

# Culinary Recipes as a Textual Genre: An Analysis of Their Structure and Procedural Instructions

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## Abstract

Culinary recipes have only recently been studied as a distinct textual genre (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001; Garzone, 2017). Recognisable by their structured format (Baker, 2006), they have bipartite structures and occupy a unique linguistic space that cannot be fully integrated into General English text types (Norrick, 1983). Their language is highly typified and reflects the effects of digital transformation. The text of a recipe may be selected from cookery books or online, and its choice is based on the author’s perceived reliability adopting an accurate linguistic code, literary genre conventions, and specialised indices. The textual interpretation of a recipe involves a mental reconstruction of the process of preparing edible products, from the inference of its presupposed truthfulness to the sense of readiness required to carry it out practically. Food recipes are therefore analysed in this paper as organised models of texts (Enkvist, 1981). The study examines a mini-corpus of recipes from Jamie Oliver’s cookbook, *Jamie’s Great Britain: Over 130 Reasons to Love Our Food* (2011), and his popular website, considering two research questions: 1) How do recipes function as structured models in their rhetorical patterns to facilitate the reader’s understanding and execution of the instructions? 2) How does the verb “put” convey procedural instructions?

**Keywords:** culinary recipe, bipartite structure, locative adverbials, infosphere, mimetic isomorphism

## 1. Introduction: The Digitalisation of Culinary Recipes in the Promotion of Food Cultures

A culinary recipe serves to prepare an edible product: it consists of instructions outlining ingredients and procedures followed to render it consistent and reproducible. Recipes often include important details concerning cooking time, technique, and even serving suggestions. They may vary from simple or everyday meals to complex and sophisticated gourmet. Over time, recipes have represented the suitable practical and cultural tools that reflect tradition and innovation, nourishing societal preferences and trends. Accordingly, since the 1980s, in line with the promotion of food cultures that rapidly evolved with the advent of the World Wide Web, the traditional printed cooking magazines and cookery books, or broadsheets and tabloids about food sections, have gradually turned into hypermedia as superseded by channels of food communication, information, and entertainment. Broadcasting, social networking sites, *blogs*, *wikis*, and *podcasts* now constitute the chief sources of culinary inspiration. In this respect, the Internet reproduces metaphorical environments shaped by digital technologies that epitomise social and cultural spaces, as places where communication is shared through these means, rather than physically, namely “within an infosphere that is neither entirely virtual nor only physical” (Floridi, 2014, p. 59).

The profound impact the introduction of information and communication technology has had on human identity and societal reality is thoroughly conveyed in Floridi’s (2014) principle, embodying two central notions, the “infosphere” and the “social self.” These notions provide a framework for understanding how digital technologies have transformed human lives and reshaped their sense of self.

The infosphere (Floridi, 2014, pp. 40–44) denotes the informational environment that encompasses all forms of information, including digital, analogue, and biological data. It is defined as a global, interconnected ecosystem where information is forged, processed, stored, and shared. Three facets appear to epitomise this concept: 1) the ubiquity extending from digital spaces to all environments of the information flow, including the physical and biological systems (2014, p. 40); 2) the interconnectedness resulting from the seamless integration of the online and offline realms, blurring the boundaries between the digital and the physical (2014, p. 43); 3) the ontological equality of the human natural, and machine entities, are treated as informational, namely “inforgs” (2014, p. 114).

These assumptions lead to different implications for human reality (2014, p. 144), the first of which epitomises the “re-ontologisation” of the infosphere, that takes place and redefines the nature of reality by treating everything as information. This shift thus exceeds the conventional interpretation of physical and digital, real and virtual (Floridi, 2010, pp. 6–7). The second implication involves humanity entering a new era of “hyperhistory,” where the development of society is driven by information technologies rather than material and factual resources (Floridi, 2014, p. 168). The third implication relates to the ethical challenges the infosphere raises about privacy, data ownership, and the moral status of agency (Floridi, 2014, p. 190).

Whereas Floridi’s recourse to Marcel Proust’s concept of the *social self* is in the observation of how individuals construct and present their identities in the infosphere (2014, p. 60). As the digital age has significantly altered humans’ perception of themselves and their interaction (2014, pp. 73–74), three features emerge from this concept: 1) the fluidity of identities in the infosphere, which are not considered fixed but rather fluid and adaptable. With the current technological means, individuals can now create multiple digital personas, and each of them can be tailored according to different contexts; 2) the inherent relationality of the social self, which is shaped by the interactions with other informational entities, between people, algorithms, and AI systems; 3) the transparency and privacy that the digital environment makes of the social self, as personal information, which is constantly shared, and tracked, hence raising concerns about privacy and autonomy (2014, p. 190). The concepts of the infosphere and the social self are deeply interconnected, in that the infosphere provides the environment in which the social self is shaped, performed, and transformed, by enabling new forms of interaction, creating new opportunities for self-expression and collaboration, and dissolving traditional boundaries.

