

# Intensification of Affirmativity: *Definitely* as a Discourse Marker in Spoken Conversation

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Lee, Jungyull. (2019). Intensification of Affirmativity: *Definitely* as a discourse marker in spoken conversation. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 27(1), 63–80. From a pragmatic–analytic perspective, this study examines how *definitely* as a discourse marker (DM) functions in spoken conversation. Three corpora, namely the British National Corpus (BNC), the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE), and the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBC) are used to investigate the multifarious pragmatic functions of *definitely* between interlocutors. It is practicable to use *definitely* as a DM in pre–front field and it frequently occurs in everyday language use. In light of the three corpora with respect to the DM *definitely* introduced in this study, there may be divergent types of *definitely* that occur in spoken conversation. Based on my dataset, *definitely* exhibits four types of pre–front use. For instance, *definitely* appears by itself and it also occurs with specific discourse particles such as *oh*, *yeah*, and *yes* and with negators such as *no* and *not*. Lastly, its repetitive pre–front use is also found. The analysis from a pragmatic perspective in regard to *definitely* as a DM proposes that *definitely* can play a great variety of pragmatic functions such as those of acting as a pre–closing device, or devices to express and solicit approval, consensus, eagerness, stimulation, gratification, floor–holding, topic–shift, intimacy, and bridging between interlocutors in spoken conversation. From perspectives of semantic and pragmatic analysis, *definitely* has an affirmative semantic connotation and it could strongly serve as an affirmative conversational response device.

**Key Words:** definitely, corpora, pre–front use, discourse marker (DM), pragmatic function, affirmative conversational response device

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to elucidate pragmatic functions of the discourse marker *definitely* (henceforth DM)<sup>1)</sup> and how it is used to attain heterogeneous pragmatic efficacy. Interlocutors frequently use *definitely*, and it is mainly discovered in spoken conversation. In regard to a pragmatic-analytic aspect of *definitely*, the type of usage in which *definitely* is utilized as a TCU (Turn Construction Unit) -- as the second pair part of an adjacency pair with “*definitely!* ’ ’ structured as a conversational response device -- predominantly occurs in spoken conversation. *Definitely* as a DM seems to have multifarious pragmatic functions between interlocutors. One of the examinations that has arisen in this study is the multi-functionality of *definitely* in pre-front field. The target of this paper is to delineate how *definitely* functions as the second pair part of an adjacency pair, and how it can fulfill momentous discourse functions in many and varied correlations. For the target of examining the use of *definitely* in spoken conversation, we address the following research inquiries:

- (i) Are there any analyses with respect to disparate types of *definitely* in pre-front field?
- (ii) From a perspective of pragmatic analysis, how does the DM *definitely* function between interlocutors in spoken conversation?
- (iii) From a semantic-analytic perspective, does *definitely* have its own semantic preference?

In order to investigate these inquiries, we use corpus data based on three corpora: the British National Corpus (BNC), the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE), and the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBC).<sup>2)</sup> The DM *definitely* largely occurs in spoken conversation. Thus, written data are excluded from this study. The goal of this paper is to explore the practical usages of *definitely* and how it fulfills diverse pragmatic functions in spoken conversation. In this respect, this linguistic issue needs to be further examined in future research. Following the aims of this study, this paper is arranged as follows: Section 2 of this paper presents a quick review of

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1) I will return to this issue in regard to discourse markers in Section 2.

2) See more information related to the three corpora in Section 3.

relevant previous studies. Section 3 deals with more detailed information pertaining to the data. Analysis of the use of the DM *definitely* in relation to a wide variety of pragmatic functions will be given in Section 4, along with the findings of a fundamental qualitative analysis. Section 5, finally, provides a summary discussion of the main aspects of this paper with respect to the research inquiries above.

