Modal adverbs of certainty in Australian, British and American English

A corpus-based study of the modal adverbs of certainty *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* in Australian, British and American English

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Abstract

Modal adverbs of certainty as well as modality in general have been an interesting research area for linguists for decades. We may wonder why modal expressions are well established in languages, and why people tend to use modal adverbs, adjectives and expressions of a similar character when expressing commitment to a proposition. What is the underlying meaning of utterances such as “Surely this looks good” and “No doubt you are the expert”? What is the difference between “You’re certainly right” and the unmodalized “You’re right”? Surely, certainly and no doubt are all categorized as modal adverbs of certainty, but why do people prefer surely to certainly and no doubt in a particular context?

British, American and Australian English are all considered to be English varieties with well-established standards. It is, however, widely acknowledged that there are distinct differences between them both in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation. But what about the actual use of the language? For example, are the same expressions used in the same way both syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically in BrE, AmE and AusE? More specifically, do the adverbs certainly, surely and no doubt show the same distributional patterns and fulfill similar functions at the discourse-pragmatic level in the three English varieties?

The study has shown that although certainly, surely and no doubt belong to the same category, namely modal adverbs of certainty, they differ substantially both in terms of the degree of certainty they convey and the syntactic and contextual environments they occur. Certainly, surely and no doubt can be used to achieve a rhetorical effect but the rhetorical effects differ, thus selecting a particular adverb is closely related to the motivation or intention of the speakers, and it is context-dependent.

The results of the analysis have also revealed some distributional and contextual differences of certainly, surely and no doubt in the three English varieties. The general pattern is, however, that the three adverbs perform similar roles at the discourse-pragmatic level in British, American and Australian English.

Keywords: Modality, Modal adverbs of certainty, Corpus studies, English varieties, Australian English, British English, American English, Epistemic modality, certainly, surely, no doubt, Linguistic identity, Discourse analysis.
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I developed an interest for writing when I was a pupil at primary school, and was good at writing essays in Chinese. This was my earliest experience of language. As I age, my passion for English language and literature has outweighed my other interests, but it was not until last summer did I pluck up the courage to resign from my job as a Team coordinator and pursue my interest in language. Although I was well-prepared that it would be a long and hard journey, I did lose my faith on several occasions.

Finally, I am approaching the end of the journey, and it has been an invaluable experience. I am grateful for the constructive and valuable advice, encouragement, and generous support I received from my deeply respected supervisor Signe Oksefjell Ebeling.

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List of abbreviations

AusE – Australian English

BrE – British English

AmE – American English

Corpora mentioned

FROWN - The Freiburg Brown Corpus of American English

FLOB - The Freiburg LOB Corpus of British English

ACE - The Australian Corpus of English
1. Introduction

_Certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_ are all classified as modal adverbs which express a meaning towards the high probability extreme. In other words, they are considered to express the speaker’s strong commitment to the truth of the proposition (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 69). Despite the obvious similarities between the three adverbs, it is assumed that the degree of the certainty conveyed by _certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_ differ, and so do the functions they perform in a linguistic context. It is of great interest to identify the similarities and differences in terms of the contextual use of _certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_. It should be pointed out that similar researches have been done before, but most of them focus either on British or American English, and there seems to be no direct comparison involved. My interest in this topic was sparked when I was studying the subject of Global English in which different aspects of a number of English varieties were compared. The focus of the present study is to explore the linguistic patterns of _certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_ in British, American and Australian English.

As mentioned, many studies have been carried out to investigate the linguistic differences between the two mainstream English varieties, namely British and American English. For example, the meanings and functions of _sure_ in American English are found to be absent or rare in British English. In AmE, it is frequently used as a sentence adverb conveying a similar meaning to _certainly_, e.g. _I sure can tell_, and _He sure likes to drink_. This use was previously acceptable in BrE but has now almost disappeared (Tottie 2002: 169).

Not until the end of the eighteenth century did the first British settlers reach the continent of Australia. Over 17 million speakers have English as their first language in Australia today (Melchers and Shaw 2011: 7). Despite the relatively short history of the country, Australia is considered to have developed its own linguistic identity. Is this distinctiveness of Australian English reflected in the use of _certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_?

1.1 Aim and scope

This thesis aims to explore meanings and functions of three modal adverbs of certainty: _certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_, and how these expressions are used in British, American and Australian English. It is a corpus-based study, drawing on data from the Freiburg LOB Corpus of British English (FLOB), the Freiburg Brown Corpus of American English (FROWN), and the Australian Corpus of English (ACE) to carry out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of _certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_ in the three varieties of English.

The research questions are formed as follows:

1. _Certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_ belong to the category of modal adverbs of certainty. Do they differ in terms of frequency of use, distributional patterns, functions they perform, and syntactic and contextual environments they occur in FLOB, FROWN and ACE?
2. Is Australian English’s linguistic identity reflected in the use of _certainly, surely_ and _no doubt_? In other words, to what extent does Australian English differ from British
and American English in terms of the distributional patterns and contextual uses of the three modal adverbs of certainty under investigation?

1.2 Varieties of English – British, American and Australian English

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a set of grammatical and lexical features were defined by publishers and educationalists. The varieties characterized by these “correct” features were British and American English and later known as Standard English. These differ considerably in pronunciation but are very close in grammar. There are also small but noticeable differences in spelling and vocabulary between British and American English (Melchers and Shaw 2011: 33). These two varieties have been widely studied.

Australian English, together with other varieties of English, are characterized as local standards. Despite heavy influence from BrE in the past, AusE is commonly acknowledged as a variety in its own right. Moreover, as is the case of most English varieties, AusE has been exposed to the major influence of AmE. Consequently, Australians are considered to possess “double competence” in the sense that they tend to beat American and British competitors since they are capable of mastering two varieties (Melchers and Shaw 2011: 33).

One of the main contributions of this study will be to add some insights into the use of modal adverbs in AusE in comparison with BrE and AmE. To illustrate that AusE may behave differently from one or both of the other varieties, some previous observations on AusE will be outlined in section 1.2.1, while the alleged influences from AmE will be discussed in section 1.2.2.

1.2.1 Previous studies of Australian English

Due to the fact that very few studies about certainty/probability adverbs in AusE were found, the studies presented in this section mainly address some characteristics of AusE and how it differs from its counterparts, and in this case, BrE and AmE.

As Trudgill puts it, Australian English can be seen as “mainstream” and it does not differ, neither at any linguistic level nor at any level of standardness, from other major English varieties (Trudgill 1986: 143, quoted by Newbrook 2001: 113). There are few non-standard syntactic features which are remarkably more prevalent in Australia compared to other English speaking countries. The main exceptions involve cases where Australia follows standard British norms which are considered non-standard in the United States, or less commonly, the other way around (due to the increasing American influence; Sussex 1989; Taylor 1989). However, there is no obvious Australian non-standard form (Newbrook 2001: 113). Standard AusE, though sharing some AmE features, is still much less syntactically distinctive from BrE than AmE and BrE are from each other (Newbrook 2001: 115).

According to the surveys conducted by Peters (1995) and Newbrook (2001), some more or less distinctive features of AusE have been identified. These include preferences in AusE for particular prepositions (e.g. different to rather than different from in BrE, and different than in AmE), backshifting (e.g. a preference for unshifted verb forms in indirect statement clauses...
after past tense verbs), and the use of less rather than fewer with plurals (Newbrook 2001: 118-122).

Other distinctive features of AusE that have been noted involve modality and are thus considered more relevant to the current context. Some examples given by Newbrook are presented below (Newbrook 2001: 118 – 127).

- **Epistemic have (got) to**

  It shows that younger Australians (as well as some younger British people) find the epistemic use of have (got) to (1.1) quite acceptable though the usage can be considered an Americanism by many other British people. In traditional British English, have (got) to can only substitute must in deontic uses, as in (1.2), (Newbrook: 2001: 126).

  
  (1.1) Martina has (got) to be the best player in the world!
  (1.2) Martina has (got) to be home by midnight!

- **Would (have) in the protases of remote conditionals**

  According to Newbrook, Australians use the traditionally American would (would have/would’ve) in the remote past + main verb in the protases of remote conditionals (1.3) and (1.4), rather than the more usual British/Australian singly backshifted simple past (remote present/future) and doubly backshifted past perfect (remote past/counterfactual), as in (1.5) and (1.6), (Newbrook: 2001: 126-127).

  
  (1.3) If he would do that it would be perfect.
  (1.4) If he would have done that it would be perfect.
  (1.5) If he did that it would be perfect.
  (1.6) If he had done that it would be perfect.

- **Epistemic mustn’t**

  Considerable evidence (Newbrook 1992: 4, 1993: 54) has been found to support the claim that mustn’t is used in epistemic sense quite freely in AusE, as in (1.7). This use differs from both Southern English English (where can’t is usual), as in (1.8) and North AmE (where uncontracted must not is preferred), as in (1.9).

  
  (1.7) She mustn’t be at home; the light’s off.
  (1.8) She can’t be at home; the light’s off.
  (1.9) She must not be at home; the light’s off.

In the light of these so-called Australianisms, and in the area of modality in particular, it will be interesting to see to what extent modal adverbs show any special AusE uses.

**1.2.2 The Americanization of Australian English?**

In an assessment of the status of Australian English, Taylor considers AusE as a receiver of linguistic material from other Englishes rather than a giver of it. The previous mainly British
Influence has to a great extent been replaced by substantial and increasing American influence as a result of the digital media industry. Many members of the Australian public and journalists are concerned about the massive American influence on AusE, which they think is threatening the survival of AusE as a distinctive national variety. However, the view of some linguists is far less pessimistic. For example, Peters claims that AusE has long incorporated AmE borrowings without speakers seeming to feel that they are doing their variety harm (Peters 1993: 23-25; 1994: passim). Given the increasing speed of technological development which brings the inhabitants of different continents even closer together and subjects potential informants to even more intense exposure to AmE, it is hard to make any firm predictions (Taylor 2001: 333-334).

In the study of the grammaticalisation of epistemic/evidential verbs in Australian English, for example, Louro and Harris (Louro & Harris 2011: 417, 437-439) have examined whether the distributional tendencies noted for other varieties of English (e.g. think, guess and reckon) can also be attested for AusE. They conclude that distributionally, with the exception of reckon, AusE is in line with other Englishes in the preponderance of epistemic and its overwhelming preference for think. In addition, they point out the high usage frequency of guess in the AusE corpora, a finding which was at odds with the relative frequencies noted for British English but closely in line with American English.

In the study of “Quasi-modals and Modals in Australian English Fiction 1800-1999, with comparisons across British and American English”, Collins examines the four quasi-modals in AusE which have been grammaticalizing rapidly over the period from 1800 to 1999 (have to and have got to representing the domain of necessity/obligation, and want to and be going to representing volition/prediction), and compare them with semantically related modals (must, should, ought to, will and shall). A comparison with British and American English for the same period shows that in the results for the declining modals, there are arguably strong indications of an AusE progression toward linguistic independence. AusE distances itself from the conservative BrE, recording milder changes and lower frequencies than its colonial parent (lower also than for AmE in all cases except should and shall, where they are almost identical) (Collins 2014: 7-30).

Again, it will be interesting to see how the modal adverbs under investigation fit into the claims and observations made by the linguists referred to above regarding the issue of Americanization.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. In addition to outlining previous studies, a detailed discussion of modality and in particular, modal adverbs of certainty will be presented in chapter 2. Chapter 3 will give a brief description of data collection and methodology.

In chapters 4, 5 and 6, an analysis and discussion of certainly, surely and no doubt used in BrE, AmE and AusE will be provided. A separate discussion comparing certainly, surely and no doubt functioning as modal adverbs of certainty will be given in chapter 7, and chapter 8 provides the conclusion of the study.
2. Background and previous studies

In this chapter a brief discussion of modality will be presented (2.1), followed by a fairly detailed description of modal adverbs of certainty (2.2). Some previous studies of certainly, surely and no doubt will be presented in (2.3).

2.1 Modality

Halliday claims that in addition to polarity, which concerns the choice between yes and no, there are intermediate degrees, expressions such as sometimes and maybe, which fall in between the definite yes and no. These intermediate degrees are commonly known as modality (Halliday 2013: 176).

In English, modality can be expressed in various ways, including modal adverbs, adjectives, nouns, auxiliary and lexical verbs. For example:

- He certainly will accept the offer. (adverb)
- It is a certainty that he will accept the offer. (noun)
- It is certain that he will accept the offer. (adjective)
- He may accept the offer. (auxiliary verb)
- I think he will accept the offer (lexical verb)

The focus in this thesis is on the first of these modal expressions, namely modal adverbs.

2.2 Modal adverbs of certainty

Quirk et al. (1985) classify the modal adverbs in a category called “content disjuncts”, also known as “attitudinal disjuncts”. These disjuncts are considered to “make observations on the actual content of the utterance and its truth conditions” (Halliday 1985: 615). Disjuncts are syntactically detached and “superordinate” in the sense that they “have a scope that extends over the sentence as a whole” (ibid. 613). Content disjuncts are subdivided into two categories based on their semantic meanings, those which make an observation on the degree of truth (obviously, certainly) and those which make a value judgement of the content (understandably, wisely), (ibid. 620).

On the other hand, Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer divide modal adverbs into epistemic certainty adverbs and expectation adverbs. Certainly, surely, no doubt and indeed belong to the category of epistemic certainty adverbs. These adverbs are considered to express a high degree of speaker commitment to the truth of the proposition while they do not specifically refer to modes, sources and matches of that knowledge. By comparison, of course belongs to the category of expectation adverbs. This type of adverbs share the characteristic in that their core meaning of certainty is based on the fact that the state of affairs is in accordance with expectations (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer: 84).

In terms of the nature of modal adverbs (and adjectives), Nuyts (2001) remarks that they “may be considered the ‘purest’ expressions for epistemic modality, in the sense that they are the most precise and specific means available for making the degree of likelihood of a state of
On the epistemic scale, *certain(ly)* is at the extreme positive end, *probable/probably* is considered as in the middle on the positive side of the scale, *possible/possibly* is near or at the neutral point, in the middle between the positive and the negative side of the scale (Nuyts 2001: 55). In terms of syntax, unlike adjectives which have a fixed position in an utterance, the multiple positionability and “free” nature is a distinctive characteristic of adverbs (Nuyts 2001: 57). Nuyts claims that unlike modal adjectives, which are intersubjective, modal adverbs are not (Nuyts 2001: 70). On the other hand, Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer observe that modal adverbs are inherently neutral in terms of (inter)subjectivity but contextual factors may turn them into subjective or intersubjective expressions (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 72). Nuyts also argues that adjectives do but adverbs do not allow descriptive uses. Instead of referring to some other person’s assessment of a state of affairs or a state of affairs performed by the speaker him/herself at some other moment than the moment of speaking, modal adverbs can only express the speaker’s assessment “here and now”. Unlike adjectives which can occur in questioning and conditional structures, adverbs cannot (Nuyts 2001: 76-77). According to Nuyts, the “performative” nature of modal adverbs enable them to only occur in declarative clauses, since only these express the speaker’s commitment to the proposition. Speakers cannot question their own commitment to the truth value (Nuyts 2001), as in *Has she certainly come?*

However, it can be argued that certain modal adverbs do actually occur in questions, such as *surely* and *no doubt*. In such cases, speakers typically ask for confirmation or seek agreement. This is one of the rhetorical uses of *surely* and *no doubt*, hence both adverbs are observed to be used as an argumentative strategy. This point will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5 and 6.

There are various reasons for using adverbs expressing a high degree of certainty, for example, when speakers want to position themselves in the current discourse, vis-a-vise other voices, or when they wish to open up or close down the dialogue (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 33). Modal adverbs are indexically related to variables in the social situation and are associated with types of social activity, with social roles and with power (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 5).

These adverbs express degrees of speaker certitude towards the truth of the proposition. The degrees are inconsistent in any particular adverb and may vary in accordance with the context (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 38). “Truth value” is discussed by Hoye (1997) in that it is implicit in the definition of epistemic modality as a qualification of an assertive. Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer go further by saying that in many cases, modal markers are not used by speakers to qualify their commitment to the truth value but for other reasons, and the interpretation of epistemically modified assertives is therefore dependent on extralinguistic clues (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 38). For example, the ironical or sarcastic “You must be extremely kind” does not express the speaker’s commitment to the truth value but rather implying the negative attitude of the speaker towards the addressee.

Heteroglossia and rhetorical functions are important in the discussion of modal adverbs. The contexts in which speakers feel the need to express that they are “certain” are those in which
they wish to align or disalign with other viewpoints. This is what “heteroglossic” choices are for. Alignment can be expressed in a context when the speaker confirms another speaker’s statement or focuses on shared knowledge, whereas disalignment can be expressed when the speaker emphasizes that he/she is certain of the truth of his/her own statement, in contrast with alternative views (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 304). For example, surely is frequently used as a rhetorical strategy. It expresses alignment on one level (an attempt to check that speaker and addressee share the same point of view) and disalignment on another (the speaker’s suspicion that the addressee’s beliefs are different from his/her own and that his/her own are the “truth”. Downing states that adverbs of certainty can be used to achieve rhetorical effect, and these adverbs can have functions such as persuasion, manipulation, challenging, confrontation or acceptance (Downing 2001: 257). For example, surely is often used by speakers to claim that “they know better than the hearer” (Downing 2001: 255).

Moreover, Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer argue that all adverbs of modality can be used for achieving rhetorical effect: they do not only convey degrees of subjective knowledge but are all potentially strategies of persuasion and negotiation (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 75). Speakers take different stances depending on whether they align themselves or distance themselves from a viewpoint, thus it is necessary to distinguish between the epistemic meaning and rhetorical function of the adverbs. The rhetorical function of an adverb of certainty signals that an utterance presents a stronger argument than an alternative one (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 41).

On the other hand, White (2000, 2003) has argued that speakers may use epistemic or evidential adverbs for different reasons which do not necessarily have to do with the assessment of their own or the hearer’s knowledge. Speakers express how they engage with their utterances and “engagement” includes the systems of modality and evidentiality as ways in which speakers position themselves vis-à-vis other, real or imagined voices (White 2000, 2003; quoted by Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen: 2004: 1784).

According to Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, stances such as “authority” and “solidarity” can be expressed by the same adverbs depending on both the type of speech act in which the adverbs occur and the status relationship between speaker and hearer (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 312).

Surely and no doubt have also developed the meaning of “according to expectations”, however, unlike obviously which presents an evidential source, surely and no doubt express epistemic certainty, and these two adverbs are considered to have a weaker degree of epistemic certainty. As a result, surely and no doubt are frequently used by speakers when they have less than full certainty but wish to express commitment to a very high degree of probability (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 312-313). The famous statement made by Halliday “we only say we are certain when we are not” (Halliday 2004: 625) says a lot about the complicity and sophistications associated with modality. Similarly, Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer claim that we only express certainty if it cannot be taken for granted. Thus an utterance containing the highest degree of modal certainty still conveys less certainty than an unmodalized one (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 284).
Halliday points out that although *certainly* and *always* are considered to be high value modal, they are still less determinate than a polar form. In other words, *that’s certainly John* is less certain than *that’s John*, similarly, *it always rains in summer* is less certain than *it rains in summer* (Halliday 2013: 177). The assessment of probability is typically presented as negotiable with the addressee, and may therefore occur in statements which seek confirmation. However, *surely* and *no doubt* express authority rather than solidarity. The reason is, as Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer put it, since the speaker is not in a position to have absolute certainty and yet uses an adverb whose primary meaning is certainty, he/she claims the authority to make such an epistemic assessment. Therefore, asking for confirmation with *surely* and *no doubt* is frequently power-oriented, the addressee is expected to confirm, not to contradict. In addition, the adverb *no doubt* expresses irony in some contexts. The ironical meaning can be seen in relation to the development of the meaning of “according to expectations”: certainty based on what happens regularly. Hence the predictability may lead to ridicule, and in such contexts, *no doubt* conveys superiority and authority combined with a slightly mocking tone (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 312-313).

Both *surely* and *no doubt* convey a subjective commitment which goes beyond an epistemic one, however, they differ in that *no doubt* conveys “I expect this to be the case”, while *surely* conveys “I believe this to be the case and want you to confirm this in the context of apparent disagreement” (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer: 316-317).

2.3 Previous studies of *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt*

The present study will focus on *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt*, which are commonly acknowledged as epistemic certainty adverbs. Although *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* are all classified as modal adverbs of certainty, they belong to two different categories. Adverbs formed with the –*ly* suffix, such as *certainly* and *surely*, are termed central modal adverbs, whereas adverbs formed without the –*ly* suffix, such as *no doubt* are termed peripheral adverbs (Suzuki 2015: 1367)

It is assumed that *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* express various degrees of certainty and perform different rhetorical functions in a discourse. It is of great interest to explore the similarities and differences between them on the basis of previous studies.

2.3.1 *Certainly*

In Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer’s study (2007), 21 modal adverbs which express a meaning towards the high probability extreme have been analyzed. One of the aims to the study is to find out the contextual uses of particular adverbs (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007). *Certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* are all included in the list though it shows that they perform various functions and convey different levels of certainty. Among the 21 adverbs investigated, *certainly* is the second most frequent adverb (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 85). According to Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, the reasons why one adverb is less frequent than another one may have to do with the semantics, the pragmatics or the stylistics. The semantic meaning of *certainly* is more frequently chosen by speakers than for instance
inevitably as the latter has a more specific meaning than the former. Pragmatic factors concern for example, the development of rhetorical functions which some adverbs have or the fact that some adverbs have become more frequently used as a discourse marker. In addition, some adverbs are more stylistically marked than others, the general rule is, the more formal an item the lower its frequency (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 80-81).

Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer claim that certainly has developed into a sentence adverb without retaining its status as a manner adverb, suggesting that the adverb has gone quite far in the process of pragmaticalization (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 85). In the study of “Almost certainly and most definitely – Degree modifiers and epistemic stance”, Simon-Vandenbergen mentions that semantically, certainly is a “neutral” adverb of certainty which means that the state of affairs is considered to be certain. The fact that it does not have an evidential dimension makes it the most superfluous one among the certainty adverbs. The superfluous nature has led to the development of a specific profile for certainly. According to Simon-Vandenbergen, the implicature which to a large extent has been conventionalized is “if speakers add a marker of certainty they must have a reason to do so.” Hence certainly typically occurs in contexts of contrast and concession, in which a proposition is presented as certain in contrast with another one. (Simon-Vandenbergen 2008: 1531).

From a syntagmatic point of view, the finding reveals that there are only two degree adverbs which precede certainly, namely most and almost. Whereas most pushes up the degree of certainty, almost lowers it (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 86). According to Biber et al. (1999), almost certainly is particularly frequent in academic prose. This usage can be considered as careful assessment of the degree of certainty with which a statement can be made. The fact that certainly is the most frequent collocate of almost indicates that the conceptualization of the adverb as a limit or totality concept is preferred in present-day English. (Biber et al. 1999: 546)

Certainly appears to be flexible in terms of positions in which it occurs in the clause. Medial position is most frequent, initial position is also frequent, and end position and “other” positions likewise occur. In addition, certainly is used as a response (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 86).

From a semantic point of view, it has been shown that medial position is considered to be unmarked; certainly either precedes or follows the finite verb immediately. In this position, the adverb is firmly integrated within the clause. However, it is pointed out that if the adverb occurs before the finite verb where post-finite would have been possible, it has a more marked position.

Initial certainly can have various functions; when initial certainly is separated by a comma, it becomes a discourse marker which has the whole of the following clause in its scope. However, there are more cases in which certainly, instead of having scope of the whole of the following clause, only has scope over the following element. In other words, certainly frequently occurs with a narrow scope, marking one element in clause as certain (Simon-Vandenbergen 2008: 1532). Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer refer this type of use as “focalizer” in the sense that it focalizes a particular element, for example, the subject or a
marked theme functioning as an adverbial (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 86-88). The development can be explained from its flexibility to occur anywhere in the sentence, and it enables the adverb to have any element in its scope. Hence the meaning of speaker commitment to the truth is weakened to “particularly”, “at least” (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 300). Example (2.1) is given by Simon-Vandenbergen to illustrate the focalizing function of certainly, and which can be paraphrased as particularly or at least.

(2.1) It seems to me that for instance certainly within the Jewish tradition it’s very difficult to identify a concept of the secular in the sense of that which is outside the realm of religion (ICE-GB:S1B-028/40S)

Certainly in end position can be seen as an afterthought, and the scope is the whole of the proposition (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 86-88). This function is illustrated by example (2.2) given by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer.

