Non-face-to-face international business negotiation: how is national culture reflected in this medium?

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Non-Face-to-Face International Business Negotiation: How is National Culture Reflected in this Medium?

Abstract—With the globalization of the world economy, it is imperative that managers, both present and future, be sensitive to differences in intercultural business communication. In particular, the context of global electronic commerce leads to an increasing use of email in negotiating deals, which to this point has been carried out almost exclusively via face-to-face (FTF) or other high-feedback media (e.g., telephone) but not of non-FTF media. This study, involving 20 participants, uses speech act theory and psycholinguistic analyses to explore the effects of culture on non-FTF communication.

Index Terms—Culture, face-to-face (FTF) communication, negotiation strategy, non-FTF communication, personal pronoun usage, speech act analysis.

With the globalization of the world economy, it is imperative that managers, both present and future, be sensitive to differences in intercultural business communication. In particular, the context of global electronic commerce leads to an increasing use of email in negotiating deals, which to this point has been carried out almost exclusively via face-to-face (FTF) or other high-feedback media (e.g., telephone) but not of non-FTF media, such as email. The increasing popularity of e-commerce between business partners has not only brought about a new economy around this innovation in business communication, but also the possibility to bring different national cultures together via low-cost email negotiation. The question remains, however, as to what extent non-FTF media can support intercultural negotiation?

This study provides a brief review of current non-FTF research and tries to address, through a simulated study, the question of whether non-FTF communication can support the discourse of effective negotiation among international business people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The creation of virtual organizations brings specific consequences for communication (as outlined in the recent special issue of this journal edited by El-Shinnawy [1]). Specifically, non-FTF communication, like email, becomes more important as technology shrinks the world, bringing multiple cultures into virtual relationships, and increases global communication and business opportunities.

In a literature survey of American studies comparing the use of media in negotiation (such as...
Ff, text, audio, video, decision support system, and electronic conference). Poole et al. report that out of 28 situations, Ff contact was considered superior to other media in only two instances [2]. On the other hand, Ff is perceived as the best medium for negotiation by lay people despite the fact that this medium may also personalize conflict. Poole et al. conclude that, while new media are perceived to be overwhelmingly beneficial, three of their characteristics may be harmful, especially in negotiation:

- they reduce time spent on listening;
- they are physically demanding and tiring; and
- they encourage rigid positions.

In education, new media such as email have become an important tool. Both the studies by Zhiting [3] and Vogel et al. (see this issue) [4] show that educational software, if used in an international context, requires special cultural and communicative consideration because teaching and learning styles vary across cultural borders, especially between the West and the Far East. Patterns of communication, to say nothing of values, are deeply rooted in language–culture complexes. Understanding these patterns can be facilitated by technology, as for example in the international business writing course involving Finns, Belgians, and Americans [5]. Because today's business or technical students are tomorrow's business negotiators, we require more sophisticated knowledge of discourse conventions and culture in new media such as email in order to provide students with negotiation skills for the 21st century. Not surprisingly, readers of this journal ranked the importance of specialized discourse media and types of communication as the third most important research topic in professional communication—after reading/writing and collaborative/organizational processes [6]. Computer-mediated communication was recognized as part of the required agenda for teachers and researchers by Lovitt and Goswami when they explored the rhetoric of international professional communication [7]. Moreover, doctoral research in technical, scientific, and business communication between 1992 and 1997 included 13 Ph.D. dissertations devoted to different aspects of computer-mediated communication, including cultural and communicative issues [8].

Specht's interviews of 24 German software experts in nine business units of a company that operates in four countries ranks email, together with openness of communication, as second and third of the top 10 overall success factors in international outsourcing of software development [9]. But what is the potential of non-Ff media, like email, for negotiation strategy development? The basic strategic problem in negotiation seems to be involvement. Most negotiation models and theories [10]–[13] agree that the long term of cooperation in a win–win spirit with effective relationship building is the best option. This requires a high degree of involvement, as has been recognized, for instance, in the case of home mortgage rate negotiations and automobile sales [14].

