Terrell Neuage PhD thesis - charting the ODAM - University of South Australia

Constituting the ODAM (Online Discourse Analysis Method)
Use of mixed linguistic analysis methodology
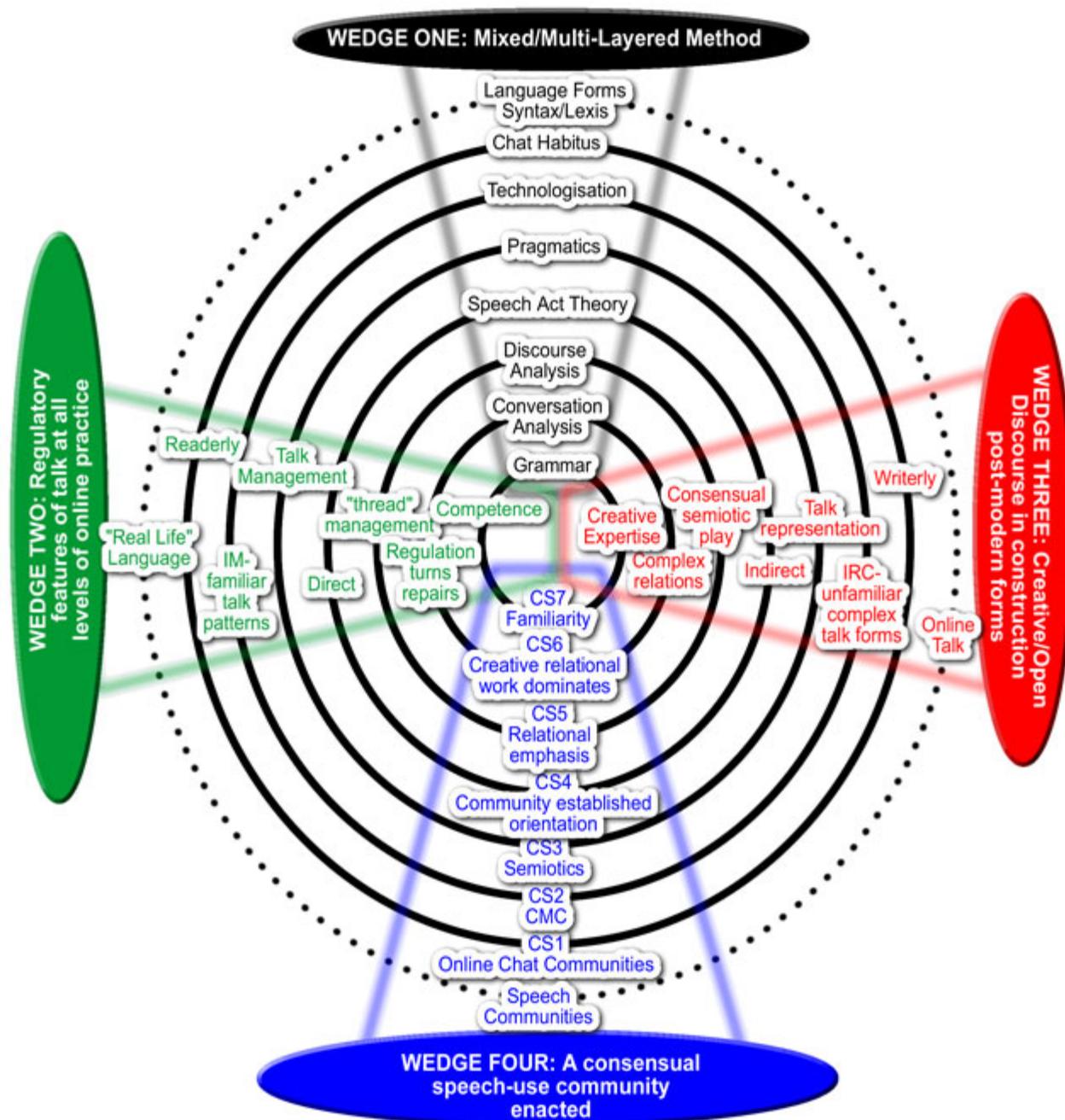Finding strictly regulated language practices
Main feature of online talk: Open/Creative practices
Main features of online talk communities – relational talk

Charting ODAM

Constituting the ODAM (Online Discourse Analysis Method)

1. Use of mixed linguistic analysis methodology
2. Finding strictly regulated language practices
3. Main feature of online talk: Open/Creative practices
4. Main features of online talk communities - relational talk

