

A Study of Principled Negotiation Based on Transactional Analysis Theory

Shougang Zhang

PhD School of Management and Business Administration,
Szent István University Gödöllő, Hungary
School of Business, Xi'an Siyuan University, Xi'an, China
zsg771126@sohu.com.

Milan Constantinovits

PhD in Management and Business Administration Sciences, Associate Professor,
Szent István University Gödöllő, Hungary
Constantinovits.Milan@gtk.szie.hu

Abstract

The concept of “principled negotiation”, developed by Fisher and Ury in “Getting to Yes”, is one of the most influential approaches in current negotiation theory. However, it is important to recognize three critical academic issues about principled negotiation. (1) Why principled negotiation and positional bargaining (the method of principled negotiation is contrasted with hard and soft positional bargaining.) emerge, (2) how to deal with principled negotiation in reality and (3) how to make a principled negotiation with theoretical support.

This paper is written to study those problems by applying psychological theory of Transactional Analysis (TA). According to negotiation mechanism analysis based on TA, this paper is set up a new SESCO model (Situation -Ego- Strokes strategy -Complementary transaction -Objective) on negotiation. Firstly, identify the ego state both oneself and others in a specific negotiation situation. Secondly, meet needs with each other by exchange of strokes. Thirdly, adopt complementary transaction to get win-win objective.

Keywords: Principled Negotiation, Transactional Analysis, Strategies

1. Introduction

The concept of “principled negotiation”, developed by Fisher and Ury in “Getting to Yes”, is one of the most influential approaches in current negotiation theory. Fisher and Ury thought principled negotiation is a different third way except soft negotiation and hard negotiation. The principled negotiation method of separating the people from the problem, focusing on basic interests, mutually satisfying options and fair standards typically results in a wise agreement, is found more creative, wise, outcomes to conflicts (Roger D. Fisher, 1981). Ideally if both sides of negotiators follow the four main points of the principled negotiation, the negotiations will make an amicable agreement. Many empirical studies confirmed those results (such as (Chain, 2014), (Lewis and Spich, 1996), (Paquet, 1995) etc.), however, there are three critical academic issues about principled negotiation. (1) Why principled negotiation and positional bargaining (the method of principled negotiation is contrasted with hard and soft positional bargaining.) emerge, (2) how to deal with principled negotiation in reality and (3) how to make a principled negotiation with theoretical support.

Nowadays the focus issues in negotiation study are how the negotiation process influences the negotiation outcomes. Due to the complexities of deciding the negotiation process and the negotiation outcomes, scholars find generally those issues to use psychological fields such as individual differences, behavior characteristics and negotiators' cognitive (Bazerman et al., 2000). This paper is written to study those problems by applying psychological theory of Transactional Analysis (TA).

2. Transactional Analysis

TA is a branch of psychotherapy developed by Eric Berne who was a Canadian-born and American-worked psychiatrist. His definition of it is “a theory of personality and a systematic psychotherapy for personal growth and change”(Berne, 1968). TA is about how people are structured psychologically and is a theory of communication. Knowing about TA can be very useful for improving our communication skills. The main thoughts of TA are as follows.

2.1. Three ego states

There are three ego states in Berne’s model: Parent, Adult and Child. Ego states are irrespective of age and are capitalized to differentiate from the normal use of the words parent, adult and child. The Parent and Child ego states are echoes of the past. The Adult ego state is a response to the here and now when a person is grown up and using grown up responses. Ego states are ‘things’ not names. They are a set and related; thoughts, feelings and behaviors(Clarkson, 2013). Adult is the part of self that can think and determine logically and rationally and act accordingly. The Parent and Child ego states are sub-divided. Parent ego state is divided into: Critical Parent (CP) which is negative, unsupportive and critical. Nurturing Parent (NP) which is supportive, helpful, nurturing, comforting. Child ego state is divided into: Free Child (FC) which is spontaneous, free-wheeling, playful, self-indulgent, curious and rebellious. Adapted Child (AC) which is toned down behavior that has been learnt in response to the reactions from other people to us and our behavior. The learned or adapted responses are more likely to generate a given result from the receiver. The TA of Parent-Adult-Child model is illustrated by the following figure (Figure 1).

