

Original Paper

Revoicing Polyphony in Documentary Translation: An Engagement-Based Study of Stance Reconstruction in *The Power of Big Oil: Doubt*

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Abstract

Investigative documentaries are assembled from voices that do not carry equal authority: narration, interviews, corporate statements, archival clips, and expert testimony qualify, reject, or support competing accounts. A translation may reproduce the propositional content of these accounts while altering who seems to own a claim or how firmly it is presented. This article examines a Chinese research translation of “Doubt”, Part Two of FRONTLINE’s The Power of Big Oil, using the Engagement system of appraisal theory. The corpus initially contained 219 entries. Removing eight production markers left 211 language units and 6,878 English tokens. A second review of 267 candidate rows retained 202 Engagement resources: 37 Attribute, 46 Entertain, 94 Disclaim, and 25 Proclaim. The review counted an integrated multiword construction as one resource, excluded deontic and dynamic modality from Entertain, and distinguished dialogic positioning from degree and focus. Eight cases were then chosen across the four categories, including two relatively stable translations for comparison. The cases suggest that broad category equivalence can coexist with local changes in stance. A translation may distance a speaker from an earlier claim, make a possibility sound more expected, turn denial into a categorical refusal, or make evidential endorsement more explicit. The comparison is organized around voice attribution, propositional commitment, and dialogic space. Since the coding was completed by the researcher and has not yet been independently replicated, the frequencies are descriptive and no reliability coefficient or corpus-wide target-side shift rate is reported.

Keywords

appraisal theory, engagement, documentary translation, stance, polyphony

1. Introduction

Documentary translation is commonly approached through information transfer, condensation, timing, and the interaction of words and images. These concerns remain central, but they are not enough for a film organized around conflicting testimony. An investigative programme may move from a narrator's summary to an interviewee's recollection, a company statement, and an archival denial within a few minutes. Its argument depends not only on what each speaker says, but also on how the film places these voices in relation to one another. Translating the transcript therefore involves choices about commitment and about the boundaries between speakers as well as choices about propositional meaning.

The issue is especially visible in climate documentaries. Research on climate communication has examined the effects of journalistic balance, organized funding, and corporate rhetoric on public uncertainty (Boykoff & Boykoff, 2004; Farrell 2016; Supran & Oreskes, 2017, 2021). The debate can no longer be described adequately as a simple opposition between belief and denial. Lamb et al. (2020, p. 1), for example, identify discourses that “accept the existence of climate change, but justify inaction or inadequate efforts”. Pflieger and De Pryck (2023) subsequently argue that such categories need to be situated in their political and institutional settings. Questions of uncertainty, responsibility, cost, feasibility, and timing are consequently built into the language of climate debate. Against this background, a small change in attribution or modality may be consequential: weakening a reporting frame can detach a claim from its source, whereas a categorical equivalent may narrow the room left by a source-language possibility.

The material examined here comes from “*Doubt*”, Part Two of FRONTLINE's The Power of Big Oil. Through political speeches, news reports, scientific testimony, company responses, and later interviews, the episode reconstructs how public uncertainty about climate change was developed and circulated. It cannot stand for documentary discourse as a whole. It does, however, provide a concentrated case in which the argument is carried by a succession of attributed and contested voices.

Engagement, one of the three systems in appraisal theory, offers a useful vocabulary for this problem (Martin & White, 2005). It distinguishes bare assertion from propositions that are entertained as possibilities, attributed to other sources, denied, countered, or endorsed. Translation scholars have used these distinctions to examine positioning in choices of reporting verbs, modal expressions, negatives, and intensifiers (Munday, 2012, 2015). A difficulty in small-scale studies is that striking examples may be chosen first and then made to support claims about typical behaviour. To limit that risk, the present analysis separates the source-side screening of the complete transcript from the later discussion of selected bilingual cases.

Three questions guide the study: (1) how are Attribute, Entertain, Disclaim, and Proclaim distributed after the second review of the source transcript; (2) how are selected resources rendered in eight English-Chinese cases; and (3) what happens in those cases to voice attribution, propositional

commitment, and dialogic space? The answers are confined to this episode and this research translation. The purpose is to make the path from source data to interpretation visible rather than to generalize from eight examples to documentary translation at large.

2. Literature Review and Analytical Framework

2.1 Engagement and Dialogic Positioning

Appraisal theory models interpersonal meaning through Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. This study focuses on Engagement because the immediate concern is how a proposition relates to other possible positions. Martin and White (2005, p. 104) describe the organizing distinction as the “fundamental contrast between dialogic contraction and expansion”. Expansive choices recognize alternative positions or assign a proposition to another voice; contractive choices reject, challenge, or strongly warrant alternatives.

