Political 'advice' in Chinese public discourse(s)

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Abstract: The practice of 'political advice' covers events such as media appearances, in the course of which the representatives of a country deliver symbolic 'advice' to another country through a monologous announcement. As such, political 'advice' is a ritual practice (Kádár 2017): on the surface level it represents communication with another country and its style is formed according to this symbolic surface function; however, its implicit function is to form alignment between the political authorities who deliver the advice and the citizens of their country. Studying political advice provides a twofold contribution to politeness theory. First, on the empirical level, this discursive ritual practice has not received sufficient academic attention, and so modelling it through the lens of interactional ritual theory fills an empirical knowledge gap in the field of pragmatics and broader sense language and society. Second, by modelling the complex relationship between politeness and political advice, the paper delivers a contribution to the theory of language use, since it demonstrates that in certain ritual practices such as political advice, and arguably a variety of similar ritual practices in the political arena. It is challenging to capture 'politeness' in the conventional sense as an other-oriented (and interpersonal) form of pragmatic behaviour, in spite of the fact that on the surface level such forms of communication are veiled as abundantly polite and as other-oriented. We argue that one needs to deploy interactional ritual theory to model the pragmatic operation of this phenomenon. The data studied is drawn from the website of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Keywords: politeness; alignment; Chinese; political advice; ritual

1. Introduction

This paper aims to examine advice giving as a public ritual practice in Chinese political discourses (in Chinese: *zhengzhi-jianyi* 政治建议). In our interpretation, 'political advice' covers monologic speeches, most typically speeches in international political meetings, in the course of which the representative of a country delivers advice to another country, usually in the context of a political tension. We pursue interest in advice delivered

in public and reported by the media. By examining this phenomenon, we aim to fill two interrelated knowledge gaps.

Firstly, political advice has not received sufficient academic attention: to the best of our knowledge, only limited previous research has examined this phenomenon. Considering the recent call in politeness studies to broaden the scope of inquiries by exploring new data and communication types (see Kádár & Haugh 2013; Chen et al. 2016), it seems to be a timely endeavour to dedicate research to the relatively understudied discourse genre of political advice, by devoting special attention to its relationship with (im)politeness. Examining this phenomenon is noteworthy, most importantly because political advice is not interpersonal by nature (see more in section 2). While in conventional pragmatic theory in the 1980s the question of whether a particular speech act occurs on the interpersonal level or not had not been important, after the 2000s politeness research has adopted a paradigmatic shift, namely that politeness is an interpersonal phenomenon. Clearly advice delivered in the political arena is **not** interpersonal, and the theoretical question lingers as to whether such data is relevant to politeness research at all - in this paper we will demonstrate that **it is** (see Kádár & Zhang 2019). This lack of interpersonal character partly explains why political advice has not received sufficient attention. At the same time, political advice may have also been left out from previous inquiries because 'advice' as a speech act has an abundant typology (see e.g., Vehviläinen 2001), and political advice may seem to be just one of the many types of this behaviour - yet, in this paper we will demonstrate that this is not the case as political advice operates with many pragmatic complexities.

Secondly, political advice is noteworthy also from a more general politeness theoretical point of view. 'Political advice' fits into what Kádár (2017) defines as 'interactional ritual', a point which we explain in more detail in section 2. Very simply put here, political advice is ritual as it animates the assumed 'voice' of the country it represents in the context of the conflict and as such it is a form of 'in-group' behaviour through which a society (or any other social structure) reproduces its values. As a ritual phenomenon, political advice is not so much designed to form a dialogue with the advised country but rather to form alignment (Kádár & Zhang, in the present volume) with those whose voice it represents, i.e., the citizens of the adviser. Put another way, the main message of 'political advice' is not necessarily giving advice: even if it may function as a proposal to engage in a dialogue with another country, ultimately it operates with discursive/rhetorical features that may be relevant, before any

other recipient, to the public of the country it represents.[1] This sense of alignment is present in the genre of political advice in various respects; for instance, the present paper illustrates that often Chinese spokespersons who deliver advice use archaic expressions that are highly complex in nature, and as such they are supposedly aimed at native-level speakers of Chinese.[2] In addition politeness in political advice may be a 'veil' (Pinker et al. 2008) because advice in this context must always be intrusive from the recipient country's point of view, and as such may well represent a certain sense of aggression (see Harris et al. 2009). Ultimately, advice giving represents what politologists such as McCourt describe as a 'domestic-oriented discursive practice', and 'politeness' behaviour in this genre may be more complex than it seems due to its interrelation with alignment.

