

Gender Differences in Giving Advice*

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1. Introduction

Giving advice, according to Searle (1969:67) is a type of speech act which the speaker believes will benefit the hearer. Searle maintains that by giving advice, the speaker is doing the hearer a favor because it is not obvious to both the speaker and the hearer that the latter will do the act without the advice being given. Searle also points out that advice is not a species of request because advising is more like telling one what is best for him/her rather than what s/he should do.

Although advice is usually given in the hearer's best interest, Anglo-American society seems to regard advice as an imposition upon the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987) consider that giving advice threatens the hearer's (H's) negative face in that the speaker (S) indicates that s/he thinks H ought to (perhaps) do some act A and therefore impedes H's freedom of action. Tannen (1990) also suggests that in power symmetric contexts, such as everyday conversation among friends, giving advice frames the advice giver as more knowledgeable, more reasonable, more in control--in a word, one-up. And this contributes

to the distancing effect.

Tannen's observation is consistent with Verschueren (1981), who points out that advising implies some kind of authority on the part of the speaker; not the kind of 'power authority' needed to be able to force someone to do something, but some sort of 'knowledge authority'. It is assumed that the person giving the advice knows what the best course of action is. As a result, the hearer is expected to respond positively and not to disregard the advice so as to maintain the harmony of interaction.

Since advice giving may result in asymmetrical role relationships, in American society it is sometimes said 'Be chary of giving advice. Wise men don't need it and fools won't heed it (Landers 1986:10, cited in Banerjee and Carrell 1988:319). With society telling one not to be too quick to give advice to others, S may decide it is best not to say anything in many situations. It is also possible that even though H may benefit from the advice, it might not be appreciated.

As when performing any other face-threatening acts (FTAs), there are several factors that affect the speaker's choice of linguistic strategies when giving advice, such as the social distance between the speaker and the hearer; speakers will be more likely to give advice to one they feel close to. The perceived

difference in power between the speaker and hearer is also an influential factor. In addition, the urgency of the advice affects the directness of the linguistic form. The more urgent the need for advice is, the more bald on record the form will be.

This paper aims to explore how gender emerges as a strong variable with respect to both the occurrence of advice-giving as well as the form and style of this speech act. My analysis has found that, while no advice-giving examples are found in the 10 mixed-sex conversations, there are more than 4 times as many examples in all-female as in all-male conversations (18 vs. 4). What is more important, men and women in my data use quite different linguistic strategies when giving advice to their interlocutors. In the following, I will first describe the data which my analysis is based on, and then I will discuss action patterns (discourse strategies) which speakers use in giving advice, the positioning of the advice in the interaction, as well as the ways in which women and men use advice to secure desired outcomes.

2. THE DATA

30 tape-recorded conversations were collected over a period of two months in 1994, each of which were 30-minutes long. All participants were undergraduate students at National Tsing Hua University. These 30

conversations were obtained from 10 groups. For each group, all speakers in Conversation A were females, in Conversation B all were males, and Conversation C was mixed-sex, consisting of at least one speaker from Conversation A and one speaker from Conversation B. As a result, it is possible for us to examine a speaker's talk in both same- and mixed-sex verbal interactions. In addition to being similar in age and educational background, all participants in each conversation were familiar with one another and in some cases were close friends. Therefore, gender would seem to be the only social factor influencing their speech styles and communicative strategies. Most of these conversations took place where the participants lived (e.g. school dormitory, off-campus housing), and a few were recorded in school cafeterias or off-campus restaurants. In general, all these conversations were characterized by spontaneity and group solidarity.

3. Analysis

My analysis has found that while 7 out of 10 all-female conversations contain advice-giving instances, only 3 all-male conversations contain this speech act. Generally, the 4 examples found in men's conversations are more direct in form and they tend to occur when the need for advice is more urgent or the advice-giver is perceived

as more knowledgeable in telling the recipient what to do.