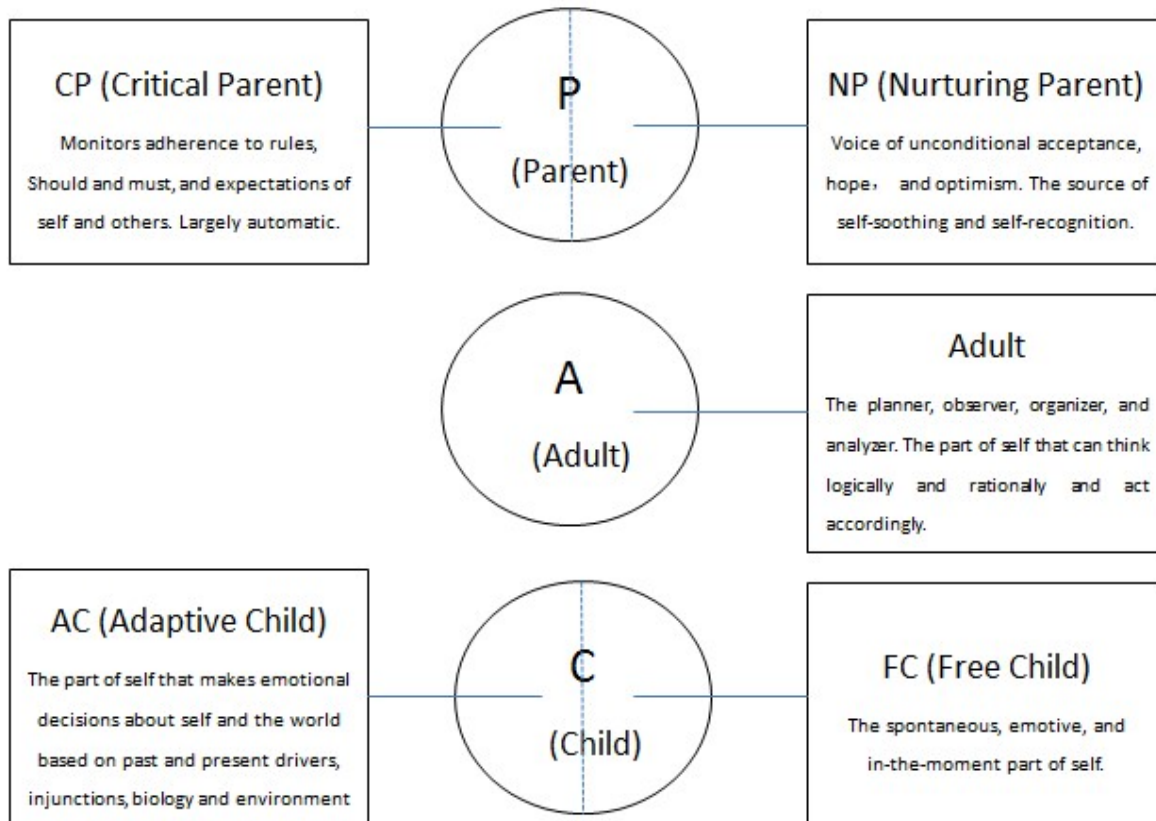


Figure 1. Three (Parent-Adult-Child) Ego States Model

2.2. Three types of transactions (communications)

The transaction defined by Dr. Berne as the basic unit of social intercourse (Berne, 2016). The three ego states can be used as a way of analyzing transactions (communications) between people. A transaction is a communication from A to B and the response from B to A. Communication (transactions) between people can be from one ego state to a different one or from one ego state to the same ego state (Hargaden and Sills, 2014). There are three types of transactions: complementary, crossed and ulterior.