We use alignment differently from conversation analysis (Hutchby 1997), in the sense that by focusing on monologues we have no way to study how speakers 'recruit' others by taking certain stances (Du Bois 2009) as part of creating intersubjective alignment. Rather, we interpret alignment as a discursive phenomenon of taking stances that are very likely to be echoed by the recipients of a political monologue. In addition, we use alignment on par with (im)politeness, which is different from the conversation analytic use of this term.

An additional reason why political advice is worth studying from a politeness theoretical view is that its study provides insight into how political rhetoric (in particular, rhetorical moralisation) interrelates with politeness (and alignment) which has been a relatively understudied area in pragmatics (but see e.g., Cherry 1988; Magnusson 1992). We point out that the rhetoric of Chinese political advisory texts is designed predominantly for domestic consumption, hence its key function is forming alignment with the domestic public. For instance, we argue that types of Chinese governmental public discourse such as advice are imbued by morally-loaded notions like 'harmony' (*hexie* 和谐), 'reciprocity' (*huhui* 互惠), and 'global peace' (*shijie-heping* 世界和平) which are rooted in Confucian and Marxist moral ideologies (Lu 1999), and as such may be more effective in national rather than international communication. Note that this does not imply that spokespersons are not aware of the presence of international recipients of the advice, but simply that in the collective Chinese culture an individual representative in an event of gravity is supposed to follow binding Chinese

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[1] As we argue in this paper, intercultural 'acceptability' (Sun 2018) is not a key issue in Chinese political advice.

[2] Note that this kind of historical engagement is a typical feature of Chinese communicative style; see e.g., He & Ren (2016).

pragmatic norms. Also, a central rhetorical feature of political advice in the Chinese cultural context is vagueness: in the wake of conflicts, Chinese political stakeholders deliver 'advice' in a significantly vague fashion. Note that vagueness is a frequently occurring phenomenon in political language use (see Gruber 1993). However, a noteworthy feature of Chinese political language use is that vagueness occurs in the context of international conflict instead of other more 'ordinary' scenarios – it would be logical to assume that, as per other forms of advice (Hinkel 1997), a pragmatic criterion for political 'advice' to operate with clarity in the wake of a conflict. Our hypothesis is that vagueness in the Chinese political context is part of the above-discussed politeness veil of a discursive engagement in the course of which those who deliver the advice aim to align with their own citizens. In sum, from a theoretical point of view the data studied is a prime example for self-oriented pragmatic engagement.

The structure of the paper is the following. In section 2 we discuss our research framework: we revisit in more detail our above-discussed claim that political advice has a ritual character, and argue that it is productive to examine it by merging interactional ritual theory with politeness research. Following this, in section 3 we discuss our data and methodology. In section 4, we overview what we regard as the key features of Chinese political advice, by focusing on its rhetorical/discursive features and the implications of these features to politeness theory. Note that we do not make a strict distinction between discourse and rhetoric, due to the monologic and scripted nature of the practice of political advice (Moysey 1982).

2. Model

Our model departs from the above-discussed problem that there is a complex relationship between 'politeness' as a form of other-oriented discursive behaviour (Brown & Levinson 1987) and the practice of political advice. Political advice is 'unsolicited' (see Anderson 2001), and as such it inherently violates the sense of non-intrusion which is a key norm in modern politics (Smith 2014). Because of this, we believe that it is problematic to frame political advice vis-à-vis conventional interpersonal politeness theories. Rather, the most optimal way of capturing its operation is to reinterpret it as a form of ritual according to Kádár's (2017) theory. The main features of political advice which demonstrate its ritual character are as follows: it (1) operates with a potentially complex participation structure, which is (2) emotive/moralising and (3) symbolic by nature, and (4) by

means of which the Chinese spokesperson 'reproduces' their systems of normative values. More specifically:

– Political advice, as with other rituals, operates with a **complex participatory structure** (Goffman 1981), in that the person who delivers the advice acts as an 'animator' rather than a 'principal' of these speeches. That is, the spokesperson who delivers political advice has the ratified authority for doing so but **cannot** change the context of the message. At the same time, there is not a single recipient but rather a complex network of recipients, unlike in dyadic face-to-face interaction. This complex participatory network influences the way in which language is formulated.

