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## **Team Work in Business Negotiations**

### **Abstract**

This is a case study of an authentic Swedish business negotiation, stretched over a time of nearly one year and divided into three sessions. The study traces and describes the phases within the negotiation process and it shows that the phase structure of each session is related to the global structure of the entire negotiation. The second part of the study concerns cooperative talk within the negotiating teams, teamtalk, and cooperative talk across the teams, grouptalk. It describes the relationship between the phases in the negotiation process and the development of different types of cooperative talk. The third part of the study indicates the relationship between the interactional character of the negotiation and the different phases. It shows how a monological interaction pattern with several instances of teamtalk in the presentation phase, gradually changes into a dialogical interaction pattern with many instances of grouptalk in the closing phase.

### **1. Introduction**

This is a case study of a Swedish business negotiation, stretched over a time of nearly one year and divided into three sessions. The analysis is based on authentic negotiations in contrast to a great number of earlier studies that are based on simulations and experiments. The study has two aims. The first is to describe the overall structure of the negotiation and to trace the different phases of the negotiation process within the set of successive sessions. The second is to analyse some manifestations of interactional cooperation and their development over time during the entire set of negotiation sessions, and how these are managed by the interlocutors.

In their review on recent research on negotiation by communication scholars, Putnam & Roloff (1992), referring to Sayer & Guetzkow (1965) and Stein (1988), define bargain and negotiation as entailing “two or more interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals and engage in social interaction to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome.” They also claim, referring to Donohue et al. (1983), Walton & McKersie (1965) and Zartman (1976), that the rules and normative practices of bargaining and negotiation “include specifying preferred outcomes prior to the negotiation, exchanging proposals and counter proposals and engaging in dynamic movement through social interaction” (Putnam & Roloff,

1992: 2-3). Even though the negotiating parties in this study could not be said to perceive incompatible goals, these definitions are relevant to the approach taken in this study, as its focus is on “social interaction” and “the dynamic movement”.

The term negotiation, as it is employed in this paper, refers to the everyday use of the word negotiation as a culturally recognized social event, bounded in time and place. Negotiation could even be said to constitute a particular communicative genre (Luckmann, 1989). The term negotiators refers to those participating in that type of event and the study concerns a particular type of negotiation, namely business negotiations.

## 2. Background

Most researchers agree that business negotiations have at least three characteristics (Lampi, 1986; Mulholland, 1991; Rubin & Brown, 1975). They are clearly goal oriented, they are structured by more or less strict procedures, and they are premeditated and planned for, not only openly **between** the teams but also internally **within** the teams.

Firstly, the negotiators pursue at least two goals; the first deals with the issue at stake and the second is concerned with the formation and maintenance of personal relationships. But very often the goal structure is even more complex. The main and explicit goal can be divided into several subgoals, for example, to deliver a product at a certain price, at a certain quantity within a certain time. But there may also be implicit goals behind the main goal. For instance the negotiator may nourish the hope that the contract at stake, if agreed on, will lead to an even bigger commitment later on. And to add to the complexity, a negotiator practically always acts on someone's behalf, as he is representing a company or an organization. He may have preferences for different objectives based on personal ideas or interests and these preferred goals may not correspond entirely with those of his associates. Sometimes all parties want to achieve the same goals, but disagree on the means. The opinions of other actors in the complicated game that is negotiation, such as unions, banks, shareholders and others, also have to be considered by the negotiator.

The urge to form and maintain personal relationships can be more or less important, depending on the length of time that the opponents have known one another and on the degree of dependence between the parties.

Due to their particular personalities, the actors could also be more or less sensitive to relational types of goals. Relational and instrumental goals are strongly interdependent. "Relational goals may operate interchangeably or simultaneously, may be subordinate to instrumental goals or become central aims in their own right" (Wilson & Putnam, 1990: 387).

Secondly, business negotiations are a highly structured form of communication, often organized according to formal rules that regulate when and how to talk and what to talk about. A written agenda and an elected chairperson will most likely lead to a formal interaction, but also an informal business negotiation is implicitly structured by procedural rules and its interactional patterns can be distinguished from those of ordinary conversation.

Thirdly, a business negotiation is always prepared in some way. Some paperwork has already been done and preliminary contacts have been taken per telephone, fax and letters. On the one hand, all the participants have mutually planned and agreed on, for instance, issues, dates and places, on the other hand each of the opposing teams may have made up internal plans and agreements of what their objectives are, of what the limits of their proposals will be and of what strategies to follow.

Finally, a fourth characteristic, which has not attracted much attention from researchers, is the fact that negotiations often include several people constituting two teams. Accordingly, the interaction is often dyadically organized, in spite of the fact that many persons are present and take part in the interaction. However, even if this organisation is the most typical interactive pattern in negotiations, the fact that there are several people communicating in a negotiation, implies the possibility of shifting communicative alliances.

Some researchers, such as e. g. Ericson (1981) and Parker (1984), have analyzed the shifts in ordinary conversation, when this conversation is enacted between several participants and thus constitutes a multi-party interaction. Their data is taken from a dinner conversation (Ericson) and from a talk in the doorway between neighbours (Parker). They have studied what happens when one conversational focus bifurcates into two and back again to one. Aronson (1991) has analysed triads (doctor-child-parent) in an institutional context, where the interactional pattern is one of shifting alliances between the participants. Edelsky (1981) has examined five informal committee meetings, where she identified two kinds of "floors". She defines floors as, "the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/space" (Edelsky, 1981: 405) and she distin-

guishes between floor 1, which is a singly developed floor and floor 2, which is a collaborative venture where several people seem to be either operating on the same wavelength or engaging in a free-for-all (Edelsky, 1981: 405).

