MAPPING INTERPERSONAL MEANING IN HANNAH WOOLLEY'S RECIPES AND MANUALS (1670-1672)*

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Abstract

This article analyses interpersonal markers in Hannah Woolley's *The Queen-like Closet* (1670) and *The Ladies Directory* (1672), two of the earliest domestic manuals authored by an Englishwoman. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics and Appraisal theory, it examines mood, modality, polarity, pronouns, conditionals, and graduation, combining quantitative frequencies with close exemplification. Results show that both works are grounded in imperatives, though Woolley tempers categorical directives with *let*-frames, permission modals, and hedges. Strong obligation markers (*must, shall*) dominate in 1670, while the later text shifts toward advisory forms (*you may*) and politeness hedges (*if you please*). Predictive *will* often functions as a promissory device, assuring readers of efficacy. The pervasive *you* casts the reader as active agent, while authorial *I* surfaces chiefly in evidential claims. These strategies reveal Woolley's negotiation of female authority in print, where interpersonal resources both assert expertise and foster solidarity.

Keywords: Hannah Woolley, Interpersonal Meaning, Modality & Directives, Women's Instructive Writing, Historical Pragmatics, Corpus-based Analysis

CARTOGRAFÍA DEL SIGNIFICADO INTERPERSONAL EN LAS RECETAS Y MANUALES DE HANNAH WOOLLEY (1670-1672)

Resumen

El artículo examina los marcadores interpersonales en dos manuales domésticos de Hannah Woolley (1670, 1672) desde la Lingüística Sistémico-Funcional y la *Appraisal Theory*. El análisis muestra un predominio de imperativos atenuados mediante estructuras con *let*, modales de permiso y estrategias de cortesía. Entre ambas obras se observa una evolución desde una directividad más fuerte hacia fórmulas de consejo. El uso de *will* cumple una función promisoria, *you* sitúa al lector como agente y *I* construye autoridad basada en la experiencia.

Palabras clave: Hannah Woolley, significado interpersonal, modalidad y directivas, escritura instructiva femenina, pragmática histórica, análisis basado en corpus

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hannah Woolley (fl. 1670s) is generally acknowledged as the first Englishwoman to make a profession of publishing domestic manuals, thus asserting authority in a domain long framed by male voices (Soares 2023). *The Queen-like Closet* (1670) and *The Ladies Directory* (1672) were produced at a moment when the vernacular market for cookery, household management, and medical advice was expanding rapidly, and they soon became touchstones for later women writers. These works were never simply collections of recipes; they are rhetorical artefacts in which Woolley presents herself as both instructor and companion. At the centre of this negotiation stands her use of interpersonal language, the grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic resources by which she directs, grants or withholds permission, mitigates risk, asserts knowledge, and addresses an imagined readership of women managing households.

The study of interpersonal markers in early modern instructive prose sheds light on how authority and solidarity were balanced in a genre that demanded prescriptive clarity yet also courted persuasion and courtesy. Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014) provides a suitable framework, treating mood, modality, and polarity as central resources for positioning self and addressee. Appraisal theory (Martin & White 2005) complements this view by examining how evidentials, conditionals, hedges, and boosters calibrate commitment and foster alignment. Through this lens, Woolley's manuals appear less as static guides than as dialogic exchanges revealing gendered strategies of stance-taking in seventeenth-century England.

This article addresses three questions. First, which interpersonal markers occur most frequently, and how are they distributed across sections of the two books? Second, how do the 1670 and 1672 profiles compare, and do they suggest subtle shifts in Woolley's rhetorical positioning? Third, how do these features reflect broader cultural and gendered expectations surrounding female instructive authority?

Answering these questions allows a baseline description of interpersonal resources in Woolley's prose. Such a description clarifies her authorial voice and provides a point of departure for diachronic comparison with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic writing by authors such as Acton, Beeton, or Haslehurst. In this way, the article contributes to scholarship on modality, politeness, and stance in historical discourse while foregrounding Woolley's pioneering role in shaping the interpersonal dimension of women's domestic prose. Critics of early modern women's writing have long remarked on the rhetorical balancing acts such authors performed to preserve credibility (Wall 2002; McDowell 1998), and Woolley's texts offer a particularly vivid case of how such authority was fashioned linguistically.

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study reads Woolley's *The Queen-like Closet* (1670) and *The Ladies Directory* (1672) through a systemic-functional perspective, complemented by Appraisal theory, historical pragmatics, and politeness research. This combination is not accidental. It makes possible an analysis that is at once linguistic and socio-historical, attentive both to the grammar of recipes and to the conditions under which a woman could claim instructive authority in seventeenth-century print.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1970, 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014) conceptualises language in terms of three metafunctions: ideational, textual, and interpersonal. Here the focus is on the interpersonal, since it is through this layer that Woolley positions herself in relation to her readers, negotiates authority, and manages alignment. Mood offers the basic grammatical choices: declarative, imperative, and interrogative. Imperatives are of course expected in recipe discourse, establishing an asymmetry between writer and reader. Yet Woolley rarely leaves them bare. She cushions them with modal verbs, conditional framing, or polite formulae. Declaratives also carry instructive or promissory force, as in *you shall boil it*, *this will keep all the year*, showing that the boundary between command and assurance is porous. Interrogatives, though scarce, appear in prefaces or paratexts, where they anticipate objections or create a semblance of dialogue. Modality adds a second layer of interpersonal work. Following Halliday's division between modalisation (probability, usuality) and modulation (obligation, inclination), one can trace how Woolley moves between categorical prescription (*must, shall*), advisory permission (*you may*), and epistemic hedging (*might, perhaps*). Predictive *will* is especially interesting: in her hands it becomes a promissory device, securing trust by assuring results. Polarity plays its part as well. Negatives such as *not, never, no more than* act as prohibitives, while conditional negatives ("if you do not stir it, it will spoil") project authority by anticipating potential mishaps.

