DISCOURSE STRATEGIES ACROSS CULTURES IN ELF NEGOTIATION SIMULATIONS
Focus on Europe and the Middle East

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Abstract – Companies today are engaging in an increasing number of international negotiations involving parties from different nations and cultures using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). ELF participants often have "heterogenous cultural backgrounds and diverse social and linguistic expectations" (House, 2003: 573) which can influence the communication process and the negotiating style. Even when participants possess a native-like competence in the language of the negotiation, they often encounter difficulties overcoming cultural barriers. The present paper focuses on the analysis of the transcript of a face-to-face negotiation simulation in English with three post-graduate students, from Germany, Greece and the United Arab Emirates. It is part of a wider research project which examines role plays and simulations enacted in business negotiation courses held in either English or Italian, with students, managers and employees from different companies and lingua-cultural backgrounds. The purpose is to explore the influence of cultural elements in the negotiation process with a view to designing training materials and raising awareness on intercultural communication.

Keywords: negotiation, students' simulation, intercultural communication, interactional strategies, English as a *Lingua Franca*.

> *Successful negotiation is 80% preparation*
> (Clive Rich 2011, Strategic Direction, Vol. 27, Issue 3. p. 3).

1. Introduction and aim

Globalization has considerably transformed organizational and discursive practices in corporate settings, extending the geographical boundaries and making it more difficult for companies to operate in an increasingly complex and multicultural scenario. Before the development of organizational science, the idea that cultural processes are key factors in corporate life was introduced by extensive research in social and cultural psychology, which highlighted its deep impact on interpersonal relationships, decisions and actions. It follows that as Bülow affirms (2009, p. 144), nowadays cultural, social and psychological variables all play crucial roles in the analysis of interaction and organizational behaviour.

Over the last decade I carried out several studies based on the analysis of interaction in corporate settings such as meetings and negotiations conducted in Italian or in English as a *Lingua Franca* (Turra 2012/2016). The purpose was to analyse the linguistic resources participants use to make sense of the activity they are involved in and to explore the way discursive and interactional strategies are employed to carry out institutionally oriented activities. Organizational behaviour and social practice were examined in relation to the cultural, contextual and social functions of the linguistic choices employed by participants. Research into language used in business settings is situated at the intersection of disciplines such as business communication, management

and organization studies as well as social psychology and sociolinguistics so that leading studies of business discourse analysis embrace a number of interdisciplinary approaches. Therefore my analytical approach has always exploited interdisciplinary synergies with a view to raising awareness and facilitating the language and corporate communication seminars run in academic and corporate settings. This article reports on a small part of my ongoing research into negotiation simulations. After audiorecording, observing and transcribing negotiation simulations in English and Italian in different university courses[1] with students coming from different lingua-cultural backgrounds, I realized that despite their proficiency in the language of the negotiation, they often found it difficult to construct agreement based on common ground and deal with cultural differences. In this perspective, I selected one simulation that I found particularly representative to examine the repertoire of discursive, persuasive and interactional strategies employed by students in order to manage conflict and reach agreement. The approach used in this paper aims at combining micro-linguistic discourse analysis with theories of negotiation (Fisher and Ury, 2012), organizational behaviour (Aslani et al, 2016) and cultural psychology (Novak et al, 2016). The purpose was to compare these strategies across cultures in order to reflect on the elements shaping the negotiation process and design new negotiation training materials for students and practitioners.

2. Methodological and analytical framework

2.1. Linguistic and pragmatic perspectives

Negotiations can be considered a prototypical form of activity type (Langlotz, 2015, Fant, 2006) as participants' role in the negotiation, as well as their background knowledge and implicit norms, may determine their expectations and what they consider allowable contributions. Activity types involve for example a tacit, negotiated agreement about what kind of event is taking place and how it is appropriate to behave.

The present study is grounded in the view that participants enter negotiations, "A fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded events with constraints on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions" (Levinson, 1992, p. 69), with a set of inferential schemata and general expectations about the types of allowable verbal behaviour. The structural properties of activity types were helpful in identifying what counts as allowable contribution and what kind of inferences are made from what is said (1992, p. 97). In international negotiations where English is used as a Lingua Franca, participants have a diverse background and social linguistic expectations, so the focus of the present study was to explore to what extent activity type conventions are culture-dependent.

Given that constructing agreement on common ground is a central feature in negotiation, politeness theories were used to analyse the way interactants manage conflict, build relationships and consensus. Politeness theory goes back to Goffman's concept of face, (Goffman, 1959, p. 21). The central role of face in interaction reflects Goffman's notions of individuals as social actors who perform or present a public self in order to create certain social impressions in others. In institutional settings, the notion of face is

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more complex, the result of the interplay between individual and institutional face wants (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 8) as the individual is seen as a representative of broader entities such as the company or the team.