In example (1), Chen tells Lin, who has diarrhea and is complaining that his stomach aches, to eat chicken soup or congee to solve the problem. (A key for the transcription notation used is given in the Appendix; an idiomatic English translation follows the original)

- (1) 1 Lin: *Duzi hao tong!*
stomach very pain
- 2 Chen: *Xiao Cancan, shang cesuo a?*
go toilet PRT
- 3 Lin: *La le yi tian le!*
Pull ASP One day PRT
- >4 Chen: *Zhengde? hei, na wo jianyi ni he nage*
really hey then I suggest you drink that
sheme...jitang.
what chick soup
- >5 *renjia shuo sheme..laduzi sheme dou buyao=*
people say what diarrhea what all not
- 6 Wu: *Yingyang*
nutrition
- >7 Chen: *=chi, faner bu hao.*
eat contrary not good
- >8 *ni jiu he nage,*
you just drink that
- >9 *jiu shi you yixie yanfen,*
just is have some salt
- >10 *you yixie..yinwei ni yao=*
have some because you need
- 11 Wu: *=Na ye keyi=*
that also can

- >12 Chen: =Dui! yinwei ni yao..
right because you need
- >13 nage zhou a! ta na bian you nage zhou
that congee PRT he that side have that congee
- >14 a ! ni kandao meiyu? nage zhou?
PRT you see not that congee
- >15 weishengzhi shi bu shi? zhe bian
toilet paper is not is this side
- >16 Wu: Qu ba! qu ba! buyao zai cheng le! =
go PRT go PRT don't again stand PRT
- >17 Chen: =Wo na bian you yipian Scientific America
I that side have one
- >18 de wenzhang, wo xiaci na gei ni kan.
NOM article I next time take give you see
- 19 Lin: Gankwai qu! Thank you!
hurry go
- (211 lines omitted)
- 20 Wu: Xiao Cancan sheng wan cesuo huilai le!
go finish toilet return PRT
- >21 Chen: (Chuckles) Hei, ni nage zhou zai na
hey you that congee again take
- >22 yixie qu chi, zhe yang cai hui zhende zhizu
some go eat this way just can really stop
- >23 laduzi, buran ni mei you banfa zhizhu
diarrhea otherwise you not have method stop
- laduzi.
diarrhea

Translation

- 1 Lin: My stomach hurts!
- 2 Chen: Little Cancan, going to the bathroom?
- 3 Lin: This has been going on for a whole day=
- >4 Chen: =Really? Hey, then I suggest that you have
some..chicken soup.
- >5 [People say that it's not good to eat nothing=

6 Wu: Nutrition
 --->7 Chen: =when having diarrhea.
 --->8 Take that..
 --->9 it just has some salt,
 --->10 have some..because you need=
 11 Wu: =That's also okay=
 --->12 Chen: =Right, because you need...
 --->13 that congee! He has congee over there!
 --->14 Do you see it? That congee?
 --->15 Toilet paper? Hey here you go.
 --->16 Wu: Hurry and go! Hurry and go! Don't endure any
 more=
 --->17 Chen: =I have an article from *Scientific America*,
 --->18 I'll show it to you next time.
 19 Lin: Here I go! Thank you!
 (211 lines omitted)
 20 Wu: Little Cancan comes back from the bathroom!
 --->21 Chen: (chuckles) Hey, you take more congee to eat
 --->22 so that your diarrhea will really stop.
 --->23 Otherwise your diarrhea won't stop.

