FEATURES OF ELECTRONIC SYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE CHAT, SPOKEN AND WRITTEN TEXTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Because computers have changed the way people communicate with one another (via e-mail, Internet chatting, etc.), it is natural to assume that the language forms used in these electronic media would be adapted to fit the channel of communication. Electronic communication, or computer-mediated communication (CMC), has become an immensely popular way to communicate. To provide a taste of the popularity of online CMC, one can look to the number one Internet provider: America On-line for data. AOL has 11 million direct subscribers sending on any given day some 28 million e-mail messages, clicking some 800 million times on various websites and checking some 60 million stock quotes. What has recently become immensely popular is chat lines--so much so that, subscribers to AOL, on average, spend an amazing 20% of their time online engaged in conversation on chat lines (Gunther, 1998). What this offers to the linguist is a rich source of descriptive data to be mined.

Because chat data are readily available, yet little studied, there is a need to classify chat using linguistic analysis. One prominent manner of classifying such descriptive linguistic data is by way of comparison. Up to this point, research has focused primarily on comparisons of spoken language and written language looking at specific linguistic features used to make distinctions between speaking and writing (Harrell, 1957;

Drieman, 1962; Devito, 1966; 1967; O'Donnell, 1974; Kroll, 1977; Tannen, 1982; Hildyard & Olson, 1982; Green, 1982; Chafe, 1982; 1994; Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987; Halliday, 1985). Whereas findings from these studies have identified a number of differences useful in segregating spoken and written language, online synchronous chat, which seems to have features of both speaking and writing has not been satisfactorily compared to either speaking or writing.

To make any such language comparison, a sound research model is an essential element. A research model that compares chat to spoken and written language should not only examine differences in output, but also offer reasonable evidence for the choices language producers make. To determine which model is in keeping with the aforesaid concerns, I look at two prominent models here. Biber (1989, 1991) examined differences between speaking and writing based upon what he calls "linguistic grounds." He suggested that by looking at the number of cooccurring linguistic elements gathered from a variety of texts (both spoken and written), the function of the text can be identified. Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), on the other hand, take a decidedly more cognitive approach while examining the grammatical/functional features that speakers and writers are able to produce.

In the present study, I opt to look at features of chat based upon the model proposed by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) rather than the approach advocated by Biber (1989, 1991). The principal reason for this decision is that Biber's approach seems to minimize the role of cognition, which is an indispensable component in language selection. His position is that language form indicates function, and he supports this concept of "function" solely with empirical output. Chafe and Danielewicz's position, on

the other hand is reversed; they focus attention on cognitive processes, which have a dramatic effect on what language speakers and writers produce or in some cases are able to produce. In contrast, Biber's markedly quantitative approach fails adequately to explain not only the role of an individual's language production processes that are certainly highly related to functional language use, but also neglects to address why speakers and writers use specific language forms (see also Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1996).

Another essential consideration when comparing texts is to recognize that spoken and written language are not linguistically monologic, but that text types vary by function and moreover by genre. Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) show, for example, that certain language elements associated with personal letter writing may be more characteristic of spoken conversation than academic writing. Hence, understanding that genre exists and that there are purposes behind language production related to genre provide additional clues as to why speakers and writers choose the language they choose.

Because both cognition and genre affect language production, I propose that the comparison model employed by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) is the appropriate model for the present research. The purpose of this study, then, is to examine the language produced by Internet chatters and compare it to samples of spoken and written language in a very specific content domain—political disagreement.

From the data obtained using this comparison model, I propose to describe Internet chatting a little more precisely. Is chat more like speaking or is it more like writing? Or are there characteristics that make it completely distinct? In this study, I

examine specific grammatical/functional uses of language derived from political talk show dialogue and newspaper editorials, and compare them to political chat discussion.

Linguistic comparisons such as these are beneficial because they represent slices of social reality. Since the number of chatters online at any one time is enormous, it is important to attempt to draw some conclusions about the language Internet chatters use and about their personalities and dispositions while they communicate online. However, these character features cannot be determined solely by counting grammatical/functional features, so a second purpose of this study is to analyze how Internet chatters address one another and compare the texts they produce with texts produced by writers and conversationalists.

In particular, political discussion seems to be a type of discourse where there would naturally be conflicts between interlocutors. Even so, the temptation to verbally accost someone who disagrees with one's opinion is tempered by social needs to be seen as a rational and somewhat friendly person (Grice, 1971; 1975; Lakoff, 1973). On the other hand, online chatters find themselves (generally) completely removed from their interlocutors. Even a chatter's name, age and gender are completely cloaked. Consequently, chatters may be feel emboldened to the point of using insults more frequently than writers and talk show discussants. Hence, it is my intention to look at frequencies of insults and the strength of such insults that are uncovered in the data samples.

To measure any differences that might occur between language samples, I adapt a model of face maintenance as explained by Brown and Levinson (1978). They suggest that the intensity of the insult can be directly tied to the extent of the harm caused to the

psyche, not only to one receiving the affront but also to the one initiating the insult. In essence, the severity and the number of insults are analyzed as a means of gauging the level of personal and psychological security that interlocutors feel as they participate in debates where there are strong disagreements.

In addition to the study conducted by Brown and Levinson (1978), the author piloted a very small study that compared spoken, written and Internet chat language. The speculative results from this pilot showed that chatters tended to use more insults than talk show discussants and writers of newspaper editorials.

This study, then, consists of gathering, transcribing and analyzing natural language samples as produced by a variety of contributors. The obtained data consist of transcribed political discussion obtained from a television talk show, written editorial comment (comprising temporally sequenced letters found in an editorial section of a newspaper), and the discussions of online chatters.

Elements of the language samples were counted looking for frequencies of various features so that distinctions could be made between the three modes of communication. Distinctions between the modes are then discussed in detail.

The value of this study is that it represents a complement to previous research addressing comparisons between speaking and writing but it also discusses online language as a distinct form of communication, like spoken language in many ways, like written language in many ways, but different as well. It is hoped that the results of this study encourage additional research aimed at providing further description of synchronous electronic communication.

Chapter 2 looks at literature that is important to the understanding of written language, spoken language and language that is produced by online chatters. Each mode of communication is discussed and then compared through various research studies and logical conclusions are advanced based upon the research.

CHAPTER II

AN OVERVIEW OF SPOKEN, WRITTEN AND ONLINE CHAT TEXTS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly provide a backdrop and a rationale for undertaking a study comparing functional/grammatical features of spoken, written and online chat discourses. This review of literature aims at establishing the need for a discourse analysis of relatively naturally occurring language data by examining language variation that exists between Internet chatting, and speaking as well as writing. To accomplish this task, characteristics of spoken language, written language and Internet chat language are discussed to highlight some of the more obvious as well as some of the less obvious differences between these modes of communication. Finally, this chapter examines insult use and what drives interlocutors to use insults. The discussions associated with relevant literature are meant to provide sound background exposing the need for such a study as this.

Comparisons

Making comparisons of vastly different modes of communication, conversation with writing for example, confronts the researcher with a conundrum of sorts. It is not so straightforward as running an experimental test to compare 50 ml of the black liquid with

50 ml of the orange liquid within the cozy confines of a sterile laboratory. In fact, linguists often opt to take the research out of the laboratory and look at language as it occurs naturally within real world settings, describing whatever is encountered. Nevertheless, once free of the constraints of the laboratory, the researcher needs to find a common thread among variables (often times a messy prospect); otherwise, no viable comparisons can be drawn. In other words, linguists operating beyond the confines of classical experimentation procedures are still restrained by the principles appropriate to "good" scientific procedure. To briefly summarize my main point, when one makes comparisons of real language samples, one is faced with a fairly messy science rather than a perfect one, but comparisons can still be made. In light of this, it is important to know not only what comparisons have been made and what conclusions drawn, but also, what weaknesses exist and should be discussed.

Natural versus Unnatural Data

Before such a discussion, however, the begging question must be addressed, "If natural data tend to be more messy, why not draw comparisons of language gathered from classical experimentation or contrive "typical" language samples for comparison?" After all, this idea has been the solid ground that psychology has stood upon for much of the twentieth century. The answer for linguists is that within the confines of a laboratory (classroom?), subjects find themselves in an uncustomary setting and so may not behave in ways that they normally would. The data produced are therefore not necessarily representative of data that might be produced in a more natural environment (Chafe, 1994).

Still, even this concept of "naturalness" is a candidate for scrutiny and debate, since it is not simply a two-sided coin with "heads" representing all natural data and "tails" representing unnatural data. Rather the naturalness of linguistic data is better viewed on a continuum; there are degrees of naturalness, and the degree of naturalness is inexorably linked to the degree of manipulation by the observer. The higher the degree of manipulation that is tolerated, the farther away the data fall on the continuum from what would naturally be produced. For instance, manufacturing language samples entails heavy manipulation and so would be represented at the extreme end of the unnatural language continuum, while covert observation of a couple chatting over coffee at a New York Bagel Café entails no perceptible manipulation and thus would be represented at the opposite end of the continuum. Obviously, there are cases where both kinds of data have resulted in fruitful research, but the former is not necessarily preferred over the latter. Minimal manipulation allows for the production of less constrained language. And, since human language is an outpouring of the processes of cognition (a mix of memory, emotion, understanding, motive, relevancy and the like), an entity that is not easily quantified, a case can be made that manipulation should be minimized. As Chafe (1994) aptly concludes:

> The unnaturalness of data on which so much of psychology and linguistics relies can be highly disturbing to anyone who is sensitive to what language is really like (p. 16).

In this study, I have chosen to look at language as it occurs in the most natural settings possible because human language should be studied in a variety of contexts; everyday language behavior should be explored as thoroughly as the language produced

in the laboratory. Of course, that means one must tolerate a slightly messier data set in favor of gathering more realistic data (see also Baddeley, 1976).

Contextualized Data

A second case for minimizing observer interference is that understanding language is dependent upon context. Humans are not mind-numb robots spewing out messages irrespective of the context; they are (generally speaking) ever aware of their surroundings, the people with whom they interact and more abstractly, even the text they are generating. So, when language data are analyzed, if the researcher is intent on painting a more accurate picture of what is really happening, the contextual factors associated with the situation in which the language is being used must be acknowledged (see Goffman, 1974; Gumperz, 1982; Fairclough, 1989; Eggins, 1994; Schiffrin, 1994).

To understand context, as Eggins (1994) suggests, one must examine language as discourse; phrases in isolation tend to offer minimal assistance (see also Tannen, 1989; Schiffrin, 1994). This approach of discourse analysis is appropriate as a means to consider language samples in natural settings. The example below clarifies the need to examine discourse beyond the word and sentence level:

> **Michael**: ==and that should be reflected in our school books. We shouldn't have little black kids running around talkin' about George Washington couldn't tell a lie and was a great guy; they should know what he was. There should be a fuller accounting of the history==in the history books==
> **Bill**: ==that...that is an interesting irony that George Washington had==
> **Markie**: ==Well, I think they did a few good things too.
> **Bill**:==Yeah==
> **Michael**: ==so did Hitler.==
> **Markie**: I mean...no Hitler didn't do==
> **Michael**: == when, when, when he first came in sure he did. He did good things== too==.
> **Markie**: not...well yeah but I...I don't..I don't...don't think 6 million deaths of == Jews is quite comparable.==

Michael: ==Absolutely because== certain things are deal breakers like if you put someone in an oven you're a scumbag. I don't care if you Mother Teresa in the day you a scum bag. If you lock people in chains you are a scumbag. These guys are so insidious, they enslave their own children in certain instances. Jefferson enslaved his children. If that don't make you a scumbag, well hell, I don't know how you were raised but ya know I didn't come from the Sudan. That makes you a scum bag if you do that.==Period==

A clause or phrase of any one of these speakers would not provide us with an adequate picture of what these interlocutors are discussing. However, by looking at the text beyond the sentence level, the topic becomes clearer as well as the emotion of the participants and even what some of their goals might be (see Labov, 1968; 1972; Schiffrin, 1994; Eggins & Slade, 1997).

Functional Language

In the aforementioned sections, there are a number of non-covert hints as to how I decided to look at language data obtained in this study. Grammatical structures could have been examined according to prescriptive sets of rules (called the formal approach); however, this presents researchers with an irresolvable dilemma: What should the researchers do with the language samples that are not well-formed? The researchers could divide the samples into two sets, one "grammatical" and one "ungrammatical," and eliminate the ungrammatical examples. However, to do so would eliminate a great deal of spoken and Internet chat data as this example from chat data illustrates:

SColet: JK: Oh soneone else whos is prepared to define real manhood...please carry on

The crux of the problem lies here: Is this "ungrammatical" example meaningless? Obviously, *Scolet* has responded to something contributed by *JK* in an earlier message, so

if her message is meaningless, it would not be worth responding to, and yet here is *JK's* next contribution:

JKul007: You don't find men in Dem party who wham-bam, bye

Instead, he/she responds to S*Colet*, ironically with another "ungrammatical" attempt. The point is that if I were to examine only well formed language, I would be obliged to eliminate language that is meaningful; strict adherence to formalistic rules of language fights against the notion that communication occurs outside of the grammar box (Givón, 1993; Lock, 1996).

The second problem with a strictly formal approach is that it focuses on structure to the point of drawing faulty conclusions. In other words, even if I attempted to compare examples that were well formed, meaning would be lost. For example, strict formalists claim that the following two sentences are essentially the same because if taken to the deep structure, they are the same (the first example is from the data):

- My health is adversely affected (by smokers).
- Smokers adversely affect my health.

A more functional and descriptive approach, on the other hand, would ask: If these two examples are exactly the same, then why should there be two ways to say the same (exact) thing? From the functional perspective there is a difference between the two example sentences, and although my word processing software underlined the first example sentence with a green, wavy line (obviously indicating a formalist attachment), the writer chose to make health the issue, not smokers (Givón, 1993; Lock, 1996; Langacker, 1999).

Hence, I opt here to use a functionalist approach in this study. Additionally, it my desire to find out what kinds of grammatical structures interlocutors use, which can offer an explanation as to the purposes of those structures used.

Categorization and Variation

The next question to be considered is why make comparisons at all? The answer in a word is "variation" (Labov, 1972; 1982; Tarone, 1983; 1985; Gass, Madden, Preston & Selinker, 1989). When people speak, they are not always consistent; they do not always produce language comprised of similar linguistic features. For example, when I chat with my parents by telephone, it "sounds" different from the talk I use with a sales representative from AT & T. I use one register (e.g. voice quality, grammar, lexis) with my parents and another with the salesperson (see Halliday, 1968). The same can be claimed about writers; they do not always produce writings that contain similar linguistic features. This dissertation, for example, "reads" quite differently than a note I would write on a friend's birthday card. These examples reveal that variation exists, but they are not very descriptive (although one may imagine). Additionally, this does not provide a persuasive argument for seeking to uncover variation; I have simply acknowledged that variation exists.

Halliday (1968) provides us with ammunition that to study variation is to understand appropriate language use. He concluded that variation is intricately tied to the context and function of language. Halliday expresses this notion about variation:

> Between them [distinct registers] they cover the total range of our language activity. It is only by reference to the various activities and situation types in which language is used that we can understand its functioning and its effectiveness. Language is not realized in the abstract: it is realized as the activity

> of people in situations, as linguistic events which are manifested in a particular dialect or register (p. 151).

Put succinctly, variation represents the social and cultural behavior of people.

Variation in Spoken Discourse

For evidence of variation in spoken discourse, I look here at one of Labov's (1968) studies of New Yorkers. Labov discovered that pronunciation of certain prestige markers and stigmatized markers from groups of speakers from different economic classes varied according to the metalinguistic focus of the participants. Labov divided the subjects into essentially six classes (i.e. lower-lower class, lower class, lower-working class, working class, lower-middle class and upper-middle class). His data were gathered under five conditions, each with an increased formality level: a) casual speech, b) careful conversation, c) reading style, d) isolated words and e) comparative words in isolation (e.g. dock vs. dark). In particular, Labov wanted to see if and when subjects would use distinct dialectic features, namely the prestige /r/ (e.g. /gad/ vs. /gard/) and the stigmatized /t/ or a blend of /t/ with /θ/ when those words could be pronounced using /θ/ alone (e.g. /bætθ/ or /bæt/ vs. /bæθ/).

When Labov (1968) analyzed the language produced in each class, he found that when the situation was less restrained, subjects from all classes tended to use the prestige form, but as the level of formality increased the use of the prestige form increased as well for all classes and at a relatively consistent degree except in the case of the lower-middle class. The lower-middle class exhibited hypercorrective behavior when reading words in isolation, so that they actually exhibited the prestige /r/ form more often than the upper-

middle class in this one context. Nevertheless, the trend clearly indicated that all classes exhibited the inclusion of prestige forms as formality increased.

The stigmatized /t/ and /tθ/ uses, on the other hand, were more clearly stratified in less constrained speech than even the inclusion of the prestige /r/ usage. The classes showed wide and consistent division (except between lower-middle class and upper-working class). However, as the level of formality increased, the use of the stigmatized forms declined for all classes; the decline was especially dramatic for the lower-lower class and the lower class. What Labov's study magnifies is that there is an apparent social need to vary language in accordance with the given situation.

Although variation is undoubtedly a social phenomenon, it is also a cultural phenomenon as well. As an illustration, Tannen (1982) found that Greek women were better storytellers than American women because Greek women were able to express the emotion of the story without getting bogged down in details. A group of American and Greek women viewed the now famous film, *The Pear Stories* (Chafe, 1980). During the retelling session, she found that the American subjects tended to focus on trying to include as many details as possible and making sure the temporal sequences were in order; on the other hand, the Greek subjects were less concerned with details and so produced shorter narratives, focusing instead on the theme of the film. According to Tannen, the differences between the two groups, as revealed in the narratives, reflected the differences in cultural conventions, namely that American women value the content and accuracy of a message, while Greek women value interpersonal involvement which results in value judgments. Thus, language variation does not simply exist across cultural boundaries, but reflects cultural norms as well.

What is evident from the aforementioned studies by Labov and Tannen is that sociocultural linguistic variety has a way of grouping individuals into discourse communities. That is not to say that any one individual cannot be a member of more than one discourse community. Indeed, Labov's study revealed that individuals were not only capable of using, but were inclined to use, less stigmatized pronunciations when the level of formality was increased (see also van den Broeck, 1977). Even with this in mind, however, discourse communities still essentially represent stratifications of linguistic conformity by individuals.

Another reason linguists make comparisons revealing linguistic differences is that these variations can reveal different social values and/or attitudes between discourse communities. Gumperz (1958) found that male members of the lower castes in India used a different dialect of Khari Boli (a dialect of Hindi) than those in the higher castes who used a more standardized dialect. Just to cite one example, members of the lower castes used the pronunciation /ĩk/ (note the nasal vowel) for the lexical item "sugar cane" while the higher castes used the more standardized /ik/. Gumperzian interview data revealed that members within the castes were well aware of the differences. The higher castes tended to view the use of stigmatized language forms as ignorant and backward, while specific members of the lower caste, upon hearing the non-stigmatized forms, spent much emotional energy in proclaiming the educational opportunities that had been denied them due to their status. Hence, the consequences of linguistic variation were viewed negatively by the lower caste discourse community because to them it represented unfair treatment.

However, there are positive aspects of linguistic variation, even for communities that do not adhere to standardized forms. Milroy and Milroy (1992) claim that lower class social networks are much more closely knit, being bound by geography, family and workplace. Consequently, there is pressure to conform, which tends to maintain localized linguistic norms and social identity (see also Chesire, 1982).

The aforementioned studies reveal consequences of social variation, but when cultures collide, the resulting variation due to dissimilar cultural norms may cause miscommunication as well as frustration. Scollon and Scollon (1990) provide us with a perfect example of problems rooted in such variation. In their study, they found that cross-cultural interactions become strained when the perception of how much information one should divulge to relative strangers and how turn taking cues during conversations should function, differ.

The research by Scollon and Scollon (1990) examined the apparent miscommunication inherent in Athabaskan conversations with Americans and Canadians (the medium was English). In such encounters, Athabaskan speakers choose to speak less because they are in the company of those whose viewpoints they are unfamiliar with. Athabaskans tend to guard their own individuality, which could potentially become exposed through spoken interaction. Such exposure provides fertile ground for a negotiated change of stance, which Athabaskans view as threatening their prized individuality. In direct contrast to this, Americans and Canadians tend to use conversation in unfamiliar company as a means to become more acquainted with others and their viewpoints to see if common ground can be established. This cross-cultural contrast, unfortunately, has a direct effect on turn taking between Athabaskans and Americans or

Canadians. In such interaction, unfamiliarity with American and Canadian cultural rules results in hesitation by Athabaskans at the expected turn exchange, which can be easily perceived as a lack of desire to participate, which in turn, compels American and/or Canadian speakers to begin another turn. Besides this difference, Athabaskans also tend to pause slightly longer between turns than Americans and Canadians. Consequently, even in the most familiar conversational settings with Americans or Canadians, Athabaskans are allotted fewer turns because their American/Canadian counterparts perceive silence as an indicator to continue speaking. Thus, the consequence for such variation is cultural frustration; Athabaskans think Americans and Canadians talk too much and Americans and Canadians think Athabaskans never want to engage them in conversation.

Up to this point variation in spoken contexts has been examined. The aforementioned studies have illustrated that variation is prevalent in spoken language. The next section will look at variation in written language.

Variation in Written Discourse

Spoken language exhibits variation dependent upon the context and obviously written language exhibits great variation as well. A great deal of variation associated with writing can be attributed to the objective of the writer. Hence, a group of writers who have similar objectives will tend to produce texts that demonstrate similar characteristics. When these characteristics can be identified as a consistent pattern, such a group can be labeled as a discourse community (cf. Bazerman, 1981; Smith & Frawley, 1983; Miller, 1984; Swales, 1990). Different discourse communities are influenced by differences in writing conventions and so, variation in production is the result.

This idea was confirmed in a study by Clyne (1987). He analyzed variation found between academic texts composed in German and academic texts composed in English and found that academic arguments written in English were more linear in nature, while German writing allowed many more digressions (including many more subordinating clauses). He also noted that the use of advanced organizers (first, second, next, etc.) and definitions, common in the English articles were relatively sparse in the German articles. It appears that German writers may have academic expectations concerning their readers, namely that if they are reading research materials, they must have sufficient background knowledge to draw the proper conclusions, so there is no need to write in a linear manner or provide advanced organizers, or definitions. Readers should be able to draw the proper conclusions from the text. English writers, on the other hand, value clarity of presentation; it seems that it is important that the text be accessible to those who may not be familiar with the subject matter (see also Hinds, 1990).

An additional consideration for writers is that must not forget about their audience. Written text (like spoken text) is not produced devoid of context; the writer is mindful of who the audience is (or who the writer perceives the audience to be), where the audience is located and how the audience will react to the message. These elements must be combined with the writer's own characteristics to produce a desired text. Obviously, the message's intent is not always harmonious with the reader's response; however, this simply indicates that the writer cannot always predict the response by readers or that the intended audience and the actual audience are not always the same. In any case, (as in speaking) writers will exhibit variation dependent upon a number of variables. Myers (1994), for example, provides some compelling evidence that variation

can exist between two or more texts written by the same researcher about exactly the same topic because he had a different intended audiences in mind for each text. The scientific researcher in question produced two markedly different texts for two very different periodicals. One article was written for publication in a very scholarly scientific journal about molecular genetics, while the other article was written for a less scholarly scientific periodical. Of course, the two texts showed wide variation in language complexity.

The point here is that there is great variation in written language as well as spoken language. In the next sections, I will begin to discuss some of the fundamental differences between written and spoken language.

Production of Spoken Language

Of course one of the most noticeable differences between spoken language and written language is that speech is sound coded with meaning. In other words, spoken language is dependent upon a physical mechanism to move air, namely the lungs. The air is then altered by the vocal tract resulting in the production of sounds (Darwin, 1976; Johnson, 1977; Dobrovolsky, 1993).

Consciousness of Speaking

All language production obviously is derived from the brain. However, speaking is different from writing in that speaking must be produced on the fly, and is consequently affected by the complex cognitive processes of the brain. Chafe (1994) claims that this process is related to the focus of any speaker's consciousness. Any speaker may only activate a miniscule part of his or her model of the surrounding world

(certainly not the entire model) at any one point in time. Put another way, a speaker cannot access huge chunks of information all at once, and when a speaker is in the process of activating one chunk of "reality," everything else in his or her brain is off limits for that nanosecond of activation. Activation costs speakers in the following way: Speakers can only produce brief spurts of language at any one point in time (i.e., the intonation unit), and so, speakers often produce speech which is fraught with dysfluencies.

Clearly then, activation cost limits linguistically what a speaker can generate, but there is one other element that makes spoken language uniquely different from writing. Generally, when a speaker produces language there is an intended recipient in the immediate proximity of the speaker—the listener(s). The presence of a listener dictates to the pragmatic speaker that he or she must consider that listener. Hence, there is an agreement of sorts between speakers and listeners. As Grice (1975) so aptly points out:

> Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them , to some extent, a common purpose or at least a mutually accepted direction... (p. 45).

The point here is that speakers want their output to be considered relevant by listeners. Listeners must be able to process what is being said, so speakers must be ever aware of mental models they share with them. Writers, on the other hand, face no audience in their immediate presence—a fundamental difference. In other words, there is no joint effort between writers and their audiences (Halliday, 1985; van Dijk, 1987; Chafe, 1994; Dickinson & Givón, 1997).

Turn Taking in Spoken Discourse

Another difference between spoken and written language is the manner in which turns affect the discourse. As previously mentioned, when a person chooses to speak there is normally an intended listener. Schegloff (1982) proposes that conversational discourse is achieved via the collaboration of the participants, not a preconceived pact. Turn taking is a foundational organizing principle to achieve this kind of collaboration (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974).

Turn taking acts as a sociosequential organizing device that helps shape the conversation, allowing interlocutors to employ various devices, which can act as a means to extend or limit turn length. Put another way, speakers speak, when they speak and for how long because they are allocated or advance their own "right" to speak at a particular point in time based on interactional cues infused into the discourse by the participants (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1982). Hence, once again the listener has a profound effect on spoken language. Writers are distant from their audience in time and space, making the production of the writing different (Chafe, 1994).

For participants, then, the process of speech exchange must be clearly understood if successful interaction is to occur. Success is not determined by the satisfaction of participants (accomplishing something), but by whether or not they were successful as conversationalists--understanding when they should listen, when they should speak and when they should stop speaking to allow another to speak. To reiterate, this is fundamentally different from what occurs in the production of written language.

In the next few sections I will focus on written language, how it is produced, what are some of its characteristics and what characteristics make it distinct from spoken language.

Production of Written Language

Obviously, written language is produced differently from spoken language. Writers physically manipulate pens, pencils, brushes and keys on a typewriter or keyboard as a means to produce texts. Put another way, written language is the production of visual representations or signals (Halliday, 1985; Chafe, 1994; Bernstein & Tiegerman-Farber, 1997).

There is another facet of written language production that makes it distinct from spoken language. In spoken language production, as I have previously mentioned, there is normally a listener or an audience in the immediate vicinity (proximal), hearing the language as it is produced; written language, on the other hand, is often produced at one point in time and read at another point in time, and very often, it is produced in a different location (distal) from where it is actually read (Chafe, 1994). This has an interesting consequence; if a waitress is confused while I am trying to order lunch, she will most likely provide me with verbal and gestural signals, and the misunderstanding can be easily remedied through negotiation. However, the reader of a written text oftentimes does not have the same luxury because the writer is not present as the reader digests the discourse. The onus is on the writer to convey the ideas through the words of the written text and in a manner that his or her intended audience can fully understand. The problem is therefore threefold: First, the writer must provide adequate detail to assure that the readers will have sufficient context from the discourse so as to comprehend the text;

second, the writer must be aware of who the audience will be (a mismatch here will prove equally frustrating to the readers), and third, the text must be organized in a linear fashion (e.g., general to specific; problem to solution), so that the readers can draw the appropriate information from the text (Coulthard, 1994; Hoey, 1994). Failure at any one juncture will result in an ineffectual text.

A second interesting aspect of written language is that, without being destroyed, it is a relatively permanent messenger. If I have serious doubts about the name of Robinson Crusoe's companion, I can simply go to the text to rediscover it. On the other hand, words spoken in conversation leave no permanent (physical) record (unless the conversation happened to be recorded or transcribed). The spoken word is only audible for those fleeting seconds in which it is produced. Even when spoken words are valuable enough to be stored permanently in one's consciousness, exact recall beyond formulaic phrases and rote memorization is exceedingly unlikely (Ong, 1977; Halliday, 1985; Chafe, 1994).

Planning and Formal Language

Before considering the planning that goes into written language, it should be noted that I have made certain generalizations about speaking and writing. Conversations have been considered the default in these discussions. Certainly, certain channels of spoken language such as speech giving would be more syntactically complex than chatting with friends (colloquial use) and possibly even more complex than certain written forms such as written stories (Green, 1982).

However, Halliday (1985) disagrees with the claim that written language is more complex than spoken, claiming that complexity must be defined more precisely to make

such a claim. While he agrees that written texts are generally more dense (a wider variety of vocabulary), he contends complex clauses due to the grammatical intricacies between interactants tend to make spoken discourses more complex. He also contests the notion that dysfluencies are an attribute of solely spoken language. His most observant point is that writers are not held accountable for all of their dysfluencies because they generally have a great deal of time (compared to speakers anyway) to rewrite their productions in solitude without interfering factors from others (Ong, 1977; Biber, 1995).

Hence, a written text is often the result of a great deal of planning, pondering, reconsidering and revising. For example, within the pages of this dissertation is a plan (which I hope is at least partially evident); however, certain parts have been revised, other parts abandoned and still other parts relocated. What is lost through this process of writing is spontaneity; what is gained is clarity (Chafe, 1994). Additionally, as a result of this ability to plan, written language tends to be more formal than spoken language, which manifests itself in greater syntactic complexity (O'Donnell, 1974; Kroll, 1977; Beaman, 1984).

Another reason that written language tends to be more complex is that oftentimes the texts must adhere to previously established conventions requiring such formalities Swales (1990). Concerning academic texts, for example, conventions tend to require more formal language. Generally speaking, spoken language tends to have less formal language (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987).

Another reason that written language is often considered to be more complex is that writers must elaborate by way of the content contained within the text (e.g., background knowledge must be written into the text). On the other hand, speakers have

the ability to use the environment, as well as paralinguistic features to elaborate. Exaggerations of elements such as pitch shifts, pace, amplitude shifts, excessive tone quality and expressive phonology act as elaborating devices to the listener(s) (Tannen, 1982).

The underlying current that binds all of these ideas together and brings the realization that writing and speaking are at times very different is the concept of audience. As previously mentioned, speakers are generally speaking to someone who is in their physical vicinity, while written texts are often generated for those who are not in the vicinity. Ong (1977) claims that writers must fictionalize an audience, not an individual audience member but an audience derived out of his or her writing and reading experiences. Once the audience has been fictionalized in the writer's consciousness and the writer has correctly gauged the audience, the writing has the potential to achieve its purpose. To the conversationalist, effectiveness can be immediately measured from the achievement of successful interaction, linguistic and paralinguistic cues; there is nothing remotely fictional about the interlocutors.

Consciousness of Writing

To start with, as Halliday (1985) points out, "Written language never was, and never has been, conversation written down" (p. 41). Still, according to Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) language that is produced in the form of print, like spoken language, consists of intonation units (although expanded), and consequently rhythm and other prosodic features, albeit that the language is conceived in the brain and then represented in a visual form rather than a phonological form.

