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Anna Mae Bower

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First Advisor

Eric Acton

Second Advisor

T. Daniel Seely

Third Advisor

Joseph Csicsila

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YEAH, NO AND NO, YEAH: AN ANALYSIS OF TWO DISCOURSE MARKERS

By

Anna Mae Bower

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Honors Advisor (Print Name and have signed)

Department Head (Print Name and have signed)

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1. Introduction

In English, there is what appears to be a contradiction in the usage of *yeah*, *no* or *no, yeah* with both words being used in consecutive order as a discourse marker. For example, this could be observed in the following exchange between two speakers.

S1: "Hey, did you like the movie?"

S2: "Yeah, no, I didn't really like the ending very much."

Yeah and *no* seem to be opposites and to use them in such a way looks like a contradiction at first glance. However, it seems this apparent contradiction is rarely noticed or commented on. This is because generally these constructions have an interpretation that does not involve contradiction (and, where it does, it is for a rhetorical effect).

Previous research has examined this phenomenon in some depth. Burrige and Florey (2002) examined the phenomenon in Australian English. They found that the *yeah, no* phenomenon has both pragmatic and discourse functions. Through a study of actual usage, Burrige and Florey found that there are three distinctly different contexts in which *yeah, no* is used. Based on the results, Burrige and Florey argue that the connecting theme between these different contexts is conversational harmony. Since their research was published in 2002, data pulled from sources dating back to the 1990's, and we know that language changes over time, the present study examines more recent uses of these expressions and is looking for any changes, especially in terms of time.

Moore's (2007) more recent paper also focuses on Australian English. In addition to being more recent, the other thing that sets Moore's paper apart from the Burrige and

Florey is her data set. Moore pulled her data from broader collections. She finds that *yeah, no* constructions are not always used with the intent of carrying semantic meaning.

Lee-Goldman (2011) examines the use of *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* from the perspective of semantic compositionality. For example, the meaning the construction *yeah, no* depends on the meaning of the individual words *yeah* and *no*. According to Lee-Goldman, the two words in the construction act on different parts of the sentence. The dialog below is an example of this compositionality in context.

S1: "I was thinking of going to a movie tonight, do you want to come with me?"

S2: "Yeah, no, I actually do not have much time."

The *yeah* addresses that S2 has heard S1's question and is acknowledging the invitation. However, the *no* addresses S2's ability to go to the movie. Though all his examples suggest that the construction is compositional, Lee-Goldman does admit there might be a possibility of the construction having compositional uses.

Though these papers were informative, there are some gaps in their research. Not one of the researchers included a function of the discourse marker *yeah, no* that I will call the 'shutdown' function. The shutdown function is basically an intense form of disagreement that does not leave room for argument from the other interlocutor. An example of this would be the following dialog taken from an interview on NPR in 2015.

SMITH: Because technically, they were assembling the car. Even though all the parts were made in Japan, they were assembling it in the United States.

GLINTON: Yeah, tighten a couple of screws - made in America.

ROBERT-SMITH: "Good to go."

SONARI-GLINTON: “And U.S. Customs was like, yeah, no. That’s not going to play.”

(Davies, 2008-), (Glinton, 2015)

Though this example is making a social commentary of how lenient (or not) the U.S. Customs are, it still demonstrates the function of a shutdown use. The *yeah* and the *no* create a huge contrast of agreement, especially with the added assertion that “That’s not going to play” (Davies, 2008). There is a false hope that U.S. Customs will agreeable, but the *no* brings this hope crashing down. U.S. Customs are shutting down whatever the argument was. If *yeah, no* is not the only phrase in the utterance in such uses, then it adds emphasis to whatever immediately precedes or follows the utterance of the construction. There are a few explanations for why the function does not make a large appearance, if any at all, in previous research. Perhaps the function was not used at the time in which these studies were taking place. If this is the case, then it is interesting to look at the use of the function over time.

Another gap I noticed in the data was the level of comfort the participants were in. Some of the data from Burrige and Florey (2002) comes from spur of the moment interviews catching participants off guard, which might mean that the interviewees were speaking in ways that they wouldn’t normally speak. There is also the question of how well they know the person they were talking to. The rest of the data comes from recorded conversations. The researchers gave participants recording devices and told them to record a conversation lasting about 30 minutes with both a person and setting of their choice. While these people were talking in a setting of their choice with people they knew, they also were aware they were being recorded. This may also contribute to a

difference of data in terms of usage and the comfort levels of the speakers. I want to examine the usage of the *yeah, no* construction in settings even more informal than what Burrige and Florey had access too. Due to the participants knowing they were being recorded, I wonder if there is difference when analyzing situations where the speaker has more anonymity.

Also, previous studies only looked at spoken language. I am curious about written forms as well. Are there any uses of these constructions in writing? If so, does the formality impact the function of the construction? Are there any new functions aside from a shutdown use that appear in written forms? Are there functions in general the previous studies overlooked? These papers were written at least ten years ago, so is time also a factor? Is there a correlation between function and negation and punctuation?

The remainder of this paper will go over the not only the detailed background of the research already conducted, but also my own research into these phenomena. After reviewing previous research, I will outline my methods and my results, and go into a discussion about what these results mean in terms of what has been done and what we intuitively know as native speakers of American English.

2. Background

Burrige and Florey (2002) provided the first in-depth look at the *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* constructions. They identified three main contexts in which the constructions are used. The first context is that of expressing assent or dissent. The second context is when a speaker is maintaining conversational cohesion, otherwise known as “back-talk”. The third and last context is when *yeah, no* acts as a form of hedging to allow the saving of face for either speaker in the situation. The methodology in the study was done by using

two different means of collecting data. The first method of collecting data was through recorded conversations between 47 individuals, 27 females and 20 males, ranging in ages from 18-50+. They were asked to record 30 minute conversations with a person of their choice in a setting of their choice. The other method was by analyzing a series of interviews from an Australian television program called *Front Up*. From this program, there were a total of 15 interviewees who used the *yeah, no* construction.

As mentioned above, Burrige and Florey found many different uses of *yeah, no*. One of the most noticeable ways *yeah, no* is understood is how it acts as a simple interjection. This can be seen from the following conversation Burrige and Florey collected for their research. It is a conversation taken from a *Front Up* interview conducted by Andrew L. Urban in Adelaide, screened SBS 18 January 2000. The interlocutors are a married couple, Tom and Judy, and they are discussing their home.

Judy: “Yeah like it’s only a little house. It’s not a huge, um a huge palace.”

Andrew Urban: “It’s not a [mansion.]”

Judy: “[It’s my] palace, or our palace.”

Andrew Urban: “Yeah?”

Judy: “**Yeah, no** it’s not a mansion.”

(Burrige and Florey, 2002, 154-155).

In the context of one of the interviewee’s talking about their house, they were saying ‘Yeah, I agree with you’, and ‘No, it’s not a mansion’. This allows speakers to avoid the natural ambiguity of answering a simple *yeah* or *no*. Speakers can affirm that yes, something is true or they agree with a statement, while also asserting they would not be opposed or object to the previously stated statement. Within this use of *yeah, no*,

Burridge and Florey found that it was used as emphatic agreement as well. The *no* acts as erasing any doubt of possible contradiction.

Another way *yeah, no* is used is when speakers are trying to establish acknowledgment between turns. It allows one speaker to transition topics while still maintaining acknowledgment for the other speaker's contribution to the conversation. However, it also helps with the awkwardness of shifting topics quickly without warning in a conversation. This is known as softening or hedging around the disagreement. Burridge and Florey found *yeah, no* being used in circumstances where a speaker does not want to hurt or offend the other speaker, yet also wants to express their dissent or desire to not commit. The exact example they use is from a conversation between a man (Peter) and his grandmother Dorothy in an interview with Andrew L. Urban for *Front Up* (2002).

Dorothy: “[We’ve got] to do this shopping Peter.”

Peter: “**Yeah, no** it’s alright nanna, we’ve got 5 minutes.”

(*Front Up* interview conducted by Andrew L. Urban in Adelaide, screened SBS 18 January 2000.)

Within the context of saving face, they found *yeah, no* happens as a response to compliments. The *yeah* allows the speaker to acknowledge the compliment, while the *no* allows them to downplay it and remain modest.

Moore (2007) also focuses on the discourse markers *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* in Australian English. Her work examines the use of the construction in three different corpora. The first and major corpus was self-compiled by Moore. She utilized public domain resources, such as television variety shows, radio interviews and talk radio. The

other two corpora were taken from a television program from 2003 and recordings from a specific program from 1998. Included in the corpora were the various forms of *yeah* and *no*. As such, there were a total of three different versions of each word. The following were all accepted forms to be analyzed: *yeah-no*, *no-yeah*, *yeah-nah*, *nah-yeah*, *yeah-nup*, *nup-yeah*, *yes-no*, *no-yes*, *yes-nah*, *nah-yes*, *yes-nup*, *nup-yes*, *yup-no*, *no-yup*, *yup-nah*, *nah-yup*, *yup-nup*, *nup-yup*.

Moore points out the following observation based on the table below.

With <i>yeah-no</i>	Without <i>yeah-no</i>
<p>SC07LJ LJ: Melanie Schlanger, She's helped me, she was my body guard today. Um, so I love you /Mel, And um, yeah no it's been fantastic. It's been great fun.</p>	<p>LJ: Melanie Schlanger, She's helped me, she was my body guard today. Um, so I love you /Mel, And um, it's been fantastic. It's been great fun.</p>

(Moore, 2007, 50)

“The absence of *yeah-no* does not affect the grammaticality of the utterance, or its referential meaning but it might be considered less pragmatically sound, as there appears to be a disjunctive quality to LJ’s turn without this token. Without *yeah-no*, there is an unsignaled jump to a summation” (2007). This appears to violate conversational harmony. Regarding phonetic variationally differences in articulation, Moore found that the differences don’t result in a difference in meaning. Another thing Moore found was that *yeah-no* acts as a filler, which aids in cognitive processing.

Moore offers an interesting analysis of *yeah, no* in the context of dissent. Usually, there are two parts to which the *yeah, no* acts as a response to. The *yeah* referring to one part, and the *no* referring to another. The table below is the conversation Moore used as an example (2007, 57).

BG07BSa

SL: And what about Kevin Sheedy's comments leading into the game Brad?
did--
were they referred to,
by the players in the lead up to the match?

BS: Yeah no,
not really we ah--
I think we all read it and sort of ah,
we know what Sheed's is like so g-
good bit of value and we <sorta> put it aside and on with it.

What does this mean when there aren't two components? Moore suggests that at that time, the token *yeah, no* has no semantic content.

Moore also coded the preceding utterances and found there is a wide diversity of utterances which come before the use of *yeah, no*. It is most likely to occur after an "explanation", "yes/no question" or a "check". However, when looking at the utterances that follow *yeah, no*, Moore noticed that almost all the tokens were followed by further speech within the same turn. This indicates that perhaps *yeah, no* is not a response token. The following utterances themselves are usually responses.

Lee-Goldman (2011) examines *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* from the perspective of semantic compositionality. Lee-Goldman focuses on the following questions: "to what extent are combinations of *yeah* and *no* understandable as instantiation uses (functions, or

senses) of the two words which are observable when they appear in isolation? Are there 'non-compositional' uses of the combinations? Are there any differences between *yeah-no* and *no-yeah*?" (2011). The author breaks down his data from two key databases, the ICSI Meeting Recorder Corpus and the English Fisher Corpus. From the ICSI Corpus, a total of 78 *yeah, no* uses and a total of 11 *no, yeah* uses were found. In the Fisher Corpus, there were a total of 1153 *yeah, no* uses and 277 *no, yeah* uses. There were also random samples used for analysis and of those 61 *yeah, no* and 35 *no, yeah* were found. These numbers suggest that *yeah, no* is more prevalent than *no, yeah*, which is consistent with the other studies mentioned above.