Goffman's theory of face was further developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), who separated it into two complementary sides: positive and negative. They consider disagreement as a face threatening act and list a series of strategies aimed at mitigating its impact (e.g. indirectness, hedges, apologies, impersonal forms, implicatures, understatement, pluralizations and nominalizations). They also suggest that positive face reflects an individual's desire for social consensus and see linguistic realizations of positive politeness as social accelerators and in-group identity markers (specialized lexis, inclusive pronouns, compliments, offers and small talk) extending intimacy and creating common ground. Small talk, in particular, is crucial to negotiate interpersonal relationships and often involves a dialectic between institutional and socio-relational goals. A series of analytical tools of conversation analysis were combined to the pragmalinguistic analysis to identify the structure of talk-in-interaction, focusing in particular on how turns are accomplished, questions answered and speakers selected. According to Schegloff, turn taking refers to " the orderly distribution of opportunities to participate in social interaction" (2000, p. 1). The units of analysis are conceived as sequences of activities that are made up of turns. A turn is therefore an utterance made of one or more words, including non-linguistic vocalisations, such as laughter and back-channelling, by which a speaker holds the floor and a new turn starts with a speaker change. Other important features introduced by conversation analysts are adjacency pairs and the preference structure. *Adjacency pairs*, (i.e. question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance), are fundamental units of conversational organization. They are constituted by a first pair and a second pair part. Second pair parts are divided into 'preferreds' (the structurally expected next act) and 'dispreferreds' (the structurally unexpected next act). For example, if the first part is a request, the preferred second part is acceptance, while the dispreferred one is refusal. This structure was particularly useful to analyse conflict sequences in the selected simulation.

Finally, in order to investigate the interplay between linguistic resources and social context, Goffman developed the sociological and cognitive notion of frame, involving the way participants define the social situation they are engaged in, what is being done, what the situation is, and what roles are adopted by participants. Goffman's notions of frame and frame shifts were used to capture the transition between socio-relational and instrumental goals. Frames and frame shifts helped identify different sequences of talk and foreground the process of negotiating goals and redefining the situation in the course of interaction.

2.2. Interdisciplinary perspectives on intercultural negotiation

Different approaches come into play in culture analysis: anthropological, behaviourist, ethnocentric, functionalist, cognitive, dynamic, and so on. This section provides an overview of the literature that has been especially influential in business and negotiation studies. According to negotiation scholars, culture can be defined as "a set of shared and enduring meanings, values, and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic and other groups and orient their behaviour". (Faure and Sjostedt, 1993, p. 3). In this perspective, culture plays a major role in interaction as it has an influence on the way people interpret context, statements and behaviours. According to negotiation trainers and scholars, cultural differences can create communication barriers and misunderstandings during the interaction. The idea of the importance of cultural processes in corporate settings

developed in the realm of anthropology. In order to convey the vastness of a scarcely visible, extremely complex subject matter, Edward Hall, an anthropologist/business consultant and pioneer of intercultural communication, compared culture to the suggestive image of an iceberg. One of his research areas was the connection between communication and context, where he identified two types of cultures as high or low context. Low-context cultures, he pointed out, are characterized by the need for explicit, verbally expressed communication, while high-context cultures pay greater attention to context and nonverbal components of communication.

His categories were made less cut and dried by Samovar and Porter (1997, p. 24), who distributed them along a continuum ranging from high to low, as can be seen in table 1 below:
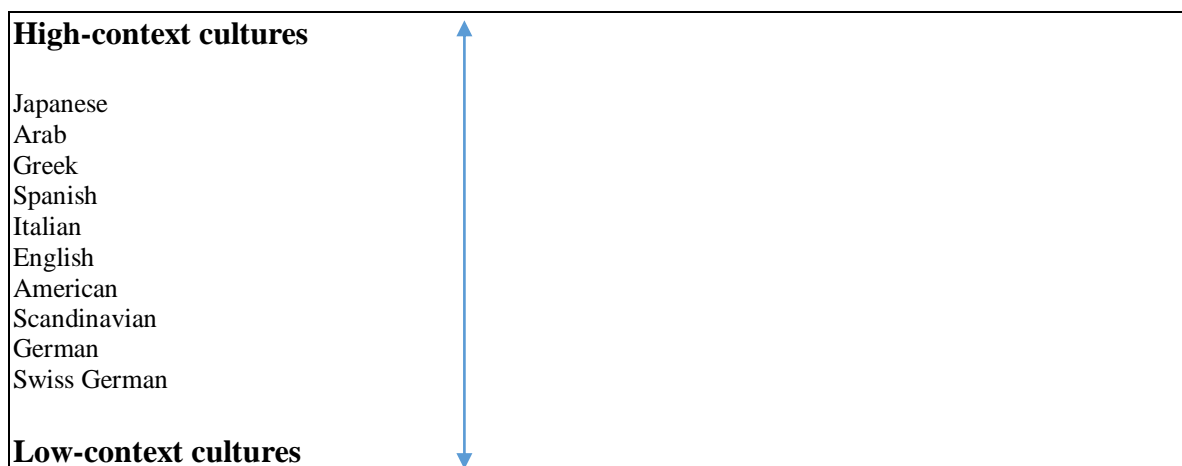
High-context cultures ↑
Japanese Arab Greek Spanish Italian English American Scandinavian German Swiss German
Low-context cultures ↓

