negotiation and conflict management research

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From "Good day" to "Sign here": Norms Shaping Negotiations Within a Face Culture

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Abstract

Using discourse analysis, we examine how culture shapes the dynamics and outcome of wage negotiations. With an intracultural lens, we look at how two opposing groups that share one overarching culture maximize group gains and achieve a bargaining agreement. We analysed audio recordings of collective bargaining meetings between labor and management negotiators of a multinational beverage company in the Philippines. Consistent with the claims of previous studies, negotiation between labor and management within this culture reflected low trust. Joint gains were however achieved through *face* dynamics that thwarted the impact of low trust bargaining. Specifically, our discursive analysis shows how utterances contain justifications, demands, rejections and threats. However, such apparently contentious talks are embedded in local language that conveys respect for authority, mixed with efforts to maintain harmony. These reflections of *face* culture in the bargaining process help shift the negotiations from a contentious to a collaborative and successful problem-solving process.

Continued importance is given to management–labor negotiations (McKersie & Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 2009), such as wage bargaining, as a means of managing conflicts in work organizations (Putnam, 2003). Negotiation is defined as a dynamic process (Olekalns & Weingart, 2008) of communication (Adair & Brett, 2004) where opposing parties, whether coming from different or the same cultural groups, make moves and countermoves (Cai & Donohue, 1997; Glenn & Susskind, 2010; Maynard, 2010; Putnam, 2003) to reach a mutual understanding (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992) despite conflicting interests over scarce resources (Arminen, 2005; Liu & Cai, 2013). This process involves the use of strategies that may be integrative (cooperative) or distributive (competitive) (Donohue & Roberto, 1996; Olekalns & Weingart, 2008). Current trends in negotiation research point to how culture influences these strategies and the eventual outcome of negotiations (Adair & Brett, 2004; Adair et al., 2004; Aslani, Ramirez-Marin, Semnani-Azad, Brett, & Tinsley, 2013; Lewicki & Polin, 2013). As such, we posit that the process involved in this conflict-filled yet goal-oriented activity may be shaped by the groups' cultural background.

We investigated how wage negotiation outcomes are shaped within a *face* culture, a cultural prototype (Aslani et al., 2013) that follows the logic of East and Southeast Asian collectivist culture (Schwartz, 1994). We aimed to unpack how cultural norms surface in the conduct of negotiation and steer the bargaining process toward achieving mutually acceptable gains. With this objective in mind, we analyzed data from wage bargaining meetings between the labor union and management negotiators of a beverage company in the Philippines.

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To contextualize our study, we begin with an overview of how culture shapes negotiation processes and how norms of a specific type of culture, that is, face culture, sculpt the dynamics of a competitive yet collaborative interaction. For instance, Aslani et al. (2013) characterized negotiators within face culture as having low trust, adhering to hierarchy, suppressing negative emotions, and sustaining harmony. It will be interesting to know how these cultural tendencies surface while negotiating groups strive to achieve opposing goals. We likewise argue how such dynamics could best be captured using the illuminative power of discourse analysis.

Cultural Influences on Negotiation Process

Culture or the unique character of a certain group (Brett, 2000; Brett & Gelfand, 2006) creates the social contexts in negotiations (Gelfand & Cai, 2004). Hence, in the process of communication, the cultural backgrounds of the negotiating parties inspire the norms, values, and beliefs that each group demonstrates (Lou, 2008).

Integral to the negotiation context is the concept of trust, as the parties involved are interdependent of each other in arriving at a resolution and in achieving their goals (Lewicki & Polin, 2013). Trust is "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998, p. 395). A Westerner tends to trust others more quickly, while an Asian discerns situational cues first before deciding to convey confidence in the other party (Gunia, Brett, Nandkeolyar, & Kamdar, 2011; Lewicki & Polin, 2013). As such, the former is more inclined to readily give information, indicating integrative behaviors, while the latter leans toward a more substantiation approach, denoting distributive comportments (Aslani et al., 2013; Gunia et al., 2011). Here, we can see that culture tends to moderate the degree of trust that parties bring into the negotiation, affecting the way the parties perceive each other as well as the (mis)leading tactics they may use in the dialogue (Lewicki & Polin, 2013).

Culture steers the way negotiating parties communicate with each other. In terms of disclosing information, for instance, groups may be direct or indirect in sharing knowledge with the other party. Aslani et al. (2013) proposed that negotiators coming from an individualistic and low-context culture tend to use direct information-sharing strategies, while those from a collectivist and high-context culture are more inclined to utilize indirect communications. Individualistic cultures value straight talk and overt verbalization, while collectivist cultures prefer being implicit and discreet in expressing their thoughts and emotions (Trubisky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991). Consistent with this suggestion, Adair et al. (2004), in their study on negotiation strategies among various cultures, found that American negotiators primarily use direct information exchange, while those from Japan largely utilize indirect information-sharing scheme. In the same vein, Trubisky et al. (1991) found that Taiwanese use an avoiding style more than their American counterparts. Negotiators who employ direct communication do not rely heavily on contextual cues because messages are conveyed explicitly. However, those who use indirect interaction styles need to be sensitive to implicit messages. Hence, cues observed in negotiation interactions shape the thoughts and behaviors of negotiating parties who use indirect communication styles (Adair & Brett, 2004).

