunction-only *as if*. In what follows, I will compare the semantics of the two subordinators. A more fine-grained analysis of independent *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses will serve to answer another research question, which is “what other meanings than the denial meaning can monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* express?”.

This comparison between *as if* and *as though* will also contribute to answer the last two research questions, which are concerned with Brinton’s diachronic development of *as if*, see Figure 1. This dissertation will attempt to answer the following questions: “knowing the role of frequency in grammaticalization, what can be said about the postulated development of *as if*?” and “which of the two subordinators, *as if* and *as though*, has moved furthest down the cline?”.

METHODOLOGY

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 *The corpus*

The data for the corpus analysis of this dissertation comes from the corpus Collins Wordbanks Online. The corpus contains 550 million words from eight varieties of English. It documents words from various sources, both spoken and written. There are five categories according to which the texts have been classified in the corpus. These are: textform, domain, country, year, corpus, and supcorpus. More than 50% of the texts come from Newspapers. The country category comprises texts from The United Kingdom, The United States of America, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, and Ireland. Most of the corpus is from Present-Day English.

3.2 *Data retrieval*

For my purposes, I searched for the comparative links *as if* and *as though* in the corpus described before, specifying UK corpora and using the simple query box. The number of hits for *as if* amounted to 29,521 (53.50 per million) and for *as though*, 9,891 (17.93 per million). I extracted a random sample of 1,000 instances for each link. Then, the first step was to sort through both samples to find relevant examples. I analysed the data for both *as if* and *as though* in a consistent way. I discarded irrelevant examples of *as if* and *as though* when used in the comparative structure *as ... as* (*her eyes were as clear as if she had just been born*) and when followed by a verbless clause. For instance, *as if* and *as though* were discarded if they were followed by a prepositional phrase (*as if in a trance*) or by an adjective (*as though dead*). I also deleted examples of *as if* and *as though* followed by a non-finite clause. In other words, the subordinators were not relevant when followed by a to-infinitive (*as if to remind us what they look like*), a bare infinitive, an -

ing form (*as if looking in a mirror*) or a past participle (*as if seen through a glass*). In short, the relevant instances of *as if* and *as though* were the ones followed by a finite clause. For the *as if* sample, I analysed 720 instances and 578 of them were relevant. That is 80.28% of relevant sentences. For the *as though* sample, I analysed 682 examples and 598 of them were relevant, which means that there were 87.68% of relevant instances.

After the basic sorting task, I retrieved the first 400 relevant instances of each sample in order to take them into further analysis. The parameters for the analysis concerned the register, the construction type (adverbial adjunct, complement clause, monoclausal, denial initial or conjunction-only), the formal properties of the matrix clause (grammatical tense, polarity, and only for complement clauses: function, subject, predicate) – when there was one –, the formal properties (position, subject, finite verb form and its semantic class of verb (based on Biber et al. 1999) and polarity) and the semantics of the *as if*- and *as though*-clause.

I also carried out another search, still in the simple query box of the Collins Wordbanks Online and still restricted to UK subcorpora, in order to study the independent use of the same two comparative links. I searched for *as if* and *as though* with a capital letter and preceded by a punctuation mark. This more precise search allowed me to come across independent clauses beginning with *as if* and *as though*. The number of hits for *as if* was of 1,457 (2.60 per million) and for *as though*, 158 (0.29 per million). I extracted a random sample of 1000 instances for *as if* and all 158 instances for *as though*. As a first task, I analysed both samples for relevant examples. Irrelevant instances of *as if* and *as though* were the ones still connected to a matrix clause (*As if all that wasn't enough, Will now had the knife*) and the ones where the punctuation was not correct (*they join, embrace and seem to kiss, As if they vow'd some league inviolable*). I also discarded independent

uses of *as if* and *as though* when they were followed by a non-finite clause (*As if to win them back*). Finally, I deleted two titles of Newspaper articles (*As if it were written yesterday* and *As though he had wings*) and one title of a book (*As Though I Had Wings*). They were not relevant since it was not possible to study the semantics of the *as if*-clause and *as though*-clause and to find the source construction with the given context. To sum up, relevant instances of *as if* and *as though* were independent and finite clauses. From the *as if* sample, I analysed 619 sentences and 209 were relevant, which is 33.76% of relevant instances. From the *as though* sample, I analysed all 158 examples and 78 of them were relevant. That is 49.36% of relevant clauses.

As a second task, I selected the first 200 relevant instances of *as if* and all 78 relevant instances of *as though* and took them into further analysis. The parameters for the analysis concerned the register, the construction type (restricted to monoclausal and conjunction-only), the formal properties (subject, finite verb form and its semantic class of verb (based on Biber et al. 1999) and polarity) and the semantics of the *as if*- and *as though*-monoclausal. I also analysed the context according to conversational (speaker of preceding utterance, position in turn-taking, nature of ensuing discourse) and rhetoric-argumentative (discourse function of preceding utterance and direction of the *as if*- and *as though*-clause) parameters (based on Gras 2018).

RESULTS

4 RESULTS

In this section, I will present the results of my corpus studies. First, I will address the general search for *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses. Then, I will tackle the more fine-grained search for monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though*. I will make a comparison between the two subordinators, while discussing the parameters studied.

4.1 A corpus-based study of *as if*- and *as though*-clauses

This section homes in on the general corpus study of the subordinators *as if* and *as though*. The types of constructions occurring with *as if* and *as though* will first be discussed. Then, I will tackle the register in which the subordinators tend to occur in. I will address the formal properties of the matrix clause and the formal properties of the subclause, focusing on the polarity, the semantic class of verb and the position. Finally, I will discuss the semantics of the *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses.

4.1.1 Types of constructions

In what follows, I will discuss whether *as if* and *as though* appear in the same constructions discussed in the literature. That is, the adverbial construction, the complementation construction, the insubordinated construction, and the conjunction-only construction. First, I will talk about the constructions for *as if* and then, for *as though* and I will compare the results.

In the corpus studied, *as if* does appear in the four different construction types mentioned above. Example (41) shows that *as if* occurs in adverbial constructions. *As if* can be paraphrased as ‘as the case would be if’ (OED, s.v. *as*, adv., and conj., Phrases, P1 a. *as if* (a)-(b)) without a change in meaning and the sentence would become *Louise [...]*

was moving her arms and legs as the case would be if she wanted to crawl. The subordinator introduces an adverbial clause of comparison, which functions as an adjunct and therefore can be omitted (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2015: 189). Here, the adverbial clause of comparison can be recognised as such because it answers the ‘how’-question *How was she moving her legs?*

- (41) Louise had started rolling over from her back on to her stomach and was moving her arms and legs *as if* she wanted to crawl. (WBO)

As if also occurs in complementation constructions. As shown in Table 2a, the corpus shows the same four patterns of complement clauses discussed by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a, 2012b) (see Section 2.3.2.1). Example (42) shows a complement clause in subject function; (43), a complement clause in predicative function; (44), a complement clause in object function, and (45) shows an example of noun complementation. If the *as if*-clauses are left out, the resulting sentence is ungrammatical (**it sounded*). Therefore, the complement clauses cannot be omitted. Table 2a shows the distribution of the functions of *as if* complement clauses and it confirms López-Couso and Méndez-Naya’s claim that the most frequent *as if* complement clauses function as subject of the sentence and as predicative complement (2012a: 322, 323; 2012b: 180, 182). Noun complementation is rather rare with Present-Day British *as if*, since only one instance out of 182 was found (0.55%).

