

AUTHORITY AND DIRECTION IN LATE MODERN ENGLISH INSTRUCTIVE WRITING: THE CASE OF *ACCORDING TO* AND DIRECTIVE *SEE**

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how Late Modern English women writers calibrate authority and guide readers through two compact resources: the prepositional phrase *according to* and the directive verb *see*. Using CoWITE18 (1700-1799) and CoWITE19 (1800-1899), this study combines function-first coding with distributional profiling. *According to* overwhelmingly realises parameterisation and norm-alignment rather than named attribution; directive *see* shows a nineteenth-century rise of navigational and supervisory frames. We interpret these patterns within historical pragmatics (function in context and diachrony), Systemic Functional Linguistics SFL (interpersonal and textual metafunctions), evidentiality and stance, and metadiscourse/engagement. Findings suggest a stable ethos of calibrated guidance, anchoring procedures in situational variables, accompanied by stronger textual scaffolding and reader management in the nineteenth century.

KEYWORDS: Attribution, Evidentiality, Directives, Metadiscourse, Engagement, Women's Instructive Prose.

AUTORIDAD E INSTRUCCIÓN EN LA PROSA INSTRUCTIVA DEL INGLÉS MODERNO TARDÍO: *ACCORDING TO* Y EL IMPERATIVO *SEE*

RESUMEN

En el presente artículo se analiza cómo autoras del inglés moderno tardío modulan la autoridad y orientan al lector mediante dos recursos: *according to* y el imperativo *see*. En CoWITE18 y CoWITE19, *according to* se emplea sobre todo para parametrizar o alinear con normas, no para atribuir a autoridades con nombre propio; *see* crece en el siglo XIX en usos de navegación textual y supervisión del proceso. El patrón refleja una autoridad calibrada y una mayor gestión del lector, interpretadas desde la pragmática histórica, la Lingüística Sistémico-Funcional, la evidencialidad y el metadiscursos. Los hallazgos sugieren un ethos estable de orientación calibrada, con procedimientos anclados en variables situacionales y acompañado, en el siglo XIX, de un refuerzo de la estructuración textual y de la gestión del lector.

PALABRAS CLAVE: atribución, evidencialidad, directivas, metadiscursos, compromiso, escritura instructiva femenina.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.recaesin.2026.92.08>

REVISTA CANARIA DE ESTUDIOS INGLESES, 92; abril 2026, pp. 179-197; ISSN: e-2530-8335
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1. INTRODUCTION

Late Modern women's instructive writing, i.e., cookery books, domestic economy manuals, household medicine, offers a clear view of how textual authority is built and how practical action is coordinated on the page. Two small forms, easily overlooked, do persistent heavy work across this material: *according to* and imperative *see*. The first tethers a recommendation to a parameter or norm ("according to size/taste/season/directions"); the second recruits the reader's attention for supervision and navigation ("see that it does not scorch;" "see p. 72"). Read together, they reveal a compact subsystem where stance, evidence, and reader management converge. There are good reasons to single out these items rather than cast a wider net over "modality" or "directives" in general. According to straddles evidentiality and procedure: it can attribute a claim to a source, but, in these genres, it more often calibrates the doing of a task to variables that matter at the bench, namely quantity, size, age, taste, thickness. That is, it marks how far an instruction extends under local conditions, not simply where the knowledge came from (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001; Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009). *See*, by contrast, belongs to what Hyland (2005; 2019) would call engagement: it secures a check ("see that..." "see whether...") or orchestrates movement across the book ("see under Soups," "see Figure 2"). Its work is as much textual as interpersonal: pointing, sequencing, routing (Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1999).

The historical stakes are specific. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century instructional print thickened its scaffolding: pagination stabilised, sectional headings multiplied, figures and plates entered the kitchen and the stillroom. As the book became a tool with parts, writers acquired a compact directive to move readers across that architecture, *see*, and they used it more (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997). At the same time, women authors writing for heterogeneous households had to sound authoritative without overreaching. *According to* suits that ethos; it locates authority in the task's contingencies ("according to the size"), or in the text's own rules ("according to the following directions"), rather than in named, external voices. This is not diffidence; it is an economy of authority keyed to practice. Our approach is function-first and diachronic. We examine *according to* and directive *see* in CoWITE18 (1700-1799) and CoWITE19 (1800-1899), coding each instance for pragmatic value, parameterisation, norm-alignment, attribution, navigation, supervision, checking, and for local patterning (head nouns after *according to*; clause types after *see*). The analysis is framed in Systemic Functional terms (interpersonal vs textual metafunctions: Halliday & Matthiessen 2014), situated in historical pragmatics (Jucker & Taavitsainen 2013), and informed by research on evidentiality/epistemicity and metadiscourse (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001; Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009; Hyland 2005, 2019).

* The research conducted in this paper has been supported by the Agencia Estatal de Investigación, Plan Estatal de Investigación Científica, Técnica y de Innovación 2021–2023, under award number PID2021-125928NB-I00. I hereby express my thanks. Unión Europea · Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo regional "Una manera de hacer Europa."



The contribution is twofold. Empirically, we chart the functional ecology of two high-dispersion, formulaic frames, *according to* + NP and *see* (that) + clause / *see* + page/section/figure, and trace their distributional shifts across the long nineteenth century. Interpretively, I argue that these items instantiate a calibrated instructional voice: *according to* manages tolerances and delegates controlled judgement to readers; *see* secures compliance points and navigates a more articulated page. The upshot is a historically specific balance of guidance and autonomy that helps explain how women writers staged expertise in print for domestic-technical tasks. Two expectations follow from this framing. First, *according to* should cluster with material and bodily parameters (size, age, taste, quantity) and with text-internal norms, while overt named attributions remain marginal. Second, directive *see* should increase in nineteenth-century texts, with growth especially in navigational pointers that exploit the book's material affordances, alongside steady supervisory uses that identify critical control points in procedures. The sections that follow test these expectations against the corpus and illustrate the patterns with contextually read examples.