2.2.1. Complementary transaction (communication)

Complementary transactions complete a transit from the receiving ego state back to the sending ego state. Where the message is sent from one ego state and the reply is from the expected ego state, so the transaction is complementary. Normally communication will be from one ego state either to the same ego state or a different one. The person who first communicates will expect a reply to be from a certain ego state. If communication is from a different ego state to the unexpected one, then the communication may be ineffective and the message may be lost, not received or disregarded by the person receiving it. If communication is from Adult to Adult then it is likely to be the most effective communication for most of our communications. So long as transactions remain complementary, communication can continue indefinitely.

2.2.2. Crossed transaction (communication)

A crossed transaction occurs when an unexpected response is made to the stimulus. When a transaction is crossed, a break in communication results, and one or both individuals will need to shift ego states in order for the communication to be re-established. The transaction is crossed; communication is non-effective. A crossed transaction could lead to argument and loss of effective communication.

2.2.3. Ulterior transaction (communication)

Ulterior transactions always involve two or more ego states in parallel. The behavioral outcome of an ulterior transaction (one where two messages are sent at the same time; one overt social and one covert psychological) is determined at the psychological level and not at the social level (Tudor and Hobbes, 2007).

Three types of transactions (communications) in TA is illustrated by Figure 2.

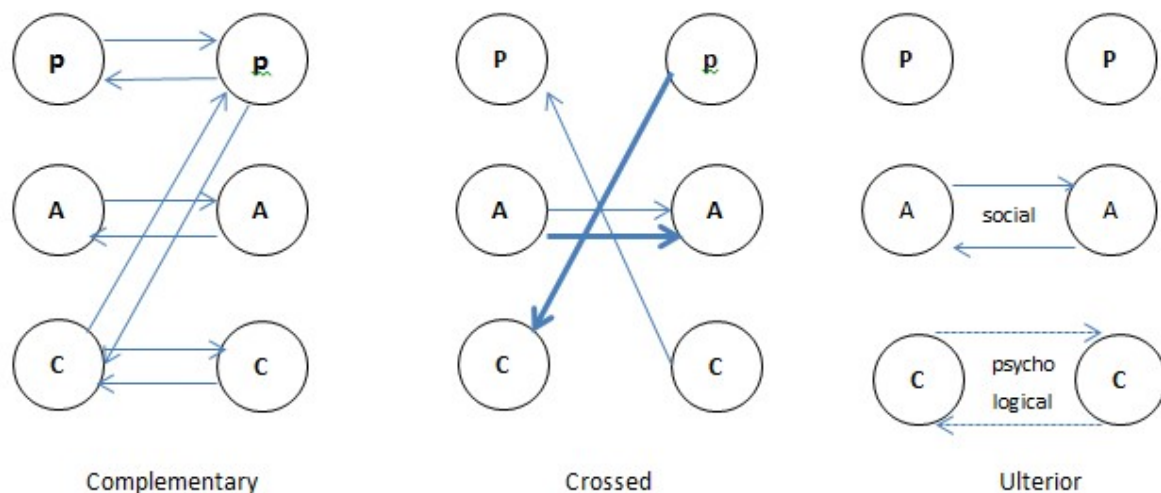


Figure2. Three Types of Transactions (communications) in TA

2.3. Stroke

Any transaction is an exchange of strokes(Steiner, 2003). A stroke is a unit of attention which provides stimulation to an individual (Woollams, 1978). Berne's choice of the word stroke refers to the infants for touching. As grownups, people learn to substitute others forms of recognition in place of physical touching. A smile, a compliment, frowns or insult, all shows our existence has been recognized. Berne used to term recognition hunger to describe our need for this kind of acknowledgement for others. Strokes have different kinds (table1). Different strokes for different folks. Everybody has their preferred stroke quotient(Jongeward, 1976). Quality of stroke cannot be measured subjectively. When someone gets a stroke that does not fit in with her or his preferred stroke quotient, she or he is likely to ignore it or belittle it. If people receive strokes from a certain behavior then people are likely to repeat it.

