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Comparing Patterns of Mood and Modality in a Recipe and a Demonstration

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Introduction

While Systemic Functional Linguistics recognizes that language is concerned with expressing meanings about the real world to convey content or experiential meanings, it also recognizes that language enables us to simultaneously interact with people. Language encodes in clauses and throughout the whole text certain meanings to do our social relationships. It allows us to take on roles and social identities, position ourselves or our audience, and express our personal attitudes or judgements and evaluation of things. In doing this we are involved in making interpersonal meanings.

These interpersonal meanings are made not just in highly interactive dialogic modes of discourse such as conversations, where maintaining and negotiating social relationships is key, but also in transactional monologues like the two procedural texts which will be examined below. The first text was created for the purpose of instructing with the goal of producing action (by the reader) in some potential future time; whereas the second text is a demonstration which was created with the purpose of accompanying and elaborating an action in the here-and-now (Thompson 2004: 133).

The data

Since the 1990s, cooking programs on television have really proliferated and the people who have presented them, among them Delia Smith, Jamie Oliver, Nigella Lawson and Gordon Ramsey, have developed into well-known personalities. Nonetheless, these shows have been around for much longer. Julia Child, who could be considered the original ‘celebrity chef’, presented a popular television programs on French cooking in the early 1960s. Popular chef personalities now have ‘empires’ consisting of cooking shows, book deals, product lines, online sites and even their own self-titled magazines.

The following study is a contrastive text analysis of a written recipe and it’s

spoken companion, both by the same author. The producer of both texts is the celebrity chef, Nigella Lawson, who happens to be the daughter of Nigel Lawson who was the Treasurer in Margaret Thatcher's government in the 1980s. She has been particularly popular for her distinctive style that has been referred to as "Gastro Porn".

Discussion

As Martin and Rose (2008: 182) point out, "Procedures are pedagogic texts in that they teach the reader how to perform a specialized sequence of activities in relation to certain objects and locations."

Procedural instructional texts, such as written recipes, impose constraints on the speaker or writer. In the written mode they are highly conventionalized. Halliday (Halliday and Hasan, 1985) refers to this as a more closed or restricted register. Written instructions tend to allow only limited room for individual creativity in making meanings. Nevertheless, within these texts there are examples of interpersonal meaning, even though meanings about who the participants are, how they are constructed, their style, and how relations between participants are constructed, are to a large extent pre-scripted (Fairclough 1995: 14).

Text 1, which is a written recipe text (see Appendix), is typically monologic in nature; there is no real-time interaction between the reader and writer. In this text the author-teacher who possesses more expertise directs what the novice-learner should do at every step in relation to "explicitly named objects and locations" (Martin and Rose 2008: 182).

Mood is the component of grammar which provides the basis of meaning exchange and allows interaction or negotiation to take place between the participants.

The imperative clause or mood is generally thought to be the syntactic category that typically realizes a directive. It is the most congruent realization of the speech function of directive (cf Tsui 1994). As Table 1 Text 1 shows, 62% of the clauses in the written recipe are imperative clauses.

These imperatives construe the subjective implicit modulation of obligation that in turn conveys that the thing that needs to be done, is a necessity. In the use of the imperative, the writer expresses the requirement that the task be performed in a certain way to achieve the all-important goal. The writer is in a position where they have greater power as a result of the role being constructed between an instructor who has expertise and greater knowledge in the field of cooking and the novice lacking in knowledge and expertise. This fact is reflected in the high percentage of imperative clauses throughout the text.

In addition, as is the convention of written instructions, the writer of Text 1 is not identified throughout the text (although she is clearly identified as being the author of the cook book), while the addressee is referred to by the use of the implicit generalized second person pronoun ‘you.’ If on the other hand the generalized second person pronoun was used explicitly most of the time, then the reader may feel as though they are being addressed directly. However, the use of the implicit ‘you’ underscores the point that a recipe is more task focused rather than about developing solidarity between the participants.

So in terms of power, Text 1 reveals an unequal relationship in terms of capacity and knowledge and casts the participants in the role of expert-helper and novice-beneficiary with the use of the imperative expressing this asymmetrical relationship.

Table 1. Mood

	<i>Full declarative</i>		<i>Elliptical declarative</i>		<i>Imperative</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Total</i>
	independent	dependent	independent	dependent		Polar		
<i>Text 1. Written recipe</i>	5 (17.2%)	4 (13.8%)	1 (3.44%)	1 (3.44%)	18 (62%)			29
<i>Text 2. Spoken demonstration</i>	16 (51.6%)	2 (6.5%)	3 (9.6%)		7 (22.6%)	1 (3.2%)	2 (6.5%)	31

The relationship between the participants that is being constructed is one of difference in regards to knowledge. In this context, the cook instructor and the novice instructee share the same aim; in this case, to ensure the successful preparation of the recipe. Once again it can be seen that the activity is focused on the completion of this task, rather than on the relationship between the participants. Text 1, with its high incidence of imperatives, is therefore a prototypical written recipe.

