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## 15. Advances in methods and theory for research in international business negotiations

*John L. Graham*

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When I began my studies of international business negotiations in the late 1970s the best practical information available on the topic came from the United States Navy. For more than 200 years naval officers had bargained in foreign ports for supplies for their ships. Their advice was codified in manuals based on their experiences. The military still provides information for our military personnel operating in foreign countries. Almost all the pertinent academic literature of the 1970s focused on political and diplomatic negotiations, much of it related to peace and disarmament topics. The prominent exception to this characterization of the literature on international business negotiations was the seminal work of anthropologist Edward Hall (1959).

In the four decades since, the importance of international trade has burgeoned, from 17 percent of world gross domestic product to over 37 percent now. The academic literature on international commercial negotiations has not kept up. We mostly still rely on the theory of integrative bargaining, vintage 1970s (cf. Rubin and Brown 1974). The literature also suffers from an American social psychological ethnocentrism with its emphases on experimental designs, the associated reductionism of simple group comparisons as opposed to comprehensive models of behavior, student samples that represent a strong preference for internal validity at the expense of external validity, and a dearth of replications. Much of my own work is guilty of these shortcomings. The purpose of this chapter is to stimulate discussions about different approaches to the study of international business negotiations. The usefulness of alternative methods and theories will be emphasized, not research findings. Finally, in-depth case analyses of actual international commercial negotiations (cf. Weiss 1987 is a classic; Lewicki, Barry, and Saunders 2014) have been quite valuable, rarely done, and are generally ignored in this discussion. A second goal here is to demonstrate how creativity and invention are keys to business negotiations, particularly in international and cross-cultural ones.

The key to understanding social phenomena is “triangulation” of findings across diverse methods of research. Often we have found consistency across methods, but in early work we have also discovered discrepancies. For example, when we interviewed Americans who had negotiated with Japanese, their comments were consistent with those of Van Zandt (1970), “Negotiations take much longer.” And, when in the behavioral science laboratory we match American negotiators with Japanese, the negotiations take longer (an average of about 25 minutes for Americans with

Americans, 35 minutes for Americans with Japanese). So, in this respect, our findings are consistent for both interviews and laboratory observations. Alternatively, when we talk with Americans who have negotiated with Japanese, universally they describe them as being “poker faced”, displaying no facial expressions. However, in the laboratory simulations, we focused a camera on each person’s face and recorded all facial expressions. We then counted them, finding no difference in the number of facial expressions (smiles and frowns). Apparently, Americans are unable to “read” Japanese expressions, and they wrongly describe Japanese as expressionless. Thus, discrepancies demonstrate the value of balancing and comparing research methods and results.

The rest of the chapter is divided into five parts:

1. A brief review of the extant literature on the topic of international business negotiations.
2. A description of the methods used in our laboratory studies of negotiation behaviors, processes, and outcomes in 22 countries.
3. Applications of two advances in measurement, linguistic distance, and facial expression coding technologies.
4. A discussion of qualitative approaches that include methods focused on emic (versus etic) interpretation.
5. We close the chapter with a third theory of negotiation, one that goes beyond the American views of competitive and integrative bargain theories, and one that emphasizes relationships over agreements and the search for mutual opportunities over problem solving.

## A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Despite the importance of the topic (cf. Salacuse 2010), empirical studies of the effects of culture on negotiation outcomes and processes remain infrequent (e.g., Lewicki, Barry, and Saunders 2016; Reynolds, Simintiras, and Vlachou 2003). Negotiators from more collectivistic cultures have been found to achieve higher joint outcomes (Lituchy 1997; Arunachalam, Wall, and Chan 1998). Complex patterns of difference in negotiation outcomes across cultures have been reported by Brett et al. (1998) and Brett (2001). Generally, cross-cultural negotiations often produce lower joint outcomes than intracultural ones (e.g., Brett and Okumura 1998; Adler and Graham 1989; Natlandsmyr and Rognes 1995).

Lewicki et al. (2016) add that culture has been shown to influence a variety of negotiation processes: e.g., concession making (Faure 1999), the use of representational strategies (Adler, Graham, and Schwarz 1987), information exchange (Adair, Okumura, and Brett 2001), interruptions (Adler, Brahm, and Graham 1992), and extreme offers (Gelfand and Christakopoulou 1999). The work of both Hall (1976) and Hofstede (2003) proved useful for predicting the observed behavioral differ-

ences in several of the studies in this area (Reynolds et al. 2003; Samaha, Beck, and Palmatier 2014).

Aslani et al. (2016) report that negotiators from different cultures tend to rely on different negotiation strategies with concomitant outcomes: Middle Easterners and Chinese more frequently take a competitive approach and Americans more often a cooperative one. Liu and Wilson (2011) found the same distinction between American and Chinese negotiators.

More recent work in the field has demonstrated that the well-accepted relationships between negotiation strategies and outcomes may be moderated by other factors: intracultural conditions versus intercultural (Liu, Friedman, Barry, Gelfand, and Zhang 2012) and a holistic or analytical mindset (Brett, Gunia, and Teucher 2017). Relatedly, Liu and Wilson found an important relationship between integrative issue linking (a kind of holistic approach) and higher joint gains. Gelfand et al. (2015) introduce a useful linguistic concept, honor talk, while providing measures, reporting cultural variation in content between Americans and Egyptians, and demonstrating its analytical value (including culture-based moderating effects).

We agree with a general criticism of the empirical literature that it tends to ignore the social context of international negotiations (Jonsson 2015). Indeed, the emphasis by those working in the area has been on rational processes (e.g., game theory) rather than on emotions (exceptions include Graham 1990; Gelfand and Brett 2004; Lee, Yang, and Graham 2006) and feelings of interpersonal attraction and relationships. Moreover, Jonsson (2015, p. 7) posits, “Whereas ideas about social dynamics emanate from a focus on individuals, international negotiations take place at a level of aggregation and representation most remote from the individual level.”