Appraisal theory (Martin & White 2005) shifts attention to evaluative stance. Two subsystems matter most here. The Engagement system captures how Woolley admits or closes down alternative voices. She entertains possibility through markers like *may*, *perhaps*, or *it is said*, but she also proclaims certainty with boosters (*surely, certainly*) and assurances (*it will never fail*). At times she invokes external authority, "physicians say," handing epistemic responsibility to collective expertise. The Graduation system tracks intensity. She heightens it through *very good* or *exceedingly fine*, and lowers it with *a little, somewhat, about*. Focus expressions, "the best sort of sugar," "almost clear," either sharpen or blur categorical boundaries. Even Attitude, though less pervasive, surfaces in adjectives such as *proper* or *negligent*, which extend her role beyond cookery to that of moral guide.

Historical pragmatics reminds us that these are not neutral stylistic choices but historically embedded strategies (Jucker & Taavitsainen 2013). Vocatives (*Ladies, Gentlewomen*) and frequent second-person pronouns construct a community of female readers; occasional *we* draws author and audience into shared domestic labour. Politeness studies add another dimension. Formulae like *if you please*, permissive *you may*, and conditional hedges soften the force of directives, minimising imposition

(Brown & Levinson 1987; Culpeper 2011; Jucker 2020). Conversely, promissory assurances (*this will certainly cure*) act as positive politeness, securing solidarity by guaranteeing success. In other words, Woolley walks a careful line between directive authority and affiliative engagement, precisely the balancing act demanded of a woman asserting expertise in her time.

Taken together, these frameworks provide a layered toolkit. SFL anchors the structural analysis of mood, modality, and polarity. Appraisal illuminates stance and dialogic space, while historical pragmatics and politeness research situate these linguistic choices in cultural context. This integrated approach shows that imperatives, modals, or vocatives are not isolated quirks but components of a patterned interpersonal style, one that allowed Woolley to present herself as both knowledgeable instructor and sympathetic companion.

3. CORPUS AND METHODS

The analysis is based on two works by Hannah Woolley, both published in London:

– *The Queen-like Closet, or Rich Cabinet* (first published 1670; second edition 1672, which is the text used here, transcribed from the University of Barcelona's Fons Antic collection).
– *The Ladies Directory, in Choice Experiments & Curiosities of Preserving in Jellies, and Candying both Fruit and Flowers* (1672).

These two texts were chosen because they are consecutive works by the same author, appearing within the same decade yet aimed at somewhat different audiences. *The Queen-like Closet* is expansive, containing recipes for food, medicine, and household management, while *The Ladies Directory* is more specialized in confectionery and preserves. Together, they provide an ideal dataset for comparing Woolley's interpersonal strategies across registers and rhetorical contexts. Both works are examined in their entirety, including paratextual material (title pages, dedications, addresses to the reader, tables of contents), which often contains overt interpersonal positioning. To capture the full range of authorial voice, the analysis treats paratexts as distinct but complementary to the recipe and advice sections.

For analysis, the texts were segmented on two levels. At clause level, each finite clause was coded for mood (imperative, declarative, interrogative) and for the presence or absence of modals and stance adverbs. At discourse level, each recipe or advice entry, typically marked by its heading and sequence of steps, was treated as a bounded unit in which directive strategies, evaluative lexis, and assurance moves could be studied in context. Paratexts were analysed in the same way, though their rhetorical style differs from the instructional sections. This two-tier segmentation makes it possible to combine distributional counts with sensitivity to the discourse coherence of each text.

Annotation followed the categories established in the theoretical framework. Mood distinctions separated imperatives from declaratives (further classified as informational, prescriptive, or promissory) and interrogatives. Modality was divided into modulation (*must, shall, should, let*), and modalization (*can, could, may, might, predictive will*, stance adverbs such as *perhaps, surely*). Polarity was tracked through negatives (*not, never, by no means*) and conditional prohibitives ("if you do not X, Y will fail"). Engagement resources included evidentials (*I have tried; it is said*), attribution to authority (*as is usual; physicians say*), and hedging devices (*if you please; it may be*). Graduation markers were coded as boosters (*very, certainly, exceedingly*) or mitigators (*a little, somewhat, about*), and as sharpeners or softeners of category boundaries ("the best sort of sugar", "almost clear"). Address strategies included vocatives (*Ladies, Gentlewomen*) and personal pronouns (*I, we, you, ye*). Evaluation was captured through stance adjectives and adverbs (*good, excellent, proper, careless*). Finally, assurance moves, "this will keep all the year", "it will never fail," were identified as promissory constructions guaranteeing results. Ambiguous cases, such as *will* functioning either as an instruction or as a prediction, were resolved through close reading of surrounding context.

Frequencies were calculated in both raw numbers and normalised counts per 10,000 words, enabling comparison between texts of different length. Sub-register contrasts (recipes, paratexts, household and medical sections) were also tracked. Keyness analysis (log-likelihood) was applied to modal verbs and stance adverbs to identify items statistically salient in one text compared with the other. For selected contrasts, imperative versus modulated directives, for instance, chi-square tests and effect sizes (Cramér's V) were used to test significance. Quantitative trends, however, were never treated in isolation. Representative passages were chosen to illustrate how interpersonal resources worked *in situ*, whether softening a directive, bolstering authority, or appealing to collective knowledge. These qualitative readings give depth to the statistics, highlighting the dialogic and rhetorical labour performed by Woolley's language.

