

Nadia D'Amelio

The Translation Paradigm: A New Understanding of 21st Century Europe

This paper aims at illustrating and defending the existence of plurilinguism by throwing light on the pervasive issue of translation in the overall context of globalisation. Thanks to the popperian concept of paradigm and to a close analysis of the cruxes of translation, we try to redefine, diachronically and synchronically, the research fields of Translation Studies by creating relevant analogies with other knowledge fields (among them legal studies). The notion of translation as the new paradigm of understanding in a plural world is born from the Babel legacy - or Babel misunderstanding – that leads either to the search for a unique and common language or to the equally ruinous search for a multitude of national languages or idiolects. This linguistic and sociocultural notion of translation originates not only from the existence of different languages but also from the diversity of communications systems which languages and idiolects are a part of. Indeed, we start from Roman Jakobson's three-level conception of translation, the first level of which being the intralingual type of translation evidenced by the coexistence of specialised sub-languages and historical strata of language. Recognising the richness of the Babel legacy, though paradoxical as it may seem, should also influence the politics of translation. Translation programmes should be initiated by the political powers even if the translation paradigm might be contaminated by the alternative communication paradigm also at work in our modern world. (Systran and globish). In the end, by starting from philosophical sources and investigating into the practices of translation throughout the past centuries, we feel convinced of the benefits to be drawn from a defence of linguistic plurality and of the relevance of the translation paradigm for XXIst century Europe.