In online text-only chatting, spatiality emerges through an ongoing co-construction by participants of three-dimensionality 'behind the screen'. This spatiality is gendered and sexed in an ongoing process, as online places and social relations adapt to one another along a reformulating path. What remains under-explored is the role that timescales play in this language-space connection. To address this gap, this study applies post-structuralist discourse analysis to online chatting transcripts in which men who desire men engage with one another in a specific type of 'dialogic space'. This is a non-euclidian space in which multiple strands of ongoing dialogue occur simultaneously but in 'layers' created by different scales of time. The written discourse element of the space permits meta-commentary in which participants discuss what has already been said, but on a different timescale from the various ongoing conversations. Thus, akin to what Bakhtin noted with novels, in online chat rooms many chronotopes are in dialogic relationships with each other and with the outside chronotopes of the various reader/writer participants. Wegerif (2007) points out that this results in both an expansion and a 'deepening' of the dialogic space. Different experiences of space and time combine in a nexus which can be sexed by the ongoing use of language. The analysis in this study will explore how this particular nexus relates to heteronormativity, identifying the role of intersecting timescales in its subversion or continuance.

Keywords: timescales & gender, computer-mediated communication, dialogic space.