Of the previous case studies on authentic negotiations very few are concerned with interaction and among these, hardly any is based on business interaction, Firth (1992) being the one exception. To learn about earlier research of the negotiation process in actual cases, one has to turn to ethnographically oriented research of negotiations in a different context. This kind of research (e.g. Douglas, 1962; Gulliver, 1979; Moerman, 1988,) contends that one feature of negotiations is that they proceed through patterns or “phases” and these phases are identified as “shifts in emphases, negotiating purpose, or behavioural disposition” (Firth, 1991: 25). The supposition of a pattern of different phases in the negotiating work has led to the construction of theoretical models of negotiations, the value of which Firth disputes, claiming that phases are “observers’ constructs, which are potentially devoid of demonstrable relationship to observable-reportable phenomena”. He further claims that “There is a need to show how ‘phases’ and ‘phase-progression’ in negotiations can be seen to be related to the participants’ actions and orientation” (Firth, 1992: 27).

Holmes (1992) in his review of research of phase structures in negotiation adopts a contrary attitude in that he regrets that “communication scholars have devoted little attention to phase models of negotiation” and that “this neglect is unfortunate because phase research enables scholars to explore how interaction changes over time, and how the longitudinal structure of negotiation is related to input and outcome variables” (Holmes, 1992: 83).

In his review of phase models of negotiations, Holmes distinguishes between prescriptive and descriptive models (Holmes, 1992: 86-92). As the most representative of all the prescriptive models he mentions the models of Atkinson (1980), Carlisle & Leary (1981), Zartman & Berman (1982) and the guide to hostage negotiation developed for the Michigan State Police by Donohue et al. (1990). The number of phases might differ across the models, but all contain three main parts: initiation phase, problem-solving phase and resolution phase. The descriptive phase models resemble the prescriptive phase models in so far as they also describe initiation phases, problem-solving phases and resolution phases. The descriptive models are based on case studies and the most well-known one is

Douglas's studies (1962) of four collective bargaining sessions from the 1950s. These negotiation studies were the first to utilise transcripts of actual talk and her model has had a major influence on later research in this area. She identifies three phases in labour management negotiations: 1) establishing the range, 2) reconnoitering the range and 3) precipitating the decision-making crisis. Putnam, Wilson, & Turner (1990) offer a similar model: 1) agenda definition and problem formulation, 2) narrowing differences, 3) testing, agreement and implementation. Gulliver's (1979) model, based on case studies in varying contexts and cultures, is more complex and consists of eight phases: 1) search for arena, 2) agenda and issue identification, 3) exploring the range, 4) narrowing the range, 5) preliminaries to final bargaining, 6) final bargaining, 7) ritualization, 8) execution.

In negotiation handbooks (e.g. Nierenburg, 1973) negotiations are sometimes referred to as cooperative enterprises. But who is cooperating with whom and when? Beside an overarching aspiration on the part of the negotiators (in most cases anyway) to create a cooperative atmosphere, which does not exclude many competitive elements, negotiations also give rise to specific forms of cooperation between the participants on the same side. This form of cooperation is called teamwork here. There are few studies that bear on interactional cooperation and teamwork within a negotiation setting. The study of Francis (1986) is based on Douglas's (1962) transcripts of a series of industrial negotiations. He demonstrates how "constituent entities of the negotiation setting, such as issues and parties, are interactionally accomplished in and through talk," (Francis, 1986: 53) specifically through interactional teamwork. However, Francis explains short sequences of turns at talk, but he does not relate these to the development of the negotiation over time.

Other researchers focus on the differences in communicative performance between cooperative and competitive negotiations. According to Donohue, Diez and Stahle, (1983) negotiations have three communication dimensions: argumentation, information management and relational development. They further suggest that there are three primary contextual parameters; potential outcomes, (goals, consequences) rules and relationship forms. They also assume that there is a strong link between communicative form and context and that context affects negotiating behaviour. For instance, if the potential outcomes are determined in advance (the size of the pie is fixed), if the participants know each other well, this will affect the form of arguments and the way the participants

exchange information and the way relationships develop (Donohue et al. 1983: 251-253). Thus if the negotiation is seen as a process moving step-wise forward through different phases in which different communicative dimensions are foregrounded and during which process the context gradually changes (potential outcomes getting more and more fixed, people getting to know each other better, etc), it is likely that the communicative patterns will be affected by this process and change accordingly, just as it can be assumed that the negotiators through their interaction will affect the context.

In this paper the development of the interactional teamwork has been chosen to judge this interdependence of the three communication dimensions and the reflexive effects of a changing context and forms during the negotiation process.

The first aim of this investigation is to trace and describe the phases within the negotiation process. The data consists of a series of meetings which constitute one negotiation. The different sessions took place at different localities and on different dates and it is, therefore, of interest to compare the phase progression of each session with the phase progression of the negotiation in general. The aim is not to construct a new phase model, but to contribute to and support the rationale of the concept of negotiation phases and to employ this concept in the analysis of the reflexive relationship between negotiation organisation and negotiating behaviour.

A second aim is to find evidence for an interrelation between the negotiation organisation and the negotiating behaviour of the participants. Starting out from the categorization by Francis (1986) of phenomena of cooperation, this study identifies manifestations of cooperation and investigates how these are related to different phases and the process variation of the interactional patterns. It should be noted, though, that my data came from negotiations of a different type than Francis's data, i.e. business negotiations as opposed to collective bargaining. When investigating the manifestations of cooperation, the interplay of dyadic and multi-party interaction will also be considered. In this business negotiation of a fairly informal type, where implicit procedures regulate the interaction, the participants have a conflict of interest with respect to one or more issues and organize themselves in opposing teams and consequently the interaction is dyadically organized. However, at certain points this interactional organization evolves into a multi-party conversation in the form of collaborative talk within the teams and across the teams. When

and how this happens will be discussed in the present paper.