Lee-Goldman goes into further detail of *no* as a standalone response token or an extension such as a disagreement or a negative exclamation or command. There is also the use of the token as an acknowledgement or topic-shift. Within the realm of topic-shifting, *no* can act as a way to shift from joking to serious. *No* also acts as a way to prevent or clear up any misunderstandings that may arise due to ambiguity. Lee-Goldman then talks about the multifunctionality of *yeah* which is much the same as *no*.

After talking about *no* and *yeah* separately, Lee-Goldman looks at the discourse markers *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* in the context of the three instances in which they are used. These classes as Lee-Goldman calls them are propositional, textual, and personal. In the examples he provides, *yeah, no* was used to show agreement with a statement. However, the interesting thing about *yeah, no* that makes it so unique, is that it conveys a different meaning that a simple *yeah* or *no* cannot. The following is the example Lee-Goldman uses to demonstrate this use of the construction. He walks us through a situation where two people are talking, and one has issued the other criticisms. The

speaker who is taking the criticism responds with *yeah, no*. S1 uses the *yeah* to denote that they heard S2's criticisms, and they use the *no* as a way to tell S2 that S2 does not understand the point S1 is trying to make. Here Lee-Goldman explains an example of how *yeah, no* can act as a way to rein in a conversation to a more serious note and wrap up the previous topic. "A group member offers Alice a larger role in the project. A joking discourse emerges. At the end, Alice brings it back to the question at hand. No marks the transition to serious talk. Yeah is polyfunctional, indicating one or more of: uptake, topic wrap-up, positive response to an offer" (Lee-Goldman, 2011).

These examples were demonstrating how *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* are used to be compositional. By compositional, Lee-Goldman means that the *yeah* and *no* act together, each with a separate role, to give meaning to the entirety of the statement. The same exact meaning would not be likely without the use of the additional marker. Though he does not give examples of *yeah, no* that are clearly non-compositional, Lee-Goldman suggests there probably exist such uses. However, he moves on to demonstrate how the construction is used in conversations to point out differences between speaker's opinions.

After giving the examples, Lee-Goldman asks the question, does the order matter? According to the data, the order of the two words does matter (Lee-Goldman, 2011).

	Agree	Disagree	Misunderst.	Response	Topic-Shift
Y-N	7	3	19	0	8
N-Y	13	0	4	3	4

For instance, there was a higher number of *no, yeah* tokens used to show agreement and response as compared to the *yeah, no*. As we can see from the data, there

were 13 *no, yeah* tokens used in agreement as opposed to the seven *yeah, no* tokens.

Though there were only three *no, yeah* tokens used as a response, there were no *yeah, no* tokens in the data set. The *yeah, no* tokens were used more frequently to show disagreement, misunderstanding management, and topic-shifts when compared to the *no, yeah* tokens. All this indicates that *yeah, no* as being specialized in interactional management. However, regardless of the context, *yeah, no* is still used at a higher rate than *no, yeah* and Lee-Goldman speculates this is due to how it allows the speaker to acknowledge the prior contribution to the conversation, then move on to address any problems with the topic or move back to a previous topic.

Both Moore and Lee-Goldman analyze *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* as discourse markers. Discourse markers are a way to punctuate conversational discourse with meanings of understanding, continuation of thought, or any number of meanings. Bruce Fraser describes the function of discourse markers as, "...they function like a two-place relation, one argument lying in the segment they introduce, the other lying in the prior discourse" (1999, 393). The discourse marker will be present in one part of the conversation, and it usually refers to another past utterance in the same conversation. The following are examples of discourse markers with the bolded words being the actual marker.

- a. A: I like him. B: **So**, you think you'll ask him out then.
- b. John can't go. **And** Mary can't go either.
- c. Will you go? **Furthermore**, will you represent the class there?
- d. Sue left very late. **But** she arrived on time.
- e. I think it will fly. **After all**, we built it right.

(Fraser, 1999, 931)

As we can see, the markers all refer the preceding comment. Many of them are from the same speaker, but as can be seen from example (a), the discourse marker can come from a speaker inserting themselves into the conversation. As mentioned above, many of the authors and research conducted on the *yeah, no/no, yeah* phenomena approach the topic from this point of view. They are analyzing the constructions with the background knowledge of what functions and uses a discourse marker has.

Overall, though these papers did a wonderful job explaining several uses of these constructions, there were a few questions I found lingering. None of the papers made mention of a shutdown use of the phrase *yeah, no*, the shutdown use being a more sarcastic version of disagreement with the specificity on leaving no room for argument. Is this a recent thing that is unique to the past ten years? They also talked about the phrases in the context of compositionality, or the whole meaning being comprised of its parts. Previous research also leaves open the question of whether the meaning or function of these expressions have changed over time, and how they are used in written contexts.

In the remainder of this paper, I will address these gaps via two corpus studies: one of the use of these expressions in the Corpus of Contemporary American English, which includes tokens from a wide variety of contexts and genres and one of the use of these expressions on the social media platform Twitter, which captures a large range of informal written uses.

3. Methods

There were two different sources from which the data were taken over the course of a few weeks: Twitter and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Where

the data comes from is important and is a major reason behind why I decided to use two very different data sets. Twitter in general is a casual and informal place for people to speak their minds. It is a social media site where users can make short little posts. Each post is limited to 140 characters total for each post. There are a few ways in which a user may make a post, or “tweet” as it is called. A detailed explanation of each term is listed below, but a user can make an original tweet, or retweet another person’s tweet. There is also the concept of a thread, in which other users may add on their own comments and thoughts in the form of tweets attached to an initial tweet. What makes it unique is that it is typed rather than spoken. Since it is on the internet, it allows people to behave differently than they would in a physical circumstance due to the heightened sense of anonymity. All the previous research was conducted using data from spoken sources. COCA is a corpus of recorded dialogs taken from various sources from the years 1990-2015. The sources range from interviews to television shows to fiction. Therefore, I am looking at a difference of usage between the two data sets. *Yeah, no* and *no, yeah* will be compared to one another across COCA and Twitter.

3.1. Twitter

I went to the Twitter main page and did a search for the *yeah, no* token by typing “yeah no” into the search bar. From these results, I took the first 149 instances of a true use of the construction. While I intended to take the first 150, I was only able to find 149 true instances of this construction ranging in dates from 09/23/2017-10/10/2017. There were a few instances where the string “yeah no” allowed for utterances of “yeah, no one”, or “yeah, no doubt” for example, would show up as well. I also did this search as well for the token *no, yeah*. I typed “no yeah” into the search bar and took the first 50 true tokens

from the results. These tweets range in dates from 09/23/2017-10/08/2017. It is important to note the quotation marks aren't accidental. They allowed for more cohesive searches without sifting through hundreds of tweets containing only either *yeah* or *no*. For each result, I would screenshot the tweet and save it based on the username of the author of the tweet. In Twitter terminology, the username is called the handle. It should be noted that the Twitter search engine is randomly generated. Therefore, when I selected tweets, I only took the first 149 constructions that were not only true uses, but also not a repeat of a tweet I found.

3.1.1. Coding the Twitter data

After I found the tokens, I classified them according to following categories: function, genre, source, thread, subtweet, talking to someone, response, retweet, punctuation, utterance initial, utterance final, utterance other, negation, and profanity.

The function category is where the constructions are sorted based on how they affect the meaning and intent of the whole utterance. While there is much overlap in terms of function between the different data sets, there were also distinguishing functions as outlined later.

The genre category is simply how the utterance was expressed in terms of either writing or speaking. Source is where the construction came from. For instance, with twitter, I used this as an opportunity to track the author's Twitter Handle. However, with COCA, I would record the actual source from which it came, (e.g. NPR, ABC, AmerTheatre, etc.).

Twitter threads are a continual string of linked messages stemming from a single tweet. In relation to the research, tweets were noted as being a part of a thread or not. I

classify something as being a part of a thread of it is a direct comment to someone's tweet. Twitter threads are a form of responses to tweets. However, they are not the only form of response. A retweet is also a form of response since the author can add their own commentary to the original tweet.

A subtweet is defined as a passive aggressive form of tweeting where the author either talks to someone or about another person without directly naming them. Since they do not always name a person, it can be difficult to attribute a tweet as a "subtweet". However, I decided that if the tweet was clearly talking to an unnamed person, for instance using the words "you", and they weren't quoting something, then it was classified as a subtweet. Along with this, I also had a category for tweets containing either the words "your" or a direct name in which it would be noted if they did or not.

Along with this, the "response" category is simply if the tweet is a response. It is considered a response if it is either a part of a thread or if it is in reply to someone on Twitter. One can see if it is or not because the top of the Tweet will say if it is in a response to "@Twitter Handle". This means they are speaking to another person through their Twitter handles. It is still considered a reply if it is a retweet of something with additional commentary to it.

Retweets are a reposting or tweeting someone else's tweet. This can contain either the author's own personal commentary or captioning of the tweet or not. I made note if the tweet was a retweet or an original tweet.

On Twitter, punctuation is very important because there is a character limit and because 'standard' punctuation is not in force to the same degree as it might be in other written media. Since punctuation appears to be intentional on Twitter, it may therefore

play an even bigger role in interpretation of the utterance. I made note of any punctuation coming directly after each word in the construction. For instance, if the token was “yeah, no,” then I would make note of the commas following both the *yeah* and the *no*.

Utterance initial, utterance final, and utterance other are all related. I would classify the construction as fitting into one of these categories. If the construction was the very first thing in the tweet itself, then it would be utterance initial. If the construction was the very last thing said in the whole tweet, then it was utterance final. However, if the construction fell right in the middle of the tweet, then it went into “other.” Sometimes it was the first thing said in a sentence, but it may have been the second or third sentence in the entire tweet. Therefore, I made detailed note of where the construction was in relation to the rest of the tweet.

The profanity category is exactly as it sounds, I made note of whether the tweet contained any profanity.

And lastly, the negation category. I classified a tweet as containing negation if there was any form of negation in the sentence in which the construction was uttered or written.

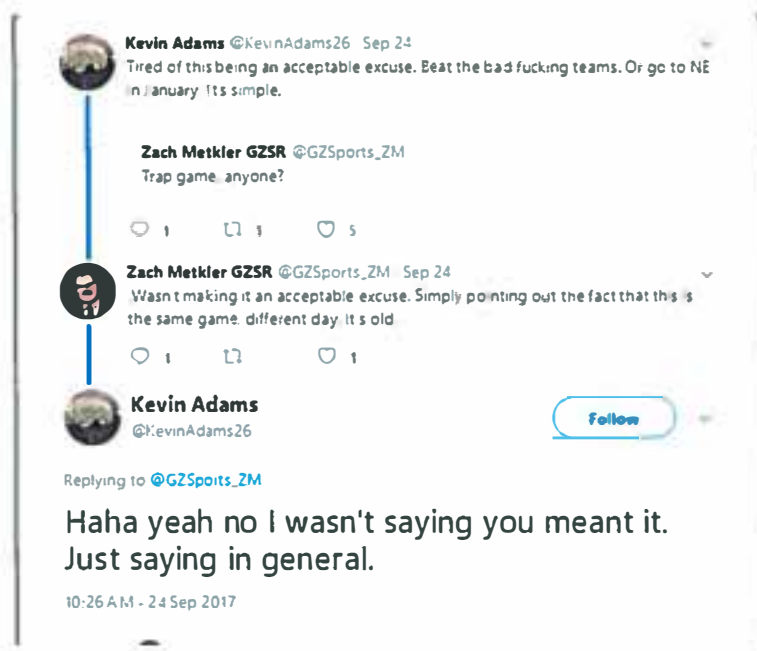
It should be mentioned there were a few additional features of Tweets I occasionally noted, though less systematically. In particular, I noticed sarcasm, contrast, and the individual contributions of the *yeah* and the *no* where each would contribute to specific aspects of the utterance.