How does one develop a positive climate, equal power distribution, and flexible procedure using non-Ff media like email? Fig. 1 presents a model for such a situation in two dimensions: fighting (win–lose) versus cooperation (win–win) and avoiding (including walking away) to exploring all options to come to an agreement.

What impact would non-Ff communication have on such win–win strategy? Would it freeze positions of parties in high involvement situations, as Hobson seems to suggest [14]? Hobson uses Fisher and Ury's [10] integrative (win–win), distributive (win–lose) and BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement) concepts to examine the role of context and power in email negotiations, for instance in online auctions. The attraction of persisting in "tit for tat" leads often to the easy BATNA where negotiators decide to walk away if they cannot get what they want in the short term.

To date, there appear to be few studies that trace back such strategies of cooperation versus competition via linguistic analysis. Donnellon [12] presents an interesting outline of pressure of individual preferences on teams which can be used in international business negotiations as well and is relevant to both research questions. Individuals use linguistic forms to identify themselves in teams or as a team, to show independence or interdependence, low or high power, social distance, conflict management tactics, and win–win/win–lose strategies of negotiations. This latter aspect is related closely to our interest in cooperation versus competition. Another possible exception might be Ulijn and Verweij's study on uncertainty reduction behavior of experienced Spanish and Dutch negotiators [15]. That study verified a major communication strategy via the identification and classification of 480 questions in linguistic transcripts of negotiations: asking questions of all kinds appeared to be a critical success factor in both monocultural and intercultural situations. We do not know how well this strategy might work for non-Ff communication, since questions cannot be immediately answered within this medium.

The cooperation and exploration strategy in negotiation requires a strong involvement in the other party's concerns. Johnson et al. [16] pinpoint that such involvement is important for communication of technical innovations between experts and
to the community, but the effect of non-FTF media in attaining such involvement was not yet verified. Linguistic indicators were used by Collot and Belmore [17] to rank-order 25 genres (e.g., FTF, telephone, email, etc.) relative to involvement and informativeness. Those indicators include first-(e.g., we) and second-person (e.g., you) pronouns, contractions (e.g., it’s), hedges (e.g., could), and amplifiers (e.g., very). Based on these indicators, FTF was rated higher in involvement than online chat, which was also rated less narrative and more abstract, but more persuasive than FTF. Effective negotiation would probably require persuasive and less narrative, but also more concrete and involved speech. Relationship building serves this involvement and appeared to be more difficult over email for the 78 American management students than FTF since there were more offers and fewer questions [17]. Higher personal disclosure led to a higher joint outcome and fewer impasses than did avoiding and undisclosed behavior [18]. The ideal rank order of personal pronoun use in negotiation might then be (1st) you, (2nd) we, (3rd) I, and (4th) it or they.

Two studies provide evidence that context is what makes interaction concrete and involved. In the first study, researchers analyzed the use of email by secretarial and administrative staff of the University of Queensland in Australia over a three-month period [18]. This study investigated personal language style, such as politeness markers, reduced subject-matter representation (more abstract style), and absence of metalanguage. In the second study, Murray investigated speech acts in email dialogues [19]. Both studies support the above empirical evidence that email interaction requires more context (as measured via concrete, personalized style using politeness markers and metalanguage) to get the other party involved than FTF or even telephone interaction. Again, the effect of missing context in non-FTF negotiation is uncertain.

As has been shown by the work by Hall [20], [21], the degree of context required is culturally sensitive, ranging from low context cultures, such as Anglo and Nordic, to medium context cultures, such as Latin American, to high context cultures in Far East cultures, symbolized in the onion model by Hofstede going from the low context outer layer to the very high context deepest layer of cultural programming (Hofstede [22]). Possible consequences for communication behavior have been outlined by Ulijn and Kumar [23]. We do not, however, know the impact of context levels on non-FTF communication. A context-reflecting culture (high) would need less language to disambiguate context, whereas a context-creating culture would require more.

