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Abstract of keynote address

**Knowledge as a network package: aspects of transfer and translation in international business**

In international business practice knowledge is created and generated in networks for transfer and implementation in other networks linked to (very) different operating environments. All the while the knowledge is invariably reshaped – and occasionally distorted - by the impact of cultural factors and language barriers. Some KM writers use the terms ‘transfer’ and ‘translation’ interchangeably when referring to these processes, but the latter term is a mere metaphor. In this presentation the term ‘translation’ will be introduced as a robust analogy for transfer of knowledge in cross-cultural contexts, for knowledge transfer is, exactly like translation from one language to another, concerned with the transposition of meaning from one cultural environment to another. Specifically three constraints on a good translation - ambiguity, lack of equivalence and cultural interference – will be applied to cross-cultural knowledge transfer. A notable merit of the analogy is that it allows for a seemingly urgently needed understanding of the role and nature of tacit knowledge in international business.