In addition, I will also focus on the more linguistic aspects of the communication process such as length of turn.

### **3. Data**

The data is taken from an authentic Swedish business negotiation stretched over a time of nearly one year and divided into three sessions. It deals with the placing of an electronic invention with a manufacturer of opto-electronic instruments and it encompasses the whole process from the first contact to the signing of a contract. The company wants to gain the right to produce and market an instrument recently invented by some technicians at a university department. Representatives from the two sides formed, as it were, two teams.

The negotiating teams consist of, on the company side, (the C-team):

HFC Henry F. Collins, owner of the company, engineer

IPC Ian P. Clarke, business consultant, member of HFC's board, on the university side, (the U-team):

AOU Andrew O. Updike, professor and engineer

HPU Howard P. Upham, AOU's chief technician,

BSU Brian S. Underwood, economist and associate professor, economic and legal advisor to the university board

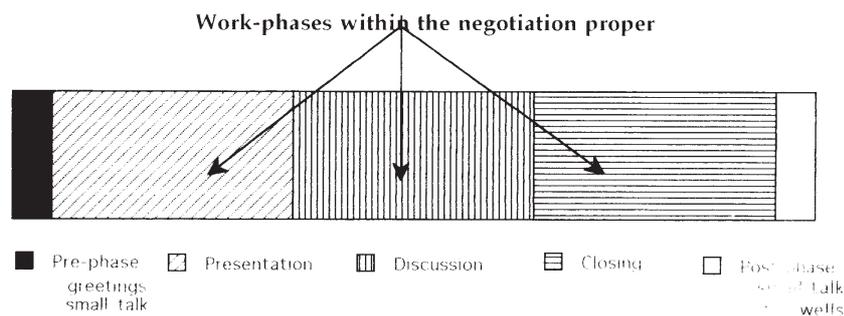
I took part in the negotiations as an observer and recorded the interaction and collected field notes. I was also given access to the written documentation concerning the case. The negotiation was transcribed and the analyses are based on transcriptions, fieldnotes and the actual tape recordings.

## **4. Analysis**

### **4.1. Overall phase structure**

If one assumes that negotiation is a process where two or more interdependent parties start with incompatible goals and end up by reaching a mutually satisfactory outcome, through engaging in social interaction (Putnam et al., 1992), it will be expected that negotiations have at least one informative and one argumentative part. Quite naturally there will also be an opening where the participants agree to negotiate and an ending where the participants reach some kind of conclusion. In the data

this presumed structure is also confirmed by the analysis of the general global structure, which showed that the negotiation proceeds from the presentation of the problem, to the discussion and ends with a conclusion, Fig. 1, (in this case an agreement).



**Figure 1. Negotiation - general global structure.**

The phase pattern of the negotiation was traced by closely following the interaction, noting the shifts in topics and interaction character, that is shifts from informative, mostly long, monological parts to argumentative parts, characterized by a question-answer pattern, where each individual turn is fairly short. It was of particular interest to identify individual key utterances that clearly indicated that the participants were aware that they were leaving one part of the negotiation and entering another. In example 1, <sup>1</sup>BSU ends a presentation phase with a key utterance and says:

<sup>1</sup> Sequences from the data cited in the text have been translated as faithfully as possible into English. Transcriptions are given verbatim, i.e. all audible words spoken are transcribed, including e.g. repetitions, restarts and hesitation noises. Normal orthography is used and the following conventions are employed:

- ... denotes a pause for 1s or longer
- (.....) denotes omitted words
- denotes a speaker's leaving a linguistic unit unfinished
- = denotes a turn immediately following another i.e. the turns are latched
- underlining marks simultaneous speech
- // marks non-verbal behaviour
- (ABC: I see) indicates back-channelling from interactant not currently holding the floor
- (XX) marks an inaudible word
- (XX XX) marks an inaudible sequence of words
- Cursive* marks emphasis
- BSU: 182 The turns in each session are consecutively numbered

Example 1    Session 2

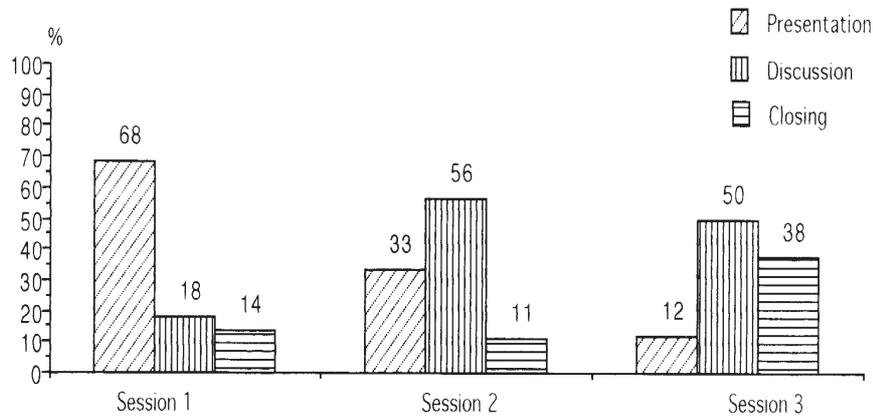
*BSU: 182 That's good, well. I think we have been given a very clear picture of the company (AOU: Mm) and now then after lunch we can ... you know ... well ... further discuss these ideas ... how ... how these different capacities can be linked to make it possible to exploit this kind of a product.*

Here we can see how BSU acknowledges, supported by a team member, that the presentation phase is coming to an end and suggests the introduction of a discussion phase.