(2.2) A: I mean
I don’t know whether
what can we do
hopefully they’ll ring me up <,> and say <,>
we’ll give you a call get in touch with you <,>
do you think the letter addresses the issue
B: no <,> yeah yeah
yeah yeah I think it does
A: yeah
B: it does
I mean that I think if you <,> send that to him he’s got to
Address the issue <,> this time certainly (ICE-GB: S1A-078/159)

Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer suggest that as the case of definitely, certainly also has developed from a modal adverb towards an emphasizer, this feature is illustrated by (2.3), which is an example given by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 89). In such cases, certainly may strengthen the forceful sense.

(2.3) Oh and certainly use the time to visit schools, different sorts of schools. (ICE-GB:S1A-033/196)

In addition, certainly is found to occur in clauses introduced by but. In such cases, Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer claim that it contrasts information which is certain with uncertainty in the preceding clause. On the other hand, certainly may also be followed by a but-clause when the speaker contrasts what is certain with a proposition which is more foregrounded. According to Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, backgrounding a proposition which is qualified as certain and then contrasting it with another proposition indicate concession (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 91 - 92). Example (2.4) and (2.5) are given by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer to illustrate the two features, respectively.
(2.4) Well we **don’t know** the nature of the disease **but** it **certainly** produces attacks of ascending infection, and it in any case produces hardening of the glands and indeed if it doesn’t swell it becomes palpable (ICE-GB:S1B-010/87)

(2.5) And I put forward the argument which could **certainly** be contested uh **but** which I have some faith in that some residue remains…(ICE-GB:S1B-028/30)

Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer claim that **certainly** and **of course** are the two adverbs which frequently occur in concessive contexts. They are often used in clauses which express agreement with some viewpoint and then contrast that statement with another one in a **but** clause (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 303). The difference between **of course** and **certainly** is while **of course** confidently presents a proposition as shared knowledge, **certainly** conveys certainty about one element but at the same time expresses uncertainty about another (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 211). In other words, “**certainly** typically foregrounds certainty in contrast with uncertainty, while **of course** foregrounds common knowledge in contrast with new information.” (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 317). As a result, **certainly** frequently occurs in discussion contexts where truth is not presented as self-evident or as shared knowledge. The same principle applies to the focalizing function of **certainly** in that the adverb expresses certainty about one aspect, one element, and then implicitly expresses uncertainty about other aspects (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 211); see example (2.4).

Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer further claim that **certainly** presents the proposition as certain from a subjective and relative point of view. Therefore, it is compatible with uncertainty markers and frequently occurs in contexts of discussion in which balancing one’s viewpoints is an option (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 212-213).

As a response, **certainly** signals emphatic agreement, as in example (2.6), (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 92).

(2.6) A: Mm Yeah And the people still play cricket on it
B: **Oh yes certainly** (ICE-GB:S1A-056/163)

The various functions of **certainly** suggest that the adverb has developed a profile which reflects the rhetorical need to mark certainty in “heteroglossic” contexts of doubt and disagreement as well as for interpersonal reasons such as politeness and reassurance (Simon-Vandenbergen 2008: 1533).

### 2.3.2 **Surely**

In Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer’s study (2007), **surely** is not among the most frequent adverbs in their corpus, and it indicates that the interactional usefulness must to some extent be more restricted than that of the more frequent adverbs such as **certainly** and **of course**. Unlike **certainly**, which frequently occurs after premodifiers such as **almost**, **surely** was not found with premodifiers, (this feature is shared with **no doubt**, see section 2.3.3).
The study shows that *surely* most frequently takes initial position in a clause, and in this position it collocates in half the cases (15 out of 30) with a modal auxiliary such as *could, should, will, have, must*. In such cases, Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer claim that the speaker expresses an opinion on what is possible/likely or what is desirable. The statement is therefore not about certainty but about some subjective evaluation. *Surely* does not make such statements stronger but rather builds into them the possibility of being contradicted. The speaker seeks confirmation, approval or agreement from the hearer/addressee (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 134-136).

When *surely* occurs in initial position, it is followed by the conjunction *but* in 10 out of the 30 instances. This suggests that *surely* is a useful word in the exchange of arguments (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 137).

*Surely* in end position highlights the adverb since it comes as an afterthought and marks the meaning expressed by *surely* as crucial by the speaker. In this position, its function of inviting confirmation, of reaching out to the addressee becomes even stronger. When it comes to medial position, *surely* may occur before or after the finite, and the emphasis is stronger in pre-finite position than post-finite. According to Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, it is in medial position that the meaning of “truly, indeed” becomes clear, and in such cases, *surely* has lost its epistemic meaning and functions as an emphasizer or intensifier (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 138-139).

Downing claims that unlike other certainty adverbs which are interchangeable, *surely* is hardly ever interchangeable with any of the other “certainty” adverbials, particularly when occurring initially. One of its typical uses is to be challenging and confrontational rather than polite. It is, according to Downing, what Haviland (1987) calls “a fighting word”. In addition, it also differs from other “certainty” adverbs in that it is capable of expressing surprise (Downing 2001: 253). Downing argues that *surely* is automatically triggered as a pragmatic response to an appropriate discourse stimulus and is the best possible form available, thus the main present use of *surely* is subjective in meaning (Downing 2001: 254). Downing further claims that utterances which contain *surely*, are based on perceptions, beliefs and assumptions used at a particular point in the discourse: first, there is a perception of differences in terms of state of knowledge between speaker and hearer; second, the speaker believes that the statement marked by *surely* is the only true, reasonable or acceptable one. In other words, the speaker knows better than the hearer. And thirdly, the speaker and the hearer are in principle, considered to share a common ground or attitude, and at some point in the discourse or conversation, the speaker senses or realizes that the viewpoint between them starts to differ, thus *surely* is used as marker of speaker self-validation. Downing concludes that *surely* has three crucial meanings: *surely* as a marker of self-validation, *surely* expressing surprisal or mirative meaning, and *surely* as a way to foresee and to defend oneself against possible denial (Downing 2001: 255-257).

As claimed by Downing, *surely* is a marker of evidentiality and stance. Evidentials are contemplated as interactive devises or resources for redefining common ground between the speaker and hearer. In addition to referential content, they may also signal or reflect meanings
such as confrontation and contradictory assumptions. In a conversation between interlocutors, speakers do not only make statements and ask questions or advice, they frequently pass on meta-discoursal messages with attitudinal character to the addressee as well as the ideational content of the utterance itself. These messages make it possible for the speakers to take stances of a moral or a social nature which signal their commitment and values, and position themselves in relation to the addressee in terms of status and knowledge (Downing 2002: 251-252). Surely belongs to the linguistic group which is often termed stance markers whose lexically encoded meaning underdetermines the contribution of the markers to the overall meaning communicated by the utterances in which they occur (Andersen and Fretheim 2000:2, quoted by Downing 2001: 252).

According to Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer (2007), surely expresses less than absolute certainty because of its development into an evidential. As a comparison, both surely and no doubt can be used in interrogative structures whereas certainly and definitely cannot (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 285). Example (2.7) is created to illustrate this feature:

(2.7)  Surely you’ll talk to her?
       No doubt you’ll talk to her?
       * Certainly you’ll talk to her?
       * Definitely you’ll talk to her?

Some epistemic adverbs have developed into discourse markers. By discourse marker they mean that some modal adverbs “have developed interpersonal and textual functions which go beyond epistemic meanings”. In other words, these adverbs are typically used by the speakers to establish a relationship with the interlocutors rather than conveying commitment to the truth value of a proposition. Surely is, as claimed by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, the best example. In many cases, the epistemic meaning “it is sure” is lost in the process. The meaning of certainty has weakened to uncertainty and strong affirmation of the truth has been replaced by a questioning function. The stance expressed is the one of superiority, indicating that the speaker believes the content of the utterance to be the “truth” (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 300 -301).

As mentioned in section 2.3.1, Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer claim that certainly has developed into a sentence adverb without retaining its status as a manner adverb. In the case of surely, it has retained its manner sense only in the idiomatic expression slowly but surely (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 285).

2.3.3  No doubt

As in the case of surely which tends to express less certainty, Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer claim that no doubt also frequently occurs in contexts of actual uncertainty and it has led to a weakening of the epistemic commitment. In contrast with its literal meaning it actually expresses less than full certainty (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 285). No doubt is classified as an adverb of probability rather than certainty. In other words, in many cases no doubt expresses a high degree of likelihood as far as the speaker is concerned, but not certainty (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 293). No doubt can also be used when
the speaker expects that something will be the case and the inference is often based on the predictability of a state of affairs. This predictability again follows from expectations based on past experience (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 291-292), as in example (2.8) given by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer.

(2.8) The term ‘picaresque’ is used pretty loosely here, no doubt, as it often is, to mean something like episodic and comically adventurous. (BNC:CKN, 378; written/non-fiction)

According to Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, no doubt has developed the meaning “according to expectations” from its epistemic meaning of certainty, weakened to “high probability” in contexts where the speaker has no absolute certainty. In contrast with there is no doubt and undoubtedly, no doubt has acquired a weakened epistemic certainty. In other words, it is often used in contexts when the speaker has inner certainty but no evidence. The degree of conviction, however, as Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer point out, is context-dependent. In some cases, the meaning of no doubt is close to probably, in other cases it is closer to certainly. The “inner certainty” can be weakened to an extent that the speaker shows little commitment. This makes no doubt a marker of irony or sarcasm when it is used as a response to a statement which indicates detached doubt (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 292-294). In other words, no doubt switches from being an epistemic marker of commitment to a signal of interpersonal stance (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 300 - 302). When no doubt is used alone (as a response) or in final position, it can express mild ridicule or even to sarcasm (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 294).

Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer also claim that no doubt often occurs in contexts in which speakers express belief with high probability rather than certainty because the speakers are not in a position to convey absolute certainty, as a result, no doubt is selected by the speakers to avoid making absolute commitment to a proposition (Simon-Vandenbergen: 2007: 242).

2.4 Framework of classification in the present study

Drawing on previous research, the author of the thesis has chosen to analyze the three modal adverbs certainly, surely and no doubt according to position, syntactic/contextual environment, and discourse function/meaning in context.

Modal adverbs are relatively flexible in terms of the positions they take in a clause. As will be shown in the study, both certainly, surely and no doubt are observed to occur in initial, medial and final positions, and the meanings a particular adverb conveys vary according to the positions in which it occurs. In the case of certainly, it frequently functions as a focalizer in initial position. This feature will be discussed in chapter 4.

An analysis of the syntactic/contextual environment in which certainly, surely and no doubt occur is highly relevant to the understanding of these adverbs. As mentioned in sections 2.3.1 – 2.3.3, among the three adverbs under investigation, only certainly takes premodifier such as almost and most. Thus the certainty expressed by certainly can be lowered or pushed up (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 86). On the other hand, initial surely is found to
frequently co-occur with auxiliaries such as *could, should, will, have, must*. And in such cases, the speaker expresses an opinion on what is possible/likely or what is desirable (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 134-136). By comparison, *no doubt* always occurs on its own.

An investigation of discourse function is of profound importance when it comes to understanding the linguistic patterns and meanings of the three modal adverbs in context. Furthermore, it provides empirical data for further analysis and comparison.

To sum up, position, syntactic/contextual environment, and discourse function/meaning in context are considered to be the main contributing factors to the use of how we understand these three modal adverbs. By classifying them according to the three parameters, similarities and differences in use across the three varieties of English will come to light.
3. Data and methodology

The present study seeks to identify the similarities and differences of modal adverbs of certainty/probability (surely, certainly and no doubt) in terms of form and meaning in British, American, and Australian English. For this purpose, three comparable corpora The Freiburg Brown Corpus of American English (FROWN), The Freiburg LOB Corpus of British English (FLOB), and The Australian Corpus of English (ACE) were used to collect the data which provide the empirical basis for analysis. Sections 3.1 – 3.2 give a brief introduction to each of the corpora. The method used to extract the data is presented in section 3.3, and finally, an overview of certainly, surely and no doubt occurred in FLOB, FROWN and ACE is provided in section 3.4.

3.1 The Freiburg Brown Corpus of American English (FROWN) and The Freiburg LOB Corpus of British English (FLOB)

The compilation of FROWN and FLOB was initiated by Christian Mair in order to match BROWN and Lancaster – Oslo/Bergen (LOB) corpora. Like the original Brown and Lancaster – Oslo/Bergen (LOB) corpora, FROWN and FLOB contain 500 text extracts of around 2000 words each, distributed across 15 text categories. The ultimate aim of the compilation of FROWN and FLOB was to provide an empirical basis to linguists who are interested in studying language change in progress by comparing the language of 1961 (BROWN and LOB) with then language of 1991 (FROWN and FLOB). Both FROWN and FLOB are a one-million-word corpora containing material of the early 1990s which closely matches the data collected in BROWN and LOB.

The compilation of comparable corpora enables researchers to test current hypotheses and explore linguistic change in present-day English. Furthermore, by investigating the systematic comparison of lexical frequencies such as closed-class items, researchers will be able to uncover linguistic changes, which are not previously noticed. It also provides an empirical basis for studying the inter-dependence of synchronic regional (British vs. American) and stylistic variation vs. genuine diachronic developments.


3.2 The Australian Corpus of English (ACE)

As the first systematically compiled heterogeneous corpus in Australia, the Australian Corpus of English (ACE) is aimed to contribute to a wide range of linguistic research and studies. The project of compilation of ACE started from 1986, and was carried out by Pam Peters, Peter Collins and David Blair in the department of Linguistics at Macquarie University NSW Australia. The growing interest in the differentiation between Australian, British and American English was the driving force behind the project. The fact that ACE was compiled in the same way as its British and American counterparts (LOB and BROWN) means that ACE matches LOB and BROWN in most respects, both in terms of structure and consistency.
This is achieved by matching the balance of genres represented in LOB and BROWN – a creation of more or less equivalent set of 2000-word samples in different categories. It made direct interdialectal comparisons between the three corpora possible. Furthermore, within each category, the sampling is strategically composed in order to match text types where possible. This approach is necessary to insure a spread of interests and disciplines in the corpus. ACE is also used as a reference corpus for comparisons with other corpora in Australia, which are more specialized and homogenous.

The fact that ACE consists of material from 1986 whereas LOB and BROWN contain data drawn from publications of the early 1960s posed challenges for making comparisons between the three corpora. However, the later development of The Freiburg – LOB Corpus of British (FLOB) and The Freiburg – Brown Corpus of American English (FROWN) containing material from 1991 made this comparison possible.


To sum up, ACE, FLOB and FROWN are comparable in terms of corpus size, sampling frame, composition and time of publication.

### 3.3 Overview of the text categories

The samples represented in ACE match closely to the ones in BROWN and LOB. The fiction categories in ACE are, however, slightly different from BROWN and LOB in terms of constituency. As a whole, the samples are divided into 17 categories in ACE and 15 in BROWN and LOB (see appendix 1). As mentioned, FROWN and FLOB were built up in the same way as the original BROWN and LOB both in terms of text categories and number of samples. The only difference is FROWN and FLOB contain material from 1991 whereas BROWN and LOB consist of texts from 1961. (http://clu.uni.no/icame/manuals/ACE/INDEX.HTM)

### 3.4 Data extraction

Corpuscle was used for extracting the data for AusE, BrE and AmE. Corpuscle is a web-based corpus management and analysis system for annotated corpora, and it hosts a number of corpus collections including CLARINO - a collection of language corpora that are part of the Norwegian CLARIN infrastructure. CLARIN stands for Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure Norway. In addition to making existing and future language resources accessible for researchers, Corpuscle also aims to introduce eScience to humanities disciplines (http://uni.no/en/uni-computing/clu/corpuscle/). Simple searches for the three adverbs were performed to extract the material for these in the three corpora.

### 3.5 Overview of certainly, surely and no doubt in the corpora

Although the corpora are referred to as “one million word” corpora, their size varies slightly in number of running words.
Table 3.1 shows that FROWN has the largest corpus size amongst the three corpora. Overall, *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* are most frequent in FLOB. In terms of *no doubt*, the frequency rates recorded in FLOB and ACE outnumber FROWN by a good margin, suggesting that as far as *no doubt* is concerned, there is a remarkable distributional difference between BrE and AusE on the one hand, and AmE on the other. Generally, *certainly* is most frequent amongst the three adverbs in all the three corpora. When it comes to *surely* and *no doubt*, some differences start to emerge. In FLOB and ACE, *no doubt* is more frequent than *surely*. In FROWN, on the other hand, the frequency of *surely* is higher than *no doubt*. Although this does not have a great impact when referring to raw number of occurrence in the corpora, Table 3.1 offers an overview of corpus size, raw number of occurrence of *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt*, and their frequency per million words.

### Table 3.1 Overview of *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* in the corpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverb</th>
<th>ACE (AusE)</th>
<th>Norm freq ACE pmw</th>
<th>FLOB (BrE)</th>
<th>Norm freq FLOB pmw</th>
<th>FROWN (AmE)</th>
<th>Norm freq FROWN pmw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corpus size</td>
<td>1164145</td>
<td>1267306</td>
<td>1283096</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>certainly</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>122.8</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>159.3</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>surely</em></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>no doubt</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following three chapters, a qualitative analysis according to the criteria set out in section 2.4 of the three modal adverbs will be carried out, starting with *certainly* in chapter 4, followed by *surely* in chapter 5 finally *no doubt* in chapter 6.
4. Analysis and discussion of *certainly* in ACE, FLOB, and FROWN

4.1 Introduction

"Certainly" is originally a manner adverb which developed into a sentence adverb (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 85). This development is evident in the present study as no instance in which *certainly* used as a manner adverb is recorded in the three corpora. In the study carried out by Simon-Vandenbergen (2008: 1540), and also as pointed out in section 2.3.1, certain features which specifically belong to *certainly* were identified, as follows:

1. *Certainly* belongs to formal and public speech and writing, and it is the second most frequent adverb, following *of course* in the ICE-GB corpus being investigated. *Certainly* is found in a wider range of genres and is therefore more frequent than other modal adverbs.

2. *Certainly* typically occurs in contexts of contrast with another viewpoint or of comparison with propositions with less certainty, and it frequently indicates concession.

3. *Certainly* as a focalizer has become one of the typical uses of the adverb, in such cases, *certainly* laces the scoped element on a scale of certainty and singling it out from other elements on the scale as more certain.

4. In terms of collocation with degree modifiers, *certainly* is found to only collocate with *almost* and *most*. And in addition, while *certainly* frequently collocates with *almost, most certainly* is rare.

The aim of the present study is to investigate the forms and meanings of *certainly* in the three corpora, and identify similarities and differences between the three English varieties. The observations made by Simon-Vandenbergen will to some extent, be used as reference for the analysis. Point 1 goes beyond the scope of the study and will not be included. And in addition, other features of *certainly* identified under the investigation will also be discussed. An empirical analysis was undertaken to determine the range of discourse functions of *certainly* following the framework outlined in section 2.4.

4.2 *Certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN: frequency and position

For case of reference, Table 3.1 has been broken down according to adverb and the relevant columns are repeated here for *certainly* as Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 shows that *certainly* is most frequent in FLOB (202 instances), and AusE and AmE are very similar in terms of the frequency of occurrences (143 vs. 140 instances). As noted the size of ACE is smaller than FROWN, and the normalized frequencies suggest that *certainly* is indeed least frequent in AmE (FROWN), and most frequent in BrE (FLOB). The present study aims to explore the reasons for the difference, for example, whether *certainly* has more discourse functions in BrE than the other two varieties. An investigation based on the position of *certainly* and its relation to form and meaning was carried out.
Table 4.1 Raw no. of occurrences of *certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Corpus size</th>
<th>Raw no. of occurrences</th>
<th>Normalized frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>1164145</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>122.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLOB</td>
<td>1267306</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>159.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROWN</td>
<td>1283096</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 shows that overall, medial *certainly* is most frequent in the three corpora, and it outnumbers initial (front and pre-front) *certainly* by a good margin. Final *certainly* and *certainly* used as an afterthought are rare in the three English varieties.

Table 4.2 Positions of *certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AusE</th>
<th>BrE</th>
<th>AmE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial <em>certainly</em></td>
<td>30(21%)</td>
<td>32(15.8%)</td>
<td>23(16.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial <em>certainly</em></td>
<td>111(77.6%)</td>
<td>169(83.6%)</td>
<td>115(82.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final <em>certainly</em></td>
<td>1(0.7%)</td>
<td>2(1.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterthought/reply</td>
<td>1(0.7%)</td>
<td>1(0.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>143(100%)</td>
<td>202(100%)</td>
<td>140(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 reveals that among the 143 instances in ACE, medial *certainly* occurs 111 times (77.6%). In addition, a total of 30 instances (21%) in which *certainly* takes initial (pre-front and front) position are recorded. Final *certainly* and *certainly* used as an afterthought are rare, one instance is recorded from each category.

The same pattern applies to both BrE and AmE, medial *certainly* is most frequent, 169 instances (83.6%) in FLOB and 115 instances (82.1%) in FROWN. *Certainly* takes initial (pre-front and front) position 32 times (15.8%) in FLOB and the corresponding figure for FROWN is 23 (16.4%). Final *certainly* is not recorded in FLOB and it occurs twice in FROWN. On the other hand, *certainly* used as an afterthought/reply is recorded once in FLOB while this use of *certainly* is not found in FROWN.

To sum up, the distributional pattern of *certainly* suggests that there is no obvious difference between the three corpora as far as position is concerned although medial position is proportionally more frequent in BrE and AmE compared to AusE.

4.2.1 *Certainly* in initial position

In the study carried out by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, a distinction is made between *certainly* occurring in the front and pre-front field. They claim that the pre-front field occupies a more peripheral position in the sentence compared to the front, middle or end ones. Initial *certainly* which is separated by a comma is considered to be pre-front, and in such cases, the
adverb becomes a discourse marker (Simon-Vandenbergen & Aijmer 2007: 87). The difference between pre-fronted and fronted *certainly* is illustrated in example (4.1) and (4.2).

(4.1): *Certainly*, if mental items have no causal access to our speech centres, the notion of an introspective report collapses: even if the subject retains an introspective knowledge of his mental states. (FLOB – WRRJ51J)

In example (4.1), *certainly* takes pre-front position and is separated by a comma. In general, pre-fronted *certainly* functions as a discourse marker and the certainty applies to the following clause which is typically a statement or claim. However, in this case, a conditional *if* clause follows the discourse marker *certainly*. The certainty does not apply to a statement but to a hypothesis made by the speaker.

(4.2): *Certainly* not a half or a quarter, but why not a two hundredth or a four hundredth? This is *certainly* conceivable. (FLOB – WRRK29K)

In example (4.2), initial *certainly* is a focalizer and the certainty only applies to the focused party “not a half or a quarter”. In the following *but* clause, the speaker presents an alternative view in form of a question and with the second *certainly* in medial position, he/she goes on replying the question with subjective commitment. Two different functions of *certainly* are illustrated by (4.2): being a focalizer and expressing commitment to a proposition.

**4.2.2 *Certainly* in medial position**

In medial position, *certainly* either precedes or is preceded by a finite verb, and medial *certainly* is considered to be unmarked (Simon-Vandenbergen & Aijmer 2007: 86). The present study shows that in such cases, *certainly* frequently co-occurs with an auxiliary such as *would* and *will*. Other auxiliaries (*shall, may, must, should, could* and *can*) are also found but with a much lower frequency rate.

(4.3): If you force them, you will tear them, and give yourself a painful injury. This may put you off ballet for quite a while, and *will certainly* set you back in your request for a flat turnout. (ACE – WE14B)

With the auxiliary *will* and medial *certainly* in example (4.3), the speaker is making a prediction of what is going to happen to the person in question. However, as conditional *if* indicates, the prediction is based on a condition. In this case, the speaker is expressing his/her subjective certainty. In addition, there is a contrast between the less certain “may put you off ballet” and the more certain “will certainly set you back”. *Certainly* can be seen as an argumentative strategy and a warning is implied in the clause.

**4.2.3 *Certainly* in final position**

As mentioned previously, final *certainly* is extremely rare in the corpora, it occurs once in ACE, twice in FROWN, and not at all in FLOB. The reason might be that the data in the present study is based on written material, and final *certainly* is more likely to be used as an
afterthought which typically occurs in spoken texts. An example of afterthought *certainly* (4.45) is given in section 4.3.5.