Written language, after all, is a representation of inner speech (because it still consists of similar features as spoken language), and it must also put up with nonlinguistic interferences within the brain. Dysfluencies do occur, but they are difficult to identify or pinpoint because writers generally have the benefit of sufficient time to compose and edit their discourse (Cohn, 1978; Halliday, 1985). Nevertheless, written language is under the same restrictions of activation cost as spoken language; there are restraints on new information, so that within each intonation unit, the reader expects that only one chunk of new information will be given and the balance will consist of old information that is already activated (Chafe, 1994). However, the writer is not in the physical presence of the reader, so the amount of information needed to assist a reader's comprehension is greater. In other words, although the writer must fictionalize his or her audience, in most cases the writer cannot assume that the reader shares similar mental representations, so he or she must aid the reader by providing additional information so that the reader is able to actualize such mental models.

The next section characterizes online chatting to illustrate that that there are a number of fundamental differences between it, and speaking and writing.

Chatting Online

The physiological mechanisms of online chatting are identical to those required for keyboard skills; dexterity, speed and precision are assets. It is different from writing, however, because it mandates a keyboard, a monitor, online access and client-server software; none of these can be substituted for nor eliminated if interaction is to occur (whereas in writing a pen may be substituted for a pencil, a typewriter for word processing, etc.).

Internet chatting mimics writing in that participants are generally not in the presence of one another. As Suler (1997) observes, "...it is an austere mode of communication. There are no changes in voice, no facial expressions, no body language, no (or very little) spatial environment as a context of meaning. There's just typed words" (p. 1).

Turn Taking Online

Just as there are physiological aspects of Internet chatting that seem more akin to writing skills, there is one noticeable aspect that is more like spoken conversation; online chatting is synchronous, but in a slightly different manner than spoken discourse (namely that participants are not face-to-face). Internet chatting has been called synchronous communication because a message, which can be sent from anyone logged onto a particular channel, can subsequently be read by all chatters logged onto that channel. Hence, chatting takes place in "real" time, and appears onscreen like an actual conversation is in process. Here is an example of what chatting looks like (from a public chat channel called *Sailor Moon*):

A1: . . . . msg#2485 Hello H1. And how are you today?
B1: . . . . msg#2486 hehe you know I1 ^_~
C1: . . . . msg#2487 G1: Hey, NOW will you tell me?
D1: . . . . msg#2488 J1: ah. well, tell he I said hi, cause I'm outta here at 4:30
E1: . . . . msg#2489 Gk Er.. I knew that. **pikachu bacame confused and uses thunder**
F1: . . . . msg#2490 zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz
G1: . . . . msg#2492 Hey K1.
A1: . . . . msg#2493 Hi L1.
H1: . . . . msg#2494 I1..*l* yes we are both sweet, but I'M the sweetest

Notice that eight different individuals contribute to the conversation (*A1-H1*); however, an additional four individuals are referred to in the dialogue (*I1-L1*) by those eight

chatters. From this short dialogue, it is unclear whether or not all eight individuals are contributing to the same conversation, but obviously there are specific propositions aimed at other individuals. *A1*'s proposition is directed toward *H1*. Interestingly, *H1* does not respond to *A1*, but instead sends a message to *I1*. This is one of the easily recognized differences between online chatting and conversation. There is lag time separating the participants caused by the Internet connection, the software and/or the chatter's typing speed; so the conversation does not appear to flow in the same way as conversation (cf. Werry, 1996). So, although *H1* appears to have ignored *A1's* comment, in reality, he or she either may have not seen the comment by *A1* until after submitting the proposition to *I1* or had seen the proposition by *A1*, but needed to address *I1* first. In any case *H1* was addressing *I1*. If I wanted to see *I1's* message to *H1* (and as it turns out a message to *A1* as well), I would have to revert to message number 2461; in other words, 33 turns prior to *H1's* post! This was that message:

> I1: . . . . msg#2461 *shakes head* don't no why they always do it but both A1 and H1 are sweet

This has a linguistically interesting effect on turn taking; turns occur one after another without overlap (unlike spoken conversation, which is replete with hesitations, interruptions and false starts) (Werry, 1996).

Werry (1996) has also made the claim that turn taking is different online. In spoken conversation, the speaker may try to employ various devices to extend his or her turn. This provides no advantage to the online chatter because individual chatters may create dialogue independent from the occurring "conversation." In other words, the last person to contribute has no perceptible way of limiting the production of other chatters. Thus, turn lengths tend to be shorter (see Suler, 1997; Freiermuth, 1998).

Online Output

Of the various interesting features that comprise the Internet chat world, it is the language that is produced by chatters that is the most interesting. Werry (1996) concludes that because online chatters are concerned about keeping pace with the conversation at hand, they tend to use many more acronyms than would be found in spoken or written language. Here is an example from the *Sailor Moon* channel:

M1: . . . . msg#2474 lol@N1 um *sweat drop*heh

In this case, *M1* has used the acronym "lol," which means laughing out loud; this is then followed by the e-symbol for "at." There are a great number of acronyms used by chatters. They sometimes indicate an action as this case illustrates, but are also used as abbreviated language (e.g., BTW=by the way, IMHO=in my humble opinion, BRB=be right back, etc.)

Also, from the former example, one can see a second common feature employed by Internet chatters, that is, the symbols **. Chatters enclose language within the * symbol when they wish to indicate what they are thinking about or what they are doing; at times the "action" is a way for chatters to express paralinguistic signs to other conversationalists (Werry, 1996).

Another way that online chatters express themselves is by way of emoticons. These are primarily used as a way of making a face. Here are two such examples from the former *Sailor Moon* conversation.

B1: . . . . msg#2486 hehe you know I1 ^_~
H1: . . . . msg#2494 I1..*l* yes we are both sweet, but I'M the sweetest

In the first message, *B1* winks at *I1* (^_~), and in the second message *H1* wants to show *I1* what a sweet face (*l*) he/she has. Such symbols are commonly used and have become conventionalized.

Another unique feature of chat channels is that they provide virtually unlimited access to people who want to chat on a particular channel in a moment in time. How many conversations one chatter can be engaged in as well as how many chatters can be actively participating in online discussion are two avenues open for exploration that go beyond the parameters of this study. Still it is one aspect that is unique to online chatting.

Comparison of Spoken and Written Language

Although spoken and written language have already been compared in this chapter, there are some studies that are of particular interest because they focus on elements such as language complexity, audience detachment and audience involvement, which are of vital interest to the present study (cf., Drieman, 1962; O'Donnell, 1974; Poole & Field, 1976; Kroll, 1977; Beaman, 1984).

The first study of consequence that I wish to address here discussing the aforementioned issues is by Halliday (1987). One interesting aspect of Halliday's study is that he claims that spoken language is more complex than written language. Admitting that written language is more lexically dense than spoken language, he, nevertheless, asserts that spoken language is more complex (or as Halliday says "intricate") due to the number of complex clauses. Here are two sentences illustrating what Halliday means:

> **Written:** Every previous visit had left me with a sense of risk to others in further attempts at action on my part.
>
> **Spoken:** Whenever I'd visited before I'd end up feeling that other people might get hurt if I tried to do anything more.

From the examples, the first sentence is obviously more dense (number of different lexical items), but the second contains four individual clauses: 1) *Whenever I'd visited before*, 2) *I'd end up feeling*, 3) *that other people might get hurt* and 4) *if I tried to do anything more*, so Halliday would say that the second sentence is more complex. Halliday goes on to suggest that it is the perspective of the researcher that determines whether or not spoken language is more complex or less complex. He contends that Chafe's (1982) perception of spoken language is negative, "...a poor man's assemblage of shreds and patches," as Halliday states (1987, p. 67). Halliday claims that Chafe tends to looks at written language in more favorable light, but Chafe position is not negative, he is simply conscious of the fact that for the most part folks engaged in spoken conversation must produce language without the benefit of the additional time allotted to writers; hence, writers are able to expand clauses and use more complex and varied lexical forms.

Additionally, it should also be noted that Halliday manufactured his examples to demonstrate what spoken and written language might look like. Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), on the other hand, used real language samples to draw their conclusions. They collected written and spoken texts produced by 20 professors and graduate students, and compared these texts by looking at a number of grammatical/functional features. They chose to look at four specific modes of language production, namely conversations, lectures, letters and academic papers. Chafe and Danielewicz make a point to look at two forms of writing and two forms of speaking. Although their intent was to find differences between spoken and written language, they also stress the possibility that language differences exist within the same channel of communication based upon genre. This idea

allows for the possibility that language producers using the same channel of communication (e.g., letters versus academic papers), but for different purposes, do produce consistently diametrical language forms, and also produce language forms that are consistently similar across language channels (e.g., letters and conversation). In addition, Chafe and Danielewicz recognize the importance of the cognitive processes that affect what kinds of language, people are able to produce. It is for these reasons the procedures identified by Chafe and Danielewicz are used to make up the principal foundation for this work.

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), like Halliday (1987), find written language in all cases to be more lexically dense than spoken language. Table 2-1 illustrates Chafe and Danielewicz's findings (p. 88).

TABLE 2-1: TYPE/TOKEN RATIOS

Conversations	.18
Lectures	.19
Letters	.22
Academic Papers	.24

Lexical density is measured by taking the frequency of new words (unused) and dividing that number by the total number of words. For example, in the sentence, "The guy with the green fez knows the guy I was telling you about," there are 14 words, but there are only 11 different words; "guy" is used twice and "the" is used three times. Thus, the type/token ratio for the sample sentence is 11/14 or (.79). Clearly the larger the data sample, the lower the ratio will become. In any case, the table above illustrates that written language tends to be more lexically dense than spoken language.

A second feature that Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) looked at is hedges. Particularly, hedges are devices used when the speaker or writer is dissatisfied with the lexical choice (e.g., *sort of* and *kind of*), making it distinct from hedging used to indicate a cautious approach (e.g., *probably, principally*, etc.). Naturally, this occurs more in spoken language than in written because writers have the additional time to seek out more appropriate lexical items. Chafe and Danielewicz's findings are consistent with what one would expect. Table 2-2 illustrates the differences that were found (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p. 89).

TABLE 2-2: HEDGES

Conversations	4
Lectures	4
Letters	1
Academic Papers	0

Another feature that is associated with spoken language, according to Chafe and Danielewicz, is the use of inexplicit third person references (i.e., *it, this* and *that*). These are references that have no clearly identified antecedent or that refer broadly to some previous discourse. Speakers tend to be more vague and so use inexplicit pronouns more frequently. Chafe and Danielewicz's data bear this out (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p.91). See Table 2-3 below:

TABLE 2-3: INEXPLICIT THIRD PERSON REFERENCE

Conversations	24
Lectures	22
Letters	11
Academic Papers	4

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) also look at the variety of language people use. Specifically, they differentiate between language that is used in more casual settings and language that is used in more formal settings. Vocabulary items that seem "lexically fresh," or that seem to change from year to year or from decade to decade (e.g., *cool, neat, awesome*, etc.) are considered colloquial items (although slang, professional jargon and profanity were not counted). The other group of words Chafe and Danielewicz examined, which are normally associated with writing, is literary items. Literary words are those lexical items that cannot be considered as usual in day-to-day encounters in spoken conversation (*ascertain, optimal, despite,* etc.). Chafe and Danielewicz draw the expected conclusions as illustrated in Table 2-4 (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p.93).

TABLE 2-4: LITERARY AND COLLOQUIAL VOCABULARY

	Literary Vocabulary	Colloquial Vocabulary
Conversations	8	27
Lectures	19	18
Letters	25	16
Academic Papers	46	1

The next item that Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) look at is the number of contractions. Since, it is considered bad form in some academic circles for written discourse to contain contractions, one would expect that spoken language samples would contain the most. Chafe and Danielewicz do not disappoint; their findings reveal that contractions occur in spoken language at a much higher frequency than in written samples as shown in Table 2-5 (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p. 94).

TABLE 2-5: CONTRACTIONS

Conversations	37
Lectures	29
Letters	18
Academic Papers	0

Another element of language examined by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) is the use of prepositional phrases. Their first claim is that in academic writing there is often a desire to expound upon an idea in the same clause; hence, there are many more prepositions used in academic writing. In conversation where immediate cognitive demands are the greatest, prepositional phrases and prepositional phrase sequences tend to be used less often. Apparently, the cognitive demands on letter writers and lecturers lie somewhere in between, so they use approximately an equal number of prepositional phrases.

Their second claim is that because of the need to expand an idea fully, academic writers often juxtapose prepositional phrases. Of course this does not occur so frequently in conversation, while lectures and letters use juxtaposed prepositional phrases at about the same rate. Tables 2-6 illustrates Chafe and Danielewicz's findings (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p. 98-99).

TABLE 2-6: PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES AND PHRASE SEQUENCES

	Prepositional Phrases	Prepositional Phrase Sequences
Conversations	53	6
Lectures	88	14
Letters	91	14
Academic Papers	117	22

Modification is another aspect that distinguishes academic English from conversation. Nouns may be modified by the use of attributive adjectives. Academic writers employ more of these because it allows them the ability to be more concise. The data in Table 2-7 reveal how modification differentiates between spoken and written language (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p. 100-101).

TABLE 2-7: ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVES

	Attributive Adjectives
Conversations	23
Lectures	56
Letters	55
Academic Papers	77

Another feature that is common to writing and less common to speaking is the use of "and" to conjoin two elements converting them into a compound phrase. Here is an example from Chafe and Danielewicz: "...slang for patients reflects responses to their suffering and illness" (p. 101). They claim that writers tend to want to expand intonation units, so they employ conjoining "and" as a means to accomplish this feat. Table 2-8 illustrates their findings (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p. 101).

TABLE 2-8: CONJOINING

Conversations	8
Lectures	12
Letters	18
Academic Papers	24

Another way that writers can expand intonation is by employing participles. Hence both preposed present participles and preposed past participles are more prevalent

in writing as Table 2-9 shows (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987, p. 101).

TABLE 2-9: PARTICIPLES

Conversations	5
Lectures	6
Letters	11
Academic Papers	24

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) suggest that speakers use simple coordination (*and, but, so*) to string together intonation units rather than opting for the more complex interclausal coordination. Their reasoning is that written language is better planned due to more time, which in turn allows the producer to be more precise concerning the clausal relationships. Table 2-10 illustrates their findings (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987, p. 103).

TABLE 2-10: SIMPLE COORDINATION

Conversations	34
Lectures	21
Letters	12
Academic Papers	4

One sociological element that affects language production, according to Chafe and Danielewicz, is the involvement of the language producers. They suggest that speakers are more involved with their audience. This results in the use of phrases like "you know" that act as a bridge between the speaker and the listener and the use of first person pronouns. However, because as genre written letters tend to promote using lexical items that provide information to others about oneself, letter writers use first person

pronouns more frequently than conversationalists, lecturers and academic writers. Academic writers are also influenced by genre; the use of first person pronouns is often times deliberately discouraged in academic writing. Table 2-11 demonstrates the level of attachment between language producers and their audiences (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p. 103).

TABLE 2-11: YOU KNOWS AND FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS

	You Knows	First Person Pronouns
Conversations	11	48
Lectures	2	21
Letters	0	57
Academic Papers	0	4

Another means for language producers to demonstrate involvement concerns the use of locative (e.g., *in France*) and temporal adverbials (e.g., *last Tuesday*). Chafe and Danielewicz's (1987) research shows that the highest use of such adverbials is in letters and conversation. There is a distinct lack of these kinds of adverbials in academic writing because it is much more detached and impersonal, while letters, interestingly, contain the highest number of both locative and temporal adverbials. Here again, the effect of genre plays a role on the number of adverbials used by letter writers. Letter writers tend to locate people, places and things in space because these elements are associated with personal information (see also Smith & Frawley, 1983). The data from Chafe and Danielewicz are shown in Table 2-12 (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p. 108).

TABLE 2-12: ADVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS

	Locative Adverbials	Temporal Adverbials
Conversations	14	16
Lectures	11	10
Letters	19	22
Academic Papers	6	8

Another way that language producers demonstrate detachment is by using passive constructions. "Involved language tends to favor clauses whose subjects refer to specific concrete persons...a passive allows a writer to avoid mentioning any concrete doer, and in that way treat an event in a more abstract fashion" (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987, p. 108-109). Hence, one would predict that academic writers would use passives more frequently than in the other forums, which is indeed the case as can be seen in Table 2-13 (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (p. 109).

TABLE 2-13: PASSIVES

	Passives
Conversations	3
Lectures	9
Letters	7
Academic Papers	22

The last feature that Chafe and Danielewicz examine that also indicates a way of demonstrating some detachment is the use of probability statements. They looked at the frequency of words such as *normally, primarily, usually, principally* and *virtually*, words which allow a writer an escape from culpability. Of course, their data reveal that this is a feature found mostly in academic writing as Table 2-14 shows. However, lecturers use more than letter writers. Lecturers tend to mimic academic writers in some ways such as

using academic hedges. Here again, Chafe and Danielewicz provide evidence that conventions specific to genre affect the language choice made by speakers and writers. Table 2-14 illustrates their findings (the numbers represent occurrences per 1000 words) (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987, p. 103).

TABLE 2-14: INDICATIONS OF PROBABILITY

Conversations	4
Lectures	7
Letters	6
Academic Papers	10

In summary of this section, one can see that there are distinctive features that separate spoken and written language. In particular, Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) have shown that there is a wide division between conversation and academic writing based upon the features. They have also shown that in some instances letters are closer to conversation than academic writing, but it is dependent upon the functional use of the feature being examined. In the next section, online language production is thrown into the mix, so it too can be compared to written and spoken language.

Comparison of Spoken, Written and Electronically Produced Language

Most studies comparing online language with spoken and/or written language have been tied exclusively to classroom-based research in second language learning contexts (Kelm, 1992; Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995; Kroonenberg, 1994/1995; Freiermuth, 1998). What can be taken from this research relevant to this study is that more subjects participate more often in online interaction than in other channels of communication.

These researchers have hinted that one reason for wider participation is that chatters feel less self-conscious facing a keyboard and a monitor than they would facing their peers.

Beyond language learning studies, Yates (1996) compared messages posted on an electronic bulletin board (which he called computer-mediated communication or CMC) with both spoken and written language (i.e., London-Lund Corpora and the Lancaster-Oslo-Berger Corpora respectively). He drew the following conclusions derived from those comparisons: 1) As for type/token ratio, CMC is similar to written discourse, both of which are more dense than spoken discourse; 2) As for lexical density, CMC is similar to written language, both of which are more lexically dense than spoken language; 3) Pronoun usage in CMC is more like writing in frequency, but more like spoken language in proportion (comparing first, second and third person use); and 4) Modal use is higher in CMC than either written or spoken language. The Yates study confirms the notion that when drawing comparisons, certain similarities exist between online language and either spoken and written language, but the data also illustrate that CMC is distinct because modal use was unlike spoken or written language.

Even so, the conclusions drawn by Yates (1996) cannot be applied summarily to include Internet chatting. Online bulletin boards are not a form of synchronous communication; they can be constructed with as much thought and time as the creator requires, just like an e-mail message. Internet relay chat is fast-paced, and occurs in real time similar to a spoken conversation.

Ko (1994) also compared the three channels of communication. In his dissertation research, he employed Biber's (1991) model to make comparisons with language produced in a chatting forum known as InterChange. InterChange is closed system

software. In other words, the software must be purchased and installed on a LAN (Local Area Network). This limited Ko's research to students involved in a particular course in the English department. This presented Ko with a design problem as explained here.

Ko gathered data that were obtained as the result of classroom exercises in English composition classes and compared them with corpus data from the London-Lund corpus (spoken data) and Lancaster-Oslo-Berger corpus (written data) (Biber, 1991). This has implications for the type of data required of Ko. Biber's data represent randomly gathered language samples. In Ko's study, the data were simply the result of an English exercise. In other words, Ko compared corpus data that occurred naturally without compulsion with data he obtained under strictly controlled conditions. When the tasks and conditions under which the data are obtained are so different, conclusions and claims are susceptible to criticism.

There is a second problem that relates significantly to the first. Ko's (1994) samples stem from only one source: electronically produced samples obtained in English composition courses. On the other hand, Biber's (1991) corpora come from a multitude of sources. It is difficult to make the claim that a telephone conversation between a husband and wife produces language that is comparable to students addressing a writing prompt in an English composition class. In Ko's defense, it is difficult to make comparisons between different channels of communication. However, this is precisely the type of problem that leads to faulty analogies (see conclusions drawn by Blankenship, 1962 and discussed by Hudson-Ettle, 1998). Yates (1996) recognized that this problem must be addressed prior to drawing comparisons of CMC, written and spoken texts (p. 31):

> While one obvious method for the creation of a CMC corpus would be to download all available material, this would produce a data set of excessively large proportions that might prove too unwieldy. It also ignores the fact that the corpus must be to some extent comparable to the written and spoken corpora already in existence.

The third problem with Ko's (1994) study is that it would be difficult to replicate without additional procedural knowledge because there were only vague references to how the data were obtained, transcribed and organized.

The present study is unlike the Ko study in a number of ways. Ko employed the Biber (1991) model, which looks at different features from Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), the model that I employ here. Additionally, Ko's classroom subjects produced language in a controlled environment (an exercise in an English composition course). One of the objectives in the present study was to avoid language manipulation, so I gathered texts from more natural settings. Finally, Ko's written and spoken data sets were taken from a corpus; hence, the data set contained transcripts from a variety of people in a variety of settings discussing a variety of topics. In this study, I attempt to maintain some semblance of commonality between the different modes of communication. Therefore in this study, the basis for inclusion in the study was predetermined by whether or not the text represented cases of political disagreement.

Combative Language and Insult

A second aim of this research is to look at certain sociological aspects of online Internet chatting and compare those findings with what is found in written and spoken language. Of primary importance is the manner in which interlocutors address one another. Are there constraints that limit how they engage one another? One way to measure this is to examine insult use.

Combative language and insults occur infrequently, and in very specific contexts. Semin and Rubini (1990) suggest that use of an insult, "...arises predominantly in the context of conflict, blame and contested responsibilities, though in situations involving strong emotions or emotion repertoires" (p. 472). So, when such variables are present in an ideal atmosphere, insult use seems to supersede the counterforces to be polite.

That is not to say that all insults are used in anger. In fact in some cultural contexts, insults are expressed as a type of social game and function as a way of demarcating prestige in a socially cohesive group. Opposition through insult does not drive the participants apart, rather it reshuffles the status of group members based upon the quality (for lack of a better word) of the insults delivered; the object is to degrade your opponent. Here is an example from Goodwin's (1990) data gathered from Maple Street in Philadelphia (discourse is about roaches--the insects!):

Malcolm:	You understand their language.
	You must be one of 'em.
Jimmy:	((falsetto)) Eh heh! Heh he heh!
Ruby:	What'd he(h) s(hhhh)ay? Wha(h)d he(h) say(h)y?
	*H What he(h) sa(hh)y?
	What he sa(heh heh)y? What you say?
	Whad's he // say Candy?
Malcolm:	You understand their language.
	cuz you one of 'em.
Ruby:	I(h) know(h) you(h) ar(hh)re!
	You was born from the roach fam // ily.
Malcolm:	Don't swag.
	(1.2)
Ruby:	Don't you swa::g.
	(1.2)
	You know one thing ((tch!))
	uh when you was little,
	All you did every roach
	you see crawl on the floor
	you get it and save it for a souvenir.=
Malcolm:	Don't swag. you used to go out there
	and put roaches in the- in the-

in the jar at night. (0.2) And put 'em
and let 'em out in the mornin'. (pp. 292-293).

Ritualized insult, framed as a contest (called sounding), requires the insulted to up-the-ante by escalating the severity of the charge leveled at the antagonist and/or family members (Ayoub & Barnett, 1965; Goodwin, 1990). One can see from the example that Malcolm starts by claiming that Ruby understands "roach language," which instigates the war of words; Ruby's response is that Malcolm is born from the roach family. Insults are not taken lying down. The charges continue to escalate until someone wins. Because this is a contest, insult is intended to beget insult. Hence, there is a primary motivational difference between ritualized insult and the type of insult resulting in violent action (see Labov, 1982; Sarbin, 1989), namely that a rejoinder of greater severity is not only expected but welcomed, so instead of dividing the group, it helps to strengthen ties between members. Put another way, insults represent a form of gaming; thus, they are not intended to harm relationships but to build them.

Face

Face is a psychological entity directly tied to the encounters with others. Encounters with others expose the "line" of the interlocutors involved. Goffman (1955) defines *line* as the, "...pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he [a person potentially involved in a conversation] expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (p. 213) (cf. Sarbin, 1989). In essence, a *line* is a subconscious or conscious stand that one takes. Since the participants involved in interaction are aware that a line will be established for all participants, each one must consider the impression he or she is portraying (and wishes to portray). Formed

impressions, then, can be viewed as a risk factor associated with face-to-face conversation. If the impressions of others match the established line, the participant is said to "have face." If, however, the impressions made on others do not match the established line, the portrayal of self is diminished and loss of face results (cf. Holtgraves, 1986; Wilson, 1992; Ting-Toomey, 1994). Maintenance of face, then, is the appearance of being capable and strong, and at the same time, avoiding embarrassment in public (Brown, 1970; Hamilton & Baumeister, 1984).

So, how does this relate to insults? Threats to face (which can be an insult) create pressure on self to protect face or restore it by seeking redress. And, redress often takes the form of insult, and as a way of reasserting a strong face; the retaliation is likely to be of greater severity than the initial affront, even at personal cost to the retaliator (Brown, 1968).

Brown and Levinson (1978) categorize such confrontations between individuals as face threatening acts. Face becomes threatened based upon the confluence of three variables: 1) social distance (D) between speaker (S) and hearer (H) (symmetric relationship), 2) relative power (P) between S and H (asymmetric relationship) and 3) the ranking of imposition (R) derived out of the cultural setting (p. 74). Where insults are concerned, these variables must be weighed in conjunction with the weight of the face threatening act coupled with an assessment of a potential payoff (i.e., what kind of gain can be had) before an insult is launched.

The latter concept of payoff is especially relevant to insult usage, and consequently the present study, especially as it relates to face. Brown and Levinson divide face into negative and positive. Negative face is the desire to have one's actions go

unimpeded by others, whereas positive face is the desire that what one wants be considered desirable by others as well (p. 62). Look at the following dialogue between Nick and David; a clearer picture of a failure to maintain face emerges (both positive and negative):

> Nick: [turns to David] Where's the cigarettes, David?
> David: Sorry, Nick. I've cut you off. You said you had the last one. You promised me the last one was the last one.
> Nick: Well I want to have one more.
> David: Cost you a buck.
> Nick: Oh give me a break, David! (Eggins & Slade, 1997, pp. 9, 27).

Nick has had his wishes impeded by David who refused to give him a cigarette, so Nick's negative face has been affected (negatively). On the other hand, David's desire is that Nick not smoke any more of his cigarettes, but since Nick obviously wants to smoke one of David's cigarettes, he does not share David's desire, and so asks for a cigarette, affecting David's positive face (also negatively). It would not be hard to imagine an insult from either party in subsequent dialogue. And, since insults potentially threaten both negative and positive face, the payoff, then, must act as compensation.

Payoffs rest at the heart of understanding the appropriate moment motivating a decision to insult and determining precisely how the insult will be couched. If the user determines that it is apropos to baldly insult someone, the payoff is clarity, being non-manipulative, responsible and concerned more with efficiency than the negative effects to face. According to Brown and Levinson, bald insults are likely to be employed when the danger to the protection of face is the least (based upon D, P and R). When the danger to face is high, the interactant must consider whether or not an insult is worth the cost, and if so, how it can be said with tactfulness and/or ambiguity. The payoff for this latter

strategy is that the insulter takes less responsibility, allowing the insulted to at least potentially and/or to some degree to satisfy negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1978).

Alternative Media for Insults

Up to this point, insult has been discussed as it pertains to face-to-face encounters, but insults are not restricted to verbal exchange. In written form, Edgar Allan Poe impugned his literary colleagues, including Longfellow, by calling them plagiarists (Blish, 1972). Today, supermarket tabloids have become household names by digging up dirt on society's celebrated, which periodically results in lawsuit. In certain other venues, such as political commentary in the form of opinion editorials, the express purpose of the forum is to challenge the position of your opponents, as well as the opponents themselves. Obviously, in newspaper articles, the threats to face are greatly reduced when compared to face-to-face spoken encounters; however, editorials often carry a particular author's name, so the element of face must be considered by the writer as the discourse is being constructed.

Another element that makes the dynamics of writing different from face-to-face interaction is the lack of immediate interaction and response. Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), as well as Halliday (1987) note that the written word allows the communicator time to edit and refine, something that conversationalists must do on the fly with little time allowed for adjustments. The written channel, then, allows insulters to choose more carefully how to word their attacks. Carefully chosen words aid in minimizing the risk to face.

Comparative Sociolinguistic Objective

Online chatting offers the users the advantage of distance and displacement as well as immediacy, an ideal forum for increased insult use. Considering that the fact that chatters do not deal with the adversaries up close and personal, they may not suffer any face loss by using insults regularly. However, the issue of whether or not chatters are inclined to use insult at greater frequencies than speakers or writers has not yet been raised. It is the purpose of this study, therefore, to look not only at the frequency of insults found in online interaction, but to compare the number of insults found in online interaction with the number found in the spoken and written discourse samples (refer to the Chapter 1 as well).

It is my opinion that "real" time interaction with complete anonymity would tend to increase the use of insults because there seems to be a great deal of protection to face (because of both distance and lack of intimacy between chatters). In fact, most participants use an alias that may be familiar to the regular chatters on a particular channel, but the person behind the mask still remains a mystery (if that is his or her desire).

Another feature of chat that makes this kind of communication especially favorable for insults is that face is protected because social distance is increased by the physical isolation of participants; this means that payoff is high as well because being socially isolated allows little if any damage to face. The kind of interaction involved in Internet chatting, then, is a perfect forum for conversationalists to expose their raw feelings, which may result in more insults used and a higher percentage of direct insults (see Brown & Levinson, 1978).

Additionally, there is another reason that insults may be used more frequently online. It is possible that interaction online becomes a kind of sounding (without sound) game. Prestige is awarded by those who agree with the insult, and retaliation is expected and welcomed by opponents. So, insults can be used to degrade opponents without the intent to cause opponents to log off.

In Chapter 3, the methods that were used to gather, record and measure the data are discussed in more detail.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Introduction

Chapter 3 represents a description of the framework upon which this work rests. The methodology section starts with an outline the explaining the objectives of this study. This is followed by a rationale for choosing the texts I examined as well as how those texts were gathered and subsequently analyzed.

Objectives

The primary foci of this study are to investigate data gathered from relatively naturally occurring sources, and to examine a relatively under-investigated area of research. These objectives made Internet chat a perfect candidate for investigation because it could be gathered from a public venue and there has been a general lack of discourse studies concerning most forms of electronic communication.

Here, the natural data I examined were taken from Internet chat samples, which were then compared to written and spoken language samples. Specifically, I use the model of language comparison discussed by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987). The common thread connecting all of these texts is political discussion; all of the texts looked at here

expose two-sided issues, that is to say there are interlocutors on "both" sides of every issue. With this as a backdrop, I posit two primary objectives.

The first objective was to examine the data to identify grammatical/functional features of Internet chat to see how similar and dissimilar it is to spoken and written data samples. I hypothesize that chat cannot be categorized as being more like speaking or more like writing. Instead, it is surmised that frequency counts will illustrate that chatting is sometimes like speaking and sometime like writing, but sometimes different from either,

The second objective entailed analyzing data to confirm suspicions concerning the increased likelihood of insult use on Internet chat. Hence, I present two hypotheses about insults using the compared data: 1) The number of insults used will be higher in online chatting than in a written discourse sample or a spoken discourse sample, and 2) when compared to indirect insults, the number of direct insults (defined later) will be proportionally greater in online chatting.

Data Selection

One obstacle that had to be overcome at the outset was how to select relevant topical information. First, the topic had to be at least somewhat controversial so as to elicit disagreement, recalling that one of the goals in this study is to analyze discourse produced by interlocutors with opposing viewpoints. In more concrete terms, people chatting about gardening techniques tend not produce the kinds of discourse that are discussed in this study.