– As a related characteristic, political advice is **communal**: the spokesperson not only animates the voice of the authorities (s)he represents, but also her or his public announcement may appeal as much to the citizens of the country that (s)he represents as to the recipient political organisation (see also section 1). In this sense, political advice is certainly not an other-oriented practice, as 'politeness' is conventionally understood in pragmatics (even though it is important to note that this view has been challenged by many, e.g., Kádár & Haugh 2013). In addition, in this paper we demonstrate that Chinese spokespersons prefer making appeals to national communality in their announcements, i.e., political advice is communal also on the metapragmatic level. This communal characteristic distinguishes political advice from other forms of advice previously studied in the (im)politeness field (Wilson et al. 1998; Feng 2013).

– Public announcements tend to involve (and, assumedly, trigger) **emotions**: the raison d'être for an announcement is to deliver a message on something socially important, and as such it operates as an emotively-invested action (Gunther & Thorson 1992). Furthermore, in the present paper we point out that the rhetoric of Chinese political announcements is heavily influenced by the Chinese pragmatic norm of 'genuine emotions' (人情味 *ren'qing'wei*; see Pan & Kádár 2011 and Spencer-Oatey & Kádár 2016).

– Advisory public announcements are also ritual in the sense that there is a strong **symbolic** element in them (Bax 1999). That is, when a spokesperson advises another country to do something or refrain from doing it, all parties (including the spokesperson, the attendants of the announcement, and the viewers/listeners of the news that features the

announcement) tend to be aware of the fact that the advice may have a symbolic function along with its direct message. For instance, some seemingly friendly and moralising advice for another country to refrain from deploying military force in an area may be a warning. However, releasing advice instead of a warning may increase the credibility of the advising party (see below in this paragraph). That is, participants and observers of the practice of political advice are likely to be aware of the fact that it is 'nothing more' than a ritual. This is another reason why the action of political advice has a complex relationship with (im)politeness: to a certain extent, aggression lingers in any advice in the political arena, since the action of advice assumes a certain sense of superiority over the advisee (Pudlinski 2002). Yet, as with any other ritual, the implicit message that the spokesperson communicates needs to be made in the symbolic ritual style of advice for a number of reasons, such as protecting the national face of the country by communicating the message that China is a non-conflictive nation.

– Perhaps most importantly, announcements in which advice recurs are morally-loaded as any other ritual (Wuthnow 1989). For instance, when a spokesperson states that her or his country advises another country to refrain from an action, (s)he makes an implicit or explicit appeal to a national ideology of how things should be in international politics. Such moral appeals can be direct and indirect, but as we point out in this paper Chinese spokespersons tend to use a large number of morally-loaded lexical items that appeal to Confucian and Marxist diplomatic moral principles. Such moralising behaviour may increase the complexity of advice in terms of (im)politeness: moralising assumes a sense of superiority over the other party, and as such it may make such messages ambiguous from the direct recipient's point of view, whilst from the perspective of the indirect recipient (the citizens of the country that advises the other). It certainly increases the credibility of the advice as a message.

Framing advice as a ritual practice also helps us to go beyond the boundaries of 'speech act' theory (cf. Kádár & Haugh 2013). While advice may operate as a single speech act in, for example, face-to-face interaction, it would raise both methodological and theoretical issues to attempt to frame advisory monologues as speech acts.

We follow a discourse analytic uptake to our data, by approaching advice as an action embedded in a broader text, as a discursive genre and practice (Pälli et al. 2009). Note that the ritual features we have overviewed

in this section play a key role in our discursive-rhetorical analysis at section 4: we argue that all the rhetorical features of Chinese political advice demonstrate the fact that political advice operates as a tool by means of which political stakeholders create alignment (Kádár & Zhang 2019) with the Chinese public. Importantly, the relationship between politeness and alignment is not dichotomic but dual in the practice of political advice giving: in our view, the more 'civil' the style of an advice is, the stronger its capacity to create alignment becomes.

3. Data and methodology

Formally there is perhaps no such thing as a purely 'advisory' public political speech; we define those public narratives as 'public advice' in which giving advice to another country is a recurrent motif in the rhetoric/train of thought of the monologue. Since we pursue an interest in the relationship between (im)politeness and political advice, we focus on political speeches delivered in the context of international conflict. Thus, in collecting our data (section 3), we set out from the assumption that scenarios of conflict trigger intensive rhetorical engagement.[3] Accordingly, we intentionally excluded cases such as 'proposals' (*tiyi* 提议), e.g., instances of political talk when Chinese spokespersons propose more intensive economic collaboration with a partner country.

