

**Virtual Discourse Structure:  
An Analysis of Conversation in *World of Warcraft***

by

**Lauren B. Collister**

B.A. Linguistics, B.A. Music, The Ohio State University, 2006

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

University of Pittsburgh

2008

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This thesis was presented

by

Lauren B. Collister

It was defended on

April 29, 2008

and approved by

Scott F. Kiesling, Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics

Claude E. Mauk, Lecturer, Department of Linguistics

David R. Mortensen, Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics

Thesis Director: Scott F. Kiesling, Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics

Copyright © by Lauren B. Collister

2008

**Virtual Discourse Structure:  
An Analysis of Conversation in *World of Warcraft***

Lauren B. Collister, M.A.

University of Pittsburgh, 2008

Discourse in *World of Warcraft* poses interesting insights for the organization of conversation in text-only mediums. In my work, I show how online discourse can be analyzed using the traditional tools of Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1996). By analyzing logs of chat from within the game world, I show how turns are constructed, paying particular attention to the construction of multiple-message turns. I draw on the insights of Turn Construction Unit Continuation theory (Schegloff, 1996; Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007) to illuminate the construction of these complex turns, and I show how the tools of Cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) can be used to link parts of a turn together. Finally, I show how participants in *World of Warcraft* use different kinds of repair functions in the discourse, namely \*-repair for typographical errors and an in-group feature “get out of my head!” for overlap. Online discourse has unique and particular forms of organization, but can be analyzed in the same manner as spoken language; far from being a random and corrupted form of written language, online language use is regular and organized.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 AN EXPLANATION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.2.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.2.2 Research into Communities. ....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.2.3 Methodologies.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.3 DATA COLLECTION.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.3.1 Methodology. ....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.3.2 Participants.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1.3.3 Our Avatars. ....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1.3.4 Transcription Conventions. ....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.0 ONLINE CONVERSATION ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.2 TURN-TAKING FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.2.1 Applying Conversation Analysis Online.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.2.2 The Problem: Multiple Message Turns. ....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2.2.3 The Answer: Turn Continuation.....</b>	<b>41</b>

2.2.3.1	Glue-Ons as TCU Continuations.....	45
2.2.3.2	Repair and Replacement as TCU Continuations.....	55
2.2.4	Discussion of the Turn Taking Framework.....	67
3.0	ANALYSIS OF CONVERSATION .....	70
3.1	ANALYSIS .....	70
3.2	DISCUSSION.....	79
4.0	CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	80
4.1	SUMMARY .....	80
4.2	LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	81
4.3	IMPLICATIONS .....	83
APPENDIX A	.....	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY	.....	91

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The character creation screen from <i>World of Warcraft</i> .....	5
Figure 2: The player's first view of the world of Azeroth.....	6
Figure 3: A beginner's quest in <i>World of Warcraft</i> .....	8
Figure 4: Interacting with another player in the game world.....	9
Figure 5: Agerionos, the human mage.....	15
Figure 6: Parnopaeus, the night elf hunter.....	16
Figure 7: Skakavaz, the draenei paladin.....	16
Figure 8: Alai, the blood elf mage.....	17
Figure 9: A screenshot from the <i>World of Warcraft</i> interface.....	32
Figure 10: Types of turn extensions, adapted from Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007). .....	44

## PREFACE

### *On Collaborative Work*

Working on this thesis was an unusual experience, and in turn my work has produced an unusual product. This project on language in *World of Warcraft* began in the fall of 2006 when I met Benjamin Friedline and we discovered that we shared an interest in pursuing study of the same environment: digital media. Ben introduced me to the field of game studies, and I brought to the table my experience with Internet culture studies, and together we did our ethnography. At the start of this project, we intended to produce one cohesive work which presented our findings on the language structure and use in the online gaming world; however, as we each pursued our own interests within the field, we found that our work diverged dramatically so that we had, in essence, two completely separate documents which could only be tied together by the fact that we drew on the same data.

In light of this, we decided to split up our document into two parts – for now – and put it back together again in the future. The practical upshot of this is that we now have two different theses with the same Introduction and the same first chapter which detail our methods and experience in doing ethnography in the game world. We have preserved this similarity; when you read his thesis, his first chapter will be identical to my own. We both contributed equally to the conception, writing, and editing of the first chapter, and we decided to keep it that way to preserve the joint nature of the data collection endeavor. The second chapter, however, is my



own individual and unique work. The reader will be able to tell the difference not only by the section headings, but also by the point of view: Chapter One is told from a first person plural point of view, “we”, while the remainder of the work is in the conventional first person singular, “I”.

### *Dedication*

Academically, I would like to thank my committee for allowing us to pursue this unusual topic, particularly Scott Kiesling for his support and a well-timed issue of *Pragmatics*. I would also like to thank Professor Chia-Hui Huang for her encouragement and enthusiasm early in the formation of this topic, as well as for her guidance in many other areas.

In the game world, I thank from my heart the members of the guild *SeeD* on Scarlet Crusade for their patience and understanding in my endeavors, and for always being ready with amazing insights with a touch of humor; also, I would like to thank the members of the wow-ladies community on LiveJournal for answering my endless questions, and Luc Court for an early introduction to the game world. In real life, I thank my partner, Lee, for her unyielding faith and support, and the TWSG for those Friday meetings, particularly Pat Littel and Alaina Farabaugh for their fine-toothed combs.

In both worlds, my heartfelt thanks to Ben Friedline for everything from initial inspiration to his eye for grammar to a cab ride in San Francisco. Ben, u pwn, thx, lol.

My thesis is dedicated in memoriam to Karen R. Hoover, a wonderful teacher and friend.

διὰ σου φωνῆς τὸ μου δαιμονιόν λέγει

*Lauren Brittany Collister*

*April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The bright light of the fiery sun settles softly upon the dense jungle forest, slowly awakening the jungle's inhabitants to a new day in the Stranglethorn Vale. A soft gray mist rises lazily from the rain-drenched ground, masking the thick vines that hang from the decrepit trees. A cacophony of voices arises from the forest, a mixture of shrill ghostly shrieks and the voracious howl of a lone predator. Two travelers venture cautiously through the endless maze of strangling vines and lethal flora and fauna, narrowly avoiding detection from a nearby jungle lion. As the two travelers venture onward through the lecherous jungle heat, they come upon the remains of the ancient ruins of the long-lost city of Kal'ai. The ruins stretch for miles in each direction; a lone statue still stands guard in the city's center, malevolently guarding the remains of its long-dead creators. As the two travelers gaze upon the statue, the mist momentarily clears, only to reveal the visage of a shadowy figure looming in the distance.

The figure draws closer to the party of travelers, and it becomes clear that the figure is an enemy, an orc hunter. The hunter watches the mage and his warrior friend, but does nothing except stand and star at the two travelers. After a short time, Agerionos decides to try to make contact with the foreign, barbarian orc by using hand signals.

You wave at Katilana.

You smile at Katilana.

The orc turns from the travelers and continues on her way, leaving the two travelers alone. A bloodbath has been averted. As soon as the orc has left the two travelers alone, Demant turns questioningly towards Agerionos and asks,

[Party] Demant: not gonna attack?

Agerionos watches the orc go, saying,

[Party] Agerionos: nope

Demant seems to be uncertain about the validity of Agerionos's decision. He has a difficult time allowing his sworn enemy to go free. He asks Agerionos a simple question.

[Party] Demant: why?

Agerionos turns to Demant and explains,

[Party] Agerionos: well, some players are just lvlng

[Party] Agerionos: if they leave me alone, I won't attack

Demant knows that all orcs are bloodthirsty killers. He simply cannot accept the prospect of letting one live – one that could be so easily killed.

[Party] Demant: he would kill you if he knew he could

[Party] Demant: besides u need honor

[Party] Demant: its how you buy all top stuff

Agerionos tries again to convince his companion of the orc's lack of interest in slaughtering passing humans.

[Party] Agerionos: well, I saw him help out the 32 hunter

This evidence seems to convince Demant that he is safe – for the moment.

[Party] Demant: oh

[Party] Demant: ok

Several hours pass, and the two companions search the dank catacombs of the once mighty city for the artifacts that they had come in search of. While they are busy searching for the long-lost treasures, two undead beings silently approach. As the undead crest the rise of a nearby hill, the two travelers notice them for the first time.

[Party] Demant: see those two

[Party] Demant: 60+ horde

[Party] Demant: up there

Agerionos looks up. Two creatures, once human but fallen to the plague, are coming in their direction. He can see the rotting flesh dangling from their bodies, and the stench only gets worse as they come closer.

[Party] Agerionos: yep

The two undead beings are quick to engage the two travelers in battle. Demant draws his bow and sends a flurry of arrows towards his undead opponent. Meanwhile, Agerionos engages the undead priest by conjuring a set of magical missiles, which are sent with deadly intent towards their target. The mage and the hunter watch as their instruments of death fly towards their enemies.

The magic missiles reach their target first and fizzle upon touching the priest's conjured shield. The priest laughs as he sends a death spell hurtling from his skeletal fingers towards Agerionos. Just as the spell is cast, Demant's arrows strike the undead rogue's reinforced hide armor and harmlessly clatter to the ground. The rogue runs forward and quickly impales Demant with his magical dagger.

Demant has died.

After dying, Demand tells Agerionos:

[Party] Demant: lol he killed me

[Party] Demant: got you too?

Agerionos has been running away from the priest's death spell, but to no avail. The cords of death wrap around Agerionos's body, killing him almost instantly.

Agerionos then has a moment to respond to Demant's question.

[Party] Agerionos: yeah some people are jerks

The two travelers make their way to the spirit healer after their deaths. The spirit healer fills their roaming spirits with life once again and the two travelers make their way back to their corpses to resurrect so that they can begin their search for lost treasures once again. In Azeroth, death is only a temporary setback.

## 1.1 AN EXPLANATION

What you have just read is a portrayal of an event in the game world that happened during the course of our research. We presented it here in order to give the reader a perspective on what it is like to participate in the game world. However, this narrative does not detail the entire experience of a player in the game. Before engaging in analysis, we want to say a few words about what players do in the game and what the player's experience is like in *World of Warcraft*.

Upon obtaining an account and a version of the game installed on the computer, the player logs in to the main screen using a username and password. Then the player chooses how they will be represented in the game world. The player chooses to join a political faction, either the Alliance or the Horde. If the player chooses to play for the Horde, all who play for the Alliance will instantly become their enemies, and vice versa. Next, they select an avatar;

although they can select a human avatar, a variety of other fantasy races are available for selection (e.g., orcs, trolls, gnomes, and elves). After selecting a race, a player then selects the physical attributes and the job of the avatar. Aside from sex (male or female only), the physical attributes are highly customizable; a player can change the hairstyle, the facial expressions, and even add things like tattoos, piercings, horns, or tusks to the avatar, depending on the race chosen. On the other hand, the player is limited to a fixed number of jobs when creating an avatar, including hunters, priests, warriors, mages, shamans, rogues, paladins, and warlocks. Lastly, a player chooses a name for the avatar. See Figure 1 for an example of the character creation screen for the character “Carl”, a dwarven priest.



Figure 1: The character creation screen from *World of Warcraft*.

After customizing Carl’s appearance and role in the world, the player clicks “accept” and is launched into the world of Azeroth. A cinematic plays, introducing the characteristics of the race chosen by the character and to the state of the world at the present time, and then the player is on their own to explore the world. See Figure 2 for a screenshot of the player’s first view of Azeroth. On the player’s screen is the back of Carl’s head, and in the distance, there are a number of other figures, including a character with a bright yellow exclamation mark over his head – these are non-playable characters, or NPCs. NPCs are created by the game developers to make the game world seem like an inhabited world; they provide quests, vend items, and speak within the game world. The game gives the player a tip to go talk to characters with exclamation marks for directions with how to interact with the world – and in order to “talk”, the player is instructed to use the mouse to right-click on the NPC when Carl is standing next to him or her.



**Figure 2:** The player’s first view of the world of Azeroth.

Talking to this NPC starts Carl on a “quest”, or an activity to be done within the game, as shown in Figure 3. In the early stages, these quests are designed to acclimate a new player to the mechanics of the world around them, but as Carl progresses through the game, he will receive access to higher level quests in higher level areas. The quests not only introduce the history of Azeroth and main characters in the story of the world, but they also give Carl the means to acquire the money, items, weapons, and armor which he needs to survive. Quests also give the player a direction to travel and an impetus to explore the vast world of Azeroth. Some quests will even require that Carl find other players to team up with, for example, to defeat an exceptionally strong dragon terrorizing the village of Lakeshire. After completing quests, Carl receives the money and gear promised, but he also receives “experience points”, which are a way of measuring his progression through the game. With more experience points, Carl will become stronger and will be able to take on larger monsters. After a certain amount of experience points, Carl will gain a “level” which marks how strong he is in relation to other characters or monsters. A five level difference in opponents can mark the difference between a routine fight and a brush with death. Carl starts the game at level 1, and with an investment of time and effort by his player, he may eventually reach the highest level possible in the game, level 70.





**Figure 3:** A beginner's quest in *World of Warcraft*.

Along his journey through Azeroth, Carl might see other characters doing the same things that he is, as pictured in Figure 4 with the other character Tamral. These other characters are actually other *players* with characters in the realm, and they may be interacted with by talking (typing into the chat box) or gesturing (selecting from a list of gestures that your character is programmed to make). These players, if they are aligned in the same political faction as Carl, may be friendly and offer assistance; alternatively, if they are of the enemy faction, they may attack – as happened to Agerionos and Demant in the opening narrative of this thesis.



**Figure 4:** Interacting with another player in the game world.

There are a multitude of things to do in *World of Warcraft* as the character progresses through the game. Questing is just one option; players can also explore the world, socialize with other players in chat channels, defend contested territory from the enemy factions in special player-versus-player battlegrounds, learn how to craft weapons or armor by gathering materials and patterns from the world, and go on intense raids of difficult dungeons with many people for glory and incredible rewards<sup>1</sup>.

There are nine million players of *World of Warcraft* with active accounts (Boyer 2007), and the game is divided up into a number of “servers”, or separate versions of the game, to divide up the large number of players who are logged on at any time. There are four kinds of servers: Player-versus-Environment (PvE), also called “normal” servers; Player-versus-Player (PvP), where players can fight each other; Role-Playing (RP), where players adopt histories and

---

<sup>1</sup> Also called “phat lewt” in the game world, this last reason is a particularly salient motivator for gameplay.

personalities for their avatars separate from their own; and Player-versus-Player Role-Playing (PvP-RP), a combination of PvP and RP server styles. The choice of server for the player depends on their style and, in many cases, what server their friends play on. At any time, there may be ten thousand characters logged into any server at any one time – these are ten thousand people that the player may interact with on their journey through Azeroth.

This type of gameplay and interaction is not new or unique to *World of Warcraft* – this style is common among Massively Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Games (MMORGs). MMORGs have been studied by researchers from several academic fields, from psychology to computer science and art to linguistics. These studies tap into the communities in these online games and strive to describe the behaviors and interests of the players. All in all, research has shown that MMORGs have vibrant communities with in-group norms and, most of all, observable and describable linguistic features used within the community. This research is our inspiration in doing this thesis on *World of Warcraft*. It is our goal to describe the community at hand, show the manner that players use to interact with each other, and unveil how relationships are formed within the game world.

## **1.2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **1.2.1 Introduction.**

The Internet has become an integral part of the lives of many people from all around the world. For some, however, the Internet is not just a part of life, but an extension of life in the virtual world – or what is commonly referred to as ‘second life’. This second life is embodied in a

multitude of forms: blogs, chat rooms, online games, and hundreds of other incarnations. One of the most popular forms of online life in recent years has been the Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Game, or MMORG. A recent poll revealed that the MMORG *World of Warcraft* by Blizzard Entertainment has a worldwide population of 9.3 million participants (Boyer, 2007) at the time of the writing of this thesis. If one considers the hundreds of extant online games, this would mean that millions upon millions of people from around the globe spend countless hours in front of their computers participating in these online games. Recent studies have shown that people enter these realms to make friends (Brown & Bell, 2006), to socialize (Bartle, 1996; Griffiths, Davies, & Chappel, 2003; Williams, et. al, 2006), to make real life money by selling online currency (Steinkuehler, 2005), to escape from real world responsibilities (Yee, 2006), to experiment with language and identity through role-play (Kelly, Pomerantz, & Currie, 2006; Mortenson, 2007; Turkle, 1995), and to harass or harm other players through grief play or player killing (Bartle, 1996; Lin & Sun, 2005; Steinkuehler, 2005; Taylor, 2006).

### **1.2.2 Research into Communities.**

While online games are an extremely popular activity in the online world, few (if any) sociolinguistic studies have examined the interactions between the language and the society within these online worlds. With respect to games, past research has attempted to describe the participants (e.g. Bartle, 1996; Griffiths et al., 2003), the online cultures (e.g. Taylor, 2005; Turkle, 1995), and the motivations for gameplay (e.g., Kelly et al., 2005, Williams et al, 2006). Linguistic research of online worlds, on the other hand, has focused mostly on describing other mediums and the language associated with that particular medium, such as chat communities (Ferrara, Brunner, & Whittemore, 1991), Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs) (Cherny, 1999), instant

messaging (Baron 2004, 2005), and mailing lists (Bury, 2005; Marcoccia, 2004).<sup>2</sup> These two types of studies have not coincided with each other – there has been little or no empirical research devoted to the language used in MMORG communities. Our intent is to fill this gap in the research: we will perform an ethnographic study of a MMORG community and use this experience to describe the language used within the game world and how language functions in relation to power.

### **1.2.3 Methodologies.**

Past research has relied on a variety of methods in order to gather data within these virtual communities. Firstly, surveys have been used to collect data about the participants themselves as well as participants' ideas about the communities that exist online. For example, Griffiths et. al (2003) collected data from players of *Everquest* by looking at surveys that were posted on two different *Everquest* fan sites. The surveys were not created by the researchers, but by the fans who post to the fansites. Secondly, ethnographic interviews have been used to obtain information on community members about their own experiences within virtual communities. Kelly et al. (2006) used in-person interviews with teenagers, asking them about their experiences with identity in virtual worlds. This method was also used by Bartle (1996) when he interviewed the 'wizzes' within a MUD community in order to create his player typology. The most often used method in the most recent studies on MMORGs has been participant observation; researchers have used participant observation to explore *Everquest* (Griffiths et al., 2003; Taylor,

---

<sup>2</sup> The work done by these researchers will be described more fully in section 2.1 on Conversation Analysis Online.

2006), *Lineage* and *Lineage II* (Steinkuehler, 2005), *World of Warcraft* (Williams et al., 2006; Walker, 2007), *There* (Brown & Bell, 2006), and many other online worlds.

## 1.3 DATA COLLECTION

### 1.3.1 Methodology.

All conversation data were collected through participant observation. These observations took place over a period of approximately 6 months for approximately 5 to 10 hours per week in which the two researchers involved in this study joined different communities within *World of Warcraft*. Lauren Collister joined a Role-playing community (RP) and Benjamin Friedline joined a Player vs. Player (PvP) community. As both researchers interacted within the community, they logged all conversations in which they were participants (both overhearers and speakers) using a function present in the game which records all chats into a text file on the player's computer. Furthermore, both researchers maintained ethnographic journals to record pertinent observations about online communities and virtual discourse.

In addition to the participant observation, data about players' perceptions of language and power in *World of Warcraft* were collected through an online 'power questionnaire'. This questionnaire asked participants to provide virtual demographics (e.g., the avatar's race/class), self-conception of personal power, and reflections on how powerful/powerless people spoke within *World of Warcraft*.

### **1.3.2 Participants.**

The participants in this study were members of the online community World of Warcraft. These participants were either on a Role-playing (RP) or on a Player vs. Player (PvP) server and were, for the most part, online acquaintances of the researchers or else members of the researchers' guilds. Little is known about the background of the participants in terms of gender, occupation, race, or age due to the anonymity of the online environment, but the participants were believed to be adults (18+). The researchers know several of the participants in this study from real-life, and most of the other participants in this study were members of the researchers' respective guilds. We believed that the participants in this study were over the age of 18 because they shared this information with us during our online interactions. The participants' names were changed in this thesis to protect their real identities.

### **1.3.3 Our Avatars.**

Benjamin Friedline's avatar's name is Agerionos. This name was chosen by using an automatic name generator within the game. Agerionos is a level 70 human (Alliance) mage on Darkspear, a Player-versus-Player server within *World of Warcraft*. He is a member of a medium-sized guild of about 20 to 30 players. The guild has level 70s, but it also has a number of lower-level participants. Only one avatar was used for Ben during the course of the project.





**Figure 5:** Agerionos, the human mage.

Lauren Collister played three characters in the *World of Warcraft* universe on the Scarlet Crusade server, mostly due to the in-guild practice of creating multiple alternate characters (“alts”). This practice is more common on roleplaying servers than on PvP servers. Her main character was Parnopaeus (“Parn”), a female night elf (Alliance) hunter who was level 64 at the time of the writing of this thesis. She had two alternate lower level characters: Skakavaz, a draenei (Alliance) paladin, and Alai, a blood elf (Horde) mage. All of these characters were in the same guild, a small group (10-15 players) mostly made of people with connections outside of *World of Warcraft*. The guild was called <SeeD> on the Alliance side and <Yevon> on the Horde side. The names for the guild were borrowed from Square Enix’s console-based video games *Final Fantasy VIII* and *Final Fantasy X* respectively; these particular names were chosen



because the founding members of the guild originally met and bonded through a community for *Final Fantasy* fans, and they wanted the name of their guild to reflect their origins in gaming.



