nisse einer eigenen umfangreichen Studie. Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie sind detailliert dargestellt und besonders die Kombination von quantitativer und qualitativer Forschung erweist sich als sehr aussagekräftig.

Oliver Engelhardt, Prag

ANDREA GOLATO
COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLIMENT RESPONSES
Grammatical Structure and Sequential Organization
Studien in Discourse and Grammar: 15

The compliment and subsequent response to it have often been viewed in a purely pragmatic or politeness theory context, as formulaic speech events which "grease the social wheels", as noted by Nessa Wolfson in 1983. Andrea Golato, a German national living and teaching in the United States who has previously published articles on grammar and interaction, in her book, "Compliments and Compliment Responses: Grammatical Structure and Sequential Organization", seeks to expand the understanding of compliments using Conversation Analysis to examine compliment and compliment-response sequences containing German complimenting behavior, b) an empirical, Conversation-Analysis based approach to the study of complimenting behavior, i.e. the examination of compliments as parts of longer sequences (as opposed to, e.g. the CA-based work of Anita Pomerantz, who has focused merely on compliment responses), c) the mutual influence of grammar and social interaction, i.e. interlocutors' use of various linguistic resources in compliment turns and their compliment responses, with a particular emphasis on syntax, semantics, and sequence organization and d) recordings of naturally occurring discourse.

In Chapter 2, Golato reviews the various types of data collection methods used in past studies of compliments, most of which "purport to describe actual language use..." (12). These include discourse completion tasks and questionnaires, which reflect, rather, situationally appropriate behavior, "revealing a participant's accumulated experience within a given setting" (13), hence appropriate merely for the study of symbolic action, e.g. the normative response "thank you", covered in etiquette books and elsewhere, which has been noticeably infrequent or absent in many studies of actual compliment responses. In role-plays, where the structuring force is the researcher, subjects may be "providing beliefs about roles they have never played in real life" (16). Field observation, an ethnographic approach in which participants note a given number of interactions or all the interactions over a given period of time is entirely dependent upon the memory and observational skills of the field workers as well as subjective classifications of turns (e.g. a nod as an automatic acceptance of a compliment). Finally, recall protocols, which do generate nat-
urally occurring data, are subject to memory limitations and the absence of interactional details. The data for this study, then, were taken from a corpus of 30 hours of video-taped material and 6 hours of taped telephone conversations. All material was non-elicited, all speakers were family members or friends, with 20 different speakers producing 62 compliment sequences.

In chapter 3, Golato examines the design of the first compliment turns, beginning from the perspective of how the speaker makes "reference to the assessable", the object or ability being evaluated. Golato groups her 62 compliment instances into noun phrases, pronouns, demonstratives, no overt reference, and demonstrative plus noun phrase, noting that nearly half of the corpus compliments lack an overt referring expression. She divides the references up on the basis of position and form and analyzes the compliments based on the position the referring expression has within the entire sequence and the conversation members' orientation toward one another. She adopts an interactional perspective on anaphora which distinguishes between initial reference forms and initial reference positions, taking into view marked and unmarked forms.

There can be no overt reference to the assessable when reference is in locally initial position, giving way to appreciatory sounds, assessment segments, a combination of appreciatory sounds and adjectives, and verbs with adverbs and assessment segments. Direct reference to the assessable is omitted when all co-participants have a common orientation to the object of skill assessed, revealing the operation of Grice's maxim of quantity. This is one way that reference to the assessable implicates recipient design or the tailoring of the utterance to the needs of the recipients.

Golato then describes the syntax and semantics of her German compliments. A typical syntactic feature of the compliment turns are verb-first constructions, which are often connected with preceding utterances to create cohesion between clauses, and right-dislocated elements, or the tendency to place the positively evaluated element at the end of a turn ("this is good this muesli-bread"). In regard to semantic features, the co-participant must establish the compliment's referent and recognize the evaluative lexeme (assessment segment). While verbs such as "love/like" are used in, for example, English to carry the positiveness of a compliment, in German, the positive value of the compliment is usually not carried by the verb, and indeed the data shows that the most common verbs in first compliment turns are none or "sein (to be)". Appreciatory sounds and a limited variety of adjectives are most common for the expression of positiveness, and the most common adjectives found were "schön and gut (nice, good, well, pretty)". Typical for German compliments is the lack of first person pronouns, i.e. speakers do not appear to phrase compliments in terms of their own likes and dislikes. Golato maintains that the design of compliments in the present data is not different from that of general assessments – it is only the context that differs.