Table 1

Another of Hall's contribution was the distinction between "monochronic" and "polychronic" cultures. Members of the former, who follow monochronic time (M-time), are profiled as task-oriented, with a linear, sequential view of time. They also tend to follow rigid schedules and separate work-related from socio-emotional activities. Members of the latter most often have a flexible view of time and are very much at ease with multitasking. The following table identifies the cultures representative of each category:

M-time patterns	P-time patterns
Northern European, North American, German	Latin American, Middle Eastern, African, Asian, French, Greek

Table 2
Cultures representative of Monochronic-Time and Polychronic-time patterns (Hall, 1983)

Cognitive approaches have also been influential in the field of business communication and organizational studies. They investigate brain mechanisms and mental models or schemata as culture-bound ways of categorizing experience. Hofstede, for example, defines culture as "the software of the mind" (Hofstede, 1991/1994) and analyses national cultural differences in corporate settings. In his comprehensive study carried out in 40 of the largest IBM subsidiaries, he administered 116,000 questionnaires to employees from 64 different nations. His findings identified five dimensions which make it possible to measure intercultural differences, as shown below:

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1. Power distance (the degree of inequality considered normal in a given country).
2. Individualism (the importance given to the individual over the collective).
3. Uncertainty avoidance (tolerance for uncertainty and the degree to which structured is preferred to unstructured and flexible to rigid).
4. Masculinity (the importance given to achievement and performance as opposed to personal relationships and quality of life).
5. Long-term orientation (short-term objectives preferred to a long-term vision).

His study was a milestone in intercultural communication in business settings and his dimensions were further expanded and developed by other scholars (Trompenaars, 1993). This approach, however, often led to culture being identified with nation and was criticized by postmodernist scholars for not accounting for variations within nations. Furthermore, recent interdisciplinary studies advocate the need to develop more dynamic views of culture (Katan, 2004, Leung et al, 2005) that take into account internal and external mechanisms: changing nature of global communication, disciplinary cultures (corporate and professional), national/ethnic cultures (Connor, 2006). Business executives and professionals, for example, refer to schemata for carrying out negotiations, which are often the result of different components such as national and corporate culture involving sets of norms, values, professional practices, roles and hierarchy. According to Jameson (2007) the concept of cultural identity requires recontextualization as it is:

> An individual's sense of self derived from formal or informal membership in groups that transmit and inculcate knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and ways of life. A broad conception of cultural identity should not privilege nationality but instead should balance components related to vocation, class, geography, philosophy, language, and the social aspects of biology. Cultural identity changes over time and evokes emotions. It is intertwined with power and privilege, affected by close relationships, and negotiated through communication. (Jameson 2007, p. 199)

Given the complex nature and multiple facets of cultural identity, how can students and practitioners prepare to deal with these differences? Scholars and experts in negotiation training have developed a number of frameworks which identified potential areas of misunderstandings during international negotiations in order to help business negotiators understand and anticipate these problems. Drawing on Hall's anthropologic studies (Hall, 1959), Salacuse (1991 and 1999) identified ten factors which can help explain the impact of culture on negotiation as shown in the table below:

Goal	Contract→Relationship
Attitudes/strategies	Win/Lose→Win/Win
Personal Styles	Informal →formal
Communications	Direct→Indirect
Time Sensitivity	High→Low
Agreement Form	Specific→general
Emotionalism	High→Low
Team Organization	One leader→consensus
Agreement building	Bottom-up→Top-down
Risk Taking	High→Low

Table 3
Salacuse's factors that identify the impact of culture on negotiation.