**Figure 6:** Parnopaeus, the night elf hunter.



**Figure 7:** Skakavaz, the draenei paladin.



**Figure 8:** Alai, the blood elf mage.

### 1.3.4 Transcription Conventions.

In the course of the analyses, we will present sections of discourse collected from our data. It is important to understand how to read the data, so we set forth here the method for reading our transcriptions in this section. The data are taken directly from chatlogs saved by the game via the /chatlog function and no editing (save for changing names to pseudonyms and adding line numbers for ease of analysis) was done by the authors.

Below is a sample piece of data that we might analyze in this work.

```
54 1/22 00:04:48.937 [Guild] Elemaa: hi parn and Zanna
55 1/22 00:04:50.968 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah
56 1/22 00:04:54.640 [Guild] Zanna: Hi Elemaa
57 1/22 00:04:56.218 [Guild] Parnopaeus: hello elemaa!
```

The numbers on the far left side indicate line numbers, put into the text by the authors. The next numbers, 1/22, indicate the date that the utterance happened (January 22). The next sequence, for example 00:04:48.937 is a timestamp, showing the time of the sending of the line (hitting the Enter key on the keyboard) down to the millisecond, in 24 hour time. The first line, therefore, happened at 12:04:48 AM (and 937 milliseconds). We will be more concerned with seconds and minutes than milliseconds, but the precise timing becomes important when looking deeply at individual interactions.

[Guild] indicates which chat channel the speaker was using to say such an utterance, in this case, the Guild chat for the large social group of a "guild" in *World of Warcraft*. There are other chat channels that are often used, and in the game interface, each channel has its own unique color to make it stand out from the others; however, in our chatlog, all colors are neutralized to black. The other most often used channel names are below:

[Party]	a group of five or fewer people working on a quest or task
[Raid]	a group of six to forty players working on a quest or task
[Guild]	a social group within the game
[Officer]	officers of a guild only
[General]	general chat for anyone in a particular zone
[Trade]	special channel for selling goods and services in a city

Following the bracketed name of the chat channel is a name and a colon, such as Elemaa:. This is the name of the speaker of the utterance - more precisely, it is her character's name. A person named Amber in real life may have the name Elemaa for her character, and the character name is the one that shows on the screen. Following the colon is the actual utterance, or the thing being said. Sometimes, in our transcriptions, a parenthetical phrase in italics will occur in a line -- this is a definition of a particular piece of jargon, added by the authors so that those unfamiliar with the lingo of *World of Warcraft* may still understand what is being said. Such an addition looks like this:

8 10/30 23:01:11.593 [Guild] Avery: R u resto? (=restoration, a type of healer)

If some particular line needs additional explanation besides a definition of jargon, the author's notes will be included in [square brackets], as below:

10 11/12 23:13:29.921 [Officer] Avery: Because, omg, she had such a \*hard day\* [with men]

This layout comprises the majority of the discourse discussed in this work. However, there are two other types of chat which may occur.

The first other type of chat is called simply "Say", and is not in a particular chat "channel" at all. When a player "Says" something (sometimes called "/s", referring to the keystrokes needed to perform such an utterance), a speech bubble appears above the avatar -- this bubble and its contents are visible to everyone who is within a certain range of the character in the game. In the chat log, such an utterance looks like this:

2 10/25 00:04:06.046 Alai says: They do indeed.

Here we have the line number, date, and timestamp followed by the character's name (Alai) and "says:", then the utterance. "Emotes", or actions written out in words, appear in this way as well.

4 10/25 00:04:16.812 A sly smirk spreads across Kalel's face.

Players often use /s on Roleplaying servers to roleplay as their characters, while [Guild] and [Party] channels are considered to be "out of character", or where players can converse normally.

A final and unique form of chat that occurs in *World of Warcraft* is the "whisper", often called a "tell" or a "PST". This is a private message sent from one player to one other player, only visible by the sender and the receiver. This particular form of chat appears on the screen in *World of Warcraft* in a bright pink font, drawing great attention to itself. Much like "Say", this form features the name of the character and the verb "whispers:", followed by the utterance.

20 7/18 18:14:46.421 Vickie whispers: Don't mind him, he's a cocky ass bastard...

## 2.0 ONLINE CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

05/30 01:11:07.225 Jeremiah whispers: Typed or spoken, the purpose of communication is to convey the intended message in the fastest manner with the least amount of room for misunderstanding

Jeremiah's words sum up the role of communication in *World of Warcraft* and its relation to spoken language. However, even though the purpose remains the same, the mechanisms and the execution of the communication will necessarily be different in a typed medium than a spoken medium. In the following section, I will analyze conversational interaction in *World of Warcraft*. To do this, I will use the tools of traditional spoken-language Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974; Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1992) – however, unlike traditional Conversation Analysis which discards the use of context to analyze interaction, I will be relying on ethnographic observations and knowledge of the digital and physical worlds to perform my analyses. This hybrid style of analysis follows in the footsteps of the work by Lacy (2006) on interaction in tabletop roleplaying games.

The work in this section is a foundation for analyses – after creating the framework with which to observe interaction, I perform a short analysis of a long interaction to show how the framework may be used to look at orientation in a digital world. Other applications of this framework are many, and the framework may (and, most likely, *will*) have to be altered to fit other mediums and other games online – it is my hope that the observations I produce here will be translatable for other mediums, just as I have translated the spoken language frameworks into

a suitable form for online discourse.

I will begin by reviewing past work done on conversation online by other researchers. I will then construct my approach to conversation based on the rules of Conversation Analysis as well as the insights from previous work on e-discourse. Third, I will show examples of the complications introduced by the online medium and how they fit into my approach. Finally, I will analyze a long passage of discourse to show how players can express style and orientation to each other using the features of online language.

My research questions are as follows:

1. Are the tools of Conversation Analysis useful for analyzing e-discourse?
2. What are the problems that e-discourse poses for Conversation Analysis?
3. How do players use language in *World of Warcraft* to display alignment to each other?

## 2.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The history of online discourse analysis began with one simple question: Is online language use more like written or spoken language? The answer seemed simple in the early days of the Internet: computers were used for typing documents, and this was *written* language. However, as individuals began to make contact over the Internet, the language evolved into a more complicated code, and language forms traditionally associated with written language began to take on unusual properties. The methods of investigating the mechanics of online language use also evolved into two different styles of study: studies of a particular medium (such as instant messaging or chat rooms) and studies of online communities (such as a particular mailing list or a group of people who regularly correspond via e-mail and in a chat room).

#### **4.2.1 Studies on Medium.**

Ferrara, Brunner, and Whittemore (1991) did some of the earliest work on the question of whether online language is more like written language or spoken language. In a traditional laboratory experiment setting, they observed the language used by subjects in a chat room with each other. They noted that the language used showed similarity to the "note-taking register", such as the language used in taking notes in a classroom. However, they also noted that the simplifications they found in online language -- dropping unstressed articles and pronouns, clipping of long words into abbreviated forms -- were similar to those used in sports commentary and CB radio communication. Even though they did not study an actual community of language users, their work was still important in starting the train of research into online language use.

Bays (1998) observed an IRC (Internet Relay Chat) room looking for examples of framing and face. Using some tools of Conversation Analysis, he demonstrated that users of the chat room used metaphor and reference manipulations to construct the online world as an analogy to a physical space. He also showed that timing is not as important in online conversation as presence in the chat room -- users show involvement with the group by actively involving themselves in a conversation rather than by responding within a pre-set amount of time. Bays suggested that gaps between messages could be as long as the users could make them, just as long as the interlocutors were both still present in the chat room to receive the message. This approach seems more analogous to written language due to the lack of time constraints on the participants.

Bays's (1998) work stands in contrast to work like Al-Sa'di and Hamdan (2005), who observed chat rooms for features of spoken language. Al-Sa'di and Hamdan found that users tended to shorten their lexical items to attempt to match the speed of spoken language, and even in fact created new lexical items in the same way that speakers do in spoken language. This discrepancy in the speed of language use in chat rooms can reflect a number of differences in methodology: different frameworks for observation, different demographics of the users of the chat rooms, or even just a change in language over time. Due to the seven year interval between these studies, it is possible that some language shift could have occurred in that time.

Baron (2004, 2005), after looking at discourse structure in Instant Messaging among college students, suggested that online language is not really like either written or spoken language but rather a blend of the two with other unique language features incorporated. In her 2004 work, she measured the frequency of use of stereotypical online language features like acronyms and shortenings, and found that these features made up less than 1% of the words in her corpus. Therefore, she says, users are not taking "full advantage" of the lexical shortcuts attributed to the medium. In her 2005 work, she attempted to use Chafe's intonational unit in analyzing online discourse, mostly to tackle the phenomenon of utterance breaks in online conversation (when a single user sends two messages in a row which could have been combined into one single message). She made the distinction between "turns" (a stroke of the enter key) and "sequences" (strings of text from one user). She showed that the second parts of utterance breaks, or the second turns, tended to begin with conjunctions or adverbs, and concluded that these kinds of message breaks are modifiers.

Merchant (2001) argued that online language is more akin to spoken language. He observed teenage girls using Instant Messenger, and noted particularly the use of abbreviations and



shortened forms of words. At his conclusion, he compared the evolution of the written language of Instant Messenger to the evolution of spoken language, deducing that,

...writing is changing too as it takes on some of the functions and features of speech. Internet chatrooms and rapid real-time conferencing allow users to interact with whoever happens to coexist in cyberspace. These virtual interactions involve us in 'talking' more freely and more widely than ever before. And the majority of these virtual conversations take place in writing – not the kind of writing that comes from a pen or typewriter, but that ghost-like writing that imitates type on the monitor, disappears when the computer is turned off and may or may not be recoverable at some future date. (294)

The studies of medium point to one particular theme: depending on what particular medium a user is interacting with, the language will change. E-mail, being asynchronous communication, would have different features than synchronous communication such as instant messenger (Baron 2004). In all these mediums, language is evolving in different directions with different needs and uses. This observation led to the study of individual communities, mostly communicating over one particular medium, for a more detailed focus on linguistic features found in particular incarnations of online language.

#### **4.2.2 Studies on Communities.**

Cherny (1999), in one of the earliest and most thorough studies of an online community, took the features suggested by Ferrara, Brunner, and Whittemore (1991) as well as those proposed by Bays (1998) and applied them in an ethnographic approach to a pre-existing online community from the ElseMOO MUD (Multi-User Dungeon, or a text-based game). She showed how members of the community use a variety of syntactic and morphological phenomena to orient to each other and the collaboratively constructed environment of the MUD. She also discussed that ways that the community created certain routines or in-group language features. Most of these in-group features originated from typos or other conversational errors; for example, when two

users type a very similar sentence, the one who sent the message first will assert that she "WINS" and the other "LOSES". Aside from being a type of repair, this conversational strategy also shows an orientation to the ElseMOO community which created this norm of behavior. Cherny also addressed the features of turn-taking online, and showed how multiple users could construct a collaborative floor by jointly contributing to a topic of conversation. The length of time before responding to a posting was important, in Cherny's observation, because the users relied on the collaborative feeling of online conversation.

Marcoccia (2004) applied a framework of speaker and hearer to three pre-existing online mailing lists, showing that the interface of the mailing list affected the nature of the conversations. Furthermore, he showed that initiating messages on a topic have a "lifetime", or a period of time during which they can relevantly be replied to. For instance, if a user replied to a message that was posted two weeks ago, the topic might be considered "dead"; however, responding within the first day of a message being posted would be considered an acceptable span of time for relevance. He concluded that the displacement and gap belong to the conversational dynamics in mailing lists and do not actually disrupt the flow of talk. Even though mailing lists and chat rooms (or MUDs) are very different in synchrony, they both still incorporate the idea of message gap. In spoken conversation, silence in conversation is awkward and dispreferred, but in an online medium, it is necessary, and the users incorporate it into their language no matter what the medium is that they are using. The ways that users incorporate this gap may vary, and the length of gap that is acceptable will also differ, from days on a mailing list to minutes in a chat room.

Thomas (2003) studied a community of fanfiction authors online, who used both a forum and instant messenger to create the content for their website. Although not a linguistic study,

Thomas's participants described the way they used instant messenger to role-play their stories, which were then edited into a more traditional story format before being posted on the forums. The use of the instant message format to write a literary text is much different from uses such as those described by Baron (2004, 2005); the writers in Thomas's study did not admit to using acronyms or other language forms thought particular to the medium when creating their stories. Thomas's study is significant because it shows that the medium does not define the language, but rather the users are the ones who define how to use the medium (although the medium can have its effects on what can or cannot be done).

In a thorough investigation of a community, Bury (2005) studied a group of female fans of the actor David Duchovny. These fans corresponded via a variety of mediums: e-mail lists, personal e-mail, chat rooms, forums, and websites. She studied the interactional features of these women from a sociological standpoint, but linguistic features were also quite salient. She found that error correction (of typos) was a form of linguistic capital for these women – that is, by knowing to correct their errors, they demonstrated a knowledge of standard written English. Bury also found a shortage of the acronyms and shortenings that are so often ascribed to online language, instead showing that the community used a few in-group norms (such as referring to themselves as "DDEB", or David Duchovny Estrogen Brigade) in conjunction with largely accepted online acronyms (such as "LOL" for Laughing Out Loud). She also showed that the women of the community tended to use hedging and self-effacing humor as a politeness strategy, particularly on the mailing list where responses could be composed and edited for a much longer length of time.

These community studies of language show that the linguistic features of online talk are not wholly generalizable by medium. Each community may share some features with others

(such as the prevalence of some online acronyms like LOL, ROFL, or OMG), but the individual communities themselves develop practices to differentiate themselves from other groups. In this way, online language is very much like spoken language. Dialectologists and sociolinguists have long studied in-group spoken language norms for particular demographics or social groups (Bucholtz, 1999; Coates, 1993; Eckert, 2000; Gal, 1978; Kiesling, 1998; Labov, 1966; Tannen, 1984). However, to discard the impact of medium on the discourse is to ignore a very important feature of language use in the community. Language users can only do the things that the interface allows -- by their very nature, mailing lists have a longer gap between messages than something like Instant Messaging, due to the expected presence or non-presence of the speakers at their keyboard. Therefore, mailing lists will have different discourse features than Instant Messaging, and these differences can only be understood in the context of the medium. In my analysis of language in *World of Warcraft*, I attempt to take into account both the features of the interface that affect the language as well as the nature of the community being studied.

## **2.2 TURN-TAKING FRAMEWORK**

In this section, I will address the conventions of turn-taking in discourse in *World of Warcraft*. To accomplish this task, I will use the conventions of Conversation Analysis, traditionally applied to spoken language, to show whether online discourse in *World of Warcraft* mimics spoken language, particularly at the organizational level. In addition, I set out a framework for observing and analyzing online discourse based on the unique features of the medium.

Any approach to Conversation Analysis must begin with Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974) landmark study of turn taking in mundane interaction. They observed three

basic facts about spoken conversation:

1. Turn-taking occurs.
2. One speaker tends to talk at a time.
3. Turns are taken with as little gap or overlap between them as possible.

A *turn* can be defined as something that begins when one speaker starts to speak, and ends when he or she stops speaking (Cameron, 2001; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1992; Johnstone, 2002), so interlocutors "take turns" speaking in conversation. There are exceptions to the three rules in spoken language – people do talk over each other (overlap), and sometimes there are pauses in conversation (gap) – but these three rules function as basic principles of conversational interaction.

### **2.2.1 Applying Conversation Analysis Online.**

Are these observations from Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) useful for analyzing online discourse? This question is first reliant on a discussion of the medium in which conversation occurs in *World of Warcraft*. Discourse in *World of Warcraft* is primarily synchronous chat, meaning that players send and receive messages in real time; this is different from online mediums such as e-mail, which is asynchronous (Baron, 2004). Asynchronous conversations allow a greater amount of time to compose a message than synchronous conversations, since the idea of being "face to face" culturally requires a certain expediency in communication. Additionally, in *World of Warcraft*, discourse can be either one-to-one (as in whispers, or private messages) or one-to-many (as in [Party] or [Guild] chat). Most instances of conversation in the data are one-to-many.

Even though conversations still occur in real time in *World of Warcraft*, the nature of

online synchronous chat is fundamentally different from spoken conversation because of the medium. A “speaker” is not really a speaker at all but rather a “typer”; a “hearer” is not physically hearing anything and would be better called a “reader”.<sup>3</sup> Even though the activities of speakers and hearers online are somewhat similar to spoken conversation – the first produces an utterance and the second receives it – the interface requires that the behaviors of these roles are different from spoken conversation. For a thorough discussion of how the roles of “speaker” and “hearer” may be affected by medium, see Marcoccia (2004).

To find whether Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson’s (1974) observations fit for discourse in *World of Warcraft*, I will look at each observation individually and apply it to discourse online. First, I will address the first observation: “Turn taking occurs”. This observation seems obvious – conversations do occur in chat just as in spoken language: people talk to each other and take turns contributing to the dialogue. I will take this first observation as true for online discourse as well as spoken language. The second observation is “one speaker tends to talk at a time”, which is a necessity in spoken conversation since it is difficult to hear what is being said when two speakers speak simultaneously. An instance of simultaneous speech is often considered an interruption or an overlap, and steps are often taken to repair these conversational occurrences (Cameron, 2001; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1992). In *World of Warcraft*, chat is displayed in a small text box in the corner of the screen (see Figure 9), and the lines of chat are displayed in the order that they are typed and sent by the players. Since the interface creates instantaneous turns from a hearer's perspective (everything that a speaker has to say appears on the screen at the same time), and each different speaker's utterances are ordered visually on the screen, we can see that

---

<sup>3</sup> In this work, I retain the conventional titles “speaker” and “hearer” to preserve not only the connection to spoken language analysis, but also the perceptions of the participants. Interlocutors in *World of Warcraft* often refer to “talking” to each other, “hearing” what other people are saying, and “listening” to people talking in the chat rooms.

Principle Two ("one speaker tends to talk at a time") of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson applies -- one speaker does tend to talk at a time. However, this is a necessity due to the interface and the nature of the style of chat.

Now I will turn to the third observation of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson: "Turns are taken with as little gap or overlap between them as possible." The nature of gap and overlap in online discourse is problematic and requires a discussion of the nature of "synchrony" in online chat versus spoken language. One difference between physically synchronous (spoken) conversation and online synchronous conversation relates to the amount of time between utterances. This difference in synchrony has led to online synchronous chat being called "Quasi-Synchronous" (Garcia and Jacobs, 1999) because the delay in sending messages is different from 'true' synchrony as in spoken conversation. In *World of Warcraft*, this delay occurs because a speaker does not produce an utterance word-by-word with a hearer listening to the utterance and anticipating the end of the turn (as with spoken language); rather, a speaker must compose an utterance in its entirety in the chat box, visible only to the speaker themselves. The speaker can go back and edit what they have typed before they send it without the hearer knowing -- this message editing has no true analogy in spoken conversation. (The closest analogy is first position repair, in which a speaker repairs an error in the same turn that the error occurs. See Section 2.2.3.2 for a discussion on repair in online discourse.) The difference is that the hearer is oblivious to the content of the message (or even if the speaker is saying anything at all) and must wait for the message to be sent by the speaker and posted on the screen. At the same time, the hearer cannot predict when the next message will be posted -- it may be seconds, minutes, or never, depending on what is going on in the other interlocutor's world (physical and digital).

In *World of Warcraft*, conversation is only one part of a participant's experience. The

chat box, where all social communication occurs, is found in the lower left corner of the screen, while a visual representation of the world encompasses a majority of the rest of the area (see Figure 9). While a player interacts with the world, they must simultaneously pay attention to the visual events happening in the world as well as the small chat box in the corner of their screen. Some players are better at this visual multi-tasking than others -- during difficult battles or surprise attacks, players may drop out of the conversation altogether in order to pay more visual attention to the events happening in the world. In addition, players require the use of the keyboard not only to type their utterances in chat, but also to strike keys corresponding with spells, attacks, and even directional movements. Therefore, not only is the visual space divided between the two acts of chatting and navigating the world, but the actual keyboard (and the player's hands that operate it) has a dual usage as well. In this way, conversation in *World of Warcraft* is visual and physical rather than auditory, and there are multiple things competing for one's attention on the computer screen and the use of a player's hands. When a speaker's attention is taken away from the chat, a lull in conversation may occur, causing a large gap between utterances even in an ongoing conversation. All players know that another player's attention may be taken away at any moment, and they cannot know what is happening on another person's screen unless their avatar happens to be in the same place as their fellow interlocutor's. At the first opportunity, a player will return to the ongoing chat, usually with an excuse, as the player Avery does below after not responding to Parnopaeus's question "ready?" for more than a minute:

```
1 10/28 22:23:01.406 [Party] Parnopaeus: ready?
2 10/28 22:23:09.375 [Party] Zanna: Ready
3 10/28 22:24:14.125 [Party] Parnopaeus: you should be good now!
4 10/28 22:24:15.156 [Party] Avery: Sorry got attacked XD
```

Players in Avery's situation clearly do not favor the conversation over fending off an attack. It is



known that other players will understand if you take a longer time to respond to a chat message because you were attacked, as long as you explain your absence. A player could, feasibly, choose to continue the conversation at the expense of striking the correct keys to prevent their death – thereby conversing with as little gap or overlap as possible -- but this behavior is widely regarded as an unwise choice.