Our dataset consists of instances of political advice delivered in the period between January 2015 and March 2018. These discourses have been drawn from the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China.[4] We analysed in detail 10 political speeches that deliver political advice; the overall length of this dataset is 23,479 Chinese characters. We chose public speeches delivered by Wang Yi 王毅, the Chinese Foreign Minister who also acts as spokesperson for the government in important national matters. In Chinese political culture there is a tendency for public servants to imitate the rhetorical style of their principals (and this is valid to rhetorical styles across other domains of Chinese society, cf. Liu 2009); thus, the speeches studied in our dataset have operated as 'models' for other political talks, as the study of a broader set of 60 speeches has confirmed. Table 1 summarises our data:

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[3] Note that it may be difficult to 'measure' politeness engagement (Watts 2003) across datatypes, and because of this we focus our research to a particular corpus which, in our view, trigger intensive politeness rhetorical engagement, without attempting to compare this dataset with others.

[4] https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/

Table 1: The ten speeches studied

Cases	International conferences	Characters	Dates
1	The opening ceremony of the South-South human rights forum	3,272	7 December 2017
2	The high-level meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Syria	1,233	23 September 2016
3	The meeting of BRICS ministers of Foreign Affairs	1,867	21 September 2016
4	Bo'ao Forum for Asia	1,258	11 April 2018
5	The 13th ASEM foreign ministers' meeting	1,318	21 November 2017
6	The global counter-terrorism forum	2,667	21 October 2016
7	The meeting of the FOCAC Johannesburg Summit	3,601	30 July 2016
8	The 53th Munich security conference	3,792	18 February 2017
9	The fifth ministerial conference of the heart of Asia-Istanbul process	1,864	9 December 2015
10	The sixth GMS summit	2,605	11 March 2018

In terms of methodology, our research is discourse-based in that we examine the features of our data as parts of discursive engagement. We agree with the third-wave approach to linguistic politeness (cf. van der Bom & Grainger, 2015): it is important to study politeness behaviour in diverse data types, including ones that may not fit into the interactional analytic paradigm of the second-wave of this field (e.g., Eelen 2001). We believe that scripted texts provide a prime example to discourse-analytically examine politeness and related behaviour, such as alignment, which differ from what has been studied in the mainstream of the field.

4. The main features of Chinese political advice

In what follows, let us focus on the ways in which politeness and alignment operate as a duality.

4.1. Rhetorical structure

As a starting point of analysis, it is worth looking into the rhetorical structure of Chinese advisory discourses. Note that the term 'structure' does

not refer to the whole of the advisory speech; as Table 1 illustrates, some of the monologues in our dataset are significantly long, and advising recurs in them various times, in the form of recurrent advisory 'moves' (cf. Locher 2006) in the frame of a broader speech. Rather, 'structure' refers to the way in which such individual advisory moves are built up within the broader speech.

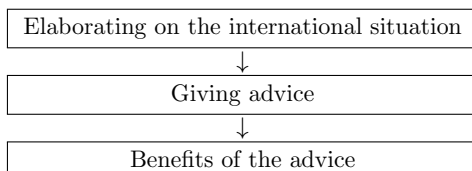Figure 1 illustrates the recurrent structure/logic of advisory discursive moves:

Elaborating on the international situation
↓
Giving advice
↓
Benefits of the advice

Figure 1: The rhetorical moves of Chinese political advice

Before delivering the advice, the Chinese spokesperson tends to describe the international situation that triggers the action, and which constitutes the context for advice-giving. This rhetorical move seems to build the ground for the action of advice giving, by boosting the necessity of implementing the advice. Following this move, the spokesperson delivers the advice, and this step is followed by a third rhetorical move, i.e., the spokesperson elaborates on the benefit(s) of the advice to the addressee. This rhetorical structure coincides with what Kádár (2012) has argued about historical Chinese texts in a more general sense: in historical Chinese rhetoric emphasising the other's benefit is a key politeness strategy.

