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Author(s): Yelena Belyaeva
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ADVICE AND *SOVIET:* A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON SPEECH ACTS

Yelena Belyaeva
University of California at San Diego

1. INTRODUCTION.

The paper explores cross-cultural pragmatics of the speech act of advice in two different societies. It uses a cognitive approach (Langacker 1991) to the case study of the speech act of advice in English and in Russian placing the overall analysis of the speech act in the context of a broader inquiry into the culture. It aims at establishing language- and culture-specific linguistic and pragmatic regularities of this type of discourse in American and Russian cultural environments. The paper focuses on the problems of variability, coding, interpretation, and pragmatic perception of advice by Russian and American native speakers. Its more general goal is to give an interpretation of the speech behavior from the viewpoint of cultural values.

Drawing on recent developments in cross-cultural pragmatics (Blum-Kulka et al 1989, 1993, Ervin-Tripp 1976, Kramsch 1994, R. Lakoff 1990, Mills 1992, 1993, Wierzbicka 1991, 1992). I will challenge a universalistic approach to speech acts (Frazer 1985, Brown & Levinson 1987, Searle 1983) that claims that strategies of realization of speech acts are essentially the same across cultures, with differences in implementation of these strategies. I will argue that forms and strategies preferred by Russians and Americans for expressing advice are culture-specific and are rooted in national culture. In fact, every message carries a lot of social implications about cultural presuppositions, values and feelings, and it is the task of a linguist to spell out these cultural presuppositions. As Anna Wierzbicka puts it:

> Ways of speaking characteristic of a given community cannot be satisfactorily described (let alone explained) in purely behavioral terms; in fact, they constitute a behavioral manifestation of a tacit system of "cultural rules" or, as I call them, "cultural scripts"; to understand a society's ways of speaking, we have to identify and articulate its implicit 'cultural scripts" (Wierzbicka 1994:2)

The paper will address the following questions:

1. What is the repertoire of the forms used by Russians and Americans to perform the speech act of advice?
2. How do Russian and American speakers evaluate the available forms in regard to their directness and politeness?
3. What strategies are favored by Russians and Americans in issuing advice?
4. How are the preferred strategies motivated by the cultural assumptions?

2. DEFINITION OF ADVICE.

The term ADVICE is used to subsume a range of directive speech acts which are defined as "attempts of the speaker to get the hearer to do something" (Searle 1975). Based on the criteria of who benefits from the envisaged action and the degree of obligation for its fulfillment, we can differentiate between three prototypical directive acts: prescriptives (commands, regulations, obligations, instructions), requestives (requests, pleas), and suggestives (advice, recommendation, suggestions, invitations). Unlike prescriptives, advice does not presuppose obligatory fulfillment of the action which is envisaged as beneficial for

the hearer, and not for the speaker, as it is in request (more about taxonomy of directive speech acts see Belyaeva 1992). For the purpose of this paper, I define ADVICE as an attempt of the speaker (ADVISOR) to influence the hearer (ADVISEE) to act in the way beneficial for the advisee. Prototypical advice is based on the following pragmatic presuppositions:

1. The advisee is faced with a problematic situation and has difficulty in solving it;
2. The advisor knows or believes that he knows what is a better solution of the problematic situation.

Depending on who initiates the speech act of advice, we can distinguish between solicited and unsolicited advice. In the case of solicited advice, the advisor's authority is based on his socially recognized professional or social status or, in peer relationship, the authority is waived to him by the advisee. In the case of unsolicited advice, the advisor self-imposes the authority, assuming that he knows a better solution of the problematic situation. Obviously, solicited and unsolicited advice may have very different social implications in different cultures. There are also culture-specific assumptions about the situational appropriateness of giving and seeking advice. These assumptions act as social and cultural constraints on the choice of advising strategies used by different speech communities in different communicative contexts.

According to Leech's illocutionary classification, which is based on the social function of speech acts (1983), advice can be regarded as a collaborative act whose illocutionary goal is indifferent to its social goal; it neither conflicts nor competes with its social goals.

I will consider three aspects of perceiving advice speech acts by Russians and Americans: directness and indirectness, directness and politeness, strategic preferences in different communicative contexts.

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA.