Second, besides seeking some controversy, the topical information contained within the data needed to be at least slightly similar across the various media (as was

emphasized in Chapter 2). So, although a television show like *The Jerry Springer Show* may provide a wealth of spoken data, it would prove quite difficult to find topically similar data in the other formats that was also consistent with other requirements of the study (i.e., natural data, turn-taking). Hence, since politics provides a natural forum for disagreement and certainly the potential for insults, discourses were chosen that focused on issue-oriented political disagreement.

Additionally, to maintain consistency and normalization of the data, 3000 words from each mode of communication were analyzed. Of course, the notion of topic was always at the forefront of selecting the discourses (wider discussion forthcoming in this chapter).

Another factor that had to be considered was participation restrictions. Both videotaped television shows and electronic chatting, in a sense, restrict access to those who are interacting in the immediate (proximal) environment. Writing an editorial, on the other hand, naturally takes place in a distal environment (see Chafe, 1994), so participation is less restricted; however, it may be restricted by other factors such as who subscribes to a particular paper, who is literate, and/or geography, etc. In the case of the present study, I wanted to insure that the discourse obtained from the videotapes, and, moreover, the downloaded chat conversations would not be susceptible to criticism concerning the particular participants involved in such restricted forums.

Regarding the current study, from the data obtained in the videotaped segments, six topics from six different shows were chosen (the first topic of each show excluding the monologue). The first 500 words from each show were transcribed for a total of 3000

words. This meant that there were 29 participants who contributed to the talk show transcripts (recalling that the host remained the same for every show).

In the electronic chat transcripts three "conversations" were chosen from three different days (of course restricted to a specific topic). Each conversation consisted of 1000 words each (3000 words total). Because AOL's political chats allow a maximum of 23 chatters at one time, there was the potential for 69 chatters (if everyone who was logged on at the start of the conversation remained logged on). However, this number is in constant fluctuation due to the nature of Internet chatting. Even so, it was also the case that the political channel used in this study was always full or nearly full (one or two slots available) because the political chat lines offered by AOL are extremely popular. Of course, as is the case with spoken interaction, this does not assure that everyone logged on is involved in the ongoing discussion; there could be chatters discussing another topic; there certainly are inattentive (or even sleeping) chatters, and some chatters may be in another room sipping coffee or engaged in some other activity but remain logged on.

In all of the samples, 3000 words were selected for analysis. How the various data were collected will be discussed in the next sections.

Spoken Data Collection

The data for the spoken examples were gathered from the late-night television program *Politically Incorrect,* which is taped before a live audience. *Politically Incorrect* is a show based upon political issues of the day. The host, Bill Maher, begins the show with a brief monologue, which is followed by the introduction of four guests. The political persuasion of the guests is not presented by the host, although their accomplishments are mentioned, which may or may not be an indicator of political

leaning. After the first commercial break, the host introduces a recent politically-charged issue that the guests are welcome to debate. It appears that there are no specific directives as to who should carry the discussion; guests and the host are cued by statements made during the discussion. Natural discussion is only interrupted by television commercials, after which, the topic is generally changed by the host. Based upon the aforementioned format as well as a number of other factors, subsequently discussed, this show was selected as the most appropriate venue in which to collect data for comparison.

Since a fundamental stance of the present research is adherence to the use of more naturally produced language, one of the principal problems in collecting spoken conversation samples concerns the degree of conformity to naturally occurring conversation. Whereas collecting natural data samples of online chatting may seem relatively easy, it is almost impossible to haphazardly encounter a spoken conversation where interlocutors with opposing views are debating political issues. This is further complicated by the need to have a tape recorder in hand along with the university-required permission slips for combatants to sign, so that recordings and transcriptions could be legitimately used. Besides the difficulty of the aforementioned problems, there is also the very real concern that such an action on the part of the researcher may result in lack of cooperation by the participants, resulting in physical harm to the researcher. The other problem, as previously mentioned, is that the presence of the observer gathering the data in the immediate presence of the interlocutors (observer's paradox), which certainly has the potential to alter interaction significantly.

Because of these difficulties, as an acceptable alternative, transcriptions of the show *Politically Incorrect* were used because although there is a certain amount of

staging of the questions (certainly the players involved are aware of the kinds of questions that are forthcoming), the forum provides a fairly relaxed setting. And, although guests are often selected based upon their positions on an issue, the show generally accommodates non-pundits as an integral part of the discussion. Because of this mix, interactants often become emotional, making their responses, at least for appearance sake, seem more natural than those that might occur in certain other formats (e.g., interview-style talk shows). It seems as if the format used by *Politically Incorrect* allows political rivals ample opportunity without institutionalized constraints (i.e., constraints imposed by the producers of the show) to degrade opponents if they consider insult as appropriate action (cf. Semin & Rubini, 1990).

Another aspect of the show that made it the preferred selection for the study is that the show allows participants to speak freely. In other words, there seems to be little direction from the host or television prompters that a particular guest has exceeded his or her time allotment and must cede the floor to the opposition. Also, the host does not prompt guests, notifying them that the topic will be switched; topics run their courses until discussion has finished or until a commercial break interrupts the dialogue. Disagreements tend to be a natural occurrence based upon the statements of the participants; hence, turn taking tends to occur at expected (natural) locations (Schegloff, 1982) or as interruptions. In other words, the debate on this show mimics more closely "on the street" discussions. With that said, it should also be mentioned that the conversations are filmed in front of a live audience, which may or may not affect what is said by participants (see Goffman, 1981).

Transcription Selection for Spoken Data

Since the show was videotaped, the transcriptions were painstakingly constructed bit-by-bit from the discussions as they occurred on the videotapes. There were important omissions from the transcripts as well.

First, the monologue and subsequent guest introductions were not transcribed because they were not relevant to this research. Second, any statement deemed "off-topic" was not transcribed nor analyzed. An operational definition of "off-topic" for this study is any proposition that was considered unaffected by the discourse topic. A common example would be a welcoming remark to a particular guest or talking about a guest's new movie or book in a general sense, not as it related to the discussion at hand. However, it was not the case that off topic statements occurred once the dialogue on a particular topic was underway. The topics of discussion apparently generated enough interest so that the host and his guests remained on topic in every case.

Second, as is the case with any audio recording, certain words and phrases could not be adequately heard to make any sort of transcription or analysis, and so these elements were obviously not considered in the final frequency counts.

Furthermore, considering the objectives of this study mandate the compilation of frequencies concerning particular linguistics elements (as discussed in Chapter 2), a very basic transcription method was used. A similar method of transcription is employed by Eggins and Slade (1997) for their analysis of conversation. So, pauses were not indicated on the transcriptions unless they were deemed as considerable in length (at least three seconds). In other words, small pauses indicating such elements as intonation units were not indicated in the transcription notations. In addition, words said during interruptions

and overlaps were counted as long as the words and/or phrases were comprehensible. Finally, words or phrases that were repeated for whatever reason were double counted with the justification that such occurrences are a natural part of conversational interaction (e.g., establishing a turn), and so could not be discounted. On the other hand, back channel cues (uh-huh, hmm, okay, etc.) that acted simply as a means of encouraging the present speaker to continue were not counted (Schegloff, 1982).

The language sample below represents how transcriptions appear in this study (from the spoken conversation data):

> **Joshua:** ==presidential, and he definitely had that.==
> **Adam:** ==regal. He always had those note cards with him, so he never lost his place. He wore a lot of makeup, he dyed his hair and he was a nice==
> **Niger:** ==He had very simple goals==
> **Adam:** ==...nice figurehead.
> **Niger:** Yeah, very simple goals, revive the economy, crush communism, expand free-markets, and he achieved just about all of them.
> **Bill:** Well, aah==

The "= =" marks indicate the starting point from which two interlocutors had begun speaking simultaneously.

Written Data Collection

Samples of written communication were gathered from the editorial section of the newspaper the *Standard-Times*, which serves the south coast of Massachusetts. There are a number of reasons for choosing this particular newspaper and there are also specific reasons why editorials were chosen for this study.

There are several reasons the *Standard-Times* was chosen over other newspapers. First, the *Standard-Times* offers an online version (which is simply the hardcopy put online) that is also archived, so that the most recent issue can be accessed, as well as any

previous issue. This offers the researcher an extremely efficient means to collect data. The principal reason the online version is so useful is that one can find related editorials specific to one topic simply by surfing through consecutive issues and reading.

The second reason the *Standard-Times* was selected over other newspapers is that it is a regional newspaper and not a national newspaper. It would seem that a national newspaper might be the more logical choice; however, local newspapers tend to be more accessible to the general public (regarding contributions). To clarify, newspapers such as the *Washington Post* print editorials that maintain a certain standard or level of writing, and furthermore, issues discussed tend to be limited to those of more national importance and recent events (as determined by the editorial staff of the newspaper); to use editorials from a paper with such a national reputation would truncate the sample in a dramatic fashion. Local and regional newspapers tend to allow more editorials about a variety of topics, some national and others more localized. This allows for a broader voice. This is especially the case for the *Standard-Times*, which is a regional paper that seems to allow thorough editorial debates concerning hot issues.

Third, and certainly of greatest importance to the design of this study, is that the *Standard-Times* allows continual editorial discussion concerning a relevant issue. The problem with most large newspapers is that they often do not allow responses to an editorial, or if they do they may accept one or possibly two. The *Standard-Times*, on the other hand, allows many responses to earlier published editorials. This is important to this study in this respect: Writing is difficult to compare to speaking (and chatting for that matter) because it tends to lack any sort of turn-taking mechanism; here, however, editorial responses were viewed as turns. Hence, for the sake of comparison, the

Standard-Times was ideal; each response acted as a subsequent but separate turn, which in turn opened up the opportunity for additional "turns" from others. Hence, the "dialogue" could be linked together as an ongoing debate.

Transcription Selection for Written Data

As mentioned in the preceding section, it is not particularly easy to find a politically driven editorial that is then commented on by someone else, which is then commented on by another, which is in turn commented on by another and so on. However, since this tends to be infrequent, when such an interconnected chain of editorials was discovered it was obvious that the data were in fact appropriate for the study. The topic that generated the political debate in the present research was whether or not private establishments can be forced by local ordinances to adhere to a non-smoking policy.

Since anyone who reads the *Standard-Times* could submit a response to the original editorial, it was felt that subsequent responses did represent a broad array of opinions. Of course, responses were limited to those who read the *Standard-Times* and most likely consisted of those who live in communities that are in close proximity to the south coast of Massachusetts.

On the other hand, the data once obtained were relatively "clean." Concerning the frequency counts, the linguistic elements from the data found within the editorial texts were the easiest to count. There are no hesitations, nor interruptions, nor contests for floor-control that occur in spoken conversation, and likewise, there are no (or relatively few) misspellings, or unfinished clauses, or off-topic entries such as occur in online chatting.

Online Chat Data Collection

Online data were gathered from one of the political chat channels on America Online, dubbed: *From the Left*. The primary reason that this chat site was selected as being appropriate for this study is that political disagreement is evident in the discourse.

Gathering the data involved joining the chat group while chatting was in progress. Joining allows the researcher access to the discourse, so he or she has the ability to copy the discourse simply by highlighting the text with a mouse and copying (using pull down menus). The copied text was subsequently pasted in a word processing document and saved.

The texts were then printed-out so that frequency counts could be done. This involved ascertaining which entries when combined actually made up a conversation. Conversations were then highlighted using specific colors so that counts could be made.

After the "conversations" were identified from the transcripts, each contribution to the discussion was cut and then pasted into a word processing document. The linguistic and sociolinguistic elements were then counted and analyzed.

Transcription Selection for Chat Data

The online chat data were rather easy to save and read; however, it was more difficult to select data that conformed to the idea of a political disagreement in the form of a conversation. There are a number of reasons why this was the case, requiring further discussion.

The chief problem is that there can be as many as 23 chatters online at one time in AOL's, *From the Left*. The difficulty this presents to the researcher is that there is the

possibility and likelihood many separate and overlapping conversations are going to occur simultaneously. Besides the propensity for a great number of chatters to be interacting at the same time, there is also the problem that often times chatters are involved in more than one conversation simultaneously. In other words, a particular chatter may respond to a challenge by an adversary in one flurry of keystrokes and respond to a different opponent in the next flurry, but on a completely different topic and in a completely different conversation. In this sense, online chatting does not conform to the conventions of spoken conversation, except for the occasional conversational asides that occur in spoken interaction.

The question becomes, how can one identify what actually constitutes a conversation? The researcher could simply extract a chunk of discourse and start counting things, but because there are multiple conversations taking place simultaneously, resulting in conversational overlapping, the comments would truly be completely disconnected. This hardly seemed satisfactory as a means to count the various linguistic elements. If the discourse were to be examined as it appeared on the screen, the Gricean principle of relevancy (interlocutors try to make their comments relevant) would be at stake (Grice, 1975). Here is an example highlighting the problem (from some previously gathered data—the comment lines and time postings have been omitted for ease of reading):

free-man: wildchild well?.. do you any thoughts on the normal thingy? or you're not normal enought to comment on normalcy? *L*

ChicagoRedhead: Nickels - Of course! The U.S. government is good at 4 things: 1) Defense, 2) the Federal Reserve, 3) the National Institute of Health is partly responsible for U.S. leading the world in medical research, 4) USDA is partly responsible for U.S. leading the world in agriculture.

Old Armor: Free-man: good point. I hope Marseilles didn't leave angry. I was trying my best to be strait and yet be his friend?
southern cowboy: who is the rasist here?
free-man: Park: then it would be boring ... no?
foshay: southern cowboy: Some of the people we catch lying in here take a sudden interest in our personal lives. It's strange but true. I just make it policy not to reveal anything about myself when they ask. It drives them nuts.
PARK BENCH: free: True.
wildchild: if this isn't a good example of being nuts.....why are you asking about my family? what does have to do with anything?.....you can insult an idiot and they may not know that you did it!
Nickels: Chicago, those are liberal opinions????
hans: Efforts to infiltrate chat rooms by sexual deviants are reported regularly. Most often mentioned is a character calling him/her self free-man.
Old Armor: Cowboy: I offer you an olive branch, and say 'peace'. Do you take it, or slap it away... forcing the drawing of swords and a duel to the bitter end?
wildchild: free, that is a hard question to answer.....i work on being happy.....it's easier to achieve.....S.....

The preceding chat interaction appeared on a political channel in the exact sequence as seen here. Clearly, there are a number of conversations occurring simultaneously; there is not a common topical thread running through all of the contributions to the dialogue. And, by examining the two contributions by *free-man*, one can see that a participant can be potentially involved in more than one conversation at any given time. In the first instance, "he" is responding to *wildchild,* and in the second instance he is responding to *PARK*, and yet he has kept both conversations alive by posing a question. I have encased *free-man's* first comment and question with a border to emphasize the fact that ten additional turns must be sifted through before one can see *wildchild's* answer to the question posed by *free-man* (the second encased turn). This is typical of conversational structures on a chat line with heavy traffic.

To count linguistic elements, then, a conversation from the data had to be first identified and then extracted from the midst of the remaining data. A conversation could be identified in two ways: 1) by specific topical information relating directly to a prior post and 2) by responses that included the previous interactant's alias in the message line

or that represented an obvious response to the previous interlocutor's statement. In the example above, *free-man* directs his message by naming his targeted audience, which acts as conversational glue for both of his postings in this discourse sample. By naming *wildchild* and *Park* as his intended targets, he is in fact cueing his interlocutors to respond; *wildchild* echoes this strategy by fronting his response with *free-man,* notifying *free-man* that he/she is cognizant of the question asked and engaged in the conversation. Topical information was determined by the context and the content of the propositions. *wildchild's* response to *free-man* is an expected answer to the question posed; hence, it is easy to tell that the answer is part of the ongoing conversation. Here is an example from another section of the discourse:

> **Nickels**: . . . . msg#3571 Thu, Nov 12, 2:35PM PST
> Chicago, those are liberal opinions????
> **ChicagoRedhead**: . . . . msg#3580 Thu, Nov 12, 2:38PM PST
> Nickels - Those are sensible opinions about legitimate government activity. They are neither liberal nor conservative.

One can see from this example that *Nickels* directs a pointed question at *ChicagoRedhead* who then responds on topic, making it very easy to identify these posts as being sequentially situated in a conversation (although certainly not sequentially ordered on the screen as can be seen by the gaps in the posting numbers: msg#3571 followed by msg#3580).

To make the counting process easier, individual conversations were highlighted (on the printouts) by marking entries with colored pencils. Following the extraction of various conversations, the linguistic elements needed to be counted.

Another issue that was the cause for some concern involved the limitation of posts. All of AOL*'s* have a limit as to how many characters can be posted by any one chatter. The problem is highlighted below:

LAURA5235: Ha sharpton is ant-white and has incited people to commit murder but you don't see the media

Campy28212: JUBAL..FLUSH for not having class enough to accept his self-imposed loss

PAMJPAINE: LINSASHI..GET FACTS STRAIGHT, GORE VOTED TO **NOT** ALLOW IRS TO HAVE THE SAY ON WHO LOST TA

Jubal28: CAMPY ran from an honest debate . . .

DONL420: We need white babies to support black babies

LAURA5235: harping on that

LAURA5235 had started one turn in the first encased example from this text, but subsequently must finish her contribution in the second box, allowing others to sneak their contributions in. This does not cause any problem as far as turn-taking is concerned since that is not a focus of this study; however, it does make it slightly more difficult to measure linguistic elements. For this study, such entries are counted as one proposition.

Coding and Counting

This section's purpose is to explain how elements were coded, so a frequency count could be conducted.

Type/Token Ratio

The first element I looked at was "type/token ratio;" the Chafe and Danielewicz's (1987) methodology was followed exactly. Recall that this involves counting the frequency of new words (unused) and dividing that number by the total number of words. This example from chat data explains the procedure:

Tony84ny: I want a simple answer to a very simple question....

This example contains 10 words but there are only 8 different words; *simple* and *a* are used twice. The type/token ratio in this case is 8/10 or (.80).

It is predicted that chatters will be able to use a more complex and diverse lexicon than conversationalists because they have additional cognitive processing time, which is ironically the same reason that they will be unable use a more complex and diverse lexicon when compared to writers.

Hedges

Hedges in the Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) study were linguistic elements that interlocutors employed to demonstrate that they were not satisfied with their choice. I differentiate here between hedges and probability markers, which will also be coded and counted separately. The following example illustrates the kind of hedging Chafe and Danielewicz refer to (p. 89):

...Um...I'm **sort of** paraphrasing a little bit.

Chafe and Danielewicz claim that the user has struggled here to find the appropriate and consequently used the hedge: *sort of.* In this study I followed the Chafe and Danielewicz model.

It is predicted that chatters will not need to use hedging because they cannot be held accountable for their words, so even if they did happen to be dissatisfied with their production, they probably would not express this dissatisfaction online.

Inexplicit Third Person References

Inexplicit third person references have no clearly boundaried and identifiable antecedents. As a means to code and count the inexplicit third person references, *it, this* and *that*, markers that signaled shifts in topical focus were noted; this is often characteristic of *this* and *that.* That is not to say they were not counted when they had no

clearly defined antecedent, but that they served a very viable discourse function. In other words, although *this* and *that* may not have a clear antecedent, this is not to imply that they are somehow less effective (see McCarthy, 1994). The example below illustrates an example of an inexplicit reference indicating a shift in focus (McCarthy, 1994, p. 274):

> The sulfate anions are very mobile and move through the soil dragging cations such as the hydrogen ion with them, which then acidify surface waters.
>
> They believe that if **this** is what happened in Galloway, it could well be what happened in the Lake District.

In the preceding example, *this* may refer back to the entire previous sentence or perhaps it is only meant to incorporate the final clause. However, what is important from a discourse functional analysis is that the focal topic has switched and brought the idea of acidified surface water into topic focus. I predicted that this kind of inexplicit third person reference would be primarily restricted to the written texts, but might be a feature of chat as well since chatters have more time to construct discourse than conversationalists.

Ya Know and You Know

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) also maintain that *ya know's* and *you know's* are a strategy, prototypically characteristic of conversation, intended to involve the other interlocutors. In this study I expected to find the same kinds of numbers as Chafe and Danielewicz. Concerning the chat dialogue, I predicted that chatters would not use this kind of discourse marker because there seems to be no real advantage in this predominantly verbal strategy. Utilizing discourse markers as a means to hold the floor or gain the attention of interlocutors would seem to be an ineffectual strategy for chatters due to the nature of electronic synchronous communication.

Naming

Using personal names is another way that interlocutors show involvement with one another. Although Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) did not look at the use of personal names, I examined the category because I predicted that chatters would use naming as a means of identifying relevant interlocutors from a room full of potential participants, and in the process would use many more than in either of the other two forums.

Literary and Colloquial Vocabulary

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) looked at lexically "fresh" linguistic elements versus literary vocabulary as a means to distinguish written and spoken language. In this study, I expanded the categories to include items that one would associate with either spoken or written language but not both. As an example, the verb to *obtain* is associated with writing and so one would expect to find more instances of this verb in written texts.

My purpose was to see if chatters preferred to use language that was more like conversation or more like writing. It was predicted that their behavior would be more like conversationalists because chatters must contend with faster paced interaction than editorial writers, and they prefer to mimic conversation when making lexical choices.

Contractions

Chafe and Danielewicz's (1987) findings allow them to assess contractions as primarily a spoken phenomenon. In this study, all contracted lexical items were counted including those, which could be labeled as abbreviated items such as *gov't* as a substitution for *government*. It was assumed that these kinds of contractions would be

very inviting as time-saving devices to Internet chatters. I also separated out words that were contracted without the conventional marking (apostrophe) and counted them as well. Here again, I assumed that any time saving device available to chatters would be taken advantage of by them.

Prepositional Phrases and Phrase Sequences

Recall here that Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) suggest that writers use prepositions and prepositional phrase sequences as a means to expand intonation units, and therefore use them more frequently. I followed the Chafe and Danielewicz model. The goal here was to see if chatters favor using more prepositions and sequences of prepositional phrases like writers or use fewer like conversationalists. It was predicted that chatters would use fewer than writers because they are pressed for time and have no real need to expand intonation units.

Attributive Adjectives

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) suggest that the reason writers use many more attributive adjectives than conversationalists is that they can expand intonation units, which enables them to be more concise and precise. Since attributive adjectives are prevalent in even spoken language, they must not be difficult to use. Here, all preposed adjectives including noun modifiers were counted (Fernand, 1963). Adjectives that are categorized as possessives, pronouns and articles were excluded (Chafe and Danielewicz excluded these as well). Since it is believed that chatters prefer conciseness, it is predicted that they would use more preposed adjectives than conversationalists.

Conjoining

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) look at conjoining as a tool of syntactic reduction. In this study, conjoining at the phrasal unit level was examined. Chafe and Danielewicz found that writers employed this kind of conjoining more often than lecturers or conversationalists (cf. Givón, 1993). It was expected that editorial writers would not break the pattern and use conjoining at the highest frequency here as well. Chatters and conversationalists, I presumed would not use as much phrasal level conjoining.

Participles

Another way that writers expand intonation units is by employing participles in sentence adjuncts. Here are two examples from Chafe and Danielewicz (1987, p. 102):

> Cult activity **originating** in the hamlet is atypical.
> **Bowed** oscillations can begin in two ways.

Adjunctive participle use is a way that academic writers (primarily) can expand intonation units. In the case of the first example above, if the writer was unable to employ participle integration, the sentence would read something akin to, "It is atypical when cult activity originates in the hamlet." In other words, integration allows the writer to be more precise—instead of using 10 words, he or she can use integration and reduce the number to 6. Also, since verb tense/aspect forms like the perfect and progressive participles are not used in this manner, they were not counted in this study (cf. Givón, 1993). In the case of participles, it is believed that chat and spoken language data should contain fewer of these types of participles.

Coordination

To accurately count coordination, I had to distinguish it from conjoining. I chose the terminology used by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) in each case because they make a functional distinction between the two. Conjoining is a strategy that writers use more frequently than those engaged in talking because it allows them to expand intonation units while being more precise. On the other hand, coordination in the Chafe and Danielewiczian model represents a way of connecting intonation units rather than expanding them. Hence, it is those engaged in spoken conversations who primarily use sentence level joining (cf. Givón, 1993). Here is an example of how speakers involved in conversation tend to use coordination (from Chafe and Danielewicz (1987, p. 103)):

> ...**And** there was two women, hiking up ahead of us,...**and** you sort of got to a rise, **and** then the lake was kind of right there where we were gonna... camp. **And** the two of them got to the rise, and the next minute,...they just...fell over...totally.

All coordination located in sentence/turn initial position, and used to conjoin at the sentence level were counted (see Givón, 1993). However, in the case of spoken language, if a speaker tried to establish the floor by employing the same coordinator continually, only the initial coordinator was counted; the subsequent attempts were not counted (because he or she was believed to be trying to establish the floor). Here is an example from the data:

> Obba: ==**But**...but...but...but...but...but I have...I have it...

Since coordination seems to offer no advantage to chatters (due to length of contribution), and considering the fact that their propositions are generally not connected to the most

recent turn to appear on the monitor, it was predicted that the chat transcript would reveal very few of these, especially when compared to the spoken data.

Audience Involvement: Questions and Responses

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) conclude from their findings that responses (primarily to questions) are an indicator of involvement with the present audience. As one would expect, responses to questions are normally associated with spoken language. In this study, I looked at all questions asked in each mode and then looked at the responses to determine the audience involvement. I also looked at whether or not questions were in fact responded to because this is a further indicator of audience involvement.

Adverbials

Another way of indicating involvement according to Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) is by utilizing adverbials. Folks engaged in conversation are much more likely to talk about spatial and temporal elements because interlocutors are enabled to present people, objects and events concretely as a means to establish interpersonal communion (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 1997). In the present study, I expected to find similar results to Chafe and Danielewicz, and predicted that chatters would use fewer temporal and spatial adverbials because they have little need to establish any sort of relationship with their interlocutors nor can they be held accountable for ambiguous information.

Personal Pronoun References

For the coding of pronouns, it was important to determine not only the number of pronouns chatters used, but how involved (or detached) they were when constructing

dialogue with their fellow interlocutors. With this in mind, I decided to count all of the major pronouns but divide them into three categories: *first person, second person* and *third person.* My argument is that the more first and second person pronouns chatters use, the more involved they are with their fellow interlocutors (see Sinclair, 1990 for a taxonomy of pronouns).

Passives

Passives are very interesting in this respect: Since I am cognizant that chatters may prefer to deal very directly with their interlocutors, I presumed that they would use the fewest. One of the primary functions of using passive voice is to topicalize the *patient* in a sentence by making it more salient than the *agent*, which of course, moves the *patient* to the position of grammatical subject (Tomlin, 1983; 1995; Givón, 1993). This seems to be a particularly effective strategy for academic writers. Recall that in the Chafe and Danielewicz study (1987), academic writers consistently used the most passives; hence, it is tempting to conclude that editorial writers would use the most passives. Nevertheless, while passivity is important in academic writing, especially concerning the issue of adherence to genre conventions (see Swales, 1990), the purposes behind editorials written as debate in political contest are markedly different. Therefore, it is assumed that in all forums participants would prefer directness and avoid using the passive.

Probability Markers

Probability markers can be counted a number of ways; here I incorporated a taxonomy from Salager-Meyer (2001). Probability markers in the present study include

1) adverbial modal phrases such as: *perhaps, possibly, practically, likely, presumably, virtually* and *apparently*; and 2) approximators such as: *approximately, roughly, occasionally, generally, usually, somewhat* and *somehow* (see also Mullholland, 1999). Here again, I believed that editorial writers would not utilize the kinds of calculated language that is covertly required in academic writing (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987) because editorial writers are not under the same kinds of professional and ethical restrictions, not to mention culpability, of academic writers and so it was expected that editorial writers would be less cautious. Of course, I also wanted to see if chatters were inclined to use any kind of probability hedging. My suspicion was that chatters would prefer to be very direct with interlocutors.

Insult Frequency

Besides tabulating and discussing various linguistic elements (from Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987), the number of insults from each forum were counted and discussed.

Using Brown and Levinson (1978) as a guide, insults were divided into two major types, direct and indirect. These two categories were further divided into group affronts and individual affronts. Various examples that follow will illustrate how these insults were categorized in this study.

The first example will demonstrate what is considered a direct insult attacking an individual:

Archrival: Wildchild is indeed a liar.....

The comment above (taken from chat interaction) made by the person Archrival is "bald" (name calling) and attributed directly to an individual.

Direct affronts can also be aimed at groups of persons. Here is one such example:

> Every political party has its fringe element, but it appears that the Republican Party is developing a sizable vocal number…

Although it seems not as harsh, this proposition (taken from a newspaper editorial) still makes the claim that certain members of the Republican Party are members of the fringe element.

Indirect insults are slightly more difficult to identify because context often plays a larger role in determining whether or not something is an insult. This is especially true of sarcastic remarks, which this study considers as indirect insults. To make the appropriate choice the political position of the insulter must be known as well as the context for making the comment.

> **AskMax:** Insolente - lol...Now you are acting like a man...very masculine.

The above comment (obviously aimed at an individual) is in response to a taunting and vulgar remark directed at *AskMax*. *AskMax* and *Insolente* are online enemies, so the preceding entry is obviously meant to sting, but without the context it would almost appear as a compliment. A previous post reveals their animosity towards one another:

> **Insolente:** AskMax...You've been taunting me since you got in here..Don't quit now

A second type of indirect insult that can only be understood in light of the context is implementing the ridiculous to make implications about a group or an individual. Here is another example from the same "conversation."

> **Insolente:** AskMax..Are you crawling back because the light is on you?

In this example, *Insolente* responds to *AskMax's* previous comment by implying that *AskMax* is something akin to a cockroach, or some other nasty creature.

The last kind of indirect attack is a proposition that demonstrates disdain for an idea, statement, action or person that the opposition holds dear. Here is an example from a newspaper editorial:

> 'Francisco Stratton's' Oct.12 letter, "It's just a game to Democrats," is an unfortunate example of extremism...

In the aforementioned example, Francisco Stratton's letter of October 12 is attacked in this follow-up editorial by calling it extremist; undoubtedly the author feels Mr. Stratton is also an extremist but has chosen to attack the letter rather than the person—a kind of modulated attack.

Summary of Data Collection

In summary, this chapter looked at the ways in which data were gathered and subsequently analysed. It was imperative that the content across the three modes of communication had some similarity regarding content and be dialogic in nature. To fulfil this requirement, the data needed to be political in nature; hence, the television show Politically Incorrect was chosen for the spoken texts, the online newspaper the *Standard Times* was chosen for the written texts and the chat channel AOL*'s: From the Left* was chosen for the online chat texts. A 3000 word corpus was collected, compiled and transcribed for each of the three texts (9000 words total). Finally, various grammatical/functional features, as well as insults, were counted and analyzed.

In the Chapter 4, the results of the present study will be examined, then discussed in detail. Following the discussion, the data will be summarized and conclusions will be made.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter reports the results of the analysis of the data obtained from the research with the purpose of highlighting any marked differences (or similarities) between speaking, writing and chatting. The focus then turns to discussing the meaning behind the numbers. For the most part, here, I follow the model that Chafe and Danielewicz used in their 1987 study. Subsequent to this analysis and discussion will follow data and discussion concerning the manner in which interlocutors address one another with a specific focus on insults. Throughout the chapter, examples from the data are used as a means to bolster positions that are argued for or against. At the end of the chapter the data are summarized and concluding comments are added.

Type/Token Ratio

As mentioned in the methodology, type/token ratio is a measurement of lexical density, which Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) use as a yardstick for textual complexity. The data from the type/token analysis reveal a surprise concerning the Internet chat data as the following table illustrates:

TABLE 4-1: TYPE/TOKEN RATIOS

Talk Show Discussion	.25
Editorials	.36
Internet Chat	.34

It was assumed (by this researcher) that the data from the Internet chat samples would find a home neatly centered between speaking and writing because chatters have more time to construct propositions when compared to conversationalists but much less time than writers. However, as these results indicate, this is not the case. As the table indicates, the lexical density of chat text is much closer to that of editorial writing, .34 and .36 respectively.