Culture shapes how negotiating parties move and countermove so as to gain advantage over each other. Negotiators who prefer egalitarianism emphasize equal opportunities, while those who favor hierarchical cultural values stress status and power (Adair et al., 2004; Brett, 2000; Tinsley, 2004). In the latter, knowledge of status also determines how people relate with one another (Brett, 2000). Hierarchical cultures are associated with East and Southeast Asian countries, while egalitarian cultures are often linked with countries of Western cultural background (Aslani et al., 2013).

Beliefs about negotiations may be influenced by culture (Adair & Brett, 2004). Negotiators coming from the individualistic culture tend to see themselves as independent and thus free enough to focus on personal (Rogoveanu, 2010; Triandis, 1995) as well as outcome goals (Adair & Brett,

2004). Those coming from the collectivist culture, on the other hand, are inclined to perceive themselves as interdependent with each other and hence value solidarity (Rogoveanu, 2010; Triandis, 1995) and harmonious relationships (Adair & Brett, 2004). As such, whether a group deems negotiation along the lines of relationships or outcomes depends largely on the kind of cultural background that has shaped its views. Culture, thus, may account for the negotiators' propensity to approach negotiation as a process of sustaining relationships or a process of allocating resources (Adair & Brett, 2004).

Having discussed how culture may frame the process of negotiation, we now turn to a discussion of face culture. We likewise elaborate on how this type of culture shapes the dynamics of an intracultural negotiation interaction.

Negotiation Within a Face Culture

Varying cultures create a variety of negotiation schemes (Chang, 2006). Aslani et al. (2013) have identified three types of culture—Dignity, Honor, and Face. Dignity culture is associated with Western Europe and North America where independence, freedom, and equality are valued. Honor culture, on the other hand, is linked to the Middle East and Latin America, where honor is manifested in trustworthiness, warmth, not being preyed on by others, and one's strength to protect self and family. The third type of culture, face culture, is related to the East and Southeast Asian collectivist way of life, where social responsibility, respect for tradition, and honoring of elders are some distinguishing traits. As we are interested on how culture shapes the negotiation process within a face culture, we focus our discussion on this type of culture.

Face culture negotiators are assumed to utilize distributive or competitive strategy in the negotiating table. Gunia et al. (2011) referred to this strategy as Substantiation and Offers or S&O. Here, parties tend to present single-issue offers in persuasive manners with the use of such tactics as power plays, appeals, or even threats. Since trust among negotiators tends to be low (Aslani et al., 2013), this strategy may thus be seen as a negotiator's cautious defense move rather than an ambitious offense attempt (Gunia et al., 2011). In the end, negotiators infer from observed patterns of offers and substantiation to identify joint gains (Aslani et al., 2013).

Societies with face cultures are marked by stable hierarchical social structures whose norms are based on collective interdependency (Aslani et al., 2013). In the Philippines, this interdependency is very much related to the Filipino term, *kapwa*, which may mean fellow (Alejo, 1990) that emphasizes shared identity (Enriquez, 1992), or a nondistinction of the self and other (Sta. Maria & Largoza, 2008). Here, sense of community is highly valued and people deem it important to carry out their responsibility to the group (Aslani et al., 2013). The cultural norms and social institutions endorse interdependence by highlighting social obligations (Brett, 2000). When this strong feeling of kinship is brought into play in the context of negotiation, conflicting groups may view each other both as opponents (e.g., management vs. labor) and as important parts of the whole collective (belonging to one company). This perspective may influence outcomes of the bargaining process.

In face culture, insults are viewed as horrid and as threatening people's social standing. People belonging to this culture are usually quick at discerning insults (Aslani et al., 2013). Since this culture values preserving face and harmony (Brett & Gelfand, 2006; Kirkbride, Tang, & Westwood, 1991), people normally avoid giving insults, endure insults, and expect the insulted ones to bow to hierarchy and wait for those with higher status to reprimand the offender (Aslani et al., 2013). Giving insults or confronting the one who insults another is avoided because these undesirable behaviors damage a congenial relationship.

This insult-avoidance approach is common among collectivist Filipinos. They have this penchant for steering away from conflict at all cost, marked by a relational tendency called *pakikisama* or getting along with others (Mendoza & Perkinson, 2003). In the interest of *pakikisama*, Filipinos may bear the brunt of another's insults so as to uphold harmony and preserve face or one's sense of positive image (Oetzel &

Ting-Toomey, 2003). In the same vein, Chinese usually avoid antagonisms that perturb a group to maintain their harmonious relationship (Kirkbride et al., 1991). Further, members of face cultures enact self-sacrificing and altruistic behaviors to ensure harmony within the collectives (Brett, 2000; Brett & Gelfand, 2006).

Consistent with maintaining group harmony, negotiators coming from a face culture are inclined to use indirect confrontation styles (Aslani et al., 2013; Brett & Gelfand, 2006). For instance, to soften management–labor conflict, Filipino negotiators use humor to deliver hardline stances to their opposing party (Teng-Calleja, Montiel, & Baquiano, 2015).

