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1 Introduction: Advice in discourse

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1. Setting the scene

This collection of original chapters is about advice-giving and advice-seeking in different practices. Advice-giving is a common activity that occurs not only between friends, family members or between professionals and lay people, in written or spoken form, in face-to-face situations or in mediated forms of communication (such as telephone conversations or computer-mediated environments). It is also subject of scientific investigation especially from a linguistic and sociological perspective. Advice exchanges constitute a communicative act that is subject to negotiation between the speaker (or writer) and the addressee (or reader). The pragmatic understanding of the speech act in the Searlean sense of an advice-giver “telling you what is best for you” (Searle 1969: 67) may easily veil the interactional achievement of an *in situ* advisory exchange and the relational implications that are potentially involved when advice is communicated. For Anglo-Western cultures, several researchers have pointed out that advice is a delicate and risky act for all involved, so that its realization requires appropriate consideration of a range of different factors (Hutchby 1995; Goldsmith and MacGeorge 2000; Locher 2006). These may be, for example, the social context (public or private), the participants’ knowledge (expert or novice) and power asymmetry, the severity and face-sensitivity of the issue to which advice is given and whether advice is elicited or not. Others have pointed out that giving-advice can also be used

as a face-maintaining strategy in that it expresses solidarity with the advice seekers (Hinkel 1994, 1997). Cultural expectations are thus an important factor in the negotiation of advice, both in the sense of a broad, overarching construct consisting of shared beliefs, values, and attitudes, but also as it is manifested verbally and non-verbally in different, more local communities of practice. Crucially, it is not just the content of the advice that may influence people's perceptions of its force and appropriateness, but also the manner in which it is communicated.

The topic of advice-giving is thus firmly embedded in the study of pragmatics, that is the study of language in use. Here we follow Verschueren (2009), who interprets pragmatics as

[A] general functional perspective on (any aspect of) language, i.e. as an approach to language which takes into account the full complexity of its cognitive, social, and cultural (i.e. meaningful) functioning in the lives of human beings. (Verschueren 2009: 19, italics removed)

Our understanding of this definition is broad in that we do not preclude a fixed choice of methodology nor a set of questions to investigate language use. Instead, this collection allows us to look at advice-giving practices from different perspectives (cf. Locher and Graham 2010; Taavitsainen and Jucker 2010 for a discussion of this understanding). In fact, the collection of papers in this volume brings together studies on different advice contexts and analyzes as well as discusses what constitutes advice, how it is communicated as well as received, and what effect different situational and institutional frameworks have on its implementation from a range of methodological perspectives. We believe that the strength of the volume consists in spotlighting one communicative act and investigating it in its different facets and fields of occurrence. The volume is unique in its combination of different methodologies and in bringing together scholars working in different, but related, areas of research. The contributors are working in the fields of (natural language) semantics, pragmatics, communication studies, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and corpus linguists. Their studies reveal the scope, versatility, and importance that advice, this seemingly straightforward and everyday act, has in our life.

The collection includes 14 original papers that are organized into four parts on the basis of the social and interactional context in which the advice practice is found. Part I, II, and III each comprise a set of papers that are empirical and that use authentic or elicited data to explore the practice of advice-giving and advice-reception. In Part I, advice seeking and giving in contexts related to academic, educational and training settings are discussed, while the papers in Part II focus on the production and reception of advice in medical and more general health-related settings. Part III gives center stage to advice in two computer-mediated contexts. All of these chapters embed

the study of advice in the social and interactional context in which it occurs. Leppänen's (1998: 210) argument that "the study of advice should both carefully explicate the details of the production of advice and show how these details are systematic products of the interactants' orientations to specific features of the institutions" is followed up by the scholars so that we learn about a range of different practices of advice-giving. Finally, Part IV includes two papers which investigate advice from two different perspectives, without using a specific discourse context as a point of reference. The two chapters in this part are both theoretical and empirical, and they offer a valuable perspective on advice in cross-cultural and semantic terms, one from the perspective of natural language semantics and one from a corpus linguistics approach. Before we move on to introducing the different parts of the collection in more detail, we will introduce the topic of advice and the factors that influence advice practices in more detail.

2. From speech act and speech event to activity type and discourse

This collection is concerned with *Advice in Discourse*. The title suggests that the focus is not only on the *speech act* of rendering advice, but, in an attempt to grasp the practice of advice-seeking and advice-giving more globally, the *speech activity* has the centre stage (cf. Gumperz 1992). This means that the research reported here is interested in how the interactants orient towards advice-seeking and advice-giving (cf. Leppänen 1998) in the data that constitutes the *speech events* for analysis.

Let us first look at the level of the speech act and take English as an example. If we use the Searlean definition of the speech act 'advice,' i.e., "telling you what is best for you" (Searle 1969: 67), we realize at once that the use of the English verb *advise* or the noun *advice* in combination with a verb (*seek, give, provide, etc.*; cf. Diederich and Höhn, this volume; Wierzbicka, this volume) are only some of the ways in which advice can be linguistically imparted. In fact, these only constitute a minor sample in the spectrum of advice (and especially the performative use of the verb *advise* is rare indeed). The literature reports on a whole gamut of linguistic realizations, distinguished on the basis of different sentence types, markers of modality and syntactic agency (cf., e.g., Hudson 1990; Locher 2006). The examples are taken from an American Internet advice column on health issues called *Lucy Answers*,¹ that appears in the form of a problem letter, responded to by an agony aunt (created by a team of health educators) in the form of a response letter (cf. Locher 2006):

- imperatives: "Surround yourself with life – plants, animals, and friends"
(inviting action)

¹ At the request of the Internet site in question *Lucy Answers* is a pseudonym.

“Think about the pros and cons of your religion.” (inviting introspection)

- interrogatives: “Can you cut something out until the class is over? Can you drop the class?” (inviting action)
“is it possible that the reason why your parents told you that you shouldn’t be kissing is because of religious or cultural reasons, or is it based on the belief that kissing will lead to sexual activity?” (inviting introspection)
- declaratives: “So, Lucy suggests a good cleaning at the dentist and a few extra vitamin C.” (suggesting action)
- conditional sentences: “If you haven’t already, perhaps you and your girlfriend could talk about your concerns and try to reach a mutual decision on what form(s) of contraception you both want to use.” (making the advice relevant for a particular target group)
- agentive sentences: “You can, however, make good food choices.” (highlighting the active subject, i.e., the advice-seeker)
- non-agentive sentences: “Douching is no longer recommended for a number of reasons.” (mitigating the active subject, i.e., the advice-seeker)

Depending on the community of practice in question, its members will recognize the different levels of directness and mitigation as carrying interpersonal meaning (such as the wish not to impose, the wish to signal solidarity, etc.). Note that the *form* of the advisory act does not, *per se*, project its interpersonal effect. The interpretation of its force will depend on the norms of the practice in question.