3.1.2. Functions

The functions vary based on not only the context, but also the token type. For Twitter *yeah*, *no*, I found the tokens fit into the following functions: agreement, clear up

misunderstanding, convey understanding, disagreement, emphasis of *no*, emphasis of *yeah*, hedge, joke to serious, shutdown, topic shift, and turn take. Some of the tokens were easy to categorize into each function, but others were more difficult because without the full context of what the speaker was feeling and thinking, we do not know what role intonation plays. Intonation can be the last barrier between two very contrasting meanings.

For instance, the easy ones were agreement where either the rest of the speaker's utterance is a repeat of *yeah*, or their content reiterates what the other person said, which is a sign of agreement. Clearing up misunderstanding is when it is obvious that replying either *yeah* or *no* would not be enough to convey your meaning. There is usually an additional comment along the lines of, "I didn't mean...". When these types of comments are made, it is very easy to classify the construction as being used to clear up misunderstanding. The use of both allows the speaker to address either their agreement or disagreement, but also controls for misunderstanding. Take the following dialog taken from Twitter user KevinAdams26.



As one can see, the *yeah* conveys agreement, but the *no* also allows the speaker to control for any misinterpretation. Imagine the speaker had said just *yeah*. It would be unclear if they are agreeing with the previously stated sentence or if they are actually correcting the other speaker and stating their position is actually the opposite.

Conveying understanding is along the same lines as preventing misunderstanding. The following is a dialog from Twitter user carlymarie51.



Replying to @Xena907

well yeah no i get that but you go to a wing place you're not getting chicken strips???? unless ur Kyle bc he does that

9:44 AM - 24 Sep 2017

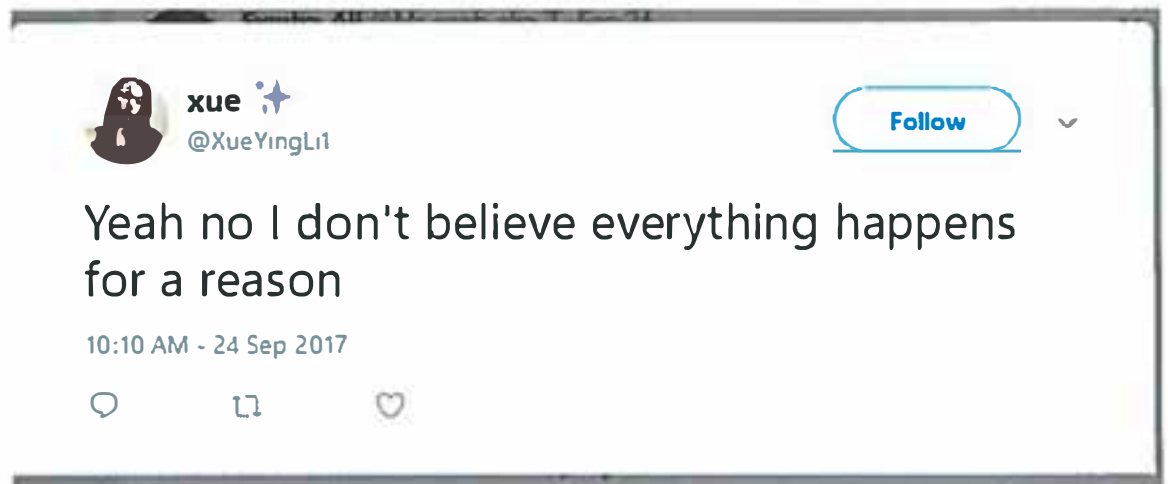
I also had to determine what the difference was between a simple disagreement and a shutdown. A shutdown use is when the construction is being used to “shut down” the argument. They are intending to leave no room for argument. This can manifest in either a simple *yeah, no* with no further comment, or with an explanation attached. The speaker was not intending for the conversation to continue, but rather have the last word and close the topic. The following quote from Twitter user Shareblue is an example of such shutdown use.



As one can see, this isn't quite a disagreement in the sense of the author intending to reply "no" to a statement. This goes beyond a disagreement by intending to stop any further discussion of the matter and emphasis just how powerfully they agree with saying "no". There is also an underlying sense of sarcasm with the shutdown use. This may originate from the contrast of the two words, *yeah* and *no*. The *yeah* gives an initial impression the speaker is in agreement. However, the *no* acts as a swift and unheralded change in meaning. This contrast gives the function an undertone of sarcasm, which in turn contributes to the function of shutdown.

In the case of disagreement, the speaker only intends to express their disagreement, yet still allows and leaves room for further commentary and conversation. The main distinction between the two is the tone of sarcasm set off by the contrast of intent with the *yeah* and *no*. Another feature that sets disagreement aside from shutdown is the concept of acknowledgment. One part, for instance the *yeah*, will act as a way for

the speaker to acknowledge what was said, and the *no* is their personal viewpoint of the situation. An example of a simple disagreement function can be seen in the following quote from Twitter user XueYingLi1.



As we can see, the *yeah* is attaching to the previous statement and acknowledging it was made, and the *no* is the speaker's personal opinion on the matter.

Emphasis of *no* and emphasis of *yeah* are very similar in terms of categorization. There were times where there was an emphasis on a certain word or point. However, it was not always in the context of agreeing or disagreeing and therefore cannot be put in the agreement or disagreement category. Both categories are compositional in that the constructions rely on each part to deliver the whole, with the whole being the emphasis of a certain word. What I mean by this is that in the case of an emphasis of *no*, the *yeah* acts to emphasize the answer of *no*. It affirms and asserts that *no* is the focus. This is true as well with an emphasis of *yeah*. An example of an emphasis of *no* is quoted below from Twitter user PutterTV.

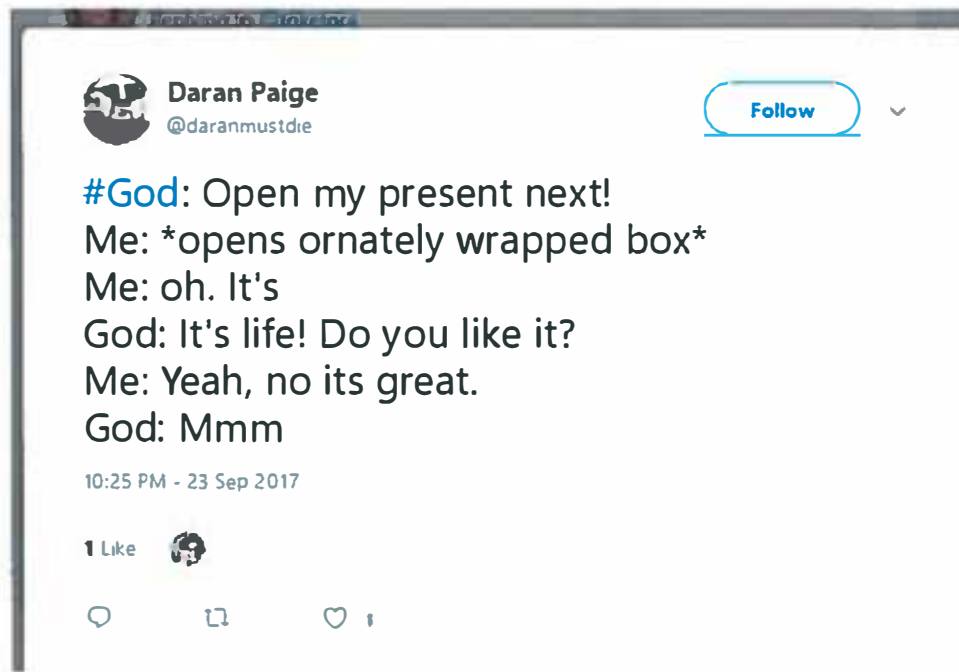


In this example, Twitter user PuttherTV acknowledges the suggestion from their followers, yet maintains they will not be calling their followers that name. While this is not a direct disagreement per say, it is a clear emphasis of *no*. To follow, an example of an emphasis of *yeah* is quoted below from Twitter user juggiesburgers.



As we can see, Twitter user juggiesburgers is not in disagreement with the pictures, but rather uses the *no* to erase any doubt the woman in the pictures is anything less than breathtaking. The *yeah* affirms their playful stance on how attractive the woman is, and the *no* is emphasizing this point.

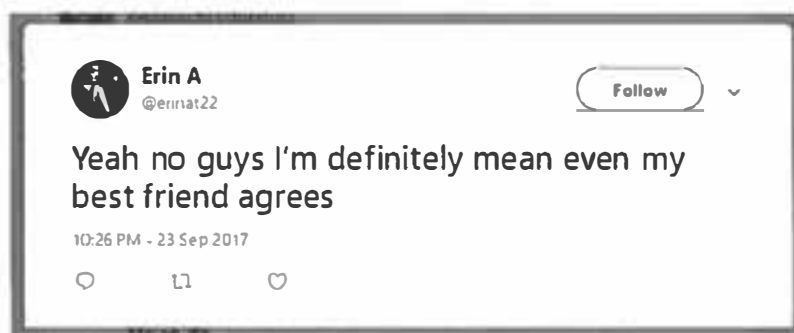
Hedges are one of the easy functions to categorize because the speaker will attempt to not give a direct or concrete answer. As seen in the example below from Twitter user daranmustdie, the fictional dialog between the interlocutor and God contains a good example of hedge.



The dialog relies on the reader's ability to understand sarcasm. While sarcasm is not usually a feature in hedges, it must be noted that this example only fits into the hedge category when sarcasm is taken into consideration. The sarcasm lies in the mutual understanding that the (me) speaker would not want the gift of life. With this knowledge understood, it is clear to see how speaker (me) tries to deflect God's inquiry into their enjoyment of the gift by saying "yeah, no, I love it". They do not actually want the gift, but are trying to hedge around the situation and not make God feel bad for giving them the gift. However, another indicator that this is a hedge is that God replies with an "mmm". This shows that even God knows that speaker (me) does not want the gift and

was therefore trying to make God feel better by using *yeah, no* to hedge around the question.

The joking to serious category is exactly as it sounds. The construction is used to transition the conversation from that of joking to one of a more serious nature. In the example below from twitter user erinat22, the author is trying to move away from interpretation of their expression being a joke. They are using the *yeah, no* to convey that they are serious about their personality being mean natured, and they are not joking about it.



The topic shift category is similar to the joking to serious category, yet it is different enough to warrant its own category. Though the joking to serious category shifts the tone, the topic shift is more generalized and shifts the actual conversational topic. The joke to serious is specific and unique to a certain instance, whereas the topic shift category is a generalized shift in conversation to either a new topic or one previously discussed. Below is an example of a topic shift taken from Twitter user tdkeepsmling.



It can be seen that twitter user tdkeepsmling is in a conversation with zjcox.

Tdkeepsmling uses the *yeah, no* construction to shift the topic away from account layout to a new topic. This is also signified by the large space between the initial “nice” and the *yeah, no*.

The turn take function is similar to the topic shift function in that it signifies a shift. However, it does not suggest a shift in conversation topic, but rather the insertion of a speaker. The speaker will utilize this function to take a turn in the conversation by, inserting themselves into the conversation. This is distinguished from the topic shift because it does not shift the conversation to a new topic in the process. Below is an example from Twitter user killerswan. Their use of the *yeah, no* construction is to comment in another twitter user’s thread and give their commentary on the attached article. They are not shifting the conversation to a new topic, and are not turning a joking

atmosphere to a more serious nature. Therefore, Twitter user killerswan is utilizing the turn take function of the construction.



yeah no dude's gonna get 100 million people killed to distract from healthcare debacles and sports honor

For *no, yeah*, I found the tokens fit into a few of the same categories as the *yeah, no* function. The categories found among *yeah, no* but not among *no, yeah* are the following: convey understanding, disagreement, hedge, joke to serious, shut down, and topic shift. This leaves the following categories, which are overlapped in meaning with *yeah, no*: Agreement, Clear up Misunderstanding, Emphasis of *no*, Emphasis of *yeah*, Turn Take.

It can already be noticed from the differences in functions that *no, yeah* carries a different connotation. Based on the data collected, there does not appear to be nearly as many constructions with the function conveying a negative tone. In fact, the interpretation appears to be the opposite. The *no, yeah* construction appears to be used in

mainly positive instances. Determining the functions was difficult because some of the functions are similar. However, as laid out above, there are clear, if only slight, differences between the different categories.