There are a number of reasons that this is the case. First and foremost is that chatters do not have to compete for turns in the same manner as conversationalists (see Schegloff, 1984). Apparently, even though turns occur, there is enough time to produce a statement of one's choosing. And, just as writers may alter a proposition (or even abandon one), chatters can do this online prior to posting a statement so that all other chatters tuned into the channel can see the result (cf. Halliday, 1987). On the other hand, interlocutors engaged in conversation must continually compete for precious turns or go unheard. The transcripts reveal that one strategy to control the floor is to repeat one or two words until the floor is established (see Schiffrin, 1987). The net result is that type/token ratios tend to naturally drop. Here is one example of an interlocutor trying to establish the floor:

> Obba: ==But...but...but...but...but I have...I have it aah on good source because aah many of the people in the industry what...which I am involved in, they

> do want to represent themselves as being someone that are…that is a lover of God, and that has God in their life. I think that in any ==situation==

In this case Obba uses the word *but* five times as a means of establishing the floor. Actually, the first time he utters the word *but* the floor is his. However, as Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) note, speakers must quickly convert what is in their minds and turn that information into spoken messages. Obba is not immediately ready for the translation and so must repeat the word or risk losing the floor to someone else. Eggins and Slade (1997) suggest that this kind of floor-securing strategy is useful to a speaker to gain the floor, but moreover, allows the speaker cognitive processing time to properly organize what they would like to say. The consequence here is that type/token ratio is decreased.

This problem of translating what is in the mind so that speech can be produced results in speakers not being able to come up with the language they would most likely prefer to use if they were given endless amounts of time. Obba's example turn on the preceding page reveals that even once the floor has been established, he must process language on the fly. So, he uses "aah" to give himself additional time to construct and produce the proposition. Here is another example:

> Heather: Well we are pondering that Um, this is not…this is not a race, this is not a contest based on sexual orientation. It's based on ya know male and female, like what you are as far as your gender. Ya know, he is not a woman. He may dress like woman. He…he…I don't think he wants to be a woman. He does not wanna have a sex change if I read that article correctly.

In this case, Heather uses "um," "ya know," as well as hesitations, to buy her mind some precious milliseconds (Eggins & Slade, 1997). The point here is that the speaker must select words that are not always the most appropriate, and even with this advantage must use strategies just to keep the discourse flowing. Because writers and chatters do not have

to deal with verbal output, they have a much greater advantage when it comes to lexical choice (cf. Lakoff, 1973). Additionally, Heather employs repetition of previously accessed lexical items to gain lexical coherence (e.g., the use of *woman* three times; the use of *he* six times, etc.), which of course further reduces lexical density.

Nevertheless, it seems logical that writers would have a significant advantage over chatters, but the data do not support this notion. One reason is that Internet chatting is distinct from both spoken and written language. Thus, chatters employ language that is suited to their environment and this means additional words are required for both speed and target.

First, concerning speed, chatters employ variation to express the same notion. In this study, for example, the second amendment is referred to in the following ways:

2d Amdt., 2d amend, 2nd, Amendment

This is only one example. Chatters seem to employ any tactic that will save them keyboard production time, so "you" becomes "u" and "government" becomes "gov't" or "govt." Oddly, apostrophes are apparently optional in online chat. There seems to be a general disregard for them, even concerning certain contractions. Hence, in the data "you are" is represented in four ways: 1) you are 2) your 3) you're and 4) youre.

All of the spelling innovations add to the word variety used in chat. In other words, lexical density increased by a variety of these innovative forms.

Second, chatters often target their specific intended audience. Whereas what they want to express might add to the general thrust of a particular topic, they often want to respond to a specific statement made by a particular chatter. Thus in the data sample, no less than 35 different nicknames are referenced by individual chatters.

In face-to-face conversations examined in this study, interlocutors mentioned an intended target of a particular proposition by name but once. In conversation there is a general awareness of who is talking to whom (even if that is everyone in the group). This is in fact directly tied to the dynamics of spoken conversation. To add to any discussion, one must be ever aware of what is currently on the table. Only if one intends to comment on a topic not presently in focus must the speaker employ such specificity as identifying the intended target of a proposition; in fact, there is evidence to suggest that the addition of personal names to conversation would actually impede communication due to additional cognitive processing (cf. Chafe, 1994; Foertsch & Gernsbacher, 1994). In the one example obtained from the spoken, face-to-face data, one can see how the host brings a previous topic to the forefront of discussion and in turn identifies the originator of the topic:

> Okay, now **Michael** when we came to Cleveland you had an interesting issue and I'm going to let you set it up. You basically feel==

Nevertheless, this is the only occurrence where one interlocutor feels the need to mention another interlocutor. Michael is then referred to as "you" in the subsequent pronoun mention; referring to him in another way would be unexpected (Foertsch & Gernsbacher, 1994).

Chatting is distinctively different. Lag time and multiple topics make it a necessity for chatters to identify why they have said what they have said, and to make this crystal clear, they often need to refer to the chatter to whom they are responding. In chat, it becomes necessary to make sure the intended audience gets the message or comment. Thus, names add to the variety of language produced in chat forum. This example illustrates what occurs in chat:

Bsiiinc: **toots** go to...oh, i see you know the way..
Rich NY RedNeck: **deus**, i don't get any special treatments from the gop
TOOTS746: **bsi** oh so you can relate?
DEUS EX3: The Govt owes us health care
KC JONES53: **ARM**, LOL, your not earning anything for me, I have my own pension plan thank you
ARMKEV: LMALO **DEUS**
TOOTS746: thought so we had this discussion already youre very rude
Rich NY RedNeck: i don't need gop to make my money
JKul007: **KC**--I don't like dumbasses from Ohio
JKul007: either
Bsiiinc: go get yourself off on a harley...great accomplishment in life ..old fart
Rich NY RedNeck: employess are good enough
ARMKEV: **KC** why dop u think everyone owes u?
KC JONES53: **JKul,** you HATE everything and everyone, your sick, get help
DEUS EX3: if congress wont give us health care then congress should cut its own health benefits
TOOTS746: **bsi** reborn true colors always come out
TOOTS746: attack
TOOTS746: its easier
KC JONES53: **ARM**, ??? noone owes me anything, what are you babbling about??
Rich NY RedNeck: even i know that without employees any business would not run
MitziMN: right on **deus**...but we should cut it for them...they work for us...
Bsiiinc: catholic...not even close dumb bi---
TOOTS746: youre acting like an ignorant moron believe what you will
DEUS EX3: yep **Mitz**

Within the preceding mess, coherent conversation and arguments must be extracted, not only by the researcher but by the participants themselves. Thus it becomes essential to identify who is talking about what and to whom!

One other factor that added a few words to the variation of language used by chatters relates to misspellings (or perceived misspellings). As previously mentioned, chatters seem relatively unconcerned about contractions; they also seem less concerned with perceived misspells. The reason I use the term 'perceive' here is that chatters sometimes may employ misspellings as a strategy to gain time, so there is a question

whether any misspelling really occurred. This proposition from the data sample exemplifies the problem:

thatsa stupid idea

Here it is difficult to tell if the chatter made one error, two errors or no errors. It is perfectly reasonable to assume "thatsa" incorporates "that is a" as a time-saver. The point here of course is that these uninterpretable forms represent more lexical items.

It is important to mention that this is not the case with all misspellings; chatters sometimes take care to make corrections, especially if their proposition may be misconstrued. Take this example in the dialogue about gun control:

Hades976: God loves a well amed christian!

Hades976: *armed

Hades976 is strongly anti-gun and wants this statement to carry the appropriate sarcasm, but the misspelling makes the proposition confusing, so *Hades976* quickly makes the correction. In any case, misspellings add a few additional words to the variety of language employed online.

It should be noted that some of these misspellings or perceived misspellings are due to the pace of Internet chat. Obviously chatters have more processing time than speakers, but they still must construct text quickly if they wish to stay abreast of the conversation as it unfolds. This certainly contributes to the number of true misspellings; chatters seem to care very little about misspelling as long as their propositions are understood.

Hedges

Hedges are lexical devices employed by the a speaker who is engaged in spoken conversation (generally) as means to express dissatisfaction with what he or she has just said or is about to say. Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) looked at hedges that pointed to a language producer's inability to pinpoint the precise word for maximum fit. This study revealed the same results as Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) concerning writers. The talk show discussants, on the other hand, produced 10 hedges, while the online chatters produced one as the table below indicates.

TABLE 4-2: HEDGES

Political Discussion	10
Editorials	0
Political Chat	1

It is not surprising that talk show discussants were more inclined to use hedges since they must construct on the fly. Here are a couple of examples from the transcripts:

> Bill: We're talking...**sort of** got onto how the aah the presence of God gets into everyday life. I think award shows have become the PTL club of television. And lest people think I am attacking the right, which I'm happy to do, let me just say I think the left wing, the lefties==with God==
>
> Kevin: ==I think there's== gotta be some kind of gender distinction. Ya know when you go to an event you're expecting to see ya know, if it's the homecoming queen, you're expecting to see a women. Ya know, you don't want to get there and just be all confused. Ya know, **it's like** aah ya know you're let down you're disappointed.

In the two examples, the speakers leave the listeners with a slightly "fuzzier" picture of what they intend (Lakoff, 1973). It is difficult to conclude that the speakers are truly dissatisfied, but they are clearly giving indications that what they are about to say

may not be the most precise way to make their point. In the battleground called conversation, the person who is speaking wants to sound logical and reasonable (Grice, 1975), but it is cognitively overwhelming to always find the most expected or shall I say the most prototypical manner in which to say something.

Being off the mark, then, is a matter of degrees, not necessarily "black and white." If this idea is put into more concrete terms, it will become even clearer. For example, most people have the capability of instantaneously imagining a prototypical bird; in my experience a robin fits nicely into that category; it has wings feathers, a little yellow beak, and it flies and nests—even its size is right. On the other hand, a penguin does not fit so nicely into the category of bird; it is large, odd-shaped, and it does not nest, but it is still a bird; however, it is not the prototypical example (Rosch, et al., 1976; Rosch, 1978). When speakers are under pressure to say just the right thing, they often cannot find the most efficient means and occasionally will even make blunders (prescriptively speaking) that may not happen if the cognitive demands were lessened (Bybee & Moder, 1983). What hedging does is offer speakers an escape from full responsibility for sounding slightly unreasonable or off kilter when they are about to miss their mark or have already missed it.

In this study, it must be the case that chatters are under more pressure to produce rational propositions than editorial writers, but do they need to hedge? The answer is "not very often." There was only one hedge, but it was a result of a contributor grasping for more accuracy. Here is that example:

LIB NYC: I think the most recent was from the 30's or **something like that**

Obviously, *LIB NYC* is intent on bolstering his/her previous point, but is slightly unsure of the accuracy of the aforementioned statement, so there is a need to hedge. In other words, there is certainly a much greater potential to hedge in chatting, but hedging did not really materialize in this study. I believe there are two reasons for this. First, chatters cannot really be held accountable for their declarations; it is difficult for them to lose face because they are so well protected by social distance and, generally speaking, complete anonymity (Brown & Levinson, 1976), so there is no real need to escape culpability for any inaccuracies. Second, to hedge is to show uncertainty; that is why the preceding example is so rare. In a political chat forum sides are drawn up and defended; hedging is out of place because it shows weakness.

Interestingly, there were two instances where a participant used a "false" hedge. The chosen wording is that of hedge, but the effect is meant to rebuke the opposition. In the first case, *Jubal28* uses *whatever*, which is sometimes used as a hedge by those engaged in conversations. Here is that example:

Jubal28: LIB: **Whatever**. I know full well what the Framers intended.

What *Jubal28* has done in this example is to suggest that it is *LIB's* proposition that is "fuzzy" and illogical—a kind of reverse hedge. The second case, would be considered a hedge if the contributor did not front the clause with contrastive *but*, which has the effect of adding sarcasm instead of uncertainty:

Gueralinda: free college education...**but** what am i saying???

In either case, the "false" hedging is a means to malign the opponents rather than express uncertainty. However, it should be emphasized again that these were the only two

occurrences of this kind of "false" hedging. Certainly no definitive conclusions can be drawn from these examples.

Inexplicit Third Person and Personal Pronoun Reference

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) looked at inexplicit third person references as a means to point out that richness of vocabulary and subtle linguistic distinctions are sacrificed during conversation (and in their study lectures as well) in favor of directness of thought. In the present study, I looked at the same inexplicit references as Chafe and Danielewicz (*this*, *that* and *it*). Table 4-3 reveals the frequencies within each communication channel:

TABLE 4-3: INEXPLICIT THIRD PERSON REFERENCES

Political Discussion	66
Editorials	31
Political Chat	26

The number of inexplicit references found in political discussion is consistent with the numbers that Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) tallied for conversations and lectures. As they have claimed, folks engaged in conversation (or in lectures) are not afforded the time to be explicit, and this results in vague reference usage. Here is an example where the host of *Politically Incorrect* used *it* without a clearly defined antecedent:

> Bill: We were talking about Ronald Reagan last week because the big biography thing came out last week and look I have no desire to talk about him again because every time I do I get all sorts of hate mail because the people who love Ronald Reagan love him beyond all measure of sanity. I liked Ronald Reagan; he was a very nice man when he was president. I'm sure he is a very nice man now, but they have put him now...today the governor of this state

signed **it** into law. He is on a license plate. You can get a commemorative...well a commemorative plate actually would be appropriate==

In the above instance, it seems as if what is being referred to is a bill of some kind. Yet, there is no anaphoric or cataphoric reference to identify that it is a bill that is being talked about. Interlocutors are assumed to have complete understanding without any clearly identified antecedent. In the example below, Al uses *that*, but without referencing an antecedent; however, there is a discourse function at work as well:

Bill: All right, we are talking about these "Good, bad, ugly" awards about advertising and how women can be differently portrayed. Here is what my problem is...is that the agenda is first and reality is second. The award that won, the one they love, the one they think is great, the grand winner was the one: "I can do anything better than you can," with Michael Jordan and Mia Hamm, the soccer star, the female soccer star in which she beats him at a bunch of different sports, which of course is a huge lie. ==Michael Jordan==
Lydia: ==Okay.==
Bill: ==would kick her ass at every sport.==
Lydia: ==Exactly. ==Here's the problem==
Bill: ==So they're saying,== "Here's the one that's a big lie, and that's the one we like, so that's what we award."
Lydia: ==Right.==
Al: ==Well,== that's what you expect from a group like **that**. ==I mean **that's** the ultimate political crowd.==

In the above case, one can tell from the context that Al thinks that the organization introduced by Bill has a political agenda, but this is never clearly stated, although it is certainly implied. The context gives the listeners adequate information so that the conversation does not come to a screeching halt. Still, speakers do not necessarily prefer to use the context to make their fellow interlocutors surmise what is meant by one reference or another. In the preceding example, Bill is probably unaware that his use of *it* has no textual antecedent; however, the processing demands required to contribute to spoken conversations, lead to more vague references being accepted.

Return for a moment to the preceding example; the first *that* used by the panelist Al is a reference to the beliefs held by the organization in question, and in the second case, *that* seems to refer to the organization (or its members); however, in neither instance can this information be specifically garnered from the antecedent. Even so, what cannot be overlooked is the subtle discourse message conveyed by *that* in this case. McCarthy (1994) maintains that speakers make pragmatic choices when selecting subsequent references. In the preceding example, Al holds a very strong negative opinion about the group he is referring to, as well as their belief system. He decided to use *that*, not once but twice. McCarthy asserts that employing *that* often signals an attempt to marginalize what or who is being referred to. In this case, one can clearly see Al's attempt at marginalizing people associated with the organization. His use of *that* rather than referring to the organization by name or by using *this* indicates his intention to denigrate the group.

In contrast to conversationalists, writers have much more time to construct their texts; hence, one would expect to find fewer inexplicit references used in political editorials, which is in fact the case as Table 4.3 indicates. When compared to the Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) study, the numbers align themselves more with letters than with academic papers (11 per 1000 and 4 per 1000 respectively). After all, editorials are not meant to be subjective, so these numbers come as no surprise. Here is an example from the written discourse:

> Instead, you wait around all these years for a local board of health with their assumed unlimited powers granted by God Almighty, we assume, to speak your piece for you. You then latch on to the tails of their pre-Revolutionary War red coats, spewing and echoing their rhetoric. But none of you, whether of political influence or private citizenship, will bother to take on the Big Guys up there in D.C., where **it** all starts and could finish as well.

In the example above the writer assumes that the reader has enough information so she does not have to "spell-out" her point. The inexplicit use of *it* here refers to laws about smoking and seems to be used for effect rather than for any other reason. The statement reeks of ominous government policies controlling others' lives. Here is another example from the editorials:

> Prior to this bank, how many restaurants in New Bedford, Fairhaven, or Dartmouth could one frequent with the guarantee of a truly smoke-free environment (since, as we all know, smoke does not recognize the imaginary barriers which delineate smoking and non-smoking areas in an open dining room, regardless of its size)? I can think of none, which is far from "exercising (my) American right to choose," a right so hotly vaunted by Ms. Breakell.
>
> **This** is why the rhetoric employed by those who do not support the ban is so largely hollow.

Comparing this example to spoken conversation yields an interesting difference. Here the use of *this* is inexplicit, but it is clear that in the a foreshown model case the reference subsumes the notion that it is non-smokers whose rights are being trampled not smokers. However, what is of greater importance to the writer is that inexplicit *this* employed here carries a discourse function as well. McCarthy (1994) points out that persons often employ *this* as a means to signal the audience that the topic in focus is changing to a previously raised issued, which will become the new topic in focus. In the example, what is important to the writer is to shift the topic focus from "the smoking ban in restaurants" to "whose rights are really being denied."

Last, I examine the inexplicit references that show up in online discourses or more appropriately the lack of inexplicit references. From Table 4-3, one can see that Internet chat is distinct from spoken language. Compared to the talk show discussants they used fewer than half (66 to 26). The reason is likely twofold. First, similar to writers, chatters

have more time to produce their propositions and can therefore take more time. Second, too many inexplicit references can add more confusion to an already slightly confusing venue. (Perhaps if there were fewer people online, something I never encountered, the number of inexplicit references would increase.)

Here is a case in point; although no other chatter mentions the confusing proposition, it is very unclear what is being referred to:

Jubal28: LIB: I suppose all the supportive writings at the time, explaining intent, are irrelevant.
LIB NYC: Besides Jubal, if it means nothing, why does the NRA consistently leave it out
NAGUAL4A: well lib....then that explains a lot....
Hades976: God loves a well amed christian!
Saw011: LIB-commas,come on,your grooping
Jubal28: LIB: I'm an attorney, and I know about the SPIRIT of law.
Hades976: armed*
LIB NYC: Jubal to tell you the truth, **THAT'S** what made me notice **it** in the first place!

Although *LIB NYC* has referred to something, it seems that is outside the dialogue or perhaps the supportive writings mentioned by *Jubal28* on the first line from this dialogue. In either case, the statement seems to make little sense. The statement is completely ignored and another subtopic is quickly picked up.

Other inexplicit references in online chat are most likely used for effect and as a way to subsume more than a single noun or noun phrase, similar to strategies that writers employ. Here is an example:

MitziMN: the last thing i will ever say on my death bed is...
ARMKEV: KC im not here saying the govt OWES me like your beggar friend Deus
KC JONES53: ARM, LOL, and your a hard worker ?? doubt it, riding on Govt $$ shame
DEUS EX3: GOP=special rights for the rich
MitziMN: Gee...i wish i would have spent more time at the office...
MitziMN: and remember...you can't take **it** with you.

In this example *MitziMN* uses a cliché for effect. She has concluded her diatribe with an unclear reference, but everyone online knows that she means that you cannot take wealth (money, possessions) with you when you die, so why spend your time in the ill pursuit of such things?

McCarthy (1994) mentions that *it* also serves as a signal to interlocutors that the present topic will remain in focus for the moment. In the case of *MitziMN* she (he?) has maintained the topic focus of "the obsessive pursuit of wealth," which she had maintained from her previous turns. If one doubts the veracity of this, one can simply look at her next turn:

> MitziMN: when i'm 80 years old i really don't think i'll wll care what type of chair i am sitting in.

She has continued the topic of the emptiness of pursuing wealth in this turn.

Literary and Colloquial Vocabulary

As Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) have mentioned there is nothing in the nature of writing nor speaking that precludes the use of either literary or, at the opposite end, colloquial vocabulary. However, in their study they showed a chasm between spoken language and written language concerning both lexical styles. Recall that colloquial language is what one would tend to normally find in conversational situations, especially "lexically fresh" words, while literary language is that language that one would normally associate with more formalized styles of writing. Table 4-4 reveals the findings:

TABLE 4-4: LITERARY AND COLLOQUIAL VOCABULARY

	Literary Vocabulary	Colloquial Vocabulary
Political Discussion	32	131
Editorials	156	32
Political Chat	49	87

My findings concur with Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), namely that spoken language samples contains much colloquial lexical items and written language samples contains much more literary lexical items. Chat, on the other hand, was centered between the two other forums.

The talk show data samples have many examples of colloquial language use, which make spoken language sound like spoken language. Here is an example from the text:

> Bill: He wants to be able run for the actual title. I...I mean there must be an easier way to get **beat up**, but I **guess** this **kid** doesn't know it. Um, he does not like the term transgender. He says he is gender...he has a gender identity disorder (pause), and wants to be able to run, and this is a controversy, for the ==homecoming.==

This is easily identified as spoken language. If this were a newspaper article, the second sentence from the above text would probably be something akin to: "**Apparently**, a **student** having or claiming to have a gender identity disorder is often looked upon by his or her peers with derision, which can eventually lead to the student being **physically abused** from those same peers." Of course, in the spoken forum, the previous sentence would sound "stuffy" and far too serious for casual conversation. Unlike this scenario, the intent by the speaker in this example reveals just the opposite. His aim is to lighten

the seriousness of such a statement and using colloquial language is the perfect tool to accomplish the task.

Editorials writers, it would appear, use language to make their arguments sound more intelligent, precise and logically reasoned, and what better way than to employ more literal types of language. Here is an example from the editorials employing such language:

Another of Ms. Breakell's **dubious** "points": her **assertion** that anyone who supports the ban but who has not "bothered to take on the Big Guys up there in D.C.," should be considered a supporter without credibility. This **stance** is nothing short of **specious**. It is like saying that if I **championed** civil rights in the mid-1960s **via** the manner in which I conducted my personal and professional life, but failed to march with a picket sign in Washington D.C., I should be **branded** a liar, and my point of view **regarding** racial equality **rendered** meaningless. I think not.

These are lexical items that I expect to encounter in written prose; they provide the "special" ingredients that turn a logical argument into a more powerful argument. And, unless I happen to be dining with William F. Buckley, I would not expect to encounter such formal language in conversation.

The chat data revealed more uses of casual language than literal language. It was an interesting mix. Chatters, at times, seem to want to impress or convince their online peers that their arguments are sound by using more literal language, such as in the following example:

Jubal28: LIB: I suppose all the supportive **writings** at the time, explaining **intent**, are **irrelevant**.

In the above example *Jubal28* uses lawyer jargon (*intent*) to make a convincing argument. On the other hand, they also like to use casual language as can be seen in the following example:

Annie170: clinton-gore team trying to **knock off** the elderly **coz** they cost to much

Chatters seem to prefer a more conversational environment (give and take), presumably because responses must be relatively immediate. If one wants to make a statement, it is true that one has more time to construct the statement, but not so much as to ponder in deep reflection over the wording of the statement, and certainly not enough time to check with a thesaurus. As I have already mentioned, the fact that there are quite a few misspellings indicates that time is precious, so although chatters have to worry less about getting and keeping the floor, they still must be able to respond relatively rapidly if they intend to "keep up" with the other chatters. Hence, cognitive processing becomes more demanding online, especially when compared to written texts Thus, chatters prefer casual language to literary language, making it closer to spoken conversation.

Contractions

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) also look at contractions as a form that is closely associated with spoken conversation. In this study, contraction use online included contractions that did not contain the conventionalized apostrophe; recall, that I also counted these contractions and totaled them in a separate column. Here is the table with the corresponding numbers:

TABLE 4-5: CONTRACTIONS

	Total Contractions	Contractions w/o Apostrophes
Political Discussion	146	x
Editorials	31	0
Political Chat	110	61

As Table 4-5 illustrates, writers of editorials prefer to use fewer contractions than either conversationalists or chatters. These data reveal that the conversationalists in this study used almost five times as many contractions as writers but only one-third more than chatters. Although there are very few contractions used in editorial expression, some are employed. Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) found that letter writers used contractions at roughly 18 per 100 words, while academic papers revealed none. It was found that editorials writers fell between letters and academic papers (31 or about 10 per 1000 words). It seems that there are occasions where editorial writers want their rhetoric to resemble public speech-making, and so use more contracted forms. Here is one such example:

> Too many local restaurants, particularly Portuguese restaurants, are losing their camisas (shirts) and they **don't** understand why. Neither do I.
>
> They **don't** understand how you can acquiesce to the letter of state law, spend thousands upon thousands of dollars building a separate smoking room, then not be allowed to use it. Neither do I.
>
> They **don't** understand how this could happen here in America. Neither do I.
>
> **It's** as if Antonio Salazar has risen from the ashes of Hell, where he eternally belongs, and joined the Board of Health. Maybe he has.

The examples shown in the sample text, reveal an interesting element, namely, that the collocate used with *don't* is always *understand,* which is a naturally sounding

alliance. Actually four of the five times that *don't* is employed, it is followed by *understand* and the other instance is followed by *think*, another natural collocation. Using *do not* in such cases sounds slightly awkward and consequently the force of the statements would be affected. In fact, the talk show data samples reveal that there are no occurrences of *do* with *not*. My conjecture is that the non-contracted *do not* sequence only appears in spoken language rarely and most of the time for emphasis.

Writers apparently also consider phonological reduction because the writer in the preceding example uses *it's*, which sounds less awkward than *it is*. If one considers how this sentence would be spoken aloud, the problem would be immediately identified. Speakers would naturally prefer to use *it's* over *it is* because *it is as if* represents a more difficult production problem. *It, is* and *if* are all one syllable minimal pairs, and *as* is a minimal pair of its collocate *is*. In this instance, then, there is a string of four, one syllable minimal pairs, so by simply contracting *it is* to *it's*, speakers are able to eliminate the extended string of minimal pairs, which is apparently important to writers as well. The conclusion here is that in these instances it seems as if the spoken language influences the written language; yet, this is the exception rather than the standard case (cf. Baddeley, 1990).

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) claim that spoken language is generally more innovative than written language; contractions represent one such linguistic element associated with speaking. For comparison sake, if one looks at the contraction that occurred at the highest frequency in spoken language, *that's* (27 times) and compare it to the number of written occurrences (0 times) and the number used by chatters (8), one can easily see that this contraction is an innovative spoken form. In fact in these data, writers

did not use the sequence *that is*, which amazingly only occurred 4 times, twice in the spoken sample and twice in the chat data. Apparently for these texts *that's* represents a more spoken linguistic element. In any case, contractions are consistently used throughout the spoken discourse. Here is a sample from the spoken data:

> Bill: ==So **they're** saying,== "**Here's** the one that's a big lie, and **that's** the one we like, so **that's** what we award."
> Lydia: ==Right.==
> Al: ==Well,== **that's** what you expect from a group like that. ==I mean **that's** the ultimate political crowd.==
> Nancy: ==WOOOOOOOOO!==
> Al: ==I mean **that's** what they are. No, I mean they are politically correct; **they're**...**they're**...**they're** probably a bunch of liberal feminists who **don't** like the way...who..who **don't** like the way women...some women want to portray their bodies. They are...they are liberal fascists. They would shut down every kind of expression ==that==
> Lydia: ==Oh god!==
> Al: ==they **didn't** agree with. Well, they would. They would...they==
> Nancy: ==**I've** had enough ==of the "F" word from you, enough "F" words.==

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) also mention that there are constraints put on speakers by the environment; hence, they employ contractions to deal with these constraints. However, apparently, there are certain constraints that exist in the chat world as well because chatters also demonstrated a preference for contractions. Their world also makes use of innovation including the apostropheless contraction. As one can see from Table 4-5, chatters used more contractions without apostrophes than with them. In the example below, there are only apostropheless contractions used:

> ARMKEV: DEUS the **GOVT** owes you NOTHING
> DEUS EX3: yes it does
> DEUS EX3: the **Govt** owes us all
> KC JONES53: ARM, get real, get a life, **Ill** match portfolios with you anytime, send your paycheck over
> KC JONES53: and **Ill** cash it for you
> ARMKEV: DEUS u just lost your argument claiming the **GOVT** owes you something
> DEUS EX3: as long as we pay taxes the **Govt** owes us

The above example illustrates the tendency by chatters to make contractions from single words, in this case the word *government* is contracted (of course used here without the apostrophe). This represents a second innovation specific to chatting and perhaps very casual writing. Single word contractions did not occur at all in writing. Another, version of the apostropheless contraction is the reduced form for *you are*. Here both innovative forms are shown below:

DEUS EX3: ARM **youre** a traitor to your own class
MitziMN: when i'm 80 years old i really don't think i'll wll care what type of chair i am sitting in.
ARMKEV: yes KC i work in fact i go to work today at 2 so ill be there earning money while the 2 of u
DEUS EX3: if **your** rich then yes redneck

What is interesting about the aforementioned example is the same chatter uses both innovative forms in consecutive turns. It should be noted here that inexperienced writers sometimes use *your* to represent *you are*. The point here is that since one obviously cannot experience the mindset of the chatters who use the innovative form to represent *you are*, one cannot draw conclusions about why they prefer to use them over the prescribed forms.

Although I have thus far focused on the innovative forms used by chatters, they still used the conventional forms rather frequently. Here is an example from the text:

WillieMan7: T7, why **can't** you negroes just stay in the ghetto and smoke crack? We will give it to you
LSU SigEp1: PERSON...public school
WillieMan7: free, from the government.
Person3084625472: great
LSU SigEp1: PERSON...**what's** your point?
Captain Ebonics: What? I **haven't** killed a black person in a drive by in the lat 30 minutes.

To sum up then, chatters prefer contractions--both innovative and conventional forms. What cannot be determined from these data is whether there are any patterns regarding when innovative forms are chosen. However, it is most likely that production time plays a role; one less character to type means that the time it takes to post a message is reduced by a few precious milliseconds.

Prepositional Phrases and Phrase Sequences

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) claim that prepositional phrases (in English) exact little in the way of cognitive resources and therefore, they find their way into all forms of language. On the other hand, they found that sequenced prepositional phrases occurred much less frequently in spoken language, indicating that stringing prepositional phrases together requires more cognitive processing; they found that writers employ these strings more frequently (which of course increases the number of prepositional phrases used.) In Table 4-6, besides showing the number of prepositions used and the number of stringed prepositions employed, I also recorded the percentage of stringed prepositions compared to the total number:

TABLE 4-6: PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES AND PHRASE SEQUENCES

	Prepositional Phrases	Prepositional Phrase Sequences
Political Discussions	216	16 (7.4%)
Editorials	324	64 (19.6%)
Political Chat	199	21 (10.6%)

What becomes immediately clear from this table is the proclivity of editorial writers to employ prepositions as well as stringed prepositions, while Internet chatters and talk show discussants used far fewer.

The reason that the editorial writings contain more prepositional phrases and more sequences is probably related to two factors. 1) Regardless of minimal processing demands required to produce prepositions, writers still have more time to ponder and produce them than speakers or apparently, chatters. 2) Writers use prepositions as a way to be more precise (in English) by modifying nouns and verbs, making them more specific (see Slobin, 1992). Precision can be enhanced when prepositions are strung together. Here is an example from the data;

> Another **of** *Ms. Breakell's dubious "points":* her assertion that anyone who supports the ban but who has not "bothered to take on the Big Guys **up** *there* **in** *D.C.*," should be considered a supporter **without** *credibility*. This stance is nothing short **of** *specious*. It is like saying that if I championed civil rights in the mid-1960s **via** *the manner* **in** *which* I conducted my personal and professional life, but failed to march **with** *a picket sign* **in** *Washington D.C.*, I should be branded a liar, and my point **of** *view* regarding racial equality rendered meaningless.

