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Culinary Linguistics

The chef's special

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Culinary Linguistics

The chef's special

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Für Chef

Menu

Food for thought – or, what's (in) a recipe?

A diachronic analysis of cooking instructions

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This paper focuses on the text type of cooking instructions, or *recipes*, from a chiefly diachronic point of view. After giving a brief overview on both the etymological origins and semantic developments of the notion *recipe*, we will compare two recipes with regard to formal and functional similarities and discrepancies: one Middle English recipe ("Beef y-Stywyd", MS. Harl. 279 f. 6ᵛ) by an anonymous scribe with its Modern English online counterpart ("beef and ale stew") by the British chef James 'Jamie' Oliver. Opposed to findings by e.g. Görlach (2004), particularly the functional comparison remains mostly obscure, as the medieval recipe escapes functional classification. However, remarkable text type specific parallels can be identified with regard to formal aspects, such as syntactic constructions and lexical codification.

1. Introduction

Dishes, their ingredients and their preparation, have always been a savory subject of universal relevance. Fortunately, what may be called 'food talk' is not only a common human practice but also a timeless one, preserving all sorts of descriptions, instructions and scribal images of culinary phenomena for linguists to re-boil, i.e. to analyze retrospectively. From the countless numbers of textual patterns that may be identified within the field of cooking, we have chosen the text type *recipe* as the basis for a diachronic investigation that sets out to compare two British English texts whose origins are no less than five centuries apart: one recipe from the first half of the 15th century to be found in the Harleian manuscript MS. 279 versus a contemporary online text authored by Jamie Oliver.

For the sake of comparability, we opted for two recipes that resemble each other as much as possible in terms of subject (i.e. the dish) and length. Both recipes deal with the preparation of stewed beef, which, in itself, reflects two

aspects we would like to pick out right at the outset. First of all, *beef* is not a vernacularly Germanic lexeme but a borrowing from OF *boef* (< classL *bos, bov-*). This observation already raises the question in what way the recipe – then and now – is characterized or even enhanced by the choice of a particular lexico-semantic code, and, for that matter, a particular syntax? Secondly, a brief glance at both recipes shows that it is not only the text bodies that need to be taken into account but also their mode of presentation. The appearance of a medieval recipe noted down onto parchment may rightly be called bare compared to the multimodal arrangement of today's cooking instructions as found on webpages. Accordingly, this contribution offers some answers to the following question: What are the formal and functional differences and parallels between the two recipes, which feature the same content, yet could not be more diverse from a chronological point of view?

In order to shed light on this research question as well as on related issues, the remainder of the paper combines theoretical reasoning with practical analyses. After some introductory remarks sketching the underlying terminology used in this paper, the medieval and the modern computer-mediated recipe will be juxtaposed on a formal and functional level.

2. One dish – two recipes

2.1 The history of the notion *recipe*

In a first step towards answering our research question, we need to sketch the semantics of the notion *recipe* from a diachronic point of view before exploring its conceptual delimitation as an individual text type (see 3.2). As to its etymology, the English terms *recipe* and *receipt* are not only partially synonymous when used in the context of cooking instructions, but ultimately also go back to one common Latin source term, i.e. to classL *recipere* v. 'take, receive'. The recordings published by the OED (online version June 2011) reveal that by the end of the 14th century (c1390), *receipt* had found its way into the English lexical inventory via AN *receipte* <classL *recepta* (< ppp. of *recipere* 'receive, obtain, to be given', used both as adj. or noun, which is the case here), referring, however, to the reception of money in particular. Subsequently, the frame of reference seems to have been extended to 'the act of receiving something or someone', at the same time pertaining to medical directions for composing drugs (a1398) (ibid.). The first recorded evidence of *receipt* as actually referring to what we would understand as a cooking recipe dates back to 1595: "A notable receite to make Ipocras" (*Widowes Treasure* B iv b, URL 1).

The ModE noun *recipe*, which currently seems to be the more common term with regard to cooking instructions, is, however, a much younger incorporation into the lexical inventory of the English language. While its first documented occurrence was in 1533, the reference to cooking had only developed by the first half of the 17th century. Besides *recipe*, the *OED Historical Thesaurus* (Kay 2009) also mentions two other terms referring to cooking recipes in that particular timeframe: *formula* (1706) and †*nostrum* (1742). In the course of the EmodE vocabulary soaking up lexical items from Greek and Latin, *recipe* seems to have been directly adopted (and phonologically adapted) from the Latin imperative of the verb *recipere*. As such, it addresses a second person singular in the sense of 'take!', which is of course an almost ritualized formula preceding lists of ingredients, be it in a strictly medical context initially (cf. OED online version June 2011) or beyond that later on.

The compound noun *recipe book*, referring to a printed compendium of cooking instructions, is a term occurring hardly earlier than 1803. This holds true despite the fact that it retrospectively gives a label to a concept which had doubtlessly already been established by the end of the 13th century. This can for example be seen from MSS. Add 32085 and Royal 12.C.xii (British Library), which both contain Anglo-Norman compilations of recipes (Hieatt & Jones 1986). Before the thirteenth century, however, little is known about British cooking instructions in general and in particular about their social distribution, let alone about the intentions of their compilers or the actual functions a recipe was supposed to fulfill. In order to disentangle various aspects of the recipe, we will also look into the matter of text types in the course of this paper. Drawing on Görlach (2004), it is yet to be seen whether the two specimens under investigation meet typical criteria of the text type *recipe*.

