The Language of Criseyde in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (Ⅲ)

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0. Introduction

Recently, studies of regional dialects in Middle English writings have remarkably progressed. One of the representative achievements is A.McIntosh et al., *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (1986).[1] Another is M.L.Samuels and J.J. Smith's *The Language of Chaucer and His Contemporaries* (1988), who discuss regional dialects in "a linguistic community" created by the 14th century writers and the contemporary scribes.[2]

Much attention is thus paid to regional dialects, but sociolinguistic studies of Middle English, as they apply to social dialects, have been insufficiently developed. Though we find a few outstanding researchers, such as M.Schlauch (1952),[3] V.Salmon (1975),[4] N.F.Blake (1981),[5] D.Burnley (1983),[6] and so on, the sociolinguistic approach to Middle English has not been done more than that to Modern English or Present-day English. We still have to wait for a further study of women's speech in the language of characters in Chaucer's English.

In this paper,[7] we will deal with the language of Criseyde in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, examining mainly her vocabulary and syntax. And, by comparing them with those of Troilus and Pandarus, we will concentrate on the characteristics of women's language in the 14th century upper class society, few though they may be. In this study, we have used the detabased text of *Troilus and Criseyde*.[8] We have then investigated the real state of Criseyde's language, using the statistic data analysis by the personal computer. Table (1) charts the number of lines and words in every Book and the number of words used by the characters in each.

Table (1) Summary Table of Word Counts

		Book I	Book II	Book III	Book IV	Book V	total
lines		1092	1757	1820	1701	1869	8239
words		8667	14237	14533	13390	14763	65590
**	T	1581	338	2452	3601	3396	11368
	C	6	2228	2031	3292	1429	8986
	TC	0	0	12	0	0	12
	P	2814	5444	2926	1784	1283	14251
	N	4179	4887	7112	4109	7132	27419

**the number of words spoken by the characters in *Troilus and Criseyde*

(T: Troilus, C: Criseyde, TC: Troilus & Criseyde, P: Pandarus, N: Narrator)

First of all, let us examine some general characteristics of women's speech in *Troilus and Criseyde*. When we read the scene of the Criseyde-Antenor hostage exchange determined between Troy and Greece in Book IV, we encounter Criseyde's women friends, who belong to the higher class those days. Their language might reflect the contemporary Middle English women's speech.

> Quod first that oon, "I am glad, *trewely*,
> Bycause of yow, that shal youre fader see."
> Another seyde, "*Ywis*, so nam nat I,
> For al to litel hath she with us be."
> Quod tho the thridde, "I hope, *ywis*, that she
> Shal bryngen us the pees on every syde,
> That, whan she goth, almyghty God hire gide!"
> Tho wordes and tho *wommanysshe* thynges,
> She herde hem right as though she thennes were; (4.687-95)

The women's speeches in this passage, the Narrator explains as "wommanysshe" (the *OED*'s earliest citation: "2. Characteristic of or proper to a woman or women; womanly, feminine."), and may show femininity. They commonly use the intensive adverbs such as "trewely" and "ywis," they ask for boons from God, such as "almyghty God hire gide" (which leads to the expression of swearings), they use short or abridged sentences in succession, and so on.

We also see an aspect of women's colloquial language, when Antigone speaks her lovable words after she sang the lovely sonnet.

> "madame, *ywys*, the *goodlieste* mayde
> Of *gret estat* in *al* the town of Troy,
> And let hire lif in moste *honour and joye*." (2.880-82)

The characteristics of women's language are shown in the intensive adverb "ywys," the self-conscious expressions such as "gret estat," and "moste honour," the adjective "al," and the superlative adjectives such as "goodlieste" and "moste."

These characteristics of women's speech will be also reflected in the language of Criseyde. In this paper, we would like to investigate her speech, based on Jennifer Coates' classification,[9] often consulting Robin Lakoff.[10] The sections considered here are as follows: (1) Vocabulary, (2) Swearing and taboo langauge, (3) Grammar, (4) Literacy, (5) Pronunciation

and (6) Verbosity. In the present paper, we will deal with the following sections: (3) Grammar, (4) Literacy, (5) Pronunciation, and (6) Verbosity.

1. Grammar

Now we would like to consider the grammatical differences between men and women. In the first half of this chapter, we will deal with some grammatical items; in the second half some problems of grammatical constructions.

1.1. Ellipsis, repetition, interrogative sentences, etc.

According to Coates, it seems that men spoke a more formal language than women, because in the past men more easily received their education than women.[1] However, Criseyde seems to have received a fair education, judging from her courtly speech, which nevertheless has some loose constructions, as Taylor indicates.[2] In this section, we will see the examples of ellipsis, repetition, and interrogative sentences.

