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Annotation Manual for the extraction, identification, and classification of advice sequences in conversation

The purpose of this Annotation Manual is to present the procedures used to extract, identify, and classify advice sequences in a corpus of casual and institutional conversation. Advice is here defined as follows.

Advice "describes, recommends or otherwise forwards a preferred course of future action" (Heritage & Sefi, 1992, p. 368).

The following sequence is an example of advice.[1]

A: August probably'll be quite hot
B: yeah but *you could start there couldn't you # you could have a few days there*
A: we could

In this example, where the speakers are discussing a holiday in Cape Cod, speaker B gives two pieces of advice: *you could start there couldn't you* and *you could have a few days there*. The constructions used to give the advice are the declarative formats *you could*. In the first instance, the advice construction is further accompanied by the tag question *couldn't you* in order to tone down the force of the advice. The advice is a response to a complaint made by speaker A in the preceding turn and is met with weak acceptance by the same speaker in the subsequent turn. The actions proposed by speaker B are expected to be carried out sometime in the distant future, rather than in the immediate situational context, and they are construed either as processes (*you could **start** there*) or states (*you could **have** a few days there*). These are exactly the kinds of features that will be dealt with in this Annotation Manual.

The manual has four parts.

In Part 1, we present the full list of search terms used to extract advice sequence candidates from the conversations.

In Part 2, we present the procedure for identifying true instances of advice among the advice sequence candidates.

In Part 3, we present the procedure for classifying the advice sequences in terms of a number of linguistic and dialogic factors.

In Part 4, we summarise the results of two discussion sessions where further annotation decisions were made.

PART 1. Search terms for extracting advice sequence candidates

Table 1 presents the full list of search terms used to extract advice sequence candidates from the conversations, and their corresponding examples. In phrases, the symbol * stands for possible intervening words (e.g., *I really would*). In word stems, the symbol stands for zero or more letters (e.g., *suggest** returns *suggest, suggested, suggestion, suggestions*).

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[1] The hash sign (#) in the example indicates a turn unit boundary and is included to facilitate the task of the reader. Unless otherwise noted, all the examples in this manual are from the London–Lund Corpora (either in their original or slightly modified form). Three dots (…) are used to omit irrelevant talk.

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Table 1. List of search terms with corresponding examples.

Search terms	Examples
Imperatives	*get back in the habit of writing under timed conditions*
why don't	*why don't you get hold of Peter*
how/what about	*what about the Godfather Part Two*
what if	*what if we just used loads of scaredy's fluff*
do/did you/we	*do we have the competition to see*
are you/we (also negative counterparts)	*are you going to do some work on the car*
have you/we (also negative counterparts)	*have we done anything on anti-homeless architecture*
can/could/may/might/shall/should/will/would you/we (also negative counterparts)	*couldn't we get one now*
*you * should/must/ought to/have to/need to/want to/wanna* (also negative counterparts)	*you just need to make sure that those applications are really really compelling*
*you('ve) * got to/gotta*	*you've got to move on*
*you * can/could/may/might/will/would* (also negative counterparts)	*you can't stop very long with that*
*we * should/must/ought to/have to/need to/want to/wanna* (also negative counterparts)	*ideally we wanna get one piece of coverage out of this*
*we('ve) * got to/gotta*	*we've got to get a baby-sitter though*
*we * can/could/may/might/will/would* (also negative counterparts)	*we might jolly well use them*
*I * would / I'd* (also negative counterparts)	*I would pursue the publishers for example*
Modals + any subject (also negative counterparts)	*would it not be possible to shift the library to the block across here*
Any subject + modals (also negative counterparts)	*this sort of thing should have its own title and status*
Evaluations with comparatives / superlatives	*I think it fits in better with what you've got*
worth/worthwhile	*then it's not worth worrying about it*
*if you/*any subject	*if you restricted yourself to a short list of three*
advi, recommend*, suggest*, propos*, possib*, point, idea*	*there's no point spending extra money on a trigger*
some people, the (other/another) thing(s)	*the thing to do is to be eminently reasonable*
I think, just	*think it's probably a sensible thing to do*
like	*like Likert scale thing*
rather, as well	*it's just as well to know*

PART 2. Procedure for identifying advice sequences

Begin by reading the whole conversation to develop a general understanding of the topic.