(4.4): This required skill *certainly*, but for women with few assets it required no capital outlay beyond a sewing machine. (ACE – WJJ25)

In example (4.4), final *certainly* is followed by the conjunction *but*, in this case, the speaker first concedes that skill is required and in the following *but* clause, an alternative view is presented. It can be seen as an argumentative strategy in which the speaker is attempting to convince and persuade the interlocutors. It can be argued that, in such context, expressing commitment towards a proposition is not the primary concern of the speaker, rather, he/she is more interested in achieving a rhetorical effect.

### 4.3 The relationship between positions, contexts and meanings of *certainly*

As will become clear, the data shows that *certainly* conveys several meanings and these meanings are considered to be more or less the same in the three corpora under investigation. The meaning conveyed is dependent on both the position and context in which it occurs. For example, as mentioned above, *certainly* functions as a discourse marker when it takes pre-front position. On the other hand, focalizer *certainly* is found to take both initial (fronted) and medial positions in a clause, and it frequently precedes negator *not*, thus certainty is conveyed when something is not the case or is not going to happen. Medial *certainly* functioning as an emphizer is observed to follow auxiliaries such as *shall* and *will*, and in such cases, it is often preceded by personal pronouns, which function as subjects. A detailed analysis of the relationship between positions, contexts and meanings of *certainly* is performed in the following sections (4.3.1 – 4.3.5). Furthermore, any similarities and differences identified in the three English varieties will be studied and discussed. In order to identify clausal patterns of *certainly*, the sentence structures in which *certainly* occurs in to convey different meanings will also be studied in detail. In other words, is *certainly* more likely to convey a certain meaning when it occurs in a specific sentence construction or is meaning and sentence construction independent from each other?

#### 4.3.1 Initial *certainly*

**Pre-front *certainly***

a) Discourse marker

i. Discourse marker - making a conditional claim (4.5) and a strong claim with *most* (4.6)

(4.5) *Certainly, if* the multiplex cinema car park site proves a success, it would be both naive and self-defeating not to make it York’s second park-and-ride base. (FLOB – WRRB18)

In example (4.5), *certainly* is pre-fronted and as mentioned previously, it functions as a discourse marker in this position. *Certainly* expresses commitment to a conditional clause, in
other words, certainty is applied to the following proposition provided that something else has become a reality, and in this case, “if the multiplex cinema car park site proves a success”. Both the conditional clause and the use of the auxiliary would indicate that the certainty expressed by certainly is limited. It can be argued that certainly merely functions as a discourse marker in the sense that it has “interpersonal and textual functions which go beyond epistemic meanings (Simon-Vandenbergen & Aijmer 2007: 300-301).

(4.6): …, the poem is one of the least sensual I have ever read. It recognizes what Blackmur calls “blind, necessary action”, and little more. Most certainly, it registers behaviour quite unenlightened or unimpeached by consonantia, integritas, claritas, harmony, wholeness, radiance”. (ACE – WJJ65)

In example (4.6), the speaker first presents his subject opinion about the poem “as one of the least sensual.” With premodifier most and pre-fronted certainly, the speaker goes further and emphasizes what he/she is “most” certain about in the following clause in order to support the viewpoint he/she has already made.

ii. Discourse marker – seeking confirmation (4.7)

(4.7): The bum’s doing time, six to ten years for fraud, actually… A lid, please, Big Man, okay? Certainly, Vincent… Is he really? Just remember, none of us remember him, replied the DCI, barely above a whisper. (FROWN – WRRN29)

In example (4.7), pre-fronted certainly precedes a question and it raises the question whether the adverb expresses certainty towards a proposition as it normally does. It does not seem to be the case as we cannot express commitment to something and question it at the same time. “Certainly, Vincent … Is he really?” expresses doubt rather than certainty and in this case, it seeks confirmation.

iii. Discourse marker – making a concession (4.8)

(4.8): Certainly, reckless young farmers may account for the appearance of some of these increasingly strange designs, but in general their symmetry, and the way in which something in the chemical structure of the crops has been affected, cannot be explained (FLOB – WRRF35F)

In example (4.8), pre-fronted certainly occurs in the clause which is followed by a clause introduced by but. With certainly, the speaker partly admits that “young farmers may account for the appearance…”, the modal auxiliary may indicates reserved commitment. In the following clause, a counter-proposal is presented. It can be considered as a concession.

iv. Discourse marker - presenting a counter-proposal, potentially argumentative (4.9)

(4.9) Certainly, what happened between the late fifties and the early seventies was not a political revolution, not a revolution in economic thought and practice, but it was. I believe...(FLOB – WRRF01)
Discourse marker *certainly* precedes a wh-cleft in example (4.9), a counter-proposal introduced by *but* is presented at the end of the clause, after two negations “not a political revolution, not a revolution in economic thought and practice.” This construction can be considered as an argumentative strategy.

To sum up, examples (4.5) - (4.9) show that *certainly* functioning as a discourse marker does not exclusively convey certainty towards a claim or statement. It is flexible and can contribute to convey different meanings depending on the context, such as seeking confirmation (4.7), making a concession (4.8), and presenting a counter-proposal (4.9). Discourse marker *certainly* is clearly used as an argumentative strategy in (4.9) in which a stronger argument is followed by double negations.

**Front certainly**

a) Fronted *certainly* - making a concession and stating a stronger claim/counter-proposal, argumentative

i. Fronted *certainly* + existential *there* + clause introduced by *but* – making concession and stating a stronger claim, argumentative (4.10)

(4.10) *Certainly* there was injustice in Australia, but, as his father said, no society was without its faults. (ACE – WKK28)

In example (4.10), fronted *certainly* precedes an existential *there* clause. The contrast between “there was injustice in Australia” and “no society was without its faults” indicates that the speaker expresses less than full commitment, and this is signaled by the conjunction *but*. With *certainly*, the speaker concedes that “there was injustice in Australia”, and in the following clause introduced by *but*, the speaker presents a counter-proposal, and in this case, a quotation from “his father”, which in some way justifies “injustice in Australia”.

b) Fronted *certainly* – conveying certainty towards a prediction and presenting a counter-proposal

i. Fronted *certainly* + second person pronoun *you* + clause introduced by *however* – conveying certainty to a prediction and presenting a counter-proposal. (4.11)

(4.11) *Certainly* you will never see the long metrical similes and galleries of images again. Particular obsessions, *however*, reveal themselves throughout his all too brief poetical life in certain symbolic words which have been noted in William Scammell’s excellent study of 1988; (FLOB – WRRG60)

With fronted *certainly*, the speaker expresses strong commitment towards the prediction. Both *certainly*, auxiliary *will*, and the negator *never* strengthen the degree of forcefulness. In the following clause, *however* signals a turning point and implies that the new information, to a certain extent, will contrast with the prediction made in the previous clause.

c) Fronted *certainly* – conveying certainty to a claim/statement
i. Fronted *certainly* + noun phrase – conveying certainty to a statement (4.12)

(4.12) *Certainly* the religious tensions generated by the issue of Dissent and the unsatisfactory Church settlement perpetually bedeviled the government in its dealings with all three realms throughout the reign. (FROWN – WRRJ58)

By using fronted *certainly* in example (4.12), the speaker conveys commitment to the claim he/she makes.

ii. Fronted *certainly* + anticipatory it clause – conveying certainty to a claim (4.13)

(4.13) *Certainly* it is clear that our film-makers, just like our writers and painters, see the Australian landscape as more distinctive, more of cinematic exotic, and…(ACE – WJJ62)

In example (4.13), despite fronted *certainly* preceding an anticipatory it clause, the certainty conveyed is considered to be subjective.

d) Fronted *certainly* – focalizer

i. Fronted *certainly* + negator not + prepositional phrase – focalizer (4.14)

(4.14) The two words are very different. I don’t know if they will ever be done. *Certainly* not in my lifetime. (FROWN – WRRN18)

In example (4.14), fronted *certainly* is clearly used as a focalizer and this can be seen in relation to the uncertainty expressed in the previous clause. The speaker is uncertain about “if they will ever be done” and he/she expresses commitment to the focalized party “not in my lifetime”, which is a prepositional phrase functioning as an adverbial. It is observed that front *certainly* used as a focalizer frequently precedes negator not in the three corpora, and as a result, the speakers convey certainty to something which is not the case, as in example (4.14).

   ii. Fronted *certainly* (without negator not) + noun phrase – focalizer (4.15)

(4.15) Carriage? Matty seemed startled. *Certainly* a carriage. (FROWN – WRRP01)

Focalizer *certainly* without not is also recorded, as in example (4.15), where the focused party is the noun phrase “a carriage”.

As example (4.14) - (4.15) illustrate, the focalized party is not fixed, it can be an adverbial in the case of (4.14) or a noun phrase (subject) in the case of (4.15). This finding is consistent with Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer’s claim that a subject is often the scoped element, but a marked theme, such as an adverbial may also occur after focalizer *certainly* (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 86).
4.3.2 Discussion – Initial *certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

As table 4.3 shows, initial *certainly* is most frequently fronted and conveys or contributes to convey certainty to a claim, statement, and sometimes a suggestion. This feature is observed in all the three English varieties.

**Table 4.3 The distribution of the various meanings of initial *certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-front <em>certainly</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Discourse marker - making a conditional claim</td>
<td>2(6.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discourse marker - seeking confirmation</td>
<td>1(4.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discourse marker – convey certainty to a claim/statement</td>
<td>8(26.8%)</td>
<td>4(12.5%)</td>
<td>5(22.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Discourse marker - making concession</td>
<td>1(3.3%)</td>
<td>2(6.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total pre-front <em>certainly</em></strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front <em>certainly</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Making a concession and stating a stronger claim/counter-proposal</td>
<td>1(3.3%)</td>
<td>3(9.3%)</td>
<td>2(8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(potentially) argumentative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conveying certainty to a prediction and presenting counter-proposal</td>
<td>1(3.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conveying certainty to a claim/statement/suggestion</td>
<td>15(50%)</td>
<td>18(56%)</td>
<td>12(52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Focalizer</td>
<td>5(16.6%)</td>
<td>2(6.7%)</td>
<td>2(8.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Seeking information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1(4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total front <em>certainly</em></strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total initial and pre-fronted <em>certainly</em>**</td>
<td>30(100%)</td>
<td>32(100%)</td>
<td>23(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Certainly* in front position is also used as a focalizer, it is particularly the case in ACE as the frequency rate of focalizer *certainly* in front position is slightly higher in this English variety than in its counterparts. Instead of being a sentence adverb, it focalizers a thematic theme (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 281). And in such cases, “*certainly* does not have scope over the whole of the following clause, but only over the following element” (ibid 2007: 87). Furthermore, among the 9 instances in which focalizer *certainly* takes front position recorded in the three corpora, it is followed by negator *not* in 6 cases, conveying certainty to something which is not the case or is unlikely to happen. The relatively high frequency of focalizer *certainly* + negator *not* suggests that this usage of *certainly* is common in the three English varieties, although we have little material to rely on.

Fronted *certainly* may also contribute to convey other meanings, such as making a concession, expressing certainty to a prediction and seeking information. However, the frequency rates recorded are too low to draw any firm conclusions in terms of distributional variances across the three corpora. It is observed that when making a concession, fronted
Certainly is followed by a clause introduced by conjunctions such as but, however and nevertheless. This feature suggests that it is not certainly itself that conveys the concessive meaning, rather, it is when certainly combines with but, however, and nevertheless that this concessive meaning becomes apparent. With certainly, the speaker concedes that something is the case in the previous clause. A counter-proposal is immediately presented in the following clause introduced by a conjunction, typically but. In such cases, certainly is used as a part of the argumentative strategy rather than conveying certainty.

Pre-fronted certainly functions as a discourse marker; however, the meaning it conveys differs according to the context in which it occurs. It most frequently conveys certainty to a claim or statement in the three corpora. In addition, it is also observed that discourse marker certainly is used to make a conditional claim and concession, as well as seek information. The frequency rate of these uses is relatively low in the three corpora.

In the two instances in which fronted and pre-fronted certainly are used to seek information, not surprisingly, a question is presented in both cases.

It should be pointed out that certainly separated by a comma is treated separately in the section and it is categorized as “discourse marker”. However, it can be argued that fronted certainly may very well have the same “discourse marker” function. Furthermore, it is hard to distinguish between pre-fronted (certainly separated by a comma) and fronted certainly in spoken contexts.

4.3.3 Medial certainly

a) Medial certainly – making a prediction

i. Auxiliary will + medial certainly – making a prediction (4.16)

(4.16) If you force them, you will tear them, and give yourself a painful injury. This may put you off ballet for quite a while, and will certainly set you back in your request for a flat turnout. (ACE – WEE14B)

(4.16) was discussed above as example (4.3), but repeated here as an example of will + certainly, where the speaker is making a prediction of what is going to happen to the person in question. The speaker is expressing his/her subjective certainty towards the prediction.

The data shows that certainly is frequently preceded by the degree adverb almost, which functions as a modifier. This feature of certainly is illustrated by example (4.17), a case of indirect speech, (4.18), a conditional if clause combined with a referential it clause and (4.19), a referential it clause. In the study “Almost certainly and most definitely: Degree modifiers and epistemic stance”, Simon-Vandenbergen investigated the semantic and pragmatic differences between certainly and definitely. In the case of certainly, it is concluded that the preferred degree adverb of certainly is almost, thus certainly is considered as a totality word, indicating a limit on the modal scale of certainty (Simen-Vandenbergen 2008: 1540).
ii. Downtoner almost + medial certainly - making a prediction with less than full commitment, a case of indirect speech (4.17)

(4.17) Bruthern wrote that while none of the London playhouses expressed interests in his plays, a theatre in Leeds was impressed to the point of almost certainly putting on one of his plays in July or August. Would he be able to be present during rehearsals? (ACE – WKK25)

In example (4.17), the degree adverb almost reduces the level of certainty. The certainty expressed is not based on Bruthern’s subjective commitment to the truth value but from the judgement made by “a theatre in Leeds”. It is a case of indirect speech. As the following question indicates, the certainty of putting on one of his plays seems to be rather conditional and depends on the possibility of his presence during rehearsals.

iii. If conditional clause + referential it + auxiliary will + downtoner almost + medial certainly – making a conditional prediction (4.18)

(4.18) If the skeleton is present then it will be almost certainly replaced. Sediment may have infilled the calyx and infiltrated more deeply, giving variable perfection to moulds. (FLOB: WRRJ02)

In example (4.18), almost certainly occurs in a referential it clause and is preceded by a conditional if clause. To match the conditional certainty, not surprisingly, the downtoner almost becomes the right choice.

iv. Referential it + auxiliary would + downtoner almost + medial certainly – making a prediction with reservation (4.19)

(4.19) It would almost certainly mean US troops re-entering Iraq because we don’t see anyone else volunteering. (FLOB – WRRA03)

In example (4.19), almost certainly occurs in a referential it clause and is preceded by the auxiliary would. The co-occurrence of would and almost certainly indicates that the speaker is making a prediction with less than full commitment, the following clause “because we don’t see anyone else volunteering” explains the lack of confidence.

The above examples suggest that almost often functions as pre-modifier of certainly when the speakers are making a prediction, and in many cases, it is accompanied by the auxiliaries will and would, as example (4.16), (4.18) and (4.19) illustrate. These features can be seen in relation to the nature of predictions, we are rarely absolutely certain about the predictions we make, the downtoner almost is a proper choice in situations where reservation is required. In addition, predictions are future-oriented, which explains, at least to some extent, why auxiliary will and would are frequently found in such contexts. The fact that certainly frequently occurs in conditional constructions as well as co-occurs with the downtoner almost arguably contradicts its status as a modal adverb of high certainty. In such contexts, the certainty expressed is either conditional or reserved. It shows, however, the flexibility of
certainly in that it can both express a relatively high degree of certainty and limited certainty or probability.

b) Medial certainly - making a concession and presenting a stronger argument/counter-proposal, (potentially) argumentative

i. While + medial certainly – making concession and stating a stronger point/presenting a counter-proposal, potentially argumentative (4.20) and (4.21)

(4.20) While the deals could bail out struggling airlines, they certainly won’t help the stronger American carriers like American and Delta. (FROWN – WRRA37)

In example (4.20), certainly precedes the negation won’t and expresses commitment to something which will not happen. The previous clause introduced by while is considered to carry a sense of concession; however, the speaker is at least certain that “they won’t help the stronger American carriers…”. The co-occurrence of while and certainly has created a rhetorical effect and made the utterance stronger and more forceful.

(4.21) While the wisdom of term limits is certainly debatable, attempts to limit the terms of members of Congress raise constitutional questions. (FROWN – WRRH23)

Example (4.21) differs from (4.20) in that certainly in this case occurs in the same clause as the conjunction while. Thus the certainty is conveyed towards the first proposition. While signals a turning point and with certainly, the speaker concedes that “the wisdom of term limits is debatable”. A counter-proposal is presented in the following clause which reflects the speaker’s stronger negative viewpoint towards “attempts to limit the terms of members of Congress”. Once again, this construction involving while and certainly is used as an effective argumentative strategy. In addition, certainly in (4.21) may also be considered as a focalizer, and the scoped element is “debatable”.

ii. Although + referential it + medial certainly – making concession and presenting a stronger argument/counter-proposal (4.22).

(4.22): It certainly adds a new dimension to the relationship between master and servant, although one wonders how Giovanni had time for homosexual conquests as well as the 1.003 Spanish women. (FLOB – WRRC12)

In example (4.22), certainly occurs in a referential it clause and the speaker concedes that “it adds a new dimension to the relationship …”. In the following clause introduced by the conjunction although, a counter argument is presented and it questions the credibility of the previous one. The certainty has, arguably, been weakened.

As example (4.20) – (4.22) illustrate, when certainly is preceded by a clause introduced by conjunctions such as while and although, a concessive meaning is typically conveyed.
A similar pattern is observed when medial *certainly* is followed by *but, however,* and *nevertheless,* and in such cases, as mentioned earlier, a concessive meaning is frequently expressed.

iii. *If conditional clause + medial certainly + conjunction but* – making a concession (4.23)

(4.23): If the agreements had been written down, those actions would have *certainly* been in breach of Section 11 of the Companies Act. But, as we all know, these agreements are never written down… (ACE – WAA34A)

In example (4.23), the speaker expresses commitment to a hypothetical claim introduced by a conditional *if* clause, and it indicates concession. In the following clause introduced by *but,* the speaker points out that “these agreements are never written down”. The implication is “those actions would not have been in breach of Section 11 of the Companies Act since the agreements had not been written down”. *Certainly + but* can be considered as an argumentative strategy in this case.

v. Medial *certainly + conjunction but + making a concession and presenting a stronger argument* (4.24)

(4.25): Elsewhere in Europe, the Royal Copenhagen factory in Denmark *certainly* produced some porcelain thimbles, *but* they lack the refined elegance of their Meissen peers. (FLOB – WRRF39)

In example (4.24), with *certainly,* the speaker expresses certainty to “the Royal Copenhagen factory in Denmark produced some porcelain thimbles”, however, a counter proposal is presented in the following clause introduced by *but* and it contrasts with the previous claim. Thus, *certainly* in this case is considered to express less than full commitment and it can be considered as a concession.

c) Medial *certainly* - making a contrast/comparison

i. Medial *certainly + conjunction but* – making a contrast (4.25)

(4.25) The first, manifest meaning, *certainly* refers to the outcome of the war, *but* the second meaning – which creates that peculiar hollow space, the sounding board in these words – refers to the totality of … (FROWN – WRRG27)

In example (4.25), there is no contrast in terms of certainty, rather, there is a comparison between “the first meaning” and “the second meaning”, in other words, a comparison between “the outcome of the war” and “the totality of …”.

ii. *Whether conditional + conjunction but + medial certainly* – making a contrast (4.26)

(4.26) *Whether* this relates to his beginnings in drama is unclear, *but* that time was *certainly* traumatic. (ACE – WAA10B)
In example (4.26), the speaker contrasts what is certain with what is uncertain in the previous clause, and it confirms what Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer have concluded, namely that *certainly* often occurs in a context of uncertainty rather than certainty. Its typical use is conveying epistemic certainty about one thing while at the same time conveying uncertainty about another. Hence, *certainly* frequently occurs in discussions where truth is not considered as self-evident or as shared knowledge (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 211). In this case, what the speaker is certain about is “that time was traumatic”.

iii. Conjunction *but* + medial *certainly not*– making a contrast

(4.27): “Ridiculous” I think working for the dole is a damn good idea, but *certainly* not cleaning the streets or Meals On wheels, which in the end become ridiculous”, he says. (ACE – WBB04B)

In example (4.27), the speaker expresses his/her positive attitude towards “working for the dole”, and in the following clause introduced by *but certainly* + negation *not*, a counter-proposal is presented to contrast with the claim made in the previous clause. *Certainly* in this case can also be analyzed as a focalizer.

It is observed that when *certainly* occurs in clauses introduced by *but*, in addition to contrasting certainty with uncertainty, speakers also present new or sometimes contradictory information and contrast it with the information already given in the previous clause, as example (4.27) illustrates.

iii. *If* conditional clause + conjunction *but* + medial *certainly* – making a contrast (4.28)

(4.28) …; and if they proved too hard-bit for me I supposed I would have to quit, *but* that I *certainly* would not quit until I had made the effort and found out whether I really was too weak to hold my own in the rough and tumble. (FRWON – WRRF33)

In example (4.28), the speaker contrasts the certain “I certainly would not quit until…” with the uncertain “I supposed I would have to quit” in the previous clause. In the clause introduced by *but… certainly*, the speaker expresses subjective commitment towards the proposition, and “I certainly would not” is rhetorically stronger than “I supposed I would”.

v. Conjunction *but* + referential *it* + medial *certainly* – making a contrast, argumentative (4.29)

(4.29): …further thought to that novel of yours until relaxation has taken every last kink out of your cranium, *but* relaxation didn’t seem to be what Stafford wanted – and it *certainly* wasn’t what she got. (FROWN – WRRG35)

In example (4.29), there is double negation and double cleft *what* constructions in the *but… certainly* clause. The speaker contrasts the certain “certainly wasn’t” with the uncertain “didn’t seem to”. The predicative “relaxation” is fronted and thus marked. Overall, *but… certainly* in this case is potentially challenging and can be seen as an argumentative strategy.
ix. In spite of + medial certainly – making a contrast (4.30)

(4.30): In spite of all their courtesy, the hotel staff certainly do not like the pilgrims loitering about in their magnificent hall. (FLOB – WRRD06)

In example (4.30), in spite of signals that new and contradictory information is to come in the following clause. With certainly, the speaker expresses commitment towards a claim, which contrasts the information given in the previous clause.

The above examples illustrate that certainly with a contrastive meaning can occur in different sentence structures, for example, whether conditional construction as in (4.26), if conditional construction as in (4.28), and referential it constructions as in (4.29). The most obvious pattern is certainly occurs in a clause introduced by but, and there is either a comparison between uncertainty and certainty or a comparison between new information and given information. Despite the fact that but … certainly is a distinctive feature of certainly when making a contrast/comparison, it is not absolute. Certainly is preceded by the conjunction in spite of in (4.30), and in this case, a comparison is made without the involvement of the conjunction but.

d) Medial certainly - making a claim/statement/comment with certainty

i. Must + medial certainly – making a sarcastic comment (4.31)

(4.31): You cannot understand. Then how can we believe? You claim to understand your Lord, Rabbi? A minor God he must certainly be. (FROWN – WRRK21K)

In example (4.31), the auxiliary must strengthens the meaning of certainly, the fact that the subjective predicative “A minor God” is fronted makes the whole utterance rather confrontational and sarcastic. There is little implication of certainty in this case but rather a strong sense of sarcasm. It should be noted that unlike auxillaries will, would and can, which relatively frequently co-occur with certainly, must does not. Only one instance of the co-occurrence of must and certainly is recorded among the three corpora, suggesting that must is not a desirable choice to certainly. In (4.32), must is used intentionally by the speaker in order to strengthen the sarcastic sense.

ii. Auxiliary will + prepodifier most + medial certainly – making a strong claim (4.32)

(4.32): These functions will most certainly appeal to users saving time particularly for contractors. (FLOB – WRRE38)

In example (4.32), most certainly strengthens the degree of certainty, the certainty expressed is most likely based on superior knowledge. Unlike the downtoner almost, which frequently collocates with certainly, most certainly is rare. It suggests that certainly often occurs in contexts in which reserved certainty is implied, and in such cases, it can be argued that the certainty turns to probability.
iii. Referential *it* and anticipatory *it + medial certainly* – making a claim (4.33) and (4.34)

(4.33): …press functions here at times almost like a kind of publicity agent or PR exercise for the government. *It certainly* does not perform a very critical function. (ACE – WGG61)

In example (4.33), referential *it + certainly* is followed by negation. The speaker expresses the commitment to the utterance “press functions does not perform a very critical function”, a claim based on information given in the previous clause.