## 2. Previous Studies

In this section, some of the previous studies on definitions of DMs (Discourse Markers) are reviewed. In addition to this, the available works on *definitely* and characteristics of conversational response devices as the second pair part of an adjacency pair are reviewed. DMs have been examined by earlier researchers (Brinton 1996; Jucker, & Ziv 1998; Schiffrin 1987; Suh 2011). Burgeoning interest in spoken language has been leading to an increase in articles on DMs. DMs are lexemes or phrases which are principally employed to mark boundaries in spoken discourse between one subject and the next or to express plans and aims. They have been investigated phonologically, syntactically, semantically, pragmatically, and stylistically by some researchers. For instance, Schiffrin (1987: 328) describes linguistic properties of DMs as follows:

- (i) “The expression has a range of prosodic contours, i.e., tonic stress, followed by a pause and phonological reduction. ’ ’
- (ii) “The propositional content of the proposition remains the same when the expression is omitted. ’ ’
- (iii) “The expression occurs either outside the syntactic structure or loosely attached to it and hence have no clear grammatical function. ’ ’
- (iv) “The expression may be multifunctional, operating on the local (i.e., morphophonemic, syntactic, and semantic) and global (i.e., pragmatic) levels, simultaneously, as well as on different planes (textual and interpersonal) within the pragmatic components. ’ ’

These are DMs’ properties in regard to phonological, syntax, semantic, and pragmatic perspectives. According to Suh (2011), they are analogous to road signs or cues guiding our steps in textual elucidation and understanding; in other words, DMs are signposts in

the expression of the interlocutors' behaviors and sentiments. Drawing upon previous studies, DMs do not tend to have their own context-independent senses or roles. Therefore, Speech Act Theory, Conversational Analysis, Relevance Theory, or Rhetorical Structure can be more relevant to DMs than sentence-based formal syntax. According to Jucker, & Ziv (1998), DMs can pragmatically function as turn-taking, confirmation-seeking, topic-switching, hesitation-marking, fillers, repair-marking, and hedging devices, etc. Consider excerpt (1).

- (1) 1 S1: but you just told me that you can 't double-count them  
 2 S2: right but you\_ right well she\_ i think you just\_ you can just\_ you  
 → 3 have the stats but then you have to take *like* four credits of a  
 4 different class (MICASE)

In line 1 of excerpt (1), the student is confused about credits from S1's class, and then the staff member S2 tries to explain precisely how many credits S1 takes from a different class. In line 3, she uses *like* as a DM, which plays the role of approximator. The DM *like* is perhaps the most general in terms of its empty, semantically bleached meaning and discourse-organizational function. That is, it can provide a leading clue which has an effect on processes of contextual comprehension and interpretation.

In terms of pre-front use in spoken conversation, Quirk et al. (1985) suggests that adverbial categories are relevant to adjuncts, which are lexemes utilized as modifiers; and disjuncts, which express information that is not considered essential to the sentence they appears in, but which are considered to give expression to the speaker's or writer's attitude towards, or descriptive statement of, the propositional content of the sentence. According to Quirk et al. (1985), disjuncts are more freestanding: they are syntactically more separated and have a scope that spans the sentence as a whole, while adjuncts have a more limited orientation. According to the view stated by Quirk et al., *definitely* would be a disjunct. Thus, *definitely* does not tend to be impeded by limitations. It is noteworthy that there is another crucial factor in elucidating the practicability of pre-front use of *definitely*. In this connection, Hopper (1987: 156-157) states that grammar is not to be understood as an essential element for conversation in the same form to both speaker and hearer: "the notion of *Emergent Grammar*<sup>3)</sup> is meant to suggest that structure, or

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3) Emergent grammar is an approach to the study of syntax, originally proposed by