This rhetorical structure by itself is not particularly significant in understanding the pragmatic dynamics of the monologues studied, in particular if we intend to capture the above-discussed relationship between politeness and alignment (cf. section 1). However, if one examines how the actual steps of this rhetorical structure – such as the above-discussed notion of emphasising 'benefit' – concur, it becomes evident that this rhetorical structure is not so much about building up an argument to save the other's face (e.g., in Brown & Levinson's 1987 sense), or even to convince the other, in the context of intrusion, but rather to position China as a moral country, which is a stance likely to be echoed by the Chinese public. The following example illustrates the operation of this recurrent rhetorical structure:

(1)   面对乱象丛生的世界，联合国的权威需要维护而不是破坏，
       联合国的作用应当加强而不是削弱。我们应更为坚定地维护《联合国宪章》
       的宗旨和原则，更好发挥《宪章》确立的集体安全机制作用，
       进一步提升联合国的治理能力和效率。
       'In the face of a world of chaos, the authority of the United Nations needs to be
       maintained rather than destroyed, and the role of the United Nations should be
       strengthened rather than weakened. We should firmly uphold the purposes and prin-
       ciples of the Charter of the United Nations, give fuller play to the role of the collective
       security mechanism established in the Charter and further enhance the governance
       capacity and efficiency of the United Nations.'

This advisory speech was delivered on the 18th of February 2017 at the
53rd Munich Security Conference, in the context of the U.S. sanctions
against Iran. Essentially, the 'advice' delivered here functions as a warn-
ing for Iran to follow the decisions of the United Nations. The spokesperson
firstly states the role and the function of the U.N. in a dramatic and moral-
ising fashion. Since we will discuss moralisation in section 4.3, here let us
focus on the role of this statement in the rhetorical structure of the po-
litical advice: it seems that the spokesperson states information that is
self-evident to all parties involved. It is exactly this self-evident character-
istic that demonstrates that this is a pragmatically-loaded rhetorical move:
by referring to the international community, the spokesperson frames the
forthcoming advice as moral. As a next step, he delivers the advice itself,
namely that all countries should maintain the authority of the U.N. This
advisory utterance is a veiled warning or reminder to Iran to follow the
regulatory measures of the U.N. Following this statement, he launches the
third move, by arguing that it would be beneficial to all parties involved to
follow this advice, since in this way the governance capacity and efficiency
of the U.N. may be enhanced — as part of this rhetoric, he refers to the
notion of delivering benefit to 'the world' (*quan'shijie* 全世界). A notewor-
thy feature point here is this utopistic sense of the message: as we point
out later in the present analysis (section 4.2), Chinese political discourse
is grounded in Confucian and Marxist rhetoric, and the intercultural effi-
ciency of this rhetoric in the present intercultural context is, at least, ques-
tionable. As Chen and Starosta (1997) have pointed out, Chinese political
rhetoric in intercultural political/formal communication is often made for
domestic 'consumption', and the pragmatics of example (1) seems to con-
firm this claim. Thus, there is a certain sense of contradiction between
the use of a rhetorical structure that aims to build up advice giving in a
'polite' and convincing fashion, and the self/domestic-oriented nature of
the message delivered. Considering that there is an increasing endeavour
of many countries to familiarise themselves with intercultural expectations

(Shen & Darbu 2006), it is logical to argue that if there is 'genuine' form of alignment involved in this rhetorical structure, it is at least as much directed to Chinese people as to the citizens of the country that receives the advice.[5]

4.2. Vagueness and moralisation

The analysis has so far has demonstrated that, in our dataset of political advice, it is difficult to disentangle politeness related to the representatives of another country and the attempts to align with Chinese citizens. This phenomenon becomes even more evident if one examines the style of this discourse genre: Chinese spokespersons use a significantly vague style. This vagueness may be interpreted as a mitigating discursive attempt, considering that it makes the advice more indirect. However, vagueness as a form of mitigation is somewhat ambiguous when it comes to the practice of political advice where it may normally be clear to both the participants and the observers of the event who is being advised. Vagueness comes on par with the use of strongly moralising rhetoric, which expresses stances that are likely to be received positively by the Chinese public.

Vagueness and moralisation are present on the lexical level: Chinese spokespersons prefer using plural pronominal forms. The preference for plural forms is not specifically Chinese: Tabakowska (2002) has found the same phenomenon in political talks delivered in English. In the present dataset, we have found that Chinese spokespersons tend to use the plural pronominal form *women* 我们 'we' in both 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' ways (Yule 1996). Exclusive uses of 'we' are not particularly relevant from the point of the present analysis: in various instances Chinese spokespersons use 'we' to refer to China:

(2) <u>我们</u>同时呼吁各支持国和国际组织在资金、
技术和人力资源等方面为合作项目提供切实和充分支持。
'At the same time, <u>we</u> call on all the supporting countries and international organisations to give practical and full support to the joint projects in terms of funding, technology and human resources.'