Table 1. Kinds of Strokes

Classification results	Characteristics
Verbal	Exchange of ideas that occurs through words. This can be both written and oral.
Non- Verbal	Through facial expressions, gestures and also thorough postures.
Internal	Fantasies, self-praise, and other forms of self-stimulation.
External	Strokes from others are important for healthy living.
Positive	A positive stroke is one which the receiver experiences as pleasant.
Negative	A negative stroke is one experience as painful.
Conditional	A conditional stroke relates to what you do.
Unconditional	An unconditional stroke relates to what you are.

3. Negotiation Mechanism of Transactional Analysis

Principled negotiation is meant to be a synthesis between "hard" and "soft" negotiation. Fisher and Ury thought that soft negotiation and hard negotiation are the existing shortcomings at negotiation, so advanced a new theory principled negotiation. They suggested that principled negotiation which negotiates interests rather than position is the best alternative to either hard or soft bargaining(Roger Fisher, 1981).

But it is not answer in their study why hard negotiation, soft negotiation and principled negotiation exist. Though TA theory, the answer can be found. When a negotiator uses hard bargaining, he or she shows the parent ego state, especially in critical parent. When a negotiator uses soft bargaining, he or she shows the child ego state, especially in adaptive child, and the parent ego state, especially in nurturing parent. When a negotiator uses principled negotiation, he or she shows the adult ego state. We can see relationships between styles of negotiation and ego states in Table 2.

When people are negotiating with others, one person initiates a transaction with the transactional stimulus. The person at whom the stimulus is directed will respond with the transactional response. At the core of Berne's theory is the rule that effective transactions must be complementary, so successful negotiations must be complementary communication as well. Negotiators must go back from the receiving ego state to the sending ego state. For example, if the stimulus is parent to child, the response must be child to parent or the communication is crossed, and then there will be a problem between sender and receiver. If a crossed transaction occurs, there is an ineffective negotiation. Worse still either or both parties will be upset in negotiation. In order to continue the relationship smoothly, the negotiator must rescue the situation with a complementary transaction. Moreover, when negotiators are negotiating with others, negotiators must identify the real information, no overt social information, through covert messages.

Gerard Nierenberg, says that negotiation occurs when human beings exchange ideas for the purpose of changing their relationships(Nierenberg, 1995). According to TA, human beings exchanging ideas is negotiated by exchanging strokes. Different strokes generate different

relationships between negotiators. Each one of ego states has a particular way of negotiation, an important part of TA is for us to be able to recognize what ego state is in control when you are negotiating with other people.

Table 2. Relationships between Styles of Negotiation and Ego States

Styles of Negotiation (basic points)		Ego States (behavior characteristics)	
Hard	Participants are adversaries. The goal is winning at any cost. Threats and personal attacks are appropriate. Distrust and suspicion is assumed. Compromise is never acceptable.	Parent (especially in critical parent)	The Physical state such as angry or impatient body language and expressions, finger-pointing, patronizing gestures; The Verbal cues such as always, never, for once and for all, judgmental words, critical words, patronizing language and posturing language.
Soft	Participants are friends. The goal is agreement that may sometimes involve one-sided losses. Conciliatory and friendly gestures and concessions are frequently used. Trust is assumed. Concessions are made to encourage a smooth relationship and to avoid conflict.	Child (especially in adaptive child)	The physical state such as emotionally sad expressions, despair, temper tantrums, whining voice, rolling eyes, shrugging shoulders, teasing, delight, laughter, speaking behind hand, raising hand to speak; The verbal cues such as baby talk, I wish, I don't know, I want, I'm going to, I don't care, oh no, not again, things never go right for me, worst day of my life, bigger, biggest, best, words to impress.
		Parent (especially in nurturing parent)	The physical state such as supportive and protective toward others, offers help and guidance; nurturing parent will speak in caring, concerned way.
Principled	Participants are problem solvers. The goal is reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement. The problem, not the people, is the focus. Proceed in dependent of trust. Compromise is appropriate when based on principle, not pressure.	Adult	The Physical state such as attentive, interested, straight-forward, tilted head, non-threatening and non-threatened; The Verbal cues such as why, what, how, who, where and when, how much, in what way, comparative expressions, reasoned statements, true, false, probably, possibly, I think, I realize, I see, I believe, in my opinion.