Finally, we are most pleased to see an increasing interest in the literature in notions of creativity in negotiations (e.g., Crotty and Brett 2012; Gelfand et al. 2015; and Aslani et al. 2016). Please see more on creativity and inventiveness at the end of the chapter.

## REPLICATIONS AND EXTENSION OF GRAHAM ET AL. (1994)

The validity of a problem-solving model of buyer–seller negotiations was explored by Graham, Mintu-Winsatt, and Rodgers (1994). The theoretical model employed is represented in Figure 15.1. A variety of theories and methods were applied in our studies: marketing science, decision analysis, behavioral economics, game theory, social psychology, anthropology, linguistics, sociolinguistics, content analysis, and structural equations modeling. The key construct in the model is a problem-solving approach (PSA) to negotiation. Among the several conceptually overlapping terms such as representational, cooperative, or direct/open bargaining, question and answer, and soft-line strategies, *integrative negotiation* is perhaps the most commonly used label currently. The PSA approach emphasizes asking questions and exchanging information about negotiators’ and their partners’ needs and interests in order to

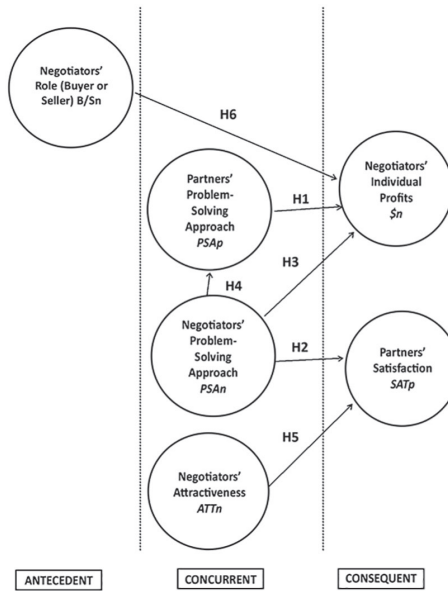


Figure 15.1 *A model of buyer-seller negotiations*

achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. This is often seen as the opposite of *distributive bargaining*, sometimes referred to as individualistic, competitive, substantiation and offers, or hardline approaches to negotiation (cf. Pruitt 1981). Individual profits comprise the economic outcome. The model also includes relational constructs as well – interpersonal attraction and negotiator satisfaction, both of which hold implications beyond the immediate transaction.

In a series of studies my colleagues and I have used more than 1,200 business people from 22 distinct cultural groups as participants in a bargaining simulation (i.e., Kelley's three-product buyer-seller game, 1966). All participants were at least 25 years old and had at least two years of full-time work experience in their respective countries. They completed questionnaires following the simulation yielding measures of PSA, interpersonal attraction, and negotiator satisfaction. Individual profit levels achieved were recorded for each negotiator. Please see Graham et al.'s (1994) article for a detailed description of the methods used. Both theoretical and measurement issues were considered using structural equations and partial least squares (PLS) as the primary data analysis approaches (Bagozzi 1980). The results regarding the universality of the model first developed in the United States proved equivocal. That is, findings varied across cultural groups in most cases. However, we concluded that the six-hypotheses theoretical model still appears to be a useful tool for understanding how business negotiations vary across cultural groups.

In Table 15.1 we only report findings regarding five of the 22 cultural groups, as our purpose is to demonstrate methods and potential results.

*Table 15.1 Questionnaire analysis: means (s.d. and PLS parameter estimates)*

Cultures (n =)	Brazil (70)	Germany (44)	Japan (44)	Russia (56)	United States (160)
Individual profits (\$)	46.4 (10.3)	40.9 (12.6)	47.9 (7.7)	43.0 (11.3)	44.9 (11.1)
Satisfaction	16.6 (3.1)	14.0 (2.8)	15.3 (3.4)	14.6 (3.2)	14.6 (3.2)
Problem-solving approach	10.4 (2.2)	9.1 (2.1)	10.3 (2.2)	11.4 (2.3)	9.6 (2.6)
Negotiator attractiveness	12.8 (2.0)	10.9 (2.2)	12.0 (2.0)	12.4 (2.3)	11.9 (2.3)
H1 PSAn->\$n	0.12	0.23	-0.09	0.24*	0.28**
H2 PSAn->SATp	0.06	0.33**	-0.07	0.14	0.14
H3 PSAn->\$n	-0.11	-0.19	-0.15	0.1	-0.01
H4 PSAn->PSAp	-0.13	0.34**	0.36**	0.40**	0.29**
H5 ATTN->SATp	0.42**	0.42**	0.39**	0.72**	0.39**
H6 B/\$n->\$n	0.05	0.13	0.43**	0.1	0.04

Note: \*\* = p < 0.05, \* = p < 0.10.

### **A New Approach to Managing Translation Problems in Questionnaires**

Traditionally, three approaches to ensure the quality of translations of questionnaires are recommended: back translation, parallel translation, and decentering (for details see Cateora, Money, Gilly, and Graham (2020). Others recommend ways to mitigate translations problems through statistical approaches (cf., Baumgartner and Steenkamp 2001).

In our studies, we take an additional step to ameliorate translation imprecision. Using PLS formative indicators (Fornell and Bookstein 1982; SmartPLS.com is recommended) allows researchers to maximize the information imbedded in translated multi-item measures. Please see Graham et al. (1994, pp. 79–81) for the entire argument.

### **Observational Measures**

Using the approach detailed in Graham (1985, 1993), we also studied the verbal behaviors of negotiators in the five cultures (six negotiators in each of the groups were videotaped). Using a content analysis scheme developed by Angelmar and Stern (1978) for studying bargaining in a marketing setting, 11 verbal behaviors were coded using transcripts of the videotaped negotiations. The numbers in the body of Table 15.2 are the percentages of statements that were classified into each category. That is, on average for the six Brazilian negotiators, 3 percent of their statements were classified as promises, 2 percent were threats, 22 percent were questions, and so on. Please see Table 15.2.

