

WHOSE LANGUAGE, WHOSE VOICE, WHOSE MESSAGE? DIFFERENT AVT MODES FOR DOCUMENTARIES ON VRT-CANVAS TELEVISION, FLANDERS

*Aline Remael**

RESUMO: Este artigo examina como edição e três tipos de tradução audiovisual são combinados para produzir as versões de três documentários de língua inglesa, transmitidos pelo canal VRT-Canvas (da televisão pública flamenga) em 2002 e 2003. Os dois documentários da BBC, *Chasing Saddam's Weapons* e *Road to War* lidam com a guerra no Iraque, o documentário da PBS, *Kim's Nuclear Gamble*, lida com as relações tensas entre os Estados Unidos e a Coreia do Norte. Enquanto cada tipo de TAV (comentário introdutório, legenda e narração) tem sua particularidade própria, os três tipos de texto também parecem ter características em comum. Algumas delas relacionam-se com o tipo de linguagem usado em cada texto, outras com a ideologia implícita no texto. Alterações comparáveis na tradução nas diferentes formas de TAV, parecem revelar uma voz narrativa unificadora determinada formalmente por políticas linguísticas enraizadas em tradições sócio-culturais, e determinadas ideologicamente pela tendência dos programas de televisão de se dirigirem a um público específico.

UNITERMOS: Televisão; documentário; normas de TAV; políticas linguísticas; alterações ideológicas.

ABSTRACT. This article examines how editing and three types of audiovisual translation are combined to produce

* Hoger Instituut voor Vertalen en Tolken, Bélgica.

the VRT-Canvas (Flemish public television) versions of three English language documentaries broadcast in 2002 and 2003. Two BBC documentaries, Chasing Saddam's Weapons and Road to War deal with the war in Iraq, one PBS documentary Kim's Nuclear Gamble deals with the strained relations between the United States and North Korea. Whereas each type of AVT (introductory statement, subtitling and narration) has its own particularities, the three text types also appear to have characteristics in common. Some of these relate to the kind of language used in each text type, some to the ideology underlying it. Comparable translational shifts across the different AVT forms appear to reveal a unifying underlying narrative voice, formally determined by language policies that are themselves rooted in socio-cultural traditions, and ideologically determined by the tendency of television programmes to cater for a specific public.

KEYWORDS: *Television; documentary film; AVT norms; language policies; ideology-bound shifts.*

1. Introduction

The question of who speaks to us through the media is always a complex one, but as TV programmes travel across the globe, translators' voices and tongues are added to those of the directors, actors, journalists, interviewees, etc. These translators' voices are regulated, often hybrid forms, determined by global demand but also locally coloured due to institutional requirements as well as translator preferences and socialization. Basically, audiovisual productions as well as their translations are pulled into two directions; some have a global aim and reach, others are becoming increasingly regionalized.

In documentary films for television, commonly used forms of AVT are voice-over, free commentary, narration and subtitling. On Flemish television, *narrators*¹ (or *commentators*) or any other

¹ I will use the term *narrator* henceforth.

speakers for that matter, are subtitled whenever they appear on screen, but replaced by a Flemish narrator when the narrating voice remains 'off'.

A recurring feature of most if not all the above-mentioned forms of AVT is that they rewrite their oral source texts, turning speech into a cleaned up idiom with features of both oral and written language. It is common knowledge now that even voice-over only remains closer to the spoken variant in theory. Franco (2000) amply demonstrates this in her doctoral dissertation entirely devoted to this type of AVT and Orero (2004: 82) writes: "The resulting translation has to be grammatically correct, syntactically ordered and without any of the prosodic elements that characterised the spoken language: no repetitions, tag questions or padding phrases." In other words, the translations use a standard language form, purged of idiosyncrasies. This does not mean, however, that it is nobody's language. Any standard variant is also the voice of a certain group or groups, or of a person belonging to a group. As the idiosyncrasies and the 'voice' of one speaker are erased, the language that reaches the viewer speaks with the voice of another speaker or speakers, whereby 'voice' is used in the sense of the "speaking personality" or "the speaking consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1981).