Source: Adapted from Fisher, R. and Ury, W (1981) Getting to yes Negotiating agreement without giving in (pp. 9, 13). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

4. Principled Negotiation Strategies Based on Transactional Analysis

According to negotiation mechanism analysis based on TA, this paper is set up a new SESCO negotiation strategies model (Situation-Ego-Strokes strategy–Complementary transaction–Objective) in negotiation. This model provides a systemic way to negotiate based on TA. Negotiators get into a situation, and identify the ego state both oneself and others, then take strokes strategy, next bring about complementary transaction, finally get win-win objective. SESCO model based on TA is illustrated by the following Figure 3.

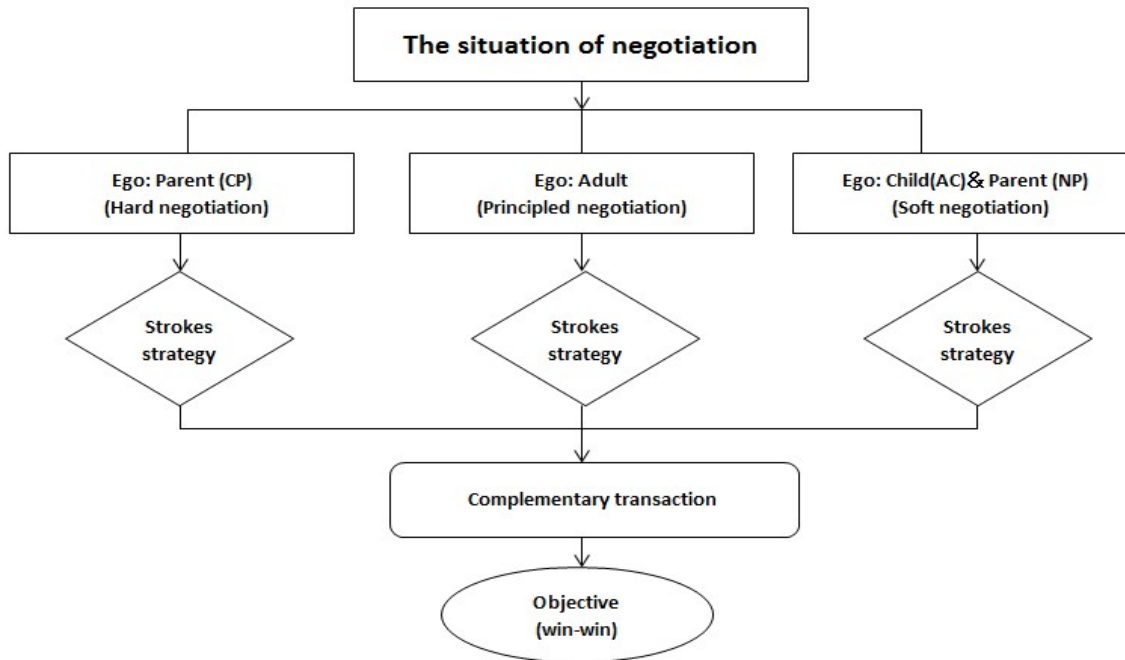


Figure 3. SESCO Negotiation Model Based on TA

4.1. Identify the ego state both oneself and others in negotiation

According to TA, negotiators must look at how the words are being delivered (accents on particular words, changes in tone, volume, etc.) as the non-verbal signs accompanying those words (body language, facial expressions, etc.). Negotiators will pay attention to all of these cues when analyzing a negotiation and identifying which ego states is involved. Negotiators can observe and listen to people's communication to identify if opponents are habitually in one ego state and then decide if communication to that ego state would be appropriate or not. Negotiators do not communicate with own parent's state or child's state, only adult ego to solve problems and conflicts. TA is effectively a language within a language; a language of true meaning, feeling and motive. It can help negotiators in every situation, through being able to understand more clearly what is going on, and by virtue of this knowledge, negotiators give choices of what ego states to adopt, which signals to send, and where to send them. TA enables negotiators to make the most of all communications and therefore create, develop and maintain better relationships.

4.2. Meet needs with each other by exchange of strokes

Gerard Nierenberg in his book *The Art of Negotiating* explained a condition of the origin of the negotiation according to needs of both parties (Nierenberg, 1995). According to TA, meeting needs refers to exchange of strokes. People need strokes to survive physically and psychologically. Stroke hunger is a form of information hunger, which is a fundamental, constant, and pervasive drive in all living beings. The scarcity of strokes creates heightened stroke hunger that stimulates

stroke-seeking behavior. Sometimes, negotiators behave in a specific way designed to elicit a specific type of stroke from others. When negotiators communicate with other people, negotiators provide positive stroke to other people to meet other's need. People prefer positive strokes. Positive Strokes make other feel good, and negative strokes make other feel bad.

4.3. Focus on each other's ego to adopt complementary transaction