The next step is to identify utterances in which the speaker gives some kind of advice (henceforth, *advice-giving utterances*).

In this study, advice is understood in a very broad sense, including a number of different speech acts in its scope, such as recommendations, suggestions, and proposals.

I wouldn't recommend it [recommendation]
what about if you kind of put some stuff down in your tummy [suggestion]
we should do something for Halloween [proposal]

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You will be able to recognise advice-giving utterances by the following properties.

- The focus of the utterance is on the addressee's **action**; in other words, the speaker must elicit some kind of action from the addressee, whether cognitive (e.g., make a decision) or behavioural (e.g., pursue a relationship). This means that advice goes beyond mere communication of the speaker's attitudes, beliefs, and values. Attitudes, beliefs, and values may influence action, but an advice-giving utterance **must** address the addressee's behaviour, not just the speaker's perspective (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018, p. 6). Thus, the utterance in italics below is not considered to be advice against an action (to tie a doll to a stick for Halloween).

  A: we'll take the dolly with us as Goldilocks
  B: yeah but if we're just three people with a doll tied to a stick *that would be rubbish* [not advice: attitude]
  A: we're not tying the doll to the stick

  The same is true of the utterance below, where the speaker expresses uncertainty about whether or not a person called Charlie Wilson has relevant research experience, rather than advising against the action of contacting him.

  A: you know who to see
  B: he said Charlie Wilson
  A: did he really … Charlie Wilson's just been here he's been here two or three weeks ago uhm he left on July the twenty-eighth June the twenty-eighth … *I don't think this is Charlie Wilson's line* [not advice: uncertainty]
  B: you don't

- The proposed action **must** include the addressee. The addressee is expected to carry out the action alone or together with the speaker, but the action is never carried out by the speaker alone. This excludes, e.g., offers (e.g., *what if I do a roast dinner*).
- The benefactor of the action is always the addressee. The speaker may benefit from the action, but the addressee **must** do so. This excludes, e.g., requests (e.g., *if you could tell us really whether you have any views about its condition now*).
- The action **must** take place in the future, even if the utterance has past reference (e.g., *I would have thought that it would have been worth giving it a try*). Past actions are not considered (e.g., *just adding something actually would have been okay*).
- The advice is clearly directed at the people who are present in the conversation at the time of the utterance. This excludes reported speech (e.g., *she came back to us saying have you thought about entering this*) and general statements without a clear addressee (e.g., *you can't do the same thing twice really -> the beauty of an excellent lecture is you're supposed to be able to give it again*).

NOTES:
- Consult the addressee's response (if present) to the advice-giving utterance if the function of the utterance is unclear. The utterance is considered to convey advice if the addressee treats it as such. This is the case in the following example where speaker A produces a potentially ambiguous utterance between a piece of advice and a genuine question, and where speaker B treats it as advice by accepting it.

  A: *what about in thinking about taxonomy and stuff* [advice]
  B: oh yeah that's a good trail

  In contrast, the following utterance is **not** treated as advice by the addressee.

  A: *do you have a Young Persons Railcard* [not advice]
  B: no I don't

The same is the case in the utterance below, where the addressee's response is not a rejection of the advice, but a simple answer to a question.

A: *have you tried the Oxford Press which is an obvious one* [not advice]
B: no we didn't

- Do not include highly idiomatic expressions, because it is difficult to judge their intent (e.g., *never say never*).
- Only include those incomplete utterances that contain enough information for the advice to be interpreted as such, despite the fact that some of the additional information may be missing. This is the case in the following utterance where the core message is that there are various things that the advisee could do: *there are various things that you could do in terms of a I mean….* The missing information would have simply identified the problem at hand (e.g., *in terms of measurements*). However, in the following utterance the core message is not that the advisee should check something, but rather that they should check something specific, which is, however, missing: *the other thing that we should just first check ugh I have to….* Thus, only the first utterance is considered to be an advice-giving utterance in this study.

PART 3. Procedure for classifying advice sequences

After the advice sequences have been identified, classify them in terms of a number of linguistic and dialogic factors.

The factors relate to different aspects of the advice sequence.