This sample not only illustrates the great number of prepositions, but also the manner in which writers can string prepositions together to provide the readers with greater detail and precision. It is not just *Big Guys*, but *Big Guys up there in D.C.* The prepositions tell us where the *Big Guys* are and even how one should view them—they are *up there*—they are not the local more reasonable folks (see Talmy, 1985; Slobin, 1992)

Spoken conversation, on the other hand, requires less precision, and so naturally employs fewer prepositions and moreover, fewer strings of prepositions when compared to written language. From Table 4-6, one can see that conversationalists used 111 fewer

prepositions than writers (327-216). Here is a similar sized chunk of dialogue (pulled at random) from the spoken data. Note the lack of prepositions:

> Kathy: ==I like it when the white rappers say, "God, Dr. Dre and their Jewish accountants.
> Bill: Yeah. (pause) Exactly.
> Nadine: But==
> Kathy: ==I like to give a shout out **to** *Dr. Dre, God and Maury Rosenboom.* Keep **in** *mind* Benjamin Digoder. That's my favorite, M and M. Oh he kills me.
> Nadine: I…I would think that **for** *people* who were really devote that having…dragging God **to** *every ya know awards show and every political speech* because no politician, no matter how many sins he or she has committed==would end a speech **without** *saying "God bless America.==*

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) found that preposition use by lecturers was more similar to academic writing, and letters were more like spoken conversation. They suggest that this is because lecturers use prepositions to try and mimic academic writing and letter writers use prepositions to try to mimic spoken conversation. The current language samples suggest that chatters must use prepositions to mimic conversation because the numbers are so similar (216 for verbal conversation and 199 for chat). Here is a similar sized sample from the chat data (randomly selected):

> DBA500: Bsii: Gore is very charitable..he gave $358.00 **in** *1997*
> MitziMN: mother teresa said true charity is giving something you really can't afford to...
> MitziMN: so i could care less if billionaire pigs give $$$ **to** *charities....*
> Bsiiinc: Democrats would spit **on** *Mother theresa*
> Webster824: Mitz.....well, you should care
> MitziMN: stop the charitable donations and start paying workers wages that allow them to live.
> TOOTS746: bsi wow youre bitter.....
> Bsiiinc: yes they do
> MitziMN: then there would be less need ***for*** *the charities*....oh...but wait....
> MitziMN: it corps did that, they couldn't write the donations off....i see…

The sample illustrates the general paucity of prepositions and the lack of stringed prepositional phrases. The other important element that must be noted is the overall

shortness of the statements. This is consistent throughout the data. Chatters cannot spend so much time forming long eloquently worded statements because to remain engaged, they must get their messages out. This results in fewer prepositions used as a consequence, beyond the restraints instituted by cognitive demands.

Besides this, chatters are limited by the environment (in this study). AOL software restricts the number of characters allowed per contribution. Rather than have their contributions split, they may prefer to compose propositions consisting of fewer words. In other words, it might be more fruitful to forego precise verb and noun modification in favor of speed and avoidance of split propositions. This results in fewer propositions, which gives chat a conversational feel concerning this one aspect.

Attributive Adjectives

Another means for writers to be more precise via syntactic integration is by modifying nouns using attributive adjectives and nouns. Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) looked at preposed adjectives, so I have as well. Specifically, I have included all preposed adjectives and noun modifiers except for those categorized as possessives, pronouns and articles (Fernand, 1963). Table 4-7 provides the data:

TABLE 4-7: ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVES

Political Discussion	144
Editorials	299
Political Chat	243

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) found that academic writers used the most preposed attributive adjectives. In the current data sample, it comes as no surprise that the

editorial writers employed the most. Here is an example from the data illustrating how effective adjectives can be:

> No less a **preposterous** notion is her suggestion that the number of non-smokers who opt for an **unhealthy** diet when dining out ("that will kill you a lot quicker than anyone's **second-hand** smoke") precludes the **general** public's right to **smoke-free** air. What kind of **apples-and-oranges** scenario is this? First of all, one must necessarily overlook her **broad** generalization that **every restaurant** patron is gorging themselves on "**prime** rib, **lobster** meat drenched in butter, or that **deep-fried seafood** platter." Hardly.

The prolific use of preposed adjectives not only allows the expansion of intonation units (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987), but moreover, provides the writer with influential tools to paint a picture of his adversary: She is illogical. Adjectives such as *preposterous*, *apples-and-oranges* and *broad* are used to influence the reader to think in a similar manner. And lest one thinks that only one side of the debate uses such emotion-laden adjectives, here is a second example from the editorial data:

> Why, then, do I feel like a victim tied to the stake after the **Salem Witch** Trials, as the Board of Health approaches with a **lit** match in hand?
>
> Burn, witch, burn.
>
> Because I see hypocrisy in the remains of the day, along with the **remaining cigarette vending** machines inside establishments where smoking is not allowed.
>
> And I believe that if money talks and you-know-what walks, then it's time for the Board of Health to take a hike.
>
> I believe that this time they've made **smoking** hysteria.
>
> And in the process, some **local** businesses are destined to become casualties of **friendly** fire, "**collateral** damage" in a **self-righteous** war that nobody but a handful of Fascists want to declare.
>
> Why, then, do I feel like Henry David Thoreau huddled on the shore of Walden Pond, in **singular** protest against government's interference with **individual** liberty?

> Because, no matter how hard anyone tries to divert this **dog-and-pony** show, it all comes down to your freedom of choice.

Again, the writer uses adjectives, this time to paint the other side as maniacal. It is not just a trial, it is the *Salem Witch* trials. It is not just a war, it is a *self-righteous* war. The use of adjectives helps the writer not only describe the situation, but make an impassioned plea, while painting the other side as being irrational. Hence, writers use attribution by way of adjectives to expand intonation units and make their arguments more forceful, and consequently use more adjectives than talk show discussants or chatters (299 for writers, 144 and 243 respectively for talk show participants and chatters).

A second reason attributive adjectives are more prevalent in editorial writing is that they can be strung together. Because this kind of stringing requires more cognitive processing, a luxury that writers generally have, they can expand intonation units while enhancing descriptions (Givón, 1993). Here is an example from the editorial data:

> Indeed, as the **smooth** (and **profitable**) transition to **smoke-free public** environments is evidenced in **large urban** centers such as Boston, New York and Los Angeles, I am nothing short of flabbergasted that in our own community there can be any remaining debate about the viability (economic and otherwise) of such measures, particularly when the dangers of second-hand smoke continue to pose such an **enormous** and **irrefutable** threat to the public's health.

Conversely, the spoken data revealed very few such strings and so, much less passion. Whereas, one preposition per intonation unit may be relatively easy to process, the demands for stringing them together is much more cognitively troublesome. Besides activating the most appropriate choices for description, the producer must also string them together in a relatively fixed order; otherwise, the production is nonsensical

(Teschner & Evans, 1993; Lock, 1996). As a result, conversationalists tend not to string prepositions as this fruitful stretch of text from the spoken data illustrates:

> Niger: Yeah, very **simple** goals, revive the economy, crush communism, expand **free**-markets, and he achieved just about all of them.
>
> Bill: Well, aah==
>
> Niger: ==Very **simple** goals, very **direct** focus and he achieved them.==
>
> Bill: ==I have always given him **tremendous** credit for his…saying it was an **evil** empire because the **Soviet** Union was an **evil** empire, and he was aah very effective in a lot of areas, but again, this a guy in the most **important** job in the world, is it not important to all of us that the condition of his mind be put forward for us.==

Even though the participants are adamantly opposed to one another concerning their positions, they cannot produce the diversity of adjectives as illustrated by the editorial selections. Just as Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) suggest, there are processing constraints, which limit what kinds of adjectives can be pulled out of long-term store.

However, there is a second factor at work as well. As previously alluded to, interlocutors involved in face-to-face discussion must take care to maintain face (Brown & Levinson, 1978), so they may not wish to risk employing the kinds of emotion-packed, inflammatory adjectives used by writers. Writers are distant from their audience, which provides them a cushion of protection. What I am implying here is that in face-to-face settings, even when someone's position appears outlandish, care must be taken by other participants so as to maintain a certain linguistic decorum.

On the other hand, chatters do not have to worry about the face-to-face problems, but they are limited in some manner by time constraints and once again by the restrictions of the chat channel concerning number of characters allowed per turn. This may be one reason that chatters did not string adjectives as proficiently as writers or it might be

related to processing constraints of stringing them together. Or, it may simply be that chatters do not have enough time to type as many expressive adjectives (in strings) that come to mind. Yet, they clearly use adjectives at a much higher rate than conversationalists. This is confirmed in the following example:

T7221: Wille & BChrist support **White** Supremacist dragging us **Black** Folks with their **pickup** trucks
LSU SigEp1: AJSFAN...how am I a bigot?
Josman 509772556: which teaches black that we are stupid
WillieMan7: Negroes are incapable of being educated, Person.
Person3084625472: through **free** tuition and investment in **innercity** schools, hospitals, communties...
Len075: Boil any Republican down to their **core** Beliefs and you ALWAYS find Bigotry
LSU SigEp1: PERSON...why should a **poor black** student be any more entitled to **free** education than a **poor**
LSU SigEp1: **white** one...that's racism
AJSFan: LEN...you have utttered a **universal** truth.
BChrist751: T7 Why do you **blacks** Folks always killing each other for

From this example, one can see that chatters are regular adjective users; however, they did not use them as frequently, nor did they use the wide variety that the editorial writers employed. In the previous dialogue, for example, the adjectives *poor, free* and *white* are all used twice, while the adjective *black* is used three times; writers use more variety simply because they have sufficient time to be more creative. Hence, in chat, they were used less as a tool for making impassioned arguments and more as description device as the preceding example also demonstrates.

Conjoining

Conjunctions can be employed as a means to conjoin two linguistic items and form a compound phrase, which also acts a way to expand intonation units (according to Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987). Table 4-8 illustrates the findings:

TABLE 4-8: CONJOINING

Political Discussion	32
Editorials	56
Political Chat	24

Not surprisingly editorial writers did the most conjoining with *and.* This is in line with the findings of Chafe and Danielewicz (1987). The numbers generated by the editorial writers in this study are very consistent with letter writers (18 per 1000 words). Here is an example from the text:

> The final decision should lie with the restaurant owners whether or not to support the consumer **and** user of a still-legal product **and** make the necessary accommodations for both smoker **and** non-smoker, which some had at a very hefty price.

As this section of text illustrates writers are able to form rather complex constructions by conjoining done at the noun phrase and verb phrase and within a single sentence. Spoken language samples revealed many fewer. Here is one of the more fruitful stretches:

> Bill:==are totally, equally obnoxious. Lauren Hill bringing the Bible on stage to an award show is as awful **and** obnoxious **and** egotistical to me as Gary Bauer or yourself, Bob. Um, I'm not kidding. This to me has nothing to do with God. It all has to with, "Thank you God for making me so talented as to get this award." I see these people up there with their jewelry **and** their entourages **and** their all about getting drugs and sex lifestyle, talking about God, it makes me as sick as the <unintelligible>.

In this case the, the speaker is the very eloquent host of the show, but he still employs rather simplistic patterns of stringing together intonation units at the phrasal level. The first instance of conjoining from the preceding example helps to clarify this concept. His pattern is simply: *predicate adjective + and + predicate adjective + and + predicate adjective.*

Since speakers must struggle with the mental processes needed to produce language, they do not always find the most concise way to say what they want to say. In the previous example, the speaker chose to use *and* twice in each sentence to conjoin ideas; however, he still manages to run aground in the last phrase. The point is that speakers must edit on the fly, and this makes it difficult to extend intonation units. In the preceding example, the speaker's attempts are only somewhat successful. He manages to use conjoining *and* but not efficiently, and his cognitive efforts took their toll on the construction of the final phrase, which was quite awkward even for such an eloquent speaker as the host of a nightly show.

Chatters used conjoining *and* sporadically at best. Here is one of the more fruitful sections of the text:

> WillieMan7: After a 6 month sit-in, they finally broke in **and** rounded up the radical beaners **and** threw
> WillieMan7: them in jail.
> Josman 509772556: there, gay, racist, priest, serial killers, school shooters
> LSU SigEp1: AJSFAN...yes you are
> Person3084625472: I'm talking about giving black americans the respect, **and** money, they have earned

Apparently, chatters do not feel the need to expand intonation units. Perhaps the physical environment again plays a role. What I mean here is that expanding intonation units may be equated with additional typing, which in turn means more time wasted in construction of propositions, so instead, they opt for shorter constructions and smaller intonation units. In certain instances they will not use conjoining *and* even when it would seem to be warranted (as *Josman* illustrates in the above text, rather than typing the word *and,* he or she prefers to omit it as a time-saving device).

To sum up then, chatters unlike writers do not use conjoining *and* very frequently, and moreover, unlike speakers, apparently do not often opt to attempt expanding intonation units, resulting in an *and* frequency output that is even lower than was found in the spoken conversation data. Once again, chat cannot be labeled as entirely like writing or like speaking; it is rather, a distinct form of communication.

Participles

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) found that writers use participles as a strategy to extend intonation units; hence, writers employ many more participles than those engaged in conversation. In their study, academic writers used about 24 per 1000 words, while those in conversation only used 5 per 1000 words. In present study, editorial writers were more like letter writers from the Chafe and Danielewicz study (11 per 1000 words), while talk show discussants and chatters fell in line with conversationalists. The table below shows the resulting numbers from my count:

TABLE 4-9: PARTICIPLES

Political Discussion	16
Editorials	35
Political Chat	15

It was writers who used participles the most frequently. Here is an example from the text:

> Some have stressed the argument that the Board of Health acted appropriately with this ban, **being** that it is a health issue. Well, it appears the nonsmoking crusaders are just as biased as the smokers on this issue and refuse to see the failing health of a democratic process **unfolding** here.

Talk show discussants and online chatters used participles at a strikingly similar pace, and yet, very sporadically. Here is an example from the talk show:

> Jeri: Anyway, with the people **covering** up...staff members and people in the cabinet **covering** things up that's not specific to the Reagan administration by any stretch of the imagination. That's==

In the preceding example, *Jeri* attempts to expand the intonation unit initially without complete success, emphasizing Chafe and Danielewicz's (1987) assessment that using participles, outside of progressives and perfects, is a more cognitively demanding process.

Chatters produced a similar number of participles as talk show discussants. Here is a typical example from the chat discourse:

> Jubal28: LIB: You're basing your entire interpretation on one comman?
> LIB NYC: Saw, the point is that both phrases become descriptive phrases with those commas in there
> Jubal28: comma?
> Hades976: God empowered us to keep weaponry!
> Saw011: LIB-you grooping now
> Jubal28: LIB: I suppose all the supportive writings at the time, **explaining** intent, are irrelevant.

Since the participle form by itself is not especially cognitively demanding to access and activate according to Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), it must be cognitively demanding to use them as a means to expand intonation units by way of adjuncts. I conclude here that there may be a slight difference between chatters and conversationalists although the numbers are so similar. If there is a difference, perhaps the difference is something akin to this: Conversationalists struggle to expand intonation units and so produce fewer participles than writers; conversely, chatters do not struggle to expand intonation units and do not really have a need for such expansions because short turns are preferred, so paradoxically, they also produce fewer participles.

Coordination

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) also looked at coordination as a way to link intonation units together. One way that this occurs in spoken language is by way of simple coordination. The spoken language contains many more of these kinds of coordinators because speakers are unable to elaborate and form more complex clausal relationships as previously mentioned (in the section on conjoining). The number of coordinators tallied in my study are shown in Table 4-10 below:

TABLE 4-10: COORDINATION

Political Discussion	69
Editorials	31
Political Chat	31

The talk show participants were apt to use coordinators quite frequently when compared to written editorial writers. Of course, this harmonizes with the findings by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987). And, as they have said, speakers have a tendency to chain intonation units together using coordinators to help them out. Schiffrin (1987) suggests that *and* is used by the present speaker to signal others that he or she wishes to continue and also as a means to organize discourse, while *but* acts as a speaker return device (while still maintaining the contrastive quality). Here is one example taken from the spoken data illustrating Schiffrin's conclusions:

> Obba:==I think== I think... I think what has happened is that um ya know at that moment that you're receiving an award there's an enormous amount of energy that is surging through **and** you wanna give thanks, **and...and** I think that aah what has happened is that it is taken to the extreme. Aah...Aah of course, I don't...I don't...I don't think anybody intends to say that, "I wanna thank

you God for blessing me and not blessing my other, ya know aah, the other people that are been nominated in the same category."

Nadine: That's cuz they're off reading Harry Potter, so they don't have to==<unintelligible>

Bob: ==Evil! Evil ==wizardry.

Obba: ==**But**...**but**...**but**...**but**...**but** I have...I have it aah on good source because aah many of the people in the industry what...which I am involved in, they do want to represent themselves as being someone that are...that is a lover of God, and that has God in their life. I think that in any ==situation==

Bill: ==**But** it's bull. They're not.

Obba first uses *and* to continue and organize his diatribe. And, a few turns later, he grabs the floor back using a string of *but's*. Bill then takes up the floor employing an initial *but* to contrast what Obba has just said.

Of course writers do not need to use coordinators to add to what they or someone else has previously said, nor must they worry about extending their turns via chaining. Additionally, they do not need to fight for the floor when they disagree with someone, and so do need *but* as an initiator of a turn. Instead they may invent very complex clausal constructions to make their points. Here is an example of what I mean:

> In light of Ms. McCann's Jan. 18 letter attacking Dick White for his ongoing opposition of the smoking ban, along with all the others who have only now decided to express their anti-smoking views publicly, I have a few questions and points I'd like to make also.

Such a sentence in the setting of natural conversation would be very difficult to produce without a number of hesitations, but for writers who have sufficient time to create, such sentences roll off the tip of the pen (or keyboard). The result is less need for coordinators like *and, so* and *but*. However, that does not mean they are never used. In fact, editorial writers opted to use more coordinators when compared to the academic writers in the Chafe and Danielewicz study. It seems that editorial writers, at times, opt to present their ideas as a kind of platform for their positions—as if they were giving a speech or lecture.

Hence, when the writing style takes on this kind of "address the crowd" form, coordinators become useful tools. The following example illustrates this:

> It was way back in the '60s that our government's surgeon general publicly declared the use of tobacco "hazardous to your health." **So** where the heck were all of you crusaders in the '70s, '80s and '90s? Just imagine all the lives you could have saved!
>
> **And** how many of you ever took the time in all these decades to write letters to your legislatures and demand that they make this lethal product (tobacco) illegal? Or have even given a darn enough to make a trip to your nation's capital to be heard on this issue with all your passionate concerns?
>
> Well, how many of you have?
>
> Instead, you wait around all these years for a local board of health with their assumed unlimited powers granted by God Almighty, we assume, to speak your piece for you. You then latch on to the tails of their pre-Revolutionary War red coats, spewing and echoing their rhetoric. **But** none of you, whether of political influence or private citizenship, will bother to take on the Big Guys up there in D.C., where it all starts and could finish as well.

Although the text is in written form, it has elements of spokenness, such as addressing the readers (apparently only the readers who oppose the writer's position) as *you*. Moreover, she employs *and*, *but* and *so*, all of which add to the flavor of spokenness in the discourse. On the other hand, because writers do not need to use these coordinators for chaining intonation units, they still produced far fewer than speakers.

Although chatting may mimic speaking concerning certain aspects, it is not surprising that coordination is not such an area; it is simply not advantageous for chatters to use coordinators as chaining devices considering that their creative juices are used in producing text offline with a keyboard. Just as writers' hesitations and misfires are not usually visible to their interactants, the same can be said concerning the production of Internet chatters (cf. Halliday, 1987). Although in their haste, they may actually send a slightly confusing message to the chat group, such as:

Josman 509772556: but they fear blacks, so backward

Even so, *Josman's* confusing comment is ignored (even by him or her). There is no need for *Josman* to try and correct. There is no need for *Josman* to try to keep the floor (since all chatters have the floor at all times). There is no need for *Josman* to try and restart. There is no need for *Josman* to try to chain units together. Coordinators do not need to be used in this manner. On the other hand, chatters do like to respond to others' statements; one way they do this is by using coordinators. This kind of usage resembles an interruption or extension, an element one would typically associate with conversation. The following example demonstrates this:

I luv my Puppers: nag what happened in that school in flint
LIB NYC: Jubal, problem with all 3 is that in all 3 cases the petitioners were convicted criminals
NAGUAL4A: first grader shot another first grader...
Jubal28: LIB: Which cases are you talking about?
I luv my Puppers: nag what a terrible thing
Hades976: first graders killing each other, it wasnt the guns fault
NAGUAL4A: ...**but** its not a reason to destroy a political system....

Nagual4A wants to respond to the proposition submitted by *I luv my Puppers*; hence he or she starts the turn unit with *but*, almost as if he/she wanted to take back the floor (Schiffrin, 1987). Chatters also use coordinators to extend their own statements. Here is an example from the chat discourse:

MitziMN: Gee...i wish i would have spent more time at the office...
MitziMN: **and** remember...you can't take it with you.

MitziMN wants to add something to what he or she previously stated (about the pursuit of wealth) and uses the coordinator *and* to serve this purpose.

Audience Involvement

Chafe (1994), and Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) claim that writers are generally more detached and conversationalists are generally more involved with their respective audiences. The difference is shaped by how the language is produced and in whose presence (or in the case of writing, the absence of who is present) the language is produced. Writers do not often see their audience and generally do not need to respond to questions or comments from their audience (see Chafe, 1994). This case is unique in that one of the founding principles of the study is that writers' discourses represent a response of some kind to a previous editorial. This allows for question and response pairs. In my study I tabulated these as a means to measure audience involvement. The interesting numbers are shown in Table 4-11:

TABLE 4-11: AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT: RESPONSES

	Total Questions	Question Responses
Political Discussions	9	7 (77.7%)
Editorials	17	1 (5.9%)
Political Chat	72	16 (22.2%)

What is striking about these numbers is the percentage of responses to questions. Editorials writers posed 17 questions with only one response; at the other extreme were the political talk show participants who answered 7 out of 9. Chatters fell in between, but that is not to say that they were more involved with their audience (which I will discuss shortly).

At the heart of political discussion is disagreement—a tenet of this study. What unfolds is that sides are formed and alignments forged; positions on each side tend to be

uncompromising (see Schiffrin, 1994); however, in conversation, questions represent the first part of a dialogic pair, the second part being a response. To leave questions unanswered is a violation of the participation code that necessitates construction of verbal dialogues as a team—irrespective of positions on issues (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Goffman, 1981).

With this concept as a driving force in social interaction, one would expect that talk show discussants would answer questions. So, even though participants on the syndicated talk show asked by far the fewest questions, they were generally answered. Here is an example from the text:

> Bill: ==What does it matter?==
> Melissa: ==on a plate. Because, I mean if it's never been attempted then we don't know if it could happen.
> Bill: But you think Reagan should be on a plate?
> Melissa: I think that ya know if people want to pay to have Reagan's face on a plate, why not? ==Nobody==
> Carrot: ==I'm already==
> Bill: ==Because it's a government sanctioned thing. This is the government.

Three questions are asked and three questions are subsequently answered. This example illustrates that in the face-to-face setting questions must be responded to if conversation/discussion is to continue. To ignore another's question does not assist the further development of the conversation; interlocutors are inclined to adhere to the design of the "customary model," which means participants need to construct the conversation together and in a polite way (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Grice, 1975; Goffman, 1981).

Writers, on the other hand, did not respond to posed questions. In this study, editorial writers posed seventeen different questions; only one of these was responded to by another. In many instances, the writers answered the questions themselves as this example illustrates:

> Why, then, do I feel like one of General Custer's troops about to enter Big Horn in this deal?
>
> Because, thus far, the BOH hasn't given any reason for anyone to trust its nefarious, back-door, gag-ordered edicts, unless you are a total anti-smoking nut unwilling to compromise an absurd position in which the remedy has become worse than the evil.

Obviously such a question is not meant to probe for information; rather it represents a rhetorical style of writing. It is not meant to invoke any response (except emotional), but to cause readers to reflect on their on their precious freedom. The point here is that writing and conversation are significantly different concerning audience involvement. When interlocutors are engaged in conversation, they are expected to answer questions as co-constructors of the discourse. Contrastively, the questions writers pose are not necessarily meant to be responded to, rather they are meant to make an impression on the reader and audience. Thus, only one question generated a response in the discourse I analyzed. The respondent restates the question and then proceeds to answer it. Here is that response:

> Clearly, Ms. Breakell resents the swell of people who have stepped forward to speak their mind in support of the ban. She feebly attempts to discredit their views through her accusation, **"Where the heck were all of you crusaders in the '70s, '80s and '90s?** Just imagine all the lives you could have saved!" as if a nation's earlier, broader-based tolerance for smoking should render current, health-conscious opinions false, moot, or unworthy.
>
> **Then again, I would say, that we "crusaders" were, in fact, here all along, all across the country, tens of millions of non-smokers (including countless former smokers) encouraging friends, colleagues and family members to kick the nicotine habit while we ardently supported measures to ban smoking in public spaces.** Somehow you failed to notice our diligence and concern, Ms. Breakell (perhaps you were surrounded by a cloud of smoke) and that is the only reason it comes as a surprise to you that through our efforts the advent of enclosed public spaces free of carcinogens is now, at last, rapidly becoming the norm.

Perhaps one reason that writers do not respond to previously posed questions is that they must refresh the readers' minds since the majority of the readers will probably not have a copy of the previous editorial in their hands. So, rather than answer a posed question, they prefer to give convincing arguments denigrating their opponents' positions; however, generally not in the form of a question and answer pair. Since they are not involved in the social construction of conversation, editorial writers gauge the reading audience and aim at convincing them that their positions are the most rational. Hence, they are not expected to respond to questions directly, and it is doubtful that they feel any question is aimed directly at them, as the preceding example shows. The writer of this editorial is not responding to a question posed to him, he is rather responding to a question that was originally posed by Ms. Breakall and subsequently aimed at Ms. Breakall's intended audience. In other words, no co-construction of dialogue is required for the dialogue to continue. In fact to answer questions posed by an opponent is to play into the opponent's hands, since the questions are generally couched in assumptions to which the potential respondent disagrees.

On the other hand, chatters are involved in turn taking and assembly of text together, so it would seem that they would be obliged to respond to questions. However, they have the advantage of social anonymity, as well as distance, so are not bound by the social rules that demand that they be polite and respond on topic to questions (or even respond at all for that matter). Also, once questions are asked, intervening turns and the time plus attention needed to construct propositions contribute to chatters ignoring and/or forgetting questions. They asked by far the most questions (72 compared to 17 for editorial writers and 9 for talk show participants); few were responded to; some were

ignored, and some were answered by the questioner. In this example two questions are posed and subsequently responded to:

ARMKEV: KC why dop u think everyone owes u?
DEUS EX3: if congress wont give us health care then congress should cut its own health benefits
KC JONES53: ARM, ??? noone owes me anything, what are you babbling about??
MitziMN: right on deus...but we should cut it for them...they work for us...
DEUS EX3: yep Mitz
ARMKEV: u were agreeing with Deus a few minutes ago and all hes said is how everyone owes him someth

Interestingly, *ARMKEV* poses the original question, which is followed by a response, which in turn is followed by a question and then a response. This gives the dialogue coherence; however, as one will notice *KC JONES53* has not posed a particularly polite question. Thus, it seems as if politeness is not required in online chat debate. Also, from the data count, one can see that about 88% of the questions were simply ignored (56 out of 72), something that would be considered terribly rude and a violation of social norms if this were conventional conversation. Here is what can happen (in this example intervening turns are omitted to more clearly show how *T7221's* question is ignored):

T7221: WillieMan why the mean spirited, personal attacks against us Black Folks *(2 turns follow)*
WillieMan7: Why not just give everyone $10 million, Gueralinda?*(11 turns follow)*
WillieMan7: No, make it $49,765.49/hour.
T7221: Hey guys there a rumor floating around on-line that WilleMan & BChrist sleep with Barnyard *(3 turns follow)*
T7221: Animals *(5 turns follow)*
WillieMan7: Yeah, and the army just broke up a strike at the University of Mexico, Gueralinda. *(6 turns follow)*
WillieMan7: After a 6 month sit-in, they finally broke in and rounded up the radical beaners and threw
WillieMan7: them in jail.

The original question concerning mean-spirited attacks is completely ignored by *WillieMan*. He or she is more intent on addressing an issue that was brought up by *Gueralinda* about cheap tuition at Mexican universities (ironically, all of the propositions made by *WilllieMan* concerning the situation in Mexico are completely ignored by *Gueralinda* as well). Since the original question is ignored, *T7221* wields an attack of his or her own. This has no effect on WillieMan, who picks up another subtopic unrelated to the question about mean-spirited attacks. *T7221* attempts to bait *WillieMan* later in the discussion, but *WillieMan* ignores this as well. The upshot is that in chat, questions can be and are completely ignored.

You Know or Ya know

Another way that interlocutors show involvement with one another is by using *ya know* or *you know*. In spoken conversation this acts as a bridge between the listeners and whoever has the floor. *Ya (you) know* acts as a device to reassure the speaker that his or her statement has some kind of validity, but it does not require any outright (and therefore embarrassing) confirmation from other participants (cf. Ostman, 1981). Schiffrin (1987) put forwards that *ya know* acts as a signal for hearers to adjust their orientation so as to receive the information or attend to it. Hence, it acts as a check of listener involvement. Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) confirmed this indirectly. Where there was no need for *ya know* as an audience involver, there were no instances of ya know (both letters and academic papers), so I did not expect to find them in editorial writing. The data in the table below confirm my suspicions:

TABLE 4-12: YA KNOW/YOU KNOW

Political Discussion	23
Editorials	1
Political Chat	0

The numbers are consistent with the data presented by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) concerning spoken language and written language. Here is an example from the spoken text:

> Kevin: ==I think there's== gotta be some kind of gender distinction. **Ya know** when you go to an event you're expecting to see **ya know**, if it's the homecoming queen, you're expecting to see a women. **Ya know**, you don't want to get there and just be all confused. **Ya know**, it's like aah ya know you're let down you're disappointed. It's like going to a café or a diner, you want a cup of coffee and all they have is tea ==What do you do? ==
> Heather: ==I think==...I think the main issue here is that this is not a race==
> Kevin: ==Think about that.
> Heather: Well we are pondering that. Um, this is not...this is not a race, this is not a contest based on sexual orientation. It's based on **ya know** male and female, like what you are as far as your gender. **Ya know**, he is not a woman. He may dress like woman. He...he...I don't think he wants to be a woman. He does not wanna have a sex change if I read that article correctly.

This dialogue illustrates that speakers attempt to form a bridge with their interlocutors and so the number of times *ya know* is used in conversation is much higher than in writing or Internet chatting. Apparently, in these two forums, no bridge needs to be established. Since writers and chatters cannot see who their interlocutors are, there is no need to try to form any bridge; they must gain the attention of interlocutors in other ways, such as forceful arguments or insults. This again attests to the notion that conversation is much different from either Internet chatting or editorial writing; discussants in the talk show had to construct conversation by abiding by conversational social rules. This is not to say that there are no social rules for written text; certainly there

are (Swales, 1990); however, the social rules for conversation are unique in that the interlocutors are in the speaker's presence and communication must be forged mutually (Brown & Levinson, 1970; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Schegloff, 1982). The social rules for online chatting will be discussed later in this chapter.

