INTRODUCTION: INTERPERSONAL GRAMMAR IN WOMEN'S INSTRUCTIVE WRITING*

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Women's instructive writing sits in an intriguing place in the history of English. It is plainly practical, often relentlessly so. Lists of ingredients, sequences of actions, advice on household management, institutional directions, pedagogical guidance, and those stubbornly repetitive genres that only look formulaic until one starts reading them closely. Yet it is also socially delicate. To instruct is to presume a right to guide someone else's actions, to calibrate what counts as "proper", "safe", "effective", "economical", "decent". For women writing in periods when access to formal authority was limited or policed, that presumption could not simply be taken for granted. The result is that instructive genres become, almost by design, privileged sites for negotiating authority, managing alignment with readers, and constructing an authorial position (Hyland 2005; Hyland 2012) that can be firm without sounding socially transgressive.

This Special Issue brings that interpersonal work into focus. Its aim is not to treat women's instructive texts as quaint artefacts of domestic history, nor to reduce them to stylistic curiosities. Instead, the guiding claim is straightforward. If we want to understand how women participated in the making and circulation of specialised knowledge, we need to look at the interpersonal grammar through which instruction is made doable, acceptable, and persuasive. That means attention to grammatical choices that enact relations and stances, not simply to "tone" as a vague impression. It also means anchoring interpretation in corpus-based evidence, because the phenomena at stake are often incremental and patterned: small shifts in modal choices, recurring conditional framings, subtle clustering of stance adverbials, the steady background hum of address forms and engagement cues (Biber and Finegan 1989; Biber et al. 1999).

Two research traditions, in particular, underpin the Special Issue. The first is work grounded in the *Corpus of Women's Instructive Texts in English* (CoWITE), which has provided a sustained empirical basis for examining women's instructive discourse across modern English, including its changing repertoires of directive force, mitigation, and evaluative positioning (Alonso-Almeida 2013; Alonso-Almeida et al. 2025). The second is the long-standing corpus scholarship developed by members of the MUSTE research group at the University of A Coruña, including their foundational work with the *Coruña Corpus* and its affiliated resources for historical specialised discourse (Moskowich et al. 2012). While the Coruña tradition is most

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often associated with scientific writing, its analytic commitments (to historical variation, register differentiation, and the linguistic construction of expertise and credibility) speak directly to the concerns of this issue (Moskowich 2016; Crespo and Moskowich 2015). Put simply, CoWITE and *Coruña-Corpus-based* scholarship converge on an empirical understanding of how writers make knowledge socially legible: how they present claims, manage epistemic access, and align audiences to procedures, explanations, or recommendations (Hyland and Tse 2004).

The notion of 'interpersonal meaning' is sometimes used loosely, as if it were synonymous with evaluation, politeness, or the expression of 'attitude'. The approach taken in this Special Issue is narrower and, I think, more productive. We treat interpersonal meaning as a metafunctional dimension of language in the Hallidayan sense. This means the semiotic resources through which speakers and writers enact social relations, negotiate roles, and position themselves with respect to both addressees and the exchange itself (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Halliday and Hasan 1985). In Halliday and Matthiessen's account, this includes the grammar of MOOD (declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives), modality, polarity, and related systems that construe obligation, inclination, probability, and usuality as part of the exchange (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). It also includes the lexicogrammatical resources that allow writers to negotiate alignment, namely evaluative lexis, evidential framings, engagement markers, and strategies that distribute responsibility for knowledge ('it is said', 'it seems', 'you will find') (Alonso-Almeida 2023, Alonso-Almeida 2025, Hyland 2005; Hyland 2012). The relevant point for instructive writing is that these resources are not ornamentation. They are part of how instruction works as social action.

Instructive genres are especially revealing because they make interpersonal choices unavoidable. A recipe that says something like 'Take the eggs and beat them well' does more than describe a procedure; it performs a directive. A manual that writes 'you should allow the mixture to settle' positions the reader as a cooperative agent while modulating force. An institutional instruction that states 'you must submit the form by Michaelmas' invokes an explicit obligation and, often, a disciplinary backdrop. Even when writers avoid overt command forms, the interpersonal load does not disappear, and it is redistributed across modal choices, conditional packaging ('if you wish to...'), or impersonal constructions that shift agency away from writer and reader alike ('it is necessary to...') (Alonso-Almeida 2023; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Palmer 2001).

Within SFL, it is also useful to preserve the distinction between modalisation and modulation. Modalisation concerns assessments of probability and usuality (how

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likely, how frequent); modulation concerns obligation and inclination (how strongly required, how strongly willed) (Alonso-Almeida 2026; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Palmer 2001; Nuyts 2001). In women's instructive writing, that distinction is not merely taxonomic. It often tracks a rhetorical recalibration of authority, i.e., moving from bare obligation to graded recommendation; from absolute certainty to carefully bounded probability; or, conversely, from tentative possibility to the occasional, strategically placed necessity when safety, health, or institutional compliance is at stake (Alonso-Almeida 2015; Nuyts 2001). The issue is not whether women were "more tentative" in some essentialised way, but how interpersonal force is managed relative to genre aims, readership design, and historically situated constraints on authorial legitimacy (Hyland 2005; Hyland 2012).