Non-FTF communication, like email, can equalize people (e.g., it is more difficult to express status using standard forms, as required in some Latin contexts, over email). Such equalization, however, may contradict Latin and Oriental cultural values. Ma [24] was able to confirm some of those elements in his interview with 18 U.S. and 25 East Asian

Fig. 1. Successful negotiation strategy: Fighting versus cooperating and avoiding versus exploring.
students about their experiences in using computer-mediated communication with each other. East Asians judged that they were more direct and self-disclosing, but the U.S. students thought that the Asians were polite, reserved, indirect, and did not talk about themselves over email.

Mutual perception is crucial in such encounters because correspondents cannot see each other (see Ulijn and St. Amant [25] for the effect of this in a Chinese–Dutch FTF business negotiation). If a Chinese student says: *I can’t stay on relay for too long during a relay chat to turn an invitation to a private channel* this statement would be perceived as explicit and rude by a Far Eastern student but as beating around the bush by a North American. But computer-mediated communication also seems to be seen by East Asians as rare, worry-free, and involving little risk. Therefore, it is uncertain whether new media would really contribute to a serious interpersonal relationship leading to business involvement in Asians’ perception in the same way FTF interaction does.

In this study, we limit our linguistic check on simulated non-FTF negotiation to three specific cultures with respect to two research questions that explore two major aspects of negotiation strategy that are dealt with in a non-FTF setting:

**RQ1:** Cooperation versus competition—How does simulated non-FTF communication contribute to a win–win strategy in negotiation?

**RQ2:** Involvement and medium—How does simulated non-FTF communication affect the participants’ ability to empathize with each other?

The answers to both research questions might be affected by important variables in (international) negotiations, such as national culture, seller/buyer roles, and gender. RQ1 is too qualitative in nature to test those effects, but RQ2 allows us to test seven specific hypotheses on this matter. Our methods for addressing these questions are discussed in the following section.

**METHODS**

This study is an attempt to test a negotiation strategy by linguistic means. In their psycholinguistic analysis of the technical and business communicator, Ulijn and Strother [14] argue that linguistic analysis can be used, in both written and oral negotiation situations, to provide evidence of the effectiveness of communication strategies if the experimental setting meets some design and business relevance requirements. Specifically, in contrast to other deductive, descriptive, ethnographic speech act analyses, this study attempts to apply the quantitative methods of formulating and testing research questions in the hope of increasing the reliability and validity of the speech act analysis.

A simulated buyer–seller case, called “ALYK,” was developed by the second and third authors to gather data from 20 students in the first author’s “International Business Negotiation” class. The simulation was planned for the end of the semester to evaluate the success of the course objectives as stated in the research questions. The simulation was designed to mimic interactive non-FTF communication. As part of the simulation, participants were asked to negotiate the terms of a business deal, where they had to play either the role of a seller or a buyer. Specifically, participants were instructed to write down their statements on a blank sheet of paper and hand it to the opponent. Speaking to each other, gestures, laughing, shaking hands, etc., was not possible because the participants did not know with whom they were negotiating (although they did know each other from class). These restrictions were given to simulate the nonpersonal atmosphere of written, non-FTF communication, like email.

The participants represented three different cultural backgrounds: Anglo (North American), Nordic, and Latin (European) and were placed in a monocultural and an intercultural setting. We made an attempt to rule out gender and buyer/seller role bias and to keep independent variables such as mono- and intercultural dyads under control as much as possible within the constraints of an intercultural negotiation class (Tables I and II). In sum, half of the simulated negotiations were intercultural and half monocultural, of which two involved participants of the same nationality. It is important to note that five of the 20 students had professional experience.