1.1.1. Ellipsis

Criseyde sometimes cuts short and leaves out the sentences. Some of the instances are as follows:

> What! Bet than swyche fyve? I! Nay, ywys!(2.128)
> I not nat what ye meene." (2.133)
> "And whi so, uncle myn? Whi so? (2.136)
> "Which hous?" (2.1189)
> "I ? no," (2.1470)
> "Horaste! Allas, and falsen Troilus? (3.806)
> O, mercy, God! Lo, which a dede! (4.1231)

1.1.2. Repetition

Sometimes Criseyde uses the words and phrases repeatedly. Some of the instances are as follows:

> "And whi so, uncle myn? Whi so? (2.136)
> But harm ydoon is doon, whoso it rewe: (2.789)
> Do wey, do wey, (2.893)
> Welcome, my knyght, my pees, my suffisaunce!"(3.1309)

1.1.3. Interrogative sentences

Criseyde often uses interrogative sentences. This may mean that she always consults with others for their judgement, and is obedient to them. Though it is a quite feminine style of expression, in Book IV, we find that she persuades Troilus of her honesty, pledging herself to come back to Troilus without fail. When she makes up her mind to do, however, she is not obedient at all. Some of her interrogative sentences are as follows:

> Sey ye me nevere er now? What sey ye, no? (2.277)
> "Now em," quod she, "what wolde ye devise?
> What is youre reed I sholde don of this?" (2.388-89)
> Ye seyn, ye nothyng elles me requere?" (2.473)
> "Why, no, parde; what nedeth moore speche? (2.497)
> "Kan he wel speke of love?" (2.503)
> "Who yaf me drynke?" (2.651)
> "It reyneth; lo, how sholde I gon?" (3.562)
> "What, which wey be ye comen, benedicite?" (3.757)

> Why doth my deere herte thus, allas?" (3.843)
>
> And ye therwith shal stynte al his disese? (3.884)

1.2. Parataxis or hypotaxis

Traditionally speaking, the grammatical distinction between parataxis and hypotaxis is made the best use of as the criteria of the language difference between the men and women. According to Coates, both written language and men's speech are likely to take the structure of hypotaxis, while both spoken language and women's speech tend to take that of parataxis.[2] It seems that we find more sentences involving coordinate clauses than sentences involving subordinate clauses.

The following tables (2) to (6) show the frequency of "and" and "but" as the representatives of coordinate sentences and that of "if" and "which" as those of subordinate sentences. Since these words, except "if," play an important part of the narrative parts in this work, it is as a matter of fact that the Narrator uses these conjunctions most often. Some will omit the Narrator's use of them in these tables. It is a regret, however, that, when comparing Criseyde's use of these conjunctions with that of the other characters, we do not have a striking difference between them. But we find the conjunctions "and" and "or" in Criseyde's speech used in Books II, III, and IV more than in the other characters', while we notice that Troilus uses "which" more than Criseyde does. We understand, little as it may be, the relationship between the structure of parataxis and hypotaxis and the language differences in sex. We especially find a striking difference between Troilus and Criseyde in their longest speeches. Troilus uses the conjunction "and" 19 times in his speech: Book IV 958-1078 (122 lines), while Criseyde does 45 times in her speech: Book IV 1254-1414 (161 lines). In order to build up this kind of her longer speech, she seems to need this conjunction "and."

1.2.1. Parataxis

1.2.1.1. "and"

Table (2)

	I	II	III	IV	V	total
T	48	6	85	110	97	346
C	0	62	75	123	52	312
P	117	204	96	75	51	543
total	165	272	256	308	200	1201

1.2.1.2. "or"

Table (3)

	I	II	III	IV	V	total
T	8	3	14	16	13	54
C	0	13	13	22	5	53
P	17	27	8	13	8	73
total	25	43	35	51	26	180

Here we include not only the paratactic constructions of sentences but also those of words and phrases.

1.2.1.3. "but"

Table (4)

	I	II	III	IV	V	total
T	24	2	14	43	25	108
C	0	14	16	30	20	80
P	25	53	26	14	6	124
total	49	69	56	87	51	312

Here we include the word "but" meaning "unless," because we have collected the examples mechanically, using the personal computer. So we do not lemmatize the words in this table.