play a focalizing role to any great extent. In contrast to their findings, however, *definitely* is frequently found in pre-front field in this study (see Table 1 and 2). In this respect, this paper especially focuses on *definitely* as a DM in pre-front field without its dependent use. In addition to this, Simon-Vandenberg & Aijmer (2007) state that *definitely* does not seem to be found to combine readily with modal auxiliaries, i.e., it generally appears more in factual, unmodalized clauses. Hoyer (1997: 163) indicates that *definitely* “remains too lexically loaded to occur in the environment of epistemic MUST ’ ’ With regard to collocations of *definitely*, *definitely* combines well with auxiliaries such as *must* and *will* in order to express a high degree of speaker commitment or to emphasize the speaker’s certainty in terms of a predicted state of affairs or commitment. *Definitely* also strongly tends to appear with a first-person subject in medial pre-finite position. On the other hand, it does not appear in non-vague focalizing positions and does not produce expectations of a following *but* (Simon-Vandenberg & Aijmer 2007). These previous studies of *definitely* elaborated on its lexical meanings, collocations, and positions, etc. There have been, however, few investigations that have focused on its multifarious pragmatic functions from the perspective of pragmatic analysis. Hence, this paper elaborates on discourse roles of *definitely* used on its own in pre-front field, as a DM.

### 3. The Data

Three divergent spoken corpora of British and American English are used in this paper. Specific reports of each corpus (BNC,<sup>5</sup> MICASE,<sup>6</sup> and SBC<sup>7</sup>) are delineated as follows: First, the British National Corpus (BNC) (Leech, Rayson, & Wilson, 2001) is a 100-million-word structured collection of spoken and written texts. The corpus was compiled by a consortium of universities, publishers, and the British government in the 1990s to be representative of the spoken and written English used in Britain at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The spoken part consists of orthographic transcriptions of unscripted informal discourses and spoken language collected in disparate contexts, ranging from formal business or government meetings to radio shows and phone-ins. It is important to

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5) The BNC is accessible at <http://www.lex tutor.ca/>

6) The MICASE is accessible at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/c/corpus/corpus?c=micase;page=simple>

7) The SBC is accessible at <http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/research/santa-barbara-corpus>

mention that this paper focuses on pragmatic functions of *definitely* in pre-front use in spoken conversation. *Definitely* in pre-front use never occurs in written conversation. Thus, only spoken data are included from this study. Based on the BNC, out of the 100 million lexemes in this corpus, a total of 26 cases of *definitely* in pre-front field were found.

Second, the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) (Simson, Briggs, Ovens, & Swales, 2002) is a compilation of approximately 1.8 million lexemes of recorded dialogue from the University of Michigan. The MICASE includes data from a wide variety of dialogic events, including seminars, lectures, advising sessions, and classroom discussions. A tremendous range of speech acts such as witticisms, definitions, expositions, private communication, and cerebral explanations can be examined. The MICASE contains dialogue events that range in length from 19 to 178 minutes, with word counts ranging from 2,805 lexemes to 30,328 lexemes. Out of the 1.8 million lexemes, a total of 35 cases of *definitely* as a DM in pre-front field were found.

Third, the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBC) (Du Bois, Chafe, Meyer, Thompson, Englebretson & Martey, 2000–2005) is a collection of nearly 249,000 lexemes of transcribed dialogues from University of California, Santa Barbara. The corpus contains audio, timestamps, and transcriptions. It includes a great variety of persons from heterogeneous ages, careers, genders, local origins, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The distinct form of language use is face-to-face discourse. Moreover, the SBC includes highly diverse speech acts such as card games, classroom discussions, telephone conversations, homilies, food preparation, on-the-job-talk, story-telling, tour-guide spiels, town hall meetings, and more. Based on the 249,000 lexemes in the SBC, a total of 8 cases of *definitely* as a DM in pre-front field were identified. Table 1 presents the distribution of *definitely* as a DM across these three corpora:

Table 1. Frequency of *definitely* as a DM on the BNC, MICASE, and SBC

	BNC	MICASE	SBC	Total
<i>Definitely</i>	26 (38%)	35 (51%)	8 (11%)	69 (100%)

*Definitely* as a DM can be used between interlocutors in spoken conversation. Based on the BNC, MICASE, and SBC, a total of 26, 35, and 8 cases of *definitely* in pre-front use as a DM were found respectively.