Section 3 details the corpus and coding scheme (CoWITE18/19; functional labels for *according to* and directive *see*; dispersion and collocational measures). Section 4 presents the distributional results, and, the interpersonal/textual effects of using *according to* and directive *see*. Section 5 draws the threads together, linking parameterisation and navigation to a calibrated instructional voice, and notes limits and avenues for finer subgenre modelling. A short appendix gathers head-noun profiles for *according to* and pattern families for *see*, with file-year metadata to aid replication.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Historical pragmatics asks how meaning is done in earlier periods, inferring speech-act values, stance, and interactional work from written traces (Jucker & Taavitsainen 2013). Methodologically it pairs corpus evidence with close reading: recurrent forms are tracked as conventionalised routines, then interpreted in their immediate co-text and task ecology to see how functions shift across time and genre. Late modern instructional print, cookery, domestic economy, household medicine, thrives on compressed, repeatable cues that both stage authority and steer action. In this frame, *according to* and directive *see* are treated as conventional resources whose core functions, attribution/parameterisation and engagement/navigation, respectively, can be profiled diachronically in women's instructive prose.

Within SFL, meanings organise along interpersonal and textual planes (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In instructional genres, the interpersonal plane calibrates commitment and obligation (modals, evidentials, directives); the textual plane manages information flow and reader movement (sequencing, cross-reference). The two focal items sit at this interface: *according to* modulates commitment, either by attributing a proposition or by parameterising a procedure relative to local variables, while imperative *see* realises engagement (direct address, supervision) and textual navigation (pointers to pages, sections, headings). Put simply: one sets tolerances; the other routes attention.



I treat *according to* as a polyfunctional cue spanning reportative/attributive evidentiality and procedural parameterisation. Cross-linguistically, evidentiality encodes information source (Aikhenvald 2004); in English it often overlaps with epistemic stance (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001; Cornillie 2009). In instructive discourse, *according to* typically does two things:

- a) it distributes epistemic responsibility by anchoring a recommendation in an external norm or communal practice;
- b) it delegates local judgement by setting conditional ranges rather than categorical thresholds (e.g. according to your taste/need/size).

This duality, external anchoring with local calibration, offers a compact way to balance expert guidance with reader autonomy, a recurrent need in heterogeneous household contexts.

Directive *see* is analysed as an engagement marker in the metadiscourse repertoire: a device writers use to involve and guide readers in the unfolding procedure (Hyland 2005; 2019). In our material it clusters in two frames: process-supervisory (see that it does not scorch; see it be well beaten) and text-navigational (see p. 72; see under Soups; see the preceding receipt). Both enact reader management: the first choreographs attention and quality control at critical steps; the second orchestrates movement across the book's material architecture (sections, headings, plates, figures). Engagement of this kind complements stance resources (hedges, boosters, attribution) by co-ordinating action, not just evaluation.

From a speech-act perspective, *see (that...)* prototypes a directive: it is designed to get the addressee to ensure a state of affairs. Imperatives and directive paraphrases are central to instructional styles (Biber et al. 1999). Text-navigational *see* approaches the family of discourse-organising markers that signal relations between stretches of text or point readers to resources (Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1999). Their spread is tied to print affordances: pagination, running heads, and indexing make compact cross-reference routines both possible and useful (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997). In domestic and medical how-to writing, such routines externalise sequence and retrieval, keeping the interactional load on short, learnable cues.

Both *according to* and directive *see* instantiate formulaic frames, *according to* + NP; *see (that)* + clause / *see* + NP/number. These show stable lexico-grammatical patterning and wide dispersion in procedural prose (Biber et al. 1999). Routinisation aids processing speed and intersubjective alignment: readers learn to treat *according to* as a condition-setter and *see* as a prompt to attend or navigate. A historical-pragmatic account therefore tracks frames, their collocates (e.g. *according to* + size/quantity/rule; *see* + page/section/that-clause), and their placement in imperative strings and transitional slots.

Women's domestic-technical authorship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries sits at the junction of household expertise, emergent print conventions, and expanding lay readerships (Tebeaux 1997; Pahta & Taavitsainen 2011). Within this ecology, attribution (*according to X*) legitimises advice by aligning with recognised norms, while engagement (*see...*) choreographs non-expert readers through the



contingencies of materials, tools, and bodies. The interplay of these two compact resources, anchoring knowledge and directing practice, is a signature of instructive prose. It is also a sensitive indicator of how the didactic voice available to women writers adjusts over time as books acquire more architecture and readers more guidance expectations.

3. CORPUS AND METHOD

We draw on two subcorpora of women's instructive prose compiled to a common design: CoWITE18 (1700-1799; 22 texts; 541,789 tokens) and CoWITE19 (1800-1899; 33 texts; 502,701 tokens) (Alonso-Almeida, Álvarez-Gil & Ortega-Barrera 2025; Alonso-Almeida et al. 2025). Texts are women-authored and instructional (cookery, household economy, domestic medicine, handiwork), POS-tagged with TreeTagger. Filenames encode year of publication, enabling straightforward diachronic checks. All corpus searches are case-insensitive; quoted examples retain original orthography and punctuation.