Adverbial Expressions

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) also looked at adverbials of time and space as a way of indicating involvement. In their study, conversationalists and letter writers were much more likely to talk about temporal and spatial elements because this allowed them to situate people, objects and events in concrete reality (cf. Sinclair, 1990; Givón, 1993). Apparently, academic writers have less need to locate people, places and things in the time and space because they are dealing more with theoretical principles. The present study revealed these interesting results:

TABLE 4-13: ADVERBIALS

	Locative Adverbs	Temporal Adverbs
Political Discussions	20	24
Editorials	40	65
Political Chat	24	40

What one immediately notices is the fact that editorial writers used the most locative adverbs and temporal adverbs. Here is an example of how they were employed:

> **Over the past few weeks** I have read with great interest the wide range of opinions published **in The Standard-Times** regarding the recent smoking ban **in area restaurants**. I thought it strangely appropriate that the most sensible, intelligent and persuasive letter I have read on the subject ("Owners, follow me," by Evelyn Bettencourt) should appear on the same day as the most shoddily constructed ("Why do this **now, all of a sudden, after all these years**?" by Pam Breakell) set of arguments I have thus far encountered in this debate.

The data concerning adverbials indicate that editorial letter writers used just slightly more of them than letter writers from the Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) study. Clearly, this is due to the nature of editorials. Smith and Frawley (1983) suggest that temporal adverbials are an integral part of journalistic writing. If the text were scientific in nature (i.e., academic), there would most likely be very few. They claim that using adverbials allows writers to make their texts cohesive through the presentation of information in a sequentially oriented manner. In the preceding example, it is necessary for the writer to frame his argument in relation to the other arguments he wishes to discuss. This makes it necessary that he be precise about locations and times. Besides this, from the preceding example one can see that editorial writers were inclined to refer back to the articles that they were responding to; it became imperative for clarity's sake to frame the counter argument within the proper temporal relationship of the articles the writer wishes to address.

Concerning locatives, editorial writers often mentioned that they were responding to someone's opinion that they had read in the *Standard Times*, so they provided their audience with a clearer picture by giving location. Here is one example:

> I've sat here and watched Dick rant and rave **in the newsroom** and **in the newspapers** about how awful this decision by the New Bedford Board of Health is and how it is ruining the bottom lines of all these restaurants.

In fact, to address other's arguments these elements are vital. To be clearly understood, there is compulsion to locate events in time and space—it makes for a stronger position.

Speakers may have desired to use even more adverbials than they did but were most likely limited by mental processing. In any case, concerning talk show discussants, my study's findings were consistent with the findings by Chafe and Danielewicz with one

exception; the number of locatives was slightly higher in this study. I assume that this is due primarily to the fact that many of the topics discussed centered on events that happened in the past. Speakers felt compelled to position objects and people within those events. Here is an example where the speaker uses metaphorical adverbials to position Lauren Hill and her ilk:

> Bill:==are totally, equally obnoxious. Lauren Hill bringing the Bible **on stage** to an award show is as awful and obnoxious and egotistical to me as Gary Bauer or yourself, Bob. Um, I'm not kidding. This to me has nothing to do with God. It all has to with, "Thank you God for making me so talented as to get this award." I see these people **up there** with their jewelry and their entourages and their all about getting drugs and sex lifestyle, talking about God, it makes me as sick as the <unintelligible>.

Chatters used a few more temporal adverbials than did conversationalists and many fewer than editorial writers. Apparently, it is important for them to discuss issues temporally, but the past seems to be only important as it relates to the present. The temporal adverbial *now* showed up 9 times in the data. Here is one example from my data highlighting this feature:

> LIB NYC: DON, and that was OK when the citizenry and army were more evenly matched in firepower
> LIB NYC: **Today** howver, I wouldn't suggest raising a 9mm at an M-16 toting battalion
> Jubal28: LIB: They're not **now**? 100 million armed citizens v. 3 million in uniform?

Even in these two postings, the producers referred to the past, but only as it applied to the present. *LIB NYC* uses the adverbial *today* in opposition to times past, and *Jubal28* uses *now* to emphasize that the situation in the past has not changed. Schiffrin (1987) also mentions that *now* serves the purpose of acting as a time progression marker. In this case, *Jubal28* temporally moves the discussion from *LIB NYC's* claim that in the past citizens could defend themselves from the government, but presently they cannot. (She (he)

undoubtedly read the subsequent post by *LIB NYC* after she had submitted her own post containing *now*.)

Chatters apparently have little need to locate people, places and things and so use few locative adverbials. Here is an example where the chatter decided to use a couple of locatives:

> Person3084625472: there are kids who never make it **out** of high school, never make it **out** of the ghe

In this case, the chatter is involved in what I term "online reflection." Such reflectionary discourse becomes almost narrative in nature; rather than engaging in online debate, the chatter addresses no particular individual. In such reflectionary moods chatters may tend to use more hypothetical and abstract locatives. In the above example, the speaker needs to place kids in inner city schools and in ghettos to give the proper mood. Here is another such reflection:

> MitziMN: the last thing i will ever say **on my death bed** is... *(3 turns follow)*
> MitziMN: Gee...i wish i would have spent more time **at the office**...

These reflectionary sequences show up on occasion online and for those few moments, chatters remove themselves cognitively from the discussion until their "speech" is concluded. It would be of great interest to investigate factors that motivate chatters to engage in online reflection.

Personal Pronoun References

As previously mentioned, I also looked at personal pronoun use where the antecedent can be identified from either the context (in spoken venues) or the text. I looked at the following pronouns, which include first, second and third person*: I, we, you, your, yours, he, she, they, me, my, mine, us, him, his, our, ours, his, her, hers, their, theirs,*

them. The rationale for looking at first person pronouns is that it represents an obvious measure of interlocutor involvement. Besides first person pronouns, second person pronouns are included in the realm of the deictic center—the here and now, so they too indicate a level of involvement. Third person personal pronouns, on the other hand tend to indicate less involvement, but still are used by conversationalists to make dialogue cohesive. It is also a way for interlocutors to ground topics (in this case people) once they have been introduced. Hence, it takes less cognitive processing to refer to people in the third person after they have been selected as the topic (Foertsch & Gernsbacher, 1994; Herman, 1999).

The data for personal pronoun reference are shown in the following table:

TABLE 4-14: PERSONAL PRONOUN REFERENCES

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person	Total
Pol. Discussion	183	89	151	423
Editorials	79	32	68	179
Political Chat	110	86	58	254

As might be expected, the political discussion data contained many more personal pronouns than either the editorial and chat data. In fact the 183 uses of first person pronouns was greater than the total number of pronouns used by writers. Truly, speakers in face-to-face settings are more self-conscious and speak from an ego-centric perspective. Many of the first person usages are self-effacing. Here is an example of what I mean:

> Bill: We're talking…sort of got onto how the aah the presence of God gets into everyday life. **I think** award shows have become the PTL club of television. And **lest people think I** am attacking the right, which I'm happy to do, let me just say **I think** the left wing, the lefties==with God==

In this sample, the host of the show uses the first person pronoun "I" four times; in three of the instances, he modifies his statement with the word *think* assuring that it is known that this is only an opinion. In fact, his second use of the first person pronoun in the above example demonstrates that he is concerned that people might not see his opinion as unbiased and so prefaces his statement with *lest people think.*

As expected, talk show participants used the most third person pronouns (151), almost three times as many as the other two forums. They used these third person pronouns for topical grounding (Foertsch & Gernsbacher, 1994). One can clearly see this from this example referring to a feminist organization:

> Al: ==I mean that's what **they** are. No, I mean **they** are politically correct; **they're**...**they're**...**they're** probably a bunch of liberal feminists who don't like the way...who..who don't like the way women...some women want to portray their bodies. **They** are...**they** are liberal fascists. **They** would shut down every kind of expression ==that==
> Lydia: ==Oh god!==
> Al: ==**they** didn't agree with. Well, **they** would. **They** would...**they**==
> Nancy: ==I've had enough ==of the "F" word from you, enough "F" words.==
> Al: ==No! **They** would stop==
> Lydia: ==Right.
> Al: **They** would stop women from posing nude. **They** would stop women from setting off fire sprinklers in commercials. I mean that's what **they** would do.
> Bill: **They** would stop pornography.

Besides giving Al the ability to establish and maintain his topic, employing the third person pronoun *they* allows Al to make his discourse cohesive and therefore more forceful by first employing *they* + *are* chains and subsequently following that with *they* + *would* + *verb* chains. A cohesive and coherent text is a more effective one (see Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Additionally, there is every attempt (I believe) by Al to paint the group of feminists as impersonal, cold-hearted and radical, which can be accomplished more effectively by referring to the group as *they* rather than by the organization's name.

Concerning first person pronouns, editorial writers used the fewest. This is completely understandable. Unlike the efforts needed to sustain cohesion and coherence in spoken language, writers can select and employ synonymy and lexical chaining to bond texts together (see Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Look at this example from the discourse:

> No less a preposterous notion is her suggestion that the **number of non-smokers** who opt for an unhealthy diet when dining out ("that will kill you a lot quicker than anyone's second-hand smoke") precludes the **general public's** right to smoke-free air. What kind of apples-and-oranges scenario is this? First of all, one must necessarily overlook her broad generalization that every **restaurant patron** is gorging themselves on "prime rib, lobster meat drenched in butter, or that deep-fried seafood platter." Hardly.
>
> Secondly, when I visit a restaurant and choose to eat a healthy meal (as many of us do), should I be surrounded by **100 other patrons** each consuming a tub of Crisco for their dinner, the fact remains my **fellow diners** are endangering their own health, not mine. Yet if these same **100 people** choose to light up, then my health is adversely affected.

As the above example demonstrates, writers have diverse choices, so rather than continually referring to people as "they," writers can select from a wider vocabulary since they have more time to come up with the most colorful way to express their ideas.

However, even editorial writers occasionally choose to use pronouns, for effect, which tends to cement propositions within a text. The subsequent discourse illustrates this kind of pronoun use:

> Too many local restaurants, particularly Portuguese restaurants, are losing their *camisas* (shirts) and **they don't understand** why. **Neither do I**.
>
> **They don't understand** how you can acquiesce to the letter of state law, spend thousands upon thousands of dollars building a separate smoking room, then not be allowed to use it. **Neither do I**.
>
> **They don't understand** how this could happen here in America. **Neither do I**.

For impact, the writer presents his argument in an almost poetic fashion by using repetition. Nonetheless, it is clearly not used as a device forged out of necessity due to constraints of processing; it is rather a clever choice made by the writer to involve the audience with an emotional appeal (cf. McCarthy & Carter, 1994). Also, since writers have many choices and "do-overs" available to them, their use of all personal pronouns diminishes.

The most stark example of differences between the written venue and the other two venues is that of second person pronouns where writers used only 32 compared to 89 and 86 by talk show members and chatters respectively. The use of *you* is a less effective tool for writers in particular. Their represented audience are readers of the newspaper, so in a sense, even when they are addressing an individual's arguments presented in some previous editorial, they are appealing to a larger audience. Furthermore, editorialists have no intention of bringing their audience into the here and now, rather they want their audience in the then and there. Here is an example from the texts:

> The truth is that elected officials were helpless to stand by while the only railroad job in town was set in motion to run all over your individual rights.
>
> And say what you want about New Bedford City Councilors David Alves and Brian Gomes (I know I do), but no other elected officials showed a pair of ... uh, guts, bigger than they did in taking the initiative on this issue. They didn't wimp out. Thus, the stage is set for Tuesday's emergency meeting with the Board of Health to discuss the city's smoking ban.

Here the writer bases his argument on what has occurred rather than what is occurring in the immediate environment; the deictic center is naturally displaced, except for the brief parenthetical aside *(I know I do)* in the middle of paragraph two (Herman, 1999).

Online chatters' pronoun use is interesting in this respect: They used the fewest third person pronouns (58) and almost the same number of second person pronouns as conversationalists (86 as compared to 89 for conversationalists).

Chatters avoided using the third person because it has relatively little value to them beyond the turn level; therefore, it is unlike spoken text where speakers can keep the topic grounded by employing pronouns (Foertsch & Gernsbacher, 1994). The problem is emphasized in this example:

> NAGUAL4A: first grader shot another first grader...
> Jubal28: LIB: Which cases are you talking about?
> I luv my Puppers: nag what a terrible thing
> Hades976: first graders killing each other, it wasnt the guns fault
> NAGUAL4A: ...but its not a reason to destroy a political system....
> TaoPoo: Nag: now see, if all those 1st graders had been armed...that would never have happened.

In the opening turn sequence, *NAGUAL4A* talks about one first grader shooting another; in the last turn sequence *TaoPoo* wishes to respond to *Nag*. However, *TaoPoo* must address three problems before making his/her response. First, there is an awareness by chatters that the text will look confusing by the time their contribution is entered due to intervening turns by other chatters. In fact, even *NAGUAL4A* is able to take a second turn before *TaoPoo* has successfully addressed his/her original comment. Second, due to lag time in the construction phase, topics can suddenly shift slightly or dramatically. Third, because chatters so commonly are involved with so many interlocutors all contributing at the same time and all commenting on one another's topics, it becomes very difficult to use pronoun referencing as a means to make text coherent. The upshot is that in this example, *TaoPoo* must refer to the first graders as *first graders* rather than using the third

person pronoun *they*. Hence, they tend not to use third person references beyond their own turn.

On the other hand, they used second person pronouns at almost the same rate as talk show discussants. Even so, they tended to use *you* in a more confrontational manner, whereas talk show discussants tended to employ generic *you* as can be seen in this example from the talk show:

> Michael: ==Absolutely because== certain things are deal breakers like if **you** put someone in an oven **you're** a scumbag. I don't care if **you** Mother Teresa in the day **you** a scum bag. If you lock people in chains **you** are a scumbag. These guys are so insidious, they enslave their own children in certain instances. Jefferson enslaved his children. If that don't make **you** a scumbag, well hell, I don't know how **you** were raised but **ya** know I didn't come from the Sudan. That makes **you** a scum bag if **you** do that.==Period==

In all of the instances save two, Michael has employed "you" in the generic sense. Thus, he has avoided accusing anyone directly. Online chatters tend to ignore this kind of usage preferring instead a more direct confrontation:

> ARMKEV: DEUS **u** are dependant on Kennedy thats why **u** love him without him **you** could not survive on
> ARMKEV: your own
> ARMKEV: its called DEPENDENCY
> DEUS EX3: ARM the govt owes me as much as the GOP steals for the rich
> DEUS EX3: Kennedys steal for US
> ARMKEV: DEUS the GOVT owes **you** NOTHING

This kind of rhetoric is quite common online; it seems that chatters feel the need to employ *you* more often and more often with a specified target in mind. This kind of directness is evidenced throughout the dialogue and it sometimes seems as if the dialogue becomes "you said-I said" (instead of he said-she said). Here's what I mean:

> Jubal28: LIB: **I'm** an attorney, and **I** know about the SPIRIT of law.
> Hades976: armed*
> LIB NYC: Jubal to tell **you** the truth, THAT'S what made **me** notice it in the first place!

NAGUAL4A: Dont try to fix the government until **You** FIX THE LEGAL SYSTEM!
LIB NYC: Jubal, yeah right - **you're** an attorney
Jubal28: LIB: Washington state, bar # 28613.

This leads to significant use of first person pronouns, but not nearly so frequent as the numbers generated by the talk show participants (183 as compared to 110). The reason for the higher numbers in spoken texts is certainly related to face-to-face social restraints that occur in normal conversation. Rather than reduce the first person usage, it increases it because as I have previously mentioned the right hand collocate for "I" is often an effacing hedge, such as *I think, I mean* or *I believe* (cf. Schiffrin, 1987). Whereas conversationalist used such hedging 44 times, chatters used this kind of combination only 3 times.

One of the most important reasons that chatters used fewer personal pronouns (when compared to speaking) is simply that it becomes difficult for chatters to clearly identify one another and the people to whom they are referring. As one can see from the previous example, *LIB NYC* and *Jubal28* must continually specify to whom a particular message is intended, just in case there is any doubt. Of course, the net effect of this is to reduce the total number of personal pronouns used. Without the addition of nicknames in sentence initial position, the text would become very unconnected, especially with so many chatters posting propositions of differing content.

Names

Associated with pronoun use is the use of first names as address markers. In spoken conversation, as I intend to discuss, interlocutors employ first and second person pronouns as an indicator of involvement in the conversation (Foertsch & Gernsbacher,

1994). However, this strategy is not particularly effective for writers and Internet chatters. In light of this, I looked at names or nicknames used by interlocutors as a possible strategy (namely for Internet chatters) to create effective interaction, and therefore involvement. Table 4-15 illustrates how effective chatters used naming:

TABLE 4-15: NAMES

Political Discussion	4
Editorials	21
Political Chat	139

From these data it would seem that the talk show discussants were the least involved with one another. However, using names in spoken conversation would probably indicate very little involvement the use of names in face-to-face settings would indicate a level of unusual formality (once ritualized greetings are completed). In this study, interlocutors in spoken conversation did not need to address other discussants by name. Instead, they could simply gaze at their intended targets, use pronouns to address them or simply rely on natural turn taking sequences as a way of targeting the intended recipient of their proposition:

> Bill: But **you** think Reagan should be on a plate?
> Melissa: I think that **ya** know if people want to pay to have Reagan's face on a plate, why not? ==Nobody==
> Carrot: ==I'm already==
> Bill: ==Because it's a government sanctioned thing. This is the government.

Bill directs his question at Melissa (while looking at her) and so uses the pronoun *you*. Melissa's answer and subsequent question of "why not?" is responded to by Bill again; however, he does not need to refer to Melissa before he responds to Melissa's

query, the context of the question is enough and the lack of address is what the others involved in the conversation expect.

On the rare occasion when conversationalists needed to use another's name, it was to single them out from others involved in the discussion (beyond the greeting function) as this example demonstrates:

> Bill:==are totally, equally obnoxious. Lauren Hill bringing the Bible on stage to an award show is as awful and obnoxious and egotistical to me as Gary Bauer or yourself, **Bob**. Um, I'm not kidding. This to me has nothing to do with God. It all has to with, "Thank you God for making me so talented as to get this award." I see these people up there with their jewelry and their entourages and their all about getting drugs and sex lifestyle, talking about God, it makes me as sick as the <unintelligible>.

In the above example, Bill must clarify *yourself* so refers to Bob by name; however, in general there is little need to single out individual interlocutors because of other factors such as direction of eye gaze, context and pronoun use.

Editorial writers are much different from conversationalists because they need to let their audience know whose positions they are aligning themselves with, and moreover whose positions they are opposed to. To do this, they must address the writer of those positions so that the audience has a clear understanding of the similarities or differences couched within the framework of their own points. Here is an example from the written text:

> Gimme a break, **Dick White**, and stop blowin' smoke about the restaurant smoking issue. WI've known **Dick** ever since he started working at The Standard-Times and, if any of you readers haven't figured it out by now, he is a dyed-in-the-wool, fanatical smoker.
>
> He has taken this smoking issue as his holy grail -- and very personally. And I think he is completely wrong.
>
> First let make this statement: I am a lifelong non-smoker and an anti-smoking advocate.

Now that we have that straight, I'll proceed.

I've sat here and watched **Dick** rant and rave in the newsroom and in the newspapers about how awful this decision by the New Bedford Board of Health is and how it is ruining the bottom lines of all these restaurants.
Dick, how can you in all good conscience say that when all this smoke is ruining the physical health of so many people and shortening the lives of many?

Where are your statistics? Who is being hurt? How much money has been lost? Aren't you just clouding the issue?

And your comment about the Board of Health decision being a done deal was also way out of line. I'm sure its original decision wasn't made without a lot of study and discussion. Did you expect the members to change their minds in the heat of the moment?

The board said it would take up the issue again at its Feb. 7 meeting. So your pleas and those of others haven't gone up in smoke.

The real issue here is whether people -- and believe it or not, **Mr. White**, most people -- can enjoy a night out with out having to breathe in toxic smoke and chemicals and go home smelling like a fireplace.

As one can see from this example, the writer first singles out *Dick White* and then proceeds to attack his positions. He must refresh the readers' memories on a couple of occasions so that the readers are aware that his arguments stem from previous statements made by *Dick White*. At times the text seems to take on a tone of spoken dialogue—speech like in nature. This is one reason why editorial writers feel the need to use others' names, and it certainly paints the tone as more involved than academic writing or even lectures. However, address labels in these data samples revealed that more formal labels are preferred in written language. In fact, out of the 21 instances of address, 13 were preceded by either Ms. or Mr., a feature exclusive to writing. This allows writers to distance themselves from their opponents and make their arguments more formal (which equates with being more intelligent and eloquent, and certainly more detached).

The question is, "Why do chatters address one another using nicknames so frequently?" This question can only be answered in light of the nature of chat and the visual cues that chat offers interlocutors. Chatters often feel the need to couch their responses with an address label simply to identify to whom they wish to respond. When there are 23 folks on one channel all actively participating it can be troublesome identifying who is addressing whom. Here is a graphic illustration of this concept from unused data (concerning the frequency counts):

Bsiiinc: The Communist attack on the U. S. Navy will have all libs hating Clointon/Gore within 2 year
TralrPrkPrincess: Did someone kick LOOSER MAROON's ass out....or what?
Rich NY RedNeck: that is a southern thing
TOOTS746: rush exactly more division .....
ARMKEV: GORE has admitted to beaking federal law
DBA500: Rich: and you moved to NY? were you drunk that day?
JKul007: KC--I know Gore very well
TOOTS746: the south still mad about losing?
SOCCERNUMB: Liberal, facts, logic: Mutually exclusive
KC JONES53: Rush, JKul is in denial of who won the Civil War LOL
Rush8myDogg: JK is not only a GED southern redneck, he still says Yankees?
Rush8myDogg: what a loser
Rich NY RedNeck: i was born here, but have family who is from the south
KC JONES53: JKul, one of your own ?? favorite son ??? too funny
Rich NY RedNeck: what a difference.
TOOTS746: hiya im
ImSentient: Ho Toots---all...
Rich NY RedNeck: new yorkers are cleaner and smarter
Bsiiinc: Yeah ,the Republican Lincoln whipped the Democrat Douglas in the civil war
ARMKEV: Rush has a very strange infatuation with Rush Limbaugh guess what hes already married
TOOTS746: were all americans
DBA500: I-85 is crowded with Yankees pulling U-Hauls moving south
KC JONES53: JKul, LOL, you just keep dumbing up, too funn
JKul007: <<<<<JKul is a transplanted yankee from Detroit--ROFLMAO--actually Dearborn, MI
TralrPrkPrincess: Rich NY, are you cultural bigot?

KC JONES53: DBA, NOT, thats honorable GOPhers resigning and leaving DC
ARMKEV: people up north want to move south because southereners have more rights here
Rush8myDogg: DBA - thats because the south has to import management
Rich NY RedNeck: what?

Things get convoluted! Even when chatters use address labels, there can be confusion as *Rich NY RedNeck* indicates with his or her final "what?" In any case, chatters need to identify one another to keep their discourses coherent and cohesive, and as a way to let the other interlocutors know that it is now their turn to respond. In other words, to start or continue a conversation address labels are necessary as the means to identify and to discriminate one statement from others; it becomes part of turn recognition (Schegloff, 1982).

Address becomes yet another way that Internet chatting is distinct from either spoken conversation or written language. Chatters use address as their primary source of indicating involvement with others. Pronoun use is not as effective as it is in speaking and neither is the use of adverbials of time and space as is associated with editorial styles of writing.

Passives

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) maintain that the passive voice is a means of showing detachment from the audience. Obviously, academic writing uses many passives (in the Chafe and Danielewicz study academic writers employed 22 passives per 1000 words, while conversationalists only used 3 per 1000.) However, political debate is very confrontational by definition, so I predicted that passives would not be favored in any forum. The subsequent table illustrates this was the case:

TABLE 4-16: PASSIVES

Political Discussion	13
Editorials	14
Political Chat	15

These results indicate that in political debate detachment is not esteemed by the participants involved. For statements to have impact directness is preferred. And, even when passives are used, they are used as a means to either push important information to clause initial locations or as a way of grounding the discourse based upon new and old information (Chafe, 1994; Barry, 1998). Here is an example from the editorial data:

> Secondly, when I visit a restaurant and choose to eat a healthy meal (as many of us do), should I be surrounded by 100 other patrons each consuming a tub of Crisco for their dinner, the fact remains my fellow diners are endangering their own health, not mine. Yet if these same 100 people choose to light up, then **my health is adversely affected.**

In the above example, there is no need to highlight the *100 people* because that information is active already; hence, the writer chooses to make *my health* the grammatical subject of the clause, which is the new (or at least newer) information. "Health" is what the author wants to talk about; it is what he deems as important in this discussion. In fact, the *100 people* become less interesting because those people obviously represent the demoted agents of this clause and are consequently truncated. One can see this pattern repeated in the editorial data. In fact, writers truncated all 14 passives used (Tomlin, 1983; 1995).

In the spoken data samples there were fewer passives found, but this was not significant. In fact, the numbers for this spoken data are in complete agreement with the numbers found by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) concerning passive usage. Speakers

also tended to truncate the agents of clauses because of the knowledge that listeners already possess and what information is topical and important. Here is an example:

> Niger: That's if you assume what he says is correct. There were rumors==
> Bill: ==Oh come on==
> Niger: =I'll give you that==No, there absolutely were rumors about Reagan's mental ==incompetence.==
> Bill: ==Rumors?==
> **Niger: But those rumors were crushed in Reykjavik==**

Here again, the focus is on the rumors, not on who crushed them. The audience already knows who crushed the rumors because of the context. Hence, the speaker chooses to truncate the agent. Once again, speakers truncated all 13 attempts at the passive (including two *get passives*).

Chatters also used very few passives; however, they did on occasion include the agent in the passive. Here is one example:

> JBanko9977: Our society is too violent...Thats the problem...NOT GUNS!!!!!!!!!!!!!
> Hades976: JB, so do we continue to arm the too violent?
> PAMJPAINE: FIRST GRADERS DON'T KNOW WHAT "KILL" IS. DON'T KNOW WHAT DEAD IS
> I luv my Puppers: jb children aren't born violent
> DONL420: **The revolutionary war was won by gun bearing citizens**

In the above example, *DONL420* needs to include the agent to make his point comprehensible. The notion of gun bearing citizens cannot be assumed from any textual cues found in the prior discourse, so he must clarify for the other interlocutors how the war was won and by whom. However, the chatter still wants to focus attention on the revolutionary war rather than gun bearing citizens (Tomlin, 1983; 1995).

Another use of the passive that is equated more with speaking and hence involvement rather than lack of it, is the use of *get passives*. Of the 15 instances of passive voice, chatters employed *get passives* on two occasions. Here is one example:

AJSFan: LSU.....you are a bigot. And **bigots get ignored by me.**

Although this sounds like spoken language, it would not be surprising to see such an example in conversation or even an editorial. (In fact, I have seen examples of *get passives* in other editorials.)

To sum up, the lack of passives in all three modes of communication is not terribly surprising because in debate, directness is highly valued and demonstrates certainty. Passives, when they are used, act as a topic focuser. The use of *get passives* by chatters indicates that they are involved with their fellow chatters because *get passive* use is generally associated with conversation.

Indications of Probability

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) also looked at detachment and involvement by looking at probability hedges, which can be used in lieu of lexical items that represent concrete certainty. Of course, Chafe and Danielewicz found that academic writers used the most indicators of probability. In a way, these types of words help writers avoid black and white positions. It also provides them with effective lexical tools to avoid generalizing beyond the scope of their research findings. Here is what these data reveal:

TABLE 4-17: INDICATIONS OF PROBABILITY

Political Discussion	7
Editorials	9
Political Chat	1

Indicators of probability are quite infrequent in all three of the forums. The reason for the limited production of probability markers can be tied to the concepts that drive

political debate—it is a forum where directness is valued because this characterizes confidence.

As Table 4-17 indicates, even writers did not use many probability indicators. Whereas, academic writers (as in the Chafe and Danielewicz study) must be concerned about ethics of generalizing beyond what the data indicate and so use academic hedging, editorial writers want their positions to be understood and presented forcefully. In academic writing words like *generally, usually, primarily, virtually* and *principally* are common as a means to hedge. In editorial writing none of these words could be found. When there are examples, they generally carry more sting than one would expect from out and out hedging. Here is an example of what I mean:

> No less a preposterous notion is her suggestion that the number of non-smokers who opt for an unhealthy diet when dining out ("that will kill you a lot quicker than anyone's second-hand smoke") precludes the general public's right to smoke-free air. What kind of apples-and-oranges scenario is this? First of all, one must necessarily overlook her broad generalization that every restaurant patron is gorging themselves on "prime rib, lobster meat drenched in butter, or that deep-fried seafood platter." **Hardly**.

There is only the slightest intent to hedge here (if any); this was consistently the case. Other indicators of probability were words such as *largely, highly* and *significantly,* certainly these would be considered stronger kinds of hedges.

The number of indicators of probability found in the spoken conversations was nearly identical to what Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) found. Conversationalists do not use these indicators of probability very frequently. However, the hedging employed by conversationalists tends to be a little more hedgy than the hedging used by writers, indicating that there may be a little more reluctance to make bold statements. The conversationalists used the words *basically* and *probably* a total of five times. (Recall that

conversationalists employed alternative forms to hedge as well (e.g., *I think*)). Here is an example:

> Al: ==I mean that's what they are. No, I mean they are politically correct; they're…they're…they're **probably** a bunch of liberal feminists who don't like the way…who..who don't like the way women…some women want to portray their bodies. They are…they are liberal fascists. They would shut down every kind of expression ==that==

Al, in this case, expresses slight uncertainty about whether or not the group is "a bunch of liberal feminists," perhaps because there are women on the show who would whole-heartedly consider themselves as liberal feminists (one sitting right next to him as a matter of fact). However, immediately following this statement, he has no problems calling them liberal fascists a decidedly more negative term—if not feminists at least fascists!

Chatters do not use hedges much at all. The appearance of one seemed almost by chance. Chatters prefer being direct with one another as this example illustrates:

> Len075: Boil any Republican down to their core Beliefs and you ALWAYS find Bigotry

In this example, *Len075* makes a very direct statement about Republicans. He/she employs an intensifier rather than to hedge in any manner. There is little room for doubt concerning his or her position.

In summary then, hedging is not preferred in any of the three venues because the nature of political debate values directness. Conversationalists generally do not employ hedges because many hedges are stuffy sounding; writers used primarily *basically* and *probably* or what one would consider "less academic sounding" hedges. Editorial writers want their positions to be clear and thus only used hedging sparingly. Chatters prefer to be direct with their opponents and thus have no use for hedging. The limited use of

indicators of probability in this study attest to the fact that in political debate directness is preferred over indirectness. Whether it is writing, speaking or chatting, there seems to be a need to be involved rather than detached from other participants and this is indicated by being direct.

The next section of this chapter will focus on the use of verbal attacks aimed at other interlocutors, specifically how insults are couched and how often they are used. Following this, will be a summation highlighting interesting findings

Insults

In this section of Chapter 4, my goal was to see how chatters addressed one another as compared to conversationalists and editorial writers. Since political bantering lends itself very nicely to the potential for insults (since conflict is at the core of discussion), I decided to look at the frequency of insults that were used in each forum. In each channel of communication, then, social and physical distance are factors that must be considered.

On the talk show, discussants had no cover. Whatever they said was on the record (and recorded) of their interlocutors, and was heard by a studio audience and seen by anyone tuned in to the program. In such situations, words must be chosen carefully to maintain face. Hence, it is predictable that they would not resort to using insults frequently.

Editorial writers have much more cover. Physically, they are not in the immediate eye of their audience and that allows them more social space cover than conversationalists have. Thus, writers do not have to worry about maintaining face in the presence of others; however, they generally are required to have a byline on their

submission (a requirement for printing the article in most newspapers), so their name is in print. Besides this, what they write is, for all practical purposes, a permanent record, not only in print, but also on the World Wide Web. Their words cannot be taken back. In other words, they have more cover than talk show discussants, but they can still be held accountable for what they say, which can influence their immediate social circles (for example if their neighbor happens to read their editorial).