## 4. Analysis

This section attempts to deal with diverse pragmatic functions of *definitely* as a DM in pre-front field. Looking into different types of *definitely* in pre-front use in spoken conversation, *definitely* is observed to accompany particular linguistic devices. For example, *definitely* can be used *per se*; i.e., it can occur by itself, unaccompanied by any discourse particles. *Definitely* can also be accompanied by specific discourse particles such as *oh*, *yeah*, and *yes* and it can be combined with negators such as *no* and *not*. Lastly, the doublet of *definitely* in pre-front use can be employed in repetition. Table 2 displays the accompaniments of *definitely* with pre-front use (null), discourse particles, repetitions, and negators based on the three corpora of the BNC, MICASE, and SBC.

Table 2. Frequency of *definitely* by accompaniments on the BNC, MICASE, and SBC

Accompaniments	Pre-front use (Null)	Discourse particles	Repetitions	Negators	Total
BNC	11	13	0	2	26
MICASE	19	11	3	2	35
SBC	5	3	0	0	8
Total	35	27	3	4	69

Based on the three corpora, pre-front use (null) and discourse particles (*oh*, *yeah*, and *yes*) are utilized the most (e.g., 35 cases and 27 cases), while repetitions (*definitely. definitely*) and negators (*no* and *not*) are the least frequent (e.g., 3 cases and 4 cases). A wide variety of pragmatic functions of these linguistic devices will be treated in depth in the following section of the paper.

### 4.1. Pre-front use (null)

*Definitely* as a turn-initial element can be freestanding. The set of response tokens of *definitely* to be examined repeatedly occur as a single-lexeme response. The DM *definitely* functions as a conversational response device, i.e., *definitely* can be a response to inquiries pertaining to an earlier statement. Looking into prior studies on response devices, Fries (1952) mentions that *yes*, *huh*, *uh*, and *good* are listener responses. Yngve (1970) also states that *yes*, *okay*, and *uh-huh* are back-channel responses. As for these response

devices, *definitely* can play a role in a conversational response device analogous to that of *yes* and *okay*. Excerpts (2) and (3) show that the interlocutors use *definitely* as conversational response devices following the prior statements of the interlocutors.

- (2) 1 S2: you can understand some things your uncle says you could, have  
 2 some computer that would understand those same things and  
 3 translate them into what the written thing was.  
 4 S1: and repeat them in a clearer voice.  
 → 5 S2: [*yeah*]  
 → 6 S1: *definitely*. (MICASE)

In excerpt (2), *yeah* in line 5 is used by S2, after which the turn reverts to the prior interlocutor S1. There can be the peril of being perceived as curt or less than satisfied between the two interlocutors. S1, however, uses *definitely* in line 6 as a conversational response device, which can signal unconditional agreement and can also furnish a fuller expression of gratification than *yeah*. What is more, pre-front use of *definitely* can be used for intensification.

- (3) 1 A: Also it's kind of er even if you er sort of different people don't, I  
 2 mean a lot of people don't discuss as much as we do. I've really,  
 3 really, really realized that. Most people don't actually go into things as  
 4 deeply as we do. We've er oh it's, it's all to do with this sort of  
 5 special thing that we found. It is, it is true though.  
 → 6 B: *Definitely*. (BNC)

As shown in excerpt (3) above, *definitely* in line 6 can perform functions analogous to formulaic indications of agreement (e.g., that's + lexical items such as *right*, *correct*, and *true*). It is used as a conversational response device. *Definitely*, when placed turn-initially, is utilized to respond to a previous interlocutor, and it functions as an affirmative agreement, acknowledgment device, or back-channel signal on several levels concurrently. From a pragmatic-analytic perspective, the DM *definitely* seems to convey an affirmative response and behavior. As shown in excerpts (2) and (3), if the two interlocutors S1 and B had ceased after using *definitely*, there would have been no unaffirmative efficacy on the stream of correlation. Based on my dataset, turn-initial elements of *definitely* as a DM

appear syntactically in pre-front field, and this DM plays a role in an affirmative linguistic response device in spoken conversation.

