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Department of English Language and Literature

Master Thesis

Use of Sociolect

In Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this diploma thesis, titled "Use of Sociolect In Chaucer's Canterbury Tales", is the result of my own work and that I used only the cited sources.

Prague, November 26th 2010   ……….…………………………..

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Abstract

This MA thesis deals with sociolect as it is used in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* The goal of the thesis is to find and describe the connections between particular characters and their social profiles. This goal leads to the following hypothesis: Chaucer described the characters on the basis of social stereotypes. Each of these characters uses certain language style which can be defined as a sociolect. The work consists of two main parts. The first theoretical part is focused on what a sociolect is, as well as the development of the English language in the 14th century and the life of Geoffrey Chaucer. Furthermore, it explores the English social history of the 14th century England, which is the key to understanding the social profile of Chaucer's characters. The following analytical part presents a description of the characters, hypotheses about their styles and the stylistic analyses of the language of the selected stories. Finally, the conclusion presents the answers to the questions from the introduction and more importantly, it explains why the principle hypothesis has been proved only partly.

Keywords

Social status, sociolinguistic profile, stereotype, social class, sociolect

Anotace

Tato diplomová práce se věnuje použití sociolektu v Chaucerových Canterburských povídkách. Cílem je najít a popsat spojitosti mezi jednotlivými postavami a jejich styly. Tento cíl vede k následující hypotéze: Chaucer popsal své postavy na základě sociálních stereotypů. Každá postava používá určitý jazykový styl, který může být definován jako sociolekt. Práce se skládá se ze dvou hlavních částí. První část se zaměřuje na to, co je sociolekt, vývoj anglického jazyka ve 14. století a život Geoffryho Chaucera. Dále se zabývá sociálními dějinami Anglie ve 14. století, které jsou klíčem k pochopení sociálních profilů Chaucerových postav. Následující analytická část se soustředí na popis postav, hypotézy o jazykovém stylu postav a stylilistickou analýzu vlastních povídek. Praktická část dále také odpovídá na otázky, které jsou položeny v úvodu této práce, a vysvětluje, proč byla hlavní hypotéza potvrzena pouze částečně.

Klíčová slova

Společenský status, sociolingvistický profil, stereotyp, společenská třída, sociolekt

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The present thesis is concerned with social and sociolinguistic aspects of the language used in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Namely, it is a stylistic analysis of selected *tales* connected to the social reality of the late 14th century England.

The aim is not only to analyze the *tales* in terms of style, but also to shed new light on the links between Chaucer's intentions and the social roles and profiles of the characters that are presenting the stories. All the aspects are compared, analyzed and described on the background of social reality of the given period (the Church, chivalry, nobility and the people in towns and country). In other words, there are several questions: Are there any differences between the styles of the characters? To what degree are those possible differences influenced by social aspects? To what degree does the Chaucer's depiction correspond with the social reality as presented by historians in chapter 2.1 (pages (9-15). All these questions lead to the following hypothesis: Chaucer's description of characters corresponds to the description of social reality given by historians. These styles used by various characters are significantly different from each other. These differences are caused by different social rank of the characters. The style of a particular character can be defined as a sociolect.

The reason I chose Chaucer was partly a matter of my personal preference and apart from that, it is his uniqueness. Throughout his life he was meeting people from all social classes of medieval English society. From the king whom he served directly when he was older to poorest beggars that he met when he was a student. On his travels around Western Europe he learned Italian and Latin. From England he already knew English and French. Linguistically skilled and socially experienced Chaucer could start to work on his greatest work in the last decade of his life.

At a first glance, The *Canterbury Tales* give us a very detailed picture of English society of his times. As Robinson describes:

'*Whole works…were devoted to the description of various orders of society, and others to the classification of men and women by physical and temperamental characteristics. With this lore of the physiognomists and social philosophers Chaucer was doubtless familiar. But in none of his predecessors has there been found a gallery of portraits like that in the Prologue*' (Robinson: 3).

The importance of this work is not just a matter of its content, but also a matter of the language that it was written in. Chaucer was one of the first authors who used English[1] for his writings. Therefore he helped to establish the written form of the English Language. However, he did not do so from the beginning since '*He probably wrote poems in French during his early life as an esquire of the royal household, but he made a decisive choice to write in English in 1369, with his poem on the death of John of Gaunt's wife, The Book of the Duchess and English poetry never looked back*' (Pearsall: 271).

His personality and works offer present day linguists and historians a great opportunity to study the language on the social background. As Fritze points out:' *The remarkable variety of characters and genres and the comically realistic interchanges among the pilgrims make The Canterbury Tales a monument in English literature*' (Fritze: 102).

Historical sociolinguists are grateful for the variety of language that his pilgrims used. The the differences between the varieties are the main focus of this study. Through the comprehension of these differences the reader will be able to delve into the society of Chaucer's time.

Another reason why I chose a synchronic topic from medieval England is my interest in history. A thorough sociolinguistic analysis of literary characters is very helpful for historians, especially those interested in social history. However, the influence is mutual. On one hand, a socio-linguistic analysis helps a historian to study history. On the other hand, an insight to the social history of England in 14th century contributes to a more profound outcome of a sociolinguistic research. Thus, a brief summary of English social history of 14th century should be mentioned.

The study is divided into two main parts, the theoretical one (chapter 2, pages 8-26) and the practical one (chapter 3, pages 27-74). Both of them are subdivided into several sections. The theoretical one (chapter 2, pages 9-29) consists of three sections. First section 2.1 (pages 8-14) focuses on the social history of England in the given period. It includes a brief insight into English society. The topics that are most important for this thesis are the Church, differences between the towns and the country,

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[1] By the term English in this case I mean Middle English that emerged from highly inflected Old English and the vocabulary borrowing from Latin in 12th century and Norman French after 1066.

nobility and education. The study of those topics shall give us the image of the society. Section 2.2 (pages 16-20) focuses on Chaucer himself. It briefly comments on his life and the origins of the *Tales*. Then, section 2.3 (pages 20-29) deals with the theory of social dialect and its place in the field of sociolinguistics. It also briefly explores the development of the English language from 1066 till the end of the 14th century. Lastly, it describes the method which will be applied in the practical part.

The practical part (chapter 3, pages 30-73) consists of three sections. Firstly, it is the chapter 3.1 (pages 30-34) where it is described how the characters were selected. Secondly, it is chapter 3.2 (pages 34-43), which describes all the selected characters. These descriptions are enriched with hypothesis about the characters' styles which are based on the *General Prologue*. Chapter 3.3 (pages 43-73) include the analyses of the stories.

Whole thesis is summed up in chapter 4 (pages 74-79). This chapter also answers the questions from the introduction (chapter 1, page 6). Furthermore, it comments on the realation between each character and the principle hypothesis.

2. Theoretical Part

2.1. Social history of England in the 14th century

2.1.1. The breakdown of the old feudal system.

Till the 14th century the majority of farmland had been cultivated through the *open field* system. This was widespread around England and each farmer had his small piece of farmland that was scattered among his neighbour's farmland. Thus all the estates were chaotically placed without any borders. The villages were surrounded by these open fields and the peasants worked on their soil. This system kept the community of the village together and simultaneously the workers grew enough crops for their families. All the peasants were equal but they were bound to the lord, who was the formal owner of the land where the peasants worked. They had to work some days per week on the lord's land. It was a type of rent for the land they received to cultivate.

Throughout the 13th century the population grew rapidly and it gave the lords more opportunities to work the peasants harder since there was a lack of land for the farmers. At the beginning of the 14th century there were three successive years of famine (1315, 1316, and 1317) that killed half a million people and foreshadowed the economic crises.

There are several reasons why the economic crisis in the beginning of the fourteenth century struck England. Some historians claim that it was the heavy taxation of the peasants that caused the low productivity of work; others say that it was because of the old hierarchical social structures that held back any innovating spirits (Dyer: 121). Undoubtedly, the crucial reason was the plague that first arrived to Europe in 1346.

The Black Death (the name of this plague) shaped the social history of England in the second half of the fourteenth century dramatically. Mice carrying fleas in their fur arrived on the merchant ships from Crimea to the Mediterranean in the second half of the 1340s and caused the worst plague that had ever struck Europe. England was not any exception and its population was halved within just a few years. Not only the major wave between 1348-1349, but also in the following years 1361-1362, 1369, 1379-1383, 1389-1393 cut the population of England from five million in the year 1300 to two and half million at the end of the 14th century.

This gave a great opportunity to the surviving peasants, because *'the number of strips in the open field held by a single farmer were increased by the amalgamation of derelict holdings; and the villein cultivators of these larger units became in effect middle class yeomen employing hired labour'* (Trevelyan: 30). The sudden lack of labour increased its price and decreased the prices of the land. Due to the high wages it was even better for the lord to rent the land to other people. Those were usually the yeomen, whose job was to gather the labourers to cultivate the crops. A completely new, middle class was born.

This phenomenon established new relationships in the society. The former serfs became landowners, who filled the gap between the noblemen and villains. The second group were landless farmers, who worked on the land for wages. Both these groups were gradually getting involved into a conflict with the noblemen. The landowners gained an economic dependency and became rich; however, they still did not have real freedom. Sometimes they were forced do the field service for the lord or they were obliged to grind their corn in the mill of the lord. Similarly the landless farmes started to protest because after the plague the king introduced fixed wages in order to keep them low.

The dissatisfaction started to be prominent in both groups and they started to rebel against the king in 1381. As many historians, such as Trevelyan, deem *'The rising originated from an unpopular poll-tax. Its oppressive and corrupt administration caused local revolts in Essex and Kent, which became the signal for a national rebellion in no less than twenty-eight counties'* (Trevelyan: 30). The rebels were very well organized by the rich landowners, who had gain certain fortune after the Black Death and wanted to set themselves free from the serfdom. The rebels from the countryside entered London and occupied it for three years until the leaders were executed or had fled. The gentry had to leave the city and even the royal power was in danger. Finally, King Richard II managed the situation, suppressed the mutiny and kept the servile dues valid.

In spite of the fact that the rebellion was unsuccessful, the message to the king and the gentry was very clear. For us, the demand of the *'Peasants that all Englishmen should be freemen has a familiar sound today, but it was then a novelty and it cut at base of the existing social fabric'* (Trevelyan: 21).

2.1.2. English towns in the fourteenth century

Social changes arrived also to towns which became the centres of national trade and money lending.[2] The owners of the manufactories started to sell the cloth in the town markets and '*by the middle of the fourteenth century many English merchants, like Thomas Swanland, Walter Cheriton, or John Poultney, had accumulated capital to such extent that Edward III increasingly relied on them to finance his war in France. These merchants were engaging in foreign trade on growing scale and wanted to exclude the foreign merchant from the London market*' (Myers: 91).

Even though most of the people still lived in the villages, the towns began to grow rapidly. As in the village where the differences between the landowners and landless workers grew bigger, similar events happened in the towns. Untill the 14th the members of the guilds were economically quite. Nonetheless, from the times of Chaucer the role of national and international trade became stronger and the guild masters became merchants that travelled around England and Europe for bussines purposes. This brought them higher economic power and social prestige. The increase of the cloth and wool industry that set off traders on journeys left us '*many phrases and metaphors borrowed from the manufacture of cloth – 'thread of discourse', 'spin a yearn', 'unravel a mystery', 'web of life', 'fine-drawn', 'homespun', 'tease' – while all unmarried women were put down as 'spinsters*' (Trevelyan: 87). The growth of the wool and cloth industry demanded a change of manufacturing system. The masters started to focus on trade more than on the manufacturing process that was left to apprentices and craftsmen such as weavers and dyers.

New merchant class (Chaucer was also a member of this class) suddenly received great respect from the nobility and the king, because of the money they lend them. This brought many of the merchants to the court and promoted them to the highest social classes. Since the highest class of the gentry was closed for the people who suddenly became rich a new title of 'gentleman' was introduced. Before the changes took place the society was divided into three estates which were those ho pray,

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[2]This business was exclusively the matter of Jews, but in 1290 Edward I expelled all the Jews from the country. However, the king in the fourteenth century needed money for the French wars, so he started to borrow the money from the merchants.

those who fight and those who work. This old division started to collapse and the difference began to be blurred.

The political and economic independence on France created the English nation in the fourteenth century. *For in Chaucer's time the English people first clearly appear as a racial and cultural unit. The component races and languages have been melted into one. The upper class is no longer French, nor the peasant class Anglo-Saxon: all are English'* (Trevelyan: 16). French remained to be taught and the English language became the mother tongue.

2.1.3. The wars with France and chivalry

Fourteenth century is not only the age of plague and social changes for England, but also a heyday of the English army and knighthood in general. After the death of Charles IV of France in1328 England staked a claim for the French throne. This started a long-lasting conflict between France and England. First two major battles, at Crécy and Poitiers, were won by the English.

Those two victories were the key to the peace treaty in Bretigny in 1360 where the French agreed to the English possession of large lands in southwest France. Furthermore, it aroused a great interest in jousting. Edward III and also his son were very fond of these games and both of them were often admired by women. They were the sport heroes of the middle ages. However, the chivalric concept was based on respect to a lady and purely spiritual love to her. A knight that is fighting for the glory (having her talisman with him) is the key topic of the middle ages love poetry.

Chaucer observed these feats and it was one of the sources for his poetry. He did not participate actively in the jousts but was more interested in the courtly game of love between a brave knight and a demure lady. The traditional concept of a courtly love is strictly based on the spiritual level of the relationship, but Chaucer shifted this notion on to a different level, the carnal one. What makes this concept interesting when reading Chaucer is the fact that he was '*aware of sex as major theme of his life's work, both early and late. Sex was in fact for Geoffrey Chaucer the heart of the matter*' (Gardner: 131). Carnality and frequent mentions about the acts of love as in the *Miller's Tale* or the *Reeve's Tale* are clear evidence. Nevertheless, Chaucer was also aware of the conventional concept based on the spirit as it is presented in the *Knight's Tale*.

Another important feature that is connected to knighthood is the social prestige. Knights and gentry in general had the highest social status for they defended all the other people. This extraordinary status often brought large estate property and higher living standart in general. Traditionaly, social status was not a matter of merit for it was inborn. Nonetheless, this idea of being born in to a certain social group with its duties started to lose its grounds in the 14th century. The knighthood itself began to lose its prestige and was becoming rather an ideal without any solid grounds as seen in the chapter 3.3.2 (page). Still, being a 'gentil' man was not only a privilege, but also a duty to act always fair and according to the Christian morals.

2.1.4. Social changes in the fourteenth 14th century

When studying the English language in the social context of 14th century England it is important to keep in mind several facts.

Even though there were tremendous changes in the 14th century, especially for the nobility, the notion of society based on those who fight, those who work and those who pray was still more or less intact. The possibility to change the status was seen as impossible and even dangerous for it might violate the God's law. This law matches people with their social functions and changing these functions would bring disharmony to the world order.

Medieval people were much more connected to religion than are people today. Atheism was an unknown concept and people, especially those living in the rural areas, organized their calendar according to the feasts and field works. Also in the towns various feasts were celebrated and they were part of the general culture. Even though Church and the clergy was criticised by scholars (i.e. Wycliffe) or local preachers the importance of the people working for the Church must have been great, since ten of the pilgrims are to a certain degree connected to the Church.

As we see it today, the then society was very closed and therefore highly influenced by stereotypes that were rooted in the culture. Chaucer also filtered his characters through stereotypes. Stereotyping and keeping the old order was a sign of good culture and art. Chaucer was surely aware of the divine division of people into three estates, but thanks to his travels to Spain, France and Italy he became more open to new opinions about social hierarchy than his peers in England.

In order to depict the typical members of then society he had stereotyped them to make the picture more black and white, more visible to the reader. Thus, he observed all the people he had met on in England and depicted them in the *Tales*.

2.1.5. Role of Church in medieval society

Although the changes were taking place everywhere, the church was not influenced very much. The traditional hierarchy of the church influenced the society from the lower level of local priests or parishes up to the highest ranks of bishops and archbishops. The forenamed were often connected directly to the royal power and held the offices of royal administration. Those functions brought them fortune and estates in the towns or the country. It saved the money of the royal treasury since the King appointed and '*paid his Ministers and civil servants not out of the public taxes but out of the Episcopal revenues*' (Trevelyan: 94). This was the cause for neglecting the church issues.

