Spatio-temporal systems in Chaucer's language:
A discourse-pragmatic analysis*

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to conduct a discourse-pragmatic analysis of the spatio-temporal systems in Chaucer's language along the lines of historical pragmatics and discourse analysis. The text used for analysis is "The knight's tale" adopted from the Riverside edition of *The Canterbury tales*. Language has built-in spatio-temporal systems by which speakers judge how distant the situations they wish to express are from their domain, i.e. proximal or distal. Spatio-temporal elements can be connected to each other to take either a proximal or a distal perspective in discourse. Based on this approach, the present paper performs a detailed examination of the spatio-temporal elements, and addresses the following questions: 1) How does the perspective change as the discourse progresses? and 2) What factors are relevant to this change in discourse? To provide answers to these questions, this paper will investigate: 1) elements which structure discourse, 2) elements which promote a proximal or a distal perspective, 3) elements which trigger alternations of these perspectives, and 4) factors which facilitate the alternation of elements in either the spatial, the temporal, or the integrated spatio-temporal domain.

Keywords: spatio-temporal system, Chaucer, historical pragmatics and discourse analysis, proximal and distal perspectives

1. Introduction

When a speaker has some situations in mind to put into language, he[1] judges how distant these situations are from his own domain, and then chooses language that expresses the relationship of space and time using deictic elements. In the following context taken from Chaucer's *Canterbury tales*, Duke Theseus reflects on what has happened to him, his sister Emelye and the knights Palamoun and Arcite:

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[1] In discussion, the present paper employs the term 'speaker' unless otherwise specified, and refers to the speaker in general as 'he' because of the significance of the role of Chaucer.

(1)   "The contrarie of al <u>this</u> <u>is</u> wilfulnesse.
           Why <u>grucchen</u> <u>we</u>, why <u>have</u> <u>we</u> hevynesse,
           <u>That</u> goode Arcite, of chivalrie flour,
           <u>Departed</u> <u>is</u> with duetee and honour
           Out of <u>this</u> foule prisoun of <u>this</u> lyf?
           Why <u>grucchen</u> <u>heere</u> <u>his</u> cosyn and <u>his</u> wyf
           Of <u>his</u> welfare, that <u>loved</u> <u>hem</u> so weel?   (A.KN 3057–3063)[2]

He successively employs elements such as pronouns, demonstratives, tense forms and adverbs, both proximal (close) and distal (distant), which are in fact part of the spatio-temporal systems. These elements are interconnected with each other to evoke either a proximal or a distal perspective in the integrated spatio-temporal domain. The speaker then continues to take the same perspective, or alternate different perspectives, in discourse.

The idea of integrating both space and time in historical data is not new, however. Traugott (1974, 1978) is the first scholar to employ the term 'spatio-temporal'. Among the works which are relevant to both spatial and temporal domains, we can find, for example, Fries (1994) on text deixis in Early Modern English, Taavitsainen (1999) on personality and style of affect, and Nagucka (2000) on spatial and temporal meanings of *before*. In more recent papers, Nakayasu (2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2018), using Chaucer's works and Paston letters as corpora, has addressed the questions of what elements belong to the spatio-temporal systems and how they are interrelated to evoke a proximal or distal perspective, and conducted preliminary analyses of discourse-pragmatic factors of spatio-temporal systems. Still, some important questions remain: How does the perspective change as discourse progresses? And what factors are relevant to this change in discourse?

The purpose of this paper is to carry out a discourse-pragmatic analysis of the spatio-temporal systems in Chaucer's language (Middle English) along the lines of historical pragmatics and discourse analysis (Taavitsainen and Jucker 2010, 2015). The corpus for this study is "The knight's tale", taken from the Riverside edition of *The Canterbury tales* (Benson 1987)[3] consisting of 17,261 words. I identified spatio-temporal elements in the corpus manually, and built a database using the software, FileMaker Pro. Limiting the scope of corpus makes it possible to conduct a detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis of the systems, where a variety of elements interact. After establishing the definition of spatio-temporal systems in Section 2, the third section will show which perspective, proximal or distal, is likely to be taken, based on a frequency analysis of each spatio-temporal element. Section 4 then conducts a discourse-pragmatic analysis of the elements and factors which affect the spatio-temporal systems in discourse, i.e. elements which structure discourse, elements which promote either perspective, elements which trigger alternations of these perspectives, and factors which facilitate the alternation of elements in either the spatial, the temporal, or the integrated spatio-temporal domain. Section 5 is my conclusion.

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[2]   All the examples are taken from the Riverside edition (Benson 1987). The abbreviation 'A.KN' stands for "The knight's tale," followed by the lines in the text.

[3]   The Riverside edition of "The knight's tale" is also available online through the Geoffrey Chaucer Website (https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/kt-par0.htm).

2. Spatio-temporal systems

Before starting the analysis of the spatio-temporal systems in Chaucer, this section will establish the definition of spatio-temporal systems following Nakayasu (2018).