For the purposes of this paper, only the factors that clearly emerged in the selected simulation were considered. The first factor involves the way different cultures communicate. Some cultures (e.g. German) tend to manage communication and conflict in a more direct way (Hall, 1952, Hall&Hall, 1990, Samovar and Porter 1997), while other cultures (e.g. Arab and Greek) pay greater attention to context and nonverbal components of communication, making an effort to mitigate instances of conflict. Hall's notion of monochronic and polychronic cultures also proved useful in order to examine the distinction between cultures displaying a higher or lower sensitivity to time.

The choice of a formal or an informal style during the negotiation is another culture-dependent factor. Hofstede's cultural dimension of power distance is used to distinguish between relatively high and relatively low power distance cultures. Some cultures (e.g. Germans) have a more formal style than others (e.g. Americans). The former tend to avoid questions on private life and family and address counterparts by their titles. The latter will adopt a more personal and friendly communication style.

Another factor concerns the way different cultures view the purpose of a business negotiation. For some cultures (e.g. American, German) the goal of a negotiation is to make a deal and sign a contract. For others (e.g. Asian, Middle East) the main purpose of a negotiation is to create a relationship between the counterparts (Pye, 1982). While Some cultures devote more time to pre-negotiation, others will accelerate this phase and arrive at the deal-making phase as fast as possible. The different value associated with the purpose of a negotiation, may also have an impact on the approach and strategies selected by the negotiators. According to negotiation scholars, (Salacuse, 1999, Fischer and Ury 2011, Lewicki *at al*., 2011) there are two main approaches to any negotiation situation: win/lose and win/win strategies. The win/lose approach, which is also called competitive or distributive approach, tends to be used when negotiators are not interested in establishing a long-term relationship with the other party. It often leads the negotiating parties "to focus on their differences" and "not to disclose information which could improve the other party's negotiation power" (Lewicki *at al*., 2011, p. 18). The win-win negotiation approach, also called integrative or collaborative, is used when the parties aim at establishing or maintaining a long-term relationship and have multiple issues and interests to discuss. Integrative negotiations place greater emphasis on common ground, cooperation, flexibility and information sharing. In order to account for cultural differences in the selection of competitive or cooperative negotiation approaches, Aslani *et al*. (2016) incorporated a framework in cultural psychology based on a three-dimensional cultural model: dignity, face and honour. (Novak *et al*., 2016). Dignity cultures, (US, Canada and Northern Europe) base their idea of self-worth on individual achievements, goals and values (Schwartz, 1994). Self-worth is therefore intrinsically determined by individual self-assessment, and is based on self-interest and autonomy. Members of these cultures tend to manage conflict rationally and directly. In face cultures, which include East Asian countries like China and Japan, self-worth and respectability depend on an individual's fulfilment of social expectations as assessed by others. Social relationships are organized in stable and rule-governed social hierarchies (families or organizations) and social approval is conferred by members of equal or higher status. Although some studies consider East Asian negotiations cooperative, (Gelfand et al., 2013), others have gathered empirical evidence showing that they can be at times highly competitive (Liu et al 2012). In honour cultures, generally dominant in the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America and Greece, self-worth is based on reputation. As in face cultures, self-worth is also based on social approval and interdependency, but in a context where social hierarchies are particularly dynamic and often unstable. While there are variations in the behaviour of honour cultures, shared elements exist, such as loyalty, honesty and a concern for respect.

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In most Arab countries, for example, negotiations tend to be cooperative and are centred on relational work, which may require a longer time (Caporarello and Iacovone, 2017). However, when reputation is at stake (Aslani *et al*., 2016) members of honour cultures may suddenly become competitive or even aggressive. The description of dignity and honour cultures, were particularly helpful to examine participants' strategic choices and interactional behaviour in the simulation under analysis.

3. Dataset, background context and participants

Negotiating effectively with counterparts from different countries and cultures is becoming increasingly important for companies operating in international and global contexts. Developing specific communication, linguistic, strategic and intercultural skills is therefore the aim of courses in Business Communication and Negotiation offered at different universities both to students and professionals. These courses generally provide an overview of current theories on negotiation and a number of role plays, business cases and simulations which can been observed, recorded and transcribed for research or pedagogic purposes. The analysis and discussion of these role plays is a precious tool that enables scholars to monitor the evolution of negotiation theories and practices and the interplay of cultural forces. The data selected for the present article consists of a single negotiation simulation part of a corpus of 60 interactions, and was selected on the basis of its representative nature in terms of size, lingua-cultural backgrounds and strategies deployed. The negotiation was observed during a course of business communication in 2017 and was transcribed using a simplified version of Ochs' conventions (1979, pp. 176-179). The two men and one woman taking part in the simulation were master students who had completed an international bachelor program in Economics or Engineering in their own countries and had just started their postgraduate program in Italy. As the Masters are held in English, students who qualify for these programs typically have Ielts 7.5 or Cambridge Proficiency, so that their language competence can be described as C2, the highest level of proficient user, according to the Common European Framework of Reference. Although they all had near-native competence in English, they all had different levels of previous working experience and practice. Table 4 gives the profiles of the participants in the negotiation simulation.