In line 10 Chen tells Lin exactly what Lin should do with
 Lin's diarrhea problem (i.e., to eat chicken soup).
 Before explaining why chicken soup is good for diarrhea,
 Chen first tells Lin that the widely believed idea that
 when one has diarrhea, it's better not to eat anything is
 actually incorrect; on the contrary, one needs to eat
 something containing salt. Since there is no chicken soup
 but there is congee at hand, he suggests the latter will
 do. However, since Lin has to go to the toilet then, Chen
 does not finish his explanation but states that next time
 he will show Lin one journal article concerning diarrhea.
 Lin expresses appreciation for Chen's advice and leaves
 for the toilet. Later, when Lin comes back from the
 toilet, Chen again insists that Lin eat congee so that his

problem will be solved. Chen's advice can be divided into three parts: (1) to offer Lin direction regarding the action to be taken in the future, i.e. to eat chicken soup or congee; (2) to give reasons for his advice; and (3) to repeat the advice. Note that Wu can be considered a co-advice-giver in that he not only agrees with Chen's advice (line 11) but urges Lin to go to the toilet immediately (line 16). In this example, Chen and Wu offer their advice in a most direct and efficient manner: the advice in line 10 is prefaced with the performative verb *jianyi* 'suggest, advise', which makes Chen's communicative intention clear; and both Wu's advice in line 16 and Chen's repeated advice in line 21 are uttered as imperatives.

A piece of advice may sound like a warning. Example (2) is from a conversation in which Xu, Xie and Hong are talking about an academic topic. Xie advises Xu not to take too many courses next semester.

(2) 1 Xu: *Jewei, ni yao kao na yi zhu?*
you want examine which one section

2 *bu zhidao?*
not know

3 Xie: *Bu zhidao.*
not know

--->4 Xu: *ei, ni dasan xia zhende bu keyi xiu*
hey you junior next sem. really not can take

name duo la!
so many PRT

--->5 ni hui sidiao, ni yiding hui sidiao.
 you will die you surely will die

Translation

1 Xu: Zewei, which section of the exam are you
2 taking? You don't know?
3 Xie: I don't know.
4 Xu: Hey, you really shouldn't take so many courses
 next semester!
--->5 You'll kill yourself! Surely you'll kill
 yourself!

What Xie says in lines 4 and 5 is for Xu's benefit (i.e., he does not want Xu to suffer from his heavy study load), and it thus can be considered a piece of advice. However, the speech act he performs is more like a warning in that it expresses that a future event which is not in Xu's interest will occur if Xu does something. In general, when giving advice, the speaker does not usually make it clear to the hearer what the result will be if the advice is not taken. In addition, Xie's exaggerated way of expressing the terrible result (i.e., Xu will kill himself) also strengthens the threatening force of his advice.

However, it is also found that in all-male conversations, the speech act of giving advice can also be performed in a non-serious way. In Example (3), Wang's roommates suggest that he buy those flowers which are not yet in bloom to give to his girlfriend on Valentine's day.

Prior to this segment, the five speakers have been talking about their plans for Valentine's day, and Wang, who has a girlfriend, is complaining that it cost him a lot of money the previous year when he took his girlfriend to dinner.

- (3) 1 Wang: *Nage hao shang!*
that very hurt
- 2 *sheme dongxi dou double ye!*
what thing all PRT
- 3 *mei you gen ni fenxi yixia ni bu*
not have with you analyze a little you not
- 4 *zhidao. nimen zhende mei you ganshoudao ma?*
know you really not have feel PRT
- >5 Zhang: *Mingtian qu mai hua la!*
tomorrow go buy flower PRT
- >6 *Ni mai nage hai mei kai de zhongzi.*
you buy that yet not open NOM seed
- 7 Wu: *Dui ya!*
right PRT
- >8 Lin: *Cha zai na deng dao eryue shisi*
put in there wait to February 14th
- ganghao kai*
just open
- >9 Wu: *Wo juede ziji zhong hao le.*
I feel self plant good PRT
- >10 *zhong dao na shihou dou sheng chulai!*
plant to that time all grow out
- 11 Wang: *Ei, eryue shisi you sheme hua?*
hey February 14th have what flower

Translation

- 1 Wang: That's really costly!
2 Everything is double!
3 You wouldn't know if I didn't explain it to

- 4 you. Don't you really feel the same way?
 --->5 Zhang: Go buy some flowers tomorrow!
 --->6 Just buy those buds which are not blooming
 yet.
 7 Wu: Right!
 --->8 Lin: Put them there and they will be in full
 bloom by Valentine's Day!
 --->9 Wu: I think you can grow the flowers yourself.
 --->10 They will all come out by then!
 11 Wang: Hey, what flowers are there on that day?