**Figure 9:** A screenshot from the *World of Warcraft* interface.

Turn-taking occurs, therefore, but in a more extended timeframe – a speaker has a much longer span of time to create an utterance, and a hearer must wait in conversational silence for that utterance before they can begin to compose their response. This silence would be problematic in spoken language, as two conversants tend to interact with as little gap as possible;

in online conversation, however, the silence and gap is simply an understood part of the process. The visual and physical nature of the interface seems to eliminate the concept of gap and overlap in conversation (and Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's third observation) as a useful tool for analyzing discourse.

So, while the observations posed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) are relevant for physically co-present people participating in spoken conversation, they are not as useful for online conversations. The organization of online discourse seems much simpler on the surface:

1. Turn-taking occurs.
2. Each speaker's turn consists of one message.
3. Messages can be sent within a largely variable amount of time as long as the hearer is still logged into the chat room to hear the message (Bays, 1998; Cherny, 1999; Garcia and Jacobs, 1999) and the topic is still relevant (Marroccia, 2004).

With this time freedom as well as the message structure proposed by Baron (2005), the expected discourse structure is that each stroke of the Enter key marks the end of a turn and, in concordance, a Transition Relevance Place (TRP) at which another speaker could begin their turn. This structure holds for conversations like that in .

**Example 1.**

### **Example 1**

```
1 9/13 21:14:25.968 [Party] Avery: Ever been here before?
2 9/13 21:14:31.593 [Party] Parnopaeus: No I Ihaven't!
3 9/13 21:14:36.031 [Party] Avery: It's a fun place to hang!
4 9/13 21:14:40.984 [Party] Parnopaeus: really?
5 9/13 21:14:51.640 [Party] Avery: LOTS of leather!
6 9/13 21:14:53.734 [Party] Parnopaeus: WOOT
7 9/13 21:15:03.796 [Party] Avery: I was just clearing down here
```

In this example, the two interlocutors Avery and Parnopaeus exchange turns one at a time separated by an average of 6.3 seconds. The gaps between turns are as short as two seconds (between lines 5 and 6) and as long as 11 seconds (between lines 4 and 5). There is no particular

reason that Avery's utterance "LOTS of leather!" in line 5 should take longer to type than her utterance "It's a fun place to hang!" in line 3 -- the latter has more characters for the fingers to type, but occurs after five seconds as opposed to line 5 which occurs after 11 seconds. This is likely due to Avery's explanation in line 7, "I was just clearing down here", meaning that she was clearing out the enemies at the beginning of the dungeon when Parnopaeus arrived and, therefore, had multiple events competing for her attention. Line 7 occurs after a ten second delay as well, which may indicate the ongoing process of "clearing".

Each line in .

Example 1 constitutes a turn -- one stroke of the Enter key sends a complete thought to [Party] chat, and the next interlocutor chooses to take her turn in succession. This one-message-turn model works for more than two interlocutors as well, as in Example 2 in which Avery describes an action considered mildly rude -- sending an unsolicited private message (whisper) to a total stranger asking for healing in a dungeon.

## Example 2

```
3 10/30 22:59:44.328 [Guild] Avery: I'm waiting to get a whisper
4 10/30 22:59:50.593 [Guild] Jikko: lol
5 10/30 22:59:55.921 [Guild] Skakavaz: why?
6 10/30 23:00:08.031 [Guild] Avery: There's a dude here lookin for a healer for Ulda (=Uldaman,
a dungeon) in general (=chat)
7 10/30 23:00:14.843 [Guild] Skakavaz: uh oh
8 10/30 23:01:11.593 [Guild] Avery: R u resto? (=are you restoration [a type of healer])
9 10/30 23:01:18.984 [Guild] Jikko: >_< UGH
10 10/30 23:01:19.859 [Guild] Avery: XD
11 10/30 23:01:36.078 [Guild] Jikko: "NO. LRN2SPELL" (=learn to spell)
12 10/30 23:01:39.031 [Guild] Avery: Just waitin
13 10/30 23:02:21.156 [Guild] Skakavaz: KILL HIM
14 10/30 23:02:31.218 [Guild] Avery: Well he hasn't yet
```

In Example 2, the three interlocutors Avery, Jikko, and Skakavaz each take one message per turn with an average of 15.6 seconds between turns, though there is a one-second turn (line 10) and a 57 second turn (line 8). This wide disparity in time taken between turns has no connection to the data just as in .

Example 1; Avery's utterance "R u resto?" (line 8) which comes after a 57 second gap is a shorter utterance than "There's a dude here lookin for a healer for Ulda in general" in line 6, which has a 13 second gap. Perhaps Avery in line 8 was attending to something else on the screen, even possibly communication with the other people she is referring to, which may account for her long delay because some other activity took her attention.

There also appears to be no regular order to the turn-taking in Example 2, indicating that the speakers are self-selecting. The turns themselves have different natures as well -- lines 4 and 7 could be considered a type of backchanneling -- Jikko says "lol" to indicate that she is laughing at something (perhaps at Avery's situation), whereas in line 7 Skakavaz says "uh oh" to indicate her perception of the situation and encourage Avery to continue explaining. Lines 9 and 10 both feature emoticons (>\_< from Jikko is an angry anime-style emoticon, and Avery's XD is a non-anime style laughing emoticon), and allow Jikko and Avery to express their respective reactions to the situation in conversational turns.

From the above examples, we can see that the three rules postulated by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) for spoken discourse partially apply to online conversations. Rules 1 ("Turn-taking occurs") and 2 ("One speaker tends to talk at a time") apply, as we have seen, but rule 3 ("Turns are taken with as little gap and overlap between them as possible") seems to be different because of the interface and the nature of playing the game itself. The above examples concur with my observations regarding online discourse:

1. Turn-taking occurs. (Each of the examples above shows the interlocutors taking turns contributing to a topic of discussion.)
2. Each speaker's turn consists of one message. (Again, each speaker takes one line to say their contribution to the conversation.)

3. Messages can be sent within a largely variable amount of time as long as the hearer is still logged into the chat room to hear the message and the topic is still relevant. (A largely variable length of time between messages occurred in Examples 1 and 2, but yet these gaps were neither remarked upon nor did they interfere with the flow of conversation.)

This framework synthesizes the ideas presented by previous researchers (Cherny, 1999; Baron, 2004, 2005; Merchant, 2001; Marcoccia, 2004; among others). In observing the discourse in *World of Warcraft*, however, this orderly match between message and turn described by Observation 2 is relatively rare – the discourse is not always as simple as the interface allows. Players frequently construct turns consisting of multiple messages, or multiple strokes of the Enter key, but all of the messages combine to form one single coherent utterance. In the following section I show how players construct these multiple message turns, and discuss the discourse tools needed to analyze such passages.

### **2.2.2 The Problem: Multiple Message Turns.**

Rather than sending one message at a time, it is actually much more common in *World of Warcraft* discourse for one speaker to send multiple messages in a row as part of the same thought idea. *World of Warcraft* does have a message limit -- a player is permitted only 255 total characters per message sent to chat. However, the average message length produced by players is considerably shorter than the message limit, and messages that *could* be typed in one line (containing fewer than 255 characters) are often broken up into multiple messages, such as in Example 3 below.

### Example 3

```
2 12/18 21:47:52.781 [Guild] Parnopaeus: oooh that's gonna take tiem
3 12/18 21:48:09.203 [Guild] Avery: yeah >.< specially since I've DONE most of the Barrens (=a
zone in the game)
4 12/18 21:48:22.968 [Guild] Avery: So I have to look up quests for him to do
```

Avery's two messages in lines 3 and 4 could have been combined into one long message, such as "yeah >.< specially since I've DONE most of the Barrens so I have to look up quests for him to do" which only has 96 characters. However, she chooses to break up the long sentence into two smaller messages.

Example 3 contrasts with Example 4, in which Avery and Zanna both send two messages in succession which do not form one unified message. There are two topics at hand here -- making fun of Avery's armor, and a quest that both interlocutors need to complete.

### Example 4

```
6 12/26 19:08:55.937 [Guild] Avery: He's not helping his image thar
7 12/26 19:10:03.140 [Guild] Avery: Zanna! You want to go take out the warlord in Hellfire
8 12/26 19:10:13.000 [Guild] Zanna: LOL, after the dress, I don't think there's much he can do.
9 12/26 19:10:14.000 [Guild] Zanna: I DO
```

The timestamps on lines 6 and 7 show that more than a minute passed between the two messages. In contrast, Zanna's two messages in 8 and 9 are only one second apart. There are two different adjacency pairs evident in Example 4, pairing line 6 with 8 and line 7 with 9. The even numbered lines are on the topic of Avery's armor, while the odd numbered lines refer to the quest to "take out the warlord in Hellfire" which Avery and Zanna have both been assigned to do. Zanna's utterance in 8 occurs one minute and eighteen seconds after Avery's utterance in 6; even though these two utterances go together, they are separated by a large gap which gave Avery an opening to introduce a new topic -- which indicates that gap may be more salient in online discourse than previously thought. Zanna finishes her utterance in 8, which she may have been typing when Avery sent her next message in line 7, before responding to the second first pair part.

Example 3 features a two-part turn by Avery, while Example 4 features two turns by both of the interlocutors. It may seem that in Example 3 Avery creates an adjacency pair with herself – she gives cause and effect in two adjacency pairs, the cause being “I’ve DONE most of the Barrens” (meaning that she has done most of the quests in the zone called The Barrens) and the effect being “So I have to look up quests for him to do”. There can be longer strings of these self-adjacency pairs created by a single user, as in Example 5.

### Example 5

```
14 12/26 18:58:13.234 [Guild] Parnopaeus: I'm looking for the arch mage and some dude's old house
15 12/26 18:58:29.093 [Guild] Avery: Oh THAT! That house is a bitch
16 12/26 18:58:32.421 [Guild] Avery: To find anyway XD
17 12/26 18:58:36.453 [Guild] Avery: It's like RIGHT on the edge
```

Lines 15, 16, and 17 are three individual messages sent by the same user within a seven second time period. However, these messages all make up the longer thought “Oh THAT! That house is a bitch to find, [because] it’s like RIGHT on the edge”. First, Avery responds to Parn by saying that she’s familiar with the house Parn is looking for. Avery assesses that “That house is a bitch”, but then amends her statement with “To find anyway”, meaning that “the house is a bitch to find”, rather than to fight in, get the quest item from, or any other qualities that would fit Avery’s assessment of the house being “a bitch”. Line 16 also helps the hearer understand the meaning of “bitch”, which here has been used as a slang term in which “is a bitch” is roughly synonymous to “is difficult”. Then in line 17, Avery continues with more clarification of why the house is difficult to find, because “it’s like right on the edge”.

The idea of self-adjacency pairs seems attractive, but does not fit with what is happening in the actual utterances. First, adjacency pairs are traditionally conceived as occurring between two interlocutors (Cameron, 2001; Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1996; Johnstone, 2002; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), so “self-adjacency pairs” is a contradiction. Secondly, the lines are not different messages like a question-answer adjacency pair; all of the lines in discourse like Example 5

combine to form one coherent message, divided up at what would be CA's transition relevant places (TRPs). These are not traditional transition points, however. TRPs are traditionally considered to be reliant on intonation and prosody (Chafe, 1980, 1994, 2002; Crookes & Rulon, 1985; Crystal, 1969; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Sherzer, 1982); however, in *World of Warcraft*, there are no audible words spoken in the discourse, only visual representation. TRPs instead seem to be places where users strike the Enter key to send a message to chat -- Enter does not actually correspond to a turn, like was stated previously, but rather to a type of prosodic unit. The prosodic unit, like the language itself in *World of Warcraft*, is not audible but rather visual, dividing up the message and ordering the lines on the screen in a particular way.

Sometimes, these visual prosodic sequences of message breaks can be rather long. In Example 6, which is taken from a long interaction between Killah, Vickie, and Parnopaeus<sup>4</sup>, Killah has a seven message turn as he explains why he asked Parn whether she was male or female. This length of message sequence is rather unusual in my data, but not unusual for Killah's conversational style as he exhibits this same behavior throughout the interaction this except is taken from. Killah's many small message breaks make up his own unique conversational style, a visual counterpart to prosodic features in spoken language. This is contrasted with Parn's turn in line 2, which has four potential prosodic breaks in her line (evidenced by the punctuation which indicates the parts of her utterance), but she puts them all into one message.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The entire text of the conversation is included in Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup> Since the player in question here is, in fact, the author of this paper, I find it necessary to point out other instances of similar long-message behavior to show that this is not isolated behavior. For other cases, please see Example 9 line 2 from Avery, Example 10 line 29 from Lomack and line 42 from Sandy, Example 12 line 1 from Graffle, Example 16 line 1 from Shak, Example 25A lines 5, 18, and 19 from Zanna, and Example 25B line 39 from Zanna, Example 25C line 42 from Niele and line 63 from Zanna.



## Example 6

```
1 7/18 18:11:02.765 [Party] Vickie: Are you good now, Parn?
2 7/18 18:11:13.312 [Party] Parnopaeus: Yes I am - thank you again!
3 7/18 18:11:22.171 [Party] Killah: Parn
4 7/18 18:11:24.718 [Party] Killah: are you a guy?
5 7/18 18:11:33.546 [Party] Parnopaeus: why do you ask?
6 7/18 18:11:40.015 [Party] Killah: Cause i'm a curious bastard
7 7/18 18:11:40.015 [Party] Vickie: Np.
8 7/18 18:11:52.781 [Party] Vickie: Take care. =]
9 7/18 18:11:55.468 [Party] Killah: And i don't like guys who plays girlchars
10 7/18 18:11:58.890 [Party] Parnopaeus: haha, I get asked it a lot. I'm a girl. lol
11 7/18 18:12:00.640 [Party] Parnopaeus: why not?
12 7/18 18:12:03.546 [Party] Killah: Cause
13 7/18 18:12:04.812 [Party] Killah: it's gay
14 7/18 18:12:05.921 [Party] Killah: lmao
15 7/18 18:12:09.781 [Party] Killah: Guys with tits?
16 7/18 18:12:11.937 [Party] Killah: >>
17 7/18 18:12:31.796 [Party] Killah: It's (=presumably "if") thats fine with you..
18 7/18 18:12:33.937 [Party] Killah: Then su re!
19 7/18 18:12:35.281 [Party] Vickie: -shrugs- Killah doesn't like the idea of lesbians? =p
```

Killah's five messages in lines 12 through 16 are very close together, occurring within eight seconds. After a twenty second pause between lines 16 and 17, Killah adds another two lines onto his argument. The long pause between lines 16 and 17 is not a good sign for Killah – this may be a sign that the others are engaging in an activity other than paying attention to him. He continues the conversation in line 17, adding on another two lines that somewhat contradict what he said before. The topic is then continued by Vickie, either because she detects Killah's unwillingness to drop the conversation or because she has finished with some engaging visual activity on her screen. Killah's style in this example is different from Parn's. Killah breaks up his utterances into multiple messages; while Parn could have done the same thing following Killah's style ("haha / I get asked it a lot / I'm a girl / lol"), she instead chooses to keep all of her turn to one line. Line 11 then is a second turn, not a second message of the same turn, because line 11 refers to something different than line 10 does. This breaking up of messages may be a style indicator – Killah likes to have his utterances spread across the chat box so that his name appears multiple times, while Parn prefers to put all of her turn content in one line.

I have shown that although the interface of *World of Warcraft* seems to promote a one-turn-per-message structure for conversation, players do not adopt this imposed structure and

instead can and often do create coherent turns out of multiple messages. The structure of conversation is much more complicated than I expected. In the following section, I will break down the multiple message turns in order to show how these turns are organized.

### **2.2.3 The Answer: Turn Continuation.**

How do players and analysts know that Example 3, Example 5, and Killah's part of Example 6 consist of multiple-message turns, while Example 4 and Parn's turn in 6 consist of two different turns? One way that we might know that some messages are meant to be taken together and others are not is punctuation: Zanna in Example 4 ends her first message with a period, indicating a full stop or a completion of a sentence before sending her next message. There are no periods at the ends of Avery's messages in Example 5. The punctuation theory is problematic, however, because punctuation too seems to be a style choice for players. One example of the style choice is whether to use periods -- the vast majority of Avery's messages contain no line-final punctuation at all even with a complete thought or turn (see Example 4), while Zanna often ends her lines with some sort of punctuation mark. On the other hand, Killah uses two periods at the end of line 9 in Example 6 to indicate that his turn is continuing onto his next message and the two lines are connected. Punctuation, therefore, can be a clue about what constitutes a turn, but not a definitive one depending on the style of the speaker.

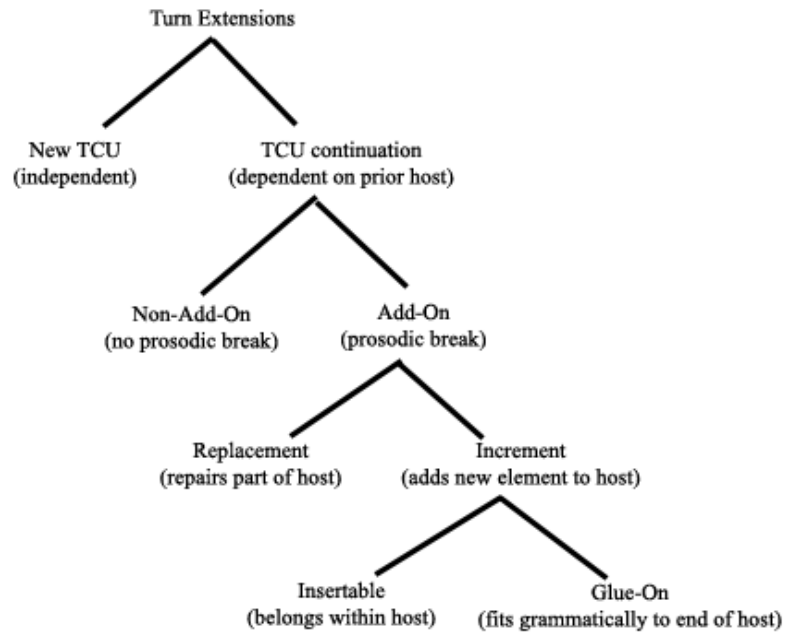
Another way to put messages together is using syntactic structures. Example 3 and Example 5 can be put together to form one syntactically complete sentence, such as "Specially since I've DONE most of the Barrens so I have to look up quests for him to do", "Oh THAT! That house is a bitch to find, because it's like RIGHT on the edge". With some poetic license, even Killah's long string in Example 6 can be formed into a syntactically complete sentence:

"Cause it's gay, guys with tits -- if that's fine with you, then sure." If we tried to do this with Zanna's utterance in Example 4, we would wind up with the sentence, "after the dress, I don't think there's much he can do, I DO", which does not make sense syntactically or semantically.

There is a third possibility. I have said previously that turns in online discourse seem to occur at the ends of messages, or when a speaker strikes the Enter key to send their message to the chat box; however, the phenomenon of multiple-message turns indicates that turn structure in online discourse is more complicated than the interface seems to suggest. Each new message, or line of chat, adds to the previous line *while being dependent on it*. One could not make sense of Avery's utterance "To find anyway" in Example 5 without knowledge of the previous line of chat. The construction of multiple message turns, such as those seen in Example 3, Example 5, and Example 6, seems to be similar to the construction of increments as seen in Schegloff (1996) and Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007). The increments construct is an expansion on the Turn Constructional Unit (TCU) of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), created to explain how speakers can extend their turns in different manners once they have arrived at a possible completion point. Also called **TCU continuation**, an increment is different from a new turn in that it is syntactically and semantically dependent on its prior turn, or 'host' (Couper-Kuhlen and Ono, 2007); the continuation can repair or replace part of the host or add a new element altogether. There are different types of TCU continuations, diagrammed in Figure 10.

Turn extensions can consist of two types: new TCUs, which are somewhat like Example 4 with two different adjacency pairs, and TCU continuations, which are dependent on their prior host as in Example 3, Example 5, and Example 6. TCU continuations consist of two different categories -- Non-Add-Ons, which are not separated from their hosts by a prosodic break, and Add-Ons, which feature a prosodic break. As online discourse has no traditional representation

of prosody, this distinction is a difficult one to make in my data. However, because the multiple message turns consist of many line breaks, or strokes of the Enter key, I consider them to be Add-Ons because the TCU continuations do come after a type of break – in this case, a line break. Therefore, I define one strike of the Enter key, corresponding to a prosodic break, as a marker of a Turn Constructional Unit (TCU). Whether this line sent to the chat is a complete thought or only a partial sentence, the speaker sent a message to the chat room which required others to read it, thereby contributing something to the discourse and taking a turn. This turn can be built upon to make a large turn out of multiple TCUs. A line break, then, does not necessarily mean the end of a turn, but only the end of a Turn Constructional Unit, that may be followed by more TCUs to expand the turn.