Building inwards from the broad user-perspectives of Reader Response, examining chat postings as actively received interpreted "wreaderly" communication, the ODAM has cut four deep and "rich descriptive" wedges from a multi-dimensional, multi-leveled set of chat actions. Beginning simply on an empirically driven arm: to cut into actual instances of chat practice using any existing research methods which could examine how online talk "works". The study can now be seen to offer in the first instance, a set of

interlocking research tools, any or all of which can be picked up, critiqued and re-applied, to be improved upon in future studies, by future researchers.
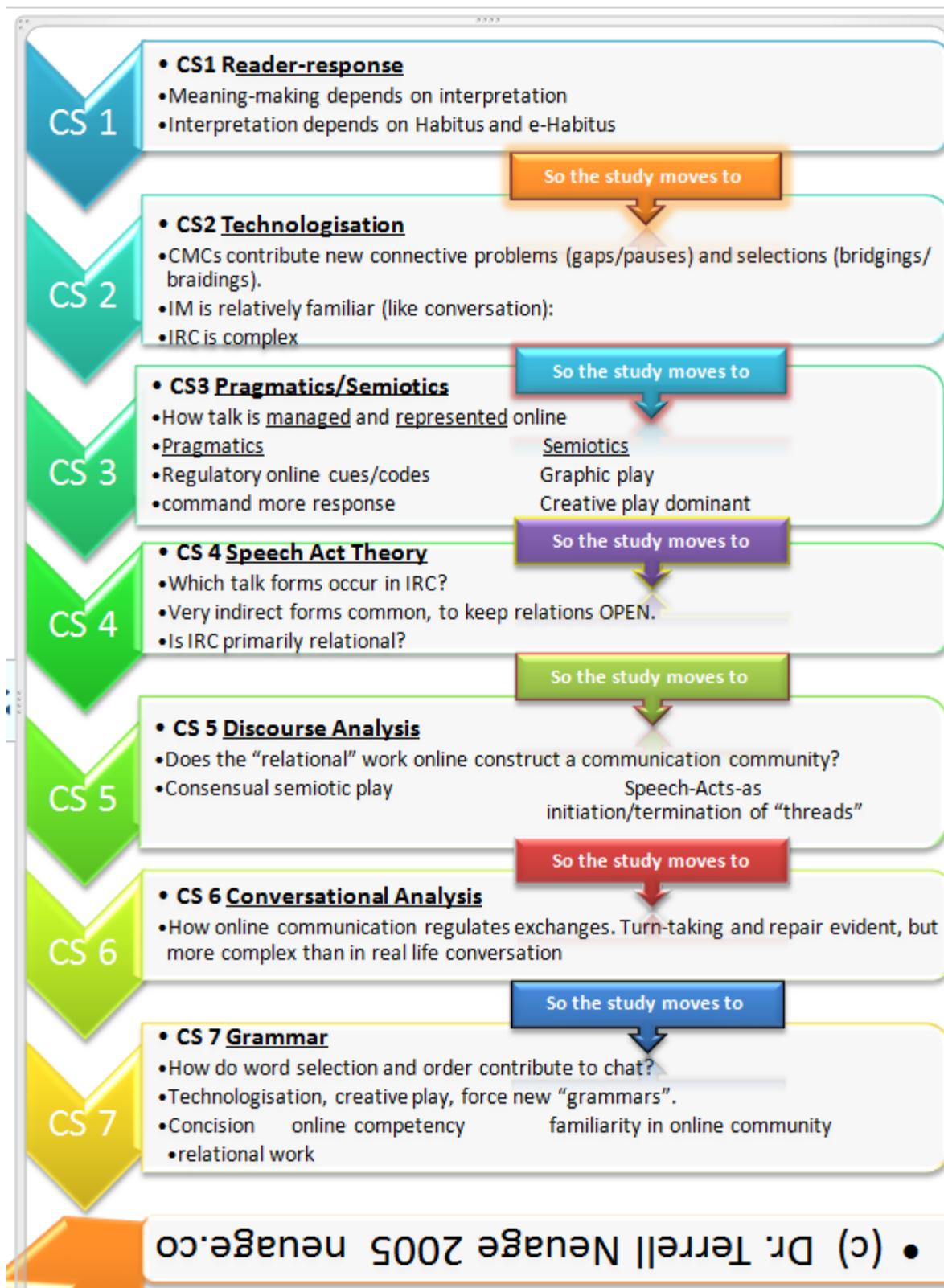
A second "wedge" or cut from the research findings however establishes that a key direction in linguistic research methodologies: the drive towards establishing the "regulatory" or rules-and-systems elements behind language use, is indeed given a different spin within online talk. Here it proves possible, again and again, from method to method – across the seven case studies "speech communities", to reveal tightly regulated, recurrent and systematic talk practices, variant from those observable offline, even where there are equivalent interest or topic groups. Wedge 2 indicates those already established online practices which constitute the difference, and even expertise of online chat, this suggests that it may well be on its way to constituting its own "speech community/ies".

