

Giving Advice and Responding to it in a Spanish Discussion among Puerto Ricans

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Abstract

Although advice is considered in many languages as a face-threatening speech act; in Spanish it is often seen as a solidarity-building tool that shows closeness among the interlocutors. This study analyzes the advice sequences in a conversation between a Puerto Rican couple in order to identify the strategies, types of sentences, and reactions that took place during the verbal exchange. Results show evidence that -contrary to building solidarity among Spanish speakers- advice can also serve as a tool for questioning, criticizing, and demeaning the interlocutor.

Keywords: advice and responding, advice sequences, types of sentences,

1. INTRODUCTION

Advice is included in the type of speech acts that "put some pressure on the hearer to do (or refrain from doing) the act" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 66). Heritage and Sefi (1992) define advice-giving as an activity in which an individual "describes, recommends, or otherwise *proposes* a preferred course of future action" (368). This study focuses on advice-giving and responding to it in the conversation of a Puerto Rican couple, and following Lepänen (1998), addresses the following questions: (1) When is advice-giving initiated? (2) How is it delivered?, and (3) What are the responses to it?

Advice and favors are examples of specific influence goals meaningful to everyday actors (Cody, Canary & Smith, 1994; Dillard, 1989; Rule, Bisanz & Kohn, 1085 cited by Wilson & Kunkel, 2000, 197). By doing a close analysis of the

advice-giving sequences and comparing the elements found in them to those presented by Lepänen (1998), this study allows to identify similarities and/or differences in the contexts of nurse-patient and husband-wife conversations. This inductive study also allows for a detailed discussion of some excerpts of this particular exchange and its interlocutors. The findings of this research cannot be generalized but they should prove helpful in providing an insight in advice-giving sequences in one of the multiple contexts of the Caribbean Spanish dialects.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on advice as a speech act are pertinent to the present research. Below, the most relevant theoretical framework and studies on advice and the conclusions relevant for this analysis are presented.

The majority of studies on advice have had Brown & Levinson's theory on face and facework (1987) as their framework. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory asserts that all individuals -regardless of the culture they belong to- have the need to be liked and approved by others (positive face) and to be autonomous (negative face). They have a need to maintain face. The authors' "universal" framework assumes that some actions inherently create conflict and can threaten the face of the interlocutor (Face Threatening Acts), and they distinguish between acts that threaten negative face and those which threaten positive face. For instance, Brown & Levinson identify advising (the focus of this study) as a speech act that threatens negative face (1987, 65-66).

The magnitude of such threats varies in virtue of the speakers' power and social distance. In order to deal with these threats, speakers use a set of politeness strategies that can be classified in five categories: (1) Bald on record strategies without redress involve "doing it in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 69). In general, an FTA is done this way where (a) there is little social distance between the interlocutors, (b) where they tacitly agree that urgency or efficiency are more relevant than the face demand, (c) where the threat to face is very small, "as in ... suggestions that are clearly in the hearer's interest" (69), and (d) where the speaker's power is significantly superior to that of the hearer. Some examples of this strategy are commands, criticisms, farewells, instructions, and insults. On record strategies with redressive action include positive and negative politeness strategies.

(2) Positive politeness strategies are used to satisfy the interlocutor's desire to be liked and approved. They focus on the establishment of solidarity through tactics that direct attention to the hearer's needs, interests and wants. They include noticing the hearer's interests, wants or needs; exaggerating interest in, approval of or sympathy for the hearer; intensifying the interest to the hearer (direct speech, tag questions, etc.); using in-group identity markers (diminutive, slang, inside language); claiming common points of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy (by seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, telling white lies, etc.); presupposing common ground; and joking, among others. (3) Negative politeness strategies serve to satisfy the hearer's desire to be respected and not imposed on. These strategies include being indirect, minimizing any imposition, expressing

pessimism, apologizing, impersonalizing the speaker and the hearer, being deferential, and going on record as incurring in a debt. (4) Off-record strategies, including giving hints, presupposing, overstating, using metaphors, and being vague and incomplete, are those used to express ambiguity and imprecision. (5) Doing nothing is the strategy a speaker uses when he/she chooses to remain silent.

Some downfalls can be identified in Brown & Levinson's politeness theory (1987) despite its breadth and importance. First, its universality is questionable since the wants of maintaining positive and negative faces and what it takes to preserve the changes from culture to culture. Although the authors mention that they expect their notion of face "to be the subject of much cultural elaboration" (1987, 13), they assume that "the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image of face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal" (1987, 61-62).

Second, substantial differences in politeness become evident when focusing on Asian contexts. For instance, according to Mao (1994) and Gu (1990), in the Chinese culture the notions of positive and negative face have different social presuppositions; politeness is connected with moral social norms and it is not instrumental but normative. Positive face 'lian' makes reference to the desire to be liked and approved but this desire is not suitable of negotiation neither is it related to the notion of closeness; it has a moral sense. Negative face 'miànzi' deals with the notion of respect but in the Chinese context it depends on society recognition (Mao, 1994, 461-462) and not on protecting the individual's autonomy. As a result, people's face are threatened not when their wants are not met, but when they fail to meet social standards.

Third, in the Ecuadorian context Placencia (1996) asserts that deference plays an outstanding role in everyday interactions. However, its presence is not due to the wish of safeguarding the negative face of the interlocutor and his wish to be respected, but to comply with some rules that award status to those who use them (21). In other words, the notion of face does not apply to their self image but to satisfy the social norms of the group.

In the same vein, Hernández-Flores (1999) states that in Spanish colloquial conversation, protecting negative face is not required for a smooth flowing of the interaction. In fact, acts such as asking things or giving advice are accepted in Spanish colloquial interactions, while other acts such as offering and complimenting have good social consideration; nevertheless, all of them are said to be potentially threatening for the negative face of the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 66) (Hernández-Flores, 1999, 39).

Even though identifying certain patterns of human interaction is possible, communication always occurs in a context and under circumstances that should not be disregarded. With respect to this, Arundale (1999) asserts that human interaction is not a simple process of codification and decodification of intentions but an interactive construction that includes social and individual traits. Arundale (1999) also blames Brown & Levinson's theory for not acknowledging the role of participants' expectations in their interpretations of what happens in the interaction.