#### 4.2. Discourse particles

*Definitely* accompanied by the three illustrative discourse particles of *oh*, *yeah*, and *yes* can occur in the second pair part. These discourse particles can be reinforced by *definitely*. The response devices do not seem to be transactionally crucial, but function as more than merely response features; *definitely* does not exclusively deal with acknowledgment and understanding but also serves as a correlational resource that allows for further affirmation of the other interlocutor's utterance. In addition to this, it can perform the function of promoting good relationships between interlocutors. *Definitely* can be accompanied by discourse particles such as *oh*, *yeah*, and *yes* and it can strengthen agreement and intimacy in spoken conversation. The following excerpt shows the type of *definitely* accompanied with *oh*.

- (4) 1 Kathy: ... What did you want to do after this test.  
 2 Nathan: ... That's it,  
 3 .. I guess.  
 4 Kathy: ... You gonna study some more tomorrow then,  
 5 right?  
 → 6 Nathan: ... *Oh definitely*. (SBC)

In line 6 of excerpt (4), Nathan's response device *oh definitely* intensifies his agreement with his addressee that promptly implicates an approbation of the addressee's attitude. Kathy asks about Nathan's plan after his test. He then displays astonishment in response and then uses *definitely* as an index of an intimate alignment. This discourse presents a social alignment indicated by *oh definitely*.

As for *definitely* as a DM in spoken conversation, *definitely* is observed to combine with *yeah* as well. Consider excerpt (5), where *definitely* occurs with *yeah*.

- (5) 1 A: It just makes leaving that much harder.

- 2 B: *Yeah.*  
 3 A: It makes like doing anything that much harder.  
 → 4 B: *Yeah. Definitely.* (BNC)

In line 2, the interlocutor B uses the discourse particle *yeah* in order to express fundamental alignment, and then the interlocutor A utters “It makes like doing anything that much harder. ’ ’ In line 4, B lastly utters *Yeah Definitely* in order to express strong alignment. It is worth mentioning that interlocutors can expand beyond basic alignment to make the response more intimate, combining with *definitely*.

Moving onto the discourse particle *yes*, it can be accompanied by *definitely*. It is signified with *yes* connoting closure. *Yes definitely* can also function as a closure device. Consider excerpt (6).

- (6) 1 A: I mean, we're led to believe that some of the people that you see  
 2 sitting on the streets of Edinburgh begging are actually making a good  
 3 living out of it!  
 → 4 B: *Yes! Definitely.* (BNC)

In excerpt (6), the two interlocutors A and B talk about young and elderly people in Edinburgh. In line 4, B uses *definitely* with the discourse particle *yes* right after A’s opinion. *Yes definitely* functions as a closure device here. Based on the three corpora including the BNC, MICASE, and SBC, *definitely* with the three discourse particles of *oh*, *yeah*, and *yes* is commonly utilized. A subset of these particles generally occurs with premodification by *definitely*, which acts to strengthen the correlations between interlocutors.

As can be seen in excerpts (4)–(6) pertaining to their accompaniments, *definitely* as a DM is commonly signified with the three discourse particles. In addition, they function to present social intimacy. To sum up, the notion of social intimacy tends to require more than comprehension, concurrence, and acknowledgment.

### 4.3. Repetition

As for a discourse reactive token, repetition of *definitely* as a DM tends to be quite

commonplace. *Definitely* seems to occur in repetition, and it appears at points of obvious colloquial convergence. In this section, I attempt to analyze correlative pragmatic functions in regard to the repetition of *definitely*. *Definitely* seems to have the potential to be a TCU. It can imply that the next interlocutor agrees with the prior interlocutor. That is, repetition of *definitely* can be connected to the prior interlocutor as an affirmative response device. Consider excerpt (7).

- (7) 1 SU-m: fascinated.  
2 S1: fascinated in awe.  
3 SU-m: yeah.  
4 S1: that deserves a Starburst right there.  
5 SU-m: (okay good.)  
→ 6 S1: *definitely. definitely.* how do you pronounce your name?  
(MICASE)