3.2. COCA

3.2.1. Coding the COCA data

I also collected data from COCA. I searched for the phrases *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* using the COCA search engine. I took all the tokens COCA had of *yeah, no* (305) and *no, yeah* (31). After sifting through, identifying the true construction, and getting rid of any non-true construction, I coded the resulting constructions (192 and 30 respectively) according to multiple factors. Most of the factors included are the same across Twitter and COCA. The factors that are the same across both platforms and consistent with both the *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* construction are the following: function, genre, response, source, punctuation, utterance initial, utterance final, and utterance other. Also, consistent with the Twitter coding system is the category of profanity for the *yeah, no* construction, and the category for negation for the *no, yeah* construction. As I did with Twitter, I also made periodic notes about the contribution of either *no* or *yeah*. Again, these were more casual observations and were not a part of the coding system. However, there was one additional category I decided to code for that were not included with the Twitter data. This addition is the year that each token came from, which I coded for both constructions. This addition along with any category found in the Twitter data and not with the COCA data is due to the difference in nature between the two platforms. With the Twitter data, there are many features that are unique to Twitter alone and cannot be compared to the COCA, for instance, twitter threads and subtweeting to name a few. Also, all the data

from Twitter come from tweets published this year (2017). The data in COCA is compiled between the years 1990-2015. Because the usage of these constructions over time is something I am looking for, coding for the year is important.

3.2.2 Functions

As with the data from Twitter, coding the constructions by function proved to be challenging for many of the tokens because it can be difficult to tell what the speaker intends without having the full context. Though we are given a sentence or two before and after the token, it sometimes is not enough. When this happened, I did one of a few things. I would either move on and go back at a different time, re-evaluate my definition for each function and perhaps adjust as necessary to distinguish a difference, consult my advisor and get a second opinion, or I would classify it as ????. There is also the issue of intonation. Some of the tokens could be taken either way even with context based on intonation alone. However, we are relying on transcribed documentation, which is completely up to the transcriber's interpretation of what is being said.

The function categories were decided much as the Twitter ones were above. However, there were some functional differences that reflect the difference between Twitter and COCA. For instance, Twitter is all written, while much of COCA is taken from spoken sources. The *yeah*, *no* construction functions are as follows: ???, agreement, backchanneling, clear up misunderstanding, disagreement, emphasis of *no*, emphasis of *yeah*, emphatic *no*, emphatic *yeah*, filler, hedge, joke to serious, positive emphasis, shutdown, turn take, topic shift, and understanding. The functions that are unique to COCA are as follows and will be described in more detail: ???, backchanneling, and positive affirmation. The “???” signifies the few tokens I just could not determine the

function of based on the context provided. However, they should not be thrown out of the analysis entirely because they are definitely tokens regardless of my inability to decide what the function is. Below is an example taken from ABC Primetime in 2009.

“is back, pretending to calm his impatient father. ACTOR-1MALE2-# Dad. Yeah, **yeah** , **no**, no, no. I'll be out in a minute” (Davies, 2015-).

As we can see, it is unclear what the speaker is intending this utterance to mean.

However, it still appears to be a true construction of *yeah*, *no* and should not be thrown out.

The backchanneling function is actually described as a feature in the paper by Burrige and Florey (2002). This is simply the act of giving feedback or letting the other speakers know you are following along. It is not an interjection in the sense of having an intent to insert oneself into the conversation. The following is an example of backchanneling taken from NBC in 2008. Matthews is not trying to insert themselves into the conversation or change the topic. Due to these factors and how they are not directly answering a question, it is apparent that Matthews is using the construction to give conversational cues to signal they are following along with Ms-Tucker.

“...as angry. But he was absolutely humorless in that Pennsylvania debate.”

MATTHEWS: “Yeah , no.”

Ms-TUCKER: “So he needs to seem warm and add a little humor”

(Davies, 2015-).

The *no*, *yeah* functions are as follows: agreement, backchanneling, clear up misunderstanding, emphasis of *yeah*, emphasis of *no*, emphatic *yeah*, hedge, topic shift. The functions that are unique to *no*, *yeah* are affirmation, and hedge.

Below is a table with each function broken down by data set and construction use.

Yes, No: COCA	No, Yes: COCA	Yes, No: Twitter	No, Yes: Twitter
??	Affirmation	Agreement	Agreement
Agreement	Agreement	Clear Misunderstanding	Clear Misunderstanding
Back Channeling	Back-channeling	Convey Understanding	Emphasis of <i>no</i>
Clear Misunderstanding	Clear misunderstanding	Disagreement	Emphasis of <i>yeah</i>
Disagreement	Emphasis of <i>yeah</i>	Emphasis of <i>no</i>	Turn Take
Emphasis of <i>no</i>	Emphasis on <i>no</i>	Emphasis of <i>yeah</i>	
Emphasis of <i>yeah</i>	Emphatic <i>yeah</i>	Hedge	
Emphatic <i>no</i>	Hedge	Joking to Serious	
Emphatic <i>Yeah</i>	Topic Shift	Shut Down	
Filler		Topic Shift	
Hedge		Turn Take	
Joking to Serious			
Positive Emphasis			
Shut Down			
Take Turn			
Topic Shift			
Understanding			

3.3. Analysis

After coding the data, I analyzed the resulting data sets to answer the following questions. What is the change of usage of both the construction of *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* over time? Is there a correlation between punctuation and function? Is negation an indicator of function? With Twitter, is there a relationship between function and

responses? If so, is there a relationship between what type of response? In the next section, I present the results of these analyses, with discussion of the results interspersed.

4. Results & Discussion

4.1. Twitter.

This section presents the results of the analyses of the Twitter data. For each of the two discourse markers of interest, I examined the relationship between the function of the discourse marker and how it was punctuated, whether it was part of a tweet containing negation, and whether tweet was written in response to some other tweet. The results from the coded profanity were excluded because there were so few tokens.

Punctuation: I analyzed the relationship between function and punctuation with the intent to determine if punctuation can be an indicator of the function. Since Twitter is so informal, it can be comparable to texting. With texting specifically, there are unspoken conventions regarding punctuation and capitalization. Twitter especially has its own punctuation conventions due to the character limit. Literally every letter and punctuation choice matters because of how little room there is to write. The use of ellipsis is just an example of this. By comparing the technical rules with the usage in a similar medium, we can gain a better understanding of how the conventions differ depending on formality. For instance, according to the Punctuation Guide, ellipses are used in formal text to denote an omission of quoted content (2017). The Punctuation Guide is a website dedicated to explaining in detail grammatically correct way in which each punctuation mark should be used in English. According to *Slate* writer Matthew Malady however, Malady realized upon scanning through his emails and text messages that, “[t]here were ellipses used in lieu of commas. Ellipses as question-mark replacements. In some

instances, it was ellipses instead of a single period at the end of a statement” (2013). As Malady points out, ellipses in an informal context can be used for a variety of functions where other punctuation might be used in more formal media and contexts. However, Malady states in reference to reading text messages from friends and family and seeing all the “misused” ellipsis, “And yet at no point in reading the mom text or any of the others did I find myself confused as to what the message senders were attempting to communicate” (2013). If Malady’s comments can be generalized beyond his own experience, the informal use of ellipses is important and unconsciously understood by people writing in informal media. Now, since we know that informal punctuation has even more significance than formal punctuation, perhaps there is a correlation between punctuation and the functions of the *yeah*, *no* and *no, yeah* constructions.

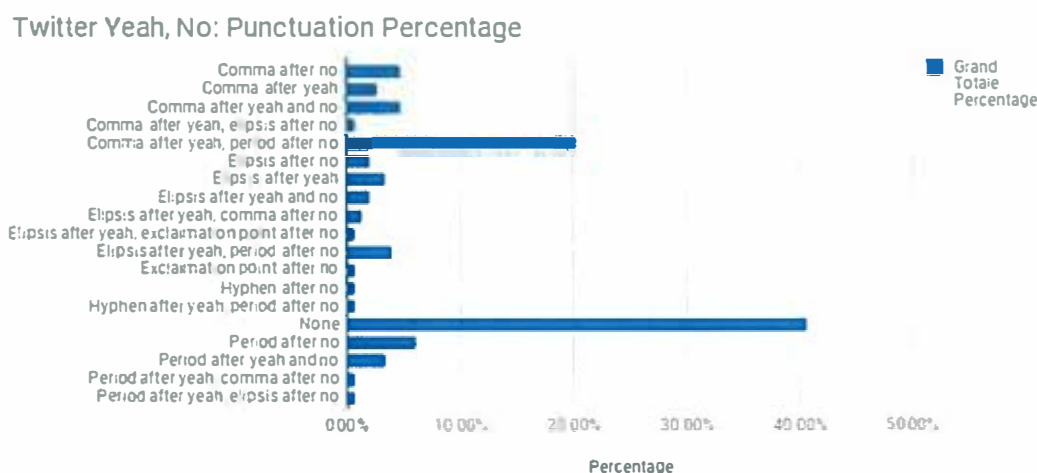
Negation: As mentioned above, negation was a category I felt warranted categorizing. My intuition told me there was a relationship between negation and the function of the constructions. If negation is an indicator of the function of the construction, then there should be a correlation between the two.

Response and response type: The relationship between functions and response types will also be analyzed. As noted in the previous section, there are quite a few ways in which a person can write a tweet. A person can write their own tweet and have no connection to another person or their tweet. They could also sub-tweet, retweet, or join in a Twitter thread. If responsive tweets are more conversational or dialogic than stand-alone tweets, there may well be correlation between the function of the construction whether or not it’s being used in a responsive tweet.

4.1.1. Twitter: Yeah, No

Punctuation and function: Figure 1 below is a chart depicting all the punctuation used in the *yeah, no* construction from Twitter. According to the chart, the most popular punctuation type across the board is no punctuation. A little over 40% of the constructions did not include punctuation. The second most used punctuation combination, is a comma after *yeah* and a period after *no*, (*yeah, no.*), at just over 20% of all tokens. However, the third most popular punctuation type used had only a period after *no* with no punctuation after *yeah* (*yeah no.*), accounting for only 6% of the data. Therefore, we know that where there is punctuation, in most cases, there is a comma after *yeah*. Looking at Figure 2 (below), we may be able to see a correlation between function and the punctuation.

Figure 1.



Based on the chart below, there does not appear to be any correlation between punctuation and function. There was one instance where the numbers caught my eye

though. With the exception of the “none” category, the highest number of tokens with an emphasis of *no* function were in the punctuation category of comma after *yeah*, period after *no* (*yeah, no.*). This could point towards a correlation of sorts, but I do not think there is enough data to make such a claim. However, there is specific interest in the possibility of punctuation and the shutdown function having a relationship. The shutdown category makes up 22% of all the *yeah, no* constructions from Twitter, as seen in Figure 3. Of the total 33 instances of shutdown usage with *yeah, no*, there were 9 (27%) that did not have punctuation. There were also 9 (27%) that contained the punctuation comma after *yeah*, period after *no* (*yeah, no.*), compared with 20% for the data as a whole. This may be significant because it follows the intuition that a period denotes finality, and one of the distinguishing characteristics of the shutdown use is that carries a sense of finality and end of conversation.

Figure 2.