After this introductory look at the notion's history, we can now proceed to the description of the two recipes.

2.2 "Beef y-Stywyd" as in MS. Harl. 279, f. 6ᵛ

The medieval specimen of a cooking instruction for stewed beef dates between 1430 and 1440 (Austin 1888 [foreword]: vii), i.e. to the late Middle English period. We obtain this prose text recorded in MS. Harl. 279 on folio 6ᵛ, as part of all in all 153 recipes compiled under the heading "Kalendare de Potages dyuers" ('various stews', fols. 6ʳ to 26ʳ). This section is followed by two shorter ones, *viz.* "Kalendare de Leche Metys" ('[jellylike] sliced dishes', fols. 27ᵛ to 36ʳ),[1] which

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1. Although Austin edited this title as "Leche Metys" on p. 3, he printed "LECHE VYAUNDEZ" in the actual edition of the text on pp. 34ff. The makeshift translation of the

contains 64 recipes, and "Dyuerse Bake Metis" ('various pastries', fols. 37ᵛ to 43ᵛ) with just 41 cooking instructions.[2] The manuscript additionally contains bills of several courtly banquets (fols. 45ʳ to 48ᵛ), none of which, however, incorporate the rather down-to-earth dish "Beef y-Stywyd" in the menu (Austin 1888: 57–64). As the actual manuscript is not easily accessible to the general public, the only way to approach the text was as part of a compilation, *viz.* in the first of the *Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books*, edited by Thomas Austin and printed for *The Early English Text Society* (1888: 6) under the title just mentioned. As a consequence, we cannot make a point about the medial make-up of the original recipe, a fact which also constrains us somewhat in the attempt to sound out the functions of the original recipe (see 3.2).

While the Middle English recipe-text displayed in the following is entirely based on Austin's edition, the subsequent translation is our own rendition of it and both syntactically and semantically as close to the original as possible:

> **.vj. Beef y-Stywyd.**—Take fayre beef of þe rybbys of þe fore quarterys, an smyte in fayre pecys, an wasche þe beef in-to a fayre potte; þan take þe water þat þe beef was soþin yn, an strayne it þorw a straynowr, an sethe þe same water and beef in a potte, an let hem boyle to-gederys; þan take canel, clowes, maces, graynys of parise, quibibes, and oynons y-mynced, perceli, an sawge, an caste þer-to, an let hem boyle to-gederys; an þan take a lof of brede, an stepe it with brothe an venegre, an þan draw it þorw a straynoure, and let it be stylle; an whan it is nere y-now, caste þe lycour þer-to, but nowt to moche, an þan let boyle onys, an cast safroun þer-to a quantyte;[3] þan take salt an venegre, and cast þer-to, an loke þat it be poynaunt y-now, & serue forth.

> [*Recipe for*] *Stewed beef. – Take a nice fore-quarter rib piece of beef and cut* [*it*] *up into nice chunks.*[4] *Rinse the beef in a nice pot and then strain it through a sieve. Pour the same water the beef was washed in into a pot and let the beef boil in it. Then take cinnamon, cloves, mace, grains of paradise, cubebs, and minced onions, parsley, and sage, add* [*these*] *thereto and let them boil together. And then take a loaf of bread and steep it with broth and vinegar, and then draw it through a strainer, and leave it. And when it* [*the beef*] *is nearly done, add the liquid thereto, but not too*

ME phrase may seem odd, but follows the *Middle English Dictionary*, rendering *leche viaunde* (which corresponds to the frenchicized *vyaund-ez* above) as "any of a number of jellylike dishes prepared from various ingredients and usually cut into strips or slices" (URL 2).

2.　As is quite usual for ME spelling, *y* and *i* are considered interchangeable variables.

3.　For this common adverbial, the *Middle English Dictionary* suggests the translations 'in an unspecified amount; somewhat, considerably' (URL 3).

4.　As to 'a nice … piece of beef', compare NHG *ein schönes Stück (Rind-)Fleisch*, which – quite similar to its English counterpart *nice* – also conveys various ideas such as 'big', 'fresh', 'tender' etc. (but cf. 3.1).

> much [*of it*]*, and let it boil up once, and add some saffron to it. Then take salt and vinegar and add* [*it*] *thereto and see to it that it tastes spicy enough and serve* [*it*] *immediately.*

To place the Middle English recipe from MS. Harl. 279, f. 6ᵛ within its broader intertextual context, a few more words about the history of English recipes and cooking instructions in general are in order before we head on to the analysis proper. According to Hödl (1999: 52), who gives a concise overview of the inventory and origins of the historic European cookery books we currently obtain, more than 50 manuscripts have come down to us that contain English recipes. Apart from the 19th century recipe book our text is taken from, she particularly refers to the significant 14th century work *Forme of Curye* ('Manner(s) of cooking'), a compendium of over 200 recipes, many of which were included in later recipe compilations. However, no recipe of stewed beef could be found in it, which may seem surprising in light of its simplicity and commonness from today's point of view.