(4.34) It is *certainly* true that the handling of public funds in some areas of the Government services in the State in recent times has left much to be desired. (ACE – WBB23D)

*Certainly* is found in combination with anticipatory *it + that* clause in example (4.34), the long and heavy subject is moved to the position of predicate. *Certainly* strengthens the sense of “true”.

e) Medial *certainly* - making an assumption/speculation

i. Auxiliary *would* + downtoner *almost* + medial *certainly* – making an assumption, speculating (4.35)

(4.35): “I wasn’t dealing with family… A fairly politically-minded person made the approach.” Had a service at St Christopher’s been advertised, the cathedral would almost *certainly* have been filled, but he had not wanted the church to be used for other purposes. (ACE – WAA12F)

In example (4.35), the auxiliary *would* together with the downtoner *almost* lowers the level of certainty and the utterance can be seen as a subjective prediction of the speaker. In the protases of remote (counterfactual) past conditionals “would certainly have been”, the speaker is speculating what would have been the case rather than expressing a high level of commitment to the proposition.

f) Medial *certainly* – focalizer

It is observed that focalizer *certainly* is common in all the English varieties under investigation. As Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer point out, instead of focusing on the whole of the proposition, *certainly* frequently has one specific element in its focus. In such cases, the certainty only applies to the focused part (Simon-Vandenbergen & Aijmer 2007: 90).

i. Medial *certainly* functioning as a focalizer in various contexts (4.36) – (4.38)

(4.36): The city, on the other hand, evokes this image;” as soulful as the crooked back streets of Newtown on a rainy day”. Soulful they are *certainly* not. Mean maybe. (ACE – WGG59)
In example (4.36): the subject predicative soulful is fronted and takes a more marked position, and it strengthens the sense of certainly which in this case, functions as a focalizer. An alternative viewpoint “mean maybe” is presented after the negation. In this case, the speaker contrasts the stronger “soulful they are certainly not” with the seemingly weaker but rather ironic “mean maybe”. Certainly is clearly used as part of the argumentative strategy.

(4.37): “I wished he hadn’t killed that man,” she sniffed. “Why would he?” I didn’t have any answer to that, certainly not at 2.45 am.” (ACE – WLL04)

In example (4.37), focalizer certainly precedes negation not. The certainty only applies to “not at 2.45 am.” The implication is “2.45 am” is not the suitable time for giving any reasonable answer. Certainly not is considered to be a collocation on the basis of its high frequency recorded in all the three corpora. This point will be discussed further in section 4.3.7.

(4.38): However, nurses are much more likely to move jobs or take a break from their career than doctors; certainly once they have become established in a definitive post. (FLOB – WRRG57)

In example (4.38), with “much more likely”, the speaker expresses less than full certainty. The certainty is, however, conveyed in the following clause. Instead of having a noun phrase or adverbial as its focused part, the certainty applies to the whole clause which is immediately followed by certainly.

g) Medial certainly - emphizer

Certainly functioning as an emphizer also occurs in the three corpora, though not as frequently as focalizer certainly. Emphizer certainly is more frequent in FLOB than ACE and FROWN, but the difference is not remarkable. (11 instances in FLOB, 9 in FROWN and 6 in ACE, see Table 4.4).

i. Auxiliary shall + medial certainly - emphizer (4.39)

(4.39), The MP said at the weekend: I shall certainly try to see Mr Henderson earlier than planned. (FLOB – WRRA34)

Certainly is an emphizer in example (4.39), the meaning of certainly is “You can be reassured that I shall try to see Mr Henderson” rather than “I am certain that I shall try to see Mr Henderson…”

It should be pointed out that shall is only found to co-occur with certainly in FLOB and in all the three cases recorded, certainly functions as an emphizer. This seems to be a specific feature of certainly in BrE.

ii. Auxiliary would + premodifier most + medial certainly – emphizer (4.40)
(4.40): As a usual plea, I would most certainly welcome any additional information on those listed or indeed verification of further awards be they DSOs or others. (FLOB – WRRE25)

In example (4.40), the degree adverb most strengthens the subjective certainty of the speaker and emphasizes what the speaker would be doing. Certainly in this case is considered to be an emphaser.

It is observed that when certainly functions as an emphasizer, it is almost exclusively preceded by a pronoun. And the finding also shows that the speakers tend to use certainly to emphasize a specific action they will be performing.

iii. Second person pronoun you + medial certainly – emphasizer (4.41)

(4.41): You certainly sympathize with them at times. But the whole thing feels like an excise in self-indulgence. (FROWN – WRRC01)

In example (4.41), certainly is an emphasizer rather than an epistemic marker of stance. It is not about the commitment towards the proposition but the emphasis on the action, and in this case, to sympathize with someone.

4.3.4 Discussion – Medial certainly in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

Table 4.4 shows that conveying certainty towards a claim, statement or comment generates the highest frequency rate of medial certainly, and it is a feature observed in all the three English varieties under investigation. This finding suggests that, generally, certainly is used as an adverb of certainty. Other meanings associated with medial certainly are recorded in all the three corpora, and the distribution of the various meanings is slightly different. The frequency rate of medial certainly used to making a concession and contrast is similar in ACE, FLOB and FROWN. Medial certainly used to making an assumption/speculation is recorded more frequently in FLOB, and so is medial certainly functioning as a focalizer and emphasizer.
Table 4.4 The distribution of the various meanings of medial *certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medial <em>certainly</em></th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Making a prediction</td>
<td>5(4.5%)</td>
<td>10(5.9%)</td>
<td>7(6.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Making a concession</td>
<td>15(13.5%)</td>
<td>15(8.9%)</td>
<td>17(14.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and presenting a stronger argument/counter-proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Making a contrast/comparison</td>
<td>15(13.5%)</td>
<td>15(8.9%)</td>
<td>17(14.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Making a claim/statement/comment with certainty</td>
<td>46(41.5%)</td>
<td>75(44.3%)</td>
<td>33(28.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Making an assumption/speculation</td>
<td>7(6.3%)</td>
<td>17(10.2%)</td>
<td>14(12.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Focalizer</td>
<td>16(14.4%)</td>
<td>26(15.3%)</td>
<td>17(14.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Emphasizer</td>
<td>6(5.4%)</td>
<td>11(6.5%)</td>
<td>9(7.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Conveying certainty to a specific action carried out by a third party</td>
<td>1(0.9%)</td>
<td>1(0.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111(100%)</td>
<td>169(100%)</td>
<td>115(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.5 Final *certainly*

a) Making a contrast

i. Final *certainly* – making a contrast (4.42) and (4.43)

(4.42): This required skill *certainly*, but for women with few assets it required no capital outlay beyond a sewing machine. (ACE – WJJ25)

(4.42) was discussed above as example (4.3), but repeated here as an example of *certainly* used to making a contrast. In example (4.43), final *certainly* is followed by a clause introduced by conjunction *but*. As mentioned earlier, medial *certainly* often conveys a concessive meaning when it is preceded by a clause introduced by *but*. In this case, however, it is not a concession but rather a contrast which is made by the speaker. It can be seen as an argumentative strategy in which the speaker is attempting to convince and persuade the interlocutors.

(4.43): I was sorry for her *certainly*, but not very sorry, possibly because of that self-satisfied smile and of course I know I’m kinda pretty. (FROWN – WRRG51)
In example (4.43), final *certainly* also precedes a clause introduced by *but*, and a contrast is made between “I was sorry” and “not very sorry”. The certainty expressed is weakened and it raises a question about the credibility of the commitment expressed in the first proposition. The apology made by the speaker in this case has a rather ambiguous character.

b) Final *certainly* – afterthought (4.44)

(4.44) Whereas Daniel… well, not one of the good guys, *certainly*, but further than that… I don’t know, I said, after a while. (FLOB – WRRL17)

*Certainly* occurs in final position in (4.44), separated by a comma. It is used as an afterthought, expressing emphatic agreement.

4.3.6 Discussion – Final *certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

Table 4.5 shows that final *certainly* is extremely rare in the corpora, it occurs once in ACE (making a contrast), twice in FROWN (making a contrast and functioning as an afterthought), and *certainly* in final position is not recorded in FLOB. As mentioned, the reason might be that the data in the present study is based on written material, and final *certainly* is often used as an afterthought/reply which typically occurs in spoken texts.

**Table 4.5 The distribution of the various meanings of final *certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final <em>certainly</em></th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Making a contrast</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Afterthought</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.7 A special case - *certainly not*

The collocation *certainly not* occurs 21 times in ACE, 16 in FLOB and 11 in FROWN, and not surprisingly, it takes the medial position in most cases, initial *certainly + not* is less frequent in the three corpora. The relatively high frequency rate of *certainly not* indicates that *certainly* is favoured by English speakers when expressing commitment towards something which is not the case or is unlikely to happen. This feature is illustrated in various contexts by examples (4.45) - (4.48).

(4.45) The Government is *certainly not* dragging its feet over the new local council tax – again the shadow of the hustings. (FLOB – WRRB17)

In example (4.45), the speaker is making a claim, and the certainty is applied to something which is not going to happen.

(4.46) I say that confidently but what fraction do I mean? *Certainly not* a half or a quarter, but why not a two hundredth or a four hundredth? (FLOB – WRRK29)
In example (4.46), initial *certainly* is a focalizer and the focused element is “not a half or a quarter”, the speaker expresses commitment to something which is not the case.

(4.47): George would *certainly* not have narrated his little story half as coherently as this. (ACE – WGG23)

In example (4.47), the speaker is speculating “what George would not have done”, the certainty conveyed is subjective.

(4.48): Not many persons, and *certainly* not many persons in the business community, would disagree with that assertion. (FROWN – WRRB14)

There is double negation in example (4.48), *certainly* precedes *not* and functions as a focalizer. The speaker expresses commitment towards “not many persons in the business community”, which is rhetorically stronger than “not many persons”. *Certainly* can be seen as an argumentative strategy.

### 4.3.8 Discussion – *certainly* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

The distribution of *certainly* with various meanings is similar in ACE, FLOB and FROWN. The main meanings of *certainly* identified are recorded in all the three corpora and with relatively similar frequency rates. It indicates that *certainly* is used in almost the same way in AusE, BrE and AmE. The findings also show that the meanings of *certainly* are less related to the sentence structures in which it occurs, it is rather its position and its co-occurrence with other functional words that contribute to a wide range of meanings in the clauses. For example, *certainly* frequently functions as a focalizer when it takes initial position, and often conveys a contrastive meaning when it occurs in a clause introduced by the conjunction *but*. By contrast, *certainly* frequently contributes to express a concessive meaning when it is followed by a clause introduced by *but*. And it is observed to function as an emphazizer when it is preceded by a personal pronoun and auxiliaries such as *will* and *shall*. *Certainly* is considered to be a neutral modal adverb of certainty in the sense that it can be used in various contexts, such as informal conversations, argumentative discussions and academic writing. As mentioned in chapter 2, the co-occurrence of the down-toner *almost* and *certainly* is particularly frequent in academic prose (Biber et al. 1999: 546). This multifunctional nature of *certainly* may explain, at least to some extent, its higher frequency than *surely* and *no doubt* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN.
5. Analysis and discussion of surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will investigate the main features and distributional patterns of surely in ACE, FLOB, and FROWN. In other words, how is surely used in the three English varieties in terms of meanings, functions and frequency. Any differences identified will be studied and discussed. An empirical analysis was undertaken to determine the range of discourse functions of surely following the framework outlined in section 2.4. In addition, the article by Downing “Surely you know!” (2001) referred to in Section 2.3.2 will be used as reference and guidance in terms of categorization of forms and functions of surely.

The chapter follows the same structure as chapter 4 on certainly.

5.2 Surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN: frequency and position

Table 5.1 shows that surely is used more frequently in BrE compared to the other two English varieties. AusE and AmE are very similar in terms of the frequency of occurrences. However, it should be noted that the size of ACE is smaller than FROWN, thus, the normalized frequency per million words shows that surely is least frequently used in FROWN. The present study aims to explore the reasons for this difference. One hypothesis might be that surely has adopted more discourse functions in BrE. In order to confirm whether this is the case, an investigation based on the position of surely and its relation to form and meaning has been carried out. Surely used as a manner adverb as well as afterthought/reply was separated from other types of usage.

Table 5.1 Raw no. of occurrences of surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Corpus size</th>
<th>Raw no. of occurrences</th>
<th>Normalized frequencies pmw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>1164145</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLOB</td>
<td>1267306</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROWN</td>
<td>1283096</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When it comes to position in the clause, table 5.2 shows that, among the 52 instances of surely recorded in ACE, surely occurs most frequently in initial position (27 instances), medial surely takes the second position (20 instances), whereas final surely is infrequent (2 instances).

In FLOB the distributional difference between surely in initial and medial positions is clear; medial surely (39 instances) outnumbers initial surely (29 instances). In addition, final surely occurs 3 times.

Among the 54 instances recorded in FROWN, surely in medial position (29 instances) is more frequent than surely in initial position (22 instances). Final surely is not found in FROWN.
Surely is used as a manner adverb in all the three corpora (3 instances in each corpus), and in addition, it is used as an affirmative response once in FLOB. These uses are not included in the analysis.

**Table 5.2 Positions of surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AusE</th>
<th>BrE</th>
<th>AmE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial surely</td>
<td>27(51.9%)</td>
<td>29(38.6%)</td>
<td>22(40.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial surely</td>
<td>20(38.4%)</td>
<td>39(52%)</td>
<td>29(53.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final surely</td>
<td>2(3.8%)</td>
<td>3(4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>3(5.9%)</td>
<td>3(4%)</td>
<td>3(5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative response</td>
<td></td>
<td>1(1.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>52(100%)</td>
<td>75(100%)</td>
<td>54(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the positions of surely, the data reveals that the pattern is similar in two varieties of English. While initial surely is slightly more frequent than medial surely in ACE, medial surely is most frequent in FLOB and FROWN. Overall, however, the difference is not remarkable enough to draw any firm conclusions. Final surely occurs in ACE and FLOB but not at all in FROWN suggesting that AusE and BrE are similar in this respect. Surely is used as an affirmative response once in BrE but this particular use of the adverb is not found in the other two corpora. Surely used as a manner adverb is recorded in all corpora though not overly frequently. The finding suggests that surely has kept its status as a manner adverb in all the three varieties of English though its main role is, according to Downing, a marker of evidentiality and stance, at least in British English discourse (Downing 2002: 252). This is supported in the present study. It should be noted that in her study, Downing explored specifically the role and function of surely in British English. Some of the main findings from Downing’s study will be used for comparison.

**5.2.1 Surely in initial position**

According to Downing (2002: 259-260), initial surely is tonic and may appear slightly detached from the main utterance, and it has the whole of the following clause in its scope (5.1)

(5.1): I spent most of my time there feeling I had committed a great sin in being born a child. And surely one day my fingers would find not a biscuit but a funnel-web spider. (ACE 14 G20)

In example (5.1), initial surely is preceded by the connective and, the speaker is making an assumption which is unlikely to happen with an ironic and slightly sarcastic tone. In this case, surely is used specifically to create a rhetorical effect rather than conveying certainty.

**5.2.2 Surely in medial position**

Medial surely is considered less forceful as it is integrated into the tone of the unit in which it
occurs. Medial *surely* is an emphasis in that it highlights the part of the utterance it immediately precedes (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer: 2007: 232), as in (5.2).

(5.2): The coming of war at the end of July 1914 was *surely* one such. (FLOB WRRG30)

In example (5.2), medial *surely* is an emphasis emphasizing “one such”. The speaker is making an assumption about a past event.

**5.2.3 Surely in final position**

Final *surely* functions as an evidential afterthought at the end of a sentence, sometimes separated by a comma (5.3).

(5.3): …up the number of autopsies he had attended; it must be near a thousand, *surely*? Enough, certainly, to be absolute master of the necessary procedures. (ACE-27 L01)

In example (5.3), *surely* is preceded by a referential *it* clause, with auxiliary *must*, and the speaker is making a strong speculation. However, final *surely* in a question weakens the level of certainty, and the speaker seems to question him/herself about the truth value or seeking confirmation from the interlocutor.

As suggested above, *surely* has various meanings and functions depending on the contexts in which it occurs. Overall, the meaning of *surely* is not exclusively determined by its position but very much context-dependent. After carrying out an in-depth analysis, the meanings of *surely* conveyed are categorized according to its forms and positions in which it occurs. This approach makes it possible to identify the patterns of *surely* when expressing a specific meaning as well as similarities and differences in terms of uses among Australian, British and American speakers of English.

**5.3 The relationship between positions, contexts and meanings of *surely***

**5.3.1 Initial surely**

a) Initial *Surely* being challenging and confrontational

i. Initial *surely* + second person pronoun *you* – challenging and confrontational (5.4)

(5.4): Aw come on Doug, *surely* you have to train people up, not just the pilots, what about spares, people to maintain the aircraft? (ACE- N04 32)

As pointed out by Downing, *surely* with second person subjects can be decidedly challenging and confrontational. The reason for this, according to Downing, is that the speaker is questioning the hearer’s state of knowledge, with the implication that the hearer lacks the knowledge which is based on common sense, something he/she should know but does not (Downing 2002: 263).

The co-occurrence of initial *surely* and the second person pronoun *you* in example (5.4) is in agreement with what Downing has observed – it is extremely challenging and confrontational. The speaker questions Doug’s knowledge and awareness, and the implication is that Doug
should have trained “spares, people to maintain aircraft and not only pilots”, and it is something Doug has apparently failed to do.

ii. Initial surely + first person pronoun I and demonstrative that – challenging and confrontational (5.5)

(5.5): Surely – surely! - I had been destined for better things. My parents had, after all, survived Europe. I myself had recovered from meningitis, and once, when I was five, six perhaps, I was knocked down by a truck and had crawled out with barely a scratch. There must have been some greater purpose, some special mission for which I had been spared. Surely that was a fair assumption, No? Well, I had early on set my mind upon becoming a writer. (ACE - K06 21)

Initial surely + first pronoun I occurs once in ACE and three times in FROWN. According to Downing, speakers use first person “I” subjects to empathize with themselves both when they intend to address themselves in indirect thought, or when position themselves in relation to an interlocutor. While self-questioning expresses surprise and doubt, and seeks agreement and confirmation, facing a co-participant, surely + I-subjects either disagree with or challenge their interlocutor (Downing 2002: 261).

Surely occurs three times in example (5.5), in the first case, surely is followed by a second surely in initial position and it reinforces the strong sense of disapproval and irony in the utterance. “Surely - surely! (exclamation) - I (first person pronoun) had been destined for better things” is emotionally provoking. In the third case, initial surely precedes demonstrative that, and becomes extremely challenging in a rhetorical question. The speaker answers his/her own question by using the ironic negation “no”. Overall, all the three occurrences of surely in the clause are considered challenging, confrontational and sarcastic. The choice of surely also suggests that among a number of modal adverbs of certainty, surely is the one which is considered most suitable in a context involving provoking arguments.

iii. Initial surely + inclusive we – challenging and confrontational (5.6)

(5.6): Oh yes, surely we have heard mention of the legendary Turkish Airline DC-10s? Doesn't the very folklore of our times instruct us that the hedgerows of Europe are full of the gibbering, terrified bodies of farm workers diving for cover as the rear doors and often the entire delightful planes themselves plummet down up the cowering EEC rural sector? (ACE - N01 31)

Initial surely + pronoun we occurs in all the three corpora, however, the meaning it conveys differs according to the context. Downing claims that surely + inclusive we is a persuasive device and it seeks to establish empathy and togetherness from the addressee (Downing 2002: 266).

In example (5.6), initial surely + inclusive we occurs in a rhetorical question, and instead of seeking to establish empathy and togetherness, the speaker assumes that the addressee shares his/her negative view about Turkish Airline, and seeks agreement. The word “legendary” is used with a sarcastic and disproving sense and thus reinforces the negative point made by the speaker, which is both rhetorically challenging and emotionally provoking.
iv. Initial *surely* + referential *it* – ironic and sarcastic (5.7)

(5.7): The cell Hsia Shan-yun woke up in was dank, foul; almost lightless … The future's not like that. You know that and I know that. The people who live in the future know it better than either of us. Good grief, if a single fact has been established once and for all, *surely* it's that the future is clean. It's sanitised. (ACE- M06 30)

In example (5.7), initial *surely* + referential *it* is preceded by a conditional clause introduced by *if*. *Surely* in this case gives a sense of irony and sarcasm, on behalf of the character Hsia Shan-yun, the narrative voice presents the counter proposal. Initial *surely* + referential *it* is challenging in this case.

v. Initial *surely* + anticipatory *it* – challenging and argumentative (5.8)

(5.8): My worry is about a different kind of illiteracy, what I shall refer to as `cultural illiteracy', which is far more destructive and at least as prevalent as is grammatical incompetence. *Surely* it matters less that children misspell Shakespeare's name than that they are denied the chance to revel in his plays. (ACE - G64 46)

*Surely* precedes an anticipatory *it* clause in example (5.8), the extra-long and heavy subject is moved from the subject position to the right of the predicate. The speaker first expresses his/her concerns, and in the following clause introduced by *surely*, the speaker presents a counter proposal as additional information to what he/she terms “cultural illiteracy”. Initial *surely* is challenging and functions as an argumentative strategy, and the speaker is attempting to persuade and convince the audience.

vi. Initial *surely* + third person pronoun *they* – ironic and argumentative (5.9)

(5.9): Yet despite this, the Liberals still give their preferences to the Nationals and keep them in office. *Surely* they should give their preferences to any minority party and defeat the Nationals, as they don't owe them a thing. (ACE B13 37)

In example (5.9): In the clause introduced by *surely*, the speaker presents a counter proposal of what “the Liberals surely should do”. *Surely* is ironic and argumentative in this case.

vii. Initial *surely* + third person pronoun *she* – ironic and confrontational (5.10)

(5.10): Hard work a fact of life S.MOLLY (C-M, June 12) is talking through her highly educated hat. *Surely* she does not believe that working at night, working hard, working weekends, grabbing lunch when you can, is exclusive to the teaching profession. (ACE - B13 38)

In example (5.10), the speaker expresses his/her disagreement with S.MOLLY, with initial *surely*, the speaker is presenting his/her belief regarding “what S.MOLLY does not believe”. *Surely* clearly contributes to strengthen the disapproving sense of the speaker.

b) Initial *Surely* presenting (subjective) belief/prediction
i. Initial *surely* + first person pronoun *I* – presenting (subjective) belief/prediction (5.11) and (5.12).

(5.11): After that beautiful release you experience after giving birth, all I could think was, `Oh no! Surely I'm not going to start all over again'. (ACE - F05 40)

In example (5.11), initial *surely* precedes the first person pronoun *I*, and in this case, the speaker expresses her subjective belief.

(5.12): ... got pregnant again; that at least they can't take away ... *Surely* I can bear to think about it now, now I know I'm going to have a daughter. (FLOB – WRRK02)

In (5.12), the speaker presents her subjective predication that she is going to have a daughter. *Surely* in this case gives a sense of reassurance.

In many cases, initial *surely* + first person pronoun *I* is observed to be used by speakers to claim rights and questioning the addressee’s lack of knowledge (Downing 2001: 262). However, in examples (5.11) and (5.12), there is no such confrontational sense.

ii. Initial *surely* + inclusive *we* – presenting collective belief (5.13).

(5.13): *Surely*, we all felt, we had reached the ultimate in technological achievement. (ACE G20 44)

In example (5.13), initial *surely* + inclusive pronoun *we* is chosen by the speaker to express a collective belief on behalf of the group in which *we* is referred to. Unlike example (5.6) in which initial *surely* + *we* is extremely challenging and confrontational, *surely* + *we* in this case has no sense of “fighting”, neither is it persuasive in the sense that it is seeking agreement and confirmation. In addition, *surely* is separated by a comma, which turns it into a discourse marker.

iii. Initial *surely* + third person pronouns – presenting subjective belief on behalf of the third party *they* and *he*. (5.14) and (5.15)

(5.14): "What's the matter with everyone? The man's a raving lunatic. *Surely* they realize that, even from yesterday's incident." "He just gets a bit excited, that's all. (ACE - L07 46)

In example (5.14), initial *surely* + third person pronoun *they* occurs in a conversation in which the speaker is presenting his/her subjective belief about what the third part “they” should have realized.