The data for this study were collected and analyzed in a three-tiered system that included 1) collecting an adequate pool of examples through observation, 2) elicitation of advice strategies through questionnaires, and 3) cultural interpretation of the data in ethnographic interviews with native speakers of Russian and American English. The methodological objective was to compile a complete list of syntactic variables that are used to express advice and provide cross-cultural pragmatic interpretation of Russian and American advisory strategies.

The primary data were drawn from speech situations heard and noted in natural conversation in Russia and in the United States (California, Texas, Wisconsin, Delaware and Missouri) in 1995-1996 and from modern Russian and American prose and films. The empirical method of data collection yielded a total of about 340 examples: about 100 tokens of oral face-to-face interactions and recorded advisory sessions and 240 examples from literary sources.

To study the native speakers' perception of directness and politeness of various constructions regularly occurring in natural conversation, I designed two types of questionnaires which were administered to 45 Russians and 65 Americans. A special discourse completion test was conducted in order to elicit written samples of advice in six different situations each containing variables of social and psychological relationship between the advisor and advisee. The elicited data comprised a total of over 500 written tokens of advice in each language.

Finally, to test the native speakers' intuition about the cultural assumptions

of the speech act of advice, I conducted ethnographic interviews with 27 native speakers of Russian and 17 Americans.

The target groups in this research were Russian and American university students and faculty observed and tested in a college environment setting. Our informants in Russia were 25 students and 16 faculty from Voronezh State University, and 20 students and 12 faculty from Moscow State University. In the USA the study was conducted with 30 students and 10 faculty of University of California at San Diego, 20 students of University of Delaware at Newark, 20 students and 6 faculty of University of Texas at Austin, and 10 students and 5 faculty at Saint Louis University, Missouri.

The three-tiered methodology of drawing and interpreting the data provided a more accurate discussion of cross-cultural specifics of advisory strategies favored by Russian and American native speakers.

4. DATA ANALYSIS.

4.1. TAXONOMY OF FORMS

There are several basic semantic classes of forms which are used to express advice in Russian and in English which are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1. FORMS OF EXPRESSING ADVICE.

Types of Forms	English	Russian
Performatives	I advise/recommend X.	Ja sovetuju/rekomenduju X
Imperatives	Do X	Sdelai X.
Need statements	You need to do X	(Tebe/vam) nado sdelat' X
Obligation statements	You must do X	Ty dolzhen sdelat' X
Suggestions	You should do X	Tebe/vam sleduet sdelat' X
Evaluations	Doing X is good	Tebe/vam stoit sdelat' X
	You'd better do X	Xorosho by sdelat' X
Hypothetical statements	If I were you I'd do X	Na tvojem/vashem meste ja by sdelal X
Opinions	Maybe you ought to do X	Mozhet byt' sdelat' X
Questions	Why don't you do X?	Pochemu by tebe/vam ne sdelat'
	Have you ever thought of doing X?	A ty ne dumal sdelat' X?
	Do you think it might be a good idea to do X?	

There are no language-specific forms of expressing advice, although their frequency and communicative range are different in the compared cultures, which is partly accountable by different perception of these forms from the point of view of directness and degree of imposition. However, there is a distinct pragmatic difference in designation of the agent. In Russian, most of the syntactic structures have two variants: singular and plural (*Ty*-forms and **Vy**-forms). For example, *Sdelai X? Sdelaite X; Ja* ***tebe*** *sovetuju/ Ja* ***vam*** *sovetuju*; ***Tebe*** *nado sdelat' X/****Vam*** *nado sdelat' X*. Contextual variability of these forms can be either semantic, which is determined by singular/multiple addressee, or pragmatic, which is restricted by social constraints of power and solidarity determined by role and status relations between the advisor and advisee.

4.2. DIRECTNESS/INDIRECTNESS

All the forms that can be used to express advice were presented to the recipients for evaluation of their directness or indirectness. The subjects were asked to mark each form either as direct or as indirect.