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[5] While the study of this topic is beyond the scope of the present paper, it may be noteworthy to compare differences between the cultural evaluations of political advice as an intercultural event (cf. Okano & Brown 2018). Such research could be done, for instance, with a corpus-based approach to online data.

Unlike this exclusive use, inclusive uses of 'we' are noteworthy in understanding the operation of 'politeness' in the context of advice, as the following extract illustrates:

(3)   我们应秉承大小国家一律平等、不同文明一视同仁的原则，相互尊重，平等相待，
      对话解决争端，协商化解分歧。
      'We should adhere to the principle that all countries, big or small, are equal, and
      all civilizations should be treated as equals. We should accord each other in a mu-
      tually respectful fashion, and resolve disputes and differences through dialogue and
      consultation.'

The use of the plural 'we' is inclusive in the respect that it refers to all politically responsible countries and it is part of a veiled criticism of the American government. There is a contradiction between the use of such inclusive forms and the conflict that has led to the release of this advice. This conflict illustrates the above-discussed symbolic ritual nature of 'being polite' in the advisory context. Being inclusive has a strong moral implication (Sverdik et al. 2012), and so the use of inclusive plural forms as part of discursive vagueness may work as a means of gaining the moral upper hand, hence building alignment with Chinese citizens.

The interrelated phenomena of vagueness and moralisation are also present in our data in the ways in which the rhetoric of advisory discourse is constructed. That is, spokespersons seem to prefer formulating advice in a vague form, by talking in a somewhat abstract language instead of proposing actual actions, as the following example illustrates:

(4)   面对当今各种全球性挑战，大国应当以人类和平发展的大局为重，携手合作，
      同舟共济，为世界各国遮风挡雨，而不能各自为政，独善其身，甚至相互对抗。
      'Facing global challenges, the great powers should give top priority to human peace
      and development and join hands and work together to protect the other countries
      in the world in times of difficulties instead of working alone or even confronting one
      another.'

In this extract from an advisory paragraph, the spokesperson delivers advice to the U.S. and Russia to refrain from engaging in an economic/political conflict. While there is no direct reference made to the countries advised, it was supposedly clear to all participants of the meeting where this advice was released that *daguo* 大国 'great powers' refer to the two protagonists of the conflict. In terms of discursive behaviour, this advice is significantly vague, reconciliatory and – most importantly – moralising: the spokesperson only suggests that the two countries involved 'should give top priority to human peace and development' (*yingdang yi renlei he heping fazhan de daju wei zhong* 应当以人类和平发展的大局为重). That is,

while the spokesperson delivers advice, this advice is veiled as an altruistic call to promote peace and development.

The vague and moralising discursive engagement becomes perhaps most visible when Chinese spokespersons use expressions that animate Confucian and Marxist moral ideology. As we have pointed out in section 3.1, a noteworthy contradiction in the rhetoric of Chinese political advice as a genre is that, while it is seemingly designed for intercultural encounters at international media events, the Confucian and Marxist ideological elements in them reveal that it is ultimately serving domestic 'consumption' (Chen & Starosta 1997). In the data studied, there is a set of recurrent terms, which are rooted in the Confucian–Marxist ideological cluster, such as *renlei-mingyun-gongtongti* 人类命运共同体 'a community of shared future for mankind', *heping, wending-yu-fazhan* 和平、稳定与发展 'peace, stability and development', and *hezuo-gongying* 合作共赢 'cooperation based on mutual respect and mutual benefit'. The following table overviews the most frequently occurring terms in our data:

Table 2: The frequency of morally-loaded terms

Ideology	Frequency	Terms (embodiment)
Reciprocity	303	*gongying* 互赢 (mutual win)
		huli 互利 (mutual benefit)
		gongxiang 共享 (mutual sharing)
		gongjian 共建 (mutual building)
Social harmony	277	*guoji* 国际 (international)
		shijie 世界 (world)
		quanqiu 全球 (globe)
		quanqiuhua 全球化 (globalization)
Peace	144	*heping* 和平 (peace)
		pingdeng 平等 (equality)
		baorong 包容 (tolerance)
		anquan 安全 (safety)
Respect for (Chinese) history	25	*lishi* 历史 (history)
		… *nianlai* … 年来 (over the past ... years)
Duty	11	*zeren* 责任 (duty/responsibility)

