

Move maps: Rhetorical structures of chatroom grooming interactions

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What is a move?

- “a section of a text that performs a specific communicative function” (Biber et al., 2007, p.23)
- moves may encompass individual ‘steps’ (Swales, 1990) or ‘strategies’ (Bhatia, 1993).



Building rapport

Strategies include:

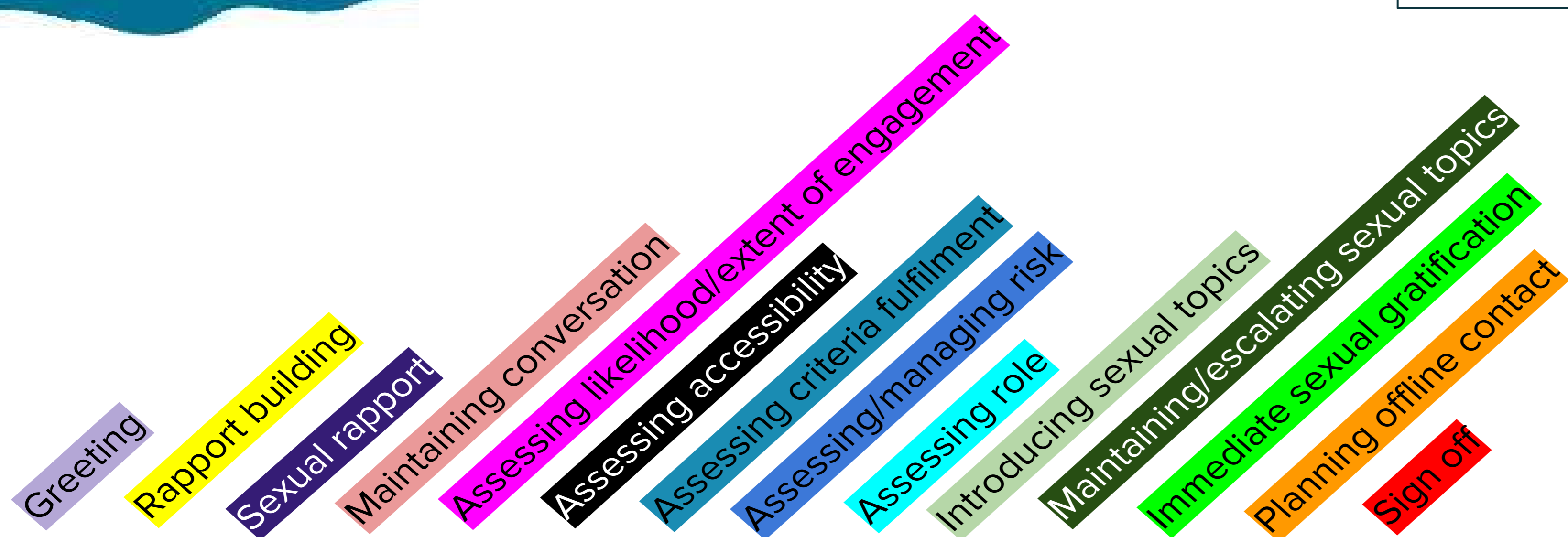
- compliments
“pretty pic”
- trust statements
“ok I promise”

Assessing and managing risk

Strategies include:

- inquiring about environment - “ur dad home?”
- deflecting topic control - “ask me anything”