We appreciate that six participants cannot possibly represent the cultural variety of entire regions or countries. Indeed, neither can 30 or even 160 participants. However, given the expenses of time and money in creating and analyzing videotape data, we think this is a reasonable start in going beyond the survey and experimental methods and measures typical in the research area. Also, in another study (cf. Roemer, Neu,

*Table 15.2 Verbal behaviors (content analysis, percentages, n=6)*

	Brazil	Germany	Japan	Russia	United States
Promise	3	7	7	5	8
Threat	2	3	4	3	4
Recommendation	5	5	7	4	4
Warning	1	1	2	0	1
Reward	2	4	1	3	2
Punishment	3	2	1	1	3
Normative appeal	1	1	4	1	2
Commitment	8	9	15	1	13
Self-disclosure	39	47	34	40	36
Question	22	11	20	27	20
Command	14	12	8	7	6

*Table 15.3 Linguistic style and non-verbal behaviors (per 30 minutes of interaction, n=6)*

	Brazil	Germany	Japan	Russia	United States
“No”	41.9	6.7	1.9	2.3	4.5
“You”	90.4	39.7	31.5	23.6	55.1
Silent period	0	0	2.5	3.7	1.7
Conversational overlaps	14.6	20.8	6.2	13.3	5.1
Facial gazing	15.6	10.2	3.9	8.7	10
Touching	4.7	0	0	0	0

Garb, and Graham 1999) we have conducted similar analyses of larger numbers of Americans (n=30) and Russians (n=26) and compared them to our analyses reported here wherein n=6 for all groups. The correlations between the larger and smaller samples are greater than  $r=.98$ ,  $p<0.01$  for the arrays of behaviors for both the Russian and American groups.

We also used the transcripts and direct observations of the videotapes to develop six sociolinguistic measures of the interactions: the frequencies of the words “no” and “you,” silent periods of ten seconds or longer, conversational overlaps (instances of simultaneous talking), and touching. Also, the time of facial gazing (per 30 minutes of interaction) was coded for each negotiator. While our efforts here merely scratch the surface of these kinds of behavioral analyses, they still provide indications of substantial cultural differences. Please see Table 15.3.

### **Summary Descriptions Based on Observational Methods**

Following are further descriptions of the distinctive aspects of each of five of the cultural groups we videotaped. Certainly, we cannot draw conclusions about the individual cultures from an analysis of only six business people in each, but the suggested cultural differences are worthwhile to consider briefly.

### **Japan**

Consistent with most descriptions of Japanese negotiation behavior in the literature, the results of this analysis suggest their style of interaction to be the least aggressive (or most polite). Threats, commands, and warnings appear to be deemphasized in favor of the more positive promises, recommendations, and commitments. Particularly indicative of their polite conversational style is their infrequent use of “no” and “you” and facial gazing, as well as more frequent silent periods.

### **Russia**

The Russians’ style was quite different from that of any other European group, and, indeed, was quite similar in many respects to the style of the Japanese. They used “no” and “you” infrequently and used the most silent periods of any group. Only the Japanese did less facial gazing, and only the Chinese asked a greater percentage of questions.

### **Germany**

The behaviors of the Germans are difficult to characterize because they fell toward the center of almost all the continua. However, the Germans were exceptional in the high percentage of self-disclosures at 47 percent and the low percentage of questions at 11 percent.

### **Brazil**

The Brazilian business people were quite aggressive. They used the highest percentage of commands of all the groups. On average, the Brazilians said the word “no” 42 times, “you” 90 times, and touched one another on the arm about five times during 30 minutes of negotiation. Facial gazing was also high.

### **United States**

Like the Germans, the Americans fell in the middle of most continua. They did interrupt one another less frequently than all the others, but that was their sole distinction.

## **Differences in Negotiation Profiles across Cultural Groups**

In this last section we take one more step in exploring, or perhaps exploiting the empirical data developed in this study. So far in this research we have analyzed our data using a data matrix with countries on the vertical axis and negotiation variables across the horizontal axis. Here we have rotated that matrix allowing us to examine the differences in negotiation profiles of each cultural group against the profiles of the other four cultural groups. That is, we have created a profile for each group using the 27 most salient variables in the study. These 27 indicants of cultural difference are listed in Table 15.4, and the results of the analysis are presented in Table 15.5. In addition to rotating the matrix, we also standardized all the measures to a range of 0 to 1.



Table 15.4 *Elements of cultural negotiation profiles*

<b>Language</b>	High/low context Linguistic distance (discussed in detail later in the chapter)
<b>Non-verbal and linguistic style behaviors</b>	No You Silent periods Overlaps Facial gazing
<b>Values</b>	Power distance Individualism Long-term orientation Time
<b>Decision process</b>	Problem-solving approach Interpersonal attraction H1 to H6 Questions Soft3 (promises + recommendations + rewards) Aggressive3 (threats + warnings + punishments)
<b>Negotiation outcomes</b>	Profits (\$) Satisfaction
<b>Others</b>	Income/capita Ease of doing business Corruption

Table 15.5 *Indices of similarity (larger is more similar) across country profiles (correlation coefficients,  $n \approx 26$ ,  $r > .40$ ,  $p \approx 0.05$ )*

	United States	Japan	Brazil	Germany	Russia
<b>United States</b>	1				
<b>Japan</b>	69	1			
<b>Brazil</b>	47	42	1		
<b>Germany</b>	85	63	45	1	
<b>Russia</b>	54	71	46	46	1

*Note:* The 27 profile variables included in country profiles are listed in Table 15.4.