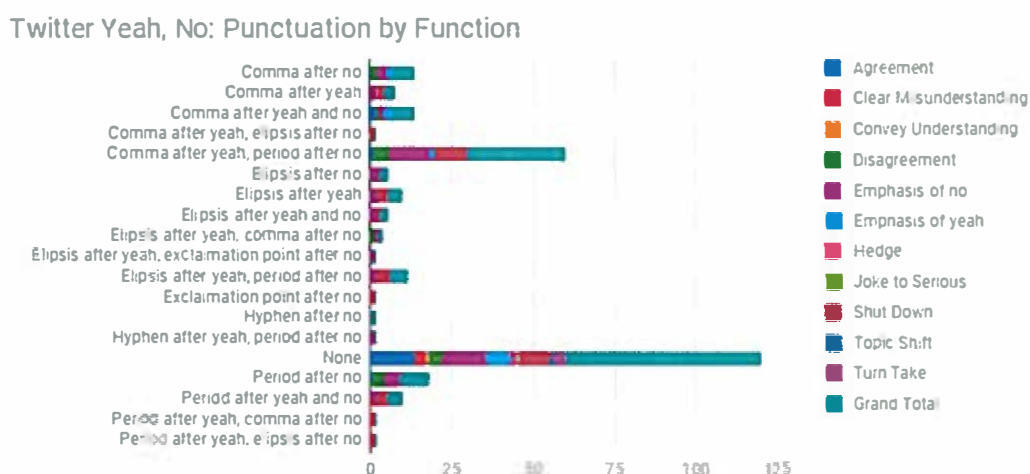
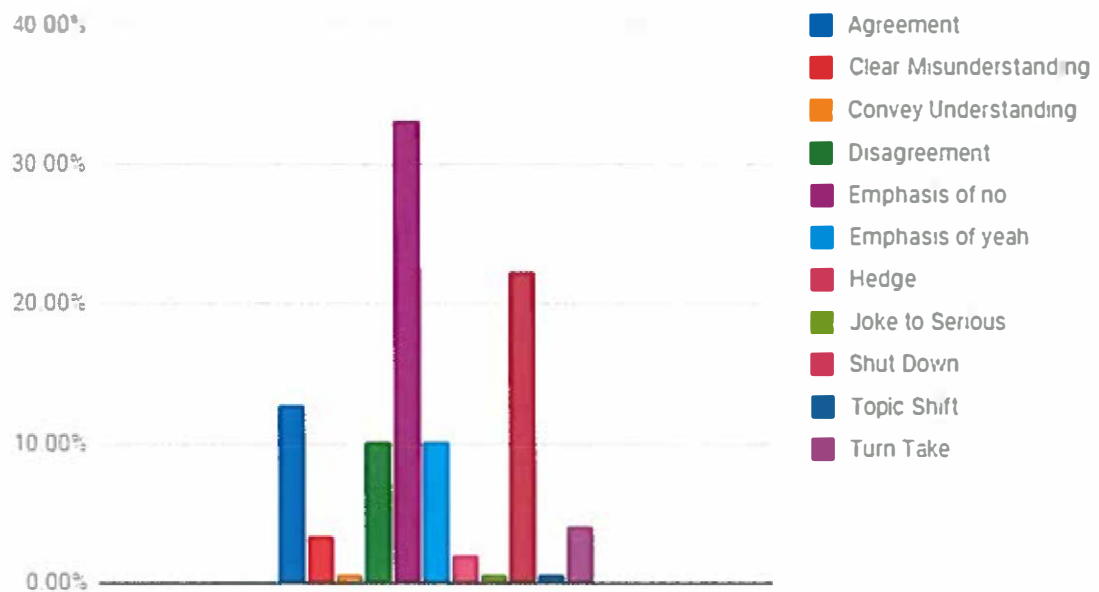


Figure 3.

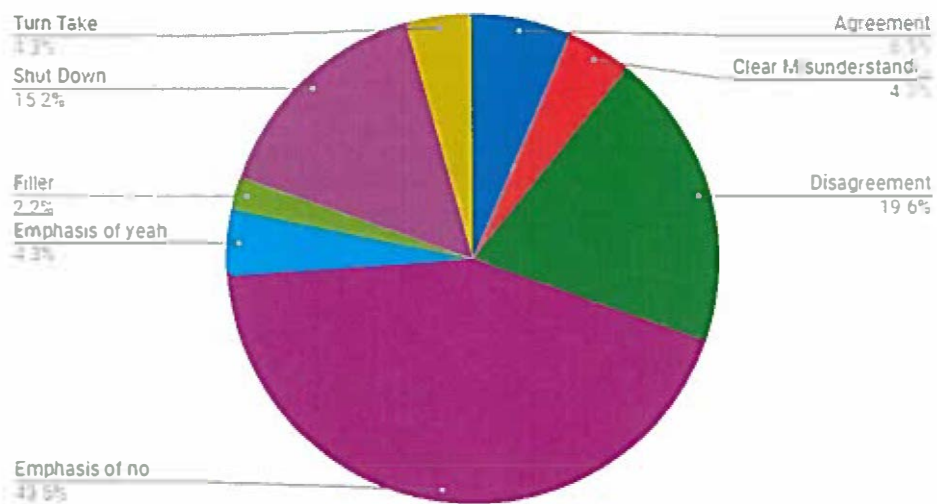
Twitter Yeah, No: Percentage of Function



Negation and function: In Twitter, the negation category broken down by function was interesting. 69% of the all the functions did not contain negation. This leaves roughly 31% all the constructions containing negation. However, within this 31%, the numbers get interesting. As seen in the chart below, 44% of the constructions with negation were used with the function of emphasis of no, compared with 32% of the tokens in the corpus as a whole. The functional category with the second highest percentage of tokens with negation was disagreement, at 20%, compared with 10% in the corpus as a whole. This suggests that there may indeed be a positive correlation between the presence of negation and functions involving disagreement or emphatic negative responses.

Figure 4.

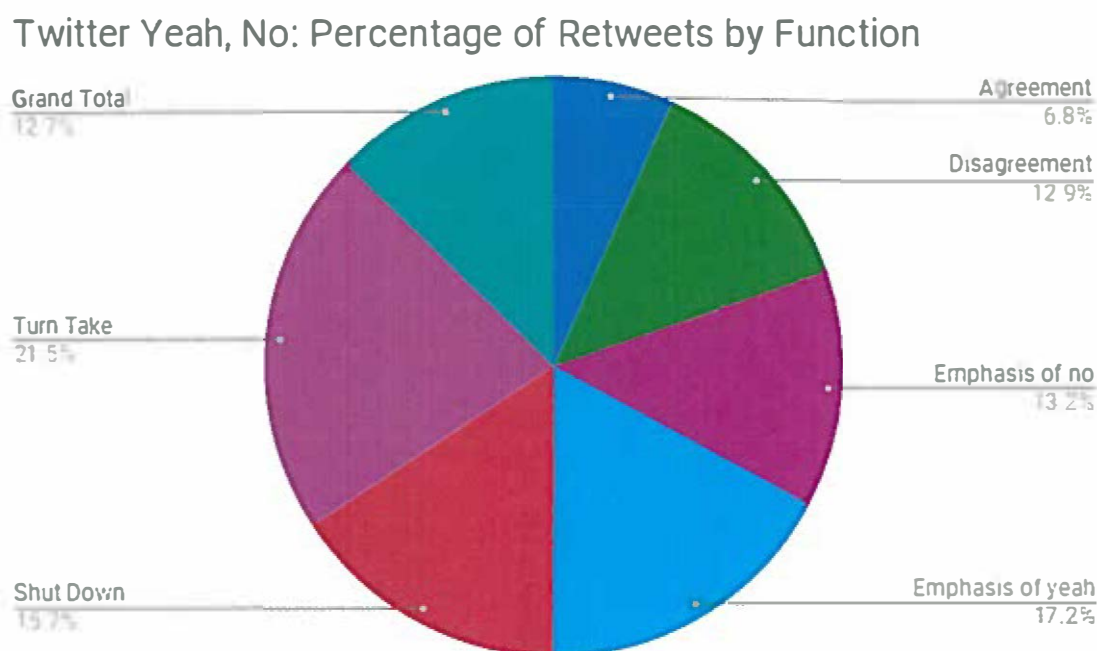
Twitter- Yeah, No: Negation by Function



Retweets and function. Figure 5 shows the relationship between the percentage of *yeah, no* constructions from Twitter that are retweets and the functions. It appears that almost 33% of the retweets have the function of turn taking, compared with 4% for the corpus as a whole. This makes sense to the extent that responsive tweets are more dialogic than stand-alone tweets. The initial hypothesis was that a large majority of the retweets would be used for the shutdown use, in that the shutdown function would be a direct comment on an issue. Though the shutdown category makes up nearly 24% of the retweets, it is not large of a distinction from most of the other functions. The only interesting finding is the agreement function making up only 10% of the retweets, compared with 12% for the corpus as a whole. However, this does not take into consideration of the emphasis of *yeah* function. Though it is not agreement, it is still in the realm of positive function meanings. The emphasis of *yeah* makes up 26% of retweets, compared with 10% of the total functions. This is significant because it is the second most used function that is retweeted. While this is a large percentage, the remaining surrounding functions that are either above or very close in percentage to the

emphasis of *yeah* function are functions either denoting disagreement, shutdown, or emphasis of *no*. This would suggest that people are not using the *yeah, no* construction in retweets with the intent to agree with the other speaker.

Figure 5.



4.1.2. Twitter: No, yeah

Punctuation and function: Comparing the function by punctuation for *no, yeah* was not very surprising. I expected most of the functions would be in the realm of either agreement or emphasis of yeah, because that is the initial interpretation I get from the usage. I was not disappointed. As seen in Figure 6 below, the majority of the constructions do not have any punctuation. The second largest percentage is only 10%, and that is from the comma after *no* and *yeah* category (*no, yeah,*). However, when we throw out all the constructions with no punctuation, the numbers change drastically and we are left with some interesting results. As seen in Figure 7, what was once only 10% of

the constructions, jumps up to 31%. Actually, the three largest percentages were from punctuation categories containing commas. This suggests that commas are the most common punctuation use, but also may again have a correlation with the function as well. It should be noted that by the time these percentages were recalculated without the constructions from the “none” category, there were only 16 tokens total.

With the exception of the “none” category, as seen in Figure 8, the highest percentage of punctuation in general is the agreement function (31%). The two other highest percentages next to this one are clearing misunderstanding and an emphasis of *yeah*. In contrast, the two highest percentages without the “none” category of *yeah, no* are the emphasis of *no* (38%) and the shutdown (25%) use. This would imply that as a whole, *no, yeah* connotes more positivity than *yeah, no* does.

Figure 6.

Twitter No, Yeah: Punctuation Percentage

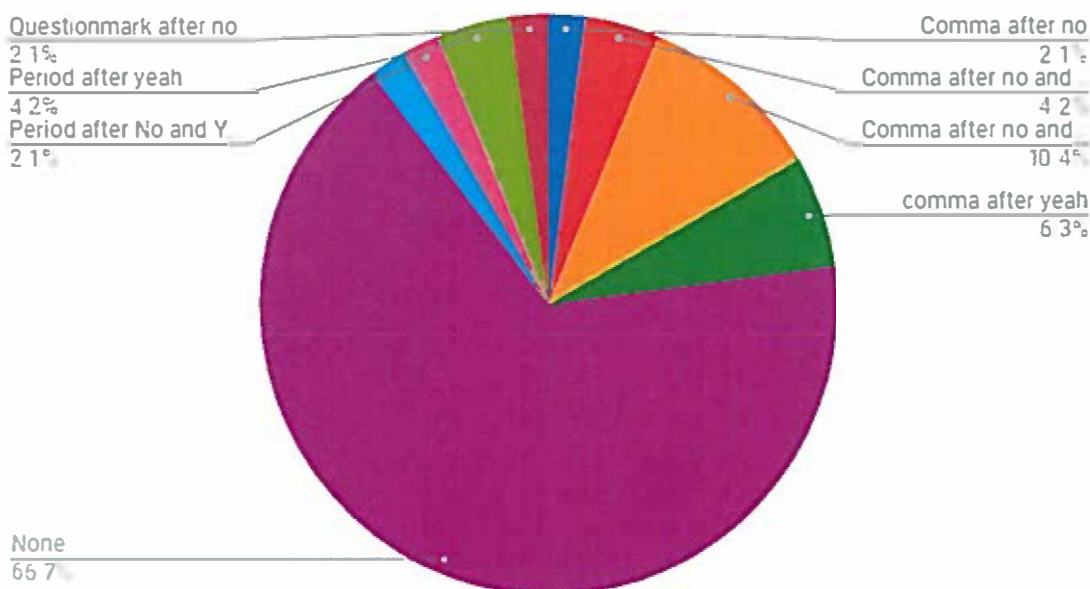


Figure 7.

