
The Middle English Medical Charm: Register, Genre and Text Type Variables

Author(s): Francisco Alonso-Almeida

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THE MIDDLE ENGLISH MEDICAL CHARM: REGISTER, GENRE AND TEXT TYPE VARIABLES

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to characterize the Middle English charm as a genre through an analysis of a substantial number of texts taken from a variety of sources. After reviewing some prior theoretical approaches to this genre, I offer a complete description of the charm from a systemic functional perspective that reconciles both the linguistic and the social aspects of charms. First I concentrate on their generic structure potential and the key linguistic realizations frequently associated to each one of the structural stages. After this, I analyze the variables pertaining to the context of situation to conclude that the charm genre is addressed to virtually any type of audience, and that it belongs to the learned tradition, as suggested by the lack of affectiveness in these texts and the appropriate use of botanical and religious terminology.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the Middle English medical charm as a genre.¹ In doing so, I shall apply the framework of functional grammar in Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) to explain variables pertaining to genre and register. Tangentially, the features typifying this text type are also commented and exemplified with data excerpted from a small corpus of charms originally compiled for this research. The Middle English charm has been the object of study only partially and more frequently for historical and illustrative purposes rather than for linguistic analysis. This is not surprising since, as I shall show below, the charm stands as one of the most unpredictable genres if compared with others, such as the recipe, the letter or the contract. Only after the study is completed does the impression of textual anarchy fade away to show a more organised genre.

Olsan (1992) published a study on Latin charms in England highlighting the linguistic and textual features of this genre. She labels charms as oral and verbal on the basis of textual evidence. In a sense, I agree with her in that charms show a great deal of oral features, such as the repetition of themes, as we will see in section 4.2, below; notwithstanding, some charms present texts which tend to belong more to the written mode than to the spoken one. As for related genres, she claims that “charms, or verbal remedies, are closely allied with medical recipes (Anglo-Saxon *laecedomes*) and remedial rituals on one side and with prayers, blessings, and in some linguistic features with exorcism on the other, verbal, side” (Olsan 1992: 117).

Olsan’s notion of genre differs from the idea used in this article as she includes, for instance, linguistic characteristics as part of the definition of genre. In the present

¹ Many thanks are due to Mary Frances Litzler, University of Alcalá de Henares, for proofreading this article, and to the editors of *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* for suggestions to improve the final version.

paper genre is differentiated from text type in the sense that genre is externally defined, whereas text type is characterized according to internal linguistic criteria. Carroll et al. (2003: 8) argue that, traditionally, genre and text type “are structured as fuzzy categories... What emerges now is a sense that any distinction between genre and text-type is a theoretical one, useful for teasing out fine distinctions, but not one which is much applied in practice by language users”. Although their claim about these two concepts is true, I intend to describe in section 3 what I understand by these two intricate notions following a functional framework, so that they can be applied to this study of charms in the fashion of Taavitsainen (2001a and 2001b) and Pahta (2001).

This article pursues the following objectives: (i) to demonstrate that the charm is a genre with the same status as other genres, such as letters, acts, reports, etc.; (ii) to show that there are a series of cultural variables that condition the configuration of the charm as a social product; (iii) to highlight the situational variables that affect the linguistic realization of the charm; and (iv) to offer the most recurrent linguistic features in the charm.

Having said this, I will structure this paper as follows: section two describes and classifies the material compiled for examination. Section three contains the theoretical framework followed in the analysis of the texts; a description of the concepts of text type, register and genre are offered in this same section. Section four analyses the charms in terms of register and genre theory and this is done in two subsections; the first one refers to the study of cultural variables together with an account of the linguistic realizations constrained by these variables. These realizations characterise the text type used to write the charm. The second subsection, i.e. 4.2, includes the situational variables that also impose certain linguistic restrictions to the text. Finally I offer the conclusions drawn from the present study, as well as some considerations for future research.

2. *Material and classification of charms*

2.1. *Material of study*

The texts of this research form a corpus of approximately three thousand words, collected from several sources and analysed using *Corpus Presenter* software by Hickey (2003), although manual analyses have also been performed at times. The number of texts comes to thirty-six of different lengths. The charms in our corpus are exclusively for healing purposes for the sake of manageability of data. The partial conclusions about this genre can be contrasted later with other types of charms so that we can obtain a better picture of the charm as a genre.

The sources include edited material such as Ogden (1938), Braekman (1986), Hunt (1990), Jones (1997), and Alonso-Almeida (2000). The charms are written in Middle English, and occasionally Latin is also used; texts with an English title and the entire body text in Latin have been discarded from the present analysis in an attempt to reach clear conclusions regarding the genre for the English language.

Code-switching has, however, been considered and duly commented on in the analysis in accordance with the descriptions in Pahta (2004a and 2004b), in which the influence of Latin on English medical texts has been evaluated. The sentences in the charms are complete and the contents are varied, ranging from remedies for the headache, nose bleeding, and fever to veterinary material and astrological advice for plant gathering. What follows is a rough description of the manuscripts from which the texts have been excerpted for analysis:

(1)

MANUSCRIPT	DESCRIPTION OF TEXTS	DATE	EDITOR	evk no.
Lincoln Cathedral 91 A.5.2.	This is a collection of recipes and charms for medical purposes. The charms included here are for different healing functions: teeth, fever, delivery, nose bleeding, etc.	C15th	Ogden (1938)	6464.00
British Library, Additional 34111	This collection of charms is combined with a collection of <i>experimenta</i> that have not been included in the analysis.	C15th	Braekman (1986)	3664.00 3117.00
Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 117 T.5.19	Only one charm has been taken from this source, and it deals with worms in the belly.	C15th	Jones (1997)	1467.00 6453.00
Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 185 T.8.17	The charms here belong to a recipe book that organises the remedies from head to foot. These have been written by two contemporary hands. The contents of the charms are varied, and they aim at providing alternative solutions to medical preparations, such as toothache, fever and the staunching of blood.	C15th	Alonso-Almeida (2000)	4988.00
British Library, Sloane 962	The charms are from a collection of the genre compiled by Tony Hunt with texts written in England. The ones included here are written in Middle English with some Latin additions. The Anglo-Norman texts in his compilation have not been selected for the present study, although they are important for the understanding of the history of magical healing in England.	C15th	Hunt (1990)	5661.00

2.2. Classification of charms

Olsan (1992) and (2003) group charms according to topic (fever, teeth, bleeding, etc.). Hunt (1989:78-82), after Payne (1904), has classified charms into six groups according to contents, method and discursive strategies; this taxonomy will be followed in this article:

(i) *prayers, invocations and other verbal formulae addressed to herbs*. This category of charms contain directions on how to gather the medicinal herbs, including the specific rites, body movement, time, and astrological evidence that suggest the propitious moment to collect a specific herb to keep its magical potential intact, as in (2) below:²

- (2) Whan thou gederest ane herbe to mannes helpe, go thryes about hym and sey this: ‘Y take the herbe yn the name of the fader and the sone and the holy gost. And Y pray to my Lord God that thys herbe be god and virtues to the medicine that Y have ordeyned hym to.’ And sey thre pater nosters & iii ave marias. And whan thou hast gedred thyn herbys al the yer or a sesonne, gyfe thys blessynge upon hem and sey thus (BL, Harley 2558, f. 63v, in Olsan 2003: 359).

(ii) *prayers and mystical words repeated over the patient, or written or applied to some part of his body as an amulet*. The indications given in texts of this group refer to the formulae and words that should be mentioned in order to overcome the disease. Alternatively, these ritualistic words may be written on parchment, wood or an object, such as an apple or lead, to be later placed on the affected body part:

- (3) For an hors that is wranch: Take write this scripture in parchemyne and hang it abouten his fote and he chal ben hol: + zinupt + anta + peranta + anta (BL, Sloane 962, f. 135v, in Hunt 1990: 96).

(iii) *direct conjurations or exorcisms addressed to diseases*. These have the function of expelling the disease or the evil spirit, the cause of affliction:

- (4) Item conjuratio pro sanguine: In nomine patris etc. ‘Oure lord was borne in Bethleem + he was howen in Jerusalem + he was bapteste in flum Jordane + whan he was bapteste thereinne + the flode hit stod + so stynte the blode + thorowe the vertue of hem and of the fyve woundes that he suffred + on the verray cros + and therto I worchipthe fyve woundes with fyve Pater Noster that he hele this wounde and stynte the blode and our lady whit ·v· Ave in the worchip of the fyve bloody terus that scho weppud whan scho sye hym on the verray cros (MS London BL Royal 12 G IV, f. 197rb, C16th, in Hunt 1990: 87, eVK 3463.00).

² All punctuation and capitalisation are editorial unless otherwise stated. The thorn is always represented as <th>.

(iv) *narrative charms*. This type seeks the recovery of the patient by resorting to stories, mainly from the Christian tradition, which involve the participation of religious characters suffering from the same disease. The invocation of these holy people was expected to result in a curative effect.

- (5) **For the feueres.** In nomine Patris & Filij & Spiriti Sancti Amen. Petrus autem iacebat supra petram marmoriam febricans. & superueniens illi Ihesus: “Quid iaces Petre? qui ait, Domine, iaceo hic de febre mala?” Et ait illi Petrus: “Domine, rogo te vt, quaecumque verba ista in nomine tuo superse portant, quidem non noceant ei febres frigide nec calide cotidiane, biduane, triduane, quatruiduane, quintane, sextane, septane”. Et ait illi Ihesus: “Petre, fiat tibi sicut petisti in nomine meo”. Fiat, fiat et the name therwith (Glasgow University Library, Hunter 185, f. 18v, in Alonso-Almeida 2000: 227).

(v) *material magic*. In this type of charm, magical powers are attributed to some objects, such as plants, parts of animals and stones.

- (6) **For to make a man to speke or a womman in his slepe & telle al that he woot.** Tak the rote of dondelyon & tak it bitwene the two grete toon of the rythth foot. Let the man or womman ly vpwarde & ly hit on his herte. Aske of hym what he woot & he schal telle the al that he can (Glasgow University Library, Hunter 185, f. 61r, in Alonso-Almeida 2000: 294-295).

(vi) *transference of disease by a verbal formula, or a ceremony, to some animal or material object*.

- (7) Ffor to stonche blod of the nose or of wat place yt be of a man. Lat hym drynke the jus of ache & ley of the pounynge to ys forhed athenes the cros of ys nose, or wryt these leters in two leues of perchemyne. Bynd yt betwene thy thyys &, thif thou leuestd nautht me, tak & wryt hem vp on a knyf. therwyth steke a swyn & the rennyng of the man schal be muche the lasse. thes beth the lettris: + p + G + C + p + e + u + o + t + a + ges + ij + u + iij + etc. + Arisme cladauis +++ + Arisme cladauis +++ + Arisme cladauis +++ (Glasgow University Library, Hunter 185, f. 65r, in Alonso-Almeida 2000: 300-301).

3. *The concepts of genre, text type and register*

The concepts of genre, text type and register have been very influential in studies of texts both synchronically and diachronically. Martin (1984), Halliday and Hasan (1985), and Biber (1988) have developed and explored these concepts in textual analysis, trying to establish the limits of each of them and the way in which they relate. A short summary of the history of these concepts is given in Moessner (2001). Applications to modern examples of genres and text types are the works

by Swales (1987 and 1990), Biber (1988), Hammond et al. (1992), Bex (1996) and Bhatia (1993), among others. Historical discourse analyses from a genre perspective are Taavitsainen (1988 and 2001a), Pahta (1998), Alonso-Almeida (1998-1999), and Carroll (1999), to mention a few.

Biber (1988) and Martin (1984) define genre differently; however, their ideas about it are not mutually exclusive as they rather complement one another. Biber (1988: 170) comments on genre in the following way: *Genre categories are determined on the basis of external criteria relating to the speaker's purpose and topic; they are assigned on the basis of use rather than on the basis of form*. Martin (1984: 25), similarly, sees genres as “a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture”. Although Martin's claim is perhaps more descriptive than Biber's in the sense that he highlights the notion of stages in a genre description, both views coincide in the fact that genres are cultural constructs that aim at particular functions. Hasan (1985: 63-64) and Eggins (1994: 41) divide the association of the stages in a specific genre into two: (1) the generic structure potential, and (2) the actual generic potential. The former represents all the possible stages in a given genre, while the latter is the result of the application of the generic structure potential to a particular text.

Biber also introduces *topic* as a defining feature of genres, but to this the EAGLES team (1996) has argued that topic is expressed by means of vocabulary and this implies an internal linguistic feature.³ One clear example that stands out as an accepted genre is the recipe text, regardless of whether it aims at showing the preparation of a medical beverage, a culinary concoction or the directions for lace making (Carroll 2003).

A first diachronic study of considerable length is Görlach (1992), which studies the evolution of the recipe genre for cooking purposes from the Old English period to the Early Modern English period. His criteria for analysis consist of (a) social features, such as the audience and the language used, (b) technical features, such as the structure of the texts and the vocabulary stock, and finally, (c) linguistic features that involve these grammatical elements that characterise the texts. Görlach has advocated the importance of using stages in the generic description of the recipe; he refers to this internal division of the text as *standardisation of arrangement* (1992: 746). In this sense, Görlach's view defies the internal/external distinction that Biber proposes for a differentiation between genres and text types.

Text types are often defined in terms of their linguistic variables and internal organisation. Biber (1988: 70) uses this term to “refer to groupings of texts that

³ The Expert Advisory Group on Language Engineering Standards (EAGLES) works on the creation of a set of guidelines and recommendations for practice and research in speech and natural language processing. They are also engaged in the assessment and evaluation of corpora and other technological resources for the study of languages. This is an initiative of the European Commission in 1993.

are similar with respect to their linguistic form, irrespective of genre categories.” Letters, for instance, constitute a unique genre, but their linguistic realisations may imply different text types according to the user’s communicative needs. It is also true that one text type may be exemplified in different genres, as for example remedies and how-to-books, as pointed out by Biber (1989: 6). The classification of text types proposed by Werlich (1976) and followed by Biber (1989) includes description, narration, exposition, argumentation, and instruction.

In his textual analyses, Biber (1988) refers to sixteen groups of linguistic features that are practical in identifying text types, namely (a) tense and aspect markers, (b) place and time adverbials, (c) pronouns and pro-verbs, (d) questions, (e) nominal forms, (f) passives, (g) stative forms, (h) subordination features, (i) prepositional phrases, adjectives, and adverbs, (j) lexical specificity, (k) lexical classes, (l) modals, (m) specialized verb classes, (n) reduced forms and dispreferred structures, (o) coordination, and (p) negation. These features comprise morphological, syntactic and lexical criteria that altogether allow the identification of text types within Werlich’s taxonomy. I intend to follow these in my analysis from a functional perspective of medieval medical charms in English in section 4.

As for register, this has to do with the context of situation for a particular communicative event and limits the stylistic choices preferred in a text. For instance, a lecture given to university professors is confined to the academic register and would be linguistically manifested in a number of choices; such a selection of linguistic choices is probabilistic in the sense that it depends on the contextual constraints of register, but also of genre. Whittaker and Rojo (1999: 154) state the following with respect to the relationship between genre and register:

Features of the situation predict the possible linguistic realizations (areas from which lexical selections will be taken, role relations and the way they are expressed linguistically, as well as the ways the clauses are built up to make an effective message for the situation); but the way a text is structured semantically to achieve its purpose seems to belong to another, more abstract level of choice: that of genre.

Register does not distinguish between genre types. A sermon, a prayer, an epistle, etc. are genres, all of which belong to the register of religion; similarly, an indenture, an act and a contract belong to the legal register. In other words, register overlooks the variation imposed by Field (see below for this concept) in genre analysis to cover texts produced in likely situations.⁴ The study of register is highly productive for the study of language use in professional settings.

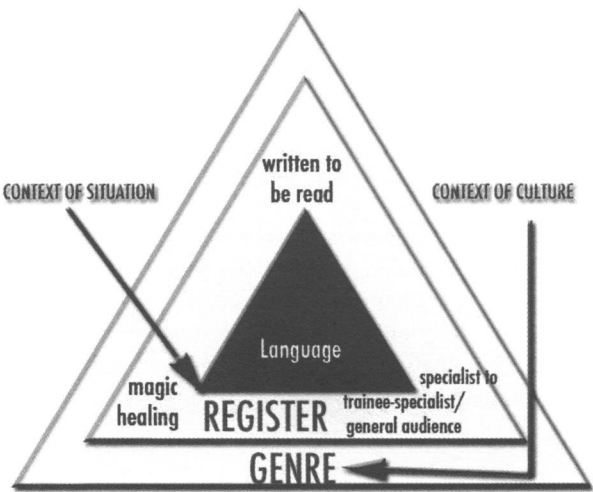
⁴ Eggins puts this in the following terms: *Genre and register are at two different levels of abstraction. Genre, or context of culture, can be seen as more abstract, more general – we can recognize a particular genre even if we are not sure exactly what the situational context is* (1994: 32).

For Halliday (1985a) and Eggins (1994: 54), register must be described in terms of three variables, namely *field* (“what the language is being used to talk about”), *mode* (“the role language is playing in the interaction”) and *tenor* (“the role relationships between the interactants”), all of which have strong implications for language use. This is so much the case that if one of these three components of genre is modified, a change of genre could be incurred. Halliday (1985b) describes three metafunctions related to the field, the tenor and the mode: the ideational, interpersonal and textual, respectively. In short, it suffices to say that (a) the ideational metafunction relates to expressing experiences and any type of contents, (b) the interpersonal has to do with roles and how actions are performed, and finally, (c) the textual metafunction implies the construction of the text. These metafunctions are fulfilled by selections related to (a) transitivity that involves processes, participants and circumstances (ideational), (b) modality and attitudinal lexis (interpersonal), and (c) a theme-rheme organization (textual). All this will be applied to charms in the next section.

4. Analysis of texts

In this section I will first study the texts in terms of cultural variables, and I will then highlight all the features concerning the situation. The way in which these two combine in a text and the lexicogrammatical choices imposed in the particular case of charms are given in the following illustration:

(8)



The external triangle represents the context of culture and how this is manifested in a particular genre in the form of goal oriented stages. The register, the inner white triangle, offers the three situational variables; they are the field, i.e. healing through magic, the tenor, i.e. a specialist to trainee or even another specialist or to a general type of audience, and finally, the mode, which implies that the text has been written to be read, in part or whole. The black triangle corresponds to the lexical and grammatical features that make up the text; this selection of linguistic choices is constrained in principle by the register and genre variables. I will comment on each of them in turn below. The linguistic features related to text type are included in the discussion on the context of culture in section 4.1.

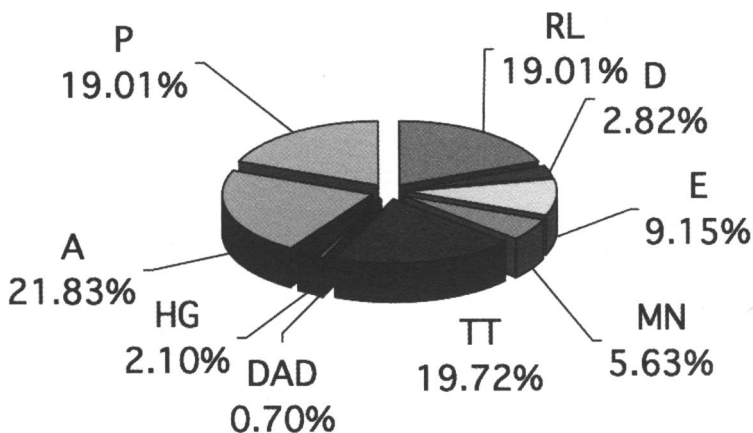
4.1. *Genre and the context of culture*

The first step in the analysis is the division of the texts into goal-oriented stages. The samples in our corpus reveal the generic structure potential below; the parentheses represent optional stages and the circumflex shows fixed order, whereas an asterisk implies variable position within the text:

- (9) (MN-MARGINAL NOTE) ^ (TT-TITLE) ^ (DAD-DIRECT ADDRESS TO DISEASE) ^ (HG-HERB GATHERING) ^ (P-PREPARATION) * (A-APPLICATION) * (RL-RITUAL LANGUAGE) * (D-DURATION) ^ (E-EVALUATION)

Using the functional labels given to the stages, we can easily deduct the type of cultural activity that is expected to be achieved by using the specific texts in a given situational and cultural context. The key stage in charms, in my view, is ritual language, which, although it is given here as optional, shows an extremely high frequency of occurrence, as observed in the following pie chart:

(10)



As seen in this chart, the most recurrent stages are A, TT, P and RL, in this order. The A, P and TT sections are not exclusive of the charm genre, as they occur in other genres like recipes (Taavitsainen 2001a, Carroll 1999, Alonso-Almeida 2000); the RL stage is far more defining, though not exclusive of the charm either. Prayers, for instance, present ritualistic language too, but the perlocutionary effects of prayers differ from charms in the sense that the primary function of the prayer is to praise God, rather than to seek an urgent solution for a disease.

For the description of each stage together with a description of their key linguistic realizations, I will concentrate on the following three texts that altogether exemplify all the stages in (9), above (notation of stages is given as subscript):

(11) *Text 1*

*A charme for the feloun:*_[TT] In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, amen._[RL] 'I conjure the, wilked feloun,_[DAD] in tho name of God al-weldyng of heven, erthe and helle and of tho sonne and of tho mone and of tho .vii. sterres and of all creatures and of all aungeles and of all the confessours, bisschopes and of all hundred abbotes redy to syng on mydwytur nyght,_[RL] that thu ne entre ne no lenger dwell,_[E] in tho name of tho Fader and of tho Sonne and of tho Holy Gost'_[RL]. Sey thus aboute the hors._[A] Hunt (1990: 97)

Schematic functional labelling: TT \neg *RL \wedge DAD \wedge E \wedge A

(12) *Text 2*

Tak on mysommer euen efter the sonn sett or one the morn or the sonn ryse & gedir pulioll royalle with the rutes, as mekill als the likes,_[HG] & dry it and kepe it to 3ole and lay 3ole nyghte appon the awtre & late it lygge to iij messes be songen ouer it & thu sall see it floresche all newe & new flores bryngen forthe. than tak it a-waye & kepe it,_[P] & when thu will, gif it hym that hase the feuer quartane on this wise,_[A] Stampe the flour & temper it with warm wyn,_[P] & gyf it hym to drynk,_[A] & ther-whills thu & he bothe says 3our Pater noster with Credo in Deum & Aue Maria,_[RL] (Ogden 1938: 60-61)

Schematic functional labelling: MN \wedge HG \wedge \neg {P \wedge A} \wedge RL.

(13) *Text 3*

Ffor de ffeueres._[TT] Take iij hostes & wryte jn the ferste,_[P] jn nomine patris pater est alpha & omega + & filij + filius est vita + spirito sancti + spiritus sanctus est remedium ... santatis + amen._[RL] Let hym ete thys ijii hostes in thre days ffastyng & segge _[A] iij patris & iij aues,_[RL] (Alonso-Almeida 2000: 304-305).

Schematic functional labelling: $TT \wedge P * \neg\{RL\} \wedge A \wedge D$

In the examples above, the sign \neg indicates a recursive stage or, if preceding braces, it manifests the repetition of a stage group. The three texts belong to the same genre, i.e. the charm, although the contents vary from one another, but, as I said in section 3, topic does not determine genre type. The first example deals with a disease called *felon* 'whitlow', whereas the other two seek to cure fever. According to the context of culture, these texts aim at curing disease by means of the (super)natural powers of words, objects or plants.

The actual generic structures confirm the idea of these texts as instances of charms by means of the use of certain stages that express instruction and, in the specific cases of these samples, by the use of the RL stages. The RL stage stands as a defining feature of charms when confronted with the allied recipe genre, whose generic structure potential requires a set of obligatory stages, such as P.⁵ None of the stages appears to be compulsory in the charm, and this poses some methodological problems as to the identification of the charm in genre terms. Probably it is in the particular combination of stages in (9) that we have the answer to the problem of charm identification, and not just in the iterative presence of one stage in all charms. It is clear by now that, because the intention of the charm is to offer guidance to carry out a magical act or preparation, the text type used in all samples is instruction. The linguistic features seen in the discussion of the texts below will further support this conclusion.

To continue with the similarity between the recipe and the charm for medical purposes, we have to admit that both types are related genres in the sense that they guide the reader through the accomplishment of a task for healing the sick. The difference in procedure reflected in the use of certain stages guarantees a difference in genre in the case of the charm. For instance, the stages DAD and RL are exclusive to this type of text, with the latter being used only when the activation of external forces for curing the sick is sought, and not when other aims are pursued (as in the *efficacy statements* described in recipes by Hunt (1990), Jones (1998), Taavitsainen (2001a) and Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu (2002)).

For the sake of clarity, I will summarise the purposes and linguistic features of each stage in (9) in the three charts below according to Eggins and Martin (1997: 246); I will comment on them afterwards:

⁵ See Carroll (1998).

(14) *Text 1*

STAGES	PURPOSE	KEY LINGUISTIC REALIZATIONS
TITLE – TT	To indicate what the charm is good for. To indicate the beginning of the charm.	Noun phrases; relation of purpose.
RITUAL LANGUAGE – RL	To offer the words and institutionalised prayers that must be recited in order to exhort the disease to depart, and to activate the action of a supernatural force to assist the sick animal.	Lexis of religion, incl. biblical lexis related to the <i>Genesis</i> (<i>God, bisschopes, abbotes, aungeles, confessours, Fader, Sonne, HolyGost</i> and <i>heven, erthe, hel, sonne, monne, sterres, creatures</i>); Latin phrase (code-switching): institutionalised religious expressions; coordinated prepositional nominal groups joined by <i>et</i> .
DIRECT ADDRESS TO DISEASE – DAD	To call the disease upon which the supernatural forces must act.	Proposal declarative (command); ⁶ first singular pronoun as subject expressing a direct command; second person as recipient to perform an activity (perlocutionary effect: to follow instructions). Lexis of evil (<i>wilked, feloun</i>) and magic (<i>conjure</i>).
EVALUATION – E	To describe the expected result intended with the conjuration.	Proposal declarative (command); ¹ double negative (<i>ne... ne...</i>); thematizing of the object in the DAD stage (<i>thu</i>); negative time adverbial (<i>no lenger</i>).
APPLICATION – A	To perform the ritual event.	Direct imperative (<i>sey thus...</i>); prepositional nominal group introducing recipient (<i>aboute the hors</i>).

⁶ Commands can be expressed congruently through the use of imperatives, or less congruently by modulated declaratives (clauses whose verbal group contain a modal verb) and proposal declaratives (clauses whose main verb is given in the present tense), as in *I think you should stop complaining now* and *You keep the interest rates low or I guess you could not be part of our team the next semester*, respectively. The verb groups have been underlined for reference in the examples.

(15) *Text 2*

STAGES	PURPOSE	KEY LINGUISTIC REALIZATIONS
MARGINAL NOTE – MN	To show the contents of the text. To visually indicate the beginning of a new text to the reader.	Nominal group filled by pronoun (<i>an other</i>); cohesive function
HERB GATHERING – HG	To give instructions about when and how to collect a herb so that it keeps its complete magical and natural properties.	Direct imperatives (<i>tak, gedir</i>); coordinated time adverbial clauses (<i>euen after the... or one the morn...</i>); lexis related to time (<i>mysommer, sonn, sett, one, morn, efter, ryse</i>); lexis related to plants (<i>pulioll royalle, rutes</i>).
PREPARATION – P	To give the directions to perform the ritualistic actions with the collected herbs so that they maintain their properties. To show how to make a herbal remedy using the collected herbs.	Direct imperatives (<i>dry, lay, late, stampe, temper</i>); extensive use of coordination with temporal value (&); verb with coercive meaning (<i>late</i>); no deletion of the object pronoun in coordinated sequences (<i>dry it... kepe it... late it... be songen ouer it... thus all see it... take it a-waye & kepe it</i>); ⁷ lexis related to the field of cooking (<i>stampe, flour, temper, warm wyn</i>)
APPLICATION – A	To show how to administer the finished product to the sick.	Adverbial clause of time (<i>when</i>); relative clause in subject position (<i>hym that hase the feuer</i>); verbs with coercive meaning (<i>gif, gyf</i>); use of second person pronoun in thematic position (<i>thu will</i>); modulated declarative referring to the reader (expression of involvement).
RITUAL LANGUAGE – RL	To offer institutionalised prayers that must be recited in order to beg God's grace to complement the effects of the product.	Use of personal pronouns in thematic position (<i>thu & he</i>); proposal declarative (a command); lexis related to religion (<i>Pater noster, Credo, Aue Maria</i>).

⁷ See Culy (1996) in this respect in the case of the recipe.

(16) *Text 3*

STAGES	PURPOSE	KEY LINGUISTIC REALIZATIONS
TITLE – TT	To indicate what the charm is good for. To indicate the beginning of the charm.	Prepositional nominal group; purpose.
PREPARATION – P	To give the ingredient needed for the ritual, and to show what to do with it.	Direct imperatives (<i>take, wryte</i>); lexis of religion (<i>hostes</i>); adverbial of time (<i>jn the ferste</i>).
RITUAL LANGUAGE – RL	To offer the magical words for the remedy. To indicate the prayers to be recited once the product has been taken.	Code switching: Latin words (<i>jn nomine patris pater est... amen</i>); crosses surrounding Latin words (semiotic). Lexis of religion (<i>patris, aues</i>)
APPLICATION – A	To show how the remedy should be used.	Direct imperatives (<i>let, segge</i>); verbs with coercive meaning (<i>let</i>); third person singular object pronoun (<i>hym</i>) functioning as subject of the infinitive clause (<i>...ete thys ijii hostes</i>).
DURATION OF APPLICATION – D	To inform about the length of remedy application.	Nominal group with preposition; time adverbial.

The schematic representations in the charts above show an organisation of contents that is parallel to that found in medieval recipes (Taavitsainen 2001a); as I have already pointed out, the text type used in both genres is instructive. Briefly, the contents of the stages in a charm are varied, but all of them have a very clear function so that the text as a whole can achieve its social goal. The MN and the TT stages present very similar purposes: (i) to indicate the beginning of the text, and (ii) to show what the charm is for. The main distinction of these two stages largely concerns the *mise-en-page* of the text in the original, as the MN stage appears outside the writing space rather than in the running text. This gives this part a further function, since it indicates visually the location of the charm, so a simple skimming of the manuscript is enough to detect the required healing remedy. In the examples, these stages are mainly realised by nominal groups that may indicate purpose, normally introduced by the particle *for* (*for de ffeueres*), as in the case of Text 3. The nominal group in Text 2 is filled by a pronoun (*an other*), which has a cohesive function; in other words, the pronoun functions as an anaphoric device and the reader must look backwards in the text for reference. Thus, this charm connects with the immediately preceding one, i.e. *The feuer that is called the quartane*. However, the use of this device does not guarantee that the texts linked represent the same genre. As a matter of fact, the series of recipes following the charm in Text 2 is also introduced by the anaphoric *an other*.

The rest of the MN and TT stages in our corpus will fall into one of the following schemes below. The parentheses show optional elements, whereas the square brackets indicate the possible components of a structure in a higher rank:

- (17) **English** (for) Nominal Group [N/Pron. + (relative clause)]
(for) to + infinitive + (complement/clause)

- e.g. a. *a charme*
 b. *Nota. A charme for the feuers. Nota bene*
 c. *An other that is a spice for the tothwerke*
 d. *Ffor men that may nou3t slepe*
 e. *For to staunche blode*

Latin (*aliud*) + noun + *contra* + ablative
(*ad*) + passive participle accusative + accusative + (Prep.P [Prep. + noun])
Item + noun + *pro* + noun

- e.g. a. *Aliud carmen*
 b. *Carmen contra fibre*
 c. *Ad restringendum sanguinem*
 d. *Item conjuratio pro sanguine*

As seen from the examples above, one of the main features of this part of charms is code switching, in this case marked by the use of Latin expressions. However, titles and marginal notes in Latin do not exceed in number those given in English. Pahta (2004a: 90-1) claims that the presence of Latin in this particular situation has the metatextual function of serving as a marker for text opening. In our corpus Latin also fulfils other functions; I shall comment on these, as described in Pahta (2004a), in due time.

An important aspect of this stage is the presence of the terminology related to genre, such as *carmen* (two occurrences) and *charme* (six occurrences). This fact is relevant for genre purposes because it reveals that the scribes were fully conscious of the type of text they were writing or collecting. This represents a cultural feature that serves the purpose of differentiating the charm from neighbouring genres, such as the recipe and the prayer. The presence of the term *charm* seems to be more institutionalized than the term *recipe* in this period. Görlach (1992: 745) claims that the presence of this terminology reveals information about the texts and that compilers could easily identify them for compilation. In the case of the recipe, Görlach (1992: 745) states that the term *recipe* “has had an age-old name designating the particular text type”; Carroll (1997: 48), however, has proven that this term is not as old as suggested by Görlach. The earliest example she found belongs to the

year 1353, and only one occurrence has been detected in her instructional corpus of 101.680 words. In my edition of Glasgow University Library, Hunter 185 (fifteenth century), I recorded only one instance of the term, as *recet*.

The next optional stage is DAD the function of which is to exhort the disease to leave the body. The invocation is performed in linguistic terms by the proposal declarative expressing a command *I conjure the, wilked feloun*, which avoids the use of the direct imperative. This means that there is a distinction between what is implied, i.e. the command, and how this is linguistically expressed, i.e. the use of the present simple tense rather than the imperative form. This is known as *interpersonal grammatical metaphor* in functional terms (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 626-635); this type of metaphor seeks to “make selections more explicit” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 636). Another aspect of this specific example is the presence of the first and second singular personal pronouns; *I* occupies the thematic position and functions as the Actor of the entire process. The Goal is fulfilled by *the*, which, given in Rheme position, serves later as the Actor of the clause in the evaluation section of this charm, i.e. *that thu ne entre ne no lenger dwell*, which I will comment on in due time.

The HG stage contains information regarding when and how a specific herb should be gathered so that it will maintain its powers completely. One of the main features in this stage is the presence of directives to guide the process of collection. Commands are congruently construed with the direct imperatives *tak* and *gedir*, and along with this feature, there are connectives realised by coordinated time adverbials. The attributes mentioned so far are characteristic of the instructive text type, and these choices are predominant throughout, as we shall see in the analysis of the texts. Lexically, this part is typified by a number of expressions related to time (*mysommer, sonne sett, the morn, sonn ryse*) and, logically, to plants (*pulioll royalle, rutes*). Another example of the HG stage is found in Ogden (1938: 18) in a charm entitled *To make a spyce for the tothwerke: Tak lij leues of sawge gedirde on a foure sqwarede bedde on crose from on cornere to an other, and saye at the pullynge of euer ilk a lefe* (the RL section follows this section). Comparing this example with Text 2, we can see that both are identically made in terms of language use except for the lexis related to time; however, the latter follows the description offered for a charm against *fever quartain* in the fact that direct imperatives are used and the lexis is related to plants, such as *leues of sawge* and *lefe*.

The function of the P stage can be any of the following three: (i) to show how to perform a ritualistic action, (ii) to describe how a remedy must be elaborated, or (iii) to give the ingredients needed to produce a remedy. This last function is realised in a different stage in the case of the recipe as described by Görlach (1992) and Taavitsainen (2001a), among others. However, I think that, in the case of the charm, the ingredients are so connected with the elaboration process that it makes more sense not to see ingredients as another stage. As a matter of fact, keeping them as two different stages, namely the *ingredients* stage and the *preparation* stage, in

my analysis resulted in a very imprecise description of the charm. As I would have needed to explain the amalgamation of these two sections as an exception to the structure potential on numerous occasions, it is more effective to see these two parts as only one.

As already pointed out above, the use of commands is manifested by the occurrence of direct imperatives: *dry*, *lay*, *late*, *stampe*, *temper* (in the example in (12), and *take*, *wryte* in (13). Verbs related to cooking and to the handling of ingredients are extremely characteristic of this section, as happens in the case of recipes. Culinary verbs represent examples of Processes of a transformative elaborating type. In this case, these are *dry*, *stampe* and *temper*. The Actor in the clauses where these verbs are embedded is elided although it is also true that it is easily retrieved through context; however, the pronoun deducted is not part of the theme as such, and the Process occupies the thematic position as Predicator. This is only possible in the case of the imperative clause (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 77). The Goal is filled by the pronoun *it* in the majority of the instances.

- (18) ...dry it and kepe it to 3ole and lay 3ole nyghte appon the awtre & late it lygge to iij messes be songen ouer it & thu sall see it floresche all newe & new flores bryngen forthe. than tak it a-waye & kepe it... Stampe the flour & temper it with warm wyn.

The Process in all the examples here involves two participants, as seen in table (19), below; one performs the action and the second receives the benefits of that action. In this particular case, the clauses are transitive material clauses and the Process represents a transformative⁸ elaboration of the Goal, since it only modifies its previous state somehow. This feature is also typical of recipe texts, regardless of the topic (Alonso Almeida 1998-99).

(19)

(You)	dry	it (= the pulioll royalle)
(You)	stampe	the flour
(You)	temper	it (= the flour)
Actor	Process Transformation Elaborating	Goal
nominal group	verbal group	nominal group
	Unmarked theme → Predicator	Rheme

⁸ Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 185-186) puts it in the following terms: *In a transformative clause, the outcome is the change of some aspect of an already existing Actor ('intransitive') or Goal ('transitive').*

Other verbs serving as Process of transformative elaboration in our corpus are contained in the following imperative clauses (underlined here only): & braye the leues all to powder... and blende all foure to-gedir (Ogden 1938: 18), *Tak a coluer hede and a frogeshewed and mak powder* (Braekman 1986: 130), and *therwith steke a swyn* (Alonso Almeida 2000: 300-301), to give a few examples. Other transformative clauses typically found in this stage offer verbs such as *lay* and *tak*, which serve as Processes of extension and enhancement. They are enhancing Processes in the sense that the outcome of the activity is a different location of the objects. The verb *wryte* & *wryte jn the ferste jn nomine patris* in example (13) and *wryte in his fronte +a + g + l + a* in Ogden (1938: 48) works in different ways. In the case of the former it serves as a Process of a creative clause since it fulfils the condition of “the coming into existence of ... the Goal” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 184); here the magical letters have been added generating the amulet that would cure the sick person. As for the latter, *wryte* functions exactly in the same way as *lay* and *tak*; in this case, the transference of the letters to the forehead does not generate any new object, rather a relocation of the letters.

To finish the description of the P section, we must not overlook a further outstanding linguistic feature of this stage, namely the use of coordinators with a temporal value; these are *and*⁹ and *than*, in the examples above. This use of *and* and *and*-combinations in paratactic enhancement¹⁰ is not exclusive of the P stage, but it extends to almost all parts of the charm, as seen in the text below (classified as type 1 in Hunt’s classification); my interpretation of the meaning is inserted in square brackets:

- (20) To make a spyce for the tothwerke: Tak lij leues of sawge gedirde on a foure squareded bedde on crose from on conereto an other, **and** [= ‘at that time’] saye at the pullynge of euer ilk a lefe a Pater noster and Aue Maria, **and than** [= ‘after’] tak two tyle stones **and** [= ‘at that time’] hete tham in the fire, **and** [= ‘after’] thab tak als mekill salte als the mountenaunce of a 3olke of an egge **and** [= ‘at that time’] laye it on the stone on brede **and** [= ‘after’] tak an halpeny worthe of powder of pepir **and** [= ‘at that time’] laye on brede appon the salte **and than** [= ‘after’] laye the leues abown appon ilkan by other ay two & two to-gedir **and than** [= ‘after’] laye the tother stone abown als hate als it may be. Bot sett on foure cobills stanes that it ne touche not the leues, **and when** the leues are dryede ynowghe & baken ymelle the stones, tak than & [= ‘at that time’] braye the leues all to powder and the

⁹ For the value of *and* with a temporal meaning in medieval recipes, see Alonso-Almeida (1998-1999).

¹⁰ Enhancement is defined in the following terms: *In enhancement one clause (or subcomplex) enhances the meaning of another by qualifying it in one of a number of possible ways: by reference to time, place, manner, cause or condition* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 410).

same pepir with the salte that was baken **and than** [= 'after'] tak ther-to an halpenyworth of powdir of licoresse **and** [= 'at that time'] blende all foure to-gedir **and** [= 'after'] putt it in a bleddir, **and than** [= 'after'] late hym that hase the tothwerke tak als mekill als a bene **and** [= 'at that time'] lay to the tothe that werkes on nyghte **when** he gose to bedde **and** [= 'at that time'] lye down on that sam syde that werkes **and** [= 'at that time'] holde the powder to the tothe als wele als he may **&** [= 'after'] he sall hele (Ogden 1938: 18).

In this example three conjunctions are used: (i) *and*, (ii) *then* and (iii) *when*. All of them are of a temporal type and organise the information according to chronological order in the sequence of events. As seen in the text, *and* is used in isolation and combined with *than* and *when*. The use of *when* marks a hypotactic rather than a paratactic relation in the two occurrences here: (i) ...*and when the leues are dryede ynowghe & baken ymelle the stone, tak than & braye the leues*, (ii) ...*lay to the tothe that werkes on nyghte when he gose to bedde*.

Both *and* in its full form and as the ampersand (&) may express that the action is done at the same time of the previous one, or that the action is performed later than the previous one. In the case of *and than* it always comes to mean a later event in time.¹¹ Narrative charms also show this use of *and* to describe stories based on Biblical motifs on which the charm is based. In the following example, note that asyndeton also plays a fundamental role, as the absence of the marker does not undermine the manifestation of a temporal sequencing:

- (21) Item conjuratio pro sanguine: In nomine Patris etc. 'Oure lord was borne in Bethleem + Ø [= 'later'] he was howen in Jerusalem + Ø [= 'later'] he was bapteste in flum Jordane + **whan** he bapteste therynne + the flode hit stod + so stynte the blode + thorowe the vertue of hem and the fy ve woundes that he suffred + on the verray cros + and therto I worchip the fyve woundes with fyve Pater Noster that he hele this wounde **and** [= 'at that time'] stynte the blode and our lady whit .v. Ave in the worchip of the fyve bloody terus that scho weppud **whan** scho sye hym on the verray cros' (MS London BL, Royal 12 G IV, s. XIV, f.97rb) in Hunt (1990: 87).

The A stage shows how to perform the ritual action or how the finished product should be administered. Linguistically it is characterised by (i) the presence of direct imperatives, (ii) verbs with coercive meaning, and (iii) the use of personal pronouns, both in subject and object position. Direct commands in the examples

¹¹ Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 415n) comments on this strategy in the following way: *In temporally organized discourse such as narrative and procedure, clause complexes where the continuing clauses are only marked by and typically represent semantic sequences of temporal succession.*

are *sey thus aboute the hors* in example (11), *gif it hym* and *gyf it hym to drynk* in example (12), and *let hym ete* in example (13). The first of the examples contains the verb in the imperative followed by the Goal (*thus*) and by the Recipient with locative meaning (*aboute the hors*), which is given in the form of a nominal group with a preposition. As for the other three instances of directives, they exemplify the second feature of the A stage, i.e. verbs with coercive meaning.

Gif (*gyf*) and *let* are cases of verbs serving as Processes of extending possession in elaborative clauses, as both have a recipient that receives something in the equation *provide somebody with something*, e.g. *gif* (Process) *it* (Goal) *hym* (Recipient). The interpretation of this type of utterances manifestly involves a command, as there is some sort of obligation to carry out the activity of ingesting or drinking the finished product. Only by taking the result of the preparation can the patient overcome the disease.

The last element strongly associated with this stage relates to the use of personal pronouns. These are *thu* in (12) in subject, thematic position, and *it/hym* in object, rheme position. The object pronouns fill the function of Goal and Recipient within the clauses where they occur, as already mentioned. The subject pronoun *thu* is more interesting for the implications it has for register, as it stands out as a mark of involvement. Similarly, in the RL section, the pronouns *he* and *thu* are used in the thematic position with the intention of showing the power relationship between the writer and the reader. I shall describe this in detail in section 4.2, below.

The function of the RL stage is to offer the words and prayers needed for the implementation of the charm. Apart from the existence of pronouns and proposal declaratives, this stage features a lexical variety strongly associated with religion as well as ample use of the classical languages and gibberish. This use of classical languages is described in Pahta (2004a: 88) in the following terms:

Some Latin prefabricated utterances act as performatives, and have a ‘doing-it-by-saying-it’ effect. As the performatives in the texts are connected with medicinal powers, they can also be seen as part of the special language of contemporary medical practice. Like in prayers, the function of the code is to enhance the power and efficacy of the words... A related group of switches contains instances of Latin, sometimes combined with transliterated Greek or Hebrew, in religious charms for medical purposes.

The vocabulary related to religion is as shown in the chart included below in (22). The first row refers to the occurrences of code switched lexis overall in the entire corpus, whereas the second row shows the distributional proportion of these words within the field of religion. The count includes Latin and English words; however the figures for these are given separately. For the sake of clarity, the labels in the chart refer to W(ord) G(roup) rather than to specific items. The key for each label is given in the caption after the chart. WG6, for instance, refers to the words *amen*, *aue*

(*auēs, aueys*), *nomen* (*nomine*) and their variants. In this example WG6 represents 4.27 percent of the religious lexis, and 0.58 percent of the total.

(22)

W G 1	W G 2	W G 3	W G 4	W G 5	W G 6	W G 7	W G 8	W G 9	W G 10	W G 11	W G 12	W G 13	W G 14	W G 15
7.73	4.53	4.27	3.47	3.2	2.93	2.67	2.4	1.87	1.6	1.33	1.07	0.8	0.53	0.27
1.06	0.62	0.58	0.47	0.44	0.4	0.37	0.33	0.26	0.22	0.18	0.15	0.11	0.07	0.04

Key: WG1: *pater, paster, patre, patris* WG2: *blode, blodi, blody*; *sancta(m), sancto, sancte, sancti, sanctus* WG3 *christe, christi, christum, christus* WG4 *crois, cros, cros(s)e; spiritu(s), spirito* WG5 *filii, filij, filius; noster, nostri* WG6 *amen; aue, auēs, aueys; nomen, nomine* WG7 *mari, maria, marie* WG8 *god(d)(e)* WG9 *crist(e)(s); domine, domini, dominus; ihesu(s); our(e); worchip, worship* WG10 *alpha; charm; crucem, crucis, crux; messe(s); seint, sent, sen, seynt* WG11 *oble(s)* WG12 *ageos, agio, agyos; dolore(m); fratres; haly, holy; lord(e); sanguine(m), sanguis; virga, virgine, virgines; WG13 bedle(e)m, bethleem; grace; hominis, hominum, homo; jop(es); Jordan(e); lady; leters, lettris, lettres; loue, love, loues; redemit, redimere; woundes; WG14 bapteste; carmen; fader, fadur; flessch; flod(e); flum; honore(m); hostes; imperat; longeus, lomgius; mater, matrix; montem; oleo, oleum; omega, passion; plaga(m); trinite, trinitatem; water* WG15 *adonay; angelum; ascension; atانات; beate; conjuratio; credo; dampnacionibus; deo, deum; exaltacion; galilei; godefriday; gost; hebreus; honour; jerusalem; jewes; lucem; margerete; messias; missam; moute; mychaelium; osculorum; redemptorem; regnat; sabaoth; salomy; santatis.*

Besides these words that are fully intelligible for those instructed in English and Latin, there is a set of letters and strange words whose meanings are not as clear. This is so much so that some represent examples of gibberish, as in the following examples:

(23)

- a. Or tak the blode of hym that bledis & wryte in his fronte + a + g + l + a + & he sal sone stanche (Ogden 1938: 48).
- b. Tak & write thir wordis in buttre or in chese & gare hir ett it: Sator sarepo tenet opera rotas (Ogden 1938: 57).¹²
- c. Bynd yt betwene thy thyys &, 3if thou leuestd nau3t me, tak & wryt hem vp on a knyf. Therwyth steke a swyn & the rennyng of the man schal be muche the lasse. thes beth the lettris: + p + G + C + p + e + u + o + t + a + ges

¹² For information on the *sator-arepo* square charm, see Haverfield (1899), McBryde (1907), Darmstaedter (1932), and Gwyn Griffiths (1971).

- + ij + u + iij + etc. + Arisme cladauis +++ + Arisme cladauis +++ + Arisme cladauis +++ (Alonso-Almeida 2000: 300-301).
- d. Ffor fere. Wryt thys: mounte secgion spontaneam honorem deo & patre lybacionem. Draw the wryt euere that ffuere (Alonso-Almeida 2000: 307).

The D stage describes how long the remedy or ritual should be applied. In the example in (13), this is expressed by means of an adverbial of time, as follows: *in three days*. The rest of the examples are very much of the same type, and hence I will not concentrate on them. Finally the E stage explains the expected outcome after the remedy (product or ritual) has been adequately applied. The example in (11) *that thu ne entre ne no lenger dwell* expresses a directive in the form of a proposal declarative. The use of negative particles is outstanding, although the idea for the sick person is obviously a positive resolution of the problem. Note that the thematizing of the object in the DAD stage, i.e. *thu*, strongly connects the clauses in DAD and E: one introduces the conjuration while the other expresses the expected result of that conjuration. Other E stages in our corpus are:

- (24) a. he sall hele (Ogden 1938: 18).
 b. he sal sone stonche (Ogden 1938: 48).
 c. als scho es delyuered (Ogden 1938: 57).
 d. when he es hale (Ogden 1938: 63).
 e. alle ye wormes shuln gon out of his bely (Jones 1997: 31).
 f. they [woundes] shalle fare wele (Braekman 1986: 25)

The majority of the clauses in (24) above present the Recipient of the Process in thematic position, as *he* in a, b, and d; and *scho* in c. In d, the theme is marked by the presence of *when*, and in c it is marked by *als*, whereas the others stand as unmarked themes. The last two examples offer an Actor in thematic position and the verbs serving as a Process of extension, *shuln gon out* and *shalle fare wele*. Note that, none of the cases show the patient's involvement in his/her recovery, rather they simply appear as the beneficiary of the charm effects. The presence of *shall* in four of the examples indicates a future to come on the condition that the ritualistic intervention is made. Examples c and d realise the same function by using *als* and *when* initially in the clause. We will see this involvement of participants in our discussion of the register variables in the next section.

4.2. Register and the context of situation

In this section I shall analyse the register variables for Field, Mode and Tenor. These are summarised in Table (25), below, for the texts discussed in section 4.1. I shall comment on each aspect separately:

(25) Register variables in the 3 texts

REGISTER VARIABLE	Text 1 <i>A charme for the feloun</i>	Text 2 <i>An other that is called the quartane</i>	Text 3 <i>Ffor de ffeueres</i>
FIELD	Directions to produce a conjuration to cure the felon. No previous knowledge of magic is presupposed. Assumed previous knowledge of the performative of the sign of the cross.	Directions on how to cure a specific type of fever by using a plant with magical properties and also on how to keep the plant properties. No assumed knowledge of magic, but certain knowledge of Christian prayers is expected.	Directions to carry out a ritual practice with hosts to cure the fever. No assumed knowledge of magic.
MODE	High interpersonal distance, closer to written language. More institutionalised. Written to be read. Not face to face. Language as action. Not spontaneous. Not casual.	Low interpersonal distance, closer to spoken language. Written to be read. Not face to face. Language as action. Not spontaneous. Not casual.	Average interpersonal distance, halfway between the spoken and written language. Written to be read. Not face to face. Language as action. Not spontaneous. Not casual.
TENOR	<u>Either</u> specialist to trainee <u>or</u> specialist to specialist. Power difference and low affective involvement: guidance is given in a formal, highly institutionalised type of language. <u>D e t a c h m e n t</u> . Writer reproduces conjuration.	<u>Either</u> specialist to trainee <u>or</u> specialist to specialist. Some degree of affective involvement: reference to the reader. Hierarchic relationship (use of imperatives): writer shows his knowledge and compels readers to proceed as given.	<u>Either</u> specialist to trainee <u>or</u> specialist to specialist. Low affective involvement. Unequal power (imperatives).

Field

The variables in Field depend on the choices of transitivity and lexis. In text 1, the most obvious participant is the writer who offers the directions. However, as this is a conjuration that is intended for oral performance, we should bear in mind that the situation changes once it is recited and the reader takes over the role the

writer plays here. The felon that the charm is intended to counteract only appears as the Actor of the clause on one occasion, when the person reciting the conjuration manifests the obligation to fulfil an action: *thu ne entre ne no lenger dwell*. The recipient of the benefit of the charm is only named at the end of the text when the application is described.

In Texts 2 and 3, the most active participants are to be retrieved by context, as the majority of the clauses are written with imperatives. Obviously, the interpretation of these commands allows us to assign the role of Actor to a hypothetical *you* as the performer of the actions listed. This is much clearer in Text 2, which mentions *thu* three times in thematic position: *& thu sall see it, ...when thu will..., ther-whills thu & he bothe says*. In this last instance of *thu*, the beneficiary of the charm, the Recipient, is used as Actor for the first and only time. Previously the beneficiary has only been given in object form with no active participation in the configuration of the charm. Similarly, *hym* functions as Recipient in Text 3 and it is not an active participant.

Note, however, that the topics of the charms are the felon in Text 1 and the fever in the cases of Texts 2 and 3. These are encoded linguistically by means of (a) a nominal group functioning as the Goal and Actor of material clauses, *I conjure thu...* and *thu ne entre ne no lenger dwell* in Text 1, (b) a relational process in Text 2, *gif it hym that hase the feuer quartane* (Text 2), and (c) a nominal group (adverbial of purpose) in the title of Text 3 *ffor de ffeueres*.

There are no explicit expressions qualifying the participants, save for one negative adjective that applies to the disease: *wilked*. The presence of Latin in Text 3 also presupposes some knowledge of Latin on the part of the reader; in all cases, knowledge of Christian prayers and the paralinguistic actions associated with prayers, such as the sign of the cross is expected. The lexical pattern most recurrent in all the three texts is connected with religion (*God, confessours, bisschopes, abbots, Fader, Sonne, messes, hostes, Pater noster, Credo, Deum, Aue Maria*, etc.). This is the most relevant lexical pattern for the configuration of the charm. Other semantic domains in the texts include vocabulary related to cooking (*stampe, temper, warm wyn, ete*) and performative verbs related to writing and saying (*wryte, segge, conjure, syng, sey, be songen ouer, says*). The combination of these lexical strings characterises the fact that the charm has been written to be carried out both manually and orally.

Tenor

The variables in Tenor depend on Mood and Subject selection. In all the texts, directives have been realised either by means of proposal declaratives (*I conjure the, that thu ne entre ne no lenger dwell*), or congruently by the use of direct imperatives (*sey thus aboute the horse, tak on mysommer euen efter the son sett, gedir pulioll, dry it and kepe it, take it a-way, gif it hym, take iij hostes & wryte jn the ferste*). This manifests the power position of the writer with respect to the reader, as is

also seen in the variables of Mode, below. The writer shows his expertise in giving directions to achieve a ritualistic remedy to cure a disease; by doing so, he positions himself in a higher rank with respect to the reader, who must follow the steps to succeed in the preparation.

The subjects in the texts differ from one another. The subjects in Text 1 shift from the writer (one occurrence) to the disease (one occurrence), but even in the latter, the author shows his superiority through a command. The subject in Text 2 is unequivocally *you*, as retrieved from the linguistic context exemplified by the directives. Similarly, the most repetitive subject in Text 3 is *you*, as suggested by the use of the imperatives and, also, the sign of the cross. One of the three components in recitation of the sign of the cross (namely Father, Son or Holy Spirit) is used as Subject at least once.

Mode

The variables in Mode are shown by nominalisations and theme choice. The texts show few cases of the former; as a matter of fact, only three occurrences of nominalizations are detected in Text 1: *al-wendyng*, *creatures* and *confessours*. This low number of nominalizations combines with a high lexical density in this text of words, such as *God*, *heven*, *erthe*, *helle*, *sonne*, *mone*, *sterres*, *aungeles*, *bisschopes*, *abbots*, *mydwyntur nyght*, *Fader*, *Sonne*, and *Holy Gost* to create an effect of institutionalised authority to empower the ritual event for effectiveness. We should also note that these words are given in a set of co-ordinated *of*-structures that creates a more monotonous rhythm. The other two texts offer the following nominalisations, which do not carry any meaningful load for their construction in this ritualistic situation: *sett* and *ryse* (Text 2) and *fastyng* (Text 3).

The thematic organisation reveals these representations in each text (theme given in italics):

(26) Text 1

	TEXTUAL THEME	INTERPERSONAL THEME	THEME SELECTION
<i>I</i> conjure the, wilked feloun	-	-	unmarked
<i>That thu</i> ne entre ne no lenger dwell	+	-	unmarked
<i>sey</i> thus aboute the hors	-	-	unmarked

Text 2

	TEXTUAL THEME	INTERPERSONAL THEME	THEME SELECTION
<i>Tak on mysommer euen efter the sonn sett</i>	-	-	unmarked
<i>& gedir</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>als the likes</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>& dry it</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>and kepe it</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>and lay 3ole nyghte</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>& late it</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>& thu sall see it</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>than tak it a-waye</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>when thu will</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>&... gif it hym</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>Stampe the flour</i>	-	-	unmarked
<i>& temper it with warm wyn</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>& gyf it hym to drynk</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>& ther-whills thu & he bothe says 3our Pater noster with Credo</i>	+	-	unmarked

Text 3

	TEXTUAL THEME	INTERPERSONAL THEME	THEME SELECTION
<i>Take iiij hostes</i>	-	-	unmarked
<i>& wryte jn the ferste</i>	+	-	unmarked
<i>pater est alpha & omega</i>	-	-	unmarked
<i>filius est vita</i>	-	-	unmarked
<i>spiritus sanctus est remedium</i>	-	-	unmarked
<i>Let hym</i>	-	-	unmarked

As shown in the representations of themes above, Text 2 stands in sharp contrast with the other two. It is organised following a sequence of textual themes joined by the use of the additive conjunctive adjunct *and* (&) preceding an imperative form. The themes in this paragraph are embodied by the Processes representing steps to obtain the final therapeutic solution. The rheme in this text is constituted either by the elements needed for the production of the remedy or by the Recipient. This makes a very clear picture of the writer’s concerns, that is, the description of the procedure. The thematic lines in Text 1 and 3 manifest the themes of each charm; it is obvious that Text 1 deals with the power tension between the enchanter (*I- sey*) and the disease (*thou*). In the case of *sey*, this refers to the actual performer of the

charm every time the conjuration is recited. Likewise, Text 3 focuses directly on the elaboration and application of the charm, as seen in its thematic line *Take... & wryte... pater... filius... spiritus... let*. Finally, the lack of interpersonal themes is evidence for the little involvement of the writers.

One outstanding aspect in Text 3 is the presence of interpolations taken from the sign of the cross recitation; such interpolations are intended for performance during the ritual: *in nomine patris pater est alpha & omega + & filij + filius est vita + spirito sancti + spiritus sanctus est remedium ... santatis + amen*. These also has a metatextual function as they separate the ritual words within the RL stage. The words of the gesture are in turn visually indicated by the use of crosses surrounding them.

In short, the presence of some nominalised forms together with the significant variety of themes in Text 1 increases the author's interpersonal and experiential distance. This distance is slightly reduced in Text 3 by the lack of nominalisations, but in Text 2 this distance is even smaller due to the absence of nominalisations and the repetition of the theme. These factors make Text 2 sound more similar to the spoken mode than Texts 1 and 3, which present a more institutionalised type of language and, hence, are closer to the written medium.

5. Conclusion

This article has considered the Middle English medical charm as a genre. I have applied a functional approach to the study of genre, text type and register, since it effectively describes the interplay of the text as a linguistic process and as a social construct. The conclusions drawn from the analysis of the texts reveal that the charm is indeed a genre, and it pursues a clear and distinguishable goal in the specific culture in which it is applied: the healing of the sick person or animal through the power of an object (incl. herbs), mainly as a result of performance of a ritualistic event or ritual language. Precisely, the use of ritual and religious language makes the charm distinct from its most closely related genre, i.e. the recipe. Besides the presence of this type of language, the charm is further characterised by a combination of an indefinite number of stages out of nine that form its generic structure potential. In other words, its social function, the organization of contents, and the use of ritual language allow for the identification of a charm.

From a purely linguistic perspective, the charm follows a lexicogrammatical selection typical of the instructive text type. Thus, it is characterised by a set of language features, such as the use of a lexis related to religion, herbs and culinary terms, verbs in the imperative form, scarcity of expressions of involvement, the presence of temporal terms, among others.

As for register, charms present an uncomplicated structure but an accurate use of language and expressions. However, the variable of Field reduces the level of formality and institutionalized technical language in the text, as no assumption of knowledge on the part of the recipient is presupposed. Thus, the fact that there

is no balance between the three register features allows me to conclude (a) that the charm is a popular genre in the sense that it is addressed to practically any type of audience, and (b) that it belongs to a learned tradition, as suggested by the careful selection of language choices, the appropriate use of terms, and the scarce affectiveness in the text. Due to the practical nature of the charm, it became popularised as an inexpensive remedy, especially when the traditional manufactured healing product was ineffective. Another popularising factor was the intervention of faith for healing, which made people tend to resort to charms in the hope that God would reward their devotion through a cure.

Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria

FRANCISCO ALONSO-ALMEIDA

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