Arundale's concern with Brown & Levinson's disregard for context is echoed by Bravo (1996). With the intention of delimitating what constitutes face in the Swedish and Spanish contexts, the author adopts the concepts of *autonomy* (perceiving and being perceived as having one's own surroundings) and *affiliation* (perceiving and being perceived as an integrated part of the group). Unlike Brown & Levinson's, Bravo's definitions for these categories are very general with the purpose of letting them open to cultural interpretation. In her opinion, the meaning (or *contents*, to use her term) of autonomy and affiliation are not universal, but to be defined in each particular context and sociocultural group. For example, in the Spanish¹ context, one of the *contents* for autonomy is "*el deseo de verse frente a un grupo como individuo original y consciente de sus cualidades sociales positivas*" 'the individual's wish to be seen as original and aware of his/her positive social qualities,' (Bravo, 1996, 63, my translation). Being assertive would then be an effective way to show autonomy in this particular environment. On the other hand, one of the *contents* for *affiliation* in the Spanish setting is the notion of *confianza* (closeness). If the interactants have *confianza*, they are allowed and expected to speak in an open way. Maintaining distance in this context would be interpreted negatively. As can be seen, the notions of *autonomy* and *affiliation* do not oppose each other as positive and negative politeness do: If an individual has the group's *confianza*, he is allowed and expected to be self affirmative, and by showing his positive social qualities, he is able to maintain the group's *confianza*. As Hernández-Flores points out, "*autonomy and affiliation (...) are linked parts of the individual's face*" (1999, 41).

Spencer-Oatey summarizes the critics of Brown & Levinson's theory pointing that it does not acknowledge the interpersonal and social aspects and overemphasizes the individual's autonomy. It overlooks the importance of cultural differences in relation to the notion of face. Brown & Levinson's theory of politeness, although considered by many to be the most complete and detailed, is based on the "nature" of speech acts and the way speakers redress the threat that their content implies for their interlocutor. It fails in incorporating very relevant aspects such as the content of speech acts, among others.

In their study about face threat perception and facework, Wilson & Kunkel (2000) test the Wilson, Aleman & Leatham's (1998) analysis of face threats and facework in compliance-gaining passages by asking 231 student participants to recall an actual conversation in which they either asked a favor or gave advice to a close same-sex friend, cross-sex friend or romantic partner and then rated threats to their interlocutor's face and their own. The authors assume the generality of Brown & Levinson's notions of face and facework. Nonetheless, Wilson & Kunkel (2000) presuppose that a speech act does not necessarily pose only one threat to face, neither do they believe this face threat is intrinsic. In contrast, the authors consider that a speech act can simultaneously threaten various types of face (2000, 197). They also highlight what they call *influence goals*; that is "the reasons why a message source tries to alter a target's behavior" (2000, 197). Advice constitutes an

¹ Spanish, as I use it, refers particularly to Spain, not to the Spanish language.

example of influence goals because the message source (a) perceives that the target may choose a less-than-optimal course of action, (b) believes that his or her recommended course of action primarily benefits the target (other) rather than him- or herself, and (c) feels motivated to advise out of concern for the target's well-being (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997 cited by Wilson & Kunkel, 2000, 197). With respect to reason (a), the authors mention that by giving advice, the message source risks insinuating that the recipient is incompetent (Goldsmith & Fitch cited by Wilson & Kunkel 2000, 200) and that she/he may presume that she/he knows the appropriate course of action for the recipient and, consequently, she/he has the right to advice. Based on this, they propose 3 hypotheses: (1) "message sources who recall giving advice –compared with those who recall asking a favor– will perceive greater threat to (a) the target's negative face and (b) their own positive face" (in that they may appear nosy) (201); (2) in order to mitigate the potential face threats, participants will give reasons; and (3) "no differences about the perception of face threat will be found in virtue of the participants' sex nor the type of the relationship they shared with the target." (201-202). With respect to hypothesis 1, results showed that participants who recalled giving advice "reported greater risk of having made the target appear incompetent and a greater chance that they themselves appeared nosy" (215) in comparison to those who recalled asking a favor. This finding constitutes another piece of evidence that leads to acknowledging the claim that different face threats can be predictably associated with different influence goals once again. Results for hypothesis 2 were consistent with the analysis of facework. First, subjects used reasons to redress face threats, and as participants noticed a more emphasized coercion of their interlocutor's autonomy or noticed they were perceived as nosy, they provided more self-focused reasons. On the contrary, when they realized that "seeking compliance implied that the target lacked competence" (215), subjects used more other-focused reasons.

Second, participants varied the focus of their reason giving depending on the specific influential goal. Participants gave reasons focused primarily on the message rather than on themselves in conversations involving advice, whereas the opposite pattern occurred in conversations involving favors. Third, participants at times withheld reasons in response to perceived face threats. For example, participants gave fewer other-focused reasons when they perceived that might incur a large future debt if a target complied with their current request (Wilson & Kunkel, 2000, 216).

Overall, no significant sex differences were found for any of the face threats. With respect to the amount of risk experienced, those who recalled giving advice to close same-sex or cross-sex friends reported to have experienced a great deal of risk (appearing nosy) than those who recalled asking a favor. However, within romantic partners, no difference in the amount of risk when giving advice and asking favors was found (216).

Despite its importance, Wilson & Kunkel's (2000) study has some shortcomings. First, as they themselves recognize, the recall procedure they used for data collection has limitations that include the possible distortion of what really happened in the episodes participants reported. As it has been informed in several sociolinguistics and pragmatic studies, in most occasions subjects' self reports of linguistic behavior do not coincide with those found by researchers. Second, informants may have recalled "memorable advice and favor episodes rather than more typical but mundane episodes that occur frequently in everyday interaction" (2000, 203). Third, Wilson & Kunkel did not control for the magnitude of the favor being requested nor did they consider the severity of the problem the interlocutors were being advised for. The severity of an event calls for differentiated ways of performing the speech acts and redressing them. Fourth, the authors ignored the willingness of the recipient to receive advice or do a favor as a fundamental factor that affects the interaction during the encounter and its outcome. Fifth and last, the content of advice was not taken into consideration. Authors such as Goldsmith (1999) and McGeorge et al. (2002) assert the content and feasibility of the advice are primary factors that need to be included in this kind of studies.