First of all, spatio-temporal systems are deictic in nature (e.g. Bühler 1934; Fillmore 1975/1997). From numerous situations occurring in our world, the speaker selects some to put into language, and judges how distant these situations are from his own domain. Those close to the speaker's domain are referred to 'proximal', while those distant to it are called 'distal' (e.g. Diessel 1999). In addition to prototypical distance (i.e. spatial and temporal distance), distal elements can express metaphorical and hypothetical distances (Oakesthott-Taylor 1984; Nakayasu 2009).

Second, a variety of elements are encompassed in spatio-temporal systems referring to space and time, as in Table 1:[4]

Table 1: *Elements of space and time*

Category	Proximal	Distal
Pronouns	1st person (*I*, *we*)	3rd person (*he*, *she*, *it*, *they*)
	Medial: 2nd person (*thou*, *ye*)	
Demonstratives	*this*, *these*	*that*, *those*
Adverb (spatial)	*here*	*there*
Tense form	present/non-past	past
Modal	*shall*, *will*, *can*, *may*, *must* (proximal)	*should*, *would*, *could*, *might*, *must* (distal)
Adverb (temporal)	*now*	*then*

Elements which typically express spatial relations are pronouns, demonstratives and spatial adverbs. Whereas the latter two show a dichotomy of proximal and distal, the former exhibits a trichotomy of proximal (speaker), medial (hearer) and distal (other). Temporal relations are expressed by tense forms, modals and temporal adverbs. The category 'present/non-past' involves the simple present, including the historical present, while the category 'past' includes the simple past and the past perfect. Although scholars such as Bühler (1934) and Fillmore (1975/1997) do not regard modals as part of deixis, I consider that they belong to the spatio-temporal systems. When the speaker employs a modal, he locates the situation on a time axis, judging how distant it is from his speaker's domain in a similar way to selecting tense (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 144; Brisard 2002[5]).

Third, one might consider spatio-temporal systems as a mere accumulation of spatial and temporal systems; rather, the systems are interrelated so that they constitute an integrated system. If the speaker takes a proximal perspective, proximal elements of both space and time may systematically appear in a piece of discourse. Likewise, if he takes a distal perspective, distal spatial elements may coexist with temporal elements. He may also alternate these proximal and distal perspectives with each other. By this definition of spatio-temporal systems, the old

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[4]   Elements which are not distinctively either proximal or distal (for example, *thilke* and the present perfect) are
      excluded from the table.
[5]   See, in particular, the chapter by Langacker, "Remarks on the English grounding systems" in Brisard (2002).

outstanding issues with deixis are now given a new framework within the systems of space and time.

3. Proximal and distal perspectives

Now that the definition of spatio-temporal systems has been established, our next step is to conduct a frequency analysis of the spatio-temporal elements to examine which perspective, proximal or distal, is likely to be taken regarding spatio-temporal elements. Figures 1–4 present the results of frequency analysis of the elements shown in Table 1, with a contrast between the categories 'proximal' and 'distal.'

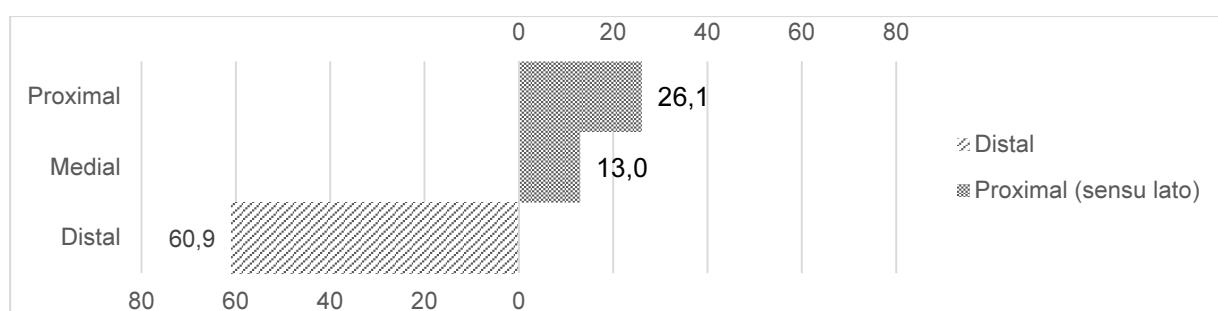Figure 1 shows the relative percentage share of the pronouns employed in the corpus:

Figure 1: Pronouns

As seen in Section 2, pronouns exhibit a trichotomy of proximal, medial and distal. In Figure 1, the medial pronouns are given a place along with the proximal ones to distinguish the roles of the speaker and the hearer from other roles because of their close relationship to the speech situation.[6] The distal pronouns hold the highest percentage share (60.9%), and it is higher than the share of the proximal pronouns *sensu lato* (39.1%; proximal and medial pronouns altogether). This is because *The Canterbury tales* contains stories from the past, and the speakers refer to the participants in their tales using these distal pronouns, as in:

(2)   Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
           Ful ofte a day <u>he</u> swelte and seyde "Allas!"
           For seen <u>his</u> lady shal <u>he</u> never mo.   (A.KN 1355–1357)

The speakers occasionally quote the dialogues between the participants as direct speech, where the proximal pronouns *sensu stricto* and medial pronouns are typically employed. In the corpus, proximal pronouns (26.1%) are used more often than medial pronouns (13.0%), because, in addition to use in direct speech, the speakers state their own opinions using proximal pronouns.