(5.15): “How exactly would a crocodile get him on dry land, or even in a little creek? *Surely* he'd hear it coming.” (ACE - R10 47)

In example (5.15), the speaker is presenting subjective belief on what the third part “he” had done. It can be argued that *surely* in both (5.14) and (5.15) carries a speculative sense as the beliefs presented by the speakers are not evidence-based.

iv. Initial *surely* + anticipatory *it* – making a subjective claim (5.16).
(5.16): However I think that giving up that she isn’t really worth writing about is also drawing people's attention to her. That is exactly what she thrives on. Surely it would be better not to bother with her at all, no matter how much you criticize her in the article. (FLOB WRRB16)

In example (5.16), the subject “not to bother with her at all” is moved to the right of the predicate. With initial surely, the speaker is making a subjective claim “it would be better not to bother with her at all”. The opinion is based on what the speaker has observed “that is exactly what she thrives on”. The adverb at all further strengthens the sense of persuasion, forcefulness and the speaker’s dislike of the person “she” in the question. Although the speaker is making a claim, a sense of confrontation can be traced in the clause.

v. Initial surely + demonstrative that – making a prediction (5.17).

(5.17): …reception desk didn't know who they were. If it's not the police, surely that means someone thinks we really are on to something." (FLOB WRRN14)

In example (5.17), the demonstrative that refers to the conditional question “if it’s not the police”, the belief expressed by the speaker is in fact conditional. In other words, the speaker is making a prediction rather than presenting strong a belief. The prediction is based on the assumption expressed in the conditional clause.

c) Initial Surely making an ironic assumption

i. Initial surely + noun phrase – making an ironic assumption (5.18).

(5.18): I spent most of my time there feeling I had committed a great sin in being born a child. And surely one day my fingers would find not a biscuit but a funnel-web spider. (ACE G20 11)

(5.18) was discussed previously as example (5.1), but repeated here to illustrate the ironic assumption made by the speaker. In example (5.18), initial surely precedes the noun phrase “my fingers” and expresses a sense of irony and sarcasm which is related to the previous clause “I spent most of my time there feeling I had committed a great sin in being born a child.” In this case, surely is not used as an argumentative strategy in the sense that the speaker positions him/herself towards an audience but rather an ironic/sarcastic remark the speaker makes to him/herself.

d) Initial surely as a focalizer

i. Initial surely + noun phrase – functioning as a focalizer (5.19).

(5.19): His elder brother and Earl of Northcliffe, describing in quite fabulous detail all the supernatural and surely quite evil happenings going on at Kimberly Hall. It was all nonsense, of course. (FROWN – WRRP09)

Surely in example (5.19) is a focalizer. In addition to focalizing the part which immediately follows the adverb, surely also strengthens the speaker’s negative attitude towards what “his
elder brother” is describing, and the disproval is made obvious in the next sentence “it was all nonsense, of course”.

e) Initial surely raising rhetorical question

i. Initial surely + existential there – raising rhetorical question (5.20)

(5.20): One thousand shows later, he's rich, famous and successful. But surely there's more to life than patting knees and being smug? (FLOB – WRRC11)

In example (5.20), the conjunction but + surely precedes existential there and it contributes to make the question a rhetorical one. According to Downing, surely + there invites a co-participant in the discourse, or an unseen reader or listener, to share the speaker’s belief in the existence or non-existence of something (Downing 2001: 274). In this case, by using but surely, the speaker is presenting a contradictory view on the previous utterance. Existential there makes the argument impersonal, and as Downing claims, “surely in existential there structure can mitigate the force of what otherwise might have sounded more peremptory” (Downing 2001: 274). However, it can be argued that the speaker’s disproving attitude is obvious.

f) Initial surely stating opposite/stronger claim (5.21) and making a reassurance (5.22)

i. Initial surely + inclusive we – stating opposite/stronger claim (5.21)

(5.21): …is so obviously real, choose the former. But I find both responses deeply unsatisfactory. Surely we can do better than this. (FLOB – WRRG63)

In example (5.21), the speaker presents his/her dissatisfaction in the previous clause and states an opposite claim with initial surely + inclusive we in the following sentence. Although the speaker uses we and seeks agreement and togetherness, his/her arguably strong subjective opinion should not to be ignored.

ii. Initial surely + first person pronoun I – persuasive and reassuring (5.22)

(5.22): A lot of women are going to do this, and it’s a real big thing and it’s acceptable and they give you a long-sleeved shirt, they say 'Maybe I can try that, and if there are that many women, then surely I won't come in last.' (FROWN – WRRE01)

In example (5.22), the speaker is presenting an opinion on behalf of an imaginary audience “a lot of women”. With initial surely + first person I, the speaker is pretending to be part of the imaginary audience and expressing the thought they “surely” have in their mind. Initial surely + I is persuasive and reassuring, an argumentative strategy used by the speaker to influence the way of thinking of the audience.

g) Initial surely seeking confirmation and agreement

i. Initial surely + inclusive we – seeking confirmation and agreement (5.23)

(5.23): For surely we may (and Wittgenstein does) speak of state of understanding, or of thought processes, surely when one understands, understands a word, a sentence, or the principle of a series – one is in a particular state, namely, the state of understanding the world, sentence, or principle. (FROWN – WRRG53)
Surely occurs twice in example (5.24). Surely precedes inclusive we in the first case and a question introduced by when in the latter. With initial surely + we, the speaker is seeking agreement and togetherness, the less certain auxiliary may and the optional or indicate less than full certainty. The speaker is making a suggestion rather than a firm statement, and at the same time, he/she is seeking agreement and confirmation. Similarly, the speaker is making an assumption in the second case. Instead of presenting a belief, surely in both cases is attempting to seek agreement and confirmation from the interlocutor.

i. Initial surely + second person pronoun you – seeking confirmation and agreement with a sense of persuasion (5.24) and (5.25)


In example (5.24), initial surely + second person pronoun you is seeking agreement and confirmation rather than presenting a confrontational argument. The reason why “Luke” surely “can understand” is expressed by the speaker in the previous sentence “I couldn’t risk having everything I’d worked for eventually falling into the hands of outsiders”. The reply from Luke “Yeah, I understand” makes it (arguably) clear that he does not consider “surely you can understand that” confrontational but rather an implicit question which seeks agreement.

(5.25): You love your estate and spend a deal of time caring for it. Surely you wish a son to whom you may leave it." She watched his growing unease. (FROWN – WRRP14)

In the first utterance “you love your estate and spend a deal of time caring for it”, the speaker is making a firm statement from the point of view of the addressee, with initial surely + second person pronoun you, the speaker is not only attempting to seek confirmation from the addressee, but speculating and making a great effort to influence the way of thinking of the other part. Initial surely + you in this case is extremely persuasive, it is used as an argumentative strategy.

h) The collocation but + initial surely – challenging (5.26) or persuasive (5.27)

In Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer’s study (2007), the collocation but surely occurs in 10 out of the 30 instances of initial surely, and they argue that surely is a “fighting word” (Downing 2001) in the sense that it is useful in the exchange of arguments (Simon-Vandenbergen & Aijmer 2007: 137).

In the present study, the data shows that the collocation but surely occurs twice in both ACE and FLOB, and three times in FROWN. However, in addition to conveying a challenging and confrontational meaning, as in example (5.26), but surely is also used in clauses in which no sense of fighting is expressed, as illustrated by (5.27)

(5.26): One thousand shows later, he’s rich, famous and successful. But surely there’s more to life than patting knees and being smug? (FLOB – WRRC11)

In example (5.26), but surely + existential there makes the utterance confrontational and challenging. The speaker obviously disproves the way “he” lives his life. With existential
there, the speaker’s negative attitude towards the other person’s behaviour becomes less personal and peremptory.

(5.27): …Such a view certainly is too harsh. But surely the moral significance of sympathy emerges as part of a larger moral picture, including a commitment to understanding those with whom one sympathizes and to acting when appropriate. (FROWN – WRRJ61)

In example (5.27), the speaker first concedes that “such a view certainly is too harsh”, with the collocation but surely in the following clause, he/she presents the counter argument. But surely does not carry a strong sense of “fighting”, however, together with another modal adverb of certainty certainly, it is used as an argumentative strategy with the intention to convince and persuade the audience.

i) Initial surely functioning as a discourse marker (5.28)

(5.28): Surely, it is time that they can at least own up to where it will not be going, and put an end to the unnecessary anxiety that is sweeping Victoria (ACE B10 36)

With discourse marker surely preceding the anticipatory it clause in example (5.28), the speaker is making a firm suggestion.

Surely precedes negation not in two cases in FROWN, this is a feature not found in ACE and FLOB.

j) The collocation of initial surely + negation not - presenting subjective belief (5.29)

(5.29): It was odd, Dekker thought, that Ngemba had sent him a recorded visual message instead of just calling him up. Because of the time difference? Surely not simply to save the extra cost of a two-way. (FROWN – WRRM02)

In example (5.29), the narrator is presenting the character Dekker’s inner thought. Dekker is attempting to figure out the reason “why Ngemba had sent him a recorded visual message”. He questions himself, with surely Dekker presents his subjective belief that “it is not simply to save the extra cost of a two-way”.

k) Initial surely + third person pronoun they - raising rhetorical question (5.30)

(5.30): Even people who themselves have been slandered in one programme, will be sucked in and suckered by the very next programme. But this is not credible, you’ll say. For a while at least, surely, they will be circumspect about anything that appears on television? I’m afraid that in practice it does not work like that. (ACE - W08 34)

In example (5.30), it is a special case in which surely is used as part of imaginative voice. The speaker puts himself/herself into the role of the imaginative audience and presents an opinion on behalf of them “But this is not credible, you’ll say. For a while at least, surely, they will be circumspect about…”. It is in this context that one of the important features of surely becomes apparent. According to Downing, utterances containing surely are based on perceptions, beliefs and assumptions brought to hearer at a particular point in the discourse. She claims that the perception at that point in the discourse, the states of knowledge starts to differ between the speaker and hear (Downing 2001: 255). In the rhetorical question, the speaker seems to have predicted that the audience is likely to have a different opinion on the subject.
In the following sentence, the speaker answers the question him/herself and justifies his/her previously stated claim.

5.3.2 Discussion – Initial surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

As illustrated by table 5.3 below, initial surely is most frequently used with a challenging and confrontational sense in ACE (33%), followed by discourse marker surely (26.3%). Initial surely also occurs in contexts in which it contributes to convey certainty towards a claim/statement (18.5%). Seeking confirmation/agreement and making a speculation are also meanings associated with initial surely but is infrequent.

In FLOB, contributing to convey certainty towards a claim/statement is the most frequent meaning of initial surely (27.5%). Seeking confirmation/agreement is relatively frequent (20.6%), and initial surely used with a challenging sense (17.2%) as well as making a speculation (13.7%) is also recorded. Discourse marker surely is not recorded in FLOB.

Overall, the lowest frequency of initial surely is recorded in FROWN (22 instances, see table 5.3), it is most frequently used with a challenging sense (27.2%), other meanings also occur, but less frequently.

The findings show that the various meanings associated with initial surely are covered in all the three corpora, however, the distribution of these meanings differs from one to another. It should be emphasized that initial surely frequently functions as a discourse marker (surely separated by a comma) in ACE (7 instances), but this use of surely is rare in FROWN (2 instances) and is absent in FLOB. On the other hand, initial surely functioning as focalizer is rare in ACE (once), but slightly more frequent in FLOB (3 instances) and FROWN (3 instances).

Table 5.3 The distribution of the various meanings of initial surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial surely</th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Being challenging/confrontational/asking rhetorical question</td>
<td>9(33%)</td>
<td>5(17.2%)</td>
<td>6(27.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Making a claim/statement</td>
<td>5(18.5%)</td>
<td>8(27.5%)</td>
<td>4(18.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Making a prediction/assumption/suggestion</td>
<td>1(3.7%)</td>
<td>3(10.3%)</td>
<td>2(9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Seeking confirmation/agreement</td>
<td>2(7.4%)</td>
<td>6(20.6%)</td>
<td>2(9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Making a concession</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Speculating</td>
<td>2(7.4%)</td>
<td>4(13.7%)</td>
<td>3(13.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Focalizer</td>
<td>1(3.7%)</td>
<td>3(10.7%)</td>
<td>3(13.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Manner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Discourse marker (surely separated by a comma)</td>
<td>7(26.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27(100%)</td>
<td>29(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.3 Medial surely

a) Medial surely being challenging and confrontational

i. Anticipatory it + medial surely – challenging and confrontational (5.31)

(5.31) It is surely significant that, in a recent poll of trades union leaders - who ought to be his strongest supporters – he was rated only seventh in the shadow Cabinet. How can the voters trust a man in whom even the party’s Stalwarts are losing faith? (FLOB – WRRB08)

In example (5.31), medial surely occurs in an anticipatory it clause. The speaker is questioning the candidate’s credibility given his increasing unpopularity. A rhetorical question is raised at the end of utterance, and surely is clearly used as argumentative strategy and is extremely challenging and provocative.

ii. Second person pronoun you + medial surely – challenging and manipulative (5.32)

(5.32): You haven't a home. You haven't any income left. You surely don't expect to go on living here indefinitely, being waited on hand and a foot. (FROWN – WRRP11)

In example (5.32), firstly, the speaker is emphasizing the miserable situation the other part is facing at the present stage. With you + medial surely, the speaker is making a strong argument on behalf of the other part, though the viewpoint is arguably subjective, namely the speaker’s own. You + medial surely is challenging and manipulative in this case.

b) Medial surely presenting a (subjective) belief (5.33) and making a prediction/claim about a third part’s capability of doing something (5.34)

i. Third person pronouns (he/she) + medial surely – presenting a (subjective) belief on behalf of a third party (5.33)

(5.33): If Jesus was in Australia now, I strongly believe that he would surely have refused to meet the criminals, and he would have held and prayed for the Palestinian victims. (ACE B10 3)

In example (5.33), the speaker is presenting a strong belief on behalf of a third part, the fact that the third part is Jesus makes the utterance extremely persuasive and rhetorical. Surely is clearly used as argumentative strategy.

ii. Third person pronoun they + medial surely – making a prediction about a third party’s capability of doing something (5.34)

(5.34): If the Russians wished to pillage down the Queensland coast, they would surely pass close to this island at the northern gateway to the only known navigable passage inside the Great Barrier Reef. (ACE – F26 12)

In example (5.34), the third person pronoun they + auxiliary would + medial surely occurs in a clause which is preceded by a conditional clause introduced by if. The speaker makes a
prediction about the action of Russians. As indicated by if, he certainty expressed is conditional.

c) Medial surely presenting a belief, making a claim/prediction/assumption and used as an emphaser
   i. Medial surely + second person pronoun you – emphaser, making a strong prediction/threat (5.35)

(5.35): Sancho was an authority on the subject, “only one way if you want to live, you must think like an Apache. Move like an Apache. Fight like an Apache. If you don’t, you will surely die. (FROWN – WRRN06)

In example (5.35), the speaker is predicting what will happen if the other part fails to do certain things in order to survive, with you + the auxiliary will + emphizer surely, the strong prediction made by the speaker can even be considered a threat.

   ii. Referential it + medial surely – making a prediction (5.36) and presenting a belief (5.37)

The data shows when medial surely occurs in referential clauses, it often precedes an auxiliary such as would and must. With would, surely expresses less certainty, as in example (5.36). When surely co-occurs with must (be), the speaker presents a much stronger belief, as in example (5.37).

   iii. Relative pronoun + medial surely – making an assumption/presenting a claim, (5.38) and (5.39)

(5.37): "If ... we try to enter into the author's intention, it must surely appear that he is thinking, in the first place, not so much of Christians who need a deeper theology, as of non-Christians who are concerned about eternal life and the way to it... (FLOB – WRRD01)

In example (5.37), the speaker is predicting how the author in the text will be thinking. With must surely, the speaker arguably presents his/her own subjective belief on behalf of a third person despite lack of clear evidence. Surely is speculative in this case, and must further strengthens the speculative sense.
In example (5.38), surely occurs in a non-restrictive relative clause introduced by which, the speaker expresses less certainty by combining the adverb maybe with the modal auxiliary would in the previous clause “…but maybe dangerous speedsters would be prevented from causing accidents.” The speaker believes, however, this approach “surely is better than filling quotas or making easy dollars”. With surely, the utterance becomes more persuasive and it can be seen as an argumentative strategy.

(5.39): Six months had elapsed since national conference. The sweaty palms, beating heart, desperate futile searching for someone who surely needed me for deep and meaningful conversation - all returned. (ACE - WD128)

In example (5.39), surely occurs in a restrictive relative clause introduced by who and functions as an emphasizer. The speaker is making an assumption or expressing his/her imaginative thoughts rather than presenting his/her subjective belief.

iii. Medial surely in cleft constructions (only recorded in FLOB) – presenting a belief (5.40)

(5.40): what most surely won her notice and then her sympathy as she came to know him was his passion for social justice and his record of failure as an impatient battler for near-hopeless causes. (FLOB - WRRG23)

In example (5.40), the long subject is a cleft clause “what most surely won her notice and then her sympathy as she came to know him”, the speaker is expressing his/her belief on what had happened to a third person she. The belief is based on the speaker’s observation and subjective judgement. The auxillary must reinforces the effect of the medial surely, which functions as an emphasizer.

d) Medial surely with concessive meaning

i. Noun phrase + medial surely – conveying concessive meaning (5.41)

(5.41): The headline surely does less than justice to her analysis. But the issues are too important and there is too much of substance that has to be genuinely faced in the policy debate for the discussion...(ACE - WE37 11)

In example (5.41), medial surely is concessive, and the speaker admits that “the headline does less than justice to her analysis”. In the following clause introduced by the conjunction but, the speaker makes justifications relating to the concession made in the previous clause.

e) Medial surely making an impersonal persuasion

i. Existential there + medial surely – being persuasive (5.42)

Existential there + surely occurs once in ACE, as in (5.42). According to Downing, in addition to inviting a co-participant in the discourse to share the speaker’s belief in the existence or non-existence of something. Existential there + surely also invites the other part to share the speaker’s belief in the speaker’s awareness of needs, dangers, alternatives and expectations (Downing 2002: 274).
(5.42): There must surely be a more environmentally acceptable option, such as that proposed by Perth architect John Oldham to re-direct Riverside Drive along the present route of Terrace Road. (ACE - WB16 5)

Medial surely in an existential clause makes the utterance impersonal, and it is, according to Downing, an interpersonal argumentative strategy in the sense that the practice of persuasion is indirect. Surely is extremely persuasive in formal argumentation with impersonalising structures such as existentials and extrapositions. (Downing 2004: 274 - 275).

In example (5.42), by combining existential there with auxiliary must + surely, the speaker makes a strong appeal to the audience and demands a more environmentally acceptable option, and in the following clause, he/she presents his/her own example and suggests that a similar option should be considered. Existential there + must surely is persuasive and argumentative in this case.

f) Medial surely seeking agreement and confirmation

i. Medial surely + inclusive we – seeking agreement and confirmation (5.43) and (5.44)

(5.43): As a society, we surely have a responsibility to identify HIV-infected individuals, if only so that they and their partners can be made aware of the appalling risks associated with unprotected sexual intercourse. (FLOB – WRRB11B)

Downing claims that in cases where inclusive we is the subject, surely functions as a persuasive device (Downing 2001: 266). In example (5.42), the speaker makes an appeal and seeks agreement on facts which are considered part of moral and social obligation. Despite the fact that the speaker is seeking agreement, with surely, he/she takes a dominant position and presents his/her statement as more reliable and reasonable. As Downing puts it, surely in such cases is procedural or directive; it instructs “the addressee to be aware that a signal is being given that points to the relevant evidence from which inferences may be drawn” (Downing 2001: 267).

(5.44): All the points of the line except this one end-point. Now we may surely assume that a finite line is a continuum, if anything is, so if Aristotle's definition is correct then the two parts into which we have divided it must share a limit. (FLOB – WRRJ53)

In example (5.44), the auxiliary may precedes medial surely and makes the utterance tentative and less certain. The verb assume further weakens the level of certainty, the speaker is asking for agreement based on his/her assumption rather than making a firm claim.

5.3.4 Discussion – Medial surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

Table 5.4 shows that surely contributing to making a claim/statement is the most frequent meaning associated with medial surely, and this is a pattern recorded in all the three corpora. However, it should be pointed out that conveying certainty to a claim/statement is more frequent in FLOB (21 instances, 54.2%) compared to ACE (9 instances, 45%) and FROWN (10 instances, 34.8%). Being challenging/confrontational is not the typical meaning of medial surely, no instance is recorded in ACE, 4 instances (10.2 %) is recorded in FLOB, and 3 instances (10.3%) is recorded in FROWN. Medial surely is relatively frequently observed to contribute to making a prediction/assumption/suggestion. The frequency is slightly higher in
ACE and FROWN than FLOB. And in addition, while initial surely is frequently found to seeking confirmation/agreement, this particular use is not recorded with medial surely in the three corpora. Medial surely used with a speculative sense, as a focalizer and emphizer are recorded but less frequent. Focalizer surely in medial position occurs twice in FROWN but no instance is recorded in ACE and FLOB. Emphasiser surely is only recorded twice in FLOB. The general pattern is initial surely is relatively more challenging and confrontational than medial surely, and medial surely is more likely to contribute to making a claim/statement. Furthermore, the distribution of various meanings associated with medial surely in the three corpora is different, some meanings are recorded in one corpora but not the other two, and vice visa.

Table 5.4 The distribution of the various meanings of medial surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medial surely</th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Being challenging/confrontational</td>
<td>4(10.2%)</td>
<td>3(10.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Making a claim/statement</td>
<td>9(45%)</td>
<td>21(54.2%)</td>
<td>10(34.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Making a prediction/assumption/assurance</td>
<td>6(30%)</td>
<td>4(10.2%)</td>
<td>7(24.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Making a concession</td>
<td>2(10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Speculating</td>
<td></td>
<td>4(10.2%)</td>
<td>4(13.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Focalizer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2(6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Emphasizer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2(5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Manner</td>
<td>3(15%)</td>
<td>4(10.2%)</td>
<td>3(10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20(100%)</td>
<td>39(100%)</td>
<td>29(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.5 Final surely – mainly seeking confirmation

a) Final surely – seeking confirmation (5.45) and (5.46)

(5.45): I mean, that would have to be the basis of most neurotic and stress problems surely, taking things out of perspective? Yes, that is true to a great extent but subconscious suppression of certain aspects of data can also throw the wheels of personality out of balance. (ACE- WL01 27)

Final surely in example (5.45) occurs in a sentence which is right before a question, the speaker expresses his/her opinion and at the same time, his doubt about it, final surely is followed by a question and the speaker seeks confirmation which immediately comes from another speaker in the next sentence.

Although the co-occurrence of initial surely and the second person pronoun you frequently conveys a challenging meaning, it does not seem to be the case with final surely co-occurring
with you. In FLOB, you + final surely occurs twice, but surely is not challenging in any of the cases, as illustrated by (5.46)

(5.46) “It was very big disappointment” He said, but added:” We will do one next year. You cannot have two days like that surely? It was the worst day they have had for three years.” (FLOB – WRRA42)

In example (5.46), final surely occurs in a rhetorical question. Although the second person pronoun you is the subject, the speaker does not seem to challenge the addressee but raises a question with an ironic sense. Instead of presenting a subjective belief, the speaker is rather seeking agreement and confirmation.

b) Final surely – being (potentially) challenging (5.47)

(5.47): To touch a woman’s breast when you were hardly twenty-one that was hardly such a heinous crime surely? (ACE – WKK 20)

In example (5.47), the speaker seems to be seeking for confirmation, but his rather ironic and sarcastic tone makes it a rhetorical question. Surely is potentially challenging in this case.

5.3.6 Discussion - Final surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

As mentioned previously, final surely is rare in ACE and FLOB and it is absent in FROWN. As illustrated by table 5.5, only two meanings are recorded. Final surely used with a (potentially) challenging/confrontational sense is recorded once in ACE, and it is used to seek confirmation/agreement once in ACE and twice in FLOB.

Table 5.5 The distribution of the various meanings of final surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final surely</th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Being (potentially) challenging/confrontational</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seeking confirmation/agreement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.7 Discussion – Surely in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

Despite the fact that similar meanings of surely are identified in the three English varieties, the distribution of the meanings differ according to position and context. Medial surely appears to be most frequent in FLOB and FROWN, in ACE, on the other hand, initial surely takes the lead.

