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María Luisa Carrió Pastor  
*(Directora)*

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**Dirección** María Luisa Carrió Pastor

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**Stancetaking in Late Modern English Scientific  
Writing. Evidence from the Coruña Corpus**

**Essays in Honour of Santiago González y  
Fernández-Corugedo**

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Francisco Alonso-Almeida  
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## Proemio

Como editora de la colección *Estudios de Lingüística Aplicada* de la Editorial de la Universitat Politècnica de València ha sido un honor recibir la propuesta de la publicación de un volumen en honor al catedrático Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo, académico de reconocido prestigio. Sus aportaciones a los estudios relacionados con el inglés antiguo y la literatura inglesa son conocidos internacionalmente y de ello son prueba los numerosos proyectos que ha liderado y en los que ha participado.

Así mismo, los numerosos libros que ha escrito o editado, nos muestran su valía como investigador, avanzando en el conocimiento constantemente y colaborando en el avance de las investigaciones sobre la lengua inglesa. El interés de su investigación se ha visto más que probado por sus numerosas publicaciones en revistas; los evaluadores han sabido apreciar a un investigador concienzudo y crítico.

Si al hecho que sea un volumen honorífico añadimos la valía de las contribuciones que se han incluido así como la de sus autores, nos percatamos que nos encontramos ante un libro excepcional que le da un gran valor a esta publicación. Este volumen nace también para la difusión de los resultados de los proyectos del Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (MINECO), FFI2013-42215-P y FFI2016-75599-P, aspecto que se ha de resaltar puesto que es fruto del trabajo de varios investigadores involucrados en esta investigación.

Quiero destacar que esta colección de trabajos ha sido evaluada por un Comité Científico que ha revisado cada uno de sus capítulos con mucho detalle. Por ello, agradezco su valiosa labor para la publicación de este segundo libro de la colección *Estudios de Lingüística Aplicada*.

Finalmente, deseo agradecer la labor del editor de este volumen, Francisco Alonso-Almeida, por su entusiasmo y trabajo concienzudo. Sin él, investigador incansable, este volumen no hubiera sido posible.



## Foreword

When the editors of this book instructed me to write a sketch of Professor Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo, I felt overwhelmed and fearful, but also eager to extol the figure of a prestigious scholar and eminent education adviser and manager. Let me start by providing some keynotes on his academic profile.

Since completing his Degree and Master of Arts (English Philology) in 1981 and his PhD in Comparative Linguistics in 1987 at the University of Oviedo, Professor Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo has served as Director of Campus El Milán (Arts area) at the University of Oviedo, holding both the position of Academic Secretary and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Arts at this University from 1988–1994.

He obtained the position of tenured lecturer at the University of Oviedo in 1989 and the Professorship in his early thirties in 1994 serving in the beginning as chair of English Language and Linguistics at the University of A Coruña from 1994 to 1996, where he also served as first Dean of the Faculty of Philology. Since 1996 he holds a chair of English Philology at the University of Oviedo.

Professor Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo has taught a large number of graduate and postgraduate courses and seminars as Visiting Scholar in several Spanish Universities (León, A Coruña, Santiago de Compostela, La Laguna, Almería, Sevilla, Valladolid, País Vasco, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Vigo, Barcelona, Jaume I, Zaragoza, Jaén, etc.) and BA courses in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Whitman College, Washington. He promoted, conducted and directed many postgraduate courses at the Universities of Oviedo and A Coruña. He has also encouraged and directed teaching innovation projects as well as providing methodological support for other teaching programmes.

As a renowned speaker and recognized expert, he was guest lecturer and a plenary speaker in a number international conferences. He has read a large number of papers and has participated in round tables discussions in scientific meetings and conferences on the fields of linguistics, medieval studies, historical linguistics and English literature.

He has obtained various visiting scholarships to do research in British and American academic institutions, namely the British Library (in The Manuscripts Collections, section of Western Manuscripts) in 1989, the University of Oxford (Bodleian Library and University Humanities Computing Centre) from 1990 to 1992 or St. Catharine's College at the University of Cambridge in 1995. He also got visiting fellowships from the Centre for Humanities Computing at the University of Oxford in 1992 and 1998. He was also visiting fellow in the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto in 2000 and at Whitman College, Washington in 2002.

Professor Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo has had a remarkable activity as general editor of prestigious academic journals: *Atlantis* (1997 and 1998) and *SEDERI* (1995-2007) as well as co-editor of *SELIM* from 1991 to 2011. He has also been in charge of the edition "Medieval and Renaissance Literature excluding Drama" (sections 301-303) in *Annotated Bibliography of English Studies (Spanish Studies in English)* from 1996 to 1998.