Leppänen (1999) analyzes advice-giving interactions between Swedish district nurses and their patients and then compare them to Heritage & Sefi's (1992) study of the same type of interactions between British health visitors and first time mothers. Her research questions included (1) when is advice-giving initiated?, (2) how can the sequential position in which advice-giving is initiated, be described and understood?, (3) what is advice about?, (4) how is advice-giving constructed, and (5) how do patients respond to advice. Her study is based on 32 videotaped interactions in clinics and patients' homes. Although the nurses did not meet the patients with the specific purpose of giving advice, they did provide suggestions. In order to respond question 1, Leppänen began by distinguishing the patient-and-nurse initiated advice-giving and by looking at the sequential contexts in which advice-giving was initiated. For the patient-initiated advice-giving, the author noticed that patients initiate the sequence verbally by (a) proposing courses of action (e.g. 'I thought that perhaps I shouldn't take them out of the insulation'), (b) detailing problems with topical environments already established by the nurses' questions (e.g. 'I've got a cold'), and (c) giving detailed descriptions of their problems (214-216). It is important to keep in mind that the patients did not specifically request advice. But what motivated nurses to give advice? Frequently, nurses offered suggestions after having observed a possible problem which indicated that the patient needed medical advice (220).

With respect to question (2), the initiation of advice giving, nurses started to give advice (a) after problems had been manifested, (b) after other aspects of problems had been addressed and (c) after completion of certain activities not related to the problem in question. In sum, advice-giving generally took place close to when nurses observed problems (221-223).

Leppänen (1998) answered question 3 by identifying four main ways used by nurses to propose actions: (a) imperative mood, (b) use of modal verbs of obligation,

(c) proposal of actions by presenting advice as an allowable or requested alternative, (d) descriptions of patients' future actions (223-225). The author emphasizes that forms (a) and (b) are "rather explicit and can be seen as aggravating and socially imposing" (225). Since forms (c) and (d) give the patient more room to express his will, Leppänen describes them as less imposing.

Goodwin (1990) noted, in a review of research on *directives*, that they often are ranked according to their syntactic shape and the degree of control they propose. In this research, the shapes of directives are usually tied to the amount of control they suggest that the issuers have over the addressees. Direct forms, such as imperatives, are ranked as more aggravating and controlling than indirect forms. But as Goodwin noted, there is not such simple link between form and social imposition. Explicit forms such as imperatives are not always imposing or degrading to their recipients. ... we cannot depart from the assumption that some forms, imperatives and modal verbs of obligation are inherently more imposing (Leppänen, 1998, 225).

With respect to question (4) the author found that nurses use imperatives and modal verbs of obligation when patients appear to understand that there is an issue but do not know how to deal with it. In contrast, in cases where patients did not seem to understand that there was an issue, nurses used proposed actions "as alternatives and descriptions of patients' future actions" (e.g., "as soon as you feel the pain ... then you take the spray yourself" [226]). In summary, the nurse gives advice to a person who, she can assume, already complies with the advice. "Therefore it is safe to deliver the advice in the normatively strongest and most explicit form, as an outright prohibition" (226). Additionally, advice-giving is usually followed by accounts: Nurses display the knowledge upon which they base their advice. Such accounts usually resemble predictions of what could happen if their advice is not taken into consideration (229).

With respect to the reception of advice (question 5), Leppänen found the same kinds of responses as Heritage & Sefi (1992), although not in the same distribution: (a) Marked acknowledgements, such as repeats of the advice key components (e.g., 'oh!'), (b) unmarked acknowledgements (e.g., 'mm hm'), (c) assertions of knowledge and/or competence (e.g., 'I know'), and (d) overt rejections of advice.

The following table summarizes Leppänen's (1998) findings in comparison with those of Heritage & Sefi (1992).

Table 1: Lepannen's findings

	Swedish Nurses	British Nurses
Reason of contact with patient	Routine sick care situations at clinics and patients homes.	Visits to first-time mothers at home to talk about their experiences of the birth and baby care.
Previous contact	Interlocutors knew each other in 20 out of the 32 cases.	No previous contact.

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Assumptions about patients	Patients had met caregivers before. Nurses could assume that patients had gotten advice before.	Mothers don't know much about baby care.
Advice-giving	Simply a consequence of incidental observations when performing tests or treatments.	The health visitors' main goal. Highly problematic (assumption that mothers are possibly incompetent plays an important role).
Relevance of advice	Very relevant because it was given after observing medical problems.	Questionable relevance since their advice rarely referred to problems.
Initiations of advice	Initiation by patients: (a) requesting advice, (b) detailing problems, and (c) describing states of affairs.	Initiation by mothers: (a) requesting advice, (b) <u>proposing courses of action with questions</u> , (c) detailing problems, and (d) describing states of affairs.
Frequency of advice	15 advice sequences in 32 home visits (10 hrs 14 min of data)	70 advice sequences in 8 home visits (4.5 hrs of data)
Contents of advice	Patient's management of medical problems.	Baby care
Design of advice (ways in which advice was delivered)	(a) Imperatives and (b) modal verbs of obligation when patients seemed to understand that they had problems, but not their solutions. (c) alternatives or descriptions of patients' future actions (mitigated forms used when patients did not understand that there was a health issue).	(a) imperatives, (b) modal verbs of obligation, (c) recommendations, and (d) factual generalizations
Responses to advice	(a) marked acknowledgements, (b) unmarked acknowledgements, (c) assertions of knowledge, and (d) overt rejections of advice.	(a) marked acknowledgements (rare), (b) unmarked acknowledgements, (c) assertions of knowledge, and (d) overt rejections of advice.
Overt rejection of advice	Several instances. Patients are straightforward; their answers tend to be polarized : marked acknowledgement or over rejections. Reason: the problem to which the advice responds is/was observable to the patient.	Only one instance. Avoidance of marked acknowledgement because such a response would have admitted incompetence about baby care.

To conclude, Leppänen asserts that instances of advice-giving between nurses and patients in British and Swedish environments present differences because contextual features play a decisive role. In Sweden, advice-giving is responded to in much more straightforward ways than in England. The author affirms that this is due to the fact that in Sweden "problems are established prior to the delivery of advice" (1998, 238).