**Figure 10:** Types of turn extensions, adapted from Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007).

Of Add-Ons there are two types: Replacements, which are repair functions, and Increments, which add new elements to the host. In my analysis, I will discuss both of these types; first, I will discuss Increments and then later I will discuss Replacements which happen in the form of \*-repair in *World of Warcraft*. Finally, there are two distinctions traditionally made among the category of Increments: Insertables and Glue-Ons. Couper-Kuhlen and Ono (2007) state that Insertables are rare within English due to restraints on possible syntactic structures (524); therefore, since my data are in English, I will be dealing mostly with Glue-Ons ("GO"s). I will show how GOs work in online discourse -- whether Insertables are permitted in online discourse because of its written nature is a question for future study.

### 2.2.3.1 Glue-Ons as TCU Continuations.

The primary type of turn continuation that happens in Example 3, Example 5, and Example 6 is a GO, being a turn that fits grammatically onto the end of the previous turn. The question remains as to *how* these GOs are dependent on their host; much of the literature on TCU continuations relies on prosodic or intonational features (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono, 2007; Ford & Thompson, 1996; Schegloff, 1996), but these features are absent in the online world of text-only communication. One might argue that the prosodic features present in a sentence may still exist as imagined by the speaker and hearer, but the fact remains that they are not physically present in the form of sounds and it would be beyond the scope of this study to analyze a non-existent prosodic unit. Reed (2004) argues that intonational units are not as important in analyzing TCUs as previous work imagined; thus, the lack of intonation in online discourse may offer insights into how speakers can construct TCUs and TCU continuations aside from the conventional use of prosodic cues.

In lieu of intonation, the tools of **cohesion** are useful for showing how these GOs relate to their hosts. In their book on cohesion, Halliday and Hasan (1976) define the concept in this manner:

Cohesion occurs where the *interpretation* of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one *presupposes* the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text. (p. 4)

The concept of cohesion seems to be intimately tied to the ideas of TCU continuation -- TCU continuation suggests that two utterances are syntactically and semantically dependent on each other, and cohesion offers ways to observe this dependence via the use of certain features in language. Looking again at Example 3, in which Avery says "Specially since I've DONE most of

the Barrens / so I have to look up quests for him to do", we can see that Avery's second utterance depends on her first because of the word "So" at the beginning of the line. "So", according to Halliday and Hasan (p. 237), is a coordinating conjunction, requiring a first part and a second part to coordinate. The second part, "I have to look up quests for him to do" would be perfectly logical if standing on its own (assuming that the hearer knew the reference for "him"), but with the addition of "so" at the beginning of the line, Avery is presupposing the first part of her utterance -- which was in her previous message. Therefore, Avery's second line "So I have to look up quests for him to do" is a grammatical continuation, or GO, to her first line "Specially since I've DONE most of the Barrens", constituting a TCU continuation.

In Example 5, Avery has three lines to coordinate, reproduced below. I have highlighted the cohesive features in boldface in Example 5A below.

### Example 5A

```
14 12/26 18:58:13.234 [Guild] Parnopaeus: I'm looking for the arch mage and some dude's old house
15 12/26 18:58:29.093 [Guild] Avery: Oh THAT! That house is a bitch
16 12/26 18:58:32.421 [Guild] Avery: To find anyway XD
17 12/26 18:58:36.453 [Guild] Avery: It's like RIGHT on the edge
```

Avery's first line uses a demonstrative, "that house", as a deictic device to refer to the house that Parnopaeus was speaking about in her message. This coheres Avery's message with Parnopaeus's utterance in the line before, which includes "some dude's old house", indicating that Avery is on the same topic as Parn and marking her utterance as a second pair part to Parn's first pair part (which is an indirect request for information). Then, in line 16, Avery has the utterance "To find anyway", which is semantically and syntactically incomplete. One must find *something*, and the object of the finding is found in the previous line, namely "that house", which in itself is a deictic pointing to Parnopaeus's utterance. Syntactically, the object "that house" has undergone Determiner Phrase (DP) movement, moving out of the position as the object of "find" and

upward in the syntactic structure -- resulting in the DP being physically visible above "find", occurring in the line above the verb in the chat transcript. The infinitival construction "to find" is not the usual verb conjugation that one would expect at the beginning of the line; in fact, syntactically, it is an embedded CP, and so it must be embedded in something -- that something is line 15. Aside from these syntactic relationships, there is also a semantic relationship between "to find" and "bitch" in the previous line. As discussed in the previous section, the use of "to find" allows the hearer to decide which meaning of "bitch" to use. This syntactic and semantic cohesion allows the hearer of such an utterance to connect line 16 with line 15, allowing line 16 to be interpreted as a GO.

As for line 17, Avery uses a pronoun "it" which must refer to something. "It" could not refer to the "arch mage", since an arch mage is (probably) an animate being, at least as animate as a group of programmed pixels can appear. Similarly, "it" could not refer to "some dude", because "dude" is a term traditionally used to refer to an animate being, usually a male. The only thing appearing in the preceding lines that "it" could refer to is "that house", and by extension "some dude's old house". "It" cannot be effectively decoded, in Halliday and Hasan's words, unless the hearer has access to what has been previously said.

Whether line 17 is a GO or not is a difficult question -- it adds new information to the host, further specifying where the house might be found, but is not syntactically dependent on the previous sentence. Here, the relationship is more semantic than syntactic, calling for a distinction between types of Glue-Ons: Semantic Glue-Ons (SemGOs) and Syntactic Glue-Ons (SynGOs). These two types are illustrated below.

### **Example 7: SynGO**

```
1 7/18 18:32:41.156 [Party] Kae: I AM SO
2 7/18 18:32:46.375 [Party] Kae: going to baskin robins today
```



Example 7 is a SynGO because Kae breaks up his full utterance “I am SO going to baskin robins today” into two separate lines. The utterance “going to baskin robins” is not dependent on the previous message for semantic reference, but only for the subject and the auxiliary of the verb “going”.

### **Example 8: SemGO**

```
1 7/18 23:46:17.281 [Party] Avery: There's a path that leads up there
2 7/18 23:46:43.781 [Party] Avery: can't remember where it is
```

Example 8 is a SemGO only, because Avery relies on the previous utterance for the referential pronoun “it” in line 2, which refers to the previously mentioned “path that leads up there”. This utterance is more loosely cohesive because these two turns could be easily interrupted, perhaps by Avery’s party member asking “where is it?”, referring to the path. Kae’s utterance in Example 7, however, is much more coherent because not only are his turns only five seconds apart, but it is difficult to imagine what utterance by another person could intervene between his lines. And if Kae did not finish his first utterance “I AM SO” in line 1, his party members might wait for him to finish and then ask “so what?”, asking for a finish to the line. The difference between these two examples shows a difference in use of these two types of Glue-Ons; utterances that are only SynGOs usually tend to follow syntactically incomplete utterances. The first parts may be truncated for a number of reasons: accidental strike of the Enter key, sudden engagement in a battle requiring a chat message to be sent half-typed, or even just personal style. Are SynGOs, then, actually Glue-Ons if they are syntactically necessary to the first turn? The answer is yes, because Glue-Ons are a type of TCU Continuation, and if we define a strike of the Enter key as marking a Turn Construction Unit, then anything syntactically or semantically necessary to the turn that occurs after the TCU, or the strike of the Enter key, is a Glue-On.

Finally, utterances can be both SemGOs and SynGOs, as in Example 9.

**Example 9: Syn/SemGO**

1 7/18 22:35:31.203 [Party] Avery: Yeah, then he gives you the Grenzo one  
2 7/18 22:35:41.265 [Party] Avery: Which is harder than it looks, but then I'm me and I can't catch runaways

Here, Avery begins line 2 with “which”, presupposing a first part to her utterance to build on syntactically with this conjunction. Then, she uses a referential pronoun “it”, referring to “the Grenzo one”, which is presumably a quest to catch runaways. The syntactic nature of this Glue-On is different from those that are only SynGOs, because the first part of the utterance can stand on its own without the second part. Avery's line 16 in Example 5A can also be defined as both a SynGO and a SemGO.

All of the above mentioned semantic references are *endophoric*, or referring to something within the text itself. Terms can also refer to things outside of the text -- one referential noun in Example 5A which does not have an obvious referent in the text is "the edge". One might ask, "The edge of what?" The use of this referent term is *exophoric*, meaning that it refers to something outside of the actual text -- specifically, "the edge" refers to "the edge of the world". The zone which contains the arch mage and the house that Parn is looking for is on a shattered world (literally a piece of a planet floating in space), and has a cliff that drops off into space -- literally the edge of the world. By just using "the edge", Avery shows her knowledge of the zone where Parn is, and also demonstrates a presupposition that Parn would know what "the edge" is. Via this exophoric reference and presupposition, we can see Avery's orientation not only to Parn's location, but also to the game world itself because Avery does not clarify her expression "the edge" like she did with "bitch...to find".

Cohesion also works with speakers with differing styles, such as Killah and his unique prosody. I have reproduced Example 6 below, and I have highlighted the words with cohesive

function in boldface.

### Example 6A

```
1 7/18 18:11:55.468 [Party] Killah: And i don't like guys who plays girlchars (=girl characters)
2 7/18 18:11:58.890 [Party] Parnopaeus: haha, I get asked it a lot. I'm a girl. lol
3 7/18 18:12:00.640 [Party] Parnopaeus: why not?
4 7/18 18:12:03.546 [Party] Killah: Cause
5 7/18 18:12:04.812 [Party] Killah: it's gay
6 7/18 18:12:05.921 [Party] Killah: lmao (=laughing my ass off)
7 7/18 18:12:09.781 [Party] Killah: Guys with tits?
8 7/18 18:12:11.937 [Party] Killah: >>
9 7/18 18:12:31.796 [Party] Killah: It's (=presumably "if") thats fine with you..
10 7/18 18:12:33.937 [Party] Killah: Then su re!
11 7/18 18:12:35.281 [Party] Vickie: -shrugs- Killah doesn't like the idea of lesbians? =p
```

Aside from Killah's lines 6 and 8, which are types of tone indicators ("lmao" for laughing and the emoticon >> as an anime-style shifty looking face), each of his turns contains a cohesive feature. Line 4 has as a cohesive features "Cause", short for "because", which is a conjunction much like "so" from Example 3 (Halliday & Hasan, 242). "Cause" presupposes a previous part, linking it to Killah's previous utterance in line 1; "cause" also links Killah's utterance in line 4 as a second pair part to Parn's question in line 3 "why not?", which in turn presupposes a previous part. Line 5 contains "it", a referential pronoun, which can refer both to "guys who play girlchars" from line 1 and to "Guys with tits" which follows in line 7. Line 5 is a SynGO to line 4, because it is syntactically necessary to complete Killah's utterance that starts with "Cause" in line 4.

While line 7 itself has no referring pronouns, it is an anchor that holds other pronoun references together, connecting "it" in line 5 with deictic "that" in line 9. Line 9, aside from the deictic "that" pointing to line 7 "Guys with tits", ends with a partial ellipsis (".."), a prosodic indicator of a "trailing off" intonation observable in other talk in the game world. Finally, line 10 has another conjunction "Then", which operates like "so" or "because", presupposing a previous utterance (in this case, the entirety of line 9), which marks it as a SynGO. All of these cohesive features serve to unite Killah's many messages into one turn that has several extensions -- SynGOs in lines 5 and 10, and SemGOs in lines 7 and 9. Since this analysis is a confusing mess

of referring pronouns and deictic references, I have an illustration of the cohesive factors at work below, in Example 6b.

### Example 6B

```
1 7/18 18:11:55.468 [Party] Killah: And i don't like guys who plays girlchars (=girl
characters)
2 7/18 18:11:58.890 [Party] Parnopaeus: haha, I get asked it a lot. I'm a girl. lol
3 7/18 18:12:00.640 [Party] Parnopaeus: why not?
4 7/18 18:12:03.546 [Party] Killah: Cause
5 7/18 18:12:04.812 [Party] Killah: it's gay
6 7/18 18:12:05.921 [Party] Killah: lmao (=laughing my ass off)
7 7/18 18:12:09.781 [Party] Killah: Guys with tits?
8 7/18 18:12:11.937 [Party] Killah: >>
9 7/18 18:12:31.796 [Party] Killah: It's (=presumably "if") thats fine with you..
10 7/18 18:12:33.937 [Party] Killah: Then su re!
11 7/18 18:12:35.281 [Party] Vickie: -shrugs- Killah doesn't like the idea of lesbians? =p
```

Traditionally, cohesive devices like those I have used to discuss Example 6B are used to show cohesion within a text itself, usually cohesion across speakers. This does not eliminate the uses of cohesion within a speaker's own utterances; a speaker using some of these cohesive devices to point to an utterance of a different speaker is not constructing a Glue-On or a TCU continuation, because these types of constructions can only be made by one speaker. However, other speakers may use cohesive features like these to fit their utterances in with those of another – I will show an example of this in the analysis section starting on page 70.

Example 4 between Avery and Zanna, the odd one out in this analysis, also contains cohesion that tells hearers how to put the lines together -- however, the organization of the cohesion and the lines themselves is different, reflecting the different organization of the

adjacency pairs compared to the other examples. I have reproduced this example below, with cohesion features marked in both bold and underlined. The bold terms cohere and the underlined terms cohere, but the two sets do not cohere to each other.

#### Example 4A

```
6 12/26 19:08:55.937 [Guild] Avery: He's not helping his image thar  
7 12/26 19:10:03.140 [Guild] Avery: Zanna! You want to go take out the warlord in Hellfire  
8 12/26 19:10:13.000 [Guild] Zanna: LOL, after the dress, I don't think there's much he can do.  
9 12/26 19:10:14.000 [Guild] Zanna: I DO
```

The multiple uses of the pronoun "he", referring to the male character Avery (who had previously been wearing a dress), cohere lines 6 and 8 together. Zanna also uses "do", a contracted verbal substitution for "help his image". She also uses "do" in line 9, but this time to substitute for Avery's proposition "want to go take out the warlord in Hellfire". She also uses "I" in line 9 to match Avery's question about "You", as opposed to lines 6 and 8 where the subject of "do" is "he". Lines 7 and 9 do not consist of GOs because they are not syntactically nor semantically dependent on their hosts; instead, they are a wholly separate adjacency pair.

With a combination of cohesion and turn construction knowledge, hearers can put together multiple messages as belonging to one single utterance. Although each stroke of the Enter key sends a message onto the screen, there may be more to come -- therefore, the Enter key does not simply mark the end of a turn, but rather a Turn Construction Unit and a type of visual prosodic boundary. In spoken conversation, hearers might anticipate a TRP by hearing a prosodic boundary; in online conversation, every sent message is a possible TRP, either because it indicates a prosodic boundary or because it actually is the end of a speaker's utterance. To make sense of the possibilities, speakers rely on the hearers to do cohesive work to put their utterances together.

One of the most difficult things for participants to do in online language is to follow the

lines of conversation and to know what speakers are referring to with each of their lines. This confusion in reference and turn continuations is one of the biggest causes for disagreements and misunderstandings in the online conversational world. One such misunderstanding is shown in Example 10, in which there is confusion over who gets a rare item ("Force of Will") that was found while questing in a dungeon. These items cannot be traded and so the first person to pick it up has to keep it; players usually pass on picking up the item and then discuss who needs the item before someone takes it. If multiple people need the item, players "roll" for it, by using an in-game function "/roll", which creates a random number -- whichever player has the highest number wins the loot.

### Example 10

```
1 2/7 19:27:01.843 [Party] Extremeslaya: whts you pro (=profession) druid?
2 2/7 19:27:19.187 [Party] Sandy: sknning leatherworking
3 2/7 19:27:27.437 [Party] Extremeslaya: nice
4 2/7 19:27:30.703 [Party] Sandy: thats need fo me
5 2/7 19:27:30.703 You passed on: Force of Will
6 2/7 19:27:36.859 Lomack passed on: Force of Will
7 2/7 19:27:42.984 Extremeslaya passed on: Force of Will
8 2/7 19:27:47.921 Sandy passed on: Force of Will
9 2/7 19:27:49.421 [Party] Lomack: damn needed that on my pally (=paladin) lol
10 2/7 19:27:50.218 Enyara passed on: Force of Will
11 2/7 19:27:50.218 Everyone passed on: Force of Will
12 2/7 19:27:51.843 Sandy rolls 23 (1-100)
13 2/7 19:27:54.515 Extremeslaya rolls 85 (1-100)
14 2/7 19:27:56.218 Enyara rolls 90 (1-100)
15 2/7 19:27:56.453 [Party] Extremeslaya: nice
16 2/7 19:27:58.765 [Party] Extremeslaya: aw
17 2/7 19:28:06.031 [Party] Sandy: why the fuck would you guys need defence
18 2/7 19:28:22.015 [Party] Enyara: anyone else rolling on it?
19 2/7 19:28:34.265 Enyara receives loot: Force of Will.
20 2/7 19:28:34.671 [Party] Lomack: who actually needs it?
21 2/7 19:28:47.953 [Party] Sandy: i do
22 2/7 19:28:48.593 [Party] Extremeslaya: druid needs it i think right
23 2/7 19:28:55.921 [Party] Enyara: well you guys ran off so... >.<
24 2/7 19:29:06.750 [Party] Sandy: i rolled need
25 2/7 19:29:17.250 [Party] Sandy: you guys rolled greed
26 2/7 19:29:19.562 [Party] Sandy: then looted
27 2/7 19:29:24.875 [Party] Sandy: haha wow...
28 2/7 19:29:38.437 [Party] Enyara: I'm sorry... you didn't let me know that you were rolling
need. AND then everyone ran off.
29 2/7 19:30:01.890 [Party] Lomack: before anyone rolls, you should kidna figure out who needs
it, if 2 ppl (=people) need it, they both roll on it
30 2/7 19:30:07.390 [Party] Enyara: If I could hand it over to you I would. In a heartbeat.
31 2/7 19:30:12.453 [Party] Sandy: i stated i needed the item
32 2/7 19:30:26.875 [Party] Enyara: you said "why the fuck would you guys need defense"
33 2/7 19:30:30.468 [Party] Sandy: yeah
34 2/7 19:30:32.375 [Party] Sandy: scroll up
35 2/7 19:30:36.421 [Party] Sandy: i said i need it
36 2/7 19:30:38.593 [Party] Enyara: which isn't a statement that you were rolling need
37 2/7 19:30:50.140 [Party] Extremeslaya: she did
38 2/7 19:31:11.812 [Party] Enyara: omg
39 2/7 19:31:16.421 [Party] Enyara: I thought youweree talking about your professions
```

40 2/7 19:31:31.109 [Party] Enyara: I am so stupid  
41 2/7 19:31:33.000 [Party] Enyara: I fail  
42 2/7 19:32:09.140 [Party] Sandy: shit always happens like this. third time today ive had an  
item taken i needed jus like this situation.  
43 2/7 19:32:18.812 [Party] Enyara: I'm so sorry. I wish I could fix it.  
44 2/7 19:32:20.890 [Party] Sandy: jus from misunderstandings

Sandy and Enyara are at odds about who gets the item "Force of Will". Sandy claims that she said she needed the item, but Enyara says in line 28 that she did not see Sandy's declaration that she needed it. Sandy's declaration of need was in line 4, which is shown in boldface, but because of the proximity to the discussion about professions in the previous line, the confusion about the reference of Sandy's demonstrative "that" caused this misunderstanding. When Sandy said "that's need fo me" in line 4, her "that" could have been anaphoric, referring to her profession of skinning and leatherworking (a very popular combination for her class), or "that" could have been exophoric, referring to the item that was found. It could have been a SemGO, referring to her profession as being a "need" for her, or it could have been an entirely new TCU. Because of these multiple possibilities, other players may have difficulty deciphering what lines are supposed to cohere. Enyara says in line 39 that she interpreted Sandy's utterance "that's need fo me" to refer to her professions rather than to the rare item. Since Enyara got the highest number on the roll, she assumed that she had won the item because no one had declared a need, and also (as Enyara says in lines 23 and 28), everyone ran away from the item to start another battle instead of staying to discuss the situation which caused a twelve-second gap. The fact that Enyara verbalizes this confusion in a meta-linguistic discussion is evidence that players really do attend to this type of cohesion in the discourse, and that they are aware, at least on some level, of what they must do to organize the discourse.

The type of disagreement seen in Example 10 is very common in the *World of Warcraft* universe, particularly regarding rare items, and these misunderstandings can be so severe that they cause players to leave guilds or even leave the game altogether. Sandy from Example 10

thought this disagreement was bad enough that she left the party and abandoned the quest, leaving the other four members to find another participant to complete their five-person task; when the items get rarer and the stakes in the game get higher, the social repercussions for such misunderstandings become more extreme. Players and entire guilds often go to great lengths to determine their systems for distributing rare items such as this one to avoid such misunderstandings.

### **2.2.3.2 Repair and Replacement as TCU Continuations.**

Another way that players of *World of Warcraft* use multiple messages is for repair, or the TCU continuation called *Replacement*. Repair is a much-researched feature in spoken language and speakers have a number of ways to correct themselves or other interlocutors; past research (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Jefferson 1972; Schegloff 1992; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) has described the different positions and types of repairs.

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Self-initiated self-repair</i>   | Repair is initiated and carried out by the speaker of the trouble source. |
| <i>Other-initiated self-repair</i>  | Repair is initiated by the hearer and carried out by the speaker.         |
| <i>Self-initiated other-repair</i>  | The speaker attempts to get the hearer to repair the trouble.             |
| <i>Other-initiated other-repair</i> | The hearer both initiates and carries out the repair.                     |

There are, in addition, four places that repair can occur, according to the research cited above. Those positions are:



<i>First position</i>	The repair occurs within the same turn that the error occurred.
<i>Second position</i>	The repair occurs in the next turn after the error, at or after the transition-relevance place.
<i>Third position</i>	The repair occurs in the speaker's turn after the hearer's response.
<i>Fourth position</i>	The repair is carried out by the hearer after the third transition-relevance place, or in the fourth turn.

Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) discuss the preference for self-repair, meaning that in conversation it is preferred that speakers be able to correct themselves in conversation. In fact, other-repair in all its forms may be a sensitive issue -- a repair may threaten the face of the mistake-maker and, as Hutchby and Wooffitt say, "might even be cited as evidence of deliberate rudeness, which in turn may undermine the harmony or accord of the exchange" (68).

#### *\*-repair*

Players of *World of Warcraft* have a mechanism for conversational repair which I have dubbed **\*-repair**<sup>6</sup>. The \*-repair mechanism allows speakers to self-repair when they have made a typographical error, or a 'typo', which may be likened to mispronouncing a word by accident in spoken language. No one types everything perfectly in *World of Warcraft*; typos are frequent and varied, and speakers prefer to correct their own typos in chat. The mechanism for performing this repair is to place an asterisk next to the corrected version<sup>7</sup> in the next sent message to chat -- in what is called the second position. The traditional definition of "first position", occurring within the same turn as the error, would mean that speakers correct themselves in the same sent

---

<sup>6</sup> Said "star repair".

<sup>7</sup> Note that this use of \* is different from markedness indications, in which \* is frequently used to indicate a dispreferred or non-existent form of language; in *World of Warcraft* it is used to indicate the preferred version.

message. This particular feature does not appear in the discourse because of the existence of the backspace key -- if a speaker mistypes something, before sending the message they can easily just backspace and delete what they have written and replace it with the correct form. This would be the form of first position repair in online discourse that most closely matches the definitions produced by spoken conversation analysts, and could be observed by videotaping, as Garcia and Jacobs did in their 1999 study.

The general use of \* to indicate a repair is widespread throughout the game, occurring in both the RP server data and the PvP server data. The pervasiveness of the \*-repair feature indicates that it must have originated outside of the game *World of Warcraft* and, furthermore, must have originated long ago in the history of computer-mediated communication. When asked about the use of \*, many players said that they have been using the \*-repair mechanism since before they played *World of Warcraft*. The history of this feature would be an interesting study of online language change, but is outside the scope of this thesis.

### Example 11

```
1 11/27 21:14:52.750 [Party] Aniko: when i run ot
2 11/27 21:14:54.765 [Party] Aniko: out*
```

In Example 11, Aniko repairs the mis-typed "ot" with out\*, using the asterisk to indicate a repair in his second turn. This asterisk can occur following the repaired form, as in Example 8, or it can occur before the repaired form as in Example 12. The precise location of the \* in \*-repair seems to be a matter of preference for the speakers.

### Example 12

```
1 11/28 19:49:29.015 [2. Trade] Graffle: Now that you throw me, cage and all into a wall, I'm
technically "damaged" goods :p
2 11/28 19:49:39.062 [2. Trade] Graffle: *threw
```

Sometimes, speakers will make another error in attempting to fix their initial typo. This can lead to a long string of errors, the culmination of which may be either a final, standard form, or an admission of frustration on the part of the speaker regarding their inability to type the correct form. For example, Example 13 and Example 14:

### Example 13

```
1 11/23 17:13:37.937 [2. Trade] Komix: wtb (=wanted to buy) glove of old
2 11/23 17:13:47.281 [2. Trade] Komix: gloves of old*
3 11/23 17:14:20.203 [2. Trade] Komix: wtb gloves of old 40g*
```

### Example 14

```
6 11/23 22:54:04.484 [2. Trade] Cthoric: Yeas
7 11/23 22:54:07.687 [2. Trade] Cthoric: *YEa
8 11/23 22:54:16.343 [2. Trade] Cthoric: Eh, you know what i mean
```

In Example 13, the speaker Komix initially mis-types the name of the item he is looking for ("glove of old" repairs to "gloves of old"), but then adds in a buying price in line 3 (40g) for the item. In Example 14, Cthoric is presumably attempting to type the simple word "Yes", or perhaps "Yea", but after one failed attempt to repair declares in line 8 that the hearers "know what i mean". The approach taken by Cthoric would not have worked for Komix, since he forgot to include the buying price in his repair of his advertisement.

The examples seen above of \*-repair occur in what might be the second position of repair because they occur after a TRP, or a strike of the enter key. They are a "Replacement" TCU continuation, not adding a new element but instead replacing part of the host. In this way, the line containing the \*-repair is dependent on the host, because it relies on the hearer to look back and see what it is that the speaker has mis-typed.

The question arises: does \*-repair only hold for this particular position? That is, do speakers only use \*-repair to repair a typo in second position? The answer to this question is no.

Although much less common, \*-repair can even be used in other-initiated repair and in third position. For example, see Example 15.

### Example 15

```
1 7/9 01:06:41.234 [Party] Lumins: nice amount f mana killer
2 7/9 01:06:50.203 [Party] Killeroo: what
3 7/9 01:06:55.468 [Party] Lumins: of*
```

In line 2, Killeroo prompts a repair by Lumins with the utterance "what". This is an example of other-initiated self-repair occurring in third position, and yet still retaining the use of \*-repair. \*-repair can occur in other-repair as well, as evidenced in Example 16.

### Example 16

```
1 1/2 06:16:50.546 [2. Trade] Shak: NEED SOME MORE FOR ZG RAID.. GOT A HOLE BUNCH!!
2 1/2 06:17:21.375 [2. Trade] Azria: *whole ...
```

Azria uses \*-repair to correct Shak's error of "hole" for "whole". This other-initiated other-repair occurring in second position is another example of the pervasiveness of \*-repair as a means of typo correction. However, as previously stated, this form of repair is much less common than self-repair using \*-repair. Often times, when correcting others, players will make explicit statements of their correction instead of using the conventionalized \*-repair form. This form is considered by the community to be much more face threatening. In Example 17, we see the player Bwano shout using all capital letters "VICTORY TO THE DARK QUEEN", a reference to the queen of the Undead race in *World of Warcraft*, Sylvanas Windrunner. However, this queen is conventionally referred to as "The Dark Lady" by her followers and in in-game texts such as quests, and so the player Saka feels the need to correct Bwano's usage to fit better in the world.

### Example 17

```
1 6/13 19:47:19.484 [1. General] Bwano: VICTORY TO THE DARK QUEEN!
2 6/13 19:47:29.125 [1. General] Saka: Its dark lady.
3 6/13 19:47:32.843 [1. General] Exot: lol
4 6/13 19:47:34.218 [1. General] Saka: DARK LADY WATCH OVER US
```

After the correction in line 2, Saka takes up Bwano's shouting behavior in line 4, "DARK LADY WATCH OVER US". By mimicking Bwano's actions and joining in the revelry in honor of Sylvanas Windrunner, Saka may be attempting to minimize the face threat caused by his correction of Bwano's term.

The use of repair in *World of Warcraft* is highly varied. There are times when repair is either not necessary or impossible, such as when bothering to re-type a correct form might result in neglecting one's duties in the line of battle and causing the virtual death of the speaker's comrades. One example of such an instance is below when Alai, as a party leader who is giving orders to the rest of the group, does not bother to repair her typo of "shepe" for "sheep" in line 5.

### Example 18

```
1 1/13 22:58:10.781 [Party] Alai: wait for sap (=an immobilized enemy)
2 1/13 22:58:15.078 [Party] Arty: Invisapig inc (=invisible pig incoming)
3 1/13 22:59:19.734 [Party] Alai: triangle (=an order to attack the enemy marked triangle)
4 1/13 22:59:50.187 [Party] Alai: sheeping (=turning an enemy into a sheep) again
5 1/13 23:00:01.703 [Party] Alai: shepe
6 1/13 23:00:05.062 [Party] Alai: get it [the sheep]
```

It is also interesting to note the very shortened form of sentences and the amount of jargon used while giving orders in Example 18. Alai uses the jargon terms "sap" and "sheeping", both referring to abilities of the group members to disable monsters, which are understood by the other party members without question. She also uses a single word in line 3, "triangle", as an order for the group to attack the enemy which she has marked in the game with a triangle icon. Her utterance in 5, "shepe", may also be an order to attack the sheep-form enemy, evidenced by her addition in line 6, "get it". Arty, a group member, also uses jargon in line 2, creating a morphological blend "invisapig" for "invisible pig", and "inc", a clipping of "incoming". The heavy use of shortened forms and jargon here may license the non-repair of Alai's "shepe" typo, since players are not attending to grammar or spelling concerns here, instead worrying about the safety of the party. Example 18 occurred in the environment of an "instance", or a dungeon with

many elite monsters that a party of five players must defeat. Similar linguistic behavior (namely a licensing to not repair typos) occurs in Battlegrounds, where players fight against each other to capture strategic targets. Example 19

below is just one example of the flurry of typos that are not repaired during Battlegrounds chat. In line 7, Shoro says “your welcoem”, presumably responding to Galia says “amazing heals thanks” in line 2, but because of the rapid action happening in the battleground (lines 3 though 5 and line 7, as well as the player Gurp calling for help at the Mage Tower), Shoro probably does not want to take the time to retype his comment when it is clear what he meant to say.

### Example 19

```
1 12/15 04:13:46.866 [Battleground] Gurp: help at mt (=Mage Tower)
2 12/15 04:14:06.163 [Battleground] Galia: amazing heals thanks
3 12/15 04:14:09.179 The Horde have captured the flag!
4 12/15 04:14:17.413 The flag has been reset.
5 12/15 04:14:24.757 The Alliance has taken control of the Blood Elf Tower!
6 12/15 04:14:26.772 [Battleground] Shoro: your welcoem ;p
7 12/15 04:14:52.350 Orkim has taken the flag!
8 12/15 04:14:53.538 [Battleground] Gurp: MT
9 12/15 04:15:07.491 [Battleground] Gurp: 2 rogues at MT
```

Outside of instances like Example 18 and Example 19

, players will go to the lengths necessary to repair their typos and conversational errors, indicating that there is a need to do so. Repair in *World of Warcraft* is a type of linguistic capital -- knowing that you have made an error and, furthermore, that you know the correct form may be a status symbol in the game. It also shows a division in the community -- there is a highly negative and well-known stereotype of gamers that they use "netspeak", or highly acronymized and otherwise illegible written forms of English when communicating at all times. This stereotype is often associated with teenagers or other young people; therefore, older players such as Jill, who plays Avery, placed a high importance on using correct spelling and grammar to differentiate themselves from the "teenage gamer" stereotype. Using repair in discourse, therefore, will gain a player higher status with players such as Jill, who has even set a rule for

membership in her guild as "ability to form coherent sentences", as seen in the example guild recruitment message below:

```
1 11/6 23:33:50.187 [5. GuildRecruitment] Avery: <SeeD> is now recruiting! We are a casual light RP guild of people who enjoy helping each other out, running random instances, and RPing (of course). Ability to form coherent and semi-intelligent sentences a must. PST me or come play with us in Darn!
```

Interestingly, this type of status given to correct grammar and spelling is most often seen on roleplaying servers. In the data from PvP servers, players do still repair typos using \*-repair and correct each other's grammar and spelling, but there are no instances of guild grammar requirements like Avery's. This difference is likely due to the server culture – roleplayers are expected to be immersed in the fictional world to add to the fantasy-style environment, and using appropriate grammar and lexical items for the world is necessary to create the feel of the world. On PvP servers, players have no such requirements, and therefore the use of correct grammar and spelling is not so highly valued; other things are more valued, as Friedline (2008) discusses.

### *Overlap Repair*

Another form of repair exists in the data, this one dealing with overlap in conversation. Previously, I have stated that the concept of overlap is not productive in online discourse because of the nature of the interface. Because the act of sending messages in *World of Warcraft* is instantaneous, there are very few instances in which two speakers are speaking "at the same time" or sending messages at precisely the same moment. However, multiple people may be typing a message simultaneously, and instances occur when two or more players send messages to the chat which have precisely the same content. Cherny (1999) observed this phenomenon in her study of ElseMOO – when two speakers would type the same message, the first speaker to send the message would be declared a "winner" (98). This was the ElseMOO community's way

of dealing with this nuance of online conversation. In my data, there is also an approach to this overlap in conversation, one which is particular to the guild <SeeD> on the Scarlet Crusade server. An example of the phenomenon is in Example 20 below.

### Example 20

```
1 9/4 20:47:21.640 [Party] Parnopaeus: nada
2 9/4 20:47:21.640 [Party] Avery: nada
3 9/4 20:47:26.125 [Party] Avery: GET OUT OF MY HEAD
```

Here, an overlap of the utterance "nada" at the same second (in fact, precisely the same, down to the millisecond) by Parnopaeus and Avery results in Avery ordering Parnopaeus to "GET OUT OF MY HEAD" in a consecutive turn. Participants often refer to the concept of "being inside my head", jokingly accusing each other of mind-reading when the same messages are typed in conversation. This is a particular in-group linguistic feature by the guild <SeeD>, and was not observed in interactions with any player outside of the guild.

The utterances do not have to be exactly simultaneous for this accusation of mind-reading to occur, as shown in Example 21.

### Example 21

```
1 9/14 23:05:07.968 [Party] Niele: one more in the room
2 9/14 23:05:09.265 [Party] Skakavaz: one more in the room
3 9/14 23:05:12.484 [Party] Skakavaz: GET OUT OF MY HEAD
```

Here, there is a two second break between the identical utterances in lines 1 and 2, but the mind-reading accusation still holds. A two-second break in spoken conversation would be a remarkable gap, but in this online conversation it constitutes an overlap that requires the "get out of my head" response. In fact, there can even be an intervening turn by another participant, as in Example 22 in which Skakavaz and Niele try to elicit Avery's help in a dungeon ("Gnomer") but in order to do so, must kick another party member out of their group. This other party member is



referred to by a unique morphological form “tankalock”, referring first to the role of “tank”, or a character in the party that can withstand a lot of damage to protect the other party members. The second part of the compound is “lock”, from the character class “warlock”, which is a character class that is not at all suited to the job of tanking. This particular warlock player was attempting to be the tank, but was failing spectacularly. Niele and Skakavaz would rather have Avery, who actually plays a “tank” character, in their party than the warlock who is not a tank. This warlock tank was the subject of much ridicule in private messages.

### Example 22

```
1 10/27 23:04:12.875 [Guild] Skakavaz: wanna come help us in Gnomer? ;) jk (=just kidding)
2 10/27 23:04:21.015 [Guild] Avery: Ooooh I dunno~
3 10/27 23:04:24.546 [Guild] Avery: You have room? (=in the party)
4 10/27 23:04:28.734 [Guild] Skakavaz: no, actually, lol
5 10/27 23:04:32.234 [Guild] Avery: XD
6 10/27 23:04:33.375 [Guild] Skakavaz: unless we kick out tankalock (=warlock tank)
7 10/27 23:04:35.375 [Guild] Avery: Then I can't!
8 10/27 23:04:36.218 [Guild] Niele: we could kick the tankalock
9 10/27 23:04:42.375 [Guild] Niele: ..out of my head!
```

The near-identical utterances are in lines 6 and 8, occurring three seconds apart, but with an intervening turn by another participant in line 7. Due to the fact that Niele and Skakavaz were both participating in a dungeon at this time, with many battles and complex activities going on, they were not attending to the discourse as much as they would have been if the conversation was the sole recipient of their attention. In addition, the two turns in 6 and 8 are worded slightly differently; still, the identical utterance overlap convention holds, as Niele in line 9 uses a truncated form of "get out of my head". Conceivably, Niele's utterance in line 8 "we could kick out the tankalock" could be different from Skakavaz's suggestion in line 6 "unless we kick out the tankalock". Skakavaz, knowing that Avery often fulfills the role of "tank" that the "tankalock" was playing, may have been suggesting that in order for Avery to join the party, they would have to kick out the tankalock. Niele, on the other hand, could have meant her utterance as "we *could* kick out the tankalock", or a vote for her approval of removing this player from the

party. The two interpretations of the utterances are slightly different; however, if Niele had meant her utterance to be different from Skakavaz's suggestion and not conveying the exact same message, then there would have been no reason for her to use the "get out of my head" identical message construction. Even if Niele meant her utterance to be "we could kick out the tankalock and we probably should", her use of "out of my head!" shows that Niele *thought* the content of her message to be exactly the same of that of Skakavaz's, even if each speaker actually had different meanings in mind for their utterances and the utterances themselves were worded slightly differently. This could be an effect of the interface as well -- Niele, participating in a battle, may not have noticed the slight difference in wording because she did not have the time to carefully scan the messages in the chat box.

Sometimes, the second identical utterance does not even need to be typed in order to elicit the idiomatic "get out of my head" response, such as in Example 23, a roleplaying encounter between the characters Kalel, Alai, and Kubbec (secondary characters of Avery, Parnopaeus, and Niele, respectively). As discussed in Section 1.3.4, roleplaying occurs in Say, a special chat channel which can be viewed by any player in the area, while out-of-character chat, or "normal conversation" occurs in most other chat channels, especially [Guild]. In Example 23, roleplaying in Say is in lines 1 through 4, while normal conversation in [Guild] is in lines 5 and 6. (Note that Kalel uses Phyllis's real world name in line 5 to mark that her [Guild] utterance is definitely out of character, in contrast to calling Phyllis by the name of her game-world avatar, Kubbec.)

### **Example 23**

```
1 10/25 00:03:51.750 Kalel says: They always try to run.
2 10/25 00:04:06.046 Alai says: They do indeed.
3 10/25 00:04:12.812 Kubbec says: They never get very far, though
4 10/25 00:04:16.812 A sly smirk spreads across Kalel's face.
5 10/25 00:04:24.859 [Guild] Kalel: PHYLLIS GET OUT OF MY HEAD I HAD THAT TYPED!
6 10/25 00:04:33.968 [Guild] Kubbec: NOES IT WARM HERE
```

In line 5, Kalel (Jill) tells Phyllis, who is the player of Kubbec, to "get out of my head" even though there is no identical utterance in preceding discourse. Kalel's reason is that she "had that typed", but deleted the utterance -- which is evidence that there is first position repair (repair that occurs in the same turn unit) even if such repair does not get exhibited on screen or in the saved data. The deletion of the duplicate utterance (which was ostensibly replaced with the /smirk emote in line 4) is a result of the more formal restrictions on roleplaying discourse in *World of Warcraft*, in which players are expected to pay more attention to what is being spoken in order to remain in-character -- they are attending more to the language use than they would be in a more casual encounter in [Guild] or even in [Party] when they are also interacting with the game world. This is in stark contrast to Example 22 in which Niele, participating actively in a dungeon, uses "get out of my head" in an unusual place where the messages and even the meanings of the utterances were not exactly the same. However, Kalel still feels the need to use the "get out of my head" feature in line 5 in [Guild] chat, which is for out-of-character discussions.

Example 23 also shows an interesting trope on the "get out of my head" phenomenon in line 6. Kubbec takes up the out-of-character order to get out of Kalel's head, and denies the order by saying "NOES IT WARM HERE" (which translates from LOLcat to "no, it's warm here!"). This meta-discursive troping happens often in response to this order, often resulting in a switch to the LOLcat dialect of online language. A more extensive example, also including LOLcat, is in Example 24.

#### **Example 24**

```
1 12/26 19:20:56.968 [Party] Zanna: Is he a quest?  
2 12/26 19:20:58.671 [Party] Avery: Zeth'Gor  
3 12/26 19:21:00.468 [Party] Parnopaeus: yes
```

```

4 12/26 19:21:04.437 [Party] Avery: Warlord of the Bleeding Hollow
5 12/26 19:21:06.640 [Party] Parnopaeus: Warlord of the Bleeding Hollow
6 12/26 19:21:11.734 [Party] Parnopaeus: GET OUT OF MY HEAD JILL
7 12/26 19:21:16.390 [Party] Avery: NO IS COMFY
8 12/26 19:21:19.796 [Party] Parnopaeus: BUT
9 12/26 19:21:23.796 [Party] Avery: NU
10 12/26 19:21:25.109 [Party] Zanna: Aha! I have it!
11 12/26 19:21:26.687 [Party] Parnopaeus: WAH
12 12/26 19:21:32.546 [Party] Parnopaeus: ./cry
13 12/26 19:21:34.875 [Party] Avery: *gets comfy in Lauren's brainz*

```

Much like Kubbec saying "no, it's warm here!", Avery says "NO IS COMFY" ("no, it's comfy [comfortable]!") in line 7 in response to Parn's "get out of my head". What is simply a convention for dealing with overlap in the game world is taken so far in this trope that Jill emotes an action in line 13 in which she invokes the image of getting "comfy" inside another Lauren/Parnopaeus's brain. Jill uses the features of LOLcat, a dialect of online language which developed out of humorous captions on pictures of cats and spread into other mediums. The LOLcat features used are z-plural in line 13 ("brainz"), simplified verb formation in line 7 ("is"), and purposeful misspelling in line 9 ("nu" for "no"). She also uses Lauren's real world name in line 13 to establish the departure from the game world. This use of a different *register* of online language establishes a particular stance: the ridiculousness of the situation that Jill is postulating combined with the use of the LOLcat register indicates that Jill is being silly with her trope on the in-group "get out of my head!" norm.