- (42) It sounded *as if* he was licking his lips. (WBO)
- (43) The horn looked *as if* someone had been kicking it back and forth on the rocky ground. (WBO)
- (44) She feels *as if* she has lost her best friend. (WBO)

- (45) A look effortlessly beautiful, *as if* everything is easier now that he's out of your life. (WBO)

Table 2a: Distribution of the different functions of *as if* complement clauses.

	subject_ function	predicative_ function	object_ function	noun_ complementation	Total
<i>as if</i> complement clauses	122 (67.03%)	41 (22.53%)	18 (9.89%)	1 (0.55%)	182 (100.00%)

The monoclausal construction is also found for *as if*. Example (46) shows an independent *as if*-clause. As said before, Brinton (2014: 99) claims that monoclauses can also be attached to the following sentence. My corpus study also proves the existence of such sentences, see example (47). For ease of reference, I will use the term *denial_initial* in tables and I will explain the tag later on. In 5 out of 7 of these sentences (71.43%), the adverb *enough* is found, as in (47). Moreover, one example (14.29%) was found with the word *sufficient*, which is a synonym for *enough*, see (48). In the 400-instances sample of *as if*, no instance of the subordinator was found being used on its own. For ease of reference, I will use the term *conjunction-only* to refer to the use of the bare complementizer.

- (46) Maria Grazia was taken back to Sicily. Hundreds of friends came to say farewell. Just *as if* it had been a pilgrimage to Lourdes. (WBO)
- (47) *As if* it wasn't clear enough already, the latest Fifa rankings suggest that Argentina head a group that is comfortably the strongest. (WBO)

- (48) And *as if* all this wasn't sufficient disincentive for would-be Ackroyds, we now have the glossy book that ties in with BBC Two's three-part series Dickens: Public Life and Private Passion. (WBO)

Regarding *as though* in the corpus, it appears in adverbial constructions, as shown in (49). The *as though*-clause is not obligatory and it answers the question *How is she putting her hands to the side of her head?* The whole sentence can be paraphrased as *She put her hands to the side of her head as the case would be if she had heard some loud and terrible sound* and *as though* therefore expresses comparison.

- (49) She put her hands to the side of her head *as though* she had heard some loud and terrible sound. (WBO)

As though also occurs in complementation constructions and *as though* complement clauses show the same four patterns as *as if*. That is, the subject function, as in (50), the predicative function, as in (51), the object function, as in (52), and noun complementation, as in (53). The *as though*-clauses are obligatory and cannot be omitted (**it was*). Table 2b shows the distribution of the functions for *as though* complement clauses. The subject function and the predicative function are also the two most frequent functions for *as though*. Noun complementation is equally rare for *as though* as only 3 examples (1.43%) were analysed as such.

- (50) It was *as though* we'd been lovers the week before, and nothing had changed. (WBO)
- (51) Alf looked *as though* he had come from the stars. (WBO)
- (52) I felt *as though* I was on the verge of completing a three-day event in one long, exhausting afternoon. (WBO)

- (53) A look of bewilderment settled on his face, *as though* he could not understand how he had somehow conjured up the wrong spirit. (WBO)

Table 2b: Distribution of the different functions of *as though* complement clauses.

	subject_ function	predicative_ function	object_ function	noun_ complementation	Total
<i>as though</i> complement clauses	118 (56.19%)	56 (26.67%)	33 (15.71%)	3 (1.43%)	210 (100.00%)

Example (54) shows that monoclausal *as though* can be found in British English. However, no instance of independent *as though* was found attached to the next sentence. The bare complementizer *as though* was not found either in the 400-instances sample of *as though*.

- (54) The Griffin rose again, half seen through a cloud of dust. It arrowed away to the north. Silence. Silence utter. *As though* the world held its breath. (WBO)

The distribution of the different types of constructions occurring with *as if* and *as though* can be found in Table 3 below. Adverbial clauses are slightly more frequent with *as if* (50.00%) than with *as though* (46.50%). Complement clauses are less frequent when introduced by *as if* (45.50%) than when introduced by *as though* (52.50%). These results contrast with López-Couso and Méndez-Naya's (2012a: 320, 2012b: 179, 2015: 191) corpus studies. They found that both subordinators were more frequent when introducing adverbial clauses than when introducing complement clauses (López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 320, 2012b: 179, 2015: 191). As Table 3 shows, the monoclausal construction occurs both with *as if* (2.75%) and *as though* (1.00%). However, clauses attached to the following sentence are only found with *as if*, though they are not common.

Only 7 examples out of 400 (1.75%) were found. Finally, no example of the bare complementizers was found. However, monoclausal *as if* and *as though* and *as if* and *as though* used as a conjunction-only will be discussed in more details in Section 4.2, which deals with the more fine-grained corpus study of *as if* and *as though*.

Table 3: Distribution of the different types of constructions for *as if* and *as though*.

	as if	as though
adverbial_adjunct	200 (50.00%)	186 (46.50%)
complement_clause	182 (45.50%)	210 (52.50%)
denial_initial	7 (1.75%)	-
monoclause	11 (2.75%)	4 (1.00%)
conjunction_only	-	-
Total	400 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

4.1.2 Register

This section is concerned with the register in which *as if*- and *as though*-clauses occur. Tables 4a and 4b below show the distribution of the registers according to the types of constructions. The types of registers encountered in the corpus were the direct reported speech, as in (55), the interior monologue, as in (56), the spoken (57) and the written register, which can be divided into first- and third-person narrator, as in (58) and (59) respectively. As the data in Tables 4a and 4b show, both *as if* and *as though* most frequently occur in written British English. The subordinators are quite rare in spoken English: 5.25% for *as if* and 5.75% for *as though*. Interestingly, clauses attached to the

following sentence (i.e., *denial_initial* clauses) occur in no other register than the written register. As for the monoclausal construction of *as if* and *as though*, no example was found in spoken English.

- (55) ‘Right you are, gov.’ ‘Looks *as if* we might have something, Liz.’ (WBO)
- (56) ‘Where did you go? Where’s the bright, funny, ambitious man I fell in love with?’ A lump comes to my throat. Where did I go? We look at each other for an age, strangers again. It’s suddenly *as if* our time together never happened. (WBO)
- (57) set up the hardware so that they could dial in <F01/> Mm. <M01/> and literally work from home *as if* they were in the office <F01/> Right. (WBO)
- (58) I’m left feeling *as if* he has just used me, knowing that he wanted me all those years ago. (WBO)
- (59) *As if* England had not had enough injury worries to contend with, they lost Owen Hargreaves after just 19 minutes. (WBO)

Table 4a: Register across construction types of *as if*-clauses.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	denial_ initial	monoclausal	Total
direct_reported_ speech	22 (11.00%)	47 (25.82%)	-	3 (27.27%)	72 (18.00%)
interior_monologue	49 (24.50%)	18 (9.89%)	-	2 (18.18%)	69 (17.35%)
spoken	9 (4.50%)	12 (6.59%)	-	-	21 (5.25%)
written - 1st person narrator	39 (19.50%)	39 (21.43%)	2 (28.57%)	2 (18.18%)	82 (20.50%)
written - 3rd person narrator	81 (40.50%)	66 (36.26%)	5 (71.43%)	4 (36.36%)	156 (39.00%)
Total	200 (100.00%)	182 (100.00%)	7 (100.00%)	11 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

Table 4b: Register across construction types of *as though*-clauses.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	monoclause	Total
direct_reported_ speech	11 (5.91%)	41 (19.52%)	1 (25.00%)	53 (13.25%)
interior_monologue	66 (35.48%)	31 (14.76%)	1 (25.00%)	98 (24.50%)
spoken	3 (1.61%)	20 (9.52%)	-	23 (5.75%)
written - 1st person narrator	36 (19.35%)	47 (22.38%)	1 (25.00%)	84 (21.00%)
written - 3rd person narrator	70 (37.63%)	71 (33.81%)	1 (25.00%)	142 (35.50%)
Total	186 (100.00%)	210 (100.00%)	4 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

4.1.3 Formal properties of the matrix clause

The formal properties of the matrix clause were part of the parameters used for the analysis of the data. The subject and the predicate of the matrix clause have already been studied by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 322-324, 2012b: 179-183) and have been dealt with in Section 2.3. Since my data corroborates López-Couso and Méndez-Naya's (2012a: 322-324, 2012b: 179-183) findings, it seems appropriate not to be repetitive and not elaborate on those formal properties. Thus, I will discuss the polarity of the matrix clause in what follows.