We target two compact forms with clear formal signatures:

- *according to*: retrieved as the contiguous bigram *according to* (case-insensitive). Anticipated functions: ATTR (attributive/reportative evidentiality), PARAM (procedural parameterisation to variables such as *taste/age/season/size/quantity*), NORM (alignment to rules or book-internal directions, e.g., *according to rule/receipt/custom/directions*), OTHER (ambiguous/elliptical).
- directive *see*: imperative/directive uses only, in two main frames: SUP (process supervision: *see that it does not scorch; see it be well beaten; see to it that...*) and NAV (text navigation: *see p./pp./page/fig./figure/table; see under/above/below; see the preceding receipt/No. N*). We also tag CHK for imperative *see whether/if...* (diagnostic checking). We exclude perceptual/epistemic *see (I/you/we see)*, predictive *shall/will see*, and infinitival *to see* unless sentence-initial *See...* is unambiguously imperative.

Queries are run in LancsBox (KWIC; N-grams to confirm formulaicity; GraphColl for local patterning; Whelk/dispersion for spread). For each hit we export KWIC lines with file and year metadata for coding (Brezina 2018). Each token is coded once for primary function using minimal surrounding context (typically $\pm 1-2$ clauses): (a) *according to*: ATTR / PARAM / NORM / OTHER, and (b) directive *see*: NAV / SUP / CHK / OTHER. Operational cues include right-hand head classes after *according to* (PERSON/BOOK/INSTITUTION vs MEASURE/QUALITY/MATERIAL/BODY) and complement types after *see* (finite *that*-clause; *see it/be + V-ed/ADJ*; numeral/heading pointers). Ambiguities default to OTHER, with notes for adjudication.

Counts are normalised per 10,000 words. We report dispersion as the share of texts with ≥ 1 instance and include DP (Gries 2008) to mitigate unequal file sizes. Diachronic comparisons are made at the corpus level (CoWITE18 vs CoWITE19)



with identical operational criteria across centuries. We characterise local patterning with GraphColl using L5-R5 windows, $f \geq 5$, and LogDice as the association measure (Rychlý 2008). For *according to* we profile right-hand heads (e.g., *size, age, taste, quantity, thickness; rule, receipt, directions*). For directive *see* we track pattern families (e.g., *see that, see it be V-ed/ADJ, see p./No./under/above*). Collocation summaries are presented as short ranked lists (top 8-10 items) rather than full network plots to keep results compact and readable.

4. ANALYSIS

Across centuries, *according to* is stable; *see* rises in the nineteenth century, as seen below:

Corpus	<i>according to</i> (count; per-10k)	<i>see</i> (count; per-10k)
CoWITE18	116; 2.14	120; 2.21
CoWITE19	118; 2.35	172; 3.42

Concerning dispersion, both items are widespread rather than idiosyncratic:

- *according to* occurs in 19/21 texts in CoWITE18 (90.5%) and 26/30 in CoWITE19 (86.7%).
- *see* occurs in 20/21 texts in CoWITE18 (95.2%) and 26/30 in CoWITE19 (86.7%).

Automatic right-context heuristics show parameterisation as the dominant value in both centuries; norm-alignment is secondary; explicit attribution is absent in these KWICs.

Right-hand heads after *according to* (top).

- 18th c.: *quantity* (19), *size* (18), *bigness* (9), *receipt* (5), *strength* (4), *age* (3).
- 19th c.: *size* (37), *age* (13), *taste* (11), *quantity* (6), *thickness* (5), *directions* (5), *fancy* (4), *colour* (3), *season* (3).

TABLE 1. FUNCTIONAL PROFILE OF *ACCORDING TO* (PER 10,000 WORDS).

FUNCTION (<i>ACCORDING TO</i>)	CoWITE18 (COUNT; PER-10K)	CoWITE19 (COUNT; PER-10K)
PARAM (calibrating variables: size, age, taste, quantity...)	50; 0.92	67; 1.33
NORM (rule/receipt/directions/custom)	11; 0.20	16; 0.32
ATTR (named authority/source)	0; 0.00	0; 0.00
OTHER / ambiguous	55; 1.02	35; 0.70



TABLE 2. FUNCTIONAL PROFILE OF DIRECTIVE *SEE* (PER 10,000 WORDS) FOR SUBTYPES.

FUNCTION (<i>SEE</i>)	CoWITE18 (COUNT; PER-10K)	CoWITE19 (COUNT; PER-10K)
NAV (page/section/figure/receipt pointers; <i>see under/above/below</i>)	7; 0.13	60; 1.19
SUP (<i>see that / see it be / see it does not ...</i>)	17; 0.31	30; 0.60
CHK (<i>see whether / see if...</i>)	5; 0.09	10; 0.20
NONDIRECTIVE (e.g. <i>if you see ...</i> ; not counted as directives)	69	7
OTHER / unclear	22	65

These heads make the parameterising function transparent: instructions are tailored “according to size/age/taste/quantity...,” with nineteenth-century texts showing a stronger pull toward *size/age/taste* (and book-internal *directions*) than the eighteenth-century mix (which still includes older terms like *bigness*).

Directive uses are separated into NAV (text navigation), SUP (process supervision/quality checks), and CHK (diagnostic *see whether/if*). Non-directive perception (e.g. *if you see...*) is flagged as NONDIRECTIVE and not interpreted as engagement/command.

The phrase *according to* is steady overall but more explicitly parameterising in the nineteenth century; *see* shows a marked nineteenth-century shift toward navigational and supervisory imperatives, tracking the growth of internal cross-referencing conventions. In what follows, I comment on specific instances from the corpus to illustrate the different categories.