In line 6 of excerpt (7), the interlocutor S1 repeats *definitely* twice in response to the previous interlocutor SU-m. There could be some circumstances at this point that seem to account for why *definitely* as a TCU is being doubled. Repeated tokens perform the discourse functions of providing an enthusiastic or encouraging response. For instance, if the next interlocutor S1 in the second pair part had halted after using repetitive *definitely*, S1 would have had no contrary effects on the flow of interaction. *Definitely* can thus occur in doublets, promoting discourse convergence, and it can produce various pragmatic effects such as concurrence, acknowledgment, reinforcement of convergence, connection, satisfaction, clarification, confirmation, and sanguine social bonding. Thus, the repetitive use of *definitely* could be construed as an affirmative agreement in response to which it becomes highly inappropriate for interlocutors to make non-affirmative remarks at all. It can mainly show that the next interlocutor is expected to concur with the previous interlocutor. In the case of using reduplicated *definitely* between interlocutors, the doublet seems to occur often in spoken conversation. What is more, as shown in excerpt (7) above, S1 attempts to shift S1's topic right after S1 agrees with SU-m, as in "*definitely. definitely.* how do you pronounce your name? ' ' in line 6. It is significant to state that reduplicative *definitely* seems to function as a topic-resuming device when interlocutors intend to go back a prior topic.

Repetition of *definitely* can be a method of claiming the floor, i.e., of asserting one's

right to make the next utterance. This use of *definitely* gains interlocutors more time in conversation as well. In addition, it can be a pattern of concentrating attention. Excerpt (8) demonstrates that repetition of *definitely* can play a discursive role in such a way as to obtain the floor.

- (8) 1 S1: if you have any questions, (you\_) thank you very much, this is  
 2 the first group that's clapped you guys. so anyway i'm just gonna  
 3 hang out over here so if you guys wanna come over here or you  
 4 don't that's fine, um you can go, take a leak or, anything, over  
 5 there if you want through those same buildings (over there.) you  
 6 had a question?  
 7 SU-m: (can i have a) frisbee?  
 → 8 S1: *yeah. definitely. definitely.* so we're done, actually, if you guys,  
 9 [R1: okay.] want this back. [SU-m: (where is) (xx)] um we're  
 10 just gonna play (MICASE)

This conversation is about a freshman orientation tour. As can be seen in excerpt (8) above, S1 in line 8 assents with SU-m's shift of topic (from procedural clarification to asking about outdoor game equipment), then S1 attempts to reclaim the floor after using reduplication of *definitely*: "*yeah. definitely. definitely.* so we're done, actually, if you guys want this back. um we're just gonna play ' '. In other words, *definitely* can be mainly reiterated in the second pair part. It can play a pragmatic role as a strategy to retain the floor until the next interlocutor's turn. Interlocutors can thus get more chances to engage in discourse after repeating *definitely*. In this way, this DM can act as a bridging device, as a method of utilizing agreeable disturbance between interlocutors. The preferred responses seem to elicit affirmative acknowledgment and concurrence rather than unaffirmative responses or disagreements when turn beginnings entail responses to the prior interlocutor. Although unaffirmative responses can also occur, they almost never appear from my dataset. These findings suggest that the affirmation-eliciting property of *definitely* functions as an interactive device and can strengthen the preference for acknowledgment, concurrence, and solidarity.

#### 4.4. Negators

The preceding analysis suggests a couple of peculiarities of *definitely* in regards to its pragmatic roles in spoken conversation. First, it is frequently practicable to use *definitely* as a DM between interlocutors. Second, *definitely* can function as an affirmative response device. Throughout the observations, *definitely* seems to have an affirmative semantic connotation and it also has affirmative pragmatic roles. That is, it is less likely to be negated with *no* or *not*. Looking into previous studies, Pomerantz (1984: 70) states that, with respect to multiple constituents pertaining to discordance between interlocutors, “A substantial number of such disagreements are produced with stated disagreement components delayed or withheld from early positioning within turns and sequences. ’ ’ What is more, she mentions that disagreements can contain a negator such as *no* and *not*. Based on my dataset, *definitely* may be negated with a negator *no*, which universally has an unaffirmative connotation. Consider excerpt (9).