Thus, the result was a global picture, a blueprint of the negotiation process. In the first session the main problem with its subproblem is presented and delineated. The negotiators are introduced to one another and they work actively to build up personal relationships. In the second session the problems are analysed in detail and a preliminary agreement is arrived at. The personal relationships are strengthened and the atmosphere gradually becomes more relaxed. During the third session the adjustment of some details in the final contract is discussed and agreed upon and the final contract is signed. The negotiating work in the third session is performed in a relaxed and friendly climate.

Every session is structured in a way similar to the global structure of the whole negotiation. After a prephase devoted to small talk, the negotiation proper is opened with a presentation phase. Then a discussion follows which in its turn is followed by a closing phase, where the negotiators discuss when to meet next time and what needs to be done before the next meeting. In the ensuing farewell phase the actors exchange some small talk before they depart.

However, the analysis of each session shows that even if they are structured in a similar manner, their phases vary in length and content depending on their placement in the whole negotiation as is illustrated in Fig. 2.



**Figure 2. The phase structure of the negotiation proper in sessions 1, 2 and 3.**

Fig. 2 shows the length of each phase within the negotiation proper (pre-phase and postphase are not included in the estimation) of the three sessions and the estimation is based on the amount of words, where 100% equals the total amount of words of each session.

*Characteristics of the presentation phases or the “agenda substitutes”.*

Despite the fact that the negotiation is fairly informal and that no written agenda is used, no chairperson is chosen and no minutes are taken, the participants seem to follow and construct their interaction according to an implicit, highly regulated structure. The head of the department opens the negotiations with a few words at the university and the owner of the company does the same thing at the company’s premises. After breaks and interruptions these two also put the interaction on its track again as, for instance, in session two when, after a pause in the meeting caused by a secretary, HFC says: “Well, you were saying, Ian ?” Through implicit chairmanship AOU and HFC take responsibility for the interaction.

In the first session the company presents a market report including a marketing plan, which occupies more than half of the time of the first session and also functions as an agenda and structures the subsequent discussion. This report emphasizes issues that are important as seen from the company perspective and the main part of the following discussion circles around these issues. The second session includes a visit to the factory and a presentation of the organization of the company and the U-team have an opportunity to get more information. It also includes a

presentation of the opinions and the positions of the U-team, which guides the following discussion. The third session hardly has any presentation phase as it is the contract-draft that functions as an agenda and introduces the issues at stake.

In the presentation phase the interaction has a monological character and when the participants give their reports they are interrupted only a few times by short requests for clarification as this example shows:

Example 2	Session 1
IPC: 29	<i>(.....) I was talking to people at Brown ... Optic Ltd ... about another project and then I mentioned this too...</i>
AOU: 30	<i>In Holland?</i>
IPC: 31	<i>In no. in ... Brown Optic that is... the branch that is (AOU: Yes) located in Milano (AOU: Yes ok) in Italy... (.....)</i>

#### *Characteristics of the discussion phases.*

As Fig. 2 illustrates, the discussion phase in the first session is short in comparison to the presentation phase. The discussion is mostly of question-explanation character as some unclear points in the presentation need to be elucidated. The discussion is ended with a statement that the participants have found good grounds for further discussions. In the second session the discussion is longer and it takes up most of the time and both sides take up issues that they find debatable or in need of clarification. However, there is a predominance towards points dealing with the concerns of the inventors. The discussion is closed with a preliminary agreement.

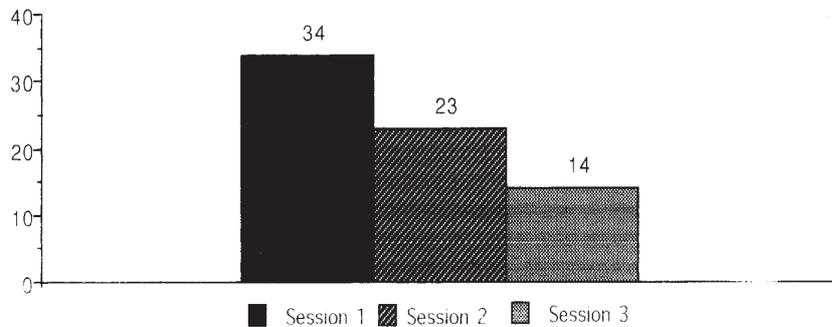
In the third session the discussion is again shorter as it does not treat disagreements so much as it seeks confirmation about prior agreements. Six months have passed since the last meeting and the participants have to refresh their memories and make sure that nothing is forgotten or has changed. The discussion is closed with the confirmation of the agreement.

During the discussion phase the interaction is mostly dyadically organized, that is arguments and ideas are exchanged between the teams. However, during events of a more interruptive kind, e.g. coffee breaks and when the secretary comes in, and at the prephase and the farewell phase, the floor is open to all and the interaction transforms into multi-party conversation.

*Characteristics of the closing phases.*

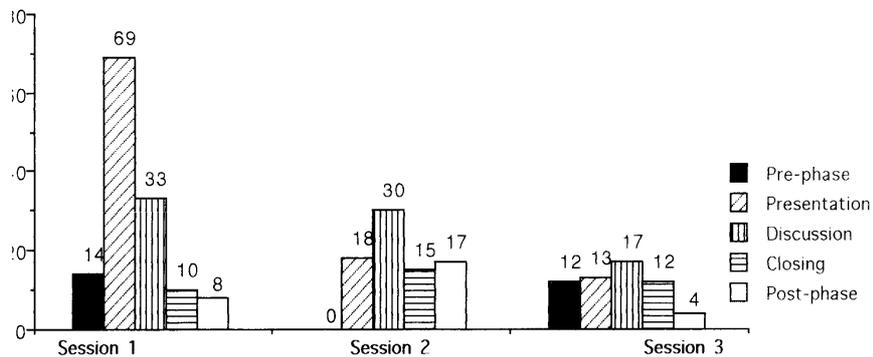
The closing phases in the first two sessions are rather short. In the third session the closing phase concerns the signing of the contract and in comparison to the other two sessions this phase is fairly long and includes several procedural questions. There is also a tendency in the closing phase for the interaction to lose its earlier predominantly dyadic character and on several occasions turn into a multi-party conversation. This is particularly observable in the third session which will be described in more detail in section 4.2 below.