Moving beyond the sentence level, it transpires that the embeddedness of the speech act in the wider speech event is crucial for its interpretation. Drawing once again on the example of the American advice column, we find that the actual piece of advice entailed in the overall answer written by the agony aunt is regularly framed by text passages in which the advice-seeker’s situation is assessed (i.e., there are textual connections to the problem letter that make up the question-answer pair of the written exchange), and sections in which information is neutrally passed on. This means that the surrounding text further supports the interpretation of the advisory act *within* the entire composition of the response letter.

Once we move beyond the single exchange of problem letter and response letter, that, we could argue, constitutes a ‘speech event’ in the context of the online advice column, we are in the realm of the ‘speech

activity.’ Here it will become apparent that the institutional context of the advice column influences the ways in which the agony aunt renders advice. The Internet site adheres to an ideal of non-directiveness and declares its aim to be the provision of non-judgmental information so that the target readership of university students can decide on the appropriate courses of action. This institutional constraint influences the ways in which advice is given on this site. Furthermore, the ‘speech activity: advice column’ also entails expectations on the format and organization of the text that shape the ultimate realization of the practice (e.g., the letter format).

The importance of expectations that interactants derive from their previous knowledge of a speech activity (cf. the term ‘activity type’ proposed by Levinson 1979, and ‘frame’ suggested by Goffman 1974) has also been reported by other researchers working on advice. Harrison and Barlow (2009), for example, show that contributors to an online arthritis self-management program often write *personal narratives* of their own experience in response to action plans posted by other writers. The authors claim that their study “demonstrates the importance of communication context for interpretation. In the context of the arthritis workshops, participants are expecting feedback on their action plans, and are therefore able to interpret the narratives as advice” (2009: 108). As Waring (2007a: 373) points out as well, when readers turn to a resource with the aim of finding advice, they are also likely to interpret text as advice even if it is not obviously marked as such.² This research highlights that we cannot rely on one single form to identify the function of advice in context.

As mentioned above, the literature on advice highlights a number of factors that influence the encounters and linguistic renditions of advice and that should be taken into account when studying advice. They will be introduced here in the form of a brief summary:

Practice: As illustrated above with the help of the online advice column *Lucy Answers*, the act of advising is embedded within a speech event that is part of a speech activity or practice. Depending on what kind of advice activity we are dealing with (e.g., institutional or peer-to-peer) different expectations will arise as to the rights and obligations of the roles of the interactants and the norms for appropriate linguistic formulations of advice-seeking and advice-giving. It is important to point out that these roles and understandings are not static but are continually negotiated in the instantiations of the practices.

Ideologies and culture: From the above follows that, crucially, none of these advice activities ever occur in a cultural void. Practices are always

² Sarangi (2000) explains this phenomenon by referring to the conflation of ‘activity type’ and ‘discourse type.’ He argues that the activity type framework (e.g., the American Internet advice column) has a strong effect on the different functions that discourse types (i.e., forms of talk such as informing and advising) have. In other words, contributions made by the Agony Aunt *Lucy* in the American Internet advice column *Lucy Answers* are likely to be interpreted as potential advice.

bound and embedded in particular cultural contexts. For example, Sarangi and Clark (2002a/b) point out that there is an ideology of non-directiveness on the part of the doctors in their data on genetic counseling and Heritage and Lindström (1998) argue that there is a moral element in medical advising since recommended behavior is judged according to an ideal. These underlying understandings influence the behavior of interactants.

Hierarchical differences and the role of expertise: While hierarchical difference between interactants in institutional contexts might be more evident (doctor versus patient; teacher versus student, etc.), they also play a role in peer-to-peer encounters. This is the case because an advice-seeker positions the advice-giver in a role of having something to say about the issue raised. Despite this fact, the advice-givers often use warranting strategies (cf. Richardson 2003, 2005) in order to give credibility to their recommendations and to show expertise (e.g., citing a source, quoting facts and numbers, invoking personal experience to make a point). In contrast, they also often use mitigation strategies to downtone the impression that they might be imposing their view on the advice-seeker. Both behaviors can ultimately be linked to considerations of the face of both interactants, and to relational work more generally.³ This observation also holds true for the advice-seekers/recipients, who, in turn, negotiate face issues when admitting that they lack knowledge and/or when they resist the content of a particular piece of advice or advice-giving more generally.

Solicited versus unsolicited advice: When an interactant self-selects to give advice we are dealing with unsolicited advice. This positioning on the part of the advice-giver might be reacted to in an unfavorable way by the advice recipient, and might negatively influence the willingness to follow advice (cf., e.g., Heritage and Sefi 1992). In an attempt at persuasion and in order to overcome this bias, advice-givers might invest considerable thought in fabricating their advisory message such that even a potentially unwilling recipient might accept it. For examples, see Locher (2010, in press) on online advice-givers on health internet sites who wish to achieve behavioral change in their addressees, or Vehviläinen (2001, this volume) on the work that counselors invest in aligning themselves with the students in order to prepare advice-giving. This fabrication applies both to the advice message itself as well as the sequential environment that is prepared to launch advice. It is thus important to point out that the interactional environment in which advice is introduced influences its further course of action (cf. also Jefferson and Lee 1981). Having said this, there is no guarantee that advice, whether solicited or not, will also be followed.⁴

³ Relational work is defined as “the ‘work’ individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others” (Locher and Watts 2005: 10) and is crucially linked to identity construction and the negotiation of roles (cf. Locher 2008, 2011).