At the beginning of the module on negotiation, after a short overview of the course and of the main concepts and terminology, students were divided into groups of three and were given instructions to prepare for the simulation with roles assigned accordingly. Students were given 5 minutes to read instructions individually and 10 minutes maximum to conduct the simulation.

	Participant	Nationality	Gender	Age	Education	Working experience	Assigned role in the simulation
1	Sabine	German	F	25	Bachelor of Engineering obtained in Germany	6 month-internship in Germany. No previous experience in negotiation	Sales Manager of a German Company
2	Stylianos	Greece	M	26	Bachelor of Economics in a Greek Business School	1 year in a company based in London.	Sales Engineer of a German company
3	Ali	United Arab Emirates (Dubai)	M	28	Bachelor of Economics in an International Business School in Dubai	2 years in a family business based in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.	Customer (CEO of a Dubai-based company)

Table 4
Profile of the participants.

According to the specific instructions given to the students, the common goal of the negotiation was to establish a long-term relationship between the two companies (a multinational based in Germany) and a Dubai-based company (the customer). They also had to find the best strategy to deal with a delay in the delivery date originally agreed. Sabine, the first student, in the role of Sales Manager of a German company manufacturing electronic equipment, had the mandate to break into the UAE and the Far East. The second student, Stylianos was assigned the role of sales engineer in the same German company and therefore had to report to Sabine. In charge of liaising with clients and identifying their needs. He and Sabine knew that due to a setback, the consignment would arrive in Dubai 20 days beyond the date they had originally agreed and had to decide when and how to communicate the delay to their customer. The third student, Ali, acted as CEO of a Dubai-based company, supplying electronic equipment to key customers in the UAE. His role was to establish new relationships with manufacturers in Europe. He had met Stylianos at the Electronic Fair of Berlin and placed his first order for a consignment of control units on behalf of an important customer in Abu Dhabi. Figure 1 shows the post and position of the three participants at the negotiation table.

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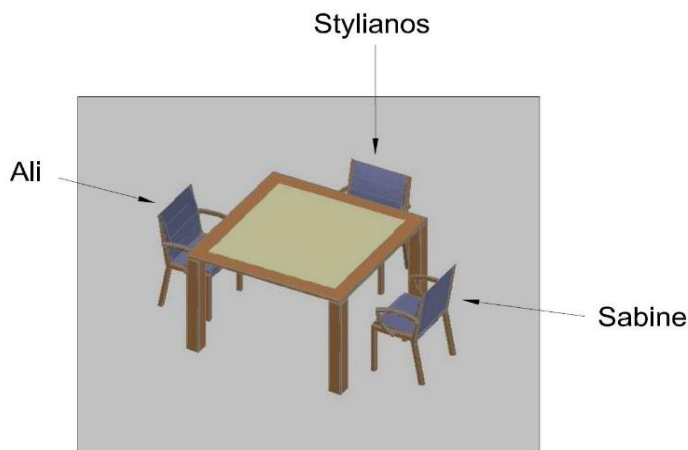
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Figure 1
Post and position of the three participants at the negotiation table.

The simulation lasted for about 7 minutes, after which an open discussion (or debrief) followed. The rest of the students who did not take part in the simulation could observe it and participate in the discussion. The pedagogic aim of the simulation was to observe which approach (distributive/integrative) and which communication style students would spontaneously adopt in the negotiation and discuss their choices during the debrief. For this reason the simulation took place at the beginning of the negotiation module so that participants had to rely on their prior working experience and diverse personal backgrounds.

4. Analytical features

The negotiation simulation under analysis was opened by Ali, with the role of CEO of the Dubai company:

Extract 1.