4.1. ACCORDING TO AS CALIBRATED INSTRUCTION

Parameterising cues license adjustment within a bounded space, classic interpersonal work in SFL terms, where obligation and commitment are modulated rather than imposed (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014), and they instantiate what Nuyts calls a stance-as-tolerance posture, not a categorical fiat (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001). In procedural discourse this amounts to contingency management (Biber et al. 1999), aligning writer and reader by granting controlled choice at points where materials, tools, or preferences vary (Hyland 2005; 2019). In evidential terms, such cues shift responsibility from the author’s personal say-so to the situational conditions that warrant adjustment (Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009). The following instance shows how quantity calibration is realised:

- (1) Quantity calibration (early 18th c.). “salt, *–according to your quantity*, as for example, If you gather four gallons of Mushrooms, put three handfulls of salt, and no more or less.” (Fuller 1712; CoWITE18)



Example (1) encodes a ratio-based tolerance band, “three handfulls: four gallons,” that the reader can scale up or down. The prepositional frame *according to + NP* signals the variable (*your quantity*) that governs adjustment; the follow-up exemplum (“as for example...”) operationalises the rule so it can be re-used beyond the single case. In SFL terms, the clause-final conditioner *according to your quantity* modulates the illocutionary force of the imperative step (add salt) by specifying how far the obligation extends under differing inputs (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). From a pragmatic angle, the instruction distributes epistemic responsibility: the writer fixes the proportional relation and the upper–lower bounds (“no more or less”), while the reader determines the exact dose once the input (four gallons; two gallons; etc.) is known, precisely the reportative–epistemic balance observed for English evidential cues (Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009). As procedural design, this is textbook contingency management: where measurement is inherently approximate (note the vernacular *handfulls*), the text replaces unattainable precision with a learnable heuristic that supports fast, reliable action (Biber et al. 1999). Interpersonally, it is also engagement through option-granting: the author retains authority over the relation and the safe bounds, yet cedes local judgement to the performer (Hyland 2005; 2019). The result is a compact calibration device well suited to late-modern household practice, where inputs vary and tolerances, not fixed thresholds, secure procedural success (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001).

Where preferences plausibly vary, writers open a bounded space for reader choice, still an instruction, but with calibrated leeway. In SFL terms, the imperative nucleus (“add salt...”) is modulated by a postposed conditioner that specifies how far the obligation extends (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). Pragmatically, this realises stance-as-tolerance (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001): the writer maintains control over the action while allowing the degree to be reader-managed. As engagement, such option-granting recruits the reader as co-agent in the task (Hyland 2005; 2019). In evidential terms, responsibility is nudged from the author’s fiat to situational grounds, here, the taster’s palate as a licit criterion for adjustment (Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009). The following instance shows taste calibration in practice:

- (2) Taste calibration (early 19th c.). “... thicken the liquor... add salt and some dumplins *according to your taste*; stew it till tender.” (Randolph 1824; CoWITE19)

Example (2) preserves a non-negotiable action (*add salt*) but opens a tolerance band via *according to your taste*. The writer thus fixes the procedural step while delegating the quantitative endpoint to the reader’s organoleptic judgement. Interpersonally, this balances authority with controlled choice (Hyland 2005); textually, it avoids over-specification where variability is expected (different broths, diners, regional palates). In SFL terms, the clause-final prepositional phrase functions as a postposed conditioner, modulating obligation without downgrading the command (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). As an evidential move, the calibration is licensed by local conditions (what tastes right now), not the author’s personal say-so (Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009). In short, the device codifies a practical



norm: *you must salt, but the endpoint is contingent*, a neat solution to the problem of instructing heterogeneous households.

When physical affordances constrain outcomes, e.g., thickness of joints, capacity of vessels, authors invoke size to scale time, heat, or quantity. Here the modulus is material rather than evaluative, but the logic is the same: a fixed step plus a variable tolerance (Biber et al. 1999). In SFL terms, *according to + size* realises graded modulation rather than a single threshold (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The corpus shows size to be the most frequent 19th-century head in this frame, signalling a shift toward concrete, reader-salient parameters.

- (3) Size calibration (19th c.). “... wash it well, and put it to boil *according to the size*.” (Rundell 1806; CoWITE19)

Example (3) encodes an input-dependent tolerance: larger joints require longer or gentler boiling; smaller ones, less. The postposed *according to the size* marks the governing variable that the reader must assess before executing the step. Interpersonally, this preserves the imperative, *put it to boil*, while instructing how far to take it (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001). Textually, the brevity of the frame keeps the sequence light, outsourcing calculation to a learnable heuristic rather than listing times for every cut (Biber et al. 1999). As an evidential gesture, the adjustment is grounded in visible, measurable conditions (Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009). Together with (2), it shows how *according to + MEASURE/QUALITY* heads (*size, age, taste, quantity, thickness*) operationalise a compact, genre-typical solution: be authoritative, yet flexible, stipulate the action, specify the parameter, and let readers tune the outcome within safe bounds (Hyland 2005; 2019; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

4.2. ACCORDING TO AS NORM-ALIGNMENT

When *according to* points not to persons or books but to rules, receipts, or directions, it aligns the current move with the text’s own canon. Pragmatically, this is metadiscourse: the writer frames what follows as compliant with an already stated procedure or an immediately forthcoming list (Crismore, Markkanen & Steffensen 1993; Hyland 2019). In SFL terms, the device couples interpersonal authority (this is how one ought to proceed) with textual organisation (recycling or foreshadowing structure). It is endophoric signalling in Schiffrin’s sense, cohesion through in-text reference, realised by a compact, learnable frame (Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1999). The following instance shows rule-following:

- (4) Rule-following (mid-18th c.). “... they are all to be boiled exactly in the same manner, and *according to the same rules*; only allowing a larger time...” (Bradley 1750; CoWITE18)

Example (4) internalises authority: the “rules” invoked are the author’s own, established earlier in the book. Rather than cite an external source, the writer upgrades



prior instructions to normative status, a classic metadiscursive move where the text authorises itself (Crismore et al. 1993; Hyland 2019). Textually, *according to the same rules* functions as an endophoric pointer, achieving cohesion by re-application of a stored procedure (Schiffrin 1987). Interpersonally, it compresses a directive sequence (“boil as before, mutatis mutandis”) into a single cue, thereby economising repetition while keeping the obligation salient (Fraser 1999). Historically, such self-referential norming sits well with eighteenth-century compilations that rely on a core method plus allowances (“only allowing a larger time”), a pattern noted in early technical and domestic print (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997).

A second pattern uses *according to* to pre-align the reader with a list or procedure that immediately follows. The next example illustrates book-internal directions:

- (5) Book-internal directions (early 19th c.). “... the first process in the art of confectionary... *according to the following directions.*” (Haslehurst 1814; CoWITE19)

Here *according to* serves as an advance organiser: it forecasts that compliance will be measured against a forthcoming set of steps. The prepositional frame (*according to + directions*) explicitly binds the imperative ethos to the material architecture of the page (Hyland 2019). In discourse-organisational terms, it is an instructional frame marker signalling a shift from overview to procedure (Crismore et al. 1993; Fraser 1999). The move also reflects the nineteenth-century codification of manuals, e.g., headings, numbered entries, plates, on which such compact cross-reference depends (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997). By anchoring the next actions to “the following directions,” the text both routes and regulates: it primes the reader to treat what comes next as the applicable norm.

All in all, (4)-(5) show *according to* operating as a norm-alignment switch: not “what X says” but what this book establishes. The effect is twofold. It keeps authority within the text, a strategic stance in women’s domestic-technical authorship, and it reduces redundancy by licensing reference and foreshadowing rather than full restatement, precisely the kind of metadiscursive economy that matured with Late Modern print conventions (Hyland 2019; Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997).

4.3. DIRECTIVE *SEE* AS SUPERVISION AND NAVIGATION

Imperative *see* concentrates two kinds of engagement (Hyland 2005; 2019): SUPERVISION, *see that... / see it be...*, which secures quality and safety at critical control points within the procedure, and NAVIGATION, *see page/under/plate/No.*, which orchestrates the reader’s movement across the book’s architecture. Both are directive in force (Biber et al. 1999), but they operate on different planes, process vs text, and together they knit interpersonal guidance to textual design (Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The supervisory uses choreograph attention where outcomes are fragile; the navigational uses exploit print affordances



(pagination, headings, plates, numbering) to externalise sequence and retrieval (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997). The examples that follow illustrate these two strands.

Early recipe prose often embeds *see* inside conditionals rather than as a bare imperative, mitigating the directive while still installing a checkpoint.

- (6) Process supervision (18th c., imperative-like check). “... put them into the oven; *if you see* them rise too fast, put them down with your hand... when you *see* them well baked, take them out.” (Fitzgerald 1703; CoWITE18)

In (6), *see* packages perceptual diagnostics (“rise too fast;” “well baked”) as gates for progression. Functionally, these are control points: proceed iff a criterion is met, prototypical of instructional sequencing (Biber et al. 1999). The conditional wrapper (“if you see...”) softens the command in line with period politeness, yet the illocutionary force is clear: ensure X before Y. Interpersonally, this is engagement by attention management; textually, it locks to the stepwise connective *then*, tying the interpersonal and textual metafunctions (Hyland 2005; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

A second supervisory pattern moves from conditional narration to a more direct prompting of what must be observed.

- (7) Observational checkpoint (18th c.). “... set it upon an easy fire, and *see* it begin to boyl or rise up, then pour upon it...” (Fitzgerald 1703; CoWITE18)

Example (7) is a canonical CHK: the writer stipulates the diagnostic sign (“begin to boil”) that warrants the next action. Compared with (6), the imperative contour is more salient; the reader is recruited as inspector. This is still lighter than *see that it boils*, but the pragmatic outcome is the same, assure the state before advancing. Such micro-directives reduce error and standardise tacit craft knowledge (Hyland 2005; 2019), aligning with the SFL notion of modulated obligation at points of uncertainty (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

Nineteenth-century print conventions, stable pagination, sectional heads, plates, and numbered entries, licensed concise routing. Imperative *see* becomes a text-navigation engine.

- (8) Navigating to a plate (intermodal hand-off). “*See Plate 1st*. In this plate the fowl is placed in the proper position for carving...” (Rundell 1806; CoWITE19)

See X uses a heading-based indexical to route the reader to a labelled locus (the figure). This is endophoric organisation in Schiffrin’s sense (1987), i.e., cohesion by internal reference, here leveraging the book’s paratext. The author does not repeat technique; she outsources it to the visual, cutting cognitive load (Hyland 2019). The pattern presupposes a mature page architecture (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997). In this particular instance, prose hands off to image. The imperative is minimal, while the payoff is high, as spatial technique is better taught by a diagram than by prose. Pragmatically, *see Plate 1st* functions as a pointer-directive; textually, it coordinates



modes, verbal instruction and visual demonstration (Hyland 2019). Again, the efficacy depends on numbered plates and captions. Alongside this use, there is a related use of navigational *see*, indicating the page where a particular recipe may be found, as in the nineteenth-century example in (9), which is nowhere found in the eighteenth-century compilation, using only the term *page* followed by a number, as illustrated in the excerpts (9)-(12):