Twitter No, Yeah: Punctuation Percentage Without "None" Category

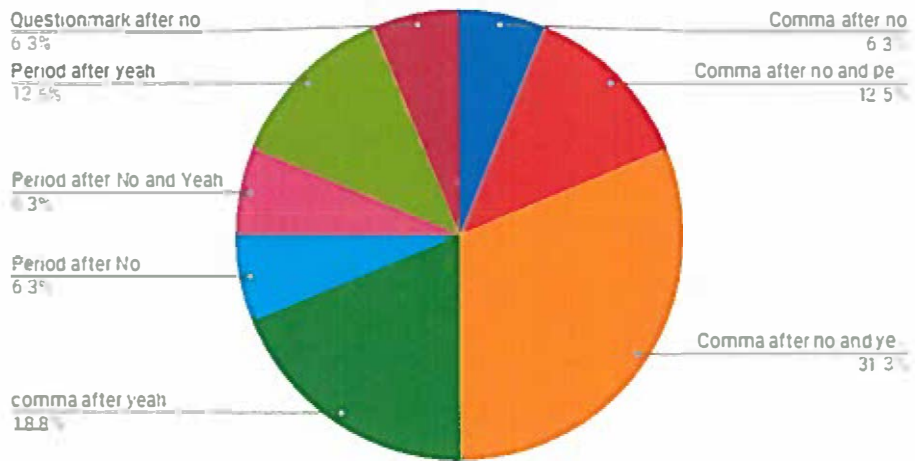
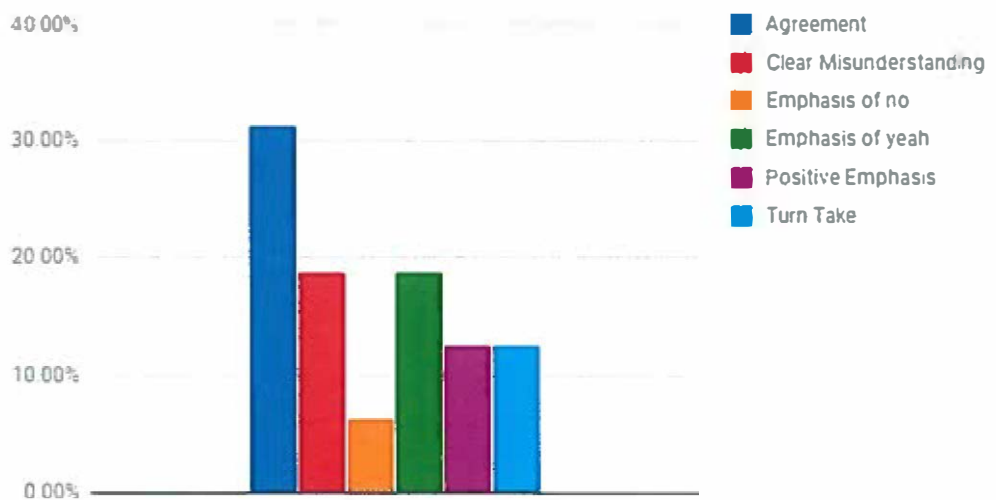


Figure 8.

Twitter No, Yeah: Percentage of Function with Punctuation without "None" Category



Negation and function: As compared to the findings of negation by function with *yeah, no* in Twitter, the results for *no, yeah* are surprising. The results from *yeah, no*

indicated that negation correlates with functions of a negative tone. However, based on the data shown in Figure 9, the top three functions containing negation were agreement, emphasis of *yeah*, and positive emphasis. This is surprising partly because I would have expected the results to mirror those from *yeah, no*. I suppose it could be argued that since *no, yeah* is so rarely used for any function other than agreement, emphasis of *yeah*, or something of the like, it is not that far out of the ordinary for the two constructions to not have that in common. When we compare the distribution of functions for all *no, yeah* tokens with the distribution of functions of *no, yeah* with negation, the results are slightly interesting, as seen in Figure 10. The actual number of tokens goes down, due to the small sample size. However, both the agreement and emphasis of *yeah* functions drop in terms of percentage, while the emphasis of *no* does increase. While these numbers are small, this suggests the constructions may not be as different as they would appear.

Figure 9.

Twitter No, Yeah: Percentage of Negation Only by Function

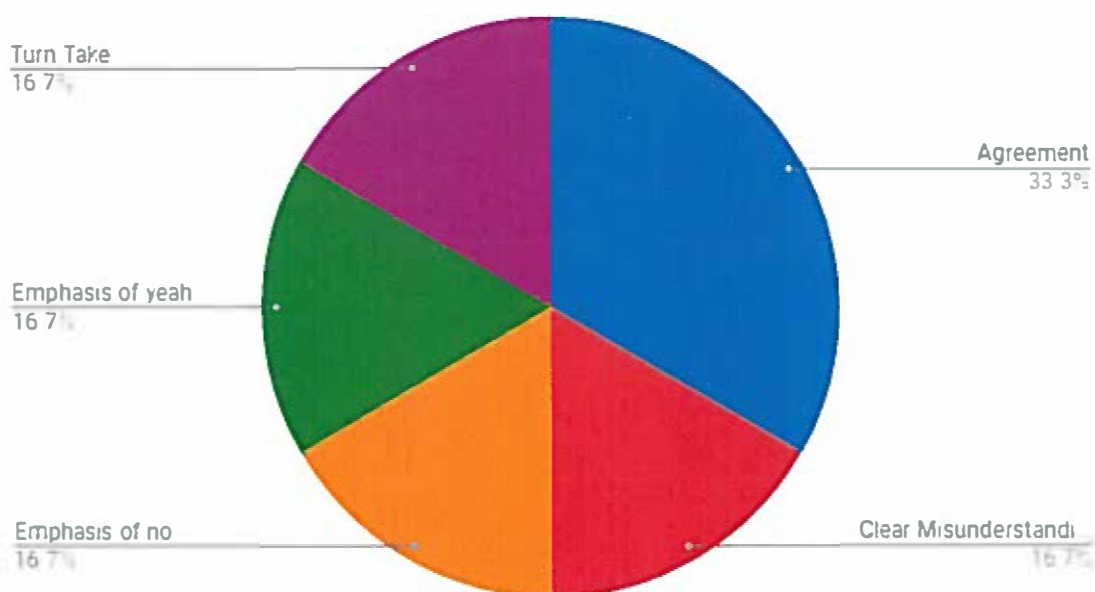
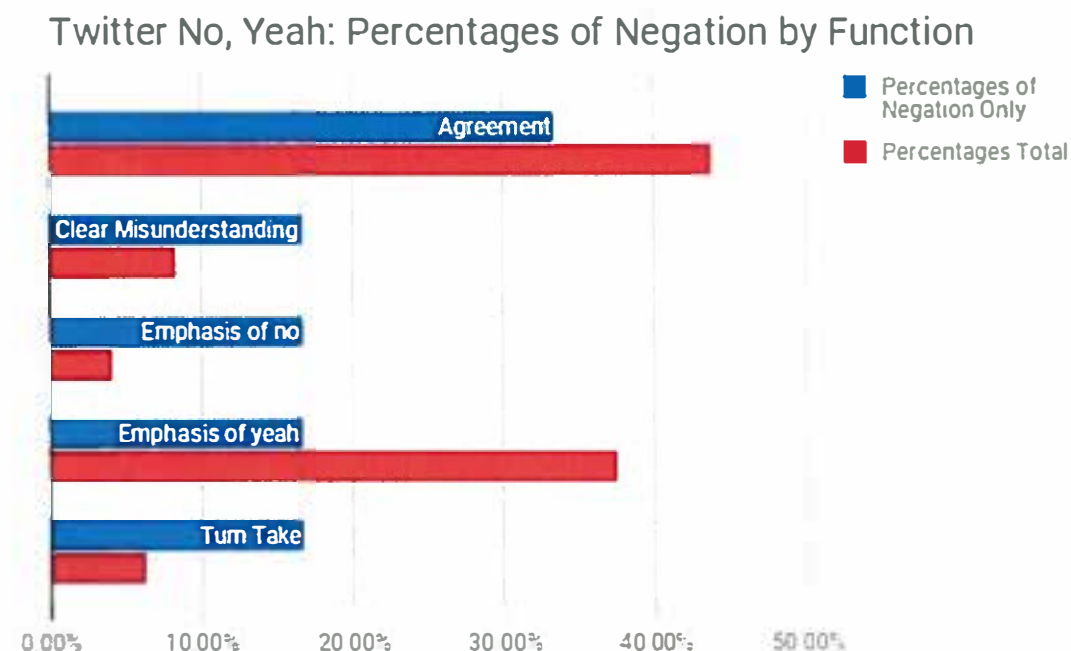


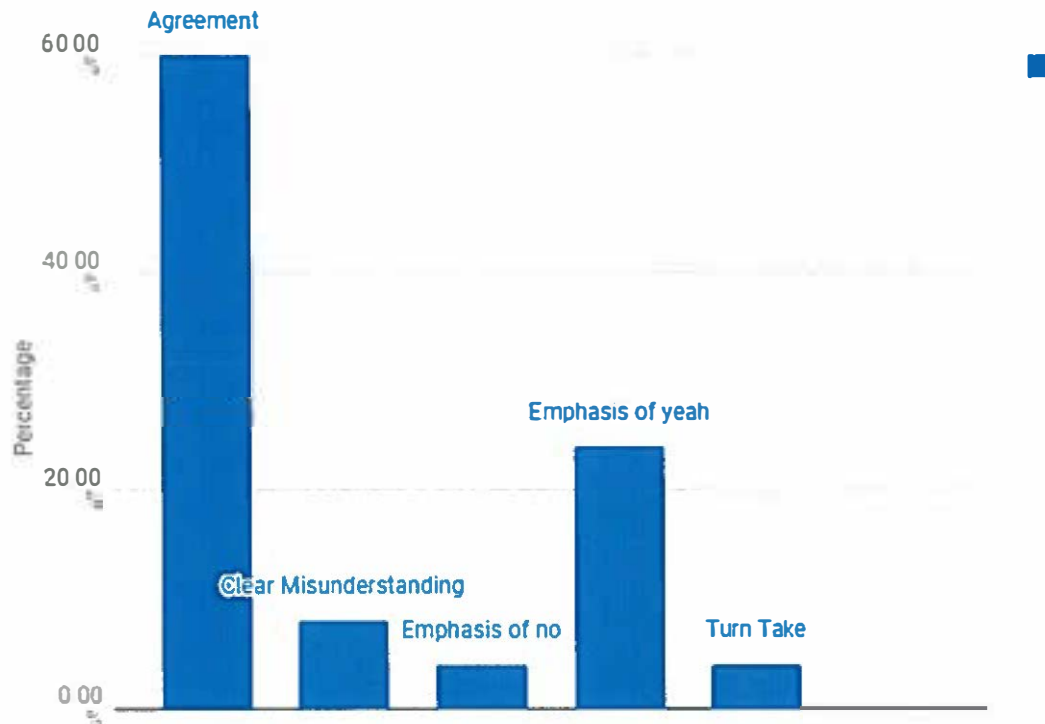
Figure 10.



Responses and function: The results for *no, yeah* in terms of retweets over function are very disappointing. There were only two instances of the construction being used as part of a retweet. However, the results for *no, yeah* in terms of being a part of a thread are more comprehensive. It was split about 50/50 with 23 of the total 48 tokens not being in a thread, and other 25 tokens in a thread. Looking at Figure 11, we can see the similar divide of functions in percentages. The agreement function takes up almost 60% of the all the tokens of *no, yeah* in a Twitter thread. Add this to the emphasis of *yeah* making up 20% of the constructions and now 80% of all the *no, yeah* constructions are in a Twitter thread. This is significant because it supports the claim that *no, yeah* is almost exclusively used to indicate agreement or an emphasis of the positive. On Twitter, the easiest way to join in a conversation, and therefore have something to agree about, is in a Twitter thread.