Advice in everyday conversation, unlike that which occurs in institutional settings, such as academic counseling encounters or therapeutic sessions, is often unsolicited, that is, it is proffered without having been asked for. Among the 18 examples of advice-giving occurring in all-female conversations, 16 are unsolicited; they are not preceded by a request for advice or a statement of need. Interestingly, the two examples of solicited advice both deal with topics of appearance, i.e., how to improve facial skin conditions. This suggests that while women tend to compliment each other on appearance (Holmes 1988), to give advice to a female interlocutor about how to improve her appearance is a face-threatening act which puts her in a one-down position. In Example (4), Yang asks Dai for advice with regard to her skin problem.

- (4) 1 Yang: *Ei, nage..wo wen ni hao bu hao?*
 Hey that I ask you good not good
 2 *wo yiqian nage maoxikong buhui name cu,*
 I past that pore not that rough

- 3 xianzai zhe bian yuelaiyue cu.
now this side more and more rough
- 4 Dai: Shi o? na.. na shi dongtian tai gan le a!
is PRT that that is winter too dry PRT PRT
- 5 Yang: Bushi, bushi, wo yiqian buhui a!
No no I past not PRT
- 6 ranhou xianzai dao daer,
then now to sophomore
- 7 bu xiaode sheme shihou turan yikan,
now know that time suddenly look
- 8 yi, zeme zhe bian maoxikong dou zheme
gee how this side pore all this

mingxian.
obvious
- >9 Dai: Wo bu zhidao,
I not know
- >10 women jia yichuang jiu shi maoxikong dou
our family heredity just is pore all
- >11 hen da, na jiu yao you naixin a,
very big then just need have patience PRT
- >12 yao yong shoulian shui,
need use astringent water
- >13 yao mai shoulian shui lai ca a,
need buy astringent water to apply PRT
- >14 rouruan gen huazhuang.
soften and make up

Translation

- 1 Yang: Um..that..let me ask you,
2 my facial skin wasn't that rough before,
3 and now this side is becoming rougher and
 rougher.
4 Dai: Really? That..that's because of the dry
 winter!
5 Yang: No, no. It wasn't like this before.
6 And then since I became a sophomore,

7 when I look at it suddenly one day,
 8 gee, how come those pores on this side have
 become so obvious!
 --->9 Dai: I don't know.
 --->10 All my family has inherited big pores.
 --->11 Then you need to have patience,
 --->12 you have to use refining toner,
 --->13 you have to buy refining toner
 --->14 to soften your skin and cover it up.

Note that Dai does not give Yang advice directly; instead, in line 9, she first claims that she does not know what has caused Yang's facial skin problem and therefore denies that she has 'power authority' over Yang. She then adds that her own family also has the same problem so as to avoid putting herself in a one-up position. As a result, these strategies, to some extent, help maintain the symmetrical relationship between the two women. Only after this does she advise Yang to have patience and to buy refining toner to improve her facial skin. In the rest of the conversation, Dai also tells and explains to Yang how to use the toner correctly.

In Example (5), Lu, whose skin is so dry that wrinkles are found around her eyes, does not request advice herself. Rather, other participants in the conversation who found Lu's problems suggest that she seek help from Yan, who until this moment has not joined the conversation although she has been in the same dorm room. Yan is called 'Miss Avon' by her friends because of her knowledge of cosmetics and skin care. Yan's advice, as the example

shows, is elaborated and clear.