Although the study is primarily synchronic, it benefits from the near-contemporary nature of the two works. The brief interval between 1670 and 1672 makes it possible to trace subtle preferences in Woolley's stance, for example, whether the later *Ladies Directory* relies more heavily on *should* and *may*, or intensifies its promissory rhetoric through assurances. Such micro-shifts are interpreted in light of the cultural pressures on women writers and the competitive print marketplace of the Restoration. The following sections present results by linguistic category, before moving to a broader discussion of Woolley's authorial positioning.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section reports the distribution and interpretation of interpersonal markers in Woolley's *The Queen-like Closet* (1670) and *The Ladies Directory* (1672). Results are presented by category, mood and directive design, modality, address and person, polarity and conditionals, and stance adverbs with graduation, before moving

to a comparative synthesis. Counts are given in both raw numbers and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) to allow comparison across texts of different length.

4.1. Mood and directive design

Both works confirm the dominance of imperatives in recipe discourse. In the *Queen-like Closet* (1670), clause-initial imperatives are everywhere: *take* occurs 446 times, while *let*-constructions (*let it stand, let them be*) appear 239 times, or about 36.9 per 10,000 words (Table 1). Prohibitives supplement the directive repertoire, with *do not* (36 instances) and *never* (6 instances) marking procedural warnings. Modalised directives are also attested: *you must* (47 cases), *you may* (105), and more occasional *you shall* (2) and *you should* (1). Table 1 summarises the distribution of directive forms across the two texts.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF MOOD AND DIRECTIVE TYPES

Directive form	1670 *Queen-like Closet* (per 10k)	1672 *Ladies Directory* (per 10k)
Imperatives (*take*)	446 (-)	287 (-)
let-imperatives	239 (36.9)	134 (42.9)
Prohibitives (*do not*, *never*)	42 (6.5)	23 (7.3)
you must	47 (7.2)	18 (5.8)
you may	105 (16.2)	62 (19.9)
you shall	2 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
you should	1 (0.2)	2 (0.6)
you will	12 (1.8)	7 (2.2)

The *Ladies Directory* (1672) continues this imperative foundation, with *take* recorded 287 times and *let* 134 times (42.9 per 10,000 words). Prohibitives remain stable, though less numerous (*do not* 21; *never* 2). What shifts is the balance of modulated directives. Instances of *you must* fall sharply to 18, and *you shall* drops to 1. *You may* remains comparatively frequent (62 occurrences), keeping the advisory option in circulation. The decline of obligation markers from 1670 to 1672 suggests that Woolley was experimenting with a less categorical stance. In the earlier work she leans on the force of *must* and *shall*, while the later volume privileges softer options, offering permission (*you may*) or hedged advice. Imperatives still dominate, but the pattern points to a recalibration of directive force, away from compulsion and towards guidance.

Figure 1 illustrates these contrasts. The bar chart compares the normalised frequency of core modals across both texts. Modulated forms (*must, shall*) decline, while permissive *may* holds steady and predictive *will* remains high. Visually, the contrast underlines the textual shift. The *Ladies Directory* softens its prescriptive voice, adopting a more consultative and advisory tone without abandoning the imperative backbone of recipe writing.

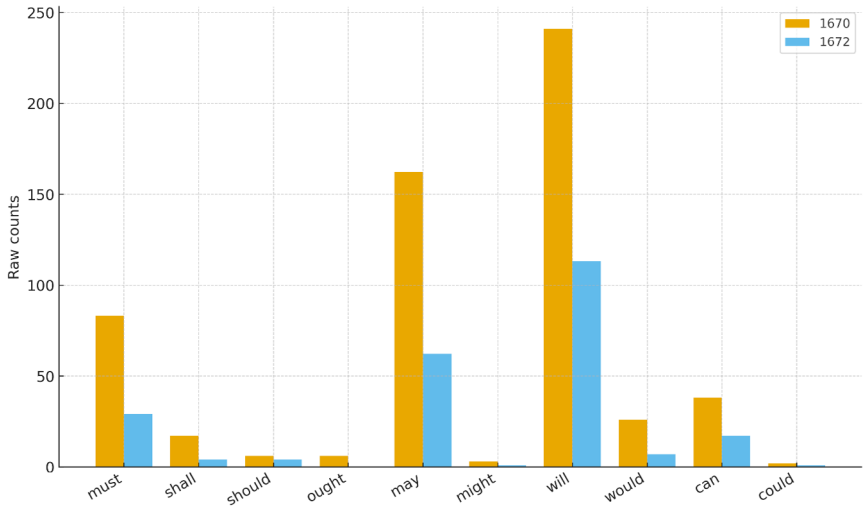

Figure 1. Modal profiles of Woolley's 1670 and 1672 texts (normalized frequency per 10,000 words).

This bar chart compares core modal verbs, showing a decline in strong deontic modals (must, shall) from 1670 to 1672, while the permissive *may* remains frequent and predictive *will* stays at a high level in both. The visual comparison confirms the trend described above: Woolley's later text uses fewer categorical obligation modals, therefore affiliating a more consultative tone that relies on suggestion and assurance rather than command.

4.2. Modality

Modal usage offers one of the clearest windows into Woolley's interpersonal style. Table 2 shows the distribution of the main forms across the two works. In the *Queen-like Closet* (1670), deontic markers are conspicuous: *must* appears 83 times (12.8 per 10,000 words), *shall* 17 times (2.6 per 10k), while *should* and *ought* occur six times each (0.9 per 10k). These items typically signal obligation or necessity, often where accuracy or safety is at stake. Alongside them, modalised and predictive forms are highly frequent: *may* registers 162 instances (25.0 per 10k), *might* 3, and *will* 241 (37.2 per 10k). The predictive *will* is especially salient, frequently carrying promissory or assurance value, "it will keep all the year," "this will certainly cure," phrases that guarantee the efficacy of her instructions and build reader trust.