A cultural group's deference to authority may lead the members to put the responsibility of admonishing the offender to the authority figure, such as the rulers or the elderly (Aslani et al., 2013). Submissiveness to authority is one of the cultural values that is predominantly reflected in management–labor relations in the Philippines (Edralin, 2003). This is because, within a collectivist culture, those in power are believed to have the resources to impose damages on the less powerful ones (Tinsley, 2004). Within a face culture, those who are transgressed against do not usually hit back, but instead they refer the conflict to those in authority (Aslani et al., 2013). This usually means suppressing the expression of negative emotions. Revealing negative emotions is rare among Asian culture as doing so may disrupt harmony (Aslani et al., 2013).

This study assumes that the interplay of cultural characteristics discussed above shapes the conduct of negotiations within face culture. When parties parley in face cultures, the mechanisms that resolve conflicts are marked by hierarchy (Tinsley, 2004), restraint of negative emotions, and the maintenance of harmonious relationships (Aslani et al., 2013).

Conflict management styles in face cultures may appear paradoxical to outsiders. For example, trust among negotiators tends to be low (Aslani et al., 2013). With low trust, one expects the use of conflict-intensifying distributive or competitive strategies during a bargaining process. However, face culture negotiators tend to avoid conflict as they adhere to hierarchy, suppress negative emotions, and give precedence to collective interests to maintain social harmony. Dissecting face may clarify how culture and these interesting paradoxes emerge during intracultural negotiations. Our research unpacks the various expressions of shared cultural norms and values of negotiators within face culture and examines how these norms and values influence the dynamics of intracultural negotiation process. We attempted to do such investigation through the lens of discourse analysis.

Method: Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis (DA) is a powerful lens that can be employed to examine communication patterns during negotiations (Glenn & Susskind, 2010; Putnam, 2010; Susskind, 2010) and to consider cultural contexts in interpreting the action orientation of words (Coyle, 2007). Using pragmatics as a particular type of DA, we examined language used during wage bargaining. Specifically, we looked at the kinds of pronouns, verbs, and adjectives used (Putnam, 2005) to reflect cultural dynamics such as having low trust (Aslani et al., 2013), adhering to hierarchy (Tinsley, 2004), and restraining negative emotions as well as maintaining harmony (Aslani et al., 2013). We considered contextual features such as the goals and relationships of negotiators (Donohue, Diez, & Stahle, 1983). We likewise studied negotiation communicative tactics employed by both management and labor.

Data Source

We collected our data from a Philippine branch of a multinational beverage company. We obtained audio recordings of collective bargaining sessions from March to July 2010 between the management and the labor union of all regular rank-and-file nonsales employees. All parties were Filipinos, and hence, there existed an intracultural relationship between management and labor negotiators. Consent to use

the audio recordings for our research was granted by the Union President and the company's Senior Human Resources (HR) Manager.

The complete series of collective bargaining meetings were recorded by the union with the vice president's laptop at first and then with the aid of a digital recorder that we provided. Recording the bargaining meeting for minute-taking is a common practice in collective negotiations in the Philippines (Edralin, 2003), so having the recorder remained unobtrusive during the bargaining process.

Audio recordings of the entire bargaining proceedings were orthographically transcribed by a research assistant. We then lifted all conversations that pertain to wages. We observed that wage **c**onversation occurred at the very first of the 17 collective bargaining meetings and came out as a topic even during meetings that were devoted to nonwage issues such as employee leaves and other benefits. Wage bargaining became the core agenda toward the end of the entire collective bargaining process. Of the 17 meetings, nine had conversations about wages, varying from 1½ to 3½ hours each, totaling approximately 18 hours. Based on the audio recordings, the main negotiators from each group were present in all of the meetings. Table 1 shows the list of negotiators and their ascribed role in wage bargaining. Code names were used to protect the identity of the people involved in the negotiation.

Analyzing Discursive Actions Reflective of Face Culture

From our data corpus, we identified wage-related talk during the labor–management negotiations. We then employed a four-stage discourse analysis process using the pragmatic perspective (Willig, 2008) to describe the interplay between face culture and the action orientation of talk expressed during wage negotiations.

Our first step entailed carefully reading the transcripts containing the discourses on wages without any attempts at analysis. This was done to allow us to gain awareness of what the utterances were doing and exactly how the actions were accomplished through spoken words (e.g., communicative constructions of acceptable wage increase). Second, we coded relevant texts (Putnam, 2005) that reflected the cultural dynamics of face culture, that is, words used to address the other party or that pertained to relational distance (e.g., *boss, sir, pare*, or buddy), all forms of pronouns pertaining to the in-group (e.g., *kami* or us), the other group (e.g., *ninyo* or your), and both groups (e.g., *tayo* or we), as well as words or phrases that conveyed trust or the lack of it, humility, appeal, tolerance, demand, threats, insult, mockery, and sarcasm. As researchers rooted in the same culture and language, we used our understanding of word meanings to locate relevant words, coded these separately, and engaged in intercoder discussions to come up with the final coding. We utilized spreadsheets to read and identify any differences across time.

Table 1
Code Names and Formal Roles of Negotiators

Code name	Ascribed role in the negotiation
L1	Union President, Main Labor Negotiator*
L2	Union Vice President, Main Labor Negotiator*
L3	Board Member, Labor Negotiator, Appointed "Devil's Advocate"*
L4	Board Member, Labor Negotiator
L5	Legal Counsel for Labor
L	Other Labor Negotiators
M1	Director, Corporate Employee and Industrial Relations and Communications, Main Management Negotiator for Wage Bargaining†
M2	Senior HR Manager, Main Management Negotiator for Non-Economic Benefits†
M	Other Management Negotiators

Notes. *Based on the interview with the Union President on October 25, 2011.
†Based on the interview with the Senior HR Manager, November 3, 2011.