Figure 11.

Twitter No, Yeah: Thread Percentage by Function



Summary: In summary, the results from Twitter were as follows. The most common form of punctuation is the use of a comma after *yeah* which allows the author to denote that the *yeah* and *no* are somehow connected in meaning. Also, besides not having any punctuation, the most common punctuation type to be used with the shutdown function was the comma after *yeah*, and a period after *no* (*yeah, no.*). The period denotes finality and an end to further conversation, which is one of the defining features of the shutdown function. In contrast, the *no, yeah* constructions appear to have punctuation used more heavily in instances of connoting agreement or positivity in general. There is a correlation between the negation and functions involving disagreement or emphasis of *no*. Due to this, perhaps negation can be an indicator of the function of the construction.

The high number of disagreement functions used as retweets would indicate that when commenting on another person's tweet, Twitter users are not commenting *yeah, no* with the intent to agree with the other speaker. To contrast, *no, yeah* constructions are hardly used in retweets and are instead prominent in Twitter threads. As this construction is used a majority of the time to denote agreement, the consensus between the two results is that retweets are more common in instances of disagreement and are more likely to use the construction *yeah, no*.

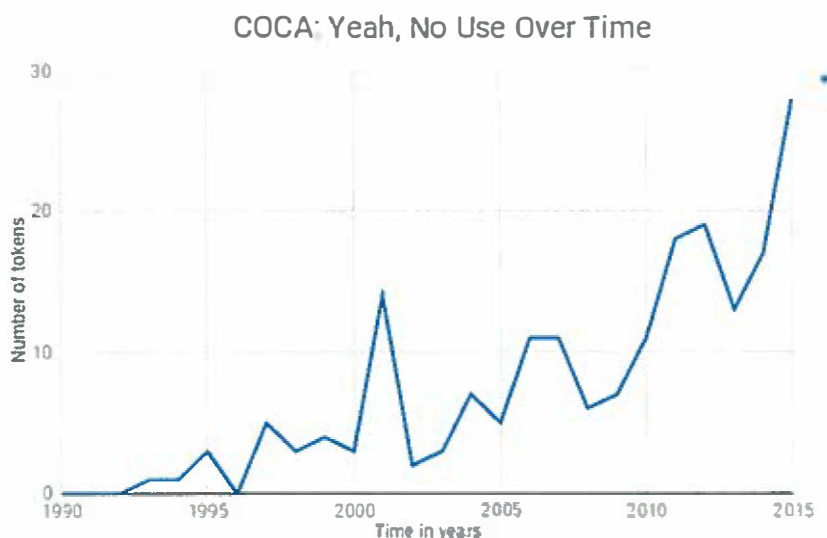
4.2. COCA:

With COCA, the largest area of interest was the usage of the *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* over time. The other papers on the topic are drawing from data sets that are well over 10 years old. The other thing is that since COCA is focused on American English, the results may differ from previous studies since they were using Australian English as their data source. Along with examining changes in frequency over time, I also looked for any changes of function use over time. Do certain functions fade or increase as time goes on? Are there new functions that make an appearance in the corpus after the other papers were written? As with the Twitter data, the function and punctuation of the construction will be analyzed and compared with each other. Also, I will also present an analysis of the relationship between negation and function, just as there was for Twitter (though only for *yeah, no*, as there were only seven tokens of *no, yeah* occurring with negation in COCA). The results from the coded profanity were excluded because there were so few tokens. There isn't enough data within the COCA dataset to compare the formal written from the spoken.

4.2.3. COCA: Yeah, no

Time: The figure below demonstrates how the *yeah, no* changes over time. COCA's data begins in 1990. The first instance of *yeah, no* in COCA appears in 1993. It fluctuates in use until 1996, where COCA does not have a single instance of the token. However, after 2000, the use starts to steadily up-climb. In 2010, we can see the use never drops below 10, and is on a continual upward spike until 2015 when the corpus ends. The COCA corpus is roughly balanced in terms of size across each year it covers, so this dramatic rise in the use of this expression suggests an increase in its use more generally. With that in mind, one might ask whether the expression has taken on a wider range of discourse functions over time.

Figure 12.



Punctuation and function: Of the *yeah, no* constructions in COCA, only 192 were true tokens, (seen in Figure 13). I compared the coded functions of the *yeah, no* construction with the coded punctuation and found that a little more than 67% of the tokens were in the format of a comma after both *yeah* and *no*. This is the largest percentage by far of the entire group and can be seen in Figure 14. This suggests, as with

Twitter, that commas are more popular than the rest of the punctuation. I compared the punctuation because I wanted to look at a formal use vs. the informal use. I recognize that the punctuation in COCA is not entirely comparable with Twitter due to the fact the author is not the one designating punctuation, but there is still value in comparing the two. However, it should be noted that I specifically used a comma between the *yeah* and the *no* when conducting my search through COCA. So, in terms of punctuation, the only punctuation of interest would be what punctuation (if any) follows the *no*. Comparing the two will give an insight as to whether or not punctuation is different between formal and informal writing. While we may not know the speaker's intended interpretation, we are still able to gather information based on what the transcriber understood.

Figure 13.

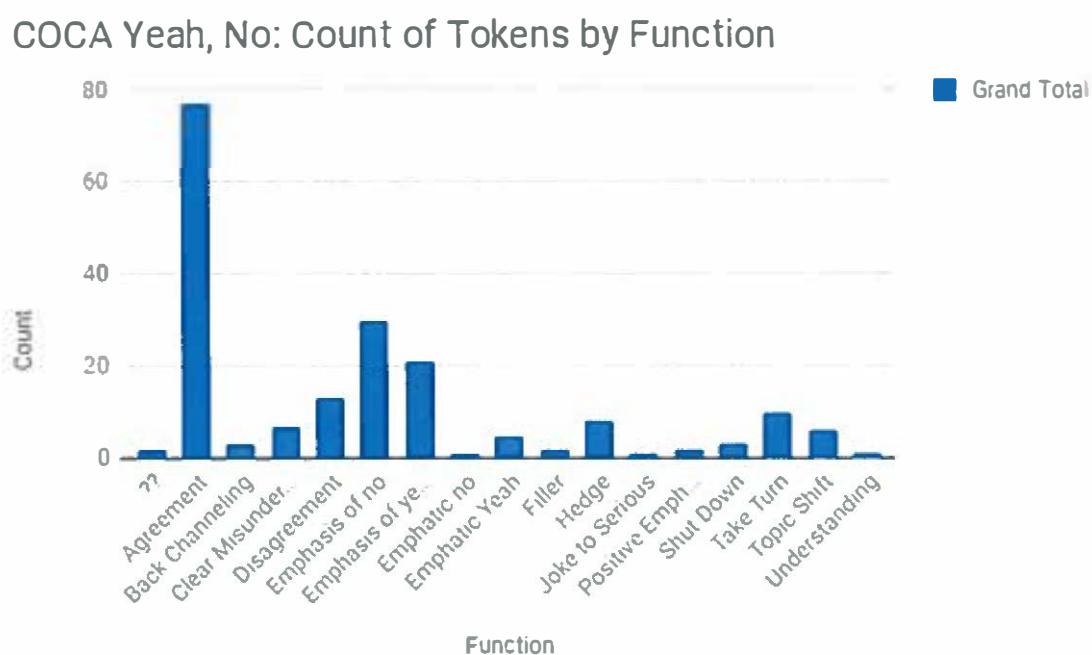
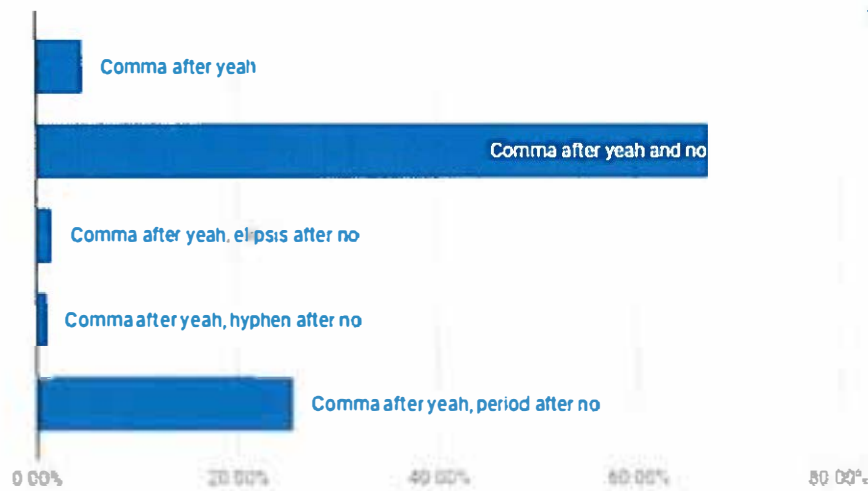


Figure 14.

COCA Yeah, No: Punctuation Percentage



Of the functions, the agreement function had the highest number of tokens using punctuation of comma after *yeah* and *no*, taking up a little over 42% of the total uses of the punctuation. Also, interesting to note, of all the punctuation used for agreement, the comma after both *yeah* and *no* took up 71% of the total agreement token uses. Not only is the agreement function the majority in terms of this particular punctuation use when compared to the other functions, but within the actual function, this type of punctuation is still the leading use. In contrast, the disagreement function only makes up almost 7% of all the functions. Of this percentage of the disagreement function, 7 out of 13 or 54% of the tokens had the punctuation comma after *yeah* and *no* (*yeah, no*). There may then be some significant degree of correlation between commas and agreement, but more data is needed before we can draw this conclusion.

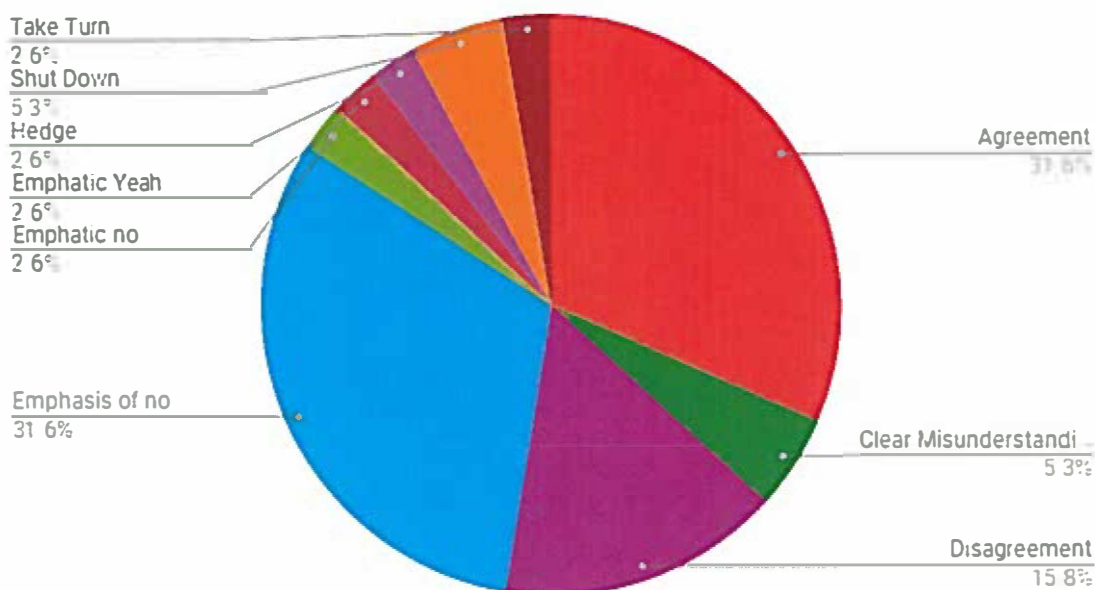
Shutdown uses- A recent phenomenon: As mentioned before, the shutdown function use is not mentioned in previous papers and is possibly a recent function. Based on the data collected from COCA, there was one instance of the function use in between the years 2006-2010, and then two more between the years 2010-2015. This is significant

because this means the usage was recorded after the other papers were written. Also significant is it is found and collected from an American English corpus, which could be a factor.