In the *Ladies Directory* (1672) the overall profile is similar, but categorical obligation is notably reduced. *Must* drops to 29 occurrences (9.3 per 10k), *shall* to 4, and *should* to 4. *May* appears 62 times (19.9 per 10k), and *will* remains consistently high with 113 instances (36.2 per 10k). Here too, predictive *will* acts as a warranty, especially in recipes for preserving and candying where durability is essential ("it will

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF CORE MODAL VERBS		
Modal form	1670 *Queen-like Closet* (per 10k)	1672 *Ladies Directory* (per 10k)
must	83 (12.8)	29 (9.3)
shall	17 (2.6)	4 (1.3)
should	6 (0.9)	4 (1.3)
ought	6 (0.9)	-
may	162 (25.0)	62 (19.9)
might	3 (0.5)	-
will	241 (37.2)	113 (36.2)

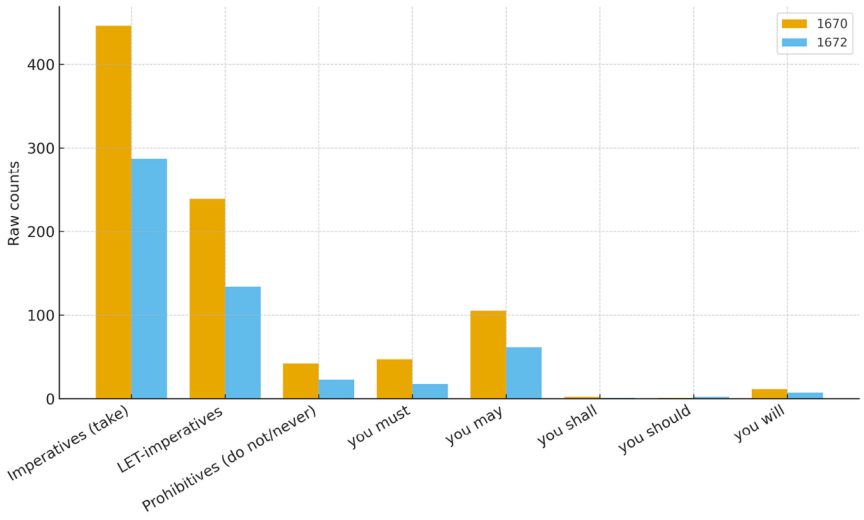

Figure 2. Distribution of directive types in 1670 and 1672 (absolute frequencies). Each bar is segmented into imperative forms (bottom, gold) versus modalized directives (top, orange).

keep," "this will last"). The decline in *must* and *shall* between the two works points to a deliberate softening of prescriptive force. Rather than pressing obligation, Woolley increasingly frames her expertise through assurances of outcome.

Across both texts, then, the data suggest that interpersonal weight in both works rests less on categorical obligation than on the interplay of permissive *may* and promissory *will*. The resulting voice is both authoritative and reassuring. Woolley issues guidance, but couples it with promises of success. Such calibration seems designed for her female readership, asserting control without sounding heavy-handed, and cultivating an approachable stance as a knowledgeable companion (Wall 2002; Soares 2023).

Figure 2 visualises directive types across the two texts. Each bar is divided into imperatives (bottom, gold) and modalised directives (top, orange). The pattern

confirms what the tables suggest: imperatives account for more than 80% of directives in both works, while modalised forms are fewer overall in 1672. The core profile remains firmly imperative-centred, but the reduction of *must* and *shall* in the later text underscores a shift away from categorical commands toward gentler, outcome-oriented guidance.

4.3. Address and person

The pronoun distribution shown in Table 3 reinforces just how central the addressee is in Woolley's instructive discourse. In the *Queen-like Closet* (1670), *you* appears 623 times (96.1 per 10,000 words) and *your* 770 times (118.7 per 10k). The *Ladies Directory* (1672) shows slightly higher proportional values: *you* occurs 317 times (101.6 per 10k) and *your* 412 times (132.1 per 10k). Across both works, then, the second person decisively establishes the reader as the grammatical and rhetorical agent of the text.

TABLE 3. PRONOUN USAGE

Pronoun	1670 Raw (per 10k)	1672 Raw (per 10k)
you	623 (96.1)	317 (101.6)
your	770 (118.7)	412 (132.1)
I	64 (9.9)	22 (7.0)
we	2 (0.3)	3 (1.0)

By contrast, Woolley largely backgrounds herself. The pronoun *I* appears only 64 times in 1670 (9.9 per 10k) and 22 times in 1672 (7.0 per 10k). Inclusive *we* is almost absent, with two occurrences in the earlier text and three in the later. When Woolley does use *I*, it tends to occur in paratexts or in evidential remarks, "I have tried this," which serve to bolster her ethos as a practitioner without disturbing the impersonal rhythm of the recipes. In effect, the addressee is consistently cast as the active performer of the domestic "drama," while Woolley herself remains a largely invisible prompter, stepping on stage only to authenticate a recipe through personal experience. This balance produces a striking asymmetry.

As Figure 3 shows, in 1670 reader-oriented pronouns (*you, your*) outnumber author-oriented pronouns (*I, we*) by roughly 21:1; in 1672 the ratio widens to about 29:1. Such figures highlight Woolley's deliberate strategy of foregrounding the reader and minimising the authorial self. This pronoun configuration is not accidental. It aligns with contemporary expectations that women writers should present themselves as modest, even while they claimed authority in print. Woolley frames the reader as agent and herself as a discreet guarantor, thereby positioning her instructive voice in an inclusive, "you"-centred mode that empowers readers while preserving the expected modesty of female authorship. (Jucker & Taavitsainen 2013).