Village people encountered the presence of priests, summoners or friars almost on a daily basis. This highly developed church organization kept people in obedience through religious and financial duties to the church. Instead of being poor and living from the alms as it is written in the doctrine of St. Francis and others, the friars as well as others member of the Church became richer. The numerous ranks of clergymen had to leave their religious service and became official doing various jobs for merchants or landowners. Some of them were changing the jobs all the time and became criminals, which was advantageous for them for they were subjects to the canonical law and not to the King's justice.

Since the council of Lateran in 1215 all the Christians had to go for a confession at least once a year (Leyser: 195). Moreover, the penance commuting for money became an everyday issue and indulgences were sold without hesitation. None the less the progress that influenced the people and spirit of the time in towns and country was not accepted by the clergy and '*Institutional change was prevented by the rigid conservatism of the Church authorities, although here too thought and opinion was moving fast. Change indeed was long overdue*' (Trevelyan: 92).

2.1.6. Education and spread of knowledge among people

The ecclesial power was suddenly seen as corrupted and spoiled. By our standards most of the institutions of the middle ages were corrupted and spoiled. While the secular power was willing to undergo certain changes, the Catholic Church was not. The dissatisfaction with church was also connected to the education that had been monopolized by the clergy till the Chaucer's time. In the 14th century the knowledge moves from the monasteries to the universities, where it is still mostly in the hands of the secular clergy, yet a bit more open to the changing world. Life of students is depicted in the character called Absolon which is featured in the *Miller's Tale.*

The academic environment in the 14th century started to play an important role in the society. The scholars epitomize a new wave of thinking of the time. Thanks to the openness of the universities,[3] they gained their own social status and became also a certain political power in the city where the university was placed. Still, the village people were more in contact with the friars. These preaching friars gave the people most of the information they could have possibly obtain. In addition, they offered the country people absolution after a confession in exchange for money or other favours.

Those who taught in the newly founded universities, mainly Oxford, suddenly had to face the critics among the students, who had their 'eyes open' thanks to he education. Being challenged, the monks began to lose their intellectual self-confidence which started the development of the heretical movement.

The leader was an Oxford student, and lately, a teacher John Wycliffe who was against the official theory of transubstantiation during the sacred mass. He also criticized the indulgences and the riches of the monasteries and Church in general.

His followers, the Lollards, started to preach the return to purity of the faith and foreshadowed the reformation of the sixteenth century.

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[3] The universities were at the beginning very opened to the outer world. The students met in the public places to discuss various issues that were stirring the world of the time. Thus they became quite popular for the writers as we see it for example in the *Miller's tale.* Nevertheless, the university system was changed and the students were more staying in the colleges, being a bit more separated from the outer reality.

2.2. Chaucer and the English language

2.2.1. Life of Geoffrey Chaucer and his *Canterbury Tales*

In spite of the fact that this study is focused on Chaucer's language in social context a brief insight into his life shall be mentioned. Fortunately, contemporary scholars have relatively many information about Chaucer's life. Due to his higher social status there are several official documents on which his curriculum can be developed.

Chaucer was born to a family of a well-to-do vintner who lived in London[4]. His father, John Chaucer, was a successful tradesman who had links to both national and international trade. The exact date of birth is not known but most probably, it was in year 1340 or 1341 (Gardner: 21). He spent the first years in London living a life of a merchant's son. This meant a decent house and he was well taken care of in terms of nourishment. Around the fifth year of age he probably started to learn how to read and write as most of the children of the similar age and social rank did.

Soon after, he started to attend the school at St. Paul's. Here he learned Latin in order to be able to study the theological and philosophical works of old masters, such as Boethius or Aquinas. He also read the Roman authors like Vergil and Ovid whose works where a source of inspiration. For him '*it was as good an early education as any period could offer: in time of unpropitious weather, famine, recurrent plague, and endless, devastating war, it encouraged a philosophical approach to life's most troublesome questions-gave noble and dignified arguments on the meaning of life and death*' (Gardner: 89).

The education made him a man of an outstanding knowledge measured by the standards of his time. He must have had certain level of university education since he had quite advanced knowledge of mathematics and astronomy as he is showing in the *Treatise on the astrolabe.* Moreover, he had several friends amongst the Oxford scholars.

Not later than in 1357 he left his home to become a member of the household of the King's daughter-in-law Elizabeth, countess of Ulster[5]. He probably observed and

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[4] His family originally came from Ipswich, which is 70 miles northwards from London, but Chaucer's family is dated back as settled on London since the time of Chaucer's grandfather.
[5] Chaucer was elevated to the milieu of the highest of the realm because both his parents helped the king in the fight against Mortimer in late 1320s.

controlled the labourers in the fields and worked as a scrivener. Most likely, he also did the accounts for the countess. In the evenings he studied French and Latin, art and literature or talked to his peers about cultural topics. Soon after, he was elevated among the highest nobility, where he met John of Gaunt, lately the most powerful man in England. Not only did he become involved in the current political issues or in the accounts of his provider, but also he started to write his own poetry. In 1350s and 1360s the court and high nobility was still used to speak French[6], but this was just about to change. Chaucer, although he wrote his first poems in French, was one of the first ones who symbolize the language change that was spreading in London. During his service for the countess of Ulster he was writing love poetry. Thanks to his wit, humour and understanding of women he must have been very popular, especially among ladies. Most probably during this service at Elizabeth's household he met his future wife, Philippa of Roet.

In late 1359 Chaucer left to France with a great army, not as a soldier, but more as a diplomat. Despite the diplomatic purposes of his campaign he was he was captured but soon after ransomed by the king himself and returned to England in 1360

After the return he started to study law in London. Since he used several legal terms in his works and he worked and did business with lawyers he must have studied law to a certain degree, because he '*makes use of terms that, in fourteenth century, no but a man with some training in law would be likely to know'* (Gardner: 130).

There is clear evidence missing about Chaucer's life between 1360 and 1365 and the sources follow up with notice about his travels to Spain in 1366. Furthermore, not later than in 1366 Chaucer married Philippa of Roet.

The key factors that influenced him as a writer were his trips to Italy. He went there on behalf of King's business to negotiate about Italian merchant interests in England. For the first time he went to Italy in winter 1372/1373. He must have been impressed by the atmosphere in Italy for renaissance and humanism were already in the bloom when Chaucer arrived. He was highly influenced by Italian literature of the time. Petrarch, Boccaccio and mainly Dante were his sources for *The Canterbury Tales.* Humanism and humanistic approach in the description of characters and the *Tales* are

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[6] More precisely Anglo-Norman, that was a mixture of Norman French and English, still it was comprehensible for the French people from the Continent.

omnipresent. The courtly love, innocence and heroism, so typical for gothic literature, are not the major topics anymore[7].

The topics of *The Canterbury Tales* were closer to real people and real life stories. This is also the reason why they are still relevant today. Sexuality, even eroticism, human envy, greed, but also joy and ordinary happiness make all the *Tales* real. Most of the characters appear as people made of flesh and blood, with their sins and not idealized infallible superheroes.

In later 1380s His wife, Philippa died in and he became a widower. Moreover, he became one of the participants in the struggle for power between the King and the nobles. He was on the King's side defending his concerns in the House of Commons. Finally, he became clerk of King's works and looked after the construction of new buildings.

The period of 1390s although it was the last decade of life for Chaucer it was the period when he wrote the most of his major work, the *Canterbury Tales.* After having written several literary pieces such *Legend of a Good Woman,* the *Book of the Duchess, Parliament of Fowls* and many others he entered the last, but most important period of his literary career. Even though he had already written some of the *Tales* before 1390, in 1390s he reached the peak of his literary perfection.

2.2.2. Historical importance of *The Canterbury Tales*

Having gone through French, Latin and Italian influence he put all his experience and knowledge about the English language to create the masterpiece of medieval English literature. Lerer claims that Chaucer:

'*Did more than simply enlarge the vocabulary of the language. He often juxtaposed terms from Old English against those of French and Latin, creating, in the process, striking literary effects…Chaucer was conscious of linguistic difference as social, historical and even philosophical problem. He reflected on language change and dialect variation, presented characters who manipulate the world through their vernacular, and set up the figure of poet who is himself an innovator in the uses of language. Language is always a theme for Chaucer's poetry, and Chaucer himself took*

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[7] Apart from the Knight's tale where courtly love is more mocked that idealized.

up the persona of a writer preoccupied with new words and vernacular command' (Lerer: 70-71). This is the way he created the new language. The great variety of language that is used through the pilgrims is the most important aspect of the language.

His project of the *Tales* was originally planned to embrace hundred and twenty stories. Thirty pilgrims (including Chaucer himself) were supposed to tell four stories each (two on the way there and two on the way back from Canterbury). This intention, however, was not fulfilled, because of his early death. We are left just with fragments of the unfinished work. None of the story we have today is Chaucer's original handwritten script. What is left are just copies from early 15th century such asthe Ellesmere manuscript or from the later times as the Caxton's printed version.

2.3. Theoretical aspects of the analysis

2.3.1. Historical development of the English language in the Middle Ages

The language we observe when reading *The Canterbury Tales* is obviously different from the one that is spoken today. The span of more than six hundred years has left significant changes it pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, morphology and syntax. However, these differences are insignificant in comparison with development of the language from the 6th century till the Chaucer's time.

During those eight hundred years English shifted from highly inflectional language into nearly uninflected one. However, our focus is not the development of the language during those eight hundred years, but in order to understand Chaucer's language a brief summary of the development after of the language after 1066 should be made (Lerer: 54-85).

The point that is crucial in the development of pre-Chaucerian English in the year 1066. After the Norman invasion England became a country of three languages. Those were French, Latin and English. The Normans brought French. Specifically, Norman French that was lately in the 13th century changed for Parisian French. Latin was the language of the clergy and scholars and English was the language of the majority.

Thanks to the number of people that used English as their mother tongue this language finally became also the language of the court. Lately, after the reformation it became also language of the clergy and scholars. One of the reasons why French was

not influential in terms of morphology is the origins of both languages. North Germanic languages that influenced English before were more influential because they had similar inflectional endings. French did not have such impact on English because both languages are too different in terms of morphology.

In 1066 English was still highly inflectional language. It lacked any kind of standard written or spoken form. There are several theories how the inflections started to disappear from the language. Seth Lerer claims that:

'*Old English, as all Germanic languages had fixed stress in the root syllable of the word. Regardless of what prefixes or suffixes were added to it, or regardless of the word's grammatical category, the stress remained fixed on the root (other languages such as those of Romance family or Greek, have variable word stress). It has been argued that this root stress had a tendency to level out the sounds of unstressed syllables in speech*' (Lerer: 40).

In other words, thanks to the fixed stress the inflectional endings ceased to be fully pronounced or were totally omitted so that just the root was preserved. Another fact that could have brought the vanishing of the inflectional endings could have been the contacts with Vikings from Scandinavia who started to invade England in eighth century.

Since Old English and Old Norse were of Germanic origin the speakers could have omitted the inflectional ending. They just kept just the roots of the words in order to make themselves understood by their neighbours or trade partners. The number of inflections had been reduced during just two or three centuries[8]. *The Peterborough Chronicle*[9] proves that these changes in some of the parts of the country took part just within few decades. Since the chronicle always starts narration of a particular year saying 'In this year' it is quite easy to deduce the differences in the morphology of adjectives as well as nouns to a certain degree. For example for year 1083 it uses the Old English inflected form 'On Þissum geare'. The entry for year 1117 says 'On Þison

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[8] Morphology is not the subject of the thesis, but it should be mentioned that most important. Morphological changes happened to verbs which with the exception of *–s* in third person singular and verb *be* lost all the inflections marking the person. Similarly, nouns lost the cases that are substituted mainly with prepositions.

[9] Peterborough Chronicle is an account that tells about the English history of the approximately first century after the Norman invasion. Thanks to its location in the northern England the monks of the abbey continued to write the chronicle still in English even after the invasion.

geare and in 1135 it is 'On Þis geare'. Lastly, also the noun changes and in 1154 it says 'On Þis gear'. This proves that at least in Northern England the endings completely dropped not even within one century (Lerer: 40).

Not only does it capture the rapid changes of morphology but it is first account that includes items of French vocabulary in an English written document. This was proved in the time of Chaucer when English was trying to reach its literary status. At that time French wordstock was, besides Latin, the source for new vocabulary. The new vocabulary consisted mostly of terms from culture, architecture and the system of government. Another language that was source for new vocabulary items was Latin that gave English words used in religious and legal issues.

In the second half of the 14th century when Chaucer wrote all his works, English began the process of establishing itself as a standardized language (also thanks to Chaucer). Its social usefulness also started to grow, especially after 1388 when Richard II for the first time in history conducted a parliamentary session in English. This was mainly caused by growing feeling of national independency on France during the hundred's years war.

However, the emancipation of English as a literary language brought several discrepancies. English had not had any standard written form of the language since the reign of Alfred the Great. In the time of Chaucer the spelling was very inconsistent and varied not only from region to region, but also from author to author. Furthermore, in some cases it varied even within one script as show the lines 12 and 21 of the *General Prologue* where the letter following the *r* in *pilgrimage* is spelled with *i* and *y* respectively. There were also certain regional varieties of English and Chaucer was aware of them..

In *The Reeve's Tale* he imitates the dialect of two Cambridge students who are originally from the Northern England. This Northern dialect of English was very distinct from the dialects of southern parts of England. These differences were mainly in syntax, verbs and pronouns. What Modern English has adopted from the Northern dialect was third person plural pronoun They/Them.

The dialect that lately became the standard, also thanks to Chaucer, was the east Midland dialect. This dialect differed from the Northern in pronunciation. While in the North more conservative *a* was still preserved such as in word *stan* (stone) in the south

a started to become *o* as in *ston.* These phonetic changes were followed by the Great Vowel Shift starting in second half of the 15th century. The difference between the Middle English dialects are not of great importance for the chosen topic, but this was just a brief introduction to the language situation that was in England in the second half of the 14th century.

English in the time of Chaucer was not so frequently used in the written form as French or Latin. Thus, the written form was usually a "phonetic" transcription of the spoken form. However, Chaucer intended the *Tales* to be narrated rather than read. For Chaucer, story-telling was still most important means of spreading English culture among people. The occasion for story telling was one of the reasons why he chose a pilgrimage as a framework for the *Tales.* The other reason most probably was the possibility to introduce people of various age, profession class and gender in one work, thus creating an image of human society. As Spearing points out:

'*Chaucer is famous at the great poet of human reality, the one writer of so long ago in whose characters we can recognize our neighbours. If he is a poet of reality it is because he is not the poet of any single view of reality. He forces us to acknowledge that a whole range of views is possible and necessary, and he always calls our own judgements into play*' (Hussey et al.:152).

None the less, we have just twenty four finished stories and some other, such as *The Cook's Tale* that are unfinished.

2.3.2. Sociolinguistics and the *Canterbury Tales*

Before the analysis of a particular language that is being used in the *Tale*s is undertaken, a brief insight in the theory of varieties of language should be made. The preliminary distinction should be made between *variety, language* and *dialect.*

Hudson defines variety of a language as '*a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution. This allows us to call any of the following 'varieties of language': English, French, London English, the English of football commentaries, the languages*

used by the members of a particular long-house[10] in the north-west Amazon, the language or languages used by a particular person' (Hudson: 23) .

This definition, however it is valid for basically any sociolinguistic purposes, is too vague for us. The list of sociolinguistic factors and types of factors through which we can categorize a language into groups is extensive. Thus, every variety would be broken down in to such details, creating an idiolect. This is theoretically plausible, but not useful for the purposes of this thesis. Then, there is a certain difference between a variety and a language that is defined usually by the factor of mutual intelligibility. If two speakers can understand each other, they are speaking the same language and vice versa. Nevertheless, this point is highly arguable, for example in case of Czech and Slovak that are distinct languages, though the speakers understand each other.

According to Hudson the differences between a dialect and a language in English are basically two. Firstly, *'there is a difference of size, because a language is larger than a dialect. That is, a variety called language contains more items than one called a dialect'* (Hudson: 32). Secondly, dialect lacks prestige that is typical for language. Namely, it is generally believed that written variety is a language, while just the spoken one is a dialect. To sum up, variety is an umbrella term including both, language and dialect.