Text 2 is a spoken demonstration which accompanies an activity. The person demonstrating can continually adjust to respond to the changing conditions and does not need to explicitly name all the objects, locations and processes (see Martin and Rose 2008: 183). Instead they can refer to what is going on in the present.

In Text 1, Nigella chooses to use the imperative clause, for example:

10. Mix well to form a smooth batter.

This happens to be the most congruent mood available in order to demand a service. It expresses its meaning clearly and concisely, avoiding unnecessary elaboration which could get in the way of achieving the goal.

In Text 2, the filmed demonstration of a recipe, there are just 22.6% clauses in the

imperative mood while over 60% are declaratives. Unlike written instructions, demonstrations take place in a particular context at a specified time and place with a particular audience in mind. Since directives, in the form of imperatives, impose a demand of behavior and challenge the addressee’s autonomy by assuming their readiness to comply, the use of imperative clauses especially is inherently face-threatening. Nigella Lawson could be perceived as ordering the viewers around which is something people like her don’t do to an audience of strangers (Pinker 2007: 382).

Nigella, in the grammatical choices she makes throughout this demonstration, avoids alienating her audience by representing herself as having more skill at cooking. Through using the bare imperative, she could be judged as being proud and self-satisfied about her achievements and abilities. At the same time, by using the bare imperative she could also be interpreted as positioning her audience to feel as if they were below-standard and lacking technical expertise. Instead, she is careful not to make her audience feel ignorant, or give the impression that she feels entitled to boss them around, so she uses modulated declarative clauses, such as in: 22. *I would use* a bit of vegetable oil

As Nigella has to get on with the business of demonstrating, her solution is to make amends by using ellipses – omitting the action verb, so it is not clear to the audience whether she intended to use the direct speech act of a bare imperative or an indirect speech act of a declarative clause. Below are some examples of this in the first column which are followed by their direct forms in the second column.

What is said (Indirect form):	What is meant (Direct form):
2. A 125mls of milk	Measure a 124mls of milk.
5. And two eggs	Take two eggs.
6. and the eggs beaten separately	Beat the eggs separately.

In addition, as a TV chef, Nigella has to position herself as a friend to an audience who are essentially strangers. She employs a number of strategies to do this, as well as to lessen the face-threatening act of showing and telling people how to make something.

- She simulates a degree of closeness by pretending to want what the hearer wants for herself:
 - 16. And it *actually* makes you feel that you are eating *very healthily*.
- She makes presumptions about what a person might need and feel like:

- 10. You don't need to be *too* energetic
- 11. so it is quite good for early in the morning.
- 31. Don't put too much syrup on them.
- She simulates solidarity by joking:
 - 7. But a small child can do this for you
 - 13. A little child labour ensues.
- She hedges her opinions:
 - 12. ...*about* a teaspoon of baking powder
 - 21. So just pour these frothy whites into the yolk and flour and *all that ..*
 - 25. And after *about* two minutes
 - 27. And give them another half a minute *or so*.
- She talks about topics people would be in agreement with:
 - 14. The thing about fruit is that it seems to highlight the freshness of the taste.
- She minimizes the imposition:
 - 7. But a *small* child *can* do this for you.
 - 15. And it *could* be any fruit.
 - 21. so *just* pour ...
 - 24. And it is *just* a question of dolloping out spoonfuls at regular intervals.
 - 29. And that's *it*.
- She expresses pessimism:
 - 10. You don't need to be too energetic.
- She masks who is responsible for doing the action and distances her audience from the action by using the passive voice:
 - 6. And the eggs (NEED TO BE) beaten separately

Nigella avoids direct speech acts that realize the function of a command. In the few occasions when she does use the imperative it is no surprise that Nigella lessens the imposition by using mood adjuncts like 'just'. For example:

21. So, *just* pour these frothy whites into the yolk and flour and all that – the ricotta base.

26. *Just* flip them over

When she does use the bare imperative it is for an action that would not exact a high toll on her listeners:

9. Stir it together.

Furthermore, the imposition of this action has been lessened by the fact that the previous action was characterized as something that even a small child could do for you (Clause 7).

Imperatives which generally don't contain a Finite (unless to signal negative

polarity – e.g. ‘*Don’t go*’; or used for emphasis – e.g. ‘*Do hurry up*’) are presented as not open to negotiation – there is no choice being offered. In avoiding the use of imperatives in Text 2, Nigella allows for modality to enter the text through using declarative clauses. Modality as Thompson (2004: 66) points out is the space between ‘yes’ and ‘no’. In Text 2, Nigella avoids being construed as overly authoritative, and so is able to construct a more cooperative relationship.