The factors that relate to the advice-giving utterance are as follows.
- Advice construction
- Utterance type
- Presence or absence of modifiers
- Type of event
- Deictic time

The rest of the factors relate to the preceding and subsequent utterances.
- (Non-)solicitation of advice
- Advisee response to advice

In what follows, we provide detailed information about how to classify the advice sequences in terms of each factor.

Advice construction

In contrast to the rest of the factors, advice construction does not require strict classification, but rather the goal is to identify the part of the advice-giving utterance that conveys the main illocutionary message of the utterance. The following items should be included (see corresponding examples below).
- References to participants involved in the action (typically pronouns)
- The verb phrase conveying the action, including main verbs, auxiliary verbs and accompanying particles (e.g., the particle *to* in infinitive constructions)
- Performative verbs and speech act related nouns and adjectives (e.g., *advise*, *advice*, *advisable*)
- Noun phrases and adjective phrases (comparatives and superlatives) in the subject and subject predicative positions (e.g., *your best bet is…*)
- Dummy subjects (*it*, *there*)

- Any additional elements such as question words, negative markers, etc., but **not** *wh*-words in pseudo-clefts (e.g., *what you would do is…*) or the conditional *if* particle (e.g., *if there was a…*)

NOTES:
- If the advice-giving utterance does not contain any of the items above, the whole utterance is included.
- If the advice-giving utterance contains a parenthetical, the advice construction is the part around the parenthetical (e.g., **what you would do is** *knowing the percentage of the total number of glottal stops* **ignore all of those glottal stops in the intervocalic environments**; see also below).
- It is fine to include any intervening modifiers; otherwise, they are not part of the advice construction (but see below for a separate analysis of the presence or absence of modifiers).

The following advice-giving utterances provide some examples (the relevant items are in italics).

well *my advice would certainly be to you to do* structural and constructional alterations
slow down your pace a little bit
why don't you just put an uplifting message on it and be done
you should get into a job as quickly as possible
I would pursue the publishers for example
your best bet is to go to the University Library
I feel *an auditory analysis can be much cleaner*
I think *it would be worth selling* it to the larger group
this is something that could be running through your mind
there has to be a number in our report
I mean *some people use* it for publishing
I was thinking if *there was* a door that opens there
maybe just *after the end of the term* [the whole utterance is included]

Utterance type

Utterance type is the first factor that has a closed set of values.

Utterance type has four values: **imperative**, **interrogative**, **declarative**, and **conditional**.

Imperatives have the structure [base verb…]. They may be positive or negative.

get the contact details from students who are there now [positive]
don't worry [negative]

Interrogatives have the structure [*wh*-word/auxiliary verb + subject + main verb].

why don't you draw the budget
should we try and get tickets for Duna Jam

Declaratives have the structure [subject + verb]. Fragments are also classified as declaratives.

you can go and stay elsewhere
I would put all three down
like Lost in the City or something [fragment]

Conditionals have the same structure as declaratives, but the difference we make in this study is that, in conditionals, the proposed action is in the conditional clause, while in declaratives, the action is in the main clause. Conditionals may also occur without the main clause.

well if you just write to Paxted College you'll get him [action in italics]
I think maybe if you just think about things like pace [no main clause]

Presence or absence of modifiers

Modifiers have four values: **hedge**, **emphasiser**, **stance marker**, and **NA.**

The function of **hedges** is to mitigate, soften, or otherwise qualify the force of the advice-giving utterance. They include complement-taking predicates and adverbs (e.g., *I think*, *I wonder*, *maybe*, *probably*, *just*), discourse markers with a mitigating function (e.g., *well, I mean*, *you know*), and tag questions (e.g., *you could start there couldn't you*).

The function of **emphasisers** is to boost, amplify, or otherwise strengthen the force of the advice-giving utterance (e.g., *obviously*, *absolutely*, *in fact*, *always*, intensifier *do*, *really* as in *really if we could get an office*; but see below).

Stance markers include those modifiers that cannot be classified as either hedges or emphasisers but that, typically, express the speaker's viewpoint or focus (e.g., *ideally*, *honestly*, *basically*, *still*).

If the advice-giving utterance contains more than one type of modifier, all of them are included.