4.1.3.1 Polarity of the matrix clause

The polarity of the matrix clause is exclusively restricted to adverbial, complementation and denial_initial constructions. The monoclausal construction is not concerned with this parameter since it is an insubordinated clause and therefore does not depend on a matrix

clause. Table 5a and 5b below show the polarity of the matrix clause according to the construction types of *as if*- and *as though*-clauses. Example (60a) shows an instance of an adverbial construction with its matrix clause being positive, while example (60b) shows a negative matrix clause. For complementation constructions, instances (61a) and (61b) present a positive and a negative matrix, respectively. For the denial_initial construction, the matrix clause is always positive, as shown in example (62). What stands out from these tables is the fact that the matrix clause for both *as if* and *as though* is more frequently positive than negative. For *as if*, 92.03% of the matrix clauses are positive and for *as though*, 93.18% are positive. Moreover, regarding denial_initial clauses, their matrix clause is always positive.

- (60a) But Mahe was nowhere near Dallas when the red card was shown yet he ran threateningly towards the official *as if* he was going to hit him. (WBO)
- (60b) He was about the only man she knew who did not guard his wife *as if* she were a bitch on heat. (WBO)
- (61a) It looks *as though* the players are coming round to his way of thinking. (WBO)
- (61b) the latter does not look *as though* he will be letting Middlesbrough down this season. (WBO)
- (62) *As if* this were not bad enough, at the first meeting of the Ulster Unionist Assembly Group at Stormont, Michael McGimpsey informed the gathering that it was the DUP who were the ‘enemy’. (WBO)

Table 5a: Polarity of matrix clause across construction types of *as if*-clauses.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	denial_ initial	Total
negative	8 (4.00%)	23 (12.64%)	-	31 (7.97%)
positive	192 (96.00%)	159 (87.36%)	7 (100.00%)	358 (92.03%)
Total	200 (100.00%)	182 (100.00%)	7 (100.00%)	389 (100.00%)

Table 5b: Polarity of matrix clause across construction types of *as though*-clauses.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	Total
negative	6 (3.23%)	21 (10.00%)	27 (6.82%)
positive	180 (96.77%)	189 (90.00%)	369 (93.18%)
Total	186 (100.00%)	210 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

4.1.4 Formal properties of the *as if*- and *as though*-clause

In this section, I will present the results for the parameters concerned with the formal properties of the subclause. I will show the results for the semantic class of verb in the subclause, the polarity and the position of the *as if*- and *as though*-clause.

4.1.4.1 Semantic class of verb in the as if- and as though-clause

The study of the semantic class of verb occurring in the *as if*- and *as though*-clause was based on Biber et al.'s (1999: 360-422) classification of verbs into semantic domains. There are seven semantic domains according to which verbs are classified: “activity verbs, communication verbs, mental verbs, causative verbs, verbs of simple occurrence,

verbs of existence or relationship, and aspectual verbs” (Biber et al. 1999: 360). As the data in Tables 6a and 6b show, the verbs in the *as if*- and *as though*-clauses belong most frequently to the semantic domain of existence or relationship, as in (63) and to the semantic domain of activity, as in (64). *As if* most frequently occurs with verbs of existence or relationship (39.75%) or with verbs of activity (38.50%). *As though* shows the same tendencies. It is more frequent with verbs of activity (35.75%) and with verbs of existence or relationship (35.00%). Regarding the construction types, verbs of existence or relationship and mental verbs are the only ones occurring with *as if* denial_initial clauses. For monoclauses, it seems that *as if* does not occur with verbs of communication, verbs of facilitation or causation and verbs of simple occurrence. As for monoclausal *as though*, it seems that it does not appear with activity verbs, verbs of facilitation or causation and verbs of simple occurrence. However, monoclauses will be analysed more thoroughly in Section 4.2 below.

(63) Freud himself left his siblings out of his memoirs. To read his life, it is *as if* they didn't exist. (WBO)

(64) I thought it was truly a work of art, the doll's face so like my own it was *as if* I were looking into a mirror that miniaturized whoever gazed upon it. (WBO)

Table 6a: Semantic class of verb in *as if*-clause across construction types.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	denial_ initial	monoclause	Total
Activity	64 (32.00%)	88 (48.35%)	-	2 (18.18%)	155 (38.50%)
Aspectual	1 (0.50%)	7 (3.85%)	-	1 (9.09%)	9 (2.25%)
Communication	3 (1.50%)	3 (1.65%)	-	-	6 (1.50%)
Existence/ relationship	96 (48.00%)	52 (28.57%)	6 (85.71%)	5 (45.45%)	159 (39.75%)
Facilitation/ causation	2 (1%)	3 (1.65%)	-	-	5 (1.25%)
Mental	25 (12.50%)	20 (10.99%)	1 (14.29%)	3 (27.27%)	49 (12.25%)
Simple_ occurrence	9 (4.50%)	9 (4.95%)	-	-	18 (4.50%)
Total	200 (100.00%)	182 (100.00%)	7 (100.00%)	11 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

Table 6b: Semantic class of verb in *as though*-clause across construction types.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	monoclause	Total
Activity	53 (28.49%)	90 (42.86%)	-	143 (35.75%)
Aspectual	6 (3.23%)	11 (5.24%)	1 (25.00%)	18 (4.50%)
Communication	6 (3.23%)	11 (5.24%)	1 (25.00%)	18 (4.50%)
Existence/ relationship	73 (39.25%)	66 (31.43%)	1 (25.00%)	140 (35.00%)
Facilitation/ causation	5 (2.69%)	2 (0.95%)	-	7 (1.75%)
Mental	27 (14.52%)	24 (11.43%)	1 (25.00%)	52 (13.00%)
Simple_ occurrence	16 (8.60%)	6 (2.86%)	-	22 (5.50%)
Total	200 (100.00%)	182 (100.00%)	11 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

4.1.4.2 Polarity of the *as if-* and *as though-*clause

As Tables 7a and 7b show, positive *as if-* and *as though-*clauses are more frequent than negative *as if-* and *as though-*clauses. This is valid for all the types of constructions except for the *denial_initial* construction. As the data for this construction show, it is most frequently negative (85.71%) than positive (14.29%). Only one instance of positive *denial_initial* clause was found in the corpus and it is represented in (46). See (47) for an example of negative *denial_initial* clause.

(65) Yes, *as if* they needed him, Johnson will be back after his three-week suspension. (WBO)

(47) *As if* it wasn't clear enough already, the latest Fifa rankings suggest that Argentina head a group that is comfortably the strongest. (WBO)

Table 7a: Polarity of *as if-*clause across construction types.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	denial_ initial	monoclause	Total
negative	29 (14.50%)	9 (4.95%)	6 (85.71%)	2 (18.18%)	46 (11.50%)
positive	171 (85.50%)	173 (95.05%)	1 (14.29%)	9 (81.82%)	354 (88.50%)
Total	200 (100.00%)	182 (100.00%)	7 (100.00%)	11 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

Table 7b: Polarity of *as though-*clause across construction types.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	monoclause	Total
negative	29 (15.59%)	13 (6.19%)	1 (25.00%)	43 (10.75%)
positive	157 (84.41%)	197 (93.81%)	3 (75.00%)	357 (89.25%)
Total	186 (100.00%)	210 (100.00%)	4 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

4.1.4.3 Position of the *as if*- and *as though*-clause

As explained earlier, monoclausal *as if* and *as though* are independent clauses and are therefore not concerned with the parameter of position. Examples (66) to (68) represent adverbial clauses. Example (66) shows an *as if*-clause in sentence-initial position, example (67) shows the sentence-medial position and (68) shows the sentence-final position. The sentence-medial position in (67) can be justified by the fact that the clause ‘and then says nothing’ is coordinated with the main clause and not with the *as if*-clause. In other words, if the *as if*-clause is omitted, the resulting sentence would be *He briefly smiles at me and then says nothing*.