- (9) 1 A: By the time you had arrested him or put his trousers on. How many  
 2 people were in the room?  
 3 B: There would still have been er P C with the shield and P C with the  
 4 shotgun.  
 5 A: Giving you cover?  
 6 B: That's right yes.  
 7 A: Did you point the gun or shove a gun into the back of Mr head?  
 → 8 B: *No, definitely no.* (BNC)

In line 7 of excerpt (9), the interlocutor A asks the other interlocutor B. “Did you point the gun or shove a gun into the back of Mr head? ’ ’ B, in line 8, says *no* to express basic disagreement, and then lastly uses *definitely no* to express strong disagreement. However, *definitely* with the negator *not* can be used as an affirmative response device if it is interpreted with reference to its global dialogical and sequential circumstance. This linguistic device does not seem to be an exceedingly frequent phenomenon. Consider excerpt (10).

- (10) 1 A: I mean th there's er no doubt that the microchips that erm takes  
 2 away the erm the teletext information, stores it and then spits up  
 3 whatever you ask for is er two or three P now I suppose and  
 4 therefore the, the television manufacturer charges hundred pounds to

- 5        put it in.  
 6 B:    Mm. It's er it's you're, you're, you're, you're quite erm hooked on  
 7        it?  
 8 A:    Ah well yes I wouldn't like to be without it now.  
 → 9 B:    *Definitely not.* (BNC)

As can be seen in excerpt (10), the interlocutor A talks about the microchips, and puts a great amount of trusts in their reliability. The other interlocutor B produces *definitely not* in response to A's utterance. B unhesitatingly uses *definitely* in line 9, which plays a role in the affirmative agreement. Note that if the negator *not* accompanied by *definitely* were decontextualized, it might be constructed as having an unaffirmative connotation without reference to its sequential circumstance. An interesting finding is that *definitely not*, however, can function as an affirmative response device if the circumstance is thoroughly considered. Throughout the analysis, *definitely* is accompanied by the negator *not*, and it appears in intensive contexts of concurrence. That is, it signals acknowledgment, not disapprobation. This section has examined on multifarious pragmatic roles of *definitely* as a DM in spoken conversation. It can play a great variety of discourse roles such as those of topic shift, bridging or it can indicate concurrence, gratification, motivation, inspiration, and intimacy. Thus, *definitely* seems to have an affirmative semantic connotation, and interlocutors express an affirmative agreement as an affirmative response device, to create an intimacy-building correlation and good rapport.

## 5. Conclusion

From a pragmatic-analytic perspective, this paper has focused on *definitely* as a DM. *Definitely* has frequently been used as a conversational response device between interlocutors in spoken conversation. This section summarizes the findings of the study pertaining to the three research questions proposed in Section 1. The first research question asks whether there are disparate types of *definitely* in pre-front field. *Definitely* shows the four heterogenous types of conversational response devices in its pre-front field. For instance, *definitely* can be used independently, by itself. It can be utilized with negators such as *no* and *not* as well as discourse particles such as *oh*, *yeah*, and *yes*. Lastly, the

doublet of *definitely* can be used, in reduplication. The second research question deals with the issue of the discourse roles of *definitely* in spoken conversation. Throughout the analysis in regard to its pragmatic functions, it has been shown that *definitely* can play such roles as approval, consensus, eagerness, stimulation, gratification, floor-holding, topic-shift, pre-closing signal, intimacy, and bridging between interlocutors. The third question addresses the issue of the semantic preferences of *definitely*. The answer to the third question concerning its semantic-analytic perspective is that *definitely* has a strongly affirmative semantic preference.

Based on the findings we surmise that *definitely* frequently occurs in contexts of affirmative connections with interlocutors, expressing concurrence as a way of establishing an intimate interaction and promoting a better social relationship; i.e., semantically, *definitely* has an strong affirmative semantic connotation, and pragmatically, it can also be used as an affirmative conversational response device. On the basis of the results obtained in the current examination, the series of questions sought in this study could be extended in further research by investigating the practicality of *definitely* as a DM in various kinds of institutional talk for any analogousness or heterogeneousness with respect to the diverse functions found in spoken conversation. Feasible sources of data include various live and telephone interactions such as news interviews, talk shows, and corporate customer services.

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