Within this framework, the digitisation of culinary recipes has been playing an emblematic role since its advent, transforming the environment, the format and the channels of communication and interaction, by challenging the functions provided by the written recipes and cookbooks being used and stocked in the kitchen. When recipes were hand-written and collected in holders filled with index cards, they were an expression of the older generation’s cultural knowledge, creativity and experience manifested through the selection of ingredients to manipulate, and utensils to cook them through well-tested and recognised procedures. The kitchen embodied the archetypal environment where these recurrent practices, taught, shown and transmitted to the younger generation, physically took place. Nowadays, the kitchen remains the emblematic place to deal with food cooking and impart recipes though it is recreated in broadcasts and on the Web. It reflects a metaphoric space blurred between the digital and the physical realms: the sense of the social self is now expressed through technological means, and performed and shared in different formats stored as electronic multimedia files and scattered over the Web in a variety of forums, *Facebook* groups, *Instagram*, *Twitter* and *Tumblr*, and above all accessible anytime from anywhere.

Due to the wide currency food communication has acquired through time the culinary field is now provided with “meaning and relevance” (Godemann & Bartelmeß, 2017, p. 192): recipes have meantime garnered increasing scholarly attention, though only recently have been acknowledged as textual genre (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001, p. 46; Garzone, 2017, pp. 39–40). While their instructional purpose is well-established, their linguistic and structural complexity warrants further exploration. This article thus investigates the linguistic features of recipes exemplified in the cookery book Jamie Oliver’s *Jamie’s Great Britain* (2011) and Oliver’s website (Note 1), by focusing on their structured format and use of language in context regarding the procedural instructions. The study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on culinary discourse and its role in contemporary communication.

## 2. Literature Review

Culinary recipes as a textual genre are easily recognisable in structure (Baker, 2006, p. 3). They are mainly categorised as a “text type” (Görlach, 2004, p. 123; Arendholz, Bublitz, Kirner, & Zimmermann, 2013, p. 121) featuring “specialised texts” (Rebecchi & da Silva, 2017, p. 104), or “technical texts”, which cannot be included within the field of General English texts (Norricks, 1983, p. 181). They have been similarly classified into four styles according to their function, namely “scientific style (cookery books); publicistic style (articles with culinary recipes); colloquial style (everyday conversations connected with culinary themes); belles-lettres style (novels)” (Dobrikova, 2020, p. 390). As a prototypical form of recipes, food-related texts require a certain degree of standardisation to be defined in their character and categorised as a genre, thus being acknowledged in research such as text linguistics and translation studies.

The rhetorical patterns necessary to characterise a text reflecting language in context concern how this is linguistically structured and pragmatically oriented towards the recipients, representative of the receiving culture. Observing its linguistic structure, the text is performed by patterns operating within the “stretches” of variable extent, which carry related grammatical categories. In this respect, the text contains stretches that consist of grammatical patterns ordered according to a taxonomic classification (Halliday, 1961, pp. 250–251). Considering

the grammatical theory, its hierarchical nature is defined by a rank: in a language, the text comprises a sequence of sentences, each minimally consisting of two units, of which the first stands for the main unit, whereas the other depends on the former. The lower unit is ranked on a scale as a clause, then as a phrase, presupposing lexical items. The representation of the components located according to an ordered progression and placed in these units determines the conceptual categorisation of the structure (Halliday, 1961, pp. 252–255), which functionally plays the role of implementing “an organic configuration of elements” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 39).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the recipe as a text type embodies a relationship between social and cultural practices that are based on pragmatic assumptions and concern behaviours and expectations (Cotter, 1997, p. 71). People’s identity is also reflected in this form and not always needed to be overtly manifesting or conforming to be members of a specific community. Different layers of attitudes display the individual “major identity”, defined by a sense of belonging to a social, ethnic, or gender group, distinct from the personal “minor identity”, revealing peripheral preferences and behaviours (Lakoff, 2006, p. 143). As regards food, these attitudes contribute to the construction of the individual’s identity, and they can be recognised in the user’s expression of choices, beliefs or ideas about how food is procured, prepared and consumed. A comparison between the recipe and the menu can be made. The menu, equally defined as a literary genre (Lakoff, 2006, p. 148), illustrates how individuals’ attitudes and expectations towards food consumption are epitomised by the patrons’ implicit acceptance of the restaurateur’s offer (Lakoff, 2006, p. 151). A relationship exists between menus, which rely upon the customer’s agreement to the lists of dishes usually entrusted to the waiter, and recipes, that are based on the reader’s choice agreeing to the chef’s offer through cookery books or online websites. It could be stated that, as a textual means, the recipe becomes a “reciprocal of the menu”, which is offered by its writer’s assuming the reader’s expectations of the food as a product that, consequently, is read rather than consumed (Lakoff, 2006, p. 157).