- (66) *As if* the information meant nothing to him, Alistair said, ‘Where are you thinking of going?’ (WBO)
- (67) He very briefly smiles at me, *as if* we sort of know each other, and then says nothing. (WBO)
- (68) He scanned the room with a wide grin, *as if* he could not believe his good fortune. (WBO)

Tables 8a and 8b show the position of *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses according to the types of constructions. Overall, both *as if* and *as though* occur most frequently in final position. Least frequent is the sentence-initial position: 2.31% and 0.76% for *as if* and *as though* respectively. As the data show, *as though*-clauses are slightly more frequent than *as if*-clauses in final position; 85.35% and 82.01% respectively. Regarding the types of constructions, *as if* and *as though* adverbial clauses are most frequent in sentence-final position. *As if* and *as though* introducing complement clauses do not occur in sentence-initial position. As for *as if*-clauses attached to the

following sentence, they always occur in sentence-initial position, which explains the use of the term *initial* in the tag *denial_initial* for such sentences.

Table 8a: Position of *as if*-clause across construction types.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	denial_ initial	Total
initial	2 (1.00%)	-	7 (100.00%)	9 (2.31%)
medial	37 (18.50%)	24 (13.19%)	-	61 (15.68%)
final	161 (80.50%)	158 (86.81%)	-	319 (82.01%)
Total	200 (100.00%)	182 (100.00%)	7 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

Table 8b: Position of *as though*-clause across construction types.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	Total
initial	3 (1.61%)	-	3 (0.76%)
medial	19 (10.22%)	36 (17.14%)	55 (13.89%)
final	164 (88.17%)	174 (82.86%)	338 (85.35%)
Total	186 (100.00%)	210 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

4.1.5 Semantics of the *as if*- and *as though*-clause

4.1.5.1 Meanings expressed by *as if*- and *as though*-clauses

This section focuses on the semantics of the *as if*- and *as though*-clause. As the data in Table 9a and 9b show, *as if* and *as though* adverbial and complement clauses do not solely express comparison. Moreover, monoclausal *as if* and *as though* do not solely express

denial. *As if* and *as though* in their different construction types convey three meanings: hypothetical comparison, denial and bridging. Overall, both subordinators tend to express the hypothetical comparison meaning: 92.50% for *as if* and 96.50% for *as though*. More instances expressing denial were found with *as if* than with *as though*.

Table 9a: Semantics of *as if*-clause across construction types.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	denial_ initial	monoclaue	Total
hypothetical comparison	197 (98.50%)	167 (91.76%)	-	6 (54.55%)	70 (92.50%)
bridging	3 (1.50%)	2 (1.10%)	-	2 (18.18%)	7 (1.75%)
denial	-	13 (7.14%)	7 (100.00%)	3 (27.27%)	23 (5.75%)
Total	200 (100.00%)	182 (100.00%)	7 (100.00%)	11 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

Table 9b: Semantics of *as though*-clause across construction types.

	adverbial_ adjunct	complement_ clause	Monoclaue	Total
hypothetical comparison	179 (96.24%)	203 (96.67%)	4 (100.00%)	386 (96.50%)
bridging	4 (2.15%)	-	-	4 (1.00%)
denial	3 (2.61%)	7 (3.33%)	-	10 (2.50%)
Total	186 (100.00%)	210 (100.00%)	4 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

Regarding the semantics according to the types of constructions, *as if* adverbial clauses show two meanings: hypothetical comparison and bridging. In turn, *as though* adverbial clauses show all three meanings. Example (69) represents an adverbial clause

introduced by *as though* and conveying the comparison meaning. The answer to the question *How did Thurzella rush to meet Peter?* is *as though he were her long-lost rich uncle*. Moreover, the comparison meaning can be explained by the fact that the subordinator can be replaced by *as the case would be if*: *Thurzella rushed to meet Peter as the case would be if he were her long-lost rich uncle*. Example (70) shows that the meaning of adverbial clauses can be indeterminable. Instance (70) can both express comparison or denial. The bridging meaning refers to this indeterminacy in meaning. For instance, example (70) can mean *The state of Israel acts as if that admission might somehow diminish the magnitude of Jewish suffering* and therefore convey the comparison meaning. Or, it can be interpreted as *That admission cannot diminish the magnitude of Jewish suffering* and express denial. Adverbial clauses introduced by *as though* can also unambiguously express denial, see (71). Example (71) means that *the bees do not need the telling*. In other words, the bees do not need to be told that everyone has to die since it is common knowledge.

(69) Thurzella rushed to meet Peter *as though* he were her long-lost rich uncle.

(WBO)

(70) the state of Israel cannot allow itself to recognize that any other peoples in the twentieth century were subjected to similar genocidal persecution, *as though* that admission might somehow diminish the magnitude of Jewish suffering.

(WBO)

(71) ‘Besides’, she added – *as though* the bees needed the telling! – ‘everyone has to die’. (WBO)

About complement clauses, the ones introduced by *as if* show all three meanings, while the ones introduced by *as though* do not convey the bridging meaning. Example (72) shows a complement clause conveying comparison. With the context, we learn about two people who earn a good income. Then, the *it sounds as if*-clause compares Lane with the two people mentioned before, saying that he isn't doing too badly either. The sentence means that Lane, just as the two people, is earning a good income. The meaning expressed by *as if* complement clauses can be indeterminate, see (73). Example (73) can express comparison and mean that *Posh people survive because they act as if they are the top of society*. Or, it can convey the denial meaning and therefore be interpreted as *The New-Labourciabatta-sun-dried-tomato people are not the top of society*. When the meaning conveyed is denial, the assumption that the New-Labourciabatta-sun-dried-tomato people are the top of society is refuted by the speaker. Example (74) shows an instance where the *as if* complement clause expresses denial. The speaker denies that it was a wild party and the clause can be paraphrased as *it was not a wild party*.

(72) ...their pay packet swelling to a record \$100,000 (£54,000) a week each. It sounds *as if* Lane isn't doing too badly in Britain, either. He has secured a record West End pay deal that could reportedly earn him close to £500,000 for his all-too-brief London run. (WBO)

(73) Posh people survive, he says, 'because they have this remorseless set of values that carries them through. But it's a world that has gone to ground. It's *as if* the New-Labourciabatta-sun-dried-tomato people are the top of society'. (WBO)

(74) It was really lovely, but civilised; the children were with us the whole day so it's not *as if* it was a wild party, or anything. (WBO)

An interesting finding with *as if* and *as though* complement clauses lies in their subject function and more precisely in the pattern *it is as if/as though*. Tables 10a and 10b below show the polarity of the matrix clause according to the semantics of the *it is as if* and *it is as though* complement clauses. As the data from the tables show, the meaning expressed by the *it is as if* and *it is as though* constructions is always denial when the matrix clause has negative polarity, see example (74). Example (75) shows an instance of the pattern *it is as though* with positive polarity in the matrix clause. The whole sentence can be interpreted as *She acts as though she wants him to suffer for 20 years* and it expresses comparison.

- (75) As he starts to make changes and give her the love she has been wanting for 20 years, she reacts with cold resentment. It is *as though* she wants him to suffer for 20 years just as she did. (WBO)

Table 10a: Polarity of matrix clause across semantics of *it is as if*-pattern (complement clause).

	complement_clause subject function <i>It is as if</i> -pattern			Total
	hypothetical comparison	bridging	denial	
negative	-	-	13 (100.00%)	13 (24.07%)
positive	39 (100.00%)	2 (100.00%)	-	41 (75.93%)
Total	39 (100.00%)	2 (100.00%)	13 (100.00%)	54 (100.00%)

Table 10b: Polarity of matrix clause across semantics of *it is as though*-pattern (complement clause).

	complement_clause subject function <i>It is as though</i> -pattern			Total
	hypothetical comparison	bridging	denial	
negative	-	-	7 (100.00%)	7 (16.67%)
positive	35 (100.00%)	-	-	35 (83.33%)
Total	35 (100.00%)	-	7 (100.00%)	42 (100.00%)

As for the *as if* denial_initial clauses, they all convey denial meaning, see examples (47) and (65). This explains the use of the term *denial* in the tag used for such sentences. With the use of the adverb *enough*, example (47) expresses a comparison of degree, where the expectations of the speaker are exceeded. Both examples (47) and (65) refute what is being said and express denial meaning. Example (47) means that it was clear enough already. Put differently, the rankings suggest something that was already clear and evident for the speaker. The clause *As if it wasn't clear enough already* denies the assumption that it was not clear enough and it asserts that it was already clear. In example (65), the speaker claims that they did not need Johnson. In other words, the clause *as if they needed him* denies the presumption that the people needed Johnson and it asserts that they did not need him.