1.2.2. Hypotaxis

1.2.2.1. "if"

Table (5)

	I	II	III	IV	V	total
T	14	1	16	24	14	69
C	0	8	12	25	5	50
P	16	35	15	11	9	86
total	30	44	43	60	28	205

1.2.2.2. "which(e)"

Table (6)

	I	II	III	IV	V	total
T	10	0	12	14	25	61
C	0	7	7	17	5	36
P	2	17	6	6	6	37
total	12	24	25	37	36	134

2. Literacy

Educated women in Middle English period would have likely acquired French, to say nothing of Latin and Greek, in order to become a representative woman of the upper class. While it is as a matter of course that men possess these languages, it may nevertheless have been limited to an upper class lady such as Criseyde who is able to learn and use them. As Taylor indicates, Criseyde sometimes uses academic and fashionable words such as the derived words from Latin;[04] i.e., the "goodly" words when we cite Chaucer's language. This fact may show Criseyde's wide knowledge of learning and her careful usage concerning the contemporary

fashion.

Now we would like to enumerate the words which Criseyde uses only once in this work. We will exclude the words which have the variants in spelling or have the derivatives used in this work. We nevertheless regard the verbal nouns and the adjectival use of past participles as the independent words. The asterisk * shows that the word is cited in the *OED*.

abstience, amphibologies *, angwissous *, bacward *, bille, bisshop, bridlede, brotel, busshel *, byword, byquethe, carie, causyng, cave, chartres, chekmat *, chep, cherisynge, childissh *, conceyved, constellecioun *, continuance *, cors, court, covenable, coveyteth, coye *, crowned, debat, depeynted *, deprive *, devoir, dissveraunce *, dissmulyng *, doubleth, dowves, dronkenesse, drynkeles *, enchaunten *, entrecomunen *, excusabl, fawny *, ferventliche *, floureth, forlong, fox, future *, gentily, gnat, greyn, grucche, habundaunce handle harming, heleles, hemysperie *, herteles, hove *, hyve, infortuned *, injure *, janglerie *, jugement, juparten *, kynrede *, leful, lesyng, leturrie *, likkere, justinesse *, maisterfull *, maistresse *, marcial *, me-ward, mencioun, misericode, mocioun *, morter *, murble, mysbyleved *, nobleye, noriture *, nymphe, office, ordal *, papir *, plukke. poeplissh *, pompe, rave *, rebounde, refut *, regioun, religious, remenant, remuable *, repentaunce *, repressed *, repressioun *, resistence *, reyneth *, rooteles *, salve, satiry, saufly, scrit *, shove *, skilfully, slyvere *, sourmounteth *, sours *, sovereignete *, spie, sorneth, spotted, stoppen, strmy *, suffrant *, thewes, threteth, torney *, transitorie *, tribulacioun *, twynnyng *, underserved *, ungiltif *, ungiltif *, unhappy, unstable, untey *, unthonk, unthrifty *, untriste *, venym, voluptuous *, wanteth, weddynge *, wether, wildernesse, wolf, worthily *, wyvere *, ypleynted

deite *, deyte; honeste, honestee; queme *, quemen.

Looking up the vocabularies of the above list, we will summarize as follows:

(1) There are many words which are quoted as the earliest citation in the *OED*: amphibology, bakward, busshel, continuance, coye, depeynted, deprive, disseveraunce, dissmulyng, enchaunten, entrecomunen, excusable, fawny, ferventliche, future, hemysperie, infortuned, injure, janglerie, juparten, lustinesse, marcial, mocioun, mysbyleved, noriture, poeplissh, rave, refut, remuable, repressed, repressioun, resistence, rootels, slyvere, surmounteth, sours, sovereignete, suffrant, torney, transitorie, undeserved, unshethe, unteyd, unthrifty, untrist, voluptuous.

(2) There are many words which are originated in Old French, Anglo French, and Latin: e.g. in the above list most words are derived from Romance languages, except some words originated in Old English such as "bakward," "lustinesse," "mysbyleved," "rooteles," "unshette," "unteyd," and "worthily," and some words originated in Old Norse such as "unthrifty" or "untriste" whose prefix "un-" is descended from Old English.

(3) We find some scholastic terms such as astronomy, astrology, or rhetoric: "constellecioun," "hemysperie," and "amphibology."

(4) The stem with the OE prefix "un-" is originated in Old French, Old English and Old Norse.

(5) The other features:

(a) The meaning of some words is explained as "figurative" in the *OED*: "enchaunten," "sours," "stormy," and "wyvere."

(b) The meaning of some words is explained as "loosely" in the *OED*: "busshel."

(c) Some words have a pejorative meaning rather than an original meaning: "depeynted."

(d) Some words are quoted as only one citation in the *OED*: "mysbyleved," "poeplissh," and "suffrant."

(e) We find a literally translated word from Latin to English: "byword" which is modeled

on Latin *pro-verbium.*

3. Pronunciation

In "General Prologue" of *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer gives an ironical touch to Prioresse's manner of speech, but we do not find such a subtle description to Criseyde's. (Further, in "The Reeve's Prologue and Tale" of *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer, changing his London spellings, gives northern dialects to the students and visualizes some rural features of the contemporary pronunciation, but we do not find such a visualized rural dialect in Criseyde's speech.) Chaucer rather favours her speech.