#### **2.2.4 Discussion of the Turn Taking Framework.**

In this section, I have deconstructed the turn-taking rules proposed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) in terms of online conversation. I proposed that observations one ("turn taking occurs") and two ("one speaker tends to talk at a time") hold for online discourse, but observation three ("speakers tend to talk with as little gap and overlap as possible") was not

useful for online discourse due to the restrictions of the medium. I further posed the following set of rules:

1. Turn-taking occurs.
2. Each speaker's turn consists of one message.
3. Messages can be sent within a largely variable amount of time as long as the hearer is still logged into the chat room to hear the message and the topic is still relevant.

In the above sections, I have shown that (2) and (3) are not always applicable to online discourse either. In fact, more often than not, turns consist of more than one message, and too long of a gap between messages can cause a topic shift. In light of the discourse analyzed previously, (2) might be reframed as "Each speaker's turn consists of one message, or a string of syntactically or semantically related messages sent within a short span of time". Similarly, (3) could be rephrased, "Messages have a life-span for relevance". The precise nature of the "short span of time" in (2) and the "life-span" in (3) certainly require more research, but my data seem to suggest that these time periods are highly dependent both on the style of the speaker and the nature of the activity happening in the game world. In addition, these three rules say nothing about the interface or the medium, which – as has been sufficiently demonstrated – is a fundamental feature of online conversation.

After reframing the observations in light of the above analyses, I postulate the following final set of observations for *online synchronous chat*:

1. Turn taking occurs.
2. Each speaker's turn consists of one message or a string of syntactically or semantically related messages sent within a short span of time.
3. Messages have a life-span for relevance.

4. The nature of the interface or the medium affects some aspects of observations 1-3, and users may manipulate these restrictions.

These observations are motivated by the data from this project and by past research by other scholars. They are not intended to be definitive and the observations may be broken in many cases – and some mediums may necessitate changes to this framework.

### **3.0 ANALYSIS OF CONVERSATION**

In Section 2.0 , I showed how Conversation Analysis can be applied to online discourse. In this section, I will analyze a long passage of discourse using the tools discussed in the previous chapter. In doing this, I plan to show how different players can use the tools of online conversation differently to establish the following:

1. Tone of voice, or unique individual prosody.
2. Orientation to individuals via topic.
3. Orientation to a group.
4. Orientation to a digital world.

#### **3.1 ANALYSIS**

The passage that I have chosen to analyze is a conversation between five female members of the guild <SeeD>. Due to its length, I will analyze only the first portion of the passage, and I will do so in small parts. The entirety of the conversation may be found in Appendix A. Below I present a brief sketch of each of the participants along with their relation to the guild leader, Jill.

Although Jill is not a participant in this conversation, the guild is made up of her network, and all members of the guild know the others through Jill in some way.

**Parnopaeus** - Lauren, the author of this thesis, mid-20s, female, second-in-command of the guild. Has known Jill for approximately 5 years, first meeting through the online website Livejournal.com.

**Niele** - Phyllis, late-20s, female, regular member of the guild. Has known Jill for approximately 6 years, first meeting through the online website Livejournal.com.

**Sammive** - Lily, mid-20s, female, regular member of the guild, newest player of the group. Has known Jill for approximately 2 years through Livejournal.com.

**Zanna** - Sharon, mid-20s, female, new officer of the guild. Met Jill through a *World of Warcraft* community on Livejournal.com approximately 6 months previously.

**Elemaa** - Amber, reportedly mid-20s, female, regular member of the guild. Met Jill in-game approximately 3 months previously.

The strongest connections in this group are between Lauren and Phyllis, who have known each other the longest and also live together. These two met Jill through a non-*World of Warcraft* space (namely through roleplaying communities on Livejournal.com) and the three have met in real life previously. Jill, Phyllis, and Lauren are part of a *play community*, or a group of people who share recreational interests and who are committed to leisure activities together (Pearce, 2007). The next strongest connection is Lily, who entered the play community relatively recently through the same Livejournal roleplaying community. Sharon, on the other hand, is not part of the established play community -- she is a *World of Warcraft*-only connection, even though her original connection is through the Livejournal medium (Sharon and Jill met when Jill posted an entry about *World of Warcraft* on Livejournal). Amber has the weakest tie of the group -- she and Jill met when Jill was passing through an area of the game and Amber noticed the guild name and liked it, thereby asking to be in the guild on the basis of her identification with the



guild name.

It is important to note that rank and status in the guild is not based on membership of Jill's play community. Although Phyllis has known Jill longer than Lauren, Phyllis is only a regular member of the guild while Lauren is second in command. Sharon, on the other hand, is not even a member of Jill's play community, but based on her attitude and dedication to the guild, she was promoted to an officer position.

In the excerpt, Sharon brings up a topic relating to a community on Livejournal.com called "fandomsecrets" where people anonymously post secrets about the books, movies, television shows, and games that they love. In this case, Sharon references two particular posts about *World of Warcraft* which had negative messages about the game.

### **Example 25A: Zanna's Rant**

```
1 1/21 23:58:21.281 [Guild] Zanna: gosh, I hate people.
2 1/21 23:58:21.937 [Guild] Sammive: He's like.... 8 or something
3 1/21 23:58:34.156 [Guild] Parnopaeus: o.O
4 1/21 23:58:36.828 [Guild] Parnopaeus: what happen?
5 1/21 23:59:04.359 [Guild] Zanna: Just... there's this fandomsecrets lj comm (=Livejournal
community) that I visit because it's like post secret but a lot geekier.
6 1/21 23:59:23.812 [Guild] Sammive: Ooh, sounds fun
7 1/21 23:59:26.218 [Guild] Zanna: And someone made this post totally hating on warcraft, you
know, the usual
8 1/21 23:59:39.578 [Guild] Sammive: Le sad
9 1/21 23:59:43.000 [Guild] Niele: ooh, the one about people failing life for wacraft or the
belf (=blood elf, a race of characters) one? >>>
10 1/21 23:59:51.265 [Guild] Parnopaeus: o.O
11 1/21 23:59:54.468 [Guild] Zanna: people failing life for warcraft
12 1/21 23:59:55.187 [Guild] Parnopaeus: I am unaware of this thing
13 1/21 23:59:58.187 [Guild] Zanna: the belf one I can undersnad.
14 1/22 00:00:09.468 [Guild] Niele: well, failing school, losing job, ect
15 1/22 00:00:15.750 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah.
16 1/22 00:00:20.109 [Guild] Sammive: Sheesh
17 1/22 00:00:25.984 [Guild] Sammive: Because people only do that when on WoW
18 1/22 00:00:41.421 [Guild] Zanna: I mean, I like belves (=blood elves), but I can see someone
being pissy about having all their rp (=role playing) threads dropped for the new shiny thing.
19 1/22 00:01:07.062 [Guild] Zanna: But yeah, like-- to generalize everyone who plays a game
because you know about one person who has no life?
20 1/22 00:01:10.406 [Guild] Niele: yea, I can see that. I mean, I'd be pissy, to, I think
21 1/22 00:01:13.765 [Guild] Parnopaeus: Yeeeah.
```

What is happening in 25A and the rest of the examples is that Zanna sets up a community via alterity in her discourse. She characterizes herself, Niele, Parn, and Sammive as a group with identification with both the Livejournal.com community and the *World of Warcraft* community,

and this group identification is in opposition to another group – Livejournal.com users who oppose participation in *World of Warcraft*. (In later examples, Zanna will specify the characteristics of the opposing community – I will return to this topic when discussing the next example.) The means by which Zanna sets up this alterity are interesting, but outside the scope of this analysis. Here, I will be looking only at the turn constructions and how the players use them to relate to each other and I will save the analysis of alterity for future work.

After Zanna says “gosh, I hate people” in line 1, and Parn asks her what happened, Zanna answers Parn's question with a pair of messages. The first is in line 5, with an introduction to the setting of the event followed by a description of the event in line 7. Zanna takes a (relatively) long time to produce her utterances: 28 seconds for line 5 and 22 seconds to follow it up with her line 7. Sammive interjects in the gap in line 6 with her statement, "Ooh, sounds fun", encouraging Zanna to continue. Zanna begins line 7 with a conjunction “And”, linking it to her previous utterance in line 5, even though Sammive has interjected another turn in between these two lines. The “And” links lines 5 and 7 together syntactically, and “this post” in line 7, referring to a LiveJournal post in the fandomsecrets community, refers semantically to the material in line 5. Thus, line 7 is both a SynGO and a SemGO, even with an intervening turn. Sammive’s line 6 functions as a sort of backchanneling here, which does not interfere with Zanna’s turn structure.

Niele then picks up the topic in line 9, asking Zanna to be more specific; here, Niele shows an alignment with Zanna through common knowledge of the event and, presumably, the Livejournal community in question. Zanna specifies in line 11 that she means "failing life for *Warcraft*", using the same phrase structure as Niele. This is an example of inter-speaker cohesion, in which speakers use cohesive devices to show that their utterances are part of a larger text or conversation. Zanna then has a pair of turns (lines 13 and 18) which are presumably

linked (“the belf one I can undersnad. / I mean, I like belves, but I can see someone being pissy about having all their rp threads dropped for the new shiny thing”) -- line 18 is a Glue-On to line 13, but with a 43 second time span separating them. In these 43 seconds, Niele has quantified what she means by "failing life for *Warcraft*" in line 14 by adding "well, failing school, losing job, ect [sic]", which Zanna confirms in line 15. Here Zanna has broken up her own Glue-On of lines 13 and 18 with a confirmation to what Niele is interpreting from her statement -- she is confirming Niele's description instead of continuing her own turn. Before Zanna can finish her TCU continuation, Sammive presents another value judgment in lines 16 and 17, "Sheesh / Because people only do that when on *WoW*" (probably linked to the “failing life for *WoW*” topic), and Zanna confirms this judgment in line 19, but only *after* she has finished her TCU continuation in line 18 about the blood elves. Line 18 coheres to line 13 because of the use of the conjunctive phrase “I mean”, presupposing a previous part, as well topic similarity and use of the same jargon ("belf" and "belves"). This Glue-On is more semantic than syntactic, using the same words and references, and the use of the phrase “I mean” is a semantic expansion on her previous utterance. Having finished her full turn about the "blood elf" topic, Zanna then responds to Sammive in line 19 regarding the "failing life for *WoW*" topic. Niele's utterance in line 20 also shares cohesive features with Zanna's line 18 because of her use of similar words and phrases, such as "I can see" and "I mean" and "pissy"; Niele uses similar phrasing to indicate that her utterance goes with Zanna's utterance about the blood elves and *not* the one about failing life for *WoW*.

In summary, Zanna introduces the topic about the fandomsecrets Livejournal.com community, which sparks discussion about two topics: “failing life for *WoW*” and “blood elves”. Zanna constructs two Glue-On type turns: lines 5 and 7, which serve to introduce the setting and

topic of conversation, and lines 13 and 18, which are on the blood elf topic. The first pair is both syntactic and semantic in nature, while the second pair is mostly semantic. In addition, another speaker, Niele, uses cohesive features to fit her discourse in with Zanna's, namely by using the same phrasing in line 20 to show which of Zanna's lines her utterance is in response to. However, Niele's use of cohesive features does not make her line 20 a Glue-On because she did not produce the host utterance.

In the next excerpt, Zanna continues her discussion of the post on the fandomsecrets community. Zanna also further defines the group identification that she has begun to set up in Example 25A by defining the 'other' as fans of the console-based video game *Phoenix Wright*. Again, the mechanics of setting up this alterity are interesting, and I will deal with them in future work. For ease of analysis, I have underlined the cohesive features in Example 25B.

### Example 25B: Zanna's Rant

22 1/22 00:01:20.281 [Guild] Zanna: and then you have people with fucking Phoenix Wright icons agreeing with it.  
 23 1/22 00:01:26.109 [Guild] Sammive: Ha  
 24 1/22 00:01:27.109 [Guild] Niele: and then equivocating it to someone with a drinking problem...  
 25 1/22 00:01:34.734 [Guild] Zanna: YEAH  
 26 1/22 00:01:44.562 [Guild] Parnopaeus: phoenix wright. ugh.  
 27 1/22 00:01:48.281 [Guild] Parnopaeus: talk about no life  
 28 1/22 00:01:49.921 [Guild] Sammive: I feel like the only person on earth who hasn't played that game yet. What IS Phoenix Wright?  
 29 1/22 00:01:58.718 [Guild] Zanna: It's a game about lawyers  
 30 1/22 00:02:01.656 [Guild] Zanna: But it's like...  
 31 1/22 00:02:05.984 [Guild] Zanna: Really inaccurate.  
 32 1/22 00:02:11.281 [Guild] Zanna: and kinda dumb  
 33 1/22 00:02:19.468 [Guild] Niele: and it has this massive fandom  
 34 1/22 00:02:20.453 [Guild] Zanna: and yeah... guess wut... ADDICTIVE  
 35 1/22 00:02:25.140 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah  
 36 1/22 00:02:42.750 [Guild] Sammive: Anything can be addictive. ><  
 37 1/22 00:02:48.359 [Guild] Niele: though eally ANY game can be addictive  
 38 1/22 00:02:52.421 [Guild] Parnopaeus: That game just... it's lawyers. Seriously.  
 39 1/22 00:03:04.828 [Guild] Zanna: And like... I kinda wanna be like "well, phoenix wright fans being rude about warcraft is kinda... hypocritical. At least our characters are interesting and if you RP it requites some creativity"  
 40 1/22 00:03:21.328 [Guild] Zanna: Oh, I know any game can be addictive. That's what gets me  
 41 1/22 00:03:23.453 [Guild] Sammive: 3 second respawns, jeebus XO

Throughout this excerpt, Niele and Zanna are the main participants, co-constructing the topic because they have shared knowledge about the general topic. Niele and Zanna in lines 29-35 create a description of the *Phoenix Wright* game; this is mostly done by Zanna with her string of

messages in lines 29-34, but Niele interjects some extra information in line 33. All of Zanna's utterances in this sequence are Glue-Ons. Line 30 begins with the conjunction "but", functioning as a syntactic device, and contains the referential pronoun "it" which relies on the semantic material in her previous turn. Line 31 is a SynGO because it completes the incomplete turn in line 30. Lines 32 and 34 begin with the conjunction "and", situating them syntactically with the previous line. Interestingly, Niele's line 33 *also* begins with "and", which matches Zanna's constructions around the utterance; Niele uses this syntactic cohesive feature to place her utterance with Zanna's by using the same structure. Niele's utterance would be a Glue-On, except the host was produced by another speaker, so her turn cannot function as a Glue-On; however, it can certainly *look* like a Glue-On, which may be a way for Niele to orient herself to Zanna by matching their utterances. Zanna's line 39, which also starts with a conjunction, could also be a TCU continuation from her line 34, meaning that Zanna constructs her utterance in 39 as more of the description of the game.

Example 25B shows how a speaker can construct a long string of Glue-Ons, and how a different speaker may take advantage of the similarity in structure to situate their utterance in alignment with the other's. In Example 25C, something else happens: another member of the guild, Elemaa, comes online in line 49 and announces her presence in line 54. (It is important to know that even though my transcript shows that she signed on in line 49, this notification does not appear in the actual chat box on the screen unless a player has altered the settings of the game chat.) Elemaa was generally disliked by the rest of the guild because of her previous actions and identifications. She was outside of the core community of the guild and was not a user of Livejournal.com, and so was unlikely understand the topic of discussion in the previous examples. Furthermore, Zanna in particular disliked Elemaa because of Elemaa's behavior, and

had reprimanded Elemaa several times previously in Guild chat for using her sex (female) to elicit gifts from male players and also for bragging about participation in Player-versus-Player combat, which is an activity not held in high regard on Roleplaying servers. Zanna's handling of Elemaa earned her high respect in the guild and even got her promoted, as Avery says in Example 26, below.

### Example 26: Zanna's Tactful Smackdown

```
1 11/12 23:10:40.796 [Officer] Avery: Mmm. You missed Zanna being awesome
2 11/12 23:10:45.093 [Officer] Parnopaeus: ohhhh?
3 11/12 23:10:57.625 [Officer] Avery: She put the most tactful smackdown on Elemaa I have ever
  seen
4 11/12 23:11:09.468 [Officer] Parnopaeus: omg (=oh my god) really and I missed it?
5 11/12 23:11:21.453 [Officer] Avery: You did. I almost promoted her then and there
6 11/12 23:11:28.281 [Officer] Parnopaeus: what did she do??
7 11/12 23:11:40.468 [Officer] Avery: She told her to stop being an attention whore, but
  without using those words
8 11/12 23:12:35.828 [Officer] Parnopaeus: what did elemaa say?
9 11/12 23:13:21.062 [Officer] Avery: Whoring for hugs - like you ask for one and that should
  be it, right? Apparently Elemaa kept asking
10 11/12 23:13:29.921 [Officer] Avery: Because, omg, she had such a *hard day* [in PvP combat]
11 11/12 23:13:58.781 [Officer] Avery: So Zanna layed into her XD
12 11/12 23:14:05.375 [Officer] Avery: Like I said, I almost bumped (=promoted) her right there
```

Zanna, being already predisposed against Elemaa, makes no move to include Elemaa in the conversation happening in Guild chat when she signs on. Zanna accomplishes this using a tool of cohesion, namely semantic reference, which works for the other participants but against Elemaa.

### Example 25C: Zanna's Rant

```
42 1/22 00:03:30.906 [Guild] Niele: and there IS socialization in it. It's not a primarily
  singular thing
43 1/22 00:03:51.984 [Guild] Parnopaeus: The people who say we're 'wasting time' with WoW... I
  mean... I think starin at a TV screen is a TOTAL waste of time
44 1/22 00:03:56.265 [Guild] Parnopaeus: at least there's social interaction here
45 1/22 00:03:58.953 [Guild] Zanna: Honestly? A lot of the time I sign on warcrack and sit in the
  inn the whole night and talk to you guys
46 1/22 00:04:05.265 [Guild] Parnopaeus: aww!
47 1/22 00:04:05.625 [Guild] Zanna: It's what I'm doing right now
48 1/22 00:04:06.234 [Guild] Parnopaeus: hee
49 1/22 00:04:12.500 Elemaa has come online.
50 1/22 00:04:15.609 [Guild] Parnopaeus: it's a new socialization place
51 1/22 00:04:36.484 [Guild] Zanna: Also? even raiding- setting aside a night for a raid is no
  different than setting a side to watch a braindead tv show.
52 1/22 00:04:44.703 [Guild] Zanna: Like American Idol or some crap
53 1/22 00:04:47.531 [Guild] Parnopaeus: or going out and getting drunk
54 1/22 00:04:48.937 [Guild] Elemaa: hi parn and Zanna
55 1/22 00:04:50.968 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah
56 1/22 00:04:54.640 [Guild] Zanna: Hi Elemaa
57 1/22 00:04:56.218 [Guild] Parnopaeus: hello elemaa!
58 1/22 00:04:57.062 [Guild] Elemaa: :P (=emoticon for "sticking out tongue")
59 1/22 00:04:58.593 [Guild] Sammive: Allo!
60 1/22 00:05:06.796 [Guild] Elemaa: i just woke up from a nap --zzz (=sleepy emoticon)
61 1/22 00:05:26.828 [Guild] Parnopaeus: good nap?
```

62 1/22 00:05:28.718 [Guild] Sammive: heee  
63 1/22 00:05:32.437 [Guild] Zanna: It really is no different. possibly better because at least you're spending time interacting with other people instead of watching TV.

Elemaa announces her presence in line 54 with a greeting to Parn and Zanna, but not to Niele or Sammive; the reason for this selective greeting is two-fold. First, Parn and Zanna were the ones that Elemaa could see talking in guild chat when she signed on; secondly, Parn and Zanna were both officers in the guild, and Elemaa (who was still new to the group) may have been attempting to build rapport with the powerful people in the guild even at the expense of neglecting those without titles in the guild. Elemaa's greeting may be a result of the combination of these two motives -- she signed on and saw two officers talking in guild chat, and felt that she should greet them as a form of respect. However, note that when Sammive greets Elemaa in line 59, Elemaa does not respond to this greeting (perhaps because she does not know Sammive very well, and also Sammive is new to the guild and not an officer). In this manner, Elemaa uses greetings as an attempt to align herself with the officers of the guild rather than with other people of her status.

In line 63, Zanna returns to the topic at hand, about whether playing *World of Warcraft* is a legitimate way of spending time. She summarizes the most recent arguments made (that "it" [playing the game] is not different from watching TV, that there is social interaction, and playing is a way of spending time with people). Zanna's summary could be for the benefit of Elemaa, who has just joined the conversation, except that Zanna does not specify what she means by "it" at the beginning of her line. The pronoun "it" is endophoric, referring back to previous discourse, namely line 51. Even though this discourse shows that Elemaa signed on at line 49, Zanna did not know that was when Elemaa signed on because she did not have the game set up to alert her this way (in fact, when asked about this option, Zanna said that she kept meaning to turn that alert on but never did so). So although my transcript shows that Elemaa signed on before Zanna

said line 51, Zanna did not know that, and therefore her endophoric "it" in line 63 refers to a topic that Zanna *did not know Elemaa had access to*. Zanna makes no overt move to include Elemaa in the conversation, which can be accounted for if we know Elemaa's history with the guild as I discussed above. With this knowledge of Zanna's past with Elemaa, the fact that Zanna does not attempt to include Elemaa in her conversation in Example 25C is not surprising, and may in fact be motivated by Zanna's negative feelings for Elemaa.

