

Language and Cultural Barriers in International Cooperation

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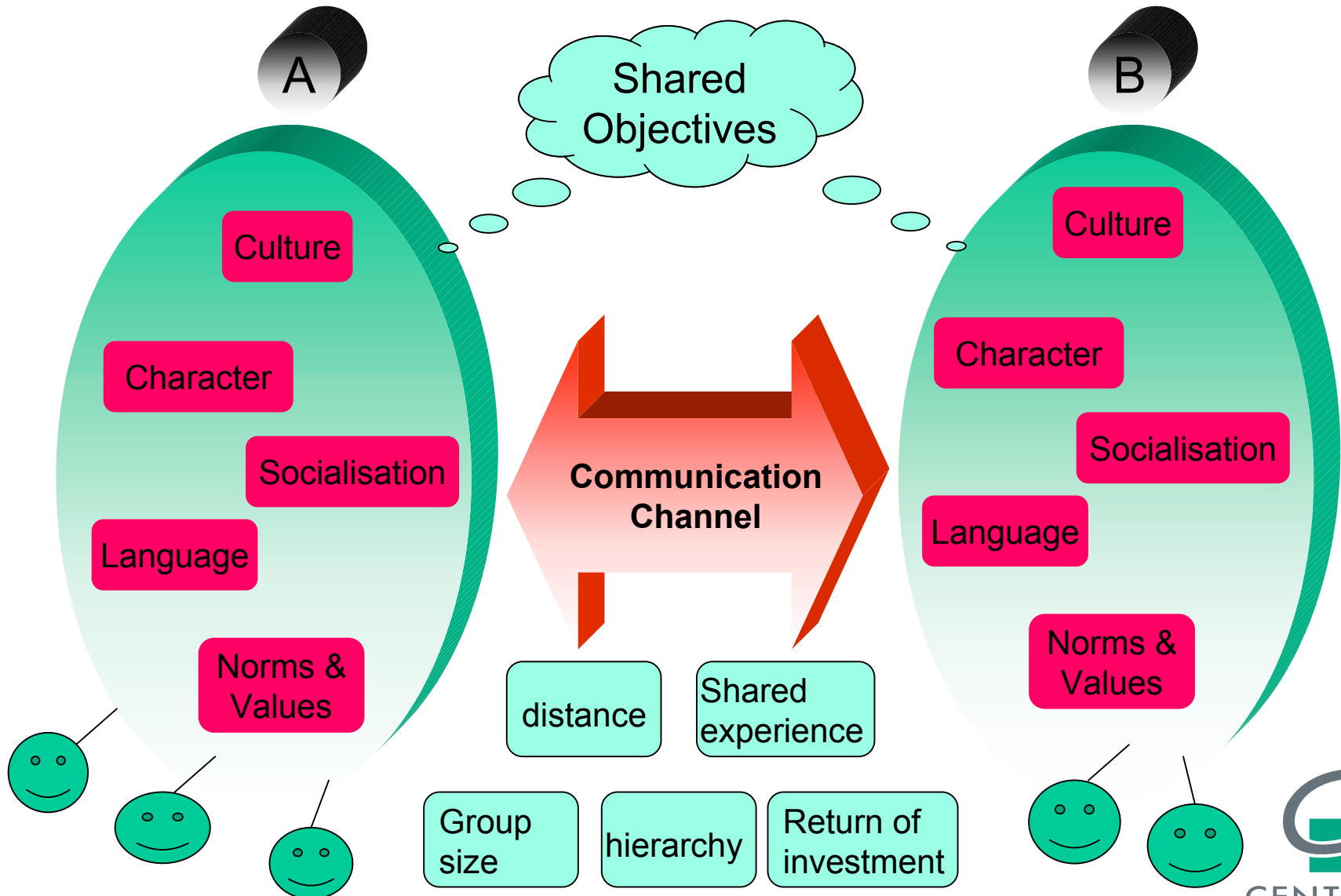
- Motivation
- Context
- Research Objectives
- Framework/Methodology
- Observations
- Conclusion

- Personal interest due to work in international projects where language and culture have been identified as obstacles
- Especially in virtual environments the existing communication tools support cooperation but can at the same time act as barriers
- Language and culture play an important role in international/virtual environments and need to be respected
- The challenge is not to eliminate cultural differences but to learn how to make profit out of them!