Leppänen's research is rich in details, especially in the sections that describe the nurses' tasks and environments in both contexts, of great relevance to understand the sequences of advice-giving she presents. The author is able to respond each research question very precisely and clearly. However, it is possible that the straightforwardness she claims to have found in Swedish patients' reception of advice be due to traits of the Swedish culture not considered in this study.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Participants

'Pablo' and 'Ana' (pseudonyms) are a married Puerto Rican couple. At the time of the study, both were graduate students at Middle-Eastern universities in the United States. The following table summarizes relevant information about them.

Table 2: Participants' Background Information

Pseudonym	Age	Native Language	Dialect	Highest Level of Education	Occupation
Ana	32	Spanish	Puerto Rican Spanish	Master of Arts	Graduate Student
Pablo	34	Spanish	Puerto Rican Spanish	Bachelor of Arts	Graduate Student

Ana and Pablo were asked to have a conversation on any topic and they were told that they would be audio and videotaped. The couple had been married for about 5 years and had lived together most of the time.

Some contextual information is relevant for a general understanding of the conversation excerpts I will discuss in this section: Ana is a graduate student at the Department of Education. Literacy in adolescents is her specialty and her professor had asked her to write part of a chapter that will appear in a publication about adolescent literacy. Ana is in charge of discussing the relationship between literacy and identity proposed by the socio-cultural approach in the 90's. Her professor has suggested her to create three categories and develop the topic around them and she is experiencing trouble with this task. The deadline for submission is approaching and Ana is under a lot of stress.

3.2 Instruments

The data analyzed consists of a one-hour videotaped conversation of a Puerto Rican married couple. The interaction was videotaped and audio-recorded. The equipment used included a digital video-camera and a digital recorder with external microphone.

3.3 Data Analysis

The one-hour conversation was transcribed using the transcription conventions by Jefferson (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984) and Levinson (1983), (see appendix A). The numbers on the left side correspond to the lines of the text. The transcription is orthographical. Wife and husband were identified by the initials A and P, respectively. To avoid confidentiality issues, the names of the subjects and people, companies, organizations, etc. referred to in the conversation were changed.

Interviewing the participants after collecting and analyzing the natural-occurring data was part of the initial methodology design and analysis; however, Pablo accepted a job offer and the couple suddenly moved to a different state, which made it impossible to reach them for this purpose.

With the objective of answering the research questions (based on Leppänen [1998]), the 28 instances of advice that took place during the conversation were analyzed and discussed.

4. FINDINGS

Despite the fact that each instance of advice-giving has its own initiation, the following excerpt exhibits what seems to be the basic antecedent to advice in the interaction overall. Please notice that a horizontal arrow draws attention to location of phenomenon of direct interest to discussion.

1. A→ El problema que tengo ahora mismo es que:: (.)
The problem that I have right now is tha::t
2. A tengo que (.) hablar de la identidad, el concepto de identidad en los,
I have to talk about identity, the concept of identity in,
3. A en los noventa.
in the nineties
4. P→ Por qué es un problema?
Why is it a problem?
5. A Por qué es que: (.) Lo que ell-, lo que ella me puso fue que (.),
Because it's tha:t. What sh-, what she wanted me to do was that,
6. A la única que yo tengo ahora mismo, qu- yo sé,
the only one that I have right now, tha- I know
7. A yo sé cual es la l- la:: cómo es?
I know which one it is th-, how was that?
8. A La filosofía sociocultural que había en es-, que::, que todavía
predomina.
Cultural Philosophy that still prevails
9. A Que es que:: la literacia e- es (.) contextual, este:: y:: y está situada,
That states that literaci i- is (.) contextual, uhm:: a::nd, a::nd is positioned
10. A está localizada, se localiza dependiendo de:: de tu posición social,
lies in, one identifies it depending on you::r social position.
11. A o el c- contexto social que se da, en que se de.
or the s- social context where it occurs, where it occurs.
12. A PEro, la guía que ella me dio para escribir fue que tenía que ser (.)
BUt the guideliness she gave me to write was that it had to be (.)
13. A las dos características que s- dentro de:: (.) l-, este:: (.) la literacia:: e:
both characteristics that s- inside the::: (.) uhm:: (.) literacy::: e:
14. A e::n (.) en la teo- teoría socio- sociocultural de:: (.)
i::n (.) the socio-,sociocultural theo- theory.

15. A que predominó en los noventa. En la teor- teoría so- sociocultural de:;, *that predominated in the nineties. In the so- sociocultural theory*
16. A que predominó en los noventa, es que:: era (.) cómo era? Cóm=- *that prediminated in the nineties, it's tha::t it was (.) How was it? Ho-*
=
17. P→ Pero cuál es el problema? Hábla//me de eso!II *But what is the problem? Talk to me about it!!*
18. A //QUE NO SÉII No sé como empezar de, esta, la= *THAT I DON'T KNOW. I don't know how to begin to, uhm, the=*
19. P Ajá- *Uhum*
20. A La la escritura. *To write it.*
- ...
- 34.A→ Pero:: pero no sé como:: Por donde empezar. *But I don't know how:: Where to begin.*

At lines 10 and 34, Ana states very clearly that she has a problem. Detailing problems is one of the initiations of advice identified by Leppänen (1998). She continues by describing the socio-cultural approach to literacy state of affairs although in with a hesitant voice and almost incoherent way. In line 26, Pablo asks Ana to rephrase her explanation since he was able to understand she had a problem but was unable to comprehend what it was about. Ana has made very clear that she is having trouble; however, it is not possible to determine if she intended these first statements to be advice-provoking unless an interview is done.

In the following excerpt, advice seems to be initiated when Ana degrades herself by indicating something that she could have done to begin solving her problem and did not do and by asseverating the troublesome that begin writing always poses to her (lines 23 and 25).

21. A La verdad me senté frente a la computadora y empecé a escribir, *The truth is that I sat in front of the computer and I began writing*
22. A y a veces cuando estoy así::, por ejemplo anoche tuve una ideas, *and sometimes when I'm like thi::s, for example last night I had some ideas*
23. A→ pero e- c- debí de haberme sentado en la computadora, no lo hice! *But e- c- I should have sat in front of the computer, I didn't do it!*
24. P Mmm *Mmm*
25. A→ Este: °y no::° Tú sabes que (siempre) para escribir es un (pedo). *Uhm: °and I di::dn't° You know that beginning to write is (always) a (pain).*
26. P→ Empieza con la tesis, planteando la tesis de los noventa.