2.3 "Beef and ale stew" as presented by Jamie Oliver

More than 500 years later, amateur chefs can resort to a very similar recipe, "beef and ale stew", however this time presented by James "Jamie" Oliver on his webpage ⟨http://www.jamieoliver.com/⟩. Born and raised in the UK, this renowned chef and owner of several restaurants targets at raising awareness about healthy (yet simple) food worldwide. He does so by means of starring on his own cooking shows on British as well as American television, touring continents with cookery shows and authoring bestselling cookbooks. He is also the driving force behind various campaigns to improve the cooking skills of non-professionals interested in food, be it in private households or in public institutions such as schools in particular (URL 4).

Although the recipe under investigation is also accessible in print, *viz.* in Oliver's book *Jamie's Ministry of Food. Anyone Can Learn to Cook in 24 Hours* (2008), this paper focuses on its online version. On his webpage, users are offered a wide range of recipes, which are grouped into various sections such as "fish", "vegetable", "pasta" and others. When clicking on the section "beef", one of the many suggestions on how to prepare food in general and beef in particular is "beef and ale stew". The presentation of the recipe displays a tripartite structure, featuring a photograph of the dish with basic information such as the servings and, most importantly, two columns of text stating the "method" on the left hand side and listing the "ingredients" on the right hand side.

The "method" column is again subdivided into an italicized upper part (containing own experiences with the recipe) and a rectified lower part representing the actual cooking instruction. The second object of this study reads as follows (see Figure 2).
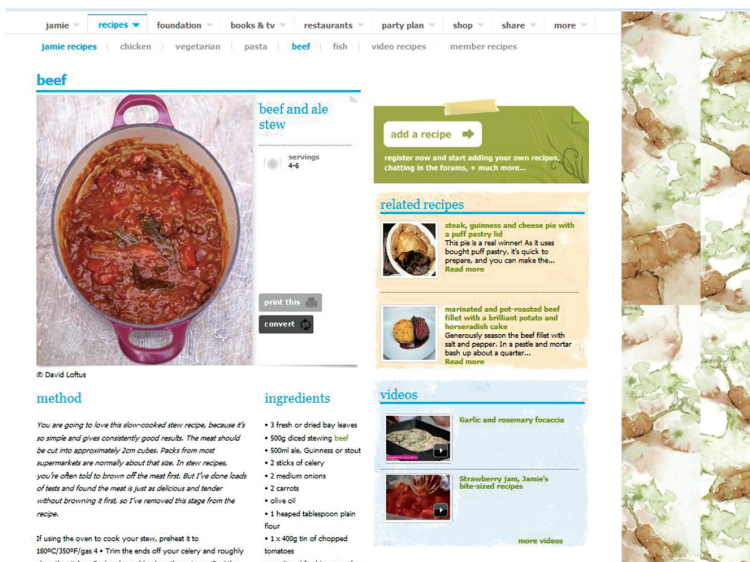
Figure 1. Screenshot of Oliver's online recipe for "beef and ale stew" as part of the arrangement on the webpage (URL 5)

method

You are going to love this slow-cooked stew recipe, because it's so simple and gives consistently good results. The meat should be cut into approximately 2cm cubes. Packs from most supermarkets are normally about that size. In stew recipes, you're often told to brown off the meat first. But I've done loads of tests and found the meat is just as delicious and tender without browning it first, so I've removed this stage from the recipe.

If using the oven to cook your stew, preheat it to 180ºC/350ºF/gas 4 • Trim the ends off your celery and roughly chop the sticks • Peel and roughly chop the onions • Peel the carrots, slice lengthways and roughly chop • Put a casserole pan on a medium heat • Put all the vegetables and the bay leaves into the pan with 2 lugs of olive oil and fry for 10 minutes • Add your meat and flour • Pour in the booze and tinned tomatoes • Give it a good stir, then season with a teaspoon of sea salt (less if using table salt) and a few grinds of pepper • Bring to the boil, put the lid on and either simmer slowly on your hob or cook in an oven for 3 hours • Remove the lid for the final half hour of simmering or cooking • When done, your meat should be tender and delicious • Remember to remove the bay leaves before serving, and taste it to see if it needs a bit more salt and pepper • You can eat your stew as it is, or you can add some lovely dumplings to it.

ingredients

• 3 fresh or dried bay leaves
• 500g diced stewing beef
• 500ml ale, Guinness or stout
• 2 sticks of celery
• 2 medium onions
• 2 carrots
• olive oil
• 1 heaped tablespoon plain flour
• 1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Figure 2. Screenshot of the central section of Oliver's online recipe for "beef and ale stew" (URL 5)

Oliver's webpage bears witness to his obsession with food, providing fans and like-minded people with all kinds of cooking related information. For that reason, actual written recipes are just one of the webpage's many components. Next to biographic information about the host, there are also sections dedicated to his foundations, books, TV shows, restaurants and discussion platforms. In fact, each and every recipe, including the one to be analyzed, is equipped with a discussion template, thus providing users with the opportunity to comment on the recipe and to share their experiences with the preparation and/or taste of the dish. In a way mirroring Oliver's philosophy that cooking is in fact much more than just preparing food, (the purpose of) the multimodal make-up of this webpage will be taken up again in later chapters.