At this point, 'stance' becomes analytically relevant, though we treat it as compatible with, rather than competing against, interpersonal grammar. In the tradition associated with Biber and Finegan, stance can be operationalised through recurrent lexical and grammatical markers that express affect, epistemic commitment, or evidential grounding (Biber and Finegan 1989; Biber et al. 1999). In the tradition associated with Hyland, stance is inseparable from engagement, since authorial positioning is always oriented to an imagined reader (Hyland 2005; Hyland 2012). In our context, stance is best understood as the discourse-level patterning that emerges from interpersonal choices. In other words, it is a profile of commitment, authority, caution, and reader-orientation that becomes visible when we look at distributions and co-texts across large bodies of instructive prose.

There is a familiar narrative according to which women's writing becomes relevant to the history of specialised discourse once women enter institutions more visibly: universities, professional societies, medical organisations, and publishing networks. That narrative is partial. It overlooks the fact that women were producing and circulating specialised knowledge long before those institutional openings widened, often through genres that were culturally available (or at least culturally tolerable) to them. Recipe collections, domestic economy manuals, conduct books, midwifery guides, household medicine, and educational materials are not peripheral to specialised discourse. They are actually part of its infrastructure. They disseminate procedures, stabilise terminology, and encode norms of practice. They also reveal, sometimes with unpredicted clarity, the interpersonal labour required to claim authority without overstepping the limits of what could be 'said' from a female subject position (Alonso-Almeida 2013; Moskowich 2016).

This is one of the major contributions of CoWITE-based scholarship. It allows us to treat women's instructive writing as a coherent empirical object, rather than a scatter of celebrated examples. When texts are assembled systematically and annotated in ways that support fine-grained searches, patterns become visible that would otherwise look like isolated stylistic choices. For instance, it becomes possible to track how directives are routinely softened or reinforced across centuries; how conditional structures are used not only to encode procedures but also to manage face and choice; how epistemic adverbials cluster around risky claims (health remedies are an obvious case); or how inclusive pronouns and address terms design a relationship of shared practice rather than top-down instruction (Alonso-Almeida

2015; Hyland 2005; Mele-Marrero 2025). The internal trajectory of this research, developed in CoWITE studies, repeatedly points to an interaction between gendered authorship, register constraints, and genre-specific communicative goals (Alonso-Almeida et al. 2026).

The Coruña Corpus tradition, cultivated by MUSTE researchers, offers a complementary lens. Scientific writing, especially in its early and late modern phases, provides a laboratory for observing how authority is linguistically legitimised: through evidential framing, hedging, attribution, and rhetorical management of dissent (Moskowich et al. 2012; Crespo and Moskowich 2015). When women's texts are placed within those broader histories of specialised registers, the analytical payoff is twofold. First, women's authorial strategies can be described without romanticising them; they can be compared against contemporaneous norms and against male-authored baselines, rather than treated as different by default. Second, the boundaries between "domestic" and "public" expertise become empirically inspectable. A nineteenth-century institutional recipe, a household medical direction, and a popular scientific explanation may differ in field and readership, yet they can share interpersonal architectures, e.g., how obligation is scaled, how certainty is warranted, and how the reader is invited to cooperate.

Because this Special Issue is grounded in corpus traditions, it adopts a particular standard of argumentation. Claims about interpersonal meaning should be traceable to recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns, not merely to selective quotation. This does not mean that interpretation is reduced to counting. In fact, the research that motivates this issue typically works through a productive alternation: quantitative mapping to locate patterns (frequencies, dispersion, collocational profiles, diachronic distributions), followed by qualitative interpretation of concordance lines and extended co-text. The point of that alternation is not to prove meanings statistically, but to keep functional interpretation honest. The rationale is to show that the interpersonal effects being argued for are not artefacts of cherry-picked examples, while still attending to the semantic and pragmatic work performed in situated instances.

This commitment is particularly relevant for instructive discourse, where interpersonal meaning often resides in apparently small grammatical decisions. The difference between 'must' and 'should,' the reach of a conditional ('if you wish to…') as a face-saving device rather than a procedural necessity, the use of impersonal constructions ('it is necessary to…') to redistribute agency, or the clustering of stance adverbials around risky claims and remedies. These are not isolated stylistic flourishes; they tend to recur with enough regularity to be observable at scale, yet they only become interpretable once we return to local contexts and ask what kind of exchange is being enacted (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Palmer 2001; Nuyts 2001).

Methodologically, then, the Special Issue endorses an approach in which corpus tools are treated as instruments for pattern discovery rather than as ends in themselves. Frequency and normalisation help identify which interpersonal resources are privileged in particular genres or periods; dispersion guards against over-reliance on a few idiosyncratic texts; collocation and colligation reveal the phraseological environments in which stance and modality are realised; and concordancing

provides the bridge back to discourse function (Biber et al. 1999; Hyland 2005). This is also where the design principles of historically oriented corpora matter. Both CoWITE and the Coruña Corpus tradition have insisted, each in its own way, on the importance of metadata, genre control, and transparent sampling criteria, since interpretive claims about historical discourse are only as strong as the contextual scaffolding that supports them (Moskowich et al. 2012; Moskowich 2016).