27. A *Begin with the thesis, bringing up the nineties' thesis.*
Pues ya, esa fue la primera oración que @@escribí@@
Well, I already, that was the first sentence that @@I wrote@@
28. P→ Una sola oración hiciste en toda la tesis?=
You summarized the whole thesis in only one sentence?

Leppänen (1998) does not identify self-degradation as initiation of advice. While this action poses a self threat to negative face, it might also be interpreted as a sign of affiliation in this context: The level of *confianza* is so significant, that recognizing one's mistakes might reinforce the sense of belonging to the group, in this case only composed of 2 people.

In line 26, we notice how Pablo gives advice using an imperative form. Interestingly, in line 27, Ana responds to the advice by asserting that she had already implemented the course of action, a reaction not identified by Leppänen (1998) in her data. This way of responding is very recurrent in Ana's turns and becomes more frequent and stronger as the interaction progress, as we will see in some coming examples.

Even though the advice sequence ends in line 27, it is interesting to look at what Pablo says in line 28. He probably knows that summarizing a thesis in one sentence is highly uncommon; nonetheless, he interprets Ana's assertion literally as a basis for questioning her ability to write coherently. The fact that Ana denigrated herself previously might have made Pablo feel that he was allowed to continue doing the same.

In the fragment below, Ana begins the advice sequence by expressing the reasoning behind the possibility of just keeping the two traditional categories: inside and outside the school (lines 321-330). By doing this, Ana is again presenting a state of affairs.

321. A→ //Pues claro!II Pues por eso es que tal vez, (.)
//Of course!II Well, that is why maybe, (.)
322. A tal vez (me debo quedar) con lo de dentro y fuera de la escuela,
Maybe (I should conform) to working with inside and outside the school
323. A Por eso mismo,
Precisely because of that,
324. A porque es bastante amplio. Pero si me pongo a pensar (.)
because it is very broad. But if I begin thinking (.)
325. A como es-, como mi as-, como mi asesora académica me dijo
How it is, how muy adv-, how my academic advisor told me
326. A que pienses en tres, la posibilidad de tres categorías,
that I had to think about the possibility of three categories
327. A pero en realidad de lo que he visto,
but in reality from what I've seen
328. A lo más amplio que puede definir lo que hemos estado leyendo,

- the broadest categories that can define what we've been reading*
329. A toda la literatura que estamos leyendo- leyendo
all the literature we're been reading
330. A es dentro y fuera de la escuela.
is inside and outside the school.
331. P→ Pero no tienes que recoger toda la literatura,
But you don't have to compile all the literature
332. P→ puedes descartar algunas referencias //aunque las categorías ()II
you may discard some references //even though the categories ()II
333. A→ //Ya sé, ya las discut-II eso está ya des- ya, ya,
//I know, we already discuss-II that's already done, af- already, already,
334. A→ ya todo eso lo hicimos.
we already did all that
335. A Tengo ya la literatura con qu-
I already have the literature with wh-
336. A que es con la que más me he concentrado.
which is the one I have concentrated the most on.

In line 336, Pablo gives advice using a command form once more. Next he gives another piece of advice using a modal verb. This second command seems a little less imposing and the reason behind it might be that he knows that not considering all the existing literature in a study is actually a very common procedure. He might actually suspect that his wife did not intend to look at every single article or book. To both pieces of advice, Ana responds again asserting that discarding some of the sources was something that had already been done (lines 334-336).

The following passage deserves special attention since Pablo's advice (lines 184-185) consists on a reiteration of what Ana said she had already done and needed to do in the turns immediately before the advice.

171. A→ La literatura ya la definimos como:, este:.,
Literacy, we already defined it as, uhm:.,
172. A→ como el texto escrito y hablado,
as written and spoken text
173. A→ (tú) sabes. Todo lo que sea texto escrito y hablado.
(you) know. All what is written and spoken text.
174. P Uhum.
Uhum.
175. A Este:., que es, está, es, es limit- es limitado porque, por ejemplo,

- Uhm::, what is , it is, is, is limit-, it is limited because, for example,*
176. A en mi caso, me interés- (el drama y) la educación
in my case, I am interest- (drama and) education
177. A y (ya) yo entiendo que la literacia nos s-
and (already) I understand that literacy s- us
178. A es mas que lo escrito y lo hablado.
is more than what's written and spoken.
179. P Uhum.
Uhum.
180. A Esta la cuestión corpóreo y otras cosas=
This is the corporeal question and other things=
181. P Audiovisual, //audiovisualII
Audiovisual, //audiovisualIII
182. A→ //Sí.II Pero para el, para efectos del artículo tienes que (.)
//Yes.II But for the, for this article one has to to(.)
183. A tú sabes, este: //(finitarlo)II
you know, uhm:, //finish itII
184. P→ //Sí, pues, definirloII.
//Yes, of course, define itII
185. P→ Claro, por eso //te digo que tienes que definir que es literacia.II
Of course, that is why //I am telling you that you have to define what literacy is.II
186. A→ //por eso, pues ya esta limit-, ya esta limit-II,
//that is why, well, it is already limit-, it is already limitedII
187. A→ ya eso ya se definió en el artículo.
that was already defined in the article.

Ana begins the sequence by asserting that she had already defined literacy as written and spoken text (lines 172-173). Then she does a reflection and expresses that the definition she had done is somehow a limited concept that could also incorporate other aspects. In lines 176-178, 180, 182 and 183 she says that in order to include those aspects she considers important, it would be necessary to redefine the notion of literacy. At this point, Ana has already specified the features she would like to incorporate and recognizes that she would eventually have to make some changes to the definition of literacy she had been working on previously. The fact that Pablo's subsequent piece of advice consists on saying exactly the same Ana has is very particular. I doubt it is due to lack of attention because, as we can notice, in line 181 he participates actively adding an additional feature to those Ana thinks should be considered. His advice seems unnecessary as it does not propose a course of action nor anything new.