Our third step involved analyzing the coded text by giving close attention to the "constructive and functional dimensions of discourse" (Willig, 2008, p. 166). We looked at how characteristics of face culture were reflected in and steered the action orientation of talk as negotiators constructed the meaning of an acceptable wage increase. Intercoder discussions were likewise conducted at this stage. Fourth, we wrote the results to produce a coherent account of the textual data.

Results

Findings of our study showed that intracultural labor–management negotiators uphold social harmony, or *pakikisama*, as well as accentuating their interdependence during the negotiation process. Both parties also utilize distributive/S&O strategy, demonstrating low trust and intensions to get the most of the scarce resource. This pairing of cooperative and competitive moves and countermoves by the negotiating parties illustrates contradictory features of face culture that are reflected in bargaining. In this section, we present clashing cultural dynamics in face culture that emerged from the data—respecting while defying authority, coaxing while challenging counterparts, and preserving while attacking face—that played a role in scaling down conflicts and achieving mutual understanding at the bargaining table.

Respecting While Defying Authority

Data showed that both labor and management displayed deference to their colleagues as well as to those in higher authority. In the meetings where wages were discussed, labor called management *boss* or *sir*, demonstrating that labor held management in esteem even though both were supposed to be on equal status as representatives of two negotiating parties. Management representatives, on the other hand, displayed respect for labor envoys by acknowledging them as their equal through the use of such words as *brother, pare* (buddy), *pres* (short for president), and *guys.* Both parties also acknowledged the supremacy of the company's top management. This was demonstrated with management representatives' referring to it as one who gave them *maximum authority limit*, as well as with labor's utterances in their bid for a higher wage increase that "if we need to::: to talk to those with more ahhh authority we will talk to them"; top management being those with more authority than the management negotiators.

Respect for the hierarchy also meant obeying its mandate of taking responsibility for the collective. As such, throughout the negotiation process, both labor and management showed that they were willing to cooperate. And through their appeal for collaboration, both parties were effectively able to subtly demand that the other party also do its share, as interdependence was part of their responsibility for the company and its people. The labor negotiators' use of such lines as "willing *nga kami*" (we are willing), "*mabait naman kaming kausap*" (we are easy to talk to), and "*sa susunod na paghaharap ilatag din namin. . .kesa magtalo-talo tayo dito na wala naman tayong patutunguhan*" (next time we meet, we will also lay down (our offer). . ..because if we keep arguing we will not move forward) as well as management negotiators' utterances such as "commitment *naman namin yun*" (that is our commitment), "the management negotiating panel is. . .eager," and "*talagang naghanap kami ng* creative way *na matugunan ang mungkahi ninyo. . .*" (we really looked for creative ways to address your proposal. . .) illustrated both parties' move toward cooperation. The adherence to and regard for those in authority (to top management by both parties and to management negotiators by labor) discussed earlier also helped guide the negotiators in managing conflict.

The same authority, however, was also challenged, particularly by labor. For instance, labor would forthrightly question management arguments or request that management clarify its offer. There were times when labor openly mocked and laughed at management's offer. Below is an extract illustrating labor as blatantly making fun of management's proposal by expressing the need to use crocodile jack to increase management proposed wages.

1	M1	substantial offer yan. "yes ahh" YUN BASICALLY i-ano niyo lang para makita nyo lang	That's a substantial offer. "yes ahh" THAT BASICALLY just ahh so you can see
2	L1	[so]	[so]
3	M	[SA AMIN ON OUR OWN] ON OUR OWN ahhh	[FOR US ON OUR OWN] ON OUR OWN ahhh
4	L1	huh "jackin mo jack"	huh "you jack it, jack"
5	L2	(huh) kung ako sa iyo crocodile jack ang gamitin natin	(huh) if I were you we will use crocodile jack

Labor had, at some point, bluntly told management that its offer was "*bola*" (fib), and "*malabo*" (doubtful). It also directly asked, "*nakakatuwa ba yan*?" (would that make us happy?) when management was about to lay down its offer, and frankly inquired, "*wala na bang bago*?" (isn't there anything new?) when management asked that labor seriously consider its offer. Labor showed impatience when it asked "final *yan ha*?" (what, that is final?) in response to management's reiteration of its final offer. It also articulated its doubts (seem to be implying low trust) about management's sincerity to uphold its part of the bargain. It assertively asked management whether its offer was done "*in good faith*," or whether it was only fibbing. This forthright expression of open resistance and misgivings essentially served to weaken management's credibility and challenge its authority.

Coaxing While Challenging Counterparts

Both labor and management used offers and arguments so as to coax the competing party to yield and accept their demands. Their offers usually came in the form of particular amounts for the basic wage increase and performance incentive. Management offers started really low, while labor counteroffers were at first pegged at a much higher amount. Across several negotiation meetings happening within four months, offers and counteroffers were exchanged until both parties came to an agreed amount for the basic wage increase and performance incentives. The extract below is an example of an offer on the amount of wage increase that management presented to labor.