3.   Form and function: Two perspectives on one recipe

3.1   A formal comparison

Although both recipes outline the same dish, same content does not mean same make-up. Not only that from a medial point of view both texts are passed down differently,[5] their differing states of originality also cause considerable problems, especially when it comes to "Beef y-Stywyd". Without access to the manuscript (MS Harley 279), a facsimile or pictures of the manuscript text, we lack reliable information about the composition of the original recipe. Working with an edited version of the original certainly limits the comparative potential when contrasted with Oliver's recipe. As a result, this kind of text lends itself to a predominantly language related analysis which focuses on aspects of structure, lexicon and grammar.

The first structuring feature meeting the eye in both recipes is the heading. Even on expensive parchment, little but necessary room was given to indicate briefly what dish was the outcome of the following recipe. When comparing the title "Beef y-Stywyd" to other such recipe headings, the phrasal structure is mostly identical. We have noun phrases consisting of one simple or, in rarer cases, of complex heads (e.g. "Vele, Kede, or Henne in bokenade", Austin 1888: 13, no. xxxvj.) plus at least one modification, *viz.* an adjective (in our case a past participle). Having said that "Beef y-Stywyd" is a rather down-to-earth dish, in this case we also find this congruously affirmed by the simple phrasal structure of it.

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5.   As a matter of fact, our Middle-English recipe can also be found in various online versions for common use, e.g. on ⟨www.godecookery.com⟩.

As for Oliver's recipe, the photograph of the dish comes with a rather simple heading, indicating the name of the dish, "beef and ale stew". Neglecting capitalization, which is not uncommon for computer-mediated contents, the main components of the dish are listed in the form of a noun phrase conjoint which serves as a premodification to the head *stew*. Above that, Oliver's recipe is further structured by the two headings "method" and "ingredients", again summarizing the content of the subsequent text in the most straightforward way.

When looking at Oliver's list of ingredients, the (more or less) experienced amateur chef finds what they expect to be there: numerals for exact measurement and modifying adjectives explaining texture or form of the ingredients. As common as we might expect such information to be today, there is no such list of ingredients to be found with our Middle-English recipe.[6] This first fundamental, even unexpected difference between these two texts might, at least from today's perspective, be explained by a slightly differing medieval understanding of cooking. When looking at medieval recipes, cooking back then rather seems to have been a question of trial and error. The cook needed to handle the ingredients with care, always on guard not to overdo things. Another explanation could be seen in the fact that most people in former times learned how to cook (the basics at least) from their childhood on, because the preparation of food was an urgent means to survive, and therefore might have had a more fundamental understanding of the course of events and necessities of cooking.

If we move on to the column on the left, the first paragraph provides the reader with some inside knowledge about Oliver's experiences with the recipe and his personal modifications thereof, phrased in a simple, straightforward syntax, which consists mostly of SVO-constructions, occasionally accompanied by an adverbial. For regular cookery books, i.e. those that have not been authored by a prominent figure, such an introductory part is rather uncommon. This *personalized preface* to Oliver's recipe could be interpreted as a remnant of one of his TV shows, where the viewer is presented with a lot of insights into his personal backdrop and opinions. The same conclusion can be drawn by looking at personal pronouns such as "you", when addressing his fellow cooks, and "I", when referring to himself.

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6. On ⟨http://www.medievalcookery.com/recipes/beefystewed.html⟩, we find one example of the attempt of rendering our medieval recipe imitable in terms of exact measurements and quantities of ingredients.

Having used notions such as *personal* and *personalized*, we should address the vital aspect of authorship first, before returning to our formal analysis. Although we considered the first part of Oliver's online recipe to be a personalized preface, we must bear in mind that it is certainly not Jamie Oliver himself who typewrote this recipe, let alone embedded it into 'his' website. We could even go as far as doubting the authenticity of said 'personalized' preface. For that reason, we can only guess as to what extent recipes presented on this website (and in his cookbooks, for that matter) are really a product of Oliver's own creativity or experience. To detail the various roles involved in the process of producing language, part of Goffman's (1981: 145–146) model concerning the production format can be applied:

1. animator: the sounding box
2. author: the agent who scripts lines
3. principal: the party whose position is expressed

Although Oliver can be seen as the *principal* of the online recipe, i.e. the one who instigates the original idea and triggers the process of text production, it is doubtful whether he is also the *author* and, even more unlikely, the *animator* of the recipe, i.e. the one who delivers the contribution to the (intended) recipients. Considering the mere size of the "brand" Jamie Oliver and its related lines of business worldwide, it is quite safe to assume that there are certainly people who act as authors for "Oliver's" recipes, with Jamie Oliver as a person simply giving his name and smile. Last but not least, the role of the animator is also taken out of Oliver's hands and transferred to his webpage, which spreads the word all day long and independent of Oliver's presence.