Table 2. Modality and Polarity

	Text 1. Written recipe	Text 2. Spoken demonstration
<i>Modalization (information) ‘Pms’/’Fms’</i>	1	1
<i>Modulation (goods or services) ‘Pml’/’Fml’</i>	4	5
<i>Negation</i>		2
<i>Percentage of modality and polarity in text</i>	20.83%	29.62%
<i>Ranking clauses</i>	24	27

Finally, Table 3 below shows the types of Adjuncts used in both texts. Text 1 contains only Circumstantial Adjuncts which contribute to the experiential meaning of the clause and give information like when, or how or where; and Conjunctive Adjuncts which function to organize the text into a sequence. This confirms the point that Martin and Rose (2008: 182) make that in written recipes the writer needs to provide explicit detail about time and duration and location and to put the processes into a specific sequence. Where the two texts differ is in the number of Mood Adjuncts in Text 2. These have an interpersonal function. Mood Adjuncts like *actually* (in 16); and *just* (in 21, 24 and 26) function as comments and hedges, once again making Nigella appear less dominating and authoritative.

Table 3. Types of Adjuncts

	Text 1. Written recipe	Text 3. Spoken demonstration
<i>Circumstantial</i>	24	11
<i>Mood</i>	0	7
<i>Polarity</i>	0	2
<i>Conjunctive</i>	15	18
<i>Total Adjuncts</i>	39	38
<i>Ranking clauses</i>	24	27

Conclusion

While Text 1 retains all the characteristics of written instructional texts which position the writer as expert and the reader as novice, Text 2, the spoken demonstration of the same recipe, allows Nigella more leeway to make various interpersonal meanings. In Text 2, Nigella constructs herself and her audience as in a kind of fictitious solidarity with one another. While developing these kinds of relationships may not be a part of many cultures, it is a feature within English speaking cultures. People in cultures such as England and Australia, value egalitarianism in social relationships and attempt to minimize social distance in their encounters. In this short analysis of mass-crafted discourse it is possible to see how the grammar resources of Mood and modality which the ‘Celebrity Chef’ has used, go towards developing a more personalized relationship with her audience.

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Appendix

Key:

S=Subject, F=Finite, Fn=negative, Fms=modalized, Fml=modulated

P=Predicator, Pml=modulated Predicator, Pms=modalized Predicator, F/P-fused Finite and Predicator

C=Complement, Ca=attributive Complement

A=Adjunct, Ac=circumstantial, Am=mood, Ap=polarity, Ao=comment, Aj=conjunctive, At=continuity

Mn=minor clause

Mood element of ranking (non-embedded) clauses is shown in bold

CAPITAL LETTERS = recovered elliptical clauses

Text 1. Homemade instant pancake mix with blueberry syrup (237 words)

Nigella Lawson from *Nigella Express*

Makes 15. Preparation time less than 30 mins. Cooking time 10 to 30 mins.

(Ingredients)

Method

1. For the dry pancake mix, (Ac) place (P) all the dry ingredients (C) into a bowl (Ac) 2. and (Aj) mix (P) well (Ca). 3. Transfer (P) to an airtight container (Ac), 4. seal (P) 5. and (Aj) store (P) || until needed. (Ac) 6. [[To make (P) the pancakes (C),] add (P) the appropriate quantity of egg, milk and melted butter per 150g/5¼oz of the dry mixture (C) 7. **a filled American cup measure (S) will (Fml)** give (P) you (C) the requisite amount per batch (C), 8. so (Aj) **you (S) may (Fms)** like to use (P) one (C) 9. and dispense (P) with any weighing (Ac).

10. Mix (P) well (Ca) to form (P) a smooth batter. (C) 11. Heat (P) a flat griddle or non-stick frying pan (C) [[without adding (P) oil.]] (Ac) 12. Spoon (P) drops of 1½-2 tablespoons of the batter (C) onto the hot griddle (Ac) 13. and when (Aj) **bubbles (S) appear** (F/P) on the surface of the little pancakes (Ac), flip (P) them (C) over (Ac) 14. and (Aj) cook (P) until golden-brown on both sides (Ac). 15. **It (S) should** (Fml) take (P) about a minute per side (Ac).16. Meanwhile (Aj), for the blueberry syrup (Ac), place (P) the maple syrup and blueberries (C) into a pan (Ac) 17. and (Aj) bring (P) to the boil (Ac). 18. Reduce (P) the heat (C) 19. and (Aj) simmer (P) for 2-3 minutes (Ac) ,|| until (Aj) **the blueberries (S) have** (F) broken (P) down (Ac) slightly (Ac). 20. [[To serve (P)]], pour (P) the blueberry syrup (C) into a jug (Ac) 21. and (Aj) take (P) to the breakfast table with the pancakes (Ac). 22. If (Aj) **you (S) have (F)** any of the syrup (C) left (P) over (Ac),|| **you (S) will** (Fml) notice (P) [[that it (S) sets (F/P) into a kind of glossy jam (Ac).]] 23. **This (S) will (Fml)** keep (P) for a few days (Ac) [[decanted (P) into a jar (Ac) || and (Aj) put (P) in the fridge (Ac),]] 24. and (Aj) **(IT (S)) is (F)** glorious (Ca) [[dolloped (P) into yoghurt (Ac) || or (Aj) spread (P) on bread. (Ac)]]