1	M1	so::: going back to the first page na ang ang ano natin mag-focus na lang tayo sa item number one	So:::: going back to the first page in which we just focus on item number one
2		lang ahhh so in terms of yung ano natin yung format. diba?	So in terms of our format. Right?
3		yung format ng ano natin ahhh pay increase natin pay increase for cba covered employees	The format of our ahhh pay increase pay increase for cba covered employees
4		mapapansin yan for the first year the pay increase is given in the form of	that can be observed for the first year the pay increase is given in the form of
5		a one time lump sum which should cover the whole first year. okey? and then for the last	a one time lump sum which should cover the whole first year. okay? and then for the last
6		two years makikita nyo. We are proposing ahhh::: an increase in your monthly basic	two years you can see. We are proposing ahhh::: an increase in your monthly basic
7		salary okey? ahhh in the total amount of five hundred pesos diba? for the last two years	salary okay? ahhh in the total amount of five hundred pesos right? for the last two years
8		okey? and also ahhh for the last two years of our new cba we are proposing ahhh an increase	okey? and also ahhh for the last two years of our new cba we are proposing ahhh an increase
8		in your ehhh ahhh cba monthly performance incentive in the additional amount of in the additional	in your ehhh ahhh cba monthly performance incentive in the additional amount of in the additional
10		total amount of amount of two hundred pesos on top of the existing ahhh-	total amount of amount of two hundred pesos on top of the existing ahhh-

Persuading the other party to accept its offer or counteroffer came in the form of justifications as well as logical and emotional appeals. Management justified the amount it offered using figures and detailing the circumstance that the company was facing considering its present circumstance and the prevailing

inflation rate. It claimed that the organization had to vie with other beverage companies in the market, deal with the reality that its products were not that saleable as they were not part of people's basic needs, cope with the ongoing market costs, and take in hand current business demands. Management hinted at the need to sustain the company, as its continued existence would benefit all of them. Management also maintained that it had accurate and legitimate documents to back up its arguments. In the process, it utilized logical appeal in trying to convince labor to accept its offer.

In contrast, labor used emotional appeals to oppose management offers. This was done, for instance, by highlighting the daily needs of the workers (thus the need for bigger salary increase), how they were the backbone of the organization, and how hard they were working for the company. Labor argued that the workers were facing economic difficulties; thus, they should be helped. Its utterances focused on how little the amount of increase it was asking for by describing this as just *barya* (small amount) and *makatarungan* (just). It also used such line as *unawain din kami* (understand us also) or such metaphors as *hindi langit* (not the heavens) and *lupa lang* (just the earth) in referring to their desired salary increase when it implored management to reconsider its offer. Labor likewise presented counterarguments to management's claims. It contended, for instance, that management could afford to give a bigger amount of salary increase considering its growing annual sales and the expansions it was making.

To further persuade the opposing party and elicit concession, labor and management displayed humility and willingness to accommodate the other party. Doing so ensured maintenance of group harmony and management of conflict during the negotiation process. Humility came in the form of admission of fault and meek appeal for understanding. For instance, labor willingly owned up to its faux pas of not being ready with its proposal when management asked for it by saying the following:

> sa union kasi, ahhh sa ngayon dahil nga:::: naka focus kami dun sa non-economic. . .hindi pa namin napag-usapan yung tungkol sa economic. So dahil nga:::: ganyan yung:::: sinasabi ng management at kami din ay may hiling na tapusin muna yung non-economic ah mag stick muna tayo dun sa non-economic. Di kung::: natapos na natin yang non-economic tsaka tayo pumasok sa economic. . .(in the union right now, because we focused on non-economic. . .we have not talked about economic (issues). So we request that we finish non-economic, let us stick first with non-economic. When we finish non-economic then we tackle economic)

Management likewise showed humility through appeal talk, using such lines as "*pinapaki-usap namin*" (we are appealing), "may we humbly appeal," "please seriously consider," or "*hanggang diyan na lang*. Please *lang*" (enough please). Management also pleaded for labor to cooperate, using such lines as "*tulungan nyo kami*" (help us), and "*pagtulungan natin na i-manage yung. . .*" (together let us help manage the. . .). When at the height of their discussion management made a statement that labor took as threat, management immediately acknowledged its mistake by explaining what it actually meant or by clarifying the issue. The extract below is an example of this:

1	M1	wala na. kahit saan pa kayo umakyat	no more. No matter how high you go
2		(simultaneous laughter presumably by all negotiators)	(simultaneous laughter presumably by all negotiators)
3	L	hinahamon ka L3 diba? kahit saan ka pa umakyat	You are being challenged L3 right? No matter how high you go
4	L3	oo!	Right!
5	M1	what I mean to say diba? kami ang ano eh kami ang ahhh ang ahhh-	What I mean to is, we are ahhh we are ahhh the ahhh-

Both labor and management also displayed willingness to accommodate the other party by being agreeable and not being difficult. Below is an extract that shows both parties easily agreeing with each other. Management and labor both clarified what they had agreed on previously. Although both sides started off speaking in loud voices, the volume of the discussions quieted down, especially on labor's side of the negotiation table.