At a pragmatic level, the writer of the recipe makes a strategic use of the text, by structuring a linear one-to-one correspondence between its functional constituents in the sentences. Hence, when exploring the recipe in its main characteristics some of the relations that are displayed concern the referents represented within the text in time and space as well as in causal and even social sequences, which the reader can rebuild out of the text. As a result, the recipe suggests a “mimetic isomorphism” aimed at persuading the reader in the interpretation of an iconic experience, where the order of the linear conjuncts in the text is projected by the order of the experience concerning the worldly reference that the structure of the text evokes. This technical text is thus entirely oriented to the recipient (Enkvist, 1981, pp. 101–102) and the iconic experience results from the use of four different models of structure: the first of them is the “sentence-based” model, which focuses on the relations determined by the endophoric references as anaphor and cataphor, and by the functional units of theme-rheme. As regards the second, the “predication-based” model contains the set of predications along with temporal, causal, spatial, and social relations resulting in the hypotactic or embedded linguistic representation of the direct representation of experience. The third is the “cognitive” model, necessary for the reader’s interpretation and extraction of the predications out of the text consistent with the human’s general worldly knowledge, as insight into the cognition of the linguistic processing projected by the mental processing of the worldly experience. The fourth and last model is “interactive”, and the reader’s interpretation widens the investigation into the contexts or situations of social communication and interactions concerning what Nils Erik Enkvist called “the principles of information dynamics and intersentential linkage and textual fit”: these entail the author’s selection of the textual patterns, from lexical to syntactic (1981, pp. 102–104).

In this sense, the language representing the prototypical bipartite structure of recipes is analysed and focuses on the use of the verb “put”, which most frequently occurs as the element necessary to convey procedural instructions.

### 3. Methodology

A digitised text proves helpful when investigating a natural language, for instance, when identifying grammatical patterns of the English language and examining their recurrent use. To do so, texts are tagged and annotated with grammatical information and categorised according to their part-of-speech annotations performed automatically or semi-automatically. This study employed a qualitative corpus-based approach to examine the linguistic features of 93 recipes in Jamie Oliver’s *Jamie’s Great Britain* (2011) that were included in the list of contents of the book (2011, p. 11), and 36 recipes, occurring from the search for lexical occurrences querying the phrase “British recipes” in Oliver’s website (Note 2). The mini-corpus thus consists of 129 recipes, from breakfasts to condiments: all the recipes were digitised by converting them into plain text and cleaning the whole text to remove non-relevant content. Those recipes from the printed cookery book that appeared to be the same as the British online recipes published on Jamie Oliver’s website were discarded as the web recipes have different layouts and contain more detailed information. An example is *Epic roast chicken salad* (2011, pp. 104–105): the digitised recipe on the webpage presents additional nutritional information about the dietary energy intake for an adult. This is expressed

in terms of weight and percentage of *Calories, Fat, Saturates, Sugars, Protein, and Carbs*: when pointing the mouse cursor on them related text boxes appear with further descriptive explanations (Note 3). Research questions were formulated in this study: 1) How do recipes function as structured models in their rhetorical patterns to facilitate the reader's understanding and execution of the instructions? 2) How does the verb "put" convey procedural instructions? To answer these questions, the language in the bipartite structure of recipes was first examined focusing on the use of the verb phrase "put" in one of the printed recipes *EMPIRE ROAST CHICKEN, BOMBAY ROASTIES • AMAZING INDIAN GRAVY*. This emblematic example epitomising Oliver's consideration of British food culture is described as "a nod" to the British richness in flavours and worldly cooking practices. Then the verb "put" was queried as a keyword in context (KWIC) in the mini-corpus compiled by the corpus-analysis tool, #LancsBox X 5.0.3 (Note 4). Tokenisation was performed according to the same rules used in reference corpora, to ensure consistency: from the automatic tag of words with their part-of-speech (POS) and grammatical categories, by lemmatising them as base forms. Concordance and collocation of the verb "put" were also queried to obtain frequency lists sorted from related interrogations.