Finally, while the analytic centre of gravity in this issue lies in interpersonal grammar, contributors are encouraged to work at the interface between grammar and discourse. In practical terms, that often means moving across levels of description, e.g., from finite choices in MOOD and modality, to recurrent stance configurations, to broader interactional patterns of alignment and authority management. In a recipe, the interpersonal work may be compressed into directive sequences and modulated obligations (Alonso-Almeida 2026); in a pedagogical or institutional text, it may surface in more explicit reader-address and in the careful balancing of deontic force with justificatory or evidential framing. In either case, the goal is the same, i.e., to model instructive writing as a form of interpersonal negotiation, not merely a repository of procedures (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Hyland 2012).

This Special Issue is organised around a set of interrelated analytical axes that reflect both the breadth of women's instructive writing and the range of interpersonal resources through which authority, alignment, and guidance are negotiated. Rather than arranging contributions strictly by chronology or by genre, the volume follows a functional logic grounded in interpersonal grammar, moving from broader grammatical resources to more localised discourse phenomena and, finally, to case-based analyses of individual authors and texts. The opening group of contributions addresses core grammatical and discourse-building resources that shape interpersonal meaning across instructive and specialised registers. These chapters examine how writers organise experience and interaction through nominalisation, pronominal reference, and metadiscursive strategies, drawing on large, historically stratified corpora. Work by Elena Quintana-Toledo, Isabel Sofía Moskowich-Spiegel Fandiño, and Begoña Crespo García establishes a shared analytical ground by showing how interpersonal positioning is embedded in grammatical choices that are often treated as ideational or textual. Together, these studies foreground the relevance of nominal structures, pronominal systems, and metadiscourse for understanding how women writers construct authorial presence and negotiate expertise within instructive and scientific discourse.

A second block broadens the comparative scope by placing women's writing in dialogue with male-authored texts and cross-disciplinary registers, particularly within the Coruña Corpus tradition. Contributions by Ana Montoya Reyes and Leida Maria Monaco adopt multidimensional and contrastive approaches to stance, involvement, and verbal processes, allowing interpersonal patterns in women's instructive writing to be interpreted against wider norms of historical specialised discourse. This comparative perspective reinforces one of the central premises of the volume, namely, that interpersonal strategies in women's texts are best understood relationally, not in isolation. The central section of the monograph is devoted to modality, mitigation, and interpersonal calibration, themes that lie at the heart of

instructive discourse. Several chapters focus on modal verbs, downtoners, conditional structures, and related resources as mechanisms for regulating directive force and reader alignment. Contributions by Claudia E. Stoian, Francisco J. Álvarez Gil in collaboration with Néstor de Armas Guerra, Luis Puente-Castelo, and Estefanía Sánchez Balteiro explore how obligation, recommendation, avoidance, and extension are grammatically managed in women-authored instructive texts. Altogether, these studies show how apparently minor grammatical choices contribute to a finely tuned interpersonal economy, especially in genres where authority must be asserted without coercion.

A further set of chapters turns to measurement, evaluation, and cultural positioning as sites of interpersonal meaning. Work by Magdalena Bator and Isabel de la Cruz Cabanillas highlights how practices such as quantification, description, and cultural framing intersect with advice-giving and evaluative stance, extending the notion of interpersonal grammar beyond modal systems narrowly defined. The volume concludes with a series of text-centred case studies focusing on individual women writers and manuscript or printed collections. Chapters by Francisco Alonso-Almeida, Mercedes Cabrera-Abreu and Ivalla Ortega-Barrera, María Luisa Carrió Pastor, María José Gómez Calderón, and Margarita-Esther Sánchez-Cuervo with Carmen-María Yeste-Ruiz return to the materiality of instructive writing: recipes, manuals, and domestic guides situated in specific sociohistorical contexts. These studies demonstrate how interpersonal grammar operates at the micro-level of individual texts while remaining consistent with the broader patterns identified across corpora.

Overall, the structure of the Special Issue reflects a deliberate movement from general grammatical resources to situated interpersonal practice, and from corpus-wide tendencies to textually anchored interpretation. This organisation is intended to underscore the central claim of the volume, and that is that women's instructive writing constitutes a rich and methodologically revealing domain for the study of interpersonal grammar, where authority, guidance, and alignment are continuously negotiated through patterned linguistic choices.