- (47) *As if it wasn't clear enough already, the latest Fifa rankings suggest that Argentina head a group that is comfortably the strongest. (WBO)*

- (65) Yes, *as if* they needed him, Johnson will be back after his three-week suspension. (WBO)

For the monoclausal construction, *as if* shows all three meanings, while *as though* only shows hypothetical comparison. The fact that monoclausal *as though* is restricted to comparison may be accounted for the few examples of *as though*-monoclausal that were found in the corpus. However, the semantics of monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* will be discussed in more details in Section 4.2 thanks to the more fine-grained search for *as if*- and *as though*-monoclauses.

4.1.5.2 Verb phrase in the *as if*- and *as though*-clauses

Tables 11a and 11b show the types of verb phrases occurring in the *as if*- and *as though*-clauses according to the meaning conveyed. As the data show, various verb phrases occur in the subclause: modal verbs, verbs expressing future reference, indicative tenses, perfect tenses and past subjunctive phrases. Overall, past simple and past perfect phrases predominate in *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses. Regarding the semantics, all the verb phrases mentioned previously occur in *as if*- and *as though*-clauses expressing hypothetical comparison meaning. As for the subclauses expressing denial meaning, they tend to contain present simple and past simple phrases, though they may also contain modals or past subjunctive phrases. Finally, present simple, past simple and past subjunctive phrases predominate with *as if*- and *as though*-clauses expressing bridging meaning.

The data shown in Tables 11a and 11b contrasts with what López-Couso and Méndez-Naya (2012a: 328) say about the verb phrase in the subordinate clause. They claim that the subjunctive predominates in *as if* and *as though* complement clauses

(López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012a: 328). However, this is not the case with this corpus study. The data show that the verb phrase in the subclause is rarely the past subjunctive. For the complementation construction, the past subjunctive occurs in 8 instances of *as if*-clauses out of 182 (4.40%) and in 13 instances of *as though*-clauses out of 210 (6.19%).

Table 11a: Finite verb phrase in *as if*-clause across semantics of construction types.

	adverbial_adjunct			complement_clause			denial_initial	monoclause			Total
	hypoth. comp.	bridging	denial	hypoth. comp.	bridging	denial	denial	hypoth. comp.	bridging	denial	
modal	9 (4.57%)	-	-	27 (16.17%)	-	1 (7.69%)	-	-	-	1 (33.33%)	38 (9.50%)
past_be_about_to	-	-	-	1 (0.60%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (0.25%)
past_be_going_to	3 (1.52%)	-	-	3 (1.80%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 (1.50%)
past_be_to	1 (0.51%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (0.25%)
present_simple	12 (6.09%)	1 (33.33%)	-	39 (23.35%)	1 (50.00%)	6 (46.15%)	-	-	-	-	59 (14.75%)
present_perfect	6 (3.05%)	-	-	12 (7.19%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	18 (4.50%)
past_simple	79 (40.10%)	1 (33.33%)	-	35 (20.96%)	1 (50.00%)	6 (46.15%)	4 (57.14%)	1 (16.67%)	1 (50.00%)	1 (33.33%)	129 (32.25%)
past_perfect	51 (25.89%)	-	-	42 (25.15%)	-	-	1 (14.29%)	3 (50.00%)	-	-	97 (24.25%)
past_subj.	36 (18.27%)	1 (33.33%)	-	8 (4.79%)	-	-	2 (28.57%)	2 (33.33%)	1 (50.00%)	1 (33.33%)	51 (12.75%)
Total	197 (100.00%)	3 (100.00%)	-	167 (100.00%)	2 (100.00%)	13 (100.00%)	7 (100.00%)	6 (100.00%)	2 (100.00%)	3 (100.00%)	400 (100.00%)

Table 11b: Finite verb phrase in *as though*-clause across semantics of construction types.

	adverbial_adjunct			complement_clause			monoclause			Total
	hypoth. comp.	bridging	denial	hypoth. comp.	bridging	denial	hypoth. comp.	bridging	denial	
modal	16 (8.94%)	1 (25.00%)	-	37 (18.23%)	-	-	-	-	-	54 (13.50%)
past_be_about_to	2 (1.12%)	-	-	3 (1.48%)	-	-	-	-	-	5 (1.25%)
past_be_going_to	2 (1.12%)	-	-	2 (0.99%)	-	-	-	-	-	4 (1.00%)
present_simple	11 (6.15%)	1 (25.00%)	-	46 (21.67%)	-	2 (28.57%)	-	-	-	58 (14.50%)
present_perfect	1 (0.56%)	-	-	19 (9.36%)	-	-	-	-	-	20 (5.00%)
past_simple	79 (44.13%)	1 (25.00%)	3 (100.00%)	47 (21.67%)	-	3 (42.86%)	3 (75.00%)	-	-	133 (33.25%)
past_perfect	39 (21.79%)	-	-	44 (21.18%)	-	1 (14.29%)	-	-	-	83 (20.75%)
past_subj.	29 (16.20%)	1 (25.00%)	-	12 (5.42%)	-	1 (14.29%)	1 (25.00%)	-	-	43 (10.75%)
Total	179 (100.00%)	4 (100.00%)	3 (100.00%)	203 (100.00%)	-	7 (100.00%)	4 (100.00%)	-	-	400 (100.00%)

4.2 A corpus-based study of independent as if- and as though-clauses

The more fine-grained corpus study aimed to find the subordinators *as if* and *as though* with a capital letter and with a punctuation mark preceding them. Thus, this section focuses on the study of the independent use of *as if*- and *as though*-clauses. First, I will home in on the types of constructions and on the register in which the subordinators occur. Then, I will discuss the formal properties of the monoclauses, paying attention to the semantic class of verb and the polarity. Finally, I will broach the semantics of the *as if*- and *as though*-clauses.

4.2.1 Types of constructions

The types of constructions found in the more fine-grained search for *as if* and *as though* are listed below in Table 12. As the data show, the subordinator *as if* is mostly used in monoclauses (94.50%) but it is also used as a conjunction-only (5.50%). In turn, *as though* does not appear on its own and it is always used in monoclauses. See example (46) for an instance of monoclausal *as if*. Example (76) shows an instance of *as if* used as a conjunction-only, where there is no matrix clause and where the subordinator is used on its own.

- (46) Maria Grazia was taken back to Sicily. Hundreds of friends came to say farewell. Just *as if* it had been a pilgrimage to Lourdes. (WBO)
- (76) She stopped and looked at us with that daft expression on her face that she thinks makes her look as if she's in charge and knows what she's doing. *As if*. I could see her thinking about whether to say anything or not. (WBO)

Table 12: Distribution of the different types of constructions for independent *as if* and *as though*.

	<i>as if</i>	<i>as though</i>
monoclause	189 (94.50%)	78 (100.00%)
conjunction_only	11 (5.50%)	-
Total	200 (100.00%)	78 (100.00%)

As Evans (2007: 374) and Stirling (1999: 289) warned, the reconstruction of the exact ellipted matrix clause was a difficult process. Therefore, I focused on the source construction from which monoclausal *as if* and *as though* may have originated. In other words, there were two values for the source construction parameter. When I reconstructed the matrix clause, *as if*- and *as though*-monoclauses either derived from the adverbial construction or the complementation construction. As the data from Table 13 shows, both *as if*-monoclauses and *as though*-monoclauses most frequently derive from the complementation construction. Example (77) shows an instance of monoclausal *as if* which would belong to the adverbial construction, if it had a matrix clause. The possible reconstructed matrix clause for example (77) would be *She spoke/talked* and the resulting sentence would be *She spoke/talked in Sicilian as if she had never talked anything else*. If the matrix of example (78) was reconstructed, the *as if*-clause would belong to the complementation construction. The possible reconstructed matrix clause for (78) would be *It was* or *It felt*. The resulting sentence would be *It was/felt as if she were saying, do what I want you to do and I'll be nice to you* and the *as if*-clause would therefore belong to the complementation construction.