### 3.1 The Bipartite and Rhetorical Structure of Recipes

Extensive research has shown how the structure of the text of the culinary recipes reflects "a well-defined procedural genre with a clear writing purpose" (Taavitsainen, 2001, p. 86). Since they are technical texts, their layout is arranged according to a "bipartite structure" consisting in a list of ingredients on the one hand, and the instructions for preparing the dish on the other hand (Norrick, 1983, p. 174). In addressing a qualified and general readership, recipes perform the task of instructing, by introducing the list of ingredients followed by a progression of paratactic sentences that explain the preparation of the referred edible products. Enkvist's (1981) structured models are here considered to examine the recipe *EMPIRE ROAST CHICKEN, BOMBAY ROASTIES • AMAZING INDIAN GRAVY* (Oliver, 2011, pp. 104–105) which is reproduced in the content as appearing in the printed book with the canonical bipartite structure, although in an adapted layout:

**"Ask any British person what their two favourite meals are and I reckon most people would say their mum's roast chicken, and a curry. Well, welcome to Empire roast chicken, a combination of both of those things. Your friends and family are going to love it. I love it. You will love it."**

SERVES 4 TO 6

Table 1. Bipartite structure of *EMPIRE ROAST CHICKEN, BOMBAY ROASTIES • AMAZING INDIAN GRAVY*

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Method</i>
<p><i>For the chicken and marinade</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.4kg free-range chicken</li> <li>• 1 heaped tablespoon each finely grated garlic, fresh ginger and fresh red chilli</li> <li>• 1 heaped tablespoon tomato puree</li> <li>• 1 heaped teaspoon each of ground coriander, turmeric, garam masala and ground cumin</li> <li>• 2 heaped teaspoons natural yoghurt</li> <li>• 2 lemons</li> <li>• 2 level teaspoons sea salt</li> </ul> <p><i>For the gravy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 stick of cinnamon</li> <li>• 3 small red onions, peeled</li> <li>• 10 cloves</li> <li>• 3 tablespoons each of white wine vinegar and Worcestershire sauce</li> <li>• 3 level tablespoons plain flour</li> <li>• 500ml organic chicken stock</li> <li>• optional: natural yoghurt, to serve</li> </ul> <p><i>For the Bombay-style potatoes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 800g new potatoes</li> <li>• sea salt and ground pepper</li> <li>• 1 lemon</li> <li>• 2 or 3 tablespoons olive oil</li> <li>• a knob of butter</li> <li>• 1 heaped teaspoon each of black mustard seeds, cumin seeds, garam masala and turmeric</li> <li>• 1 bulb of garlic</li> <li>• 1 fresh red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced</li> <li>• 2 tomatoes, roughly chopped</li> <li>• 1 small bunch of fresh coriander</li> </ul>	<p>Slash the chicken's legs a few times right down to the bone. Get a roasting tray slightly bigger than the chicken, then add all of the marinade ingredients and mix together well.</p> <p>Put on a pair of clean rubber gloves, then really massage those flavours over and inside the chicken so it's smeared everywhere. Don't be shy! Ideally marinate overnight in the fridge.</p> <p>Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6 and organize your shelves so the roasting tray can sit right at the bottom, the chicken can sit directly above it, right on the bars of the shelf, and the potatoes can go at the top. Halve any larger potatoes, then parboil them in a large pan of salted boiling water with a whole lemon for about 15 to 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are cooked through. Drain the potatoes then let them steam dry. Stab the lemon a few times with a sharp knife and put it right into the chicken's cavity. Move the chicken to a plate.</p> <p>Roughly chop the onions and add to the roasting tray along with the cinnamon stick, cloves, vinegar and Worcestershire sauce, then whisk in the flour. Pour in the stock or water, then place this right at the bottom of the oven. Place the chicken straight on to the bars of the middle shelf, above the roasting tray. Cook for 1 hour 20 minutes.</p> <p>Put another sturdy roasting tray over a medium heat and add the olive oil a knob of butter, the mustard and cumin seeds, garam masala and turmeric - work quickly because if the fat gets too hot the mustard seeds will pop everywhere. Halve a bulb of garlic and add it straight to the pan, with the sliced chilli and chopped tomatoes. Add your drained potatoes to the tray, mix everything together, then season well. Finely slice and scatter in the coriander stalks, and keep the leaves in a bowl of water for later. After the chicken has been in for 40 minutes, put the potatoes in.</p> <p>Once the chicken is cooked, move it to a board and carefully peel off the dark charred bits to reveal perfect chicken underneath. Pass the gravy through a coarse sieve into a pan, whisking any sticky goodness from the pan as you go. Bring to the boil and either cook and thicken or thin down with water to your preference. Put it into a serving bowl and drizzle over a little yoghurt. Get your potatoes out of the oven and put them into a serving bowl, then serve the chicken on a board next to the sizzling roasties and hot gravy.</p> <p>Sprinkle the reserved coriander leaves over everything and serve with any condiments you like. Life doesn't get much better.</p>