The Special Issue opens with Quintana-Toledo's study of nominalization as a central grammatical resource in the construction of interpersonal meaning in women's instructive writing across the Late Modern period. Drawing on data from CoWITE18 and CoWITE19, the article offers a diachronic analysis of shifts in both the frequency and morphological profile of nominalizations between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, combining quantitative evidence with functional interpretation (Quintana-Toledo, this volume). Adopting a systemic-functional perspective, the study treats nominalization as a form of grammatical metaphor that enables abstraction, lexical density, and procedural reification (Halliday 1989; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004). Crucially, Quintana-Toledo shows that, in women's instructive texts, these effects have clear interpersonal consequences: nominalized constructions facilitate the presentation of instructions as properties of processes rather than as directives issued by an identifiable author. In this way, interpersonal authority is redistributed from the writer to the procedure itself, allowing guidance to be conveyed with reduced imposition and increased objectivity.

The diachronic dimension of the analysis reveals a clear tendency towards greater reliance on Latinate nominal forms in nineteenth-century texts, aligning women's instructive writing with broader developments in specialised registers during the period (Biber 1988; Biber et al. 1999). Rather than interpreting this shift as stylistic convergence alone, the article situates it within the interpersonal economy of instructive discourse: increased abstraction supports a more impersonal instructional voice, one that enhances credibility and expertise while remaining compatible with the social constraints historically placed on female authorship (Alonso-Almeida 2013; Alonso-Almeida 2015).

This contribution establishes a key premise for the volume as a whole by foregrounding nominalization as an interpersonal strategy rather than a purely ideational one. Interpersonal grammar in women's instructive writing is often realised through indirect grammatical means, embedded in the architecture of the clause and the noun phrase, rather than through overt stance markers alone.

The second contribution shifts the focus from impersonalisation to explicit authorial presence, examining how first-person subject pronouns function as markers of stance and interpersonal positioning in nineteenth-century women's writing. Moskowich-Spiegel Fandiño conducts a qualitative analysis of texts drawn from two corpora: CoWITE19 and the *Corpus of English Chemistry Texts* (CECheT), a subcorpus of the Coruña Corpus (Moskowich et al. 2022; Alonso-Almeida et al. 2025). Building on earlier work on pronominal functions in scientific discourse (Moskowich 2017; Moskowich 2020), the article applies a functional classification that distinguishes between uses of first-person pronouns as markers of authority, commonality, mitigation, interaction, and neutral description. The analysis confirms that first-person pronouns in women-authored texts perform distinct interpersonal roles that go well beyond reference, aligning with established accounts of stance and self-mention in specialised writing (Hyland 2001; Hyland 2002; Hyland 2005).

A key finding of the study is the strong genre sensitivity of pronominal usage. While texts from the scientific register, particularly dialogic and textbook genres within CECheT, display a relatively rich use of first-person pronouns to claim authority, structure argumentation, or construct common ground with readers, recipes in CoWITE show an almost complete avoidance of such forms. This contrast is interpreted not as evidence of greater impersonality in women's instructive writing, but as a consequence of genre-specific rhetorical constraints, where imperatives and procedural sequencing take over the interpersonal work typically carried by pronominal self-reference (Biber and Finegan 1989; Crespo and Moskowich 2015). Importantly, the article challenges assumptions about women's writing as inherently modest or mitigated. The functional distribution of pronouns reveals that forms associated with authority and commonality outnumber those linked to modesty, particularly in scientific texts, suggesting a more assertive rhetorical stance than traditionally assumed (Argamon et al. 2003). In doing so, the study complements Quintana-Toledo's contribution by illustrating the counterpoint between agency suppression and agency assertion in women's specialised writing, i.e., where nominalization distances the author from the instruction, pronominal choice selectively reintroduces authorial voice when genre and communicative purpose allow.

The third contribution widens the analytical lens from specific grammatical resources to the discursive construction of authorial presence, situating interpersonal grammar within the broader architecture of metadiscourse. Drawing on nineteenth-century scientific texts from the Coruña Corpus, Crespo García examines how writers construct what she terms the scientific self through patterns of self-mention, engagement, and interactional metadiscourse (Crespo García, this volume). Anchored in established models of metadiscourse (Hyland 2005; Hyland and Tse 2004), the study shows that authorial presence in scientific writing is neither uniform nor neutral, but carefully calibrated according to genre, disciplinary expectations, and communicative goals. The analysis reveals systematic variation in the deployment of self-references, frame markers, and engagement devices, which collectively shape how writers claim epistemic authority while maintaining alignment with readers. Importantly for the present Special Issue, Crespo García demonstrates that these strategies are not merely rhetorical ornaments but constitutive of interpersonal meaning, governing how knowledge is offered, warranted, and made credible. Placed after the two opening articles, this contribution extends the volume's trajectory from clause-level resources (nominalization and pronouns) to discourse-level interpersonal organisation. It also provides a conceptual bridge between CoWITE-based work on instructive genres and Coruña-Corpus-based research on scientific writing, showing how women's authorial positioning participates in shared economies of expertise across specialised registers (Crespo and Moskowich 2015; Moskowich et al. 2012).