(Retrieved June 2016 from HYPERLINK "<http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/>")
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/>)

Text 2. Nigella Lawson Pancakes Video (1:35min; 232 words)

1. Two hundred and fifty gram tub of ricotta (S) is (F) [what you need] (C) [[to start off.]] 2. and (Aj) **(YOU (S) NEED** [F/P]) a hundred and twenty five milliliters of milk (C). **3. I (S) always** (Am) **use** (F/P) semi-skimmed (C). **4. It (S)'s** (F) easy to measure (Ca) just (Am) by half filling the ricotta tub (Ac). 5. And (Aj) **(YOU (S) NEED** [F/P]) two eggs (C) [[which need (Fml) to be separated]] 6. and (Aj) **the eggs (S) (NEED** [Fml/P] **TO BE**) beaten (P) separately (Ac). 7. But (Aj) **a small child (S) can** (Fms) **do** (P) this (C) for you (Ac), 8. so (Aj) **that (S)'s** (F) OK (Ca). 9. **Stir** (P) it (C) together (Ac). 10. **You (S) don't** (Fn) **need** (Pml) to be (P) too energetic (Ca), 11. so (Aj) **it (S) is** (F) quite (Am) good (Ca) for early in the morning (Ac). 12. (ADD [P]) One hundred grams of plain flour, about a teaspoon of baking powder (C) 13. and (Aj) **a little child labour (S) ensues.** (F/P) 14. **The thing about the fruit (S) is** (F) [[that it seems to highlight the freshness of the taste.]] (C)15.<<and (Aj) **it (S) could** (Fml) be (P) any fruit, (C)>> 16. And (Aj) **(IT (S)) actually** (Am) **(laughs) makes** (F/P) you (C) feel (P) [[that **you are eating** very healthily.]] 17. Mummy! 18. Yes? 19. Mummy **is (F) this (S)** enough (Ac)? 20. **Let's (S) see.** (P) 21. So (Aj), just (Am) **pour** (P) these frothy whites (C) into

the yolk and flour and all that – the ricotta base. (Ac) 22. And (Aj) when (Aj) **you** (S) **are** (F) cooking (P) them (C) <<if (Aj) **you** (S) **are** (F) using (P) an ordinary frying pan>>(C) **I** (S) **would** (Fml) use (P) a bit of vegetable oil, (C) 23. but (Aj) **this** (S) **is** (F) a non-stick griddle, (C) 24. and (Aj) **it** (S) **is** (F) just (Am) a question of [[dolloping out spoonfuls at regular intervals]] (C) 25. and (Aj) after about two minutes (Ac) **they** (S) **will** (Fml) be (P) lovely and golden brown. (Ca) 26. Just (Am) flip (P) them (C) over (Ac) 27. and (Aj) give (P) them (C) another half a minute or so (Ac) 29. and (Aj) **that** (S)'s (F) it. 31. Don't (Fn) put (P) too much syrup (C) on them. (Ac)

(Retrieved September 2016 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-8yHZS4ZC4>)

Abstract

In this paper I will outline the findings of an analysis of two texts which used the tools of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Both texts were concerned with directing us in how to act in the world. These two procedures – one a spoken demonstration and the other a written instruction of the same recipe – are by a well-known television chef. I explored interpersonal meanings and how they are realized through Mood choice and how the selection of a particular patterns of Mood and modality can all lead to the construction of a certain relationship between the producer and receiver of the text. The analysis of the texts shows distinctive patterns of Mood and modality. The questions addressed are why these particular patterns of Mood and modality occur and how contextual factors, such as the kinds of meanings that we want to convey regarding our social roles and identities, impact on the grammatical realizations. In analyzing the results of the study I have drawn on Norman Fairclough's (2001: 52) concept of "synthetic personalization" which is where language is used in a specific way to create an appearance of direct concern and contact with the individual listener in mass-crafted discourse phenomena.