- (9) Put in a Pint of good fry'd Gravy (*as in Page 12*). (Glasse 1747)
- (10) Mrs. Mason gives the above receipt, differently expressed, *page 263*. (Cole 1789)
- (11) This you may do in the same manner as the collops with the white sauce *on page 40*. (Frazer 1791)
- (12) Make a rice cake (*see p. 228*). (Mrs Toogood 1866)

Across these instances, there is a diachronic drift from narrated contingencies to bare imperatives, tracking the rise of editorialised manuals and an increasingly confident didactic voice. Supervisory *see* installs assurance conditions inside the process; navigational *see* exploits the material page to choreograph consultation. Together they show how a tiny verb carries substantial interpersonal (engagement, vigilance) and textual (routing, cohesion) labour in Late Modern instructive prose (Schiffrin 1987; Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997; Biber et al. 1999; Fraser 1999; Hyland 2005, 2019; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

4.4. TEXTUAL ECOLOGY: PLACEMENT, CO-SELECTION, AND PATTERNING

Two placement tendencies stand out. First, *according to* is typically clause-medial after the nucleus of instruction, where it behaves as a postposed conditioner; it also appears pre-list as an advance organiser. Second, directive *see* prefers clause-initial, often in stand-alone sentences, which maximises salience at decision points. In SFL terms, clause-initial position gives thematic prominence to *see* as a control or routing move, while clause-medial *according to* functions as an adjunct of modulation, narrowing how far the preceding command extends (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). The pattern is easy to see in the corpus.

– Clause-medial conditioner (postposed): the nucleus comes first, the tolerance afterwards.

- (13) Clause-medial (calibration). “Put sweet herbs (marjoram or sage) *according to your taste*.” (Mrs Child 1841; CoWITE19)

In (13) the imperative remains non-negotiable (*put sweet herbs*), but the scope of compliance is curtailed by the postposed *according to* phrase. Functionally this is stance-as-tolerance (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001): obligation stands, degree varies. As engagement, the move grants controlled choice (Hyland 2005, 2019), and as evidential practice it grounds adjustment in situational conditions (Aikhenvald 2004;



Cornillie 2009). The clause-medial placement keeps the sequence light and locally processable, command first, calibration second (Biber et al. 1999).

- Pre-list organiser (foreshadowing): the frame signals that what follows is the norm to be applied, as in (14), below:

(14) Pre-list (norm-alignment). “... the first process in the art of confectionary... *according to the following directions.*” (Haslehurst 1814; CoWITE19)

Example (14) uses *according to* to prime the reader for a procedural list. This is metadiscourse in Crismore et al.’s sense (1993): an organisational cue that binds the upcoming text to the current move (Hyland 2019). It also reflects nineteenth-century codification, headings, numbered steps, plates, on which concise cross-reference depends (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997).

- Clause-initial pointer (routing): the directive occupies theme position and issues a high-salience instruction to consult elsewhere, as in:

(15) Clause-initial (navigation). “Pigeons.- *See Plate 1st.* Here are the representations of two, the one with the back uppermost, and the other with the breast” (Haslehurst 1814; CoWITE19)

In (15) the imperative fronts the clause, projecting a clear route through the book’s architecture. The pay-off is cognitive economy, as prose hands off to image where demonstration outperforms description (Hyland 2019). Such clause-initial *see* is a classic engagement cue that orchestrates movement across a designed page (Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1999), a practice that scales with stable pagination and visual apparatus (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997).

Beyond position, co-selection reinforces function:

- *according to* pairs with evaluative heads (*taste, strength, thickness*), measure heads (*quantity, size, age*), and norm heads (rule, receipt, directions); these heads identify the governing parameter or the in-book norm.
- *see* co-occurs with negation/preventions (see that it does not burn (Clarke 1885)), with quality adjectives (see it clean (Haddock 1720), see it clear (Maciver 1774)), and with textual nouns (*page, plate, No.*); these collocates mark assurance conditions or routing targets.

The positional and collocational evidence points to formulaic frames that speed processing and stabilise expectations: readers learn that *according to* + *NP* signals tolerances or norms, and *see* + *that/No./page* signals checks or pointers (Biber et al. 1999). In short, placement gives the cue its information status (theme vs rheme), while co-selection advertises its work, calibrate here; ensure this; turn there.



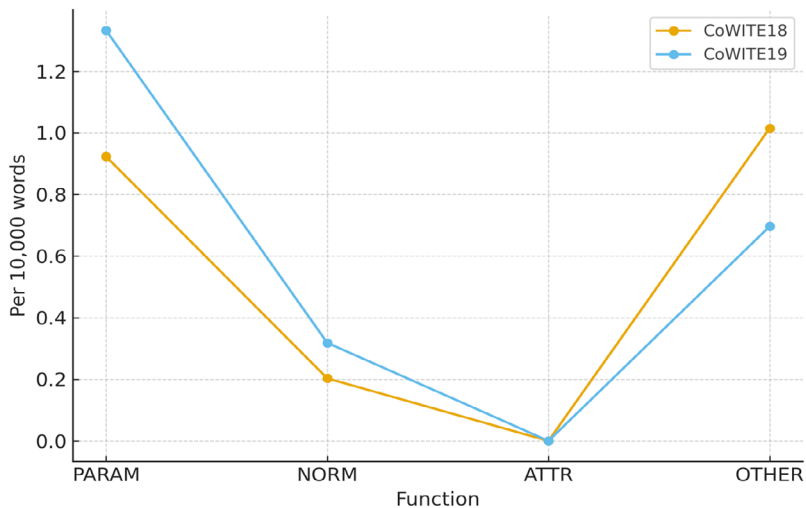


Figure 1. 'according to' functions per 10,000 words (CoWITE18, 1700–1799, vs CoWITE19, 1800–1899). PARAM = parameterisation; NORM = norm-alignment; ATTR = attributive/reportative; OTHER = ambiguous/elliptical.