There is a difference regarding the average turn length of the participants in each session, which is shown in Fig. 3 a.



**Figure 3a. Words per turn in sessions 1, 2 and 3.**

The same difference of turn length is displayed even when all phases of the three sessions are compared, Fig.3b. For instance the amount of words per turn in the discussion phase of the first session is larger than the amount of words per turn in the discussion phase of the third session.



**Figure 3b. Words per turn in each phase.**

It is obvious that the tendency towards decreasing turn length in the course of the negotiation concurs with the gradual change from a more monological interaction pattern to a more dialogical interaction pattern.

To sum up: Firstly, the analysis showed that in spite of the lack of formal procedure, the negotiation in its entirety was structured according to a pattern specific for the communicative genre of negotiation, and in addition it also showed that each session was strictly structured according to the same pattern. Secondly, it showed that the phase structure of each session was intimately related to the global structure of the entire negotiation, i.e. the first session had a long presentation phase, the second a long discussion phase and the third a long closing phase. Thirdly, the analysis also indicated that the interactional character of the negotiation was related to the different phases, i.e. the presentation phases were mainly monological, the discussion phases dyadic and the interaction of the closing phases varied in character between dyadic and multi-party conversations. The relationship between these interactional patterns will be discussed further in the following section.

#### 4.2. Interactional cooperation

The second part of the study concerns the relationship between the negotiating process and the development of teamwork. In his study on structures of negotiation talk, Francis (1986) found examples of interaction, where negotiation talk was co-produced by two or more team members, which he referred to as teamwork. He identified and described four kinds of teamwork: team passing, team assists, team takeovers and team movements. Francis explains his categories as follows (Francis, 1986: 62-75):

**Team passing:** A turn, where a participant, belonging to team A, who is the recipient of a first part of an adjacency pair, produced by a member of team B, passes the production of a second pair part to a third participant also belonging to team A. Moreover, Francis distinguishes between conference or consultation pass, confirmation pass and processing or substitution pass.

**Team assists and team takeovers:** Self selected turns by a team member placed during, or immediately subsequent to, a turn by another member of the same team and directed to the other team. A team assist is designed as a satellite to the turn to which it is attached. It is also designed to contribute to the turn of the co-team member to which it is attached. Francis divides the team assists into three subgroups: corrections,

prompts and buttresses.

A team takeover is designed to take the conversational floor from a co-team member, which may result in its speaker having the subsequent turns from the other side directed to him or her.

**Team movements:** A sequence of talk in which the co-members of a team in the presence of another team with whom they are negotiating, direct their talk to one another rather than to members of that other team.

These categories were chosen as a starting point when instances of cooperative talk were selected from the data. Below follows an example of teamwork, taken from the third session. The participants are discussing economical issues and AOU is worried about the meaning of a passage concerning a debt of SEK one million. IPC assures him that it is not important, it is merely a way of accounting for the money that earlier has been given to the research project.

Example 3    Session 3

IPC: 109    (...).and the consequence will be then that there is a large loan at the bottom of the page from the very beginning, as it were, before one has borrowed a single penny from ... (AOU: Yes) from the bank or opened a cheque account or something like that, then it says a loan then from (AOU: Mm) X-foundation of a million (AOU: Yes) and then one has to have on the credit side an asset of a million SEK in this case the project (AOU: Mm) and then the balance sheet becomes heavy ... and then the banks (AOU: Yes) get sort of nervous and they think that it all looks very bad (AOU: Ok) but in the reality it is not so.

->HFC: 110    Yes that is true. It is a chimera. (team assist, buttress) rephrasing

->IPC: 111    It is a chimera. (team assist, buttress) repetition, emphasis

->HFC: 112    It is,/Giggle/ it is a debt in whatever way one handles it (AOU: Yes) and the value lies in the project. (AOU: Yes) (IPC: Exactly) It is only that if it is on the balance sheet the banks get nervous if it isn't on the balance sheet they get

(team assist of turn 109, buttress) rephrasing, repetition

->IPC: 113    They get unhappy yes. /HFC: Laugh/ what they see makes them nervous and what they don't see—

*(team assist, buttress) fill-in,  
repetition*

*AOU: 114 No no right ok.*

In this example IPC explains that the research money is entered as a debt of one million SEK and the project is entered on the credit side for the same amount. However, the banks do not always understand this and they sometimes question the balance-sheet. In the next turn HFC partly rephrases IPC's turn, saying it is all a chimera, thereby reinforcing the gist of IPC's turn. This is a kind of team assist that would be defined as a buttress. IPC repeats and emphasizes this buttress and in the next turn HCF repeats and rephrases PC's turn 109 and is once more assisted by IPC with a buttress type of team assist.

The example also demonstrates that to be categorized as an instance of cooperative talk between two team members, the turns have to be linked not only in content but also in time. That is, the team assisting turn immediately follows (or is uttered during) the turn it is supposed to support. This example also demonstrates that there could be a chain of turns that in varying ways, through emphasis or repetition or through rephrasing the first turn or filling in missing words, supports the first turn.

The analysis of the present data showed that the same kind of cooperative pattern could also be found in sequences where members from opposite teams were interacting. For instance, when a team member was answering a question, he would be helped not only by a member of his own team, but he could also be supported by a member of the opposite team, who would fill in missing words or correct a word or a figure. Here is an example from session 1. The U-team has been asked by the C-team about their attitude concerning future cooperation. Do they want to play an active role as board members or business partners? BSU prompts an answer from HPU, which is elaborated by IPC.