In chapter four, Golato challenges the idea of compliments necessarily being expressions of positive face or positive politeness due to serving as "social lubricants", used to "grease the social wheels", establishment or maintenance of social solidarity, as expressed by Manes and Wolfson. Manes
and Wolfson (1981) claim that a compliment can be identified on the basis of its semantic and syntactic regularity. Golato counters this, arguing that an utterance containing the requisite semantic and syntactic characteristics may not necessarily function as a compliment, but rather, can be used to perform other actions and what is crucial is its sequential placement.

When compliments occur either within a dispreferred turn or in response to one, they can serve as rejections to offers, as mitigation of a face-threatening act, as "no thanks, it's really good though", precede critique, such as "that's beautiful, but...", mitigating the face-threatening act of criticizing, or be utilized to elicit an offer in order to avoid a direct request. Compliments in preferred environments remain most common. As parts of preferred second pair parts, they explicitly express the alignment of the second pair part speaker with the first pair part speaker. One example of this is a preferred response of disagreement when a compliment occurs in reaction to self-deprecation (a device known as "fishing for compliments"). Compliments are also "expected" in reaction to noticing, announcements, etc.

The "darker side" of compliments is that they can be perceived as face-threatening acts – the complimenter indirectly expressing envy or request for something.

In chapter 5, Golato analyzes the role of third-parties in the placement and shape of compliments. This is primarily manifested in so-called "second compliments", or those given by a second interlocutor either before or after the recipient has responded. The question posed is that of why a particular turn shape for second compliments (which tends in Golato's data to be minimal, often only one short turn constructional unit or TCU) is used at a particular moment. The answers are represented by different manners of conferring alignment, for example, a gustatory "mmmh" made while eating is minimal as it is considered rude to talk with food in one's mouth, but at the same time is able to express alignment through the sharing of experience or pleasure. Confirmation markers such as nodding can show alignment with a certain membership category (e.g. hosts), which is also done when the compliment serves as a "noticing". Response pursuit markers such as "ne (right)?" in German can occur as an entire turn, to repeat a previously stated utterance, in tag position, to seek agreement by turning the utterance into a first-pair part. Video recording in its entirety is important here, as Golato provides a diagram of a given example and notes that the assessed subject had already been brought up once in conversation. The "brief assessment" is used in situations when the second compliment is more than a single TCU turn. These instances involve some form of elicitation, and the speaker aligns him or herself with both the person delivering the compliment and the person being complimented.

One commonality among the various bits of recorded data is that the second compliment is always placed after first compliment but before the response to it, which is made possible by its minimal form: it doesn't steal the turn. One variable is that there are different types of agreement expressed and different bases for the second assessment. This poses the question of whether a first compliment produces the need for a second one in multi-party talk. The second compliments occurred in the data as expressions of thanks, noticings (situations in which e.g. a guest
comments on an item in a host's home or a friend comments on another friend's hairstyle or clothing), or elicited responses, and the second speaker had access to the assessable, and never as dispreferred pair parts. Golato concludes by commenting on the fact that when a second compliment is "missing", participation framework can usually account for it, it is usually not relevantly "missing" (165–166).

Chapter 6 examines compliment responses. There is no empirically-based research to support the idea that Germans typically reject compliments, Golato notes. She utilizes the compliment response base of Anita Pomerantz (1978). These response types, which are defined by the conflicting acceptance of or agreement with the compliment while avoiding self-praise are acceptances (appreciation token, agreement/second assessment), rejections (disagreements) and solution types for two conflicting preferences (questions-neutral stance, evaluation shift – downgrade, evaluation shift – qualification, referent shift-away from self, referent shift-compliment return, comment history, reinterpretation, ignoring).

In Golato’s data, the acceptance of a compliment using an appreciation marker, e.g. "thank you" is absent. Golato attributes this to the German manner of appreciating a compliment by providing an assessment, e.g. "that’s nice". The most common response, on the other hand, was agreement/acceptance in the form of confirmation using the particle "ja (yes)" or some variant thereof, followed by a similar acceptance involving a "second assessment" made by the complimented individual, often in reaction to a "response pursuit" (such as the particle "ne (right)?"), which contrasts with the American English downgrading in this position described by Pomerantz, but at the same time expresses mutual agreement.