Montoya Reyes' article introduces a comparative and diachronic dimension that sharpens the Special Issue's concern with interpersonal grammar by examining verbal processes that encode perception, cognition, desire, and aspectuality. Using historical texts from the Coruña Corpus of History English Texts, the study contrasts male- and female-authored writing across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Montoya Reyes, this volume). The analysis focuses on verb classes that are central to the negotiation of stance and evidential positioning, verbs of perception ('see,' 'observe'), communication ('say,' 'argue'), desire ('wish,' 'intend'), and aspect ('begin,' 'continue'). These forms are shown to function as interpersonal pivots, shaping how authors present knowledge, manage commitment, and align themselves with readers. The diachronic comparison reveals both continuity and change, as well as gender-sensitive distributions that cannot be reduced to stylistic preference alone. Within the logic of the monographic structure, this contribution reinforces two core claims. First, interpersonal meaning is not confined to overt modal or evaluative markers, but is deeply embedded in process type selection and aspectual framing (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). Second, women's specialised writing, whether instructive or historical, must be analysed against contemporaneous male-authored baselines if claims about interpersonal design are to be empirically grounded rather than impressionistic. Montoya Reyes' findings thus resonate with earlier contributions while extending the interpersonal lens beyond instruction proper, situating women's textual practices within wider histories of specialised discourse.

Returning explicitly to the instructive genre, González Quintana and Stoian offer a micro-analytical study of modality in an early nineteenth-century domestic manuscript. Focusing on modal verbs as core interpersonal resources, the

article examines how obligation, recommendation, possibility, and prediction are grammatically encoded in a single, cohesive text (González Quintana & Stoian, this volume). Working within a systemic-functional framework that distinguishes between modalisation and modulation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Palmer 2001), the authors show that modal verbs in the manuscript perform finely graded interpersonal work. Strong modals ('must,' 'shall') are sparingly used and tend to cluster around issues of safety, health, or non-negotiable procedure, while weaker forms ('may,' 'should,' 'can') dominate routine instruction. This distribution constructs an authorial voice that is authoritative without being coercive, allowing guidance to be framed as cooperative rather than imposed. Methodologically, the study exemplifies the Special Issue's commitment to close corpus-informed reading, where quantitative tendencies are interpreted through extended contextual analysis. Substantively, it reinforces a recurring insight across CoWITE-based research. Women's instructive writing does not avoid authority, but recalibrates it, distributing interpersonal force across modal choices in ways that remain sensitive to genre expectations and reader autonomy (Alonso-Almeida 2015; Quintana-Toledo 2024).

Álvarez Gil and de Armas Guerra study downtoners as mechanisms of interpersonal mitigation in women's instructive prose. Based on four canonical cookery and household texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the article combines normalised frequency counts with detailed pragmatic analysis to show how degree modifiers such as 'almost,' 'a little,' 'slightly,' and 'rather' shape directive force (Álvarez Gil & de Armas Guerra, this volume). Drawing on established classifications of downtoners and intensifiers (Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999), the authors demonstrate that these forms are both frequent and functionally stable across the period. Approximators and diminishers dominate procedural contexts where judgement is required, timing, quantity, temperature, while minimisers remain rare and pragmatically marked. Functionally, downtoners are shown to soften imperatives, temper assertions, and align instruction with norms of politeness and tact, consistent with historical accounts of hedging and negative-politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987; Holmes 1995). This contribution brings the focus back to lexico-grammatical detail, showing how even small adverbial choices perform substantial interpersonal labour. Read alongside the preceding articles on modality, pronouns, and nominalisation, it reinforces the volume's central argument, i.e., interpersonal meaning in women's instructive writing is not episodic or incidental, but systematically woven into the grammar of instruction itself.

Monaco's contribution introduces a methodologically distinct but conceptually central perspective to this issue. The use of Biber's Multidimensional Analysis (MDA) to capture interpersonal variation at the level of register and subregister, rather than individual grammatical choices. Drawing on nineteenth-century history and life sciences texts from the Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing, the study focuses on Dimension 1: "Involved/Persuasive vs. Informational style", as originally operationalised in Monaco (2017), and examines how involvement patterns interact with author sex, discipline, and genre (Monaco, this volume). From the standpoint of interpersonal grammar, the relevance of this chapter is twofold. First, it provides a quantitative macro-mapping of interpersonal

orientation, showing how features associated with involvement (first- and second-person pronouns, modals, private and suasive verbs, questions, conditionals) and with informational density (nouns, passives, nominalisations) cluster across texts (Biber 1988; Biber & Finegan 1989). Second, it demonstrates that gender alone is an insufficient explanatory variable unless it is analysed in interaction with genre and disciplinary conventions. The results complicate long-standing generalisations about women's writing as inherently more personal or involved (Lakoff 1990; Argamon et al. 2003). While female-authored texts in both history and life sciences display slightly higher involvement scores than male-authored ones at an aggregate level, this difference largely disappears once genre is controlled for. Treatises written by women and men show remarkably similar, strongly informational profiles, whereas lectures,predominantly male-authored in the corpus, exhibit much higher involvement. In other words, genre exerts a stronger constraint on interpersonal style than author sex. Monaco's study performs an important calibrating function in this monograph. It establishes a baseline for what "involvement" looks like quantitatively in nineteenth-century specialised discourse, against which the more fine-grained analyses of modality, directives, downtoners, and stance can be interpreted. It also reinforces a recurring methodological principle across CoWITE- and Coruña-based scholarship. Interpersonal meaning is systemically patterned, not anecdotal, and claims about women's authorial style must be grounded in register-sensitive corpus evidence rather than inherited sociolinguistic stereotypes (Crespo & Moskowich 2015).