The exact terms to be negotiated, as quoted from the experimental task, were:

**Task:** Seller wants to sell computers for the below mentioned conditions:

**Price per computer:** $1650–$2000.

**Delivery time:** 30, 60, 90 days. The aim of the seller is to deliver as late as possible. The aim of the buyer is to get delivery as soon as possible.

**Payment conditions:** 30, 60, 90 days after delivery. The aim of the seller is to get paid as soon as possible. The aim of the buyer is to pay as late as possible.

Since there are obvious colliding interests in each negotiation, these interests have to be balanced. Therefore, one seller and one buyer have to negotiate the deal. Imagine that buyer and seller are far away from each other and
Participants were given 15 minutes to negotiate the terms of the deal. From the 20 participants, we received 10 usable negotiation transcripts. The combined text of most of the simulations contained one page of written statements. The negotiation almost always began when the buyer stated his or her interest in purchasing some computers from the computer dealer. Introductions were rare. A discussion and mutual statement of objections, suggestions, and explanations were most common steps toward reaching an agreement. Disagreements or partial agreements to suggestions were followed by explanations of the negotiators’ positions. The general discourse was about the facts and terms of the deal. Further proposals for a long-term relationship were also made so both the seller and the buyer could broaden the discussion base.

To explore both of our research questions, we used psycholinguistic analysis to identify cooperative attitude (including its lack) and metacommunicative behavior to verify the involvement of the negotiation parties on the basis of the nonpublished cluster-factorized list of Van der Wijst and Noordman [26] quoted by Ulijn and Strother [13]. Our methods relate to the findings by Condon and Cech [27], who compared FTF with computer-mediated decision-making interactions and ascertained a three times higher use of metalanguage in the electronic condition to stimulate socializing at a distance. Electronic discourse seems to be situated between the purely oral and written modes of communication. A linguistic analysis by Werry [28] indicated that Internet Relayed Chat (IRC) is shaped at many different levels by the drive to reproduce and simulate the discursive style of FTF spoken dialogues.

The transcripts of our simulated negotiations were categorized into four clusters of speech acts for each turn identified in the transcripts of the 10 negotiation interactions:

- Noncooperative Behavior (N): i.e., criticize, deny, disapprove, object, reject, show indignation, irritation, etc.
- Cooperative Behavior (C): i.e., admit, approach, be forthcoming, confirm, inspire confidence, emphasize cooperation, show goodwill, etc.
- General Speech Acts (G): i.e., ask (for understanding, confirmation, information), explain, request, stipulate, suggest, etc.
- Metacommunicative Speech Acts (M): i.e., conclude, close, engage, offer, promise, propose, remind, repeat, resume, specify, etc.

For illustration purposes, the transcript of one negotiation after speech act categorization appears in the Table II.

Personal pronoun analysis has been used to identify involvement and empathy. Yates [29] compared computer-mediated communication with the written and spoken modes. For electronic communication, the first person pronouns (I, we) were used most, followed by the second person pronoun (you). In contrast, in emailed negotiation the third person pronoun (s/he, it, they) was used much less. The predominant use of the first person pronoun has been confirmed for a corpus of 115,618 words of electronic English language by Collot and Belmore [17]. Their findings were comparable in frequency of use with Biber’s corpus of one million written and 500,000 spoken English words in which the use of the first person pronoun was twice as frequent in the Electronic Language Corpus, with the use of third person pronouns equal. Unfortunately, the use of the second person pronoun was not analyzed. It will be possible to compare our findings with those two studies.

Applying this earlier work by Yates [29] and Collot and Belmore [17], we identified all personal pronouns in the transcripts of the simulated negotiations as a measure of involvement and empathy. Because of the small scale of the sample and potential differences in languages, a nonparametric statistical interference analysis was used to analyze personal pronoun use [30].

### Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nordic</th>
<th>Anglo</th>
<th>Latin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
our samples comprise one sheet of written text (the negotiation transcript) and the participants only had 15 minutes of time, we assume that the average usage of pronouns is symmetrically distributed around a mean value. Therefore, the Wilcoxon rank sum test (as part of SPSS, a standard social sciences software package) could be used because it can be considered a nonparametric equivalent of the unpaired t-test. It is used to test the hypothesis that two independent samples have come from the same population. Because it is nonparametric, it makes no assumptions about the distribution of the data.

**RESULTS**

We begin our discussion in this section by focusing on the two research questions posed earlier.

**Cooperation Versus Competition** In this section, we address our question: How does simulated non-FTF communication contribute to a win–win strategy in negotiation? (RQ1). Fig. 2 presents the distribution of the total of 187 speech acts found in the 10 simulated negotiation transcripts.

The balance between cooperative and noncooperative behavior (e.g., as indicated by the use of confirm or inspire versus reject or deny) and between general (as indicated by the use of ask or request)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn No.</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Speech Act Categorization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Buyer</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Buyer</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Buyer</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Buyer</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Buyer</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE II**

**SAMPLE ANALYZED NEGOTIATION TRANSCRIPT**

Fig. 2. Proportion of four speech act clusters in transcripts of a simulated negotiation.
and metacommunicative speech acts (as indicated by the use of repeat or explain) is roughly equal. However, about two-thirds of all speech acts were either general or metacommunicative rather than indicative of negotiation strategy (cooperative or “win–win” versus noncooperative or “win–lose”). Thus, the general and metacommunicative speech acts were used two times more frequently than the noncooperative and cooperative ones. Both sets of clusters are in balance, confirming a negotiation interaction somewhere between fighting and cooperating with a tendency to more win–win (see Fig. 1 again). This is in line with the objective of most negotiation training: in the long run, one wins more through cooperation than through competition. The predominant use of general and, in particular, metacommunicative speech acts suggests that negotiators who were interacting non-FTF had to express their involvement in the negotiation more explicitly, thus using the language of negotiation strategy less.

**Involvement and Medium** In this section, we address our question: How does simulated non-FTF communication affect the participants’ ability to empathize with each other? (RQ2). Table III gives the results of the frequency count of the three types of personal pronouns in three culture clusters distributed over seven nationalities, seller and buyer roles, and gender in our simulated negotiations.

Table III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negotiation Pairs (n = 10)</th>
<th>Nationality (n = 7)</th>
<th>Culture (n = 3)</th>
<th>Seller Use of Pronouns</th>
<th>Buyer Use of Pronouns</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st Incl</td>
<td>2nd Excl</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Canada, Finland</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Canada, France</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Netherlands, Netherlands</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sweden, Canada</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Canada, Sweden</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Finland, Sweden</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Sweden, Sweden</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 France, USA</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 France, Columbia</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sweden, Finland</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>Nordic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can generally say that expressions about their own positions were used and objections to the other party were made. This means that the usage of first and second person pronouns was quite frequent, with both sellers and buyers using only 11 instances of the third person pronouns. The overall underuse of the third person pronoun might also be the result of the nature of the simulation case itself, since it does not involve third parties explicitly. An additional comment for the figure of first person pronouns is needed because the pronoun we can have an inclusive (you and I equals we) and an exclusive (me and others equals we) meaning. This distinction is important because by frequently using the inclusive version of...
the first person pronouns, the person's language indicates an atmosphere of solidarity and politeness and that he or she wants to bind the other entity to himself and build a long-term relationship. By often using the exclusive meaning of the first person pronoun, the negotiator indicates a more distant, not necessarily disrespectful, position toward the other party. As a matter of fact, nearly every usage of the first person pronoun was intended to have an exclusive meaning, even in a multicultural environment of the classroom, where different cultures were represented. This brings us to the conclusion that the earlier mentioned ideal rank order of personal pronoun use in negotiation (1st you, 2nd we, 3rd I, 4th it, they) is not yet reached at the end of this course.