⁴ Studies conducted in linguistics do not generally follow-up whether the interactants follow the advice given in the data. This is because the focus is usually on the linguistic rendition of the advisory episodes that were captured in the data sampling or because

Advising, counseling, information-giving, suggesting, ... even story-telling: In addition to the fact that there are multiple possibilities of realizing advice syntactically, there is also a certain fuzziness of the concept itself. The actual isolation of a speech act ‘advice’ within a practice is far from an easy task and is the result of interpreting an utterance in its cultural and linguistic context. For this reason, it is important to point out that interactants can *construe* utterances *as* advice even when there are no clear-cut linguistic pointers that mark them as such. This is especially the case when interactants willingly engage in advisory exchanges or when they solicit advice themselves. They are then more likely to interpret utterances directed at them *as* advice. This is, for example, reported by Zayts and Schnurr (this volume) for patients who explicitly solicit advice and who then interpret information-giving as advice in particular contexts and by Harrison and Barlow (2009) for personal narratives in the online arthritis self-management program mentioned above. A possible way to approach this fuzziness is to look at the distinction the interactants themselves draw and to see if their responses reveal anything about how an utterance is interpreted *in situ*. Ultimately, researchers working both on face-to-face and written data can tackle this complexity by pinpointing the interactional practices the participants engage in and by conducting qualitative content analyses.

Advice-giving in a variety of discourses: So far, the majority of the research literature has focused on face-to-face interactions in an institutional context. However, other forms of advice-giving equally merit attention: The field of peer-to-peer advising and everyday non-institutional advising as well as written forms of advising (in print and online form) are all-pervasive as well. Finally, the cultural embeddedness of the advisory exchanges is crucial so that we are likely to encounter different discourses of advice, which lend themselves to comparisons. The acts of seeking and giving advice are a salient activity in our daily lives and deserve further attention. After having highlighted the complexity of advice in different discourses, let us move to an introduction of the different parts of the volume.

3. Part I: Advice in academic, educational and training settings

As Limberg (2010) has discussed in great detail, the educational setting is full of situations where advice is sought and given. In fact, it is probably one of the foremost duties of any educator to help students in their academic and personal development by means of passing on advice. Situations in which such advice is expected can be, for example, feedback or training sessions,

follow-up data was not possible to collect. The new mixed methodology approach that combines data recording with interviews (cf. Angouri, Hyland and Hyland, Zayts and Schnurr, this volume) and longitudinal studies of practices can overcome this lacuna.

office hours, or counseling meetings. These encounters involve hierarchical differences in that the advisor represents the institution and often functions as a gatekeeper as well (Erickson and Shultz 1982). Advisors are thus often bound by the norms and rules of their employers and have to act within certain boundaries. A number of scholars have studied such situations in which advice is given by professionals who are in a higher-ranking social status than the advice-seekers (e.g., Bresnahan 1992; Vehviläinen 2001, 2003, 2009a/b, this volume; He 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996; House and Lévy-Tödter 2009; Hyland, F. 1998; Hyland and Hyland 2001, this volume; DeCapua and Dunham, this volume). They point to the complexity of the negotiation of how the interactants fulfill their tasks and shape their roles as advisor and advisee. Crucially, these negotiations also involve resistance and challenges since there is not always a mutual alignment involved. This results in both student advice-seekers and advisors developing communication strategies that allow them to pursue their goals.

For example, in his study of 47 video-taped office hours in English departments at two German universities, Limberg's (2010) study of talk-in-interaction demonstrates the complexity of a practice that forms a 'formally organized and institutionally situated event.' True to an ethnographic conversation analytical approach, Limberg focuses on the different phases of academic office hours to investigate how the participants interactionally organize talk and orient towards the event as a form of institutional practice. These events are studied in their entirety: the opening and closing phases, the body of the interaction, advice episodes and the co-construction of the academic concerns (see also Limberg 2007). While this is not the place to introduce this work in great depth, we will point out a number of important factors by looking at office hours to introduce advisory practices in the educational context in more detail.

In the course of their academic studies, students come across many questions and problems which require professional assistance. The office hour as an institutional practice is arranged for, as well as oriented towards, an academic agenda that students exhibit as problematic or difficult to cope with on their own (see also Vehviläinen 2009b). Seeking advice is therefore not only expected to occur regularly within these encounters, it is also treated as legitimate and indispensable for the agenda of this 'problem-solving endeavor' (Vehviläinen 2003, 2009b; Limberg 2010). Advice is a practical means to provide support and guidance to students, sometimes in the form of concrete information, general academic knowledge or by simply showing understanding for the learner. Despite the obvious benefits of giving advice to students, the actual practice is not as clear-cut and straightforward on both sides as one might expect.

For students, one concern that often arises in this context is the issue of competence. Invoking incompetence, for example through openly admitting to their lack of knowledge or indicating a struggle with their task or assignment, is an exemplary means of demanding advice from the

teacher. But this is, as Vehviläinen (2009b: 186) suggests, “treated by students as problematic,” since they have to juggle their goals of wishing to receive advice with the danger of potential face-loss when having to admit to their lack of knowledge or competence (cf. Tracy 1997; Waring 2002). The outcome of this balancing act can be problem descriptions that leave teachers in doubt as to what advice to give. This can be risky, as Limberg (2010) argues, because the advice may misfire, be omitted completely, or it may demand more interactional work to find an adequate solution to the problem. More direct and explicit advice requests also occur in these exchanges. They have been found regarding minor issues and being used during later stages of the talk in the office hours when the issue has been officially accepted and assistance is already induced (Limberg 2010). In supervision encounters advanced students (e.g., graduates) who, being more aware of their competence areas, also seek problem-related advice by coupling potential problem descriptions with a suggestion for solution (Vehviläinen 2009b; cf. Waring 2007b). This way they may appear more competent and are also able to receive advice that is well grounded.

Teachers’ advice is often affected by their underlying role identities; one being oriented towards the ideal of non-directiveness and the other towards being a student advocate and supporter. Whereas the ideology of non-directiveness expects teachers to refrain from giving advice or, at least, withholding personal information until the student’s perspective has been obtained in order to strengthen student competence (Vehviläinen 2001), the role of supporter evokes the teacher’s authority through providing information and giving practical advice. Teachers in office hours have been found to communicate advice often explicitly to students by means of overt recommendations and agentive utterances (cf. above), but when looking at advice-giving as an interactional activity the outcome is more complex. Advice is often organized in ‘packages’ (Limberg 2010), which is an aggregate of factual and normative information, furnished with a number of discursive moves such as ‘accounts,’ ‘assessments’ and ‘repetitions,’ weaved into a longer stretch of talk (cf. also Locher 2006). This package may also involve stepwise entries into advice-giving which can be used to prepare the advice, foster students’ self-directedness and, perhaps, cope better with one’s role duality (Vehviläinen 2001, 2003; cf. Heritage and Sefi 1992). Delaying advice and withholding it completely are relevant means employed by advisors to indicate that the student has to take a different perspective on the problem. As an additional asset, these strategies save the teacher from being held accountable for their advice at a later stage.