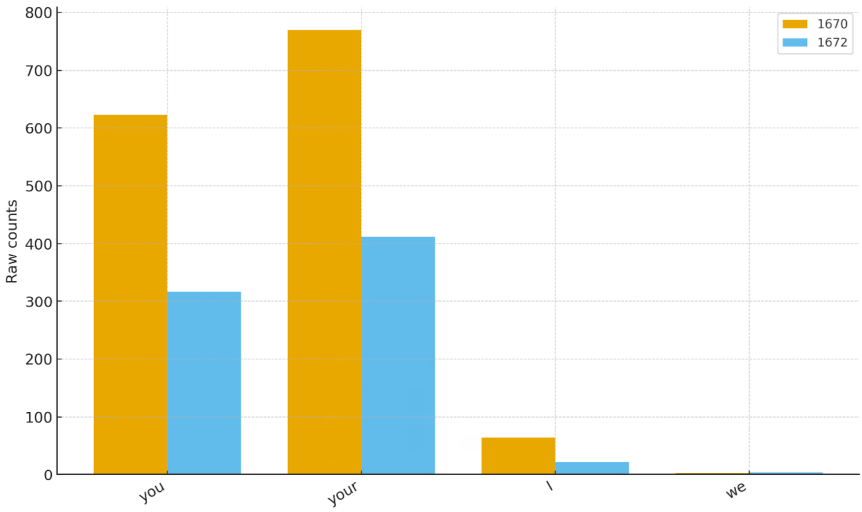

Figure 3. Reader-centered vs. author-centered pronoun usage.

4.4. Polarity, Conditionals, and Warnings

Negation and conditionals are among the most persistent resources in Woolley's manuals, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF NEGATIVES AND CONDITIONALS

Form	1670 *Queen-like Closet* (per 10k)	1672 *Ladies Directory* (per 10k)
not	152 (23.4)	74 (23.7)
never / *no*	occasional (—)	occasional (—)
if	119 (18.4)	62 (19.9)
when	414 (63.8)	201 (64.4)

In the *Queen-like Closet* (1670), *not* appears 152 times (23.4 per 10,000 words), with a handful of *never* and *no*. Conditionals are equally present: *if* occurs 119 times (18.4 per 10k) and *when* an impressive 414 times (63.8 per 10k). The *Ladies Directory* (1672) shows a strikingly similar profile: *not* 74 times (23.7 per 10k), *if* 62 (19.9 per 10k), and *when* 201 (64.4 per 10k). Each of these items pulls weight in different ways. Negatives act as warnings; "do not let it boil over" is a typical phrasing, shielding readers from missteps and at the same time signalling the author's foresight. Conditionals, by contrast, allow room for manoeuvre. "If it be not boiled enough, it will not keep" is less an instruction than a safety net, equipping the reader to judge results for herself. The heavy use of *when* reflects something different again: the time-bound logic of recipes, moving stage by stage, "When you see X, then do Y."

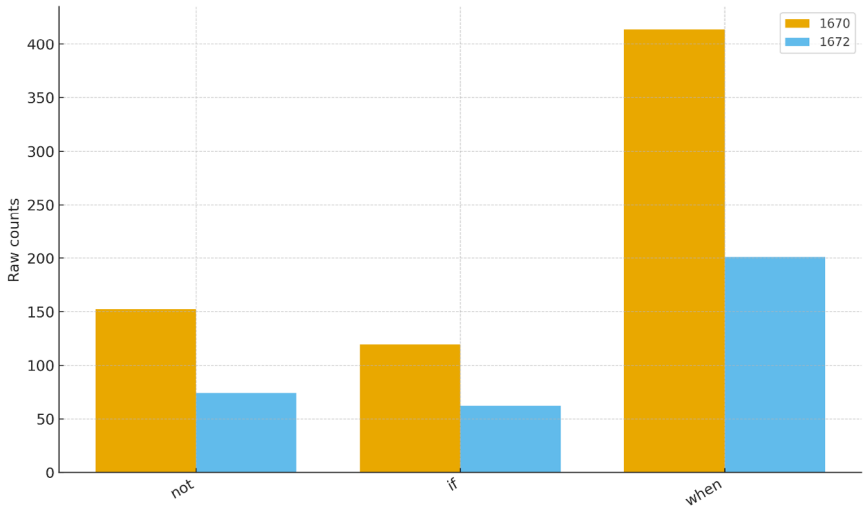

Figure 4. Frequency of negatives vs. conditionals in 1670 and 1672 (normalized per 10,000 words).

Figure 4 plots these patterns. What it shows is stability rather than change: both works register roughly 23-24 negatives per 10,000 words and more than 80 conditionals (*if* and *when*) per 10,000. Woolley's practice, then, is consistent. She devotes as much space to telling her readers what *not* to do, and how to avoid failure, as to spelling out the main procedures. Read this way, the interplay of negatives and conditionals is more than a technical feature. It projects an authorial stance steeped in care, as Woolley appears as someone who anticipates trouble, warns against it, and reassures her audience that pitfalls can be avoided. That protective voice fits neatly with cultural expectations of women as guardians of domestic safety, while also enhancing her credibility as an experienced guide.