The four operational categories follow that distinction. Attribute assigns a proposition to an external or represented source. Acknowledge names the source without marked distance, whereas Distance uses forms such as claim or allegedly to withhold alignment. Entertain presents a proposition as one possibility through probability, appearance, explicit cognition, or irrealis framing. Disclaim covers Deny and Counter: Deny rejects a proposition, while Counter replaces an expected relation with another. Proclaim comprises Concur, Pronounce, and Endorse. These resources respectively present a position as shared, make authorial intervention overt, or treat external evidence as warrant for a proposition.

The categories cannot be applied as a simple word list. Depending on its co-text, would may express counter factuality, future-in-the-past, or habit. Should may convey expectedness, but it may also impose an obligation rather than open an epistemic possibility. Similarly, emphatic just can strengthen a denial without functioning as a separate Proclaim resource. Each coding decision therefore considered the proposition in scope, the speaker responsible for it, and the alternative position being negotiated.

2.2 Engagement in Translation Studies

Munday (2015, p. 406) applies Engagement and Graduation to translator positioning, including a translator’s degree of “investment in a proposition”. From this perspective, the choice of reporting verb can acknowledge, endorse, or distance a source, while an intensifier may alter the pressure placed on the reader. The framework makes interpersonal effects discussable without requiring the stronger—and often untestable—claim that every difference reflects a conscious ideological decision.

Liu et al. (2022) review translation studies using appraisal theory between 2011 and 2021 and identify both achievements and unresolved limitations in this body of work. More recently, Li, Meng, and Jing (2025) compared evaluative meanings in two English news reports with 130 Chinese student translations, showing that target-side variation can produce evaluative divergence. The practical difficulty lies in deciding what counts as evidence. As Zeng, Dong, and Fang (2024, p. 144) observe,

the “practical application of Appraisal Theory in text annotation presents significant challenges”. Their own work concerns Attitude, but the methodological point also applies to Engagement: a detailed taxonomy does not eliminate analyst judgement. Inclusion criteria and exclusion records therefore need to be available alongside the frequency table.

Imamović et al. (2025) used several annotators to study evaluative expressions in English TED Talks and their German translations. The authors report a “preference for equivalence”, a result that draws attention to an easily overlooked part of qualitative analysis: stable renderings also require explanation. A case set containing only conspicuous shifts would overstate instability. For this reason, the eight cases below include relatively stable comparisons as well as clearer instances of revoicing.

Formal correspondence is a poor guide on its own in English-Chinese comparison. Modality, attribution, and counter-expectancy may be realized through auxiliaries, adverbs, reporting verbs, negation, connectives, word order, or clause sequence. An English not only...but construction, for instance, can be reorganized into a Chinese counter-scalar pattern without changing its dialogic work. Conversely, an apparently close modal equivalent may alter commitment once it is read within the surrounding clause.

2.3 Documentary Voice and the Need for a Polyphonic Account

Documentaries combine claims to factuality with visible selection and framing. Work on translation and media places them within institutional as well as multimodal settings (Bielsa 2022). Franco (2001) and Matamala (2009) discuss problems specific to documentary voice-over, while D'áz Cintas and Remael (2021) set out the wider constraints of audiovisual translation. Bosseaux (2025, p. 56) notes that “documentaries give voice to their subjects and those who have something to say about them”. In investigative work, those voices are also edited into relations of support, correction, distance, and contradiction. Translation can leave those relations intact or subtly readjust them.

The present material is a transcript, not a finished subtitle file or voice-over track. It cannot support claims about reading speed, synchronization, vocal performance, or audience response. What it does preserve is the verbal sequence, speaker labels, and enough local context to trace the source of a proposition. This makes it possible to ask whether narration, interview speech, archival material, and reported corporate statements remain distinct in Chinese.

The working unit is therefore defined as a relation among speaker, proposition, Engagement resource, and dialogic alternative. Three questions are asked of each bilingual case. Voice attribution identifies who is made responsible for the proposition. Propositional commitment concerns how firmly that voice advances it. Dialogic space concerns whether other positions are acknowledged, entertained, denied, countered, or endorsed. These are not additional subsystems of appraisal; they are diagnostic questions used to connect an Engagement label with its function in a polyphonic passage.

