
Multilingualism in Medieval Medical Receptaria: A Case Study of Code-Switching in Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense, ms. 215.

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This communication aims to analyze the dynamics of codeswitching in a multilingual medical receptary preserved in Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense, ms. 215 in the light of the general tendencies in syntactic patterns and pragmatic functions already recognized on Middle-English medieval medical writing by Pahta and others , and by using, moreover, a text-historical perspective in order to valorize the endemic features of the genre of the medical *receptaria*.

Codex 215 is a composite manuscript that can be divided into four codicological units, denominated here for ease A, B, C and D: unit C can be dated between the fourth quarter of fifteenth and the first quarter of sixteenth century and it consists of an unpublished medical receptary on ff. 93r-156v, object of the present communication, drawn up mostly by one scribe (with the exception of two ff. and two annotations in Latin on the page margins). The major languages in the text are Catalan and Italian – to be more accurate, an italo-romance variety yet to be identified– and secondarily Latin and Castilian.

In the field of multilingualism in Middle English medieval medical texts the pioneering studies of the medievalists Linda E. Voigts and Tony Hunt traced the path successfully traveled by Taavitsainen, Carroll, Alonso Almeida and many others. Indeed, the compilation of an electronic corpus of Middle English Medical Texts (MENT) from 1375 to 1500 grossly facilitated cross-cutting researches, even if Pahta has repeatedly highlighted that ‘a full understanding of the phenomenon can only be gained through detailed micro-level analyses of individual texts as communicative exchanges reflecting the bilingual competence and performance of the writer and his projected audience’. The main purpose of this communication –following on from the invitation previously mentioned– is the identification of the types of codeswitching and the related possible functions observable between Latin

and Romance Languages in the medical receptary preserved in ms. 215, by integrating an historical and textual perspective that takes account of the new studies available on the 'medical receptaries' genre. This genre has been lately revalued, thus allowing to distinguish it from the others and to define its main features and subtypes. The medical receptary is a *compendium* of therapeutics conceived for a self-consumption and characterized, in fact, by a very frequent coexistence of Latin and Vulgar –larger in the professional medical *receptaria*– and, often, of different vernaculars, unlike the academic works and their subsequent vernacularisation. Its structure is open, able to accept subsequent interventions of different authors/scribes, and unitary, compiled and assembled in order to counterbalance the insufficient presence of university-trained healers, the increasing control exercised on healers without a university background by political authorities and the need of a domestic self-help that the Late medieval post-plague society was requiring.