Example 4 Session 1

*->BSU: 138 But but now as for you Howard, you have mentioned sometimes that you would like to go on to work with new projects and then ... that is what one wants to do and that is quite clear that one should have ... of course one cannot simply just leave something totally on the contrary one has to be ready to do one's bit and be of assistance but this is... somewhat Howard ... your your philosophy is so to speak to in some way to finish a project and then continue with another then—*

*(team assist, prompt)*

HPU: 139 *But as I said yesterday (.....)we will start on another project that is knocking on the door (AOU: Mm) that we have to start on July 1 in order to get it rolling and therefore Andrew doesn't know ... neither Andrew nor I are especially interested in joining the company so to speak but we want to=*

*(team assist through back-channelling)*

->IPC: 140 *=You want to hand it over.*

*(team assist, buttress) fill-in*

HPU: 141 *We want to hand it over but of course at the same time we want to have a chance to influence (AOU: Mm)*

*(team assist through back-channelling)*

Each of these two examples has been considered as one instance of cooperative talk even if they include several turns and a linkage of team assists. That the turns refer to the same content is the determining factor when deciding on the length of one instance of teamwork.

The cooperative moves **within the teams** of the kind exemplified here, I have called **teamtalk** and those **across the teams** I have called **grouptalk**.

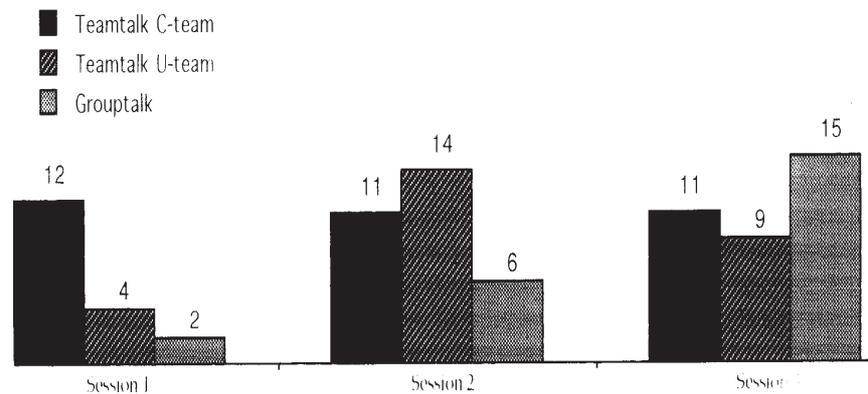
To summarize; in order to be categorized as teamtalk, cooperative talk between team members, or grouptalk, cooperative talk between members of the opposite teams, the selected utterances have to qualify according to one or more of the following criteria; namely that they are linked to one another: 1) *in content, i. e.* turns confirming, explaining, correcting or complementing the content of the previous utterance, 2) *in time, i.e.* turns following after one another, and in 3) *structure; i.e.* rephrasing statements or parts of statements, filling in missing words, repeating, and emphasizing previous statements.

It was stated above that the three sessions were structured differently. The first included a long presentation phase that was characterized by a monological form of interaction. Consequently, one could presuppose that few instances of cooperative talk would be found in this session. Session two was pre-eminently a discussion with a mainly dyadic pattern of interaction. Here one would anticipate finding many instances of teamtalk, while the third session, where the participants more or less

have already reached an agreement, would yield more instances of grouptalk.

**Fig. 4. Instances of teamtalk and grouptalk in session 1, 2 and 3.**

Figure 4 shows the amount of teamwork in each session divided into the



number of instances of C-team talk, U-team talk and grouptalk and it is evident that these presuppositions were confirmed.

### 4.3. Negotiating work

Let's examine some examples of teamtalk and grouptalk from the different sessions and see how they are constituted and what kind of negotiating work they do. When IPC and HFC come to the first meeting with the inventors, whom they have never met before, they do not know exactly their position and if they have any competitors but they are anxious to acquire the right to the invention and moreover, they want a far-reaching commitment to further cooperation. They have to be aggressive and sell themselves and their company and they have to provide information and arguments for their idea of handling the project, but also to elicit information about the position of the inventors. Donohue, Diez and Stahle (1983) argue that the most important primary communication concerns to negotiators are argumentation, information management and relational development. Out of these three concerns: information management and relational development are foregrounded in this session, but there are also argumentative elements embedded in the information management tactics. Through his presentation IPC provides information about the pos-

sibilities of the project but also argues that HFC owns the company with enough resources to realize the project. He is supported all the way by HFC, as can be demonstrated by the team assist in example 5:

Example 5    Session 1

*IPC: 105 /Writing on the blackboard/ Thus, the greatest cost here, it...it as I see it, it will be the travelling,..and of course there are salaries for /Writing on the blackboard/... for the staff that work directly with this. So the kind of supporting function that's needed that will be the responsibility of...That'll be Collins Electronics or, Different kinds of secretarial services and all such like and some wages ....and then there are of course costs that have to do with this purely technical cooperation too. /Writing on the blackboard/ (AOU: Mm).*

*->HFC: 106 Maybe one should notice the difference here a bit just the things you describe from a project that you have carried out here in X-town. While an ordinary model is exactly that one so to speak starts by forming the company ... in which the project is going to be realized and then one estimates that it will take three to five years of costs before we get there... And when... one forms a company one in reality takes on the whole ... mass of costs from scratch with managing director and secretary and pensions and the whole lot... eeeeh ... The projects we have been involved in previously then we usually avoid doing this until we reach the commercialization phase.. When we start so to speak to make a profit... (AOU: Mm) or are getting close to a situation when one can start a commercialization process and make a profit then we clothe the company with this kind of persons... (BSU:Hm).*

Here HFC refers back to a conversation he has had with BSU, the university economist, some turns earlier about initial costs. BSU doubts the correctness of the company's calculations. IPC has specified the costs and now HFC explains the difference between the conventional way of building up a new company and his new and unusual model and through this expansion he adds new information to their exposition. At the same time he stresses the fact that he is an experienced manager and builds up a positive picture of himself and his company.