Communication theory suggests a four-level hierarchy of cultural differences in negotiation behavior (Graham, Lawrence, and Hernandez Requeo 2020): (1) verbal, (2) non-verbal, (3) values, and (4) decision processes can cause problems in cross-cultural negotiations. The order reflects negotiators' consciousness of such differences. Differences at the level of language are obvious and therefore more easily remediated. Translators can be hired, a common third language may be employed, or someone learns a new language. Because negotiators give out and take in a great deal of information unconsciously from non-verbal behaviors, these "hidden" problems are more difficult to address. When a Brazilian interrupts an American, the American

might misattribute her discomfort to the “pushiness” of her counterpart, not to a cultural difference in turn-taking behaviors. Differences in values and decision-making processes are often even more subtle, yet perhaps more salient.

Below we roughly organize the variables included in our negotiation profiles accordingly. Finally, we also added at the bottom three “other” measures of country characteristics pertinent to doing business: gross domestic product/capita, ease of doing business ranking (World Bank 2017), and Corruption Perception Index scores ([www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org) 2018; see Jing and Graham 2008; Chandler and Graham 2010).

Table 15.5 includes the correlation coefficients (scaled to 100 versus 1.00, higher numbers mean greater similarity) that deliver a measure of the degree of difference in profiles between any two cultures. For example, the profiles of Brazil and Japan ( $r = 42$ ) are the most different, and Germany and the United States ( $r = 85$ ) are the most similar. For a 20 culture matrix, see Mahdavi, Fatehi-Rad and Graham (2020).

Many of the variables used in the profile are behavioral in nature. This allows comparisons to (triangulation with) other international negotiation profile data based mostly on surveys of executives such as the excellent works of Katz (2006), Salacuse (2003), and Meyer (2014).

## NEW MEASURES

### **The Coming Usefulness of Facial Recognition Technologies**

Facial recognition software, much like grocery store laser scanner data in the 1980/1990s, represents a major advance in marketing science. Here we have asked key executives at Affectiva, an American firm on the forefront of this work, to describe aspects of their services. Of particular interest are the cross-cultural differences Rana el Kaliouby and Gabi Zijderveld (forthcoming) have observed. Affectiva, a division of advertising giant WWP, counts among its prominent clientele global marketers such as Mars, Kellogg, and Unilever.

Emotions influence every aspect of our lives – from the way we interact with each other to the decisions we make and even to our health. A big portion of our decision-making process is emotional – from what we eat for breakfast to how we decide to buy a house or who to marry!

Until recently, the quantification of facial behavior has relied primarily on two approaches: (1) manual coding of muscle movements on the face from photographic images or video segments, typically by an expert observer, and (2) measurement of electrical muscle potentials on the face, known as electromyography (EMG). Neither of these approaches is easily scalable. Recent computer vision and machine learning advances have enabled accurate and automated facial coding from video material. Among other advantages, automated facial coding allows extensive amounts of data to be analyzed.

The system provides two categories of emotion metrics: dimensions of emotion and discrete emotions. Dimensions of emotion are used to characterize the emotional response. Discrete emotions are used to describe the specific emotional states.

The dimensions of emotion include: valence, attention, and expressiveness/intensity.

The discrete emotion measures include: enjoyment, concentration, surprise, dislike, disgust, and doubt. El Kaliouby and Zijderveld continue,

To date, Affectiva has amassed the world's largest data repository – Affectiva's emotion insights have been gathered from nearly 11,000 media units (more than 2.6 million face videos) and spans more than 75 countries around the globe.

The firm has also amassed 2.7 million face videos from more than 75 countries – more than 7 billion emotion data points. These data have never existed before and are allowing us to gain insight into cross-cultural differences in facial expressions at a scale that was never possible before. When it comes to emotion communication, we all start with the same base of universal, pan-cultural facial expressions. However, while emotion expression is universal, we learn at an early age to alter our expressions based on social circumstances, this is called “Cultural Display Rules”. For instance, we may amplify our sadness at funerals and dampen it at weddings. These display rules vary by culture. Our emotion data have confirmed that collectivist cultures, like China and India, are more likely to dampen or mask their emotion, especially negative ones.

We have known for 40 years that the face communicates more information than words. These new technologies will allow international business negotiation researchers to gain a much better understanding of the phenomena.

### **A New Measure of Cultural Differences, Linguistic Distance**

Here we report on a new measure of cultural distance – linguistic distance – that can be readily applied in the broadest array of cross-cultural research circumstances (West and Graham 2004). Second, we tested hypotheses about the influence of language spoken on managerial values in the international context. Toward these ends we specifically determined a relationship between our measure of linguistic distance (based on linguistic genealogical classification) and Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of culture using two separate sets of data.

The ideal cultural measure would be one that theoretically was representative of an entire culture (or perhaps nation) and would be readily available for any given culture. One such measure might be based on language, which is closely linked to both national and cultural boundaries. Fasold (1984) notes that designation of a national language facilitates the development of national identity and is thus in most cases a key prerequisite to the formation of a stable nation state. At the same time, many of the most obvious sub- or supra-national divisions of cultural groups are found between language groups in multilingual societies such as Belgium, Canada, or China. The measure can also be quite useful as it can be readily applied to individuals by asking respondents about their mother tongue.

There are many possible ways of determining the dissimilarity of languages, including a variety of lexical, typological, or grammatical characteristics. Empirical evidence suggests cognitive differences are not limited to one type of dissimilarity (Kluckhohn 1954, pp. 937–40). It would be possible to combine multiple measures of language distance, incorporating, for example, vocabulary, syntax, and morphology.