### 3.2 DISCUSSION

I have shown with the above analysis how players can orient to each other and to the game world with the use of conversational features. Niele and Zanna demonstrated an orientation to each other by co-constructing a topic of conversation based on shared knowledge. They did so by using each other's phrasings and mimicking each other's turn constructions; in some cases, Niele or Zanna continued the other's turn with a TCU continuation, indicating that her utterance belonged within the discourse of the other. The other conversants, Parnopaeus and Sammive, contributed to the conversation based on their shared knowledge with Zanna and Niele, attempting to add to the conversation but not to be part of the conversational flow created by Zanna and Niele. In addition, I analyzed how one player, Zanna, oriented herself in opposition to another player, Elemaa, by excluding her from the conversation via an opaque semantic reference; this behavior was motivated by previous discourse and an ideology held by Zanna about the role of female players in the *World of Warcraft* universe.



## 4.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

### 4.1 SUMMARY

In Chapter 2.0 I showed how Conversation Analysis can be applied to text-only discourse in online mediums, choosing to analyze conversations from the MMORPG *World of Warcraft*. After analyzing short passages of discourse, I made several observations about the nature of online synchronous chat about the composition of turns; namely, that players use the Enter key as a marker of a Turn Construction Unit (TCU), and then construct Glue-Ons in subsequent messages to make strings of TCUs into one larger coherent turn. I also showed how players manipulate the chat interface of the game in this way to create their own style of speech which is visual rather than auditory. In addition to turn construction, I showed how repair works in the game in a similar fashion with two behaviors which are norms in different communities in the game: \*-repair, a norm for most players of *World of Warcraft*, and “get out of my head” repair, which is an in-group feature for a particular guild.

In Chapter 3.0 , I showed how players can demonstrate relationships and orientations to each other using discourse features like turn continuation, cohesion, and reference. By mimicking each other’s style of turn construction, two players jointly constructed a topic and a discussion, demonstrating an orientation to each other based on shared knowledge and the inclusion of each’s input in the other’s discourse. I also showed how one player excluded another player based on semantic reference. This analysis of one larger text served as an example of how

the isolated examples I discussed in Chapter 2.0 can be applied by players in a larger context to accomplish certain social means.

## **4.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study is not comprehensive regarding the discourse features found in *World of Warcraft*. There are many more features in the discourse that I could not give ample time to discussing in this thesis without the expense of the features already present. Also, the observations here are informed only by the data from *World of Warcraft* and therefore may be missing some generalizations that may be seen in all MMORPGs.

A feature being used in the game world is voice chatting, either through the game's servers or through third-party programs. Many guilds and players make use of this option, but voice chat is not accounted for in the scope of this study – this is mostly because the guild <SeeD>, which was the focus of my research, did not make use of voice chat. The effect of voice chat on textual language of other guilds may be substantial, and indeed it may have its own features which I cannot address due to my lack of data. A future study would do well to investigate the use of voice chat in the game and the role it plays on discourse -- or if the case is vice-versa, that the discourse structure of the text-only chat in the game affects how the players talk in voice chat.

Another limitation of this study is that the majority of interactions described are from a roleplaying server, although many similar features are seen in the data from the player-versus-player server. The other server type, player-versus-environment, is not represented in this study, even though PvE servers contain the majority of the *World of Warcraft* population. A future

avenue of study would be to observe a PvE server to see if these features are present there as well. Results in either direction would be very interesting.

Additionally, no player demographics were taken into account in this analysis, mostly due to the unavailability of said information. What demographic information was used was personal knowledge of the author and used with permission of the players being described. It is quite plausible that physical characteristics such as race, age, and native language may affect the discourse in the game world, but without those demographics available, it is impossible to see these effects. While I do not know how a researcher would incorporate such data into a linguistic analysis, if these data were available, I imagine they could yield very interesting results.

Lastly, in the course of my analysis, I made a point to show how players have different styles of “speaking” in chat. The question remains: *why* do players use these different styles? Why do players such as Zanna and Parn send very long messages to the chat, while other players like Avery and Niele break their long messages into many separate turns, and yet other players like Killah send very short turns as part of a larger, coherent message? My suggestion is that these styles are imported from other mediums; Parn, Zanna, Niele, and Avery have all been long time users of journaling sites like Livejournal.com which promote the creation of long, coherent messages. Killah, on the other hand, may come from a different background in terms of his online activities – for instance, if he spent most of his time in IRC chat rooms before playing *World of Warcraft*, he might be incorporating features from IRC. Another possibility (which may actually tie into the influence of other mediums) is that players who send long messages have not learned that shorter messages are useful in the *WoW* medium; therefore, learning to send messages in smaller chunks is a discourse norm for *World of Warcraft* which must be learned by its players, and many of those in my data sample may have either not learned that norm yet or

may have been in the process of learning it. These styles may also be personal preference of the players involved. Because chat in the game is visual, some players might prefer the large blocks of text on the screen as opposed to many small messages for aesthetic reasons, or vice versa. The answer to why players adopt different linguistic styles may actually be an interplay of all three of these suggestions or even factors that I have not put forth here; this remains a question for future research to investigate.

### **4.3 IMPLICATIONS**

The most important conclusion that I have drawn from my ethnography and analysis is that online language has a definite and observable structure, which goes against many common stereotypes about language use in online environments. In particular, the fact that game discourse bears the organizational features that I discussed -- and that a researcher can analyze game discourse using traditional linguistic tools from spoken language -- gives evidence that online gamers use language to communicate in the same ways that people use spoken language in the physical world. There is logic to it, there is order, and these things are observable. Furthermore, this order to language is part of the game's culture that was formed by the players themselves -- not imposed by the game designers. In fact, as I showed, players do not confine themselves to the restrictions of the interface created by the game designers; on the contrary, the players use the tools available to them to create individual style in a text-only language. The conventions are created by the community and acquired by new players, a process which bears even more resemblance to spoken language. The above conclusions suggest that users of text-only language in digital environments follow the same general rules as speakers of spoken language in physical

environments but with different parameters. Those embarking on future studies of language and digital environments should keep these observations in mind as they explore this new frontier of linguistic expression.

## APPENDIX A

### ENTIRE TRANSCRIPTS

#### A.1.1 Killah, Vickie, and Parnopaeus

7/18 18:00:18.843 [Party] Vickie: Soooooooooooooo  
7/18 18:00:50.500 [Party] Parnopaeus: yes? ^^ (=anime smiling face)  
7/18 18:01:18.156 [Party] Vickie: Dunno. It's quiet.  
7/18 18:01:48.312 [Party] Parnopaeus: it is.  
7/18 18:02:24.578 [Party] Parnopaeus: Is Ratchet a neutral town?  
7/18 18:02:29.125 [Party] Vickie: Mhm.  
7/18 18:02:39.015 [Party] Vickie: Both horde and alliance can enter/exit it.  
7/18 18:02:51.437 [Party] Vickie: Along with booty bay, which is accessable by the boat in ratchet.  
7/18 18:03:02.343 [Party] Vickie: And don't remind me, I'm a dork. >.< (=anime scrunched face)  
7/18 18:03:02.875 [Party] Parnopaeus: okay. sounds like fun. ^^  
7/18 18:03:07.578 [Party] Vickie: Lol  
7/18 18:03:13.875 [Party] Parnopaeus: haha, really? >.> (=anime shifty eyes)  
7/18 18:03:19.218 [Party] Vickie: Mhms.  
7/18 18:03:41.687 [Party] Parnopaeus: you say this to someone in a guild named after something from Final Fantasy.  
7/18 18:03:52.546 [Party] Vickie: rofl  
7/18 18:03:53.953 [Party] Killah: >>  
7/18 18:04:04.750 [Party] Vickie: Well, WoW geek...  
7/18 18:04:07.140 [Party] Killah: Nub nubs >> (=“noob noobs”)  
7/18 18:04:12.437 [Party] Vickie: Haven't played an FF (=Final Fantasy) in a while.  
7/18 18:04:15.343 [Party] Vickie: And shuddup qq. (=crying emoticon)  
7/18 18:04:23.859 [Party] Killah: lol..  
7/18 18:04:25.796 [Party] Parnopaeus: haha, I couldn't resist.  
7/18 18:04:27.437 [Party] Killah: You play FF?  
7/18 18:04:39.375 [Party] Parnopaeus: who?  
7/18 18:04:43.937 [Party] Killah: vick  
7/18 18:04:49.843 [Party] Vickie: only played like... FFX, FFX-2, and FFIIX  
7/18 18:04:55.734 [Party] Killah: lol >>  
7/18 18:05:01.109 [Party] Parnopaeus: it's from FFVIII  
7/18 18:05:07.015 [Party] Parnopaeus: oh, here it is!  
7/18 18:05:07.765 [Party] Vickie: neverrr got to play 7. though i tried 8.  
7/18 18:05:10.906 [Party] Parnopaeus: fabulous  
7/18 18:05:30.750 [Party] Vickie: for some reason I think SeeD is this academy Squall was in?>.> ;  
7/18 18:05:52.156 [Party] Parnopaeus: you're right! it's the military force of the game, pretty much.  
7/18 18:06:05.390 [Party] Vickie: Yay. x.x (=anime dead face) And welcome to Ratchet!  
7/18 18:06:05.875 [Party] Killah: wtf is chu nub nubs talking about?

7/18 18:06:10.484 [Party] Vickie: urmom (=your mom)  
7/18 18:06:11.343 [Party] Vickie: >.>  
7/18 18:06:14.093 [Party] Killah: turn off  
7/18 18:06:15.250 [Party] Parnopaeus: huzzah!  
7/18 18:06:18.671 [Party] Vickie: rofl (=roll on floor laughing)  
7/18 18:06:23.468 [Party] Killah: srsly >> (=seriously)  
7/18 18:06:23.984 [Party] Killah: gf (=possibly "girlfriend")  
7/18 18:06:27.140 [Party] Killah: TOO nerdy  
7/18 18:06:27.859 [Party] Killah: lmao (=laughing my ass off)  
7/18 18:06:45.031 [Party] Killah: Babe you play more games then i do x.x  
7/18 18:06:46.515 [Party] Vickie: but chu love meee  
7/18 18:06:51.390 [Party] Parnopaeus: thanks for showing me the way. =)  
7/18 18:06:54.750 [Party] Vickie: Np. (=no problem)  
7/18 18:07:08.000 [Party] Parnopaeus: yay flightpath  
7/18 18:07:23.421 [Party] Killah: i don't think  
7/18 18:07:27.953 [Party] Killah: i woulda liked chu  
7/18 18:07:32.062 [Party] Killah: if i met the nerdy side first  
7/18 18:07:37.671 [Party] Vickie: :<  
7/18 18:07:50.531 [Party] Vickie: Who are you calling nerdy anyways?  
7/18 18:07:51.031 [Party] Killah: -shrug-  
7/18 18:07:56.109 [Party] Vickie: You have a lvl 70 hunter.  
7/18 18:08:05.546 [Party] Killah: Not my fault you can't get to 70  
7/18 18:08:08.171 [Party] Killah: lmao  
7/18 18:08:21.187 [Party] Vickie: Not my fault I don't spend all day lvling. :< qq  
7/18 18:08:27.468 [Party] Killah: Yes it is  
7/18 18:08:28.625 [Party] Killah: >>  
7/18 18:08:42.734 [Party] Vickie: nu uh..h.  
7/18 18:08:45.890 [Party] Killah: " I wana PvP"  
7/18 18:08:49.015 [Party] Killah: urmom pvps  
7/18 18:08:50.109 [Party] Killah: pfft  
7/18 18:08:57.828 [Party] Vickie: because I like kicking hordies ass >.>  
7/18 18:09:08.093 [Party] Killah: Hey  
7/18 18:09:09.500 [Party] Killah: uh  
7/18 18:09:13.796 [Party] Killah: i migh tbe busy all day tomorrow  
7/18 18:09:22.734 [Party] Vickie: Then I'll sleep all day.  
7/18 18:09:28.250 [Party] Killah: Mk =]  
7/18 18:09:33.546 [Party] Vickie: so keep me up until 7 in the morning.  
7/18 18:09:34.218 [Party] Killah: i'll be backat like  
7/18 18:09:36.437 [Party] Killah: 11 or 12?  
7/18 18:09:43.203 [Party] Vickie: At night?  
7/18 18:09:45.890 [Party] Killah: Mhm  
7/18 18:09:55.968 [Party] Vickie: Mmk... >.> What cha doin?  
7/18 18:10:07.265 [Party] Killah: Going to teh bay  
7/18 18:10:16.859 [Party] Vickie: with uncle? :o  
7/18 18:10:18.609 [Party] Killah: 3 hr drive  
7/18 18:10:19.484 [Party] Killah: no  
7/18 18:10:21.234 [Party] Killah: friends  
7/18 18:10:29.546 [Party] Vickie: Mmks.  
7/18 18:11:02.765 [Party] Vickie: Are you good now, Parn?  
7/18 18:11:13.312 [Party] Parnopaeus: Yes I am - thank you again!  
7/18 18:11:22.171 [Party] Killah: Parn  
7/18 18:11:24.718 [Party] Killah: are you a guy?  
7/18 18:11:33.546 [Party] Parnopaeus: why do you ask?  
7/18 18:11:40.015 [Party] Killah: Cause i'm a curious bastard  
7/18 18:11:40.015 [Party] Vickie: Np.  
7/18 18:11:52.781 [Party] Vickie: Take care. =]  
7/18 18:11:55.468 [Party] Killah: And i don't like guys who plays girlchars  
7/18 18:11:58.890 [Party] Parnopaeus: haha, I get asked it a lot. I'm a girl. lol  
7/18 18:12:00.640 [Party] Parnopaeus: why not?  
7/18 18:12:03.546 [Party] Killah: Cause  
7/18 18:12:04.812 [Party] Killah: it's gay  
7/18 18:12:05.921 [Party] Killah: lmao  
7/18 18:12:09.781 [Party] Killah: Guys with tits?  
7/18 18:12:11.937 [Party] Killah: >>  
7/18 18:12:31.796 [Party] Killah: It's thats fine with you..  
7/18 18:12:33.937 [Party] Killah: Then su re!  
7/18 18:12:35.281 [Party] Vickie: -shrugs- Killah doesn't like the idea of lesbians? =p  
7/18 18:12:42.203 [Party] Parnopaeus: haha, I've heard guys say that they don't want to stare at a guy character's butt running around all day.  
7/18 18:12:47.437 [Party] Killah: No  
7/18 18:12:47.437 [Party] Vickie: so he doesn't like men pretending to be em?

7/18 18:12:51.703 [Party] Vickie: lol  
7/18 18:12:56.328 [Party] Killah: It's like  
7/18 18:13:01.859 [Party] Killah: And wtf is a Parnopaeus?  
7/18 18:13:05.218 [Party] Killah: A dinosaur? >>  
7/18 18:13:12.140 [Party] Vickie: Babe be nice. =.=  
7/18 18:13:17.218 [Party] Killah: I am  
7/18 18:13:18.593 [Party] Killah: Pfft  
7/18 18:13:29.828 [Party] Parnopaeus: It's Greek  
7/18 18:13:35.734 [Party] Killah: For dinosaur?  
7/18 18:13:37.015 [Party] Killah: >>  
7/18 18:13:38.953 [Party] Parnopaeus: A name for the god Apollo.  
7/18 18:13:42.187 [Party] Vickie: ...babe srsly.  
7/18 18:13:50.859 [Party] Killah: :o  
7/18 18:13:54.312 [Party] Killah: Isn't that  
7/18 18:13:57.203 [Party] Killah: the moon person?  
7/18 18:14:11.984 [Party] Parnopaeus: sun, actually  
7/18 18:14:17.718 [Party] Killah: Close enough  
7/18 18:14:29.593 [Party] Vickie: Brb.  
7/18 18:14:30.953 [Party] Parnopaeus: I suppose.  
7/18 18:14:46.421 Vickie whispers: Don't mind him, he's a cocky ass bastard...  
7/18 18:14:47.671 [Party] Killah: So like  
7/18 18:14:50.828 [Party] Killah: you a geek too?  
7/18 18:15:01.421 To Vickie: nah, he's okay. just lots of random questions.

(rest of transcript omitted due to Killah and Vickie discussing personal topics)

## A.1.2 Zanna's Entire Rant

1 1/21 23:58:21.281 [Guild] Zanna: gosh, I hate people.  
2 1/21 23:58:21.937 [Guild] Sammive: He's like.... 8 or something  
3 1/21 23:58:34.156 [Guild] Parnopaeus: o.O  
4 1/21 23:58:36.828 [Guild] Parnopaeus: what happen?  
5 1/21 23:59:04.359 [Guild] Zanna: Just... there's this fandomsecrets lj comm (=Livejournal community) that I visit because it's like post secret but a lot geekier.  
6 1/21 23:59:23.812 [Guild] Sammive: Ooh, sounds fun  
7 1/21 23:59:26.218 [Guild] Zanna: And someone made this post totally hating on warcraft, you know, the usual  
8 1/21 23:59:39.578 [Guild] Sammive: Le sad  
9 1/21 23:59:43.000 [Guild] Niele: ooh, the one about people failing life for wacraft or the belf (=blood elf, a race of characters) one? >>>  
10 1/21 23:59:51.265 [Guild] Parnopaeus: o.O  
11 1/21 23:59:54.468 [Guild] Zanna: people failing life for warcraft  
12 1/21 23:59:55.187 [Guild] Parnopaeus: I am unaware of this thing  
13 1/21 23:59:58.187 [Guild] Zanna: the belf one I can undersnad.  
14 1/22 00:00:09.468 [Guild] Niele: well, failing school, losing job, ect  
15 1/22 00:00:15.750 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah.  
16 1/22 00:00:20.109 [Guild] Sammive: Sheesh  
17 1/22 00:00:25.984 [Guild] Sammive: Because people only do that when on WoW  
18 1/22 00:00:41.421 [Guild] Zanna: I mean, I like belves (=blood elves), but I can see someone being pissy about having all their rp (=role playing) threads dropped for the new shiny thing.  
19 1/22 00:01:07.062 [Guild] Zanna: But yeah, like-- to generalize everyone who plays a game because you know about one person who has no life?  
20 1/22 00:01:10.406 [Guild] Niele: yea, I can see that. I mean, I'd be pissy, to, I think  
21 1/22 00:01:13.765 [Guild] Parnopaeus: Yeeeeah.  
22 1/22 00:01:20.281 [Guild] Zanna: and then you have people with fucking Phoenix Wright icons agreeing with it.  
23 1/22 00:01:26.109 [Guild] Sammive: Ha  
24 1/22 00:01:27.109 [Guild] Niele: and then equivilating it to someone with a drinking problem...  
25 1/22 00:01:34.734 [Guild] Zanna: YEAH  
26 1/22 00:01:44.562 [Guild] Parnopaeus: phoenix wright. ugh.  
27 1/22 00:01:48.281 [Guild] Parnopaeus: talk about no life



28 1/22 00:01:49.921 [Guild] Sammive: I feel like the only person on earth who hasn't played that game yet. What IS Phoenix Wright?

29 1/22 00:01:58.718 [Guild] Zanna: It's a game about lawyers

30 1/22 00:02:01.656 [Guild] Zanna: But it's like...

31 1/22 00:02:05.984 [Guild] Zanna: Really inaccurate.

32 1/22 00:02:11.281 [Guild] Zanna: and kinda dumb

33 1/22 00:02:19.468 [Guild] Niele: and it has this massive fandom

34 1/22 00:02:20.453 [Guild] Zanna: and yeah... guess wut... ADDICTIVE

35 1/22 00:02:25.140 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah

36 1/22 00:02:42.750 [Guild] Sammive: Anything can be addictive. ><

37 1/22 00:02:48.359 [Guild] Niele: though eally ANY game can be addictive

38 1/22 00:02:52.421 [Guild] Parnopaeus: That game just... it's lawyers. Seriously.

39 1/22 00:03:04.828 [Guild] Zanna: And like... I kinda wanna be like "well, phoenix wright fans being rude about warcraft is kinda... hypocritical. At least our characters are interesting and if you RP it requites some creativity"

40 1/22 00:03:21.328 [Guild] Zanna: Oh, I know any game can be addictive. That's what gets me

41 1/22 00:03:23.453 [Guild] Sammive: 3 second respawns, jeebus XO

42 1/22 00:03:30.906 [Guild] Niele: and there IS socialization in it. It's not a primarily singular thing

43 1/22 00:03:51.984 [Guild] Parnopaeus: The people who say we're 'wasting time' with WoW... I mean... I think starin at a TV screen is a TOTAL waste of time

44 1/22 00:03:56.265 [Guild] Parnopaeus: at least there's social interaction here

45 1/22 00:03:58.953 [Guild] Zanna: Honestly? A lot of the time I sign on warcrack and sit in the inn the whole night and talk to you guys

46 1/22 00:04:05.265 [Guild] Parnopaeus: aww!

47 1/22 00:04:05.625 [Guild] Zanna: It's what I'm doing right now

48 1/22 00:04:06.234 [Guild] Parnopaeus: hee

49 1/22 00:04:12.500 Elemaa has come online.