For effective communication negotiators need to keep the complementary transaction. Negotiators focus on where the message is sent to the ego state from which you expect a reply from sender to receiver and receiver to sender. Negotiators can look at how others communicate and how communicate with others. If negotiators receive a reply from the wrong or non-expected ego state (a crossed transaction could occur) then can either try to shift the other person's ego state; or if negotiators cannot do this it may be better to stop the communication and try again another time when the person may be in a different ego state. Therefore TA can be used to elicit the reactions which negotiators want from other people (and this will happen consciously or unconsciously). Negotiators can try to shift the other person's ego state by inviting people to move into a different ego state (they may not always move into it though, particularly if someone is habitually in one ego state) or by acknowledging their current ego state using the appropriate message or response and then invite them into another ego state with the words and body language. Negotiators use adult ego state to think about what behavior is appropriate. The adult ego state has the capacity to control the two sides' ego states. Moreover, negotiators need to know real mean with ulterior transactions.

5. Summary

The method of principled negotiation has been the dominant formative approach to negotiation in the world, but it has received some criticism. Principled negotiation was criticized by scholars because it is lack of theoretical support(Zhang and Constantinovits, 2016). This study gives a theoretical support based on TA. It explains why three style of negotiation occur. Three styles of negotiation (hard, principled and soft) stand for three ego states (Parent, Adult and Child) because the PAC model represents three parts of the personality. Moreover, this paper based on TA is set up a new SESCO negotiation strategy model. The SESCO negotiation model provides effective strategy for principled negotiation. Negotiators get what is a basic tool to understand opponent's ego states and how to meet other's need by exchange of strokes. As following the SESCO negotiation strategy model to negotiate, negotiators can solve conflicts, make a good relationship with opponent, and finally get win-win objective.

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Shougang Zhang (b. November 26, 1977), student in PhD School of Management and Business Administration, Szent István University Gödöllő, Hungary. Now he also is a teacher as associate professor in School of Business, Xi'an Siyuan University, Xi'an, China. His research orientation is communication and negotiation. E-mail: 285748134@qq.com



Milan Constantinovits (b. April 18, 1956) received his MSc 1978 from Marx Károly University of Economics (now Budapest Corvinus University), in 2003 his PhD in Management and Business Administration Sciences from Szent István University, he is associate professor, works for the department of international economics of Szent István University Gödöllő, Hungary, and lecturer for the Corvinus University. He is author/coauthor of about 20 books and textbooks, 50 scientific papers. E-mail: Constantinovits.Milan@gtk.szie.hu.