As a matter of fact, division of labor is a common practice in mass media and productive steps and roles are realized by different people at different times. This holds true for highly interactive forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC), of course, but also for printed encyclopedias, travel guides or, indeed, cook books. They allow for a moderate degree of interactivity in that they display a considerable wealth of inserts and self-contained texts, references and cross-references, images, drawings, graphics and other iconic snippets, which anticipate key features of CMC such as multi- or nonlinearity, multimodality and fragmentarization. As just pointed out, the monolithic character of a cook book's participant concept is blurred on the producing side, where we encounter textual and iconic fragments of information that are frequently authored, arranged, designed and co-authored, co-arranged, co-designed by an indistinct number of human agents rather than by one identifiable individual author. The reason that the degree of interactivity in the CMC format, which we investigate for Oliver's recipe, is much higher has, of course, to do with the receiving side. The users'

range of options is much wider and actions, accordingly, unpredictable in as far as they are free to choose among a multitude of meaningful reading-paths, not only by glancing at various textual and iconic fragments on screen but mainly by activating hyperlinks (cf. below).

In the Middle English recipe, on the other hand, the medieval creator and/ or the 'scribe' takes a backseat and remains anonymous, as many medieval manuscripts and texts do. By introducing these two notions *creator* and *scribe(s)*, we have already implied the split roles in the process of any medieval text being recorded in written form. More often than not do we obtain medieval texts preserved as copies (no autographs or manuscripts authorized by a text's creator, so to say), which were produced by at least one scribe, generally not even a contemporary of what Goffman would call the *author* of a text. This notion, however, must not be confused with the everyday term *author*, which generally refers to the producer of a text who is responsible for its form and contents, rightfully claiming them as his own intellectual property. With reference to any kind of medieval text creator, the latter understanding of the term *author* would thus be highly anachronistic, which is why we will use the term *author* only according to Goffman's definition in the following analysis. For one thing, the passing on of knowledge extant both in oral and written form used to be in much greater demand during the Middle Ages than did the creation and publication of *new* ideas for food. For that reason, we must presume that every medieval text passed on till today is a mere reflection of a pre-existent idea. One could imagine a medieval text as a necklace made of pearls lined up on a string. The pearls represent parts of texts (oral or written), some of them are old and therefore already existing in a person's cultural memory, some of them are new and are an invention for the creation of a new work. Not only that creators of texts line up chosen items on the string, but also the order in which they do so, makes them create independent texts, from which educated readers are able to deduct inter-textual information. Thus follows the second deduction, namely the fact that the author of a text would not have considered him- or herself more important than the contents compiled or copied, which is why we hardly ever find text editors having left any fingerprint but their handwriting. Anonymity in combination with the lack of graspable facts about the author is more than usual for medieval texts. Consequently, Goffman's model of production roles is hardly applicable, as it is impossible to identify any of these for our Middle English text.

Coming back to our formal analysis, Oliver's recipe stands out for the bullet points, which separate distinct steps in the process of preparing the dish. There is actually no punctuation, except for a few commas between them. Cooking instructions are phrased in the imperative – something that has not changed since the Middle Ages. As a matter of fact, 21 of the 28 verb forms in our medieval recipe are phrased as imperatives. Additionally, we encounter verb phrases

featuring modal auxiliaries + infinitive constructions ("the meat should be cut", see Figure 2), at times adorned with a personal pronoun "you" and its possessive form "your" ("you can eat your stew", see Figure 2), in sentences reflecting the work progress or chiefly presenting additional assistance.

Before we turn to some aspects concerning the lexical choices in both the ME and the ModE texts, a curious syntactic finding pointed out by Culy (1996) before shall briefly be included here. In comparing ME recipes from the 14th and 15th centuries with modern ones, Culy observed a remarkable rise in frequency of elliptical direct objects in recipes, or, according to his terminology, *zero anaphors*. Transferring this observation to the two recipe texts in our investigation, we discern a somewhat different picture. While Oliver's text does, indeed, contain a fair number of zero-anaphors typical for modern recipes, eight, to be precise (following 'slice', 'chop', 'fry', 'season', 'bring', 'simmer', 'cook', 'serving'), we unexpectedly also find five instances in the ME text. This is a boiled-down display of the five relevant passages, which come indicated in bold script:

> […] Take fayre beef of þe rybbys of þe fore quarterys, an smyte [**the beef**] in fayre pecys, […] þan take canel, clowes, […] an caste [**these ingredients**] þer-to, […] an þan let [**it all**] boyle onys, […] þan take salt an venegre, and cast [**these**] þer-to, an loke þat it be poynaunt y-now, & serue [**it**] forth.

Given the fact that Oliver's text is considerably longer than the ME text (188 vs 146 words), we can rightly aver that they more or less display the same ratio of zero anaphors. Thus, at least with respect to our ME recipe, Culy's assumption cannot be confirmed.