From time to time, Pablo's advice is followed by his opinion. In the following section, he delivers the advice in form as an obligation (lines 431-432) and then criticizes Ana's choice of the existing categories "in school" and "out of school"

because, in his opinion, the criteria for their creation is not very "smart" (lines 433-434).

421. P //°ta bien, (pero que te)°II Estamos hablando de:: có-,
//°Ok, (but that) °II We are talking about ho-
422. P buscar las categorías,
look for the categories,
423. A Uhum
Uhum
424. P con la definición de cómo la literacia afecta
with the definition of how literacy affects
425. P el performance de negociación del individuo.
the individual's negotiation performance
426. A Uhum.
Uhum
427. P No tomando la definición de la educación ni nada de eso.
Not considering the definition of education nor anything like that.
428. A Bueno, si, est-, esto, est-, esto es bajo la educación!
Well, if th-, this, th, this is under education!
429. A //Todo esto es bajo la educ-II
//All this is under educationII
430. P //Uhm, es bien complicadoII,
//Uhm, it is very complicated.
431. P→ tienes muchos parámetros ahí que tienes que aclarar
you have a lot of parameters there that you have to clarify
432. P→ para poder decir lo que es una categoría.
to be able to say what a category is.
433. P→ A mí me parece que categoría dentro y fuera de la escuela son,
I think that categories in and out of school are,
434. P→ No sé°, no implican mucho (.) pensamiento, eso.
I don't know, they do not imply (.) a lot of thinking, that.
435. A→ Bueno, antes no se reconocía que este,
Well, before it was not recognized that this
436. A los jóvenes o los niños practicaran, este:
teenagers or kids practiced, uhm::
437. A no se reconocía la literacia que ellos practicaban en su casa.
the literacy they practiced at home was not recognized.
438. A Cualquier tipo de literacia que practicasen fuera de la escuela
Any type of literacy that they practiced outside of school
439. A no era conocida como, no era reconocida en el contexto escolar,
was not known as, wasn't recognized in the school context,
440. A dentro del salón de clase.
inside the classroom.

By sharply criticizing the categories Ana has mentioned before, Pablo could be supporting Ana's idea of expanding them or creating others. However, at the same time, these categories constitute a mainstay in literacy studies and Ana's point of departure. Considering this, Pablo could be, at the same time slightly criticizing Ana for not being able to come across other categories with a "smarter" reasoning behind them.

As can be seen in lines 435-440, Ana's reaction is not in response to the advice itself but to Pablo's critical comment. In an effort for safeguarding the validity of these categories, Ana highlights the fact that up to that point, literacy outside of school was not even recognized in the area of adolescent literacy.

In this context, advice can was also given in from of factual generalizations. In the excerpt below, Ana and Pablo are talking about how broad the categories in and out of school are. Pablo says this explicitly and Ana agrees (line 657). Immediately after, she reemphasizes that her problem is creating the categories (line 658). In lines 661, 663 and 664, Pablo generalizes the ability to create categories for analysis purposes as inherent to any researcher.

657. A Yo estoy de acuerdo contigo,
I agree with you.
658. A→ pero tengo que establecer unas cate//gorías,II
but I have to establish some categories
659. P //Ahí:::II
//There:::II
660. A va en contra de lo que yo entiendo que se debe, =
it is against what I understand one must, =
661. P→ =//Pero eso no importaII, es un objeto de estudio!
=//But that doesn't matterII, it is an object of study!
662. A //O sea, yo no está-II
//Well, I am not II
663. P→ (O sea), aunque tú estés en contra de la bomba nuclear tú puedes,
That means that even if you are against of the nuclear bomb, you can
664. P→ si eres científico, hacer unas categorías pa' estudiar eso!
if you are a scientist, create some categories to study that!
665. A→ Pues por eso!
Well, that's why!
666. P °Por eso.°
°That's why.°
667. A→ Pero se me hace difícil! Es lo que te estoy diciendo! No sé!
A *But it's difficult to me! That's what I'm saying! I don't know!*

Despite the fact that being assertive, as Bravo (1996), mentions, is a technique that points at creating affiliation, Ana's answer to this advice reveals that it posed a

threat to her negative face. By recognizing that what is causing so much trouble for her is precisely what her husband just mentioned to be one of the simplest tasks any researcher would be able to do, she seems to feel attacked instead of helped. Such feeling is confirmed when, as can be seen in the following selection (which takes place at approximately in the middle of the conversation), Ana tells Pablo that she does not think he is helping her right after he questions the fact that the categories have to be tied to school. For Ana this questioning is not valid since, in her opinion, there is an intrinsic relationship between literacy in adolescents and the context of school.

832. A→ //Esta bien, pues miraII No creo que @me estas ayudando!@
//Ok. well, seeII I don't think @you're helping me!@
833. A→ ((Soft laughter)) @No me estas ayudando //mucho@II
((Soft laughter)) @You are not helping me //much@II
834. P //No, pero esII que no,
//No, but it'sII that you're not
835. A→ //Estas ya cuestionando cosas que estan establecidasII
//You're questioning things that are already established!II

It is important to point that, even though in this selection Ana is talking with a laughing voice, it more a type of chuckling desperation.

Criticisms and questionings are very frequent in this conversation but, since they are not the focus of this analysis, I do not address them in detail. However, many times (as we will see below), advice is prompted by Ana's reaction to Pablo's criticism. Before it, Pablo manifested continuing having trouble understanding the relationship between school and the importance of identity in adolescent literacy despite Ana's repeated explanations. In line 818 (not included in the excerpt) Pablo surprisingly claimed that Ana had not made clear how crucial school was in determining the categories when, as I said above, she had repeatedly mentioned and highlighted it.