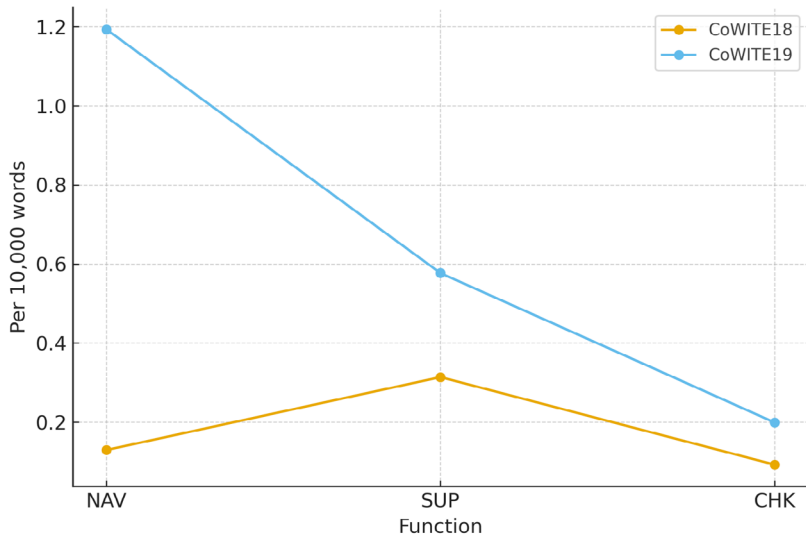


Figure 2. Directive 'see' functions per 10,000 words. NAV = text navigation; SUP = process supervision; CHK = diagnostic checks.

As Figures 1–2 below show, three diachronic tendencies structure the profile of our two targets. First, steady parameterisation. The overall rate of *according to* barely shifts from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century (2.14 → 2.35 per 10,000 words), yet its centre of gravity remains firmly PARAM, with NORM rising modestly and ATTR (named attribution) essentially absent. The right-hand heads that dominate the frame, namely, *size, age, taste, quantity, thickness*, index a pragmatic ethic in which calibration, not citation, carries instructional authority. In SFL terms, postposed *according to* + NP narrows the scope of an obligation without weakening the imperative force; it realises interpersonal modulation while keeping the procedural nucleus intact (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). From a stance perspective, this is tolerance rather than fiat (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001), and in evidential terms it grounds adjustment in situational conditions rather than the author's say-so (Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009).

Directive *see* increases overall (2.21 → 3.42 per 10,000), with the NAV subtype doing most of the lifting (0.13 → 1.19 per 10,000). This growth tracks the densification of nineteenth-century book architecture, stable pagination, numbered entries, sectional heads, plates, features that both enable and invite concise routing (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997). In metadiscourse terms, *see p./plate...* functions as a compact engagement cue that organises the reader's path through a designed page (Hyland 2005, 2019). The page itself becomes part of the procedural tool-set, so that movement across the book is orchestrated as deliberately as movement through the task.

SUP frames (*see that...; see it be...*) also rise (0.31 → 0.60 per 10,000), while CHK (*see if/whether...*) remains minor but persistent (0.09 → 0.20 per 10,000). The supervisory drift reallocates some of the burden of quality control to explicit checkpoints, naming the perceptual or procedural state that must obtain before the next step, very much the contingency management one expects in procedural prose (Biber et al. 1999). Interpersonally, engagement becomes more overt; textually, assurance conditions are placed at high-salience positions, often clause-initial, to maximise attention at decision points (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; Hyland 2019).

These trends are robust across texts (high dispersion in both centuries) and hold under dispersion-sensitive metrics, indicating genre-wide routines rather than idiosyncratic habits. In short, the nineteenth century adds navigation and supervision to an already stable base of parameterisation, a recalibration of the didactic voice that mirrors the maturing affordances of instructional print.

5. DISCUSSION

The distributional picture is clear enough, but the interpretive pay-off lies in how these small forms organise authority and action together. *According to* holds steady in rate across the two centuries while remaining decisively parameterising. The right-hand heads that dominate the frame locate judgement in the situation



rather than in the writer's fiat. In SFL terms, the postposed *according to* + NP works as interpersonal modulation. It narrows how far the preceding command extends without weakening its imperative force (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). From a stance perspective, this is tolerance, not categorical obligation (Nuyts 2001; Palmer 2001). In evidential terms, the calibration is licensed by observable or felt conditions, what the joint weighs, what the broth tastes like, rather than by an appeal to learned authority (Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2009). That ethos fits the genre: household tasks vary; a ratio or parameter helps more than a name.