The data revealed that forms perceived as *direct* are mostly speaker-oriented with either a semantically implicit Agent (Imperative Mood) or with an explicit indication of the Agent. The most frequent among them are the following constructions:

1. Performative constructions with the verbs *advise* (90%) and *recommend* (70%); sovetuju (75%) and *rekomenduju* (60%);
2. Imperative constructions: *Do X* (100%), *First do X, then do Y* (100%), *Do X, why don't you* (95%); *sdelai X* (94%);
3. Statements of necessity or obligation: *You must do X* (100%), *You should do X* (80%), *I think you should do* X (70%); *Tebe/vam nado sdelat' X* (76%), *Ty dolzhen sdelat' X* (80%);
4. Evaluation phrases indicating a better course of action: *You'd better do* X (90%), *Tebe/vam lutshe sdelat' X* (76%), *Lutshe sdelai X* (56%).

Forms perceived as *indirect* have the following features:

1. Express supposition in declarative and interrogative constructions: *Might it be an idea to do X?* (100%); *You might consider doing X* (85%); *Do you think it might be a good idea to do X?* (90%); *Ty mog by sdelat' X* (67%);
2. Express uncertainty: *Maybe you ought to do X* (95%); *Mozhet byt' sdelat' X* ? (75%)
3. Challenge the advisee's future action: *Have you ever thought of doing X?* (95%), *Do you think it might be a good idea to do X?* (90%), *Couldn't you do X?* (95 %), *Why don't you do X?* (70%); *A ty ne dumal o tom chtoby sdelat' X?* (77%).

Obviously, both American and Russian students and faculty perceived as *direct* those constructions that directly point to the doer of the action directly express Speaker's communicative intention, or directly state the necessity or preferability of the action. Both Russians and Americans marked as *indirect* mitigated non-categorical expressions of opinion and indirect speech acts, such as suppositions and interrogations.

4.3. DIRECTNESS/INDIRECTNESS AND POLITENESS

The same taxonomy of forms marked already for *directness/indirectness* was presented to the respondents for evaluation of the degree of their politeness. The instruction was to evaluate each form as *polite, less polite,* or *more polite.* These results were subsequently compared to the evaluation of *directness/indirectness.* As expected, indirect forms were perceived by the majority of the respondents either as *polite* or *more polite* .

The forms presented in Table 2 were perceived as both *indirect* and *polite* by the majority of Russian respondents. The absolute majority of Russian respondents also perceive constructions with formal Vy/Vam (plural 'you') as *polite.* Cf.: *Ja* ***tebe*** *sovetuju / Ja* ***vam*** *sovetuju*; ***Tebe*** *nado by sdelat' X /* ***Vam*** *nado by sdelat' X.*

Table 2. INDIRECTNESS AND POLITENESS: RUSSIANS

Forms	Indirect %	Polite %	More Polite %
Mne kazhetsa (vam) lutshe sdelat X. (It seems to me you'd better do X)	90	30	70
Mozhet byt' (vam) sdelat' X? (Maybe you would do X?)	80	45	55
Mne kazhetsa (vam) nuzhno sdelat' X. (It seems to me that you need to do X)	80	35	65
A ne lutshe li sdelat' X? (Wouldn't it be better to do X?)	75	50	50

All of our American respondents considered the following five constructions previously marked as *indirect, polite,* or *more polite* (Table 3):

Table 3. INDIRECTNESS AND POLITENESS: AMERICANS

Forms	Indirect %	Polite %	More Polite %
Might it be an idea to do X?	90	20	80
Have you ever thought of doing X?	90	40	60
Do you think it might be a good idea to do X?	90	35	65
You might consider doing X	85	50	50
Maybe you ought to do X.	82	85	15
Could you do X?	90	55	45
Why don't you do X?	90	75	25

Constructions which were considered as *more polite* by more than half of the respondents can be classified as marked for politeness in expressing advice. Americans consider *more polite* hedged interrogative constructions. Russians mark as *more polite* mitigated expressions of opinion.

Table 4. DIRECTNESS AND POLITENESS: RUSSIANS AND AMERICANS.