Since we are analyzing a literary work and not real speakers' utterances we are reduced to apply only basic sociolinguistic criteria. However, this simplification might seem to be unprofessional it is actually necessary for various reasons. Firstly, the distance in time is so great that we cannot reach the speaker personally. Thus, we are missing any recordings of the utterances. Secondly, the whole work is written in verse so the language itself is modified in the sake of maintaining certain degree of versification. Yet, thanks to the Chaucer's mastery of the language and its use we are still able to create an analysis that is supported by solid sociolinguistic theoretical background that will be described further in chapter 2.3.2 (page 24). Thirdly, including just some of the criteria will make the analysis more comprehensible and coherent. In other words, the aims that have been set before in chapter 1 (page 6) are attainable only through a narrow classification and specification.

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[10] It is a house were a married couple lives also with husband's brothers and parents. For more about Amazon language communities see Hudson: 6-10.

The limits of selecting the sociolinguistic criteria are in the information that is provided by the author. The social profiles of the characters are based on the information from the *General Prologue.*

One of the crucial aspects is the definition of a sociolect. It has been mentioned what variety, language and dialect are, but a key term for this study is a sociolect or a social dialect. Both these terms mean the same that is a social variety that is typical for a certain social class or group. A certain distinction between sociolect and register shall be made. The most important fact about sociolect is that it is a type of dialect depending not on the regional factors, but on the social ones. Furthermore, it is dependent on the way the language is used. The crucial point for us it the one that makes Hudson:

'The term register is widely used in sociolinguistics to refer to 'varieties according to use', in contrast with dialects, defined as varieties according to the user' (Hudson: 45). In order words, register is more depending on the specific needs of the speaker, whereas sociolect is a variety based on the differences on the social level.

Basic language features that we can usually observe in a sociolinguistic analysis are pronunciation, syntax, morphology, and lexicology. Since the reconstruction of social difference in the pronunciation of Middle English would be highly complicated different factors should be focused on. Those are are lexicology, morphology and syntax. The differences in morphology are very clearly seen in English since the 9th century. At that time Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons speaking were similar languages and thus created a variety that has lost most of its inflectional endings. More about this is dealt with in the chapter 2.3.1 (page 20) about history of the English language.

The key aspects for us are the vocabulary and syntax. For the historical reasons that are explained above in chapter 2.3.1 (page 19), there are cases when three vocabulary items that are expressing the same object or concept have different roots. They are either from Anglo-Saxon, French[11] or Latin. These words are markers of the social status of the speaker. Anglo-Saxon items stand usually for the lower classes, Latin items for the clergy and French terms for nobility and higher classes.

Other social variables that we shall observe are age, sex, profession and social status according to then criteria. For basic distinction of the characters' social status the

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[11] French meaning the Norman French that was quite different from the Parisian French, especially in terms of pronunciation and spelling

Host's way of addressing the other pilgrims is quite useful. In some cases (i.e. the Miller) he addresses the pilgrims with second person singular *thou* while some others (i.e. the Knight) he addresses with second person plural *ye* or *you*. Describing those characters in terms of these variables should provide us with a social profile of that particular character.

2.3.3. The method of the analysis

After having approached *The Canterbury Tales* from various theoretical aspects we should now move on to the analysis of the text itself. We have basically two choices for the analysis. As Short and Leech suggest there are two approaches of the text analysis (Short and Leech: 4). The first one is rather intuitional, theoretical and lacks quantitative data. The advantage is that it gives us a certain distance from the text. We can look at it in a way that we have a whole embracing idea of the style that is used.

The second one is a method that relies on quantitative methods of analysis. After this kind of analysis is completed the researcher obtains statistical data about the sample that has been focused on. This is usually when just one or few aspects are in the focus.

As it has been briefly mentioned in chapter 2.3.2 (page 24), the number of language aspects which can be observed in the *Canterbury Tales* is limited for following reasons: Firstly, due to the distance in time we are not able to include analysis of phonetic aspects. Secondly, spelling is highly inconsistent, not because of the different usage of the characters, but due to the lack of the standart written form.

In Chaucer's time most of the people started to speak the vernacular. However, this was used by the speakers in a number of ways and significant differences are found mainly in lexis and syntax. These two are the key factors for the analysis. The origins of the lexis are the means to delve in to the specifics of each of the characters. Since Chaucer had knowledge of all three languages (English, French and Latin) he could assign specific words to specific characters.

The statistical data elicited from the samples would be of little help without being compared to each other. Thus, the comparison of the results between the characters is a necessary output of the analyses. However, the comparison of the statistical data is not the only way of analyzing the text. The data has to be interpreted in a certain way. For a thorough interpretation also the parts of the stories that have not

been statistically processed will be used. Before collecting statistical data, it shall be described how the samples were extracted.

In order to avoid any doubts about objectivity of the sample selection, the choice of the text selected is independent on any content connected features. Precisely speaking, each story has been divided into five equally long parts. Then, first ten lines of each section were extracted for the further analysis, each of them starting at the beginning of a sentence. Hence, not all of the samples begin with the line numbered by multiple of ten. This keeps the analysis independent on the content since all of the sections are included.

After having extracted the samples from the entire text, word processing could start. As has been mentioned above in this chapter 2.3.3 (page 25), the main focus of the analysis is on the lexis and syntax. Here follows the list of the factors that were taken into consideration when processing the text. Total number of all words[12] was counted. The main aim is to describe differences between characters' speech based on the different origin of the lexis. Therefore only three most semantically significant and represented word classes were focused on. These are nouns, verbs and adjectives. These three categories cover around 45% of the total word count in each (the ratio of nouns, verbs and adjectives in the total word count ranges from the lowest rate of 44% in the *Miller's Tale* up to highest rate of 45.8 % in the *Friar's Tale*). Then, the ratio between nouns, verbs and adjectives was calculated based on the total word count of those three categories.

Next step was to find out the number of words of foreign origin in each sample. This was done through *A Conscise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* written by Skeat or online etymological dictionary http://www.etymonline.com/. All the words from the samples have been processed through those dictionaries. Practically speaking, this meant a search for the words of French and Latin origin. Obviously, most of the words from French were originally derived from their Latin roots. Therefore they are also of Latin origin, but important is the way they have been incorporated into English language. These words become widely used after the Norman invasion in 1066

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[12] Orthographically speaking, word is considered to be a single unit that is separated with one space at each side of the unit and in these terms it is also understood for the purposes of this work

thanks to the French gentry. Similarly, the names or proper nouns that are in the sample are not counted as foreign words.

To sum up the calculations, each sample gives us several values. These are total word count total word count of the nouns, verbs and adjectives and total word count of foreign origin words (Latin and French).

The syntactic factors that are statistically processed are following: It is the total number of complete sentences. Then there is the average number of words per sentence and lastly it is the number of stative verbs in the whole sample. Speaking of syntax, the factor of the direct speech has to be incorporated in the analysis as well. The reason is a significant change in the data when the instances of direct speech are exluded. In some cases (like the story of the Knight, Wife of Bath or the Friar) the average number of words increases. In other cases (such as the tale of the Miller, the Prioress and the Pardoner) this number decreases. Thus the interpretation of the use of the direct speech is highly important. Even though stating of both values (including and excluding the direct speech) might seem quite confusing for the reader, it shall be mentioned for not only the differences between the stories but also the differences within the stories are important.

The analysis of each tale is structured to three main parts. Firstly, some general remarks about the style are mentioned. Then there is the analysis of the lexis followed by the insight in the syntax.

3. Practical Part

3.1.1. Selection of the characters

The *Canterbury Tales* includes twenty four completed stories that are told by twenty three different characters[13]. However, the analysis will not include all of the twenty four stories and pilgrims for following reasons: Firstly, Chaucer's work does not represent the English society completly. He omits the highest (such as the king) and the lowest (such as the beggars) classes. Therefore the attempt to have a complete picture of the society would pointless even if we used all 24 stories. Secondly, the extent of this analysis is limited and could not include a detailed analysis of all the tales. To keep the thesis in the limits only several characters will be represented in the analysis. The number will be specified based of the criteria for the selection (chapter 3.1.1, page 28-32).

The basic criterion of selection of the characters is their gender. Hudson proves that a woman of particular social class speaks a different variety of language than her peer of the male sex (Hudson: 41). This depends on many, mainly sociological, factors which will not be focused on here but are accessible in other sources[14]. Thus, there are nineteen male pilgrims telling their stories and only four female characters. Just this fact, that Chaucer included only this quite insignificant number of female characters reveals certain facts about the then society.

It might seem that Chaucer was a sexist who neglected the female voice in his work. However this is connected to the general gender atmosphere of medieval England. Probably, Chaucer was progressive in matters of gender as seen in other of his works (such as *The Book of the Duchess).* His approach to marriage is also very open-minded. He often mocks unwise and elderly men that foolishly marry young beautiful girls in hope to keep them just for themselves off the hands of other men like in the *Merchant's Tale* or in the *Miller's Tale.*

Like political and other important social events also pilgrimages were usually meant for men. The reasons are manifold. Firstly, it was quite expensive and thus it was

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[13] Chaucer himself told two stories on the pilgrimage, However, the first one *The Tale of Sir Thopas* was not told till the end since the moderator of the story telling contest and the owner of the Tabard Inn in Southwark Harry Bailey stopped Chaucer's narration claiming that Chaucer's '*drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord*' (F8: 930).

[14] Eg. Romaine, Suzanne. *Language in society: and introduction to sociolinguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

a matter of. Secondly, the women were seen as Devil's emissaries on Earth. Religious event such as pilgrimage was not appropriate for them. As states the *General Prologue* there are four female pilgrims in the *Tales.* Three of them are members of clergy (Prioress, Nun, Second Nun) and the fourth is the Wife of Bath. She is the only lay woman represented in the book. Therefore her voice must be present in the analysis.

The question of selecting the male characters is more difficult. The relationship to the Church is a crucial criterion for any research that at least slightly touches study of medieval society. Hussey points out the importance of the Church:

'*A historian of the fourteenth century assesses the number of ordained members of the Church altogether as one-fifth of the population*' (Hussey et al.: 56). Therefore the Church and people related to it must have played a very important role in the society of medieval England.

Nineteen male tale pilgrims consist of six that are closely connected to the Church. These are the Friar, the Summoner, the Pardoner, the Monk, the Nun's Priest and the Parson. The other twelve are laymen. Those are the Knight, the Miller, the Reeve, the Man of Law, the Merchant, the Squire, the Franklin, the Physician, the Shipman, Chaucer himself, the Canon's Yeoman and the Manciple and the Clerk. The Clerk shall be featured in the selection for following reasons. He is the most educated character of all. The importance of education is seen in chapter 2.1.6 (page 15). Therefore he will be in the selection.

Two characters have been already selected. Those are the Wife of Bath (the only laywoman in the *Tales)* and The Clerk (as member of scholar category). There are still three groups of characters. First are the men and women related to the church and the second are men not related to the Church[15].Since the goal is to describe the style of various social classes it is helpful to select those who represent the biggest distance on the social ladder. This should help to see the differences more clearly.

The list of the characters can be retrieved from the *Prologue*, where all (apart from Canon's Yeoman that joined the pilgrimage later on) the pilgrims are described. The description provides us with basic sociolinguistic information so that we can create their social profiles.

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[15] The group of women not related to the Church is represented only with The Wife of Bath who has been automatically put to the selection.

We shall apply the criterion of social status of the particular character. The hint shall be the *General Prologue*. However, Chaucer doubts the correctness of his listing and says:

' Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde.
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde' (F1: 743-746)[16].

This makes the divison quite difficult. Another option is to select the character into three estates. Thus we have group of those who fight (the Knight, the Squire), those who prey (the Friar, the Monk, the Nun, the Pardoner) and those who work (the Miller, the Shipman, the Reeve). Obviously, it is a simple division which does not correspond to real situation in the 14th century, but it serves as a good starting point Each of the estates shall be represented at least once to have to maintain the equality in the selection.

On of the pilgrims that should be in the selection for detailed analysis is the Friar. He is an instance of the clergymen that have diverged from the original purpose they was given by the Church. He is the contrary character to The Parson who is idealized by Chaucer. Then there is the Knight, one of those who fight. He is a man of virtues and gentiles and above all he is claimed to be the one with the highest reputation from all the pilgrims. On the other side, there is the Miller who is a member of those who work. He is famous for being a drunken outcast of the society. Another of the selected characters is The Pardoner. His tale and his character as a pilgrim is in such a contradiction that his tale is worth analyzing. Finally, one instance of the clergy woman shall be represented. Therefore, The Prioress is in the selection in order to reflect the voice of woman that is a member of monastic clergy.

Another variable that is usually used for sociolinguistic analysis is the factor of age. The *Tales* does not provide the reader with relevant information about pilgrims' age and therefore it can be assumed that Chaucer himself did not consider age important

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[16] I will always refer to Chaucer's own words referring to Benson's third edition of *The Riverside Chaucer* reissued in 2008. The abbreviation means the particular fragment of *The Canterbury Tales* and the number line of the particular fragment as stated in the third edition of the *Riverside Chaucer*.

when describing the characters in the *Prologue*. Hence, the age is to be disregarded in the selection for these reasons.

Seven characters have been chosen for the analysis. These are the Miller, the Knight, the Wife of Bath the Clerk, the Pardoner the Friar and the Prioress. In the next chapter, the focus will be on the description of the selected characters. This description is based on the *General Prologue*. This description will be accompanied with a hypothesis (the last paragpaphs of each character description in italics) about the language. This hypothesis will be then commented on in the analytical part of the thesis (chapter 3.3, pages 43-73).

3.2. Description of the selected characters

The characters that shall be analyzed are briefly, but aptly described in *General Prologue*. This description is also the source for the following short insight into the pilgrims' social profiles and their language. Chaucer's description is partly sociological study and offers a look into the structure of the company heading towards Canterbury.

Chaucer uses a similar pattern when describing the characters in the G*eneral Prologue.* Even their names are very eloquent since mostly they are not calling each other by their names but quite often by their profession. Chaucer partly generalizes about the characters and presents their personal characters as if they were 'typical' members of their social class. It is not surprising that due to the general lack of information and education people easily believed various social stereotypes.

Chaucer himself did not make up the stereotypes and was inspired by several of his forerunners and contemporaries that were writing mostly in French or Latin[17]. He also based his work on the own experience and '*he suddenly began to set down his observations of life'* (Mann: 183).

To conclude, Chaucer was observing the changing world, he was aware of the changes, but in his works he kept the stereotypes even though he might have considered stereotyping wrong (criticism of anti-Semitism in the *Prioress's Tale*). He obviously kept the stereotypes on purpose in order to show the differences between people, their

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[17] For example John Gower, John Clanvowe or William Langland were his contemporaries. Nigel de Longchamps, Guiot de Province or Walter of Châtilon as his forerunners. For more about social stereotypes in contemporary and older literature see: Mann, Jill. *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*. London: CUP, 1973.

points of view and the difference in the language they speak. None the less, he presents the characters not only as 'typical' or 'ideal' members of their estate, but through the description of their appearance he makes them also individuals.

Another feature of the *Prologue* that helps us with the descriptions is the focus is on the appearance of the pilgrims. Those are description of their face and the clothes they wear. It is a way to make the pilgrim more vivid in the imagination of the reader and make the character more unique and therefore closer to the audience.

The ideas of generalization and individualization which are in the *Prologue* have a major impact on the addressee. On one hand, there is the attempt to present the pilgrims as social constructs, based on stereotypes, but on the other hand, he describes them in very specific details for the sake of attracting attention and making the characters living human beings. Both these factors are of crucial importance when assessing the validity of the principle hypothesis in the chapter 4 (pages 72-74).

The hypotheses that stated at the end of each description are focused on syntax and lexis since the following analyses are focused on the same.

The Miller

Travelling on a horse, but always drunk that is the first impression we have of the Miller. He is a member of one of the lowest social classes. Chaucer takes it for granted and assures the reader that:

'The Millere is a cherl; ye knowe wel this'

(F1: 3182).