Turning to the lexical make-up of our "Beef y-Stywyd" recipe, we find that the first two lines exhibit a word that is repeatedly used in this text: "fayre" ("fayre beef", "fayre pecys", "fayre potte"), the Modern English equivalent of which appears to be, at least in this particular context, *fair* in the sense of *nice* (see translation of the ME text above and FN 4). Nowadays, this is an unusual lexical choice in cookery books. As "fayre" is used in phrases of differing heads, it is questionable what the reader is supposed to understand by it. Fortunately, we can draw on some readings listed in the *Middle English Dictionary* for clarification (URL 6):

1.   Pleasing to the sight (…) (c) of animals and their parts.
3.   (…) odour: agreeable to the senses; pleasing (…).
9.   (…) suitable, appropriate, (…) desirable.
12. (a) Highly to be approved of; splendid, excellent; fine, good[.]
14. (a) Physically clean (…)[.]
15. Above average; considerable, sizable (…)[.]

Although the dictionary suggests even more meanings, this selection only mirrors the most likely candidates for the various possible interpretations of the lexeme

fayre, with the third meaning most likely leading the way. Still, the appropriate interpretation is left, as ever so often, to the reader.

Another recurring lexeme, "(and) then", serves as a connector within the recipe's syntactic structure and is used for asyndetic listings of distinct steps in the working progress. Then again the coordinating conjunction "and" ties together main clauses inside those steps, thereby compensating for the lack of punctuation, which is typical for medieval manuscripts. Note that Austin's edition of our recipe is an adaptation to modern reading conventionalities. The simplicity and straightforwardness displayed in both the ME and the ModE recipe is certainly common, even desirable in this sort of instruction. A different picture presents itself when it comes to the accuracy of this text. Beside the fact that there is no list of ingredients, our Middle English recipe tells us about the How, but nothing about the How Much and How Long. With the exception of "fore-quarter rib piece of beef" at the beginning, quantities do not seem to matter at all to the Middle English text. As already mentioned before, it appears to be all about a rule of thumb estimate then. In addition it is rather curious to write down the recipe in the first place, when a considerable amount of previous knowledge is expected from the reader anyway. It is thoughts like these that beg the question about the function of this recipe, which will be dealt with in some detail in Section 3.2.

With a view to the frequency of the parts-of-speech used in the two recipes, it is also worth mentioning that recipes, both then and now, make salient use of verbs and nouns. When looking at Oliver's recipe, these two word classes constitute 38.5% of all words used in the entire text, thus indicating their lexical primacy in this particular recipe. In comparing these findings to the text-internal distribution of diverse word classes of the ME text, it is interesting to see that the percentage covered by verbs and nouns in the second text remarkably equals the one just gathered from Oliver's recipe, 38.7% to be exact.

Let us focus on the two most prominent verbs in the texts respectively, i.e. on the recipes' usages of *add* (2x Oliver, 0x ME) and *take* (0x Oliver, 5x ME). The origin and first documented occurrence of the verbs may serve as a useful hint. While *take* is of North Germanic origin (> late OE *tacan*), *add* stems from L *addere* and is first mentioned in the English language at the end of the 14th century. Assuming that recipes shoulder an oral tradition of considerable duration, it is not surprising that the comparatively modern word *add* did not have the chance to find its way into our Middle English recipe. After all, ME *adden* was only introduced towards the end of the 14th century. Instead, ME *casten* (< ModE *to cast*) is used 4 times in this sense. Given that *take* equals the German "nehmen" (as in the formula *man nehme*, which is a typical feature in the recipe-code), its usage sounds fairly familiar to us, despite the fact that it is semantically imprecise. *Add* is the more

accurate expression: *take* does not generally mean "put in(to)" whereas *add* is "join sth. to sth." (URL 7).

With respect to formulaic expressions in the text type *recipe*, which have so far only been dealt with marginally, we find one particular recurring pattern of text in the ME text, which deserves to be mentioned here. We may just call it the 'take and *-formula', whereby the asterisk *represents another verb inserted. This formulaic sequence occurs 5 times in total, basically following each of the 5 occurrences of the verb *take* in the text, and seems to internally structure the text by sectioning the sequential steps of description. Considering that the manuscript version does not contain any punctuation, the strategic positioning of *take* before the actual verb of action may have served as a structuring device.

Casting a closer look at the ingredients of "Beef y-Stywyd", we find that all of them are, etymologically speaking, of French origin and must have been rather exclusive in Middle English times: among them "canel" ('white cinnamon') and "graynys of parise" ('grains of paradise', i.e. peppery seeds) and "quibibes" ('cubeb'). If indigenous Middle English expressions for these rather exotic spices had existed, it is astonishing that they were not used in the Middle English recipe. Coming across French names for certain spices is not very surprising as the French, being part of the ruling class over England for centuries, certainly had access to the most exquisite spices all over England. Today, these ingredients certainly belong to a well-equipped kitchen. Looking back to the Middle Ages, one can only wonder who would have been able to afford such exquisite culinary pleasures in the first place.

3.2 A functional comparison

In his essay *Text-types and language history: the cookery recipe*, Görlach presents a quite clear-cut outline of a recipe's features, when he describes it as

> a category […]that is well-defined as far as function is concerned – the instruction on however to prepare a meal; […]whose basic function has not changed over the centuries – how much ingredients, utensils and the people involved in the process may have changed.   (Görlach 1992: 745)

When comparing the textual forms of the two recipes represented here, we need to bear in mind, that there are at least 600 years separating them; and as time did not pass the recipes' formal aspects without leaving its marks, it also left its imprints on the functional ones, as will be pointed out in the course of this chapter.