Chatters, on the other hand, have almost bullet-proof cover. They are physically removed from their interlocutors, so they have the advantage of physical distance. They are also socially distant from their interlocutors, not only because they do not personally know the people with whom they are interacting, but also because it is virtually impossible to know them personally through the medium unless both sides are willing to share personal data with one another online. This does not happen in the heat of political wrangling. In fact, if the latter were not enough protection, they have one more advantage: They can and do use aliases, so anonymity is assured—at least this is the feeling chatters have. In light of these elements of protection, I predicted chatters would use the most insults and be the most direct.

Before insults are looked at, it is necessary to differentiate between insults and non-insults. The most difficult element in uncovering insults is to distinguish between insult and opinion. Insults are non-neutral words or phrases with the intent of degrading one's opponents or what one's opponents cherish or support. Hence, the following tables identify only comments that are meant to degrade another or another's positions. First, I looked at direct insults aimed at groups of people and those aimed at a particular interlocutor. Here is what was found:

TABLE 4-18: DIRECT INSULTS

	Group	Personal
Political Discussions	1	1
Editorials	4	1
Political Chat	6	17

Clearly, from Table 4-18 one can see that in political discussion direct insult is highly unusual. In fact, in the one instance a direct personal attack was employed, the victim was the butt-end of a joke, so the sting was lessened slightly. Here is that example:

> Bill:==**are totally, equally obnoxious. Lauren Hill bringing the Bible on stage to an award show is as awful and obnoxious and egotistical to me as Gary Bauer or yourself, Bob.** Um, I'm not kidding. This to me has nothing to do with God. It all has to with, "Thank you God for making me so talented as to get this award." I see these people up there with their jewelry and their entourages and their all about getting drugs and sex lifestyle, talking about God, it makes me as sick as the <unintelligible>.

In this instance, the host has called Bob egotistical and obnoxious, but he is more focused on attacking the political left in Hollywood as this example illustrates (group attack):

> Bill: We're talking...sort of got onto how the aah the presence of God gets into everyday life. I think award shows have become the PTL club of television. And lest people think I am attacking the right, which I'm happy to do**, let me just say I think the left wing, the lefties==with God==**
> Nadine:==Don't look at me.==
> Bill:==**are totally, equally obnoxious**

In any case, it seems to be unappealing to attack peers directly in the presence of those peers. Direct insults in face-to-face encounters are damaging to face (Levinson & Brown, 1973), and moreover can potentially lead to violent acts. Put another way, when emotional stability is lost and direct insults are used, physical reaction is one possible outcome (Labov, 1982; Sarbin, 1989). *The Jerry Springer Show* is well aware that opponents pushed to their limits will insult each other to the point of violence; which

appears to be the principal foundation for the show's success. Nevertheless, when interlocutors are hopeful of continued dialogue, they cannot insult one another so directly.

In the editorial opinions, writers used a few more direct group insults, but the same number of direct personal insults as was found in the discussion data. It is interesting that although separated by time and space, writers still were hesitant to make personal attacks. In order to appear to be addressing issues in a balanced and logical manner, they must maintain positive face (Levinson & Brown, 1973). So they refrain from the personal direct mode of attack, but still feel free to label groups on occasion to emphasize the extremes of the other side. Here is one such example from the data:

> And in the process, some local businesses are destined to become casualties of friendly fire, "collateral damage" in a self-righteous war that nobody but a **handful of Fascists** want to declare.

The attack here is the most vituperative example from the data, calling all of those supporting the smoking ban *fascists*. Apparently, writers feel that they can attack groups more directly with the desired effect than attack individuals. The use of the term *fascists* is very colorful and instills images of heartless brown-coated troopers who show no mercy to fellow residents.

Chatters attacked both groups and of course made significantly more direct personal attacks. In fact, by total, they used 23 direct insults compared to only 7 by writers and talk show discussants combined. Chatters have a distinct advantage over their counterparts participating in face-to-face discussion and written debate: Their identities are safely protected through the privacy offered by online interaction. The other interlocutors do not know the real identity of the person behind the language. They do not

know if the person is old or young, male or female, Asian or American, rich or poor (although there are plenty of accusations). Hence, each chatter has a built in face-protector, so if a chatter feels the urge to insult an online interlocutor, there is little to prevent him or her from doing so. The consequence is that direct insults are much more common as this example clearly shows:

NAGUAL4A: listen to you **idiots**....COMMAS....

Although, one may have heard children speak to one another in this manner, it is highly unusual to hear adults refer to one another like this without a donnybrook ensuing. In face-to-face settings insults of this nature may result in physical altercations, as well as damage positive face and negative face.

The number of indirect insults was also greater online as this table indicates:

TABLE 4-19: INDIRECT INSULTS

	Group	Personal
Political Discussions	14	4
Editorials	4	20
Political Chat	7	22

What this table illustrates is the hesitancy to attack an individual even indirectly in face-to-face encounters. Most of those instances came during one combative incident between two guests. Here is that dialogue:

Lydia: You have to listen to the stories of the survivors of rape. And when you look...research the si..the stories of the survivors of rape and sexual assault, you will find a very strong link with pornography and ==and pornographic materials.==
Al: ==Well, that's==...that's not true! That is...**that's a lie**.==
Lydia: ==Yes it is true.==
Al: ==**She's lying**. The Meese Commission...No!==

Lydia: ==And that's not true. ==Gail Dyne's book "Pornography," I mean there's actual accounts==

Al:==That's...that's not true. The Meese Commission== under Reagan spent...The Meese Commission under Reagan spent aah all of many years trying to do this study about pornography and the link between rape and violence and you know what? They were trying to find it and they couldn't find it. ==That's true.==

Lydia: == because they were doing it== scientifically!==

Bill: ==No, because women don't==

Al: Oh==because...**so they should have done it unscientifically**.==

In this chunk of dialogue Al attacks Lydia's position indirectly, insinuating that she is a liar and then at the end making a sarcastic remark about how research should have been done. This undoubtedly was the most heated conflict in the spoken transcripts, but even in this head-to-head battle, the interlocutors did not resort to characterizing the other person, as in: "You're a liar." They did resort instead to less direct attacks on groups that some of the interlocutors present may have supported as this example illustrates (remember that it is sometimes a fine line whether attacks are direct or indirect):

Al: ==Well,== that's what you expect from a group like that. ==I mean **that's the ultimate political crowd.==**

Nancy: ==WOOOOOOOOO!==

Al: ==I mean that's what they are. No, I mean **they are politically correct**; they're...they're...**they're probably a bunch of liberal feminists** who don't like the way...who..who don't like the way women...some women want to portray their bodies. They are...**they are liberal fascists**. They would shut down every kind of expression ==that==

This is clearly the strongest indirect attack against a particular group. However, it is still not direct. The attack is not directed at any of the other panel members in particular, so it is indirect. Although it is reacted to quite strongly by other members who do not agree with Al's scenario entirely, but even those who opposed Al excluded themselves from the group he condemned as this chunk of dialogue shows:

Al: Oh, Absolutely! In fact Angela Dworkin has said that even the act of love making itself is violence against women. **I mean that's how radical these people are.**
Bill: **They ==are very radical.==**
Lydia: **==Okay, some people!== That's how radical some people==**

Lydia excludes herself from the groups being attacked even though she is at least sympathetic to some of their causes.

The upshot of this analysis is this: In face-to-face environments, interlocutors in a political debate environment prefer not to attack peers individually, nor do they desire to make direct attacks on groups that include fellow participants. This attests to the power that maintaining negative and positive face has over conversations where there are disagreements. Those who cannot abide by these forces may end up in jail or the hospital...or on *Jerry Springer.*

Whereas, editorial writers favor group attacks if made directly, they favor individual attacks when made indirectly. Writers have more cover than conversationalists, and it allows them to attack individuals albeit indirectly. If one reflects for a moment on comments made by Al (from the previous spoken data sample), he attacked groups of people. Yet, he probably believed that Lydia was part of the group he was condemning but he was restrained from a continual barrage of attacks directed at her, even though it appeared that he had the upper hand and had gained footing with other members (Goffman, 1981). He was in peril of losing face, so he directed his attacks at the group in which Lydia was a member (or at least a member in his mind). Writers can more eloquently attack an individual without losing face. In the example below, the writer attempts to paint Ms. Breakall is an illogical person with illogical reasoning, but he carefully crafts his words, so that he sounds reasonable:

> Indeed, my incredulity reached a new peak as I read the assembled "questions and points" of Ms. Breakell's letter, which resembled nothing so much as a convoluted rant, one riddled with preposterous arguments and illogical conclusions.

Writers are afforded the time to craft well thought out attacks using more cleverly devised language (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987). Hence, even though the author levels a stinging attack, he chooses his words carefully. Thus, he attempts to preserve face by appealing to the reader with an "intelligent" point of view. Editorial writers consistently attempted to paint the other side (especially the arguments from an individual) as using ridiculous arguments, which in a sense elevated their own arguments.

In conclusion, writers can attack individuals with clever but indirect attacks. They must maintain positive face if their arguments are going to be considered as wise, so they must avoid direct personal attacks. They have the most time to construct well-thought out and very emotional language that is useful in making their attacks against another sound like the logical position (cf. Copi & Cohen, 1998).

Chatters attacked individuals more often both directly and indirectly. The distance and space make them impervious to damaging face. Here is an example of the kind of indirect attack that they are capable of leveling:

> ARMKEV: LOL you keep saying the govt owes you something go sit on a curb with your hand out then

Although this attack is indirect, it is still meant to sting. However, ARMKEV stops short of calling the chatter in question a *bum*. The strong implication, on the other hand, is that if people think that the government owes them something, they are nothing more than a beggar—a pariah—a leech in society. It is interesting that they used fewer indirect group attacks when compared to political talk show discussants (14-7), but they do not need to use indirect attacks, especially concerning groups. In face-to-face settings, constructing

dialogue requires more consideration of other interlocutors, so indirect group attacks are the most viable. Chatters know that they can continue the dialogue in spite of anything that they contribute to the discussion; hence, indirect group attacks are not favored (being the least malicious).

In light of these findings, one can conclude that political chat is distinct from either written editorials or political conversation in the face-to-face mode. Chatters have the advantage to be able to make direct individual attacks without losing face, an option that appears unavailable to writers and conversationalists. Table 4-20, showing the total number of insult used, illustrates the preferences for personal attacks by chatters:

TABLE 4-20: TOTAL INSULTS

	Group	Personal
Political Discussions	15	5
Editorials	8	21
Political Chat	13	39

This table also illustrates that political discussants prefer to attack groups more than individuals, which is a clear indication of their hesitancy to attack their fellow interlocutors, while editorial writers favor individual attacks but indirectly. Chatters favor direct and indirect insults directed toward individuals, almost doubling the number made by editorial writers. The payoff for chatters is that they can be clear and on record with their insults because they can hide behind their computer monitor. They believe that they are safe from face loss because they are in their own domain and can only be identified by a fictitious name on a screen, which has no features nor emotions that other interlocutors must concern themselves with (Brown & Levinson, 1973).

A summary will follow that includes all of the categories looked at in this study and how the findings relate to the original purposes outlined in preceding chapters of this text. This will be followed by conclusions and considerations for further research in the arena of Internet chatting.

Summary

In this section I summarize the findings from this chapter, paying special attention to the original research objectives. Recall that the overall objective is to compare Internet chatting with both speaking and writing. In this study I addressed this issue in two ways. First, I looked at a number of functional/grammatical features in all three modes of communication to see how Internet chatting compared to spoken and written language in the very specific context of political discussion. Second, I looked at the manner in which participants addressed one another, focusing on insults.

The following pages provide visual representation of the comparisons made in this chapter. What the figures clearly shows is that some features of chat are more like spoken language and some features are more like written language. In other cases, Internet chatting falls in the middle--between spoken and written language. There are also instances where Internet chatting seems completely removed from either writing or speaking. Internet chatting cannot be labeled as being this or that; instead, it takes on characteristics of both speaking and writing, while still demonstrating distinct features. The following sections will look at similarities and differences found in the data.

FIGURE 4-1: NO DIFFERENCE

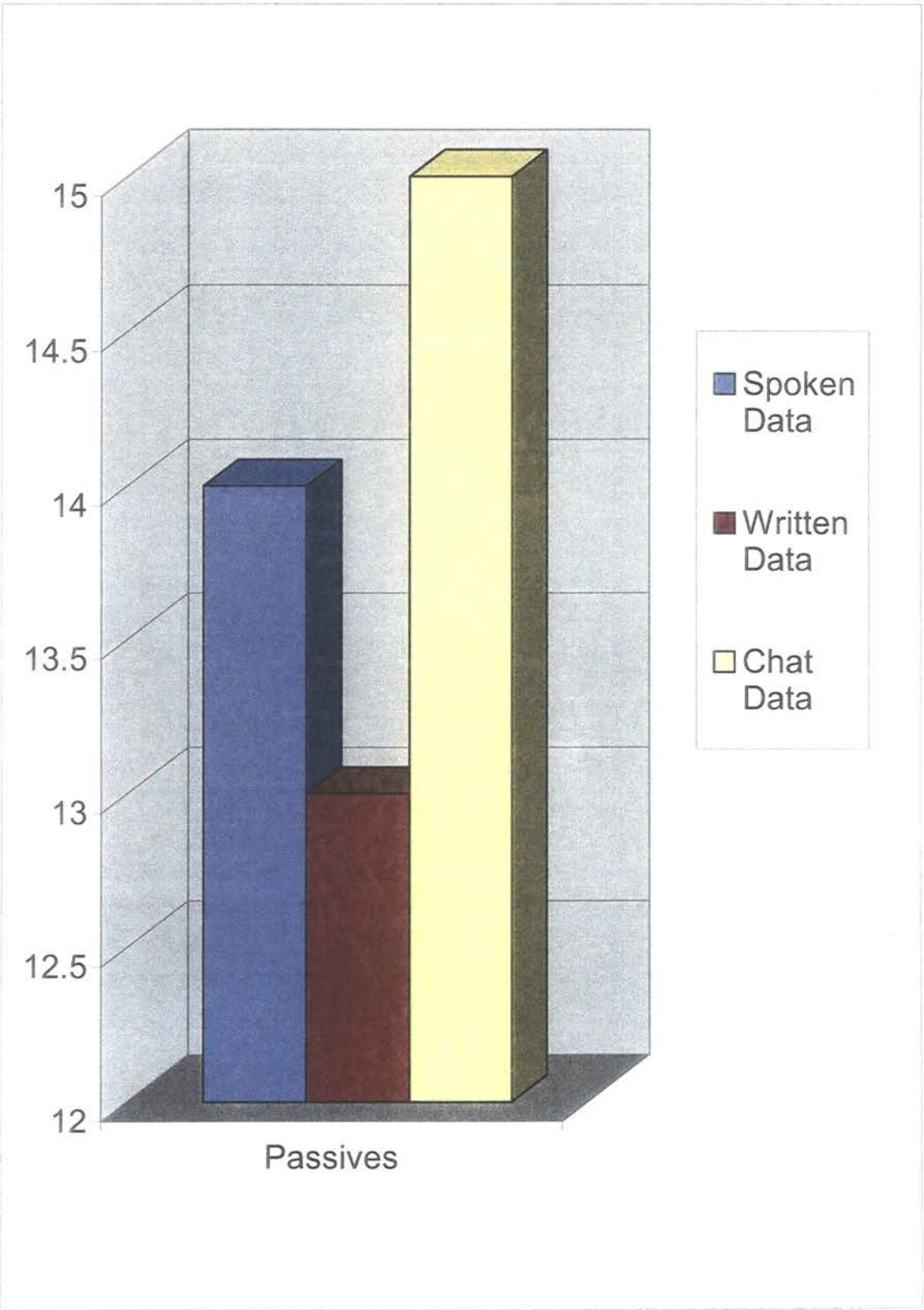


FIGURE 4-2: SPOKENNESS

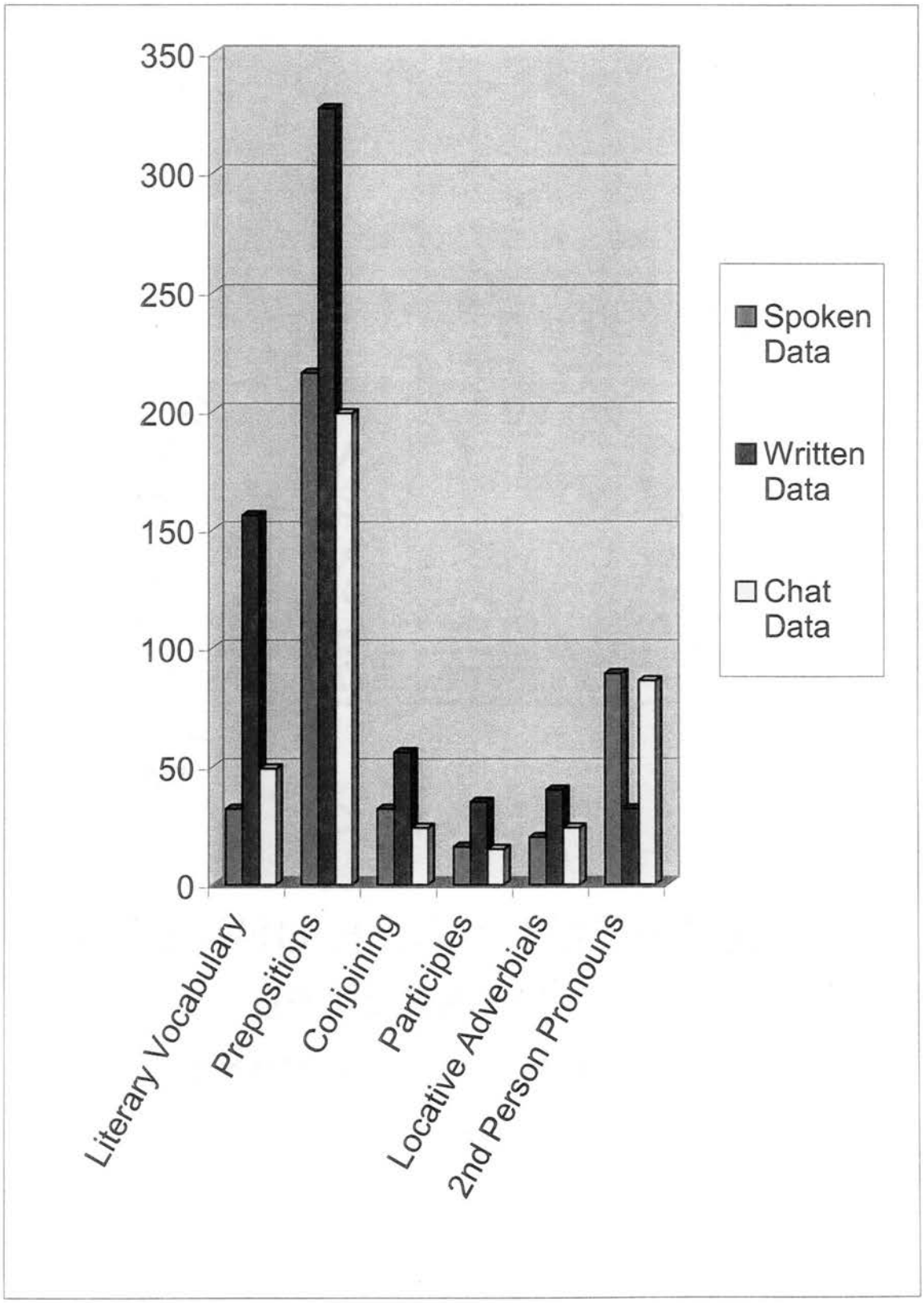


FIGURE 4-3: WRITTENNESS

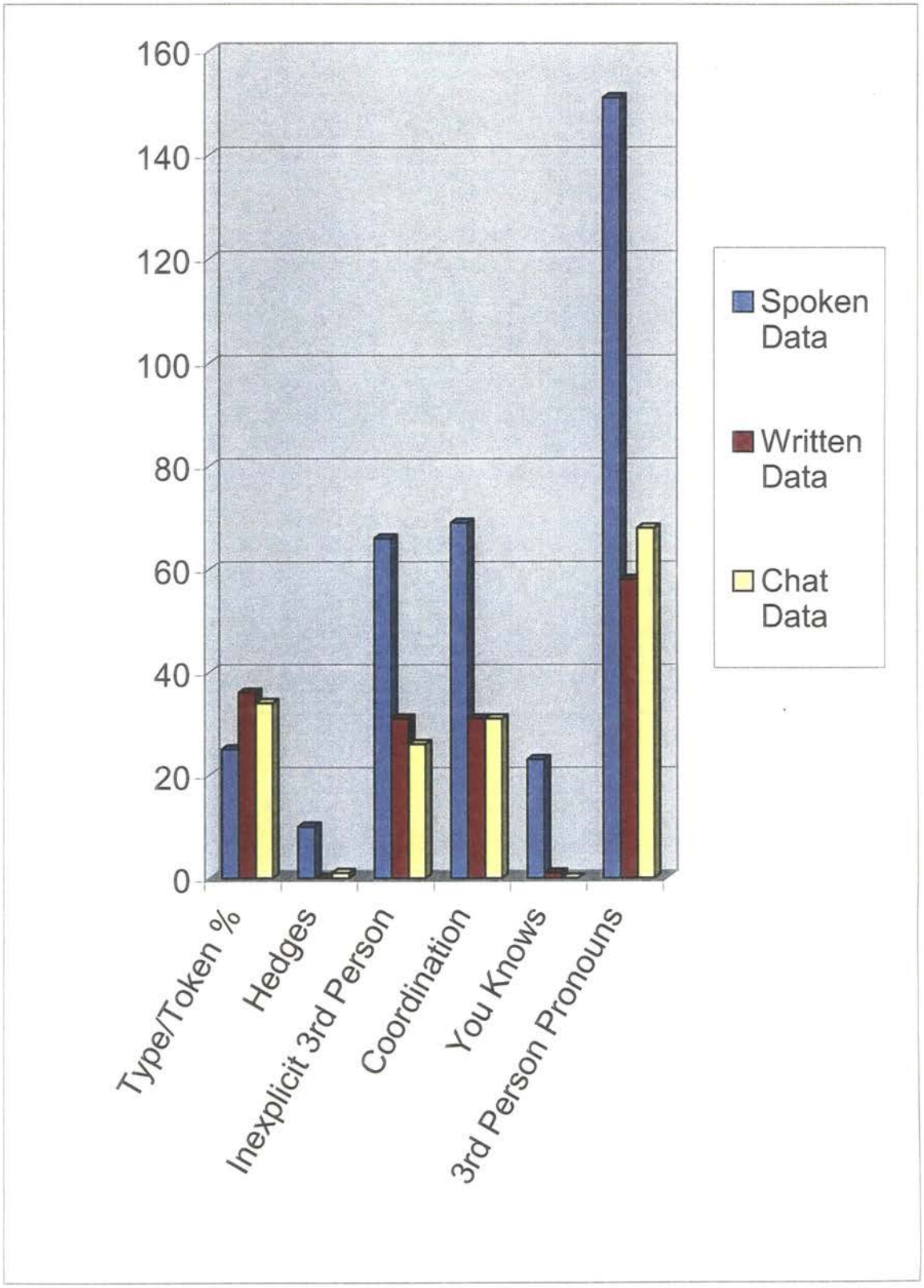


FIGURE 4-4: HYBRID EFFECT

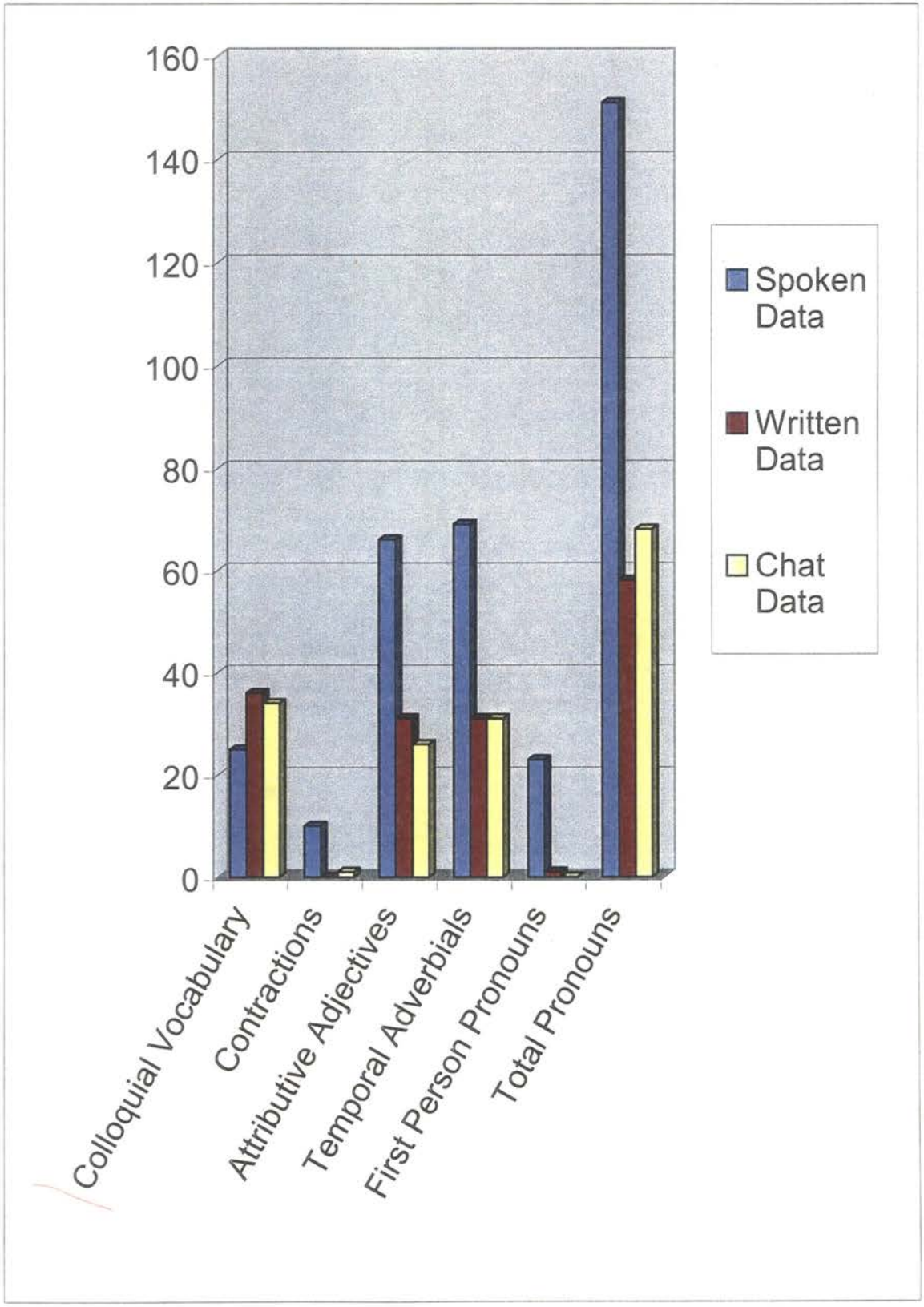
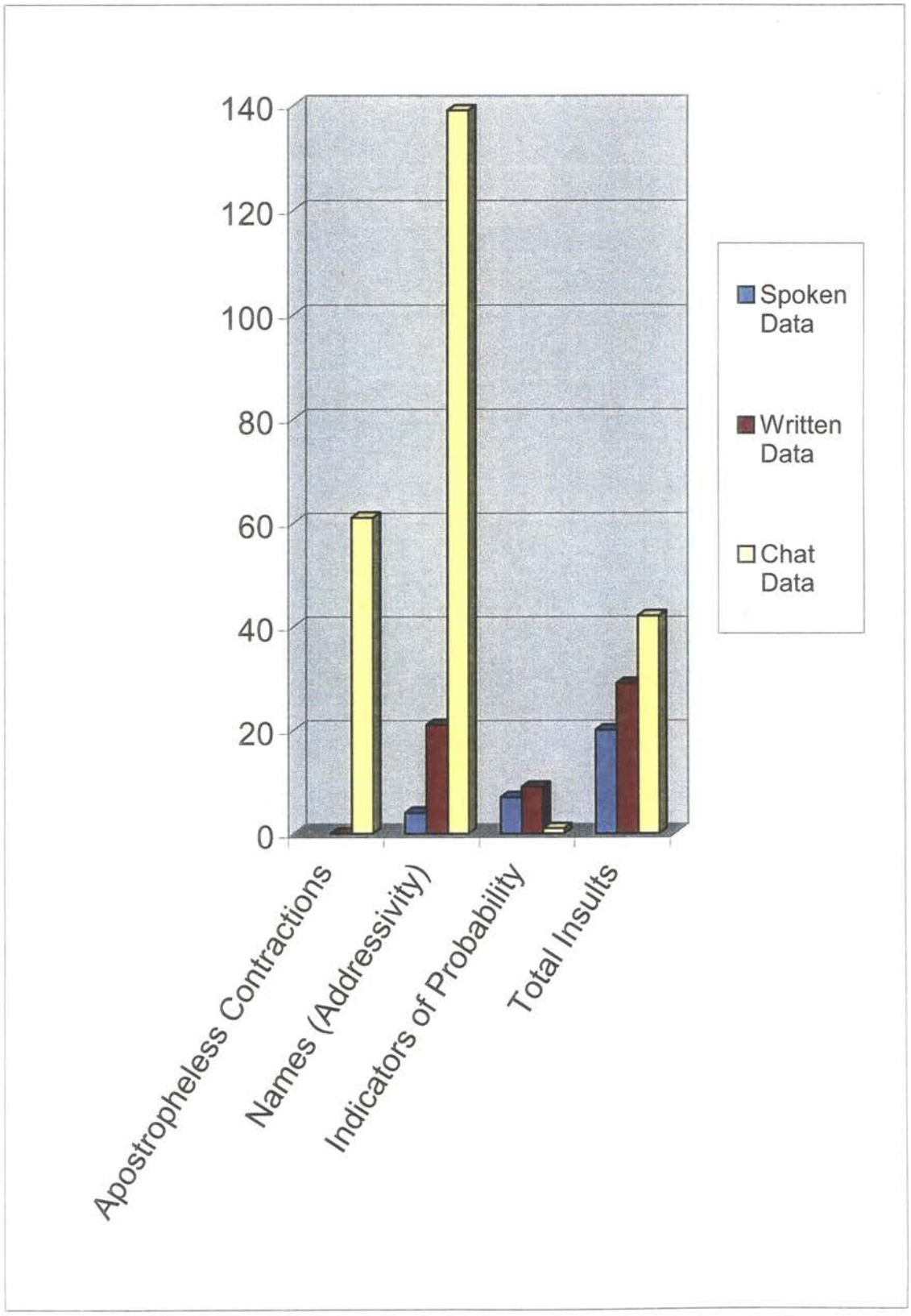


FIGURE 4-5: DISTINCTIVE FEATURES



No Difference

In this section I examine categories from the data whereby chat is similar to both spoken language and written language. Unlike the results tallied by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), who found that academic writers used many more passives than in the other three modes, my findings using a chi-square ($p. < .05$) revealed that there was no significant difference between chat and spoken language ($p. = .705$) and between chat and written language ($p. = .852$). It is my belief that subject matter discussed in the political forum does not lend itself to using the passive voice. Chatters probably avoid the passive because it is not the most forceful way to challenge another's statement, something that chatters relish doing.

Comparing two different types of chat channels might illustrate that passive voice is tied to topic. For example, the number of passives might be quite different on a chat channel where interlocutors offer one another financial advice (AOL has a number of such channels); this group would most likely be markedly more cautious and might use the passive voice with significantly greater frequency.