- (5) 1 Lu: Keshi wo zhiyao tianci yi gan jiu hui
but I only weather once dry just will

zheyang.
this way

- >2 Yan: Na ni xuyao yong yangao, yanshuang.
then you need use eye cream eye lotion

- >3 yiding yao yong la!
be sure must use PRT

- 4 Yinwei nage yanjing ya,
because that eyes PRT

- 5 zhege buwei de pifu feichang cuiruo,
this part NOM skin very frail

- 6 ranhou tianci leng dehua,
then weather cold in case of

- 7 jiu hen rongyi..hen rongyi que shui,
just very easy very easy lack water

- 8 ranhou jiu hui zhang zhouwen.
then just will grow wrinkle

Translation

- 1 Lu: But the moment the weather gets dry my skin
will be like this.
--->2 Yan: Then you need to use eyecream or eye lotion.
--->3 You must use it!
4 Because the eyes..the skin around this part is
5 very frail.
6 And then if the weather is cold,
7 it will become dehydrated easily,
8 and then the wrinkles will appear.

When giving advice, in line 2 Yan tells Lu directly to use eyecream so that the skin around Lu's eyes won't be dry. The linguistic force of her advice becomes increasingly stronger for she first says xuyao yong 'need to use' and

then *yiding yao yong* 'must/have to use'. This strong urge is followed by an explanation of why eyecream is needed to solve Lu's problem.

The most 'caring' female speaker who gives the largest amount of advice to her interlocutors in half an hour of conversation is Li. The 6 instances of advice she gives to her roommates Chen and Wang include: urging Chen to tell Chen's boyfriend not to work too hard and that Chen cook some chicken soup for him to keep him healthy; advising Wang where to buy a cheap alarm clock; and mostly, telling Wang, who has been complaining about her poor health in the conversation, different ways to improve her health (e.g. not taking too many part-time jobs and working too hard, taking vitamins, listening to rock and roll music when feeling sleepy).

The concern, understanding, and willingness to help in Li's advice is evidenced in the linguistic structure of her advice. For instance, she tends to use the modal auxiliary *keyi* 'can, could' to suggest rather than demand action. In addition, she also uses *wo juede* 'I think' as a hedge to mitigate the linguistic force of her advice. This point is illustrated in Examples (6) and (7).

- (6) (When Wang complains that she always feels tired, her facial complexion is bad and she has a lot of pimples on her face)

- 1 Li: Wo juede zhe shi..ni yi ban jiu shi
I think this is you one half just is
- 2 shenti..benshen shenti benlai jiu bu
body yourself body originally just not
gou hao=
enough good
- 3 Wang: =Um.
- >4 Li: Ranhou wo juede ni xianzai zui zhongyao jiu
then I think you now most important just
- 5 shi..birushuo, ni yong..yong chi sheme
is for example you use eat what
- 6 weitamin huozheshi shibu=
vitamin or food nutrition
- 7 Wang: =Oh!
- 8 Li: Qu gaishan niziji de qingkuang.
to improve yourself NOM condition.

Translation

- 1 Li: I think this is..partly because your health..
2 your health condition isn't good enough=
3 Wang: =Um.
- >4 Li: Then I think now the most important thing is..
5 for example, you..you could take some
6 vitamins, or eat nutritious food=
7 Wang: =Oh!=
8 Li: =to improve your own condition.
- (7) (Li suggests that Wang buy an alarm clock in some cheaper store)
- >1 Li: Ni keyi qu..wo juede ni keyi qu zhaodao
you can go I think you can go find
- >2 yixie..wo juede Jishitang mai de dongxi dou
some I think Kingstone sell NOM thing all
bijiao gui.
more expensive

(5 lines omitted)

- >3 *Ni keyi qu Jinshitang kan naxie dongxi,*
 you can go Kingstone look those thing
- 4 *ni xinli you yige di.*
 your heart have a bottom
- 5 *ranhou qu na zhong zhongbiao dian zhao.*
 then go that king clock store look for

Translation

- >1 Li: You could go..I think you could go look for
 --->2 some..I think the things sold at the Kingstone
 (bookstore) are more expensive.
 --->3 You could go to the Kingstone to take a look
 4 so that you will have some ideas.
 5 And then you could go to some clock shop.