1. **Ali:** Hello! How good to see you! How have you been?
2. **Stylianos:** Nice to see you too. Please let me introduce my colleague Sabine, our Sales Manager.
3. **Sabine:** Nice to meet you.
4. **Ali:** It's a pleasure to meet you. Is this your first time in Dubai?
5. **Sabine:** Yes.
6. **Ali:** Then I must show you around today.
7. **Sabine:** I really appreciate your agreeing to see us about your order.
8. **Ali:** My pleasure. So how was your trip? Did you come direct or did you have a stopover?
9. **Sabine:** No stopover. We're on a tight schedule. That's why we are so grateful you could see us on such a short notice. So to get down to business, we wanted to [
10. **Ali:** [How is my good friend Hans?
11. **Stylianos:** Oh, fine. He's been very busy with this order too. This is why we wanted to talk to you about it [
12. **Ali:** [you know, you have come at an excellent time. Tomorrow is my son's birthday and we're having a special party. I'd like both of you to be our guests.
13. **Sabine:** Thank you very much. That is so kind of you, but unfortunately our flight is tomorrow. Now about the order we have something very urgent to tell you.

In the opening, participants show a different use of negotiation strategies. Ali is centred on interpersonal dynamics while Sabine and Stylianos are more formal and result-oriented. This dichotomy is reflected in the tension between relational and transactional goals and linguistically realized by means of frame shifts and interruptions. The CEO devotes a long time to small talk, in order to create common ground and build the relationship, which is still at an early stage. However, Sabine tries to cut the small talk in order to get down to business (line 7). This frame shift is preceded by an expression of appreciation, which is a politeness strategy aimed at reducing the impact of an imposition. However, Ali does not accept Sabine's shift to the transactional activity and in line 8 brings everyone back to the relational dimension, asking about their journey. Interaction (lines 10-13) reflects the dynamics of changing roles and attempts to control turn-taking, which also manifests different views of time. Unlike Sabine, Ali displays a lower sense of urgency and a more relaxed orientation to time. While it is natural for Ali to keep interrupting, this is very annoying for the German. Stylianos, who also comes from a culture which tends to be classified as having a low sensitivity to time, has to defer to Sabine. His interactional behaviour is influenced by hierarchy and by his real-life international experience and contact with different cultures. The prominence of a relationship-centred and informal orientation is evident in Ali's offer to show his guests around and in his invitation to his son's birthday party. However, Sabine does not pick up his message, but tries to speed things up and concentrate on task-oriented rather than socio-relational goals. The little time she devotes exploring her counterpart's interests and to create common ground is influenced by her cultural formation, but also shows her lack of experience in negotiation. This is confirmed by her comments in the post-event discussion:

> *During the simulation I was panicking, as we were given very little time and I knew the other two students were much more experienced negotiators.*

Her comments during the discussion revealed that she felt anxious due to her lack of experience and very high sensitivity to time. This had an impact on her communicative style. Participants may also have felt emotional because the whole classroom and the professor were observing them.

In the following extract, the emotional pressure on Sabine increases as she presents the problem of the delay with the help of Stylianos.

Extract 2

1. **Sabine:** Now about the order er we have something very urgent to tell you.
2. **Stylianos:** I'm afraid so.
3. **Ali:** What is it?
4. **Stylianos:** Well (…) I don't know how to explain this.
5. **Sabine:** It's something we couldn't tell you before.
6. **Stylianos:** Some of the components we need failed our quality tests, so we had to send them back in order to replace them (…) Now, unfortunately there's going to be a delay.
7. **Sabine:** I can only apologize for this inconvenience (…)
8. **Stylianos:** And we could offer you a 5% per cent discount as we really want to establish a long-term relationship with you.
9. **Sabine:** ((non-verbal communication: facial expression of surprise))
10. **Ali:** thanks, this is very generous, I really appreciate that. Hopefully, I spoke with my customer and apparently even if the goods arrived late, it wouldn't make much difference. So, I don't think the delay is going to be a problem.

Sabine and Stylianos do not devote enough time to actively listening and exploring the customer's interests as they do not start question-answer sequences to share more information. Before announcing the delay in the delivery date, they turn to pre-sequences in order to prepare the grounds for the bad news, and co-construct sentences in order to reinforce their alliance and support for each other. In lines 4 and 6 their pauses signal all too well that they are going to utter a dispreferred second pair part. The announcement of the hold-up is mitigated by negative politeness strategies such as hedges "well…" and apologies. Stylianos's offer of a discount is also a positive politeness strategy. However, non-verbal communication shows that Sabine was not expecting this offer and that they were not aligned as a team. Politeness strategies and the discount offer generate Ali's positive reaction in line 10, which has the effect of relieving tension. This incident could have easily been avoided with a better preparation and information sharing. If Sabine and Stylianos had asked more questions, they would have found out that the delay was not a problem for their customer and that offering a discount was not necessary. The interaction shows that they were goal-oriented and therefore afraid to lose the order by announcing the delay, as they confirmed in the post-event discussion:

Sabine: We were very worried that our customer may cancel the order
Stylianos: yeah, we acted emotionally and we didn't know how to tell the customer about the delay

In the following extract, participants are going to discuss the issue of products' logo, which is related to their company's image and reputation:

Extract 3

1. **Sabine:** Now, can we talk about the logo?
2. **Ali:** Sure. If we want to sell the XYZ in the UAE, I'd like to have you put our logo on the front of each case.
3. **Stylianos:** I believe there is a technical issue here. The logo is part of the moulding and it would take a lot of time to remove it. Adding your logo without removing ours would look terrible.
4. **Sabine:** It's not just a technical issue. Our goal at the moment is to have our products and our logo better known in the UAE.
5. **Ali:** > Then I will have to cancel the order. ↑ Having our logo on the products in the Middle East is a priority for us. I would have expected more flexibility. ((*voice gets louder*))
6. **Sabine:** > And we would have expected more precision. ↑ We should have known about the logo before starting the modifications.
7. **Stylianos:** Well, I think it's going to take some time to solve this problem. Why don't we have lunch and come back to it later?

In this extract, Ali's negotiation style changes unexpectedly from cooperative to competitive. As many studies have pointed out, (Leung and Cohen, 2011, Aslani, 2016,) honour cultures tend to be polite, warm and hospitable. However, attitudes can suddenly change when their reputation is felt to be at stake.

The issue of badging is precisely such a matter. In line 2, Ali's request to put his company logo on the products looks like a directive, though mitigated by the use of deontic modality. Stylianos is Greek, and also a member of honour cultures. He seems to understand that the issue is extremely delicate and in this situation, he takes on the professional role of engineer. He replies (in line 3) using persuasive strategies to project

his credibility "I believe" and persuade the counterpart through a logical reasoning that adding a logo is not technically and aesthetically feasible. Politeness strategies such as hedges and softeners are used to soften his statements and mitigate disagreement.

His effort to minimise differences, however, is thwarted by Sabine's snappy remark in line 4, who instead of avoiding disagreement, fuels conflict by dangerously bringing up the delicate issue of image and reputation. This triggers Ali's sudden change in attitude. He raises the tone of voice and his threat to cancel the order rapidly leads to a conflict. Studies evaluating the effect of emotions and anger on the negotiation process demonstrated that competitive approaches involving hardball tactics such as threats or attempts to frighten a counterpart often backfire as negotiators react with a "reciprocal response" (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1992). Ali's threat leads to an escalation which is reflected by prosodic features such as a louder tone of voice and a faster pace as well as their facial expression. In lines 5 and 6 Ali and Sabine attack each other with allegations expressed by means of negative evaluative adjectives that maximise their differences and show their inability to manage conflict. Ali's comments in the post-event discussion reveal differences in their cultural values:

Ali: *Sabine and I are at polar opposites as far as values and communicative styles are concerned. She really lacks flexibility and made me lose my temper.*

In the following extract, Stylianos, takes on the role of mediator and suggests having a break, which has the effect of defusing tension and lower the tones as can be seen in extract 4:

Extract 4

1. **Ali:** did you enjoy the food and the view? How about going for a walk?
2. **Sabine:** the view was amazing. Now to get back to the issue of badging…
3. **Stylianos:** I think it would be worth spending some time to redesign the moulding in order to include your logo next to ours. Given that we want our products and our logo better known in the UAE, it would be a great opportunity for both of us. What do you think?
4. **Ali**: I think it's a great idea. How long should it take?
5. **Stylianos:** I can call the engineers and let you know as soon as possible.
6. **Sabine:** It'll take longer than expected, but it is going to be worth in the long run. This is why we are going to postpone our flight so that we can sort the question of badging out.
7. **Ali:** Good, so are you going to join my son's birthday party then?
8. **Sabine:** It would be a pleasure. Thanks for the invitation.

By the final part of the negotiation, Sabine's turns show that she has learned how to be more flexible and relationship-oriented in order to adjust to the counterpart's approach. She has had to recognize that Ali is in control of time, changing her schedule and accepting the invitation to his son's birthday party. This should have probably happened at the beginning of the negotiation, where Sabine's inexperience prevented her from respecting Ali's different orientation to time and his effort in cementing their relationship by creating common ground. If participants had had a better knowledge of their counterparts' communicative style, they would have paid more attention to listening to their needs and would have found out sooner that there was a win-win solution in the offing.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This paper has examined the role of different elements that may have an impact on the negotiation dynamics and compared negotiation strategies across cultures. Drawing on a range of analytical tools such as interactional sociolinguistics, pragmatics and conversational analysis, it has focused on the repertoire of discursive, persuasive and interactional strategies employed by participants to manage conflict, build relationships and reach an agreement.

