

Episode 047 – Grammar

1. Concessive clauses with "obwohl"

Subordinate clauses are dependent upon main clauses or other dependent clauses. They can't stand on their own. Frequently they begin with certain words (subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns or interrogative words) that connect them to the independent clause.

"obwohl" is a conjunction that heads a concessive clause. "obwohl" (although) clauses express something contradictory or surprising in contrast to the statement made by the main clause.

Example:

*Ich trinke ein Bier, **obwohl ich lieber Wein mag.***

(= I prefer to drink wine, but I am drinking a beer, e.g. because this bar doesn't have any decent wine.)

Subordinate clauses with the "obwohl" conjunction are always separated from the independent clause by a comma and the conjugated verb always comes at the end of the subordinate clause.

Examples:

*Das Lieblingsbier der Deutschen ist das Pils, **obwohl ich es überhaupt nicht mag.***

2. Connecting main clauses with "deshalb" und "trotzdem"

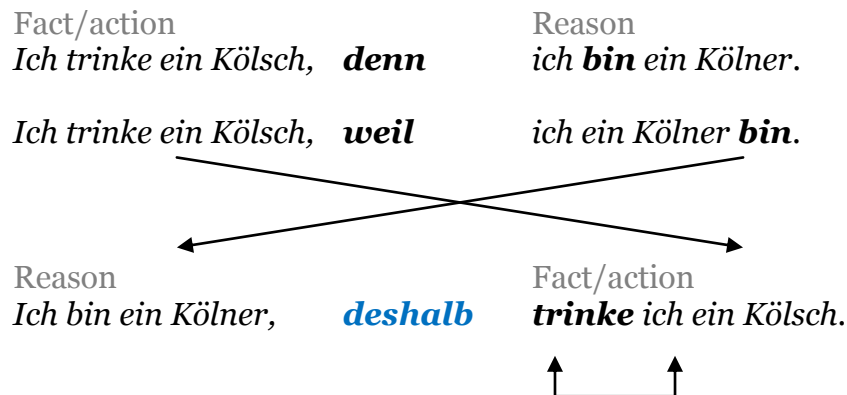
German has some adverbs that can be used to connect two independent clauses. They are called conjunctive adverbs. They have similar functions and meanings to conjunctions, but differ grammatically.

"deshalb" (therefore) is an adverb that indicates a reason for something like the conjunctions "denn" (for) and "weil" (because). So "deshalb" answers the question "Warum?" (why?) and creates a causal relationship between the two clauses. But the word order is different for all three:

"denn" is a coordinating conjunction that introduces a second, explanatory main clause. The word order of the second main clause doesn't change.

"weil" is a subordinating conjunction that introduces a dependent clause with explanatory information about the clause to which it refers. The conjugated verb moves to the end of the subordinate clause.

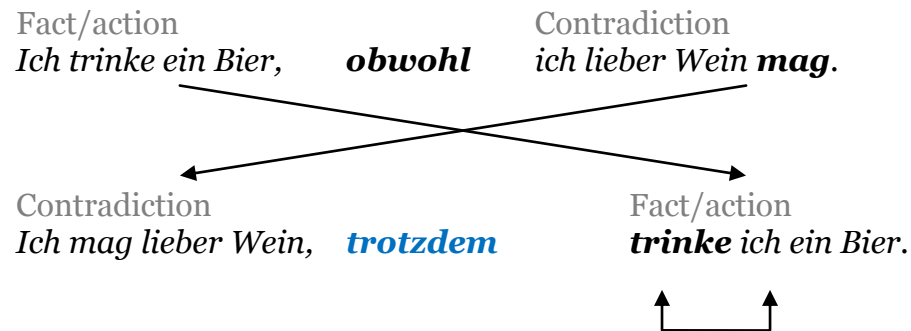
"deshalb" is an adverb that connects two main clauses. But in this case, the explanatory part comes first and "deshalb" precedes the actual action, statement or fact of the sentence. Also, the conjugated verb comes directly after it in the second position.



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Begleitmaterialien

"trotzdem" (nonetheless) is an adverb that indicates a contradiction like the conjunction "obwohl". The sentence structure here is the same as above.



In compound sentences that contain conjunctive adverbs to connect clauses, the two main clauses can be separated by a comma or a period. Even if they are separated by a period, the conjugated verb keeps its position after the adverb.

Examples:

*Ich mag lieber Wein, **trotzdem trinke ich** ein Bier.*

*Ich mag lieber Wein. **Trotzdem trinke ich** ein Bier.*