2. A different look at norms

Translation studies has for some time been moving away from binary approaches to source texts and target texts, or such classics as Toury's 'adequate' versus 'acceptable' translations (1980, 1995). Likewise, the study of norms is no longer concerned with establishing degrees of equivalence. Considering the degree of complexity that characterizes the relations between source texts and their translations, it is far more interesting to try and establish which norms are given priority over others in what circumstances, and to study norms as a cultural index (Hermans, 1999: 94). Such an approach can throw light on the position of translator and translation in a given target culture, on the influence of audience expectations, or the expectations of subgroups, and on the overt or covert influence of ideologies and

power relations between and within cultures. This is no different in the case of AVT. As Hermans writes:

Cultures, communities and groups construe their sense of self in relation to others and by regulating the channels of contact with the outside world. In other words, the normative apparatus which governs the selection, production and reception of translation, provides us with an index of cultural self-definition. (1999: 95)

More concretely, the way in which TV channels manipulate the (verbal) channels of the programmes they buy, throws light on what they deem acceptable in AVT, what they deem acceptable for their respective audiences, and more generally, what they deem acceptable for the socio-cultural context within which they are working.

3. Politics and AVT policies in VRT-Canvas' *Panorama*

In the following analysis of one PBS² and two BBC documentaries broadcast on Flemish television in 2002 and 2003, I will consider cuts, as well as three forms of AVT translation in the light of the above observations. The three types of AVT *Panorama* uses are: introductory comments, narration and subtitling. The journalist's introduction forms an integral part of the production providing the Flemish viewer with what the journalist judges to be 'necessary context'.

The programmes studied are:

Chasing Saddam's Weapons (BBC, *Panorama*, Jane Corbin).

Op zoek naar Saddams wapens (VRT-Canvas, *Panorama*, Willem Van Laeken)

Road to War (BBC, *Panorama*, Edward Stourton)

Op weg naar de oorlog (VRT -Canvas, *Panorama*, Willem Van Laeken)

² Public Broadcasting Service (USA).

Kim's Nuclear Gamble (PBS Frontline, Robert Gallucci)
Kim's nucleaire gok (VRT-Canvas, Panorama, Willem Van Laeken).

My focus is on the influence of translational norms of different kinds, as reflected in translation shifts. I will consider norms related to the AVT-genre proper, norms related to the channel's linguistic policy, which, in this case, results from the specific linguistic situation in Flanders, and norms that may be determined by personal preference/socialization.

3.1 Translating and writing for the Flemish public channel

VRT has extensive guidelines for its subtitlers as well as a very strict language policy, reflected in its Language Charter (1998), which must be respected by anyone writing for the channel.³ The subtitling guidelines cover the usual subtitling technicalities. Charter and guidelines aim to guarantee the use of standard language, and to promote clarity and uniformity. However, they do not tell the subtitlers what to translate and what to leave out. Considering the technical constraints, it is understood that the translator goes for the 'essence' of the message. This is translated into standard Dutch, in syntactically and semantically simple and short sentences that can be understood in one quick reading, and reckon with the different forms of AV synchrony. Register, swearwords and idiosyncrasies can occasionally be rendered in subtitles, but with moderation.

There are no specific guidelines for the writing or translating of narration, but the above-mentioned Language Charter, drawn up by VRT language advisor Ruud Hendrickx, covers this text type.⁴ In fact, a previous study into the subtitled/narrated version of a documentary on South Africa's Robben Island prison,

³ The Language Charter was published in Hendrickx (2003a: 281-289).

⁴ Hendrickx is former member of VRT translation service, who publishes regularly on issues related to Dutch language usage. For instance, (Hendrickx, 2003b) *Juist! Tips van de VRT-taaladviseur*. Leuven: Davidsfonds/Literair, 2003.

found that the language VRT uses in its translated commentaries does not differ substantially from typical subtitling language (Remael, 1995/6: 124). This linguistic uniformity between the two genres is in part due to VRT policy, which is in its turn determined by what the channel considers to be its educational function. Besides setting a linguistic example, VRT also aims to inform the public.

In recent years, the growing economic prosperity of Flanders, its greater political independence within the federal state of Belgium, and no doubt many other socio-cultural changes that are difficult to pinpoint, appear to have had an impact on the linguistic situation in the northern part of the country, and on linguistic attitudes among Flemish speakers. A major issue for concern among some Flemish linguists today is the emergence of a kind of 'intermediate' Flemish language (*tussentaal*) that is neither the standard variant, historically based on the standard Dutch spoken in the Netherlands, nor a dialect, but a mixture drawing mainly on the dialects of the cities of Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent. It is a variant that seems to be proliferating both among the population at large and in the media, and may in part be a reaction to the standard language, which is felt to have a strong Dutch slant.