836. P→ //No estas en tierra firme!II
You are not on solid ground!II
837. A Estas ya cuestionando cosas que no,II están establecidas.
At this point you are questioning things that aren't,II that are
established.
838. A Yo no puedo cambiar el sistema! Yo estoy tratando de hacer
un=
I cannot change the system! I'm trying to make a=
839. P =Eh, cuando yo escribo,
=Eh, when I write,
840. P yo no puedo escribir en //aire () lo que sabe,II
I cannot write empty // handed () what one knows, II
841. A //Tú eres periodista.II El periodista=
//You are a journalist. Journalists=

842. P→ =Pero (hay que saber) donde estoy parado
=But I have to know where you stand
843. P→ y que definiciones hay y claramente para poder,
and which definitions there are and know them clearly to be
able to
844. P→ entonces echar pa' lante algo
come up with something
845. P→ y que no sea lo mismo que ya esta definido!
that's not the same that is already defined!
846. P→ Que sea algo distinto! Que se desarrolle a partir //de ahí!II
Something different! Something that develops from //there!II
847. A→ //hh!II °Ok°
//hh!II °Ok°
848. P→ Si no sé donde estoy parado no puedo escribir nada,
If I don't know where I stand I cannot write anything
849. P y entiendo, por qué, por qué es tan difícil!
and I understand why, why it is so difficult!
850. A→ Si yo no sé donde esto-, Yo sé donde estoy parada.
If I don't know where I a-, I know where I stand.
851. A TÚ ERES EL QUE NO ENTIENDE LO,
YOU ARE THE ONE WHO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND
WHAT
852. A DE LO QUE YO TE ESTOY HABLANDO!
WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!

Pablo begins by telling Ana that she doesn't have a solid foundation (line 836). This instance of bald on record can be remarkably threatening to face because, as Goldsmith (1999) states, "giving advice implies that the giver knows to solve the hearer's problem" (310), but Pablo is not an expert in education; instead he has a degree in journalism and, at the time the video was recorded, he was a law school graduate student. Ana's response in line 837 seems to be an indirect way of saying that, because he does not know much about education and literacy, he keeps questioning precepts that are fundamental in her field. She tries to make him realize that even if such precepts have not been accurately proposed, her intention at the moment is not to criticize them. She has the urgent need of creating the categories she needs in order to continue writing her portion of the coming publication and the fact that her husband keeps on debating, challenging and questioning these principles she tries to explain may be important but not relevant to solve her problem. In lines 842-846 he presents his advice as a much elaborated factual generalization to which she responds with an unmarked acknowledgement that reveals her unhappiness and deceit with the piece of advice. Such a response is very frequent in the conversation. The fact that when acknowledging advice her voice is lower is also frequent and contrasts dramatically with her normal voice volume, especially in other instances (discussed later on this paper) where her impetuosity is revealed through a remarkable rise of voice volume. Rejecting advice implies that

the advice giver was wrong and, as Goldsmith (1999) proposes, it "risks showing a lack of gratitude for the advisor's concern" (311). Then, the softer volume could be a mechanism for redressing the rejection; however, when analyzing this conversation and its context as a whole, I would say an unmarked acknowledgement in a soft voice is a mechanism used by Ana when she feels she does not succeed in getting her husband to understand certain concepts, when she feels that contradicting his criticism will only lead to harder unnecessary judgments, or, as we will see later, when Pablo's advice is illogical or not feasible to implement.

Right after Ana's recognition of advice, Pablo reiterates his advice by paraphrasing what he said before in a shorter manner. In line 850 Ana rejects her husband's suggestion by declaring that she does know where she stands. In the following two lines she communicates that if there is anyone who does not know well the foundations and definitions of literacy it is him. Ana overtly rejects Pablo's accusation-shaped piece of advice using also a loud tone of voice. The use of a louder tone of voice usually appears in Ana's turns from the middle of the conversation on. This is an interesting feature of her straightforward rejection of advice that appears only from this point on possibly as a result of several unsuccessful attempts to make Pablo understand basic concepts in her field relevant to her problem. The fact Pablo's constant criticism and questioning bothers her is evident in the following selection:

1311. A→ @@qué horrible es esto!@@
@@how horrible this is!@@
1312. P ((Laughter))
1313. A→ Tú lo que estás haciendo es t-, cuestionando cada cosita,
What you are doing is qu-, questioning each little thing
1314. A no //estás escuchando lo que teII estoy diciendo!
you're //not listening to what I am telling you!
1315. P //Sí yo ().II Al //revés, tú no estás escuchando
//If I ()II. On the contrary, you are not listening
1316. P lo que te estoy diciendoII
what I'm telling youII
1317. A→ //No estás intentando entender lo que te estoy (dicien-)II,
//You are not trying to understand what I'm telling y-II
1318. A te te estoy explicando!
what what I'm explaining to you

Later in the conversation, Ana and Pablo are discussing possible specific categories. None of Pablo's has pleased Ana so far. The following fragment shows how Pablo's suggested categories disappoints Ana:

1094. P→ //Dentro de la escuelaII, fuera de la escuela
1095. P→ y en el espacio, y ya están todas!
1096. P→ Todo resumido. Porque el espacio es satélite.
1097. P Y puede ser que reciban algo por satélite! //Como::II

1098. A→ //°Gracias°II=
1099. P =No, como *satellite radio*!
1100. A→ //°Ok°II

In line 1094, Pablo does not acknowledge Ana's desire to avoid the categories *in school* and *out of school* and suggests them. Moreover, he proposes a third one that, in Ana's view, does not make sense at all: 'the space' understood as all information students get through satellite. Ana's disapproval is evident when she replies to it with an ironic and low in volume *thank you* in line 1098 and an unmarked *ok* that can be barely heard. McGeorge et al. (2002) emphasize the importance that content of advice has in terms of usefulness, feasibility and absence of limitations. Most studies on advice, as mentioned before, have focused on the intrinsic threat to face the speech act of advising poses to the interlocutor but "there has been an striking lack of attention to more concrete factors such as... relevance ..." (2002, 462). The excerpt above exemplifies how the advisee's rejection of advice does not only respond to feeling threatened, but also to its inapplicability and improbability to reflect reality.

5. DISCUSSION

A close analysis of advice-sequences in this conversation allowed for the identification of the following strategies. First, for Initiations of advice, detailing problems and describing states of affairs were the most common and coincide with those Lepänen (1998) identified. Neither requesting of advice nor proposing courses of actions with questions were identified. However, self-degradation and contestation to criticism initiated advice in this conversation. Second, similar to Lepänen (1998), advice was delivered mainly through imperatives and modal verbs of obligation. Descriptions of future actions and factual generalizations were also used. Additionally, paraphrasing a course of action previously mentioned by the advisee also was identified as a design of advice particular to this verbal encounter. Third, responses to advice found in this paper and identified by Lepänen (1998) include assertions of knowledge, unmarked acknowledgements and overt rejections of advice. Additionally, responses also included assertions that the advised course of action had already been implemented or mentioned by the advisee. Moreover, in cases advice was given as an imperative followed by criticism, the response took the shape of a contestation to the criticism.