The recipe begins with an introductory quotation (in bold) of five directives in a colloquial, emotive, and persuasive style, of which two verbs “Ask” and “welcome”, and the repetition of three different forms of the verb “love”, expressing intention and determination, directly address and engage the reader. These utterances leverage cultural references and shared knowledge to create a sense of familiarity and inclusivity, while their creative blending of ideas and repetitive emphasis on “love” aim to persuade the reader of the dish's appeal. The text functions as both an informative and persuasive piece, rooted in a conversational and culturally specific context. The quotation is followed by a serving suggestion, a directive utterance preceding the bipartite structure consisting of the list of ingredients on the left and the preparation method on the right side of the table. The list of ingredients is divided into three sections and is characterised by specialised vocabulary with an instructional function. It employs: precise measurements (e.g., “1 heaped tablespoon”, “800g”, “3 tablespoons”); descriptive adjectives, such as “free-range”, “fresh”, “natural”, and “organic”; technical terms, for instance “deseeded”, “roughly chopped”, and “finely sliced” to ensure the recipe's accuracy and reproducibility; and pre- and post-modified noun phrases to avoid unnecessary verbs or clauses (e.g., “1 heaped tablespoon each finely grated garlic, fresh ginger, and fresh red chilli”). The structured format utilising bullet points and section headings enhances readability, whereas the pragmatic focus on the reader's needs ensures the text is functional and accessible. As a culinary recipe, it exemplifies the genre's conventions, balancing brevity with detailed information. The method of preparation of the dish presents directive utterances with action-oriented verbs, such as “slash”, “mix”, “massage”, “preheat”, “halve”, “parboil”, “drain”, “whisk”, and “sprinkle”, reflecting an imperative mood and instructional function. It also employs: descriptive adjectives and adverbs, such as “clean”, “sturdy”, “perfect”, “sizzling”, and “hot”; a specialised culinary lexicon, for instance, “marinate”, “parboil”, “cavity”, “coarse sieve”, and “condiments”; exact measurements (e.g., “200°C/400°F/gas 6”); quantitative and temporal language and timeframes (e.g., “15 to 20 minutes”, “1 hour 20 minutes”); and vivid descriptions to ensure intelligibility and engagement. The conversational tone, sequential structure, and use of direct address render the text approachable and readable, and its adherence to genre conventions ensures it functions effectively as a recipe. The text thus balances technical precision with a friendly,

encouraging style, epitomising the dual purpose of instructing and inspiring the reader.

Considering the patterns of the structured models (Enkvist, 1981, pp. 102–104), an example of its application in the first paragraph of the preparation method is analysed. The first three and the fifth have sentence-based structures. Focusing on the third as the longest in the number of words, “Put on a pair of clean rubber gloves, then really massage those flavours over and inside the chicken so it’s smeared everywhere” is a complex sentence, with the theme in the main clause and its first embedded clause having the implied “you”, and the rhemes in the verbs ‘put on’ and ‘massage’ containing their related predicates. In the embedded clause “it’s smeared everywhere”, “it” is the theme and the anaphor ‘it’ refers to ‘chicken’, followed by the rheme “is smeared everywhere”. The same sentence also reflects the “predication-based” structure for the temporal relation between clauses established by ‘then’, and the causal relation of ‘so’ resulting in the embedded clauses. This sentence also epitomises the cognitive structure: it entails the reader interpreting the relation between the different steps to be followed and his/her knowledge of the world in respecting their sequence in the dish preparation, or in understanding the usefulness of using ‘clean rubber gloves’. An instance of the “interactive” structure is evident in the fourth imperative sentence of the first paragraph “Don’t be shy!”, presupposing that the reader interprets the context of social communication and interaction of encouragement to succeed in realising the dish. A special index showing the author’s attitude is the discourse marker “Ideally” at the beginning of the fifth sentence. The four models are utilised in the first paragraph, and the structured pattern is repeated in the other four paragraphs: the language appears informative and evocative. Since it is a written text, it typifies a form of discourse aiming at an empathic relationship between writer and reader providing a reliable recipe, thus reproducible. The concluding sentence in the recipe, based on an interactive structure, “Life doesn’t get much better”, serves to summarise the positive experience the author would share with the reader. The sentence is a concise, declarative statement that conveys a sense of satisfaction and optimism, and the use of negation aims to emphasise the high level of the author’s contentment. The reader is thus involved as an emblematic model, aware of the semiotic value underlying the interpretation of the text, and plays the role of “Model Reader” (Eco, 1979, p. 7). The recipe raises the reader’s awareness of the semantic and symbolic values as being actively involved in the semiotic interpretation of the text. Mentally recreating the manner to proceed, inferring and assuming its presupposed truthfulness, and perceiving the sense of readiness to practically test the result and apply the recipe method as a template, are all actions of the reader’s process of interpreting. Roland Barthes’s semiotic analysis in the general field of food consumption (1961) identifies three main functions of the language specifically utilised in advertising: the first aims to favour the consumer’s recollection of past events or the knowledge of them. The second function serves to affect the consumer’s association with thoughts and beliefs related to anthropological gender preferences, even by eroticising food in its promotional content. The third pertains to the consumer’s idea of food consumption as related to health, hence assumed for its beneficial nutritional values. In this respect, the description of the polysemous sense of the lexical items with food such as “activity, work, sports, effort, leisure, celebration” appears to exemplify a shift in the way the former is incorporated into several situations of human life, and its substantial effect turns into a function. Food thus performs its function in business or leisure time (Barthes, 2019, pp. 17–18). A lexical shift encouraging cooking associated with the recipe preparation and the consumption of the resulting edible product could be suggested: “training, experience, care, diet, health, fulfilment”.