Directive *see* tells a complementary story. Its nineteenth-century growth is driven by navigational pointers, which makes sense once the page itself acquires more architecture. Stable pagination, sectional headings, numbered entries and plates allow writers to route readers economically; the imperative becomes a pointer that turns the book into a working space, not just a script (Bazerman 1988; Tebeaux 1997). In metadiscourse terms, *see X...* is a compact engagement cue that manages the interaction with the document as much as with the task (Hyland 2005, 2019). The interpersonal and textual metafunctions cooperate here: the writer addresses the reader directly while orchestrating movement across an artefact designed for consultation (Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

Supervisory *see* also rises, though more gently, and it does a different kind of work. Frames such as *see that it is perfectly smooth when you put it in the dish* (Randolph 1824) install assurance conditions. Earlier recipe prose often narrates such contingencies conditionally (*if you see...*, as in *if you see them rise too fast, put them downe with your hands before they be too hard, soe when you see them well baked, take them out* by Fitzgerald (1703)); later texts tend to command them outright. Either way, the effect is the same: attention is channelled to diagnostic signs before the next step is licensed. That is classic contingency management in procedural discourse (Biber et al. 1999) and an instance of engagement as vigilance rather than evaluation (Hyland 2005, 2019). The preference for clause-initial *see* in stand-alone sentences gives these checks thematic prominence, which is exactly where a control point should sit if it is to be noticed in time (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014).

Two further observations matter for generalisation. First, dispersion is high for both targets in both centuries, which points to genre-wide routines rather than a handful of stylistic tics. The collocational cores, MEASURE/QUALITY heads after *according to*; textual nouns, negation, and quality adjectives around *see*, are stable and easily learnable. This is the kind of formulaicity that speeds processing and stabilises expectations in time-sensitive tasks (Biber et al. 1999). Second, author and subgenre will still shade the details. The eighteenth-century preference for conditional narration, for instance, sits well with contemporary politeness and with looser page design, while nineteenth-century manuals can afford crisper imperatives because the layout carries more of the organisational load. Our corpus controls (normalisation, DP dispersion, shared retrieval criteria) reduce file-size artefacts (Gries 2008), but they do not eliminate stylistic variance. That is a limit worth acknowledging, as it does not undo the main tendencies.

In short, it appears that the system is coherent. *According to* keeps the instructional voice calibrated. It stipulates the action and names the parameter that



governs safe adjustment. *See* secures the procedure at its fragile points and routes the reader through the book that now houses the method. The nineteenth century does not abandon the earlier ethos of calibration; it layers on navigation and more explicit supervision as print affords it. The result is an instructional voice that is firm, intelligible, and, crucially, workable on the page.

6. CONCLUSION

This article has shown how two small, formulaic resources, *according to* and directive *see*, carry much of the work of authority and direction in Late Modern women's instructive prose. The quantitative backdrop is unambiguous. Across CoWITE18 and CoWITE19, *according to* holds steady in overall frequency (around 2.1-2.3 per 10,000 words) yet functions chiefly as parameterisation, with normalisation secondary and named attribution essentially absent. Directive *see* intensifies in the nineteenth century (2.21 to 3.42 per 10,000), above all through navigational pointers (around 0.13 to 1.19 per 10,000) and, more modestly, supervisory prompts (around 0.31 to 0.60). These distributional facts match the close readings: women authors calibrate procedures to materials and bodies, and they increasingly route readers through a more articulated page.

Set against the research questions, the pattern is consistent. For *according to*, parameterisation dominates in both centuries, with right-hand heads shifting from eighteenth-century *quantity, size, bigness* to nineteenth-century *size, age, taste, thickness* (plus *directions*). The shift signals a turn to concrete, reader-salient tolerances and a mild codification of practice. For directive *see*, two families are robust: process supervision marking critical control points; and text navigation that treats the page as infrastructure. Placement and co-selection behave as expected. *According to* is clause-medial as a postposed conditioner or prefaces lists; *see* favours clause-initial, stand-alone imperatives at decision junctures, collocating with preventives, quality adjectives, and textual nouns. Diachronically, *according to* is stable but more explicitly parameterising in the nineteenth century; *see* grows markedly, with navigation doing most of the lifting. High dispersion across authors and texts suggests genre routines rather than quirks, though some subgenre shading is likely.

The implications are twofold. Theoretically, small formulae deserve centre stage in historical pragmatics. *According to* is not mere reportative tagging but a condition-setter that realises stance-as-tolerance within SFL's interpersonal plane; *see* is engagement made practical, addressing the reader while designing their path across a material artefact. The nineteenth-century rise of navigational *see* reads best as a pragmatic response to maturing print affordances, stable pagination, headings, numbered entries, plates, rather than a stylistic fad. Historically, the pairing amounts to a gendered solution to the puzzle of sounding authoritative without overreach. Where appeals to learned names were scarce or strategically awkward, women writers grounded expertise in parameters the reader could act on and in a page architecture the reader could follow.



Methodologically, a lightweight, function-first workflow anchored in clear formal signatures (the bigram *according to*; imperative *see* frames) and supported by normalised rates, dispersion (DP), and collocational profiling can recover meaningful diachronic tendencies in compact expressions. The pipeline is transparent and replicable, and readily extends to adjacent items, *see also*, *refer to*, *as directed*, and to near-by evidential frames such as *as is said*. Two limits remain. Automatic heuristics inevitably leave an OTHER bucket for *according to* (orthography, ellipsis) and risk under-counting borderline *see whether/if* checks versus non-directive *see*; and the field has been treated broadly, with subgenre and author likely modulating preferences for conditional narration versus bare imperatives. Neither caveat alters the core tendencies, but both indicate where precision can improve.

Future work should model subgenre and author as random effects to separate stylistic from systemic variance; widen the metadiscursive net to map the fuller ecology of anchoring and direction; and link navigational density to paratextual features (recipe numbering, plates, running heads) to quantify the nexus between book architecture and directive practice. If we think of instructive print as a tool, *according to* is the calibrator and *see* the pointer. Together they let women writers of the long nineteenth century teach not only what to do, but how far to go and where to look next, an instructional voice at once firm, intelligible, and quietly collaborative.

Reviews sent to the authors: 11/12/2025

Revised paper accepted for publication: 27/01/2026



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