Table 1. Analytical Dimensions Used in the Engagement Analysis

Dimension	Question used in analysis	Main linguistic evidence
Voice attribution	Who owns or sources the proposition?	Reporting frame, person, quotation level, agency
Propositional commitment	How firmly is the proposition advanced?	Probability, evidentiality, cognition, categorical denial
Dialogic space	What room remains for another position?	Attribution, entertain, deny, counter, concur, endorse

3. Data and Methods

3.1 Corpus Boundary and Unitization

The source text is FRONTLINE's official transcript of “*Doubt*” (2022), accompanied by a complete Chinese research translation. The spreadsheet contains 219 sequential entries. Eight are production or scene markers without running language; after their removal, the dataset contains 211 language units. English tokens were counted with a fixed rule that treats common contractions and hyphenated forms as single tokens, yielding 6,878 tokens.

The transcript's speaker and segment structure determines the unit boundaries. Several consecutive sentences remain in one unit when they belong to a continuous turn, since attribution and self-correction often cross sentence boundaries. Speaker and actor labels were retained. Of the 211 units, 47 belong to media voices, 45 to narration, 39 to political actors, 20 to internal critics or former insiders, 16 to environmental advocates, 11 to oil-industry representatives, 11 to scientific voices, 8 to climate-sceptic voices, 8 to think tanks or lobbying groups, and 6 to mixed oil-industry/business-interest voices.

Table 2. Distribution of Valid Language Units by Actor Group

Actor group	Units	Share of 211
Media	47	22.3%
Narrator	45	21.3%
Political actors	39	18.5%
Internal critics/former insiders	20	9.5%
Environmental advocates	16	7.6%
Oil industry	11	5.2%
Scientific community	11	5.2%
Climate sceptics	8	3.8%

Think tanks/lobby groups	8	3.8%
Oil industry/business interests	6	2.8%
Total	211	100.0%

3.2 Second-pass Annotation Review

The first screen produced 267 candidate rows, of which 224 were provisionally retained. Every candidate was then reread in its complete unit and immediate co-text. Four decisions were tightened. First, a multiword construction performing one dialogic function was counted once; not only...but even, for example, was not divided into several independent resources. Second, Entertain was limited to epistemic or irrealis positioning, so deontic obligation and dynamic capacity were excluded. Third, items expressing only focus or degree, including some emphatic uses of just, were assigned to Graduation rather than Engagement. Fourth, explicit subjective frames such as in my opinion were coded as Entertain rather than Proclaim.

After these revisions, 202 resources remained: 37 Attribute, 46 Entertain, 94 Disclaim, and 25 Proclaim. The fall from 224 to 202 should be understood as a change in coding consistency, not a statistical adjustment. The audit workbook records the initial and revised decisions, final category, reason for exclusion, and any consolidated construction, so that the route to the final count can be checked.

The researcher prepared the Chinese translation and completed both coding passes. Decisions were checked against a fixed manual and an exclusion log, but no second coder has yet taken part. The frequencies are therefore used only to describe this audited source dataset. No agreement coefficient or inferential statistic is reported. The procedure makes individual decisions traceable, although it does not establish that another annotator would reproduce the same distribution.

Table 3. Second-pass Distribution of Retained Engagement Resources

Category	Retained items	Share of 202	Second-pass scope
Attribute	37	18.3%	Acknowledge 35; Distance 2
Entertain	46	22.8%	Modal/irrealis 23; Epistemic 23
Disclaim	94	46.5%	Deny 52; Counter 42
Proclaim	25	12.4%	Pronounce 10; Concur 9; Endorse 6
Total	202	100.0%	—

3.3 Case Selection and Comparison

The bilingual cases were chosen only after the second source-side review. Two were taken from each major category. Selection considered the clarity of the category, the transparency of English-Chinese alignment, sufficient co-text, variation in speaker or voice, and usefulness for the three diagnostic questions. A visible shift was not an entry condition; relatively stable cases were kept when they

supplied a needed comparison.

Twelve candidate cases were rated on category clarity, alignment, diagnostic value, voice context, and usefulness as a negative or stable case. The final group consists of U035 and U128 (Attribute), U040 and U152 (Entertain), U103 and U214 (Disclaim), and U003 and U201 (Proclaim). U038, included in an earlier draft, was dropped because *may-keneng* (“possibly”) added little beyond straightforward modal equivalence and duplicated another comparator.

