

# Knowledge sharing in multilingual organizations

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# Research question

- The main aim of the thesis is to investigate the influence of **language (diversity)** on **knowledge sharing** in multilingual organizations.

# Language diversity

- Language diversity refers to the presence of employees with various linguistic backgrounds in an organization
- Language diversity a common characteristic of today's workplaces
  - Globalization
  - Immigration
  - Bilingual countries

# Multilingualism at workplace

- Adoption of a common corporate language
- Friction between speech communities
- Communication problems

- What it has to do with knowledge sharing



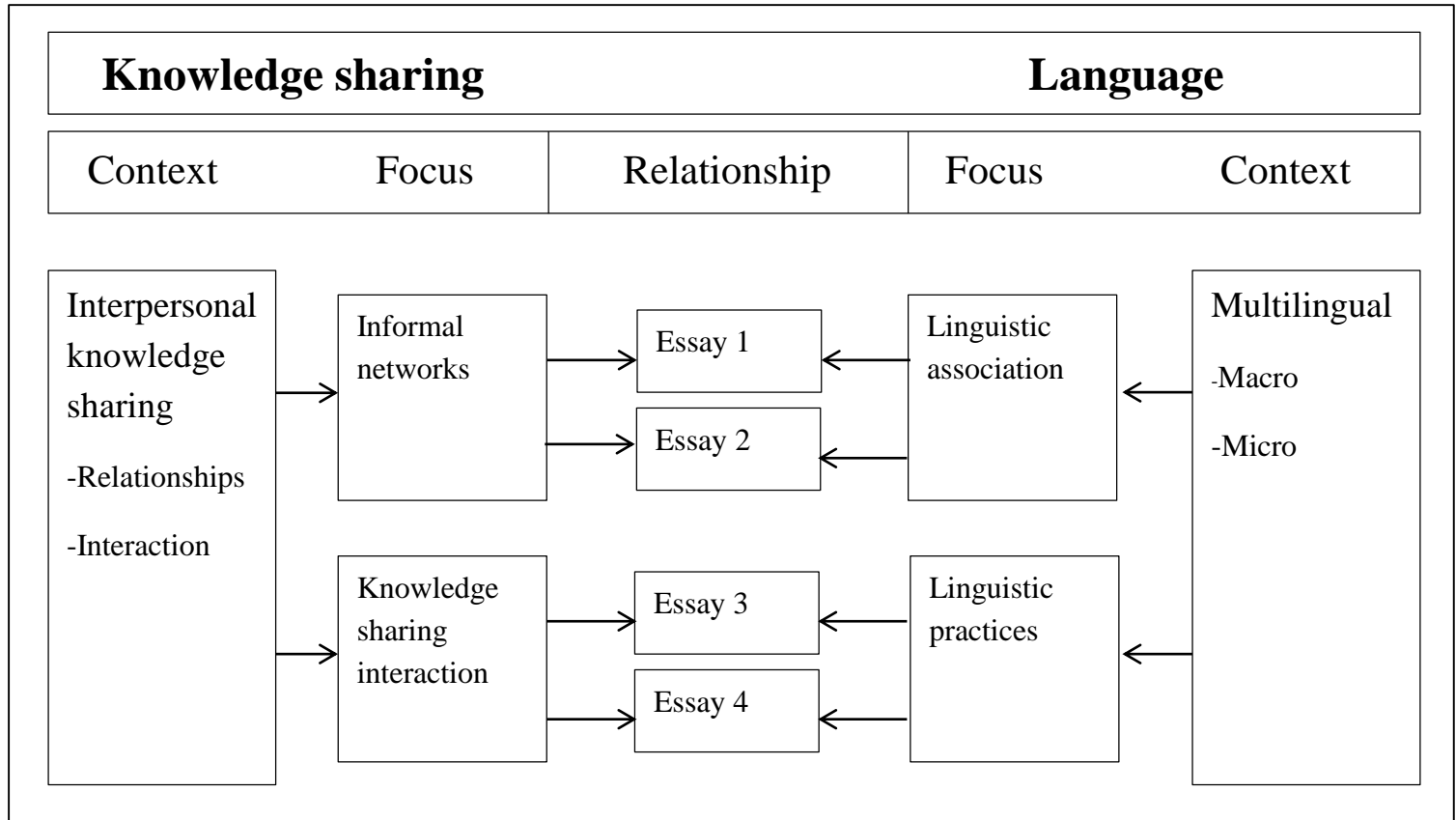
# Aspects of knowledge sharing

- Relationships
- Knowledge sharing interaction
  - Knowledge sharing talk
  - Knowledge dialogue
  - Knowledge sharing episode

# Sub questions

- How does the **linguistic association** influence **informal knowledge networks** in multilingual organizations?
- How do **language practices** influence **inter-linguistic knowledge sharing** in multilingual organizations?

# Analytical framework of the thesis





# Methodology

- Finnish multinational organization with more than 80 subsidiaries around the world
- 21 in-depth interviews with the employees from 10 different countries
- Questionnaire (403 responses)

# Article-based dissertation

- **Paper 1:** Ahmad, F., & Widen, G. (2015). Language clustering and knowledge sharing in multilingual organizations: A social perspective on language. *Journal of Information Science*, 41(4), 430-443.
- **Paper 2:** Ahmad, F. (2016). Knowledge sharing networks: Language diversity, its causes and consequences (*under review*)
- **Paper 3:** Ahmad, F., & Widen, G. (2016). Knowledge sharing in multilingual organizations: influence of code switching and convergence, *European Journal of International Management*, (in press)
- **Paper 4:** Ahmad, F. (2016). Knowledge sharing in non-native language: challenges and strategies. *Journal of Information Science* (in press)

# Paper for informaatiopäivät

- Knowledge sharing in organizations:  
language diversity and performance
  - The effect of language diversity in personal  
knowledge networks on knowledge sharing  
behavior and performance

# Basic concepts

- **Personal knowledge network (PKN):** contacts within the organization used for advice and help to solve a problem
- **Language diversity in PKN:** Number of contacts with a different native language
- **KS behavior:** intensity of knowledge sharing
- **Performance:** Self-rated performance

# Findings

- Language diversity in PKN does not influence knowledge sharing behavior of organizational employees
- Higher the language diversity in PKN, better the performance
  - Diverse insights
  - Range of personal network

Thank you