Table IV presents the results of hypotheses about possible statistical differences based on personal pronoun usage. Although there is no significant difference between sellers and buyers, sellers used fewer second person pronouns, which makes it more difficult for them to put themselves in the shoes of the other party—an important objective for the seller. Moreover, the use of inclusive we would allow the same strategy of empathy and involvement than the exclusive we that is nearly equivalent to I. Empathy or involvement building in a simulated emailed negotiation may be possible, but it would require many general and metacommunicative speech acts. And still computer-mediated communication might seduce the negotiators to overuse I and not an inclusive we or an inviting you. A win–win strategy through noon-FTF, as it is simulated here in a non-FTF setting would require additional training to get away from an egocentric bargaining position.

We will now review the possible effects of national culture, seller/buyer role, and gender.

**National Culture** Although the participants are from different cultures, the general distribution over the usage of the first, second, and third person pronouns is approximately the same. Every culture uses more first and second than third person pronouns. A more sophisticated analysis here is not possible because of the differences in sample scales (for both the Anglo and Latin culture 5 and for the Nordic culture 12). There seem to be, however, a slight tendency toward a cultural effect: Anglos (U.S. and Canada) were using more first person pronouns, but Nordics (The Netherlands, Sweden, and Finland) fewer first person pronouns than Latins (France and Colombia). Both Anglos and Latins used the significantly more inclusive we (Wilcoxon test at $p<0.05$ and $p<0.10$, respectively, see Table IV) and I and exclusive we (both at $p<0.10$) than the two other national culture clusters. Always lumping Anglos and Nordics together in one Anglo-Germanic camp is not wise. The Nordics seem to be less egocentric in these data, but the general order of descending frequency of use of pronouns is still first, second, third, whereas the negotiation strategy advice says: Use more you than we, than I being indifferent to third person pronouns (second, first, third). In general, all cultures have problems with empathy and involvement building through the use of second person pronouns.

### TABLE IV

**Significance Effects of Seller or Buyer Role and Culture on Pronoun Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Use of Pronouns</th>
<th>1st (We, I)</th>
<th>2nd (You)</th>
<th>3rd (They, It)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Higher pronoun use of the Anglo culture in comparison to both other cultures.</td>
<td>Inclusive (We, I)</td>
<td>Significance at $p&lt;0.05$</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Higher pronoun use of the Nordic culture in comparison to both other cultures.</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Higher pronoun use of the Latin culture in comparison to both other cultures.</td>
<td>Inclusive (We, I)</td>
<td>Significance at $p&lt;0.05$</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Higher pronoun use of the seller in comparison to the buyer.</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Significance at $p&lt;0.05$</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Higher pronoun use of the buyer in comparison to the seller.</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Higher pronoun use of males in comparison to females.</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Higher pronoun use of females in comparison to males.</td>
<td>Significance at $p&lt;0.05$</td>
<td>Significance at $p&lt;0.05$</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS = Not Significant
**Seller and Buyer** For sellers, the total absolute usage of the first person pronoun is 56 and for buyers 68. The average usage of the exclusive first person pronouns is nearly the same for both (no significant difference on the Wilcoxon test), but for the usage of the second person pronouns the Wilcoxon signed ranks-test gives a significant difference at p<0.05 (Table IV). Sellers might have used significantly more you and first and second person pronouns than males (significantly more first and second in independent, since the genders did not when buyers have easy access for males and females are for the exclusive first person pronouns, but sellers more so than buyers. This is OK if buyers accept more aggressive marketing, but not when buyers have easy access to other suppliers, such as in the ALYK simulation.

**Male and Female** The samples for males and females are independent, since the genders did not necessarily take part in the same simulations. Females use significantly more first and second person pronouns than males (p<0.05, Table IV). Are they more person-oriented than males? There is an indication also that for males the distribution between the usage of the first and second person pronouns is more balanced. Both genders use first person pronouns most often instead of second or third, but females seem to be more biased toward the use of the first person pronoun. Are females more prudent to be empathetic or to get involved in such depersonalized interaction, as in this simulation? In general, both genders in our study have problems with empathy and involvement building through the use of second person pronouns, but females seem to have more than males.