4.5. Stance adverbs and graduation

Table 5 illustrates a striking contrast: explicit stance adverbs are rare in Woolley's manuals, yet graduation markers occur with great frequency. In the *Queen-like Closet* (1670), *very* appears 369 times (56.9 per 10,000 words) and *well* 320 times (49.3 per 10k). Mitigating forms are also prominent: *little* registers 582 tokens (89.7 per 10k), *about* 50 (7.7 per 10k), and *almost* 33 (5.1 per 10k). The *Ladies Directory* (1672) shows the same tendency. Here *very* occurs 183 times (58.6 per 10k), *well* 167 (53.5 per 10k), *little* 311 (99.6 per 10k), *about* 24 (7.7 per 10k), and *almost* 17 (5.4 per 10k). The raw proportions differ slightly, but the overall profile is stable across the two works.

TABLE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF STANCE ADVERBS AND GRADUATION MARKERS		
Form	1670 *Queen-like Closet* (per 10k)	1672 *Ladies Directory* (per 10k)
very	369 (56.9)	183 (58.6)
well	320 (49.3)	167 (53.5)
little	582 (89.7)	311 (99.6)
about	50 (7.7)	24 (7.7)
almost	33 (5.1)	17 (5.4)
Epistemic stance adverbs (*perhaps, surely*)	2 (0.3)	1 (0.3)

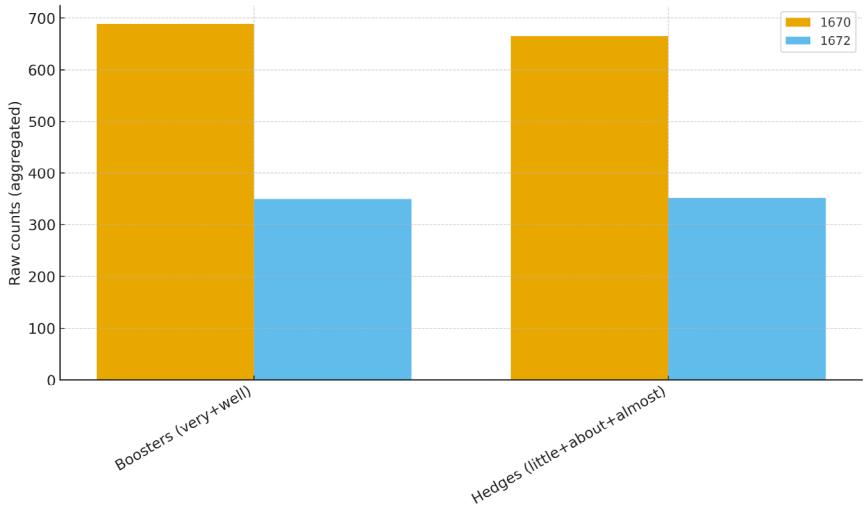

Figure 5. Use of boosters vs. hedges in Woolley's texts (normalized per 10,000 words).

Boosters such as *very* and *well* enhance quality and success, "a very fine jelly," "boil it well," infusing the prose with confidence and, at times, enthusiasm. By contrast, hedges like *a little*, *about*, or *almost* loosen the strictness of instruction. To ask for "a little sugar" or "about half a pint" acknowledges variability and leaves space for readerly judgement. These hedges do more than soften commands. They make the text feel practical, attentive to the contingencies of domestic work. Equally telling is what Woolley does not do. Explicit epistemic adverbs such as *perhaps* or *surely* are almost absent, two cases in 1670, one in 1672. Rather than verbalising uncertainty, Woolley relies on predictive futures ("it will keep," "this will last") or on conditional framing to manage risk. She prefers categorical instructions or contingency planning to hedged statements of probability.

Figure 5 compares the normalised frequency of boosters (*very* + *well*) with hedges (*little* + *about* + *almost*). Both texts show a near balance, roughly 105-112

instances per 10,000 words in each category. This equilibrium suggests a consistent rhetorical strategy. Woolley stresses excellence and precision through intensifiers, while also building tolerance into her discourse through mitigators. The result is a style that is prescriptive yet accommodating. This duality can be read as a "tolerance" strategy. Woolley insists that recipes be done properly, nothing in her discourse is slapdash, but she simultaneously acknowledges the unpredictable realities of the kitchen. In doing so, she models what Soares (2023) has described as an "epistemology of care" in women's domestic and medical writing. Authority is exercised firmly, yet flexibly, always with the well-being of the practitioner in view.

4.6. Comparative synthesis

Read side by side, the *Queen-like Closet* (1670) and the *Ladies Directory* (1672) bear a familiar fingerprint. The structure is the same. This means the recipes are controlled by imperatives, predictive *will* ensures the reader the outcome is safe, and negatives or conditionals serve as a safety net. Toss in the consistent interplay between *very fine* and *a little salt*, hedges supported by boosters, and there exists an interpersonal tone which had been resolved by 1670 and remained essentially intact two years later. And yet the later book sounds different by subtle but significant touches. The older book depends more frequently upon blunt obligation, and so *must* and *shall* come into play with enough emphasis to stamp the author as a strong authority. In the *Ladies Directory*, these diminish. Instead comes a heightened dependence upon *may*, or upon hedging terms such as *if you please* and *a little*. Permission and mitigation come into play more frequently, and the reader's presence comes through by the more frequent use of *you* and *your*. The tone is just as directive, but less dogmatic, more advisory.

Why is this softening? It could be that Woolley, with one successful book behind her, felt less need to insist. Or the shift may owe something to genre. Confectionery and preserves invite experiment, and readers would expect room for judgement. In either case the adjustment does not undo her core strategy. She continues to instruct with confidence but tempers that authority with reassurance and care. The thread running from 1670 to 1672 is clear enough, as Woolley commands, but always with an eye to protecting and encouraging her readers.