As Lu (1999) has demonstrated, the ideologies animated in the political talks studied – such as the importance of Chinese historical analogues – represent a cluster of Confucian and Marxist moral ideologies. This ideo-

logical intermix manifests itself on the lexical level. For instance, *heping*
和平 'peace' in the expression *heping-fazhan* 和平发展 is an ancient Con-
fucian value, whereas *fazhan* 发展 is a Chinese buzzword that originates
in Marxist rhetoric. In order to analyse the significance of the above fig-
ures, it is relevant to refer to the size of our dataset of ten advice talks.
While the allocation of morally-loaded words is of course not equal in each
text, in terms of sheer numbers it seems that in each text there are alto-
gether 760 moral lexemes which is a large figure if one considers that these
talks, delivered at events such as U.N. conferences, are relatively short.
In other words, the figures indicate that Chinese spokespersons engage in
an active Confucian–Marxist moral discourse when it comes to encounters
with other countries. This confirms the validity of our hypothesis that it is
difficult to clearly anchor Chinese political advice in other-oriented polite-
ness: if moralisation has any role of creating a sense of interconnectedness,
it is likely here to create alignment with Chinese nationals rather than
expressing 'politeness' to the recipient (section 1). The following extract
illustrates this use of moralising terms:

(5)   和平与发展仍是当今世界的主流。只要各国真正恪守联合国宪章的宗旨和原则，
       就完全可以和平解决争端，避免冲突对抗，在和平相处的基础上实现合作共赢。
       'Peace and development are the principles of the modern world. Only if all countries
       respect the essence and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, can we clearly
       keep peace and avoid conflict, and make sure that no tensions will escalate, hence
       making collaboration and mutual benefit the basis of our relationship.'
                                             (18 February 2017, 53rd Munich Security Conference)

4.3. Set phrases

The analysis has so far focused on those features of Chinese political advice
that can be interpreted as manifestations of both politeness and alignment,
if we accept that politeness and alignment operate as a duality. However,
there is a particular feature of our dataset which, in our view, clearly serves
the building of national alignment, namely, the use of set phrases.
      Chinese political advice is 'rich' in Chinese idioms (Lu 2002). The
abundance of these forms is of course not a sole property of this dis-
course genre: written Chinese in general prefers lexical items that consist
of four character forms (set forms/phrases are of four characters in Chi-
nese). While some of the four character expressions in the texts studied
may be freely coined, in most of the cases they are idiomatic. From the
point of view of the present analysis, an important feature of these set
phrases is that, on the level of interpersonal pragmatics, speakers of Chi-

nese often use these expressions as a ritualistic way of constructing identity (Sutton 2007), i.e., if one uses a larger number of and/or increasingly intricate idiomatic expressions one may boost their image in an interaction. Practically, spokespersons also engage in this practice by using complex and diverse idiomatic expressions. The use of such expressions may not have any sociopragmatic significance from an intercultural point of view; however, it is safe to argue that for the domestic audience these messages significantly increase the rhetorical power of the given message. In other words, in a certain respect there is a hidden alignment game going on in Chinese political advice: the set phrases increase the aligning power of the messages. The following example illustrates the use of set phrases in our data:

(6) 不同的道路和制度没有高下之分，只有特色之别，应兼收并蓄、和而不同，
各美其美，美美与共。
'Not a single path or system is superior to others, as each has its own distinctive features. It is important to draw on the strengths of others and seek harmony without uniformity. All countries should respect others' human rights paths and systems while pursuing their own, and advance human rights development for all.'

The speech quoted here was delivered during the 53rd Munich Security Conference. The advisee here is the U.S. in the context of human rights issues, which has been a subject of debate between the two countries. The spokesperson uses two compound idioms in this brief section, including:

– *jianshou-bingxu, he'er-butong* 兼收并蓄，和而不同 'swallow anything and everything, harmony in diversity', translated as 'draw on the strengths of others and seek harmony without uniformity'

– *gemei-qimei, meimei-yugong* 各美其美，美美与共 'Every form of beauty has its uniqueness, if beauty represents itself with diversity and integrity, the world will be blessed with harmony and unity'.