Álvarez Gil's article brings the focus back squarely to women's instructive writing, offering a tightly scoped analysis of two compact but highly productive resources: the prepositional phrase 'according to' and the directive verb 'see.' Based on data from CoWITE18 (1700-1799) and CoWITE19 (1800-1899), the study combines function-first coding with distributional and diachronic profiling to show how women writers calibrate authority and guide readers through procedure (Álvarez Gil, this volume). The contribution is theoretically anchored in Systemic Functional Linguistics, historical pragmatics, and work on evidentiality, stance, and engagement (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; Nuyts 2001; Hyland 2005, 2019). Rather than treating 'according to' as a simple attributive marker, the analysis demonstrates that in instructive genres it overwhelmingly realises parameterisation and norm-alignment. Writers use 'according to' to anchor instructions to situational variables, size, age, taste, quantity, thickness, or to text-internal norms ('according to the following directions'), thereby delegating controlled judgement to the reader while maintaining procedural authority. Directive 'see,' by contrast, is shown to operate at the intersection of the interpersonal and textual metafunctions. Supervisory uses establish quality-control checkpoints within procedures, while navigational uses ('see p. xx') orchestrate reader movement across an increasingly articulated page. Diachronically, the study documents a clear nineteenth-century rise in navigational see, correlating with the stabilisation of pagination, headings, and visual material in instructional print (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997).

This chapter exemplifies the volume's central claim that interpersonal meaning in women's instructive writing is often realised through small, routinised

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grammatical frames, rather than through overt stance markers alone. Together, 'according to' and 'see' instantiate what Álvarez Gil terms a "calibrated instructional voice," i.e., authoritative without being coercive, directive without being inflexible, and deeply attuned to the practical contingencies of domestic and technical action. The chapter also connects directly with earlier contributions in the volume. Its account of parameterisation resonates with Quintana-Toledo's analysis of nominalisation as impersonal authority, while its treatment of directive see complements González Quintana & Stoian's findings on modulated obligation in domestic manuscripts. More broadly, it provides a concrete illustration of how engagement and stance are operationalised in procedural discourse, reinforcing the view that women's instructive writing constitutes a sophisticated site for the negotiation of expertise and reader alignment across the Late Modern period.

Puente-Castelo's chapter addresses a construction that, at first sight, might appear marginal, but which proves to be highly revealing when examined from an interpersonal perspective: the systematic avoidance of then in conditional *if*-clauses in women-authored texts. Working within a corpus-based framework and drawing on historical data that include women's instructive prose, the study investigates how this absence reshapes the pragmatic and interactional profile of conditional constructions. From an SFL-informed standpoint, the omission of then has clear consequences for interpersonal alignment. The prototypical *if*-then schema foregrounds logical sequencing and inferential closure; removing then weakens the sense of mechanical causality and opens space for interpretive cooperation on the part of the reader. Puente-Castelo shows that, in women's writing, conditionals frequently operate not as rigid logical operators but as soft procedural cues, inviting readers to assess relevance, necessity, or applicability themselves. This is particularly compatible with instructive genres, where advice must often remain adaptable to circumstances of use. The chapter connects productively with earlier CoWITE-based research on conditional framing as a mitigating strategy, where *if*-clauses function less as logical tests and more as devices for face management and choice preservation. By avoiding then, writers reduce overt authorial control and shift part of the decision-making burden onto the addressee, an interactional move that aligns with broader tendencies documented in women's instructive writing, including the preference for graded obligation over categorical command. In this sense, Puente-Castelo's analysis complements studies of modality and downtoning in the volume, showing how interpersonal meaning can be recalibrated through the absence of an element, not only through its presence.

Sánchez-Balteiro's contribution turns to a set of pragmatic devices traditionally associated with spoken interaction, general and specific extenders, and demonstrates their systematic role in eighteenth-century women's instructive writing. Using the CoWITE18 subcorpus (over 540,000 words), the chapter offers a detailed quantitative and qualitative account of extender forms, distributions, and functional variation in recipe discourse authored by women. The analysis draws on the now well-established distinction between adjunctive vs. disjunctive extenders and between general vs. specific types (Overstreet 1999), while situating these categories firmly within historical written discourse. What emerges is not random

imprecision, but a patterned use of vagueness as an interactional resource. Extenders such as 'and all,' '&c.,' 'or other,' or 'or what you please' allow writers to delimit a semantic field without exhausting it, thereby acknowledging variability in ingredients, availability, or reader preference. From the perspective of interpersonal grammar, extenders perform a dual function. On the one hand, they reduce prescriptive pressure, signalling that the instruction admits alternatives. On the other, they construct shared knowledge, presupposing that readers can competently fill in the open-ended category. Sánchez-Balteiro shows that this balance between guidance and flexibility is not incidental but deeply embedded in the recipe genre, especially in texts written by women whose authority often rests on experiential credibility rather than institutional endorsement. The chapter resonates strongly with other contributions in the volume that examine mitigation, conditionality, and directive softening. Like the avoidance of then in conditional clauses or the use of evidential framings (according to), extenders exemplify how interpersonal work is offloaded onto seemingly minor grammatical choices. In CoWITE-based research, these micro-resources repeatedly emerge as central to the negotiation of authority in instructive discourse, and Sánchez-Balteiro's study provides one of the most detailed historical mappings of this phenomenon to date.k