This standard language, used on Flemish public radio and television, however, is still considered the norm and indeed the example to follow in Flanders. The quotations below are from the VRT language charter (www.taaldatabanken.com and Hendrickx, 2003a: 281; translations AR):

Radio and television being spoken media, our message must be clear at once. The viewers and listeners cannot pause and return to a previous page as they might when reading a book. When formulating a message we must therefore use language that is as transparent and efficient as possible.

VRT wants to be and remain the norm for the Belgian variant of the Dutch standard language. It therefore uses an attractive, transparent and correct form of the standard language that reckons with its viewers and listeners and is attuned to them.

'Belgian variant' means that a few minor 'Flemish' grammar points and words are acceptable. VRT does not permit 'intermediate language', except in series and soaps. Standard language is required for all programmes of the news service, and any programme in which "[...] language is no more than a neutral medium to convey a message, [a programme] in which language has no other signalling function." (2003a: 283) The charter also states that: "In informative programmes [...] our aim is first and foremost to pass on our knowledge to the viewer or listener. [...] In informative programmes language has no signalling function whatsoever and must therefore be neutral." (Hendrickx, 2003a: 283-4)

Crucial concepts are: 'attractive', 'transparent' and 'efficient' language, besides the concept of a language that has no 'signalling function'. 'Attractive' means that the journalists must use a varied vocabulary and alternate sentence constructions without over-using metaphors. However, attractiveness is not the primary concern: "A news broadcast is a factual programme for which only factual language is appropriate." (2003a: 285). It is of the utmost importance that the viewer or listener "... should be taken by the hand and led through the message." In commentaries, connectives must be used to replace or underline visual textual structures and render links explicit. "Sloppy sentences can often be interpreted in different ways. That must be avoided." (2003a: 286) The charter also limits the use of synonyms and difficult words, and recommends active over passive voice, verb phrases over noun phrases.

This, in brief, is the prescribed form of VRT's 'neutral' voice, aiming to impart 'neutral' information. A comparison with current trends in radio publicity and language policy on Flemish commercial radio stations is revealing. In a recent article Slembrouck and Van Herreweghe (2004: 568), quoting Saman (2003), write that there has been both a quantitative and a qualitative increase in the use of 'intermediate' language in Flemish radio commercials. The decade starting in 1991 and ending in 2001 saw a rise from 10% to 66.5% in radio voices speaking an increasingly marked variant of 'intermediate' language. However, as the authors point out, this use is controlled: only the charac-

ters in the commercials speak it, the meta-voices, representing the voice of the producer, speak standard Dutch.

4. AVT- modes on VRT-Canvas' *Panorama*: a closer look

4.1 Introductory translations

Flemish *Panorama* has a long-standing reputation for critical reporting on current affairs and newsworthy items. Most of its broadcasts consist of Flemish translations of documentaries that it has acquired from other channels, the BBC being just one of them. The programme always consists of an introduction followed by the documentary cut to the available slot-size, and made accessible to the Flemish public through translated narration and subtitling.

In the three films under consideration the anchorman, William Van Laeken, takes care of the introduction as well as the narration. In the introduction he situates and clarifies the documentary. He does not specify what has been cut from the English version, which would have been an option, i.e. to inform the viewers about the bits of information they are missing. Instead, he tells them what to expect from the version they are about to see. In other words, the introduction helps render the message 'transparent'. For reasons of space, only two examples (rendered in my rather literal translation) are discussed below.

Road to War

It is two and a half months now since the days and nights of lobbying and discussions about whether to say 'yes' or 'no' to a war against Iraq, at the UN headquarters in New York. The discussions were unusually intense and passionate for diplomatic circles. It is good to look back on the sparring match that took place in March, when the choice between war and diplomacy was at stake, with France and Germany on one side, America and Great Britain on the other. We are joined today by most of the then important players: foreign secretaries and ambassadors, who are now in a position to tell us a bit more than they were then...The road to war was strewn with suspense and verbal acroba-

tics, but also with 'realpolitik'. It is a pity really that we already know the outcome of this thriller.

Kim's Nuclear Gamble

[...] North Korea which is, as is commonly known, one of last communist dictatorships, started working on a nuclear programme in the late eighties. A few years later came the threat that it would pull back from the non-proliferation treaty, the treaty meant to counter the spread of nuclear weapons. And in 1998, to crown it all you could say, North Korea launched a long-range missile that could supposedly reach Alaska or Hawaii. Clinton and his team tried to counter all that with diplomacy: if you slow down your nuclear programme, said the Americans, we will do business with you. But the approach of the Bush boys ['Bush boys' in English in the ST] is, as is commonly known, different. North Korea is a rogue state, Bush has said, and one does not negotiate with such states. In a word, America and North Korea are at loggerheads again.