Negation and function: The last result from the *yeah, no* construction is the negation in relation to function. There were two functions that were both equal in terms of taking up percentage of all the constructions that contain negation. Both the agreement function and the emphasis of no function contain 32% of constructions containing negation in the utterance (see Figure 15). This contrasts sharply with the findings from the Twitter data, where those values were 6.5% and 43.5%, respectively. Then again, in Twitter, 12% of all tokens (with or without negation) had the agreement function, compared with 40% of all tokens in COCA. This suggests that the agreement function is far more frequent in COCA than in Twitter overall, and it may be that negation and agreement interact significantly differently in the two collections.

Figure 15.

COCA Yeah, No: Negation Percentage by Function

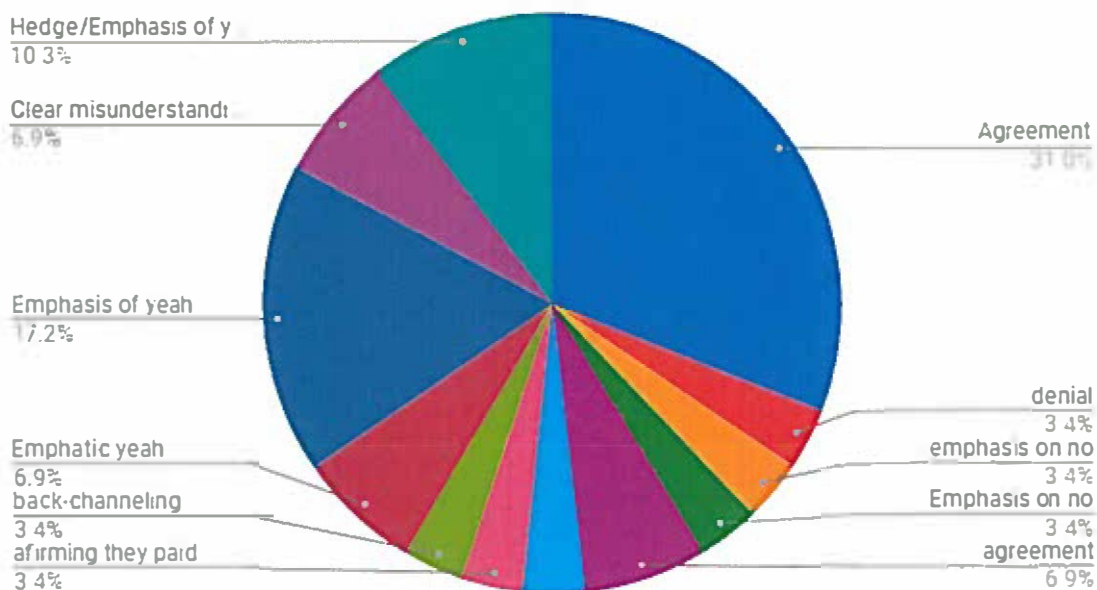


4.2.1. COCA: No, yeah

The *no, yeah* construction is interesting because it hasn't been talked about much in the earlier publications. Just as *yeah, no* has many different functions and ways in which the construction acts, *no, yeah* does as well. However, its functions are not all the same as *yeah, no*. *Yeah, no* has at least three or four different ways to express displeasure or dissent, to varying levels and degrees. *No, yeah* does not have nearly as many. The most popular function in this construction is the agreement function, which makes up 31%, as seen in Figure 16. The second highest at 17% is an emphasis of *yeah*. These both have positive connotations and already set the tone for how the construction is used, as discussed with the Twitter data.

Figure 16.

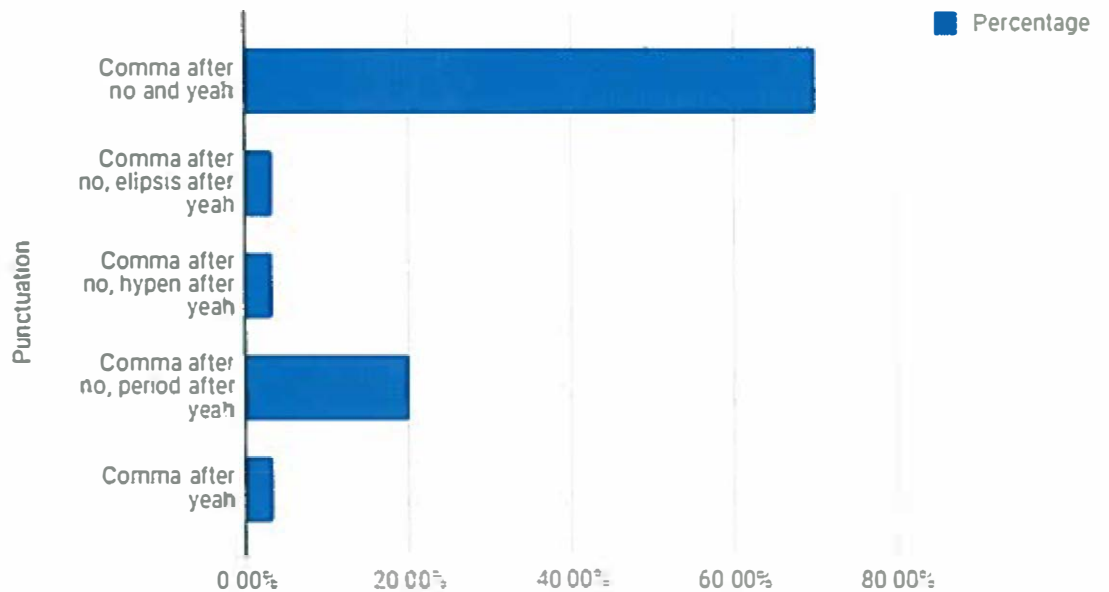
Count of COCA: No, Yeah Function



Punctuation and function: In terms of punctuation, the category with the highest percentage used by the *no, yeah* construction is the comma after *no* and *yeah* (*no, yeah,*). This category makes up 70% of all punctuation, as seen in Figure 17. Again, this follows in the same pattern as the *no, yeah* Twitter constructions. Since *no, yeah* constructions are more likely to convey agreement, the use of comma after the *yeah* may be an indicator of such intent.

Figure 17.

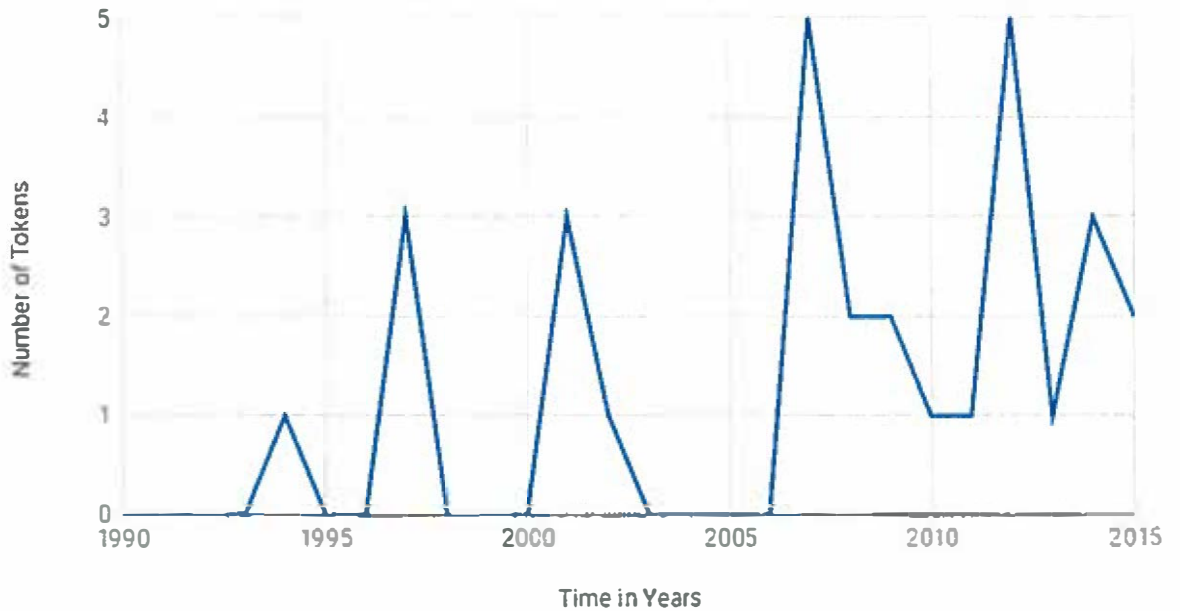
COCA No, Yeah: Punctuation Percentage



Time: For the COCA *no, yeah* tokens, only 32 were true tokens. The use of *no, yeah* increases over time. We can see this when we look at the comparison of dates. The chart below (Figure 18) shows how they spike higher and closer together as the years go on. There are a few slight dips to zero where there were no instances of the *no, yeah* construction in COCA. However, after the year 2007, the uses never drop below one. This suggests that the use of this discourse marker is also on the rise.

Figure 18.

COCA: No, Yeah Use Over Time



Summary. To summarize, both *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* show an upward trend of use the more recent the year. This implies, as originally hypothesized, that these constructions are a more recent development and the usage is only increasing. There is also the appearance of a new function not discussed in previous papers. The shutdown function only is recorded in COCA in the 2010, which is after the most recent paper on the topic was written. If it is true that this is a new function, then it makes sense it is only seen in recent years. Though *yeah, no* is used equally with the function of either agreement or an emphasis of *no*, the results contrast with the findings from Twitter, such that tokens from Twitter were not used nearly as much with the function for agreement. *No, yeah* were used most in instances where there was a comma after the *yeah*.

4.3 Results summary: Overall, the results from data sets were interesting and yielded both surprising and unsurprising results. As already mentioned, the data sets for

no, yeah in both Twitter and COCA were small and unfortunately were not able to give concrete evidence to make hard statements. However, the fact they exist and are present is telling in terms of use over time. I was able to find more than a handful of constructions in COCA especially, which allows us to plot the growth over time. In terms of function use, though there were differences between the *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* constructions, there were not many differences between Twitter and COCA. The only instance where there were differences between COCA and Twitter is due to the nature of the medium in which the constructions were being said.

For instance, on Twitter, the construction is written and even when the author is in dialog with another Twitter user, there is still remote distance which can lead to a lack of back-channeling. They are not engaged in a face to face conversation and therefore do not need to maintain this specific form of maintaining conversational harmony. However, most of the other function analysis and observations were the same and consistent with what is found to be true about *yeah, no* and *no, yeah*.

5. Conclusion and future work

This study brings new data and insights to our understanding of the *yeah, no* and *no, yeah* discourse markers. As the results show, both discourse markers appear to be growing more common in usage, and new functions have developed in recent years, perhaps most notably the shutdown function. This function is of special interest because it runs counter to Burrige and Florey's (2002) claim that *yeah, no*'s uniting function is to promote conversational harmony. The shutdown use arguably does the very opposite.

Due to the limitations of the study, many avenues for further study remain. For instance, with more data, one could draw sharper conclusions about the status and trends

of these discourse markers. It might also be interesting to look at how these expressions are perceived, and whether more recent data from Australia line up with the data from the U.S. There is also the issue of compositionality. While I agree that in most circumstances compositionality is the main form in which these constructions take place, I cannot help but wonder if there are instances where either the *yeah* or the *no* play no direct role in the meaning of the construction, rather than both having an individual semantic role. Lee-Goldman mentioned the possibility of there being such an existence, so further study may uncover such a case. Another potential research option is to analyze whether there is a pattern or correlation between the function and the placement of the construction in the utterance.

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