Some turns later HFC gets a question from BSU and is assisted by IPC who fills in and emphasizes the turn. HFC thereafter continues in example 6 and reinforces IPC's turn.

## Example 6 Session 1

*BSU: 133 (BSU first gives some examples of cooperation forms between inventors and commercial companies). The question is: Should there be a considerable sum or at least a small sum of money initially or should it be in the form of shares and dividends in the long run and that is yes that— (HFC: Mm)*

*HFC: 135 In that case I can say... we haven't discussed that... (BSU: Noo I venture to say...(XX))... the approach.. our approach is that... it's well that—*

*->IPC: 136 You have to be involved somehow, it's as simple as that.*

*->HFC:137 Yes, we are open to... so to speak... discussing the forms. It isn't essential really which form it will take. (BSU: No)*

Here the C-team not only stresses the importance of the cooperation with the inventors but also emphasizes their own openness and informality.

In these examples the content issue is at the forefront, but very often teamtalk deals with the personal relationship issue. These two aspects, the content issue and the personal relationship issue, are always present in the interaction, as it is not only what someone says that is noted but also how he says it. If a participant helps a team member to provide information, he demonstrates their good relationship and he also proves himself to be a generous person. In example 7, where IPC turns to HFC for confirmation, the teamtalk takes the form of humorous team movement.

## Example 7 Session 1

*IPC: 40 .....Is this pretty much Henry?=I am looking inquiringly at you. (HFC: Laugh) Is this is this what we agreed upon?*

*->HFC: 41 Yes. You pass!*

*->IPC: 42 /Laugh/ Oh really Thank you (HPU: Laugh) I thought you would leave it to—*

This playful teamtalk does three things. It confirms the facts delivered earlier by IPC, it demonstrates the good fellowship between the two team members and it reminds the listeners of the fact that HFC is the boss, the owner of the company and the one who is going to execute the plans that IPC, the spokesman, has just been talking about. It is easier to put a team member in a favourable light than to advertise oneself. In this example,

when IPC turns to HFC for confirmation, it could be called a kind of interactive impression management (Goffman, 1959) where the two team members reinforce their positive impressions of each other. It is interesting to note that it is through a humorous code switching (Gumperz, 1982) that the opponents are reminded of the fact that HCF is the boss. Through the utterance “You pass”, IPC is reduced to a schoolboy just fulfilling an assignment while HCF has the power as the schoolmaster to approve or disapprove of IPC’s efforts.

The fact that teamtalk sometimes can be reflected on as a conscious strategy, at least on the part of the company, can be inferred by their joking admission in example 8 in the third session.

Example 8    Session 3

IPC:    235    *Now, Henry and I have divided the roles between us on our way down here and he is supposed to play the part of the nice guy and I will be the bad one That’s the way it’s supposed to be isn’t it...*

HPU:    236    *Yes /Laugh/*

HFC:    237    *(towards BÖ, investigator) This is the simplest form for negotiations there is then /Laugh/just to give further comments on this=*

IPC:    238    *=Tomorrow you can be the bad guy.*

Example 9 illustrates this collaborative strategy. At first IPC sketches a very bright future for the new instrument but then he brings forth the bad news and, though mildly, accuses the inventors of negligence.

Example 9    Session 1

IPC:    35    *(.....)This is...This is the positive part and the thing that makes you ... jump up and down a bit, this is a project you want to be part of...The big negative issue is.....that.....nobody that no-one from the beginning, you know thought of ....eeh ...protection of... this instrument protection patentwise and in another way(.....)*

He goes on telling a threatening story about a group of scientists he has just met. They are on the road to constructing a similar instrument. Then HFC takes the floor and offers a solution to the problem, which involves taking the future test results and implementing them into the design.

HFC:    37    *(.....) Then it would be possible to so to speak transform this into a form of know-how that will benefit the routine instrument. Could be in the form of software that can be*

*implemented it it could be in the form of a silicon design (AOU: Mm) in which we can stow everything away that... continuous two-year-use of the instrument has yielded in the form of of practical useful know how (AOU: Mm) ... and ...what I mean is that what one does by that is that is that one creates an obstacle for the competitors. One gets a headstart on them for two, three years..... (AOU:Hm)(.....)*

*IPC: 38 And that is a strong argument for... now if this is possible to carry through then it is a very strong argument for investing more money in development.*

HFC is then supported by IPC who explains that this solution fits beautifully into the overall plan he already has presented. This way the C-team present a veiled threat, alluding that the inventors are rather negligent and careless, in need of protection as it were, which the C-team can provide. This is a refined persuasive tactic that is used several times and which apparently works. This is also a good example of how team-talk can be used to propound an argument.

The teamtalk between the inventors is not as frequent as that of the company people and there may be several reasons for this. The need to sell the invention is not as pressing as to buy it. The inventors can afford to sit back and listen and let their opponents persuade them. It seems too, as if the two sides have different negotiating strategies. The inventors use BSU as their spokesman and just confirm his statements from time to time. However, the rate of teamtalk from the university side increases during the second session when the inventors want to make sure that they have understood everything correctly and that their conditions are understood and accepted by HFC and IPC. Towards the end of session two there are some instances of grouptalk and in the third session the examples of grouptalk are accumulated.