Forms	direct	polite	less polite
You must do X.	95		100
Ty dolzhen sdetat' X.	85	15	85
You'd better do X.	94	7	93
Tebe/vam lutshe sdelat' X	78	65	35
You should do X.	86	30	70
Tebe/Vam sledovalo by/stoilo by sdelat' X.	56	80	20
Do X, why don't you?	90	30	70
Do X - I would.	85	35	65
Sdelai X/ Sdelaite X.	100	15	85
I advise you to do X.	94	45	55
Ja tebe/vam sovetevtuju sdelat' X.	85	85	15
I recommend you to do X.	75	40	60
Ja tebe/vam recomenduju sdelat' X.	70	85	15

Our data shows considerable difference in perception of politeness level of similar direct forms by Russian and American respondents. As we see from Table 4, direct forms that contain an explicit Agent were most strongly perceived as *less polite* by an absolute majority of the American respondents: *You must do X* (100%), *You'd better do X* (93%), *You should do X* (70%). By contrast, Russians marked as *less polite* only one of these constructions - an obligation statement with *dolzhen* (must): *Ty dolzhen sdelat' X* (85%). Imperative constructions, even if they contained a mitigator, were marked as *less polite* by the majority of both Americans and Russians: *Do it, why don't you?* (70%); *Do it - I would* (65%), *Sdelai/Sdelaite X* (85%). On the other hand, several direct forms were marked as *polite* or even as *more polite* by the majority of the respondents. For example, construction with the performative verbs *recommend* and *advise* were marked as *polite* by the majority of Russian and American respondents.

Some forms seemed to be ambiguous in regard to politeness: i.e., constructions with modals of obligation. *You should do X* was marked as *polite* by 40% and as *less polite* by 60% of American respondents. The same applies to the performative construction with *advise,* which was marked as *direct* by 95% of respondents. Only 55% of Americans perceived it as *less polite* while 45% marked it as *polite*. On the other hand, similar performative constructions were perceived as *polite* by the overwhelming majority of Russians. Contrary to Americans, most Russian respondents considered evaluative constructions *polite*: *Tebe/ Vam lutshe sedelat' X* (65%), *Tebe/vam sledovalo by sdelat' X* (65%).

5. DISCUSSION.

5.1 RUSSIAN AND AMERICAN ADVISING STRATEGIES.

Table 5 sums up data elicited through situational questionnaire for unsolicited advice to which the respondents were asked to provide responses. The questionnaire contained descriptions of six different situations: advice about health condition, fitness program, change of job, TV viewing, vacation plans, being considerate to other people. Each situation was designed to cover three types of *communicative contexts* (CC) : CC1 - giving advice to familiar equals such as colleagues, friends , CC2 - giving advice to subordinates or junior people, and CC3 - giving advice to superordinates, such as social or age seniors. Statistics were calculated for each type of CC with a resulting point average for Russians and Americans, which is summed up in Table 5. Our data showed that although both languages possess the same repertoire of syntactic structures for expressing advice, there is considerable difference in perception and usage of these forms by Russians and Americans. In this section, I will focus on discussing strategic differences in expressing unsolicited advice by Russians and Americans.

The major difference between American and Russians is in the preferences of use of direct and explicit forms of expressing advice. The data reveal that Americans prefer indirect, mitigated, non-committal ways of advising while Russians favor direct, explicit expressions of advice. These differences are most noticeable in the use of performatives, evaluation statements, imperatives and obligation statements.

PERFORMATIVES explicitly express the advisor's communicative intention and overtly indicate his commitment to the speech act.

Russians use performatives freely in all types of communicative contexts: symmetrical and asymmetrical, although they are more frequent in CC with familiar equals: when talking to friends, colleagues, or classmates. In expressing advice to

their peers, Russians use performatives five times more than Americans do (82% and 15% respectively). Compared to *Sovetuju, rekomenduju* is perceived as formal, which accounts for its higher frequency in addressing the superordinates than in communication with peers (50% vs. 20%). *Sovetuju* has a wider communicative range in Russian than does its counterpart in English. *I advise you to do X* is used three times less that in *Ja vam sovetuju* in Russian.

Unlike Russians, Americans prefer the performative verb *recommend* to *advise. Recommend* has a wide communicative range although it is more common in communication with peers than in asymmetrical CC (50% vs. 20%). American faculty avoid using *I advise you to do X* in communication with superordinates while more than half of the American students do not use it at all.