Although this is just a preliminary analysis of one single simulation, results converge to show that participants' interactional behaviour differ in a way that is consistent with Aslani's conceptualization of dignity and honour cultures. The data however, also confirm the view that the selection of negotiation strategies or the different ways of communicating and managing conflict are also influenced by aspects related to individual background and experience, role constraints, and the topics discussed.

In the simulation under analysis, the Emirati and the German participants have adopted entirely opposite negotiation styles. The first is relationship-centered, displays a relaxed orientation to time and expects others to follow his rules. His interactional behaviour is similar to what other studies based on simulations (Aslani et al, 2016) or post-negotiation interviews, (Iacovone, Caporarello, 2017) have identified in Arab countries and honour-based cultures: relationship-centred and cooperative, but very tough and competitive when reputation is at stake. The second instead, is culturally oriented to efficiency and results, tends to cut the small talk and speed things up, showing a high-sensitivity to time. This attitude has the effect of fuelling conflict and emotional reactions. Her anxiety is due to a lack of experience in real-life negotiations and to her different educational background: a Bachelor of Engineering as opposed to the other students' Bachelor of Economics. The third participant, comes from Greece, a culture generally classified as honour-based and with a low-sensitivity to time. His subordinate role in the simulation makes him align to the strategy and time restraints of his boss. However, his contribution is inevitably influenced by his real-life working experience in London which makes him play a crucial role in conflict resolution thanks to the use of cooperative and politeness strategies.

The analysis of this simulation shows that awareness of cultural orientations can be useful when negotiating with members of unfamiliar cultures, but also supports the view that cultural identity is a complex and multi-faceted concept including a number of individual factors that may determine the success or failure of a negotiation.

In intercultural negotiations, more time and effort need to be devoted to creating common ground, listening and exploring interests and role-relationships and dealing with different communication styles. For this purpose, the use of integrative and collaborative strategies (win-win) is more effective than the distributive (win-lose) approach, especially when the aim of the negotiation is to establish a long-term relationship with the other party.

In order to better prepare students and practitioners to identify useful strategies in intercultural negotiations, I prepared a checklist of the distributive strategies used by participants in the simulation, with recommendations and examples of more effective integrative realizations. These strategies are summarized in the following table:

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Distributive tactics	→	Suggested integrative strategies
Not enough time is devoted to building relationships with the customers. The counterpart's invitation is rejected and the small talk is cut out	→	Compliments, building rapport, accepting offers and invitations, showing concerns for the counterpart's needs, expressing desire for a future work relationship
While the customer uses an informal style, the counterpart does not adjust and uses a formal and detached communication style	→	A friendly and informal style would have been more appropriate to accommodate to the customer's communication style
The customer uses frequent interruptions and topic shifts	→	Even though interruptions are aimed at establishing a relationship, they can be annoying. Participants should observe and adjust to their counterpart's turn-taking and interactional style as much as possible
The delay is announced and a discount offered before even finding out the customer's priorities and orientation to time	→	Asking many questions and sharing information in order to explore each other priorities on the issues (e.g. asking for details about the counterparts' priorities and sharing information concerning one's own priorities)
The customer threatens the counterpart as a persuasive strategy to make them change their position	→	Exploring the possibility of finding outcomes that benefit both parties and finding connections between multiple issues
The customer raises the tone of his voice, which fuels tension	→	In order to manage conflict participants should control the tone of their voice and use humour and irony to defuse tension
The requests of the customer are immediately rejected without finding alternative solutions	→	Asking questions in order to explore other options
The German participant refused to move from her position	→	Switching roles, putting oneself in the counterparts' shoes in order to explore different viewpoints and perspectives
Questioning the counterpart's values	→	Using positive sentences and instances of positive evaluation and appraisal
Conflict is managed with a direct communication style	→	Using an indirect style to manage conflict, with the use of hedging and mitigation

Table 5
Checklist of distributive strategies used in the simulation and examples
of recommended integrative strategies (adapted from Liu, 2009).

This checklist can be further expanded and developed, but may be the starting point of a metalinguistic reflection which can help students and practitioners to develop a better understanding on how to build common ground, enact role relationships and manage conflict. A competent use of interactional and negotiation strategies can help explore the counterpart's interests, cultural differences and values, so developing tolerance and possibly preventing the onset of conflicts and facilitating negotiation. This preliminary study, will be developed and complemented with the analysis of the other simulations from a corpus of 60. A series of videos are being produced for pedagogic purposes and aimed at providing examples and recommendations for students and professional negotiators.

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