Note that modifiers must take scope over the whole advice-giving utterance rather than a part of it. This excludes, for example, degree reinforcing *really* (e.g., *we could do some really interesting stuff*) and discourse markers used to modify a phrasal element (e.g., *kind of* as in *should you be interested in kind of the arts more broadly*).

The absence of a modifier is indicated with **NA.**

Type of event

Type of event refers to the spatio-temporal structure of the proposed action, that is, how it represents time.

Type of event has two values: **dynamic** and **stative**.

Dynamic events include change of state or state of change. They are typically expressed by action verbs.

you must start to rearrange your estimates of Lawrence's novels [change of state]
go to the planning and buildings committee [state of change]

Stative events include state of no change. Many high-frequency verbs denote stative events.

I think that's about the minimum of what would make it worthwhile
if we could get it a little bit quicker [high-frequency verb; describes an ideal state-of-affairs]

If the action is not explicitly stated in the advice-giving utterance, the preceding utterance(s) should be consulted (e.g., *the sooner the better* in reference to an event in the preceding context).

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Deictic time

Deictic time is time when the addressee is expected, or is in the position, to carry out the proposed action relative to the time of the utterance.

Deictic time has two values: **immediate** and **distant**.

The deictic time is **immediate** when the addressee is expected, or is in the position, to carry out the proposed action during the course of the conversation in which the advice-giving utterance is produced. This includes decisions that have to be made immediately. Whether or not the action is actually carried out is irrelevant.

I think weekdays would be preferred [the addressee needs to propose a suitable weekday immediately]
actually the door could then open all the way around [while brainstorming ideas for a building structure]
I can only say that you must take Joe Power's advice on this [what is at stake is whether or not to take the advice, rather than the content of the advice, which may be distant]

The deictic time is **distant** when the addressee is **not** expected, or is **not** in the position, to carry out the proposed action during the course of the present conversation, but instead should do so at some point in the distant future.

this could be held alongside a teaching job [the job is in the distant future; no decision has to be made immediately]
you should really ask him [the referent of *him* is not present in the conversation]

(Non-)solicitation of advice

The procedure for classifying (non-)solicitation of advice draws heavily on Goldsmith (2000) and her typology of six patterns through which advice may be introduced.[2]

The six values of (non-)solicitation of advice are: **advisee asks for advice**, **advisee asks for opinion or information**, **advisee discloses problem**, **advisee announces plan of action**, **adviser identifies problem**, **adviser volunteers advice**.

The values are ordered from the most clear case for advice solicitation (advisee asks for advice) to the most clear case for when the advice is not solicited (adviser volunteers advice).

The values are assigned based on utterance(s) in the preceding context.

NOTES:
- There must be a **clear** connection between the preceding utterance and the advice-giving utterance. This connection is best understood in terms of a problem; in other words, the preceding utterance and the advice-giving utterance must be made in the context of the same problem.
- In casual conversation, the problem is often understood as a complaint or troubles-telling (e.g., *my toenails are getting bad*).
- The preceding utterance should be in relatively close proximity to the advice-giving utterance so that it is reasonable to assume that the latter is a response to the former.
- In the presence of multiple values, the one with the more clear case for advice-solicitation is chosen (e.g., 'advisee asks for advice' is chosen over 'advisee asks for opinion or information').

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[2] Some of the examples in this part of the manual are from Goldsmith (2000).

- In institutional conversation, it is often the context that makes advice relevant and gives the impression that the advice is somehow solicited (e.g., a university tutorial). **However, in this study only advice solicited by linguistic means is considered!**

In what follows, we provide more information about each value.[3]

Advisee asks for advice: the advisee asks for advice in a relatively explicit way, ranging from clear statements (e.g., *I need your advice*) to explicit requests (e.g., *what should I do*) to somewhat narrower questions (e.g., *should we try and get tickets for Duna Jam*), which ask about the advisability of one particular action. Sometimes, such utterances are accompanied by a description of the problem.

Advisee asks for opinion or information: the advisee asks either for an opinion on some action (e.g., *what do you think*) or for information (e.g., *which was the troubled pear* [the advisee wonders which pear to eat]). In the case of the former, the evaluation of the action is explicit and the advisability of the action is implied, while in the latter, the relevance of the advice is less clear. In both cases, however, the advisee implies that they are attempting to solve a problem.