As described in the *Prologue* and as pictured in the Ellesmere manuscript he is a rough fellow which is partly demanded by his occupation. The appearance is rather ugly and scary. Furthermore, the words he is saying are '*moost of synne and harlotries*' (F1: 561). He looks like an old drunk beggar that is scorned by the other pilgrims. Still, he is one of those who own his own horse which was quite an economic privilege. Only the minority of the pilgrims such as The Knight and The Wife of Bath went on the pilgrimage on a horseback. Most probably he was a wealthy man because:

'Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries;

And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee'[18]

(F1: 562-563).

His cunning and artful nature is another reason why he is rather disliked by the other pilgrims. At the same time Chaucer adds that he still is a good fellow for a pilgrimage, a buffoon that entertains other. Apart from being greedy he is a man of action who does not hesitate. His reactions are impulsive and he is not afraid of solving issue by physical means.

His story and his character itself are in great contrast with the Knight and his story that precedes the Miller's narration. The topic[19] is the same, but takes part in different milieu. The Miller proves in his story that even though the court seems to be noble and '*gentil*' the events are the same as in the house of a carpenter.

Unfortunately, His way of speaking is not particularly described in the *General Prologue.* The only reference to his narrative skills mentions that:

'He was a janglere and a goliardeys,

And that was moost of synne and harlotries' (F1: 560-561).

On the basis of the portrayal few hypotheses about his style can be made.

His character and appearance suggests that his story will be full of actions, one following the other. Therefore higher ration of verbs than nouns is expectable. Since he is an earthy person the vocabulary shall be mainly of Anglo-Saxon origin without many Latin or French origin vocabulary items. Speaking of syntax, rather simple and short sentences will be present. Similarly, in order to create a dramatic effect on the audience he would use exclamations.

The Knight

The fact that he is mentioned as the first one gives him the highest social prominence of all. He is a true *gentile* man that has gone through numerous battlefields all around the world:

'At mortal batailles hadde he been fifteen,

And foughten for oure faith at Tramyssene

In lystes thries, and ay slayn his too' (F1: 61-63).

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[18] This medieval proverb is ironic and means that there are no honest millers.
[19] Two young men fighting for love of a young woman.

His warfare experience and knighthood gave him a great degree of dignity that is supported by the horse and his squire. His story is a medieval romance with a happy ending, but his character is not just a naive one. The equipment he has is huge, but not shining and rather seems used. However, this is not caused by non-use, but the complete opposite. Numerous campaigns have him exhausted; still he goes on a pilgrimage with others.

Heroism and courtly love are his ultimate goals in life. The victory in the fight against enemy is a victory in his personal life. Through this victory he wants to reach the ultimate goal in his life which is the love of a lady. This heroic life is distant from the earthly ones of a pardoner or a miller and the language of the tale is to be accordingly different.

The travels and love of chivalry must have taught him a lot foreign vocabulary, especially French origin one. The self presentation as a man of high reputation and respect should make his speech an imposing example of a very rich language. In terms of vocabulary, it means using incomparably (to the other samples) high number of nouns and stative verbs.

His language shall be very complex, even incomprehensible. This proves that his social profile and also his language are very distatnt from the others. Therefore, speaking about syntax, long, and complex sentences with high average number of words per sentence shall be featured in the sample.

The Wife of Bath

She is one of the few female voices represented in the whole work. She is an exceptional character for various reasons. Firstly, she is not only a woman, but she is from a merchant background which is a new, rapidly developing social group of the 14th century. Moreover, she is a skilled pilgrim since she has already been on many pilgrimages even to very distant lands. Her mundane behaviour is quite obvious from the very first glance. Secondly, she is the only character that provides us with the view on marriage and relationships between the genders from the position of a woman.

She has lot of experience with men and Chaucer mentions that:

> '*She was a worthy womman al hir lyve;*
> *Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde five,*

Withouten oother compaignye in youthe-

But thereof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe'

(F1: 459-462).

She also knows the tricks and remedies of love and represents a highly self-confident middle class woman. Since she has married five times and has travelled so much she cannot be very young, rather middle aged which is not an impediment in having love affairs.

According to her portrayal and Prologue to her tale it is expectable that her tale might be about love and relationship between women and men. If it is so, the descriptive style would include rather nouns than verbs. Furthermore, since she had travelled to many lands her vocabulary shall be enriched with many foreign origin words. Her cloth-making business must have connected her to famous cloth-makers from foreign countries (as is said in the portrait, F1: 448) and therefore French origin vocabulary shall be featured in the text. The portrayal does not mention any education of hers which suggests that in terms of syntax, either short sentences or compound sentence connected simply with basic corrdinator (such as *and).*

The Clerk of Oxford

The Clerk is the most educated pilgrim of all. His passion for books is contrasted with the clergy men (the Friar and the Monk) that have officially sworn to poverty, but in fact live the lives of noblemen.

'For him was lever have at his bed's head twenty bookės clad in black or red of Aristotle and his philosophy than robės rich or fiddle or gay psalt'ry but albeit that he was a philosopher yet he haddė but little cold in coffer' (F1: 293-298).

He is depicted as a university scholar, who is a real bookworm and intellectual that has eager for knowledge. He would rather spend the last penny in books than for food. He always lacks finance, but borrowing from his friends is a usual way of collecting money. His rhetorical skills are claimed to be at a very high level since he:

'Noght a word spak he moore than was neede,

And that was seyd in forme and reverence,

And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence;

Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche

35

And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche'

(F1:304-308).

As is assumed in the *General Prologue* his way of speech has one main goal, which is to educate the audience.

It is assumable that the story he shall tell would be full of foreign origin words and also semantically it would be rather academic wordstock including terms from philosophy or law. The proportion of nouns and verbs shall be unbalanced with higher ratio of nouns representing the thoughts or possibly significant (compared to other stories) number of stative verbs.

Concerning the syntax, the sentences shall be rather long and complex with lots of abstract ideas and high average number of words per sentence. Still, as it is said in the Prologue (F1:304), he would not mention any unnecessary words and would strictly go to the point. Furthermore, several references to the old masters of philosophy and literature might be mentioned.

The Pardoner

When we look at his portrayal we see a vicious man that represents one of the greatest differences between the medieval ideal of a profession and its true reality. His face is rather old with greasy and untidy hair, yet it seems very credible. The uneducated countrymen respect him, but people like Chaucer knew about his weaknesses and mostly despised him. Still, there is the question why Chaucer matched a story that bears one of the greatest moral of all the tales with one of the most despicable professions that epitomizes evil. His job is to sell indulgences to the others, but he is just exploiting the sins of the country people in order to earn own money. He would spend these funds in the most blasphemous activities that are gambling, drinking and fornication.

Another striking fact is that he is using fake relics, intimidation and theological arguments to make the sinners pay. Chaucer says that even though he is one of the worst of the living men in terms of the moral rules he is well educated in theology and philosophy. Thus it is easy for him to build up persuasive arguments when talking to the ordinary people. These skills help him to earn such amounts of money that:

'*Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye*

Than that the person gat in monthes tweye

And thus, with feyened flaterye and japes,

He made the person and the people him apes.

But trewely to tellen ate laste,

He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste' (F1:703-708).

He does not desire to have great power, or lead the life of noblemen like the friars. He lives in the countryside, most of his life travelling around and spending his money in taverns.

The language is his means of making the living. The tongue is his working instrument and therefore his choice of language corresponds to it. Focusing on the lexis, use of the religious terms and sophisticated language that most of the people would understand is his great power to make the people fear of hell. This means use of foreign (French and also Latin) vocabulary. In order to make his argument clear he would use antonymic adjectives which would decrease the ratio of verbs and nouns.

The syntax shall also help the Pardoner to increase the strength of his argument. This would be achieved by rather short sentences without any complex structure. Thus, the average number of words would be low. Moreover, use of exclamations in order to make people fear shall be also frequent.

The Friar

Friar is supposed to be a man devoted to strictly monastic life spent in obedience. However, he is one of the classical examples of the ideals and the reality of the medieval world. He is pictured as a loyal, servile subject to the rich who come to him in order to receive absolution. This is rewarded with money that he spends in gluttony and hunting. His stomach is often overfilled with various kinds of meat and wine that it is emptied only through vomiting.

He is a good friend of rich people from towns and lords of the country and does not spend the time in solemnity or with his fellowmen from the order. Begging is not the only way to obtain funds for living His main source is the sponsorship supplied by the higher classes. The sociability and 'fair language' make him a joyful company for the others. In his clothes he looks rather like the pope than a beggar and

'Therefore in stede of wepynge and preyeres

Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres' (F1: 231-232).

He also knows many people from taverns and other places of bad reputation. He always tries to elevate his reputation through making '*Englissh sweete upon his tongue*'. His name that is mentioned in the Prologue is Hubert. Saint Hubert is a patron of hunters which ironically refferes to the Friar who is rather a hunter than a pious man.

The Friar and the Pardoner have one feature in common and it is greed. They both try to earn as much money as possible. However, the both have different ways to reach the goal. While the Pardoner persuades country people to pay him in order avoid hell the Friar convinces higher class people of order's importance for the society. Higher classes need to keep the majority in ignorance. Religious orders are dioing this service for them.

Therefore, he would use sophisticated words derived from French in order to show his education to the nobles. On the other hand he also knows and frequently uses bad oaths and swearwords since he often enjoys company of the lowest classes in taverns. Thus, the vocabulary shall be mixed using both sophisticated and bad words.

Syntactically speaking, he shall use also contradictory sentence structure. This means complex sentences with logically built argument as well as simple sentences with low average number of words per sentence.

The Prioress

In the fourteenth century the convents were widely spread all over England. A prioress was a head of a convent and as seen in the portrayal in the *General Prologue*. Their behaviour was in general comparable to the lifestyle of their male counterparts in the monasteries. She enjoys good food, joyful company and fine clothes. Her manners are mocked and disregarding her attempt to act as a good mannered lady she looks more as a clumsy woman from the country.

Her intellectual skills correspond to her behavior. It is full of pretence.

'*Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne,*
Entuned in hir nose ful seemly;
And frenssh she spak ful fair and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe' (F1: 122-126).

She boasts with her knowledge of French and Latin, but these attempts in the end are rather ridiculous than serious. Instead of being an example of monastic life in piety, prayers and charitable work for the poor she hosts feasts of food, drink and pseudo intellectual debates. She is more interested in mundane issues than religious ones. Her dog enjoys the same privileges when being fed with roasted meat and milk. Nevertheless, she is said to be a sympathetic person that weeps whenever a mouse or other animal is in pain. Obviously, this is meant ironically as almost the whole portrayal.

Since she pretends to be a higher class person, she would adjust he language to that fact. Therefore, high number of French origin words shall be featured. However, her intellectual incapacity to express abstracts ideas and notions would increase the use of verbs than nouns or adjectives. Moreover, her pretence in terms of language skills might cause even misuse of some word of French origin.

The Syntactic structure shall feature artificially long sentences. However, those shall be connected simply by <u>and.</u> The average number of words per sentence might be high in comparison with other character. Nonetheless, it does not elevate the level of her rhetorical skills.

3.3. Tales analyses

3.3.1. Miller's Tale

Before starting the analysis of the lexis itself, several important facts shall be mentioned in order to explain the specific use of the vocabulary.

Firstly, the Miller immediately contrasts his own story with the preceding tale of The Knight and swears:

By armes, and by blood and bones,

I kan a noble tale for the nones,

with which I wol now quite the Knyghtes tale'

(F1: 3125-3127).

The Miller's claims that he would tell a similar story, a romance, but he knows that it will be rather the opposite.

Clearly, it is done on purpose. Chaucer's aim is to put both stories in contrast since Knight is the pilgrim, who is the most respected by the others. He is contrasted with the Miller who belongs to the category of the most disrespected.

Secondly, as it is in all literary works, it is the topic and the characters that have great influx on the vocabulary. The tale is a story of people dealing with rather earthly topics such as cuckolding or jealousy. The social status of the characters is similar to each other. On one hand, there are the students, Absolon and Nicolas are rather poor, but by profession, clever people, belonging to the middle class. Moreover, they both aspire to become king's officials in the future. On the other hand, there is a relatively rich carpenter that is a citizen of Oxford, also belonging to the middle class.

Thirdly, the story describes people in their actions and life and the chain of events is depicted by the author very swiftly as in:

'Thanne fil it thus, that to the paryssh chirche,

Cristes owene werkes for to wirche,

This goode wyf went on an haliday'

(F1: 3307-3309).

Per contra, the story of the Knight is about much more noble topics, such as love, friendship and bravery. Furthermore, it explores philosophical meaning of the actions that happen in the story. It also develops its own ideas about human life, death and his place in the world as illustrated in the following lines:

'What is mankynde moore unto you holde

Than is the sheep that rouketh in the folde?

For slayn is man right as another beest,

And dwelleth eek in prison and arreest,

And hath siknesse and greet adversitee,,

And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee'

(F1: 1307-1312).

Thus, all these specifics of the story demand it to be very different in the lexis.

The Lexis

The Miller, hardly sitting on the horse because of his drunkenness, tells us a story full of swear words and blasphemy. According to the prologue:

'He was a janglere and a goliardeys,
And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee'
(F1: 560-563).

Medieval satire generally considered millers to be very plebeian and the one presented in the *Tales* fits the stereotype in all his parts. This lowbrow features and description of the actions rather than trains of thought bound the language more to the Anglo-Saxon origins. The text itself is therefore easier to read since it uses less instances of vocabulary of Romance origin.

The Miller opens the story talking about a *'riche gnof'* who dwelled in Oxford. Gnof means a churl which is mentioned in the prologue to the *Miller's Tale,* and Miller himself is called this way as a contrary to the '*gentil*' Knight. The use of synonyms to label a single notion shows Miller's rich vocabulary and mastery of the word. Though, being drunk his mind is still clear and his language is not reduced to an idle chatter as it is a frequent case of drunkards. The lack of the French origin words is substituted by a great variety of the Anglo-Saxon lexis. He also speaks of the carpenter from the story that '*He knew not Catoun, for his wit was rude…*' (F1: 3227). These words are another prove of the Miller's knowledge. He breaks the social stereotype as described in chapter 2.1.4 (page 13) and keeps his style at the level that fits his social rank. He does not hesitate to use vulgar words such as '*fart*' and lascivious language with sexual connotations such as '*spille*'. The fact that his style is rather low is supported by following data.

Total word count of the sample is 391. The basic assumption is that the more words are in the sample, the more monosyllabic and disyllabic words are present. Those belong usually to the group of words of the Anglo-Saxon origin which are generally marked as belonging to the language typical for lower social classes. This is proved by synonymous doublets that are preserved in English till today, such as worthy/honourable or sheep/mutton. First is always of Germanic origin that was used by the lower classes. The second is of French origin and is used by the upper classes.

There are also other statistical results. The most prominent and significant one is the total number of words of foreign origin, which is 23. This is the lowest

representation of the foreign words of all the samples. Moreover, no instances of Latin origin have been found in the sample.

Clearly, his story is an example of a narrative from everyday life. This fact affects also the used language. There is an assumption that lower class people rather understand actions that words (Lawton: 24-26). Thus, it is highly probable that when speaking they would also describe rather actions than abstract ideas. Miller, being a low rank person, most probably illiterate and not educated at all frequently tends to use descriptions of the actions rather than abstract ideas. This is proved by another value. There are 89 verbs in the sample. Thus, 51.3% of all the three major word class categories are represented by verbs. Similarly, the number of stative verbs is the second lowest of all which is six in the whole sample. All preceding values show the tendency of the Miller to describe actions rather than thoughts.

The Syntax

His use of foreign words is limited and also the syntactic devices he applies make the text quite easy (in comparison to other tales such as The Clerk of The Knight) to process even for a present day reader. Total number of completed sentences in the sample is 15 and average number of words per sentence is 20.2. At this point, the analysis of the sample could to be reduced only to six complete sentences, for they are the only examples of Miller's speech in the sample. The rest of the nine complete sentences that are in the sample are instances of direct speech of various characters. Thus the average number of words per sentence would be 17.0. The fact that three fifths of the sample are not own words of the narrator himself seemingly decreases the representativeness of the sample. However, interpreted from a stylistic point of view, it is done on purpose and therefore it has to be analyzed. Frequent use of the direct speech has an important impact on the style of the whole tale.