1	M1	TINE-TAKE MO KAMI OUT OF CONTEXT YUNG BINITIWAN NAMIN EH	YOU ARE TAKING US OUT OF CONTEXT THE ONE WE SUGGESTED
2		TAMA? HINDE! EH:::::DIBA MALINAW NAMAN YUNG SINABI NAMIN?	RIGHT? NO! AH:::::WHAT WE SAID WAS CLEAR RIGHT?
3	L1	[sige sige sige]	[okay okay okay]
4	M1	[ETO LANG]ANG SUGGESTED RANGE!	[THIS IS ONLY]THE SUGGESTED RANGE!
5	L1	[sige sige]	[okay okay]
6	M1	[diba?]	[right?]
7	L1	so dahil [ahhh] YUNG ONE THOUSAND BINIGAY NYO TAPOS SUMAGOT KAMI]	So because [ahhh] YOU SAID ONE THOUSAND THEN WE REPLIED
8	M1	[NGAYON PARA IANO ANG SOLUTION! SUMAGOT KAYO NG::]	[NOW SO WE CAN UHMM THE SOLUTION! YOU SAID::]
9	M1	[five–six]	[five–six]
10	L1	[okey] sige	[okay] okay
11	M1	ganun na lang ano natin. diba?	that's it, right?
12	L1	ganun (nalang tayo)	that's it
13	M1	so de of course ahhh pagka ano natin pagka-adjourn namin i-print lang namin yun ano muna diba?	So of course ahhh when we adjourn, we will just print that right?
14	L1	umm sige	umm okay
15	M1	yung latest na ano yung latest na::: ano naging basehan ng pagsagot nyo ng ano ng five thousand	the latest the latest::: the basis of your saying five thousand
16	L1	so::: idisregard na natin ito	so::: we will disregard this
17	M1	i-disregard nyo na	you disregard it
18		akin na kunin na namin para hindi na tayo mag ano. ALL COPIES ha? [all copies]	Give it to me, we will get that so you won't have to. ALL COPIES please [all copies]

The admission of mistakes was received without reservations as well as with lenience and forbearance. Both labor and management showed that they were willing to listen and that they understood and took into consideration the other party's need, such as need for short break, time to prepare, preferred time to meet, and even their position as representatives of the workers and as representatives of the company.

The use of certain pronouns turned out to be a tool in coaxing the other party to yield even further. For instance, negotiators from both parties may have used second-person pronouns at the very start of the bargaining process, but it shifted to first-person collaborative pronouns toward the middle of their very first meeting and continued on until the conclusion of the wage negotiation. The change in pronouns used from noncollaborative—*kayo* (you) and *inyo* (your)—to collaborative—*tayo* (us, we) and *atin* (our)—gave prominence to their joint goals. As such, even though labor and management came from different sides of the fence, they still belonged to one and the same organization or overarching collective, and whatever decision both parties hammered out would eventually affect both parties.

These persuasive tactics, however, were also contradicted, particularly by labor's approach, which actually challenged its counterpart. These challenges came in the form of threats, intimidations, and openly questioning the other party's logic or assumption. For instance, labor informed management that the workers would hold protest in response to the small amount of salary increase that the management was proposing. It also threatened management that it would face a big problem if it remained tight-fisted with this line: "*pagka madamot kayo sa karapat dapat sa manggagawa mamromorblema tayo diyan*" (If you are ungenerous in giving what the workers deserve, we will have a big problem). At some points, labor expressed hostile intentions toward management by declaring that one of the members of the labor negotiating panel would go to the mountains—*mamumundok ako* (this implies joining the antigovernment armed struggle in mountainous rural areas in the country)—if he would not be happy with the management's offer. Labor also questioned the logic of management's argument by saying the following:

> Sir nagtataka nga kami sa declaration nyo ng operating profit nung two thousand seven. samantalang::: nagmeeting kami pinagmeeting nyo kami dun ang nagsabi na::: two thousand seven ang pinakamalaking naging

ano eh. ah pinakamalaking::: kinita ng ano ng::: (company)sa history. pagdating dito one hundred twenty-nine million lang ang kinita ng ano metro. nakapagtataka naman yun Sir.(Sir, we are perplexed by your declaration of operating profit in 2007. When in fact::: we had a meeting, you called for a meeting and it was. . . said that::: it was in 2007 when (the company) had the biggest profit in history. Now you are telling us that the company only profited one hundred twenty-nine million. That seems unbelievable Sir.)

The discourses of both labor and management that surfaced through the cooperative and competitive bargaining strategies they utilized were intended to legitimize their claims and delegitimize the assertions of the opposing party. Their arguments and counter arguments, coupled with their offers, were meant to justify their positions and eventually increase their individual group's gains.

Preserving While Attacking Face

Many times during the negotiation process, labor attacked the sense of positive image of management in the form of affronts and belligerence. Some of these antagonistic behaviors were demonstrated through blunt laughter at management's offer, frank expressions of its doubts on management's sincerity, and the use of insulting jokes. For instance, when management assured labor of its commitment, labor replied by saying, "Committed?" and then laughed out loud. Another example of labor attack can be seen in the extract below. Labor was aggressively telling management that it could not sense management's sincerity to the negotiation process, with management hardly given the chance to respond.