TABLE 5. FORMS OF EXPRESSING ADVICE IN DIFFERENT COMMUNICATIVE CONTEXTS: RUSSIANS AND AMERICANS COMPARED

FORMS	CC 1 equals		CC 2 infer.		CC 3 super.		Average	
	Rus	Am	Rus	Am	Rus	Am	Rus	Am
Performatives								
Ja sovetuju ; I advise X	82	15	52	60	28	-	**68**	**23**
Ja rekomendju X; I recommend X	20	50	6	20	50	20	**30**	**25**
Imperatives								
Sdelai X, Do X;	76	15	58	20	5	-	**50**	**13**
Sdelal X, tak budet lutshe;								
Do X, why don't you	52	20	36	15	41	-	**50**	**15**
Need statements								
Tebe/Nam nado; You need	53	15	41	10	47	5	**45**	**10**
Obligation statements								
Ty/Vy dolzhen/y X; You must do X	67	-	52	20	40	-	**51**	**5**
Suggestions								
Tebe steduet X; You should do X	23	20	25	50	47	-	**35**	**45**
Evaluations								
Xorosho by X; Doing X is good;	82	40	47	40	30	-	**72**	**28**
Tebe lutshe sdelat' X; You'd better X	78	10	45	20	40	-	**63**	**15**
Hypothetical statements								
Na tvojem meste Ja by sdelal X;	60	60	35	40	20	40	**40**	**50**
If I were you, I would do X								
Opinions								
Mozhet byt' sdelat' X;	30	70	10	50	70	70	**50**	**70**
Maybe you ought to do X								
Questions (Imbedded suggestions)								
a) Pochemu by tebe ne sdelat' X?	40	70	30	65	5	55	**25**	**65**
Why don't you do X?								
b) A ty ne dumal sdelat' X?	35	80	-	70	70	50	**35**	**60**
Have you ever thought of doing X?								
c) A ne lutshe li sdelat' X?	76	70	75	50	75	60	**76**	**60**
Do you think it might be .... ?								

IMPERATIVES directly express the advisor's imposition upon the addressee's course of actions. Due to this, imperative sentences are qualified by most Americans as commands which are to be avoided in polite communication: 75% of American respondents marked them as unacceptable. With Russians, this form is not uncommon although it may not be as favored as other direct forms such as evaluation sentences (50% and 72% respectively). Comparatively speaking, on the average, Russians use imperatives four times more often than Americans. With Americans, imperatives are three times less common with subordinates and five times less common with familiar equals than they are with Russians. Americans demonstrated strong reluctance to use bare infinitives not only in conversation with the superiors, but also in everyday trivial situations with peers and subordinates.

NEED STATEMENTS emphasize an objective necessity to follow a suggested course of actions and are normally perceived as a direct form of expressing advice. Although this form has a comparatively wide communicative range in both languages, its average frequency with Russian respondents is much higher than with the Americans (45% vs. 10%). Moreover, in communication with superiors, Russians use this form nine times more often than Americans (47% vs. 5%).

OBLIGATION STATEMENTS explicitly reveal the advisor's authority over the addressee and overt imposition upon his course of actions. On the average, they are ten times less common among Americans than among Russians. Almost all American respondents (96% of students and 70% of faculty) marked it as the form to be avoided in all the CCs, while Russians have no inhibitions in using it widely in all CCs.

EVALUATION STATEMENTS explicitly convey the advisor's judgment about what might be a more beneficial way of dealing with the problematic situation. These forms have high frequency and a wide communicative range in Russian while their use is limited to peer and subordinate CCs with Americans. In general, evaluations are used by Americans almost three times less than by Russians. Furthermore, the form *You'd better do X* was marked as a form to be avoided by 70% of American students and 60% of faculty. On the contrary, its counterpart form in Russian - *Tebe lutshe cdelat' X*- is one of the most popular among peers.

5.2. CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE SPEECH ACT OF ADVICE.

Ethnographic interviews conducted with male and female Russian (15) and American (18) faculty and other people in a position of authority (managers, directors, advisors) helped to shed light upon cultural assumptions and pragmatic presuppositions about the speech act of advice. Here, I will discuss similarities and differences in the perception of some social aspects of advice.

PERCEPTION OF ADVICE AS A TYPE OF SOCIAL INTERACTION.