It might be the Chaucer's goal to attract the readers' attention to the text of the tale. As it has been suggested before, Miller is a scandalous person of dubious reputation. A colourful description of carnal desires is supported by frequent instances of direct speech enriched with exclamations and imperatives such as '*Help us to space, or we be dede echon*' (F1: 3608). This is in sharp contrast with the beginning where he stated that he would tell a '*noble story*'.

In another part of the sample we read the speech of Nicolas, the student. His sentence (longest sentence of the whole sample) indicates a great difference in style between the Miller's speech and words of the student. Several non obligatory sentence elements that are present in the sentence show speaker's, in this case Nicolas' mastery of the language and ability to use large variety of expressions. Those non obligatory sentence elements are mainly adverbials such *Upon thy trouthe* as in '*Thou shalt upon thy trouthe swere me heere'* (F1: 3502)*. Change of style is also apparent in complex sentence structure consisting of ten clauses. Less prominent, nonetheless still apparent is the use of fronted indirect object in '*That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wrey'* (F1: 3503)*.

However, these differences between the language of a highly educated person, such as an university student, and a miller are in comparison with the other stories (such as the *Clerk's Tale)* hardly noticeable in this sample.

Several reasons for the frequent use of the direct speech might be found. Firstly, it is the Miller's self consciousness about his language. In scientific language the use of other people's words is considered to be professional. However, in the case of the Miller other reasons shall be looked for. First is the self-consciousness about own language. In the prologue he admits:

> '*That I am dronke; I knowe it by my soun.*
> *And therefore if that I mysspeke or seye,*
> *Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I you prey*'
> (F1: 3138-3140)'

Not only should we blame the beer of the tavern, but also the company of pilgrims such as the Clerk or the Knight. Their complex sentence structure and use of romance vocabulary might have caused him feelings of speaking an inferior kind of language.

By all means, being aware of the fact that he is drunk is another reason why he rather lets Absolon, Alison, John and Nicolas speak in their own words. Nonetheless, the drunkenness brings another interpretation of the frequent use of the direct speech. His unscrupulous behaviour which is beyond the limits of social conventions brought him the right to tell the story right after the Knight and this opportunity combined with his present state of mind reduces him to tell the story without any preparation or

consideration. He speaks swiftly and briefly, the events following each other without any unnecessary descriptions of the setting or the characters such as in:

> *'And thus they been accorded and ysworn*
> *To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.*
> *Whan nicholas had doon thus everideel,*
> *And thakked hire aboute the lendes weel,*
> *He kiste hire sweete and taketh his sawtrie*
> *And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodie'*
> (F1:3301-3306).

He has to quickly recall the story from his memory and the quotations help him to recall it better. The events of the story move rapidly even though the whole tale spans over 667 lines which is the third longest story of the seven selected ones. Long descriptive passages which are typical for the *Knight's Tale* or the *Clerk's Tale* are substituted with direct speech of the main protagonists.

The analysis proved that the Miller tends to use more verbs than nouns. Precisely, the difference between the number of nouns and verbs is 41 one which is the greatest of all the stories. Furthermore, the ratio of French vocabulary is the lowest one proving the assumption that he would use more words of Anglo-Saxon origin. However, he does not try to create a dramatic effect on the audience by using lot of exclamations. In terms of syntax, the anlasysis proved use of rather short simple sentences with second highest number (15) of sentence of all the stories.

3.3.2. The Knight's Tale

The tale of the Knight is the first one told to the pilgrims. Undoubtedly, Knight is the one of all the thirty pilgrims that has the highest social prestige. He is the first one mentioned in the prologue. He has gained this important social status due to his participation in many heroic battles which brought him the membership of 'those who fight'. As has been mentioned in chapter 2.1.3 (page 12), this social group was considered to be the most beneficial to society since they defended all the other people. They were crucially important although they were the least in number.

The status among the other pilgrims brings him a high level of self confidence and in the same way he speaks. No one dares to interrupt his narration and similarly he

does not interfere into the speeches of the other pilgrims. In some cases he settles the disputes between the pilgrims (in the *Monk's Tale)*. Neither does he provide the listeners with a prologue to his tale. This shows a certain level of being uninvolved in the game proposed by the Host. In the same way, as he acts as uninvolved in the group of pilgrims. Similarly his story is a bit distant from the travelling society since it takes part in a land far away (Greece was considered at that time as distant land). Also his language is a bit distant from the middle or low class co-travellers; especially it contrasts with immediately following tale of the Miller.

The Lexis

The tale itself is the longest one, spanning over 2250 lines. However, the sample that is to be examined for the quantification analysis is the second shortest one with only 377 words. The longest one belongs to the Clerk of Oxford. In the sample of the *Knight's Tale* the proportion of nouns and verbs is balanced, with slightly higher ratio of verbs from which twelve are stative. This fact contributes to a static character of Knight's narration. Moreover, the narrator often tends to bring philosophical ideas. Thus the story is in a certain manner elevated to a text focusing not only on noble people but also on their thoughts and their minds such as in:

> *'Thanne seyde he, o crueel goddes that governe*
> *This world with byndyng of youre word eterne,*
> *And writen in the table of atthamaunt*
> *Youre parlement and youre eterne graunt,*
> *What is mankynde moore unto you holde*
> *Than is the sheep that rouketh in the folde?*
> *For slayn is man right as another beest,*
> *And dwelleth eek in prison and arreest,*
> *And hath siknesse and greet adversitee,*
> *And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee'*
> (F1: 1303-1312).

In addition to that, in terms of the subject matter The Knight goes beyond the limits of the terrestrial world. A lot of characters from Greek mythology are mentioned.

The story includes many of the narrator's deviations from the story itself to his own mind such as in:

'I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;

Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,

And lat se now who shal the soper wynne;

And ther I lefte, I wol ayeyn bigynne'

(F1: 889-892).

In other cases he shows his knowledge and education by referring to other mythological stories. However, those short references distract the reader from the plot and are unnecessary for the storyline as it is seen in:

'And certes, if it nere to long to heere,

I wolde have toold yow fully the manere

How wonnen was the regne of femenye

By theseus and by his chivalrye;

And of the grete bataille for the nones

Bitwixen atthenes and amazones;

And how asseged was ypolita,

The faire, hardy queene of scithia;

And of the feste that was at hir weddynge,

And of the tempest at hir hoom-comynge;

But al that thyng I moot as now forbere'

(F1: 875-885)'

His social rank and his education suggests frequent use of French lexis and it is proved by the data. 30 words of the 377 are of French origin. It is the fourth highest value (following the tale of the Clerk, the Friar and the Wife of Bath). Words such as *parlement*, *juge, partie, estaat* or *gentil* prove Knight's preoccupation for higher class issues, such as justice and social differences. As in the case of Miller, no instances of the Latin origin words are found. This partly proves his style to be only apparently complex and formal as it is explained further in the syntactic part of the analysis.

The Syntax

Relatively frequent use of words of French origin (in comparison to the stories such as those of the Miller or the Pardoner) is appended by the syntactic complexity of the tale in general. That means that the sentences are rather long and also the number of sentences is the lowest one of all the stories. Only ten complete sentences (the same number as in the case of the *Clerk's Tale)* speak of Knight's tendency to create manner of speech that would be in concord to his social status. In other words, his noble position supposes him to use long and complex sentences such as in:

> *'And god, that al this wyde world hath wroght,*
>
> *Sende hym his love that hath it deere aboght;*
>
> *For now is palamon in alle wele,*
>
> *Lyvynge in blisse, in richesse, and in heele,*
>
> *And emelye hym loveth so tendrely,*
>
> *And he hire serveth al so gentilly,*
>
> *That nevere was ther no word hem bitwene*
>
> *Of jalousie or any oother teen'*
>
> (F1: 3099-3106)'

As it is seen in the previous text reference the Knight uses the coordinative conjunction *and* and omits the others. Thus, the story is built on a chain of events or lengthy insights into the characters' minds. Major lack of other coordinative conjunctions (such as *for, but* and *or)* shifts the cultivated style on a different level. The Knight was a *gentil* man and:

> *'He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde*
>
> *In al his lyf unto no maner wight'*
>
> (F1: 70-71).

Thus, his sentence structure should be complex, yet what is observed are mostly compound sentences simply connected by *and.*

He tries to mislead the reader with lengthy sentences leaving the impression of a profound language. The *Prologue* does not make any mention of his education and rather speaks of numerous battles he fought all over the world. Hence, the assumption that he had not been educated makes us think that he only pretends to be a

knowledgeable man whose speech is appropriate to his social standing and his scope of interest (see chapter 2.1.3, page 13).

In addition to that there are another proves of his pretence. The average number of words per sentence is the highest one (taking into consideration only the words of the Knight himself) and it is 32.2 words per sentence. If the whole sample including the direct speeches of the story characters is considered the value decreases to 23.8 words per sentence. Since the instances of the direct speech are uttered exclusively by the members of nobility the difference between their speeches and the speeches of the Knight himself should not be very significant. Nonetheless, here the complete contrary is observed. The nobles of the story speak without using any complex sentences such as in:

'I wol be trewe juge, and no partie.
Arcite of thebes shal have emelie,
That by his fortune hath hire faire ywonne'
(F1: 2657-2659).

On the other hand the complexity of the sentence structure of the Knight himself is incomparably high. The reason for this contradiction is to be found in the character of the nobility itself. Higher classes were supposed to speak in high brow manner. However, in the reality they often did not speak that way as suggests the previous quote. They were supposed by the rest of the society to speak differently and they wanted it themselves. The language was a social marker for them. Nonetheless in many cases, as in the case of the Knight, they failed to have it that way. Their style used for the public appearance was becoming artificial, full of French origin words and unnecessarily complex sentence structure. However, in their private lives they tended to speak in simpler manners.

As was presupposed in chapter 3.2 (page 34) Knight uses instances of French origin vocabulary, still 30 is not not as many as would be expected since there are three other pilgrims who used more (the Clerk, the Wife of Bath, the Friar). However, he does not use such a high ratio of nouns. In his sample the verbs are the most represented words class. In terms of syntax the analysis proved high average number of words per

sentence (the highest of all which is 32.2). Similarly the sentences proved to be long and therefore total number of sentences is the lowest (10).

3.3.3. Wife of Bath's Tale

The voice of the Wife of Bath is the only instance of a lay woman in the whole corpus of the *Canterbury Tales*. She is also unique for several other reasons.

Firstly, she is the only character whose profession is not included in the name of her *tale*. Alyson, which is her name, is simply a woman coming from the city of Bath. The fact that she is a very successful cloth-maker is mentioned in her description in the *General Prologue.*

Secondly, she is the complete opposite of a typical woman of the middle ages. Instead of being obedient and devoted wife taking care of the household she is a cosmopolitan prototype of the new class described in chapter 2.1.2 (page 11). It is worth to mention that she has had five husbands in her life which means that she has been widowed five times for no divorce was possible for women in the middle ages. Obviously, she deliberately married old rich men who would sooner or later die and she would inherit their possessions. In all other *tales* the narrator is a typical member of a social or professional group. Thus, it is plausible to make generalizations about the style that is used in a particular story and relate it to the social group the narrator belongs to. Nevertheless, In the case of Wife of Bath this procedure is hardly feasible. She is not an example of a typical middle-class woman. Hence, her style is rather to be judged as an idiolect rather than a social dialect.

Thirdly, this pilgrimage was not the first for her as it is explained in the *General Prologue*:

'*And thries hadde she been at jerusalem;*
She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
At rome she hadde been, and at boloigne,
In galice at seint-jame, and at coloigne.
She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye'
(F1: 463-467).

Thus, the reason to go on a pilgrimage is not a religious one, but rather a joy of adventure and possibly an attempt to search for a new husband since most of the

pilgrims are males. Lastly her prologue to the *tale* is longer than the *tale* itself and the differences between both, mainly in the vocabulary, will be also dealt with.

The prologue to the *tale* is a lengthy account of her life and her opinions about marriage and relations between men and women. Her reason to introduce her *tale* with such a comprehensive overture is twofold. Firstly, she persuades the other, mainly male pilgrims, that women are equal to men in their rights. Secondly, she justifies what she has done in her life.

Her style is like her nature, it is persuasive, dynamic and always serving her argument as suggests the following passage:

> *'But now kan no man se none elves mo,*
> *For now the grete charitee and prayers*
> *Of lymytours and othere hooly freres,*
> *That serchen every lond and every streem,*
> *As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,*
> *Blessynge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,*
> *Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,*
> *Thropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes –*
> *This maketh that ther ben no fayeryes'*
> (F3: 864-872).

Through the use of negation she clearly points out what she finds to be bad and by the repetition of *now* she refers to the difference between the past and present situation.

The Lexis

The sample consists of 392 words which is the second highest value, the Friar having the most (395) words in the sample. On one hand some of the passages include series of short words such as in:

> *'Whan they be comen to the court, this knyght*
> *Seyde he had holde his day, as he hadde hight,*
> *And redy was his answere, as he sayde'*
> (F3: 1023-1025).

Thus she clearly presents the storyline. On the other hand she tries to impress the reader by long, often foreign origin words as in this passage of the prologue to her tale:

'Therfore I made my visitaciouns
To vigilies and to processiouns,
To prechyng eek, and to thise pilgrimages,
To pleyes of myracles, and to mariages,
And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes'

(F3: 555-559).

The ration of verbs, nouns and adjectives is similar to the values of the *Miller's Tale* with nouns standing for 37.7 %, verbs 48.6 and adjectives 13.7. Like the Miller, she also often uses vulgar language as seen from:

'Is it for ye wolde have my queynte allone?
Wy, taak it al! lo, have it every deel!
Peter! I shrewe yow, but ye love it weel;
For if I wolde selle my bele chose,
I koude walke as fressh as is a rose;
But I wol kepe it for youre owene toot'

(F3: 444-449).

The prologue to *Wife's Tale* is in the use of vocabulary very similar to the tale of the Miller. However Alyson's tale itself differs widely, especially when analyzing words of foreign origin.

As regards the frequency of the French and Latin origin words her language skills are at high level. 33 words of French origin and even one Latin origin words (*secree)* are evidence of her language abilities. The semantic fields covering her use of the French origin words are very diverse. The vocabulary spans from the religious terms such as *frères* or prayers through architecture and technical terms such as *castels* or *pistel* to a vocabulary dealing with courtesy and chivalry like *gentillese* and *honest.* The question is how she gained this kind of knowledge.

As being introduced in the *General Prologue* she is a middle class woman and mostly probably in her childhood she was a member of a low rank family. Her ambitious and utilitarian character helped her to ascend the social ladder. As she recounts her life seen through her marriages she does not mention the education. Therefore it can be concluded that she has none or if she had ever received any it must have been insignificant. She compensated the lack of education by marrying rich, higher

class men and by travelling. The elevation of her social status and international trips helped her to unconsciously enrich her vocabulary and supplied her with knowledge in general as she shows in following passage:

'Glad poverte is an honest thyng, certeyn;

This wole senec and othere clerkes seyn'

(F3: 1183-1184).

The Syntax

As certain similarities in vocabulary with the story of the Miller have been found, also in syntax few comparable tendencies shall be mentioned. Firstly the number of sentences is 14 which is only one less than in the sample from the *Miller's Tale*. Secondly, if the direct speech is omitted from analysis the remaining number of complete sentences is 7 which is only one higher compared to the Miller. However, the effect of the reduction of the sentences is the absolute opposite for the average number of words per sentence increases from 16.9 to 23.3 while in the case of the Miller the value decreased.

What happened in the syntactic part simply follows the pattern from the lexical part. The style of Wife of Bath is quite inconsistent. In some cases a colloquial style and very simple sentence structure are very apparent features as in:

'But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele'

(F3: 949).

Yet, in other parts some instances of very complex syntax could be found as when she describes the return of the knight:

'Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,

And many a wydwe, for that they been wise,

The queene hirself sittynge as a justise,

Assembled been, his answere for to heere;

And afterward this knyght was bode appeere'

(F3: 1026-1030).

The inconsistence of her style is also evidenced by the number of stative verbs. Nine is a value that is just in the middle between the earthy style of the Miller (6 stative verbs) and artificially poetic style of the Knight's story (12 stative verbs).