Spokenness

Whereas passive voice use was similar in all three forums, there were a number of categories where chat was similar to spoken language. Interestingly, the current data reveal that Internet chatting is more closely associated with spoken language when literary vocabulary was examined. A chi-square showed that there was no significant difference between speaking and chatting at the $p. < .05$ level ($p.= .057$). Considering that chatters have more time than speakers, one might guess that they would use significantly

more sophisticated language. However, they do not have the kind of time afforded to writers. In other words, they cannot scratch out, highlight and delete, cut and paste, nor grab a dictionary without losing precious time. Otherwise, the conversation that they are interested in may advance to the point where their potential contributions would be rendered meaningless.

In these data samples, I also counted prepositions and found that there was no significant difference between chatters and talk show panelists' use of prepositions (chi-square at $p. < .05$; $p. = .387$). It is my belief that the data demonstrate that chatters wish to mimic speakers who are engaged in conversation (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987). Also, concerning stringed prepositional phrases, chatters (like speakers) do not have the time to spend constructing wordy propositions. An interesting side study would be to see if the number of chatters online has an effect on the number of prepositions used. In a chat forum where there are fewer interlocutors, chatters may slow their deliveries, and thereby employ more prepositions. Additionally, it may be such that regarding preposition use the topic of discussion is of significant importance. For example, topics that require sequential arrangements, such as recipes or narratives may encourage more preposition usage. It would be interesting to look at various chat channels and compare them to see if the topic is a true driving force behind preposition use.

Another area where chatters and speakers behaved in similar fashion concerns conjoining. A chi-square ($p. < .05$; $p. = .283$) indicated that there was no significant difference between chatters' and talk show discussants' use of conjoining *and*. Speakers must construct ideas while engaged in conversation, a difficult task. Hence, they have great cognitive difficulty using complex conjoining to extend intonation units. It is my

opinion that chatters do not want to waste time and thus miss opportunities, so they opt for very short propositions over wordy ones. They have no need to expand intonation units and so their output is even less than that of speakers (although not significantly).

Chatters and talk show discussants also used a similar number of participles. A chi-square revealed no significant difference in participle use by chatters and speakers (p. < .05; p. = .857). It is believed that speakers have processing difficulties when attempting to expand intonation units and so use fewer. On the other hand, as is the case with conjoining, chatters have no need to expand intonation units and therefore do not use them as often as writers. It is also true that chatters in this study were restricted by the chat environment concerning the number of characters they could type per turn. Hence, chatters may opt for shorter contributions and avoid conjoining at the phrasal level.

Again, topic may play a very important role in the use of participles. It would be a fruitful study to look at participle use by chatters in an environment where chatters were involved in a more general discussion (something like teen chat). Obviously, a different topical environment would emphasize certain aspects of language use while diminishing others.

Another area where chat discourse is more like spoken language is in the area of locative adverbials. As previously noted, chatters do not feel the need to position people, places or things in space, and so, they used relatively few locative adverbials--in line with conversationalist production (chi-square at the p. < .05 level; p. = .545). They are also somewhat restricted by processing constraints (more than writers anyway), and certainly constrained by the environment, which limits the number of characters they can produce. Chatting also involves so many other interlocutors, forcing online participants to sift

through off-topic chatting and focus on what they want to talk about. These constraints affect output and this is most likely reflected in their use of locative adverbials.

Yet another area of similarity concerns the use of second person pronouns. Chatters used almost identical numbers as conversationalists, and there was no significant difference between the two forums of communication (chi-square, $p. < .05$; $p. = .818$). However, it is suggested here that the reason that chatters use second person pronouns as frequently as conversationalists is not because they use such pronouns in a similar fashion. Whereas talk show discussants used them as a means of conversational involvement and co-constructing dialogue, chatters used them as a means of being direct.

Chatters on a political chat channel certainly have the purpose in mind of addressing interlocutors in a direct manner, so they use *you* quite regularly. Obviously, if the topic of discussion were different, second person pronoun use would certainly be affected. It would be interesting to compare different chat channels to see if pronoun use is significantly influenced dependent upon the purpose of discussion.

To sum up the similarities between chat and spoken language, three elements stand out. First, chatters have more time than speakers engaged in conversation, but not so much time that they can mull over their decisions. Second, chatters are limited by their environment. Third, chatters involved with other interlocutors, at times, must envision themselves as being involved in a conversation, so they mimic conversation. With that said, it is important to note that they have no means to control the floor by using devices that speakers regularly use to gain and hold turns (Schegloff, 1982).

Writtenness

Internet chat is more closely associated with writing in a number of categories as well. Using chi-square, it was found that there was no significant difference ($p < .05$; p. = .055) between chatting and writing when analyzing type/token ration. The common assumption would be that chatting is nearly as complex as writing; however, this conclusion is slightly misleading. Chatters prefer many contracted forms of words, and also must address other chatters by name. This, along with misspellings (or what prescriptively would be considered misspellings), increases the number of different tokens in the data set.

Still, chatters seem to have more time (than speakers) to employ more diversified vocabulary and take advantage of this opportunity. Yates (1996), who compared electronic bulletin board postings (from a conference) to spoken and written language, found a similar pattern as I have discovered here. He suggests that when people post information electronically, they tends to bring their literate production practices and apply them to socially interactive environments such as chat.

Written language is also more like chatting when it comes to hedging. A chi-square revealed there was no statistical difference in hedge use between chatters and editorial writers (p. < .05; p. = .317). Chatting is clearly more like writing than speaking (recalling that chatters and writers hedged 1 and 0 times respectively, while talk show guests used hedges 10 times). Political debating is a forum where opinions drive discussions. Chatters may be under slightly more pressure than chatters when it comes to production, but not so much as to have difficulties of precision. At the very least, they are satisfied enough with their output that they do not appear to need to hedge.

Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) have claimed that writers do not employ inexplicit third person pronoun references because they have sufficient time to be more precise. I would hasten to add that speakers and listeners are more engaged with one another (Schegloff, 1982) and, therefore, do not need to be as precise to make their audience understand. Chatters must be more precise than even editorial writers because the environment is often clogged with as many as 23 participants engaged in multiple, ongoing conversations. Inexplicit references therefore become ineffective ways of conveying a message. Using chi-square as a measurement, it was found that there was no significant difference between writers and chatters' use of third person inexplicit references ($p. < .05$; $p. = .506$). It would be interesting to look at a restricted forum where only two or three people were allowed to chat to see if this would affect the number of inexplicit references that are used.

Another area where writers and chatters display similarities concerns their use of coordination. A chi-square revealed that there was no significant difference between chatters and writers' coordination use ($p. < .05$; $p. = 1.00$). The lack of conversation-driven pressures aids chatters and writers because they have more time to construct propositions without using coordination. Recall that writers used conjoining only 32 times compared to 24 times for chatters. In spoken conversations, interlocutors sometimes struggle to find the right words and so often employ *and* and *but* as a way of attaching their next thought (56 times). They also use coordination as a way of securing the floor or keeping the floor, something that chatters never have to worry about because their propositions are constructed, removed from their interlocutors (just like writers).

Chatters and writers also refrain from using *you know* as a means of engaging their interlocutors. A chi-square measurement revealed that there is no significant difference between writers and chatters' use of *you know* ($p. < .05$; $p. = .317$). That chatters never used *you know,* indicates that it is a useless linguistic device for engaging the other online participants. From the current data, one can see that *you know* served more as a bridge for the speaker to find the right words, as well as a bridge extending invitation to other participants. The extra time that writers and chatters have eliminates the need to use such cognitive time-extenders; they simply do not have the pressures that interlocutors engaged in conversation have.

Finally, chatters used approximately the same number of third person pronouns as writers (chi-square at the $p. < .05$ level; $p. = .368$). As previously mentioned, writers are afforded substantial time so as not to have to depend on the third person referencing, and in fact writers, in general, prefer not to use personal pronouns. Chatters actually used slightly fewer third person pronouns than writers. The reason they do not use so many is that for chatters, third person pronoun use beyond the present turn becomes confusing; hence, chatters refer to topical entities with synonymy as a means to keep the topic in focus. Again, if there were fewer chatters engaged in discussion, say 3-4, the use of third person pronouns may be significantly increased because there would most likely be only one topic of discussion with all interlocutors participating. So, the similarity between writers and chatters is the fact that they do not use third person pronouns to make texts cohesive and coherent.

The strong pattern revealed in this section seems to relate to primarily one factor. Chatters are afforded more time than conversationalists. And although they do not have

the amount of time that is afforded to writers, they do not have sufficient demands upon their cognitive resources to force them to use the kinds of devices (words) that speakers must employ. Hence, they are much more like writers when time factors are considered. The other features where chatters and writers demonstrated similar behavior was in their use of hedging. Chatters and writers do not need to hedge because they are removed from their interlocutors and, therefore, do not need to worry about the social constraints required in face-to-face encounters. Even when chatters make a typing mistake or do not make their point clearly, they cannot be held accountable for they have contributed, so they do not need to hedge. And also, like writers, chatters have no need to employ third person pronouns; in fact, overuse would tend to debilitate the comprehensibility of their messages.

Hybrid Effect

At the outset of this study, it was thought that chat discourse for the most part would fall between spoken and written language samples. This supposition was false, but there were a number of categories where the production of chatters did fall between the output of spoken and written language.

The first category where the language of chatters proved significantly different (chi-square at the $p. < .05$ level) from that of writers ($p. = .000$) and speakers ($p. = 000$) was in the overall use of pronouns and in the use of first person pronouns. Unlike speakers, chatters apparently do not have as much need for the first person pronoun "I." They have no need to establish themselves as the speaker or to mark any proposition as the property of the speaker, nor do they need to hedge before they make a statement (e.g., *I think..., I believe..., I mean...*, etc.). In other words, since one's alias always

accompanies one's proposition, there is no need for any kind of personal identification. Still, they wish to mimic speaking and so sometimes do use first person pronouns and more frequently than writers. That chatters fall in between speakers (p. = .000) and writers (p. = .022) when it comes to first person pronoun use is balanced by second person pronoun use where chatters used statistically similar numbers as conversationalists and third person pronoun use where chatters used statistically similar numbers to writers.

Here again the nature of political discussion must have an effect on the numbers of pronouns used. I surmise that studying and comparing other types of chat channels would reveal much different numbers. For example, a sports channel may reveal that more participants opt to use first person pronouns in a manner more like conversation because they are continually giving their opinion and third person pronouns as interlocutors chat about the heroes and zeroes of the day.

A second area where chat discourse was nestled between spoken and written language was in colloquial language use. Chatters really did seem to be caught between writing and speaking. Indeed they were; a chi-square (p. < .05) revealed that chatters used significantly more colloquial language than writers (p. = .000) but significantly less than speakers (p. = .002). They seemed to want to maintain the spokenness of language and so used colloquial language more often than writers, but on the other hand, they also seemed to want to use intelligent and logical language as a means of strengthening their arguments. They seemed to vacillate between the two. This could be attributed to the fact that they had less time to produce more eloquent-sounding language, or perhaps they are driven more by the emotion of the moment. There are certainly fewer restraints concerning the language they chose (as was evident from the number of insults that

chatters used). As was suggested previously, it would be interesting to look at chat discourse in a monitored setting to see if literary language increased and colloquial language decreased or vice-versa. Also, the topic must have an effect concerning the formality of language used. Undoubtedly, if someone were to examine one of the thousands of teen chat channels, the results would show that the level of language would be distinctively more colloquial.

Additionally, chatters used significantly fewer contractions (chi-square at the p. < .05 level) than talks show participants (p. = .021), but significantly more than writers (p. = .000). Contractions are associated with spoken language and are used almost constantly, while writers use very few even in editorial writing, which seems to be more letter-like than academic-like. Chatters like to employ contractions frequently, but avoid such innovative forms as *that's*, which occurred only 8 times in the chat transcription compared to 27 times in the spoken data.

In similar fashion, chatters used significantly more (chi-square at the p. < .05 level) attributive adjectives than speakers (p. = .012) but significantly less than writers (p. = .000). Once again it seems that chatters are caught in between the two forces—having more time than speakers but less than writers. Consequently, they use more attributive adjectives than speakers and less than writers. Again, it needs to be reiterated that chatters are restricted by the chat environment concerning turn length, which may or may not limit adjectivals, but undoubtedly reduces the number of stringed adjectivals.

The final area where chatters fell between writers and speakers was in the amount of temporal adverbials they employed. They used temporal adverbials as a way of bringing events from the past to the present, but did not use them as a means of ordering

events (like writers). A chi-square test revealed the significant differences at the p. < 05 level (p. = .044 for spoken language; p. = .014 for written language).

To sum up this section, then, I can say that there are three major forces that must be considered when trying to explain why chat discourse features fall between the numbers produced by writers and speakers. The first is time. Chatters have more time than speakers but not so much as to produce the variety that can be devised by writers. The second is quality. Chatters in this setting seemed to be torn between wanting to sound conversational, and wanting to be precise and profound. Hence, they found themselves in the middle. The third factor is the number of concurrent participants online. This adds pressure to deliver messages quickly requiring more cognitive processing than writers; on the other hand, they are not in any way pressured by other members online. In fact, individuals often ignore comments and questions directed at them.

Distinctive Features

There are some instances where chat appears to be or in some cases is most certainly different than either political, spoken discussion or editorial writing.

The first area to be discussed is contractions. Whereas, it seems that the overall number of contractions are hybrid-like, contractions without the use of apostrophes were only used in chat discourse. Considering it is an impossible task to try and determine whether or not participants engaged in conversation were using apostropheless contractions, they could not be compared. However, by using a chi-square, it was found that apostropheless contraction use was significantly higher (p. < .05) for chatters than for editorial writers (p. = .000).

This finding is not without merit. Chatters seem intent on finding ways in which they can save keystroke time. When there are 23 chatters engaged in multiple conversations in continual flux, it becomes imperative to use precious construction time efficiently. Werry (1996) has pointed out that chatters use measures such as abbreviations, emoticons and acronyms to save time. Apostropheless contractions seem to fall into the same category. Additionally, it is suggested here that using this innovative form is acceptable behavior. In all of the data that I have pored over, there have been no negative comments from chatters complaining about the lack of correct use of apostrophes, and no chatter ever made an online self-repair nor did fellow interlocutors ever offer other-repair. In fact, by avoiding the apostrophe, chatters can undoubtedly save time. I also maintain that most chatters have the capability to use conventional forms but often opt for the quickest yet still comprehensible entry. This idea offers a clear explanation for why chatters avoid punctuation (especially sentence initial capitalization and sentence-ending markers) as well as using innovative language forms such as using *u* as a replacement for *you*. It might prove interesting to see if the frequency of apostropheless contractions is directly tied to the number of folks engaged in online discussion. In this study, the political chat lines were virtually maxed-out; rarely did the total number of chatters dip below 20; if the number of chatters were reduced to say four or five, it is conceivable that the users would be less interested in innovative forms and start to use apostrophes with their contractions. (However, it is my opinion that they would still use apostropheless contractions at the same rate because chatters simply prefer to finish the construction of their propositions quickly, but this point is nevertheless debatable.)

A second area where chat is dominant is in the amount of questions they pose, which far outweighed the other forums. Interestingly enough, questions routinely go unanswered. This reflects the idea that chatters do not have to engage in the same kinds of politeness rules that are customary in conversation (see Brown & Levinson, 1978). In fact chatters can pick and choose who they would like to respond to and when. This is an option that is not afforded to most politicians, who even when not wishing to respond are forced into tactical avoidance of answering the question directly while still appearing to answer. When chatters are cornered, they can simply ignore what the other side is saying or resort to insulting the other side. After all, they cannot be held accountable by the other side, the law or the press. It is freedom of speech at its freest, which is the reason why personal insults are flung without hesitation.

It would be interesting to look at political chatters in a more controlled environment, such as a monitored chat line. A monitored setting may reveal that the number of questions would be diminished, while the answers to those questions would be increased, especially if the number of chatters online happened to be more in line with natural face-to-face conversation (3-4 chatters). Controlled environments may intensify the social pressure to be polite and say what is appropriate for conversational settings; this area certainly warrants further investigation.

Yet another area where chat discourse was distinct (chi-square, $p. < .05$ level) from spoken ($p. = .000$) and written discourse ($p. = .000$) was in the use of personal names. Addressivity (as Werry, 1996 coins it) is essential to minimize the confusion of who is responding to whom. As I have already mentioned, chatters constantly used questions; thus, it becomes necessary when two or three debatable propositions have been

put forward to address the proper person; this, multiplied by the number of chatters (usually 23) warrants addressing the person. I believe that if the number of chatters engaged in electronic discussion were reduced to three or four that the necessity to identify the intended audience would be diminished. It may be the case that the discussion would look a lot more like conventional face-to-face conversation, without multiple topics. In other words, propositions would most likely be intended for everyone involved in the discussion.

Also, by using a chi-square, it was found that chatters used significantly fewer ($p. < .05$) indicators of probability (words such as *generally, primarily*, etc.) than either speakers ($p. = .034$) or writers ($p. = .011$). Although these were not favored in any of the venues due to the nature of political debate, they were used only once by chatters. This again is related to the reality that chatters find themselves removed entirely from their audience. They can say (type) what they like without doing damage to positive or negative face. Chat offers participants a fertile environment to be direct; there is no need to modify a statement with the kind of hedging used in research writing. It would seem that in the chat atmosphere hedging would be viewed as a lack of confidence, so instead of finding indicators of probability, chatters may prefer indicators of certainty (such as *always*).

The final area where chatters are uniquely housed is in the area of direct and personal insult use. Because chatters are remote from one another, and they can safely hide behind their aliases, they are free from the kind of constraints that both writers and conversationalists must face (Brown & Levinson, 1978). They can engage in personal and direct attacks because of this. In the present study, I limited this count of insults to

those that were directly related to a specific and identifiable conversation, restricted by topic and which constituted responses to a particular individual. If all of the insults were to be counted (those that fall outside the parameters laid out in the methodology), the difference between chat and the other two forums would be greatly increased. For example, the following dialogue was the type of dialogue that was excluded, but occurred frequently:

> **BigBooty**: Wow. Nickels, foshay, mermaid, and archrival. What bad news for repubs came out to cause this?
> **Archrival**: Booty, you are pretty much an idiot, aren't you....what banality do you have to offer us this afternoon....

Here one can see that mere recognition of someone as a political opponent opens *Pandora's box.* Yet, this kind of debate does not generate much in the way of topical discussion and is, therefore, not useable data in the present study; chat sometimes is fraught with insults that are not part of any conversation, but these occurrences fall outside the parameters set up in the Method section of this study.

One point that must be addressed is the perception that these kinds of chatters are folks that are on the edge of going off the deep-end and committing heinous acts. While there certainly may be such folks engaged in chatting, it would seem that the vast majority of chatters are engaged in a kind of "insult gamesmanship." If these kinds of insults were truly injurious to one side or the other, people would simply cease to use chatting as a way of expressing themselves. Obviously, people enjoy the battles that occur, and though they insult one another, most of the chatters come back for more (Goodwin, 1990). I surmise that political chat is akin to insult games and is one of the primary attractions of chatting. There are forums where this would probably not be the case, but the political arena is the perfect forum for would-be insulters to engage one

another. It would be interesting to examine foreign political chat venues to see if these phenomena are restricted to Americans who have been raised with the notion that it is important to express one's viewpoints and defend them, but it is taboo to do so in face-to-face settings, making chat a perfect outlet. In countries where politics is discussed openly, perhaps political chat would be less popular because politics is fair game for public discussion, or, on the other hand, they may be wildly popular because chatters would have access to more people simultaneously.

Chapter 5 consists of a brief summation including some closing remarks.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

What is chat?

The contents of Chapter 5 represent a very brief overview of the complete work. At the outset of this study, I attempted to address the following question: Is chatting more like speaking or more like writing? Of course, this is not a cut and dried question, especially because genre has an effect on spoken and written language; in other words, the two are not monologic. Nevertheless, there are differences that can be looked at just as I did in this study.

I used the model provided by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) as my guide. I present here the broad categories that Chafe and Danielewicz used and provide brief remarks concerning how chat fits into these categories.

The first broad category that Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) looked at was vocabulary variety. Under this umbrella, I looked at type/token ratios, hedging and inexplicit third person use. Chatters tend use more variety and thus, are more like writers. Here are my overall conclusions:

- Chatters have more time to choose appropriate vocabulary when compared to speakers.

- Chatters increase variety by using creative and innovative language forms, as well as addressivity.
- Chatters do not use hedges, indicating that they are either satisfied with their language choices or that they do not care if they are imprecise because they cannot be held accountable for what they "say."

The second broad category investigated by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) was vocabulary register. They suggest that register (or level) determines whether language is more like spoken language or written language. Chafe and Danielewicz looked at the following subcategories that I also used to compare spoken and written language to chat: literary language, colloquial language and contractions. Chatters generally fell between spoken and written language, which means that it is difficult to identify if the language register is more like speaking or more like writing. Here is my assessment of vocabulary register as it relates to chat:

- Chatters have less time than writers (much), but more time than speakers. Their cognitive processing of language is not under the same heavy demands that speakers face.
- Chatters tend to mimic spoken language, but because they are aided by time, they sometimes elevate their language sophistication.

Another broad category examined by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) was syntactic integration (or as I called it here, *intonation expansion*). Integration is a strategy used primarily by writers (especially academic writers) to incorporate various linguistic elements into clauses as a means to be more concise and precise, while extending intonation units. The categories I looked at in this study were: prepositions and stringed

prepositions, complex clausal conjoining, locative and temporal adverbials and preposed attributive adjectives (and noun modifiers). When I made the comparison between the spoken and written language samples, I concluded that chat was more like spoken language. Here is my comments:

- Chatters are limited by their environment. AOL restricts the number of characters a participant may type per turn, so integration is not a useful strategy.
- Chatters must cope with many simultaneous difficulties, while trying to be an active member in the conversation. The complex dynamics of Internet chat (e.g., the number of chatters, the problem of intervening turns from multiple conversations, the difficulties of processing text embedded in the midst of the dialogic interaction, etc.) do not warrant expanding intonation units.
- Chatters are capable of more complex clausal construction, but prefer speed to precision.

An additional broad category looked at by Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) is sentence level conjoining by using conjunctives (*and, but, so*). Speakers (primarily) use this kind of conjoining to establish the floor, maintain the floor and as a means to organize their thoughts. My results indicate that chat text is more like written text. Here are some of my conclusions why this is the case:

- Chatters have no need to establish or maintain the floor because they can construct dialogue simultaneously with other chatters who are online. In other words, the floor is always available to them.

- Chatters do not need to organize their thoughts within the framework of a conversation. They can take as much time as they want without affecting the conversational dynamics.

The final category that Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) looked at that I look at here is the broad category of involvement and detachment. Unless there is a genre effect, written language indicates more detachment, while spoken language indicates more involvement. The subcategories I looked at are: you knows, first person pronouns, second person pronouns, third person pronouns, indicators of probability, passives and addressivity. The chat data I analysed indicate that chatters use language to show involvement with their interlocutors in a different manner than either writers or conversationalist. I drew the following conclusions:

- Chatters have no need to cue interlocutors with classic discourse markers. In fact, such markers would probably have little effect on the participants online.
- Chatters tend not to respond to questions. They cannot be held accountable if they fail to answer questions, and it is likely the problem of intervening turns causes them to forget to answer questions.
- Chatters use second person pronouns at about the same frequency as conversationalists, but they tend to use them in a more confrontational way, while conversationalists use them in a generic sense quite frequently.
- Chatters must use addressivity to target a particular chatter that is online; otherwise, it is quite difficult to identify who is chatting with whom.

Besides the categories that Chafe and Danielewicz (1987) used to identify grammatical features to differentiate between spoken and written language, I also looked

at insult use by chatters and compared the frequency of insults to that of speakers and writers. It was found that chatters used many more direct insults than speakers or writers. Here is my conclusions indicating two of the reasons why chatters use more insults:

- Chatters are fearless because they have no risks of losing face (Brown & Levinson, 1978). A chatter is protected by complete anonymity.
- Chatters use insults as a means to have fun. Insulting one another becomes like a game to participants.

To briefly sum up, the comparisons made in this study, chatting is a little like writing and a little like speaking, yet completely different in certain respects. This paints a clearer picture of what the chatters in this study are like.

Chatter Profiles

In this next section, I wish to characterize chatters (from these data) with the following statements:

1. Chatters use their keyboards as a way of "speaking." They must follow the dialogue as if they were engaged in a conversation.
2. Chatters are masked individuals that have no gender, educational level, financial status, or race. Even when chatters reveal such information for consumption, it not verifiable, and so cannot be assured. This offers them great protection from face damage.
3. Chatters are time conscious but not hesitant or flummoxed. They need not worry about securing turns, as turn taking is not dependent upon social cues like they are in face-to-face conversation. Chatters can construct their propositions when they wish. (Obviously, this adds to the confusion of a heavily used chat channel.)

4. Chatters are bold in their opinions, and their words confirm this notion. Consequently, chatters use insults with regularity.
5. Chatters focus on content, sacrificing prescription; hence, they seem generally unconcerned with "errors."
6. Chatters seem torn between contributing to discussion with sound, rational, logical propositions and reacting to the propositions of others. This results in a mixture of mimicking speaking and writing.
7. Chatters are involved in the discussion when they want to be. There are no social cues holding their attention. They tend to be fickle participants, sometimes engaged and sometimes disengaged.
8. Chatters organize chat discourse by creating interesting linguistic devices. This allows them to operate in a potentially messy and confusing channel of communication.
9. Chatters engage in political debate as a form of recreation. They are knowledgeable about politics, but the confrontational language often used is more game-like than serious.

Concluding Remarks

These are some conclusions that I have drawn from the data gathered, and these conclusions are restricted to the political chat forum I investigated. There are a number of other avenues that can be pursued in the chat world. Actually, there have been almost no studies related to discourse analysis. Whereas written and spoken discourse analysts have looked at very specific elements in a variety of discourses, such thorough investigations, for the most part, have bypassed online interactive venues. Due to the sheer number of

chat channels coupled with the wide, wide variety of topic-specific channels available, the sky is truly the limit as to what can be investigated.

Another area open to further investigation is chat that takes place in languages other than English. Certainly the cultural and perhaps social backgrounds of individuals would have an interesting effect on the data. Comparing two chat channels of like topical content but in different languages may reveal some very distinctive social and/or cultural differences. However, as is the case with all chat analyses, chatters remain protected by distance and alias masks, so drawing general conclusions about chatters is limited primarily to the data they produce.

One area of chat that has not been investigated, to my knowledge, concerns chat channels that offer participants a virtual experience as well as a language experience. In virtual chat, participants select an avatar to operate within the chosen virtual environment. Avatars can chat with one another when they are close enough within the environment. So, when one chatter sees another, he or she can walk (run or even fly) over to the other chatter to engage that person in chat. Of course, language still must be produced using the keyboard, but the text appears in cartoon-like bubbles that are emitted from each avatar's mouth. It is a very unusual way to "talk" with someone, and it most certainly has at least some effect on the dialogue that is used in such environments. Once again, the number of chatters and the particular topics would influence the data produced.

Closely related to virtual chat is split-screen chatting (such as *ICQ*), which is actually free to download and only requires an Internet connection and a web browser. In split-screen chatting, as the name implies, the user chats on a split screen. One user types on one half of the screen, while the other user types on the other half of the screen. This

forum is truly synchronous in every respect. Thus, this is a very interesting forum because it allows both users to see the "errors" as they are actually typed. In other words, one can see the mistakes and "do-overs" that Halliday (1987) says make writing fraught with hesitations—just like speaking. Of course, if those errors could be captured in some way, it would make for very invigorating discussion. However, it would be very difficult to get "natural" data because this kind of chatting has a more intimate "feel."

The present study focused on one tiny part of online interaction. As online discourses are in their infancy, they have not yet been thoroughly investigated. Besides, creation of new ways to communicate online seems to be a never-ending venture, so opportunities will not soon dry up due to lack of available online discourses.

In this study, it was found that chatters are different from writers and different from conversationalists. It would be difficult for me to conclude here that what chatters produce is real conversation because they do not abide by the social rules of co-construction of conversation and maxims of politeness. On the other hand, it is not like writing because it does consist of turns, and there is the quality of back and forth banter. So, the term "chatting" defined in the conventional sense cannot be applied to online synchronous Internet communication. It is a distinctive form of communication.

Chatters are unlike interlocutors engaged in conversation because they do not need to get and keep the floor; they always have the floor whenever they want it. This means that they do not have to use devices that conversationalists use to maintain and enter conversations (such as using coordination to get or hold the floor). Still, they tend to want to mimic speaking in a number of ways. They tend to use informal language and

create interesting devices to save time. Yet, they sometimes use formal language to strengthen arguments similar to written language.

Concerning involvement, chatters are also inconsistent. On the one hand, their contributions represent more involved language such as use of the second pronoun *you*. On the other hand, they seem almost completely detached from their interlocutors. Questions are almost never answered once they are raised, even when they are specifically targeted.

When chatters are engaged online, the turn-taking represented in print on the transcripts does resemble conventional conversation but conversation consisting of short turns and a conversation that is continually splitting into subtopics and new topics. This absolutely encourages syntactic reduction, but it is different from speaking because chatters tend to involve themselves in more than one conversation at any point in time. This results in "speed typing." Frankly, it is amazing how fast some of the interlocutors engaged online can make successive contributions to the discussion.

Social distance and physical distance allow chatters to "say" what they wish without any repercussions. This can be viewed in two ways: 1) It is either the ultimate in freedom of speech because interlocutors are not judged by their racial makeup, their gender, their beauty, their accent or their social status; they are judged by what they "say," or 2) It is the most impersonal form of communication available that allows people to engage one another without any conscience, and without any intent on developing personal relationships. I conclude here that it is actually more like the first rather than the second. Chat is used by interlocutors as a way to have fun online.

However, it does say something about American culture (and other cultures as well), which is that nowadays computers are used as a means for almost everything including interactive communication. And, although I would not say that Internet chat affects relationship building directly because that is not the intent of chatters online, I would say that relationship building has already been affected by the advent of the computer. Considering that I spent many hours online, I was aware that some chatters spent hours online. Some were obviously married and others were students, but the net effect of being constantly online undoubtedly influences how people communicate with one another in face-to-face settings. In social settings, people learn the rules of communication, and learn what is proper and what is not; one learns ritualized beginnings and endings to conversations; one learns correct register, etc. Online, chatters do not learn these things and obviously from looking at the data, they do not necessarily practice them. However, this is only one chat forum, and a confrontational one at that. There are also chat groups where cancer patients and their families can express their feelings with other cancer patients and their families. There are also chat channels designed for the deaf, who can watch television shows while logged on and see the text of the show they are watching appear on their computer monitors, while volunteers furiously type in the text from a remote location.

Chat is interesting in another respect as well. In the co-construction of conversation, interlocutors must be keenly aware of the clues provided by the other members of the group. For example, if the speaker planned on an extended narrative, he/she would couch the beginning in a way as to cue the others that an extended turn was being asked for. These kinds of cues seem lacking online. Chatters enter into the

conversation abruptly and exit the conversation abruptly. Since turns are short, they are unable to use linguistic or paralinguistic clues to advise other interlocutors of their intentions. And, even if they did signal their intentions, it is unlikely in a fast-paced environment like political chat that their cues would be perceived, let alone heeded. Still, many interlocutors do feel the need to exit gracefully with acronyms "brb" (be right back). In any case, chatting is more like an endurance battle as neither side seeks any consensus. After all, they came into the chat room for a specific purpose and that was to engage fellow chatters in political discussion. Certainly, a research study comparing chat channels with vastly different expressed purposes would be a welcome extension of the present research. My contention is that a channel's purpose plays a vital role in determining what kinds of linguistic elements will be prevalent, just as it does in written and spoken venues of communication.

In closing, I would just like to remark that by analyzing the various discourses, I think that I have learned a little about what makes political chatters tick, and so I will always look at chat as a distinct form of communication, and chatters as a unique group of individuals. I hope that this work acts as an impetus for others who might be considering looking at the wide variety of online discourses.

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VITA

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