Overall, surely most frequently contributes to convey certainty to a claim/statement in the three corpora, and in such cases, surely often takes medial position, and the frequency rate of medial surely is remarkably higher than initial surely when conveying this particular meaning. It is observed that when surely conveys certainty to a claim/predication, and speculates as to the state of mind/actions of a third party, it is often argumentative. The underlying meaning is that the speakers know the best and the confidence is based on knowledge or authority.

The frequency rate of surely as a fighting word is similar in the three corpora, however, challenging surely is observed to only take initial position in ACE. The distribution of initial
and medial *surely* is more even in FLOB and FROWN, suggesting that *surely* conveying this particular meaning seems to be more position-dependent in ACE than FLOB and FROWN. Final *surely* with a confrontational sense is only recorded in ACE (once). The low frequency indicates that being challenging and confrontational is not the primary meaning of final *surely* in the three English varieties under investigation.

In terms of seeking confirmation and agreement, *surely* is most frequent in FLOB, and among the 6 cases, it takes initial position 4 times and final *surely* occurs twice. And not surprisingly, *surely* occurs at the end of a question in both cases. On the other hand, *surely* conveying this particular meaning is recorded twice in both ACE and FROWN. It is observed that generally, *surely* takes initial position when it seeks confirmation and agreement, and this feature applies to all the three English varieties.

Furthermore, *surely* being speculative is more frequent in FLOB and FROWN than in ACE, and it takes both initial and medial positions when conveying this meaning. (4 initial *surely* + 4 medial *surely* in FLOB and 3 initial *surely* + 4 medial *surely* in FROWN, 2 instances of medial *surely* are found in ACE). On the other hand, *surely* is used as a discourse marker to a greater extent in AusE than BrE and AmE. A total of 7 instances are recorded in ACE. Discourse marker *surely* occurs twice in FROWN, and not a single case of this use of *surely* is recorded in FLOB. The results show distribution differences in terms of meanings and functions of *surely* in the three corpora, although more research is needed.

Focalizer *surely* is least frequent in ACE, one instance is recorded. On the other hand, 3 instances are recorded in FLOB, and *surely* takes initial position in all the three cases. A total of 5 instances of focalizer *surely* is found in FROWN, it takes initial position in 3 cases, and medial position twice.

*Surely* used with a concessive meaning is only recorded in ACE, and it takes medial position in both cases.

In terms of contextual meanings of *surely*, some differences have been observed among the three corpora. *Surely* + second person pronoun *you*, a position in which *surely* is considered to be most challenging and confrontational is more frequent in AmE compared to the other two English varieties. It seems to suggest that American speakers are potentially more direct and confrontational when presenting their arguments than the more subtle Britons and Australians, and when engaging in an argument, they might prefer a more personal approach. After a closer look, the findings confirm what Downing has observed, i.e. the combination of *surely* and *you* is mainly used as a fighting word in all the three corpora. However, it should be noticed that the frequency rate of the co-occurrence of *surely* and *you* is relatively low in both ACE (1 instance – a fighting word) and FLOB (2 instances, one of them is a case of final *surely*, and there is no sense of fighting). Among the 7 instances of the co-occurrence of *surely* + *you* in Frown, 5 of them is challenging and confrontational, whereas *surely* seeks confirmation in one case and makes a claim in another. It suggests that the combination of initial *surely* + *you* is not exclusively challenging.
The fact that the co-occurrence of *surely* and inclusive pronoun *we* is more frequent in ACE (4 instances of initial *surely* + *we*) and FLOB (4 instances of initial *surely* + *we* and 3 instances of *we* + medial *surely*) than Frown (one instance of initial *surely* + *we*) seems to suggest that Australian and British speakers favour persuasion as an argumentative strategy. Instead of confronting their counterparts, they are more likely to seek togetherness, confirmation and agreement. In other words, they may look for collaboration rather than making a more personal or direct approach. However, as Downing points out, the co-occurrence of *surely* + individual *we* is an effective argumentative strategy in that the speaker presents him/herself as the one who has the superior knowledge and his/her opinion is the reasonable and reliable one (Downing 2002: 266-267). The findings of the present study show that the co-occurrence of *surely* + *we* is often used by speakers, consciously or unconsciously to influence the thinking of the audience and seek confirmation and agreement. This feature is observed both when *surely* is used to make a statement/claim and raise a question. And in some cases, there is arguably little room for the interlocutors to make counter-argument. In such cases, the implication is that the speakers expect the addressee to comply with what he/she has suggested or requested.

In terms of the co-occurrence of *surely* + *she/he/they* subjects, AusE is close to BrE. And it should be noticed that AusE has the highest frequency rate of *surely* + third person subjects. A total of 8 instances of *surely* + third person pronouns *she/he/they* are recorded in ACE, by comparison, 5 instances are recorded in FLOB, and only 2 instances are recorded in FROWN for the combination of *surely* + third person pronouns.

Among the 8 instances in which *surely* co-occurs with third person pronouns in AusE, *surely* is mainly used in contexts when the speakers make predictions/claims on behalf of a third party or speculate on the thinking or actions of a third person. In such cases, *surely* is often argumentative. In other words, despite the fact that the speakers do not have absolute evidence, they appear confident to their beliefs and the confidence is sometimes based on knowledge or authority. The same pattern is observed in FLOB, when co-occurring with third person pronouns, *surely* mainly makes claims and predictions and *surely* is speculative in one case. Among the two cases recorded in FROWN, *surely* carries a speculative sense in both of them. The fact that 8 instances of *surely* + *he/she/they* occurs in ACE, 5 in FLOB and 2 in FROWN suggests that Australians prefer this usage of *surely* to a greater extent than Britons and Americans.

With regards to other contexts, the results of the analysis show that the combination of *surely* and existential *there* is relatively infrequent in the three English varieties. It is recorded once in both ACE and FLOB, and twice in FROWN. *Surely* takes medial position in ACE, and a counter-proposal is presented. In FLOB, initial *surely* is preceded by the conjunction *but*, and *surely* is challenging and confrontational. The two instances of *surely* + *there* from FROWN (initial position once and medial position once) are observed to making an ironic claim, and *surely* is used as an argumentative strategy. In all cases, despite the fact that a challenging sense is conveyed, the speakers have avoided making personal arguments.
As mentioned previously, the high frequency of *surely* in FLOB is mainly due to two constructions, the co-occurrence of *surely* and referential *it* and *surely* preceded or is followed by a noun phrase. Downing claims that anticipatory *it*, whether it is preceded or followed by *surely* is frequently used to state a claim or suggest an alternative which contrasts with, disagrees with or qualifies something stated in the preceding clause. And similarly, referential *it* also has this function. The difference is that referential *it* connects topical entities across sentences while extrapoosed construction organizes the argument rhetorically (Downing 2002: 272). The data in Downing’s study is based on British English discourses extracted from British National Corpus, and it is reported that *surely* + anticipatory *it* outnumbered referential *it* by a good margin. In the present study, however, the frequency of *surely* + referential *it* (10 instances) is remarkably higher than *surely* + anticipatory *it* (4 instances) in FLOB. The distribution of *surely* + referential *it* and *surely* + anticipatory *it* is even in ACE, 3 instances are recorded from both categories. On the other hand, *surely* + referential *it* is more frequent (3 instances) than *surely* + extrapoosed *it* (once) in FROWN.

Among the 10 instances recorded from FLOB in which *surely* occurs with referential *it*, *surely* takes medial position in 6 cases, initial position 3 times, and final position once. Medial *surely* mainly makes assumptions (sometimes on behalf of a third party) as well as claims, and the evidence for making such claims is often based on superior knowledge or authority. The 3 instances of initial *surely* + referential *it* are all questions, not surprisingly, *surely* seeks confirmation in all the three cases. It is also observed that *surely* seeks confirmation when taking final position.

Among the 3 instances recorded from ACE, *surely* takes initial position once, and medial position twice. Initial *surely* is used to make a claim with a sense of sarcasm, thus *surely* becomes argumentative. Medial *surely* makes assumption and suggestion in ACE.

*Surely* takes initial position in all three instances recorded in FROWN, it makes uncertain prediction “But it will almost *surely* be back”, a hypothetical claim “…since it would *surely* last forever” and a claim with no absolute evidence.

To sum up, in terms of the co-occurrence of *surely* + referential *it* across the three corpora, the main pattern is that medial *surely* in referential constructions tends to make claims and assumptions, either with or without evidence. Initial *surely* in questions and final *surely*, on the other hand, often seeks confirmation, in such cases, *surely* is considered to be used as an argumentative strategy. It should be emphasized that *surely* + referential *it* occurs more frequently in FLOB, however, the meanings conveyed by *surely* are similar to the ones identified in ACE and FROWN. In other words, the combination of *surely* + referential *it* is used in very much the same way in the three corpora.

*Surely* and anticipatory *it* occurs 3 times in ACE, and in all the 3 cases, *surely* takes initial position, and it is challenging with a counter-proposal involved.

Four cases in which *surely* + anticipatory *it* are recorded in FLOB, *surely* takes initial position twice and medial position twice. The finding shows that *surely* either makes counter-proposal
or claim and it is (potentially) challenging. A sarcastic or confrontational sense can often be traced.

The combination of surely and anticipatory it only occurs once in FROWN, and surely takes initial position in this case. A counter-proposal is presented and it makes the utterance more argumentative.

The findings suggest that surely + anticipatory it is frequently used to make a claim, and in particular, to present a counter-proposal. As a result, a “fighting” sense is conveyed. It differs from surely + referential it in that despite both sentence structures with surely are frequently used to make a claim, surely + anticipatory it structure appears to be more challenging and argumentative. In other words, the sense of surely as a fighting word is more frequently reflected in extraposed constructions, and this feature of surely + anticipatory it seems to apply to all the three English varieties. This finding is consistent with what Downing has observed: referential it connects topical entities across sentences while extraposed construction organizes the argument rhetorically (Downing 2002: 272).

Surely frequently takes initial position in extraposed constructions, and it is often challenging and confrontational. With referential it, surely is observed to frequently take medial position, thus it becomes an emphaser. In such cases, surely is mainly used to state a claim, persuade audience and seek confirmation.

As mentioned previously, the co-occurrence of surely + noun phrase is most frequent in FLOB and it is considered to be one of the main reasons for the high frequency of surely recorded in this English variety. It is observed that when surely is combined with a noun phrase, either in initial or medial position the meanings it conveys are more or less the same in all the three English varieties. In other word, surely + noun phrase is considered to be used in the same way and in similar contexts in ACE, FLOB and FROWN. Surely is mainly used to make a claim, assumption and suggestion, sometimes with a sense of sarcasm and irony.
6. Analysis and discussion of *no doubt* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

6.1 Introduction

In the study carried out by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer (2007), 5 different patterns with *no doubt* are identified: *no doubt, no doubt about it, be in no doubt, there is no doubt,* and *have no doubt.* The different expressions convey varying degrees of certainty (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 123). It should be pointed out that only *no doubt* is an adverb of certainty/uncertainty.

The aim of this study is to identify the main meanings of *no doubt* and the relationship between forms and meanings in ACE, FLOB and FROWN following a similar structure to the previous two chapters. However, the related expressions mentioned above will also be analyzed and discussed to some degree. The reason for including the related expressions is, as Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer point out in their study, “These express varying degrees of certainty. As some of these expressions are infrequent in the data and as they are so closely related to each other both formally and semantically we shall treat them together” (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 121). A thorough analysis of both *no doubt* used as an adverb and its related expressions will also provide a more accurate picture of *no doubt* used in the three English varieties. In addition, the findings will be used to confirm or disconfirm the main claims made by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, i.e. to what extent the patterns observed by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer are also attested in the three English varieties in this study.

6.2 *No doubt* and related expressions in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

Table 6.1 shows substantial distributional difference of *no doubt* between ACE and FLOB on the one hand, and FROWN on the other. Overall, *no doubt* (functioning as an adverb and occurring in related expressions) is remarkably more frequent in ACE and FLOB than FROWN (75 and 81 vs. 38). The finding suggests that *no doubt*, independent of its forms and functions, is preferred by AusE and BrE speakers compared to AmE speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Corpus size</th>
<th>Raw no. of occurrences</th>
<th>Normalized freq. pmw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>1164145</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLOB</td>
<td>1267306</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROWN</td>
<td>1283096</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in table 6.2, five different contextual patterns of *no doubt* are identified. Among the 75 instances of *no doubt* recorded in ACE, *no doubt* functioning as an adverb is most frequent (44 instances, 58.6%). The existential construction *there BE no doubt* is also
frequent, and a total of 19 instances are recorded (25.3%). \textit{HAVE/LEAVE no doubt} is less frequent (10.6%), and the expressions \textit{BE (left) in no doubt} and \textit{no doubt about/of that/it} are rare (4.1% and 1.4%). In FLOB, \textit{no doubt} used as an adverb is most frequent, 51 instances out of a total of 81 are recorded (62.9%). Both \textit{there BE no doubt} (16%), \textit{HAVE/LEAVE no doubt} (13.5%), and \textit{BE (left) in no doubt} (6.1%) are recorded but these expressions are remarkably less frequent than adverb \textit{no doubt}. \textit{No doubt about (of) that (it)} is rare (1.5%). In Frown, a total of 38 instances are recorded which makes it the lowest of the three corpora. Adverb \textit{no doubt} appears to be most frequent (71%). The expressions \textit{there BE no doubt} (15.7%), \textit{HAVE (LEAVE) no doubt} (10.7%) and \textit{no doubt about (of) that (it)} (once, 2.6%) are recorded, whereas \textit{BE (left) in no doubt} is not found at all.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & ACE & FLOB & FROWN \\
\hline
there \textit{BE no doubt} & 19 (25.3\%) & 13 (16\%) & 6 (15.7\%) \\
\textit{no doubt} & 44 (58.6\%) & 51 (62.9\%) & 27 (71\%) \\
\textit{HAVE/LEAVE no doubt} & 8 (10.6\%) & 11 (13.5\%) & 4 (10.7\%) \\
\textit{Be (left) in no doubt} & 3 (4.1\%) & 5 (6.1\%) & \\
\textit{no doubt about (of) that (it)} & 1 (1.4\%) & 1 (1.5\%) & 1 (2.6\%) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Distribution of \textit{no doubt} and its related expressions in ACE, FLOB and FROWN}
\end{table}

The examples below illustrate the three most frequently used expressions recorded in the corpora, \textit{no doubt} (6.1), \textit{there BE no doubt} (6.2), and \textit{HAVE (LEAVE) no doubt} (6.3).

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{(6.1)} The mission is sumptuous, impressive, intelligent, full of a somber spiritual idealism; and \textit{no doubt} it cost a fortune to make. (ACE – WCC01B)
\item \textit{(6.2)} “\textit{There’s no doubt} that computers have an application for us,” Mr Kincaid’s administrative aide, Mr Dan Satran, said. (ACE – WAA01C)
\item \textit{(6.3)} Bryant said: \textit{I have no doubt} that the demand is there for our product and it is simply a case of putting in a lot of hard work and marketing to convert interest into bookings. (FLOB – WNN1B10)
\end{itemize}

The certainty expressed by \textit{no doubt} in example (6.1) is supported by the claim made in the previous clause, thus the speaker is conveying a high level of probability, and the claim sounds more convincing. In most cases, \textit{there BE no doubt} is followed by a \textit{that} clause, as in example (6.2). The certainty expressed by an existential construction with \textit{no doubt} is objective and arguably stronger than the subjective certainty expressed by \textit{I have no doubt} in example (6.3). In this case, the certainty is expressed as a personal belief made by the speaker.

As the main focus of the present study is to establish an understanding of \textit{no doubt} used as an adverb, the analysis will start with \textit{no doubt} and continues with \textit{there BE no doubt}, \textit{HAVE/LEAVE no doubt}, \textit{BE in no doubt} and \textit{no doubt about (of) that (it)}.
6.3 No doubt in ACE, FLOB and FROWN: Frequency and position

As revealed by table 6.3, among the 44 instances of adverb no doubt recorded in ACE, it most frequently occurs in initial position (27 instances, 61.3%). Medial no doubt is also relatively frequent (14 instances, 31.8%), whereas final no doubt is rare (3 instances 6.9%). Adverb no doubt occurs 51 times in FLOB, and the distribution of no doubt in initial (22 instances, 43.1%) and medial position (20 instances, 39.2%) is almost even. Among the three corpora, final no doubt is most frequent in FLOB (9 instances, 17.7%). Overall, adverb no doubt is least recorded in FROWN. Initial (11 instances, 40.8%) and medial no doubt (12 instances, 44.4%) are almost equally frequent, whereas final no doubt is rare (4 instances, 14.8%). As a comparison, the finding from Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer’s study (ICE-GB) shows that among 87 instances recorded, no doubt occurs about equally frequent in initial and medial position (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 122). The data from FLOB and FROWN has showed the same distributional pattern of initial and medial no doubt as the one observed by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer in their study, whereas AusE has a clear preference for initial position.

Table 6.3 Positions of no doubt as an adverb in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial no doubt</td>
<td>27(61.3%)</td>
<td>22(43.1%)</td>
<td>11(40.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial no doubt</td>
<td>14(31.8%)</td>
<td>20(39.2%)</td>
<td>12(44.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final no doubt</td>
<td>3(6.9%)</td>
<td>9(17.7%)</td>
<td>4(14.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44(100%)</td>
<td>51(100%)</td>
<td>27(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.1 Initial no doubt in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

As table 6.3 shows, initial no doubt occurs 27 times in ACE, 22 times in FLOB, and 11 times in FROWN. Among the 27 instances of initial no doubt recorded in ACE, it is separated by a comma in two cases. As Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer put it, this clearly turns no doubt into a discourse marker (Simon-Vandenbergen 2007: 122), as in example (6.4). Discourse marker no doubt (in initial position) is recorded twice in FROWN but not recorded at all in FLOB.

(6.4) No doubt, too, it improved the economy as men and women were able to stay in the workforce instead of travelling to the Holy Land on their hands and knees, (ACE – WRR05)

Initial no doubt most frequently occurs in clauses without being separated by a comma, as in example (6.5). However, it can be argued that no doubt still has the discourse function.

(6.5) No doubt the pupil was more elated than the teacher, who wondered why on earth he’d wish to write under a woman’s name. (ACE – WGG07)

In both example (6.4) and (6.5), no doubt contributes to strengthen the certainty which is committed towards a claim. Thus no doubt can be seen as a certainty marker.
6.3.2 Medial *no doubt* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

Medial *no doubt* occurs 14 times in ACE, 20 times in FLOB (6.6), and 12 times in FROWN.

(6.6) He *no doubt* thinks that it’s an election winner, what with promising no more than a two-year wait to have a leg off, name badges for public sector employees…(FLOB – WRRI21)

In example (6.6), the speaker is making an assumption or speculating about what the third person “he” has in mind. *No doubt* can be seen as a probability marker.

6.3.3 Final *no doubt* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

As mentioned previously, final *no doubt* occurs 3 times in ACE (6.7), 9 times in FLOB and 4 times in FROWN.

(6.7) …the earth piled and abandoned, raw scrapes along the dry creek beds, stones, bushes, brown and red earth gashed back. Spoil from metal detectors and dozers *no doubt*. (ACE – WKK01)

In example (6.7), the speaker is speculating about the causes of the destruction of nature. Final *no doubt* can be seen as a discourse marker, and it is directly linked to the dreadful situation mentioned in the previous clause. Thus it adds a disapproving sense to the proposition. This use of *no doubt* can be seen in relation to the observation made by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, namely that *no doubt* can express mild ridicule or even sarcasm when it is used alone (as a response) or in final position (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 291-292).

The meaning conveyed by *no doubt* is dependent on both functions, positions and contexts in which it occurs. For instance, when functioning as a discourse marker (adverb), final *no doubt* may carry a sarcastic meaning, as in example (6.7). On the other hand, *no doubt* in initial position frequently contributes to strengthen the certainty towards a claim. This feature is illustrated by example (6.4) and (6.5). An analysis is made with the aim to identify the relationship between positions, contexts and meanings of *no doubt*. Any similarities and differences identified in ACE, FLOB and FROWN will be studied and discussed.

6.4 The relationship between positions, contexts and meanings of *no doubt*

6.4.1 Initial *no doubt*

a) Discourse marker – conveying certainty towards a claim (6.8)

(6.8) *No doubt*, there is something vaguely troubling about routinely aestheticizing one’s feelings. But even troubling is the habit of aestheticizing feelings that play a central role in our moral lives. (FROWN - WRRJ61)

Initial *no doubt* in example (6.8) is separated by a comma and it functions as a discourse marker. The speaker is making a firm claim “there is something vaguely troubling about…” with high certainty, and the certainty expressed is considered to be objective.
b) Initial *no doubt* + *but* clause – making a concession (6.9)

(6.9) *No doubt* the invitation is tempting and the officials could easily argue a persuasive case for acceptance, *but* the South African offer should be politely declined. (ACE – WBB11G)

In example (6.9), initial *no doubt* occurs in a clause which is followed by a clause introduced by *but* and it suggests concession. With *no doubt*, the speaker concedes that “the invitation is tempting …”, and in the following clause introduced by *but*, a counter argument is made. This construction resembles the structure with *certainly* in which the adverb is followed by a *but*-clause, and in such cases, *certainly* frequently contributes to convey a concessive meaning. If *no doubt* was replaced by *certainly* in (6.9), the sense of concession is preserved. In other words, *no doubt* and *certainly* are considered interchangeable in this particular context.

c) Initial *no doubt* + auxiliary *would have* + past participle – being speculative (6.10)

(6.10) *No doubt* he would still have liked to wave chamber pots to shock the proper, but the responsibility of a home and family (he had married again) somewhat dampened his firecracker. (ACE – WGG20)

In example (6.10), initial *no doubt* precedes third person pronoun *he*, and with *would have liked*, the speaker is speculating what the third part “he” would have done. The certainty expressed in this case is not based on evidence, it can rather be seen as mere speculation. This feature of *no doubt* can be seen in relation to the claim made by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer that there are cases in which *no doubt* expresses probability rather than certainty, in such cases, statements are made about the addressees (third parties) in which the speakers can only speculate (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 124). Furthermore, as the case of (6.9), example (6.10) is followed by a clause introduced by *but*, which is considered to be the typical feature associated with concession. Hence, *no doubt* in (6.10) may also be analyzed as contributing to concession.

d) Initial *no doubt* – asking a rhetorical question, argumentative (6.11)

(6.11) *No doubt* their children and grandchildren were throwing their bodies at life and expecting them to come bouncing back so how could they possibly understand? (ACE – WKK02)

Similar to (6.10), initial *no doubt* in (6.11) contributes to convey a speculative sense. The speaker is speculating what “their children and grandchildren” were doing, and the fact that the speculation is ended with a question makes the proposition argumentative and potentially challenging. The speaker is making an argument rather than seeking an answer or a confirmation from the interlocutor.

e) Initial *no doubt* + auxiliary *will* – making predictions and expressing subjective probability, (6.12) and (6.13)
(6.12) *No doubt* it will be suggested it was someone else who carried out the attack for some reason or another. (FLOB – WRRA13)

(6.13) *No doubt* FPL will soon learn of other storm plans that failed, and will have to recoup and explain. (FROWN – WRRB02)

In example (6.12) from FLOB and (6.13) from FROWN, initial *no doubt* is followed by the auxiliary *will*. As Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer put it, when collocating with *will*, instead of conveying absolute certainty, the speaker is expressing a high degree of subjective probability (Simon-Vandenbergen 2007: 124). In both (6.12) and (6.13), the speakers are predicting that something will happen with no absolute evidence. The predictions are seemingly based on the speakers’ subjective judgement.

f) Initial *no doubt* – conveying certainty to a claim (6.14)

(6.14) *No doubt* in some cases the types of convention listed here (for example how long to wait between moves, talking, moving about, whether or not to allow a retraction of a move) are more rule-like and may indeed be governed by a rule book just like Knowledge 1 and 2. (FLOB – WNN1J33J)

In example (6.14), initial *no doubt* is followed by the prepositional phrase *in some cases*, which functions as an adverbial in the clause. The certainty expressed by the speaker is limited to “some cases”, thus the commitment becomes more specific and arguably more convincing.

g) *No doubt* - making a (potentially sarcastic) remark (6.15)

(6.15) She seemed chronically late – *no doubt* a legacy of single motherhood. (ACE – WPP06)

In example (6.15), the speaker is making a remark about the woman following what has been observed. The collocation “chronically late” has arguably a negative connotation. *No doubt* has strengthened the potentially sarcastic sense of the remark made by the speaker.