Context and culture are essential for the interpretation of advice giving sequences. Even though it is possible to find some similarities on how a speech act is performed in different settings, suggesting that face threatening has universal features is not accurate.

In her study, Garcia (1999) found that in Venezuela, a Caribbean Spanish language setting, threatening the interlocutor's face a common feature. Curcó (1998) also found this peculiarity to be common in Spain but not in Mexico. Most Mexicans find some speech acts performed without mitigation less polite. In the case of giving suggestions, Koike (1998) found that they are particularly threatening to face, especially when they imply criticism and when they have not been explicitly

requested. As for most Mexicans, the author says the threat can be counteracted by lessening its impact through minimizers. Farr's (2000) finding about Mexican "rancheros" is completely opposite: Being verbally direct and straightforward is a style that indexes qualities that might be perceived as face threatening acts, but they are intended as a natural expression of self-assertiveness. As Bravo (1996) points out, in order to fulfill the face requirement of affiliation developing *confianza* allows speakers to speak intimately and openly, which is highly valued in some Spanish language contexts. As we can see, attention to positive and negative politeness is a matter of degree; it is part of the knowledge members of the same culture share. It could be the case that, likewise Mexican *ranchero*, and Venezuelan cultures, in Puerto Rican culture autonomy and affiliation are not opposed to each other but linked in a common emphasis of group belonging. If this is true, Pablo's constant delivery of advice as an imperative action using commands or modal verbs of obligation and, to a lesser extent, factual generalizations may simply reflect the desirable qualities his culture groups accepts.

Nonetheless, the close analysis of the sequences of advice done in for this study and especially Ana's reactions revealed that some ways in which advice was delivered were not always appreciated. In fact, Ana's overt rejections, constant assertions that advised course of action had already been implemented or clearly unmarked acknowledgements of advice, in addition to her specific comments on how she felt constantly questioned and criticized instead of being helped, indicate that in many instances she struggled to accept advice considering it illogical, non-applicable or already put into practice.

Although throughout the conversation Ana's interventions were knowledgeable, her hesitant way of talking may have caused Pablo the impression that she did not know the subject well enough.

6. CONCLUSION

Neither Bravo's (1996) nor Brown & Levinson's (1987) approach seem to be able to provide enough elements for the understanding of advice giving and response to it in isolation. It is possible that in the Puerto Rican culture the perception of autonomy and affiliation do not oppose each other and that the performance of certain speech acts is not considered a face threat itself. However, when advice-sequences are looked at in detail, the design of advice becomes secondary with respect to its content. As MacGeorge et al. (2002) point out,

Most influential with respect to coping outcomes influence decreases when advice is about broader judgment of global advice 'goodness'. Attention to the face matters most in the short term. Facework may not matter much when it comes to determining whether the advice should be implemented or whether there is a need to seek input from others (462).

As indicated by Tannen (2003), linguistic behaviors do not only have one interpretation. One strategy may have different meanings depending on the context; therefore, verbal signs that have been recognized as dominant may

or may not be so depending on the case. According to Uchida (1992) "[g]ender is one major construct that organizes our world and our social life" (291). However, as the author points out, categories of males and females have been inadequately seen as pre-linguistic variables (290) and the relevance of context has been put aside by many researchers. In this study, likewise Fishman's (1978), the definition of what is appropriate or inappropriate is frequently expressed by the male's advice. However, categorical affirmations about behaviors that are inherent to males and females in conversation are inappropriate. A look at the sequences of interaction and the content of turns as well as the context are vital for an accurate interpretation of the object of study.

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Appendix A
Transcription conventions

°estudio°	A degree sign indicates a passage of talk which is low in volume.
ESTUDIO	Capitals indicate increasing volume.
//	Double slashes mark the place in an utterance which overlaps with the following utterance.
 	Double vertical lines indicate the end of an overlap in the utterance which continues the longest.
No estudio= =Oh.	The equal signs indicate ‘latching’; there is no interval between the end of a prior turn and the start of a next piece of talk.
estudio::	Colons indicate that the sound immediately preceding has been lengthened. Each colon represents approximately 1 syllable length.
estud-	A dash marks a sudden cut-off of the current sound.
estudio.	A period indicates falling or final intonation contour not necessarily the end of a sentence
estudio,	A comma indicates continuing intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
estudio?	A question mark is not a punctuation mark; it indicates a rising intonation contour (not necessarily a question)
studio¿	The inverted question mark indicates a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark.
estudio!	An exclamation point indicates an animated tone, not necessarily an exclamation.
(.)	A dot in parenthesis indicates a “micropause”, hearable but not readily measurable, ordinarily less than 2/10 of a second.
(0.5)	Numbers in parenthesis indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second.
((pause))	The word ‘pause’ in double parenthesis indicates untimed silence.
(estudio) ()	When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, or the speaker identification is, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part but represents a likely possibility. <u>Empty parentheses</u> indicate that something is being said but no hearing can be achieved.
((cough)) ((whispered)) ((telephone rings))	Double parentheses are used to mark transcriber’s descriptions of events rather than representations of them.
@estudio@	Utterance between the @ @ is said in laughing voice.
.hh	A series of <i>h</i> ’s preceded by a period marks an in-breath. The number of

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	<i>h</i> 's indicate the length of the in-breath in relation to the length of mora in the preceding talk.
hh	A series of <i>h</i> 's marks an out-breath. The number of <i>h</i> 's indicate the length of the out-breath in relation to the length of mora in the preceding talk.
>estudio<	The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
<estudio>	Used in the reverse order, the symbols indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slowed or drawn out.
<<1:05>>	Length of a section of talk in minutes:seconds is given in << >>.
→	A horizontal arrow draws attention to location of phenomenon of direct interest to discussion.
Luis: Es muy estudioso. . . . Ana: Le debo dinero.	Vertical ellipses indicate that intervening turns at talking have been omitted from the fragment.