One question needs to be kept in mind whenever a medieval text is approached: When and why did who write the text (i.e. the recipe) and for whom? And it will serve us as a guide through our functional analysis of the medieval recipe.

When? MS Harley 279 is dated around the years 1430 and 1440 (Austin 1888: foreword). The Middle English recipe discussed in this essay might, however, certainly be older. Before the creation of manuscripts, collectors had to gather bits and pieces (recipes in the case of MS Harley 279), which were only later on compiled and formed into a manuscript. Sometimes rather loose bundles (i.e. quires) of leaves that had already been written on were packed and bound together. In other cases the collected materials needed to be ordered and then copied into an empty manuscript.

Why? "Recipes tend to be collected in books devoted to the purpose of cooking, or household management" (Görlach 1992: 750). This statement perfectly applies to MS Harley 279. Yet, if we assume that most recipes (as other texts as well) were transported orally in former times, the reason for their record needs to be inquired, especially with respect to the still relatively high costs of a medieval parchment manuscript, even if it was intended for daily usage (*Gebrauchshandschrift*). It could be argued that recipes were regarded as transporting cultural identity and were consequently written down to fix it for coming generations. Another possibility might be that the recipe somehow served as a cooking aid, when there was no experienced cook at hand. Of course, the lack of quantifications of ingredients seems to be problematic at first, but we can assume that basic knowledge about the preparation of food can be taken for granted in medieval times, because it was existentially needed to survive. The aforementioned idea of a cooking aid leads us to another reason for manuscripts containing recipes. With a rising number of manuscripts, which circulated in society, more and more people found out about their benefits, such as serving as a reminder and collector of memories or new (exotic) recipes.

Who? This is presumably the trickiest part when it comes to medieval texts, because *who* could stand for different referents: the author and the scribe (cf. 3.1 above). It proves to be almost impossible to trace the primal author of a recipe and find out how (medially) he or she passed it on. All we know is that the recipe has found its way into MS Harley 279 and this alone was the work of the scribe. We cannot say if his master copy was written on scrap paper, on a fly leaf belonging to a greater but loose collection, in another manuscript (containing recipes), or if it was passed on to him orally.

For whom? The addressee of a recipe then was, and still is today, the cook. As already mentioned, most of the recipes were formerly transported orally, not only because manuscripts were costly, but also because many people were illiterate in the Middle Ages. Consequently, it has to be asked who, after all, was able to read those recipe manuscripts; and who, with regard to the exquisiteness of some of the ingredients, was able to afford such dishes. Here it needs to be considered that the

people cooking and the beneficiaries cannot generally be expected to be identical. First of all, we have to narrow down the possible field of recipients to households which could indulge themselves to such culinary pleasures, *viz.* clerical or courtly households. Most of the nuns and monks in the Middle Ages were trained to read and/or write and therefore should have been able to follow those cooking instructions. Still, the rather exclusive choice of food seems a bit unbefitting. This brings us to the courtly households, i.e. homes of the socially higher-ranked. Some of them might have been off well enough to appoint specially trained kitchen staff. Their reading (and writing) skills, however, remain obscure. However, it could be possible that some of them had acquired at least some basic education at school or somewhere else. Another option for illiterate kitchen staff might have been a person reading the course of events described in the recipe out loud to them. In other households of higher social status, maybe the housewife herself took care of the kitchen and the preparation of the food. She more likely might have enjoyed some kind of education and hence could have been a potential addressee for a manuscript containing recipes.

Documentation and organization of facts as well as instructing interested amateur cooks are certainly regarded as the most central functions of recipes nowadays. Moreover, today's addressees are male and female cooks, young and old, from various parts of the world. This is especially obvious on Oliver's webpage, which 'translates' its content into British, American and Australian English as well as Dutch. But there is more to Oliver's website than just cooking instructions.

Oliver's site promotes the idea of cooking as joint venture, because everybody is invited to add their own ideas via blogs or live chat, to participate in polls or to make use of various services (e.g. dating). An interactive community is busy exchanging recipes, ideas for improvements or simple chitchat. The idea is equally simple: cooking brings people together, not only around the table (as also a few hundred years back) but also around the hearth. Cooking constitutes a community, which transports a certain feeling of coziness and ease. This is what many people are looking for today. It is no more about prevention of starvation. It is basically all about well-being, food-awareness, and having a good time.

All of this is communicated on Oliver's website, which makes users feel at home instantly. The website neatly combines textual and visual elements such as photos of dishes and cook books, embedded videos as well as links to social network sites, newsfeeds and related businesses (e.g. to Oliver's catering party service "Jamie at home" and his restaurants), to name but a few. It is thus a platform not only for information but also entertainment: *info*-tainment, so to say. *Info* in this context not only comprises food, cooking and recipes themselves, but also, and potentially a lot more, facts about this website's omnipresent host

Jamie Oliver, who is perceivable in each and every detail of this page, not only in the autobiographic section. The recipes are thus reduced to a mere means to an end, which is presenting the host in a proper light. He, certainly supported and guided by his public relations specialists, uses this site for self-promotion and merchandising purposes in a very obvious way, aspects of cooking supposedly nobody would have thought of in medieval times.