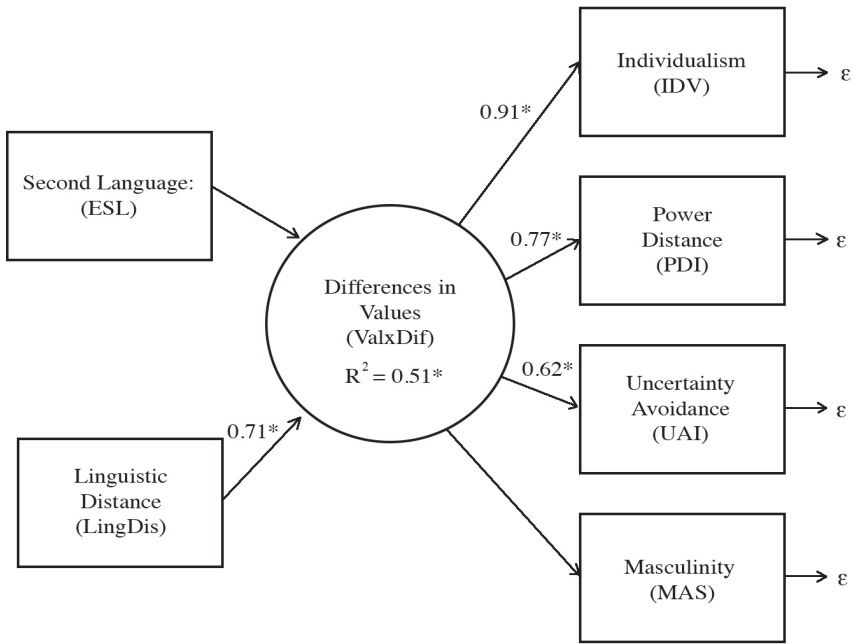
But for a single comprehensive measure of linguistic distance, arguably the best a priori choice is genealogical or genetic classification, which classifies language dissimilarity based on the existence (or inference) of common linguistic ancestors (Dakubu 1992). Besides the theoretical advantages, it is the only measure that can be operationalized for such a wide range of languages.

The measure used here was constructed using the ideas of Grimes (1992), which lists some 6,500 languages based on the linguistic classifications of Bright (1992). Every language is part of an explicit family tree; 37 of 50 of Hofstede's countries used languages within the Indo-European family. Chen, Sokal, and Ruhlen (1995) have built on Grimes' hierarchy of languages and we directly borrow their tree to determining linguistic distance. We initially used English as the focal language and calculated the measure of distance from English (LingDis) listed in Table 15.6 by coding each lan-

*Table 15.6 Linguistic distance from English for countries listed by Hofstede (2003)*

Country	Primary language	Secondary language	Measure (wt.avg)	Country	Primary language	Secondary language	Measure (wt.avg)
Arabic countries	Arabic		5	Korea	Korean		4
Argentina	Spanish		3	Malaysia*	Malay		7
Australia	English		0	Mexico	Spanish		3
Austria	German		1	Netherlands	Dutch		1
Belgium*	Flemish	French	1/3(1.7)	New Zealand	English		0
Brazil	Portuguese		3	Norway	Norwegian		2
Canada*	English	French	0/3(0.9)	Pakistan	Panjabi	Sindhi	3/3(3)
Chile	Spanish		3	Panama	Spanish		3
Columbia	Spanish		3	Peru	Spanish		3
Costa Rica	Spanish		3	Philippines*	Tagalog	Cebuan	7/7(7)
Denmark	Danish		2	Portugal	Portuguese		3
Ecuador	Spanish		3	Singapore*	Taiwanese		6
El Salvador	Spanish		3	South Africa*	Afrikaans	English	1/0(0.6)
Finland	Finnish		4	Spain	Spanish		3
France	French		3	Sweden	Swedish		2
Germany	German		1	Switzerland*	German	French, Italian	1/3(1.6)
Great Britain	English		0	Taiwan	Taiwanese		6
Greece	Greek		3	Thailand	Thai		7
Guatemala	Spanish		3	Turkey	Turkish		4
Hong Kong	Cantonese		6	United States	English		0
India*	Indo-Aryan	Dravidian	3/5(3.7)	Uruguay	Spanish		3
Indonesia	Bahasa	Javanese	7/7(7)	Venezuela	Spanish		3
Iran	Farsi		3	Yugoslavia	Serbo-Croatian	Slovenian	3/3(3)
Ireland	English		0				
Israel	Hebrew		5				
Italy	Italian		3				
Jamaica*	Creole		1				
Japan	Japanese		4				

*Note:* \* = multiple languages spoken in country.



Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ ,  $n = 51$ ; † 1 = non-native second language used; 0 = native language used (ESL → UAI path =  $0.52^*$ ).

Figure 15.2 *A comparison of Hofstede’s values and linguistic distance from English (PLS parameter estimates)*

guage for the number of branches used to connect it to English. For example, Mandarin = 6, Spanish = 3, Swedish = 2, and German = 1. The second language variable takes into account that in ten countries in Hofstede’s data base questionnaires were administered in English, not the respective native tongues (Figure 15.2).

Linguistic distance measured in this way has proven useful in our international business negotiations work. We have reported a direct relationship between linguistic distance from English and problem-solving behaviors (Graham, Mahdavi, and Fatehi-Rad 2020). In that same study linguistic distance moderates the relationship between several variables as well. The concept also has proven useful in a study of international financial markets (Pirouz and Graham 2019). Therein linguistic distance well predicts age of stock markets and their price volatility.

## QUALITATIVE METHODS

### **The Essential Fieldwork**

For problem-oriented research grounding in the field at the outset is invaluable (Blumer 1969). In many of our studies preliminary fieldwork consisted of two parts – interviews with experienced executives and observation of actual business negotiations. Open-ended interview protocols were used to guide discussions with business people with extensive experience in cross-cultural business negotiations. For example, in our work less structured discussions were held with eight native Japanese executives working in the United States for a variety of Japanese manufacturing and trading companies. In all cases, extensive research notes were taken during and after the interviews. The second step in the fieldwork was observation of business meetings in both the United States and Japan. The meetings observed involved sales personnel from an American capital equipment manufacturer and a variety of clients. There were eight such transactions with American clients in southern California and eight with Japanese clients in Tokyo. Again, extensive notes were taken in each case and participants were interviewed afterward. Obviously, if permitted, recordings were preferred in either field interviews or observations.