Advice responses in academic settings also vary. In German office hours students often use minimal response tokens during the advice sequence (‘mmhm’) and conclude their uptake with acknowledgment markers such as ‘okay’ or ‘yeah’ (Limberg 2010; cf. Guthrie 1997; Beach 1995). While this restrained response behavior is neither equal to a rejection nor a clear-cut acceptance of the proposed course of action, it seems to

suggest that teacher's advice is taken as authorized and serious. In peer tutoring, where the tutor-tutee relationship is less certain with regard to knowledge and competence, advice resistance seems more common due to a clash of competence areas between the two interactants (e.g., in areas such as content and formal issues, Waring 2005). Advice response behavior is both locally managed as well as affected by the larger institutional framework of the talk-in-interaction. Students often seek help and advice from teachers voluntarily (including asking for advice explicitly), but teachers also frequently make use of their professional (pedagogical) status in giving unsolicited advice in order to project future actions, lay out alternatives, and prevent students from making wrong decisions.

Three chapters in this part of the volume discuss advisory encounters in which advice-giving takes place in an institutional context and where representatives of the institution interact with students. In Chapter 2, Sanna Vehviläinen explores "Question-prefaced advice in feedback sequences of Finnish academic supervisions" from a conversation analytic perspective. She takes up a key issue of previous research, namely how advice givers prepare the local environment to minimize resistance and prevent problems with asymmetry in face-to-face supervision encounters. However, she investigates this issue in the new context of text feedback on students' dissertation manuscripts in a Finnish university setting. The question-answer sequence, which has been identified as a distinct structure of advice-giving across various institutional settings (cf. Heritage and Sefi 1992; Silverman 1997; Vehviläinen 2001), is strategically used by teachers either to align or challenge perspectives between advice giver and seeker before the advice is given. Feedback on student writing involves both encouragement as well as criticism in a number of distinct ways, which confirm that problem-solving is at the heart of text feedback in this context and that questions are almost inevitably understood to be corrective and preventive as opposed to being genuine information-seeking.

Text feedback is also discussed in Chapter 3 by Ken Hyland and Fiona Hyland, who study teachers' advice on ESL academic writing within a discourse analytic approach.

While Vehviläinen worked with face-to-face encounters, this study looks at written comments on a written assignment in English as a Second Language (ESL). This data, which has been obtained from 17 ESL writings, is moreover complemented with the teachers' verbal protocols and retrospective interviews with students. Hyland and Hyland emphasize the importance of the teachers establishing an interpersonal relationship with their students through these written comments in order to explore the learning potentials that advice has for a specific student. This finding is not always implemented in practice, as their data indicates. The investigated feedback tokens only contained a quarter of advice acts, most of which were corrective and addressed surface errors in the text. Comments were either given on an extra feedback sheet or directly on the student paper. Teachers

were aware of the affective, face-threatening nature of their comments, because advice was often mitigated in some way, primarily through hedges such as modal lexemes and imprecise quantifiers. However, according to the interviews with the ESL students, they failed to understand the indirectness with which advice was expressed. The interviews also revealed that the students had individual expectations of feedback and advice apart from the obvious language accuracy, which lead the authors to conclude that the “advice-giver needs to develop sensitivity and awareness of the cultural and educational background of the students” (Hyland and Hyland, this volume; cf. House and Lévy-Tödter 2009).

Andrea DeCapua and Joan Findlay Dunham dedicated their chapter to the study of “Advice to mothers in responses to vignettes from a US teaching context” (Chapter 4). With the help of so-called vignettes, a learning tool frequently used in teacher training in US universities, the authors investigate how students who are preparing to be teachers of young children respond in writing to hypothetical scenarios that invite advice to concerns frequently voiced by parents (e.g., letting a child watch TV for 4-5 hours while mother works at home). While the validity of data elicited through discourse completion tasks is discussed controversially by some, DeCapua and Dunham argue that they reflect general patterns interlocutors engage in. In addition, vignettes and other elicitation techniques are valuable instruments for linguistic analyses in educational settings that deserve being studied in their own right. The students who took part in this study thus produced the texts as part of their course (rather than as part of a data collection process).⁵ DeCapua and Dunham conducted a content analysis of the 75 (English) texts produced by 17 students by coding the texts with respect to their components and relational strategies (cf. Locher 2006). They found that only eight components were employed to construct the texts: Advice, advice lists, referral, elaboration, display of expertise, assessment, empathy and criticism. Students frequently used assessments before they suggested a course of action in order to understand the given situation better. Two further techniques often observed are the combination of criticism with a positive comment and an elaboration after advice has been given (cf. ‘accounts,’ in Waring 2007a). These practices are both in line with previous research on advice in similar settings (they also reflect general pedagogical practices) and the online advice column studied by Locher (2006). In addition, DeCapua and Huber focus on relational strategies such as mitigation, bonding, expressing empathy, criticism, expertise and identification with advice-seeker. Their discussion reveals once more the

⁵ The data is thus ‘naturally occurring’ in the sense that it was not produced for the benefit of the research (but cf. Angouri, this volume), but had an integral part in the practice of the teacher training that the students engaged in. The data as such presents reflections on what the students *think* they would do in particular advisory contexts.

complexity of advice in discourse and underscores the considerable relational work that the students employ.