In this chapter we quote the passages referred to only her speech, and we would like to see how the others evaluate her "speche," "word," and "voice."

> ...ne of speche ╱ A *frendlyer*,... (1.884-85)
> And *goodly* of hire speche in general, (5.822)
> And with hire *goodly* wordes hym disporte
> She gan,... (3.1133-34)
> With *pitous* vois, (1.111)
> With *broken* vois, *al hoors forshright*, (4.1147)
> Herde I myn alderlevest lady deere
> *So wommanly*, with vois *melodious*,
> Syngen so *wel*, so *goodly*, and so *clere* (5.576-78)

Criseyde seems to speak in a compassionate tone of voice, never in a harsh voice, as Burnley states "a woman was expected to have a gentle and sweet tone."[13] Her speech is shown by the favourable adjectives such as "frendly" or "goodly." The adjective "melodious" in the last example is used when Troilus remembers Criseyde's beautiful voice in Book V. (It should be noticeable that we find the expression "wikked speche" (5.1610) in Criseyde's letter. This is used when Criseyde says that one of the reasons why she cannot return from Greece to Troy is because she is much conscious of the evil speech around her. This shows Criseyde's self-consciousness which makes her consider the *un*-courtly speech around her and consequently leads her to using the courtly speech.)

4. Verbosity

The Wife of Bath is a very talkative woman, as Chaucer says: "In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe (I(A) 474)." Criseyde seems not only talkative like the Wife of Bath, but also silent like Griselda in "The Clerk's Tale."

In order to investigate whether or not Criseyde is wordy, we would like to compare the length and the total words of Criseyde's speech with those of the other characters. See the Table (1) which shows the total words of each character. The lineage of the longest speech of each character is as follows: Troilus 121 lines (4.958-1078), Criseyde 161 lines (4.1254-1414), and Pandarus 105 lines (3.239-343). The frequency of each character's speech is as follows: Troilus 155 times (the total words of Troilus's speech: 11,368 words), Criseyde 167 times (8,986 words), and Pandarus 219 times (14,251 words). Thus we have two kinds of facts concerning Criseyde's verbosity. First, we find that she has the longest speech of the three characters. Second, she tends to be less wordy, though she speaks more often than the other characters. We, however, must not jump to the conclusion that these facts show her talkativeness but it is also a matter of fact that this kind of statistical analysis helps us to

see at least one aspect of Criseyde's speech.

We have thus investigated Criseyde's language from various points of view. In this study, we do not know exactly what kind of relationship exists between the language of Chaucer's women and that of Criseyde, what kind of language the main character Troilus uses, and so on. These problems will be our further study.

Now we are able to state at least the following summary in the present statistical study. As Dr Masui states that "Chaucer's language becomes dramatic in fact, since he dynamically connects the speech with the character and that such a dynamic language is reflected in Criseyde's speech and Pandarus's from a courtly point of view,"[16] Criseyde's language shows at least one aspect of women's language in the 14th century courtly society of England where Criseyde, created and characterized by the poet Chaucer, lives with flesh and blood as well as her contemporary women.

NOTES

(1) A.McIntosh et al., *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (Aberdeen University Press, 1986).

(2) M.L.Samuels and J.J.Smith, *The English of Chaucer and His Contemporaries* (Aberdeen University Press, 1988).

(3) M.Schlauch, "Chaucer's Colloquial English: Its Structural Traits," *PMLA* LXVII, 1103-16.

(4) V.Salmon, "The Representation of Colloquial Speech in *The Canterbury Tales*," *Style and Text: Studies Presented to N.E.Enkvist*, (Stockholm, 1975), 263-77.

(5) N.F.Blake, *Non-Standard Language in English Literature*, (London, 1981).

(6) D.Burnley, *A Guide to Chaucer's Language* (London, 1983).

(7) All Chaucer citations are from L.D.Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). Italics in the passages are mine.

(8) M.Matsuo, Y.Nakao, S.Suzuki, and T.Kuya, *Machine Readable Text of Chaucer Project*, (Hiroshima University, 1985).

(9) J.Coates, *Women, Men, and Language* (London, 1986).

(10) R.Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place*, (New York, 1975).

(11) Coates, *op.cit.*, 24.

(12) Taylor, *op.cit.*, 147.

(13) Coates, *op.cit.*, 26.

(14) Taylor, *op.cit.*, 156.

(15) Burnley,"Courtly Speech in Chaucer," *POETICA* 24 (1986), 27.

(16) M. Masui, *Studies in Chaucer* (in Japanese), (Tokyo, 1962,1973), 203.