### 3.2 The Use of the Verb Phrase “Put”: Procedural Instructions

Research reveals that the language of the recipe as a technical text is characterised by the frequent use of the imperative form of “put”, fronted with an object (Enkvist, 1981, p. 101) and underlying the subject “you”. As used to instruct, the verb phrase is usually followed by an object and a specific location. In the mini-corpus of the 129 digitised recipes, as KWIC the verb phrase “put” has the highest frequency of 363 occurrences and 4,040,74 hits. An instance of its occurrence is “Put the flour, sugar and butter into a food processor with a pinch of sea salt and pulse until you have a mixture that looks like breadcrumbs” (Rainbow Jam Tarts, 2011, p. 178). Furthermore, to ensure clarity and reproducibility of the information analysed, the graphical collocations tool (Note 5) was used to observe “put” as node + collocate considering the main features of distance, frequency and exclusivity. The frequency of collocation in the mini-corpus and the Log Dice, the association measure of exclusivity and the frequency of collocational co-occurrence were chosen according to this assumption: the stronger the value of the collocate in the Log Dice, the closer the collocate to the node. The statistic parameters calculated and normalised per million words (PMW) set the collocational span of five words L5/R5, Freq. (collocation)  $\geq 5$  & Log Dice  $\geq 6$  (or NaN) “Freq. (collocation)” = number Range (5.0, Infinity) and “Log Dice” = number Range (6.0, Infinity, NaN) (Brezina, McEnery, Wattam, 2015, p. 140). The table reproduced here ranks the collocates around “put” in frequency from the highest to 16 occurrences focusing on the use of locative adverbials associated with the verb.

Table 2. *GraphColl* tab: Key collocates of the verb “put”

Collocate	Frequency Collocation	Frequency Mini-Corpus	Log Dice
the	320	4.813	11,0
a	196	3.010	10,9
and	163	3.232	10,5
into	119	643	11,9
on	94	599	11,6
of	86	2.094	10,2
to	68	1.969	9,9
it	55	1.108	10,3
pan	47	350	11,1
in	45	989	10,1
then	44	677	10,4
large	42	269	11,1
with	34	843	9,9
them	33	352	10,6
your	31	395	10,4
aside	29	44	11,2
bowl	29	213	10,7
you	26	900	9,4
for	26	912	9,4
back	24	102	10,7
tray	21	164	10,4
oven	20	233	10,1
flour	16	153	10,0
or	16	741	8,9