To sum up, style of Alyson speaks not only of her character but also about her life itself. She came from poor conditions of low ranks and demotic language. Nevertheless, she managed to improve her social position and thus she mastered a more complex language. Therefore she disproved the hypothesis from chapter 3.2 (page 35) that she would use simple and short sentences. Similarly, she does not use more nouns than verbs. However, she does not use extraordinaly high number of French origin vocabulary.

3.3.4. The Clerk's Tale

The *tale* has not even started yet and the Host is already conscious about two basic features of the *Clerk's Tale.* Firstly, it is the subject matter. The Host is afraid that the overeducated Clerk (compared to other pilgrims) would tell a tedious and boring story and he asks him to:

'Telle us som myrie tale, by youre fey!

For what man that is entred in a pley,

He nedes moot unto the pley agente'

(F4: 9-11).

Secondly, the Host is worried about the style wherein he will tell the story and he beseeches the Clerk:

'Youre termes, youre colours, and youre figures,

Keepe hem in stoor til so be that ye endite

Heigh style, as whan that men to kynges write.

Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, we yow preye,

That we may understonde what ye seye'

(F4: 16-20).

Obviously, the Clerk is the most educated person of all the pilgrims and they all respect his knowledge as the Host shows in the abovementioned passage. Furthermore The Clerk himself is aware of this fact, but he does not misuse this privilege by employing highly complex and incomprehensible style. He expresses the disagreement with the way the story-telling contest is lead by other than linguistic means.

He uses the topic of the *tale* to show what he dislikes about the competition. The protest against the governance of one human being over another is the topic of his tale

and similarly the Clerk is against the idea that the Host should be the only judge and authority in the contest as he claims:

> *'And for to make yow the moore mury,*
>
> *I wol myselven goodly with yow ryde,*
>
> *Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde,*
>
> *And whoso wole my juggement withseye*
>
> *Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye'*
>
> (F1: 802-806).

The Clerk disagrees with Host's leadership and asserts that only God has the right to govern people and justifies further:

> *'For certes he,*
>
> *Er we were born, knew al oure freletee;*
>
> *And for oure beste is al his governaunce.*
>
> *Lat us thanne lyve in vertuous suffraunce'*
>
> (F4: 1159-1162).

Another worth mentioning fact is the relation to Italy between the story and the Clerk. Right at the beginning the reader is told that:

> *'Ther is, right at the west syde of ytaille,*
>
> *Doun at the roote of vesulus the colde,*
>
> *A lusty playn, habundant of vitaille,*
>
> *Where many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,*
>
> *That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,*
>
> *And many another delitable sighte,*
>
> *And saluces this noble contree highte'*
>
> (F4: 57-63).

Moreover, Clerk, being a professional scholar, states in the end the source of the story that just has been told and he adds a comment about the language:

> *'therfore petrak writeth*
>
> *This storie, which with heigh stile he enditeth'*
>
> (F4: 1147-1148).

Thus, Chaucer's inspiration by early humanists is also apparent in the language that he uses as will be seen in the lexis of the *Clerk's Tale* (chapter 3.3.4, page 55)

The Lexis

The sample of the Clerk's Tale is extracted from the second longest story of all those that have been analyzed. It spans over 1219 lines, but the sample itself is the shortest one of all including only 373 words. The preceding value is the lowest one mainly for the high number of polysyllabic words like *herbergage*, *sustenance* or *habundance* that are found at the beginning of the story. The frequent use of convoluted and foreign origin vocabulary is a typical sign of the Clerk's story as is apparent in:

'*For though that evere vertuous was she,*

She was encressed in swich excellence

Of thewes goode, yset in heigh bountee,

And so discreet and fair of eloquence,

So benigne and so digne of reverence,

And koude so the peples herte embrace,

That ech hire lovede that looked in hir face'

(F4: 407-413)

In the whole sample there are 35 words of French origin which is the highest number of all the samples. Despite the fact that Chaucer and his *Clerk's Tale* are closely connected to Italy the general cultural and linguistic atmosphere of England in the late 14th century is afflicted by French language and culture.

The number of originally French words is a convincing evidence of the influence of French in English society. While lower and uneducated classes (the Miller) were still, three hundred years after the Norman Conquest, influenced much less than higher and educated classes (the Clerk). The difference between the Miller and the Clerk in number of French origin words is 13 and the frequency of their use in the *Clerk's Tale* is 152% of the *Miller's Tale*. Moreover, the difference is not only linguistic but also social.

Furthermore, the sample also features two instances of Latin origin (in bold) words that are put into one couplet:

'*She doghter were, for, as by **conjecture**,*

*Hem thoughte she was another **creature**'*

(F4: 405-406).

Previous quote and the presence of two words of Latin origin are closely connected to the subject matter of the story. As it is said in the previous quotation, the people of the village thought Griselda to be *another creature*, which means that she changed. Apparently, she changed as a person, but by using the Latin origin words Clerk subtly suggests that also her social status increased. Consequently, also Griselda's language style changed.

Focusing on the ratios of nouns, verbs and adjectives two important phenomena are observed. First is the balance of nouns and verbs. There are 68 nouns and equal number of verbs in the sample. This coincidence can be hardly ascribed to the intention of the Clerk himself. Such a balance cannot be compared to any other of the samples. The Knight is the closest one with only three words difference. Despite the fact that the equality is unconscious, it tells the reader about the sense for keeping particular language features in symmetry. Secondly, it is the highest ratio of adjectives which comprise 18% of the total sum of nouns, verbs and adjectives. This could be ascribed to Clerk's ability to assess various entities.

The Syntax

The balance is kept also in some of the syntactic features. Whole sample consists of 10 complete sentences which is the lowest number of all the samples. After the direct speech is extracted seven sentences are left, but the change in average number of words per sentence is only 0.5 from 24.1 to 24.6, again the lowest of all the samples. This means that in the direct speech syntactically similar language is used. Generally speaking, the direct speech is used very rarely in comparison with other tales such as those of the Miller and the Friar. There are certain ideas described in too complicated ways (in bold) in both direct speech and Clerk's words such as when Lord Walter speaks:

*'**Consenteth it, that dar I undertake**;*

And trewely thus muche I wol yow seye,

My newe wyf is comynge by the weye.

Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place,

And thilke dowere that ye broghten me,

Taak it agayn; I graunte it of my grace'

Similarly, he uses redundant phrases (in bold) such as:

'Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee,

Whan that the peple gazed up and doun;

For they were glad, **right for the noveltee***,*

To han a newe lady of hir toun'

Both either redundant or complicated expressions show speaker's rhetorical skills. Namely, the ability typical for highly educated people to describe simple phenomena with many words or even to use redundant phrases to emphasize one particular idea.

Furthermore, there is a certain tendency of a scholar, the Clerk, to keep the narration cohesive when he refers '*to janicle of which I spak bifore'* (F4: 404).

The Clerk proved to be very fond of educated terms and foreign origin vocabulary. His 35 instances of French origin words is the highest number of all the stories. However, he did not use more nouns than verbs as was expected in chapter 3.2 (page 36). Syntanctically speaking he proved to use long sentences since the average number of words per sentence is 24.6 which is the second highest.

3.3.5. Pardoner's Tale

The portrayal of the Pardoner as is presented in the *General Prologue* is twofold. On one hand, there is rather an old man, slightly drunk and obviously full of bodily needs. On the other hand there is a cleric claiming that:

'Radix malorum est Cupiditas'

In other words, root of all evil is greed. At the same time, he is described as a religious person. Concerning the analysis of the language that is used, the most important information that is given in the *General Prologue* is:

'But trewely to tellen atte laste,

He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.

Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,

But alderbest he song an offertorie;

For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,

He moste preche and wel affile his tonge

To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude;

Therefore he song the murierly and loude'

(F1: 707-714).

He is clever enough to know how to adjust his speech in order to reach the goal, get money from people. His portrayal mentioned in chapter 3.2 (page 36) is a depiction of a job how it really looks like. In his behaviour to the other fellow pilgrims he is completely honest which proves the confession in the whole prologue to his *tale*. However, in the ends he tries deceive his audience on the pilgrimage as he does when preaching to the folk. Nonetheless, his rhetorical skills are still at a very high level. Despite being aware of the pilgrims' brightness he cannot prevent himself from using a didactic and sometimes even patronizing tone as seen here:

'O glotonye, ful of cursednesse!

O cause first of oure confusioun!

O original of oure dampnacioun,

Til crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn!'

(F6: 498-501).

He very often comments the events of the story and directly recommends his listeners what they should not do as when he is preaching against drunkenness:

'Now kepe yow fro the white and fro the rede,

And namely fro the white wyn of lepe,

That is to selle in fysshstrete or in chepe'

(F6: 562-564).

Another typical feature of his style is frequent reffering to the bible and radical (for middle ages typical) anti-Semitic opinions as he points out:

'Oure blissed lordes body they totere, --

Hem thoughte that jewes rente hym noght ynough;

And ech of hem at otheres synne lough'

(F6: 474-476).

However, he is not educated only in the religious matters, but also in general knowledge when he talks about Seneca:

'Senec seith a good word doutelees;

He seith he kan no difference fynde

Bitwix a man that is out of his mynde

And a man which that is dronkelewe,

But that woodnessse, yfallen in a shrewe,

Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse'

(F6: 492-497).

Lastly it should be mentioned that analysis of the *Pardoner's Tale* is first from the group of clergymen and therefore the differences from the previous *tales*, both in vocabulary and syntax will be evident.

The Lexis

The analyzed sample includes 391 words from which only 161 represent nouns, verbs and adjectives. 161 words stand for 41.1% of all words in the sample and it is the lowest value from all the samples. Hence, frequent use of other word classes, mainly demonstrative and personal pronouns is seen as in the following passage:

'*And whan he cam, hym happede, par chaunce,*

That alle the gretteste that were of that lond,

Pleyynge atte hasard he hem fond'.

The scope of Pardoner's work triggers extensive use of terms connected to religious matters:

'*The heighe God forbad sweryng at al,*

Witnesse on mathew; but in special

Of sweryng seith the hooly jeremye,

Thou shalt swere sooth thyne othes, and nat lye,

And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisnesse;

But ydel sweryng is a cursednesse'

(F6: 633-638).

Looking at the sample the reader immediately notices a significant difference between the first 20 lines, plus last 10 lines of the sample (called part A) and lines 21 to 40 of the sample (part B). There are 25 out of the total of 30 French origin words in the part A of the sample. In addition to that, three words of Latin origin, which are *corrupt, reputacioun* and *bulle* are also find in the part A of the sample. Preceding findings

explain the contrasts between the Pardoner-preacher and Pardoner-narrator. In the part A he criticizes humankind and tries to lecture his audience, often with pathetic and exalted words:

'Lo, how deere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileynye
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye'
(F6: 502-504).

In the part B the reader is told the story and it is rather a simple recount of what happened without any emotional tone or preaching:

'That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest,
And bad hem drawe, and looke where it wol falle;
And if fil on the yongeste of hem alle,
And forth toward the toun he wente anon'
(F6: 802-805).

Moreover, the French origin vocabulary is into a considerable degree related to Christian matter (in bold) such as in:

'Now goode men, God foryeve yow youre trespas,
*And ware yow fro the synne of **avarice**!*
*Myn hooly **pardoun** may yow alle **warice**,*
So that ye offre nobles or sterlynges,
Or elles silver broches, spoones, rynges'
(F6: 903-908).

The Syntax

As it has been concluded in the vocabulary part, also the analysis of the syntax is considerably influenced by the preaching factor that is deeply embedded in Pardoner's character. In the fifteen complete sentences six of them are exclamations, which is to be interpreted as author's attempt to emphasize Pardoner's role as a preacher. In other words, exclamations prove that Pardoner is a person that is used to affect people by very suggestive and sometimes even threatening words:

'Boweth youre heed under this hooly bulle!

Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of youre wolle!'

(F6: 909-910).

His *tale* is in its form very close to a lecture wherein he preaches against greed. This type of preaches was typical as described in chapter 2.1.5 (page 14). His lecture is accompanied with a short story about three friends whose greed brought them to death. Most of the *tale* consists of Pardoner's long narration about human sins and misbehaviour and he starts the criticism at the beginning:

'Adam oure fader, and his wyf also,

Fro paradys to labour and to wo

Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede'

(F6: 505-507).

Therefore, the text itself does not include long passages of direct speeches between the characters as is seen in the *Miller's Tale* or *Wife of Bath's Tale*. Thus, after extracting of the direct speech there are still 13 complete sentence left. Hence, the average number of words per sentence does not change very much. It decreases from 20.3 to 18.6 suggesting that the three heroes (whose only words are mentioned in the *tale)* spoke with similar brevity of the sentences as the Miller:

'Thou knowest wel tho art my sworen brother;

Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.

Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon.

And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,

That shal departed been among us thre'

(F6: 808-812).

Pardoner, as is concluded in the end of his *tale* is considered by the others as a deceiver. The Host points out:

'Lat be, quod he, it shal nat be, so theech!

Thou woldest make me kisse thyn olde breech,

And swere it were a relyk of a seint,

Though it were with thy fundement depeint!'

(F6: 947-950).

He tries to extort money from the other pilgrims using his usual communication techniques, which are threat with God's punishment and moral examples from history

or mythology. However, he fails to convince the pilgrims, mainly due to their own wit.

The Pardoner proved that he uses the language in order to persuade and deceive people. However, he does not exesively use French origin words. What has been proved is the use of Latin origin vocabulary, especially the one connected to religion. Also the hypothesis about syntax (chapter 2.3, page 36) proved to be correct since he uses 15 complete sentences (second highest number) which are in three cases exclamative.

3.3.6. The Friar's Tale

The Friar is the male member of the Church with highest rank within the clergy that is represented in all the *tales*. As is said at the beginning of the *prologue* to his *tale, 'This worthy lymytour, this noble frere'* (F4: 1265) should be a moral authority in religious matters for all other pilgrims. He is supposed to preach the Word of God and live from the alms. Similarly, his language should be without any swearing or oaths. However, the changes of the Church in middle ages changed also its members so that the real Friar is a completely different person.

He is rude and often offensive, especially to summoners and it costs him a lot of effort to behave properly so that '*No vileyns word as yet to hym spak he*' (F4: 1268). Nonetheless, his story that follows is a long series of insults, swearing and foul language ascribed to a summoner, a clerical profession generally hated by friars as he describes:

'*For thogh this somonour wood were as an hare,*
To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare;
For we been out of his correccioun.
They han of us no jurisdiccioun,
Ne nevere shullen, terme of alle hir lyves'
(F4: 1327-1331).

In the end of the fourteenth century the Church serves a different cause than it used to serve several hundred years ago. The friars have become corrupted, misbehaving and caring mainly about their own wellbeing. Their behaviour is hardly distinguishable from the nobles and they speak as if they were nobles, frequently using French origin words. Their rhetorical skills are on a very high level as suggests the Friar's portrait in the *General Prologue*:

'In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan

So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage'

(F1: 210-211).

Very often he uses his *'fair language'*, to manipulate with other people as is said in the *General Prologue*:

'Ful wel biloved and famulier was he

With frankeleyns over al in his contree,

And eek with worthy wommen of the toun;

For he hadde power of confessioun,

As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,

For of his ordre he was licenciat'

(F1: 215-220)

The Lexis

  Friar's sample is the longest one of all, having 395 words over fifty lines. This would suggest a frequent use of monosyllabic words which implies rare use of French origin words. However, the values prove the opposite. The Friar uses 34 words of French origin which is the second highest number (first is the sample of the Clerk). The contradiction is caused by one major factor which is the types of characters that are featured in the story, mainly the summoner. Despite the fact that summoners are members of the clergy like friars, he is mocked at by the narrator for his expediency:

'Withouten mandement a lewed man

He koude somne, on peyne of cristes curs,

And they were glade for to fille his purs,

And make hym grete feestes atte nale'

(F6: 1346-1349).

  Paradoxically, Friar's criticism of summoner's greediness is to a certain degree similar to the portrait of the Friar in the *General Prologue*. They both persuade people and threaten them, but each of them in a different way.

  The Friar use sophisticated means which are various figures of speech such as simile or repetition as seen here:

'Herketh this word! beth war, as in this cas:

> *The leoun sit in his awayt alway*
> *To sle the innocent, if that he may'*
> (F4: 1656-1658)

and:

> *'And right as judas hadde purses smale,*
> *And was a theef, right swich a theef was he;*
> *His maister hadde but half his duetee'*
> (F4: 1350-1352).