The educational community begins to place more and more importance on peer tutoring (cf., e.g., Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2004), a fact that is now also mirrored in research. Two chapters in this volume are dedicated to this trend. While the institutional frame is still pertinent, the interactants engaged in communicative exchanges are peers. Peers are fellow students with a similar or more senior status (i.e., graduates). Compared to a teacher–student or counselor–student exchange, their relationship is often less clear-cut from a hierarchical point of view (Waring 2005). This is because peers may have competing areas of knowledge and competence, and because grading and gatekeeping do not exist as means to exercise power during a tutoring session. In Chapter 5, Hansun Zhang Waring explores “The advising sequence and its preference structures in graduate peer tutoring at an American university” by looking at the individual components of talk that participants orient towards during their interaction (cf. Limberg 2010). Her data consists of 15 graduate peer tutoring sessions, during which tutors give advice to students on the latter’s course papers at an American university. She builds on her previous conversational analytic work on advisory sequences in institutional contexts (Waring 2005, 2007a/b), this time especially examining the interactional trajectory of tutor-initiated advice sequences. Her qualitative CA analysis of 74 instances of tutor-initiated advice on global problems reveal two kinds of sequences. One follows the order of problem and advice (‘build a case’), whereas the other skips the problem negotiation by fronting the advice (‘cut to the chase’). Global problems, such as the overall organization of a student paper, follow most often the expected order, with an ‘orientation to the problem,’ a ‘negotiation of the problem,’ a ‘negotiation of a solution,’ and finally a ‘closing’ phase. This exhaustive scheme does not always emerge in the peer tutoring on local problems (e.g., wording). Sometimes, the orientation phase is omitted and advice is immediately given. However, both sequence types reveal a normative orientation towards grounding one’s advice, with departures from it being marked as dispreferred (as visible in the turn shapes, cf. Schegloff 2007). By the same token, tutee-initiated solutions are also preferred, especially when advice is grounded first.

Jo Angouri also looks at peer advice in her study entitled “‘Yes that’s a good idea’: Peer-advice in academic discourse at a UK university” (Chapter 6). This paper employs a mixed methodology, consisting of a transcript analysis of two meetings between two post-graduate and two undergraduate students about essay/dissertation writing and additional interview data with the post-graduates following the event (cf. Hyland and Hyland, this volume). Situated in a British university context, Angouri’s study examines how advice seeking and giving are co-constructed practices in which peer students negotiate their identities as novices and experts dynamically and interactively. Despite the pre-existing (asymmetrical)

differences between a graduate and undergraduate student in terms of age, experience, and seniority, both participants collaboratively engage in the discussion, with, for example, one controlling the agenda and the other developing the discussion. In this environment, suggestions and directives given to the advice seeker (i.e., the undergraduate) are received seemingly without any face-threatening potential. However, the fact that students' interactional roles as advice giver and seeker may not coincide with their institutional status shows that "boundaries between 'guiding' and 'being prescriptive' are far from clear-cut" (Angouri, this volume). Even though the data for study was elicited for research purposes (and is not, as in the other papers in this part, 'naturally occurring'), Angouri's research also reveals the ideologically complex nature of academic advice giving, shaped by students' views and their understanding of what peer advice sessions should look like. Ideological assumptions and implications are also a prominent topic in other research contexts, namely medical and other professional settings, as the papers in the next part reveal.

The last chapter in Part I introduces a training situation outside an academic or educational environment that is workplace related. Bernadette Vine, Janet Holmes and Meredith Marra, the team of the *Wellington Language in the Workplace Project*, discuss "Mentoring migrants: facilitating the transition to the New Zealand workplace." Their paper is conducted within a discourse analytic framework and gives a central role to the scrutinization of the cultural context in which the interactions analyzed take place. Vine, Holmes and Marra study how advice is given to two Chinese male migrants to New Zealand in a program that is designed to facilitate the transition from an educational to a workplace context. The program thus aims at increasing sociopragmatic competence in New Zealand English. The cultural background of the migrants and the new cultural context of which they are trained to become aware is thus not only an object of study, but vitally also the concern of the training programs *per se*. Vine, Holmes and Marra find that advice is given explicitly and directly by the mentors, while there is still ample evidence for attention to relational aspects of interaction. They also shed light on the negotiation of the mentoring relationship. While the mentors are being supportive, they also understand their roles to be directive – a fact, the authors claim, that "is consistent with the strong and specific learning focus of the mentoring context in which they are operating (cf. Chiles 2006)." The two Chinese mentees appear to conceptualise their roles as passive and accept the direct style of their mentors; in fact, Chinese bosses are expected to be directive so that there is no clash of expectations. Nevertheless, there is evidence in their comments in the transcripts that the two men become aware of different New Zealand norms of interaction. This chapter thus highlights the embeddedness of interactional practices in a cultural matrix.

4. Part II: Advice in medical and health-related settings

Another area in which advice is of paramount importance is in medical and health-related settings. Two chapters in this part of the collection deal with health interactions in medical professional contexts (Chapter 8 and 9), while in the other two chapters advice attends to emotional and mental health needs and is given on phone lines (Chapter 10 and 11). Communication in health settings – be it from a physical communication or psychological point of view – have long received attention from linguists who focus on advisory interaction. To name just a few, the contexts studied vary from interactions between health visitors to first-time mothers in Britain (Heritage and Sefi 1992; Heritage and Lindström 1998, this volume), HIV counseling (e.g., Silverman et al. 1992; Kinnell and Maynard 1996), patient-nurse interaction (e.g., Leppänen 1998), patient-pharmacist interaction (e.g., Pilnick 1999, 2001), genetics risk communication (e.g., Sarangi and Clarke 2002a/b), telephone helplines (e.g., Baker, Emmison and Firth 2005; Pudlinski 2002) to online health advice (e.g., Griffiths 2005; Harvey et al. 2007; Locher 2006, 2010, in press).⁶ Next to identifying the action sequences of the advice practices, the authors highlight the influence of factors on the interaction such as taboo topics (e.g., issues of sexuality or handicaps), the time constraint under which many institutional encounters take place, the knowledge difference between advisor (expert / doctor) and advisee (lay person / patient) and the connected status difference, as well as the impact of societal ideologies (e.g., what it means to be a good mother, or that doctors should withhold personal opinions as advice).

Two studies conducted in a conversation analytical framework that have inspired subsequent work shall briefly be revisited here. Silverman et al.'s (1992) work on HIV counseling sessions in hospitals in England and the USA demonstrate how the severe time constraint of the sessions and the taboo topic of sexuality influence the advice-giving practice. They observed two main formats that counselors draw on: “an Interview Format (in which Cs [counselors] asks [sic] questions and Ps [patients] give answers) and an Information-Delivery Format (in which Cs deliver information and Ps are silent apart from small acknowledgment tokens)” (Silverman et al. 1992: 176). Both formats come with their respective advantages and disadvantages. For example, in the Information-Delivery format, patient acknowledgments are optional and the counselor is thus not certain whether advice has been understood. On the other hand, all relevant information can be passed on and, since advice is kept at a general level, “issues of delicacy that can arise in discussing sexual behavior” (Silverman et al. 1992: 185) can be handled more easily. The advantage of the Interview Format is that advice is attuned to the advisee's individual needs, while the disadvantage is the longer duration of this format.