### **An example from field notes, an *Aisatsu***

The Japanese president controlled the interaction completely, asking questions of all the Americans through the interpreter. Attention of all participants was given to each speaker in turn. After this initial round of questions for all the Americans, the Japanese president focused on developing a conversation with the American vice president. During this interaction an interesting pattern in non-verbal behaviors developed. The Japanese president would ask a question in Japanese. The interpreter then translated the question for the American vice president. While the interpreter spoke, the American's attention (gaze direction) was given to the interpreter. However, the Japanese president's gaze direction was at the American. Thus, the Japanese president could carefully and unobtrusively observe the American's facial expressions and non-verbal responses. Alternatively, when the American spoke the Japanese president had twice the response time. Because he understood English, he could formulate his responses during the translation process. (See Hodgson, Sano, and Graham (2008, page 11) for more details)

### **Emic Views of Videotaped Negotiations**

If it were a contest based on the degree of insight delivered, the methods described in this section would clearly win. But I learned early in my doctoral career to respect all research methods, all with their inherent strengths and weaknesses. In my second year at Berkeley I had two doctoral classes back to back: psychometrics and ethnography. The world-class behavioral scientists that led those seminars held very different views about credible evidence and truth – one demanded big sample sizes and elegant statistics, the other trusted informants and long-term observations.

Further, the anthropologist distinguished between emic and etic views of behavior, that is, the differing perspectives of both the subject and the researcher were important (Kottak 2006). Below are described two efforts to understand negotiation behavior from the standpoint of the negotiators themselves.

### **Japanese and Americans**

The data for this analysis included videotapes of simulated negotiations (Kelley's game 1966; three Japanese/Japanese, three American/American, and six Japanese/American dyads), each participant's account of the negotiations, descriptions of three uninvolved observers, and all data previously analyzed and reported. The method included five stages (see Gumperz 1979; Erikson 1978; Graham and Andrews 1987):

1. The first step was to view the videotaped interactions to gain a gestalt or a context-informed understanding of the content. Then, to locate "focal points", notes were made while each tape was being viewed a second time. Focal points were identified by obvious misunderstandings, breakdowns in conversational rhythm, and changes in thematic progression. The principal researcher and two assistants (one of them Japanese) independently identified focal points.
2. Next, in a session with individual participants, the tapes were again reviewed, with the participants stopping the tape periodically (at their discretion) to report their "thoughts and feelings at the time of the negotiation". Comments solicited by the researcher were limited to a minimum during these interviews. All participants' comments were tape-recorded, thus providing retrospective protocols for future analysis.
3. Informed by the first two stages, specific focal points were selected for in depth analysis. The criteria of selection included the intrinsic interest of the focal point, its completeness, its theoretical salience or practical salience for participants, and the quality of picture and sound on the tape. These focal points of interaction, as well as two or three minutes of interaction before and after the focal point, were edited onto another tape.
4. In the fourth step, the focal points were reviewed repeatedly. Additionally, all relevant data previously collected, including questionnaires, verbal and nonverbal measures, and participant protocols were reviewed. The goal of this inductive form of analysis was to identify the antecedents and consequences of these focal points.
5. The final stage of the analysis involved demonstration of the generality of the models determined from the single cases developed in stage 4. Here, all 12 tapes from the entire series of interactions were searched for analogous instances of these single cases. In viewing this series of analogous cases, attention was given to those communication forms and functions that had demonstrated structural salience in stage 4. When discrepant evidence appeared during this stage, the original case was reexamined and possibly redesigned.

The analyses of the ten focal points selected included excerpts from eight of the 12 interactions (no focal points were chosen from four). Below we report on just one.

Here, the Japanese buyer was noticeably uncomfortable at the beginning of the negotiation. Both the principal researcher and the American assistant noted the discomfort. The Japanese participant commented on it in the protocol. The antecedents of this problem were rather obvious. The American seller began with aggressive, persuasive appeals immediately. The Japanese buyer asked the seller to describe his situation first. This aggressive behavior was not anticipated by the Japanese buyer.

The consequences were also rather obvious. The American ignored the Japanese request and continued his attack. Both participants later reported experiencing continuing discomfort during the interaction and using individualistic bargaining strategies. Each participant rated the other as very exploitive but did not rate himself so. The outcome of the game was not particularly advantageous for either party as the joint-profit level was below average.

### **Chinese and Americans: Tension in Negotiations**

The participants in the research were 176 executive MBA students from a Hong Kong university (90) and a West Coast American university (86). The Americans had traveled to Hong Kong as part of a one-week international residential global management course. All of the Chinese executives spoke English fluently, allowing for the negotiations with the Americans to be conducted in that language. Indeed, Hong Kong is perhaps the ideal place to conduct this kind of research with Americans, because cultural differences are maximized, as described above, while linguistic difficulties are minimized.

The executives were brought together in separate classrooms (Americans in one and Chinese in another) at the university in Hong Kong. Each participant was asked to fill out a questionnaire that included several questions regarding demographics, attitudes, and personality traits. The groups compare quite well on most demographic dimensions except language skills, where predictably the Americans are weaker.

Next, the executives were assigned randomly to within-culture groups of three to work together as either a buying team or a selling team. They were given individual instructions from the Bolter Turbines Negotiation Simulation, as detailed in Graham (1984), and were allowed 30 minutes to plan negotiation strategies. The Bolter Simulation is a buyer–seller negotiation involving the sale of a \$3 million piece of capital equipment, and includes issues such as price, warranty, delivery, service contracts, product options, and late delivery penalties. The instructions provide information about each person's and team's interests but provide no information or suggestions about bargaining procedures. At the end of the half-hour, each team was sent to a separate room (supposedly at the buyers' headquarters) to meet their foreign counterparts and begin face-to-face bargaining.