He chaired the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature from 1999 to 2004 and has been member of many academic societies and of countless boards and committees of academic journals (SELIM, Atlantis, The Grove, AESLA, SELL, Cuadernos del Cemyr, Cuadernos de Investigación Filológica, International Journal of English Studies, Journal of English Studies, Culture, Language and Representation, Philologia Hispalense, etc.).

His research covers many different fields (Textual Edition and Philology, Medieval Studies, Historical Linguistics, Romantic Poetry, etc.). He has published books, book chapters and articles in scientific journals. He edited an Anthology of Middle English Texts for the Oxford University Text Archive already in 1990, just to give one example. He has lead relevant research projects with financial support from the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science and the Autonomic Governments of Galicia and the Principality of Asturias and has also been a member of other research projects. He has conducted the investigation of many doctorate students when writing their doctoral dissertation. He was also chairman and member of Evaluation and Assessment Committees (Avaliação Investigadora do Instituto de Estudos Anglísticos da Universidade de Lisboa; Agencia Nacional de Evaluación y Prospectiva; Comissió Valenciana d'Acreditació i Evaluació de la Qualitat; Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación; Agencia Andaluza de Evaluación de la Calidad, etc.).

Appointed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (Subdirección General de Cooperación Internacional & Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores), he developed an outstanding career as Consul of Education at the Consulate General of Spain in Miami in 2004 and 2005, with jurisdiction over Alabama, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Luisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. Then, he also served for five years as Counsellor for Education at the Spanish Embassies in Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. As Consul of Education, he was responsible for Spanish educational programs and educational cooperation with local authorities. From this diplomatic, advisory and managerial position, he also collaborated with the Instituto Cervantes, and participated as member of the examining boards of DELE.

Let me finish by highlighting the main traits of his personality. Professor Santiago González y Fernández-Corugedo has showed impressive adaptability and an innate ability to juggle complex tasks while starting a new position in a new institution, in a new university system, immediately fitting in with his colleagues and enjoying his work. But, above all, he is well-liked by staff, students and colleagues alike, and unanimously appreciated and respected by his peers.

For all this, this volume is dedicated to him.

Luis Iglesias Rábade

## Acknowledgments

The research presented in this monograph has been funded by the Spanish *Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad* (MINECO), grant number FFI2013-42215-P and grant number FFI2016-75599-P. These grants are hereby gratefully acknowledged.

This volume could not have been possible without the contributors. I am really honoured that they have attended my call and accepted to participate in this project. I would like to thank the anonymous readers for their suggestions and feedback to individual chapters for improvements.

I also owe my gratitude to the Series General Editor, María Luisa Carrió Pastor, for her help and support at every stage of the process. Thanks are also due to the The Polytechnic University Valencia and her Editorial Services for economic support and for the edition of this monograph.

Finally, many thanks to all those who have contributed in any way to this book.

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 21 April 2017



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# Introduction. Stancetaking in late Modern English scientific writing

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## 1. Introduction

Stancetaking has received extraordinary scholarship attention over the last decades. Research focusing on present day languages is evidence of this interest. See, for instance, Iwasaki and Yap's monograph (2015) on stancemarking and stancetaking in Asian languages (Japanese, Korean and Mandarin); Briz (2012) and Albeda-Marco (2016) on Spanish; and Bassiouney (2015) on Egyptian Arabic, just to mention a few. The analysis of stancetaking in discourse offers valid insight to explain processes of variation and change, and this makes its study in earlier stages of languages a substantial contribution to assess the way in which evaluation, perspectivization, affect, and commitment, for instance, have had an effect on linguistic innovations (Cf. Moskowich and Crespo 2014). In this volume, contributors study certain devices, e.g. pronouns and conditional structures, which evince authorial stance on a corpus of scientific texts excerpted from *The Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing*. The methodology of analysis is particular to each one of the papers included in this monograph, as the study of stance devices may be addressed at from different perspectives. The term *stance* indeed refers to different phenomena in language, and so it is generally the umbrella term for notions, such as *epistemic stance* (Biber and Finegan 1989), *commitment* (Caffi 1999 and 2007; Del Lungo Camiccioti 2008), *mitigation* (Martín Martín 2008; Alonso-Almeida 2015), *reinforcement* or *strengthening* (Brown 2011), *intensification* (Gonzalez 2015), *authority*, *involvement* and *hedging* (Hyland 1998 and 2005), *assessment* (Goodwin 2006), *modality* and *evidentiality* (Chafe 1986, Palmer 2001, Fairclough 2003, Goodwin 2006, Marín Arrese 2009, Carrió Pastor 2012, Pic and Furmaniak 2012), *affect* (Martin 2000, Martin and White 2005), and *vagueness* in language (Cutting 2007).