50 1/22 00:04:15.609 [Guild] Parnopaeus: it's a new socialization place

51 1/22 00:04:36.484 [Guild] Zanna: Also? even raiding- setting aside a night for a raid is no different than setting a side to watch a braindead tv show.

52 1/22 00:04:44.703 [Guild] Zanna: Like American Idol or some crap

53 1/22 00:04:47.531 [Guild] Parnopaeus: or going out and getting drunk

54 1/22 00:04:48.937 [Guild] Elemaa: hi parn and Zanna

55 1/22 00:04:50.968 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah

56 1/22 00:04:54.640 [Guild] Zanna: Hi Elemaa

57 1/22 00:04:56.218 [Guild] Parnopaeus: hello elemaa!

58 1/22 00:04:57.062 [Guild] Elemaa: :P (=emoticon for "sticking out tongue")

59 1/22 00:04:58.593 [Guild] Sammive: Allo!

60 1/22 00:05:06.796 [Guild] Elemaa: i just woke up from a nap --zzz (=sleepy emoticon)

61 1/22 00:05:26.828 [Guild] Parnopaeus: good nap?

62 1/22 00:05:28.718 [Guild] Sammive: heee

63 1/22 00:05:32.437 [Guild] Zanna: It really is no different. possibly better because at least you're spending time interacting with other people instead of watching TV.

64 1/22 00:05:44.375 [Guild] Elemaa: i dont even remember going to take a nap, musta passed out

65 1/22 00:05:58.218 [Guild] Parnopaeus: exactly. and -- at least for me -- I'm learning about strategy and organization and stuff like that. it helps me think clearly about other things.

66 1/22 00:06:03.031 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah

67 1/22 00:06:12.484 [Guild] Sammive: And motor skills! XD

68 1/22 00:06:16.343 [Guild] Parnopaeus: hahahaha

69 1/22 00:06:28.609 [Guild] Zanna: I kinda wanna make a secret that says "Any Phoenix Wright fan who looks down on a Warcraft Fan is a huge hypocrite" but more cleverly

70 1/22 00:06:32.187 [Guild] Niele: and you're learning teamwork in PuGs

71 1/22 00:06:42.078 [Guild] Sammive: Also, acronyms

72 1/22 00:06:44.390 [Guild] Parnopaeus: I would squee at you. ;)

73 1/22 00:06:46.625 [Guild] Zanna: LOL

74 1/22 00:06:49.171 [Guild] Parnopaeus: acronyms! yay

75 1/22 00:06:49.687 [Guild] Sammive: I still have no idea what PuGs are. e-e

76 1/22 00:06:53.968 [Guild] Parnopaeus: and fashion sense

77 1/22 00:06:55.406 [Guild] Niele: I say do it. But I'm a dork ;p

78 1/22 00:06:56.906 [Guild] Zanna: I might do it. Like, I need to figure out a way to make it clever.

79 1/22 00:07:00.515 [Guild] Parnopaeus: PuG is a pick-up group

80 1/22 00:07:01.890 [Guild] Parnopaeus: for instances

81 1/22 00:07:06.140 [Guild] Sammive: Ahhhhhh

82 1/22 00:07:09.359 [Guild] Sammive: See, I learn!

83 1/22 00:07:13.796 [Guild] Parnopaeus: like if we don't have a nicely put together group like we do on hordeside ;)

84 1/22 00:07:21.703 [Guild] Sammive: Hee

85 1/22 00:07:31.875 [Guild] Sammive: Our Hordeside group OWNS >B

86 1/22 00:07:37.062 [Guild] Parnopaeus: we just need a tank

87 1/22 00:07:42.109 [Guild] Sammive: One big Tauren  
88 1/22 00:07:47.718 [Guild] Sammive: Three teeny belves  
89 1/22 00:07:49.953 [Guild] Sammive: X3  
90 1/22 00:08:03.062 [Guild] Sammive: Oh, the hijinks!  
91 1/22 00:08:03.359 [Guild] Parnopaeus: mmm moldy leather belt  
92 1/22 00:08:08.734 [Guild] Parnopaeus: hijinks ahoy!  
93 1/22 00:08:08.937 [Guild] Zanna: I'm going to transfer my pally  
94 1/22 00:08:14.234 [Guild] Zanna: SOON  
95 1/22 00:08:15.015 [Guild] Parnopaeus: what lvl is your pally?  
96 1/22 00:08:19.890 [Guild] Zanna: 20 >\_>  
97 1/22 00:08:30.515 [Guild] Parnopaeus: dude yeah  
98 1/22 00:09:22.765 [Guild] Sammive: I think there is a point where you can play WoW too much  
99 1/22 00:09:29.906 [Guild] Zanna: Oh yeah  
100 1/22 00:09:38.093 [Guild] Zanna: I mean, I'm not saying people don't get addicted  
101 1/22 00:09:43.140 [Guild] Sammive: If your bills AREN'T getting paid, you don't go outside  
the house and all that fun stuff? Yeah.  
102 1/22 00:09:55.218 [Guild] Zanna: But like... that post is a generalization  
103 1/22 00:09:59.937 [Guild] Sammive: But any game, or anything in my opinion can be considered  
addictive  
104 1/22 00:10:04.671 [Guild] Zanna: and like... that's a problem with the person, not the game  
105 1/22 00:10:23.109 [Guild] Sammive: I have an aunt who can't go a day without drinking apple  
juice. That could be addiction. XD  
106 1/22 00:11:04.625 [Guild] Parnopaeus: see? lol  
107 1/22 00:11:17.265 [Guild] Sammive: But as long as no one's being hurt or the user isn't hurt,  
there really is no point in being a jerk about something just 'cause they don't like it. ~.~  
108 1/22 00:11:17.875 [Guild] Elemaa: squee... i love apple juice  
109 1/22 00:11:26.515 [Guild] Parnopaeus: I died ;. ;  
110 1/22 00:11:27.562 [Guild] Sammive: Mmm. i love fruit juice. ~.~  
111 1/22 00:11:36.984 [Guild] Sammive: ahahahaha, this username  
112 1/22 00:11:37.531 [Guild] Elemaa: i love most juices "{  
113 1/22 00:11:40.750 [Guild] Elemaa: :P  
114 1/22 00:11:43.796 [Guild] Sammive: "Idtappdatt"  
115 1/22 00:11:48.609 [Guild] Parnopaeus: >.<  
116 1/22 00:11:53.625 [Guild] Parnopaeus: not in character o.o  
117 1/22 00:11:57.687 [Guild] Elemaa: \*.\*  
118 1/22 00:12:00.031 [Guild] Parnopaeus: lol  
119 1/22 00:12:06.500 [Guild] Sammive: XD  
120 1/22 00:12:11.906 [Guild] Parnopaeus: I love the guild though, "I'd mana tap that"  
121 1/22 00:12:14.375 [Guild] Zanna: And people are like "my aunt's amrriage fell apart because  
of WOW" and I feel like replying "no, your aunt's marriage probably fell apart because she's  
related to you."  
122 1/22 00:12:23.703 [Guild] Sammive: haha  
123 1/22 00:12:41.078 [Guild] Elemaa: >.<  
124 1/22 00:12:51.656 [Guild] Sammive: That's like saying... "The house blew up!" "OMG how!" "It  
had stairs."  
125 1/22 00:12:58.500 [Guild] Zanna: YES  
126 1/22 00:13:07.515 [Guild] Elemaa: o.o  
127 1/22 00:13:08.562 [Guild] Elemaa: rofl  
128 1/22 00:14:26.296 [Guild] Sammive: Just because something was in the house doesn't mean it  
was the reason for said implosion  
129 1/22 00:14:31.062 [Guild] Sammive: Or explosion  
130 1/22 00:14:43.687 [Guild] Sammive: Implosion is a cooler word << >>  
131 1/22 00:15:06.062 [Guild] Sammive: Lauren can prove it, she's a wordologist  
132 1/22 00:15:07.718 [Guild] Sammive: ;)  
133 1/22 00:15:11.812 [Guild] Parnopaeus: What?  
134 1/22 00:15:12.328 [Guild] Parnopaeus: lol  
135 1/22 00:15:18.015 [Guild] Parnopaeus: linguist alert?  
136 1/22 00:15:21.312 [Guild] Sammive: XD  
137 1/22 00:15:26.546 [Guild] Zanna: Yeah.  
138 1/22 00:15:54.250 [Guild] Zanna: Like... I don't know. I think it might be easier for a lot  
of people to use something like a video game as a scapegoat than to admit maybe they did a couple  
of things wrong  
139 1/22 00:16:18.203 [Guild] Zanna: Like, in a relationship. It's easier for people to be like  
"WOW TOOK HIM AWAY" than be like "maybe I was too clingy" you know?  
140 1/22 00:16:27.593 [Guild] Zanna: Because if you're jealous of a video game, you are a bit too  
clingy  
141 1/22 00:16:44.500 [Guild] Niele: but I'm jealous of Lauren's video game ;- ;  
142 1/22 00:16:47.437 [Guild] Parnopaeus: >.>  
143 1/22 00:16:52.890 [Guild] Parnopaeus: I'm jealous of your <3 for Gippal?  
144 1/22 00:17:09.953 [Guild] Elemaa: zomg gippal :P  
145 1/22 00:17:30.062 [Guild] Elemaa: hes the evil dude who made me dig >.<

146 1/22 00:17:43.156 [Guild] Sammive: Dammit, jewel, where fore art thou  
147 1/22 00:17:51.234 [Guild] Parnopaeus: also the hawt one with the eyepatch ;)  
148 1/22 00:18:14.828 [Guild] Zanna: LOL  
149 1/22 00:18:27.421 [Guild] Zanna: I love you guys. I'm just sad you both play WOW  
150 1/22 00:18:35.921 [Guild] Zanna: Because it means your relationship is DOOMED.  
151 1/22 00:18:36.046 [Guild] Elemaa: the ones covering their faces are usually the hot ones x.x  
152 1/22 00:18:37.546 [Guild] Parnopaeus: you guys like tentacles, I like eyepatches  
153 1/22 00:18:47.625 [Guild] Zanna: Cuz you know there's like...  
154 1/22 00:18:50.812 [Guild] Parnopaeus: hey, I think WoW helps us stay together. it gives us  
stuff to geek out on  
155 1/22 00:18:56.078 [Guild] Zanna: subliminal messages  
156 1/22 00:19:02.765 [Guild] Sammive: Haha  
157 1/22 00:19:05.609 [Guild] Zanna: yeah, I'm being sarcastic. XD  
158 1/22 00:19:08.328 [Guild] Sammive: "Slash saved my marriage! :D"  
159 1/22 00:19:12.765 [Guild] Zanna: XDD  
160 1/22 00:19:20.171 [Guild] Niele: and we're really just jealous of each other's WoW  
161 1/22 00:19:24.250 [Guild] Parnopaeus: >.> the sad thing is that they're both true.  
162 1/22 00:19:29.156 [Guild] Parnopaeus: not the jealous part  
163 1/22 00:19:30.031 [Guild] Zanna: Secretly Blizz put messages in the game telling everyone to  
ignore their SO  
164 1/22 00:19:32.718 [Guild] Parnopaeus: the slash and geek out  
165 1/22 00:19:37.218 [Guild] Niele: as we lust after each other's laptops  
166 1/22 00:19:42.203 [Guild] Zanna: XDD  
167 1/22 00:20:01.359 [Guild] Sammive: My sister is getting a pink one  
168 1/22 00:20:04.500 [Guild] Sammive: Lord save her soul

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al-Sa'Di, R. A., & Hamdan, J. M. (2005). "Synchronous online chat" English: Computer-mediated communication. *World Englishes*, 24(4), 409-424.
- Angela Cora Garcia, & Jennifer Baker Jacobs. (2003, December 22). The Eyes of the Beholder: Understanding the Turn-Taking System in Quasi-Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication. . Retrieved March 26, 2008, from [http://www.leaonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15327973rls3204\\_2?cookieSet=1&journalCode=rlsi](http://www.leaonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15327973rls3204_2?cookieSet=1&journalCode=rlsi).
- Auer, P. (2007). Why are increments such elusive objects? An afterthought. *Pragmatics*, 17(4), 647-658.
- Baron, N. S. (1998). Letters by phone or speech by other means: the linguistics of email. *Language & Communication*, 18(2), 133-170.
- Baron, N. S. (2004). See you Online: Gender Issues in College Student Use of Instant Messaging. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 23(4), 397-423. d
- Baron, N. S. (2005). Discourse structure in instant messaging: The case of utterance breaks. In S. Herring (Ed.), *Computer-Mediated Conversation*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. Retrieved March 26, 2008, from <http://www.american.edu/tesol/Baron-Summer%2005%20version.pdf>.
- Bartle, R. (1996). *Hearts, clubs, diamonds, spades: Players who suit MUDs*. Retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://www.mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm>
- Bays, H. (1998). Framing and face in Internet exchanges: A socio-cognitive approach. *Linguistik online*, 1(1). Retrieved March 26, 2008, from <http://www.linguistik-online.de/bays.htm>.
- Blizzard Entertainment. (2004). *World of Warcraft*.
- Boyer, B. (2007, November). *Vivendi Q3 sales up 19%, WoW userbase hits 9.3m*. Retrieved November 26, 2007, from [http://www.gamasutra.com/php-bin/news\\_index.php?story=16250](http://www.gamasutra.com/php-bin/news_index.php?story=16250)
- Brown, B., & Bell, M. (2006). Play and sociability in there: Some lessons from online games for collaborative virtual environments. In R. Schroeder & A. Axelsson (Eds.), *Avatars at*

- work and play: Collaboration and interaction in shared virtual environments* (pp. 227-246). London: Springer.
- Bucholtz, M. (2000). "Why be normal?": Language and identity practices in a community of nerd girls. *Language in Society*, 28(02), 203-223.
- Bury, R. (2005). *Cyberspaces of Their Own: Female Fandoms Online*. Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing.
- Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with Spoken Discourse*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Chafe, W. L. Prosody and Emotion in a Sample of Real Speech. In P. H. Fries (Ed.), *Relations and Functions within and around language*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Chafe, W. L. (1980). *The Pear Stories: Cognitive, Cultural and Linguistic Aspects of Narrative Production*. Toronto: Ablex Publishing.
- Chafe, W. L. (1994). *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time: The Flow and Displacement of Conscious*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cherny, L. (1999). *Conversation and Community: Chat in a Virtual World*. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- Coates, J. (1993). No gap, lots of overlap: turn-taking patterns in the talk of women friends. In D. Graddol, J. Maybin, & B. Stierer (Eds.), *Researching Language and Literacy in Social Context* (pp. 177-192). Cleveland: Multilingual Matters.
- Couper-Kuhlen, E., & Ford, C. E. (Eds.). (2004). *Sound Patterns in Interaction: Cross-Linguistic Studies from Conversation*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Couper-Kuhlen, E., & Ono, T. (2007). 'Incrementing' in conversation. A comparison of practices in English, German, and Japanese. *Pragmatics*, 17(4), 513-552.
- Crookes, G. V., & Rulon, K. (1985). *Incorporation of Corrective Feedback in Native Speaker/Non-native Speaker Conversation*. Technical report, vol. 3. University of Hawaii, Honolulu: Center for Second Language Classroom Research, Social Science Research Institute.
- Crystal, D. (1969). *Prosodic Systems and Intonation in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Danet, B. (1996, November). *Text as mask: Gender and identity on the internet*. Retrieved 11/10/2006, from <http://atar.mscc.huji.ac.il/~msdanet/mask.html>
- Eckert, P. (2000). *Language Variation as Social Practice: The Linguistic Construction of Identity in Belten High*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

- Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (2003). *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferrara, K., Brunner, H., & Whittemore, G. (1991). Interactive Written Discourse as an Emergent Register. *Written Communication*, 8(1), 8-34.
- Fine, G. (1983). *Shared fantasy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ford, C., & Thompson, S. (1996). Interactional units in conversation: Syntactic, intonational, and pragmatic resources for the management of turns. In E. Ochs, E. Schegloff, & S. Thompson (Eds.), *Interaction and Grammar* (pp. 134-184). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Friedline, B. (2008). *A linguistic profile of power and identity in massively multiplayer online role-playing games*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Gal, S. (1978). Peasant men can't get wives: language change and sex roles in a bilingual community. *Language in Society*, 7, 1-16.
- Griffiths, M.D., Davies, M.N.O., & Chappel, D. (2003). Breaking the stereotype: The case of online gaming. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 6(1), 81-91.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. Essex: Longman Publishing Group.
- Herring, S. C. (2004). Computer-mediated communication and women's place. In M. Bucholtz (Ed.), *Language and Women's Place: Text and Commentaries*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Holmes, J. (1995). *Women, Men, and Politeness*. New York: Longman Publishing.
- Hutchby, I., & Wooffitt, R. (1998). *Conversation Analysis: Principles, Practices and Applications*. Boston: Polity.
- Johnstone, B. (2007). *Discourse Analysis*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kelly, D., Pomerantz, S., & Currie, D. (2006). "No boundaries"?: Girls' interactive, online learning about femininities [Electronic version]. *Youth and Society*, 38(1), 3-28.
- Kiesling, S. F. (1998). Men's Identities and Sociolinguistic Variation: The Case of Fraternity Men. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 2(1), 69-99.
- Labov, W. (2006). *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Lacy, K. (2006). Narrative and identity in fantasy role-playing games. (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 2006). Retrieved on 10/24/2006, from <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~knl201/diss.html>
- Lakoff, R. T. (1972). Language and women's place. In M. Bucholtz (Ed.), *Language and women's place: Text and commentaries*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lin, H., & Sun, C. (2005). *The 'white-eyed' player culture: Grief play and construction of deviance in MMORPGs*. Paper presented at the Digital Games Research Association, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- Marcoccia, M. (2004). On-line polylogues: conversation structure and participation framework in internet newsgroups. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 36(1), 115-145.
- Merchant, G. (2001). Teenagers in cyberspace: an investigation of language use and language change in internet chatrooms. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 24(3), 293-306.
- Mortensen, T. (2007). 'Me, the other.' In P. Harrigan & N. Wardrip-Fruin (Eds.), *Second person, roleplaying and story in games and playable media*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Ono, T., & Couper-Kuhlen, E. (2007). Increments in cross-linguistic perspective: Introductory remarks. *Pragmatics*, 17(4), 505-512.
- Pearce, C. (2006). Communities of play. In P. Harrigan & N. Wardrip-Fruin (Eds.), *Second person, roleplaying and story in games and playable media*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Peterson, M. (2001). MOOs and second language acquisition: Towards a rationale for MOO-based learning [Electronic version]. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 14 (5), pp. 443-459.
- Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2002). Behavior online: Does anonymous computer communication reduce gender inequality? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28, 1073-1083.
- Reed, B. S. (2004). Turn-final intonation in English. In E. Couper-Kuhlen & C. E. Ford (Eds.), *Sound Patterns in Interaction: Cross-Linguistic Studies from Conversation*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, 50(4), 696-735.
- Schegloff, E. (1992). Repair after next turn: The last structurally provided defense of intersubjectivity in conversation. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 97(5), 1295-1345.
- Schegloff, E. (1996). Turn organization: one intersection of grammar and interaction. In E. Ochs, E. Schegloff, & S. Thompson (Eds.), *Interaction and Grammar*, Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Schegloff, E., Jefferson, G., & Sacks, H. (1977). The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language*, 53(2), 361-382.
- Schwienhorst, K. (2004). Native-Speaker/Non-Native-Speaker Discourse in the MOO: Topic Negotiation and Initiation in a Synchronous Text-Based Environment [Electronic version]. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 17(1), 35-50.
- Sherzer, J. (1982). Poetic structuring of Kuna discourse: The line. *Language in Society*, 11, 371-390.
- Seppanen, E., & Laury, R. (2007). Complement clauses as turn continuations: The Finnish et(ta)-clause. *Pragmatics*, 17(4), 553-572.
- Spears, R., & Lea, M. (1994). Panacea or panopticum? The hidden power of computer mediated communication. *Communication Research*, 21, 427-459.
- Steinkuehler, C. (2005). Cognition and learning in massively multiplayer online games: A critical approach. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005.) Retrieved 09/15/2007 from <<http://website.education.wisc.edu/steinkuehler/thesis.html>>.
- Tannen, D. (1981). New York Jewish conversational style. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 30, 133-139.
- Tannen, D. (1984). *Conversational Style: Analyzing Talk Among Friends*. Toronto: Ablex Publishing.
- Taylor, T. L. (2006). *Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Thomas, A. (2006). Fan fiction online: Engagement, critical response, and affective play through writing. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 29(3), 226-239.
- Turkle, S. (1995). *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the internet*. New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.
- Walker, J. (2007). A network of quests in World of Warcraft. In P. Harrigan & N. Wardrip-Fruin (Eds.), *Second person, roleplaying and story in games and playable media*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Williams, D., Ducheneaut, N., Xiong, L., Zhang, Y., Yee, N., & Nickell, E. (2006). From tree house to barracks: The social life of guilds in World of Warcraft. *Games and Culture*, 1(4), 338-361.
- Yee, N. (2006). The psychology of MMORPGs: Emotional investment, motivations, relationship formation, and problematic usage. In R. Schroeder & A. Axelsson (Eds.), *Avatars at work and play: Collaboration and interaction in shared virtual environments* (pp. 187-207). London: Springer.