Considering the structure of the verb put + noun + locative adverbial, the most frequent collocates immediately following the verb “put”, are preceded by the determiners “the” (320 occurrences) and “a” (196 occurrences). This entails the high Log Dice score of “put the” (11.0) and “put a” (10.9). The frequency of “put” with the preposition “into” (119 occurrences), includes only 16 “put into” such as in “Put into a medium pan with a knob of butter” (Easy Pork Scratchings 2011, p. 134). Conversely, “into” has the highest Log Dice score (11.9), indicating a strong association with the verb “put”. As KWIC “put on” occurs only three times in the mini-corpus whereas the preposition “on” after (pro)noun with “put” scores 94, such as in “put the lid on” (9 occurrences), “put it on” (9 occurrences), or “put them on” (5 occurrences) or even “put a large pan on” (3 occurrences). The Log Dice score for “on” (11.6) as a collocate of “put” also reveals a strong association and an instance is “Fill a large sturdy pan halfway up with vegetable oil and put it on a high heat” (Root Vegetable Crisps, 2011, p. 116). The structure put + pronoun + locative adverbial is also confirmed by the occurring “it” (55) as in “Put it into the fridge overnight to set and firm up” (Elderflower Summer Pudding, 2011, p. 340), and “them” (33), such as “Put them into a nice salad bowl” (Baby Broad Bean Salad, 2011, p. 76). The Log Dice associations of the pronouns “them” (10.6) and “it” (10.3) also entail the presence of locative adverbials. Whereas the collocate “aside” with “put” has the third highest Log Dice score (11.2) with a frequency of occurrence of 20 immediately following the verb, such as in “Put aside while you make the sponge” (Chocolate Orange Steamed Pud, 2011, p. 348) and 9 following the noun after the verb “put” such as in “Put the rosemary sprigs aside” (Sunday Roast Steak, 2011, p. 254). The collocate “to” (68) around the verb “put” shows a Log Dice of 9.9 and the KWIC has nine occurrences such as in “Put to one side” (Chestnut Pumpkin Soup, 2011, p. 68). The collocate “in” (45) associated with “put” scores a Log Dice of 10.1 such as in “Put it in a bowl” (Basic Bread Recipe <https://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/bread/basic-bread-recipe/>), and the KWIC shows eight occurrences as in “Get a roasting tray, put in the cutlets and rub the marinade all over them” (Sizzling Lamb Lollipops, 2011, p. 150). Whereas the collocate “back” (24), such as in “Put the pan back on a low heat” (Warm Tomato Salad, 2011, p. 102) and the KWIC (3) as in “Put back on a high heat” with a Log Dice of 10.7. As resulting from the number of collocations and the occurrences, the collocates “in”, “to”, and “back” mainly reflect the function of locative adverbials following (pro)nouns when occurring after “put”.

#### 4. Discussion of Results

Two research questions were formulated to carry out the analysis: the first investigating the function of recipes as structured models in their rhetorical patterns to facilitate the reader’s understanding and execution of the instructions; the second exploring how the verb “put” conveys procedural instructions. The results are here discussed linking the research questions in the above analysis as they appear consistent with previous studies on

recipe discourse in emphasising the formulaic and instructional nature of recipes (Enkvist, 1981; Norrick, 1983; Cotter, 1997).

Concerning the first research question, the analysis of the structured models in the recipe preparation method, reveals how linguistic patterns and textual structures are employed to guide readers through the cooking process while fostering engagement and empathy. The example sentence, “Put on a pair of clean rubber gloves, then really massage those flavours over and inside the chicken so it’s smeared everywhere,” demonstrates the interplay of sentence-based, predication-based, cognitive, and interactive structures, which collectively enhance the clarity, functionality, and appeal of the recipe. Being a complex sentence with a clear thematic progression, it ensures the reader’s understanding of the sequence of the actions and their purpose, making the instructions easy to follow. The construction in its logical progression reflects the process of cooking in its actuality, where each step builds on the previous one to achieve a specific result. The clarity of these relationships ensures that the reader can mentally reconstruct the cooking procedures and anticipate the next steps. The sentence engages the reader’s cognitive processes by requiring them to interpret the relationship between the steps and apply their prior knowledge. This cognitive engagement ensures that the recipe is not only informative but also relatable and intuitive. The interactive structure is evident in the imperative tone and the use of direct address, which creates a sense of dialogue between the author and the reader. It encourages the reader to engage actively and confidently with the recipe. The conversational tone and the interactive approach foster a sense of collaboration, making the reader feel supported and motivated throughout the cooking process. The analysis shows that the structured patterns observed in the first paragraph are repeated throughout the recipe, ensuring consistency and coherence. This repetition reinforces the instructional purpose of the text while maintaining a balance between technical precision and evocative language. The declarative and optimistic tone emphasises the satisfaction and fulfilment associated with the dish, further engaging the reader on an emotional level.