**6.4.2 Discussion – Initial *no doubt* in ACE (and FLOB)**

As shown in the discussion above, and in table 6.4, initial *no doubt* contributes to express several meanings in ACE, FLOB and FROWN. *No doubt* is most frequently used in contexts in which it contributes to express certainty towards a claim in the three English varieties. The adverb is also used by the speakers when predicting the actions or states of a third party, and in such cases, the auxiliary *will* often collocates with *no doubt*, pointing to a time reference in the future. The speakers are expressing subjective probability rather than certainty. This particular use is more frequent in ACE (7 instances) and FLOB (4 instances) than in FROWN (once). Furthermore, *no doubt* is found in situations when the speakers are speculating about a past event or action with no absolute evidence, and in such cases, *no doubt* strengthens the speculative sense in the clause. The construction *would have* + past participle is frequently found in such contexts. 6 instances of speculative *no doubt* is recorded in ACE as well as in
FLOB. By contrast, only one instance is registered in FROWN. The borderline between *no doubt* being used for speculative purposes and making a prediction is however; not always clear-cut. When contributing to making a concession, initial *no doubt* is observed to occur frequently in a clause which is followed by a clause introduced by *but*. *No doubt* is therefore considered to be interchangeable with *certainly* in cases when a concessive meaning is conveyed. The typical scenario is that the speaker concedes that something is the case with initial *no doubt* before presenting a counter-proposal in the following clause introduced by *but*, hence this type of use can be seen as an argumentative strategy. Initial *no doubt* is also found in contexts in which it is used to raise a rhetorical question, and to make a (potentially sarcastic) remark.

As mentioned previously, initial *no doubt* separated by a comma turns it into a discourse marker. However, it can be argued that independent of commas, *no doubt* in initial position always functions as a discourse marker, which typically has the whole following clause in its scope. Discourse marker *no doubt* is observed to convey certainty towards a claim and express a concessive meaning.

As revealed by table 6.4, the frequency rates of initial *no doubt* used to expressing a speculative sense and making a prediction are much lower in FROWN compared to ACE and FLOB. It is considered to be the main reason for the distribution difference between ACE and FLOB on the one hand, and FROWN on the other.

Table 6.4 The distribution of the various meanings of initial *no doubt*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making a concession</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening a speculative sense</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conveying certainty to a claim</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a prediction/expressing probability</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking rhetorical question</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse marker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a (potentially sarcastic) remark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4.3 Medial *no doubt*

Referring back to table 6.2, medial *no doubt* occurs 14 times in ACE, 20 times in FLOB, and 12 times FROWN. As was the case of initial *no doubt*, *no doubt* in medial position also contributes to convey several meanings.

a) Medial *No doubt* - strengthening the speculative sense (6.16)

(6.16) Had humanity seen the Educators of its collective childhood in their true character, as agents of one civilizing process, it would *no doubt* have reaped
incalculably greater benefits from the cumulative effects of their successive missions. (ACE – WDD17)

In example (6.16), the speaker is speculating what would have happened if something else had happened in the first place. It is in such contexts that the nature of speculation becomes obvious. Generally, speakers are not in the position to express full commitment to an event in the past. With no doubt, the speculative sense is further strengthened.

b) Medial no doubt – contributing to convey a concessive meaning (6.17)

(6.17) The young man no doubt had his qualities, but it was discomfiting to consider that had her wedding-night union produced tangible results, Mr Coombe’s invective might have been directed …(ACE WPP12)

In example (6.17), no doubt occurs in a clause which is followed by a but clause. With no doubt the speaker concedes that the man had his qualities, and in the following clause introduced by but, a new argument is presented; which to some extent; contradicts the certainty expressed by no doubt. This is also a typical feature of certainly when used in concessive contexts, and as mentioned, in such cases, no doubt and certainly are considered interchangeable.

c) No doubt – expressing certainty towards a claim (6.18)

(6.18) …I learnt that Bayer Associates had tried to sell a case to the Aston Group – which was no doubt what had induced them to hire me in the first place. (FLOB - WRRP17)

In example (6.18), no doubt is found in a relative clause introduced by which. The speaker is expressing certainty to a claim. No doubt in this case is arguably interchangeable with certainly and it seems to suggest that no doubt may be replaced by certainly in contexts when certainty is expressed.

d) No doubt – making a prediction/expressing probability (6.19)

(6.19) Moreover, Russia will no doubt emerge with a powerful military capability and with intentions toward Europe that can not now be foreseen. (FROWN – WRRG02)

In example (6.19), with no doubt combined with will, the speaker is predicting what will happen to Russia. No doubt conveys high probability rather than certainty in this case. The replacement of no doubt with certainly is arguably inappropriate.

6.4.4 Discussion - Medial no doubt in ACE (and FLOB)

Medial no doubt is less frequent than no doubt in initial position in ACE (14 vs. 27 instances). In FLOB and FROWN, the distribution of initial and medial no doubt is even. Table 6.5 reveals that the distribution of various meanings of medial no doubt is different from no doubt in initial position (see table 6.4). There are four meanings associated with medial no doubt which are recorded in the corpora. Contributing to convey certainty to a claim is the most
frequent meaning in all the three English varieties. Medial *no doubt* used to making a prediction/expressing probability is more frequent in FLOB than in ACE and FROWN. While *no doubt* used to strengthening a speculative sense is recorded in all the three corpora, making a concession is only found in ACE (once). It should be pointed out that the distinction between the various meanings is not always clear-cut.

It is in the contexts in which *no doubt* contributes to convey certainty towards a claim that the adverb can be considered as a certainty adverb; in such cases, *no doubt* and *certainly* may be interchangeable. Furthermore, *no doubt* is observed to precede a clause introduced by *but* in concessive contexts, this is a feature which both initial and medial *no doubt* share with *certainly*. When *no doubt* is used with the purpose of strengthening a speculative sense, the speakers typically do not have absolute evidence or are not in a position to express full commitment. What the speakers are speculating about is often a past event or action. *No doubt* is also found to make a prediction, and in such cases, it expresses probability rather than certainty. *No doubt* is not replaceable by *certainly* in contexts in which it carries a speculative sense or conveys probability. The reason for it is that *certainly* is an adverb which normally conveys a relatively high degree of certainty (see section of *certainly*). *No doubt* is observed to make a potentially sarcastic remark once, thus Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer’s claim “*no doubt* can express mild ridicule or even sarcasm” (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 290-292) is supported, but the frequency is too low to draw any firm conclusions.

Table 6.5 The distribution of the various meanings of medial *no doubt* in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>No doubt</em></th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making a concession</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening a speculative sense</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conveying certainty to a claim</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a prediction/expressing probability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4.5 Final *no doubt*

As mentioned previously, *no doubt* in final position occurs 3 times in ACE, 9 times in FLOB, and 4 times in FROWN. Among the 16 cases, *no doubt* most frequently functions as an afterthought. Final *no doubt* occurs in a speculative context once, and in a concessive context once. Both cases are recorded from ACE. This finding is not in line with the claim made by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer that *no doubt* can express mild ridicule or even sarcasm when it is used alone (as a response) or in final position (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 291-292). In other word, their claim is not supported by the 16 cases registered in the three corpora.

a) Final *no doubt* – Afterthought (6.20)
(6.20) Braintree had preserved prolonged silence – contemplating his defection no doubt. (ACE – WLL15)

Final no doubt in example (6.20) is used as an afterthought, it is likely that the speaker is seeking confirmation.

b) Final no doubt + but clause – making a concession (6.21)

(6.21) Sounds suspicious, no doubt, but it can be done. (ACE – WEE08B)

No doubt is separated by commas in example (6.21) and functions as a discourse marker. Instead of having the whole following clause in its scope, no doubt has a back-ward effect, and points back to the previous clause “sounds suspicious”. In addition, no doubt is followed by a clause introduced by but. As mentioned previously, this type of construction is frequently used in contexts when a concession is made. In (6.21), the speaker concedes that “it sounds suspicious, but it can be done” (anyway).

As mentioned previously, an analysis of both no doubt used as an adverb and its related expressions will provide a more accurate picture of no doubt used in the three English varieties. The analysis of related expressions is presented in section 6.5.

6.5 Related expressions in various contexts

a) Existential there BE + no doubt with various meanings.

1. Existential there BE + no doubt + that clause/preposition about - expressing certainty towards a claim (6.22), (6.23), (6.24) and (6.25)

(6.22) There was no doubt that the overwhelming effect this disconcerting bequeathal had on Lawrence and myself pleased and amused Anna immensely. (ACE – WPP08)

In example (6.22), existential there was precedes no doubt, and the speaker is making a strong claim about the reaction of the third part Anna. With existential there was no doubt, the subjective certainty of the speaker becomes objective and more convincing.

(6.23) The myth needs substance to work upon, and there can be no doubt that the subjects of heroic legends were remarkable figures. (FLOB – WNN1G38G)

In example (6.23), the auxiliary can precedes the verb be, and the certainty conveyed is considered even more objective and arguably more convincing.

(6.24) There was no doubt in the minds of the competitors that here was the stuff the trip had promised. (ACE – WEE19)

In example (6.24), there was no doubt is followed by the adverbial “in the minds of the competitors”. This is a special case of the existential construction with no doubt, the certainty expressed may also be seen as a speculation in the sense that the speaker is speculating what was in the minds of the competitors.
(6.25) *There was no doubt about* the proclivities of Lionel Johnson who was a friend of Warren and Berenson’s. (FLOB – WNN1G10G)

Example (6.25) is different from (6.22) in that *there was no doubt* is followed by the preposition *about* instead of a *that* clause, thus *no doubt* has the prepositional phrase “about the proclivities” as its complement. In this case, certainty is expressed regarding “the proclivities of Lionel Johnson”.

As the above examples (6.22) - (6.25) have illustrated, the existential construction *there BE no doubt* is flexible in terms of tense variation. In the case of *there can be no doubt*, the objective nature of the certainty becomes even more obvious. Furthermore, example (6.24) confirms what Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer have observed that the clausal expression is not fixed but allows internal variation (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 122). In example (6.24), the adverbial *in the minds of the competitors* is followed by *there was no doubt*, and the claim is presented in the following *that* clause.

ii. **Existential there BE + no doubt + that clause – expressing certainty to a claim followed by a counter-proposal (6.26) and (6.27)**

(6.26) *There is no doubt that* the Democrats genuinely want to change the world: they are very sincere and caring people but their means are often seen as being at odds with their ends. (ACE – WGG57)

In example (6.26), the existential *there is + no doubt* is followed by a clause which is followed by a *but* clause. This is a case which is similar to *no doubt* and *certainly* when used in a concessive context.

(6.27) *There should be no doubt that* word frequency has an important influence on communication and communication problems. But, have we stopped to ask the question, where did all these frequency data come from… (FROWN – WNN1J32J)

In example (6.27), the existential *there is* followed by the auxiliary *should*. It should be pointed out that the combination of *there and should* only occurs once in FROWN, and it is not found in ACE and FLOB. With *there should be no doubt*, the speaker expresses a relatively strong commitment towards the claim “word frequency has an important influence…” In the following clause introduced by *but*, the speaker raises a question which can be considered argumentative. The replacement of *there should be no doubt that* with *no doubt* will weaken the degree of certainty, and turn the certainty into probability.

iii. **Existential there (be) + no doubt + that clause – making a contrast (6.28) and (6.29)**

(6.28) *While* some Aborigines may baulk at the idea of cultural fusion, *there is no doubt that* non-Aboriginal society would greatly benefit from the trading of modes of artistic expression. (ACE – WGG58)
In example (6.28), *there is no doubt that* is preceded by a clause which is introduced by *while*. This feature is similar to *certainly* when occurring in a context in which a comparison is made between uncertain and certain elements. In (6.28), the speaker compares the less certain “while some Aborigines may baulk” with the more certain “there is no doubt that non-Aboriginal society would greatly benefit from…” The replacement of *there is no doubt that* with *certainly* as in “Non-aboriginal society certainly would” is possible as the contrastive meaning is maintained.

(6.29) Whether that interpretation was, in fact, justified is open to strident debate but *there is no doubt that* it was generally held in Australian society. (ACE – WGG58)

The uncertainty and certainty expressed in example (6.29) is clear, the conditional *whether* indicates what the speaker is uncertain about, with *there is no doubt* in the following clause, the speaker expresses certainty towards “it was generally held in Australian society”.

v. Existential *there BE + no doubt + adverbial – presenting a personal belief* (6.30)

(6.30) There was *no doubt in my mind*, it was the simplest and grimmest of facts. (FROWN – WNN1K04K)

In example (6.30), *in my mind* is a prepositional phrase which functions as an adverbial in the clause. As Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer put it, boosters such as *in my mind* in “there is no doubt in my mind”, and *whatever* in “there can be no doubt whatever” turn the clausal expressions into stronger commitment expressions than *no doubt* (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 122). *In my mind* in (6.30) turns the objective certainty expressed by the existential *there was no doubt* into a more subjective commitment. The speaker is presenting his/her personal belief.

vi. Existential *there be no doubt about it – making dramatic comment* (6.31)

(6.31) “There’s no doubt about it!” I hissed at the vulgar tableau: men grinning, with terry-towelling hats, sun-glasses, beer-bellies and a girl-woman sprawled on the cabin roof…(ACE – WNN06)

In example (6.31), *there’s no doubt about it* is considered to be used to create some dramatic effect, an emotional reaction from the speaker.

vii. Existential *there BE no doubt about that – emphaser* (6.32)

(6.32) It was good Brandy, *there was no doubt about that.* (ACE – WNN02)

In example (6.32), the whole expression *there was no doubt about that* in end position is used as an emphaser by the speaker with the intention to strengthen the claim “it was good Brandy” in the previous clause.

The overall picture shows that among the five expressions, the existential construction *there BE no doubt* is the most frequently recorded use in FLOB and FROWN. This existential
construction is the second-most frequent one in ACE, preceded only by the adverb *no doubt*. This suggests that *there BE no doubt* is a well-established expression in all the English varieties. Furthermore, as the discussion above and table 6.6 illustrate, *there BE no doubt* is observed to convey a variety of meanings and the distribution of the meanings is relatively similar across the corpora. The existential *there BE no doubt* is considered to convey a higher degree of certainty than the adverb *no doubt*. This can be seen in relation to the nature of existential construction which is typically objective, thus it makes the proposition more convincing. In addition, as illustrated by (6.31) and (6.32), the expression *there is no doubt about it/that* can be used to make a dramatic comment and as an emphasizer. Both examples are from ACE.

In terms of frequency, *there BE no doubt* is more frequent in ACE than FLOB, and least frequent in FROWN (19 instances in ACE, 13 in FLOB and 6 in FROWN, see table 6.6).

Table 6.6 shows that *there BE no doubt* is most frequently used to express certainty towards a claim in all the three corpora. Other meanings are rare in the corpora under investigation.

**Table 6.6 The distribution of the various meanings of there BE no doubt in ACE, FLOB and FROWN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>There (Be) no doubt</th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressing certainty to a claim</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing certainty to a claim followed by a counter-proposal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a contrast</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting personal belief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a dramatic comment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) *HAVE/LEAVE no doubt* with various meanings

i. *HAVE/LEAVE no doubt* – expressing certainty towards a personal belief

When expressing certainty towards a personal belief, the construction *HAVE/LEAVE no doubt* is flexible in that it can be preceded by a variety of pronouns as well as proper nouns, as in example (6.33) – (6.37).

(6.33) I would be lying if I said otherwise, Father Thomas admitted. *I have no doubt* that you are well educated. (FROWN – WNN1N18N)

In example (6.33), *have no doubt* is preceded by the first person pronoun *I*, and it makes it clear that the certainty is expressed towards the speaker’s personal belief “that you are well educated”.

72
We have no doubt that these people will go back to their own countries to become ambassadors for our form of environmental tourism. (FLOB – WNN1E21E)

In example (6.34), have no doubt is preceded by the inclusive pronoun we, the commitment is expressed to a personal belief presented by the speaker on behalf of a group.

She had no doubt that Joey would take her even if Davis forbade it. (FLOB – WNN1N06N)

In example (6.35), had no doubt is preceded by the third person pronoun she. It suggests that in addition to being followed by first person pronoun I and inclusive pronoun we, have no doubt also co-occurs with third person pronouns. The commitment is expressed towards a subjective belief of the third person she.

Bush left no doubt that he intends to try to repeat the 1948 strategy of Democrat Harry Truman… (FROWN – WNN1B06B)

In example (6.36), left is considered interchangeable with had. The certainty is conveyed towards the subjective belief of Bush.

In the early nineteenth century, Elizabeth Fry, who had no doubt that she stood in the succession of the apostles, firmly rejected the modern penitentiary prison system which was supported by many masculine ordained chaplains,…(FLOB – WNN1D17D)

In example (6.37), the relative pronoun who precedes had no doubt and points back to Elizabeth Fry. In this case, the certainty is expressed by the speaker towards the personal belief of Elizabeth Fry.

ii. LEAVE no doubt + prepositional clause – expressing certainty towards a claim

The solicitor’s reply is not preserved in the files but the minutes leave no doubt of the true intentions of those concerned within the Air Ministry who pursued their aim with a fanatical zeal. (FLOB – WNN1G51G)

Unlike (6.36) and (6.37) in which a proper noun and pronoun are the subjects, no doubt in (6.38) is preceded by a noun phrase “the minutes”. However, the certainty expressed towards the following claim can still be considered as subjective.

It is observed that have/leave no doubt are typically preceded by personal pronouns, and the first person pronoun I is most frequent. In such cases, the speakers usually present a personal belief towards an event either in the past, in the present or in the future. The belief presented is either the speaker’s own or on behalf of a group of people in the case of we. When the speakers express personal belief towards an event in the future, the auxiliary will often occurs in the following that clause, e.g. “I’ve no doubt that she will”, which is an example from FROWN. This can also be analyzed as presenting a personal belief towards a speculation as the speaker cannot be certain about the action of a third person. HAVE no doubt is also found
in the past tense, e.g. “She had no doubt that Joey would take her even if Davis forbade it” in example (6.35). In this case, her personal belief is related to an event in the past, and naturally, the auxiliary would is recorded in such contexts. Given that the expression is most frequently followed by pronouns, the certainty expressed is usually subjective. In addition, proper pronouns and a noun phrase also co-occur with have/leave no doubt but the frequency rate is low.

As regards LEAVE no doubt, it is an expression which has only been registered in the past tense. For example “Bush left no doubt that he intends to try to repeat the 1948 strategy of Democrat Harry Truman”. Unlike have no doubt which is often used in contexts in which a personal belief is presented, left no doubt seems to be used in situations when the focus is not on the personal belief but is somehow an impression of undoubtedness given by someone or something. This feature is also illustrated by another example found in FROWN, “The lurid bikini-clad girl on the cover of Jay Omega’s paperback original left no doubt in the English department as to which category his work fell into”.

Table 6.7 shows that HAVE/LEAVE no doubt is mainly used to express certainty towards a belief, and mostly, a personal belief. This pattern is observed in all the three corpora. HAVE/LEAVE no doubt expressing certainty towards a claim is recorded once in FLOB.

Table 6.7 The distribution of the various meanings of HAVE (LEAVE) no doubt in ACE, FLOB and FROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have/leave no doubt</th>
<th>ACE</th>
<th>FLOB</th>
<th>FROWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressing certainty towards a personal belief /giving impression of undoubtedness</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing certainty towards a claim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) BE in no doubt with various meanings

i. **BE in no doubt** – expressing certainty towards a personal belief (6.39)

(6.39) He was in no doubt as to its effect on efforts at social equality. (FLOB – WNN1G56G)

He was in no doubt in example (6.39) can be paraphrased by “he had no doubt about”. With the expression was in no doubt, certainty is expressed towards his personal belief that something has an effect on efforts at social equality.

ii. **BE (left) in no doubt** – expressing certainty to a claim (6.40)

(6.40) At the same time, they were left in no doubt that the life they enjoyed was privileged. (FLOB – WNN1G29G)

In addition to the **BE in no doubt** construction, **BE left in no doubt** is also recorded in the corpora, but only in ACE and FLOB. Unlike they were left in no doubt that, which is a
passive construction and indicates that someone else has left them in no doubt, the active construction they were in no doubt would imply that they did not doubt it themselves. In example (6.40), with the passive were left in no doubt, the certainty is arguably “granted” by someone else to “them”.

iii. Although + be in no doubt – making a concession (6.41)

(6.40) However, although Grandfather was in no doubt about God’s survival, he was concerned about the future of organized religion and its ordained ones – whom I intended to join. (ACE – WDD06)

In example (6.41), was in no doubt is preceded by although which indicates concession. The concession is however made from Grandfather’s point of view, and not the speaker’s own. A counter-proposal is presented in the following clause.

Be in no doubt is not recorded in FROWN, and it occurs 3 times in ACE and 5 times in FLOB.

d) No doubt about (of) that/it various meanings

i. No doubt of that – making a concession (6.42)

(6.42) She is academically good, no doubt of that. Quick and argumentative, well-read, a good thinker. But not intellectual… (ACE – WWW04)

In example (6.42), no doubt of that occurs in end position. The speaker concedes that “she is academically good”. A counter-proposal is presented in the clause introduced by but, this feature is similar to the case of certainly used in concessive contexts. And in such cases, certainly is frequently followed by a but clause.

iv. Have no doubt of that – making a threat (6.43)

(6.43) If you are not going to help us, then my friend will shoot you. Have no doubt of that. (FLOB – WN01N)

Have no doubt of that occurs in a conditional clause in example (6.43), and it is obvious that the imperative expression is used with the purpose to threatening the addressee.

Overall, no doubt about (of) it (that) is rare in the three corpora. It occurs once each in ACE, FLOB and FROWN. It seems that its typical function is not to express certainty towards a proposition as no instance is recorded. It is observed to make a concession (6.42) and a threat (6.43). However, the frequency rate is far too low to draw any firm conclusions.

6.6 Analysis and discussion of no doubt

The data shows that overall, no doubt is far more frequent in ACE (75 instances) and FLOB (81) than in FROWN (38 instances). Among the five patterns of no doubt identified - there BE no doubt, no doubt, HAVE/ LEAVE no doubt, BE (left) in no doubt and no doubt about (of) it (that), it is no doubt which has the highest frequency rate in the three English varieties.
As mentioned previously, among the five expressions, only *no doubt* is an adverb. *No doubt* is relatively flexible in terms of positions in which it occurs in the clause. It occurs in both initial and medial positions, whereas final *no doubt* is less frequent. Overall, the meanings associated with initial and medial *no doubt* are recorded in all the three corpora, although the distribution of these meanings differ from one corpus from another.

In terms of meanings, it is observed that the existential *there BE no doubt* conveys a higher degree of certainty than the adverb *no doubt*, and the certainty is objective and is frequently conveyed towards a claim. On the other hand, *HAVE/LEAVE no doubt* typically conveys subjective certainty towards a personal belief. In such cases, *HAVE/LEAVE no doubt* is often receded by personal pronouns, particularly first personal pronoun *I*. 
7. Discussion of *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt*

Surely, *certainly* and *no doubt* belong to the category of modal adverbs of certainty/probability. However, behind this broad cover term, as has also been shown in the present study, they convey various degrees of certainty and perform different functions in discourse.

Although *certainly* is commonly acknowledged as a modal adverb which typically conveys a high degree of certainty towards a proposition, it does express other meanings, e.g. functioning as a focalizer, contributing to make contrast/concession, and even expressing a challenging and confrontational meaning in certain contexts. Among the three adverbs under investigation, *certainly* is the most frequent one in ACE, FLOB and FROWN, and it outnumbers *surely* and *no doubt* by a good margin. Table 3.1 is re-presented here for reference.

**Table 3.1 Overview of *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* in the corpora**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACE (AusE)</th>
<th>Norm freq ACE pmw</th>
<th>FLOB (BrE)</th>
<th>Norm freq FLOB pmw</th>
<th>FROWN (AmE)</th>
<th>Norm freq FROWN pmw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corpus size</td>
<td>1164145</td>
<td>1267306</td>
<td>1283096</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>certainly</em></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>122.8</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>159.3</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>surely</em></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>no doubt</em></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned previously, Downing claims that *surely* differs from other certainty adverbs in the sense that, while many certainty adverbs are interchangeable, *surely* is hardly ever interchangeable with other adverbs of certainty, and this is particularly the case when it occurs initially. Being challenging and confrontational is one of its typical uses, consequently, it is termed as, what Haviland (1987) called a “fighting word” (Downing 2001: 253). *Surely*’s less interchangeability and its challenging and confrontational character has been confirmed in the present study. Moreover, it has been revealed that, in addition to occurring in argumentative contexts, *surely* is also widely used in other situations, e.g. conveying certainty to a claim/statement, and seeking confirmation/agreement. And in such cases, *surely* does not carry a confrontational meaning. Among the 181 instances of *surely* recorded in the three corpora, only 28 of them explicitly convey a challenging meaning (20 of initial *surely*, 7 of medial *surely* and 1 of final *surely*). The data suggests that *surely* does function as a fighting word, and especially when the adverb takes initial position, but it is not the dominate meaning associated with this adverb. It is frequently found in other contexts which no sense of fighting is involved. This is particularly the case when *surely* takes medial position, in such cases, it often contributes to convey certainty to a claim/statement and make a prediction/assumption.