For Hyland (2005: 176), stance “can be seen as an attitudinal dimension and includes features which refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments. It is the ways that writers intrude to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement”. The evaluative dimension of *stance* is patent in this definition. Evaluation is still an inclusive term that makes reference to several other concepts, as pointed out in Hunston and Thompson (2000: 5): “evaluation is the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about. That attitude may relate to certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of other sets of values. When appropriate, we refer specifically to modality as a sub-category of evaluation”. Within the spectrum of evaluation, Du Bois (2007: 163) considers the social and cultural dimension of *stance* in his definition: “a public act by social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means of simultaneously evaluating

objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field". In sum, the core of all the perspectives to *stance* mentioned here is its pragmatic nature, and thus *stance* covers the study of (inter)subjective meanings and commitment/involvement vs. detachment, for instance, which are often potential for linguistic variation, particularly in specialized discourse, as shown in the studies in this volume on the texts of the *Coruña Corpus*.

## 2. The Coruña Corpus

*The Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing* (CC) started at the University of A Coruña in 2003. As explained in Crespo and de la Cruz Cabanillas (2016: 63), the interest of their compilers was the evolution and vernacularization of scientific writing in the medieval period and later written by male and female authors, and this interest included aspects related to the macrolevel to cover the study of scientific genres. The CC contains texts from the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century (1700-1900), and these were selected for compilation according to different sociological, linguistic and disciplinary criteria, as also described in Crespo and de la Cruz Cabanillas (2016: 63). The texts have been chosen from different English-speaking geographical areas, other than England, namely: North America, Ireland and Scotland.

The internal organization of the corpus has been partially guided by the UNESCO classification of science, and thus each subsection of this corpus represents a sphere of science. This results in the following configuration of CC: (1) Natural and Exact Natural Sciences, this parameter includes the domain of Astronomy: *Corpus of English Texts on Astronomy* (*CETA*); Life Sciences: *Corpus of English Life Sciences Texts* (*CELiST*); Physics: *Corpus of English Texts on Physics* (*CETePh*); and Chemistry: *Corpus of English Chemistry Texts* (*CECheT*); (2) Humanities, this parameter to include the domain of Philosophy: *Corpus of English Philosophy Texts* (*CEPhiT*); Linguistics, *Corpus of English Texts on Linguistics* (*CETeL*); and History: *Corpus of English History Texts* (*CHET*). The compilers decided not to include the domain of medicine, as this is well represented in the *Corpus of Early Medical Writing* compiled by members of the VARIENG group (Crespo and de la Cruz Cabanillas, 2016). The *Coruña Corpus* is not yet completed, and *CETA* (Moskowich and Crespo 2012; Moskowich et al. 2012), *CEPhiT* (Moskowich et al. 2016), and *CHET* (Moskowich et al. 2012) are the only ones available at present; *CECheT* is soon to appear.

Each of the mentioned subcorpora contains ca. 400,000 words, half for each century, taken principally from first editions. The reason is that two texts of ca. 10,000 words are taken per decade after transcribing the author's own texts, excluding additional material, such as quotations, graphs, figures, etc. not representing the author's idiolect. Each of the texts owns two files. One of this is the text encoded in XML language. The other is metadata information concerning the author and the text. The presence of this information is certainly fundamental in evaluating stancetaking in texts. The consultation of these databases is performed thanks to the use of the *Coruña Corpus Tool* (*CCT*), described in Lareo (2010). The available CC texts can be interrogated in full, or any of its subcorpus, for a given unit or string of language. Statistics as to occurrences (tokens and variants) per text are given in the *results summary* window, also presenting concordances. Each concordance line shows the text where the word appears by clicking on it.

Research carried out on texts in the *Coruña Corpus* proves its validity for the study of the language of science from a historical perspective, and for the study of language variation and change. In general, research conducted using *CC* includes material on (a) the compilation of the corpus itself or descriptions of the databases (Moskowich and Crespo 2007; Moskowich and Parapar 2008; Crespo and Moskowich 2010 and 2015; Moskowich 2016); (b) morphological and/or syntactic descriptions (Puente Castelo and Mónaco 2013; Puente Castelo 2015); (c) pragmatics (Alonso Almeida 2012; Crespo 2011; Crespo and Moskowich 2015a); and (d) cultural and social concerns in relation to language and language variation (Moskowich 2012; Crespo and Moskowich 2015b; Dossena 2016), among other aspects. All this work is only an indication of the corpus' potential for further research. Its configuration in subcorpora according to register allows for contrastive analyses dealing with disciplinary variation. This is not the only way in which this material allows comparison, as language use can also be assessed with a focus on genre, for example. From a diachronic perspective, *CC* could be used in conjunction with other historical corpora of (pseudo)scientific texts to study diastatic variation and the evolution of scientific styles.

### 3. The contributions

The volume contains seven studies on several aspects of eighteenth and nineteenth century scientific English writing, as portrayed in *CC*. Each of the chapters includes a description of the subcorpus or subcorpora used in order to provide precise indications of the material analyzed. In the first chapter, **Margarita Sánchez-Cuervo** explores *appraisal* in modern English historical discourse written by male and female authors following Martin and White's model (2005) for the study of the language of evaluation. The interpretative nature of history, Sánchez-Cuervo claims, seems to suggest the use of evaluative language in order to reflect and accommodate the authors' point of view. The devices found to convey authorial position in the texts analyzed include strategic use of the pronoun "we", epistemic and deontic modals, hearsay, mindsay and perception verbs. The author closes her text by suggesting further research, which would include the analysis of dialogic contraction options.

The following chapter written by **Marina Dossena** also reports on aspects of stancetaking in late Modern English historiography. The author analyzes the ways in which (un)certainly and evaluation strategies are used in order to convey perspectivization of knowledge. Dossena's analyses involve both the texts in the *CHET* subcorpus and their titlepages, which represent the authors' first contact with their audience. These titlepages contains some language elements that indicate what the authors' position would be in their texts. A valuable contribution of this paper is the way in which the author highlights similarities and differences between *CHET* and *CEPhiT* concerning the expression of evaluation.

Persuasion strategies are the focus of the next chapter, where **Begoña Crespo** explores discourse strategies deployed to designate third person actor with a legitimizing function in *CHET*. For this, she concentrates on the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of the verb *demand*, which she exemplifies with excerpts from the corpus to demonstrate that the persuasive function of this verb needs to consider contextual factors, the function of the intervening material, its original legal meaning, its presence in set phrases and its occurrence in passive structures.

**Margarita Mele-Marrero** studies self-mention as seen in the use of the pronouns *I* and *we* in the eighteenth-century section of *CETA* and *CHET*, thus reporting on their use in the so-called hard- and soft-sciences. Mele-Marrero proves that self-mention is an important strategy to convey stance and engagement in her selection of texts. She concludes her paper with a set of interesting findings concerning the presence of self-mentioning pronouns in the texts, one of which reports in the patent occurrence of self-mention pronouns in astronomy texts in relation to history ones. The following chapter by **Isabel Moskowich** also describes pronouns as stance features in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *CETA*, *CEPhiT* and *CHET*, also with a focus on first person pronouns as involvement devices. The author considers the register variables of subject-matter and gender in order to analyze the use of these proforms in the selected subcorpora of the *Coruña Corpus*. Her study reveals that these involvement features are used as dictated by the discourse requirements of the discipline. The variable of sex seems, however, less influencing.

**Francisco J. Álvarez-Gil** offers an analysis of the stance adverbials *apparently*, *fairly* and *possibly* in *CHET* to show how these forms are used either to indicate elaboration of meaning and/or to indicate appraisal of propositional content. This paper discusses central theoretical aspects to the notion of evidentiality and its relation to epistemic modality in order to contextualize his analyses of the adverbials chosen. In his study, the author concludes that the syntactic position of adverbials may also indicate different pragmatic functions of these forms.

The potential of conditional constructions as hedging devices is described by **Luis Puente-Castelo**. In his study, Puente-Castelo examines three type of conditionals in three subcorpora of the *CC* in order to show their use to convey authorial uncertainty. The author applies socio-historical and formal parameters in his account of these structures as stance features. The last contribution written by **Elena Quintana-Toledo** is an account of vague expressions in *CHET* following Zhang's model (2015). She classifies her findings into *approximate stretchers*, *general stretchers*, *scalar stretchers* and *epistemic stretchers*. These devices have several pragmatic functions. They could be used to mitigate a claim, to indicate degrees of specificity, reliability, accountability, or affectivity. These expressions may have a persuasive function.

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