(77) They talked in Sicilian, rapidly. *As if* she had never talked anything else.
(WBO)

(78) [She said:]‘I think it would be best if you were to leave Eric with us.’ It was like a punch in the ribs. *As if* she were saying, do what I want you to do and I’ll be nice to you. (WBO)

Table 13: Source construction across monoclausal *as if* and *as though*.

	<i>as if</i>	<i>as though</i>
adv_source_cxn	40 (21.16%)	26 (33.33%)
compl_source_cxn	149 (78.84%)	52 (66.67%)
Total	189 (100.00%)	78 (100.00%)

4.2.2 Register

As discussed in Section 4.1.2, the general search for *as if* and *as though* showed that the monoclausal construction did not occur in spoken English. However, the corpus study on monoclausal and conjunction-only *as if* and *as though* revealed that the monoclausal construction may appear in spoken English, though it is rare. Only 7 out of 189 examples of *as if*-monoclauses and 9 out of 78 examples of *as though*-monoclauses are found in the spoken register, see examples (79) and (80). That is 3.70% and 11.54%, respectively. As for the use of the bare complementizer *as if*, it is found in direct reported speech, interior monologue and written English. No example of the conjunction-only *as if* was found in spoken English.

- (79) <M0X/> Yeah I mean take for <F0X/> That's right. Yes. <M0X/> example the first line <ZF1/> last <ZF0/> <F0X/> Yeah. <M0X/> last week's said `Exchanging banalities with Clint " <F0X/> Yeah. <M0X/> <ZF1/> and <ZF0/> and almost totally opposite to that is `That Harry keeps on talking". <F0X/> Yeah. <M0X/> *As if* he knows it's banal. (WBO)
- (80) <F0X/> There was a very very nasty-looking crack above the bay window wasn't there. <F0X/> Yeah. *As though* the bay window was gonna fall down. <F0X/> <tc text="laughs"/> <F0X/> Dodgy wiring <ZGY/> <M0X/> But <ZGY/> looks in really good condition <ZGY/>. (WBO)

4.2.3 Formal properties of the independent *as if*- and *as though*-clause

4.2.3.1 Semantic class of verb in the *as if*- and *as though*-monoclausal

Just as in adverbial and complementation constructions, monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* most frequently occur with verbs of existence or relationship, as in (81), and with verbs of activity, as in (82). 73 out of 189 (38.62%) of the verbs occurring in monoclausal *as if*, while 34 out of 78 (43.59%) of the verbs occurring in monoclausal *as though* belong to the existence category. As for activity verbs, they appear in 47 out of 189 (24.87%) *as if*-monoclauses and in 20 out of 78 (25.64%) *as though*-monoclauses. Contrary to what has been said in Section 4.1.4.1 on the general corpus study, monoclausal *as if* does occur with verbs of communication, verbs of facilitation or causation and verbs of simple occurrence. Moreover, monoclausal *as though* does occur with activity verbs and with verbs of simple occurrence. In short, the seven semantic domains according to which verbs are classified can be found in monoclausal *as if*.

Monoclausal *as though* also shows the existence of the seven semantic domains except for verbs of facilitation or causation.

(81) But what was this? She felt violently sick. *As if* Peter stood beside her. (WBO)

(82) He had a bow and arrow in his hands. I followed him at a distance. *As if* I had been following myself. (WBO)

4.2.4 Semantics of the independent *as if*- and *as though*-clause

In the following section, I will talk about the semantics of the monoclauses found in the more fine-grained corpus study on *as if* and *as though*. First, I will focus on *as if*- and *as though*-monoclauses and the types of meanings they express. Then, I will tackle the different meanings conveyed by the conjunction-only *as if*. I will present instances and give an interpretation of the meaning they convey.

4.2.4.1 Semantics of the *as if*- and *as though*-monoclause

4.2.4.1.1 Exclamatory monoclauses

As I have said earlier, Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1152) call *as if* and *as though* monoclauses “exclamatory clauses”. Again, this means that their illocutionary force is that of an exclamation (Brinton 2014: 98). Examples (83) to (86) show four instances of exclamatory monoclauses. However, in this corpus study only 18 instances of monoclausal *as if* out of 189 are exclamatory. That is 9.52%. For *as though*, only 4 instances out of 78 (5.12%) were found to have the illocutionary force of an exclamation. Therefore, I would not use the term *exclamatory clauses* to refer to *as if*- and *as though*-monoclauses. Interestingly, all of the exclamatory monoclauses found in the corpus convey denial meaning. Example (83) can be interpreted as *Life is not like that!* (i.e.,

people falling over, people getting stuck). The exclamatory clause in (83) claims that what happens to stout people in films does not happen in real life. Example (84) also expresses denial and means that *She did not need help to get spotted!* The speaker says that Chelsea put on a leopard print top, which drew attention to her because of the showy pattern. Then, he explains that Chelsea did not need the help of the leopard print top to get spotted since she has a nice 153-23-43 figure. Her figure alone suffice to draw attention to her. In example (85) the speaker means to say that *It is not any of his business!* and he expresses denial. From the context, the reader learns that a man enquired into The House of Hardie and its profit even though it was not his concern. Finally, the exclamatory *as though*-monoclaue in (86) also convey the denial meaning. It can be interpreted as *That would not exculpate him from murder!* In other words, Rebecca asserts that her confessing to the smuggling would not exculpate the man.

- (83) Look at the ridiculous things that happen to stout people in films. Absurd, slapstick things – people falling over, getting stuck and so on. *As if* life were like that! (WBO)
- (84) Chelsea crammed her 153-23-43 figure into a leopard print top. *As if* she needed help to get spotted! (WBO)
- (85) [He] had made an early bad impression by enquiring whether The House of Hardie was not yet sufficiently profitable to restore to Mrs Hardie some of the income which had been necessarily withdrawn when it was near to bankruptcy. *As though* it were any of his business! (WBO)
- (86) Rebecca turned to the Countess. ‘He wanted me to confess to the smuggling. *As though* that would somehow exculpate him from murder!’ (WBO)

4.2.4.1.2 Meanings expressed by the monoclausal

As mentioned in Section 4.1.5, monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* express hypothetical comparison, bridging and denial. However, the more fine-grained corpus study of *as if* and *as though* allowed me to analyse the meaning of monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* more precisely. Besides expressing denial, monoclauses can also express annoyance, disbelief, teasing or astonishment. As shown in Table 14, both *as if*-monoclauses and *as though*-monoclauses most frequently express hypothetical comparison, that is 43.92% and 67.95% respectively.

Table 14: Semantics of *as if*- and *as though*-monoclauses.

	<i>as if</i> -monoclausal	<i>as though</i> -monoclausal
hypothetical comparison	83 (43.92%)	53 (67.95%)
bridging	12 (6.35%)	7 (8.97%)
denial	39 (20.63%)	6 (7.69%)
denial/annoyance	35 (18.52%)	11 (14.10%)
denial/disbelief	15 (7.94%)	1 (1.28%)
denial/teasing	3 (1.59%)	-
denial/astonishment	2 (1.06%)	-
Total	189 (100.00%)	78 (100.00%)

As I have just said, monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* most frequently convey the hypothetical comparison meaning. Examples (87) and (88) represent two instances of monoclauses expressing comparison. The *as if*-monoclausal in example (87)

answers the question *How had she looked at him?* Moreover, the sentence can be paraphrased as *She had acted as if she was seeing something in him she hadn't know was there until then.* Example (88) also conveys comparison. It answers the question *How do you remember Heaven?* The resulting sentence would be *I remember it as though it were yesterday.* In both of the reformulations of examples (87) and (88), the subordinators *as if* and *as though* introduce adverbial clauses which express comparison.