Though she claims that compliment responses are difficult to generalize, Golato analyzes them in regard to their occurrence in preferred or dispreferred first or second pair parts. For example, when the compliment is uttered in the same turn as criticism, the co-participant orient the response toward criticism, and in response to compliment perceived as a request, the recipient offers something. Responses to compliments given as parts of dispreferred second pair parts include rejections to perceived offers and invitations. Responses to compliments in preferred first pair parts, usually when compliments serve as noticings, result in a variety of compliment responses. When compliments express gratitude – e.g. in pre-closing sequences – the response is often an assessment of compliment ("that's nice") functioning also as gratitude. Responses to compliments given in preferred second pair parts – those given as part of a contradiction to a self-deprecation, a response to an announcement, a response to a storytelling, and an expression of thanks vary as well.

Golato’s Germans display the same response types as Americans in terms of rejections and the various solution types for the two conflicting constraints, though the German corpus contains fewer rejections and disagreements than compliment agreements and acceptances (the opposite is true for Pomerantz).

Anecdotal evidence points to Germans often rejecting compliments given to them by Americans. Golato, as her data disagrees with this, poses the question of why Germans believe this about themselves. Her
suspicion is that the difference may lie in context and conversational style. German interactional behavior has been characterized (by other authors) as having a greater emphasis on information-conveying than on social bonding.

The chapter thus culminates in Golato’s analysis of the pragmatic transfer in a cross-cultural encounter between an American complimenter and a German complimentee in an American setting (“I think this is the best tea I’ve ever had”), in which the German responds with a same strength second assessment (“great”) followed by a response pursuit marker (“right?”) and the American hesitates to respond and then continues with a clarification, a repair sequence. She concludes that both cultures have ways of accepting a compliment, but the design of acceptance turns differs drastically. This leads to implications for second language acquisition and teaching.

In the final chapter, Golato summarizes her findings and contributions to the study of talk-in-interaction and interactional linguistics. These are: a) further development of the analysis of sequence organization in its examination of not only compliment turns, but also responses, agreeing second compliments and the relationships between them, for example when compliments function as other speech acts – a phenomenon which could also be analyzed for other speech events, b) additional evidence for the idea that interlocutors react to actions accomplished by utterances and thus demonstrate their keen sensitivity to the sequential organization of unfolding talk-in-interaction. As regards the area of interaction and grammar, Golato also notes that the study a) demonstrates that as concerns interaction and grammar, grammatical choice was shaped by the interaction for which it was used (Chapter 3), supporting the argument that social organization influences grammar, b) contributes to the study of anaphora by corroborating research findings on person reference and extending them to the organization of reference to objects, c) demonstrates that the syntax and semantics of a turn cannot determine the action the turn performs and d) demonstrates that grammar can shape interaction, as certain constructions were used for very specific interactional functions in the design of compliment turns.

The real strength of this book lies in its methodology and approach – the use of recorded (often on video) naturally-occurring conversation as well as the study of compliments as part of a larger sequence. Limits regarding the generalizability of complimenting behavior for an entire language can be found in the settings studied, but the author is well aware of that. The interactants involved are all individuals who know each other well, so it could thus be hypothesized that interactants who are more "foreign" to one another may tend more toward etiquette-book type or other response patterns (see Herbert, 1986). Another of the book’s merits is that it introduces, for the first time, the idea of compliments having both strengthening and mitigating functions (chapter 4) on the basis of the idea that they are regularly placed in both preferred and dispreferred environments.

This type of research makes for an interesting comparison with those using other types of data collection techniques, to the refuting of which Golato devotes a considerable amount of energy. In this context are the issues of topic and gender, i.e. which
assessable objects, abilities, etc. are assessed in compliments and which gender is more likely to give/receive compliments. Golato asserts that certain past research findings revealing, e.g. that women are more likely to give compliments, can be attributed to data collection methods, for instance the prevalence of female researchers recording them.

Golato has created a solid model for application to further contexts and languages. In this vein, it would be possible to use data from Czech sources on communication in various situations in order to create a "Czech model". In fact, Golato herself suggests the study of compliment settings other than those used here (service encounters, encounters in public places, school and workplace settings) as well as a more detailed study of response tokens, which provide information on the interlocutors’ stance. This could be obtained from data found in, among other sources, Hoffmannová, Müllerová, and Ze- man, 1999 (as concerns friends and family, situations similar to that of Golato) and Hoffmannová and Müllerová, 2000 (for talk within institutions) or in other settings, e.g. radio phonein programs (as in Watts, 2003).

Finally, the intercultural component of Golato’s analysis is valuable as well, as she furthers the presentation of pragmatic components of a given language as learnable (and thus teachable). In the course of my own work (Sherman, mentioned in Nekvapil and Neustupný, 2005), I have focused on the exchange of compliments in a variety of settings, however, with the constant variable of the American researcher paying compliments to Czechs in Czech (e.g. in service and shopping encounters as well as familiar ones).

References