Mapping moves onto transcripts

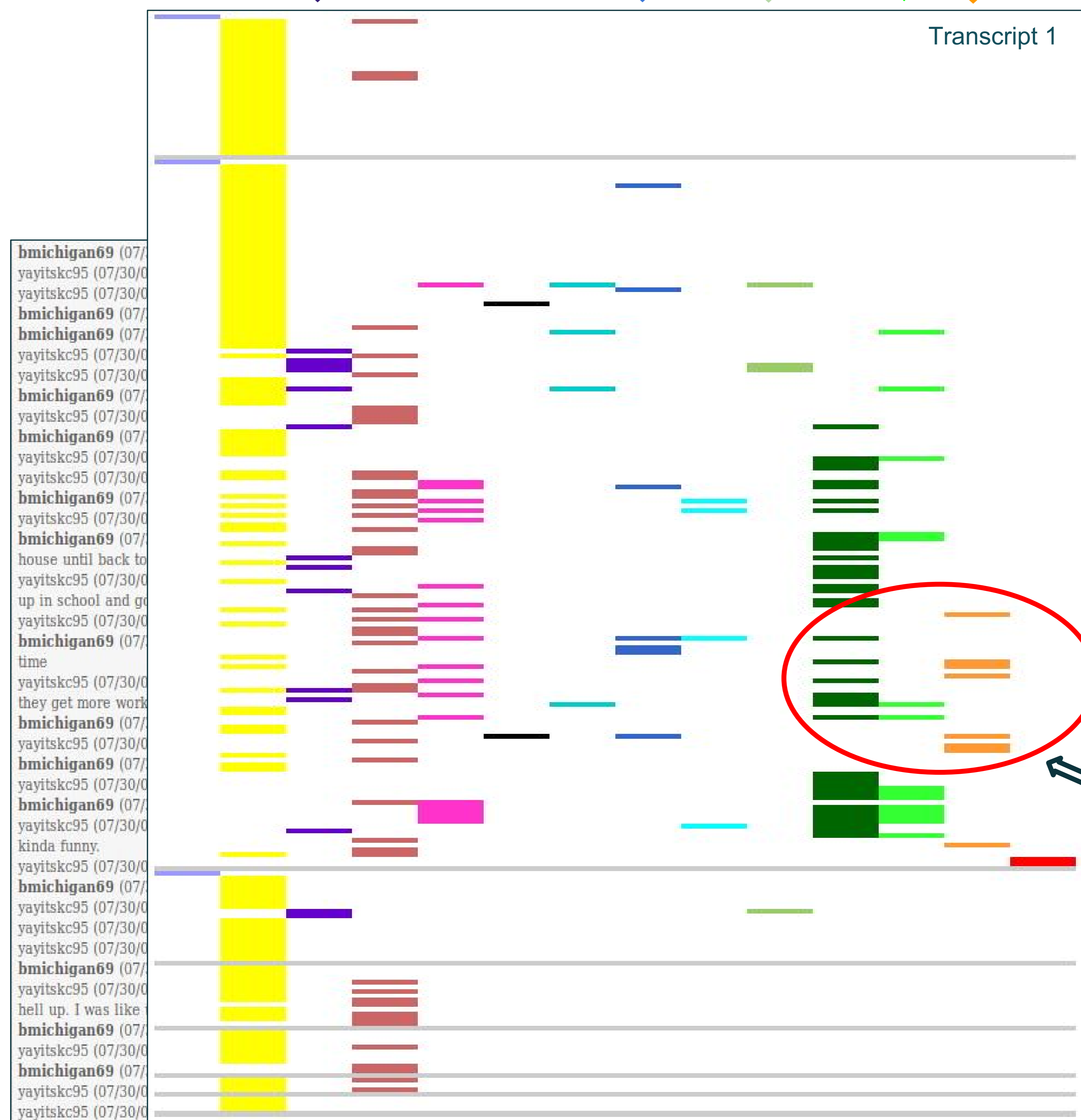


Data

- All transcripts publicly available from perverted-justice.com
- Interactions occur between offenders and adult decoys posing as minors
- All names and contact details removed

Method

- Preliminary moves developed from data driven coding of 7 transcripts
- Reliability tested through dual coding, resulting in slight alteration of moves list
- see Carmody & Grant (in submission)



bmichigan69 (07/30/09 12:03:50 PM): i like mostly any kind of movies
 yayitskc95 (07/30/09 12:04:16 PM): do you like scary ones?
 bmichigan69 (07/30/09 12:05:08 PM): yes but i think last scary movie i saw at the theater was one of the saw movies
 yayitskc95 (07/30/09 12:05:33 PM): that was a long time ago
 yayitskc95 (07/30/09 12:05:47 PM): I want to go see harry potter!

Findings

No explicit ‘persuasion’ move

- grooming appears to be a process of victim identification and rapport building

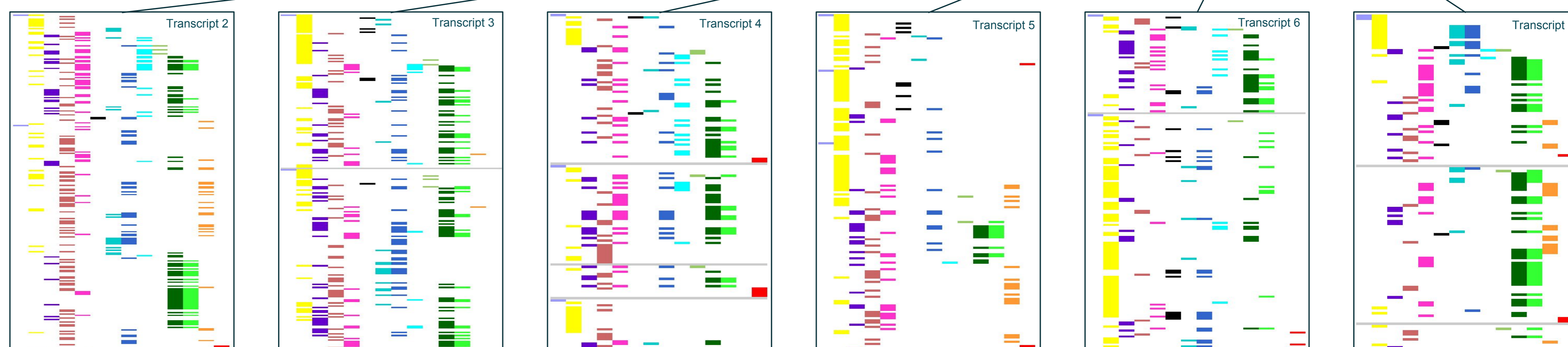
Grooming appears not to be a strongly staged process

- sexual content occurs early on in many interactions
- contrary to some research (O’Connell, 2003)

Move maps reveal patterns in grooming strategies

- e.g. some offenders interleave sexual content with planning offline contact - for others these moves occur in more defined phases (see Transcripts 2 and 5)

Move maps illustrate individual variation across transcripts



References:

Bhatia, V.K. (1993). *Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings*. Essex: Pearson.
 Biber, D., Connor, U. & Upton, T. A. (2007). *Discourse on the Move: Using Corpus Analysis to Describe Discourse Structure*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
 Carmody, E. & Grant, T. (in submission). Online sex abuse conversations: from moves to genres. *Language and Law*. [Online]. Available from: <http://ler.letras.up.pt/site/default.aspx?qry=id05id1444id2666&sum=sim>
 O’Connell, R. (2003). *A typology of cyber exploitation and online grooming practices*. Preston, England: Cyberspace Research Unit, University of Central Lancashire. [Online]. Available from: http://netsafe.org.nz/Doc_Library/rachelconnell1.pdf.
 Swales, J. (2004). *Research Genres: Explorations and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



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