A further strand developed in this issue concerns the relationship between interpersonal meaning and procedural precision, particularly as it is mediated through systems of measurement and culturally embedded practices. From this perspective, instructive discourse does not merely transmit technical information, but actively negotiates authority, expertise, and reader alignment through choices that balance standardisation and experiential knowledge. Magdalena Bator's contribution examines the evolution of measurement terminology in women's instructional texts across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, drawing on the CoWITE18 and CoWITE19 subcorpora. Her study demonstrates that the nineteenth-century institutionalisation of the imperial system following the Weights and Measures Act (1824) did not result in a straightforward increase in numerical precision. Instead, women writers progressively favoured container-based and kitchen-specific terminology, such as spoonful, cupful or handful, over formally standardised metric units. As Bator shows, this shift does not signal imprecision, but rather the consolidation of a specialised culinary register, one that relies on shared domestic knowledge and reader familiarity rather than abstract quantification (cf. Norrick 1983; Diemer 2013). From an interpersonal perspective, these choices function as strategies of reader inclusion, positioning the addressee as a competent practitioner rather than a passive recipient of technical instruction.

This emphasis on experiential authority resonates strongly with the concerns addressed in Isabel de la Cruz Cabanillas's article, which explores Lady Ann Fanshawe's recipe book (Wellcome MS 7113) alongside her Memoirs as interconnected sites of cultural mediation. Focusing on Fanshawe's encounters with Spanish culinary and domestic practices during her stays in Iberia, de la Cruz Cabanillas shows how recipes operate as vehicles for cross-cultural knowledge transfer, personal memory, and social networking. The incorporation of Spanish recipes, terminology, and practices, often explicitly marked by provenance or attribution, reveals the recipe

book as a space where domestic instruction intersects with diplomacy, travel writing, and identity construction (Basnett 2013; Valent 2018). Crucially, these two papers underscore that women's instructive writing constructs authority not through overt epistemic dominance, but through situated expertise, grounded in practice, observation, and lived experience. Whether through the calibrated vagueness of measurement terms (as in Bator's) or the embedding of foreign culinary knowledge within a domestic manuscript tradition (as in de la Cruz Cabanillas's), these texts foreground an interpersonal logic in which credibility emerges from familiarity, trust, and shared cultural frames rather than from institutional norms alone. In this sense, measurement systems and recipe transmission alike become interpersonal resources, shaping how knowledge is legitimised and how readers are positioned within the instructional exchange.

A more fine-grained mapping of interpersonal meaning is provided by Alonso-Almeida's contribution on Hannah Woolley's recipes and manuals (1670–1672), which occupies a pivotal position in the issue by placing its concerns on the early phases of printed women's instructive prose. Focusing on a tightly delimited corpus of Woolley's instructional texts, the study offers a systematic account of how interpersonal meaning is distributed across mood types, modal verbs, polarity choices, personal pronouns, conditional structures, and resources of graduation. Within an SFL-informed framework, Alonso-Almeida shows that Woolley's instructional voice is neither uniformly directive nor uniformly mitigated. Instead, authority is carefully calibrated through a combination of imperatives for procedural cores, modalised declaratives for advice and contingency, and a strategic use of predictive 'will' functioning as a promissory device that aligns reader cooperation with anticipated success. Particularly revealing is the role of paratextual sections, where authorial presence and interpersonal negotiation become more explicit, compensating for the relative impersonality of the recipe proper. Situating Woolley's practices within a general trajectory of women's instructive writing, the chapter establishes an early baseline for patterns of calibrated authority and reader alignment that recur, in transformed ways, throughout the Late Modern period.

This focus on calibrated guidance is taken up from a complementary angle in Cabrera-Abreu and Ortega-Barrera's study of advisory suggestions in Lady Catherine Fitzgerald's recipe book (1703). Concentrating on optional instructional segments that fall outside the procedural core, the authors examine how women writers encode advice without imposing obligation, relying on conditional clauses, modal verbs of permission, and formulaic expressions such as 'as you please' or 'if you like.' From an interpersonal perspective, these advisory suggestions function as low-modulation directives that redistribute agency to the reader while preserving the instructional frame. The analysis demonstrates that optionality in women's recipe writing is not a sign of indecision or imprecision, but a recurrent grammatical strategy for managing face, choice, and cooperation in contexts where domestic authority must remain socially acceptable. Read alongside Alonso-Almeida's contribution, this chapter reinforces a central argument of the monograph, and that is: women's instructive writing systematically exploits the resources of interpersonal grammar to reconcile the practical demands of instruction with historically situated constraints on authorial voice.