1	L2	may ano kami may tanong lang. kase syempre kami eh posisyon kasi namin na::: hindi. hindi naming	We have ahh we have a question. Because of course we already gave our position earlier that:::: we can't we can't
2		makita yung ano eh hindi namin makita yung	see, we cannot see the
3	L1	sinseridad!	Sincerity!
4	M1	[(wala naman (h)!/well ah!(h))]	[(no ahh (h)!/well ah!(h))]
5	M2	[(wala namang sinasabing)!]	[(we are not saying)!]
6	L2	[yung::: sinseridad ng ano eh!] ang iniisip kasi ng ano ng union kapag kami ano >masasagot ba ng management na kayoy puposisyon talaga dun sa ano kung sakaling kamiy magbago<	[that::: sincerity!] the union is thinking that if we ah>can the management answer that you would really take action if ever we change our position<

Management, on the other hand, also brazenly reproofed labor when it deemed necessary. For instance, as both parties haggled over wage increase, management stopped the interchange by declaring that they had arrived at the bargaining limit. Management's saying "*kahit saan pa kayo umakyat*" (no matter where you go up) unmistakably and unapologetically told labor that it was the one in authority and in control of the bargaining process.

Most of the time, however, management did not retaliate at labor's attacks. It showed patience and tolerance by just letting the insults pass and either continued speaking, replied with a joke, or made appeal talks. For instance, when labor noticed the incorrect number of employees on management's record, it sardonically commented that there were too many ghost employees. Management jokingly replied, "*Talagang lumalaki ano?*" (it really does get bigger, right?) and followed it with laughter. When during a heated discussion, labor said the workers might hold a picket (a form of protest action) when they learned of management's offer, management jokingly asked, "*Sinong nakapikit?*" (who is closing his eyes?), deliberately mispronouncing the word (*pikit* instead of picket), which elicited laughter from the bargaining parties. As such, management deliberately steered away from conflict by sidestepping the insults or threats flung by labor. Even when management may have already felt annoyance at labor's antagonism, management still did not show any sign of emotion that revealed it was affected in any way. By doing so, management depicted itself as nonantagonistic and helped maintain social harmony in the process.

Labor, on the other hand, also took management's bouts in good spirits. For instance, labor representatives just laughed when management said, "*kahit saan pa kayo umakyat*" (no matter where you go up). In one instance, when people were laughing at a labor representative's (in)capacity to deal with technology, he just laughed and joked with them good-naturedly.

The discourse between labor and management showed labor as mostly doing offensive moves (e.g., insults) against management, and in some of these, labor utilized jokes so that its affronts were tempered by the light-hearted manner through which the lines were delivered. For instance, when labor told management that it was fibbing or that one of them would go to the mountains if he would not be satisfied with management's offer, labor actually did these in a blithe manner so as to moderate the effect of what it said. Management did the same when it, for instance, countered labor's affronts with jokes. Humor made it easier for both parties to articulate their ideas that may be offensive or unacceptable without damaging their congenial relationship. Employment of humor allowed both parties to take offensive comments in stride without having to lose face. The negotiating parties' cultural norms of utilizing humor and evading disagreements helped lessen the tension in the group when emotions were running high. It also preserved group collegiality as well as upheld the interest of the collective.

Discussion

Our research demonstrates the important role of culture in shaping strategies and outcomes of wage bargaining. This is consistent with the claims of previous studies that highlight the role of culture in the negotiation process (Adair & Brett, 2004; Adair et al., 2004; Aslani et al., 2013; Lewicki & Polin, 2013). A close examination of the naturally occurring talk in this wage negotiation showed how the discursive actions of spoken words reflected the dynamic interplay of clashing intracultural norms shared by management and labor negotiators. Specifically, characteristics of face culture that reflect competitive and cooperative approaches in negotiation, such as having low trust, adhering to hierarchy, restraining negative emotions, and maintaining harmony (Aslani et al., 2013), seemed to have shaped the dynamics and outcome of this negotiation.

Culturally Shaped Negotiation Strategy

Expected adherence to socially regulated norms downplays the importance of interpersonal trust in face cultures (Aslani et al., 2013). However, institutional sanctions that are expected to regulate behavior are weakly imposed in negotiation context (Brett, 2007). As such, bargaining in face culture is characterized as having low trust and relying largely on substantiations and offers or distributive bargaining strategy (Aslani et al., 2013). This was evident in the results of this study, where substantiations and offers were found to characterize the verbal exchanges between labor and management. The bargaining process, as expected, was a series of offers and counteroffers substantiated by justifications, threats, arguments, and logical and emotional appeals in the hope of convincing the other party to yield to the other's offer or demand. These bargaining behaviors, lacking in information sharing and designed to aggressively put forth group gain, stem from the low trust relations (Adair & Loewenstein, 2013) between labor and management. Having low trust sometimes becomes explicit such as when labor articulated doubts about management sincerity by asking whether its offer was done in good faith.

Face Dynamics Thwart the Impact of Low Trust Bargaining

Despite having low trust, management and labor were able to achieve joint gains and sign an agreement on wages—the most contentious bargaining issue in the context of labor–management relations in the Philippines (Edralin, 2003). The discursive analysis of spoken words between both parties showed that, even if talks pertaining to wages mostly contained justification of positions, demands, rejection, and

threats, these were done with sustained adherence to authority as well as implicit and explicit efforts to maintain harmony.

