CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES
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Turning points in Translation and Communication:
the Challenges of Internationalization

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José Lambert is Professor Emeritus at KU Leuven (Belgium), where he taught Comparative Literature, Literary Studies and Translation Studies (1970-2006). He also works at POET, UFC, Fortaleza. He was the European Secretary of ICLA and FILLM and also the Founding Vice-President of Société Belge de Littérature Générale et Comparée and the European Society for Translation Studies. He is one of the pioneers of Translation Studies as a new discipline. With Gideon Toury, Lambert was the founding co-editor of the leading journal Target. His works include Traduction, Traduction Littéraire et Littérature Comparée (1977), Translated Literature Within European Literatures: Models for Research (1985), Shifts, Oppositions and Goals in Translation Studies: Towards A Genealogy of Concepts (1991), Translation and Globalization (2007), The Institutionalization of the Discipline (2013), Interdisciplinarity in Translation Studies (2012) and Translation Today and Translation Research: A World Story (2015).

“Translation is old, Translation Studies is young” (Daniel Gile). But views of the man on the street and scholarly views happen to be divergent. Not surprisingly, given the Ubiquity (Armin Frank) of translation and interpreting phenomena. Universities have accepted only in recent years the recognition of Translation Studies (TS). Since the end of the 20th century a good selection of universities tend to accept the (English) name TS - without really agreeing about its nature (Holmes 1972). Research on translation had an institutional past, before and after Holmes, but it focused too heavily on translation and interpreting as a service. Hence it failed to enter into Academia.

The idea that an academic framework was needed developed between the mid-seventies (Holmes, Amsterdam:1972) and the 1990s. In fact Holmes and his group had quite different questions in mind than support to (good) translations. And new pioneering initiatives developed and helped institutionalizing TS on five continents (e.g. networking in organizations, journals, research (training) centers, PhDs, etc.).

The dynamics of the new discipline was not limited at all to infrastructures, it involved the (re)discovery of culture (after 1976), norms along sociological lines, the recognition of communication (production, product, reception), the crisis of theories. As will be illustrated, one of the paradoxical surprises of this academic “success story” (Bassnett) is that translation leads into so many new worlds (politics, legislation, business, semiotics) beyond the expectations that the fragmentation seems now to be central on the scholarly level. How after all do universities (UNIVERSE-cities) communicate with five continents, from their Rectors to their students? How would they translate from one lingua franca into the other one, about business, languages or world literature? Is the investigation just beginning?

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