Table of contents

Acknowledgments ix
List of tables and figures xi

CHAPTER 1
Introduction 1

Part I

CHAPTER 2
Material description: ‘Lucy Answers’, an American Internet advice column 9
2.1 The site 9
2.2 The data for this study 14

Part II

CHAPTER 3
Literature review on advice 21
3.1 Advice in face-to-face health care settings 22
3.2 Advice in face-to-face educational counseling 29
3.3 Radio advice programs: The public dimension 31
3.4 Advice in therapeutic contexts 35
3.5 Everyday advising 37
3.6 Previous research on advice columns 40
   3.6.1 Advice columns as a specific text type: Some characteristics 41
   3.6.2 Norms and values 44
   3.6.3 Linguistic realizations in advice columns 47
3.7 Summary 48

CHAPTER 4
Research questions 51
4.1 The content structure of the responses and the linguistic realization of advice 51
4.2 Relational work and advice: The face-threatening character of advice 52
4.3 The Internet as a medium of the mass media: The personal versus
the public dimension of advice  53
4.4 Lucy's voice  54
4.5 The problem letters posted by the anonymous readership  54
4.6 List of research questions  55

Part III

CHAPTER 5
The content structure of the response letters and the realization of advice  59
5.1 Introduction and methodology  59
5.2 Results: The composition of the response letters  73
  5.2.1 Number of words and number of units in a response letter  74
  5.2.2 Number and type of level 3 discursive moves overall  75
  5.2.3 Number of level 3 discursive moves in a unit  77
  5.2.4 The sequence of level 3 discursive moves  77
  5.2.5 Summary  85
5.3 Results: The linguistic realization of discursive moves  86
  5.3.1 The advice and referral discursive moves  88
  5.3.2 The linguistic realization of the other level 3
discursive moves  104
5.4 Summary and comparison with other advisory situations  108

CHAPTER 6
Aspects of relational work in the response letters  113
6.1 Introduction  113
6.2 Methodology  115
6.3 Results and discussion  125
  6.3.1 Hedging  127
  6.3.2 Empathizing  133
  6.3.3 Bonding  135
  6.3.4 Praising  139
  6.3.5 Boosting  141
  6.3.6 Criticizing  143
  6.3.7 The use of humor  146
6.4 Summary and evaluation  147
9.4 Aspects of relational work in the advice-seekers’ problem letters 224
9.5 The linguistic realization of discursive moves 230
   9.5.1 The address form and mention of Lucy in the body of the problem letter 230
9.5.2 Questions 231
9.5.3 Requests for advice 233
9.5.4 Background information 234
9.5.5 Problem statements 236
9.5.6 Apology, comments on previous records, compliments, explanations, metacommments, and thanks 238
9.5.7 The pseudonyms of the advice-seekers 239
9.6 Discussion of a selection of problem letters 240
9.7 Summarizing remarks and the links between the problem and response letters 243

Part IV

CHAPTER 10
Factors constituting the discursive practice in ‘Lucy Answers’ 249

Notes 259
Appendix 265
References 267
Index 275