Unlike imperatives, both these devices, i.e., the modal auxiliary *keyi* and the hedge *wo jue de*, give the hearer the option of either carrying out or disregarding the advice.

However, sometimes when the advice-giver feels the hearer to be hesitant, she can be quite insistent. In the following example in which a group of four female friends are talking about their Christmas plans, Wei repeatedly urges Huang to take initiatives to invite the guy Huang has been interested in to a Christmas party.

- (8) 1 Huang: *Keshi bu tai queding.*
 but not very sure
- 2 *wo pa ta hui gen bieren qu,*
 I fear he will with others go
- 3 *na zemme ban?*
 then how do
- >4 Wei: *Gankui yi nian zhijian jiu xiang a,*
 hurry one idea between just think PRT

- 5 wo bu shi gen ni jiang yidadui fangfa,
I not is to you tell lots of methods
- 6 birushuo mei you ren pei a,
for example not have person accompany PRT
- 7 mei you ren chifan la!
not have people dine out PRT
(96 lines omitted)
- 8 Huang: Dui ya, keshi wo pa ta hui jia,
right PRT but I fear he return home
- 9 ranhou ta pei bieren qu zemme ban?=
and then he accompany others go how do
- 10 Guo: = Hei, qunian=
last year
- >11 Wei: =gankui xian xiashou wei qiang.
hurry first lay hand is strong
(42 lines omitted)
- >12 Wei: Jintian yijing sheji hao le,
today already desing finish PRT
- >13 yao kui yidian.
must quick a little
- >14 um, yao pao zai bieren qianmian. (chuckles)
must run in others front
- 15 Huang: Buxing, wo yao.. wo yao deng ta lai zhao
no I want I want wait he come find
- 16 wo. yinwei yijing gen ta jiangshuo wo=
I because already to he tell I
- 17 Wei: Na ni zhongbei=
then you prepare
- 18 Huang: {=keneng yao qu Fuda
perhaps will go Fujen Univ.
- 19 Wei: {=dai zai qingshi ba! (Wei and Li laugh)
stay in dorm PRT
- 20 Huang: Keshi um..zhe yang bu hao,
but this way not good

- 21 ta..ta ruguo yao qu yuehui le zemme ban?
he he if will go date ASP how do
- >22 Wei: Ni xian yue ma,
 you first make appointment PRT
- >23 ba ta xian yue xia lai.
 BA he first date down come
- 24 Li: Ta name duo..name duo ren keyi yuehui?
 he so many so many person can date
- 25 Huang: Um, ta ta yao qu yue mouge ren.
 he he will go date certain person
- >26 Wei: Ni xian wen ta shuo you mei you renhede
 you first ask he say have not have any
- jihua a!
 plan PRT
- 27 Huang: Zheyangzi..haoba, na wo jiu gen ta
 So alright then I just to he
- jiangshuo wo..
 tell I
- 28 wo zhidao wo hui cai aibing zhengce,
 I know I will adopt sad soldier policy
- 29 yaoburan=
 otherwise
- >30 Wei: =Suibian ni, fanzheng women dou yijing gen
 up to you anyway we all already to
- ni jiang guo le=
 you tell ASP PRT
- 31 Huang: =Hao la! hao la!
 good PRT good PRT
- >32 Wei: Yicie zaohua kan niziji (laughs)
 all result see yourself
- 33 Huang: Hao, hao, hao. ei, Fuda shi zai San..chung,
 good good good hey is in