The ratios of demonstratives and spatial adverbs show a contrastive pattern in Figure 2:

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[6] This is in agreement with Halliday and Hasan (1976: 45), who argue that the person system derives its significance from the person's (or object's) relevance to the speech situation.
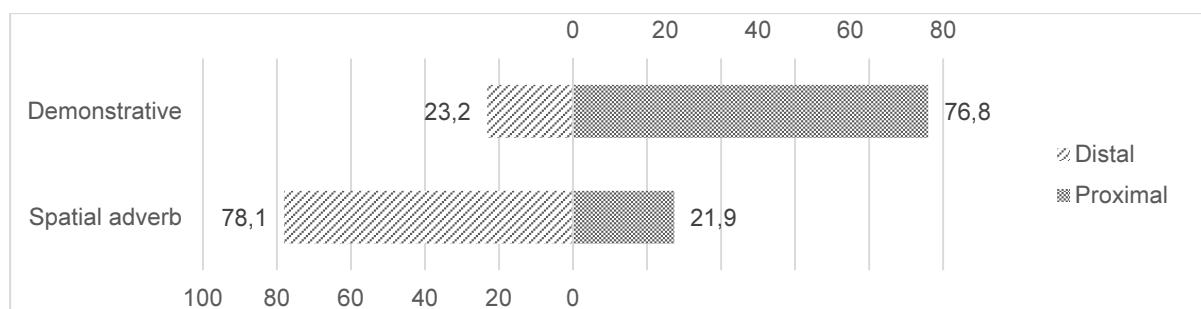
Figure 2: Demonstratives and spatial adverbs

The proximal demonstratives *this*/*these* (76.8%) are used more frequently than the distal demonstratives *that*/*those* (23.2%). In (3), the speaker indicates a place with the proximal demonstrative *this*:

(3)   (…) Venus, if it be thy wil
       Yow in <u>this</u> gardyn thus to transfigure
       Bifore me, sorweful, wrecched creature,
       Out of <u>this</u> prisoun help that we may scapen.   (A.KN 1104–1107)

The high occurrence of proximal demonstratives is due not only to these prototypical uses, but also to other uses such as anaphoric use to refer back to the entity in the previous context. I will return to this issue in the discussion of discourse in Subsection 4.1. This ratio reverses when it comes to spatial adverbs: the distal adverb *there* (78.1%) is used more frequently than *here* (21.9%), as the nature of past story-telling necessitates the use of distal spatial adverbs.

Figure 3 represents the results of frequency analysis of the temporal systems, i.e. tense forms, modals and temporal adverbs:
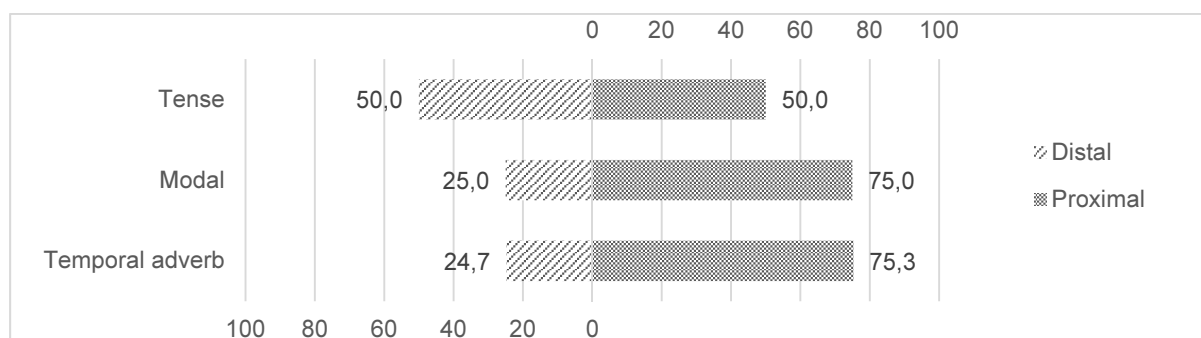

Figure 3: Tense forms, modals and temporal adverbs

Temporal relations are represented mainly by tense forms, particularly by the simple present and the simple past. Although the corpus "The knight's tale" tells a past story, the ratio of the proximal and distal tense forms is fifty-fifty. This is because the speakers not only describe situations in the past with distal tense forms, but they also refer to the direct speech of the participants of the tales and employ the historical present in their narrations in order to give the hearers a you-are-there experience.[7] In the following (4), *ryngen* is the historical present, while *lefte* is the distal (i.e. past) tense:

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[7]   Both Benson (1961) and Nakayasu (2013) present an analysis of the historical present.