As regards the second research question, the frequent use of “put” in recipes emphasises its role in guiding readers through the cooking process. The centrality of the use of the verb “put” occurring 363 times in the mini-corpus was confirmed in the procedural instructions of recipes, with the linguistic structure put + noun + locative adverbial. This pattern showed as the most frequent collocates following “put” the determiners “the” and “a” with nouns followed by prepositions such as “into” and “on”. The high Log Dice scores for collocates like “into” (11.9), “on” (11.6), and “aside” (11.2) indicate strong and meaningful associations, reflecting both practical cooking actions and cultural traditions. Collocates like “into”, “on” and “aside” highlight the importance of precise instructions, such as placing ingredients into containers or setting them aside for later use. These findings align with the instructional nature of recipes, which aim to ensure clarity and reproducibility. Furthermore, the analysis of collocates following the verb “put” displays how language is used to evoke sensory and practical experiences in cooking. The verb “put” is central to instructional language in recipes, often followed by objects, prepositions, or adverbs that guide the reader through the cooking process. The collocates reflect both the practical actions involved in cooking such as “Put the cake tin and baking tray into the hot oven on the middle shelf to cook for around 35 to 40 minutes” (2011, p. 366), and the sensory and cultural associations tied to British culinary traditions “Put the pan back on a low heat and add the sugar, Worcestershire sauce and cider vinegar” (2011, p. 102). This linguistic pattern aligns with Oliver’s aim of blending tradition and innovation, as the collocates often reference both traditional cooking methods and modern adaptations. Considering the above metrics, they highlight the strength and significance of the collocations in the context of British culinary texts.

The analysis also situated recipes within the broader context of digital communication, where the infosphere and the social self (Floridi, 2014) play a significant role in shaping how culinary knowledge is shared and experienced. The digitisation of recipes has expanded their reach and transformed them into interactive, multimedia texts that engage readers through vivid imagery, sensory descriptions, and cultural references. This shift aligns with Oliver’s innovative approach to British cuisine, which blends traditional practices with modern influences, such as Indian culinary techniques, to create a renewed sense of culinary identity.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

The present research found inspiration from the language style in Oliver’s recipes with recurrent reference to the national heritage of the British food culture. The title of the cookery book, the autobiographical information presented in the first pages, the introduction of each recipe in the book and the related ones on Oliver’s website, celebrate the British culinary identity between tradition and innovation. By referencing the centuries-old British food identity Oliver’s recipes in the book draw on the collective memory of its cultural history, customs, conventions, and past rituals to emphasise a deep-rooted tradition in British food production, distribution, and consumption. Oliver (2011) argues how, despite being hindered by food rationing during the Industrial Revolution and the two World Wars, the British culinary tradition was subsequently retraced and renewed, leading to what is



now known as the “Food Renaissance” (2011, pp. 13–14). Accordingly, by invoking cultural conventions of the past and their renewal over time, Oliver makes recurrent use of iconic foods that appeal to the human senses. He also incorporates culinary influences from other cultures, such as Indian cuisine, to evoke vivid imagery and sensory experience. Oliver’s recipes aim to instruct and inspire readers to engage with British food culture in new and meaningful ways.

As a qualitative research, it thus analyses the recipes of a single author (Jamie Oliver) in a specific cultural context (British cuisine). On the one hand, from this angle, it presents a limitation in the generalisability of findings to other culinary traditions or authors and does not account for visual or multimedia elements in the digital recipes selected from the website: therefore, it does not provide potential further insights into their communicative strategies. Accordingly, in future research, the scope of the study will be extended to the analysis of recipes from different authors in the same or different cultural contexts. On the other hand, the findings of this study equally contribute to the understanding of culinary discourse as a unique genre that blends technical precision with cultural and sensory elements. The analysis of these culinary recipes reveals a textual genre with recognisable linguistic and semiotic structure defining practical cultural habits. As standardised technical texts, recipes differ from General English and align with specific grammatical and rhetorical patterns. Their bipartite format, comprising ingredient lists and procedural instructions, reflects a functional and pragmatic orientation, ensuring clarity, accessibility, reproducibility and coherence for the reader. Furthermore, directive utterances, specialised culinary lexicon, and in particular, frequent use of the verb phrase “put,” are all elements characterising the instructional and persuasive nature of the text. Imperative mood, combined with vivid descriptions and conversational tone, fosters an engaging and interactive experience for the reader. This qualitative research underscores the significance of linguistic analysis in exploring the role of recipes as both practical guides and cultural artefacts, offering valuable insights for future research on culinary discourse.

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No additional data are available.

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## Notes

Note 1. Jamie Oliver’s website. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from <https://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/world/british/> [www.jamieoliver.com](http://www.jamieoliver.com)

Note 2. Jamie Oliver’s British recipes. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from <https://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/world/british/>

Note 3. Cf. Jamie Oliver’s *Epic roast chicken salad*. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from

<https://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/chicken-recipes/epic-roast-chicken-salad/>

Note 4. Brezina, V. & Platt, W. (2024) #LancsBox X [software], Lancaster University. Retrieved from <https://lancsbox.lancs.ac.uk/>

Note 5. *GraphColl 1.0* is a tool useful to build and explore linguistic collocations. Retrieved January 14, 2025, from <https://www.clarin.eu/content/graphcoll>

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