Analysis proceeded from source context to bilingual comparison. For each case, the speaker, proposition, trigger, and relevant alternative were identified before the Chinese wording was aligned at phrase or construction level. The two versions were then compared for attribution, commitment, and dialogic space. Only the short expressions needed for the argument appear below; the complete units are kept in the audit workbook.

4. Results

4.1 Source-side Pattern

Of the 202 retained resources, 94 (46.5 per cent) are Disclaim. The episode repeatedly introduces a position only to reject or revise it: speakers deny allegations, counter expectations, contrast public statements with internal knowledge, and correct their own earlier wording. The count is not a tally of isolated occurrences of not and but. Integrated constructions were counted once, and purely scalar or grammatical items were removed during the second review.

Entertain contributes 46 resources (22.8 per cent), occurring in scientific uncertainty, prediction, retrospective interpretation, and counterfactual reflection. Attribute accounts for 37 (18.3 per cent), linking propositions to politicians, companies, journalists, scientists, and earlier versions of the same speaker. Proclaim is the smallest group at 25 (12.4 per cent), but it appears at important points where evidence is treated as decisive or a disputed conclusion is presented as readily acceptable.

This distribution is consistent with the episode’s argumentative form: many voices are introduced, but much of the movement comes from denial, correction, and countering. The figures do not show how often the Chinese version preserves or changes each resource. Establishing a target-side shift rate would require complete aligned coding and independent checking. The eight cases provide textual evidence for particular forms of revoicing, not a frequency claim about the translation as a whole.

4.2 Case Overview

Table 4 brings the eight cases together before the category-based discussion. It lists the source trigger, Chinese rendering, and central observation so that the later interpretations can be checked against the aligned wording. The contrast is already visible in outline: U035 and U103 largely maintain the source dialogic relation, whereas the remaining cases adjust distance, commitment, or evidential force to varying degrees.

Table 4. Overview of the Eight Selected Cases

ID	Category	English trigger	Chinese rendering (pinyin/gloss)	Main observation
U035	Attribute	claims	<i>shengcheng</i> (“claims”)	Distance remains stable
U128	Attribute	I said	<i>wo ceng shengcheng</i> (“I once claimed”)	Earlier self is more clearly distanced
U040	Entertain	could	<i>hui</i> (“will/is expected to”)	Possibility becomes more expected
U152	Entertain	I think / potentially / in my opinion	<i>wo renwei / keneng / zai wo kanlai</i>	Expansion remains; adjacent obligation increases
U103	Disclaim	but / not / not just	<i>suiran...dan / bing bu / bujin...ershi</i>	Denial and countering largely maintained
U214	Disclaim	not / not only...but even	<i>bing bu / jue bu / bujin...shenzhi</i>	Denial is intensified
U003	Proclaim	what it shows	<i>zhe qiaqia baolu</i> (“this precisely exposes”)	Endorsement is strengthened
U201	Proclaim	The data says	<i>shuju biao ming...queshi</i> (“data indicate...indeed”)	Evidential warrant becomes explicit

4.3 Attribute: Keeping a Source Visible and Distancing an Earlier Self

U035 comes from a news report in which the president “claims” that a policy was abandoned because of energy costs. The Chinese *shengcheng* carries a similar distancing effect. The proposed cause remains the president’s explanation rather than an account accepted by the newsreader. Attribution, commitment, and dialogic space are consequently close to the source. The case provides a useful baseline: an apparently direct reporting-verb equivalent can preserve the relation between the cited speaker and the reporting voice.

U128 is less stable. Looking back on his former position, Bob Inglis says, “I *said* that climate change was nonsense”. The translation reads *wo ceng shengcheng*, “I once claimed”. First-person responsibility remains, yet *shengcheng* is more distancing than the relatively unmarked *said* in this context, and *ceng* locates the statement firmly in the past. Inglis’s current voice is thus separated more sharply from the view held by his earlier self. The change is not simply an increase in evaluation; it reorganizes distance within one speaker’s biography.

Together, the cases show that attribution involves more than naming a source. Both translations keep the responsible speaker visible, but U128 modifies the relation between the present speaker and his former proposition. In an episode concerned with changing positions, this temporal distancing contributes to the stance of the passage.

4.4 Entertain: Uneven Movement Inside a Single Passage

U040 combines obligation with uncertainty. George W. Bush says that climate change “must be addressed”, then adds that “we do not know” how quickly change will occur or how human actions “could” affect it. Because must is deontic here, it is not counted as Entertain, although it remains part of the rhetorical contrast. The aligned resource is could, rendered as *hui*. In this clause, *hui* can be read as a more expected future consequence rather than as open possibility. The response to climate change remains obligatory, while the effect of action is stated with a somewhat firmer orientation.