5. DISCUSSION

The foregoing analysis of interpersonal markers in Woolley's *The Queen-like Closet* (1670) and *The Ladies Directory* (1672) shows how she carefully balanced directive authority with affiliative and mitigating strategies. We have seen that imperatives and other directives position Woolley as a confident instructor, even as various softening techniques ensure that her voice does not become overly peremptory. In this section, we delve deeper into these patterns through close readings of exemplary passages, and we consider their broader implications for the interpersonal dynamics of seventeenth-century women's instructive writing.

5.1. Directives and the negotiation of authority

Imperatives dominate Woolley's prose, and they leave little doubt about who instructs and who follows. A recipe in the *The Ladies Directory* begins bluntly:

(1) *Take* a quart of cream and boil it with a blade of mace. (Woolley 1672, 174)

The verb *take* here functions as a command, establishing a hierarchy between author and reader. Yet the tone shifts in passages such as:

(2) *Let it stand* till it be reasonably cool, then beat it with a wooden Slice till it be very white (Woolley 1670, 62)

The form *let* softens the directive. The instruction is still clear, but the framing turns a command into an allowance, as if Woolley were permitting the process to unfold. This alternation between direct imperatives and *let*-forms marks her sensitivity to the risks of sounding too peremptory. In a culture where female assertiveness in print could be censured, Woolley's oscillation between firmness and deference kept her authority intact while signalling modesty (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987; Culpeper 2011).

The *Ladies Directory* two years later reveals a further shift. Instead of *do X*, Woolley often prefers modalised forms:

(3) *You may if you please* put the juice of a Limon into it when it is beating. (Woolley 1670, 126)

Here *may* and *if you please* present the act not as compulsion but as option. The reader is cast as agent, free to decide. This is more than politeness, as it reconfigures the author-reader relationship into something closer to advice than command. In this respect the 1672 text edges towards an advisory register, reflecting both market demands and gendered expectations of tact. The result is a voice that can still command when precision is vital, but that also knows when to retreat, granting the reader autonomy.

5.2. Modality and the discourse of care

Obligation and assurance often sit side by side in Woolley's discourse, producing what might be described as a grammar of care. A recipe in the *Queen-like Closet* makes the point vividly:

(4) *You must* first boil them with their weight in Sugar and some Water*, or else they will not* be sweet enough. (Woolley 1670, 103)

The obligation in *you must* is sharpened by the prediction *or else they will not*. The effect is not simply to command but to advise since the reader is told what

must be done, and why it matters. The necessity of stirring is justified as a safeguard. In SFL terms, modulation (*must*) joins modalisation (*will*), creating a double force, authority coupled with concern for the reader's success.

Woolley also deploys predictive futures as promissory devices, casting herself as guarantor of results.

(5) Set them in a cool place, *it will keep* a Month. (Woolley 1670, 119)

The phrase *it will keep* is not a neutral forecast but a guarantee. The text assures the reader that the recipe's efficacy is long-lasting, provided the instructions are followed. Similar examples abound in the *Ladies Directory*:

(6) *It will make* your skin fair if you wash therewith. (Woolley 1670, 12)

Here the repeated *will* builds confidence, as the skin will be fair, and the method of washing it with the preparation described earlier in the recipe will not fail. Readers had to trust the author's word in cases like this. Promissory futures became a rhetorical currency for securing that trust (see Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu 2002 on promises in recipe discourse). All these patterns show Woolley's skill in modulating authority. She does not simply issue orders; she provides guarantees and rationales. This blend of firmness and reassurance reflects current cultural expectations of women as household caretakers. Her instructions are binding, but they are framed as protections. In this way Woolley's modal choices project both competence and care, reinforcing her authority while also aligning it with a feminine ethos of nurture.

5.3. Pronouns, solidarity, and reader alignment

Pronoun choice offers another window onto Woolley's stance. As the counts already showed, the second person (*you, your*) far outweighs any reference to the self. The effect is immediately felt in passages such as:

(7) when *you see* the Sugar harden on the sides of the Skillet, and on the Spoon, take them off the Fire, and keep them with stirring in the warm Skillet, till *you see* them part. (Woolley 1670, 137)

The repetition of *you* creates a sense of presence, almost as if the writer were leaning over the reader's shoulder. The act of seeing, removing, and then evaluating is all mapped onto the reader's agency. The instructions feel like a dialogue in which the practitioner's perception matters: "when you see... till you see."

By contrast, Woolley's *I* is scarce and carefully deployed. It surfaces mainly in prefaces or notes where she vouches for her experience:

(8) The Books which before this *I* have caused to be put in Print, found so good an acceptance, as that *I* shall still go on in imparting what *I* yet have so fast as *I* can. (Woolley 1672, 341)

This kind of statements bolsters credibility without intruding on the impersonality of the recipe. The author steps briefly into view to certify a method, then retreats again. In the recipes themselves, the "I" is nearly invisible, an absence that conforms to expectations of feminine modesty in print. At the same time, those rare intrusions matter, as they remind readers that Woolley writes from lived practice, not borrowed authority. The inclusive *we* is rarer; only two cases reported in these books. The effect of minimizing the presence of the first-person pronouns is a discourse that empowers readers while allowing the author to remain modest yet credible. In this way Woolley manages to teach authoritatively without appearing self-assertive, a balance that women writers of her time had to strike with particular care (Jucker & Taavitsainen 2013).

5.4. Risk, contingency, and interpersonal safeguards

Woolley's prose is laced with warnings. Negatives and conditional clauses function not just as grammatical devices but as interpersonal safeguards, anticipating the things that might go wrong. In the *Queen-like Closet* she cautions:

(9) If you add the Juice of a Limon to the white Wine, it *will* be the better. (Woolley 1670, 66)

The structure is simple enough: *if* + *will*. Yet its force lies in the way it blends instruction with foresight. The reader is not only told what to do, but also what to avoid. The risk is spelled out explicitly, and the consequence, spoiling the entire dish, is made vivid.