34 *shi bu shi?*
is not is

Translation

- 1 Huang: But I'm not sure.
2 I'm afraid that he will go with other girls.
3 Then what should I do?
--->4 Wei: Then you should make your strategy right
5 now! Haven't I given you a lot of tips?
6 such as you have no companions,
7 no one goes to dinner with you?
(96 lines omitted)
8 Huang: Right! But I'm afraid that he will go back
9 home to be with other girls. What can I do=
10 Guo: =Hey, last year=
11 Wei: =Hurry up. Strike first to gain the upper
hand!
(42 lines omitted)
--->12 Wei: It's just ten days away from today.
13 You'd better hurry up.
14 Um, you've got to run in front of the others
(chuckles)
15 Huang: No, I'll...I'll wait for him to come to me
16 'cause I've told him that I may go to Fujen=
17 Wei: [Then you'll end up staying at=
18 Huang: [=University.
19 Wei: [=dorm by yourself (Wei and Li laughs)
20 Huang: But this isn't good.
21 How about just in case he he wants to go to
a date?
--->22 Wei: You just take the initiative
23 and set up a date with him first=
24 Li: =Does he have so..so many girls to date?
25 Huang: Um, he he wants to date someone.
--->26 Wei: Ask him first if he has any plans!
27 Huang: Oh..alright, then I'll tell him that I..
28 I know I will adopt this 4th-quarter
29 strategy, otherwise=
--->30 Wei: It's up to you. Any, we've told you=
31 Huang: =Alright alright!
--->32 Wei: The result is up to you (laughs)
33 Huang: OK, ok, ok. Hey, Fujen Univ. is in Sanchung,
34 isn't it?

Throughout this segment of conversation, Huang is worried
that the man she has been attracted to will not invite her

to spend Christmas with him but will date some other girls. Her repetition of *zemme ban* 'what to do?' in lines 3, 9, and 21 shows her worry and concern. However, when Wei tells her to take immediate action to set up a date with the man first instead of waiting for him to ask her for the date, she seems to be reluctant and cannot make up her mind. Huang's indecisiveness and hesitancy prompts Wei to change her strategy for advising. In line 17, she warns Huang that if Huang insists on waiting for the man's invitation, she will end up staying at the dorm by herself on the holiday. Finally, in line 30 when Wei seems to lose her patience and states that she will leave Huang to make her own decision, Huang appears to make up her mind and will do as Wei has suggested. In this long process of giving-and-taking advice, Wei, who plays the role of Huang's love-consultant, succeeds in giving advice because she knows how to use different linguistic strategies to reinforce her intent. Both explicit/direct advice (in imperative form) and implicit/indirect advice (statement of the result of non-compliance) are used.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, my analysis has found that gender emerges as a very strong variable with respect to both the occurrence of advice-giving as well as the choice of linguistic form of this speech act. Female speakers are

more likely to give advice to their same-sex interlocutors and they use various linguistic devices, such as imperatives, sentences containing auxiliary modals or hedges, and justification with advice forms, to convey advice. On the other hand, only 4 instances of advice are found in all-male conversations and, either seriously or jokingly, they all are in the imperative form. These results suggest that males and females may view advice-giving differently. While giving advice, especially unsolicited advice, may be considered a face-threatening act in conversations among male speakers, who either avoid doing it or choose to do it baldly, it is positively affective for women, who resort to a variety of stylistic and linguistic means to maintain equality and rapport.

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Appendix: Transcription Notations

My transcription conventions, as shown in the following, are taken from Tannen (1984):

- ..noticeable pause or break in rhythm
- ...half second pause, as measured by stop watch; an extra dot is added for each half second of pause
- . marks sentence-final intonation (more to come)
- >highlights point of analysis
- = indicates that talk attached by the equal sign follows prior talk without any gap whatsoever
- /?/ indicates unintelligible segment
- () indicates non-verbal behavior
- [Brackets between lines indicate overlapping speech
- Two people talking at the same time

The following abbreviations are used throughout the text to specify grammatical information about Chinese utterances:

- ASP: aspect marker
- CL: classifier
- INT: interjection
- NOM: nominalizer *de*
- POS: possessive marker *de*
- PRT: particles (e.g., *a*, *ne*, *ma*, *ba*, *le*)

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