(4)   The heraudes <u>lefte</u> hir prikyng up and doun;
        Now <u>ryngen</u> trompes loude and clarioun.   (A.KN 2599–2600)[8]

The tendency for proximal elements is stronger in modals (75.0%) and temporal adverbs (75.3%). The proximal modals have meanings derived from its direct connection to the speaker's domain. With these proximal meanings, the speakers directly bring the hearers closer to their domain without mitigating their statements, as opposed to distal modals.[9] In (5), Saturn addresses Venus with the proximal modal *shalt*:

(5)   Saturnus seyde, "Doghter, hoold thy pees!
          Mars hath his wille, his knyght hath al his boone,
          And, by myn heed, thou <u>shalt</u> been esed soone."   (A.KN 2668–2670)

In addition to their prototypical meanings and uses, the temporal adverbs *now* and *then* have further functions in discourse (see 4.1.).

Figure 4 summarises the results of the total of all the major spatio-temporal elements employed in the corpus, showing which perspective, proximal or distal, is likely to be taken:
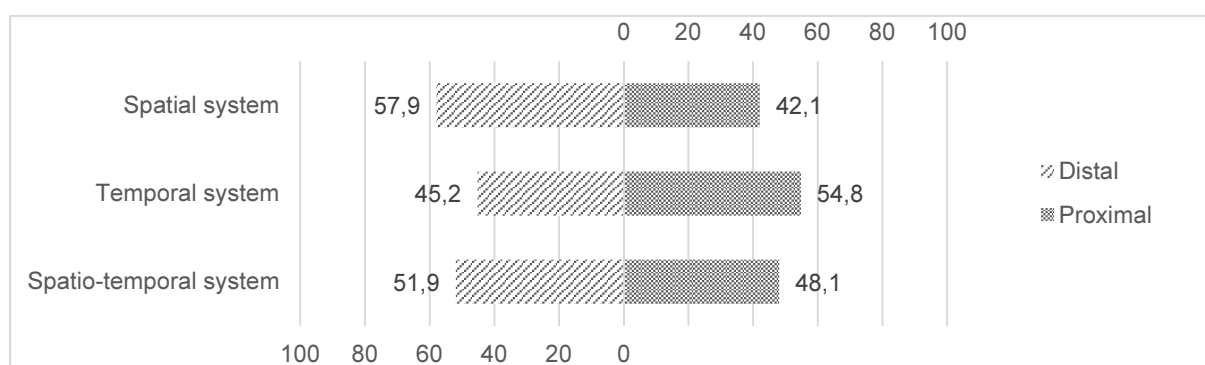

Figure 4: Spatio-temporal systems

Because the corpus "The knight's tale" tells a story from the past, one might expect that distal elements would take a much higher percentage share in all of the spatial, the temporal and the spatio-temporal systems. In fact, these proximal-distal percentage shares do not differ significantly with each other. In the spatial systems, the distal elements have a slightly higher percentage share than proximal elements due to the high rates of distal pronouns and spatial adverbs. In the temporal systems, by contrast, the high percentage share of proximal modals and temporal adverbs (also a high percentage share (50.0%) of the proximal tense for a past story-telling) contribute to this slightly higher share of the proximal elements. In total, the distal elements take up a slightly higher share in the spatio-temporal systems. The speakers seem to exploit a variety of strategies to attract the hearers' attention to their words, alternating between proximal and distal perspectives.

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8   I will come back to this example in 4.3.
9   The present paper does not go into the details of the modals, but pays attention to the proximal and distal distinction to capture spatio-temporal phenomena from a wider perspective. To explore their complex meanings and functions is far beyond the scope of this short paper.

4. Spatio-temporal systems in discourse

Having carried out a quantitative analysis of which perspective, proximal or distal, is likely to be taken, this section will examine how spatio-temporal systems progress in discourse. In discourse, proximal or distal elements can be coordinated to evoke either a proximal or a distal perspective (Nakayasu 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2018). The speaker can partly coordinate the elements, or completely coordinate all the elements, in their discourse. This coordination can be realised in the spatial or the temporal domain only, or in the integrated spatio-temporal domain. Then he may continue to take the same perspective, or alternate different perspectives. This section will examine what factors are relevant to these types of coordination and alternation in discourse.