Respect for Authority

Even if labor constantly rejected management's offers and used threats to substantiate their demand for higher wage increase, workers' discursive practices insinuated respect for the organizational hierarchy. For example, labor called the management negotiators *sir* or *boss*, showing the Filipino's adherence to power distance. According to Hofstede (1983), in countries such as the Philippines where there is large power distance, less powerful members of organizations expect and accept that there is unequal distribution of power. Despite the supposed equality in status of labor and management negotiators on the bargaining table, how labor referred to management reflected acceptance of inherent inequalities, specifically their subordinate status. Also, labor's request to talk to top management as "those with more. . . authority" when they failed to persuade management negotiators to increase wages showed how labor acknowledged the overarching power of top management. Such is akin to the recognition of the elders' authority over conflicting groups in face cultures (Aslani et al., 2013). Deference of management negotiators to top management's understanding of what is an acceptable wage increase was explicitly expressed in their successive communication of their maximum authority limit on the amount of wage increase. Labor negotiators, on the other hand, unexpectedly and perhaps unknowingly, expressed the same deference to top management in the above utterances.

Given this, although there were differences in the more explicit claims of what is an acceptable wage increase, as seen in the way offers and demand were communicated on the bargaining table, the discursive constructions generally maintain the stability of the hierarchy and power structure. The intracultural value of adherence to authority, reflected in the negotiators' utterances, somewhat facilitated working toward an agreement.

Implicit and Explicit Efforts to Maintain Harmony

Both labor and management attempted to maintain harmonious intergroup relationships. Despite the lack of trust, both parties worked toward an agreed wage level through indirect communication. Humor was particularly useful for both parties as they expressed affronts and dealt with insults. Labor sugarcoated its confrontational discourse and insults with humor, while management responded either by ignoring the indirect insult or through another humorous repartee.

To create a more harmonious relationship, management self-deprecated and discursively constructed a more egalitarian relationship, with labor calling workers *pare*, or *brother*, and using appeal talk, or *pakiusap*, in dealing with the hard line stance of the union. These utterances demonstrated *pagpapakumbaba*, or humility, a feature highly valued in Filipino culture (Pe Pua, 2006) and in other face cultures as well (Aslani et al., 2013).

Both groups likewise used inclusive pronouns throughout the negotiation that demonstrated the management and labor negotiators' cooperative stance. Communicating to the other group in this manner emphasized that both groups, although competing for scarce resources, were part of a bigger collective. Management and labor negotiators likewise openly admitted fault and showed understanding by willingly accommodating requests in the exercise of the negotiation (e.g., breaks and preparation time) and in considering the challenges of each other's position as representatives of workers and top management.

The show of humility, understanding, and willingness to cooperate served to portray both parties as worthy of the opposing group's trust, thereby strengthening their credibility as negotiating panels. The norms discursively constructed by both groups during negotiations point to labor and management's move toward teamwork and collaboration. Through their negotiation language, both parties constructed the other party as a significant part of a bigger collective. As such, the groups' culture of conciliation and harmony compelled them to work as a team so as to attain mutual gains from the negotiation.

Our findings demonstrate how explicit efforts to maintain harmony are reflected in the utterances that dynamically construct cooperation, collaboration, understanding, and humility. Although there is a tendency to be competitive due to lack of trust in the other party, negotiators within face cultures acknowledge the legitimacy of conflicting perspectives and look for ways to go beyond these contradictions (Nisbett & Miyamoto, 2005). This reflects the holistic mind set that characterizes face culture that, according to Aslani et al. (2013), may explain why negotiators within this culture achieve joint gains as long as there is no overt expression of negative emotions.

Conclusions and Implications

The study examined how culture shaped the dynamics and outcome of wage negotiations within a face culture. Using discourse analysis, findings showed how the lack of trust among negotiators translated into distributive bargaining strategies reflected in the verbal exchanges between management and labor. The discursive analysis of talk between both parties showed that even if utterances pertaining to wages mostly contained justifications, demands, rejection, and threats, these were done with respect to authority and with implicit and explicit efforts to maintain harmony through indirect confrontation using humor and tolerance of insults, humility cooperation, collaboration, and understanding. Such reflections of face culture in the bargaining process helped shift the negotiation dynamics from one where parties maximize group gains to one that pursues mutual gains.

Findings of the study can be useful in selecting negotiators or in training negotiators within face cultures to understand intracultural dynamics. Results may be used to orient negotiators on how face culture comes into play in the process of negotiation and how culturally sensitive language may help manage conflict and facilitate achievement of joint gains in highly competitive negotiations. Results highlight how management negotiators' humility through appeal talk and capacity to ignore insults helped gain trust and cooperation. Findings can likewise orient labor negotiators in face cultures on how negotiation language can perpetuate or minimize unequal power relations as unionists speak with management negotiators. This is particularly important to note in highly exploitative labor–management relations.

This research tried to locate expressions of face culture during wage negotiation in an organization. Future research may look into manifestations of intracultural norms and behaviors across types of negotiations or compare the language of negotiations that ended in an agreement and those that resulted in greater disagreements (e.g., workers' strike or company lockout). Also, since discourse analysis proved to be a fitting lens and methodological approach in unearthing cultural dimensions that surface in negotiations, future intracultural or cross-cultural research on negotiations may find value in using this perspective.

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