Advisee discloses problem: the advisee announces a problem that may make advice-solicitation plausible. Some such problem-announcements include confessions of ignorance or uncertainty (e.g*., my teaching evaluations were terrible again I really don't know what to do*) and rhetorical questions (e.g., *how can I possibly finish all my work before break*).

Advisee announces plan of action: the advisee makes a statement about undertaking some action, even if the plan is tentative. By drawing attention to the plan, the advisee suggests that the plan is in some way problematic and that a comment is invited.

A: I'm inserting a new stylus into the record player
B: *why not put it into the head*

Adviser identifies problem: the adviser identifies a problem pertaining to the advisee and then, in a separate turn, gives advice. The identification of the problem is followed by the advisee's acknowledgement of the problem, which provides a basis for giving advice in the next turn. Even minimal responses such as *yeah* or *mm* qualify as the advisee's acknowledgement of a problem.

A: do you have a Young Persons Railcard
B: no I don't
A: *you should get one*

A: here are some things that you might think about so structure for instance
B: yeah
A: with prose you're possibly limited in terms of some of the things that you wouldn't want to talk about were it drama or poetry but *structure is something you can always talk about* whatever the passage

Adviser volunteers advice: the adviser makes an observation about a problematic action and then immediately gives advice (e.g., *that's quite a lot of people # we ought really to try to get rid of some of these people sharply*). In such cases, the advisee may have already started undertaking the action and thus does not view the action as problematic. Note that the adviser's introduction of the problem and their advice must be given in the same turn, with no evidence of the advisee's input in between. This would have been the case if speaker A above had identified the problem and given the advice in the same turn.

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[3] Some of the examples in this part have been taken from Goldsmith (2000).

A: do you have a Young Persons Railcard # *you should get one*

Advisee response to advice

The procedure for classifying types of advisee responses to advice draws mainly on work by Hepburn and Potter (2011), Heritage and Sefi (1992), Pudlinski (2002), and Shaw and Hepburn (2013). The terminology we use is a mixture of the terms used in their studies. In this part of the analysis, the original audio recordings might have to be consulted.

Advisee response to advice has four main values with corresponding sub-values:
1. **Acceptance**
   a. Commitment to act
   b. Positive evaluation
   c. Marked acknowledgement
2. **Resistance**
   a. Unmarked acknowledgement
   b. Assertion of prior knowledge/competence
3. **Rejection**
   a. Elaborated
   b. Straightforward
4. **Other response**

In what follows, we provide more information about the values.

Acceptance is a response to information that the advisee accepts and is prepared to act upon.

Commitment to act includes responses in which the advisee clearly commits to carrying out the action. The commitment may be mitigated. Commitment to act also includes cases where the action is carried out during the course of the present conversation.

A: *you could fry some sausage*
B: or a sausage yeah maybe I'll make some pigs in blankets [mitigated]

A: *maybe you should just check to be sure*
B: I will [unmitigated]

A: do we now write a note
B: well no I think no do you see that's what I've done
A: oh
B: that's all he says # *should be enough*
A: well that's it [the action has now been carried out]

Positive evaluation includes responses in which the advisee positively evaluates the advice or the proposed action without clearly committing to carrying out the action.

A: *like Lost in the City or something*
B: oh that's a good one [positive evaluation of advice]

A: *would you get one of them to bring you round*
B: that would be lovely [positive evaluation of action]

Marked acknowledgements are short responses that treat the advice as newsworthy. They include various kinds of (clusters) of backchannels (e.g., *yes*, *okay, yeah well okay yeah yeah*, *oh right*), partial repeats (e.g., *we can dance if you want to -> we can*), choral co-production (e.g., *look at the Ts that were actually -> lenited*), and certain single backchannels (e.g., *right, yeah, mm*) with a clear rising–falling or rising intonation (i.e., expressed in an enthusiastic way; but see below for unmarked acknowledgements).

Note that, if the response contains both a commitment to act/positive evaluation and a marked acknowledgement, the former value is chosen, because the function of commitments to act/positive responses is more clear. In contrast, marked acknowledgements can serve multiple functions in discourse, with advice acceptance being just one of them.