In sum, on the basis of this pilot study we may state that empathy or involvement building in a simulated non-FTF negotiation is possible but needs not only more metacommunicative and general speech acts, but also more explicitly yous and inclusive uses to realize the important negotiation strategy of showing empathy for other party to get a win–win deal. We would argue that this finding would apply to other non-FTF negotiations, since the real FTF would always need less metacommunicative acts and have many types of nonverbal incentives to use you, such as eye contact, gestures, and other body language with the possibility of immediate feedback which is absent from any non-FTF.

**DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

On the basis of these preliminary results, we can surmise that non-FTF communication does allow negotiators to employ a cooperative win–win strategy (as recommended by negotiation strategy training), but that the empathy or involvement building required in non-FTF interaction detracts from the win–win strategy by requiring an excessive and perhaps cumbersome use of general and metacommunicative acts to compensate for the lack of the context and nonverbal cues available. The need for this metalanguage might also drive an excessive use of first person pronouns as negotiators produce self-disclosure statements, contradicting the dictate of win–win negotiation strategy. In these respects, our findings support those of earlier studies [27], [29], [17]. In contrast, our findings do not corroborate Hall’s [20], [21] or Hofstede’s [22] distinction between low context (Anglo, Nordic) and high context (Latin) negotiators in this simulated non-FTF context.

This study demonstrates that linguistic analysis both at the personal pronoun level and the speech act level is an excellent way to test negotiation strategies. Linguistic analysis can also be a method for identifying intercultural effects between experienced negotiators, as has been evidenced for FTF in Dutch/French [26]. Dutch/Spanish [13] and in Dutch/Finnish/Chinese [31] business negotiations. We hope our methods will prompt others to test specific hypotheses for business communication. In addition, we feel our methods suggest a way of use non-FTF communication, like email, in negotiation training courses.

Our findings require verification in well-controlled experimental studies to meet some obvious methodological shortcomings. Some suggested starting points for future research follow.

1. Although present-day students are the business managers/negotiators of the near future, studies involving professional negotiators are needed to validate linguistic usage in the business world.

2. To allow a confident measurement of effects of culture on non-FTF negotiation, adequate sampling is needed to follow up the results of this pilot study. For instance, female and male negotiators should be compared in the same buyer and seller roles with more adequate sampling than was possible in this study. In general, females are reputed to be better listeners, but the females in our sample appeared more reluctant to build business relationships through non-FTF communication.

3. Studies should compare the effects of computer-mediated and FTF communication on business relationships for “strangers” to ascertain whether non-FTF is more effective after a relationship is developed FTF.

4. Studies might compare simulations where variables are controlled with actual business negotiations to
increase ecological validity of findings. national culture reflects discourse in non-FTF international business negotiation.

We hope these recommendations will lead to future work on how

REFERENCES


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Andreas Lincke started his studies of industrial engineering at the faculty of Economics at the University of Technology, Darmstadt, Germany, in 1994. After having gained intercultural experience while working at a large industrial company in Ireland, in 1997, he earned a scholarship which enabled him to study at Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands, in 1998. There he did research in the field of e-based international business negotiations together with Yunus Karakaya under the supervision of Professor Ulijn. He was involved in a similar project for his final thesis at Tilburg University, The Netherlands. He graduated in November 2000, and he is now working on his Ph.D. dissertation in the field of intercultural negotiations in e-commerce.

Yunus Karakaya is currently a student of industrial engineering with electronics engineering as his technical interest. In addition to his education, he has been involved in several business consulting projects. Being a son of a Turkish worker in Germany, he has much personal experience with intercultural communication. Mr. Karakaya is studying at Darmstadt University of Technology, Darmstadt, Germany and will graduate at the end of 2001.