Furthermore, the difference in the vocabulary between the Friar and the summoner, who is the main character of the story is self evident. In the passages told directly by the Friar himself he uses a large number of French origin words such as in:

> *'This somnour, evere waityng on his pray,*
> *Rood for to somne an old wydwe, a ribibe,*
> *Feynynge a cause, for he wolde brybe'*
> (F4: 1376-1378).

Yet, in the passages told by the summoner low number of French origin words is observed and his whole education and knowledge can be easily argued as stated in the *General Prologue:*

> *'And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,*
> *Thanne wolde he speke no word but latyn.*
> *A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,*
> *That he had lerned out of som decree'*
> (F1: 637-640).

The proportion between nouns, verbs and adjectives is opposite to all preceding samples. While in the prior cases the number of verbs was always higher or equal to number of nouns (in the *Clerk's Tale),* in the sample extracted from the Friar's story there are more nouns than verbs. The explanation is to be found in the high number of similes and repetition as has been mentioned before.

The Syntax

The uniqueness of the Friar's sentence structure amongst the other pilgrims is based on several factors. Firstly, it is the highest number of complete sentences of all

the samples which is 21. Secondly, it is the very frequent use of the direct speech. 12 of 21 sentences are representing the words of the characters involved in the story. Thirdly, it is the difference between the average number of words per sentence of all the sentences (14.4) and the sentences said only by the Friar himself (23.3).

The first value, highest number of sentences is explicable by frequent quoting of the conversations between the story characters. The Friar is not commenting the story as does the Pardoner in his *tale*. There is also a similarity with other *tale*. Both *Miller's Tale* and *Friar's Tale* are mainly, according to the samples, created by quotations of the characters. However, in both cases due to different reasons. In the latter it is a digression to support the notion of a summoner being lecherous as presented in the *prologue* to the *tale*:

'I wol yow of a somonour telle a game.

Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name

That of a somonour may no good be sayd;

I praye that noon of you be yvele apayd.

A somonour is a rennere up and doun

With mandementz for fornicacioun,

And is ybet at every townes ende'

(F4: 1279-1285).

The ways the Friar uses in order to disrepute the summoner is very sophisticated. Instead of Friar's attributes ascribed to the summoner he uses summoner's own words making the idea of his spoilt character more credible. The summoner convicts himself of committing sins:

'Nere myn extorcioun, I myghte nat lyven,

Ne of swiche japes wol I nat be shryven.

Stomak ne conscience ne knowe I noon;

I shrewe thise shrifte-fadres everychoon.

Wel be we met, by God and by seint jame!'

(F4: 1439-1443).

The enormous difference between two values of average number of words per sentence means a great contrast between the style of the Friar and a summoner. On one

hand, the second reduced sample based only of the utterances of the Friar shows a complex sentence structure as in:

'*Lordynges, I koude han toold yow, quod this frere,*

Hadde I had leyser for this somonour heere,

After the text of crist, poul, and john,

And of oure othere doctours many oon,

Swiche peynes that youre hertes myghte agryse,

Al be it so no tonge may it devyse,

Thogh that I myghte a thousand wynter telle

The peynes of thilke cursed hous of helle'

(F4: 1645-1652).

On the other hand there are syntactically simple examples of summoner's threatening tone:

'*Yis, quod this somonour, pay anon, lat se,*

Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquite'

(F4: 1598-1599).

All the conclusions prove Friar's use of syntax and style in general to support his argument against The Summoner whose tale follows immediately the Friar's. Morover, he proved to use many instances of French origin vocabulary (34 is the second highest number). The syntax proved to be rather inconsistent switchin between complex sentences and simple ones.

3.3.7. Prioress's Tale

The story of the Prioress to a certain degree follows the linguistic pattern of the *Friar's Tale*. While the previous story was a direct attack on one of the other pilgrims, the following one is a typical instance of anti-Semitism of the middle ages, reaching its heyday in Europe after the struck of the Black Death.[20]

---

[20] It is important to say that Jews in general were banned from England earlier in the end of the 13th century during the reign of Edward I. Still, anti-Semitism was spread all over Europe even in the places where Jews were not present. The reason is an issue for social history and anthropology so it will not be dealt further here. However, it is worth mentioning that the anti-Semitism gained its popularity after occurrence of plague for the Jews were often blamed for attracting misfortune.

She was member of the clergy, as both previous characters, but she was a woman. In the portrait she is (regardless of the level irony) described as a very fragile person, who is to a large extent connected to cowardice. Her criticism is not directed to a concrete person or *estaat* of the pilgrimage but to a whole nation which was already disgraced by the societ. She just adds her disdain of Jews to general social atmosphere.

At the beginning she tells the audience about the purpose of the story:

'Wherfore in laude, as I best kan or may,

Of thee and of the white lyle flour

Which that the bar, and is a mayde alway,

To telle a storie I wol do my labour;

Nat that I may encressen hir honour,

For whe hirself is honour and the roote

Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules boote'

(F7: 460-466).

Therefore, her aim is to praise God, his Son and the Mother of the Son. In fact her story is a defamation of Jews and she starts with ill-speaking at the beginning of the story:

'Ther was in asye, in a greet citee,

Amonges cristene folk, a jewerye,

Sustened by a lord of that contree

For foule usure and lucre of vileynye,

Hateful to crist and to his compaignye'

(F7: 488-492).

The *tale* is a typical story known as miracles of Virgin Mary with anti-Semitic tone which is based on another, at that time, common motif which is a Christian child slain by Jews. Evidently, her aim is to arouse feeling of sympathy in the pilgrims and she uses certain language tools.

The Lexis

Even a first glance at the statistical outcome of the sample gives the reader quite a deep insight in the structure of the vocabulary. One value is very similar to the preceding story of the Friar. This is the inverse proportion of nouns (76) and verbs (71).

However here it should be ascribed to Prioress's tendency to use very pathetic exclamations:

> '*O cursed folk of herodes al newe,*
>
> *What may youre yvel entente yow availle?*'
>
> (F7: 574-575).

Furthermore, there are several cases of invoking God and saint very often accompanied with *-of constructions* including Christian characters such as in:

> '*O martir, sowded to virginitee,*
>
> *Now maystow syngen, folwynge evere in oon*
>
> *The white lamb celestial -- quod she --*
>
> *Of which the grete evaungelist, seint john,*
>
> *In pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon*
>
> *Biforn this lamb, and synge a song al newe,*
>
> *That nevere, flesshly, wommen they ne knewe*'
>
> (F7: 579-585).

Interestingly, the number of French origin words is 27 which is the second lowest one of all. The possible explanation is twofold. On one hand, it could be her deliberate will to adjust the language as she was used to do when preaching to the common country people. On the other hand and as concluded from her portrait in the *General Prologue* her language skills were on surface artificially pretentious, yet in reality she did not have the knowledge to speak that way regardless of the effort she put in the speech.

The syntax

In the sentence structure Prioress managed to elevate her style into a certain degree. We have only eleven complete sentences with average number of words per sentence 26.1. The use of direct speech is quite rare and only three sentences are extracted from the sample so that the final average number of words per sentence decreases to 21.5. In general, the instances of direct speech increase the sentence complexity of the sample as if we look at this example:

> '*this song, I have herd seye,*
>
> *Was maked of our blisful lady free,*

> *Hire to salue, and eek hire for to preye*
> *Fo been oure help and socour whan we deye.*
> *I kan namoore expounde in this mateere;*
> *I lerne song, I kan but smal grammeere'*
> (F7: 531-536).

The passage is uttered by an elder friend, probably a student who was a friend of the young child martyr. The elder friend is very modest when talking about his intellectual capacity, yet using many words of French origin and also Latin such as *mateere.*

The rest of the Prioress's words are rather simple clauses connected only with *and* as in:

> *'And homycide therto han they hyred,*
> *That in an aleye hadde a privee place;*
> *And as the child gan forby for to pace,*
> *This cursed jew hym hente, and heeld hym faste,*
> *And kitte his throute, and in a pit hym caste'*
> (F7: 567-571).

In the portrait she is described as a superficial and fairly strained person and she proves it in the *tale.* This is proved by low number of sentences which is only 11. However, she did not use so many instance of French origin vocabulary (27 is the second lowest number) and similarly she did not prove to use more verbs than nouns since there are 71 verbs and 76 nouns.

4. Summary and Conclusions

The thesis attempted to analyze the influence of social factors on a language style of particular characters in the *Canterbury Tales*. The first part provided a theoretical background including the chapters dealing with social history, history of the language and sociolinguistic approach to the *Canterbury Tales*. The practical part focuses on the characters themselves, provides their description and states hypotheses about their style. Furthermore, it features the analyses of the style divided according to the characters.

The hypothesis that were stated in the description of the characters in chapter 3.2 (pages 34-43) were partly corroborated and partly not as is seen in the chapter 3.3 (the last paragraph of each analysis). However, the major importance lies in the stylistic analyses of chapter 3.3 (pages 43-74). The analyses were partly concerned on the hypotheses stated in chapter 3.2 (pages 34-43), but it was not the only focus. They also describe some specific aspects of each particular story. These aspects influence further on the outcome of the principle hypothesis.

The investigation also showed the limits of the chosen method of analysis. The analyses focused on the lexis and syntax were reduced to two main aspects in each. For the lexicographical part there were the proportion of nouns, verbs and adjectives and number of French origin words. For the syntactic part there were the number of sentences and average number of words per sentence, both measured with direct speech included and excluded. There could have been more aspects included, but it would have extended the thesis into several hundred pages long study. To return where we started we shall answer the question from chapter 1 (page 6).

The first question asked whether there are any stylistic differences between the stories. At a first glance, the values in the statistics significantly differ (see appendix no. 2, page 87). These differences influence the style of the speakers. Some of the characters use rather Anglo–Saxon vocabulary and short sentences (like the Miller) while others use lot of instances of French origin vocabulary accompanied with complex sentences (like the Clerk of Oxford). These differences show high level of Chaucer's ability to change the style in order to fit the social profile of the speaker.

The second question asked to what degree are the differences in style influenced by social aspects of the character. The influence by social aspects in each case is

evident. At the same time it is different in each of the cases. For example, there is the Prioress who deliberately changes her style in order to appear as a higher class person. There is also the Friar, who adjusts his style in order to defame summoners and praise friars.

The third question asks if Chaucer's description corresponds to the social reality of 14th century England as described by the historians in chapter 2.1 (page 9-15). On one hand, the characters that were created by Chaucer still remain literally characters however real they might seem. On the other hand, as proves chapter 2.1 (pages 9-15), the characters as presented could have existed and are not diachronic at all. They fit the general atmosphere of the 14th century England.

Finally, there is the final hypothesis supposing that Chaucer's description of characters corresponds to the description of social reality given by the historians. The style used by various characters is also significantly different from each other. These differences are caused by different social rank of the characters and the style of particular character can be defined as a sociolect. The answer is partly connected to the previous question. The characters seem to be fitting the situation in society in the given period as proved by the historians in chapter 2.1 (page 9-15). However, the degree to which the style of the characters can be called a sociolect is arguable. Therefore there shall be no general conclusion for all the characters but the principle hypothesis shall be proved or disproved for each of them separately. The basic criteria for assement are the membership of a certain socially significant group and using variety of language according to the user.

The Miller represents the lower classes. He is described as a cunning person who is dishonest. Another social stereotype which Chaucer provides us with is the fact that he is drunk. The style he uses is full of foul language. Furthermore he prefers to use Anglo-Saxon origin words which make short sentences. However, his style shall be rather called register than sociolect for the following reasons. Firstly, the fact that he is drunk changes his style as has been explained in chapter 3.3.1 (page 47). Since a sociolect is not influenced by any temporary conditions which being drunk is. Secondly, he wants to mock the story of the Knight by linguistic means (foul language contrasted to the high brow style of the Knight) which also proves that style he uses is variety according to the use and not the user. Therefore it is not a social dialect.

The second character is the Knight whose style is influenced by his social rank as is described in chapter 3.3.2 (page 52). However, this influence is not caused by Knight's deliberate intention to speak in high-brow manners. As is described in chapter 2.1.3 (pages 12-13) a certain way of speaking was expected from the nobility. As well as the nobility has the language style as a social marker. Similarly, knighthood demanded certain degree of social distinctiveness from other people. At first it was a variety according to the use, but through the centuries this style became inborn part of the nobles' social life. Furthermore, it is the Knight's social and also linguistic distance (chapter 3.3.2, page 48) that makes his style to be a social dialect.

The third character is the Wife of Bath. Her social profile hints that in terms of social history she is not a member of such a socially significant group as the Knight. Sociologically, she is rather an exception as seen in chapter 3.3.3 (page 52). Social group she would be member of did not exist in her times. Also Chaucer, in his description avoids any social stereotypes. This is simply for the reason that there were not any for a middle class self confident woman. Even though her use of language is not subordinated to any temporary conditions, the lack of larger social group with at least similar social profile excludes her style from being defined as a sociolect as has been already explained in chapter 3.3.3 (page 53).

Following character is the Clerk of Oxford. His story is also (like in case of the Miller, or the Friar) the way to express opinions. However as said in chapter 3.3.4 (page 57) he uses other than linguistic means to do so, which does not exclude his style from the category of sociolect. As well as he is a scholar which means certain social prestige. Furthermore, his social status and distinctiveness of language style is very much respected by the other pilgrims as described in chapter 3.3.4 (page 57). He is also aware of the special position within the society. He expresses this exceptionality also by his style (chapter 3.3.3, pages 57-61). Also the fact, that he expresses his opinions by other than linguistic means, tells us that he wants his style to be consistent and independent on possible temporary purposes. His membership of a socially defined group and willingness to keep his style independent on temporary conditions define it as a sociolect.

The fifth story analyzed was the *Pardoner's Tale*. Pardoner's profile as depicted by Chaucer is full of stereotypes and he is an epitomy of evil of Earth. He is despised

and generally hated by the people. This hatred made pardoners outcasts always travelling alone (chapter 3.3.5, page 63), but it gave also gave them very specific social status. His style is highly influenced by the purposes (chapter 3.2, page 40) therefore it shall be excluded from a category of sociolect. However, his style used on purpose has become style used on everyday basis. As mentioned in chapter 3.3.5 (page 63) he uses the same style not only when talking to the uneducated folk, but also to noble and educated pilgrims (the Knight, the Clerk). This is a prove that that his way of speech is interiorized without any deliberate swiches. Thus, his style can be defined as a sociolect.

The Friar is another member of the clergy presented in the story. His social status can be quite precisely specified as in the case of the Pardoner. He is a typical clergyman of the 14th century, rather fat and drunk than slim and hardworking. Still, his language style cannot be defined as a sociolect for one crucial reason. This is the fact that his story and more precisely the style of his tale are highly influenced by specific temporary purposes (described in chapter 3.3.6, page 67). At a first glance at the analysis it is clear that his style is a variety based on the purpose and not the user and therefore it cannot be defined as a sociolect.

The last character is the Prioress. She mentions the purpose of the story (chapter 3.3.7, page 71) and the linguistic means are subordinated to this purpose. This is the reason why her her style is excluded from the category of sociolect. Other reason is the fact that she deliberately changes her style in order to appear as a high class person. Moreover, she fails to do so in a proper way and thus her style is rather ridiculous than high. These reasons prove that her style is distinct because of the use and not her character. Thefore it cannot be defined as sociolect.

As we have seen in the previous seven paragraphs in some of the stories the principle hypothesis (chapter 1, page 6) has been proved and in some of the cases not. Chaucer was surely aware of social and language differences between the characters (Lerer: 70-71). When he was creating his characters he must have been thinking about their social profiles connected to the language style (i.e. the Clerk, F4: 16-20). Therefore he unintentionally ascribed three of the characters (The Knight, the Clerk, and the Pardoner) feautures of a sociolect. He did not know the term. He just connected the social stereotypes with language stereotypes in order to create a 'typical'

representant of a social group. This 'typical' member would have a 'typical' language style ascribed to the the group creating a sociolinguistic prototype. However, present day definition of a sociolect applies only to three of the characters and not all seven as Chaucer intended to.