4.1. Discourse structuring

The examination starts with elements which can structure discourse in spatio-temporal systems: text deictic elements and metadiscoursal elements. Text deictic elements[10] are likely to be derived from the prototypical meaning and use of spatio-temporal elements. Typical examples of such deictic elements are demonstratives *this* and *that*, which have prototypical meanings of pointing to an entity close to or distant from the speaker in the spatialand temporal domains. These prototypical meanings are used most frequently as Figure 5 demonstrates:
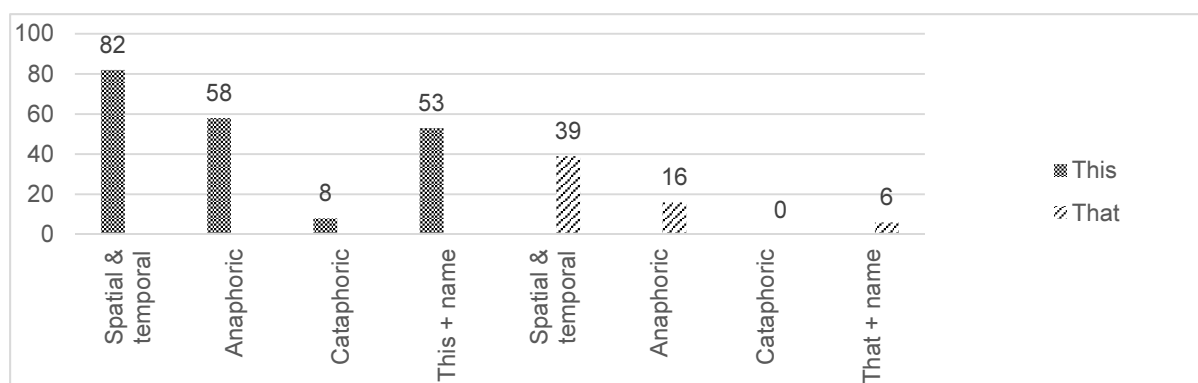

*Figure 5:*This *and* that

These demonstratives also have extended meanings and uses as text deictic elements. The anaphoric use refers back to the previously mentioned element, and the anaphoric *this* is used more frequently than the anaphoric *that*. In the following example (6), the anaphoric *this* is used once and the pattern '*this* + name' is utilised twice:

(6)   And with a sigh he[11] seyde pitously,
        "The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
        Of hire that rometh in the yonder place; (…)"
            This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
        Dispitously he looked and answerde,

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[10] See Fries (1994) and Taavitsainen and Hiltunen (2012) for a detailed analysis of text deictic elements.
[11] The distal pronoun *he* refers to Arcite here.

> "Wheither seistow <u>this</u> in ernest or in pley?"
>   "Nay," quod Arcite, "in ernest, by my fey!
> God helpe me so, me list ful yvele pleye."
> <u>This Palamon</u> gan knytte his browes tweye.   (A.KN 1117–1128)

The anaphoric *this* refers back to what Arcite had just said. The pattern '*this* + name (Palamon)' is relatively frequently employed by Chaucer (Novelli 1957: 246), and can be considered anaphoric as it refers back to the person who has been mentioned in the previous context. Note that before the use of *this Palamon*, Arcite's turn always precedes. This helps to remind the hearer of the previously mentioned person, i.e. Palamon, and brings that person to the fore. By contrast, the cataphoric *this* anticipates what will be mentioned in later context:

(7)   My wyl is <u>this</u>, for plat conclusioun,
        Withouten any repplicacioun–
        If that you liketh, take it for the beste:
        That everich of you shal goon where hymleste
        Frely, withouten raunson or daunger,
        And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,
        Everich of you shalbrynge an hundred knyghtes
        Armed for lystes up at allerightes,
        Al redy to darreyne hire by bataille.   (A.KN 1845–1853)

In this example, the speaker Theseus explains his suggestions in what follows (*That everich of you* (…) *by bataille*). The cataphoric *that*, however, is not recorded in the corpus.

    Next, temporal adverbs *now* and *thanne* 'then' are also used as text deictic elements. The prototypical temporal meanings and the meanings and functions which are extended from these meanings are shown in Figure 6:

Figure 6: Now *and thanne*

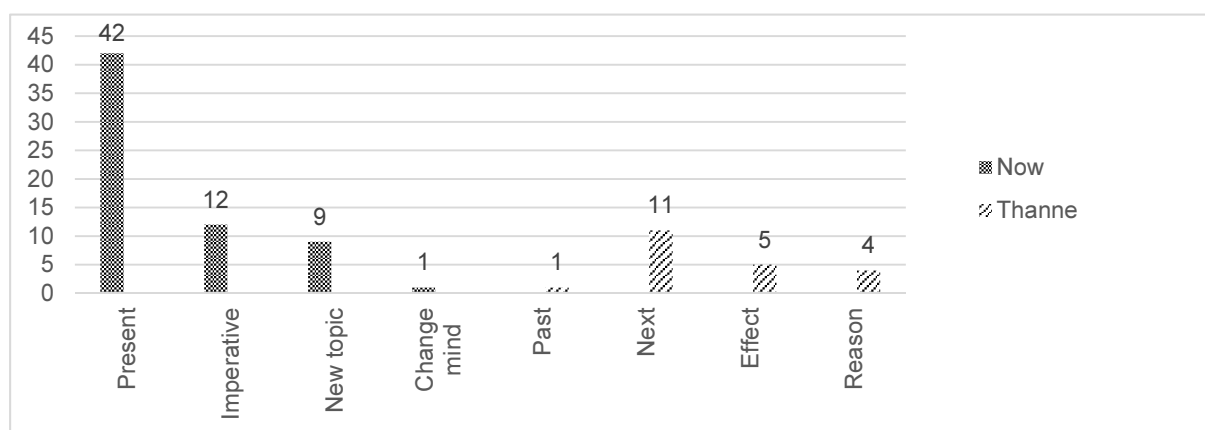As regards the prototypical temporal meanings, *now* signifies the present quite frequently, while *thanne* expresses the past only once in the corpus. *Now* also has extended meanings and functions such as prompting the hearer to do something with an imperative and introducing a new topic in context. In example (8), *now* introduces a metacomment to the context (Taavitsainen and Hiltunen 2012: 181–184):