The first idiom is a reference to a poem by Han Yu 韩愈 (768–824), a poet of the Tang Dynasty (619–907), and the second idiom is a modern coination made by the renowned Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong 费孝通. Such historically/ideologically-loaded set phrases clearly serve, in our view, domestic 'consumption' and are difficult to interpret as attempts to boost intercultural communication with another country. At the same time, it may not be ambitious to argue that they play a key aligning function, i.e., while they are not polite in a strict sense they increase intersubjectivity between the political stakeholders and their citizens.

5. Conclusion

In the present paper we have examined the ways in which politeness and alignment operate in duality in Chinese political advice, hence contributing to recent theoretical research on how to disentangle strict-sense politeness from other forms of pragmatic behaviour (see Kádár 2019 and Kádár & Zhang 2019). We have demonstrated that it is often difficult to disentangle these behavioural types, since advice may operate as a form of politely veiled monologue on the surface and as an attempt to align with the domestic population at the same time. However, certain features of political advice, most typically the use of set phrases, indicate that Chinese political advice may ultimately be a genre that is designed as a form of national public discourse, even though it takes place in the context of international events and in intercultural encounters. The following figure illustrates the operation of politeness and alignment as observed in our project:
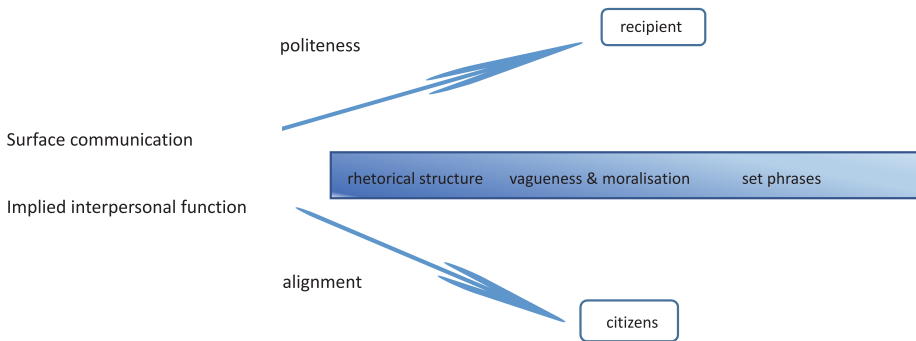

Figure 2: Politeness and alignment in Chinese political advice

Politeness and alignment are illustrated by the two relational arrows pointing to the 'recipient' and 'citizens', i.e., those with whom the advice explicitly and implicitly communicates. The former politeness is, in our view, the veil of political advice and it represents the surface communicative aspect of political advice, while alignment is the default implied pragmatic function. In terms of textual features studied in the analysis, rhetorical structure, vagueness & moralisation and set phrases are all parts of the pragmatic operation of political advice. However, these features are not on par, in the respect that while rhetorical structure may express both politeness and alignment, the other (non-Chinese) oriented politeness function

of being vague and moralising is at least dubious, while set phrases are un-related with politeness per se and may only fulfil the goal of strengthening national intersubjectivity, i.e., they are part of the aligning work of the genre studied. This difference between the various features of the advisory genre is illustrated by the changing colour in the figure.

We hope that the present exploration of politeness and alignment as dual discursive phenomena raises further interest in the study of politeness both in the pragmatics of public discourse (Fairclough 1993) and broader sense linguistic studies. The examination of various issues in the present paper has illustrated that pragmatics provides a powerful tool to exam-ine implicit layers of language (use) – this sense of implicitness may be of interest to other areas in linguistics. The examination of such phenomena may be of course particularly relevant to the analysis of public and/or written discourses (see also Kádár & Zhang 2019), but it is possible that it can also be used to explore pragmatic behaviour in other data types in-cluding, for instance, scenes of public aggression (Kádár & Marquez Reiter 2015). In this respect, the present paper has illustrated that it is fundamen-tal for the field of linguistic (im)politeness research to examine discourse types beyond freely co-constructed face-to-face or online interactions, as the study of text types such as scripted monologues may provide innova-tive insights into the operation of language use. Examining diverse data may also help us to expand research towards a cross-cultural direction: for instance, the question emerges as to which rhetorical devices would utilise political advice in other languages and cultures, and whether it is possi-ble to compare cross-cultural differences resulting from such research with other cross-cultural pragmatic Sino–Western cases (cf. Zhang & Wu 2018). The abundance of future areas of research seems to us to demonstrate that examining politeness and alignment is a key area in the field.

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