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6. Appendix

Appendix no. 1: samples of the stories

Appendix no.2: graph of the statistics

Appendix no. 1

Miller's Tale

And thus they been accorded and ysworn
3301
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.
3302
Whan nicholas had doon thus everideel,
3303
And thakked hire aboute the lendes weel,
3304
He kiste hire sweete and taketh his sawtrie,
3305
And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodie.
3306
Thanne fil it thus, that to the paryssh chirche,
3307
Cristes owene werkes for to wirche,
3308
This goode wyf went on an haliday.
3309
Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day,
3310
And hende nicholas and alisoun
3401
Acorded been to this conclusioun,
3402
That nicholas shal shapen hym a wyle
3403
This sely jalous housbonde to bigyle;
3404
And if so be the game wente aright,
3405
She sholde slepen in his arm al nyght,
3406
For this was his desir and hire also.
3407
And right anon, withouten wordes mo,
3408
This nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,
3409
But dooth ful softe unto his chambre carie
3410
He seyde john, myn hooste, lief and deere,
3501
Thou shalt upon thy trouthe swere me heere
3502
That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye;
3503
For it is cristes conseil that I seye,
3504
And if thou telle it man, thou art forlore;
3505
For this vengeaunce thou shalt han therfore,
3506
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood.
3507
Nay, crist forbede it, for his hooly blood!
3508
Quod tho this sely man, I nam no labbe;
3509
Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to gabbe.
3510
This sely carpenter goth forth his wey.
3601
Ful ofte he seide allas and weylawey,
3602
And to his wyf he tolde his pryvetee,
3603
And she was war, and knew it bet than he,
3604
What al this queynte cast was for to seye.
3605
But nathelees she ferde as she wolde deye,
3606
And seyde, allas! go forth thy wey anon,
3607
Help us to scape, or we been dede echon!
3608
I am thy trewe, verray wedded wyf;
3609
Go, deere spouse, and help to save oure lyf.
3610
Wel litel thynken ye upon my wo,
3701
That for youre love I swete ther I go.
3702
No wonder is thogh that I swelte and swete;
3703
I moorne as dooth a lamb after the tete.
3704
Ywis, lemman, I have swich love-longynge,
3705
That lik a turtel trewe is my moornynge.
3706
I may nat ete na moore than a mayde.
3707
go fro the wyndow, jakke fool, she sayde;
3708
As help me god, it wol nat be 'com pa me.'
3709
I love another -- and elles I were to blame –
3710

The Knight's Tale

So woodly that he lyk was to biholde
1301
The boxtree or the asshen dede and colde.
1302
Thanne seyde he, o crueel goddes that governe
1303
This world with byndyng of youre word eterne,
1304
And writen in the table of atthamaunt
1305
Youre parlement and youre eterne graunt,
1306
What is mankynde moore unto you holde
1307
Than is the sheep that rouketh in the folde?
1308
For slayn is man right as another beest,
1309
And dwelleth eek in prison and arreest,
1310
Greet pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
1751
That evere swich a chaunce sholde falle;
1752
For gentil men they were of greet estaat,
1753
And no thyng but for love was this debaat;
1754
And saugh hir blody woundes wyde and soore,
1755
And alle crieden, bothe lasse and moore,
1756
Have mercy, lord, upon us wommen alle!
1757
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
1758
And wolde have kist his feet ther as he stood;
1759
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood,
1760
What ladyes fairest been or best daunsynge,
2201
Or which of hem kan dauncen best and synge,
2202
Ne who moost felyngly speketh of love;
2203
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
2204
What houndes liggen on the floor adoun, --

2205
Of al this make I now no mencioun,
2206
But al th' effect, that thynketh me the beste.
2207
Now cometh the point, and herkneth if yow leste.
2208
The sonday nyght, er day bigan to sprynge,
2209
Whan palamon the larke herde synge
2210
By force and eek by composicioun.
2651
Who sorweth now but woful palamoun,
2652
That moot namoore goon agayn to fighte?
2653
And whan that theseus hadde seyn this sighte,
2654
Unto the folk that foghten thus echon
2655
He cryde, hoo! namoore, for it is doon!
2656
I wol be trewe juge, and no partie.
2657
Arcite of thebes shal have emelie,
2658
That by his fortune hath hire faire ywonne.
2659
Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
2660
And god, that al this wyde world hath wroght,
3099
Sende hym his love that hath it deere aboght;
3100
For now is palamon in alle wele,
3101
Lyvynge in blisse, in richesse, and in heele,
3102
And emelye hym loveth so tendrely,
3103
And he hire serveth al so gentilly,
3104
That nevere was ther no word hem bitwene
3105
Of jalousie or any oother teene.
3106
Thus endeth palamon and emelye;
3107
And God save al this faire compaignye! amen.
3108

Wife of Bath's Tale

Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.
861
This was the olde opinion, as I rede;
862
I speke of manye hundred yeres ago.
863
But now kan no man se none elves mo,
864
For now the grete charitee and prayers
865
Of lymytours and othere hooly freres,
866
That serchen every lond and every streem,
867
As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,
868
Blessynge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
869
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
870
That we nel kike, for he seith us sooth.
941
Assay, and he shal fynde it that so dooth;
942
For, be we never so vicious withinne,
943
We wol been holden wise and clene of synne.
944
And somme seyn that greet delit han we
945
For to been holden stable, and eek secree,
946
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
947
And nat biwreye thyng that men us telle.
948
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele.
949
Pardee, we wommen konne no thyng hele;
950
Tho rowned she a pistel in his ere,
1021
And bad hym to be glad, and have no fere.
1022
Whan they be comen to the court, this knyght
1023
Seyde he had holde his day, as he hadde hight,
1024
And redy was his answere, as he sayde.

1025
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,
1026
And many a wydwe, for that they been wise,
1027
The queene hirself sittynge as a justise,
1028
Assembled been, his answere for to heere;
1029
And afterward this knyght was bode appeere.
1030
And therto comen of so lough a kynde,
1101
That litel wonder is thogh I walwe and wynde.
1102
So wolde God myn herte wolde breste!
1103
Is this, quod she, the cause of youre unreste?
1104
Ye, certeinly, quod he, no wonder is.
1105
Now, sire, quod she, I koude amende al this,
1106
If that me liste, er it were dayes thre,
1107
So wel ye myghte bere yow unto me.
1108
But, for ye speken of swich gentillesse
1109
As is descended out of old richesse,
1110
May understonde that jhesus, hevene kyng,
1181
Ne wolde nat chese a vicious lyvyng.
1182
Glad poverte is an honest thyng, certeyn;
1183
This wole senec and othere clerkes seyn.
1184
Whoso that halt hym payd of his poverte,
1185
I holde hym riche, al hadde he nat a sherte.
1186
He that coveiteth is a povre wight,
1187
For he wolde han that is nat in his myght;
1188
But he that noght hath, ne coveiteth have,
1189
Is riche, although ye holde hym but a knave.
1190

Clerk's Tale

Hadden hir beestes and hir herbergage,
201
And of hire labour tooke hir sustenance,
202
After that the erthe yaf hem habundance.
203
Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man
204
Which that was holden povrest of hem alle;
205
But hye God somtyme senden kan
206
His grace into litel oxes stalle;
207
Janicula men of that throop hym calle.
208
A doghter hadde he, fair ynogh to sighte,
209
And grisildis this yonge mayden highte.
210
And worshipful that folk ther she was bore,
401
And from hire birthe knewe hire yeer by yeere,
402
Unnethe trowed they, -- but dorste han swore --
403
That to janicle, of which I spak bifore,
404
She doghter were, for, as by conjecture,
405
Hem thoughte she was another creature.
406
For though that evere vertuous was she,
407
She was encressed in swich excellence
408
Of thewes goode, yset in heigh bountee,
409
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
410
Or by hire word aperceyve, that she
600
Were chaunged; but he nevere hire koude fynde
601
But evere in oon ylike sad and kynde.
602
As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,
603
And eek in love, as she was wont to be,

Was she to hym in every maner wyse;
604
Ne of hir doghter noght a word spak she.
605
Noon accident, for noon adversitee,
606
Was seyn in hire, ne nevere hir doghter name
607
Ne nempned she, in ernest nor in game.
608
My peple me constreyneth for to take
609
Another wyf, and crien day by day;
800
And eek the pope, rancour for to slake.
801
Consenteth it, that dar I undertake;
802
And trewely thus muche I wol yow seye,
803
My newe wyf is comynge by the weye.
804
Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place,
805
And thilke dowere that ye broghten me,
806
Taak it agayn; I graunte it of my grace.
807
Retourneth to youre fadres hous, quod he;
808
A ful greet fool is he that on yow leeveth.
809
Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee,
1001
Whan that the peple gazed up and doun;
1002
For they were glad, right for the noveltee,
1003
To han a newe lady of hir toun.
1004
Namoore of this make I now mencioun,
1005
But to grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
1006
And telle hir constance and hir bisynesse. --
1007
Ful bisy was grisilde in every thyng
1008
That to the feeste was apertinent.
1009
1010

Pardoner's Tale

Til crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn!
501
Lo, how deere, shortly for to sayn,
502
Aboght was thilke cursed vileynye
503
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye.
504
adam oure fader, and his wyf also,
505
Fro paradys to labour and to wo
506
Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede.
507
For whil that adam fasted, as I rede,
508
He was in paradys; and whan that he
509
Eet of the fruyt deffended on the tree,
510
In alle governaunce and policye
600
He is, as by commune opinioun,
601
Yholde the lasse in reputacioun.
602
stilboun, that was a wys embassadour,
603
Was sent to corynthe, in ful greet honour,
604
Fro lacidomye, to make hire alliaunce.
605
And whan he cam, hym happede, par chaunce,
606
That alle the gretteste that were of that lond,
607
Pleyynge atte hasard he hem fond.
608
For which, as soone as it myghte be,
609
By goddes dignitee, er it be nyght!
701
togidres han thise thre hir trouthes plight
702
To lyve and dyen ech of hem for oother,
703
As though he were his owene ybore brother.
704
And up they stirte, al dronken in this rage,
705
And forth they goon towardes that village
706
Of which the taverner hadde spoke biforn.
707
And many a grisly ooth thanne han they sworn,
708
And cristes blessed body al torente --
709
Deeth shal be deed, if that they may hym hente!
710
By oon assent, where as us thynketh best.
801
That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest,
802
And bad hem drawe, and looke where it wol falle;
803
And if fil on the yongeste of hem alle,
804
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
805
And also soone as that he was gon,
806
That oon of hem spak thus unto that oother --
807
Thou knowest wel tho art my sworen brother;
808
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
809
Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon.
810
That to thy creatour, which that the wroghte,
901
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,
902
Thou art so fals and so unkynde, allas?
903
now goode men, God foryeve yow youre trespas,
904
And ware yow fro the synne of avarice!
905
Myn hooly pardoun may yow alle warice,
906
So that ye offre nobles or sterlynges,
907
Or elles silver broches, spoones, rynges.
908
Boweth youre heed under this hooly bulle!
909
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of youre wolle!

Friar's Tale

For in this world nys dogge for the bowe
1369

That kan an hurt deer from an hool yknowe
1370

Bet than this somnour knew a sly lecchour,
1371

Or an avowtier, or a paramour.
1372

And for that was the fruyt of al his rente,
1373

Therfore on it he sette al his entente.
1374

And so bifel that ones on a day
1375

This somnour, evere waityng on his pray,
1376

Rood for to somne an old wydwe, a ribibe,
1377

Feynynge a cause, for he wolde brybe.
1378

Stomak ne conscience ne knowe I noon;
1441

I shrewe thise shrifte-fadres everychoon.
1442

Wel be we met, by God and by Quod this
somonour. In this meene while
1445

This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.
1446

Brother, quod he, wiltow that I thee telle?
1447

seint jame!
1443

But, leeve brother, tel me thanne thy name,
1444

I am a feend; my dwellyng is in helle,
1448

And heere I ryde aboute my purchasyng,
1449

To wite wher men wol yeve me any thyng.
1450

and yet wol som men seye it was nat he;
1511

I do no fors of youre dyvynytee.)
1512

But o thyng warne I thee, I wol nat jape, --
1513

Thou wolt algates wite how we been shape;
1514

Thou shalt herafterward, my brother deere,
1515

Come there thee nedeth nat of me to leere.
1516

For thou shalt, by thyn owene experience,
1517

Konne in a chayer rede of this sentence
1518

Bet than virgile, while he was on lyve,
1519

Or dant also. Now lat us ryde blyve,
1520

This somonour clappeth at the wydwes gate.
1581

Com out, quod he, thou olde virytrate!
1582

I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with thee.
1583

Who clappeth? seyde this wyf, benedicitee!
1584

God save you, sire, what is youre sweete wille?
1585

I have, quod he, of somonce here a bille;
1586

Up peyne of cursyng, looke that thou be
1587

To-morn bifore the erchedeknes knee,
1588

T' answere to the court of certeyn thynges.
1589

Now, lord, quod she, crist jhesu, kyng of
kynges,
1590

hogh that I myghte a thousand wynter telle
1651

The peynes of thilke cursed hous of helle.
1652

But for to kepe us fro that cursed place,
1653

Waketh, and preyeth jhesu for his grace
1654

So kepe us from the temptour sathanas.
1655

Herketh this word! beth war, as in this cas:
1656

The leoun sit in his awayt alway
1657

To sle the innocent, if that he may.
1658

Disposeth ay youre hertes to withstonde
1659

The feend, that yow wolde make thral and
bonde.
1660

Prioress's Tale

Ther was in asye, in a greet citee,
488
Amonges cristene folk, a jewerye,
489
Sustened by a lord of that contree
490
For foule usure and lucre of vileynye,
491
Hateful to crist and to his compaignye;
492
And thurgh the strete men myghte ride or wende,
493
For it was free and open at eyther ende.
494
A litel scole of cristen folk ther stood
495
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
496
Children an heep, ycomen of cristen blood,
497
His felawe, which that elder was than he,
530
Answerde hym thus: this song, I have herd seye,
531
Was maked of our blisful lady free,
532
Hire to salue, and eek hire for to preye
533
Fo been oure help and socour whan we deye.
534
I kan namoore expounde in this mateere;
535
I lerne song, I kan but smal grammeere.
536
And is this song maked in reverence
537
Of cristes mooder? seyde this innocent.
538
Now, certes, I wol do my diligence
539
And kitte his throute, and in a pit hym caste.
571
I seye that in a wardrobe they hym threwe
572
Where as thise jewes purgen hire entraille.
573
O cursed folk of herodes al newe,
574
What may youre yvel entente yow availle?

575
Mordre wol out, certeyn, it wol nat faille,
576
And namely ther th' onour of God shal sprede;
577
The blood out crieth on youre cursed dede.
578
O martir, sowded to virginitee,
579
Now maystow syngen, folwynge evere in oon
580
Ther he with throte ykorven lay upright,
611
He alma redemptoris gan to synge
612
So loude that al the place gan to rynge.
613
The cristene folk that thurgh the strete wente
614
In coomen for to wondre upon this thyng,
615
And hastily they for the provost sente;
616
He cam anon withouten tariyng,
617
And herieth crist that is of hevene kyng,
618
And eek his mooder, honour of mankynde,
619
And after that the jewes leet he bynde.
620
I sholde have dyed, ye, longe tyme agon.
651
But jesu crist, as ye in bookes fynde,
652
Wil that his glorie laste and be in mynde,
653
And for the worship of his mooder deere
654
Yet may I synge o alma loude and cleere.
655
This welle of mercy, cristes mooder sweete,
656
I loved alwey, as after my konnynge;
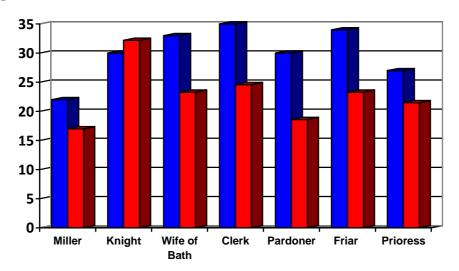657
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
658
To me she cam, and bad me for to synge
659
This anthem verraily in my deyynge,
660

Appendix No. 2

Chart showing French origin words and Average number of words per sentence for: Miller, Knight, Wife of Bath, Clerk, Pardoner, Friar, Prioress.

Legend:
- French origin words
- Average number of words per sentence