(8)   Arcite is coold, ther Mars his soule gye!
        <u>Now</u> wol I speken forth of Emelye.
            Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
        And Theseus his suster took anon
        Swownynge, and baar hire fro the corps away.   (A.KN 2815–2819)

The knight signals that he will change his topic from Arcite to Emelye with the aid of *now*, the proximal pronoun and the proximal modal *wol*. In contrast, *Thanne* has extended meanings and functions such as 'next', 'effect' and 'reason.' In (9), it signifies what happened next:

(9)   He is a kynges brother sone, pardee;(…)
        It moste been considered, leeveth me,
        For gentil mercy oghte to passen right."
            <u>Thanne</u> seyde he thus to Palamon the knight:
        "I trowe ther nedeth litel sermonyng
        To make yow assente to this thyng.
        Com neer, and taak youre lady by the hond."   (A.KN 3084–3093)

Another element responsible for structuring discourse is metadiscoursal expressions. Metadiscourse is defined as "comprising all those elements in a text which do not add new material to the text proposition, but which are used to refer to already existing text-propositional elements" (Boggel 2009: 2). In (10), the speaker paraphrases what he has just said with the metadiscourse *this is to seyn*:

(10)   Heigh labour and ful greet apparaillynge
        Was at the service and the fyr-makynge,
        That with his grene top the hevene raughte;
        And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte –
        <u>This is to seyn</u>, the bowes weren so brode.   (A.KN 2913–2917)

Note that this metadiscoursal expression itself contains the proximal spatio-temporal elements *this* and *is*, although other elements are distal. Since metadiscourse is closely connected to the speaker's domain, he can select elements independently from already existing propositions. Not only is the proximal (present) tense used in metadiscoursal phrases, but also the proximal form can signify that the future and the distal (past) tense are possible as in *as ye shal after here* (A.KN 2764) and *as I seide* (A.KN 1383).

4.2. Promoting a proximal/distal perspective

As reiterated in this paper, spatio-temporal elements, from the same or different domains, coordinate with each other to evoke a proximal or a distal perspective. This subsection will examine specific elements which promote either of these perspectives.

First, a variety of elements immediately relevant to the speech situation can promote a proximal perspective, alone or together. The imperative is used to address the hearer, for example, to make a command, a request, and so on, and is recorded 55 times in the corpus. In (11), the speaker Saturn employs the imperative *Weep now namoore* to cheer up Venus, who has had a quarrel with Mars:

(11)   Though Mars shal helpe his knyght, yet nathelees
         Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
         Al be ye noght of o compleccioun,
         That causeth al day swich divisioun.
         I am thyn aiel, redy at thy wille;
         <u>Weep now namoore</u>; I wol thy lust fulfille."   (A.KN 2473–2478)

It should be noted that he addresses her making use of other proximal elements *sensu lato* such as the adverb *now*, proximal and medial pronouns and the modal *wol*, which altogether evoke a proximal perspective.

    The cohesion of such proximal perspectives is reinforced by address terms in speech situations. In the corpus, address terms are recorded 48 times. In (12), Arcite prays to Mars with the address term *lord* that he wants a victory in the duel to win Emelye's love:

(12)   And eek to this avow I wol me bynde:
         My beerd, myn heer, that hongeth long adoun,
         That nevere yet ne felte offensioun
         Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
         And ben thy trewe servant whil I lyve.
         Now, <u>lord</u>, have routhe upon my sorwes soore;
         Yif me [victorie]; I aske thee namoore."   (A.KN 2414–2420)

Likewise in (11), the speaker also utilises proximal elements such as proximal and medial pronouns, proximal tense forms, the proximal adverb *now* and the modal *wol*, in addition to the imperatives.

    Additionally, interjections, which can be considered to be spatio-temporal elements, also promote a proximal perspective. They do not make a distinction between the spatial or temporal, but rather belong to the integrated spatio-temporal domain. They are, however, strictly proximal, being directly connected to the speaker's domain. Such interjections are recorded 38 times in the corpus; a fine example is shown in (13), where Arcite curses at Palamon:

(13)   For I defye the seurete and the bond
         Which that thou seist that I have maad to thee.
         <u>What!</u> Verray fool, thynk wel that love is free,
         And I wol love hire maugree al thy myght!   (A.KN 1604–1607)

In addition to the interjection *What!*, the speaker employs the form of address *Verray fool* and the imperative to promote the use of proximal elements *sensu lato* such as proximal and medial pronouns, proximal tense forms and the proximal modal *wol*.