In most cases that meant three Chinese executives negotiating with three American executives. For approximately half the groups, the Chinese played the roles of the sellers; for the other half, they were buyers. Each group was videotaped using



cameras with wide-angle lenses. The teams sat at 45-degree angles with the microphone placed in the middle to allow for the best video reproduction. Seat assignments were made in advance with name tags, and right- versus left-side seating was determined randomly. Each group was told there was a one-hour time limit. At the end of 60 minutes the cameras and negotiations were stopped, and all participants returned to the classrooms to complete a short post-simulation questionnaire.

The simulation is designed to be a difficult negotiation with regard to the complexity of issues and the distance between starting points. Simple “split the difference” agreements across all stated issues are possible, but often negotiators discuss issues not included in the simulation instructions, yielding outcomes that are incomparable. Most of the time, agreements are not reached within the time limit.

Within two weeks, when the Americans had returned to the United States, all participants on both sides of the Pacific were each given a copy of their videotape to review, along with a review form to be completed. Following the review, all the forms were submitted to the researchers, thus completing the data collection. This approach to data collection – having participants review their own behaviors on videotape – was pioneered in the field of socio-linguistics (Gumperz, 1979), first used in negotiation settings by Graham (1990), and discussed in some detail by Heisley and Levy (1991).

All the measures used in this aspect of the study have been taken from the various forms completed by the executives in both countries. Some details about the measures used are included in Table 15.7. The data to compose the measure of tension felt (an admittedly ethnocentric, etic choice for the central construct) during the negotiations were taken from the videotape review forms on which participants noted the clock-time of points of tension and rated each point on the intensity of the tension felt. The review of the videos included three steps, with the following instructions:

1. From page 1 of the form: “Review the videotape in its entirety, without stopping it. Below, note according to the time code (in minutes and seconds, as it appears in the upper right-hand corner of the picture) any moments of tension or discomfort during your negotiation. Also, rate the intensity (10 = extremely tense, 1 = little discomfort) of the tension or uncomfortable feelings in each of the moments noted. You should work while the tape is running and rough estimates of intensity are fine at this stage of the review.”
2. From pages 2–4 of the form: “Now, of those noted above, select the five moments of greatest tension or discomfort, review each of the five, and provide the following information about each as in the example below. Rate the intensity of tension or discomfort during the moment (10 = extremely tense or uncomfortable) for you.”
3. The participants were then asked to “briefly describe the antecedents of the five moments of greatest tension felt” using an open-ended approach.

A content analysis scheme was developed and applied to the explanations from step 3 above, producing the results in Table 15.7. The differences across the two groups are evident. For both the Chinese and American negotiators, the primary cause of

Table 15.7 Content analysis of participants' explanations (codes, definitions, and counts)

Main category	Code	Name	Definition	Observed counts (%)	
				Chinese	American
1. Factors related to self or own team	11	Within-team conflict	We have a conflict within our own team	2.1 <sup>a</sup>	5.2 <sup>a</sup>
	12	Role ambiguity	We are not sure about the role we are to play	1.2	0.4
	13	Mistakes	We make mistakes	1.8	3.4
	14	Lack of information	We are unable to respond to their questions/objections	4.8	4.3
	15	Our aggressive behavior	We use threats, warning, commands, pushiness	1.2	1.7
2. Factors related to the other team	16	Our intransigence	We make excessive demands, refusals – they avoid talking about the issues or will not compromise on the issues	2.4	3.0
	10	Other	Other factors related to self or own team	4.8	2.1
	21	Misrepresentation	They misrepresent the truth/ignore information provided	1.2 <sup>a</sup>	6.4 <sup>a</sup>
	22	Intransigence	They make excessive demands, refusals – they avoid talking about the issues or will not compromise on the issues	41.7	37.8
	23	Aggressive behaviors	They use threats, warning, commands, pushiness	8.0	5.2
3. Factors not related to either team	24	Uncivil behaviors	They use punishments, insults, animosity – things said to make us feel bad	4.2	3.0
	25	Ignore normative negotiation process	They do not follow “normal” negotiation procedures	5.1 <sup>a</sup>	12.0 <sup>a</sup>
	26	Lack of good faith	Unprepared or lack authority to reach an agreement	1.8	1.7
	20	Other	Other factors related to the opposite team	4.2	2.1
	31	Deadlock	Unable to reach an agreement because of structure of negotiation	4.8	1.7
32	Time limits	Specifically run out of time	5.1	5.2	
30	Other	Other factors that do not directly related to “our” or “their” team	6.0	4.7	
		Total	100.0	100.0	

Note: <sup>a</sup> =  $\chi^2 < 0.05$ .

tension was the others' intransigence, at approximately 40 percent for both. For both groups about 5 percent of the moments of tension were caused by time limits. Both groups identified lack of information as another common source of tension, at about 4 percent.

The Chinese reported American aggressiveness (8 percent) and uncivil behaviors (4 percent) and deadlock (5 percent) as causes of tension more often than did the Americans, but these differences were not statistically significant based on  $X^2$  tests. The American negotiators reported moments of tension felt because of their own intrateam conflicts (5 percent), and Chinese misrepresentations (6 percent) and disregard for normative negotiation processes (12 percent) more frequently. These latter differences were statistically significant based on chi-squared tests across the groups and are supportive of study hypotheses. The study also included an extensive analysis of both causes and consequences of tension felt – for details see Lee et al. (2006).

### A THIRD THEORY: INVENTIVE NEGOTIATION

Herein we propose a third theory of negotiation, one particularly appropriate for the study and practice of international business negotiations where diversity is fundamental. Beyond the traditional theoretical emphasis on competitive and integrative bargaining is inventive negotiation (Graham, Lawrence, and Hernandez 2020). In the current literature the concept of creativity is more frequently mentioned by important scholars in the field. In *Getting to Yes*, the bible of the field, chapter 4 is "*Invent Options for Mutual Gain*" (our italics). We applaud Fisher, Ury, and Patton (2011) for their quick discussion of the topic and appreciate their own diverse backgrounds in law and anthropology respectfully. But the basis of their 7 million copy seller is the social psychology literature that dominated their field when the book was first written in 1983. Indeed, they even pay homage to the market in their definition of negotiation power: your best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA).