The final set of contributions consolidates the issue's focus on interpersonal meaning by foregrounding advice, hedging, and evaluative alignment as central mechanisms in women's instructive discourse. Carrió Pastor's article on hedging as interpersonal design in Mrs Johnston's *Receipts* (1740) further develops this perspective by offering a systematic account of mitigation as a structuring principle of instructional discourse. Drawing on a detailed analysis of modal verbs, approximators, and conditional frames, the study shows how hedging functions not simply to soften commands, but to organise the interactional space between writer and reader. In this recipe collection, hedging contributes to the management of epistemic responsibility, procedural flexibility, and reader autonomy, while still preserving the authority required for effective instruction. The article situates these patterns within broader discussions of stance and politeness, demonstrating that mitigation in women's instructive writing is best understood as a functional resource embedded in genre conventions rather than as a marker of insecurity or lack of confidence. In doing so, it strengthens the corpus-driven, functional interpretation of interpersonal meaning that underpins the volume.

A closely related perspective on advice and interpersonal calibration is developed in Gómez-Calderón's study of Elizabeth Moxon's English *Housewifry* (1749), which reads the work not as a loose assemblage of recipes but as a carefully engineered advisory system. Drawing on a copy-text-based analysis that integrates running recipe prose with paratextual elements such as Bills of Fare, indices, and title-page programmes, the chapter shows how directive force is systematically graded according to task, risk, and social function. Clause-level resources, imperatives, agentless passives, *let*-constructions, prohibitives, and permissive 'you may,' combine with evaluative lexis and purpose clauses to construct a voice of experienced domestic governance. Particularly significant is the role of paratext in organising advice beyond the clause, as menu structures and spatial cues for table service encode seasonality, order, and propriety without resorting to overt obligation. Framed within Systemic Functional Linguistics and genre analysis, the article demonstrates how frugality and health operate as ethical warrants that legitimise instruction, turning procedural detail into reasoned counsel. In doing so, it provides a fitting conclusion to the monograph showing how interpersonal grammar, modality, and layout together sustain a form of authority grounded in practice, care, and social accountability rather than institutional power.

The issue concludes with Sánchez-Cuervo and Yeste-Ruiz's study of conditional practice in Priscilla Haslehurst's *The Family Friend* (1814), which offers a theoretically integrated model for analysing conditionality in historical instructive prose. Combining Sweetser's functional domains with Martin and White's Appraisal framework, the authors show how *if*-clauses organise both procedural logic and interpersonal stance, distinguishing clearly between content-based and speech-act conditionals. Their findings reveal that conditional constructions play a key role in regulating obligation, choice, and contingency, while also shaping dialogic space through engagement and graduation resources. This article not only provides a fine-grained account of conditional meaning in a single-author recipe book, but also proposes a replicable analytical framework applicable across women's instructive texts

in CoWITE and related corpora. As such, it encapsulates the broader aims of issue, namely, to demonstrate how interpersonal grammar operates as a central organising principle in women's specialised writing, mediating between instruction, authority, and reader alignment across time.

All said, the contributions to this Special Issue sharpen a claim that sometimes gets lost in broader histories of specialised discourse: instruction is never "just" procedure. It is an interpersonal accomplishment. Across recipes, manuals, domestic guides, and institutionally inflected directions, women writers make expertise workable through patterned grammatical choices that manage obligation, distribute epistemic responsibility, and invite (or constrain) reader agency. What looks, at first glance, like the plain mechanics of doing, 'take,' 'add,' 'let,' 'if,' 'according to,' 'see,' 'a little,' emerges here as a finely tuned interpersonal economy, i.e., one in which authority is routinely calibrated rather than merely asserted, and in which alignment is engineered through recurrent micro-choices as much as through overt self-reference or explicit evaluation. The volume therefore treats interpersonal grammar not as a decorative layer on top of "content", but as part of the genre's core technology for making knowledge socially legible and practically usable.

Methodologically, this is also where CoWITE- and Coruña-based traditions converge most productively. Corpus evidence allows us to see that interpersonal meaning in instructive discourse is incremental and distributed. It resides in clusters, dispersions, co-textual preferences, and diachronic shifts, not in isolated quotations or stylistic impressions. At the same time, the functional–discursive lens keeps interpretation anchored in the exchange itself, who is positioned to know, to decide, to comply, to evaluate, to adjust. In that sense, the Special Issue contributes to the historical study of women's specialised writing in two directions at once: (a) it offers a more precise map of the interpersonal resources through which women authored instruction across time, and (b) it provides a replicable analytic orientation for future work where gender, genre, and register are treated as empirical constraints rather than as inherited assumptions. If there is a single through-line, it is the following: women's instructive writing makes authority possible by making it negotiable grammatically, recurrently, and with remarkable consistency across the long eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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