    Finally, questions occur 17 times in the corpus and also encourage a proximal perspective. In (14), the two knights Palamon and Arcite fall in love with the same lady Emelye and argue about who has the right to love her. Arcite asks Palamon the question *What wiltow seynen?* to insist that it was him who loved her first:

(14)   This Arciteful proudly spak ageyn:
         "Thow shalt," quod he, "be rather fals than I;

> And thou art fals, I telle thee outrely,
> For paramour I loved hire first er thow.
> <u>What wiltow seyen?</u> Thou woost nat yet now
> Wheither she be a womman or goddesse!   (A.KN 1152–1157)

These lively dialogues actively promote the use of proximal (and medial) elements.

By contrast, elements which overtly promote distal perspectives are more difficult to find.[12] Adverbials which refer to a point or a period in the past seem to be a principal way to promote distal perspectives as far as this corpus is concerned. In (15), once the adverbial clause with *Whan* sets up a time in the past, the past time is kept in the following context:

(15)   <u>Whan</u> the orison was doon of Palamon,
            His sacrifice he dide, and that anon,
            Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,
            Al telle I noght as now his observaunces;
            But atte laste the statue of Venus shook,
            And made a signe, wherby that he took
            That his preyere accepted was that day.   (A.KN 2261–2267)

This promotes the use of distal spatio-temporal elements. In addition to distal tense forms, distal pronouns and the distal demonstrative *that* are employed, which keeps the perspective distal. Note that the phrase *Al telle I noght as now his observaunces* is a metadiscourse, where the speaker can employ proximal elements.

4.3. Triggering an alternation

Having seen the elements promoting either perspective, what are the elements, then, which can trigger alternations between proximal and distal perspectives? There are several strategies found in the corpus.

Recall the discussion on text structuring elements in 4.1. and the example in (8), where the temporal adverb *now* is employed as the speaker changes his topic from Arcite to Emelye. Here *now* can also be considered to function as a discourse marker,[13] in the sense that this small element does not affect the propositional content but has important pragmatic functions (Schiffrin 1987: 230–246). In (8), the speaker talks about Arcite, who is dead now, employing proximal tense forms, and after using *now*, he describes how other people such as Emelye got confused and grieved over his death with distal tense forms and some proximal (i.e. historical present) tense forms. Shifting the viewpoint from Arcite to Emelye and others, the speaker alternates perspectives in the temporal domain. A similar sort of alternation occurs in (16) below:

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[12] The reason why a limited number of elements can promote distal perspectives might be the following: since the speaker tries to involve the hearer into his speech situation more frequently with the aid of his vivid depiction of proximal perspectives, distal perspectives are less required; or, since this corpus is inherently a past story-telling, which describes the world of the past, there is little need for elements advancing distal perspectives. An analysis of bigger corpora, however, will be necessary to find a definitive answer.

[13] Brinton (2017) employs the term 'pragmatic marker.'

(16)   What haukes sitten on the perche above,
         What houndes liggen on the floor adoun –
         Of al this make I now no mencioun,
         But al th' effect; that thynketh me the beste.
         <u>Now</u> comes the point, and herkneth if yow leste.
             The Sonday nyght, er day bigan to sprynge,
         Whan Palamon the larke herde synge (…)   (A.KN 2204–2210)

With proximal tense forms,the speaker describes how Theseus entertained the kings and the knights, and after employing *now*, he alternates the perspective to distal to depict what Palamon did.

   A perspective alternation commonly happens when the speaker switches from direct speech to narration. In (17) below, Mercurie talks to Arcite in direct speech, where the perspective is basically proximal. Next, the knight (i.e. the narrator of this tale) changes Mercurie's direct speech to his own narration about Arcite, switching the perspective to distal:

(17)   And seydehym thus: "To Atthenes shaltou wende,
         Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende."
         And <u>with that word</u> Arcite wook and sterte.
         "Now trewely, hou soore that me smerte,"
         Quod he, "to Atthenes right now wol I fare,
         Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare
         To se my lady, that I love and serve.   (A.KN 1391–1397)

What he does here is to skillfully change the perspective to distal with the phrase *with that word*, which includes the distal demonstrative *that*. He then switches back to the proximal perspective with the direct speech by Arcite.

   The shift from narration to comment may also change the perspective. First, the knight takes a distal perspective in his narration, employing distal tense forms except for *taketh*, which is the historical present. He then gives comments on Arcite's situation (Benson 1961: 71–72), switching the perspective to proximal:

(18)   Ther nas noon oother remedie ne reed;
         But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde.
         <u>Lat hym be war! His nekkelith to wedde.</u>
             <u>How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite</u>!
         The deeth he feeleth thurgh his herte smyte;
         He wepeth, wayleth, crieth pitously;
         To sleen hymself he waiteth prively.   (A.KN 1216–1222)

In addition to proximal tense forms, he employs *now* and the exclamation to make his comments sound lively.