⁶ For a more detailed literature review see Locher (2006) and Locher (in press).

This study on HIV counseling refers to the seminal work by Heritage and Sefi (1992) and the pattern of advice-giving interaction identified there. They worked on recorded face-to-face data of interactions between British health nurses and first-time mothers. In a conversation analytic approach, they identified a number of steps that the health nurse and the mothers perform, i.e., they engage in a ‘stepwise entry to advice’:

- Step 1: HV [Health visitor]: initial inquiry.
 - Step 2: M [Mother]: problem-indicative response.
 - Step 3: HV: focusing inquiry into the problem.
 - Step 4: M: responsive detailing.
 - Step 5: HV: advice giving.
- (Heritage and Sefi 1992: 379)

This pattern is the most elaborate one and an advisory sequence could also leave out some of the steps. Heritage and Sefi (1992: 391) also discuss the uptake of advice by the mothers, which was found to vary between marked acknowledgment, unmarked acknowledgment and the assertion of knowledge or competence. In a related study by Heritage and Lindström (1998), the moral dimension of the same advice encounters is stressed since the moral norms of what constitutes being a good mother are implicitly the topic of conversations. In Chapter 8 of this volume, John Heritage and Anna Lindström revisit the same data. This time, however, they focus on the “problems that both mothers and nurses may find in bringing different kinds of advice to a conclusion” in their contribution entitled “Advice giving - terminable and interminable: The case of British health visitors.” Their study shows how non-straightforward the exits of the advice sequences in fact are. An exit is only non-problematic in cases where the mother explicitly aligns herself with the advice given. In cases where the mother resists advice by not acknowledging it, the health nurse expands her advice so that exiting the sequence is postponed. In an attempt to terminate the sequence, the health nurse then draws on the contextual environment to find an exit point. The terminating sequence is especially challenging in those interactions in which advice is given as information. The mother then has difficulties in discerning and signaling what is important for her. Heritage and Lindström point out that the advice sequence could go on until the topic is exhausted in this setting. This chapter thus complements the previous studies on this data in that it gives important information on the endpoint of the interactions.

In Chapter 9 Olga Zayts and Stephanie Schnurr report on “Negotiating advice-giving in Down Syndrome screening in a Hong Kong prenatal hospital.” While much of the literature on health advice focuses on situations where the health professionals need to impart advice to their patients, they are explicitly concentrating on patient-initiated advice. Their data consists of 33 instances of advice elicitation during 29 consultations in English and Chinese in which 29 pregnant women over the age of 35 are

given information on the various screening options for Down Syndrome so that they can make a decision as to which if any test to choose. Using discourse analysis of the recorded interaction and interviews, the authors study how the women construct the interactions as advisory events and thus put the doctors into the dilemma of being invited to give their own opinion rather than to leave the decision to the patient (cf. Sarangi and Clark 2002a/b). They argue that the patients have clear expectations of advice-giving to occur which they derive from previous encounters with the same doctors in earlier prenatal service sessions. The doctors, however, treat the Down Syndrome sessions differently and avoid advice-giving. This suggests that the doctors orient towards a 'dual role': "as providers of prenatal services the medical providers may and do routinely engage in recommending and advising"; on the other hand, with respect to the Down Syndrome sessions, "they see their role as facilitators of the patients' decision and thus they contentiously restrict their involvement in advice-giving." This clash of expectations explains why some of the sessions do not result in the patients taking any decisions.

Another team of researchers has dedicated their work to the study of advice-giving via the phone for people who are in distress. Baker, Emmison and Firth (2005) have, for example, edited a collection of papers that investigates telephone helplines for children, and Pudlinski (1998, 2002, 2005) studies peer telephone helplines catering for adults. Chapter 10 by Michael Emmison and Alan Firth on "Requesting and receiving advice on the telephone: A comparative analysis of some Australian-based helplines" positions this context in detail. The authors offer a review of work in this field and illustrate the social organization of advice-seeking and advice-giving on telephone helplines. The fact that this advisory practice is carried out over the phone and that the advice-seekers are immediately connected with an advisor (rather than being dispatched by an intermediary) is discussed as one of its defining features. The authors also point out that the institutional mandate that calls for non-directiveness constrains and shapes the interaction. Advice-giving is then enacted around this normativity and it entails a projected asymmetry between the advice-giver, who is constructed as more knowledgeable than the caller. The chapter discusses and illustrates these findings with examples and thus advances our understanding of this situated practice.

While Emmison and Firth work on data that involves interactions between professionals and lay people, Christopher Pudlinski's chapter on "The pursuit of advice on US peer telephone helplines: Sequential and functional aspects" deals with telephone helplines run by peer volunteers. These peer support lines, "officially known as consumer-run warm lines, are a growing part of a community mental health system within the United States that encourages client empowerment through self-help" (Pudlinski, this volume). Building on his previous work (1998, 2002, 2005), Pudlinski focuses in particular on how the call takers pursue advice that was initially

rejected by the caller. He identifies three main strategies with “sequential and functional orientations to pursuing advice.” They are “interrogating (seeking information and additional details on the other’s situation); supporting the advice with additional accounts; and supporting the advice with additional accounts and expressions of concern or worry.” In addition, advice is also repeated, given indirectly or alternative options are suggested. In a detailed CA analysis, Pudlinski demonstrates how the three main orientations are in fact complex interactional achievements. In addition, the choice of orientation has its own interactional consequences. For example, expressing worry/concern changes the typical relationship of advisor and advisee in professional contexts, in that here the advisor shows personal involvement. Importantly, Pudlinski points out that the caller, being an ‘expert’ on his/her own experiences, can clearly structure the interaction by volunteering and sharing this experience more or less freely. The callers can thus exercise interactional control despite the fact that they are no experts in the traditional sense.

5. Part III: Advice in computer-mediated settings

Research on computer-mediated communication and advice has taken up momentum in the last decade (cf. Locher, in press). Especially sites that cater to a health context have received attention – both with respect to professional and lay people interaction (e.g., Griffiths 2005; Locher 2006; Wood and Griffiths 2007; Harvey et al. 2007) and with respect to peer-to-peer sites (e.g., McSeveny et al. 2006; Harrison and Barlow 2009; Kouper 2010). The internet has been recognized long ago as an ideal means to reach a target audience for health concerns and especially prevention work and information dissemination (Griffiths 2005; Richardson 2003, 2005; Madden 2003).