To conclude this paragraph, a word about *remediation* (Bolter & Grusin 2001) is in order. This term labels a process of refashioning that can be witnessed all over the WWW. To be more precise, it means that web designers draw on and thus emulate traditional medial formats of representation to the effect that online replica of postcards, leaflets and clipboards, even entire bulletin boards to name but a few, are reused as parts of electronic contexts. Although clearly a brainchild of the 21st century, Oliver's recipe section (see Figure 1) is placed on what resembles a kitchen tablecloth or wallpaper. Above that, certain components of his page appear as notepads glued to the wall with adhesive tape or dog-eared pieces of paper on a table. Part of conveying that cozy feeling to users thus also seems to include presenting them with a familiar, home-like setting.

4. Results and conclusion: Same old, same old?

In this comparative investigation of two rather diverse presentations of one and the same recipe, both texts and their surroundings have been put to the test with regard to their formal as well as functional parallels and discrepancies. The findings shall now be briefly summarized, beginning with the formal parallels and differences as displayed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Parallels and discrepancies of general formal criteria

General formal criteria	ME text	ModE text
simple syntax: (A)SVO(A)	☑	☑
(asyndetic) connector *and then* (ME *an þan*)	☑	☑
occurrences of zero-anaphors (elliptical objects)	☑	☑
sketchy punctuation	☑	☑
favored modifiers: adjective (ME: *faire*) vs. adverb (ModE: *roughly*)	☑	☑
distribution of verbs + nouns within text (approx. 40%)	☑	☑
2nd person addressee (ME: implicit vs. ModE: explicit)	☑	☑
personalized preface (I > you)	☐	☑

Table 2. Parallels and discrepancies of structuring devices

Structuring devices	ME text	ModE text
heading	☑	☑
introductory part	☐	☑
list of ingredients	☐	☑
measurements (*viz.* numerals) for the exact preparation of the dish	☐	☑
formulaic cooking expressions	☑	☐
further sectioning devices for better overview (i.e. bullet points)	☐	☑

The findings revealed by Tables 1 and 2 show that particularly on a formal level, there are striking parallels, which seem to have outlasted more than half a millennium, thus gaining genre-spanning acceptance. On a syntactic level, we likewise find remarkable parallels, *viz.* the structure of the tendentially simple sentences, which are neither in the ME text, nor in the ModE one sectioned by conventional punctuation. The same ratio of zero anaphors occurring in both texts is another striking observance. What is more, both texts come with a heading as a structuring device. Although this may not be a text-type-specific feature of the recipe, the imperative addressing of the extra-textual 2nd person certainly is. This is where the parallels end. Only the modern recipe displays an additional number of structural features (cf. Table 2), among them a list of ingredients with concise indications as to quantities and time of cooking, which reflect the aim of this text far better than the ME one does.

In order to pay appropriate reference to the first of the two questions posed at the beginning of this paper, regarding a particular lexico-semantic code in the text type recipe, insights are twofold: On the one hand, we have to assume a certain amount of idiosyncratical flavor for each of the two texts, which is certainly higher in Oliver's semi-personal framing of the recipe than in the anonymous medieval text. Some formulae, on the other hand, seem to be timeless, such as ME "serue forth" and ModE "serve immediately." The fact that both recipes contain a variety of lexical items belonging to one particular semantic field may be taken for granted and is also reflected by our two examples, verbs such as ModE *trim*, *peel*, *chop* and ME *smyten*, *myncen* etc. do confirm this. A lexical peculiarity of the Middle English text, which is not paralleled in Oliver's display of the recipe, is the high number of French borrowings (e.g. "venegre", "poynaunt"). This discrepancy is due to Oliver apparently preferring Germanic vocabulary in general, but is particularly owed to the fact that he simply suggests other ingredients than those contained in the medieval recipe, which renders a direct comparison of foreign words somewhat pointless.

While the formal comparison reveals some very fruitful findings, which are also fit for being neatly inserted and displayed in tables, weighing up the functional aspects is all the more difficult. Even if we take for granted the basic but debatable function of a recipe, namely to get readers to imitate the instructions given therein, we still cannot say anything else about intentions and effects of the medieval recipe and thus cannot conclude whether its "basic function has remained stable over the centuries", as Görlach (2004: 123) believes. Then again, the functions of the ModE text may be assumed as being quite conspicuous, the formal features of the recipe even enhance the functional aims of this text. Through user-friendly structuring, which renders clear and comprehensible the concisely presented contents, and the personal tone of the text, readers find themselves encouraged and in the mood for cooking and may therefore generally assign a positive attitude to it – and associate this with Jamie Oliver.

Even if the date of the creation of these two recipes is centuries apart, the fact that *both* these texts are equally accessible freely and for free on the Internet by now (see URL 8) broadens the pool of readers, thus giving both, and particularly the medieval text and the dish it stands for, a platform to be passed on even further.

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