(87) The other night, when she had asked him about the planning committee she had looked at him in a way he'd never seen her do before. *As if* she was seeing something in him she hadn't know was there until then. (WBO)

(88) "I was an angel, D'amour," it said, its voice troubled. "I remember Heaven. I do. *As though* it were yesterday." (WBO)

Another meaning conveyed by monoclauses is the bridging meaning. For instance, the monoclause in (89) can express comparison and be interpreted as *Barbara Walters talked as if jealousy was something to be stamped out.* However, the speaker can also mean to reject what is asserted in the monoclause (i.e., that jealousy needs to be stamped out). Therefore, (89) can express denial and mean *Jealousy is not something to be stamped out.* As for the meaning conveyed by example (90), it is indeterminate between comparison and denial. It can either be interpreted as *She talked as though there could be a different answer than the one she always got* (i.e., comparison) or as *There is not a different answer than the one she always got* (i.e., denial).

(89) 'The TV programme 20/ 20 did a segment on jealousy recently. 'How can it be controlled?'" Barbara Walters asked. *As if* jealousy was something to be stamped out. (WBO)

- (90) ‘You're late,’ Li said. ‘Did you find what you sought at the Temple?’ She always asked that. *As though* there could be a different answer than the one she always got. (WBO)

Examples (91) and (92) show instances of monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* which only express the denial meaning. In example (91), the speaker rejects the assertion that execution requires the victim’s hand to be tightly bound and that it also requires the victim’s eyes to be covered with black cloth. The *as if*-monoclausal expresses denial and means *Execution does not require the victim’s hands to be bound and their eyes covered*. What the speaker wants to say is that execution is not restricted to the one described in (91) and that there are other forms of execution. Example (92) also conveys denial. The speaker rejects the assertion that he has not done enough for Jon in the past and he claims that he has done enough for him.

- (91) the chief pathologist said: ‘Not a single body bears any sign of execution.’ *As if* execution requires the victim’s hands to be tightly bound and their eyes covered with black cloth. (WBO)
- (92) ‘Is it Jon again?’ I asked. He nodded. ‘What's the problem?’ ‘The whole family are ... getting at me. Putting me under terrible pressure. *As though* I haven’t done enough for him in the past.’ (WBO)

When expressing denial, monoclauses can also convey other meanings, as shown above in Table 14. In what follows, I will describe the different meanings from the most frequent to the least frequent one. In example (93), the *as if*-monoclausal expresses denial and means *I have been trying all those years to lose weight!* However, it also conveys annoyance. The speaker explains that her doctor recommended her to lose weight. She is

annoyed by that because she claims to have been trying for years. As for example (94), the monoclauses also expresses denial and annoyance. The girl rejects the assertion that her moods are totally on a chemical level. Moreover, she is annoyed by her mother's remark and by the fact that her mother assumes that her moods are totally on a chemical level and that they are not worth discussing.

- (93) My doctor told me that if I wanted to improve my symptoms I would need to lose weight. *As if* I hadn't been trying all those years! (WBO)
- (94) Mum glared at me as I slouched in for lunch and bellowed, "HORMONES again, I take it? "I hate it when she does that. *As though* my moods are totally on a chemical level, and therefore not worth discussing. (WBO)

Examples (95) and (96) show that *as if*- and *as though*-monoclauses expressing denial can also convey disbelief. In example (95), the speaker rejects the assertion that anyone will be gullible to believe that anyone has the right to wear white. The *as if*-monoclauses expresses denial and can be interpreted as *No one will be gullible enough to believe that anyone has the right to wear white*. Moreover, it conveys disbelief. The speaker doubts that the situation describe will happen. In example (96), the *as though*-monoclauses expresses denial and it can be interpreted as *Nobody has the interest, or the ability, to do that* (i.e., use new science and technology to destroy the planet). It can also mean that the speaker does not believe that anybody has the interest, or the ability, to destroy the planet. In addition, the speaker does not believe that the situation describe will occur. In that case, the monoclauses conveys disbelief alongside denial.

(95) The blooms are on sale, red for sinners, white for prevaricators. *As if* anyone will be gullible enough to believe that you - anyone - has the right to wear white. (WBO)

(96) It comes from an unfounded suspicion that we will use new science and technology to destroy the planet, and ourselves. *As though* anybody - even a peculiar American sect - has the interest, or the ability, to do that. (WBO)

Another meaning that the monoclausal construction can convey along with denial is teasing. However, it seems to be restricted to monoclausal *as if*. No example of monoclausal *as though* was found expressing that meaning, see Table 14 above. *As if*-monoclauses conveying teasing are quite rare since only 3 examples were found. Example (97) expresses denial. It can be understood as *You are noisy enough*. In addition, it conveys teasing. The speaker's interlocutor explains that he has received a noisy book and the speaker makes a comment about him being noisy enough already without the noisy book. Thus, monoclausal *as if* is to be understood as teasing. The speaker is joking when saying that his interlocutor is noisy. The fact that the speaker laughs after making that comment reinforces the reading of the teasing meaning. As for example (98), it can be interpreted as *Mo has had enough blood out of us already* (i.e., denial). It can also convey teasing. The speaker is joking when making a comment about Mo. Moreover, it is clearly said in writing that the speaker is joking.

(97) <F05/> It was a brook book. It was a birthday present so I got <ZGY/>. <F01/> Oh <ZGY/>. <F05/> It's one of them noisy books. <F01/> Oh. *As if* you aren't noisy enough eh. <tc text="laughs"/> (WBO)

- (98) Mo's left arm was mashed up like strawberry jam and he needed blood. 'As if Mo hasn't had enough blood out of us already,' somebody joked. (WBO)

Finally, monoclausal *as if* can also convey astonishment. Yet, that meaning is rare as only 2 examples were found, see examples (99) and (100). In example (99), the monoclausal expresses denial. The speaker claims that she would not tell a soul. It also conveys astonishment. A man showed the speaker into an empty compartment of couchettes and he wants her not to say anything to anybody. She claims that she would not tell a soul and she is surprised that the man did not assume that. Example (100) can be interpreted as *I could never forget!* (i.e., denial). In addition, it can also convey astonishment. The speaker is astonished by her interlocutor's question. She is surprised that he might think that she does not remember what they did in Venice.

- (99) He showed me into an empty compartment of couchettes and put a finger to his lips: I must not tell a soul. *As if* I would! (WBO)

- (100) You ask in your letter 'Do you remember sitting in St Mark's Square in Venice and reading the French accounts of the Profumo business ... and Clifford Evans appearing ...?' *As if* I could ever forget! (WBO)

4.2.4.2 Semantics of the *as if* conjunction-only

As mentioned earlier, the use of the bare complementizer only appears with the subordinator *as if*. When *as if* is used as a conjunction-only, it expresses denial meaning. In some cases, it also conveys annoyance or disbelief. Table 15 below shows the different meanings conveyed by the bare complementizer *as if*. Out of 11 instances of the conjunction-only *as if*, 4 examples were found to express denial only, 4 examples conveyed annoyance and 3 examples conveyed disbelief.

Table 15: Semantics of *as if* conjunction-only.

	conjunction_only
denial	4 (36.36%)
denial/annoyance	4 (36.36%)
denial/disbelief	3 (27.27%)
Total	11 (100.00%)

The subordinator *as if* used on its own can express denial. Examples (101) and (102) are two instances conveying that meaning. For instance, in (101) the speaker rejects the assertion that it must be incredibly difficult to do love scenes. The fact that she explains that she was paid to do love scenes with Johnny Depp emphasises the denial meaning conveyed by *as if*. The speaker means that it was not difficult to do love scenes since she was paid to do them. In example (102), the speaker rejects the idea that she was looking pale and that she needed to gain weight.