Ultimately, the study of computer-mediated communication does not mean that previously gained insights on variation in language use should be abandoned. As Herring (2007) aptly points out in her faceted classification scheme for the study of computer-mediated discourse, the same parameters that Hymes (1972) already proposed in his SPEAKING model also play a role for online communication for the simple reason that it is people who interact with each other. In other words, factors such as the participation structure, the topic or theme, the tone, the activity, the norms, and the code of an interaction (Herring calls these situation/social factors) influence the practice. In addition, there are so-called ‘medium factors’ that describe the technological affordances of a given computer-mediated form of communication. A computer-mediated context can be described with respect to whether or not it is synchronous, how message transmission works, whether there is persistence of transcript, whether the size of the message buffer is restricted, what channels of communication are available, whether

there is the possibility of anonymous messaging and private messaging, whether the system provides a filtering and quoting function and whether the message format is pre-given by the system. In these times where the new media are ever-evolving, it is important to point out that this list is open-ended. It is also worth mentioning that the medium factors alone usually are not the sole factors responsible for the emergence of a particular practice and that we are generally looking at an intricate interplay of social and medium factors that explain the development of practices.⁷

To take the online advice column *Lucy Answers* as an example once more, we can state that this practice is influenced by a number of factors that can only be mentioned here and not illustrated for lack of space (cf. Locher 2006, 2010, in press). These are, on the one hand, that health professionals are writing for a target audience of university students (issues of expertise and tone arise), that there are institutional ideals that constrain the writers of the letters (an ideal of non-directiveness is explicitly mentioned and acted upon), that there are topics that are more delicate than others and call for different relational work (e.g., sexuality and emotional health versus general health, fitness and nutrition), that the format of the exchange orients towards the well-established print text type of an advice column (expressed, e.g., by the use of an agony aunt and the use of a ‘letter’ exchange with address terms, body of text, in some cases farewell sections, signatures) and that we are dealing with a public rather than private exchange (the purpose of the posts is to educate the wider audience rather than to help the individual *per se*). On the other hand, there are also a number of medium and social factors that are particular to the online context and that equally shape the advisory practice. The factor ‘persistence of transcript’ (Herring 2007) is important since the advisory exchanges are stored in an archive and are available for search. This means that any new text can (and often does) refer to past interchanges and takes previously published information into account. The participation structure is such that there is only one interaction possible, as the site does not envisage further exchanges between the advice-seeker and the agony aunt (as it would be possible in blogs). Since the advice-seekers are entirely anonymous (the system scrambles the IP address and email address of the problem letter writers), further contact by means of non-public posting is not possible either. For these reasons, the response letter often contains explicit interpretations of a problem letter writer’s concerns and the formulation of advice that is accompanied by conditional phrases that make the advice relevant only for those readers who match the interpretation (see the example in Section 2). What this brief enlisting of factors shows is how intricate their interplay is.

⁷ As Androutopoulos (2006) points out, the early literature on computer-mediated communication was too focused on making the technological means the sole explanatory factor for linguistic practices, which resulted in ‘computer determinism.’

Griffiths' (2005: 556) review of Internet sites that offer psychological help to gamblers proposes a classification of sites that is also valid more generally. He identifies three primary functions: "(1) information dissemination, (2) peer-delivered therapeutic / support / advice (such as self-help support group), and (3) professionally delivered treatment." The two chapters in this volume that work on data collected from a computer-mediated setting belong to category (2) in that peers give advice to each other (albeit not on psychological/therapeutic issues). By focusing on peer advice that is not given within an institutional context, the authors work on distinctly different data than reported on in the previous chapters. This shift towards the study of peer advice is important since the majority of work in our research field still predominantly deals with professional, institutional contexts.

In Chapter 12, Phillip Morrow deals with "Online advice in Japanese: Giving advice in an Internet discussion forum." This Japanese internet forum is organized such that contributors can post a question and the reactions and comments by other contributors are then organized in threads. The topic is that of divorce. Like Miller and Gergen (1998), Locher (2006) and DeCapua and Dunham (this volume), Morrow first conducts a content analysis using the notion of 'discursive moves,' with the aim of establishing the form and content of the advice messages. He finds that assessment and advice make up the majority of discursive moves in the practice studied. The particular importance of assessment moves are explained with this site on divorce being contributed to by peers, in that "advice givers may have felt a strong need to support their advice by demonstrating an understanding of the problem message writers' situations." It is argued that this kind of display of support is less expected in a professional site involving expert advice. Morrow reports that advice was rendered generally in an indirect way and that strategies of bonding (e.g., the expression of solidarity or empathy) formed an important part of the practice. In addition, there was a "tendency to refer to people's social roles and to advise them to behave in ways appropriate to those social roles." This latter point, while not being an exclusive feature of Japanese discourse, is nevertheless identified by Morrow as depicting Japanese cultural values.

In Chapter 13, Maria Elena Placencia presents her work on "Online peer-to-peer advice in Spanish Yahoo! *Respuestas*." She discusses how this peer-to-peer advice-giving platform differs from more classical 'advice columns' and especially highlights what she terms "the hybrid nature of *Yahoo!Respuestas* as a type of information/advisory service as well as a recreational site that allows people to pursue different social and individual goals." Her corpus consists of Spanish posts on *belleza y estilo*, 'beauty and style,' which are systematically analyzed for their composition into discursive moves that make up the macro event (cf. Locher 2006; DeCapua and Dunham, this volume; Morrow, this volume): the discursive

move of ‘guidance’ is especially prominent and was characterized by offering direct advice. The particular focus is further on strategies of affiliation and disaffiliation that the advice givers use to align themselves with the advice seekers. She reports that “(dis)affiliation strategies can be realized through different discursive moves and by means of different linguistic and other mechanisms (e.g., smilies) employed in the management of interpersonal relationships (online).” Overall, the practice is characterized by the creation of a friendly and cooperative environment.

Both Morrow and Placencia use the methodology of conducting a content analysis of their corpora by exploring what discursive moves make up the texts contributed to the online practices (cf. Miller and Gergen 1998; Locher 2006; DeCapua and Dunham, this volume). What is striking is that the difference between the overall type and number of discursive moves that are used by the different analysts to systematically describe their ultimately quite different advisory practices is not all that great. In other words, there seems to be a fair share of ‘general’ knowledge about what elements an advisory practice should contain – this seems to hold even across different languages.