The later manual offers similar guidance:

(10) for if you turn them too soon, it will hinder the rising. (Woolley 1672, 232)

Again, the recipe voice is less about strict prohibition ("do not…") and more about conditional consequence. The logic is clear; if a step is neglected, failure follows. This form of warning keeps the tone impersonal and practical, while still placing responsibility on the reader. These constructions serve several interpersonal purposes. First, they heighten vigilance by signalling where things can go wrong. Second, they project expertise. A competent instructor knows not only the correct procedure but also the common pitfalls. In effect, Woolley reassures her readers that she has already thought through the hazards so that they do not have to learn by error.

There is also a politeness dimension. A conditional such as "if you turn them too soon…" sounds less scolding than a bald "do not turn them too soon." The warning is framed as a logical outcome rather than a personal rebuke. In this way even Woolley's prohibitions maintain a cooperative tenor. The net result is a discourse of protection. Readers are not left to stumble in the dark; the text pre-empts their mistakes and shields them from failure. This stance aligns with the broader cultural expectation of women as caretakers, but Woolley turns it to her advantage.

She emerges as the competent guide who has anticipated difficulties and provides a safety net through language.

5.5. Woolley's place in the instructive tradition

The patterns we have traced put Woolley at a hinge point in the history of women's instructive prose. Her style blends firmness (imperatives, strong modals, categorical assurances) with gestures of affiliation (permission, hedging, direct address). The mixture speaks to the two pressures she faced. On the one side, she had to turn domestic know-how into a commodity for a paying readership; on the other, she had to keep her authority palatable within a culture that expected women to temper expertise with modesty and care. Writers who came later, namely, Eliza Acton, Mrs Beeton, Elizabeth Haslehurst, adopted the same dual stance, but in a different publishing landscape. By the mid-nineteenth century there were established houses and conventions that could carry a woman's claim to authority. Woolley had no such scaffolding. Every ounce of credibility had to be won in the texture of her prose, through the fine calibration of directives, mitigations, and reassurances.

For that reason, she can be read as a transitional figure. Earlier recipe culture was plentiful, but most of it circulated anonymously or in manuscript. Woolley puts her name to her work and speaks directly to her "Ladies and Gentlewomen" (Woolley, 1670, A4v). In doing so she crafts a persona that is doubled: the skilled expert and the sympathetic neighbour. She knows the procedures, but she delivers them in a voice that invites solidarity and trust. The implications reach further than the kitchen. Through keeping *you* in the foreground and pushing *I* to the margins, she casts her readers as capable agents. The effect is to validate women's domestic labour as skilled practice, work that demands judgement and deserves recognition. Tasks that might otherwise have been dismissed as trivial appear here as knowledge to be recorded, shared, and respected. This balancing act, i.e., commanding without arrogance, guiding without condescension, proved influential. It offered later women writers of household texts a template. Authority could be exercised through care, and modesty, far from a handicap, could be a rhetorical resource. Woolley's place in the tradition is therefore both foundational and exemplary. She shows how interpersonal language could secure credibility for a woman in print, and in doing so she cleared a path for those who followed.

6. CONCLUSION

What emerges from this study is a close look at the interpersonal machinery of Woolley's prose in *The Queen-like Closet* (1670) and *The Ladies Directory* (1672). The survey of mood, modality, pronouns, polarity, conditionals, stance adverbs, and graduation shows a writer who does not simply list recipes but constantly calibrates her voice. The imperative is everywhere, yet it rarely stands alone as obligation is softened with permission or hedged with *if you please*. Stark rules are backed by

promises. That mix of command and reassurance is the heart of her style. Across the two books there is continuity but also a small shift in emphasis. In 1670 the force of *must* and *shall* is more audible, and the tone at times feels brisk, almost brusque. Two years later, those markers thin out. Instead, *may* and conditional hedges rise in frequency. It seems Woolley had moved toward an advisory voice, which is still firm, but less categorical. The predictive *will* remains constant, working as a guarantee of success and anchoring the trust between writer and reader.

Pronouns tell a similar story. *You* and *your* dominate both texts, positioning the reader as the one who stirs, boils, and tastes. The authorial *I* slips in only occasionally, often in a preface or in claims of proof. The effect is deliberate as Woolley effaces herself in the body of the recipes, yet she still signals experience where credibility is at stake. Modesty and authority run side by side. Her risk management strategies are equally revealing. Warnings like "do not let it boil over" or "if it be not boiled enough, it will not keep" are more than technical notes. They frame Woolley as the caretaker who has anticipated mishaps, e.g., burnt cream, spoiled preserves, before they happen. Woolley's instructions are careful, flexible, protective.

If we seen against the background of seventeenth-century print, Woolley's achievement is striking. She inherits a manuscript tradition of anonymous household recipes but moves it into the commercial press under her own name. Later writers, Acton, Beeton, Haslehurst, would operate in a market that offered women stronger institutional backing. Woolley had none of that. She had to build her ethos within the sentences themselves, balancing assertion with deference, clarity with tact. The value of this study lies in making that balancing act visible through a corpus-based functional analysis. The numbers and examples together show that interpersonal markers are not surface ornaments but the very means by which Woolley fashioned herself as both expert and companion. They also give us a baseline for following the instructive genre forward, i.e., how women's voices in print shifted from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, how care and command were recombined in different proportions. Woolley's manuals remind us that recipes are rhetorical artefacts. They teach, but they also negotiate authority, build solidarity, and they quietly assert that women's domestic knowledge was skilled, valuable, and worthy of the printed page.

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