Other luminaries have mentioned invention but have not elaborated on it. For example, Raiffa, Richardson, and Metcalfe (2002, p. 196) long advocated inventiveness in negotiations: "the teams should think and plan together informally and do some joint brainstorming, which can be thought of as 'dialoguing' or 'pre-negotiating'. The two sides make no tradeoffs, commitments, or arguments about how to divide the pie at this early stage." Lax and Sebenius (2006) go past getting to yes and talk about "creative agreements" and "great agreements". Susskind et al. (1999) recommend "parallel informal negotiations" toward building creative negotiation outcomes. But, at the end of the day, American social psychology has delivered only the concept of integrative bargaining. This is a further improvement over coercion and a step above competitive bargaining. But the integrative approach with its emphasis on mutual interests over positions still sees negotiation processes as transactions. We also welcome a more recent comment, "Negotiation is about creativity, not compromise" (Weiss 2016).

Our inventive approach to negotiations builds on the work in social psychology with proven concepts gleaned from a variety of disparate sources:

- Silicon Valley firms such as INTEL and IDEO (Kelley and Littman 2005);
- open innovation (Chesbrough 2006);
- process networks and performance fabrics (Hagel, Brown and Davison 2012);
- the concept of *tertius iungens* – the importance of the third party in innovation (Obstfeld 2005);
- insights from the new brain science;
- virtual teams research;
- experimental economics;
- innovation processes perfected over 30 years of study and practice in advertising, creativity, and innovation; and
- four decades of research on the best practices of negotiators around the world.

In particular, inventive negotiations draw on practices typical in Japan and the Netherlands. The Japanese have developed a cultural ritual of negotiation that naturally uses tools of innovative processes in ways unfamiliar to most American bargainers (Hodgson et al., 2008). The Dutch are the world's experts in foreign languages, cultures, and openness to international commercial collaboration.

Our goal is to demonstrate how creativity and invention are keys to business negotiations, particularly in international and cross-cultural ones. The field is still stuck in the past, talking about “making deals” and “solving problems”. Even the use of terms like “win–win” exposes the vestiges of the old competitive thinking. Yet business negotiation is not something that can be won or lost, and the competitive and problem-solving metaphors limit creativity.

Unfortunately, the social psychological approach including all its flaws (Shea, 2011; Enserink, 2012) continues to dominate American thinking on the topic, particularly in business and law schools, here and abroad. Inventive processes in Japan and the Netherlands are almost always ignored in favor of the transactional approaches of competitive and integrative bargaining.

### **Inventive Negotiation Defined**

Our own previous use of the terms “problem solving” and “conflict resolution” reflects an old, limiting way of thinking about negotiation processes. Inventive negotiation is not meant to solve problems or resolve conflicts. The purpose of inventive negotiation is to find and exploit opportunities. So, the first step in the process is recognizing a glimmer of opportunity.

Our thinking leads to a definition of inventive negotiations. Indeed, the twentieth-century definitions, metaphors, and lexicon of negotiation are filled with words such as problems, conflicts, disputes, dividing things, competitive games and military campaigns, even chess and poker. We use a different set of words.

*H1: Inventive negotiation is the use of innovation processes to build long-term relationships for finding and exploiting extraordinary opportunities.*

Yes, problems may be solved and conflicts resolved along the way, but the primary question of inventive negotiation is “What are the opportunities here?”

Several aspects of the traditional advice on integrative bargaining make little sense in the context of an inventive approach to negotiation. We have already described in some detail the difference between focusing on agreements versus relationships. While we admire efforts to quantify the creativity of agreements (Gelfand et al., 2015), we see this as just a welcome baby step away from the reductionism of game theory and such. Rather the key focus on research in the area should be on understanding and the measurement of long-term commercial relationships.

There is a good reason why Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People* is the single best-selling book in the negotiation genre – still outselling *Getting to Yes* by millions of copies. Even in the title Carnegie emphasizes the importance of good interpersonal relationships: inventive negotiators will understand the important benefits of investments in strong, long-lasting personal relationships in commercial settings.

While many have talked about creativity and innovation processes in negotiations, almost no one has studied the topic in a systematic way. It is more than brainstorming. Other pertinent concepts are manipulations of the setting (e.g. walking in the woods), time, sleeping on it, communication channels, improvisation, role playing, humor, storytelling, emotions, random juxtaposition, working backwards, borrowing ideas, and crazy ideas. All have been found to stimulate creative thinking in non-negotiation settings. Finally, negotiation should be thought of as a kind of innovation process itself, a combination of imaginations at the very least.

While diversity can cause communication problems in negotiations, we also have evidence that once relationships have been established, diverse groups can outperform homogeneous ones (Watson et al., 1993). This area of inquiry deserves additional attention, particularly with respect to international negotiations. There is a great deal of support for the idea that women are better at building and maintaining relationships than men. This is another argument for diverse negotiation teams.

Third-party facilitators are crucial in many international negotiations settings (Hodgson et al., 2008; Lam and Graham, 2006) and have been shown to be quite valuable in many domestic negotiation settings as well (Susskind et al., 1999; Obstfeld, 2005). The American cultural value for “independence” often seems to provoke an aversion to facilitation services.

Finally, we laud creativity and invention in the act of research itself. The study of international business negotiations will best progress with the application of new methods and theories, such as those listed herein. But, even more important are the diverse ideas about method and theory you bring to both the field and the laboratory. Our knowledge and science of international business negotiations will best advance when important research problems are selected *before* methods and theories, not vice versa. And, as globalization continues in this century, more efficient and effective international negotiation processes will deliver not only global prosperity, but also global peace.

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