Even if the climate in the first session cannot be called competitive, it is more cautious and wary than in the following sessions, where it gradually gets more relaxed. In the third session the participants have got to know one another and seem to like one another and they have taken the first steps toward far-reaching cooperation. The interaction is now characterized by grouptalk and not by teamtalk. Instead of teams arguing against each other, there are now a group of people arguing together and providing information together. In example 10 we find an instance of grouptalk as both teams are working together to find ways to eliminate the debt that previous research grants represents. If the inventors earn enough money on the instrument they have to pay back the grant.

Example 10 Session 3

IPC: 121 *(.....)(XX) it's the Swedish envy that governs (AOU: Yes) for we must remember that you actually have received other money for this project too.*

*->(AOU:Yes that's right) I mean you haven't had money for your salaries and such like—*

*->AOU:122 No*

IPC: 123 *No so that is—*

HPU: 124 *But my salary comes from there!*

*->AOU:125 Yes partly yes, but mine doesn't and there are others too that haven't either. ->(IPC: no)...The engineers that have taken part in the whole thing*

*->(IPC: Exactly) they haven't been payed by...*

HPU: 126 *No not at all ....*

In this example the context has changed. Instead of a constellation of two teams with team members cooperating within the team against the opposing team there is now a group of people that has come to an agreement and is free to cooperate against a third party. IPC gives the U-team a valuable argument, which AOU acknowledges first with his backchannelling and then in turn 122. HPU protests, but is corrected by AOU, who is supported by IPC's backchannelling. So the U-team is provided with the argument they need by the C-team and the teams work it out in detail together and thus they prove to each other that they will become reliable and trustworthy partners.

Also the procedural aspect of the negotiation is affected by this change. Even if the negotiation in its entirety is rather informal, there is an obvious difference between the first and the last session that can be illustrated with example 11 and 12 from the openings of the negotiation proper.

Example 11: Session 1

AOU: 28 *(.....) Ok, yes shall we start then ... and yeah ... in principle give the floor to Ian or Henry who have done a market research study.*

Compare this to example 12 and the grouptalk organization of the opening of the third session.

AOU tries to open the negotiation:

Example 12: Session 3

AOU: 21 *Now Brian is in Stockholm and couldn't be here so we have to make do without him...*

but he does not manage to make the participants talk business. Not until cooperative prompts are delivered first by IPC:

*IPC: 61 One suggestion would be I guess that as it is such a long time since...that we... simply start to go through it a bit page (AOU: Sure) by page.*

and then by HFC:

*HFC: 80 (.....) Okay. Maybe we should...maybe should start...leafing through the text?*

does the negotiation start. Thus at this point even the chairmanship is a kind of collaborative work achieved by grouptalk.

In the third session the turns are shorter, often incomplete as the interruptions are many, and the turns also often latch on to each other which according to Tannen (1984: 60) is a sign of enthusiasm. This should be compared to the examples 5, 6 and 10 from the first sessions, where the sentences are long, the syntax and the vocabulary often complicated. Diez (1986) has reported similar findings in her collected data of examples of competitive and cooperative negotiating behaviour. She found that competitive negotiation sessions produced formal interaction with very clearly spelled out content. Competitive negotiators chose to connect their ideas tightly, used indirect forms of address and few items of backchannelling and any support statements used were directed at content rather than toward persons. In a more competitive setting the utterances would be longer, the turn exchanges smoother and the interruptions few. The cooperative interactions were informal with frequent talkovers, break-ins and a greater variety of utterance forms. The utterances were often partial, elliptical or otherwise incomplete. Interactants used tentative expressions like "I think" or "what do you think about...?"

It is quite evident then that the negotiation process is context dependent as well as context generating and that the negotiators' behaviour produces changes in the context, besides which the changing context produces changes of the negotiators' interactional strategy and linguistic behaviour. A similar claim was made by Beisecker, 1970: "Within a range of negotiation situations, there are subtle shifts from highly competitive all the way across to highly cooperative. To the degree that interactants structure negotiation following either rule set, they are creating that 'type' of negotiation interaction."

## 5. Conclusion

Previous case studies have testified that most negotiations can be seen as a three-step-operation, where the three main stages in the process can be described as an initiation phase, a problem-solving phase and a resolution phase. The business negotiation analysed in this paper fits into that pattern, both as regards each individual session as well as the total negotiation. Moreover, the investigation also displayed a relationship between the phase structure of each session and the global structure of the entire negotiation.

The analysis also supports the assumption of Donohue, Diez and Stahle, (1983) that negotiators have three primary communication concerns: argumentation, information management and relational development. When trying to cope with these three communicative interests the negotiators have to consider the constraints placed on them by the context. In this negotiation, teamwork was the strategy chosen to make it possible for the negotiators to juggle their three communicative tasks simultaneously.

Expressed differently, when trying to promote explicit and implicit goals and at the same time build up and maintain a favourable relationship with the opponent, the negotiators work in a team and can in that way both apply and relax the pressure, both be nice and nasty at the same time. They also help one another to make the negotiation proceed according to implicit rules.

But, if the context has a major impact on the participants' interactional choices, the negotiators choice of interactional strategy also affects the context. At the beginning in a fairly competitive climate the negotiators chose to work in teams to reach their goals. This choice is gradually changed when their teamwork bears fruit and the solutions to the problems come into sight, and the participants come to know each other better. Hereby the climate changes. In other words the context changes. The implicate subgoals are more foregrounded when the explicit goals are more or less reached. The pattern of procedure changes from a fairly informal one to an even more informal one when the personal relationship has changed from a state of not knowing one another to a state of friendliness. These changes in their turn also influence the interactional choices of the negotiators, which is indicated by the gradual transformation of teamtalk into grouptalk and of a carefully built up formal language into a more relaxed informal language.

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