4.4. *Facilitating an alternation*

The previous subsection 4.3. has given attention to some elements triggering alternations between perspectives. This final subsection will further examine factors which facilitate

alternations of elements in either the spatial, the temporal, or the integrated spatio-temporal domain.

In all the examples below, a distinct contrast between two different worlds can be observed. First, an alternation occurs in the spatial domain only in (19), where Palamon is captive in a prison and falls in love with Emelye, who is walking in the garden outside:

(19)   This Palamon answerde and seyde agayn,
           "Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
           Thow hast a veyn ymaginacioun.
           <u>This</u> prison caused me nat for to crye,
           But I was hurt right now thurghout myn ye
           Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.
           The fairnesse of <u>that</u> lady that I see
           <u>Yond</u> in the gardyn romen to and fro
           Is cause of al my criyng and my wo.   (A.KN 1092–1100)

Palamon makes a contrast between the prison where he is caught and the garden where Emelye is walking. For the former, he uses the proximal demonstrative *this* (i.e. *This prison*), while he employs the distal demonstrative *that* (*that lady*) and the adverb *yond* (*Yond in the gardyn*) for the latter. He selects temporal elements according to the timeline, irrespective of which perspective he takes in the spatial domain. On the other hand, the alternation takes place in the temporal domain in (20). Palamon and Arcite fought with each other in a jousting contest, leading one hundred knights each, in order to win Emelye's love:

(20)   The heraudes <u>lefte</u> hir prikyng up and doun;
           Now <u>ryngen</u> trompes loude and clarioun.
           Ther <u>is</u> namoore to seyn, but west and est
           In <u>goon</u> the speresful sadly in arrest;
           In <u>gooth</u> the sharpe spore into the syde. (…)
               Som tyme an ende ther <u>is</u> of every dede.
           For er the sonne unto the reste <u>wente</u>,
           The stronge kyng Emetreus <u>gan</u> hente
           This Palamon, as he <u>faught</u> with Arcite,
           And <u>made</u> his swerd depe in his flessh to byte, (…)   (A.KN 2599–2640)

During the jousting, the tense is the historical present (e.g. *ryngen*), i.e. proximal, as in a sports commentary. By contrast, at the beginning (*lefte*) and the end of the jousting (e.g. *wente*), the tense is distal.

My last example demonstrates the alternation of perspectives in the integrated spatio-temporal domain; here the contrast between two distinct worlds are depicted more systematically and explicitly. In (21), Duke Theseus calls on Palamon and Emelye to his side and reflects on what has happened to them, that is, Arcite has departed this world for heaven. In his talk, a clear contrast between the worlds of the dead and the living can be observed:

(21)   (=(1))
       "The contrarie of al <u>this</u> is wilfulnesse.
       Why <u>grucchen</u> <u>we</u>, why <u>have</u> <u>we</u> hevynesse,

> <u>That</u> goode Arcite, of chivalrie flour,
> Departed is with duetee and honour
> Out of <u>this</u> foule prisoun of <u>this</u> lyf?
> Why <u>grucchen</u> <u>heere</u> <u>his</u> cosyn and <u>his</u> wyf
> Of <u>his</u> welfare, that <u>loved</u> <u>hem</u> so weel?   (A.KN 3057–3063)

He distances Arcite's world of the dead by employing elements such as the distal demonstrative *that*, distal pronouns and distal tense forms, while describing the world of the living with elements like the proximal demonstratives *this*, proximal pronouns and proximal tense forms. Making best use of this alternation, he is trying to lead not just Palamon and Emelye, but also other people including himself, in a direction that is best for them.

5. Concluding remarks

This paper has conducted a discourse-pragmatic analysis of the spatio-temporal systems in Chaucer's language along the lines of historical pragmatics and discourse analysis. Using the corpus of "The knight's tale" in *The Canterbury tales*, I first showed the results of the frequency analysis of proximal and distal elements. Although the corpus is a past story-telling, its proximal-distal percentage shares do not differ significantly as shown in Figure 4, which suggests that the speakers employ a variety of strategies to involve the hearers into the tale.

A qualitative analysis was then carried out to examine how the perspectives change in discourse and what elements and factors are relevant to the spatio-temporal systems in discourse. First, elements such as text deictic elements and metadiscourse have functions to structure discourse. Second, the imperatives, address terms, questions, interjections and adverbials are closely related to spatio-temporal systems and promote either proximal or distal perspective. Third, alternations between perspectives typically occur when a discourse marker signals the start of a new topic, when switching between direct speech and narration occurs, or when alternating between narration and comments takes place. Finally, the contrast between two distinct worlds may also stimulate the alternation of perspectives in the spatial, the temporal, and the integrated spatio-temporal domain.

The approach taken by this paper advances the boundaries of the theory of historical pragmatics and discourse analysis, and expands our understanding of communication within the past into the new dimension of space, time, history and beyond.

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