Both Russians and Americans draw a sharp demarcation line between solicited and unsolicited advice. Unsolicited advice is considered 'imposing', 'presumptuous', sometimes 'threatening'. Furthermore, it is stigmatized as a conflicting act; that is, an the act that should be avoided. Unlike Americans, Russians are much more tolerant to unsolicited advice. 75% of respondents expressed readiness to accept unsolicited advice if it a) is useful, b) is expressed in a friendly manner, or c) offers a good solution of the problem. Contrary to Americans, the majority of whom do not give (or try not to give) unsolicited advice,

80% of Russian respondents at least sometimes give unsolicited advice motivated by the desire to a) prevent wrong or incompetent actions or b) help people in perceivably difficult situations.

Most of the American respondents (75%) perceived advice rather negatively ('it's not good to give advice because people should know their own business'). Advice is defined as: dangerous ('one becomes responsible for future events'), conflicting ('people do not like to receive unsolicited or critical advice'), and condescending ('putting one down').

Contrary to Americans, Russians perceive advice as a cooperative, socially positive speech act ('advice is help offered to people in need of help'), it is good to give advice ('I share my experience and make decision making less difficult for the others'; ' I feel good if I can help others').

These evaluations reflect different cultural values and believes. Americans' negative attitude to the speech act of advice is rooted in respect to personal autonomy and is based on the assumptions that 'people ought to make the decisions and solve their problems themselves', they should 'figure out themselves what they want to do'. As one of the respondents put it, 'Americans do not like to be told what to do, they want to make up their own mind'. Children in America are educated to think independently from early childhood: 'they are encouraged (even often told) to make their own decisions'.

GIVING ADVICE. When asked to give advice, both Russian (95%) and American (65%) respondents said that they feel 'flattered', 'pleased to be trusted', and 'recognized as authority'. However, 35% of American males reacted negatively when approached with a request for advice. They perceived giving advice as 'threatening', 'personal', as 'unwanted responsibility'. Although most respondents admitted that giving advice is a great responsibility, men and women showed a different degree of willingness to come out with advice. 55% of American female respondents showed reluctance to give advice, 'felt uncomfortable to interfere with the process of decision making', and did not want 'to deprive people of their own choice'. Women 'do not want to give strong advice', they prefer to act 'as a sounding board', 'let the other party talk it over'. Men (85%), on the other hand, give advice 'easily', 'feel good to give advice in the field of expertise', and think their 'ego is invested'.

The Russian target group showed more homogeneous reactions: both men and women give solicited advice 'willingly', 'without hesitation' and are 'fully committed to the responsibility of this act'. Russians feel it is their 'duty to give advice if asked' and 'feel fully responsible for it'.

SOLICITING ADVICE is perceived negatively by most American men. 75% of male respondents avoid asking for advice because they 'prefer to solve problems by myself', 'do not want to burden other people', 'do not want to show my weakness'. 85% of American female respondents ask advice regularly or often when they are 'making a major decision', and want 'to be reassured in the decision'.

95% of Russian respondents solicit advice in the situations of a) insufficient information, b) 'when faced with a difficult choice' or c) when 'having doubts about optimal solution of the problem'. They seek advice when they 'want to hear other people's viewpoints' and 'get help in analyzing the situation'. Only two respondents confessed that although they sometimes solicit advice, they 'feel

uncomfortable about revealing their dependence on others'.

ADVISING STRATEGIES. When asked about favorite strategies of expressing advice, Russian and American respondents revealed considerable similarity in their perception of appropriate strategies for advice, but demonstrated considerable differences in communicative practices. Both Russians and Americans who are in the position of authority modify their strategies depending on the factors of power and solidarity. The majority of the respondents consider it more appropriate not to show their power and speak in favor of indirect strategies with subordinates. However, unlike Americans, Russian respondents also strongly emphasize the necessity to demonstrate respect when advising a superintendent. In the Russian language, it is achieved grammatically by changing the form of the personal pronoun and the verb into plural. Cf.: Ty (sg.) sdelai (sg.) X - Vy (pl.) X. Many Russians perceive the imperative with the verb *poprobu - Poprobui sdelat'* X (Try to do X) - as a less categoric form than bare infinitive - *Sdelai X*. In fact, in this case it is the semantics of the verb, not the form that mitigates the utterance.