The difference is slight and the wider passage still marks uncertainty explicitly. Even so, uncertainty is not distributed evenly across the translated propositions: the speed of change remains unknown, while the consequences of action sound somewhat more predictable. This asymmetry makes U040 more revealing than a straightforward *may-keneng* pairing.

U152 contains three subjective frames—“I think”, “potentially”, and “in my opinion”—translated as *wo renwei*, *keneng*, and *zai wo kanlai*. The speaker remains explicit and the policy assessment remains qualified. In the same passage, however, “It’s important to acknowledge” becomes *bixu chengren*, “it must be acknowledged”. The Chinese keeps epistemic openness around the assessment but raises the pressure to accept the adjoining proposition. Calling the target merely “stronger” would blur this distinction: the shift lies in how commitment is allocated across related claims.

4.5 Disclaim: Functional Maintenance and Categorical Denial

U103 concerns the phrase “unsettled science”. The speaker concedes that some uncertainties are real, rejects their relevance to the issue at hand, and then corrects the description of the company’s language as “just public posturing”. Chinese uses a concessive-counter pattern, an explicit denial, and *bujin...ershi* (“not merely...but rather”). Although the wording is reorganized, the sequence from concession to rejection and replacement is retained. This is functional maintenance rather than word-for-word repetition.

The example also clarifies the unit of annotation. Not just and the correction that follows form one rhetorical move from an insufficient account to a stronger one; treating the parts as unrelated resources would inflate the count and weaken the connection between the quantitative screen and the close reading.

U214 shows a clearer change. The source describes a position according to which climate change is “not real” and resists “not only” legislation “but even” acknowledgment of the problem. Chinese retains the first denial with *bing bu* and the counter-scalar pattern with *bujin...shenzhi*. It also adds *jue bu*, “absolutely not” or “never”, when referring to compromise. The position is still assigned to the same group, but its refusal is rendered more categorically. Attribution remains stable while commitment and contraction increase.

4.6 Proclaim: Making Evidential Warrant More Explicit

In U003, Kert Davies reads a strategy document and concludes that “what it shows is an intentionality”.

The Chinese *zhe qiaqia baolu* means roughly “this precisely exposes”. *Qiaqia* introduces a counter-expectational emphasis, and *baolu* is more evaluative than show. The document is therefore presented less as evidence that permits an interpretation than as evidence that exposes intention in the face of a possible denial. Davies remains responsible for the interpretation, but the endorsement is firmer in Chinese.

U201 develops through self-correction. In an archival clip, Inglis begins with the language of belief, retracts it, rejects faith as the basis of his position, and ends with evidence: “The data says that’s happening”. The Chinese *shuju biaoming...queshi* can be glossed as “the data indicate...indeed”. Data remain the evidential source rather than personal conviction, while *queshi* makes confirmation overt. The endpoint of Inglis’s movement from belief to evidence is therefore more explicitly endorsed.

Both U003 and U201 strengthen Proclaim, though by different means. U003 combines counter-expectation with a more evaluative evidential verb; U201 adds explicit confirmation after self-repair. Describing both as mere intensification would miss how authority is built within each passage.

5. Discussion

5.1 Category Equivalence is not Stance Equivalence

In all eight cases, the major Engagement category remains identifiable in Chinese: attribution is still attribution, qualification remains qualification, rejection remains rejection, and endorsement remains endorsement. This continuity matters because an analysis concerned only with difference would misrepresent the data. Yet a stable category label does not necessarily mean that the relation among speaker, proposition, and alternative position is unchanged.

The more visible differences occur within the three diagnostic dimensions. U128 distances a present speaker from his earlier claim without changing the speaker identity. U040 retains explicit uncertainty but gives one consequence a firmer future orientation. U152 preserves subjective qualification while strengthening obligation in a neighbouring proposition. U214 makes an already negative position categorical. U003 and U201 maintain evidential endorsement while making its warrant more explicit. These are local reallocations of responsibility or commitment, not changes to the passage’s basic factual content.

A relational comparison is therefore more informative than a search for lexical equivalents. The relevant questions are who uses a modal, reporting verb, or negative, what proposition falls within its scope, and which alternative it answers. This also keeps interpretation proportionate. Some formal differences are ordinary idiomatic recoding; others merit discussion because they alter the arrangement of voices in the documentary.