In terms of *no doubt*, the data reveals that contributing to express certainty towards a claim/statement as well as making a prediction/speculation are the two meanings which generate the highest frequency rate. Thus it supports the Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer’s claim that *no doubt* can convey both certainty and probability (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 292-294). Furthermore, *no doubt* is observed to occur in contexts in which a concession is made. In such cases, *no doubt* is considered interchangeable with *certainly*.

In this section, attempts will be made to explore the differences and similarities between the three modal adverbs of certainty as attested in the three varieties studied in this thesis.
positions and contexts in which certainly, surely and no doubt occur will be taken into consideration.

7.1 Certainly, surely and no doubt in initial position

In terms of initial certainly, it most frequently occurs in contexts in which it conveys certainty to a claim or statement, followed by certainly functioning as a discourse marker (separated by a comma). On the other hand, being challenging and confrontational is by far the most frequent meaning of initial surely, followed by surely used to making a claim/statement and seeking confirmation/agreement. Initial no doubt most frequently contributes to convey certainty to a claim, and make a prediction/express probability. However, it should be noted that the finding for no doubt are mainly based on the data extracted from ACE. While seeking confirmation and agreement is one of the most frequently recorded meanings of initial surely, this meaning is rarely recorded with initial certainly, and not at all with initial no doubt. On the other hand, making a concession is recorded with both initial certainly and no doubt, but it is not a meaning associated with initial surely.

7.2 Certainly, surely and no doubt in medial position

The apparent similarity between surely, certainly and no doubt in medial position is that they all (most) frequently contribute to convey certainty towards a claim or statement. However, it is observed that each of them expresses certain meanings which are not shared by the others. For example, certainly is often recorded to contribute to making a concession or contrast, and it also functions as a focalizer in many cases. On the contrary, these meanings are rarely recorded with surely (medial surely expressing a concessive meaning twice and functioning as a focalizer twice). Making a prediction/speculation/assumption is however, a meaning shared by both medial surely, certainly and no doubt.

7.3 Certainly, surely and no doubt in final position

Final certainly, surely and no doubt are extremely rare in the corpora, and the data reveals that they convey different meanings. Final certainly is found to make a contrast twice (in ACE and FROWN) and functions as an afterthought once (in FROWN). Final surely conveys a challenging meaning once (in ACE) and seeks confirmation three times (in ACE and FLOB). Final no doubt makes a speculation once (in ACE).

7.4 Certainly, surely and no doubt in contexts – differences and similarities (a number of examples are re-presented in section 7.4 for reference)

7.4.1 Certainly, surely and no doubt being challenging and confrontational

As mentioned, being challenging and confrontational is one of the main features associated with surely (7.1). However, both certainly and no doubt are observed to express a (potentially) challenging and confrontational meaning in certain contexts, as in example (7.2) – (7.3).

(7.1): Oh yes, surely we have heard mention of the legendary Turkish Airline DC-10s? Doesn't the very folklore of our times instruct us that the hedgerows of Europe are full
of the gibbering, terrified bodies of farm workers diving for cover as the rear doors and often the entire delightful planes themselves plummet down up the cowering EEC rural sector? (ACE - N01 31)

(7.2): You cannot understand. Then how can we believe? You claim to understand your Lord, Rabbi? A minor God he must certainly have been. (FROWN – WRRK21K)

(7.3) No doubt their children and grandchildren were throwing their bodies at life and expecting them to come bouncing back so how could they possibly understand? (ACE – WKK02)

The challenging and confrontational sense is obvious in (7.1), surely is followed by the inclusive pronoun we, a feature which is often observed when the speakers actively seek togetherness and confirmation from the interlocutors. In this case, with initial surely and the inclusive pronoun we, the speaker is making a remarkable effort to encourage the addresses to agree with his/her negative opinion on the Turkish Airline DC-10s. It can be argued that, with surely, the speaker takes for granted that the audience, to a certain extent, already shares his/her point of view. The rhetorical question is supported by the arguments in the following clause. Surely is clearly used as an argumentative strategy. Neither certainly nor no doubt is interchangeable with surely in (7.1) as “seeking togetherness and confirmation” is not the typical meaning associated with certainly and no doubt. In other words, they lack the “interpersonal” nature which characterizes surely. The intention of persuading and convincing the audience will be lost if surely was replaced by certainly or no doubt. In addition, unlike surely and no doubt, certainly cannot occur in a question, e.g. *“certainly we have heard mention of the legendary Turkish Airline DC-10s?”

In example (7.2), medial certainly is preceded by the auxiliary must. It should be pointed out that the co-occurrence of certainly and must is extremely rare in the corpora, only one instance is recorded (in FROWN). Unlike other auxiliaries such as will and would, which relatively frequently co-occur with certainly, must is not. It can be argued that in (7.2), must is deliberately added to certainly with the intention to create a disproving sense. The fact that the subject predicative “a minor God” is fronted makes the proposition marked and strengthens the confrontational meaning. Certainly is used as an argumentative strategy in (7.2). Replacing certainly with surely or no doubt is inappropriate. Surely typically occurs in contexts in which the involvement from the addressees is expected, in that sense, it can be seen as a signal of interpersonal stance. Certainly in (7.2), on the contrary, does not have this kind of expectation. In other words, it does not require the same level of involvement or response from the addressees. “A minor God he must certainly have been” is a remark made by the speaker and he/she does not seek agreement or confirmation from the addressee. No doubt is not a proper choice in here either. Both surely and no doubt are considered to express less than full certainty, the forcefulness conveyed by must certainly will get lost if it was replaced by the less certain surely and no doubt.

In example (7.3), initial no doubt occurs in a rhetorical question which makes the proposition argumentative and potentially challenging. No doubt conveys subjective certainty/probability
in a question which is open to be challenged, and it cannot be replaced by surely and certainly. Certainly, a modal adverb of high certainty cannot occur in a context/question in which the certainty conveyed is expected to be challenged. By contrast, surely frequently occurs in questions, and in particular, when it co-occurs with the inclusive pronoun we. In such cases, it often seeks confirmation and agreement. In (7.3), the speaker is making an argument rather than seeking answer or confirmation from the interlocutor, and it lacks the shared ground between the speaker and the addressee which is often associated with surely in contexts when a question is asked, e.g. surely in (7.1).

7.4.2 Certainly, surely and no doubt – conveying certainty towards a claim/statement

Despite the fact that conveying certainty towards a claim or statement is one of the most frequent meanings of initial certainly, surely and no doubt, the three adverbs do not seem to be interchangeable. In other words, the choice of certainly, surely and no doubt is context-dependent, as illustrated by example (7.4) – (7.6).

(7.4) Certainly it is clear that our film-makers, just like our writers and painters, see the Australian landscape as more distinctive, more of cinematic exotic, and…(ACE – WJJ62)

(7.5) It is true that it wouldn’t matter to us is beside the point. Surely we want our reasons to be causes - especially if cause is to mean, as it does in the OEC, “What produces an effect” (FLOB – WRRG63)

(7.6) No doubt in some cases the types of convention listed here (for example how long to wait between moves, talking, moving about, whether or not to allow a retraction of a move) are more rule-like and may indeed be governed by a rule book just like Knowledge 1 and 2. (FLOB – WNN1J33J)

In example (7.4), certainly precedes an anticipatory it clause. In this case, there is no suggestion of any interpersonal communication but rather, the speaker is expressing his/her subjective certainty towards a claim. The replacement of certainly with the less certain no doubt will weaken the degree of certainty, and it may also contradict with “it is clear” which indicates relatively high degree of certainty. The replacement of certainly with surely would arguably convey a different meaning, e.g. the speaker positions him/herself against the interlocutor in the sense that he/she knows the best.

Initial surely in example (7.5) is used as a marker of interpersonal stance, suggesting that the speaker assumes that the hearer shares his/her viewpoint. Hence, the certainty conveyed by surely is expected to be based on a certain degree of mutual understanding and agreement. The replacement of surely with certainly or no doubt is arguably possible, but the interpersonal stance which can be seen in relation to the previous clause “it is true that it wouldn’t matter to us is beside the point” will get lost. Furthermore, while the replacement of surely with certainly will suggest a higher degree of certainty, no doubt will convey weakened and more subjective certainty.

In example (7.6), initial no doubt precedes the adverbial “in some cases”, which indicates specific and limited certainty, the auxiliary may in the following clause further suggests that it is not the certainty but probability that is expressed by the speaker. Given that both “in some
cases” and “may” indicate limited commitment towards the proposition, the replacement of the less certain no doubt with the more certain certainly is inappropriate. The replacement of no doubt with surely will imply a different meaning, which is tightly linked to the interpersonal sense associated with surely, e.g. the indication that there is a shared ground of knowledge between the speaker and the hearer.

**7.4.3 Certainly, surely and no doubt - making a prediction/speculation/assumption**

Certainly, surely and no doubt frequently occur in contexts where a prediction, speculation or an assumption is made, especially when the adverbs take medial position.

(7.7) If the skeleton is present then it will be almost certainly replaced. Sediment may have infilled the calyx and infiltrated more deeply, giving variable perfection to moulds. (FLOB: WRRJ02)

(7.8): "If ... we try to enter into the author's intention, it must surely appear that he is thinking, in the first place, not so much of Christians who need a deeper theology, as of non-Christians who are concerned about eternal life and the way to it… (FLOB – WRRD01)

(7.9) I was bored, though no doubt if I could have participated more I would have been happier. (ACE – WKK20)

Certainly in (7.7) occurs in a clause preceded by a conditional if clause. In this case, certainly is preceded by the down-toner almost which indicates limited certainty. The speaker is making a careful prediction. The co-occurrence of almost and certainly corresponds to the uncertainty conveyed by the conditional clause “if the skeleton is present…” The replacement of certainly with surely and no doubt is possible, e.g. “If the skeleton is present then it will surely be replaced”, and “If the skeleton is present then it will no doubt be replaced”.

However, while surely indicates a shared ground of knowledge between the speaker and hearer, no doubt suggests that the prediction is based on the speaker’s subjective evaluation.

The fact that the proposition in example (7.8) is presented as conditional “if …we try to enter into the author’s intention” indicates that the speaker is not in a position to express absolute commitment to the claim, rather, he/she is predicting or speculating about a third person’s thinking. The auxiliary must is functioning as an emphasizer/booster of surely, pushing up the forcefulness expressed in the proposition. In addition, the choice of surely can be seen in relation to the previous conditional clause “if…we try to…”, the speaker assumes that his/her prediction/speculation is, to a certain extent, shared by the audience/the interlocutors. It is interesting that in the context when limited certainty is implied by a conditional clause, surely co-occurs with the emphasizer/booster must whereas certainly is preceded by the down-toner almost, as in (7.7). It reveals the semantic difference between surely and certainly and how they operate in similar contexts differently. The replacement of (must) surely with certainly is inappropriate because the relatively high degree of certainty conveyed by certainly would contradict the uncertainty implied by the previous conditional clause. The replacement of (most) surely with no doubt, on the other hand, will arguably weaken the certainty and forcefulness expressed by the speaker. And in both cases, the interpersonal sense associated with surely will be lost.
In example (7.9), *no doubt* is followed by a conditional *if* clause, the speaker is speculating what would have happened to him/her if he/she could have done something else in the first place. Neither *surely* nor *certainly* is considered the proper choice in this clausal complex.

### 7.4.4 *Certainly* and *no doubt* in the protases of remote past conditionals

Both *no doubt* and *certainly* are found to occur in the protases of remote (counterfactual) past conditionals “would have been”, and in such cases, a speculative sense is conveyed, as in (7.10) and (7.11).

(7.10): “I wasn’t dealing with family… A fairly politically-minded person made the approach.” Had a service at St Christopher’s been advertised, the cathedral would almost *certainly* have been filled, but he had not wanted the church to be used for other purposes. (ACE – WAA12F)

(7.11) Had humanity seen the Educators of its collective childhood in their true character, as agents of one civilizing process, it would *no doubt* have reaped incalculably greater benefits from the cumulative effects of their successive missions. (ACE – WDD17)

In example (7.10), “had a service at St Christopher’s been advertised” is a conditional clause, indicating probability. The co-occurrence of the down-toner *almost* and *certainly* suggests that the speaker is making an assumption with reserved commitment. *No doubt* in example (7.11) occurs in a sentence construction which is similar to (7.10), and the speaker is making an assumption. It can be argued that *almost certainly* and *no doubt* are interchangeable in (7.10) and (7.11). This interchangeability also suggests that although *certainly* generally conveys higher certainty than *no doubt*, the co-occurrence of the downtoner *almost* and *certainly* may express a similar level of certainty as that of *no doubt* in a conditional clause where an assumption is made.

### 7.4.5 *Certainly* and *no doubt* – making a concession

As mentioned previously, *certainly* and *no doubt* are observed to frequently occur in concessive contexts and they share some specific features in a clausal complex. Concession is, as Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer put it, “a way of countering an alternative voice while first expressing alignment with it. The adverbs *certainly* and *of course* are pointed out to have this particular function (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aimer 2007: 307). In cases in which a concessive meaning is involved, both *certainly* and *no doubt* are found to occur in a clause followed by a *but* clause. The speakers typically concede that something is the case with *certainly* or *no doubt*, and in the following clause introduced by *but*, a counter-proposal is presented. This kind of use can be considered as an argumentative strategy. In such cases, *certainly* and *no doubt* are arguably interchangeable, as illustrated by (7.12) and (7.13).

(7.12): Elsewhere in Europe, the Royal Copenhagen factory in Denmark *certainly* produced some porcelain thimbles, *but* they lack the refined elegance of their Meissen peers. (FLOB – WRRF39)
(7.13) The young man no doubt had his qualities, but it was discomfiting to consider that had her wedding-night union produced tangible results, Mr Coombe’s invective might have been directed … (ACE WPP12)

7.4.6 No doubt – conveying an ironic/sarcastic sense

In cases in which no doubt conveys an ironic or sarcastic sense, as in (7.14) and (7.15), it is not exchangeable with certainly because the primary concern of the speaker is not expressing commitment towards the proposition but rather conveying the ironical and (potentially) disapproving sense. The replacement of no doubt with surely will lead to the loss of the sarcastic remark made by the speaker, and the meaning conveyed is also likely to be changed. For example, “surely woman sprawled on the cabin roof, in a legacy of single motherhood” in example (7.15) will imply some (expected) involvement from the hearer.

(7.14) …the earth piled and abandoned, raw scrapes along the dry creek beds, stones, bushes, brown and red earth gashed back. Spoil from metal detectors and dozers no doubt. (ACE – WKK01)

(7.15) She seemed chronically late – no doubt woman sprawled on the cabin roof, in a legacy of single motherhood. (ACE – WNN06)

7.4.7 No doubt occurring in a special position

Syntactically, no doubt is found to occur in certain positions in a clause which is considered impossible for certainly and surely. In example (7.16), no doubt is preceded by the relative pronoun where, this construction is not recorded with surely and certainly.

(7.16) It had begun, or at least been decided, in the walled garden. Where no doubt a lot more important concerns had begun. (ACE – WKK01)

7.5 Summary – the differences and similarities between certainly, surely and no doubt

Surely is a modal adverb which typically occurs in contexts in which an interpersonal stance is involved, for instance, an (assumingly) shared ground of knowledge between the speaker and the hearer. In such cases, surely is not exchangeable with certainly and no doubt as neither of them has this kind of implication.

Surely is a fighting word and this confrontational meaning can be conveyed not only when surely takes personal pronouns but also in other constructions, e.g. existential there and referential/anticipatory it clauses. In these contexts, surely can hardly be replaced by certainly and no doubt. This can be seen in relation to the argument made by Downing in that surely is “automatically triggered as a pragmatic response to an appropriate discourse stimulus and is the best possible form available, thus the main present use of surely is subjective in meaning” (Downing 2001: 254). Although both certainly and no doubt are capable of conveying a confrontational meaning, as in (7.2) and (7.3), they occur in different contexts when comparing to surely. In the case of certainly and no doubt, the speakers mainly express their negative attitude towards a proposition and they rarely position themselves against the
interlocutors or expect a response. On the other hand, *surely* is interactive in the sense that the arguments are often addressed directly to the interlocutors.

*Certainly* is a modal adverb of relatively high degree of certainty, this feature is reflected in the present study as *certainly* typically occurs in contexts in which it contributes to convey certainty to a claim or statement. It can be argued that, in such cases, the replacement of *certainly* with *surely* and *no doubt* will lead to a shift in meaning or weakening of certainty. As shown by example (7.4) – (7.6), although both *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* are used to express certainty, they operate in different ways and the contexts in which they occur are also different.

Amongst the three adverbs in the investigation, *certainly* has the highest frequency rate. The popularity can partly be seen in relation to the many functions it performs. One of the typical functions of *certainly* is making a concession or contrast. Furthermore, *certainly* also functions as a focalizer relatively frequently. The fact that *certainly* is frequently selected in clauses in which it conveys or contributes to convey certainty is likely to be the main reason for its high frequency.

As shown by example (7.4) – (7.6), although both *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* are used to express certainty, they operate in different ways and the contexts in which they occur are also different.

As a whole, *certainly* appears to convey or contribute to convey certainty 199 times in the three corpora (45 instances of initial *certainly* and 154 instances of medial *certainly*, see table 4.3 and 4.4). By comparison, *surely* conveying this particular meaning is recorded 57 times (17 instances of initial *surely* and 40 instances of medial *surely*, see table 5.3 and 5.4). 45 cases are recorded in the case of *no doubt* conveying the same meaning (21 instances of initial *no doubt* and 24 instances of medial *no doubt*, see table 6.4 and 6.5). It can be argued that *certainly* is one of the best choices in contexts when conveying certainty is the main intention of English speakers.

*Certainly* and *no doubt* are considered to be interchangeable in contexts in which a concessive meaning is conveyed. It is, however, observed that the interchangeability becomes possible only when *certainly* or *no doubt* occurs in a clause which is followed by a *but* clause.

*Certainly* can take premodifier such as *almost* and *most* whereas *surely* and *no doubt* cannot. The fact that *certainly* frequently co-occurs with the downtoner *almost* suggests that although *certainly* is categorized as an adverb of high certainty, it is capable of expressing limited certainty in many contexts. In other words, the level of certainty expressed by *certainly* is adaptable. *Certainly* frequently co-occurs with modal auxiliaries such as *will* and *would*, this is a feature which *certainly* shares with *surely* but not *no doubt*.

*Surely, certainly* and *no doubt* are all capable of functioning as an argumentative strategy. However, it is observed that *certainly* is least frequent in terms of conveying a confrontational meaning. In the case of *surely* and *no doubt*, the former typically involves some interpersonal interactions whereas the latter occurs in contexts in which the speakers are making a subjective (ironic/sarcastic) remark.
8. Conclusion

The present study has attempted to establish an understanding of the similarities and differences of the three modal adverbs of certainty – *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* in terms of distributional patterns, meanings, and functions they perform in various contexts in British, American and Australian English. In other words, are they used in the same way both syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically in BrE, AmE and AusE? It has also been of great interest to explore the distinctiveness of AusE compared to the other two varieties in terms of the uses of the three modal adverbs of certainty.

As has been shown, *certainly* is capable of performing various functions in a clause complex, and is considered to be a neutral modal adverb of certainty. Consequently, it can be an appropriate choice in different text types. On the other hand, the functionality of *surely* and *no doubt* is more limited, and both adverbs carry a potentially confrontational meaning, which may have made them more genre sensitive than *certainly*.

Both *certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* are capable of expressing certainty towards a proposition but they do so in different ways, and occur in different contexts. As a result, they are rarely interchangeable. Among the three adverbs, *certainly* is considered to convey a relatively high degree of certainty, and the kind of certainty expressed is neutral in the sense that it does not normally require a response from the audience.

*Surely*, on the other hand, typically occurs in situations in which the speaker expresses certainty but at the same time, he/she expects some involvement from the interlocutor in the form of reassurance or agreement. In other cases, the speaker tends to position him/herself against the interlocutor with *surely*. The underlying meaning is that the speaker has the authority or knowledge necessary to make the claim.

In addition to conveying certainty towards a claim, *no doubt* is frequently found in contexts in which the speakers are making speculations and predictions, a feature which indicates probability rather than certainty.

*Certainly*, *surely* and *no doubt* are all observed to be used as an argumentative strategy but they take different approaches. In the case of *surely*, it is frequently chosen by the speaker to position him/herself against the interlocutor. This feature is rarely observed with *certainly* and *no doubt*. *Certainly* typically occurs in contexts in which a concession or contrast is involved, and in such cases, *certainly* may be (potentially) argumentative. *No doubt* is capable of expressing a sarcastic and ironic meaning occasionally but the most common intention of the speakers is not challenging the interlocutors but rather criticizing a situation or an event. Thus, it can be argued that the confrontational meaning conveyed by *certainly* is considerably more subtle than that of both *surely* and *no doubt*.

The fact that *surely* is frequently used in confrontational contexts might be one of the reasons for its lower frequency compared to *certainly*. As mentioned in chapter 2, the co-occurrence of the down-toner *almost* and *certainly* is particularly frequent in academic prose (Biber et al. 1999: 546). Being a typical “fighting” word, not surprisingly, *surely* might not be considered as an appropriate choice in academic or other formal writing. The same might also apply to *no
doubt used as an adverb in that no doubt is observed to carry an ironic and sarcastic tone, which is not particularly suitable in academic or other more formal texts. These findings are in line with previous research on certainly, surely and no doubt.

In terms of regional differences between the three English varieties, the study has revealed that, generally, the various meanings and functions of certainly, surely and no doubt are recorded in the three English varieties. Some distributional variances have been observed, for instance, surely combining with second person pronoun you, a position in which surely typically conveys a challenging and confrontational meaning is more frequent in AmE compared to its counterparts. On the other hand, the co-occurrence of surely and inclusive pronoun we, which often involves seeking agreement and confirmation is more frequent in ACE and FLOB than FROWN. It may suggest that American speakers tend to adopt a more direct and challenging approach when presenting their arguments than Britons and Australians, who favour persuasion as an argumentative strategy.

No doubt (as an adverb and in related expressions) is remarkably more frequent in FLOB and ACE compared to FROWN, suggesting that this expression is less preferred by American speakers. The present study has not succeeded in giving an explanation for this variance. One of the possible reasons might be that other modal adverbs of certainty than those studied here are favoured by Americans in contexts in which no doubt is selected by British and Australian speakers.

On the basis of the results of the analysis, there is no clear evidence that supports the claim of an Australian English’ linguistic identity. In other words, the linguistic identity of Australian English is not reflected in the use of certainly, surely and no doubt in the present study. The findings from the present study are in line with the observation made by Trudgill in that AusE is considered to be “mainstream” and it does not differ, neither at any linguistic level nor at any level of standardness, from other major English varieties (Trudgill 1986: 143, quoted by Newbrook 2001: 113).

8.1 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

An investigation of other modal adverbs of certainty used in AusE, BrE and AmE is likely to provide us with a deeper insight into the use of certainty adverbs in the three English varieties. As mentioned, 21 modal adverbs of certainty (including certainly, surely and no doubt) have been studied in Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer’s study (2007), but their data is extracted from ICE-GB (BrE). A broader investigation of modal adverbs of certainty based on data from ACE, FLOB and FROWN might provide us with interesting findings. Furthermore, it is also important to study expressions such as undoubtedly and doubtless, e.g. whether these expressions are used in similar ways in the three English varieties? Are they more frequent in FLOB and ACE compared to FROWN, as is the case of no doubt? Findings from such a study would potentially provide information which can be highly relevant to the analysis of no doubt. The data of the present study is purely based on written material, the fact that surely is shown to often have been used as an effective argumentative strategy, and no doubt as a potentially sarcastic marker suggests that spoken data should be included in future research, e.g. political debates and interviews, as well as informal conversations.
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Appendix 1. The compilation of the ACE, BROWN and LOB

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The compilation of the ACE, BROWN and LOB. Available from: