

'IN SHORT TYME IT WIL HEALE THE SORE'. A RELEVANCE  
PERSPECTIVE OF PROMISING IN MEDICAL UTILITARIAN  
TEXTS OF THE EARLY MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD



Elena Quintana-Toledo

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# Estudios de Lingüística Aplicada

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*Maria Luisa Carrió Pastor*  
(Directora)

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## SUMMARY

Medical recipes written before the birth of modern scientific writing, at least as we know it today, are frequently characterised by the inclusion of expressions aimed at validating the efficacy of the remedies. These expressions have been traditionally considered as promises of efficacy. This research hypothesises that a closer examination of the context in which they are embedded may render interpretations that are different from promissory speech acts in the strictest sense. The corpus of study has been excerpted from the *Corpus of Early English Recipes* and it comprises medical recipes written in English between 1500 and 1600. The texts have been analysed using *AntConc* and the results have been manually checked afterwards. The detection of potential promises of efficacy has relied on Speech Act Theory and particularly on Searle's (1969) constitutive rules for promises. Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995) has been used to account for the process of contextual enrichment the reader follows so as to derive the illocutionary force of efficacy statements. This work shows that not all efficacy statements are necessarily interpreted as promises in the Searlean sense. In fact, it has been observed that the occurrence of stance elements, i.e. epistemic and/or evidential devices, together with the authors' lexicogrammatical choices crucially shape their illocutionary force, normally by lowering the promissory value of the locutions. Readers can additionally infer differing degrees not only of authorial commitment but also of reliability of information.



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# INTRODUCTION

Recipe texts can be taken to be rooted in the widespread European tradition of recording instructions on how to make a wide range of products (Leong 2018: 4), including culinary, medical and household, among others (DiMeo 2017: 210). A closer examination of medical recipes in particular can provide us with large amounts of information about how the language of science and scientific communication itself have changed across different periods of the English language because, as Taavitsainen (2011: 79) notes, changes in scientific thought-styles get necessarily reflected on the linguistic and stylistic choices made by writers in their texts. Referring to manuscript recipe collections, Leong and Pennell (2007: 133) point to their value as “evidence regarding the exchange, acquisition and evaluation of medical information”. It is not difficult to imagine, though, how language studies may also benefit from the analysis of the recipe books in printed form which became so popular during the Early Modern English period and afterwards.

Medical recipes written before the birth of modern scientific writing, at least as we know it today, seem to be an adequate genre for the inclusion of expressions aimed at validating the efficacy of the end product. It would not be unreasonable to expect “some indication that the medication would work for the disease indicated” (Price 2016: 16) at a time when the transition from the scholastic, logocentric scientific thought-style to the new empirical one was still yet to begin (Taavitsainen and Pahta 1997: 71-72; Taavitsainen and Pahta 1998: 162; Taavitsainen 2018: 96). The scholastic and the empirical philosophies of science differ significantly in the way evidence is considered when making claims: scholasticism is heavily dependent on authorities so that its preferred source of knowledge is quotative. Empiricism, in contrast, favours making scientific claims based on observation so that mode of knowing is frequently expressed by means of direct evidentials, particularly those involving sensory evidence (Taavitsainen and Pahta 1998).

This study contains an analysis of promises of efficacy in a corpus of English medical recipes written between 1500-1600. The texts have been excerpted from the *Corpus of Early English Recipes*, a compilation of recipe texts covering different periods of the history of the English language, i.e. 1375-1900. This corpus was compiled by the *Tecnologías Emergentes aplicadas a la Lengua y a la Literatura* research unit at the *Instituto para el Desarrollo Tecnológico y la Innovación en Comunicaciones* at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The passages under examination in this work are those that point to the writer's positive assessment of the remedy. They have been labelled as *incidental data* (Stannard 1982), *statements of efficacy* (Hunt 1990) and *efficacy phrases* (Jones 1998) in earlier scholarly literature. At first sight, they may be taken as promises of efficacy since the producer of the text is attesting the value of the therapy. However, it is hypothesised in this research that a closer look at the context in which they are embedded may render interpretations that are different from promissory speech acts.

These stretches of discourse are analysed following the relevance-theoretic approach to comprehension because this theory has proved to be efficient in the interpretation of several linguistic phenomena, including speech acts (Sperber and Wilson 1995). In addition, Relevance Theory provides us with a unified theoretical framework which allows for the inclusion of contextual information in the interpretation process in a comprehensive way. Context is to be widely understood as the network of assumptions derived from (i) the interpretation of utterances occurring earlier in the communicative situation, (ii) the addition of encyclopaedic information, and (iii) the addition of information which is immediately observable from the environment. The role of context, I contend, is crucial in the determination of the illocutionary force of these utterances.

The main objective of this study is the description and analysis of the speech act of promising in English medical recipes written between 1500-1600 by following Relevance Theory. It is intended to contribute to the field of Historical Speech-Act Analysis as it focuses on the pragmatics of a specific speech-act function as manifested through efficacy statements in the context of Early Modern medical recipe texts. I should like to point out at this stage that this work does not intend to be a diachronic study of the formulation of promissory speech acts as the corpus of study is not large enough so as to allow for the tracing of this specific communicative function and its linguistic manifestations at different points in time in the history of the English language.



## 1.1. Method

The analysis of any speech act in a historical text must necessarily take as point of departure the theoretical frames of reference provided by modern theories because the notion of *speech act* is in itself a relatively recent one. Although there is a lack of consensus in many terminological and methodological issues from a synchronic perspective, Austin's (1975) and Searle's (1969) pioneering works are still quite influential. The theoretical and methodological procedures followed here as regards the dimensions of speech acts and taxonomical issues coincide with the ones proposed by Searle (1969) because his contribution to the development of Speech Act Theory, which is partially based on Austin's investigations, is to date the most comprehensive one. Moreover, the Searlean approach to promises in terms of constitutive rules captures a great deal of the pragmatics of this type of commissive speech act in an exhaustive way. It proves to be a useful tool in the identification of potential promises of efficacy.

As regards the interpretation of efficacy statements, this relies on Relevance Theory as formulated by Sperber and Wilson (1995). In spite of the fact that this theory may be said to show some theoretical weaknesses, for instance, as regards its suitability to account for modality (Traugott 2003), its potential to explain several linguistic phenomena, including speech acts, has been satisfactorily proved, even from a historical perspective (Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu 2002). This derives from the plausibility of the ostensive-inferential model of communication as applied to human cognition, which after all, is a universal. Additionally and, as will be apparent from the research reported here, there is a wide range of linguistic resources intervening in the formulation of efficacy statements. These elements may have several pragmatic functions depending on the specific contexts in which they occur, but all of them may be considered to be indicators of *stance*. In the light of their complex nature in terms of both form and function, the analysis of the fragments will be combined with the theoretical insights of the *stance* approach to communication and text construction (Biber et al. 1999). Other works including Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980), Palmer (1986), Hunston and Thompson (1999), Nuyts (2001a, 2001b, 2012) and Plungian (2001) come to enrich the methodological framework of analysis.

Regarding methodological procedures concerning the quantification of data, corpus-based approaches to Historical Speech-Act Analysis have been specifically characterised by two important issues (Kohnen 2007: 139-141): first of all, the impossibility of making an inventory of all the potential manifestations a speech act may have and, secondly, the existence of

“hidden manifestations”. In relation to the first difficulty, orthographic variation and lack of standardisation in earlier stages in the development of the English language make the task of using electronic corpora extremely complicated if we were to trace the history of any speech act. As for the second, and being strongly related to the first problem, it does not seem to be cautious to make generalisations about the historical development of speech acts since no exhaustive account of all its possible manifestations can ever be provided, except by carrying out a careful reading of all the texts to be analysed. Obviously, there are endless ways of formally performing speech acts, thus making automatic searches possibly unlimited so as to account for a single speech act. It seems that an efficient manner of starting to deal with this problem is to try to delimit an initial selection of forms that might be considered to be a manifestation of the speech act under scrutiny (Kohnen 2004: 237-238). In order to do so, I shall take Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu (2002) and Mäkinen (2011) as a starting point for an initial inventory of linguistic elements typically found in efficacy statements. They will be searched for in the corpus by using *AntConc* (Anthony 2009). Computerised searches will be then checked manually.

## 1.2. Contents

The contents of this volume are organised into five chapters. The first chapter presents the main objective pursued in this research as well as some indications as for the methodological procedures that are followed in order to fulfil it. The structure in which the information is arranged is also provided here. Chapter 2 describes the speech act of promising in depth and the theoretical framework which guides the analysis. A preliminary characterisation is first offered by relying on Reinach’s (1983) theory of constituent elements, and then the main tenets behind Speech Act Theory and Relevance Theory are presented. These two theories provide this research with a sound theoretical basis for the analysis of promissory speech acts in medical recipes at different levels: Speech Act Theory is used to specify the speech-act function that is looked into in this work, and Relevance Theory, on its part, is used to account for the process of utterance interpretation so as to determine whether or not efficacy statements are ultimately understood as actual promises of efficacy. The fifth section in this chapter raises some of the theoretical aspects related to the main linguistic resources involved in the formulation of efficacy statements and how they are related to *stance* and have an impact on the identification of the illocutionary force. The stance approach covers diverse linguistic resources, but this study is only interested in (i)

modality, (ii) evidentiality and (iii) evaluation. The last section in this chapter refers to previous literature on Historical Speech-Act Analysis as a necessary step in the contextualisation and justification of this study.

The third chapter presents the description of the corpus of study, that is, the *Corpus of Early English Recipes*. The general objectives of the compilation, its source materials, the selection criteria and the internal organisation of the texts are first given. Then, the texts are assessed in terms of both text-type features and genre characteristics. Efficacy statements are the focus of attention in the last part of this chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the analysis and the discussion of the findings following the relevance-theoretic approach to interpretation. The last chapter offers the conclusions derived from the present research. This is followed by the list of references.



# THE SPEECH ACT OF PROMISING, RELEVANCE AND STANCE

## 2.1. Introduction

In the context of the sixteenth-century medical recipes to be analysed in this volume, efficacy statements may be considered as promises that the administration of certain medical products can bring about a positive outcome of a disease. This chapter deals with the speech act of promising and the theoretical framework used in the analysis of data. The constituent elements of promissory acts will be addressed first in order to offer a preliminary characterisation by emphasising their status as social acts (Reinach 1983). After that, Speech Act Theory will be presented as formulated in Austin (1950, 1975) and refined in Searle (1964, 1968, 1969). Both of them laid the foundations for the pragmatic analysis of the speech act examined here since their investigations of commissives specify the requisite conventions for an act to count as a promissory one. These conventions turn out to be vital in the identification of potential promises of efficacy in the corpus. The next section will outline Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995), whose principles will guide the analysis of efficacy statements to see whether or not they may be interpreted as actual promises of efficacy. A common feature of efficacy statements is the occurrence of stance devices in their formulation in the form of modal verbs, evidential material and evaluative comments regarding the quality and effectiveness of the remedies. Thus, a general description of issues related to modality, evidentiality and evaluation will be put forward. The last section in the chapter focuses on Historical Speech-Act Analysis because its methods and results necessarily provide this research with both contextualisation and justification.

## 2.2. Definition and constituent elements of a promise

A *promise* can be roughly defined as a statement by means of which someone says that something will certainly happen, frequently, that s/he will definitely do something. The definition supplied by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (online) reads as follows:

Something which has been promised; (esp. with *to claim*) the fulfillment of a promise (*promise 1, n.*).

A declaration or assurance made to another person (usually with respect to the future), stating a commitment to give, do, or refrain from doing a specified thing or act, or guaranteeing that a specified thing will or will not happen (*promise 2, n.*).

To make a promise of (something), to give verbal assurance of; to undertake or commit oneself to do or refrain from (a specified thing or act) or to give or bestow (a specified thing). [...] Usually to the benefit or advantage of the person concerned (*promise, v.*).

These entries provide several key elements of promissory acts, that is, (i) the existence of at least two participants, one issuing the promise and the other receiving it; (ii) the undertaking of a commitment; (iii) a claim; (iv) the benefit of the promisee; and (v) the reference to the future.

The first and most comprehensive formal approach to promises is Reinach (1983) who analyses promissory acts and dissects them by relying on the theory of constituency previously used by some of his successors like Husserl (Mulligan 1987: 31). The following lines contain his accurate description of a promise (Reinach's 1983: 8):

One man makes a promise to another. A curious effect proceeds from this event, an effect quite different from the effect of one man informing another of something, or making a request for him. The promising produces a unique bond between the two persons in virtue of which the one person – to express it for the time being very roughly – can claim something and the other is obliged to perform it or to grant it. This bond presents itself as a result, as a product (so to speak) of the promising. It can, according to its essence, last ever so long, but on the other hand it seems to have an inherent tendency towards meeting an end and a dissolution. The thing promised is performed; in this way the bond seems to find its natural end. The promisee waives; the promisor revokes. Even in this way, though it seems to us less natural, a dissolving of the promise can sometimes occur.

The emphasis is placed on the coming into existence of a bond between promiser and promisee when a promise is issued. The bond results in an obligation to do the act promised on the part of the promiser and a claim to get the act promised done on the part of the promisee. In other words, the promiser is obliged to do what s/he has promised to do and, on the basis of this, the promisee has a right to claim for the performance of the action promised. When a promise is issued, both promiser and promisee enter into a complex relational network. This may be diagrammatically represented as shown in Figure 1 below where solid frames are used to indicate independent existence of the constituent; single lines represent one-sided dependence relations when they run from broken to solid walls; and double lines stand for mutual dependence relations:

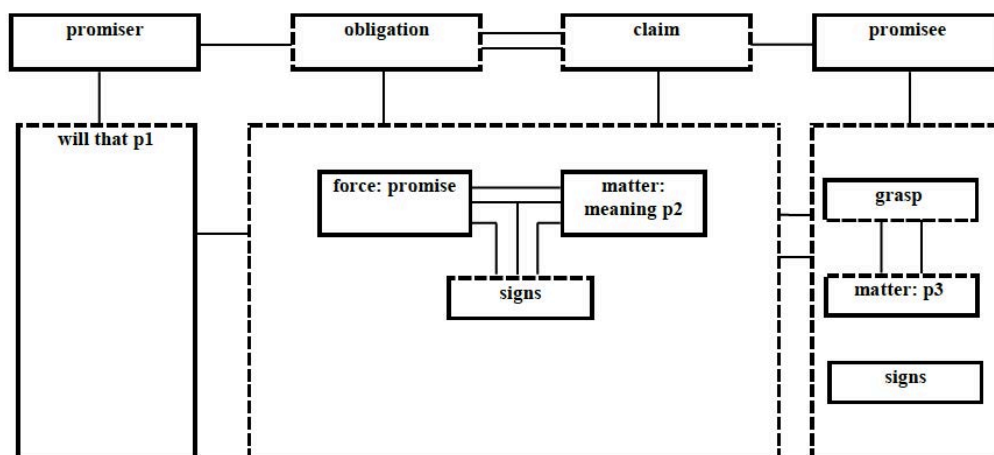


Figure 1. Constituency of promises (after Mulligan 1987: 60).

In the first place, the agents involved in the making of a promise, that is, promiser and promisee, exist independently of one another as well as of any other element involved in promissory acts. Obligation and claim exist in a dependence relation to promiser and promisee, respectively. Moreover, they both stand in a mutual dependence relation since each of them will exist as long as the other exists and, if one ceases to exist, the other will disappear too. Different elements constitute the very act of promising: the promiser produces a certain utterance by combining signs which have a certain meaning (p2) and a certain force. They are all one-sidedly dependent on the promiser's experiencing something internally, that is, his/her intention to do something in the future (his/her willing that p1). In addition, they all stand in a mutual dependence relation to (i) what the promisee perceives either by auditory or visual means, (ii) the meaning s/he associates to the signs received

(meaning p3) and (iii) the force attached to the utterance which s/he has to grasp necessarily. It should be noted that meaning p1, meaning p2 and meaning p3 are equivalent and their being referred to with different numbers simply indicates that they are mentally entertained at distinct points in time.

While it is true that Reinach (1983) pioneered philosophical theorising about promises, the bulk of research on promises from a pragmatic standpoint has been mainly inspired by Austin's (1950, 1975) investigations on speech acts as well as on Searle's (1964, 1968, 1969) contribution in the same line. The next section deals with their views on this pragmatic phenomenon as explaining the fundamentals of their theory is a necessary step in order to delimit the scope of this research.

## 2.3. Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory (hereinafter SAT) was developed by John Langshaw Austin. The main idea behind his philosophy is that language and actions are connected in such a way that an act can be performed by simply issuing an utterance (apart from the act of issuing the utterance itself) (Grünberg 2011: 1). Typical examples of the action-character of language are *I christen this ship the Joseph Stalin* and *I now pronounce you man and wife* (Sadock 2004: 54). The action carried out by pronouncing the former is that of christening, while the latter is issued to marry a couple. However, not any words pronounced by anyone would suffice to perform a speech act; roughly speaking, the circumstances must be appropriate and the participants must (intend to) behave in a certain way subsequently for the utterance to count as a speech act (Austin 1975: 14-15).

Austin's formulation of SAT was first sketched in some notes he prepared for a series of lectures entitled *Words and deeds* he was to deliver at Oxford University from 1952 to 1954. A year later, he presented his theory at Harvard University in his *William James Lectures* which were posthumously published in 1962 as *How to do things with words* (Urmson 1975: v-vi). The starting point of his *performative hypothesis* is what he termed the *performative/constative distinction*.

### 2.3.1. The performative/constative distinction

Aristotle's ideas on the statement-making function of language had remained authoritative well until pre-Austinian times when philosophical attitudes towards language were marked by



a firm rejection against any linguistic analysis which did not focus on statements as truth or falsity bearers, i.e. *truth-conditional analysis*. Hussein (2008: 61-62) describes this type of analysis by stating that "speakers use language to say something about the world or describe a state of affairs. They relate between sentences (representational entities) and affairs in the real world (truth-conditional entities). The relation between the two entities is judged as either true or false". Truth-conditional analysis had been one of the major concerns of the logical positivist philosophers who gave propositions a privileged position in their investigations. Austin (1950: 125) reacted against this attitude and coined the term *descriptive fallacy* to refer to it:

Not merely is it jejune to suppose that all a statement aims is to be "true", but it may further be questioned whether every "statement" does aim to be true at all. The principle of Logic, that "Every proposition must be true or false", has too long operated as the simplest, most persuasive and most pervasive form of the descriptive fallacy. Philosophers under its influence have forcibly interpreted all "propositions" on the model of the statement that a certain thing is red, as made when the thing concerned is currently under observation.

Philosophers appeared to be too much interested in considering statements as the only pieces of language that were worth investigating. These were taken as descriptions of states of affairs which were susceptible of verificationist analyses, according to which "unless a sentence can, at least in principle, be verified (i.e., tested for its truth or falsity), it was strictly speaking meaningless" (Levinson 1983: 227). Austin's objection to the verificationist theory of meaning was motivated by the fact that many utterances in ordinary language, even though they may have the form of statements from a grammatical point of view, are not intended to make statements at all and so they cannot be said to be true or false. For example, the utterance *I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth* (Austin 1975: 5), which uttered when smashing a bottle of champagne against a boat and under certain other circumstances, i.e. *felicity conditions*, is not supposed to record information about what the speaker is doing. The utterer is actively doing something, namely, christening a ship with the name Queen Elizabeth. As such, this utterance resists truth-conditional analysis.

Initially, a distinction was made between *constatives* and *performatives* (Harnish 2007: 4). While constatives are utterances which have assertoric force and the property of being true or false, performatives are utterances upon whose saying doings are accomplished (López-Álvarez 2005: 685-686). Consider (1)-(4):

- (1) I now pronounce you man and wife
- (2) I apologise for being late
- (3) My sister lives in Switzerland
- (4) Robert came back from Manchester yesterday morning

(1)-(4) are all declarative sentences which, according to verificationism, could be assessed as true or false in relation to their truth-conditions or their correspondence with observable facts. However, Austin's proposal in this respect would sound somewhat differently. In contrast to (3) and (4), he claimed that (1) and (2) are not primarily intended to report anything about particular states of affairs in the outside world; they are not uttered to describe anything truly or falsely. Instead, they are issued to accomplish certain actions, that is, marrying a couple in (1) and apologising in (2).

In addition to this, it should be noted that utterances of the sort shown in (1) and (2) are conventionally governed, but not strictly in the same way in each case. In the Austinian framework, (1) is to be uttered in the wider context of social conventions where there is a specific conventional procedure involving (i) specific participants and circumstances, (ii) the uttering of specific words and (iii) subsequent participants' behaviour accordingly. Then, convention in (1) is to be understood as an integral part of institutions, specifically, the institution of marriage. In the case of (2), the sense in which convention is used is restricted to the surface realisation of the speech act. Austin (1975: 103) considers it "to be conventional in the sense that at least it could be made explicit by the performative formula", that is, *apologise*.

Nevertheless, the existence of an explicit conventional formula is not necessary for the utterance to be performative. Take (5)-(8):

- (5) I order you to leave the room immediately
- (6) Leave the room immediately
- (7) I warn you that there is a spider under your chair
- (8) There is a spider under your chair

(5)-(8) are all performative utterances. Yet, there is a major difference between the members of each pair ((5) and (6), and (7) and (8)), even though they share the force of being orders, i.e. (5) and (6) (provided that the speaker has authority over the hearer), and warnings, i.e. (7) and (8) (provided that there is a potential danger for the hearer). In the case of (5) and (7), the verbs *order* and *warn* make explicit the force of the utterance, while in (6) and (8) there are not any such verbs indicating what the speaker is issuing the utterance for. In this situation, then, the force of the utterance is to be recovered by the hearer from implicatures derived from contextual clues.

The fact that (6) and (8) may be successfully recovered by the hearer as an order and a warning respectively proves that there is no actual need for performative utterances to be explicitly formulated by means of a performative verb like *order* or *warn*. In practice, there is a whole range of performative uses of language in which using a performative formula would result awkward or unnatural. Consider *I insult you* (Verschueren 1978: 75) where the force of the utterance is explicitly indicated, but nobody would ever consider himself/herself as having been insulted by the speaker's sole saying of this.

Austin (1975: 55-66) also tried to tentatively isolate the characteristics of explicit performatives from syntactic and semantic standpoints, which led him to the performative formula *I (hereby) verb-present-active X* (Sadock 2004: 57), but he soon realised that there are cases where changes in subject, tense and voice render an equally explicit performative as in (9)-(13):

(9) We suggest that you have a balanced diet

(10) You are fired (Davies 1979: 236)

(11) Passengers are requested to carry valid photo identification

(12) I am asking you to give me your sincere opinion on the matter

(13) Notice is hereby given that trespassers will be prosecuted (Austin 1975: 57)

(9) contains a first-person plural subject; (10) and (11) have a second- and a third-person plural subject with verbs in the passive voice; the verbal form in (12) is in the progressive aspect; and (13) contains an occurrence of an impersonal subject. These examples evince that performative utterances do not have particular grammatical features facilitating their identification, not even when there is an explicit performative verb.

### 2.3.2. Felicity conditions

Performative utterances are not to be assessed in terms of truth and falsity; they should be better labelled as *felicitous* or *infelicitous* insofar as some conditions do or do not obtain. These are the *felicity conditions* which do not only account for those cases in which an utterance performs an act successfully, but also those where certain things in the speech situation go wrong and the act is, as a result, unsuccessful. Austin (1975: 14-15) spelled them out as shown below:

- (A. 1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
- (A. 2) The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
- (B. 2) Completely.
- (Γ. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further
- (Γ. 2) Must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

The observance of the felicity conditions above is a requisite for speech acts to be successful, but speech acts are, on occasion, imperfect. That is the reason why there are infelicities, too. They can be classified into two broad types, namely, *misfires* and *abuses*. Misfires can be further divided into *misinvocations* and *misexecutions*, and *insincerities* are to be found within abuses. Furthermore, there are *misapplications* under misinvocations, and *flaws* and *hitches* under misexecutions. Figure 2 summarises the doctrine of infelicities.

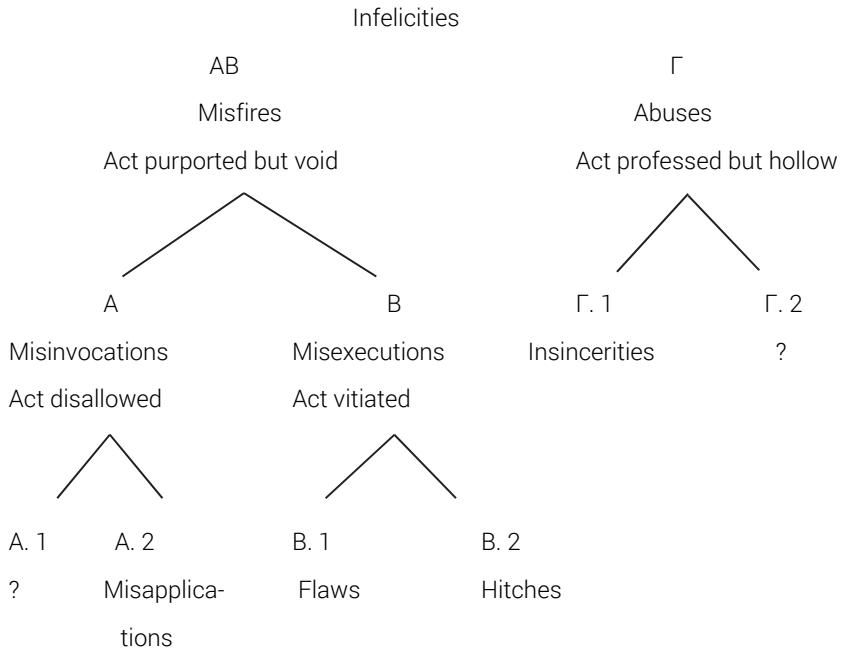


Figure 2. The doctrine of infelicities (Austin 1975: 18).

A misfire is a kind of infelicity in which the act is purported but void so that no effect is achieved. This would be the case if any of the conditions A or B do not obtain, e.g. a marriage ceremony is celebrated in an unauthorised place and, in addition, it is conducted by someone who has not been officially appointed to celebrate marriages. Within misfires, there are misinvocations and misexecutions. The former occur when the act is disallowed because the procedure cannot apply in the intended way or because, simply, there is no procedure at all. For instance, the uttering of the words *I do* on the part of a random speaker does not result in marriage, even though s/he has the intention to do so. As for misexecutions, these occur when the act is vitiated as a result of a mistake such as the priest's pronouncing a couple husband and wife by using wrong names. In both misinvocations and misexecutions the act does not succeed.

As regards misapplications (rule A. 2 is not observed) on the one hand, and flaws (condition B. 1 does not obtain) and hitches (rule B. 2 is not followed) on the other, they are kinds of misinvocations and misexecutions, respectively. One example of misapplication of the procedure occurs when a priest marries a stallion and a mare, since there is no convention of marrying animals. Austin (1975: 36-37) referred to flaws as those misexecutions where vague references are employed, e.g. *I bet you the race won't be run today*, issued when there is more than one race scheduled for today. Hitches occur when the procedure is not executed by all participants completely and, again in the marriage ceremony, this would be the case if the bride says *I do* and then the groom says *I don't*.

Under the label abuses, Austin (1975: 39-41) includes those infelicities related to the speaker's "thoughts, feelings, or intentions", and their occurrence involves his/her violating rules  $\Gamma$ . 1 and  $\Gamma$ . 2. In contrast with misfires, abuses do not prevent the act from succeeding. Insincerities are typical examples of abuses, e.g. *I apologise for having to leave right now*, pronounced when the speaker does not feel sorry at all for having to leave. Or *I advise you to use this device*, uttered when the speaker does not think that it is going to be helpful for the hearer at all to use a particular device instead of another. Or *I swear I will not leave you behind*, said when the speaker does not have the faintest intention of taking the hearer with him/her. Each of these examples involves the speaker's not having the requisite "thoughts, feelings, or intentions", but the speech act is after all performed.

Austin's performative hypothesis did not survive the end of his lectures and finally collapsed in favour of his theory of *locutionary*, *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary acts* (Verschueren 1978: 78). The reasons behind the collapse have been addressed in this subsection and in the previous one, and may be summarised as follows: (i) the use of performative verbs is not a requisite to perform certain actions; (ii) the occurrence of a performative verb does not necessarily mean that the action is performed; (iii) performative verbs do not exhibit clear grammatical features which help to differentiate them from other types of verbs (Thomas 1995: 44); and (iv) regarding the doctrine of infelicities in particular, conditions of the sort  $\Gamma$  are rather problematic since it is a complicated task to clearly distinguish cases where the speaker does not have the appropriate "thoughts, feelings, or intentions".

### 2.3.3. Dimensions of speech acts

Speech acts are said to have a tripartite dimension: when speakers produce an utterance, they simultaneously carry out *locutionary*, *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary acts*, none of which

is separable from the rest and all of which are present when speech acts are performed (Austin 1975: 101).

A locutionary act involves the production of a linguistic expression in which words are combined to create sentences that conform to a certain grammar and that have a particular meaning (Searle 1968: 406). It can be further subdivided into three other acts, (i) a *phonetic act*, (ii) a *phatic act* and (iii) a *rhetic act* (Austin 1975: 92-93). The first one has to do with the physical production of some vocal sounds or written symbols. These are combined to construct words, phrases or sentences following certain phonological and grammatical rules together with semantic and pragmatic constraints thus constituting a phatic act. The rhetic act is equated with *meaning* in the Austinian framework and it includes reference assignment and deixis.

An illocutionary act relates to the kind of action the speaker intends to bring about by the production of his/her utterance within a conventional system. It is the act performed *in* speaking (Sadock 2004: 54). Typical illocutionary acts are bequeathing, ordering, warning, intending, promising, undertaking, apologising, congratulating, thanking, affirming, denying and informing. In the literature on SAT, the function the speaker's utterance is intended to fulfil is referred to as *illocutionary force*.

A perlocutionary act concerns the consequences the utterance has over the hearer in terms of thoughts, feelings and/or subsequent action, all of which are beyond the speaker's control and, as such, they may or may not have been intended by him/her. This is the act where the effective aspect of speech acts becomes manifest. Take (14) to illustrate the three-dimensional status of speech acts:

(14) The bar will be closed in five minutes (Bach 2006: 150)

The production of (14) on the part of the bartender constitutes a speech act. Three different acts are realised simultaneously: firstly, there is the locutionary act, that is, his saying of (14) as a consequence of his speech organs being capable of articulating those sounds in a certain order as conforming to both the phonetics and syntax of the English language. Certain other semantic and pragmatic factors come into play, namely, reference assignment and time of utterance. The bar he is referring to is the one he runs, and the point in time in which the bar will be actually closed is five minutes from the time of utterance. Secondly, there is the illocutionary act, or the function the speaker wants his utterance to fulfil, and that is the informing to the people present in the bar that it will be closed in a short period of time and, in addition to this, the advising to order the last drink. And thirdly, there is the

perlocutionary act: the bartender makes them believe that he is closing the bar in five minutes. On the basis of this, some of them may decide to buy another drink, since there is still time, and some others may decide to get ready to leave. These two effects are both intended by the bartender, above all if they happen in sequential order.

According to Searle (1968: 407), *meaning* in Austin's sense, i.e. sense and reference, is part of the illocutionary force of an utterance, hence the concepts of locutionary act and illocutionary act would converge:

The meaning of the sentence determines the illocutionary force of its utterance in such a way that serious utterances of it with that literal meaning will have that particular force. The description of the act as a happily performed locutionary act, since it involves the meaning of the sentence, is already a description of the illocutionary act, since a particular illocutionary act is determined by that meaning. They are one and the same act. Uttering the sentence with a certain meaning is, Austin tells us, performing a certain locutionary act; uttering a sentence with a certain force is performing a certain illocutionary act; but where a certain force is part of the meaning, where the meaning uniquely determines a particular force, there are not two different acts but two different labels for the same act.

After making some adjustments in terminology, Searle (1969: 23-33) proposed a four-dimensional reformulation of speech acts: *utterance acts*, *propositional acts* and, adopting Austin's own concepts, *illocutionary acts* and *perlocutionary acts*. Utterance acts and propositional acts do roughly correspond with Austin's locutionary acts. The former are associated with the production of speech sounds and the latter include both referring and predicating. Referring is in itself a speech act as when one refers to something or someone in an utterance, the speaker is picking out the identity of that something or that someone from a wide range of possibilities. As for predication, this has to do with characterising the referent. According to Searle (1969: 22), when two illocutionary acts share the same referent and predication about it, both of them express the same proposition as in (15)-(17):

(15) Sam smokes habitually

(16) Does Sam smoke habitually?

(17) Sam, smoke habitually!

The proposition expressed is the same, i.e. *Sam smoking habitually*, if, in the three of them, Sam refers to the same individual about whom the same thing is predicated. Let us assume



that these two conditions obtain. Consequently, these three utterances realise the same propositional act. But propositional acts cannot be realised independently; rather, when propositions are expressed, they are always so in the performance of an illocutionary act. In the case of the examples above, three different illocutionary acts are performed, namely, stating in (15), questioning in (16) and commanding in (17).

In this sense, it was originally suggested by speech-act theorists that there seems to be a relationship between the form of utterances and the functions they are to accomplish or, in other words, between locutions and illocutions, so that declaratives, imperatives and interrogatives are used with the purpose of making statements, giving orders and making questions, respectively. Consider (18)-(20):

(18) It is a sunny day

(19) Bring me that newspaper

(20) What's the time?

In these examples, there appears to be a one-to-one correspondence between (i) declarative, (ii) imperative and (iii) interrogative moods, and the illocutionary acts of (i) stating, (ii) commanding and (iii) questioning together with the illocutionary forces of (i) commitment to the content expressed by the utterance, (ii) attempting to get the hearer do something and (iii) asking for information. Nonetheless, this form-function association amounts to oversimplifying the issue and can result in misleading utterances like (21)-(23):

(21) I am exhausted

(22) Tell me who the first man on the moon was

(23) Can you set the table?

Sentence structure points at (21) being a statement, (22) a command and (23) a question. Even though it is possible to use (21) to state the speaker's state of exhaustion, it is not difficult to imagine a situation where it is issued as a request for help to carry a heavy box. Nor is it infrequent to find a teacher who asks for some information to one of his/her students by using (22), so it is not a command properly speaking. (23) cannot be taken as a request for information either when it is uttered by a father to his son when they are about to have dinner. He would not be asking his child whether or not he is able to set the table, he would be asking him to actually set the table, and so it is a command rather than a question. Context, then, is essential for the identification of illocutionary forces.

### 2.3.4. Constitutive rules

Very much in the Austinian fashion of felicity conditions, Searle (1969: 36-37) claimed that there are certain rules, i.e. *constitutive rules*, which have to be followed for the performance of speech acts:

speaking a language is performing acts according to rules. The form this hypothesis will take is that the semantic structure of a language may be regarded as a conventional realization of a series of sets of underlying constitutive rules, and that speech acts are acts characteristically performed by uttering expressions in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules.

These lie at the basis of the performance of speech acts and show content variation across speech act types. There are four of them: *propositional content*, *preparatory*, *sincerity* and *essential*. Quoting Searle (1969: 66-67), Table 1 shows a detailed account of the constitutive rules that obtain for the speech acts of asserting, requesting and thanking:

**Table 1. Constitutive rules for asserting, requesting and thanking (Searle 1969: 66-67).**

Type of rule	<i>Asserting</i>	<i>Requesting</i>	<i>Thanking</i>
Propositional content	Any proposition <i>p</i>	Future act <i>A</i> of <i>H</i>	Past act <i>A</i> done by <i>H</i>
Preparatory	1. <i>S</i> has evidence for the truth of <i>p</i> 2. It is not obvious to both <i>S</i> and <i>H</i> that <i>H</i> knows <i>p</i>	1. <i>H</i> is able to do <i>A</i> . <i>S</i> believes <i>H</i> is able to do <i>A</i> 2. It is not obvious to both <i>S</i> and <i>H</i> that <i>H</i> will do <i>A</i> in the normal course of events of his own accord	<i>A</i> benefits <i>S</i> and <i>S</i> believes <i>A</i> benefits <i>S</i>
Sincerity	<i>S</i> believes <i>p</i>	<i>S</i> wants <i>H</i> to do <i>A</i>	<i>S</i> feels grateful or appreciative for <i>A</i>
Essential	Counts as an undertaking to the effect that <i>p</i> represents an actual state of affairs	Counts as an attempt to get <i>H</i> to do <i>A</i>	Counts as an expression of gratitude or appreciation

Regarding assertion, the propositional content rule determines that any proposition, e.g. *it's raining*, has to be expressed. The preparatory rule obtains if and only if the speaker has evidence, for example, visual, since s/he has seen through the window that it is raining indeed. Moreover, context does not provide him/her with any conclusive evidence for inferring that the hearer knows that it is raining. The sincerity rule is followed when there is a sincere belief on the part of the speaker that it is raining. Finally, the essential rule for asserting that it is raining implies that there must be an acceptance of *it's raining* as a fact.

As for a request, take for instance *can you pass me the book over there?* The propositional content underlying this utterance is characterised by a hearer's future action which, according to the preparatory rule, s/he is physically able to carry out and the speaker, in turn, considers him/her able to do, too. In addition to this, none of them take this action to be realised by the hearer under normal circumstances unless there is such a request on the part of the speaker. Sincerity is also present in this request if the speaker does really want the hearer to pass him/her the book. The utterance *can you pass me the book over there?* ultimately counts as an attempt on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to pass him/her the book.

Concerning a speech act of thanking such as *thank you for giving me a ride*, constitutive rules are supposed to have been followed when the hearer gave the speaker a ride at some point in the past (propositional content rule). The speaker believes that s/he benefited and, in fact, benefited, from the hearer's giving him/her the ride because s/he was late for work and so, s/he was earlier than expected at the workplace (preparatory rule). When uttering *thank you for giving me a ride*, the speaker is sincere about his/her feeling grateful (sincerity rule), and his/her uttering of this counts, as a matter of fact, as an expression of gratitude (essential rule).

The Searlean analysis of the speech act of promising is of special interest in this work. This author offers a detailed definition based on the conditions which have to obtain for an utterance to count as a successful promise in the following terms (Searle 1969: 57-61):

Given that a speaker *S* utters a sentence *T* in the presence of a hearer *H*, then, in the literal utterance of *T*, *S* sincerely and non-defectively promises that *p* to *H* if and only if the following conditions 1-9 obtain:

1. Normal input and output conditions obtain. [...]
2. *S* expresses the proposition that *p* in the utterance of *T*. [...]

3. In expressing that  $p$ ,  $S$  predicates the future act  $A$  of  $S$ . [...]
4.  $H$  would prefer  $S$ 's doing  $A$  to his not doing  $A$ , and  $S$  believes  $H$  would prefer his doing  $A$  than his not doing  $A$ . [...]
5. It is not obvious to both  $S$  and  $H$  that  $S$  will do  $A$  in the normal course of events. [...]
6.  $S$  intends to do  $A$ . [...]
7.  $S$  intends that the utterance of  $T$  will place him under an obligation to do  $A$ . [...]
8.  $S$  intends (i-1) to produce in  $H$  the knowledge ( $K$ ) that the utterance of  $T$  is to count as placing  $S$  under an obligation to do  $A$ .  $S$  intends to produce  $K$  by means of the recognition of  $i-1$ , and he intends  $i-1$  to be recognized in virtue of (by means of)  $H$ 's knowledge of the meaning of  $T$ . [...]
9. The semantical rules of the dialect spoken by  $S$  and  $H$  are such that  $T$  is correctly and sincerely uttered if and only if conditions 1-8 obtain. [...]

Condition 1 is related to the most basic requirements which should be met for any sincere promise and, in fact, for any speech act, to count as such in terms of both utterance production, i.e. *input conditions*, and understanding, i.e. *output conditions*. Input and output conditions demand (i) that both speaker and hearer master the same language, (ii) that they can speak without any physical hindrance, (iii) that they are fully aware of what they are doing or (iv) that they are not play-acting or joking.

Conditions 2 and 3 concern the expression of the proposition underlying the promissory act. As in the case of condition 1, this is constrained by the necessary occurrence of some features like the predication of a future act which must be carried out by the speaker. No promise can be deemed to have been made about any past action and, similarly, no one can promise that someone else will do something.

Conditions 4 and 5 contain the requirements for a promise not to be defective from the point of view of both speaker and hearer. From the speaker's viewpoint, there must be the belief that the hearer prefers his/her carrying out the action expressed in the proposition than his/her not carrying it out. From the hearer's perspective, s/he must be clearly inclined

towards the speaker's doing (rather than not doing) the action promised. Any promise in which the promiser does not believe that the promisee wants the action promised to happen and the promisee does not really want the action to happen would not meet condition 4. In addition, whatever action the speaker promises to do, it cannot be one which s/he would do anyway, that is, following the normal course of events; otherwise, condition 5 would not obtain.

Condition 6 has to do with the requisite of promises as far as sincerity is concerned. When a speaker formulates a sincere promise, s/he must have a certain intention, namely, the intention to perform the act s/he has promised to perform, or, at least, s/he must take responsibility for having that intention. According to Searle (1969: 62), the reason why this is so is that "a promise involves the expression of an intention", but promises may still be insincere.

Condition 7 holds the essential characteristic of a promise, that being that a promiser does always undertake the obligation to perform the act promised. The obligation to keep a promise derives from the fact that promising is an institution with constitutive rules so that when one promises to do something, s/he necessarily adheres to the rules of promise-making. Searle's (1964, 1969: 175-198) well-known derivation of *ought* from *is* is precisely justified by how the institutional facts associated with promise-keeping entail the obligation to keep a promise.

Finally, conditions 8 and 9 are such that the recognition of the speaker's intention is achieved: the meaning of the words uttered by the promiser is determined by the semantic rules of the language spoken by both speaker and hearer. These semantic rules do ultimately allow the hearer to recognise the speaker's intention to undertake an obligation by conventionally associating the uttering of certain words with the formulation of a promise.

Roughly speaking, conditions 2 and 3 stand for the propositional content rule; conditions 4 and 5 correspond to the preparatory rule; condition 6 is the sincerity rule; and condition 7 is the essential rule. Take *I will help you with the packing tomorrow* as an illustration. The way constitutive rules obtain for a promise like this is given in Table 2:

Table 2. Constitutive rules for the promise *I will help you with the packing tomorrow*.

Type of rule	<i>Promising</i>	<i>I will help you with the packing tomorrow</i>
Propositional content	Future act A of S	S will help H with the packing tomorrow
Preparatory	1. H wants A to happen. S believes H wants A to happen 2. It is not obvious to both S and H that S will do A in the normal course of events	1. H wants S to help him/her with the packing tomorrow. S believes H wants him/her to help H with the packing tomorrow 2. It is not obvious to both S and H that S will help H with the packing tomorrow
Sincerity	S intends to perform A	S intends to help H with the packing tomorrow
Essential	Counts as a promise that A will occur	Counts as a promise that S will help H with the packing tomorrow

The propositional content underlying a promise like *I will help you with the packing tomorrow* is that of a future action which will be carried out by the speaker, i.e. s/he will help the hearer with the packing the day after the utterance is issued. The preparatory rule obtain if (i) the hearer wants the act promised by the speaker to be performed and, at the same time, the speaker believes that the hearer wants his/her help with the packing tomorrow, and (ii) none of them think that the speaker will help the hearer in the normal course of events. For *I will help you with the packing tomorrow* to count as a promise, the speaker must be sincere in his/her intention to perform the act of helping. Finally, the utterance itself counts as a promise.

Alonso-Almeida (2010) applies constitutive rules to specific examples of efficacy statements in a corpus of Middle English healing charms in order to show how they are understood as promises. Alonso-Almeida's study is relevant to this research not only because it proves that modern pragmatic theories may be applied to the analysis of historical texts, but also because he does so with efficacy statements, which is the concern of the present investigation. For illustration purposes, I shall quote one of his examples below:

**Table 3. Constitutive rules for the promise *He Schal be Hole* (Alonso-Almeida 2010: 9).**

Type of rule	<i>He Schal be Hole</i>
Propositional content	S(tatement) states future healing of patient
Preparatory	The <i>W(riter)</i> believes that this charm will cure the patient <i>W</i> believes that the charm is good for the patient <i>W</i> believes that the <i>R(eader)</i> believes that <i>A</i> is good for <i>R/patient</i>
Sincerity	<i>W</i> declares <i>A</i> will happen
Essential	<i>S</i> is a commitment of <i>W</i> that <i>A</i> will happen

The propositional content rule for *He Schal be Hole* is the issuing of an utterance which states that the patient will heal at some point in the future. The preparatory rule obtains if the following conditions are met: (i) the writer believes that the charm will bring about the cure of the patient; (ii) the writer believes that the charm is good for the patient; and (iii) the writer believes that the reader believes that the action is good for the reader and/or the patient. The declaration of the writer that he believes that the patient will be cured by using the charm stands as the sincerity rule. Finally, if the utterance is to count as a promise, the issuing of the utterance creates a commitment on the part of the writer that the charm will cure the patient, and so the essential rule obtains.

Alonso-Almeida (2010: 8) notes that, although some of these utterances may be formally similar, the context in which they occur importantly shapes their interpretation. He illustrates the point with *He Chal be Hole tho Grace of God*. In order to interpret this utterance in contrast to *He Schal be Hole*, context will have to be extended inferentially in various ways to include assumptions about God's healing powers, and the efficacy of a combination of the charm and the presence of God's grace in the life of the patient. The reader will eventually get to the assumption that the cure of the patient seems to be dependent on the presence of God's grace in his/her life. As will be apparent from the next subsection and, above all, from section 2.4 in this chapter, inference is central in the recovery of the illocutionary force of speech acts.

### 2.3.5. Illocutionary force and speaker intention

The identification of the illocutionary force of speech acts is, on occasion, a matter of convention, but always a matter of recognition of intentions. This issue was firstly addressed by Grice (1957) who put forward the idea that human communication is guided by the speakers' having certain intentions which, in turn, are supposed to be shown so that the hearers get them recognised. This idea is encapsulated in a formula as "A meant<sub>INTN</sub> something by x" is (roughly) equivalent to "A intended the utterance of x to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention" (Grice 1957: 385).

The Gricean programme on recognition of intentions is articulated around the Cooperative Principle (hereinafter CP), which is said to govern conversational exchanges. The CP, which is defined as "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 1975: 45), determines the way participants adjust their informational contributions in relation to a number of maxims, i.e. *quantity*, *quality*, *relation* and *manner* (Grice 1975: 45-46):

QUALITY: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack evidence.

QUANTITY:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

RELATION: Be relevant.

MANNER: Be perspicuous.

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly.



Whenever the CP or any of the maxims are not observed in a conversation, implicatures arise (Mooney 2004: 901). Consider the next exchange:

(24) A: I have just baked a delicious cake, would you like to have some?

B: The doctor put me on a low-fat diet yesterday

B's reply does not seem to follow the maxim of relation since, to a question of the sort posed by A, one would expect a simple *yes* or *no*, apart from other linguistic elements like *thank you* in order to sound polite. An implicature would be derived by A so as to understand B's reply as an answer to his/her question in spite of the fact that B does not observe the maxim of relation. In order to do so, A would rely on context, linguistic or non-linguistic, and background knowledge (Grice 1975: 50). Together with other ingredients, a cake is made of fat, in which case someone who is on a low-fat diet for medical reasons is expected not to have a piece. This expectation puts A on the track to understand B's reply as a negative answer to his/her question. However, B's intention when uttering the doctor put me on a low-fat diet yesterday cannot solely be to imply a negative answer; s/he must be pursuing other goals, for example, to arise in A some interest in his/her health and well-being.

The type of reasoning hearers follow for the working out of implicatures is inferential in nature and it would proceed in the terms indicated in Grice (1975: 50):

He has said that *p*; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP; he could not be doing this unless he thought that *q*; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that *q* is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that *q*; he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that *q*; and so he has implicated that *q*.

The recovery of implicatures is ultimately grounded on the recovery of the speaker's communicative intention which must be both directed to the hearer and intended to be recognised by him/her. The speaker's communicative intention is fulfilled only when it has been recognised. Strawson (1964: 447) added a second-order intention on the part of the speaker to get the hearer recognise his first-order intention, rendering the formula as quoted below (after Sperber and Wilson 1995: 21):

To mean something by *x*, *S* must intend

- (a) *S*'s utterance of *x* to produce a certain response *r* in a certain audience *A*;

(b) A to recognise S's intention (a);

(c) A's recognition of S's intention (a) to function as at least part of A's reason for A's response *r*.

The role of inference in the recognition of speakers' intentions is described in detail in Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995), which is far richer than Grice's (1975) and Strawson's (1964) accounts as it provides an exhaustive explanation of human communication, both linguistic and non-linguistic, in terms of the cognitive processes that are triggered whenever we communicate with others (successfully and/or unsuccessfully). Besides, Relevance Theory provides us with a principled and systematic way of working out what contextual factors actually operate on the understanding of speech acts following a single principle, i.e. the *principle of relevance*.

## 2.4. Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995) explains human communication in terms of the recognition of the speaker's communicative intention. Rules governing language are not enough for hearers to recognise their interlocutors' intentions; hence, they have to rely on other mechanisms, mainly inferential, to carry out such a task. The inferential account provided by Relevance Theory (hereinafter RT) and, particularly, the ostensive-inferential model of communication it proposes, tries to offer an explanation, in realistic terms, of the cognitive processes that take place in our mind when we communicate. Part of the remainder of this chapter will deal with RT in depth.

### 2.4.1. Encoding, decoding and inference

The code model, which can be traced back to Shannon's and Weaver's mathematical theory of communication (Shannon 1948), accounts for human communication in terms of information's being encoded by the speaker into a signal which is later on decoded by the hearer (Wilson 1998). In this theory, successful communication occurs when there is an exact reproduction into the hearer's brain of the information the speaker encoded after the former performs a decoding process. The following diagram shows how the code model works for human communication:

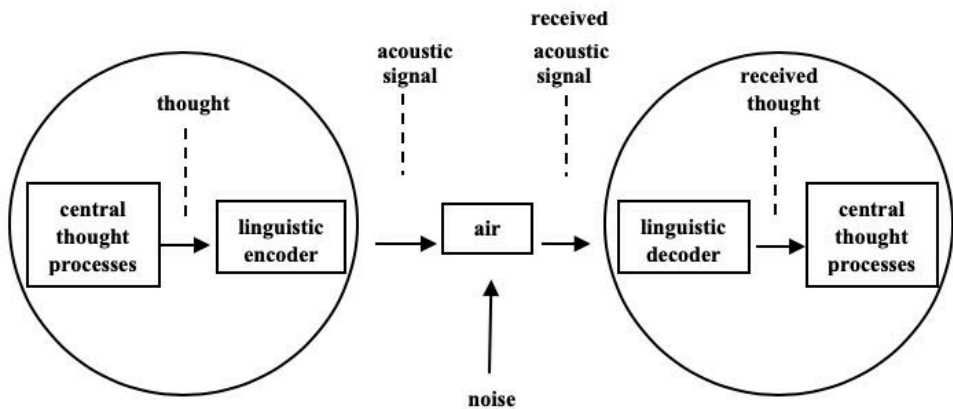


Figure 3. Human verbal communication following the code model (after Sperber and Wilson 1995: 5).

This hypothesis of how human communication works had been highly influential in Western culture from Aristotle's times up until modern semiotics (Sperber and Wilson 1987: 697). However, it presents an important deficiency: human communication does not consist in the mere duplication of the speaker's thoughts into the hearer's mind. Consequently, encoding and decoding cannot be the sole mechanisms involved in comprehension.

The inferential theory of communication served as an alternative to the classical code model. According to it, communication occurs successfully when the hearer recognises the speaker's intention to convey some information on the basis of his/her identifying a stimulus produced by the speaker with this purpose. As put forward earlier in this chapter, Grice (1957, 1975) set the basis for the inferential model which was later adopted by Sperber and Wilson (1995) and developed into the ostensive-inferential model of communication.

Ostensive stimuli are central to the ostensive-inferential theory of communication. An ostensive stimulus is primarily designed to attract the hearer's attention. It can be defined as a particular kind of behaviour which is explicable only if one assumes that the speaker wants to provide evidence of his/her intention to communicate. This evidence, then, is intentionally provided by the speaker so that the hearer achieves certain conclusions, i.e. the ones presumably foreseen by the speaker (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 255). In this model of communication, communicators are said to have two intentions, namely, *informative* and *communicative*. The former refers to the intention to inform the hearer of something, while the latter refers to the intention to inform the hearer of the informative intention (Wilson and

Sperber 2006: 611). In this framework, utterances are ostensive stimuli. Take the following for illustration:

(25) A: Are you leaving?

(B takes her coat and purse)

A and B have just had an argument at A's place. A sees B is heading towards the spot she left her belongings when she arrived, so he asks her *are you leaving?* She does not provide him with a straightforward *yes*; instead, she produces evidence which, combined with other contextual assumptions such as *after having had an argument, one might not feel in the mood to stay with whom one has argued* and *someone who wants to leave a place does normally take his/her belongings with him/her*, allows him to derive the conclusion that, in fact, she is leaving.

Even though Sperber and Wilson (1995) grant the existence of coded communication, they take the code model alone to be insufficient to explain complex communication processes. Natural languages can be considered to be codes since they pair phonetic and semantic representations of sentences, but sometimes there is a gap between the semantic representations of sentences and the propositions underlying them (Moya-Pardo 2006: 34). This is especially manifest when context-dependent expressions like deictics are used, mainly because they do not encode their referents. In these cases, the code is not enough to guarantee successful communication. Apart from this, there are other occasions on which the code is wrongly applied, i.e. slips of the tongue, but successful communication occurs anyway because hearers are eventually able to recover the speaker's intended meaning.

All things considered, human communication involves complex forms of communication where both coding and inference play a part. Sperber and Wilson (1987: 697) claim that the differences that exist between the semantic representations of sentences and the thoughts to be conveyed by utterances may be overcome by inference instead of more decoding. This means that in order to achieve verbal comprehension, human beings have to make use of both decoding and inference. What is more, RT maintains that decoding involves the performance of some inferential tasks.

Encoding, decoding and inference are combined in RT in such a way that in a certain communicative exchange, a speaker produces a stimulus, that is, a verbal utterance which will serve as evidence for the hearer to infer the speaker's intended meaning. The hearer is supposed to decode the information encoded in the utterance to use it as part of the evidence which will allow him/her to infer the speaker's intended meaning (Wilson and

Sperber 2006: 607). S/he will combine the decoded information with appropriate contextual information being guided by the *principle of relevance*.

### 2.4.2. *The principle of relevance*

In the relevance-theoretic approach, the appropriateness of the contextual information against which the understanding process occurs and which ultimately allows the hearer to infer the speaker's intended meaning is determined by a general cognitive principle (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 260):

The First Principle of Relevance

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.

According to this general principle, relevance is a property of any sort of observable phenomena in the external world. Phenomena, in general, and stimuli, in particular, may serve as input for cognitive processes to an individual at any time. However, human cognition does not pay attention to every phenomena or stimuli. In order to operate efficiently, its resources have to select those phenomena or stimuli which are likely to provide the individual with an epistemic improvement; otherwise, his/her cognition would dismiss them as irrelevant (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 251). Take, for instance, a situation where an individual has just gone to bed in a house where there is no one else but him/her. There may be several stimuli in the environment which s/he does not notice such as the ticking of the alarm clock or the sound of the wind blowing outside. S/he would pay attention, nevertheless, to a sudden noise coming from downstairs.

The sort of information likely to bring about an epistemic improvement and so enlarge the individual's representation of the world, i.e. provide him/her with *positive cognitive effects*, is not that which is completely new and unrelated in any way to his/her existing representation. Positive cognitive effects result from different cognitive operations, namely, (i) the confirmation of already existing assumptions, i.e. *contextual strengthening*, (ii) the contradiction and elimination of information already held, i.e. *contextual contradiction and elimination*, and (iii) the acquisition of new assumptions that can only be achieved by the combination of new and old assumptions, i.e. *contextual implications* (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 251). Consequently, inputs will be relevant if and only if their processing yields positive cognitive effects.

Furthermore, relevance assessment is a matter of degree. Our cognition does not simply tend to be geared to pick out relevant stimuli; it tends to pick out the most relevant ones from the available alternatives. In order to assess the relevance of stimuli, there are two basic parameters which must be taken into consideration: *processing effort* and *cognitive effects*. The processing of any stimulus always involves some effort, but the cognitive effects its processing yields may or may not be worth achieving. Relevance is, then, a matter of balance between the effort needed to process inputs and the contextual effects possibly achieved after their processing. Since it is not an absolute category, relevance is better defined in terms of *extent conditions* (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 265-266):

Relevance of an input to an individual

Extent condition 1: Other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.

Extent condition 2: Other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.

Consider the following situation adapted from Wilson and Sperber (2002: 252) to illustrate how relevance assessment works: Jules and Elle are talking about James' and Kate's last night dinner to celebrate their first wedding anniversary. Jules does not know whether or not they gave anything to each other as a present, but Elle knows because she phoned Kate right after the dinner. She may tell Jules any of (26)-(28):

(26) James gave Kate a bouquet of flowers

(27) James gave Kate a bouquet of roses

(28) Either James gave Kate a bouquet of roses or  $10^2$  is not 100

Any of (26)-(28) would be relevant to Jules in the same situation, but some of them would be more relevant than the others in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort. As such, (27) would be more relevant than (26) because it entails the latter, so that the processing of (27) would not only yield the conclusions derived from the processing of (26), but many more. (27) is also more relevant than (28): in spite of the fact that they both have the same contextual effects, the information conveyed in the second disjunct has no relation whatsoever with the context and so yields no contextual effects at all. Nevertheless, its processing requires some extra effort such as the introduction of deductive rules to infer that the second disjunct is false and the first one is true.

As noted above, relevance is better defined as a comparative rather than a quantitative notion, but this does not mean that comparisons are always feasible. In any case, the comparative view seems to be more plausible from a psychological perspective: it is highly improbable that, every time human beings are to process an utterance, they numerically calculate how much effort and how many processing effects it would have; it is easier to make approximate estimations and compare them. In addition to this, there are many features of human cognition which cannot be measured at all. These two reasons back Sperber's and Wilson's (1995: 131) conception of effort and effect as non-representational properties.

Our cognitive tendency to pay attention to potentially relevant stimuli is not that much of a choice, but a result of the evolution of human cognitive resources through time. The more general, first principle of relevance has some important implications for the explanation of human communication. As a matter of fact, this tendency "is exploited in ostensive-inferential communication" (Vega-Moreno 2003: 308). How is this so? The relevance-theoretic approach claims that, since the existence of the first principle of relevance is innate in all human beings, when we want to communicate something, we exploit our natural tendency to focus on the most relevant stimuli in our environment. The production of an ostensive stimulus should be such that it must appear to be relevant to the audience, that is, it must call for little processing effort while producing as many as possible positive cognitive effects. In other words, the stimulus must be worth the audience's attention and their cognitive processing. This is the core of the *second principle of relevance* (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 260), which cannot be formulated without reference to the *presumption of optimal relevance* (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 270):

#### The Second Principle of Relevance

Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

#### The Presumption of Optimal Relevance

The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it.

The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

Every act of ostensive communication does, in itself, raise expectations of relevance in the audience, that is, the audience presumes that, whatever the producer of the ostensive stimulus wants to communicate, it is going to be relevant enough for them to pay attention to it and to process it. But what is the degree of relevance they are allowed to expect? Maximal relevance appears to be an inadequate notion as it has been noted by Sperber and Wilson (1995: 266-271), and Higashimori and Wilson (1996: 112-113): there is a wide range of reasons why a speaker might not use the most relevant stimulus to communicate with his/her audience, i.e. s/he cannot think of a more relevant stimulus at that time or, simply, s/he is not willing to produce the most relevant stimulus even though s/he might be well aware of its existence. This is the main motivation behind the second clause in the presumption of optimal relevance where the communicator's abilities and preferences come into play. In any case, communicators are expected to produce stimuli, i.e. utterances, which are as relevant as possible.

#### *2.4.3. Relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure*

The presumption of optimal relevance suggests a comprehension procedure which is characterised by "check[ing] interpretative hypotheses in order of accessibility, that is, follow[ing] a path of least effort, until an interpretation which satisfies the expectation is found; then stop" (Carston 2002: 45). Wilson and Sperber (2002: 259) describe the procedure as follows:

Relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure

Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretative hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.

Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied.

Moreover, the procedure can be divided into a number of sub-tasks (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 261):

Sub-tasks in the overall comprehension process

Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the explicit content (in relevance-theoretic terms, EXPLICATURES) via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.



Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual assumptions (in relevance-theoretic terms, IMPLICATED PREMISES).

Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (in relevance-theoretic terms, IMPLICATED CONCLUSIONS).

Consider a situation in which Kate's birthday is going to be soon, and Jules and Elle have planned to buy her something. They have considered the possibility of asking James if he wants to participate. Jules asks James the following and he provides her with the reply below:

- (29) a. Jules: Will you join us in buying Kate's birthday present?
- b. James: I have already spent all my money from my salary this month

The process to construct hypotheses which will ultimately allow Jules to understand James' reply is guided by the principle of relevance. It might proceed as follows: Jules firstly recognises that James has produced a linguistic stimulus in a language she knows. This provides her with assumption (30a). As Sperber and Wilson (1995: 177) note, "a linguistic stimulus triggers an automatic process of decoding", which employs an assumption like (30b) as a starting point. While decoding alone would allow Jules to recover the logical form of (30b) as shown in (30c), both decoding and inference would permit her to obtain its fully propositional form as shown in (30d) (Wilson and Sperber 1993). (30d) is the explicature derived from (29b) and it can only be obtained after reference assignment, temporal resolution and pragmatic enrichment have been carried out.

- (30a) James has spoken to Jules
- (30b) James has said to Jules "I have already spent all my money from my salary this month"
- (30c) x has said to y at time t1 that z has spent all the money from his salary at time t2
- (30d) James Ford has said to Jules Cobb at 12.00 p.m. on May 5 2010 that James Ford has already spent all the money from his salary at 12.00 p.m. on May 5 2010

There are other assumptions that Jules entertains in the comprehension procedure. One of them is (30e) since, in relevance-theoretic terms, his utterance constitutes an act of ostensive communication which comes with a tacit guarantee of relevance. The expectations raised by the second principle of relevance together with the fact that an answer to the question posed by her is the most relevant thing she can expect make her entertain assumption (30f).

(30e) James' utterance will be relevant to her

(30f) James' utterance will be relevant by answering Jules' question about James' participation in buying Kate's birthday present

At this point, the comprehension process may proceed in the following way: Jules extends the context by accessing the encyclopaedic entry of "birthday present", which, for ease of exposition, I shall consider as a single concept. Its encyclopaedic entry probably contains the factual assumption in (30g) which is added to the context in which (29b) is processed. Probably, the assumption which occurs to Jules next is (30h), which is an implicit premise of James' utterance. By following deductive rules of the sort *modus ponendo ponens* (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 87) as shown in (30i), she derives the implicated conclusion (30j).

(30g) In order to buy a birthday present, one needs money

(30h) If one spends one's money from one's salary, one cannot buy somebody a birthday present

(30i) *Modus ponendo ponens*

Input: (i) *P*

(ii) (If *P* then *Q*)

Output: *Q*

Input: (i) James has spent all his money from his salary

(ii) If James has spent all his money from his salary, he cannot buy Kate a birthday present

Output: James cannot buy Kate a birthday present

(30j) James cannot buy Kate a birthday present

(30k) James would like Jules to lend him some money to buy Kate's birthday present

(30j) finally satisfies Jules' expectation of relevance when processing James' answer to her question: he is not going to participate in buying Kate a birthday present. This is the strongest implicature conveyed by (29b) and, as a matter of fact, it has to be supplied if (29b) is relevant at all. In this case, James is said to be responsible for Jules' supplying it (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 199). The processing of (29b) might lead to Jules' supplying other weaker implicatures, for instance, (30k), but only with an appropriate enrichment of the context with background information about James' habit of borrowing money from people and his sincere willingness to buy Kate a birthday present.

#### 2.4.4. Logical forms, factual assumptions and concepts

At this stage, there are certain terminological aspects which I should like to touch upon, above all, those that have been raised in the explanation of the comprehension procedure of (29b). In order to do so, I shall start commenting briefly on the relevance-theoretic conception of the mind. Sperber and Wilson (1995) follow the Fodorian view of the structure of the mind (Fodor 1983); according to it, the mind is roughly organised in different modules, all of which are in charge of carrying out specialised tasks. As far as communication is concerned, both input systems and central systems are essential. The former can only process information coming from our senses, while the latter is in charge of transforming the information processed by the input systems, apart from other obtained from memory, into conceptual representations. The function of the central system is two-fold: firstly, it combines conceptual representations so as to generate new information and secondly, it stores information which may be important in its memory (Pons-Bordería 2004: 27).

The nature of the combination of conceptual representations so as to yield new information is considered to be inferential in RT (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 71) and this constrains what the conceptual representation system is like. Conceptual representations must necessarily have logical properties to undergo inferential processes, i.e. implication, contradiction and deduction. The logical properties of a conceptual representation constitute its *logical form*, which depending on its specific structure undergoes formal logical operations. Logical forms can be, furthermore, propositional or non-propositional: propositional logical forms are those which are semantically complete and, consequently, can be true or false, whereas non-propositional logical forms are semantically incomplete and cannot be true or false. However, they can undergo logical processing and be transformed into well-formed assumptions thanks to contextual information; the only requisite for them is to be well formed. Consider (31)-(34):

(31) He brought a piece of it with him

(32) He brought something with him

(33) No one brought anything

(34) James Ford brought a piece of cheesecake with him

The sense of (31) is non-propositional because deictics like *he*, *it* and *him* have no definite reference and so, it cannot be said to be true or false, but it is still a well-formed logical form as it entails (32) and contradicts (33), in which case it can definitely undergo logical processing. Contextual information would render (31) as a roughly semantically complete propositional form of the sort shown in (34).

Logical forms are stored in memory in certain specific ways, that is, they are stored with certain attitudes attached to them. For instance, (34) may be entertained as a true description of a state of affairs. The central system is also responsible for evaluating information and assigning truth values to it. True information is the only one that seems amenable to be stored because false information would contribute nothing to human beings' understanding of the world. The sort of information stored and entertained as a true description of the world, i.e. fact, is called *factual assumption* and, according to RT, "factual assumptions are the domain par excellence of spontaneous non-demonstrative inference processes" (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 75).

Factual assumptions are not only derived from (i) sensory perception, but also from (ii) linguistic decoding, (iii) conceptual memory and (iv) deductive processes (Pons-Bordería 2004: 31). As pointed out earlier, stimuli coming from sensory perception are transformed into conceptual representations. Linguistic stimuli, on their part, trigger decoding processes whose result is not a conceptual representation, but a logical form. Conceptual memory is where assumptions and assumption schemas are stored and these are used as premises in deductive processes where certain conclusions are obtained. Let us now focus on the structure of conceptual memory.

Information is stored in conceptual memory as structured sets of constituents which are called *concepts* in relevance-theoretic terms. A concept is an address in which three different types of information are stored, namely, a *lexical entry*, an *encyclopaedic entry* and a *logical entry*. Lexical entries contain "information about the natural-language counterpart of the concept", that is, its phonological and morphosyntactic characterisation. Encyclopaedic entries contain "information about the extension and/or denotation of the concept", for instance, information related to the prototype of a certain category. Logical entries contain "a set of deductive rules which apply to logical forms of which that concept is a constituent" (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 86). Take (35)-(37):

(35) *Alegría por las desgracias ajenas*

Logical entry:	Hyponymy-hyperonymy relations
Encyclopaedic entry:	Ideas related to the concept
Lexical entry:	∅

(36) *And*

Logical entry:	& Elimination of the conjunction
Encyclopaedic entry:	∅
Lexical entry:	Conjunction

(37) *James*

Logical entry:	∅
Encyclopaedic entry:	Ideas related to the concept
Lexical entry:	Proper name

The lexical entry of a concept like *rose* contains phonological information, and morphosyntactic information, i.e. noun, singular. There are concepts which may lack lexical entries because they are not lexicalised. This is the case of the example provided by Pons-Bordería (2004: 41) about German *Schadenfreude*, which in Spanish remains as the non-lexicalised concept *alegrías por las desgracias ajenas*, as shown in (35).

As noted above, the encyclopaedic entry of a concept holds information regarding its extension and/or denotation in the form of both assumptions and assumption schemas about the concept in question. They typically show variation across speakers since we do not all entertain the same assumptions in the same way about the same concept. Moreover, the information contained in the encyclopaedic entry of a concept may be constantly changing by the addition of new assumptions. Take again the concept *rose*: its encyclopaedic entry can contain assumptions like *a rose is a type of flower*, *a rose has a pleasant smell*; *a rose can be red, pink, white or yellow*; *a rose can have thorns* and so on. There are also concepts which lack encyclopaedic entry such as conjunctions (Pons-Bordería 2004: 41), because they do not refer to any object or event in the world, and so, there are no assumptions related to them. This is the case of conjunctions like *and* in (36).

Deductive rules, on their part, can be found in the logical entry of a concept. RT emphasises the role of deductive rules in the performance of inferential tasks where the truth of the conclusions arrived at is guaranteed by the application of those rules. This point contrasts with the Gricean account of inference in which the truth of the conclusions depends, instead, on the observance of the CP and the maxims. How the principle and the maxims work in an inferential process to achieve a conclusion is barely specified in Grice's writings. For that end, he proposed an informal way of reasoning which I quoted earlier in the chapter when commenting on the derivation of implicatures. Sperber's and Wilson's proposal bring about some improvements on the explanation of the role of inference in human communication by the introduction of deductive rules: logic guarantees the truth of the conclusions obtained.

Inferential processes allow human beings to obtain new information by applying deductive rules to sets of premises. There are two types of deductive rules, namely, analytic and synthetic. Roughly speaking, analytic rules apply in the derivation of a conclusion by taking only one assumption as a premise. This is due to the fact that the content of the premise is included in the content of the conclusion, as in (38). Synthetic rules apply in the derivation of a conclusion by taking two assumptions as premises, as in (39).

(38) Premise: James bought a bouquet of roses

Conclusion: James bought a bouquet of flowers

(39) Premise 1: Kate does not hand in her assignment

Premise 2: If Kate does not hand in her assignment, she will fail the subject

Conclusion: Kate will fail the subject

The conclusion derived in (38) is determined by a lexical relationship of hyperonymy because the sense of roses includes the sense of flowers. As for (39), the conclusion can only be derived via the combination of the two premises and none of the two premises alone would allow the derivation of the conclusion that Kate will fail the subject.

Specifically, premises may be related to yield a conclusion by applying rules of (i) *and-elimination*, (ii) *modus ponendo ponens* and (iii) *modus tollendo ponens* (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 86-87):

(40) *And-elimination*

(a) Input: ( $P$  and  $Q$ )

Output:  $P$

(b) Input: ( $P$  and  $Q$ )

Output:  $Q$

(41) *Modus ponendo ponens*

Input: (i)  $P$

(ii) (If  $P$  then  $Q$ )

Output:  $Q$

(42) *Modus tollendo ponens*

(a) Input: (i) ( $P$  or  $Q$ )

(ii) (not  $P$ )

Output:  $Q$

(b) Input: (i) ( $P$  or  $Q$ )

(ii) (not  $Q$ )

Output:  $P$

In (40), there is a single premise whose constituents are conjoined by *and*. After applying *and-elimination* rule, one of the constituents is removed, and the conclusion contains the other. In (41), the input takes two premises, one of which contains a condition. The conclusion is derived from obtaining that condition. (42) takes as input two premises, one of them being a disjunction and the other the negation of one of the disjuncts. The other disjunct is then derived as conclusion. Just as some concepts may have empty encyclopaedic and lexical entries, there may be others which do not have logical entries, for instance, proper names like *James* in (37).

## 2.5. Stance

The identification of the illocutionary force of speech acts involves ascertaining the speakers' intention and, consequently, their attitudes towards the propositional content. In the case of efficacy statements, there is a wide array of disparate linguistic elements that intervene in the

expression of the speaker's seemingly positive attitude towards the use of the medical products. As a matter of fact, Mäkinen (2011: 158) indicates that "free formulation is very common, especially in Early Modern English medical recipe collections". Consider, for example, some efficacy expressions excerpted from the *Corpus of Early English Recipes* such as *and it wyll helpe it without doubt (A thousand notable things, Thomas Lupton, 1579)*, *I had this out of an old Booke wherin was many excellent Secretes, and I heard one affirme it to be a true and a tried thing (A thousand notable things, Thomas Lupton, 1579)*, and *it is most excellent (A right profitable booke, Peter Levens, 1582)*. These examples evince that devices such as modal verbs, evidential material and evaluative comments tend to occur in the formulation of efficacy statements. These linguistic resources may not only have several semantic interpretations, for instance, modals may show deontic or epistemic meanings. They may also have several pragmatic functions and effects depending on the specific contexts in which they are used. In the light of the polysemous and polypragmatic functions and effects the aforementioned devices may have, it seems to be essential to review some issues concerning modality, evidentiality and evaluation. All of them can be satisfactorily included under the general label of *stance*. This section provides a brief theoretical discussion on these issues because their occurrence is a key factor to determine whether or not efficacy statements may be understood as actual promises of efficacy in relevance-theoretic terms.

*Stance* is a complex linguistic construct in which many theoretical and methodological predicaments seem to have found their way. Complexity in the stance panorama may have been brought about because of the huge variety of linguistic and paralinguistic resources, i.e. lexis, grammar and prosody, that can signal authorial attitudes. As a matter of fact, definitions and categorisations as proposed in the literature are not always equivalent across scholarly works. What is more, sometimes the same linguistic resource is labelled differently depending on the author. Some of the terms put forward include *connotation* (Lyons 1977), *affect* (Ochs 1989), *attitude* (Halliday 1994; Tench 1996), *intensity* (Labov 1984), *hedging* (Holmes 1988; Hyland 1996), *appraisal* (White 2004; Martin and White 2005; Martin and Rose 2007), and *evaluation* (Hunston and Thompson 1999).

While *connotation* appears to be restricted to the study of single linguistic expressions, *affect* and *attitude* focus on the language user, i.e. writer's attitude. According to Leech (1974: 15-18), the study of connotative meaning is related to "the 'real-world' experience one associates with an expression", and the study of affective meaning is related to "the personal feelings of the speaker". For Martin and White (2005), *appraisal* is divided into three subcategories, that is, (i) affect, (ii) appreciation and (iii) judgement. Bybee and Fleischman (1995) also propose a



triple division of modality into (i) epistemic, (ii) deontic and (iii) evaluation. According to them, evaluation shows the writer's attitude towards something as desirable and undesirable. The sense of epistemicity is shared by other linguistic phenomena like *hedging* which is defined as "any linguistic means used to indicate either a) a lack of complete commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition, or b) a desire not to express the commitment categorically" (Hyland 1998: 1).

As shown here, terminologies are varied and, sometimes, overlapping, so much so that Hunston and Thompson (1999) have opted for using a different one which seems to encompass those used in the previous literature, and that is *evaluation*, which can be taken as

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 (Hunston and Thompson 1999: 5).

Although the notion of *stance* is used by these authors to define evaluation, both terms seem to be equivalent concepts in that they both refer to the general ideas of attitude and epistemicity. For the purposes of the present research, the term *stance* as used in Biber and Finegan (1988), Biber et al. (1999), Conrad and Biber (1999) and Precht (2000) will be preferred as it is a theoretically generous term where the analysis of modals and modalised expressions, evidential material and evaluative adjectives and adverbs can be included. Apart from this, the theoretical framework offered by these authors presents a fine-grained categorisation of stance markers which has been already successfully applied to diachronic studies as in Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998), Taavitsainen (2001b), Fitzmaurice (2003), Biber (2004), and Alonso-Almeida (2009), to mention a few.

My working definition for the concept of *stance* corresponds with the one operationalised in the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al. 1999: 763), where it is defined referring to content other than propositional as the expression of "personal feelings, attitudes and value judgments, or assessments". In other words, stance is taken as a superordinate term which covers the meanings individuals can convey in addition to the propositional content, and this includes both attitudinal and modal meanings. In general, it can be conveyed by means of lexis, grammar and other paralinguistic features. While lexical stance markers include nouns, adjectives and verbs that have a primarily evaluative function, grammatical stance markers involve the following: (i) stance adverbials, (ii) stance

complement clauses, (iii) modals and semi-modals, (iv) stance noun + prepositional phrase and (v) premodifying stance adverb (stance adverb + adjective or noun phrase).

Recent works on the role of stance markers in scientific writing from a diachronic standpoint include Alonso-Almeida (2015a), Alonso-Almeida and Álvarez-Gil (2019), Álvarez-Gil (2018) and Carrió-Pastor (2019). Alonso-Almeida (2015a) carries out a contrastive analysis of the functions of the verbs *seem* and *parecer* in medical texts written between 1500-1700. His findings reveal that both verbs primarily convey evidential instead of epistemic meanings. In both Alonso-Almeida and Álvarez-Gil (2019) and Carrió-Pastor (2019) a corpus of Late Modern English history texts is examined; while the former explores modal verb categories, the latter surveys the occurrence of attitude devices as deployed by writers. Álvarez-Gil (2018), on his part, deepens into the characterisation of Late Modern English history texts, but this time he pinpoints the meanings and functions of *-ly* adverbs. The author finds out that stance adverbs are the second most frequent type in history texts and, together with focusing adverbs, “are fundamental devices in the elaboration of historical knowledge” (Álvarez-Gil 2018: 94).

Synchronic data from several corpora have been also used to investigate stance. For example, Bellés-Fortuño (2018) inspects an academic spoken discourse genre, i.e. university lectures, in order to detect explicit evaluative devices in the form of “audience-oriented relevance markers” and evaluative adjectives. Her results show that there are differences between English and Spanish lectures not only in the patterns found in the corpora, but also in the type and frequency of use. Carrió-Pastor (2012, 2014) takes a quantitative and qualitative approach to look into the use of epistemic modals by native and non-native speakers of English in scientific communication. According to these studies, native speakers of English frequently moderate their statements through epistemic modals while Spanish speakers of English tend to use *can* rather than *may* with a possibility/probability meaning. The author contends that the cultural background of the writers has certainly an impact on modal verb use in academic discourse.

As illustrated in these works, a large amount of linguistic devices may indicate authorial stance, but this research essentially concentrates on the role modal verbs, evidentials and evaluative adjectives and adverbs play in the formulation of efficacy statements.

### 2.5.1. Modality and evidentiality

Descriptions and categorisations of modality still arise much controversy among scholars so much so that some of them opt for a relativistic standpoint claiming that “modality and its types can be named and defined in various ways. There is no correct way” (Van der Auwera and Plungian 1998: 80). It has been traditionally taken as a semantic rather than a pragmatic category. As noted by Narrog (2005: 166-167), as a universal, meaning allows for cross-linguistic validation, that is, as speakers of any language (and no matter how different languages can be), people share the mechanisms, cognitive or otherwise, by means of which linguistic expressions are associated to the ideas they represent. Thus, modality can be initially taken as a semantic basis for cross-linguistic comparison and only later can the pragmatic uses and effects generated by this formal category be looked into.

Von Wright's (1951: 1-2) work on modal logic set the path for research on descriptive and taxonomical issues of modality. He makes a distinction between four types of modality, namely, (i) alethic, (ii) epistemic, (iii) deontic and (iv) existential. Roughly speaking, the first type is concerned with the truth of propositions; the second type has to do with matters of knowledge; the third type is related to obligation; and, finally, the fourth type is associated with existence. Borrowing Aquinas' terms, he further distinguishes between modality *de dicto* and modality *de re* which only apply to alethic and epistemic modality: while alethic modality *de dicto* refers to “the mode or way in which a proposition is or is not true” (Von Wright 1951: 8), alethic modality *de re* refers to “the mode or way in which an individual thing has or has not a certain property” (Von Wright 1951: 25). Epistemic modality *de dicto*, in turn, refers to “the mode or way in which a proposition is or is not known (to be true)” (Von Wright 1951: 29). Epistemic modality *de re* refers to “the mode or way in which an individual thing is known to possess or to lack a certain property” (Von Wright 1951: 33).

Later classifications of modality are frequently and partially based on Von Wright's modal logic model. There is a tendency to divide modality into two classes, for instance, Lyons (1977) makes a two-fold distinction between epistemic and deontic modality: the former “is concerned with matters of knowledge, belief” (Lyons 1977: 793) or “opinion rather than fact” (Lyons 1977: 681-682), and the latter “is concerned with the necessity or possibility of acts performed by morally responsible agents” (Lyons 1977: 823). This division coincides with the one proposed by Biber et al. (1999: 485), but the terminology they use is different:

Each modal can have two different types of meaning, which can be labelled intrinsic and extrinsic (also referred to as 'deontic' and 'epistemic' meanings). Intrinsic modality refers to actions and actions and events that humans (or other agents) directly control. Meanings related to permission, obligation, and volition (or intention). Extrinsic modality refers to the logical status of events or states, usually relating to assessments of likelihood: possibility, necessity, or prediction.

Coates's (1983: 18-21) proposal also takes modality to encompass epistemic and non-epistemic modalities. The former roughly corresponds with Von Wright's epistemic modality in that "it is concerned with the speaker's assumptions or assessment of possibilities and, in most cases, it indicates the speaker's confidence (or lack of confidence) in the truth of the proposition expressed" (Coates 1983: 18). The emphasis is placed on the subjective nature of this type of modality as realised by the expression of the speaker's attitude or opinion towards the truth value of the proposition. Non-epistemic modality, for which Coates does not offer any clear definition, is equated with root modality and this is where she includes deontic, dynamic and existential modalities.

Bybee et al. (1994), on their part, establish a taxonomy of modality with four types, that is, (i) agent-oriented, (ii) speaker-oriented, (iii) epistemic and (iv) subordinating. Agent-oriented modality focuses on "the existence of internal and external conditions on an agent with respect to the completion of the action expressed in the main predicate" (Bybee et al. 1994: 177). Senses such as ability and root possibility, desire, intention, willingness, necessity and obligation are included in this type of modality. Speaker-oriented modality focuses on "the speaker[']s granting] the addressee permission" (Bybee et al. 1994: 179) to carry out some course of action and includes performative uses like positive and negative commands, warnings or the granting of permission, among others. As used in earlier literature (Von Wright 1951; Coates 1983), epistemic modality is defined in Bybee et al. (1994: 179) in terms of the expression of the speaker's commitment to the truth of propositions ranging from possibility through probability to inferred certainty. Finally, subordinating modality or, "subordinating moods", as Bybee et al. call it exactly, are not clearly defined in their framework. They claim that "the same forms that are used to express the speaker-oriented and epistemic modalities are often also used to mark the verbs in certain types of subordinate clauses" (Bybee et al. 1994: 180).

In Palmer's (1986) influential model, modality includes (i) propositional modality, which involves the expression of the speaker's judgements about propositions, and (ii) event

modality, which has to do with the expression of the speaker's attitude as for the likelihood of events in the future. These two subcategories are further divided into epistemic and evidential modality, and deontic and dynamic modality, respectively. Both epistemic and evidential modalities apply to the factual status of information, but the former has to do with judgements about it and the latter with the evidence for it. In the case of deontic and dynamic modalities, they are differentiated on the basis of the conditions involved, i.e. external and internal, respectively. Senses of obligation and permission belong to deontic modality, while senses of ability and willingness belong to dynamic modality.

This model epitomises one of the angles from which the relationship between epistemic modality and evidentiality may be approached, i.e. inclusion. The nature of their relationship is nothing new in recent research in linguistics, in fact, there is still a heated debate as to how the two notions are to be taken. Strictly speaking, the notion of evidentiality is related to the indication of the source of information: knowledge does always come from a source. Marking someone's source of information shows how an individual got to know or learnt that information; for example, s/he may have some information as for a given event on the basis of having witnessed it, by someone else's report, or by logical reasoning. However, in the broad conception evidentiality is taken to refer to both the speaker's source of knowledge and the degree of reliability of that knowledge, in which case evidentiality and attitudinal information, i.e. epistemic modal qualifications, seem to go hand in hand (Chafe 1986: 262).

As already stated, Palmer (1986: 51) endorses the view that evidentiality is subsumed under the epistemic modal system and, consequently, evidential markers are indicators of the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed. This association of epistemicity to the expression of both evidence and certainty is also followed by Aijmer (1980: 11), who claims that "epistemic quantifiers are expressions which say something about the speaker's evidence and degree of certainty". Associations of this kind seem to be derived by the widely adopted view that expressing one's source of knowledge is an indirect way of conveying epistemic attitude or, in other words, that all evidential markers tend to be essentially epistemic.

Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998) choose an overlapping approach to account for the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality. They assume that epistemic modality is "a domain where evidential and modal values overlap [...] where the probability of *P* is evaluated" (Plungian 2001: 354). Their definition of evidentiality is given in terms of "the indication of the source or kind of evidence speakers have for their statements" (Van der

Auwers and Plungian 1998: 85). Relying on the semantic mapping theory, they postulate that the category of epistemic modality is split up into two meaning regions: (i) epistemic possibility, i.e. uncertainty, and (ii) epistemic necessity, i.e. certainty and a relatively high degree of probability. The meaning regions covered by the evidential category are direct, i.e. visual, auditory and unspecified, and indirect, i.e. reportatives, inferential and unspecified. Their proposal equates inferential evidential readings with epistemic necessity (Van der Auwers and Plungian 1998: 85; cf. Boye 2010). Similarly, Carretero (2004) also deals with the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality from an overlapping perspective. She emphasises the existence of a continuum from evidentiality to epistemicity so that a given expression will fall towards one point or another of the continuum “depending on the commitment to the truth of the utterance which they encode or implicate” (Carretero 2004: 27-28).

De Haan (1999), Aikhenvald (2004), Cornillie (2009) and Alonso-Almeida (2015a, 2015b) adopt a disjunctive standpoint. De Haan (1999) states that “evidentiality deals with the source of information for the speaker’s utterance while epistemic modality concerns itself with the degree of commitment on the part of the speaker for his or her utterance”. Similarly, Aikhenvald (2004: 3) notes that evidentiality “covers the way in which the information was acquired, without necessarily relating to the degree of speaker’s certainty concerning the statement or whether it is true or not”. Matthewson et al. (2007) offer a criticism for both De Haan’s and Aikhenvald’s positions on the basis of their research on American Indian languages where evidentials, as elements which quantify over epistemically accessible worlds, have to be analysed as epistemic modals.

Cornillie (2009), very much after Aikhenvald’s fashion, posits that there is not a necessary correlation between the expression of mode of knowing and the expression of epistemic speaker commitment. Drawing on Nuyts’s (2001a: 21) definition of epistemic modality, that is, “an evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring or has occurred in a possible world”, Cornillie (2009: 46-47) suggests taking evidentiality as “the reasoning processes that lead to a proposition” and epistemic modality as the evaluation of “the likelihood that this proposition is true”. As Cornillie (2009) notes, evidentiality and epistemic modality are obviously different concepts. To my mind, however, the task of determining to what extent a given item contributes more to evidentiality or epistemicity seems to be difficult to accomplish in practice. This is particularly the case when referring to the interpretation of utterances as carried out by a reader who, in the search for more cognitive effects, is

probably led to infer differing degrees of reliability as attached to the information conveyed. In this research, then, I shall consider that evidentiality and epistemic modality are closely related so much so that many evidential elements are essentially epistemic, at least from the perspective of the interpreter, and so they do not only indicate the source of information, but also some sort of evaluation concerning the truth of the propositions. This approach has been also adopted by Kranich (2009) and Ortega-Barrera and Torres-Ramírez (2010).

Salient to the discussion of the relationship between epistemicity and evidentiality are the notions of *subjectivity* and *(inter)subjectivity* in the sense that modal, i.e. epistemic, and/or evidential meanings, are indexical of the speaker's subjective/(inter)subjective attitude (Marín-Arrese 2009). Lyons (1977) firstly (and vaguely) attempts to define subjectivity in contrast to objectivity as dimensions pertaining to modality. The difference between the two lies in the type of evidence an individual has for a modal judgement. Take the following (Lyons 1977: 797):

(43) Alfred may be unmarried

According to Lyons's formulation, this sentence may have been uttered by the speaker on subjective grounds to indicate that s/he is uncertain about Alfred's marital status and so, it expresses the speaker's reservations about providing an unqualified evaluation about the factual status of the proposition. Or, it may have been uttered on objective grounds, in which case it indicates that the speaker does not express any lack of commitment whatsoever as for the factuality of the proposition, but rather that s/he is certain that there is some measurable chance that Alfred is unmarried. As noted by Nuys (2001b: 386), the quality of the evidence governing objective modal judgements in Lyons's formulation can be said to be more reliable than that in subjective ones.

Within diachronic semantics, Traugott (1989, 1995, 2010) and Traugott and Dasher (2002) take the notions of objectivity, subjectivity and intersubjectivity as central in accounting for the semantic development of some linguistic forms, i.e. grammaticalisation. In their work, subjectification refers to the tendency displayed by some grammaticalised linguistic forms whose meanings have changed from expressing the objective description of the world to "expressing the speaker's belief state or attitude towards the proposition" (Traugott 1989: 44). Intersubjectification is concerned with the further development of those linguistic forms whose meanings have shifted from expressing the speaker's position towards the objective world to expressing "meanings centered on the addressee" (Traugott 2010: 35).

Langacker's (1990, 1999) cognitive grammar framework also makes use of the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity as related to human conceptualisation processes. The difference between objective and subjective construal is determined by the extent to which the conceptualiser, i.e. the speaker, is offstage as opposed to onstage in the conceptualisation of the object of perception. In an "optimal viewing arrangement" situation, the conceptualiser is offstage and implicit, which means that s/he is not part of the conceptualisation and the focus of attention is on the perceived object. In such a situation, the conceptualiser is construed with maximal subjectivity whereas the perceived object is maximally objective. In an "egocentric viewing arrangement" situation, in contrast, the conceptualiser is onstage and explicit and so s/he is placed in the focus of attention being construed with maximal objectivity while the perceived object gets less objective.

The analysis carried out in this research draws on a less ambitious application of the concepts of subjectivity and (inter)subjectivity, specifically, the one developed by Nuyts (2001a, 2001b, 2012) because it has relevant implications for the analysis of epistemic and evidential values. According to Nuyts (2001a: 34), the concept of (inter)subjectivity is defined in terms of the shared status of the modal evaluation:

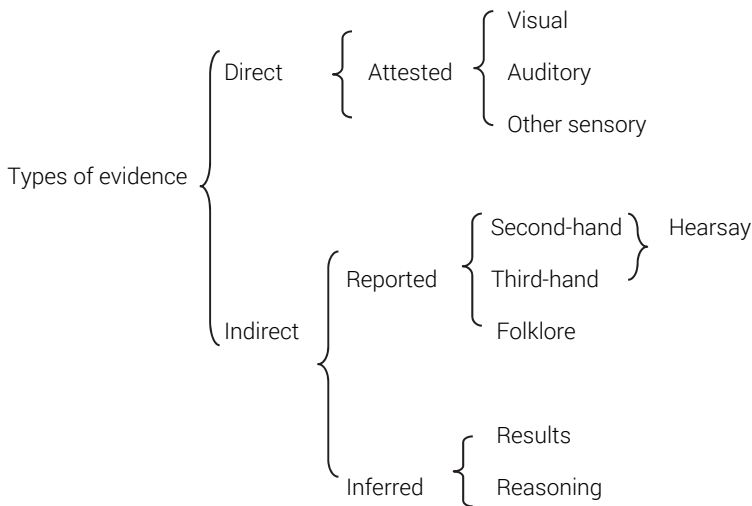
The alternatives within this [evidential] dimension could then be phrased as follows: does the speaker suggest that (s)he alone knows the evidence and draws a conclusion from it; or does (s)he indicate that the evidence is known to (or accessible by) a larger group of people who share the conclusion from it. In the former case the speaker assumes strictly personal responsibility for the epistemic qualification, in the latter case (s)he assumes a shared responsibility for it (although (s)he remains responsible too, of course).

In other words, Nuyts's view of (inter)subjectivity has to do with who is to be held responsible for a modal evaluation: if the modal evaluation is presented on the grounds of the assessor's sole responsibility, then it is subjective, whereas if it is presented on the grounds of the assessor's and someone else's responsibility, it is intersubjective. For example, this may be linguistically manifested in the use of personal pronouns in such a way that a first-person subject where the assessor is made explicit encodes subjectivity, and an impersonal subject encodes intersubjectivity (Nuyts 2012: 59).



### 2.5.1.1. Classifications of evidentiality

Information may be acquired in several ways, for instance, an individual may have had direct access to a given event, i.e. visual or otherwise involving his/her senses; he/she may have had direct access not to the event itself but to elements that hint at the occurrence of the event; or he/she may have received the information from somebody else's report. Depending on the type of evidence the speaker has for a piece of information, the subdomains of evidentiality can be as shown below (Willet 1988: 57):



**Figure 4. The semantic domains of evidentiality (Willet 1988: 57).**

According to this classification, and semantically speaking, evidentials can be direct or indirect. The former are used when the individual has some sort of sensory evidence for the information, while the latter are so when the evidence for the information has been reported to him/her by someone else, or when s/he has come to know that information on the basis of an inferential process. Willet's classification has served as the starting point for many other taxonomies of evidential values such as the one proposed by Aikhenvald (2004: 63-64) who divides evidentials into six types, namely, (i) visual, (ii) non-visual sensory, (iii) inference, (iv) assumption, (v) hearsay and (vi) quotative. While visual evidentials are those which indicate that the information has been specifically acquired through seeing, non-visual sensory evidentials are those which indicate that the information has been acquired through any of

the other senses. Evidentials within the inferential category signal at the information's being acquired on the basis of "visible or tangible evidence, or result" (Aikhenvald 2004: 63). The assumptive category involves evidence's being obtained by "logical reasoning, assumption, or simply general knowledge" (Aikhenvald 2004: 63). Hearsay and quotative evidentials are associated with the reporting of information, with no reference at all or explicit reference to those reporting it, respectively.

Aikhenvald's (2004) categorisation of evidential values seems to present, in my view, some problems with the inferential and assumptive types since it is difficult to determine to what extent logical reasoning and inference are unrelated cognitive processes. Generally speaking, logical reasoning may involve the performance of inferential tasks, in which case, the inferential and assumptive categories as defined here are somewhat fuzzy. Apart from this, Bermúdez (2005: 8) observes that Aikhenvald is not completely consistent in the classification of evidential systems: the author primarily distinguishes between evidential systems in which the source of information is specified and those in which the source of information is not specified. She then goes on making distinctions in the former on the basis of the number of ways in which the source of information can be marked, i.e. up to six different ways which correspond to the classification of evidential values commented on above. This classification results in awkward groupings of very disparate systems because they may mark the same number of evidential values and, conversely, similar systems fall into different categories because they do not mark the same number of evidential values (Bermúdez 2005: 8).

Plungian (2001) notes that not all languages make the basic distinction between direct and indirect evidence, as put forward in Willet (1988), but between mediated and non-mediated evidence, including in the latter sensory and inferred evidence. His proposal takes personal evidence vs. indirect evidence as the basic evidential opposition. Both direct and reflected evidence are included within the personal evidence category. In the case of direct evidence, the information is gained through the individual's senses and so s/he has direct access to the described situation, i.e. visually or by any other of his/her senses, or the described situation is an individual's inner state, i.e. endophoric evidence. In the case of reflected evidence, the information is obtained by performing inferential tasks or by reasoning. Finally, when the individual gets to know some information through mediated evidence, this is indicated by means of quotative evidentials. Plungian's (2001) typology seems to present certain advantages over Willet's or Aikhenvald's, for instance, its applicability to larger number of systems in which there is not a correspondence between the epistemic and the evidential

scales (Pietrandrea 2005: 48). In this respect, his proposal offers a straightforward distinction between personal and impersonal/indirect evidence. Furthermore, it provides fine-grained distinctions of the subcategories included in reflected evidence avoiding the fuzziness encountered in Aikhenvald's taxonomy and so becoming an efficient tool to distinguish between the subcategories of evidentiality.

### 2.5.2. *Evaluative adjectives and adverbs*

Efficacy statements tend to have an important evaluative component, i.e. evaluative adjectives and adverbs, by means of which writers show their opinion about the validity of medicines, mainly with persuasive purposes. Generally speaking, the expression of evaluation involves (i) an agent expressing the evaluation, (ii) an object or a subject, a process or a state of affairs being evaluated, and (iii) the type of evaluation being expressed.

It is beyond dispute that adjectives have a strong interpersonal component since they reveal authorial attitudes towards propositional information and even towards the audience themselves. Biber et al. (1999: 508-509) point out that, from a semantic perspective, there are two broad groups of adjectives: *descriptors* and *classifiers*. Descriptors can be taken as the prototypical adjectives in that they can denote features such as (i) colour, i.e. *black, bright, green*; (ii) size/quantity/extent, i.e. *deep, huge, wide*; (iii) time, i.e. *annual, late, young*; (iv) evaluative/emotive, i.e. *beautiful, good, poor*; or (v) miscellaneous descriptive, i.e. *appropriate, empty, practical*.

Classifiers, in contrast, are used to "restrict a noun's referent, by placing it in a category in relation to other referents" (Biber et al. 1999: 508). The authors identify three subclasses, namely, (i) relational/classificational/restrictive, (ii) affiliative and (iii) topical/other. The first subclass relates to those adjectives that are used to delimit the referent of a noun in relation to other referents, i.e. *chief, different, previous*. The second subclass is related to those adjectives that are used to designate some sort of affiliation of the referent, mainly, nationality and religion, i.e. *Chinese, Christian, Irish*. The third subclass includes adjectives which are used for "giving the subject area or showing a relationship with a noun" (Biber et al. 1999: 509), i.e. *environmental, legal, phonetic*.

Adjectives are said to express appreciative modality, which encodes the subjective evaluations and judgements of the speaker. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980) puts forward a major distinction between *objective* and *subjective* adjectives. She further divides the latter into

*emotional* and *evaluative* types. The evaluative type is also taken to comprise *axiological* and *non-axiological* subtypes as shown in Figure 5 below. This fine-grained typology of subjective adjectives is a useful tool for the identification of the evaluative use of adjectives which convey the writer's positive assessment of medical products in this research. Kerbat-Orecchioni's typology does not seem to be incompatible with Biber et al.'s classification, in fact, it goes deeper into the semantic characterisation of evaluative/emotive adjectives as shown here:

<b>Subjective adjectives</b>		
<b>Emotional adjectives</b> Reflect an emotional state, e.g. <i>sad, unpleasant</i>	<b>Evaluative adjectives</b>	
	<b>Axiological evaluative adjectives</b> Evaluation in relation to a system of values, e.g. <i>famous, good, interesting</i>	<b>Non-axiological evaluative adjectives</b> Evaluation in relation to norm, e.g. <i>big, new, recent</i>

Figure 5. Typology of adjectives (Kerbat-Orecchioni 1980).

According to this author, emotional adjectives are those which do not only specify a feature of the noun they modify, but also indicate an emotional reaction in the speaker (Kerbat-Orecchioni 1980: 111). Axiological evaluative adjectives, on their part, are those that indicate the speaker's qualitative evaluation of the modified noun in relation to a system of values by adding a positive or negative judgement and so, their use can be said to have implications as for the speaker's favourable or unfavourable position towards the modified noun. Non-axiological evaluative adjectives are those that provide a qualitative or a quantitative evaluation of the noun they modify in relation to a norm. They tend to have a gradual nature.

As far as adverbs are concerned, Biber et al. (1999) make a distinction between three main groups of adverbs, that is, (i) *circumstance* adverbs, i.e. *eagerly, here, now*; (ii) *stance* adverbs, i.e. *apparently, clearly, frankly*; and (iii) *linking* adverbs, i.e. *additionally, besides, nevertheless*. While *circumstance* adverbs pertain to the propositional content of a sentence, *stance* and *linking* adverbs do not essentially contribute to it: the former constitute a comment on that content and the latter signal the relationships that hold between the propositional content of

the sentence in which they occur and that of other sentences in a given piece of discourse. In this light, circumstance adverbs pertain to the representational level of meaning (Ramat and Ricca 1998): they are used as complementisers of verbs or nouns and cannot be elided without disrupting the meaning of the sentence in which they appear. Stance adverbs pertain to the interpersonal level of meaning (Ramat and Ricca 1998): they are used to convey some information about the propositional content of the sentence or about the speech act the sentence is used to accomplish. Consequently, stance adverbs are concerned with the expression of speaker attitudes.

Stance adverbs are frequently addressed in earlier literature together with linking adverbs, above all, when their syntactic behaviour is at stake. In such a case, both stance and linking adverbs are labelled as *sentence adverbs*, *sentence adverbials* or *sentence modifiers*. Whenever a pragmatic perspective is adopted, stance and linking adverbs are clearly differentiated, for instance, in Fraser's (1999) discursive framework stance adverbs have a correspondence with *comment pragmatic markers* and linking adverbs do so with *discourse markers*. Quirk et al.'s (1985) refer to *disjuncts* and *conjuncts*, respectively, while Sinclair (1990) and Halliday (1994) grouped them together under the label *adjuncts*. Similarly, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) label them as *clause-oriented adjuncts*. I shall focus on those stance adverbs aimed at indicating the validity of the remedies. In so doing, Biber et al.'s (1999) and Conrad and Biber's (1999) semantic categorisation into *epistemic*, *attitude* and *style* stance adverbials will be followed. According to the definition provided in Biber et al. (1999: 854),

Epistemic stance adverbials and attitude stance adverbials both comment on the content of a proposition. Epistemic markers express the speaker's judgment about the certainty, reliability, and limitations of the proposition; they can also comment on the source of the information. Attitude stance adverbials convey the speaker's attitude or value judgment about the proposition's content. Style adverbials, in contrast, describe the manner of speaking.

Epistemic stance adverbials can further convey a number of meanings such as (i) doubt and certainty, i.e. *perhaps*, *probably*, *undoubtedly*; (ii) actuality and reality, i.e. *actually*, *in fact*, *really*; (iii) source of knowledge, i.e. *apparently*, *evidently*, *according to*; (iv) limitation, i.e. *in most cases*, *mainly*, *typically*; (v) viewpoint or perspective, i.e. *from my perspective*, *in my opinion*, *in our view*; and (vi) imprecision, i.e. *kind of*, *roughly*, *so to speak*.

## 2.6. Historical Speech-Act Analysis

Speech acts are eminently pragmatic phenomena which can be analysed from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. As for the diachronic perspective, a wide range of approaches can be adopted not only for the analysis of speech acts, but also for the analysis of communicative practices, genres, registers, and linguistic functions in historical texts (Fitzmaurice and Taavitsainen 2007: 1). Scholars working in the field have noted that the task of analysing the history of speech acts in particular cannot be taken carelessly. Echoing Bertucelli-Papi's (2000) words in relation to the study of the history of the English language in general, Taavitsainen and Jucker (2008: 3) make an analogous claim and point out that "researchers can take different starting points when they investigate the history of individual speech acts or individual classes of speech acts and they can use different tools, but they always have to be aware of the slippery and treacherous nature of their endeavour".

Historical Speech-Act Analysis is a relatively young research topic in the pragmatic arena; in fact, there are dissenting views as regards its feasibility. Jacobs and Jucker (1995: 19) put forward Stetter's (1991: 74) position in this respect: speech acts cannot be looked into from a historical standpoint because there is no way of knowing exactly what intentions the speakers had when performing them. Obviously, "texts may be preserved across time, while contexts may not" (Vagle 2006: 222), and Stetter may be right if one considers texts in themselves as the only source of information for the analysis. It is also true that having a precise knowledge of every single factor governing communicative situations in the past with high degrees of specificity appears to be impossible, but still, "the key to interpretation is the context of utterance" (Taavitsainen and Jucker 2008: 4). Historical pragmatics may rely on other disciplines to inform analysis, such as ethnography, history, sociology, and so on. Nevertheless, a detailed account of the contextual factors governing communicative situations where speech acts were performed, i.e. cultural setting, historical context, participants, social relationships, among others, would prove to be helpful in their identification (Jacobs and Jucker 1995: 19).

As a young field of research, there are several theoretical and methodological issues yet to be discussed and refined. Some of these are raised in Bertucelli-Papi's (2000) introductory paper to the first issue of the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, which, as a matter of fact, is devoted to research in Historical Speech-Act Analysis. Bertucelli-Papi (2000: 57) notes that many of these difficulties in the historical approach to SAT are rooted in the very synchronic viewpoint where little agreement has been reached in relation to definitions and terminology, suitability

of methodological research procedures and data themselves. In this light, divergences are also to be expected when tackling its historical dimension.

Some of the problems dealt with in this paper cover various aspects of SAT and to what extent they are relevant for a historical pragmatic account. They include the relationships that can be established between (i) propositional, speaker and illocutionary meanings, (ii) grammatical structure and illocutionary force, i.e. correlation hypothesis, and (iii) illocutionary force indicating devices and speech act identification, as well as (iv) the role of context, i.e. conventions, intentions and cognition.

The relationship between propositional meaning and speaker meaning occupies a central position in SAT. They have been traditionally taken as different levels of meaning: the former is the most basic type of meaning and as such it may be truth-conditionally analysed. The latter is some sort of extension of the basic meaning of an utterance and it encompasses the whole range of speakers' intentions so that illocutionary meaning is considered to be part of it. The supposed existence of these two (and even three) levels of meaning is the reason why speakers may mean something else than the mere propositional content of the sentences they utter. However, it is not that easy to establish clear-cut distinctions between these levels of meaning since, for instance, there may be overlap as for the linguistic indicators of propositional content and illocutionary force. In any case, these linguistic indicators may show formal or functional variation and so are liable to be analysed from a historical perspective (Bertucelli-Papi 2000: 59).

Something similar happens in the case of the relationship between grammatical structure and illocutionary force. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, speech-act theorists originally suggested that certain syntactic constructions are associated with the accomplishment of certain speech acts: the declarative mood is used to make statements, the imperative to give orders and the interrogative to make questions. It was soon realised that this one-to-one correspondence between grammatical structure and illocutionary force cannot be easily kept in all instances. Recall, for example, (21), (22) and (23) in which, under appropriate contextual conditions, *I am exhausted* and *tell me who the first man on the moon was*, being declarative and imperative sentences, respectively, can be used as requests for help and information. Similarly, the interrogative *can you set the table?* can be meant as an order. Nevertheless, as Bertucelli-Papi (2000: 60) emphasises, there is a wide range of elements in the grammars of all languages in general, and in the English grammar in particular, which do certainly shape

the illocutionary force of utterances, i.e. illocutionary force indicating devices, and which are obviously subject to historical variation.

Lastly, context fundamentally determines illocutionary force. It is to be understood in a broad sense: in the Austinian formulation of the theory, the situational parameters governing the communicative exchange do not only include the characteristics of the participants and their relationship, but also the conventional nature of speech acts. The Searlian approach highlights participants' intentions and their identification as one of the main components of speech acts. The inferential perspective towards their understanding helps to deepen into the cognitive processes that are triggered in speech act production and reception. Being understood as a complex relational network of conventions, intentions and cognition, context can be certainly investigated from a historical viewpoint (Bertucelli-Papi 2000: 62-63): (i) linguistic and social conventions change over time and the historical setting does have implications in those changes; (ii) intentions are also shaped by the immediate context surrounding individuals, being primarily regulated by social relationships; and finally, (iii) human cognition and the way it works are based on cognitive environments, i.e. beliefs and assumptions achieved by perception and/or inference, and so, they are ultimately shaped by socio-historical aspects.

Jucker and Taavitsainen (2000: 68) conclude that "a diachronic speech act analysis is possible and fruitful". What follows is a general overview of the contributions which have helped to the development of Historical Speech-Act Analysis. At the same time, evidence from research in the field will provide me with arguments for validating my analysis of efficacy statements as promissory speech acts from a relevance-theoretic approach.

The pioneering works focus on languages which are not English, mainly German. The research by Schlieben-Lange (1976, 1983) stands as one of the first contributions. Her point of departure is the search for linguistic units that are functionally similar to speech acts. She employs different sources in order to get data: dictionaries, text themselves and historical, institutional and legal information. The use of dictionaries constitutes the first step in her investigation and they serve as a source to get performative verbs. Afterwards, she analyses texts so as to determine how speech acts are performed and accomplished, but with an eye on history and institutions since they influence the conception and realisation of performativity. She comes to the conclusion that there is no such thing as universal speech acts (Schlieben-Lange 1976: 114): their linguistic realisation, the role they play within



institutions and/or society and their understanding is always dependent on socio-historical concerns.

Analyses of a more specific type can be found in Lötscher (1981), Bax (1981, 1983 and 1991), Schwarz (1984) and Gloning (1993). Lötscher (1981) studies two related kinds of speech acts, i.e. swearing and insults in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Swiss German. Comparing the results with present-day usage, he concludes that swearing and insults used to be more vulgar as there were much more references to sex and excretory language. Nowadays, this type of speech acts are characterised by having frequent references to mental or physical handicaps and less than frequent appeals to religion. Bax (1981, 1983 and 1991), on his part, analyses the linguistic manifestation of the speech act of duelling and how its interpretation can be affected by the order in which utterances appear.

Schwarz (1984) concentrates on the pragmatic aspects of the speech event of declaring love as present in literary texts, i.e. Tristan poems. He touches upon the intentional nature of the speech act in itself, the circumstances surrounding it, the content of the declaration, the level of explicitness in the performance and its perlocutionary effects, among others. Gloning (1993) investigates historical texts dealing with how to use language appropriately. This study throws some light on the way the use of address formulas was mainly conditioned by social relationships so that when an individual addressed another without observance of the rules, his/her behaviour was considered to be disrespectful. Apart from this, women were not to be interrupted while they were talking, and they were supposed to obey as instructed when men gave them orders.

As for the analysis of speech acts in the English language in particular, the papers published in the first issue of the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* are of great importance. Jucker and Taavitsainen (2000) provide us with an interesting framework to investigate speech events, specifically, insults, from a historical perspective. The basic assumption is that speech acts are subject to synchronic and diachronic variation both formally and functionally. The different realisations of a given speech event is dependent on factors such as context, culture and time, and its analysis would benefit from looking into other related speech acts. Their data covers several periods of the history of the language, from Old English to Present-Day English, and many different literary and non-literary genres are also represented, namely, court proceedings, letters, plays, poems and internet news groups. Jucker and Taavitsainen (2000: 92) argue that “medieval flyting, Shakespearean name-calling and present-day flaming

are not realizations of one and the same speech function of insult but they are different speech functions located in the pragmatic space of antagonistic behaviour”.

The contribution by Culpeper and Semino (2000) proposes a distinct methodological approach to examine speech acts in the Early Modern English period. They consider those speech act verbs that are employed to refer to witches' curses and try to trace their semantic and pragmatic characteristics over time. They firstly specify the meanings attached to the verbs under consideration, i.e. *curse* and *wish*, by ascribing them into the taxonomies of illocutionary acts, and then apply the notion of constitutive rules to emphasise the differences over time. After that, the application of Levinson's (1992) concept of *activity type* allows them to identify the sort of activity which can be taken as the diachronic space where variation occurs, i.e. witchcraft activity type. Their paper proves that recent pragmatic theories can provide us with efficient tools for the study of historical texts.

Another relevant work as for the development of historical speech act analysis is Arnovick (2000), where the methodological perspective adopted is that of function-to-form mapping, in spite of Kohnen's (2001) reservations in this respect. The speech acts analysed in this monograph are varied and they include insults, curses, terminal greetings, blessings and promises. The speech events of flyting and flaming are formally distinct and occur in essentially different cultural contexts, but they are looked into in relation to the speech act that lies behind them, namely, the agonistic insult which is typically found in oral cultures. As far as curses are concerned, these are speech acts which show a very specific functional development: they were initially declarative and, as such, the person uttering them had to have some institutional or religious authority. Later on, they turned to be expressive speech acts whose function was that of conveying the speaker's emotions, mainly anger. In the last phase in their development, curses are simply used as a way of aggression. Arnovick (2000) notes that curses have undergone a process of subjectification by means of which “meanings become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief state, or attitude toward what is said” (Traugott 1989: 35).

Arnovick's (2000) analysis of promises takes Wallis rules as the starting point. These rules indicate how the speech acts of promising and predicting are to be linguistically manifested from a prescriptive point of view: while promises in the first person should make use of *will* and those in the second and third persons should do so with *shall*, predictions take just the opposite form, that is, *shall* is to be used with first person and *will* with second and third persons. Even though these rules were not followed in actual language use, grammarians'

attempt to fix them in this specific way is to be seen as a move towards trying to linguistically differentiate between deontic and epistemic meanings. It is precisely in terms of deonticity and epistemicity that she accounts for the development of promising: she notes that nowadays modals like *shall* and *will* are not enough to mark deontic obligation as typically associated with promising. Instead, promises can be said to be performed by using extra verbal work, i.e. *expanding discourse* (Arnovick 2000: 67-70). In earlier periods of the English language, however, promises could be issued by the use of the modal, because the sense of strong obligation was inherently attached to it.

Another monograph devoted to the history of speech acts in English is the one edited by Jucker and Taavitsainen (2008). It comprises a number of essays dealing with different speech acts, namely, directives and commissives (commands, requests and promises), and expressives and assertives (greetings, compliments and apologies), together with other papers where methodological issues are addressed, mainly, in relation to data retrieval. The papers dealing with commissive speech acts are Del Lungo Camiciotti (2008), Pakkala-Weckström (2008) and Valkonen (2008).

Del Lungo Camiciotti (2008) analyses commissive speech acts in relation to requests. They are both characterised by having the same direction of fit, that is, world-to-words: requests are intended to get the hearer to do something and in commissives the speaker commits himself/herself to doing something. Her corpus of study is made up of nineteenth-century business letters. In general, the formulation of these speech acts is highly influenced by rules of polite social interaction and so, directives and promises are frequently modulated, i.e. downgraded and upgraded, respectively, which means that illocutionary force is very much a matter of degree (Sbisà 2001). Commissives in particular are specifically formulated by the employment of *//we shall/will + a positive adjective* such as *glad, happy or ready*.

Pakkala-Weckström (2008) focuses on binding promises in medieval literary works like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. She puts forward the need to look into promises in relation to the context in which they are embedded since, sometimes, the issuing of certain formula typically associated with promising does not automatically imply the formulation of a promise and, other times, binding promises may not be issued by employing typical promise-like formula at all. She observes that there is a major difference between the way promises are formulated in Present-Day and Middle English: having the requisite feelings and intentions plays a central role in contemporary English, but this was not so in earlier stages of language development. The mere uttering of a promise, whether or not the speaker had the intention to

fulfil it, was binding. Several lexico-grammatical ways in which binding promises can be formulated are identified in her data, for example, the use of the verbs *trouthe*, *swearen*, *plighthen* and *bihighthen*.

Valkonen (2008), on his part, works out certain lexical and grammatical patterns to try to search for promises in *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* and the *Chadwyck-Healey Eighteenth Century Fiction Database*. In order to do so, he employs Wierzbicka's (1987) list of verbs for promises so that he only searches for explicit promissory speech acts like *guarantee*, *pledge*, *promise*, *swear* and *vow*. This research is developed in two steps: firstly, he uses a small corpus for a pilot study in which he looks for any of these verbs and he then extends the search to larger patterns in which these verbs appear embedded in a larger corpus.

## 2.7. Summary

In this chapter I have presented the theoretical framework which guides this research. The speech-act function to be examined in this study is the promise, in particular, any expressing a positive assessment of the therapy dealt with in the recipes. This function has been defined in relation to its constituent elements by drawing on Reinach's (1983) general characterisation. The theoretical basis of SAT developed in Austin (1975) and refined in Searle (1969) has been also described because understanding the underlying assumptions behind the theory is a requisite to recognise the role of the constitutive rules which apply to commissive speech acts of a promissory type.

In addition, I have introduced Grice's (1957) proposal to account for the recognition of the speaker's intention in a communicative exchange, which is done by performing inferential tasks. The Gricean programme on recognition of intentions is precisely the starting point for the development of RT, which is the theoretical framework used in the analysis and interpretation of data in this study. In the relevance-theoretic approach to communication, the Gricean maxims and the CP are superseded by the principle of relevance. This principle shapes the production and the processing of utterances. According to it, when we engage in a communicative situation, we do not only produce utterances but also communicate our belief that our utterances are optimally relevant. At the same time, hearers always take our utterances to come with an implicit guarantee of their optimal relevance. Hearers are then supposed to process our utterances in such a way that they obtain as many contextual

effects as possible for as little processing effort as possible. As we have seen in this chapter, context is of central importance in RT: both speaker and hearer participate actively in the communicative event. The utterances produced by the speaker constitute an immediate given context for the hearer to interpret subsequent utterances, together with encyclopaedic and/or environmental information. All of these factors shape a range of possible contexts; the selection of a particular context will be determined by the search for relevance. It is the chosen one against which utterances are to be processed.

Efficacy statements frequently contain stancetaking devices which are crucial for the determination of the propositional attitude and the illocutionary force attached to the utterances. In the fifth section of this chapter I have offered an overview of stance as it is a theoretically generous term whose insights allow for the analysis of modal verbs, evidential material and evaluative language. I have revised the concepts of modality and evidentiality in order to clarify what these notions can be taken to encompass. In general lines, modal verbs may encode the speaker's stance towards what s/he saying in the form of attitudes, beliefs or opinions. Although terminological variation is tremendous, I have chosen the traditional distinction between deontic and epistemic modality because their use in research is more widespread. As will be shown in chapter 4, the commissive illocutionary force of a promise of efficacy is partially determined by the deonticity conveyed by the modal verbs *shall* and *will*. The occurrence of evidential material indicating the author's source of information and its reliability is a key element in the recovery of the propositional attitude. I concede that evidentiality and epistemic modality are essentially different concepts, but when referring to the interpretation of specific utterances, readers may be led to infer the degree of reliability of the information presented in the search for more cognitive effects. The notions of subjectivity/(inter)subjectivity have been also commented on insofar as epistemic and/or evidential markers may be indexical of the author's subjective/(inter)subjective positioning.

As far as evaluation is concerned, this notion applies to those utterances where the author provides a positive assessment of the medical product by making explicit reference to its quality or to its healing properties. Here I have specified Biber et al.'s (1999: 508-509) classification of adjectives into descriptors and classifiers. I shall be focusing on the descriptors category and particularly on evaluative/emotive adjectives since these are the ones more closely related to the expression of authorial attitudes. I have also deepened into this semantic characterisation thanks to the typology of subjective adjectives proposed by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980) as it provides fine-grained distinctions in the semantics of adjectives. As will be shown in chapter 4, axiological evaluative adjectives together with

attitudinal stance adverbs and lexical verbs which predicate on the curative properties of the remedies are one of the preferred means of expressing evaluation in the medical recipes analysed in this volume.

The last section in the chapter has been devoted to contextualising and justifying this research in the field of Historical Speech-Act Analysis. Several contributions with varied methodologies and the results achieved by their authors make manifest not only the feasibility but also the necessity of conducting research in this area.

# CORPUS DESCRIPTION

## 3.1. Introduction

This chapter contains the description of the corpus used to carry out the study, namely, the *Corpus of Early English Recipes* (Alonso-Almeida, Ortega-Barrera and Quintana-Toledo 2012). This corpus gathers together Middle English, Early Modern English and Late Modern English recipe texts. The description will be offered in several steps: I shall firstly refer to the general objectives of the compilation, its source materials, the selection criteria, and its internal organisation. The next step is the characterisation of the recipe text in terms of text-type features and genre characteristics. In order to do so, I shall concentrate on the systemic-functional approach which has been already successfully applied to the study of this genre. The last step is to report on relevant literature about efficacy statements which are the specific section of medical recipes analysed in this volume.

## 3.2. Corpus of Early English Recipes

The origins of the *Corpus of Early English Recipes* (hereinafter CoER) date back to 2002. Its compilation began in the Department of Modern Philology at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria where there is a long tradition in the study and edition of medical texts (Alonso-Almeida 1997, 2000; Ortega-Barrera 2002, 2005; Vega-Déniz 2002, 2009; Quintana-Toledo 2008; Santana-Muñoz 2008). CoER can be roughly described as a monogeneric diachronic corpus since it aims at gathering together recipe texts from different stages in the development of the English language, i.e. Middle English, Early Modern English and Late Modern English, which can serve as material for research in fields like (historical) linguistics, (historical) pragmatics, (historical) discourse analysis and diachronic ESP (labelled as such in Alonso-Almeida and Marrero-Morales (2011)). The team's motivation for the choice of the

recipe genre has been determined by the fact that recipes seem to have had a wide audience as they can be found in both the remedybook and the learned traditions of writing (Taavitsainen 2001a: 86).

As for the source materials of this compilation, the team has chosen two renowned databases, namely *Early English Books Online* (<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>) and *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (<https://www.gale.com/intl/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online>), besides library reels. *Early English Books Online* is one of the most complete online catalogues of the first printed books in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and British North America between 1473 and 1700. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, on its part, provides researchers with hundreds of works printed in Great Britain during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The interfaces of these databases have made the search for the material easier. It has been primarily guided by the use of keywords, i.e. *recipe*, *medicine*, *cookery*. The criteria for selecting the texts initially retrieved after keyword searches were completely random except for the fact that first editions were preferred and the documents had to contain a significant number of recipes.

The chronological organisation of the corpus follows the indications provided in Taavitsainen's and Pahta's (1997) *Corpus of early English medical writing 1375-1750*, where there is a division between two periods, that is, 1375-1550 as representative of Middle English, and 1550-1750 for Early Modern English. As the authors put forward, the time span they take for Late Middle English does not coincide with the traditional division for this period in diachronic studies of the English language. They made the decision to change the traditional period division for this one on the basis of extralinguistic parameters: 1375 indicates the year in which vernacular medical writings re-appeared and 1550 signals the approximate time in which the medieval way of thinking started to be superseded by a new one based on observation (Taavitsainen and Pahta 1997: 73). Another period covering the time span between 1750 and 1900 is also found in CoER so as to allow users to have a more complete picture of the recipe genre.

The recipe texts which have been excerpted to build this compilation have been also organised in relation to their topic following the categories in Voigts and Kurtz (2000) as shown in Table 4 below:



**Table 4. Topic organization in CoER following Voigts and Kurtz (2000).**

Fields	Examples
Alchemical processes	alchemical, artificial jewels, soap
Animals	falconry, fishing, veterinary
Botany	arboriculture, horticulture
Food and drink	ale, culinary, wine
Medicine	dental, gynaecology and obstetrics, herbals, medical, ophthalmology
Other daily activities	book production, clothworking, ink, lacemaking, leather

The complete catalogue of categories include the following: alchemical, ale, arboriculture, artificial jewels, book production, clothworking, cosmetic, culinary, dental, dyes and pigments, falconry, fishing, glue, gunpowder, gynaecology and obstetrics, horticulture, hunting, ink, leather, medical, metallurgy, ophthalmology, soap, veterinary, wax and wine. Two categories of those listed by Voigts and Kurtz (2000), namely, magic and taking birds, have not been included in CoER.

As for the specific texts which have been used for the present research, they are shown in Table 5 as they appear in *Early English Books Online* (<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>). Abbreviations as used throughout this volume are also provided for ease of reference:

**Table 5. Specific texts from CoER used in the analysis.**

Title	Author	Date	Abbrev.
<i>Here begynneth a newe boke of medecynes intyulyd or callyd the Treasure of pore men whiche sheweth many dyuerse good medecines for dyuerse certayn dysseases as in the table of this present boke more playnly shall appere</i>	Anonymous	152 6	TPM
<i>This is the myroure or glasse of helth necessary and nedefull for euery person to loke in, that wyll kepe theyr body from the syckenes of the pestylence: and it sheweth howe the planettes raygne, in euery houre of the daye and the nyght: with the natures and exposicions of the .xii. sygnes, deuided by the .xii. monthes of the yere</i>	Thomas Moulton	153 1	MGH
<i>The kegiment [sic] of life wherunto is added A treatyse of the pestilence, with The booke of children newly corrected and enlarged by T. Phayer</i>	Jean Goeurot, Thomas Phayer	154 6	RLP

<i>The treasure of healtie conteynyng many profitable medicines, gathered out of Hypocrates, Galen and Auycen, / by one Petrus Hispanus &amp; translated into Englysh by Humfre Lloyde who hath added therunto the causes and sygnes of euerye dysease, wyth the Aphorismes of Hypocrates, and Iacobus de Partybus, redacted to a certayne order according to the membres of mans body, and a compendious table conteynyng the purging and confortatyue medycynes, with the expositoryon of certayne names &amp; weyghtes in this boke contayned, wyth an epystle of Diocles unto kyng Antigonus, at ye request of the right honorable Lord Stafford, for the noble pryncesse and his especial good lady the Duches of Northumberlande</i>	Pope John XXI, Jacques Desparts, Dyocles of Carystus	155 0	THM
<i>This lytle practice of Iohannes de Vigo, in medicine, is translated out of Latin into Englyshe, for the health of the body of man</i>	Giovanni da Vigo	156 4	PIV
<i>A booke of soueraine approued medicines and remedies as well for sundry diseases within the body as also for all sores, woundes, ... Not onely very necessary and profitable, but also commodious for all suche as shall vouchsafe to practise and vse the same</i>	Anonymous	157 7	BSM
<i>A thousand notable things, of sundry sortes wherof some are wonderfull, some straunge, some pleasant, diuers necessary, a great sort profitable and many very precious</i>	Thomas Lupton	157 9	TNT
<i>The first part of the key of philosophie</i>	John Hester, Paracelsus, Philippus Hermanni	158 0	FKP
<i>A right profitable booke for all disseases Called The pathway to health: wherein are to be found most excellent and approued medicines of great vertue, as also notable potions and drinckes, and for the destillinge of diuers pretious waters, and making of oyles and other comfortable receiptes for the health of the body, neuer before imprinted</i>	Peter Levens	158 2	TPH
<i>The good huswifes iewell VVherein is to he [sic] found most excellend [sic] and rare deuises for conceites in cookery, found out by the practise of Thomas Dawson</i>	A. T.	159 6	GHI
<i>A rich store-house or treasury for the diseased Wherein, are many approued medicines for diuers and sundry diseases, which have been long hidden, and not come to light before this time</i>	Thomas Dawson	159 6	RST

### 3.2.1. *The recipe genre*

The last three decades have witnessed a growing interest in the study of the recipe genre. The focus of attention has been placed on several aspects such as genre and/or text-type issues (Stannard 1982; Hunt 1990; Görlach 1992, 2004; Alonso-Almeida 1998-1999, 2013, 2014; Carroll 1999, 2004; Taavitsainen 2001a; Cruz-Cabanillas 2017), discursive features (Carroll 2003; Alonso-Almeida 2005) and pragmatic characteristics (Taavitsainen 2000, 2001b; Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu 2002; Alonso-Almeida 2008b; Quintana-Toledo 2009a, 2009b).

The concepts of *genre* and *text-type* have been subject to much confusion in linguistic and literary theory from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives (Lee 2001; Moessner 2001; Taavitsainen 2001c). However, there have been some scholarly efforts in order to try to clarify their status as distinct concepts. For instance, the issue of genre theory has been addressed in medical texts from a historical standpoint by Taavitsainen (1988, 2001a), Pahta (1998) and Alonso-Almeida (2008a, 2008b), among others, and, in contemporary English by authors like Martin (1984), Swales (1987, 1990), Biber (1988), Devitt (1993, 2000) and Bex (1996). Some agreement has been reached, though, in the sense that the concept of genre is often associated with features external to texts and the concept of text-type is frequently related to internal linguistic characteristics of texts (Biber 1988; Taavitsainen 2001a).

An overview of these two concepts as well as their application to the study of historical texts, i.e. Middle English and Early Modern English medical texts, can be found in Alonso-Almeida (1998-1999, 2002b, 2008a, 2008b, 2013). I will follow the background he provides in these contributions to clarify these concepts and other related notions. Definitions of genre tend to group texts in relation to their external characteristics, mainly in relation to their functions. In this sense, Martin (1984: 25) defines this concept as “a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture”. Biber (1988: 170) adds that “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”. The notion of *stage* as raised by Martin in his definition of genre above is extended by other authors within a functional systemic framework. For example, Hasan’s (1985: 63-63) and Eggins’s (1994: 41) work on this notion resulted in the association of the basic organisation of genres to the labels *generic structure potential* and *actual generic structure*: all genres have a certain ideal structure which includes all the possible stages they can have. This corresponds

to the generic structure potential. These stages may or may not be present in an actual instance of a genre, the resulting structure being what they call actual generic structure.

Martin's and Biber's definitions of the concept of genre emphasise its social and functional character. It should be noted that the latter makes reference to topic as a criterion for assigning texts to certain genres, but this notion, in its strictest sense, can only be determined on the basis of vocabulary which is something internal to texts. This was firstly pointed out by Görlach (1992: 747) in his diachronic study of the culinary recipe text where he claims that both cookery and medical recipes are formally similar. Furthermore, the Expert Advisory Group on Language Engineering Standards (EAGLES 1996: 5) do also pursue this view and they note that "in the classification of topic, the internal evidence is primary". Except for this, both Martin's and Biber's definitions seem to be suitable for the purposes of this research.

The contribution by Görlach (1992) is the first one to the analysis of recipes in a historical dimension. His definition of text-type reads as follows: "a specified linguistic pattern in which formal/structural characteristics have been conventionalized in a specific culture for certain well-defined and standardized uses of language" (Görlach 1992: 738). His analysis of the cookery recipe from Old English to Early Modern English is based on three parameters, namely, social features, technical features and linguistic features. Social features include aspects such as "the language used and the audience addressed" (Görlach 1992: 746). Technical features, on their part, cover aspects related to the structural organisation of the texts and the vocabulary employed. Lastly, linguistic features have to do with the grammatical elements present in texts. This author somehow invokes the notion of stage for the description of the structural development of recipes when referring to "standardization of arrangement" (Görlach 1992: 746).

The distinction between internal and external features as criteria for the assignment of texts into text-types and genres, respectively, seems to be blurred in Görlach's definition of text-type because he includes social features as a parameter for analysing the recipe text-type. Biber's (1988: 170) definition of the term, in contrast, highlights the internal linguistic characterisation of texts. According to him, text-types are "groupings of texts that are similar with respect to their linguistic form, irrespective of genre categories". In this sense, Werlich (1976) proposed a five-class taxonomy of text-types on the basis of the linguistic features which can be found in texts: descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative and instructive.

The concept of *register* is very often raised when talking about genre theory. The two terms tend to be used interchangeably in the literature (Lee 2001: 41) and, although overlap might be said to exist between them, there are certain differences. On the one hand, genre is a more general concept as it is associated with the cultural setting in which genres emerge as well as with the social functions attached to them (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993). On the other hand, register might be seen as a narrower concept as it is related to immediate situational contexts. As Eggins (1994: 32) puts it, "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". In the case of the culinary recipe, for example, the genre is the recipe, the text-type is instructive and the register is cooking.

In the same line of thought, Whittaker and Martín-Rojo (1999: 154) advocate for a stratification of context into (i) context of culture and (ii) context of situation. The former is a more general stratum into which the latter is subsumed and they correspond to genre and register respectively. As context of situation, register determines the lexicogrammatical choices the speaker/writer makes in a certain communicative situation so, as such, the notion of register is probabilistic as noted by Martin (1983: 6): the users of a language have to evaluate which stylistic features, among those at their disposal, fit best into the communicative event they are engaged.

Register is, moreover, conceived as a configuration of choices between three variables, namely, *field*, *mode* and *tenor* (Halliday 1985; Eggins 1994: 52). Field can be taken as "what the language is being used to talk about", mode as "the role language is playing in the interaction", and tenor as "the role relationships between the interactants" (Eggins 1994: 52). Variations in these variables are determined by the immediate situational parameters of the communicative event and, as a result, language will be used differently in the spoken and in the written modes. Similarly, power relations as indicated by the tenor will bring about significant differences in the way an individual addresses his/her supervisor in the workplace and the way s/he addresses a close friend. Finally, field variations are also to be expected since it is not the same to talk about last night's *The tonight show with Jay Leno* than to talk about recent trends in cognitive linguistics.

Halliday (1970, 1985) worked out three metafunctions of language in relation to the three register variables, i.e. *interpersonal*, *ideational* and *textual*. The ideational metafunction is related to the field. It has to do with "the speaker's experience of the real world, including the

inner world of his own consciousness" (Halliday 1970: 143). The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the tenor in the sense that it "serves to establish and maintain social relations: for the expression of social roles, [...] and also for getting things done" (Halliday 1970: 143). Lastly, the textual metafunction as related to the mode "enables the speaker or writer to construct texts, [...] and enables the listener or reader to distinguish a text from a random set of sentences" (Halliday 1970: 143).

As cultural artefacts in general and texts in particular, recipes can be assessed in terms of both external and internal criteria. As already stated, while external criteria apply to the relationships that hold between a given text and its purpose in a particular sociohistorical context, internal criteria apply to its internal linguistic features. Textual assessment made on the basis of these two standards roughly correspond to classifying texts in terms of genre and text-type features, both of which have been successfully applied to research on recipes (Carroll 1999, 2004; Taavitsainen 2001a, 2001c; Alonso-Almeida 2008b). However, there has been some scholarly disagreement as regards the identification of stages in recipes so that several classifications have been put forward.

All scholars doing research in the recipe genre identify the *title* as a stage (Stannard 1982; Hunt 1990; Görlach 1992; Taavitsainen 2001a; Alonso-Almeida 1998-1999, 2002b, 2008a; Grund 2003; Mäkinen 2004, 2011), even though there are differences in terminology, i.e. *title* (Görlach 1992; Taavitsainen 2001a; Alonso-Almeida 1998-1999, 2002b), *purpose* (Stannard 1982; Mäkinen 2004, 2011), *rubric* (Hunt 1990) and *heading* (Grund 2003). Its function is that of providing the user of the text with a clear indication of the contents.

The following sections of the recipe are frequently identified as those where the producer of the text lists the *ingredients* and offers the procedure of *preparation*. While some authors keep them as distinct (Stannard 1982; Hunt 1990; Görlach 1992; Alonso-Almeida 1998-1999, 2002b; Grund 2003; Mäkinen 2004, 2011), Taavitsainen (2001a) opts for joining them together and labelling them as *instructional part*. As Alonso-Almeida (2013) notes, Taavitsainen's decision is based on the fact that the ingredients are not always specified without making reference to the indications on how to prepare them. Nevertheless, there are recipes in which the procedure of preparation is not given and so Alonso-Almeida (2013) prefers to consider them as two independent sections. The labels given to these sections are *ingredients and equipment*, and *rules of procedure* (Stannard 1982), *composition and preparation* (Hunt 1990), *ingredients and procedure* (Görlach 1992; Mäkinen 2004, 2011), *ingredients and preparation* (Alonso-Almeida 1998-1999, 2002b, 2013), and *substances and procedure* (Grund 2003).

Scholars agree in identifying the next section as one in which the producer of the text instructs its user on *how to apply* the medical product or, alternatively, on *how to serve* the food if the recipe is culinary rather than medical. The names given to this section include *application and administration* (Stannard 1982), *application* (Hunt 1990; Alonso-Almeida 1998-1999, 2002b), *how to serve* (Görlach 1992), *explanations of application* (Taavitsainen 2001a), and *results* (Grund 2003; Mäkinen 2004, 2011). Alonso-Almeida (2002a) identifies another section, namely, *storage*, which is aimed at indicating how to store a given product as conveniently as possible so as to use it in the future.

The last section identified by scholars is often used to assert the *efficacy* of the remedy and so it can only be found in medical recipes. This tends to be formulaic in nature and it may also include some extra information regarding the source of the recipe. The names given to this section are also varied, i.e. *rationale/incidental data* (Stannard 1982), *statement of efficacy* (Hunt 1990), *efficacy phrase* (Jones 1998) *efficacy* (Taavitsainen 2001a), *closing formula* (Grund 2003) and *justification* (Mäkinen 2004).

The terminology I will be using in this volume is the one employed by Alonso-Almeida (1998-1999, 2002b, 2013) because his approach to the recipe genre shows little ambiguity and seems to be less confusing than the rest of nomenclatures employed by other researchers. Consider the recipe in (44), where the information included in round brackets in the body of the recipe corresponds with the labels for specific stages:

- (44) (TiTle) ¶An Oyle for all manner of Aches, Bruyses, and streyning of the Synewes . / (Ingredients) ¶Take a quart of Neatsfoote Oyle, and a pynt of - Ox gall, ¶Oxe gall, halfe a pynt of Aquavitæ, a pynt of - Rosewater, Bay leaves, Rosemary stamped stripped from the Stalkes, strawberry leaves, roots and - strings, Lavinder Cotton, of every of these halfe a handfull, (Preparation) beat them small, and putt them into the - foresaid stuffe, and seeth it over a soft fire of ~ Coles in a Panne of a Gallon, and at your owne - pill lett not the fflame touch your stuffe, lett it seeth very well, and then take it off, and lett it stand vntill it bee almost cold; Then straine it through a course - Lynnen Cloth, but not the bottome of the liquour, (Storage) Then putt it in a glasse, and soe keepe it . (Application) And when you are pained, annoynt your greife withall, (Efficacy) and you shall fynd present remedy by Gods grace (G.U.L. MS Hunter 93)

The actual generic structure of the recipe in (44) is as follows: TT ^ I ^ P ^ S ^ A ^ E. This example contains all the possible stages that can occur in a recipe text whose generic structure potential corresponds with the following: (TT) \* I ^ P \* (A) \* (S) \* (E). Following the

systemic-functional nomenclature, the stage label which appears within round brackets is optional. The asterisk is an indicator of variable position, and the circumflex, on its part, shows fixed position.

Within the medical register, recipes are intended to provide their audience with instructions so as to prepare efficient medical products. The first stage of (44) is the title which contains clear indications of what the remedy is for. The next stage is the ingredients section in which all the elements needed for the preparation are specified. The third stage is the preparation section which shows the exact order in which the ingredients have to be combined. The storage section comes next, and it shows the user how to store the resulting product so as to use it safely in the future. The application section offers the instructions on how to apply the medicine to the patient. The last section contains the efficacy statement which asserts the positive outcome of the disease after the right administration of the product.

As regards the text-type, this is instructive as indicated by the use of imperative forms (Alonso-Almeida 2008b: 175), i.e. *take, beat, putt, seeth, lett, straine, keepe, annoynt*. The topic of the recipe is determined by the lexical choices made by the producer of the text which are mainly related to (i) cooking, i.e. *quart, pynt, handfull, soft fire of coles, panne, glasse*, (ii) plant names and other ingredients, i.e. *oyle, neatsfoote oyle, oxe gall, aquavitae, rosewater, bay leaves, rosemary, strawberry leaves, roots and strings, lavender cotton*, and (iii) diseases and body parts, i.e. *aches, bruises, streyning of the synewes, pained, griefe, remedy*. Text-type features are described in detail as present in each individual section of the recipe genre below. All the examples have been excerpted from CoER. Square brackets in the body of the recipe are used to indicate the point where each section begins and ends and sources are indicated in between round brackets.

### 3.2.1.1. Titles

Titles are used to indicate the contents of the recipes. They tend to be visually differentiated from the body of the recipe, i.e. centre alignment and italic typeface, allowing the reader to identify more easily where each recipe begins. They are sometimes absent as recipes are inserted one following another. Some of the most frequent syntactic patterns associated with titles are shown in Table 6:



Table 6. Most recurrent syntactic patterns in titles.

Syntactic patterns	Examples
NP	<i>A good laxatiue</i> (PIV)
NP + for + NP	<i>A soueraigne oymtment for an ache or bruise</i> (BSM)
NP + to inf. + NP	<i>An other remedie to take out the fyre of a burninge or scaldinge</i> (BSM)
To inf. + NP	<i>To make oile of the skull of a man</i> (FKP)
For + to inf. + NP	<i>For to heale a mans yerde, that is sore swolened of the stone</i> (PIV)
For + NP	<i>For the Emerodes</i> (PIV)
How + to inf. + NP	<i>How to make the said Aqua fortis</i> (FKP)

Other linguistic features include the presence of deictic elements, mainly anaphoric referential devices such as *another* and *the same*, i.e. *Another present remedie for a Quartaine Ague, and for the drought that commenth thereof* (RST) and *An other for the same* (BSM), both of which also have a textual function as they signal the beginning of new recipes. In addition, adjectives are often employed so as to offer a positive evaluation of the remedies, i.e. *A good drinke for wounded men* (G.U.L. MS Hunter 93) and *A soueraigne proued medicine for the pin and web in the eye, to be made in May* (BSM). Finally, the lexis employed in titles is normally related to diseases, body parts and medical products.

### 3.2.1.2. Ingredients

The aim of this stage is to provide the reader with the list of ingredients for the preparation of the recipe; therefore, the lexis used here is related to plant names and other organic and mineral substances together with numerals and weight references as in (45) and (46):

- (45) ¶ffor a surfeit ¶Take a gallon of aquavita, & halfe a bushell of pop<pie> dryd, 2 or 3 handfull of cloue gilliflowers, 2 ounc<es> of sugar candy, 6 or 8 dates; a quarter of pan<...> of raisons in ye sun stoned, carroway amiseeds, sw<eet> fennil seeds of each halfe an ounce, one ounce of <li> quoris. Let this stand in a pott in ye sun 2 mon<ths> in ye heate of sumer then strayne it out for vse (G.U.L. MS Hunter 93)
- (46) ¶For the Plage. Cap .i. Take Bolearmoniacke q. & and Terrasagellara ob. Oleus Sacratine q. Mixxe electe ob. beate them all in powder fyne, and for to drinke at once. take .iii.d. weyght then take a sponefull of water af Scabias. Pympernell .j. sponeful, Turmentyl .i. spon full Detayne .i. sponefull of Dragons, one spoonefull, of Vinegre .i. sponefull or more, Tryacle as much as a Hasell nutte, mixte them al

together and giue the pa<cie>nt to brincke cold the quantity aforesaid. And if he be infecte, this purgacion purgeth, and wher the foreariseth, make a great plaster of gal banum clene clensed, and lay therto (PIV)

As said above the semantic fields are related to (i) plants, i.e. *poppie, gilliflowers, fennil, Bolearmoniacke, Scabias*, (ii) numerals, i.e. *one, 2, 3, .i.*, (iii) weight measures, i.e. *gallon, handfull, ounce, sponefull*, and (iv) other compound substances, i.e. *aquavita, Tryacle*. This section opens up with the imperative *take* and the ingredients are coordinated by means of punctuation marks and/or the conjunction *and/&*. They do not all necessarily appear grouped together as instructions for preparation and application, i.e. *beate them all in powder fyne, and for to drinke at once*, are sometimes inserted in between some ingredients as in recipe (46).

### 3.2.1.3. Preparation

This stage contains instructions for the exact preparation of the remedies and, consequently, the verbal forms which are used here are imperatives. Culinary terms are often employed as well as others typically used in the ingredients section; as I pointed out earlier, these two stages are sometimes given together:

- (47) ¶ffor the Tooth-Ach or swelling the mouth . / ¶Take halfe a pynt of good vinegre, **and sett it on soft fire, and putt therein a handfull of Hopp, and lett it boyle till halfe the vinegre bee consumed; - Then take it off and straine out the Hopp, and sett - the vinegre over the fire againe, and cover it, and lett it seeth softly a prettie while, then take it off,** and (as hott as you may suffer it) putt one spoonefull - in your mouth, and hold it a good while, and then - spitt it out againe, and doe soe four or five tymes, - and it taketh away the paine quickly (G.U.L. MS Hunter 93)
- (48) ¶For any man or woman that is sore wasted by syckenes, or by any other thinge. Cap .xi. **Take Lekes heads washed, let chop them smal as ye can, then put them in a pot wyth water, then take ye mary bones that be clene, and the flesh with al, & let breke a lytle, and boile these to<->gather gither, and after that take out the mary, faire and clene, and cast in again in to the potte wortes that were boiled ouer the fyre then straine it & put therto powder of Peper, Ginger, Canell, Nutmegges,** and therof eate fyrst and laste, and this shal restore any man, or woman without doubt (PIV)

These two examples show how the ingredients and the preparation sections cannot always be clearly differentiated as every time a new ingredient is given the writer also instructs the reader on what to do with it. The instructional part of the recipe is characterised by the use of culinary verbs in the imperative form, i.e. *sett, boyle, straine, cover, cast*, which are coordinated by *and/&* conjunctions and *then*. Other semantic fields include ingredients and containers, i.e. *pot*. Time expressions are also used, i.e. *till, a prettie while, and after, again*.

#### 3.2.1.4. Application

The application stage indicates how the medical product has to be used to achieve the desired effects. Imperative verbal forms are used here as well as verbs with coercive meaning (Alonso-Almeida 2008b: 176). Lexis covers fields such as anatomy, medical products, time expressions and numerals:

- (49) ¶A Medicine for a contynuall Headach . / Take Betony water, and take a Cloth three or - four fold, and but three fingers breadth, wett it well in Betony water, **and lay it to your forehead cold, - lett the Cloth (being well wett) come round about the - Head, and tye it fast, and in three or four tymes thus doing**, it will helpe you, when the Cloth is drye wett it againe (G.U.L. MS Hunter 93)
- (50) ¶For the suffocacion of the moder. Capit .xvii. ¶Take Assefetida, Oppentibaicum, & Castor .i.d. of eche, and Galbanum stepped in Uineger, & so let this Galbanum be layde on the coles, **and let him smell therto, and the other .iii. aforsayd melt together**, and make in a ball, **and let him vse to smell therto** (PIV)

Imperatives such as *lay* and *tye* indicate how to administer the resulting product which in the case of (49) has to be applied to the forehead and tied around the head in the form of a wet cloth. In (50), on its part, the remedy has to be smelt by the patient. Verbs with coercive meaning are employed, too, as in *let him smell therto*. The syntactic pattern normally associated with verbs like *let* is as follows: verb + object + infinitive. *Gif* is another verb with coercive meaning frequently used (Alonso-Almeida 2008b: 176). Lastly, numerals and time expressions indicate the dose and the frequency of administration, i.e. *in three or four tymes thus doing*.

#### 3.2.1.5. Storage

This stage provides information regarding how to keep the medical product for later use. As Carroll (2005-2006: 307) points out, this section was firstly identified by Alonso-Almeida (2002a). The lexical fields primarily involve the names of containers and verbs such as *put*, *keep*, *stop* and *close*:

- (51) A soueraigne bath for al lamenesse. Take a blacke sheepes heade with the wool on it, and doo out the braynes & tongue, & wipe the head cleane, then put it into two gallons of fayre water, with a pecke of Culuerage, otherwise called Arse smart, beyng fyrste cleane pyked and washed, and so seeth them al together, tyl the bones fal from the flesh, & scum it cleane in the seethyng, that don, take out the bones, **and the rest put into a close earthen pan, or pot, and so keepe it**, takyng at once as much of the broth, flesh, and hearbes, as shal suffice to bath the lame place withal, vsyng it euenyng and mornyng, as hot as it may be suffered, keeping the place warme with a linnen cloth betwixt the bathyngs (BSM)

### 3.2.1.6. Efficacy statement

This is aimed at asserting the positive outcome of the disease after the administration of the remedy. Different labels have been given to this section in earlier literature, for instance, *incidental data* (Stannard 1982), *statements of efficacy* (Hunt 1990) and *efficacy phrases* (Jones 1998). Since this sort of expressions is the focus of attention of this volume, they will be looked into in depth in the following section. For the time being, (52)-(55) may be used to briefly describe them formally:

- (52) ¶For any man or woman that is sore wasted by syckenes, or by any other thinge. Cap .xi. Take Lekes heads washed, let chop them smal as ye can, then put them in a pot wyth water, then take ye mary bones that be clene, and the flesh with al, & let breke a lytle, and boile these to<->gather gither, and after that take out the mary, faire and clene, and cast in again in to the potte wortes that were boiled ouer the fyre then straine it & put therto powder of Peper, Ginger, Canell, Nutmegges, and therof eate fyrst and laste, **and this shal restore any man, or woman without doubt** (PIV)
- (53) ¶ffor the Toothach . / ¶If the Ach of the Teeth come of Abundance of Humours, then Launce the Goomes betwixt the Teeth which ¶which doe paine you . And your forefinger being - first wett in your mouth, dipp him in the powder - of Euphorbium, which you shall have at the Apothecaries, and rubb your said Goomes and teeth therewith, that they may bleed, **and you shall find speedy remedye by Gods grace** (G.U.L. MS Hunter 93)
- (54) For bleeding at the nose. Take a dram of Bolae armoniacke washed, and myxe it in rose water, and plantayne water, and drinke it. then binde the extreme partes as hard as you may, and after make a tente of graeke nettles, and put into his nose. Moreouer it is good that the patient do hold in his hand egremonie with the roote and all, and drinke the iuice of knottgrasse, **the blood will staunch** (TPH)
- (55) An Excellent Remedie for a Quartaine Ague. Take an Oxe Gall, and as much Aqua composite, and put thereto a quarter of an ounce of Pepper, brused but a very little, and two pennyworth of Trieacle, and annointe the handes stomacke and wristes, with the aforesaide thinges, being all mingled together, halfe an houre before ye fitte commeth, but let it be laide too, as hote as the Patient may suffer it, and let him sweate well vpon it, **and this will speedily helpe him, Probatum est** (RST)

There is a tendency for this stage to appear at the end of recipes as noted by Jones (1998: 201) who points out that efficacy phrases “are found in this final closing position”, but it is also possible to find them somewhere else such as in marginal notes (Alonso-Almeida 1998-1999: 62; Pahta 2004: 92). Formally speaking, they are often complete sentences with different types of subject, either nominal as in (54) or pronominal as in (52), (53) and (55),

plus a verbal form with *shall* or *will* followed by an infinitive, i.e. *shal restore* in (52), *shall find* in (53), *will staunch* in (54) and *will helpe* in (55). From a semantic point of view, they are always related to recovery from illnesses by the administration of given medical products.

### 3.3. Efficacy statements and promises of efficacy

Broadly speaking, promises are expected to be found in the recipe genre whenever the producer of the text attests the efficacy of the remedies or, in other words, these utterances can be intended as promises that patients will recover from their illnesses by using certain medical products (Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu 2002: 137, 139). Price (2016: 16) notes that "Statements denoting the authority or credibility of the recipe were critical elements of medical recipes".

Hunt (1990: 23) refers to a *statement of efficacy* as "a formula asserting the value of the treatment". Jones (1998), on her part, defines *efficacy phrases* as differentiated from *tag phrases*. Both of them are defined in relation to three parameters, i.e. (i) position, (ii) content and (iii) function. Efficacy phrases and tag phrases are similar with respect to position and function in that they are both found at the end of recipes and used as a way of prognostication. Tag phrases, in contrast to efficacy phrases, can be also employed as a conventional closing element which might visually signal that the recipe has come to an end; this idea was firstly suggested by Cameron (1993: 40). As for their content, they are distinct: Jones (1998: 199) points out that while tag phrases "add no further necessary information in order for the text to be used", efficacy phrases "attest the value of a given remedy" (Jones 1998: 203-204). She further categorises efficacy phrases into (i) *stock phrases*, (ii) *specific phrases* and (iii) *'proof' efficacy statements*. In both stock phrases and specific phrases, reference to the cure of a patient is provided; however, while in the former the illness is left unspecified, in the latter it is clearly indicated. The third type of efficacy phrases, i.e. *'proof' efficacy statements*, are those containing the word *proof* or any of its variants.

Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu (2002) propose a revision of the three criteria used by Jones (1998) to characterise efficacy phrases and tag phrases in an analysis of promissory speech acts in medieval English medical recipes. They feel that the criterion of position should be less limited so as to be able to draw a clear distinction between the two types of phrases because they are both typically found at the end of recipes. As regards the criterion of function, the only aspect which distinguishes between them is that tag phrases can be

employed as conventionalised closing elements. Consequently, the prognostication function seems to be somewhat redundant. As for the criterion of content, the authors think that the distinction drawn by Jones (1998) in this respect is devoid of clarity, at least, in the data she uses for illustration. Apart from this, they rightly put forward that both types of expressions are aimed at validating the efficacy of a medical product without offering “further information for the text to be used”, initially only applicable to tag phrases according to Jones.

This research shares with the work by Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu (2002) the view that efficacy phrases and tag phrases do definitely pursue the same function in the context of medical recipes, that is, to attest that a given remedy will help patients in their recovery. The identification of this function relies heavily on the analysis of the context in which these expressions are embedded and so RT turns out to be a useful tool for such a purpose. The terminology adopted in this research is that used in Alonso-Almeida (1998-1999, 2002b, 2013) and Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu (2002), where this sort of expressions are referred to as efficacy statements rather than efficacy phrases because they are frequently complete sentences. In the remainder of this volume, these expressions, then, will be referred to as efficacy statements (hereinafter ESs).

As already stated, the analysis of ESs carried out in Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu (2002) is of special interest because the authors follow a relevance-theoretic approach to account for the understanding of this sort of utterances in the medieval period. They show that (i) cognition plays a vital role in the recognition of ESs as promises; and (ii) the syntactic and lexical features of ESs, i.e. the use of a future-indicator *schal* in simple constructions and compound sentences introduced by logical markers, tend to shape their understanding as promissory speech acts. Let us illustrate the point with the following example from G.U.L. MS Hunter 185 (Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu 2002: 146):

- (56) For the goute festred Tak avauce archangel hayhoue beteyne verueyne ana & tak  
most avauce & boyle hem in wyn • & let þe seke drynke þerof ferst and last **& he •**  
**schal • be hol•** (ll. 1329–1333)

The sequence under consideration in this instance is *& he • schal • be hol•*. If it is taken in isolation, it can only be interpreted as a declaration of the possibility that someone will recover health. However, it is part of a whole recipe where the context plays a role for its understanding as a promise. In relevance-theoretic terms, its processing is carried out by following a path of least effort which allows the reader to achieve the highest cognitive effects. The recovery of possible interpretations is marked by their order of accessibility and

so, the most accessible interpretation for & he • schal • be hol• in the context in which it is embedded is that of the utterance being a promise that the patient will recover health by taking the medicine. Even though it is not immediately obvious, the fact that the patient will be healthy is dependent on his/her taking the medicine in question. This conclusion can be achieved by means of deductive rules of the *modus ponendo ponens* type as in (57):

(57) *Modus ponendo ponens*

Input: (i) *P*  
(ii) (If *P* then *Q*)

Output: *Q*

Input: (i) let þe seke drynke þerof first and last  
(ii) If (let þe seke drynke þerof first and last) then (& he • schal • be hol•)  
Output: & he • schal • be hol•

In this light, the promise that the patient will recover from his/her illness has to be understood as fulfilled on the condition that the medicine is all drunk by him/her. If s/he fails to do so, the positive effects of the product will not be achieved.

Apparently, example (56) does not present difficulties in its interpretation as a promise, but there are other instances in which the interpretation recovered by the reader does not necessarily correspond to the writer's communicative intention, i.e. issuing a promise. Take example (58) (Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu 2002: 147):

(58) For the hed ache a good medicine Tak camamylle & bete yt in a mortere & tak a sponeful of þe draf & ale & a sponeful of comyn & a sponeful of floure & wommanes melk þerto als muche • as nedep & put al þis in a panne & set it on þe fuyr & make þerof a plaster & ley yt þer as þe hed ys sorest & vse þis medycyne iij dayes & euery tyme newe & he schal be hool bi godes grace (ll. 1350–1358)

The ES & he schal be hool bi godes grace would be taken at first sight as a promise that the patient will recover from his/her illness after using the medicine. The sort of deductive rule which would allow the reader to derive such a conclusion is *modus ponendo ponens*, i.e. If *P* then *Q*, just as in the previous example:

(59) *Modus ponendo ponens*

Input: (i) *P*  
(ii) (If *P* then *Q*)

Output: *Q*

Input: (i) vse þis medycyne iij dayes & euery tyme newe  
(ii) If (vse þis medycyne iij dayes & euery tyme newe) then (& he schal be hool bi godes grace)

Output: & he schal be hool bi godes grace

The initial context in which the ES is processed may consist of information related to (i) an individual's having a headache, (ii) the administration of a given medicine in order to deal with the pain, and (iii) the belief that God is a healer. Nevertheless, if the reader makes an extra processing, it is possible for him/her to get an extended context in which the interpretation may not coincide with what the writer actually wanted to communicate, that is, a promise. The extension of the context may proceed as follows (after Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu 2002: 147): some encyclopaedic information about headaches, medicines and pain-killers may be added. Furthermore, the context can be also extended by adding information stored in the reader's short-term memory, i.e. *the medicine is a plaster*. Extra encyclopaedic information related to certain religious beliefs, in particular, that *the grace of God and God himself can heal people* can be added. Finally, the assumption that *the combination of the use of the plaster together with the grace of God can heal the patient* can be included.

The deductive rules which may come into play at this stage of the comprehension process can be *modus ponendo ponens* or *modus tollendo ponens*, where *P* stands for *vse þe plaster*, *Y* for *bi godes grace* and *Q* for *he schal be hol*.

(60) *Modus ponendo ponens*

Input: If (*P* and *Y*) then *Q*  
(ii) *P* and *Y*

Output: *Q*

(61) *Modus tollendo ponens*

Input: (i) *P* and *Y*  
(ii) not *Y*

Output: not *Q*



If the comprehension process proceeds in the way indicated by the *modus ponendo ponens* rule, the promissory speech act will be performed *if and only if* conditions *P* and *Y* obtain because of the occurrence of the biconditional logical connective *and*. In case the comprehension process leads the reader to the application of the *modus tollendo ponens* rules, s/he will not draw the inference that the writer has issued a promise since "there is no implied manifestation of promise of efficacy" (Alonso-Almeida and Cabrera-Abreu 2002: 148).

### 3.4. Summary

In this chapter I have described the corpus of study, that is, CoER. It is a compilation of recipe texts covering different periods of the English language, i.e. Middle, Early Modern and Late Modern English. The texts are chronologically organised mainly on the basis of the indications provided by Taavitsainen and Pahta (1997), and they are also arranged by topic following the categories in Voigts and Kurtz (2000).

I have then assessed the recipe texts in relation to external and internal criteria following a systemic-functional approach. While external criteria are those indicating the relationships that can be established between a given text and its purpose in a specific sociohistorical context, i.e. genre, internal criteria are those related to the internal linguistic features of texts, i.e. text-type. This approach has been satisfactorily applied to the study of recipe texts (Carroll 1999; Taavitsainen 2001a; Alonso-Almeida 2008b, 2013, 2014); it provides a thorough understanding of how texts are linguistically constructed and of other factors, including pragmatic ones, such as writer-audience relationships or authorial stance, among others.

Recipe texts belonging to the medical register are intended to provide their audience with instructions to prepare efficient medical products. They normally consist of a title that indicates what the remedy is for, a list of ingredients, explanations about how to combine them, indications about how to give the medicine to the patient, information concerning how to store the product, and a final statement asserting its efficacy.

In terms of text-type features, recipe texts are instructive. From a lexico-grammatical perspective, they are characterised as follows: titles may be realised by a variety of syntactic patterns, but they tend to have positive evaluative adjectives and references to diseases or body parts embedded in them. In the ingredients section, the ingredients are normally coordinated by means of coordinating conjunctions or punctuation, and it includes names of plants or compound substances, numerals and weight measures. The preparation section

contains a massive presence of imperative forms of culinary verbs as well as names of ingredients and containers, and time expressions. The application is frequently indicated by verbs with coercive meaning or imperative forms; names of body parts, medical products and time expressions can be found in this stage, too. Imperatives are also found in the storage section together with names of containers. Finally, ESs tend to be complete sentences with nominal or pronominal subjects followed by *shall* or *will* plus a bare infinitive. There is always some reference to recovery from illnesses and, sometimes, to religious matters.

The last section in the chapter provides a literature review on ESs and illustrates how they may or may not be understood as promises of efficacy following a relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure.

# PROMISES OF EFFICACY IN COER: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

## 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the corpus of study and the discussion of the findings. They are organised and labelled according to the different resources writers employ for the expression of ESs in medical texts, namely, (i) modals, (ii) the lexical items *proved* and *probatum*, (iii) evaluative expressions, (iv) matrices and (v) other strategies. Section 4.3 focuses on discussing their interpretation following a relevance-theoretic approach in order to determine whether or not they are understood as actual promises of efficacy. In relevance-theoretic terms, the actual interpretation of ESs, either as promises or as something different, is crucially determined by the context, i.e. as envisaged by the addresser, in which they are embedded. Moreover, the addressee's role in the interpretation can be said to be active in the sense that s/he has to choose the context from a range of potential contexts in which these utterances are to be processed. Then, the resulting interpretation is derived from the interaction between the linguistic choices made by the addresser and the contexts selected by the addressee. Section 4.4 summarises the evidence found in the analysis of particular examples of ESs in order to affirm or deny their status as promises.

## 4.2. Results

The linguistic resources used by writers in the expression of ESs can be grouped into the following categories: (i) modal verbs, mainly *shall* and *will*, (ii) the lexical items *proved* and the Latin counterpart *probatum*, (iii) evaluative expressions such as *and it is good therefore* (TPM) and *for it healeth myghtly* (THM), (iv) matrices such as *And this I know to be and excellent thing* (GHI), and (v) other strategies including anecdotes and narrative material. Their distribution in the corpus shows the following results:

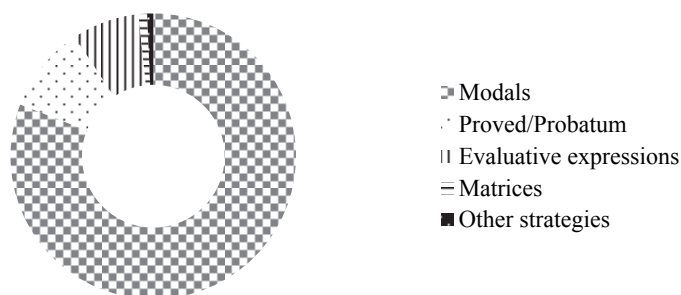


Figure 6. Distribution of the resources used to formulate ESs in the corpus (percentages).

The results shown above reveal that modal verbs are by far the most frequent resource employed by writers in the formulation of ESs accounting for 80.90% followed by the items *proved/probatum* with 9.83% and evaluative expressions with 7.61%. The distribution of the use of matrices and other strategies of the sort specified above does not seem to be quantitatively significant, accounting for 0.97% and 0.69% respectively.

Their frequency of occurrence normalised to 10,000 words per text is provided below:

	Modals	Proofs	Evaluative expressions	Matrices	Other strategies
TPM	46.19	4.03	2.57	0	0
MGH	74.19	0	0	0	0
RLP	4.57	1.33	5.33	1.14	0
THM	28.58	11.23	24.28	0.50	0.66
PIV	44.64	3.88	0	0	1.94
BSM	67.59	5.48	0	0.91	0
TNT	20.31	5.49	2.68	2.30	0.13
FKP	13.94	0	0	0	0.96
TPH	35.73	8.52	3.28	0	0
RST	69.13	12.57	2.51	0.31	0
GHI	27.47	0	0	0	0

Table 7. Distribution of linguistic resources used to formulate ESs per text (frequencies of occurrence are normalised to 10,000 words).

As shown here, there is not a single text where modals are not the predominant resource in the expression of ESs. The highest frequencies of occurrence are found in MGH with 74.19, followed by RST with 69.13 and BSM with 67.59. The frequencies of occurrence vary in range across the rest of the texts, but they are all below 50 occurrences per 10,000 words, for instance, TPM contains 46.19 occurrences and this is followed by PIV with 44.64, TPH with 35.73, THM with 28.58, GHI with 27.47 and TNT with 20.31. FKP and RLP present the lowest frequencies of occurrence with 13.94 and 4.57 occurrences per 10,000 words, respectively.

These results invite the inference that, in general, the authors of the texts in the corpus may have chosen the modals *shall* and *will* as the preferred linguistic resource to codify seemingly promises of efficacy in contrast to any of the other resources because of their intrinsic potential to convey a set of meanings typically associated with promissory speech acts, i.e. at least in a more explicit way than any of the other resources would do. These meanings will be looked at in depth in section 4.3 below when addressing the role of modals in the formulation of ESs, but, for the time being, I should like to posit that they include (i) the future orientation of an action, (ii) the expression of an intention and (iii) the undertaking of a commitment. As explained in chapter 2, these meanings are tightly connected to some of the constitutive rules which have to obtain for a promise to count as such (Searle 1969: 57-61), namely, (i) the propositional content rule, i.e. there is a predication of a future act; (ii) the sincerity condition, i.e. there is an intention to perform the action; and (iii) the essential condition, i.e. the obligation to perform the action. However, as will be shown later on following a relevance-theoretic approach to comprehension, these aspects may or may not be instantiated in particular examples of ESs, rendering this type of utterances as either actual promises of efficacy or as something different such as simple future predictions.

The next preferred resources are the item *proved* and its Latin counterpart *probatum*. The highest frequencies are found in RST with 12.57, THM with 11.23 and TPH with 8.52 occurrences per 10,000 words. TNT and BSM present very similar frequencies with 5.49 and 5.48 occurrences, and they are followed by TPM with 4.03, PIV with 3.88 and RLP with 1.33 occurrences. Not a single occurrence of these items has been found in MGH, FKP and GHI. The codification of supposed promises of efficacy as realised by the use of these items emphasises the role of evidentiality in the formulation of ESs in the texts analysed. The employment of these two items stands as an appeal to prior experience and probably testing which can be taken as the source for asserting the efficacy of the products. Both prior experience and testing seem to offer an implicit guarantee of reliability of medical knowledge which, as will be shown later on in this chapter, is manifested in varying degrees depending

on the linguistic context in which *proved* and *probatum* occur. Moreover, different degrees of authorial commitment may be also inferred on the basis of contextual information.

The use of evaluative expressions as a means of indicating the efficacy of medical products comes next. Their frequency of occurrence is unevenly distributed across the texts in the corpus, being the highest the one found in THM with 24.28 occurrences. In the rest of the texts, the presence of evaluative expressions is significantly lower, with 5.33 occurrences in RLP, 3.28 in TPH, 2.68 in TNT, 2.57 in TPM and 2.51 in RST. In the rest of the texts, authors do not make use of evaluative expressions for this purpose. Evaluative expressions, including stance adjectives and adverbs as well as lexical verbs, provide a positive qualification of the product by conveying either the author's direct positive assessment of the medicines or a description of the positive outcome of the disease after the application of the product.

Matrices and other strategies such as anecdotes and narrative material present the lowest frequencies of occurrence. Matrices have been registered in five of the eleven texts in the corpus, specifically, in TNT with 2.30 occurrences, in RLP with 1.14, in BSM with 0.91, in THM with 0.50 and in RST with 0.31. As for other strategies, these have been found in four of the eleven texts with 1.94 occurrences in PIV, 0.96 in FKP, 0.66 in THM and 0.13 in TNT. Matrices tend to have mental predicates which are used to frame the propositions allowing the reader to retrieve indications as for the source of information, its reliability and the author's degree of commitment. Evidential values may be also derived from the processing of anecdotes which are primarily used as evidence for asserting the efficacy of the remedies.

### 4.3. Discussion

This section presents the discussion of the findings which will be illustrated with relevant examples of potential promissory speech acts in medical texts. The issue of whether or not these potential promises of efficacy can be actually taken as tokens of this type of commissive speech acts will be addressed following RT. For ease of exposition, this section will be divided into subsections which correspond to the five main linguistic resources employed by writers to possibly assert the efficacy of the remedies, i.e. modals, the lexical items *proved* and *probatum*, evaluative expressions, matrices and other strategies.

### 4.3.1. Modals

As commented on in section 4.2, utterances containing the modal verbs *shall* and *will* are the preferred linguistic resources used by writers in the expression of ESs. I have suggested that this may result from the fact that these two modals may be used to convey a number of meanings which are conventionally associated with the expression of promises, at least in the Searlean sense, including the future orientation of an action, the expression of an intention and the undertaking of a commitment. A pragmatic analysis, then, seems to be in order so as to identify the type of speech acts these modals may express.

The notion of futurity as related to these modals and, in particular, to *will*, has been the object of attention of numerous semantically-driven studies (Hornstein 1990, Huddleston 1995, Sarkar 1998, Declerck 2006, Matthewson 2006). The concern has been on its status as a tense marker, a modal marker or an ambiguous marker between these two positions (Jaszczolt 2005: 471). Although the concepts of tense and modality are, in principle, different, it is also true that it is difficult to determine their boundaries (Fleischman 1982, Comrie 1985, Palmer 1986).

The debate as to whether or not items such as *shall* or *will* contribute more to tense or modality falls outside the scope of the present research, however I should like to point out that "both future time reference and modality [may] coexist" (Sarkar 1998: 93), that is, *shall* and *will* may simultaneously contribute to the tense system and modality. In the light of the instances found in the corpus, both *shall* and *will* can be taken as future tense markers and so they are used to place the actions being referred to as occurring after the time of the utterance. In addition to this, they may also participate in a number of modalities on the basis of contextual information as will be shown later on.

Just as ostension comes with a tacit guarantee of relevance, the formulation of a promise inevitably expresses both the promisor's intention to carry out the action promised, and his/her "commitment to the intention that it be a promise" (Searle 1989: 545-546), i.e. his/her binding to its fulfilment. Locutionary utterances with *shall* and *will* may have an illocutionary act potential of promises as well as of predictions. I would like to foreground Wallis rules as formulated in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in this respect. There is no consensus as regards the extent to which these rules were simply the result of prescriptivist grammarians to instruct people in the correct use of *shall* and *will*, or if they reflected actual language use (Gotti 2002: 301-302). They, nevertheless, capture the pragmatic uses of these modals in

terms of “speaker attitude and involvement” “mak[ing] formal distinctions of modality which are central to the utterance of a speech act” (Arnovick 2000: 48).

Wallis rules elaborated on the specifications of the speech-act values attached to these modals. These read as follows: “in order for a speaker to make a promise [...], he or she should use *will* in the first person and *shall* in the second and third persons. The forms for making a prediction [...] are reversed: *shall* in the first person, *will* in the second and third persons occur in predictive statements (Wallis 1972 [1653]: 339)” (Arnovick 2000: 42). The distinction on the combinations of subject pronouns with *shall* and *will* result in associations of locutionary utterances with the agents of illocutionary acts signalling speaker attitudes of volition, i.e. deontic modality, or expectation, i.e. epistemic modality.

The analysis of the samples will show that the harmonic combinations of subject pronouns and modals captured within the Wallis system do not automatically generate deontic or epistemic readings, and that only contextual information can assist the reader in retrieving the intended interpretation. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, readers are not passive recipients of the information conveyed; they have an active role in the construction of meaning interpretation. The analysis of the samples will be organised from the simplest to more complex ones.

#### 4.3.1.1. *Shall*

This section is devoted to the pragmatic analysis of samples of ESs containing *shall*. Formally speaking, the sequences may be more or less complex. They are complete sentences with noun phrases or pronouns as subjects followed by *shall* and an infinitive with its corresponding complementation. Other adjuncts may be added resulting in more complex structures. Let us begin the discussion with examples (62)-(64) below:

- (62) For them that may not see / or them that haue blered eyes. Take Ginger and rubbe it on a whetstone into a fayre bason and putte therto as moche salte and temper it in wyne with the ioyce of Sufrage and lette it stande a nyght and a day and than take the rynde or the clerenesse that houeth aboute and put it in a glasse and with a fether whan thou goes to bedde / or as ofte as thou layes ye downe to slepe anyoynte therwith thyne eye lyddes within and without **and thou shalbe hole** (TPM)
- (63) Of consumption or leanesse [...] Take butter wythoute salte, oyle of roses and of vyolettes, of ech .i. ounce the fatte of rawe porke, halfe an ounce, waxe, a quarteron of an ounce, make an ointment wherwyth the chylde muste be rubbed eury daye twyse, **thys with god feding shall encrease his strength by the grace of God** (RLP)



- (64) Another for the same. Take Rewe Heyhoue Betayne Veruayne Myntes [...] and make a playster on ye molde as hote as it may be suffered and make a garlande of a keuercheffe to kepe it on and with fyue playsters **thou shalbe hole on warantyse** (TPM)

The recipe in (62) contains a simple structure consisting of the pronominal subject *thou* plus the contracted form *shalbe* followed by *hole*, all of which is introduced by the conjunction *and*. The illocutionary force of the utterance as derived from its interpretation in context is indeed a promise of efficacy and so *shall* is to be taken as signalling deontic modality. Once the information has been computed following the path of least effort, the most accessible interpretation for this utterance is that the patient will recover his/her sight again or that his/her eyes will stop being inflamed by the application of the product in the way specified. In other words, the promise of efficacy can be retrieved once the assumption (i) *the product must be applied in the way specified*, i.e. *P*, is understood as a condition which have to obtain for the successful outcome of the disease. *Thou shalbe hole*, i.e. *Q*, would then be processed against *P* whose occurrence brings to the foreground of the deductive process the *if... then* concept, allowing for a *modus ponendo ponens* rule to be applied. This rule makes manifest that the actualisation of *Q* is dependent on the actualisation *P*, and so *P* stands as a necessary condition for the product to provide the expected results. The reader would, then, come to the conclusion that the patient's recovering his/her health is dependent on the preparation and application of the medical product as indicated in the recipe. In this case, the reader cannot infer anything else but a promise regarding the healing power of the medicine.

The instance in (63), however, cannot be readily accepted as a promise, although they are formally similar. This is so because of the addition of the stance adverbial *by the grace of God* which crucially determines the way the context has to be enriched for an optimal processing of the utterance. In this case, the subject position is occupied by the noun phrase *thys with god feding*, rendering the clause with an inanimate subject. The referent of the head of the noun phrase can be easily retrieved from context; it refers anaphorically to *an ointment wherwyth the chylde muste be rubbed every daye twyse*. The deictic item is further complemented with *with god feding*, resulting in an implicitly formulated condition for the fulfilment of the action in the predicate.

Disregarding the presence of the stance adverbial *by the grace of God*, the processing of this utterance would proceed in a similar way to the one in instance (62), provided that the condition that the application of the ointment as indicated in combination with good feeding are recognised as necessary. However, the addition of *by the grace of God* does certainly have

pragmatic implications in the process of utterance interpretation. The context must be firstly enriched by using encyclopaedic information so as to include assumptions related to the belief that God has the power to heal people. Processed in the context of the whole recipe, the reader is able to infer that this stance adverbial stands as an extra condition for the actualisation of *thys with god feding shall encrease his strength*. A conjunctive *modus ponens* rule operates on the existing premises as follows:

(65) *Conjunctive modus ponens*

Input: (i) If (*P* and *Q*) then *R*

(ii) *P*

Output: (If *Q* then *R*)

*P* = *thys with god feding*

*Q* = *by the grace of God*

*R* = *shall encrease his strength*

The truth value attached to the premises conjoined by the biconditional operator *and* is the same, and both of them have to be actualised for the fulfilment of *R*. The modal meaning conveyed by *shall* maybe deontic or epistemic depending on the extent to which the presence of the grace of God in one's life is thought to be beyond human control. In case the help of God is completely beyond human control, the utterance can be said to retain the illocutionary force of a promise and so *shall* is deontic. In case the help of God is dependent on, say, the individual's religious practices, the modal value of *shall* is epistemic as it conveys tentative possibility. Although nothing in the context can lead us to favour one reading or the other, the very occurrence of the stance adverbial *by the grace of God* implies some lowering in the degree of authorial commitment to the truth of the proposition modalised by *shall*.

As a stance marker, the employment of *by the grace of God* indicates the author's attitude towards the text and the audience. On the one hand, it clearly reveals the author's position as for his actual religious beliefs, creating appeals to the readership's beliefs as well. On the other, since there are certain requisites for the medical product to be successful, including the presence of the grace of God in the patient's life, a possible failure could be attributed not only to a lack of expertise on the part of the practitioner, but also and most importantly, to inefficient religious practices. Consequently, this stance adverbial can be taken as a strategy which allows the writer to maintain a positive image.

The recipe in (64) contains another stance adverbial embedded in the ES, i.e. *on warrantise*. The processing of the sequence *thou shalbe hole is*, again, is similar to the one in example (62), being the underlying condition for the medicine to be effective that five plasters are applied, i.e. *and with fyue playsters thou shalbe hole*. If this condition obtains, then the actualisation of the proposition modalised by *shall* is supposed to take place in the normal course of events. The writers assured position as regards the effectiveness of the product is contextually implied by the occurrence of the epistemic stance adverbial *on warrantise*.

At this stage of the comprehension process, the initial context has to be extended, probably by adding chunks of encyclopaedic information which may further activate assumptions about the degree of certainty in the truth of the proposition as expressed by the writer. This adverbial actually codifies a high degree of certainty in the future realisation of the action, emphasising on the efficacy of the remedy and on the trustworthiness of the information presented. In this sense, *on warrantise* is used by the writer in order to boost the readership's confidence in the value of the recipe. The deontic meaning of *shall* in this example is contextually strengthened by the occurrence of *on warrantise*, rendering the utterance as an actual promise of efficacy. The unequivocal expression of certainty may ultimately allow the reader to infer authorial responsibility for the truth of his/her words.

The use of adverbial stance markers such as *by the grace of God* or *on warrantise* have been frequently found in the texts analysed. In the examples above, they occupy a final position in the clause, but they may also occur in initial, pre-verbal or post-verbal position. In terms of processing of information, the position stance adverbials occupy within the clause matters; for instance, as noted by Conrad and Biber (1999: 71), earlier occurrence within the clause serves the purpose of framing the proposition before presenting it. Consider example (66) in this respect:

- (66) Medicines for bledying of the nose. [...] Moreouer, it is good for the pacyente to holde in his hande egremonie, with the rote and all, and drinke ye iuyce of knotgrasse, **and without doubt ye blood shall staunche anon** (RLP)

The sequence under consideration in this recipe for nosebleed is *and without doubt ye blood shall staunche anon*. It is introduced by the stance adverb *without doubt* and this is followed by the subject of the clause, i.e. the noun phrase *ye blood*, and the predicate which is further complemented by the adverb *anon*. *Without doubt* falls into the category of epistemic stance adverbials in the taxonomy proposed by Biber et al. (1999) and Conrad and Biber (1999). As an epistemic stance adverbial, it comments on the status of the information in the

proposition and, specifically, on the degree of certainty/uncertainty with which the author entertains it, providing a "comment about the truth-value of what is said" (Greenbaum 1969: 43; Quirk et al. 1985: 620). In this sense, epistemic stance adverbials expressing certainty/uncertainty may convey "a full spectrum of certainty states ranging from doubt to complete conviction in the truth of a statement" (Rubin et al. 2006: 62-63).

The placement of *without doubt* in theme position in the sentence actually determines the development of the comprehension process since the timing of linguistic items in the unfolding discourse has been found to be crucial in its orderliness. Clause position in itself is important when processing information because, as noted by Aguilar (2009: 115), "cognitive load or effort may [...] vary depending on factors, like the length, the quantity of metadiscourse, the time and the place it is uttered". As occurring in initial position, the processing of *without doubt* contributes to diminishing the range of potential contexts available to the reader for interpretation, thus reducing the cognitive effort while allowing him/her to achieve high cognitive effects. Pragmatically speaking, the commissive, i.e. promissory, illocutionary import of the utterance is contextually strengthened by the occurrence of the stance adverb. Its placement in initial position clearly shapes the understanding of what comes next in fairly specific ways. In particular, it leads the reader to entertain the proposition with a high level of certainty, ultimately operating as a persuasive device.

Adverbial expressions other than those explicitly signalling authorial stance as for the validity of the remedies are used in the formulation of ESs. One case in point is the adverb of time *soon* which indicates the time position for the occurrence of the event designated with the respect to the time of the utterance. In the context of promissory speech acts, however, they may have stance nuances related to the author's positive assessment of the remedies. Take the following example:

- (67) An other for the same. Take lanberd, and make pouder thereof, and then let the sicke drinke thereof with whyte wine, **and he shall pisse soone, for this medicine hath bene proued** (TPH)

The adverb *soon* linguistically encodes that the designated event, i.e. the sick person is to urinate, is to take place at some point within an interval which is close to the time of the utterance. The author may then be understood as saying a wide range of things such as *the sick person is to urinate in a few minutes/in a few hours/in a few days after the administration of the product*. The reader's task is, in principle, to decide the time interval the author had in

mind. In relevance-theoretic terms, the reader has to “look for an interval narrow enough to yield an interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance” (Wilson and Sperber 1998: 14; Wilson and Sperber 2012: 181).

By using *soone* instead of a precise specification of the supposed time in which the remedy will produce the expected results, the writer is causing the reader a great cognitive effort which, according to the presumption of optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 270), has to contribute to the achievement of great cognitive effects. Some assumptions may be activated during the interpretation process, for instance, (i) *the author does not want to provide the reader with the precise information as regards the time interval*, or (ii) *the author cannot provide the reader with the precise information as regards the time interval*. In the context of medical literature, the reader may safely infer that the writer cannot not provide him with the exact information and may further infer the authorial degree of certainty attached to the utterance. *Soon* is consequently understood as an epistemic device (Alonso-Almeida 2009: 22) showing some level of lack of confidence in the truth of the propositional content.

The epistemicity conveyed by this adverb obviously affects the illocutionary force of *he shall pisse*, which cannot be taken as a promise in the strictest sense. In this context, this utterance stands as an estimation of a likely possibility and so the modal is to be interpreted epistemically. However, the epistemic sense of *shall P* in this context is semantically modified by the occurrence of *for this medicine hath bene proued*. This has a scope over the entire preceding clause reinforcing the illusion of promise, even when the meaning of items such as *prove* is overestimated at the time. As to the use of tokens such as *proved* and *probatum*, see section 4.3.2 below.

In the light of the examples analysed here, it seems that the less modalised an ES is, the more likely it is to be taken as a promise of efficacy. The occurrence of stance adverbs, epistemic or otherwise, generally undermines the commissive illocutionary force of the utterances by arising some level of doubt in the readers and so they are frequently led to epistemic interpretations. The wide range of pragmatic effects generated by the interplay of linguistic resources signalling (i) commitment, (ii) detachment and (iii) evidentiality will become apparent in the analysis of ESs where *will* is used since, as will be shown now, they tend to be more complex.

#### 4.3.1.2. Will

In this section I shall take into consideration some examples of ESs in which *will* is used. The relevance-theoretic approach reveals that their pragmatic functions are varied and that contextual assumptions as raised by the linguistic choices made by the authors are important in order to determine whether or not they are actually issuing promises of efficacy. The most marked feature of the following samples is, perhaps, that their level of complexity in terms of formulation is higher than that in the examples with *shall*, making manifest that the patterning is highly variable (Mäkinen 2011: 158, 165).

I would like to point out that all the examples chosen for discussion in this section display some evidential nuances because of the occurrence of items such as *tried* in (68), *proved* in (69) and (70), and *sure experiment* in (71). For the time being, let us say that their evidential nature obviously influences the whole sequences in which they are embedded, rendering evidential interpretations on the basis of the experimental testing suggested by their semantics. These items will be discussed in depth in section 4.3.2. Consider example (68) below:

- (68) Baye Salt well beaten into powder and syfted, and incorporated, and mixed well with the yolke of an Egge, and so layde vpon any Carbuncle, plague sore, botche, byle, or impostume: **assuredly (by the grace of God,) it wyll drawe to it selfe all the venome of the plague, or the sore: and breake any byle, or other thing. So that in short tyme the same wyll be healed. A tried thing** (TNT)

The sequence is introduced by the adverbial stance markers *assuredly* and *by the grace of God*, both of which are used to frame the propositions modalised by *will*, i.e. *it wyll drawe to it selfe all the venome of the plague, or the sore: and breake any byle, or other thing*, and *So that in short tyme the same wyll be healed*. These devices are used to encode the speaker's commitment to the proposition and so they convey the attitude underlying the propositional form of the utterance. As commented on in example (66), initial position adverb placement contributes to help lowering the reader's processing effort in the derivation of higher level explicatures so as to embed the proposition in a certain propositional attitude.

Adverbs are considered to be the "purest" expressions of epistemic force, at least in the West Germanic languages: "they are the most precise way and specific means available for marking the degree of likelihood of a state of affairs" (Nuyts 2001a: 55). *Assuredly* can be taken to express a high degree of certainty, resulting in an evaluation of the situations described in terms of probability. Nevertheless, the explicit mention of the author's certainty

somehow implicates that the truth of the propositions cannot be granted, creating a shadow of doubt, thus changing the epistemic force value of the modals from probability to possibility.

As I have shown earlier with reference to examples of ESs with *shall*, in particular in recipe (63), the adverbial *by the grace of God* influences the reading of the modal it accompanies so that it may be interpreted deontically or epistemically depending on the extent to which the help of God is thought to be beyond the individual's control or not. In instance (68), however, the sense of epistemicity, i.e. possibility, conveyed by *assuredly* exerts an influence over the prepositional phrase *by the grace of God* which, consequently, is understood epistemically as well. Pragmatically speaking, these stance adverbs can be taken as speech-act modifiers which turn the promise of efficacy into a mere possibility.

The increasing level of complexity in the formulation of ESs seems to go hand in hand with the addition of extra linguistic resources including evidential ones. Obviously, the processing of these complex structures requires higher cognitive effort on the part of the reader but, as will be apparent from the analysis of the examples, the extra effort will bring about higher cognitive effects. Take the recipe below:

- (69) The goom of a Chery tree dissolved in white wine, and so geuen to them that are grieved with the stone: **it wyll helpe maruelously. Mizaldus affyrmes that it is certainly proued** (TNT)

Several linguistic resources intervene in the formulation of the ES in this example which consists of two complete sentences. The first one contains a third person singular pronominal subject *it* plus the modal *will* followed by the lexical verb *helpe* and the adverbial complementiser *maruelously*. The second one is a matrix clause whose subject is the noun phrase *Mizaldus*. The matrix verb is *affyrmes* and it is complemented with a *that*-clause. If the first part of the whole sequence was taken in isolation, its processing would indeed yield a deontic interpretation if only because the reader infers that the administration of the remedy is a covert condition for the fulfilment of the proposition. As such, this utterance cannot be taken to convey less than a validation of the remedy.

The addition of the matrix clause leads the reader to interpret the whole sequence rather differently. This clause has an evidential value as it specifies the source of information the writer has for the proposition expressed in the embedded clause. The reader is prone to infer that the type of evidence the writer has for the information is indirect and, specifically, mediated or quotative (Plungian 2001: 354) as the explicit reference to the source is provided.

The use of the verb *affyrmes* highlights the factual status of the proposition and its corresponding truth, but the epistemic adverbial stance marker *certainly* in the embedded clause does at the same time provide some lowering in the degree of speaker commitment. This is so because of the gradable nature of the adverb, so that in its processing the reader probably achieves higher cognitive effects if he confronts this concept with other such as *more certainly* or *less certainly*. This inferential process leads him/her to come to the conclusion that there is some authorial level of doubt implicated in the use of this adverb.

The asymmetry in the expression of different degrees of commitment as encoded in *affyrmes* and *certainly* in the matrix clause implies that the default truth value for the whole utterance is less than certain. The interpretation of *will* in the preceding utterance is definitely determined by the epistemic sense of the matrix clause and so the whole sequence is to be understood as an epistemic judgement on the part of the author rather than an expression of promise of efficacy.

As shown above, the employment of evidential structures is common in ESs containing *will*. Lexical evidential markers, in particular, are considered to be important in the development of authorial argumentation and in the creation of author-reader relationships in a text because they explicitly indicate the source of information authors have for their claims (Boye and Harder 2009). The processing of evidential material does certainly have an impact on the interpretation of the modal, providing the reader with higher cognitive effects which allow him/her to derive authorial attitudes both towards their utterances and their audience. Consider examples (70) and (71):

(70) This following is a proued medicine for the ache in the huckle bone, called the Sciatica. Take a pounce of good black Sope, one pint of good Aquavite, half a pynt of Sallet oyle, and a quarter of a pynt of the iuyce of Rew, seethe them and sturre them all together ouer an easie fyre, vntyll it be something thicke, and that it maye be made in a plaster: then sprede some thereof vpon a peece of lether, and apply it to the ache or payned place, and let it lye thereon vnremoued, three dayes and three nights: and yf the payne be not then gone, then applye such an other plaster thertoo, and remoue it not of so long, **and it wyl helpe it certainly. This was tolde me by one that knew it often proued** (TNT)

(71) Take a Frogge, and cutte her through the myddes of the backe with a knife, and take out the Lyuer, and fouled it in a Colewoort leafe, and burne it in a newe earthen pottle well closed: and geue the ashes thereof vnto him or her, that hath the falling sycknesse to drinke with Wyne, and it wyll helpe him. And if the partye be not healed at once: then do so by another Frogge, and so doo styll, **and without doubte it wyll heale him: if he vse it. This was tolde me for a sure experiment** (TNT)



The processing of the sequences *and it wyl helpe it certainly* and *without doubte it wyll heale him* is similar to the one commented on in the analysis of recipes (66) and (69) with special reference to the items *without doubt* and *certainly*. The use of the structure *This was tolde me* in these two instances, nevertheless, makes an important difference as it indicates that the information communicated in the proposition has been obtained by verbal report. In none of the statements does the writer explicitly indicate whether or not s/he believes in the truth of what s/he is saying, nor does s/he specify the source of information. The very authorial choice of this reportative structure suggests something about his/her stance through an invited inference: "Inferences of this kind are invited in the sense that they are suggested by the context" (Evans and Green 2006: 721). In the relevance-theoretic framework, the use of a reportative structure like *This was tolde me* can be accounted for in terms of the *descriptive* and *interpretative* uses of language (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 224-231). Ifantidou (2005: 1337) summarises the way this notions operate as follows:

any lexical item which marks a certain part of an utterance as an interpretation of an utterance or thought attributed to someone *other* than the speaker marks this part of an utterance as *interpretatively* used. A lexical item which marks part of an utterance as an interpretation of the speaker's *own* thought is *descriptively* used.

*Tolde*, then, can be taken as an interpretative-use marker whose pragmatic function is that of marking the ground-floor assertions or implied assertions contained in *by one that knew it often proued* in (70) and *for a sure experiment* in (71) as interpretations of thoughts that are attributed to someone other than the author him/herself. Interpretative uses of language of this type inevitably activate assumptions regarding both authorial commitment to the truth expressed and degree of reliability of the information communicated.

It has been argued that the use of evidential markers in languages where this category is not grammaticalised tends to result in the removal of "the degree of responsibility of the speaker for the reliability of information" (Paducheva 2012). Specifically, information which has been acquired on the basis of a report is considered to be less reliable than that which has been acquired by having direct access to a given situation. The attribution of the information presented to a source other than the author him/herself results in the expression of low commitment, at least lower than that expressed by means of a plain, unmodalised assertion. The use of this reportative evidential affects the claim by conveying both implicit authorial detachment and shift of responsibility.

The evidential and epistemic interpretations of the reportative structure pervade the whole statement and so in these examples *will* has both evidential and epistemic readings, none of which blocks the other since they may coexist as has been shown in Cornillie (2009). In the context of medical recipes, the illocutionary point of these utterances cannot be taken to be the expression of the author's compromise as for the future efficacy of the remedies in any case, because there are too many linguistic resources that prevent the reader to come to such a conclusion after processing them.

Moreover, *this was tolde me by one that knew it often proued* in (70) contains the linguistic codification of some important information which is worth mentioning here. Firstly, the verb *knew* encodes cognitive attitude and, specifically, one of knowledge. In other words, the information framed by *knew* can be considered to be a piece of knowledge. However, it cannot be attributed to anyone in particular because its referent cannot be inferred from the linguistic context nor the immediate physical environment, hence reducing the already low level of commitment attached to the whole utterance because of the occurrence of the reportative *tolde*. Secondly, the adverb *often* encodes information regarding the frequency with which the medicine has been supposedly proved, and so it is aimed at expressing that the medicine has been successfully applied on numerous occasions. The reader may stop at this interpretation if s/he finds that it satisfies his/her expectations of relevance, but s/he may also continue so as to achieve higher cognitive effects. S/he may arrive at the conclusion that there is some inherent vagueness conveyed by the use of this adverb and so there is some degree of tentativeness attached to the proposition.

The derivation of propositional attitudes is crucially determined by the occurrence of epistemic stance adverbials such as *assuredly* or *certainly*. As shown in this section, it does not even matter that their semantics point at a high degree of certainty and commitment towards the actualisation of the propositions, because their gradable nature and the explicit mention of authorial certainty activate assumptions about the fact that the truth of the propositions cannot be granted. In addition to the epistemic readings, *will* may also have evidential ones derived from the presence of material indicating the author's source of information embedded in the same ES. The indication of source of knowledge is linguistically encoded in the use of specific lexis, such as lexical evidential verbs like *affyrmes*, *tolde* and *proued*, which allow for contextually inferred meanings of authorial commitment and reliability of information. *Proved* and any of its variant forms, in particular, are frequently used in ESs. They will be looked at in depth in the following section.

#### 4.3.2. Use of the lexical items *proved* and *probatum*

The employment of the items *proved* and *probatum* as well as some variant forms stands as the second preferred linguistic resource used by writers to mark potential promissory speech acts. Generally speaking, the commentary style attached to utterances containing them is primarily evidential with different nuances as for the indication of the source of information. In an analysis of early scientific writing, i.e. Late Middle English and Early Modern English, Taavitsainen (2001b: 27) observes that there is a correlation between evidentiality and scientific thought-styles in the following terms:

Scholastic science relies on authorities and axioms. It is logocentric: the focus of interest is on language and the aim to reconstruct the meanings of ancient authors. Empiricism relies on sensory evidence and aims at detecting the laws of nature by observation. Rationalism, by contrast, relies on the deductive mode of knowing combining reason with innate ideas as the source of knowledge, and the modern approach, e.g. to medical science is statistically based, and its clinical applications rely on probabilities.

As will be shown in this section, ESs containing *proved* or its Latin counterpart may convey authorial source of information and/or mode of knowing as well as his/her degree of commitment towards the supposed efficacy of the medical products; a number of linguistic features are used to this end. Take the examples below:

- (72) A drinke for the paine of the mother. Take a dram of Mithridatum, and dissolue it in an vnce and a halfe of water of wormewood, and giue it to the woman for to drinke afore that she goeth to meate 4. houres, and lett her not drinke a good whyle afterwarde: **proued** (TPH)
- (73) A souerayne medycyne that helpeth a mannes sight and purgeth and claryfyeth his eyes be they neuer so bled [...] Also take a coluer and let it blede on the right vayne vnder the wyng and anoint thyne eyes with ye blode .ix. dayes and .ix. nyghtes and more yf it be need / **for this medycyne hase ben proued many tymes** (TPM)
- (74) A very good Medicine for any burninge with fire. Take Blacke Vernish, and with a Feather, anoint the place well which is burned, and it wyll asswage ye heate thereof, and yt will heale it as faire as euer did any other Medicine, and soe vse yt continually, vntill such time as you bee perfect whole. **This hath beene truly and sufficiently proued** (RST)

The recipe in (72) contains the item *proved* alone occupying a closing position. In its processing, the reader accesses the encyclopaedic entry of the concept so that some information about its extension in the form of assumptions or assumption schemas is brought to the foreground. S/he may probably have access to assumptions like *to prove something is to demonstrate its truth or in order to prove something there must be evidence for it*. Further extensions of the context and the completion of assumption schemas may allow the reader to infer the propositional attitude conveyed by the utterance.

The process of contextual extension to derive the authorial attitude as for the way s/he entertains the proposition will be constrained by syntactic means, in particular, by the use of the perfect construction which indicates that the designated action is referred to as having occurred in the past. The relevance of its past occurrence extends up until the present and even the future. This construction, then, is used to claim for the validity of the remedy on the grounds that it has already worked in the past. The reader may infer the author's level of certainty in what s/he is saying and s/he may probably come to the conclusion that s/he has some evidence for asserting that the recipe will be successful. The type of evidence as suggested in the use of *proved* seems to be experimental, but in the absence of any explicit indication in this regard, the reader infers that the author is not completely certain; otherwise s/he would have used it as evidentiary justification.

Recipes in (73) and (74) present formal variations in the use of *proved*. In example (73), the sequence with *proved* is introduced by a *for*-conjunctive and this is followed by noun phrase *thys medicine* in subject position plus the predicate and the adverbial complement *many tymes*. Similarly, the example in (74) consists of the deictic pronoun *this* followed by the predicate where some adverbial modifications are included, namely, *truly* and *sufficiently*. This time the use of the perfect structures *hase ben proued* and *hath beene [...] proued* are not the only elements contributing to the identification of the propositional attitude. The adverbial complementation, i.e. *many tymes*, and *truly and sufficiently*, can be taken as devices which linguistically encode some important information in this sense.

*Many tymes* stands as a quantifier over the times the medicine has apparently resulted in some sort of help for the patient; however, it does not provide the reader with an absolute quantity reference, but rather with a relative one. Similarly, *sufficiently* emphasises the adequacy in the number of times the medicine has been proved, but the lack of specificity may raise some level of doubt in the reader. *Truly*, on its part, contributes to help the reader recover the propositional attitude in a substantially different way, that is, by highlighting the

author's confidence in the previous testing of the medicine. After the processing of these elements in the context where they occur, the reader cannot infer that the author is completely sure about the healing power of the remedies. The strength of his/her claim of efficacy is consequently lessened to the extent that there is no promise at all issued in these utterances.

As shown in examples (72) to (74), the absence of explicit indications as for the agency of the testing of the remedies partially determines that the propositional attitudes recovered by the reader tend to be those with a less than certain degree of commitment and so the propositions are entertained as probabilities or even possibilities, i.e. depending on the extra linguistic choices made by the writers. Let us now focus on recipes (75) to (78) where some indications of the source of information are offered:

- (75) If the pestilence commeth with greate excesse of heate, drinke it vpon rosewater, and vynegre, but yf yt fele it colde, take it in a draught of wyne, and couer ye, wyth clothes, so that ye may sweate as longe as is possible, **for wythoute doute, it is a present remedie as I my selfe haue oftentimes proued** (RLP)
- (76) A playster for all maner of sores, and specially for greene sores. Take of fyne Suger and Burnet, of ech lyke much, and bruse them in a mortar, and wash the wound with the iuse of the same [...] then take them from the fyre, and let them stand a while, then put it into a bason of fayre water, and so worke it out into roules, as before is taught, in ordering the wound. **Prob.per T. Colby** (BSM)
- (77) Item in the mouth of the paciente being open put a sticke as a gagge and marke well the place of the aposteme and prycke it wyth a sharpe stycke, **for manye Authores haue oftentimes proued the same** (THM)
- (78) To heale a greene wounde. Take the hearbe Salindine and Houselyke equal quantitie, then bruse them in a mortar, and take the iuse of them, and put it in the wound, and annoynt the same therwith: that done, fyl the wound with part of the brused hearbs, and so bynde it vp, **and in short tyme it wil heale the sore: as by prooffe hath bene seene** (BSM)

The recipe in (75) contains an ES which is introduced by the stance adverbial *wythoute doute*. This adverbial helps, in principle, to frame the understanding of the proposition presented after it, but its epistemic sense, i.e. certainty, may be modified because of its interplay with other epistemic devices included in the utterance. The author then provides a positive, direct evaluation of the medicine in the form of an assertion, i.e. *it is a present remedie*. The reason for his/her assertion is finally introduced in the form of an evidential comment with the item *proved* embedded in it, i.e. *as I my selfe haue oftentimes proued*.

The use of the first person singular pronoun *I* clearly marks the agency of the action, so the author him/herself stands as the very source of information to claim for the validity of the remedy. The use of this strategy “helps to build [authorial] credibility and to achieve the reader’s subsequent confidence in [the author’s] medical knowledge” (Quintana-Toledo 2009a: 35). The causal relationship existing between the utterances *it is a present remedie* and *as I my selfe haue oftentimes proued* can be accounted for in terms of the evidential nature of the item *proued*: the author is somehow entitled to claim the effectiveness of the product as it derives from his own experience. Nevertheless, the item *oftentimes*, just as *many tymes* in recipe (73), encodes a degree of imprecision which renders the utterance an interpretation of epistemic possibility. In this sense, these items may be taken as examples of vague language.

Vagueness can be defined as “a particular kind of uncertainty about the applicability of a predicate” (Barker 2006: 294). Jucker et al. (2003: 1739) argue that vagueness can be accounted for in terms of interaction and that, when speakers are vague, they do so for strategic reasons. According to these authors, the appropriate use of vague language is determined by context: while in some contexts higher degrees of precision are required, in others speakers are somehow entitled to be less precise. In the context of medical literature, writers are expected to be precise so that they provide their audience with accurate instructions as regards the preparation and application of medicines. The use of vague terms such as *oftentimes* can be taken as a hedging device which is aimed to reduce the force of the predicate. The epistemicity pervading the whole utterance ultimately obscures its promissory illocutionary force; it can only be taken as “communicating that the thought interpreted by *P* is entertained as a description of an actual state of affairs” (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 247) or, in other words, the speaker is simply *saying that P* with little authorial commitment as for the efficacy of the medicine.

Recipe (76) provides an example in which the ES is given in Latin, though in its abbreviated form. Research shows that code-switching has been frequently found in this stage of the recipe (Pahta 2004: 92). This item conveys an evidential meaning on the basis of supposed testing which in this case is not attributed to the author him/herself nor left unspecified since the name of the agent, i.e. *T. Colby*, is provided. The attribution of knowledge to someone else as encoded in the use of this sequence stands as an interpretative use of language in relevance-theoretic terms which, as commented on earlier in this chapter with reference to examples (70) and (71), determines the recovery of attitudes signalling less than high

commitment. This item falls into the category of inter-textual metadiscourse put forward by Ifantidou (2005) since it provides reference to an author other than the writer him/herself.

Although the interpretative use of language captured by the employment of *Prob. per T. Colby* is primarily aimed at conveying authorial detachment from propositional content, the explicit mention of an authority in medicine can be also taken as an attempt to achieve credibility as it "help[s] writers to establish a persuasive epistemological and social framework for the acceptance of their arguments" (Hyland 2004: 22). In this same line of thought, the language choice, that is, Latin rather than English, activates assumptions related to learned traditions of medicine possibly pursuing "to lend an aura of credibility and prestige [...] by association" (Pahta 2011:116).

The ES in example (77) is similar to the one in (78) in the sense that it is used to represent a thought which cannot be attributed to the speaker but to *many Authores*, so that it is suggested that the writer cannot be held responsible for a possible unsuccessful application of the medicine. Again, no promise of efficacy can be deemed to be issued with this utterance. This lack of commitment typically associated to interpretative uses of language conflicts with the authorial intention to achieve credibility by mentioning supposed trusted authorities whose experience s/he uses to claim the quality and the trustworthiness of the recipe.

The evidential nature of the ES in the last example is partially given by the experimental testing suggested by the item *prooffe*. In addition, the item *seene* contributes to build on the indication of the acquisition of information by pointing at a sensory mode of knowledge, i.e. visual, creating appeals to an empiric rather than a scholastic thought-style. Assuming that there is a correlation between the mode of knowledge and the degree of reliability with which that knowledge is entertained, the employment of a direct evidential seems to suggest that the information presented is indeed reliable. Nevertheless, the degree of reliability is somehow weakened because of the linguistic choices made by the writer in the rest of the ES, i.e. *in a short tyme* and the use of the passive voice in *as by prooffe hath bene seene*. As shown earlier in the case of *many tymes* in recipe (73) and *oftentimes* in recipes (75) and (77), the degree of specificity conveyed by this adverbial cannot be high in any case and so its use results in the expression of epistemic possibility. The use of the passive voice, on its part, emphasises the action rather than its agency, resulting in the implicit expression of authorial detachment.

ESs containing the items *proved*, *probatum* or any of its variant forms have not been easily accepted as ESs properly speaking in earlier literature. Stannard (1982: 70-73) notes that this sort of statements should be taken with caution since it is not really clear whether or not they were aimed at showing readers that the recipes were indeed experimentally tried. Totelin (2011: 84-85), in the same line, points out that “the phrases ‘*expertum est*’ or ‘*probatum est*’ do not carry the modern implications attached to the notions of experimentation and proof, but rather indicate that the remedies marked in this way had, at some point, attracted the attention of a reader, who had tried them out”.

Mäkinen (2011: 159), echoing Jones’s (1998: 206) words, also notices that the use of the term *proved* does not necessarily imply that the medicine had been actually tested in any systematic way: it “may have been derived from the scholastic scholarly texts where the proof of the efficacy of a medicine was not a result of a series of laboratory tests but rather a logical outcome of a textual discussion in which contemporary theories of medicine were considered with respect to the recipe in question”. In this regard, it should be noted that scholastic science was not very much concerned with discovering new data on the basis of empirical testing, but rather with identifying the causes of events already taken as factual and perpetuating the tradition. Eamon (1994: 55-56) observes that saying that something had been proved in the scholastic sense only meant that it had been witnessed, or, as Olsan (2003: 356) puts it, saying that something had been proved indicated that the formula had worked in the past.

More recently, Alonso-Almeida (2013: 79-80) refers to the obscure nature of these Latin formulae for those English language speakers who did not have any mastery of the classical language at all, in spite of the fact that their use was somehow conventional. This author comments on several aspects regarding the use of *probatum (est)* in English medical recipes: (i) their close relationship with “magic during the medieval and early Renaissance periods”; (ii) the interpersonal role they may have played as social distance and power difference indicators; and (iii) their function as “a mark of professional approval”, which may have led to a belief in the effectiveness of the recipes.

### 4.3.3. Evaluation

The use of evaluative expressions is the third preferred linguistic resource in the marking of potential promises of efficacy. Evaluative expressions include not only the employment of items which explicitly convey a positive qualification of the medical product such as



adjectives and adverbs, but also verbs predicating on the healing properties of the medicine. Consider the following examples:

- (79) For the Tey of the eyes. Temper Arinent with Hony and a lytell of ye whyte of an egge and lay it to thy eyes whan thou goes to bedde. Also the gall of an Hare temper it with Hony **and it is good therefore** (TPM)
- (80) A purgation for colike commynge of fleume. Take .v. drammes of diafinicon,iii. ounces of wormewood water, and make a drinke, the whyche receyued fasting, iiiii. or .v. houres afore meat, **is verye profitable** (RLP)
- (81) Another for the same. Take Bay salte, Smallege, white Frankencense and Plantine leaues, of each of them a handefull, beate them in a Morter vntill they be very smalle [...] and when you perceiue your fit coming, drink it warme, and eate the cruste, you must vse this drinke dueringe all the time of your sicknes, **for it is very holesome** (RST)
- (82) For stoppyng of the splenne. Take the Elder rote and seethe it in whyte wyne vnto the thryde parte and drynke therof **for it cureth merueylously** (TPM)
- (83) Let the rote of rape Vyolet or Sowbread be sodden in water wherin let the nape of the necke be washed and afterward anointed wyth the oyle of the Decoction of Rape Violet or Sowbread **for it healeth myghtly** (THM)

Instances in (79) to (81) contain ESs where the authors provide a positive assessment of the medicines by using axiological evaluative adjectives (Kerbat-Orecchioni 1980), i.e. *good*, *profitable* and *holesome*. In instances (82) and (83), authors make use of the lexical verbs *cureth* and *healeth*, both of which predicate on the curative and healing properties of the medicine, together with attitudinal stance adverbs (Biber et al. 1999: 854), i.e. *merueylously* and *myghtly*.

Evaluative language may be used to perform certain speech acts (Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin 2010: 70). In the case of the adjectives used in examples (79) to (81), they encode the author's stance as for the validity of the product. When processing these sequences, the reader accesses their encyclopaedic entries so that a number of assumptions are brought to the foreground. In the case of *good* the reader is not entitled to infer that the remedy will provide the patient with complete health restoration, but rather that it is adequate to offer him/her some degree of health improvement. The employment of *profitable* and *holesome*, in contrast, implies that the medicines are indeed conducive to a healthful state.

In utterances where *good* is used, then, the reader alone would be responsible for assuming that a promise of efficacy is issued here since the semantics of the adjective does not allow for that. In instances (80) and (81), there is nothing in the linguistic environment which may prevent a reader from understanding these fragments as promises of efficacy as long as s/he is able to retrieve the assumption that the medicines have to be given or applied in the ways specified. The inferential process is, in fact, a simple one since the reader may arrive at that conclusion by applying a *modus ponendo ponens* rule as already illustrated in example (62). The occurrence of the item *for* in (81) introducing the utterance helps constraining the way the inferential process develops since it linguistically encode a resultative sense.

Moreover, the author does not modalise his/her assessment of the medicine by using any mitigating device, in which case the degree of commitment attached to these utterances is by default high. In other words, in the context of medical literature, there are certain standards related to what can/cannot be considered to be effective, i.e. on the grounds of providing health restoration. Consequently, if a remedy “meets or satisfies relevant standards” (Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin 2010: 70), it can be safely assessed as *profitable* or *holesome*. In this light, there is no reason to suppose that an author would claim the efficacy of the product without any mitigating device whatsoever, unless he was fully committed to the truth of his/her utterance.

Recipes in (82) and (83) are similar in that they both contain ESs which consist of simple structures introduced by *for* which is then followed by the subject pronoun *it*, the lexical verbs *cureth* and *healeth*, and the attitudinal stance adverbs *merueylously* and *myghtly*, respectively. These attitudinal stance adverbs are used to convey the author’s value judgement about the extent to which the remedy can be said to be effective, i.e. in an extraordinary manner. They do not pose any problems for the reader from a processing perspective; they simply activate assumptions on the author’s attitude by virtue of their very encyclopaedic entries.

Tense, in contrast, is worth-mentioning at this point as the use of the present tense, i.e. *cureth* and *healeth*, has certain pragmatic implications. Generally speaking, tense contributes “to the determination of reference time by giving a clue to the temporal reference intended” (Smith 1990: 85). This is obvious from any account on tense markers. In the relevance-theoretic approach to comprehension, the addressee relies on tense, among other syntactic features of the utterances together with relevant contextual information, so as to narrow down the time reference up to the point where the utterance can be deemed to be expressing something that is optimally relevant. Tense markers are considered to be “generalised

existential quantifiers: they assert that [...] there is some relatively past/present/future time at which the situation described held/holds/will hold" (Smith 1990: 83).

The predication described in (82) and (83) cannot only be taken to hold over the present time, i.e. the time the reader is actually reading the text, because in the context of medical literature, a future time reference is presupposed. In other words, the user of the text reads a text in a given point in time so as to take some course of action after that time, in which case the use of the present in these instances is a futurate one.

Obviously, the predication of the verbs *cureth* and *healeth* as referring to the future could have been more relevantly communicated by means of another linguistic form, in particular, a futurate construction with modals like *shall* or *will*. Nevertheless, the extra processing effort the reader has to make in order to arrive at the futurate interpretation will be somehow rewarded by the cognitive effects that s/he can achieve. It should be noted that "in addition to its time reference function, tense can also signal epistemic distance" (Evans and Green 2006: 394). In this sense, Langacker (2011) posits that rather than saying that the use of the present tense implies that the event described coincides with the time of speaking, it may be taken to indicate "epistemic immediacy of the profiled process", so that "a present tense indicates that the designated situation is immediate to the speaker, i.e., that it belongs to her ground" (De Wit and Brisard 2009). Pragmatically speaking, the use of the present is intended to arise in the reader certain assumptions about the immediate relationship existing between the administration or application of the medicines and the recovery of the patient, in which case these utterances are indeed understood as promises.

#### 4.3.4. *Matrices*

Matrices other than the ones which have been already commented on in previous examples are not so frequently employed by writers in the formulation of ESs in the texts analysed. This may be so because they require a higher processing effort, at least with respect to those utterances where modals, *proved* and *probatum*, and evaluative items are used. Take the following instances:

- (84) Also it is proued, that the vryne of a bulle, is a singular remedy to mudifie the sores, and to lose the heares by the rootes, without any peyne or pille (RLP)
- (85) Cautharides wrapt in a spyders webbe, and hanged ouer one that hath the Quarteyn ague, it is sayde it cures or delyuers him or her thereof perfectly. Mizaldus (TNT)

- (86) Fox bloud fresh dronke brekith the stone, **for it is knowen that yf a stone be put into it, it wyl breake** (THM)
- (87) There is no presenter helpe to ease the tormentes of the Gowte, both in the handes, and in the feete, then a young whelpe, especially of one colour, if the same be put to the grieffe: Leuinus Leminus. But the whelpe ought to be cut out, or clouen in two partes throw the myds of the back: and the one halfe with the inner side hotte, to be layde vnto ye grieued place: **and this I know to be an excellent thing** (TNT)

Recipe (84) contains a matrix where the evidential item *proued* is used, in fact, the information that constitutes the whole recipe appears to be flanked by *it is proued that*. This instance makes manifest the structural complexities of ESs where matrices are utilised, though the evidential value of the sequence as conveyed by *proued* which occurs in initial position makes its processing somewhat easier. The syntactic choices made by the author, i.e. the construction in the passive voice where explicit reference to the agency of the action is avoided, may allow the reader to infer some degree of detachment on the part of the author.

The matrix *it is sayde* in (85) linguistically encodes an indirect source of information for the embedded proposition, i.e. hearsay evidential, which, in principle, appeals to a low degree commitment and reliability, which is contextually strengthened by the passive construction. Again, there is no linguistic codification for the authorial persona in this ES, so the thought is to be attributed to other individuals. In this case, the author includes to whom it can be attributed, i.e. *Mizaldus*. As shown in the analysis of previous examples, i.e. (76), the inclusion of an authority in medicine serves as an appeal to the credibility of the efficacy of the recipe.

In recipes (86) and (87), the author employs the verb *know*, i.e. *knowen* and *know*, which indicates cognitive attitude. According to Capelli (2007: 156), it is generally assumed that, under normal circumstances and in the absence of any explicit evidential or epistemic element, hearers are normally led to infer that the information communicated constitutes a piece of knowledge. Then, the use of a cognitive verb like *know*, which explicitly signals that the information stands as a piece of knowledge, has certain pragmatic implications.

In the examples above, the employment of *know* may suggest that the author has some sort of reliable evidence for asserting the information conveyed in the embedded proposition, and so s/he chooses to foreground this fact by framing the propositions with this cognitive verb. Nevertheless, there are certain differences as for the surface linguistic manifestation of these two structures, which, again, allow readers to infer differing degrees of speaker commitment to the truth attached to the propositions. The passive voice suggests some lessening in the

degree of speaker commitment by foregrounding the action. Since no agent is mentioned, the reader would probably attribute this knowledge to popular belief, which, depending on the value s/he assigns to popular knowledge may result in crediting or discrediting the value of the recipe. In (87), the evaluator of the situation designated in the embedded clause is foregrounded by the use of the first person singular pronoun in subject position in the matrix clause. In this case, the degree of commitment inferred by the reader is high, at least, by virtue of the syntactic characteristics of the sentence in contrast to those in recipe (86).

Additionally, these two structures differ in the degree of subjective/(inter)subjective positioning. In recipe (87), the use of the first person singular subject explicitly marks that the information is presented on the grounds of the assessor's sole responsibility and so indicates subjectivity. In recipe (86), in contrast, the impersonal construction suggests that the information is presented on the grounds of someone else's responsibility, and so indicates (inter)subjectivity.

#### *4.3.5. Other strategies*

This section focuses on the pragmatic analysis of other strategies used by writers to mark potential promises of efficacy. Under this heading, I have included narrative and anecdotal material which stands as the least frequently used resource for this purpose, in fact, examples are scarce. Consider the fragments below:

- (88) In Tuscia ther was a certayne man deliuered and healed of thys disease, of a certayne husband man, by onli ordering or dressing of wild rue and afterwarde were manye healed, after the same maner (THM)
- (89) A certayne old woman healyd men which were almost full of the dropsye, with the ioyce of planten sodden to half, it might also be made in a syrope (THM)

The processing of anecdotal and narrative material relies on the reader's accessing prior knowledge against the newly presented information so as to draw inferences. The linguistic context provides him/her with some clues which constrain the way the process proceeds. In these cases, many elements have to be considered, for instance, the employment of the past tense, i.e. *healed* and *healyd*, marking information as factual. Moreover, the referents of the expressions *a certayne man* and *a certayne old woman* are not given. Contextual information, i.e. immediate linguistic context or physical environment, cannot be used by the reader in order to disambiguate the referent of those expressions. This lack of specificity may lead the

reader to infer that there the writer has some reservations as for the certainty with which he entertains propositional information.

This type of strategy may have influenced readers towards a positive consideration of the recipes because of their evidential nature, that is, they present anecdotes which may be taken as evidence for asserting the efficacy of the medicines. The strength or the degree of reliability of the evidence presented here as inferred from the linguistic manifestation of the ES cannot be taken to be high because of the asymmetrical correspondence derived from the use of the past tense, i.e. indicating factuality and a higher degree of certainty, and the ambiguity attached to the referential expressions.

#### 4.4. Are, then, ESs expressions of promise?

The relevance-theoretic approach to comprehension as applied to the understanding of ESs allows us to infer that not all ESs can be taken as expressions of promise in the strictest pragmatic sense. Context, understood as a complex network of assumptions which derive from (i) the interpretation of utterances occurring earlier in the communicative exchange, (ii) the addition of encyclopaedic information, and (iii) the addition of information which is immediately observable from the environment, constitutes a key factor in the interpretation process. Moreover, both addresser and addressee are active participants in this process: on the one hand, the linguistic choices made by the writers crucially constrain the process of context extension and, on the other hand, readers have to choose the context against which ESs are to be processed so as to determine whether or not they are actual promises of efficacy.

Several features of the ESs have been found to influence their interpretation: their very morphosyntactic features and the occurrence of modal expressions as well as other stance elements, including evidential ones, are indicators of the authors' attitude towards the validity of the remedies. Depending on the extent to which the reader is willing to achieve higher cognitive effects, s/he may follow a path of higher cognitive effort so as to arrive at interpretations which depart from seemingly promises of efficacy.

Generally speaking, both *shall* and *will* may be used to express a promisory speech act and so these modals are interpreted deontically. In these cases, the illocutionary force of the utterance is derived from the reader's recognising the covert conditions for the fulfilment of the *shall/will* proposition. In relevance-theoretic terms, such a task may be accomplished by

the application of simple deductive rules of the *modus ponendo ponens* type. The conditions tend to be related to the administration or application of the medicine as specified in the recipe. When promises are indeed issued, authorial commitment towards the factuality of the event being referred to can be said to be high, but the occurrence of adjuncts in the form of stance adverbs, epistemic or otherwise, results in modifications in the level of compromise towards the actualisation of the event. Under those circumstances, the type of speech act which is actually performed is not a promise at all.

The role of context selection and of the organisation of the assumptions in the individual's cognitive environment are crucial in the process of interpretation. This is particularly relevant when processing the stance adverb *by the grace of God* and its variant forms. Utterances containing this adjunct may be interpreted deontically, i.e. if the reader assumes that the help of God is beyond human control, or epistemically, i.e. if s/he assumes that this issue has to do with the individual's religious practices. Consequently, whether or not ESs containing *by the grace of God* can be understood as promises of efficacy is ultimately dependent on the reader's already stored assumptions about his/her religious beliefs.

The presence of other stance adverbs such as *certainly* or *without doubt* contributes to the creation of an epistemic space for the processing of sequences where these items are included. The explicit mention of the author's certainty as linguistically codified in these epistemic stance adverbs poses an implicit doubt in the factuality of the propositions, leading the reader to infer epistemic rather than deontic interpretations. In these cases, ESs cannot be taken as promises of efficacy but as expressions of possibility or potentiality regarding the predicated actions.

Time or frequency adverbials like *soone*, *many times* or *oftentimes* are also indicators of authorial stance. The level of unspecificity conveyed by these adverbs leads the reader to make a higher cognitive effort so as to determine the time interval they are used to refer to. However, their relevance is given by their function in the completion of propositional attitudes. These are characterised by a lack of confidence in the truth of propositional content, conveying a sense of epistemicity and so rendering the utterances as estimations of likely possibility.

The employment of the evidential elements *proved* and *probatum* is, in principle, aimed at strengthening the commissive illocutionary force value of the ES in which they are embedded. As such, they are used to assert the value of the remedies on the basis of the experimental testing suggested by the content of their encyclopaedic entries. Nevertheless,

these elements may convey differing degrees of authorial commitment depending on the extra linguistic choices made by the writers. For instance, the use of the first person singular pronoun indicates authorial involvement and commitment as it indicates direct access to the information presented. The use of the passive voice, on its part, emphasises the action while backgrounding its agency, resulting in lower degrees of compromise towards the efficacy of the medicines. In the relevance-theoretic framework, these strategies correspond to descriptive and attributive uses of language, respectively, which have pragmatic implications as regards the responsibility for providing some information, i.e. the supposed efficacy of the medicines.

ESs with *proved* and *probatum* are frequently formulated with extra evidential material which does not only point at the source of information but also at its reliability in differing degrees. The asymmetry brought about by the employment of resources which indicate high speaker commitment together with others which signal low speaker commitment is resolved by assigning a low confirmation value to the propositions involved, and so the expression of epistemic senses of possibility are abundant. In any case, as put forward by some scholars (Jones 1998; Mäkinen 2011), the value attached to the items *proved* and *probatum* cannot be considered to be evidential in the strictest sense, but rather as derived from the scholastic tradition.

The use of axiological evaluative adjectives, i.e. *good*, *profitable* and *holesome*, explicitly mark a positive evaluation of the medical product. However, the encyclopaedic entry of *good* does not allow the reader to infer that the medicine will be indeed effective, i.e. it will provide complete health restoration, but rather that the administration or application of remedy will be a mere help. Then, the only assumption that is mutually manifest is that the remedy will be of some help to the patient. The employment of *profitable* and *holesome*, and the lexical verbs, i.e. *cureth* and *healeth*, in contrast, makes mutually manifest that the medicine will bring about complete health restoration. Moreover, the use of the present tense suggests epistemic immediacy and, consequently, factuality. Locutions where these adjectives and lexical verbs of this type in the present tense are used can be taken as promises of efficacy.

As for ESs consisting of matrices other than the ones already mentioned, these tend to have evidential verbs which give some clues not only about the author's source of information, but also about its reliability. The employment of several morphosyntactic features contributes to the completion of propositional attitudes, mainly the use of the passive voice, hedges and referential ambiguity, all of which allow the reader to infer authorial lack of confidence in the



actualisation of the proposition. All of these elements, then, undermine the commissive illocutionary import of the utterances, which can no longer be taken as promises of efficacy.

Lastly, anecdotal and narrative material is intended to provide the reader with evidence to support the value of the medicines. On the one hand, the use of the past tense situates the designated actions before the time of writing, and so they can be taken as pieces of knowledge about past events. On the other, several resources such the ambiguity displayed by referential expressions contribute to lessening authorial commitment and to increasing his/her detachment from the supposed trustworthiness of the recipe.

#### 4.5. Summary

In this chapter I have presented the results of the analysis and the discussion of the findings. I have firstly provided the general results of the corpus of study concerning the different strategies used by authors for the expression of ESs. Five main categories have been identified, namely, (i) the use of the modal verbs *shall* and *will*, (ii) the lexical items *proved* and its Latin counterpart *probatum*, (iii) the use of evaluative expressions, (iv) matrices, and (v) other strategies, i.e. anecdotal and narrative material.

The distribution of these resources has been shown in percentages and their frequencies of occurrence have been normalised to 10,000 words. Figures indicate that the most frequent resource used by writers for such a purpose is modality. The rest of the resources presents significantly lower frequencies of occurrence with respect to modals which are followed by the use of *proved/probatum*, evaluative expression, matrices and other strategies in this order.

The discussion of the results has been carried out by following a relevance-theoretic framework since it provides us with a unified framework for the evaluation of the illocutionary force of these utterances as promises of efficacy or as something different, i.e. a future possibility, in terms of the cognitive processes involved. This is so because RT allows for the inclusion of context, understood in a broad sense not only as the immediately preceding utterances and observable information from the physical environment, but also any assumption activated during the processing of information in the reader's cognitive environment, in a detailed manner.

In addition, the theoretical insights proposed by the stance approach to the interpersonal dimension of language have been useful at this stage of the research because they allow us to have a complete picture of ESs both formally and functionally. The importance of the

linguistic elements intervening in the formulation of ESs and having an impact on the determination of the illocutionary import of the utterances insofar as they are indicators of authorial attitudes has become apparent in the pragmatic analysis of the samples.

The linguistic choices made by the writers and their contextual interpretation allow the readers to infer authorial attitudes of commitment towards the future actualisation of the propositions, i.e. the utterances are understood as promises of efficacy, or detachment from the truth values attached to them, i.e. the utterances are understood as estimations of probability or possibility. Indications of mode of knowing are frequently employed by writers and these tend to express not only source of knowledge, but also differing degrees of reliability.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research intends to contribute to the field of Historical Speech-Act Analysis and, more specifically, to the analysis of the speech act of promising in Early English medical recipes. It has been shown that modern pragmatic theories such as SAT, RT and the stance approach to communication and text construction may be successfully applied to the analysis of historical texts, and that these theories are, in fact, efficient tools that allow us to understand in detail their pragmatics. The discussion of the examples has benefited from the relevance-theoretic approach to utterance comprehension as it provides us with a principled way to account for the contextual enrichment processes the reader follows in order to derive the illocutionary force value attached to the utterances. Additionally, the stance approach has given us a more complete picture of the pragmatics of ESs in Early English medical recipe texts.

The main objective of this study as specified in the introductory chapter to the volume was the analysis of the speech act of promising in English medical texts written between 1500-1600 following RT. Undertaking such an analysis involves several steps so that the theoretical assumptions and the methodological considerations underlying the research are clarified.

I have set the starting point for the analysis by providing a general characterisation of promises in terms of the constituents elements that can be identified in the issuing of a commissive speech act of this type. In this sense, Reinach's (1983) formal description proves to be illuminating. I have also described the original formulation of SAT as proposed by Austin (1975) and the developments carried out by Searle (1969) because they serve as the frame of reference for any study on speech acts, both synchronically and diachronically. I have then focused on the Searlean constitutive rules which have to obtain for the performance of speech acts and specified his definition of a promise as well as the

conditions which have to obtain to perform one. The Gricean inferential approach to recognition of intentions has been outlined next as a way of introducing the ostensive-inferential model of communication proposed by RT. The emphasis has been placed on the theoretical machinery necessary to understand how the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure unfolds in communicative situations. Most of the promises in the medical recipe genre come exactly in the form of expressions whose function is to attest the value of the therapies. The majority of them share one remarkable feature and that is the occurrence of a large amount of linguistic devices, mainly modal verbs, evidential items and evaluative material, all of which have an impact on the determination of the illocutionary force of ESs. This is the reason why revising the notions of modality, evidentiality and evaluation as indicators of stance was in order. Lastly, with the aim of contextualizing appropriately the analysis, several contributions in the area of Historical Speech-Act Analysis have been put forward. Works such as Arnovick (2000), Del Lungo Camiciotti (2008), Pakkala-Weckström (2008) and Valkonen (2008) actually validate the feasibility of the analysis of promissory speech acts from a historical perspective.

After that, I have described the corpus of study, i.e. CoER, by referring to the general characteristics of the compilation. Medical recipe texts have been assessed in terms of genre and text-type features. ESs in particular constitute a specific section within the overall structure of the medical recipes, so it is a must to distinguish them both formally and functionally from other sections. ESs tend to appear at the end of recipes and the modal verbs *shall* and *will* are frequently used in their formulation. However, this is just a tendency: ESs may be found somewhere else in the recipe texts and modals alone are not the only stancetaking devices that play a fundamental role in the expression of efficacy.

I have shown the results derived from both the computerised search and the micro-analysis of the texts. The results reveal that the preferred linguistic resources employed by writers in the formulation of potential promises of efficacy are the modals *shall* and *will*. I argue that this may be so because these modals are intrinsically related to the expression of a set of meanings that are typically associated with promissory speech acts, at least in the Searlean sense described in this study. These meanings include (i) the predication of a future action, (ii) the expression of an intention, and (iii) and the undertaking of a commitment. I have shown that in the instances where these modals are used the future orientation of the action being referred to is clear since, in the context of medical literature, a future time reference is presupposed. However, the occurrence of stance elements, mainly epistemic, crucially determine the way the comprehension process proceeds. These elements allow the reader to

infer differing degrees of speaker commitment towards propositional information and so modals may be interpreted deontically or epistemically depending on the surrounding co-text. In general, the less modalised an ES, the more likely it is to be interpreted as a promise of efficacy as the occurrence of stance markers undermine the commissive illocutionary force by arising doubts in the reader as for the actualisation of the propositions involved.

The lexical items *proved* and *probatum* as well as any of their variant forms are the second linguistic resource used by writers in the marking of potential promises of efficacy. The encyclopaedic entries of these items suggest experimental testing and so, in principle, they may be taken as assertions of the value of the remedies on the basis of the author's or some authority's previous testing of the medical product. Their occurrence with other epistemic and/or evidential elements tend to carry implications for the degrees of reliability attached to the information conveyed. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the seemingly evidential value attached to these items does not appear to be so in the light of the scholastic commentary style still present in recipe texts at that time.

In relation to those passages where writers provide a positive evaluation of the remedies in the form of axiological evaluative adjectives such as *good*, *profitable* and *holesome*, or lexical verbs such as *cureth* and *healeth*, their commissive illocutionary force is dependent on their encyclopaedic entries. The use of the axiological evaluative adjective *good* does not make manifest the fact that the medicine will provide complete health restoration, but rather some degree of recovery, in which case there is no implied promise of efficacy. On the contrary, the encyclopaedic entries of the evaluative adjectives *profitable* and *holesome*, and the lexical verbs *cureth* and *healeth*, make manifest that the medicine will provide complete health restoration, rendering the passages as actual promises of efficacy.

Matrices and anecdotal and narrative material stand as the least frequent resources used by writers to codify apparent promises of efficacy. Matrices tend to have evidential verbs indicating both the author's source of information and its degree of reliability. Many elements such as the use of the passive voice, epistemic stance adverbs and hedges, tend to undermine the commissive illocutionary force of the utterances which, as a result, are interpreted as estimations of possibility rather than as promises of efficacy. Anecdotal and narrative material cannot be taken as promises of efficacy in the strictest sense because they normally involve predications about past rather than future events. Nevertheless, these passages obviously play a role in the rhetorical organisation of the recipes since they stand as evidence of the value of the remedies, contributing to persuading readers to use them.

This research has shown that the traditional consideration of ESs as promises of efficacy cannot be maintained, at least in the Searlean sense. The occurrence of stance elements such as modal verbs, epistemic stance adverbs, evaluative adjectives and adverbs, and evidential lexical verbs certainly shape their interpretation as actual promises of efficacy or as mere estimations of probability and/or possibility as for the actualisation of the recovery of the patient. These elements constrain the development of the comprehension process as well as the derivation of the illocutionary force of the utterances in fairly specific ways. It has been shown that, in the search for more cognitive effects, readers may be led to infer various degrees of speaker commitment and different levels of reliability of information on the basis of the lexico-grammatical choices made by the writers and the context against which a given ES is interpreted. Then, these stance elements may be taken as speech act modifiers, rendering many of these expressions only as apparent rather than actual promises of efficacy.

Future research may focus on the formal variation in the formulation of promises of efficacy as well as on its pragmatic implications from a diachronic perspective so as to trace to what extent this variation is subject to the advancement of knowledge in medicine. This may be also looked into in relation to the academic and the remedybook traditions of writing where recipe texts were included. The mediation of medical knowledge through texts belonging to these two traditions is certainly shaped by both their writers and the target audience. Consequently, it would be relevant to account for historical variation in the elements intervening in the formulation of promises of efficacy in relation to both the producers of the texts, i.e. experts, and their recipients, i.e. experts and lay people. The manifestation of stance as formalised in linguistic units may also diachronically account for specific changes in language. That is the case of modal verbs, whose meanings have changed over time to accommodate the expression of authorial viewpoint. These are, among others, possible paths for future research concerning ESs.

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