- Organisations can usually not afford the costs and cover the know-how and skills needed to master the complete range of a product development process or research topic
- Language skills are often not on an advanced level and act as an obstacle in international environments
- Resources are distributed amongst different areas and countries

- Consequences
 - Partnering is essential to be able to compete and lead world wide
 - International cooperation is strongly needed
 - Problems caused by language and cultural barriers has to be tackled to provide access to the knowledge society

- Identify contexts that might give place for cultural and language obstacles
- Understand how the identified communication channels influence processes of collaboration
- Identify possible ways to overcome language and cultural barriers based on real cases (KnowledgeBoard)
- Link the findings to the situation in organisations



- **Culture:** people with different cultural backgrounds share the same interest
- **Language:** official language is English, but this is not the mother tongue of all members
- **Character:** comments made often show a lot about one's character

- **Size of group:** varies between 2 and above 20
- **Shared experience:** is one of the main issues of KB
- **Distance:** almost every communication happens virtual, but also face-to-face meetings take place
- **Return of Investment:** culture of knowledge sharing

- **Linguistic**: Different languages spoken
- **Topic based**: Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- **Culture based**: Discussion Groups of people with the same cultural background
- **Value based**: Participants share the same norms and values
- **Person based**: Discussion or event appears particularly attracting because of the participation of certain persons

Example (1/2)

KM in Belgium: material and discussion in French, Dutch and English but with a focus on the KM community in Belgium

KM in Central Eastern Europe: geographical Zone, dealing with specific cultural related KM topics in English or in the language of a particular country of this zone. Although members don't share the same mother tongue, they have a common language

Example (2/2)

KM in Portuguese: language zone, addressing a knowledge community speaking the same mother tongue and sharing the same cultural background while living in different countries

KM for Project Management: addressing a special topic and being open for everybody interested in the topic able to communicate in English

http://www.knowledgeboard.com/open_groups/central_eastern_europe/

page Dernières nouvelles ...

Central Eastern Europe


[\[Edit\]](#)
 Welcome to the Zone dedicated to **KM in Central Eastern Europe** ! If you're interested in our aims and goals, feel free to review and comment them [here](#).

On the left hand side you can find links to country- related documents. These documents are either in english or in the language of the particular country. Language barriers are the biggest problem we are dealing with in the multi- lingual space of CEE. To overcome them, we are providing to every document a short english abstract. If you're further interested in the document after having read the abstract, please contact the author.

News

Date	Title	Hits	Comments
16-May-06	KM in Slovakia II: On Knowledge Management and Strategy in Central Europe	110	
20-Apr-06	Electronic Knowledge Markets and Corporate Universities (Russian language)	393	
29-Mar-06	Call for papers: Conference on Professional Services and Knowledge Management in Pozan	1096	
29-Mar-06	Report on the II International HR Conference "Knowledge Management" in Kiev	799	
25-Mar-06	KM in Slovakia: Actual Review	1009	

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Discussion

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Dear all,

welcome to the Zone on KM in Central Eastern Europe!

Igor Gazdik will provide us with several articles reflection the actual situation of KM in Slovakia. You can find the second article of the series [here](#). Igor would be glad to receive your comments and to answer your questions.

Tetyana Andrusenko has sent us two articles in Russian language that provide an overview on the literature on [Electronic Knowledge Markets and Corporate Universities](#).

We welcome your comments, ideas, contributions and your feedback. please feel free to comment directly in this zone or in the related discussion fora, or contact us.

Best regards, **Joanna Kluczevska-Strojny**, **Patricia Wolf**, **Amir Fazlagic** and **Mariusz Strojny**

Creation of trust

- Some general rules and guidelines are helpful to create a climate of knowledge sharing
- A moderator should keep an eye on ongoing conversations and intervene in case of problems

Knowledge about cultural backgrounds

- All community members should learn more about people's background which helps understanding the circumstances that lead to his/her specific behaviour
- A data-base can help

Face-to-face contacts

- Try to organise face-to-face contacts that give access to a bigger set of characteristics of the conversation partners
- Permit the transmission of verbal and non-verbal signals

- It is important to speak the same language but also to understand and respect people's cultural background
- Language involves culture; so it is necessary to learn as much as possible about people's background
- Face-to-face contacts can support the learning process as they enable non-verbal communication

- Awareness of barriers avoids misunderstandings and supports the team building process
- Overcoming language and cultural barriers can lead to a more effective and productive collaboration especially in virtual working environments

- Identified obstacles are very general and also strategically important for enterprises in international/virtual cooperation
- It is crucial to learn more about cultural backgrounds and the influence of norms and values on the business process
- Awareness of language and cultural barriers helps to understand and avoid the origin of conflicts
- Face-to-face meetings offer the possibility of non-verbal conversation

- The authors acknowledge their colleagues from the Industrial Engineering department of ECP for their inputs and helpful comments

Thank you for your attention!