When asked for advice, Americans consider it most appropriate 'to provide people with enough information so that they can reach their own conclusion', 'give an example from your own experience', 'outline alternatives', 'express opinion, provide something that might help the other to make the final decision'. Russians in general are much less aware of such sophisticated strategies. Although they stress the necessity of being tactful and polite, it does not refer to the subordinates, especially to children. In fact, 75% of respondents confessed that instead of monitoring them to make their own decision outlining the possibilities, they simply use a straightforward explicit way of telling their children what to do. Russians do not hesitate to give an absolute opinion and be judgmental. Few indicated a preference for the tactic of 'speaking in context and outline options', 'discussing alternatives' when speaking to the subordinates at work. Still fewer chose a strategy of 'giving the other person a chance to talk about the problem' or 'selecting carefully information you want to give the hearer that would lead him to the decision you think is best'. Most Russian respondents (65%) prefer shortcuts by simply passing judgments and telling people what they think is best in this situation.

6. CONCLUSION

Observed and elicited data showed that American respondents marked as *less polite* most direct forms of expressing advice: Imperatives (*Do X, why don't you?),* performatives (*I advise you),* evaluative statements *(You'd better do* X), and obligation sentences *(You must do* X). Americans showed a strong tendency to avoid direct forms of expressing advice in all types of communicative situations and gave preference to indirect strategies, using opinion sentences and mitigated or conditional suggestions (e.g. *If I were you, I would do X; If you want X, you might consider doing Y*). These preferences reflect a deep-rooted habit of acknowledging differences in individual points of view and recognizing an individual's right to make his own decision.

By contrast, Russian respondents did not stigmatize direct and explicit forms and showed little hesitation to use them when issuing advice (e.g. *Ja tebe sovetuju sdelat' X* -'I advise you to do X'; *Tebe nado by delat' X* - 'You would need to do X; *Ty lutshe sdelai X* - 'You'd better do X'). This uninhibited use of

direct and explicit forms of advice can be justified by the assumption that in case of advice, the advisor is urging the advisee to perform an act that will benefit him. By comparison with Americans, who try to bias the illocutionary point of the advice utterance toward the negative outcome (give options), Russians bias their advice toward the positive outcome: their use of straightforward strategies greatly restricts the advisee's opportunity to make the final decision independently.

Ethnographic interviews helped to spell out the cultural values and tacit cognitive 'cultural scripts' that determine culture-specific linguistic behavior. For example, American strategic preferences reflect Anglo-American cultural values of freedom of expression, respect for individual independence and right of choice. The implicit cultural assumptions reflected in American advisory strategies can be rephrased as cultural rules:

(1) one has the right to say and do what one wants;
(2) when stating an opinion, one should speak only for himself and not impose one's opinion on others: what is good for one may not be good for others;
(3) one can not tell others what to do.

Personal experiences and discussions with native informants lead me to posit a high degree of obligation on the part of Russians to give advice as compared to American counterparts. Russians have a strong sense of obligation to help a person who appears to be facing a problematic situation. This obligation seems to overrule the consideration of imposition on the advisee's autonomy and self-reliance which is of primary concern with Americans.

Favorite Russian strategies are based on the cultural assumption that giving advice presupposes a high degree of commitment and personal involvement. Rewritten in cultural rules, it reads:

(1) one has the right to express an opinion or pass judgments;
(2) if one believes his judgment is true one can try to make other people believe it is true;
(3) if one knows what is good for others one should tell them to do it.

In Russia giving and soliciting advice is a common practice in everyday private life and at work. It is not infrequent to get an unsolicited piece of advice from a stranger in public transpiration or in the street. In fact, advising was the salient political principle in Soviet times which was reflected in the nick-name of the country: *Strana Sovetov* - 'Country of Advice'.

Cultural ways of speaking aquired in early childhood affect greatly speech performance in the second language. Second language learners tend to use the same strategies as they use in their native language, which, naturally, reflect their native cultural values. For example, Russian learners of English may shock Americans by using blunt imperatives and other direct and explicit forms of advice when they want to show their genuine concern. On the other hand, Americans may make Russians feel very uncomfortable, if not unhappy, when they use mitigated indirect way of expressing advice which is interpreted by the Russians as unwillingness to help in the problematic situation. In order to prevent miscommunication and misunderstanding, both parties should familiarize themselves with values and beliefs that determine each other's cultural ways of speaking.

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