5.2 Polyphony and Documentary Authority

The source distribution helps to explain the episode’s rhetorical texture. Disclaim accounts for almost

half of the retained resources. Rather than simply accumulating testimony, the programme repeatedly revisits denials, disputed evidence, public statements, and revised positions. Its documentary authority is built through these relations: archival denial may be followed by contrary testimony, while an interviewee can gain credibility by acknowledging a former view and then revising it.

Translation participates in that arrangement as a form of revoicing. A more distancing reporting verb can reduce the apparent credibility of a source; a categorical evidential expression can make the documentary sound more editorially certain; and a weakened quotation boundary can shift responsibility from an interviewee towards narration. The cases do not indicate a general loss of polyphony, but they identify several points at which its balance is adjusted.

The climate context makes such adjustments especially relevant. Lamb et al. (2020) focus attention on the distribution of responsibility and on arguments about costs, feasibility, and action. *Doubt* examines how uncertainty itself travelled through institutions and public discourse. Engagement choices in translation can influence how that circulation is represented. No inference is made here about political attitudes or audience behaviour, which would require reception evidence.

5.3 What the Second-pass Audit Changes Methodologically

The second-pass total is lower because the annotation unit was defined more narrowly and applied more consistently. Excluding deontic and dynamic modals prevents every must, should, and can from being treated as epistemic possibility. Keeping emphatic just outside Proclaim avoids turning Engagement into a residual category for intensity. Counting an integrated not only...but construction once also prevents a single rhetorical move from inflating the frequency table. These conceptual decisions matter more than preserving the earlier total of 224.

The revised case selection reduces, though it cannot remove, the danger of circularity. Cases were first located within established Engagement categories; target-side outcomes such as strengthening or explicitation were not formal selection criteria. U035 and U103 remain in the set precisely because they show substantial functional maintenance. U040 replaced U038 because it contains a clearer internal contrast, not because it was pre-labelled as a particular type of target-side shift.

One limitation cannot be solved by a second reading from the same researcher. Repeated coding may improve consistency, but it does not show whether another annotator would reach the same decisions. Independent re-coding is particularly needed for borderline uses of *hui*, emphatic just, and reporting verbs. Until that work is completed, the claims rest on the audit trail, the aligned textual evidence, and the inclusion of stable cases rather than on agreement statistics.

5.4 Implications for Translation Revision

For translation revision, the three dimensions can be used as a short checking routine. A reviser identifies the current speaker and any voice embedded within that speech, isolates the proposition under negotiation, locates the Engagement resource and its scope, and then compares the two versions for attribution, commitment, and available alternatives. This does not replace an accuracy check, but it

can reveal interpersonal changes that a proposition-by-proposition comparison overlooks. The point is not that every shift should be removed. Chinese may require a different structure to reproduce a concession, denial, or evidential relation; U103 shows that substantial restructuring can preserve the dialogic movement. The practical issue is whether the change can be justified in context. If the target makes a speaker more distant, certain, or categorical, the reviser needs to consider whose authority is being strengthened and whether the surrounding passage supports that effect.

6. Conclusion

This study has examined stance reconstruction in a Chinese research translation of *The Power of Big Oil: Doubt*. From 267 candidate rows, the second review retained 202 source-side Engagement resources: 37 Attribute, 46 Entertain, 94 Disclaim, and 25 Proclaim. The review consolidated integrated multiword constructions, limited Entertain to epistemic or irrealis meanings, and separated dialogic positioning from degree and focus.

The close readings show that broad Engagement functions can be maintained while the internal stance relation changes. A speaker may remain identifiable but become more detached from an earlier claim; uncertainty may remain while one consequence becomes more expected; denial may turn categorical; and evidential endorsement may acquire explicit confirmation. Voice attribution, propositional commitment, and dialogic space describe these differences more precisely than a single scale of strengthening and weakening.

The scope of the finding is limited. The study concerns one episode, one research translation, and eight aligned cases. Its 202 source-side items have been audited by the researcher but not independently coded, and there is no reception evidence. A further stage of independent coding, followed by a larger aligned analysis, is needed before the patterns can be tested beyond the cases discussed here. At present, the study provides a traceable account of several ways in which documentary polyphony can be maintained or locally recalibrated in translation.

Data and Materials Statement

FRONTLINE's English transcript is publicly accessible. Subject to copyright restrictions, the bilingual unit file, second-pass audit, exclusion log, case pool, and scoring sheet can be supplied for peer review. The annotation is researcher-led and is reported as descriptive analysis rather than independently validated measurement.

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