But it is wedge 3: those descriptive features which reveal a markedly "open" or "creative" set of communicative behaviours online, which reveal how chat is being constituted. Here the evidence of complexity, semiotic and graphic play, consistent relational focus and creative expertise introduces the dynamic energy of online communication. Favouring members and strategies and expertise which reveal skill and creativity and fast-paced interpretive responsiveness.

Wedge 3 practices lead us on to the discourse-under formation of wedge 4 or discourse demanding continual enactment of familiarity, consensual strategies, relational work, and what CA would call "category maintenance" – of an exclusively "communal" kind.

Online chat, regardless of topic or the specifics of a participant group, appears directed to community itself. Not quite un-agentric as it dis-connects from action, it becomes meta-agentric: more about how to operate than about "what to do", It is this, contrary to most contemporary public and media's accounts, richer in value than in projects. It is a discourse largely about itself.

Having completed the seven differently-focused case studies designed to investigate these issues, it is now possible to see the quite distinctive directions these questions raise and the concomitant ways in which equally distinctive "clusters" of research focus have proven to have arise. The studies move from the fine focus of what can now be seen as technological and methodological questions (turn-taking; meaning-making; observational study) to a comparative emphasis cultural sensitivity in chat and in real-life talk; chat as reflective of real-life discourses; chat in comparison to natural conversation to the "postulatory" emphasis of much broader questions (chat as a useful area for new conversational research theory; chat as a new universal language). My own preliminary thinking indicated a three part study program, moving from existing linguistic-based observational and analytical methods, to an empirical evidence-founded description of actual online "talk" practice, and so to a deeper and richer set of hypotheses relating to online "chat" practices and behaviours. The study has thus begun the first stage of a methodological design for the study of chat – and perhaps of its future technologisations. The ODAM or Online Discourse Analysis Method proposed at the outset has evolved across the seven constitutive Case Studies:

- **CS1 Reader-response**
  - Meaning-making depends on interpretation
  - Interpretation depends on Habitus and e-Habitus

CS 1

So the study moves to

- **CS2 Technologisation**
  - CMCs contribute new connective problems (gaps/pauses) and selections (bridgings/braidings).
  - IM is relatively familiar (like conversation):
  - IRC is complex

CS 2

So the study moves to

- **CS3 Pragmatics/Semiotics**
  - How talk is managed and represented online

Pragmatics	Semiotics
Regulatory online cues/codes	Graphic play
command more response	Creative play dominant

CS 3

So the study moves to

- **CS 4 Speech Act Theory**
  - Which talk forms occur in IRC?
  - Very indirect forms common, to keep relations OPEN.
  - Is IRC primarily relational?

CS 4

So the study moves to

- **CS 5 Discourse Analysis**
  - Does the "relational" work online construct a communication community?
  - Consensual semiotic play   Speech-Acts-as initiation/termination of "threads"

CS 5

So the study moves to

- **CS 6 Conversational Analysis**
  - How online communication regulates exchanges. Turn-taking and repair evident, but more complex than in real life conversation

CS 6

So the study moves to

- **CS 7 Grammar**
  - How do word selection and order contribute to chat?
  - Technologisation, creative play, force new "grammars".
  - Concision   online competency   familiarity in online community
  - relational work

CS 7

- (c) Dr. Terrell Neuage 2005 neuage.co

5.3 Research Questions and answers

Having revealed them both a tendency towards community-specific chat behaviours and at least the foundations for "chat universals", it is time to revisit the research questions which orginally drove this project. How have they contriubted to, or contrained the findings? The five initial focus areas for this study were as follows:

1. Is meaning communicated in chatrooms?
2. How is turn-taking negotiated within chatrooms?
3. Are issues of cultural sensitivity as relevant as in face-to-face talk?

4. How is electronic chat reflective of current social discourses?
5. Will chat become a universally understood language?

Added to these mixed and incommensurable questions were an equally multi-level listing of my then-current assumptions on online communication:

1. That people create a different textual self for the chatroom environment that they are in
2. That conversation within chatrooms will change how we come to know others
3. That 'chat' does not differ from natural conversation
4. That observational studies of chatroom conversation can capture some of the adaptations of conversational behaviours
5. That this work gives us a better understanding of how and why chatrooms are an important area in which to create a new conversational research theory

Back to thesis http://neuage.org/All.htm

My Videos // Tneuage // (50 videos)

Lochiel Park South Australia
Added: August 31, 2010, 04:33 AM
by tneuage
Views: 3
Comments: 0

San Pedro Guatemala Truck Ride
Added: July 17, 2010, 11:35 PM
by tneuage
Views: 63
Comments: 0

Cluny and Tournus Burgundy France
Added: July 16, 2010, 10:35 PM
by tneuage
Views: 27
Comments: 0

Sydney July 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2015 Resume - Neuage

Visitor locations
ClustrMaps
Click to see