In the case of **resistance**, the advisee avoids treating the advice as informative. However, the proposed action is not necessarily rejected.

Unmarked acknowledgements are short responses that avoid treating the advice as newsworthy and that offer no undertaking to act on the advice. They include various kinds of single backchannels (e.g., *right*, as well as *yeah* and *mm* with a falling intonation (i.e., expressed in an unenthusiastic way), and other non-committal responses (e.g., *I hope so*).

Assertions of prior knowledge/competence include responses that assert prior knowledge and/or competence with respect to the advice. They include cases where the advisee is already engaged in the proposed action or is planning to do so anyway. In addition to the examples below, they also include various kinds of short responses (e.g., *I know*, *of course*).

A: *you could start there*
B: oh yes we would like to do that [assertion of prior knowledge]

A: *it'd make it easier if you could give them an example of someone else who is doing it right*
B: that's what I'm saying [assertion of prior competence]

Note that, if the response contains both an assertion and an unmarked acknowledgement, the former value is chosen, because the function of assertions is more clear. Also, if the response contains first an unmarked acknowledgement and then, say, a commitment to act (an acceptance), the latter is chosen.

In the case of **rejection**, the advisee explicitly rejects undertaking the action proposed by the adviser.

Elaborated responses provide a justification for the rejection of the advice.

A: *maybe we can go over and do mine*
B: mm but you wouldn't know how the system works

A: *on Wednesday we can go costume shopping*
B: well I was just thinking I could go tomorrow night

Straightforward responses are those where no such justification is made.

A: *why not put it into the head*
B: no

A: *you could use your Club Card uh no Colonel Card thing*
B: but I won't

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Other responses include, for example, silence, laughter, and topic shifts. They also include cases where the advice-giving utterance is produced in the middle of a long turn, but where no immediate response is given. Instead, the addressee responds at the end of the long turn, but since it would be difficult to determine whether the response is directed at the advice-giving utterance or what came after, other response to the advice-giving utterance is indicated. The following example is a case in point.

A: the other thing is you see that if you haven't got time to mark a paper by about the middle of July *then it's not worth worrying about it until the end of the summer vacation* because the last meeting of the Council Commission is about the middle of July and therefore the candidates wouldn't be able to receive their certificates until November so it's up to them
B: well no…

PART 4. Summary of annotation decisions made during two discussion sessions

Session 1
- The role of discourse context in the identification of advice-giving utterances: When faced with the dilemma of whether an utterance is a piece of advice or a general statement, the discourse context as well as the roles of the interlocutors should be taken into account. The following question should be asked: is the speaker in the position to give advice to the addressee? When the speaker is expected to give advice to the addressee (e.g., a tutorial) and all the other criteria are met, the utterance is considered to be a piece of advice. However, when all the criteria are met but the context does not support the interpretation of the utterance as a piece of advice (e.g., a think-aloud situation between friends), the utterance is a general statement. In other words, advice needs to be supported by strong contextual evidence.
- The prosodic marking of modifiers: Discourse markers such as *well* are considered to be emphasisers if they are accented.
- More marked acknowledgements: The category of marked acknowledgements contains, not only choral co-production, but also instances where the advisee builds on the adviser's advice to demonstrate their understanding of it (e.g., *it might be best to just keep on going with the spoken texts -> and keep that in reserve*).

Session 2
- Modifiers and false starts: The advice-giving utterance is considered to contain a modifier even if the utterance is preceded by a false start (e.g., *well we could we could have a think about that closer to the time*). However, the utterance must closely follow the modifier.
- Adviser-initiated advice in multi-party conversations: In situations where the adviser identifies a problem pertaining to the advisee (i.e., adviser identifies problem), the problem may be identified by the adviser themselves or by another speaker in the conversation. The important part is that the problem has been raised by someone and that there is a basis for giving advice in the next turn.
- Adviser-initiated advice followed by advisee discloses problem: Sometimes the adviser's identification of a problem and the advice-giving utterance are interrupted by what looks like the advisee's statement of a problem (*have you guys not seen the Lego movie -> no I didn't it didn't really appeal to me -> you should*). However, in such cases the advice is considered to be initiated by the adviser and not the advisee, because it is the adviser that raises the problem in the first place.

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