(101) “Someone said that it must be incredibly difficult to do such love scenes,” she says, somewhat scornfully. “*As if*. I was paid to go to bed with Johnny Depp.”

(WBO)

(102) I was served, as far as I could see, half a roasted moose, for Margaret said I was looking “peaky” and needed “fattening up”. *As if*. (WBO)

In addition to the denial meaning, the conjunction-only *as if* can also convey annoyance, as shown in (103) and (104). In example (103), the speaker rejects the ads’ claim that the sofa of a cat owner remains spotless. *As if* can also convey annoyance. The

speaker is annoyed by that false claim and clarifies that cats have a large cleaning problem. Thus, the speaker explains why a cat owner's sofa does not remain clean and why those ads are not realistic. Similarly, example (104) expresses denial and conveys annoyance. With the use of the conjunction-only *as if*, the speaker denies that she was in love with the defendant. Moreover, the speaker is annoyed by all the interrogation and by the questions she has to answer. The fact that she has to defend herself irritates her.

(103) You know, those ads where the elegant (though a little sad) single woman comes home to an affectionate nuzzle from her feline bloke-substitute on a spotless cream sofa. *As if*. Never mind dogs, cats -- especially those with access to street and garden - present a surprisingly large cleaning problem.
(WBO)

(104)

Murphy is breathing out, exhaling too quickly. She is buttoning and unbuttoning the bottom button of her sensible black jacket. She is saying:
None of it. It's all rubbish. It's total crap Really? ... Yes!
So it's not true to say that you were in love with the defendant? ... *As if*.

(WBO)

Finally, *as if* can be used to convey disbelief alongside denial. In example (105), *as if* expresses denial and it can be interpreted as *They would not offer me the England manager job!* In addition, it conveys disbelief that this situation will occur. The speaker does not believe that they would offer him the England manager job. In this case, *As if!* is an equivalent for *I doubt it!* As for example (106), *as if* is used to deny the prospect of Roma pulling over on the final lap. It is also used to convey disbelief. The speaker does

not believe that Roma would stop competing to let the more fancied team win the league.
In other words, the speaker doubts that the situation described will ever happen.

(105) “What if they offered you the England manager job? ‘Ha! *As if!* (WBO)

(106) So imagine Ferrari, besides Formula One, had two entries in the Italian scudetto as well. That would raise the prospect of say Roma pulling over on the final lap as it were to let the more fancied team (Juventus?) win the league.
As if! (WBO)

DISCUSSION

5 DISCUSSION

The existing literature on *as if* and *as though* does not make a difference between the two subordinators. Scholars thus treat *as if* and *as though* together without comparing them. In this dissertation, I studied and compared the subordinators in their adverbial, complementation, monoclausal and bare complementizer constructions. For the most part, the findings on *as if* do apply to *as though*. Both subordinators share the same similarities in terms of register and in terms of formal properties. *As if*, as well as *as though*, is most frequent when occurring in written English and it is least frequent in spoken English. Regarding the formal properties, there does not seem to be much difference between the formal properties of *as if*-clauses and the ones of *as though*-clauses. Most of the time, their matrix clause has positive polarity. The verb occurring in the subclause most frequently belongs to the semantic category of verbs of existence or relationship and verbs of activity. Both *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses show positive and negative polarity. To conclude on the formal properties, clauses introduced by *as if* and *as though* occur in sentence-initial, -medial and -final position. Where the two subordinators show some divergence is in the type of constructions they appear in. *As if* and *as though* both occur in adverbial, complementation and monoclausal constructions. However, *as if* also occurs in denial_initial constructions and on its own as a conjunction-only, but *as though* does not. In addition, *as if* most frequently appears in adverbial constructions while *as though* most frequently appears in complementation constructions.

Regarding the semantics expressed by *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses, it has been argued in the literature that it develops from the comparison meaning to the denial meaning. When the two subordinators occur in adverbial and complementation constructions, they express hypothetical comparison. The meaning expressed by

monoclauses develops from comparison to bridging to denial. Thus, the denial meaning is found in monoclausal *as if* and *as though* and in conjunction-only *as if*. However, this corpus study of *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses in adverbial, complementation and monoclausal constructions revealed that it was not the case. Adverbial clauses do not exclusively express comparison (cf. Table 9a and 9b). The general corpus study proved that adverbial *as if* can also convey bridging meaning and that adverbial *as though* can also convey bridging and denial. Moreover, complementizer *as if* can express bridging and denial alongside comparison. Complementizer *as though* does not solely express comparison but it also conveys denial. As for monoclauses, the more fine-grained corpus study allowed me to find out that they can express more than comparison, bridging or denial (cf. Table 14). *As if*- and *as though*-monoclauses can express annoyance and disbelief. In addition, there are two more meanings conveyed by monoclausal *as if* but not by monoclausal *as though*. *As if*-clauses can also convey teasing and astonishment. Regarding the subordinator *as if* used on its own, it can express annoyance and disbelief alongside denial.

Both of the corpus studies carried out in this dissertation validate Brinton's (2014: 108) postulated development of *as if* (cf. Figure 1). The construction in which *as if* and *as though* originally occurred in (i.e., the adverbial construction) has not disappeared. In addition, when trying to reconstruct a matrix clause for the monoclausal construction, it seems that both *as if*-monoclauses and *as though*-monoclauses most frequently derive from the complementation construction (cf. Table 13). Knowing the role of frequency in grammaticalization, it may be argued that the subordinator *as though* has moved furthest down the cline. As seen in Section 4.1.1, *as though* is more frequent in the complementation construction than in the adverbial construction. However, I would

rather say that *as if* has moved furthest down the cline of grammaticalization. First of all, it occurs in more types of constructions than *as though*. *As if* can be found in adverbial, complementation, monoclausal and denial_initial construction and as a conjunction-only, while *as though* is not found in denial_initial constructions nor is it found on its own. Moreover, there were many more hits for *as if* than for *as though* in the Collins Wordbanks Online corpus, see Section 3. For the more fine-grained search for independent *as if* and *as though*, I extracted a random sample of 1,000 instances for *as if*. For *as though* I had to extract an exhaustive sample of 158 instances. Finally, monoclausal *as if* can express up to seven different meanings but monoclausal *as though* seems to express only five of those meanings.

CONCLUSION

6 CONCLUSION

This dissertation has focused on *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses in adverbial, complementation and monoclausal constructions. Two synchronic corpus studies have been carried out. The first one consisted in a general search for the subordinators *as if* and *as though*, while the second corpus study had a more fine-grained aim. It sought to study independent constructions. The analysis of *as if*-clauses and *as though*-clauses has focused on the type of register, the formal properties of the matrix clause and of the subclause and the semantics conveyed.

I have had three aims with this dissertation. Firstly, to compare the two subordinators and see to what extent the findings on *as if* apply to *as though*. This comparison has confirmed what the existing literature says about the two subordinators. Scholars have claimed that *as if* and *as though* are similar and therefore they have treated them together. Thanks to the two corpus studies, I would say that the subordinators may be treated as equals. However, a distinction can be made between *as if* and *as though* in terms of the semantics they convey. *As if* can be used to give more precision on what the speaker means to express. The second aim was to show that the subordinators do not exclusively express comparison and denial. The data in this dissertation show that *as if* and *as though* introducing adverbial clauses and complement clauses convey more than just the comparison meaning. Moreover, monoclausal *as if* and monoclausal *as though* can be used to express various meanings alongside the denial meaning. The third aim of this dissertation was to determine which of the two subordinators has moved furthest down the cline of grammaticalization. I have argued that *as if* seems to have moved furthest down the cline given that it is found in more types of constructions than *as though*.

For further research, I suggest that more instances of *as though* should be studied. I suggest to extract instances from various corpora since there were not many for monoclausal *as though* in the Collins Wordbanks Online corpus. A quantitative study of independent *as though*-clauses would serve to verify whether *as though* may also convey all the same meanings that *as if* conveys. Moreover, this type of study might come across instances of *as though* used as a conjunction-only.

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