6. Part IV: Cross-cultural and corpus-linguistic perspectives on advice

The chapters in the previous parts of this collection all study advice giving *practices*, that is the scholars focus on interactions between individuals and zoom in on the negotiation of the speech event. The two chapters in this last part, however, take a different approach to the study of advice. In Chapter 14, Anna Wierzbicka discusses “‘Advice’ in English and in Russian: a contrastive and cross-cultural perspective.” Drawing on the framework of a natural semantic metalanguage (NSM), Wierzbicka crucially points out that:

First of all, the theme of this book is not intended to be limited to ‘advice’ in the most basic sense of the word [...], which is focused on informal settings, but includes also ‘advising’ in educational, medical and other formal settings; and second, it also includes discourses comparable to, but different from, ‘advice’ and ‘advising’ in other languages and cultures.

Thus, strictly speaking, what this book is really about is not ‘the discourse of advice,’ but language practices comparable to ‘advice,’ in a wide range of settings, languages and cultures. Culture is not just an important factor in speech practices (e.g., say, in the negotiation of advice), but a lived-in conceptual universe, which includes different ways of acting, speaking, and thinking. (Wierzbicka, this volume)

Wierzbicka highlights that the very word *advice* “encodes a language-specific perspective on the universe of discourse” and she argues that researchers need to be aware of this point of view in their analyses.

Using NSM, she conducts a cross-cultural comparison of Russian and Anglo communicative norms and values associated with the English words *advice* and *advise* and their closest Russian counterparts. This leads her to pinpoint differences and to propose what she terms ‘contrastive cultural scripts’ for English and Russian. Those, she argues, can then be used in teaching and training of cross-cultural competences.

The last chapter by Catherine Diederich and Nicole Höhn on “*Advice* and *advise* in the British National Corpus of English” takes up a line of thought that Wierzbicka mentioned in her contribution, i.e., the need to explore the scope and use of a lexeme such as *advice* and *advise* in corpora of naturally occurring language. Diederich and Höhn work on English as represented in the British National Corpus and study in what genres the lexemes are used and in what sense they are employed. They found that these lexemes are rarely used in the spoken interaction and in the fictional data of the corpus (which contains many instances of constructed dialogue). This may explain to a certain extent why previous discussions have not focused on the lexemes since these studies predominantly deal with face-to-face encounters. Diederich and Höhn report that the performative use of the verb *advise* is indeed rare. The most frequent meaning of *advise* is that of opinion-giving and information-sharing by third-person advisors, as in “Ruth Rendell and others *advise* plotting your story carefully in advance so that you don’t get carried away by unnecessary detail or a minor character.” (BNC, ARJ 1766, written magazine – a text from the domain leisure). When looking at the noun *advice*, the authors concentrated on the choice of verbs that it complements. The combinations *give advice* and *offer advice* are among the most frequent. But you can also *seek advice*, *provide advice*, *ask for advice*, *take someone’s advice*, and *act on/upon the advice of somebody*. Diederich and Höhn’s study enriches our understanding of the use and distribution of the English lexemes *advice* and *advise* and they demonstrate the value of corpus-based work for the study of the discourse of advice.

7. Concluding remarks

This volume on advice in discourse focuses on advisory practices in different contexts in an attempt to tease out in what ways the factors proposed in Section 2 influence them. The entry points for the analyses were thus the notion of practice, ideologies and culture, hierarchical differences and the role of expertise, solicited versus unsolicited advice, different forms of linguistic realizations and advice-giving in a variety of discourses. What all of the work reported on in this volume clearly demonstrates is the complexity of the advisory activity, which needs to be studied in its cultural framework and interactional context.

The advisory contexts that were looked at pertain to the field of academic, educational and training settings, health-related practices, and computer-mediated communication. The collection also offers explorations into the field of natural semantic metalanguage and corpus linguistics. The scholars involved work on the languages Cantonese, English, Finnish, Japanese, Spanish and Russian. The chapters treat professional and institutional practices (DeCapua and Dunham; Emmison and Firth; Heritage and Lindström; Hyland and Hyland; Vehviläinen; Vine, Holmes and Marra; Zayts and Schnurr), practices that contain peer interaction within an institutional framework (Angouri; Pudlinski; Waring), and non-institutional peer interaction (Morrow; Placencia). The authors report on instances where advice is clearly solicited and sought (e.g., Morrow; Placencia; Vehviläinen; Waring; Zayts and Schnurr) and others where advice is given without the advice recipient actively pursuing it (e.g., Heritage and Lindström). The different data sets have been compiled from language use in written and spoken form.

While this collection spans a wide field of advisory practices, there clearly remains more work to be done. The majority of the research literature is still on face-to-face and professional interactions, although this volume has made an effort to counteract this trend. We suggest that we can gain further insights into advisory exchanges by comparing professional and lay practices in different contexts and cultures. Written forms of advising have also not yet been sufficiently explored. For example, there is a long-standing tradition of manuals on good conduct and behavior or advice columns in newspapers (print and online), which lend themselves for a historical study of how advisory practices change over time and how the affordances of the print/online publication influence the practices. The new media produce Netiquettes and FAQs and provide different types of platforms for advisory exchanges between interactants. We also receive advice in leaflets and pamphlets and even billboards might impart advice (cf. Franke 1997 on advice in the mass media). Especially in practices where agents want to convince their addressees of particular action alternatives (e.g., in health campaigns) we can combine research interests on advisory practices with the study of persuasion and power. Finally, comparative studies in general would help us to identify commonalities of this discourse practice across different institutional contexts in order to establish a set of common properties this activity has in human interaction. Most certainly, many practitioners in all kinds of advisory contexts will benefit from our work in applied linguistics.

While much research still remains to be done, we hope to satisfy with this collection a growing interest across a number of research fields in the question of how advice is conceptualized, communicated, and received. We propose that the discourse on advice is equally important for linguists, sociologists and communication scholars, particularly for those working in the areas of (interactional) discourse analysis and conversation analysis,

pragmatics, and corpus linguistics. We hope that the original chapters in this volume offer many new insights for researchers in any of these fields and indeed for everybody interested in this practice and that they provide both a foundation and inspiration for future research.

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