The original Dutch text is neutral in the sense that no 'intermediate' language is used; Van Laeken speaks standard Dutch. Still, his language is not neutral in terms of status: this is the language of a voice in authority. Besides, the tone of the text is not neutral either, it is slightly ironic, and irony serves a purpose. Within linguistic irony Zabalbeascoa (2003: 306) distinguishes between the type of irony "that exploits traditional linguistic units of morphology, syntax, words and word groups, [...] [and] the type of irony that operates on a more discursive level." To the second type belong instances of "discourse hijacking," that is "using expressions that are normally used in completely different contexts." (ibid.) In my first example above, war is described in terms of a thriller or sports competition, and in the second, Bush and his administration are referred to as "the Bush boys". This, I feel, is an example, not only of irony, but also of the "conversationalizing" of media language (Bourdieu, 1996: 39-42). Moreover, as Pelsmaeker and Van Besien (2002) write: "the notion of superiority concurs with the concept of verbal irony as a form of criticism", whereas humour is usually considered to be one of irony's effects. For this to work, there must be a degree of under-

standing between speakers and listeners. Canvas' *Panorama* is a product of the news service, which also produces *Terzake* (To the point'), a programme providing in-depth analysis of newsworthy issues. It too, or even more so, has opted for irony as its hallmark in a bid to forge a critical bond with its viewers. *Panorama* fits this tradition and the more intellectual image of Canvas (as opposed to the other public channel, "Een").

Indeed, it is not unusual for a programme to have a house style, so a touch of irony goes well with the critical stance of VRT-Canvas' current affairs programmes, and may have a positive effect on ratings. The question is: does the pursuit of commercial success mean that the Dutch versions of the documentaries in question also tune in to the *expected attitudes* of the viewers?

4.2 Cuts

Examining what has been deleted from the ST documentaries in order to adjust them to the available time slot is revealing in two different ways. Besides minor deletions,⁵ the Flemish version of *Chasing Saddam's Weapons* gets rid of a lengthy passage dealing with the security report Iraq at one point had to submit to the UN. The discussion of the report forms one whole that can easily be omitted and allows the Flemish film to concentrate on two topics: the weapons inspections on the ground and the inspectors' negotiations with the UN.

In *Road to War* the deletions are more complex. A passage about 9/11, considered to be one of the events that triggered the war with Iraq, has been deleted, even though the event is briefly referred to. A passage on the position of Russia has been cut, as has an intervention by Greenstock, British Ambassador to the UN, about his attempts at finding a diplomatic solution. Other

⁵ There are a few deletions in the introduction by the BBC journalist Jane Corbin, which is replaced by *Panorama*'s own, and an informal 'socializing' conversation between the English journalist and a few Iraqi officials has been left out.

cuts get rid of part of an aside on the pre-war crisis at NATO,⁶ and a last minute intervention by the Chilean Ambassador to the UN, Juan Gabriel Valdes – an intervention that was (in his own words) “knocked on the head” immediately by the US.

Technical constraints are, of course, the prime factor behind the above cuts. However, having ascertained that cuts needed to be made, the journalists then had to decide what to leave out. The end result of that decision is a more focused programme, in both cases: the main actors and opponents stand out clearly and priority is given to those who are ‘important’. The corollary of this is, however, that minor voices are no longer heard. The main case in point is the intervention of the Chilean ambassador in *Road to War*: the alternative he offered never reached the Flemish public, nor was the Flemish public informed of how the US rebuffed the Chilean politician.

In *Kim’s Nuclear Gamble* an additional factor seems to be at play. Firstly, substantial cuts were required since the film ran up to 2 hours. In a few instances passages dealing with topics recurring elsewhere were cut. However, substantial cuts were also made in a sequence dealing with a crisis in the Clinton administration’s relations with North Korea, and Jimmy Carter’s personal negotiations with the then North Korean president Kim il Sung. Evidently these negotiations were undertaken without full governmental backing and Carter actually threatened to take the deal he had brokered with Kim il Sung to CNN.

Another series of cuts affects interviews revealing the outrage Carter’s “Agreed Framework” caused in Washington at the time, and therefore silences those who were in favour of a harsh approach in US dealings with North Korea even then, i.e. under Clinton. Finally, some additional cuts get rid of interviews commenting on the confusion and touch-and-go methods in the Bush administration’s North Korea policy.

What kind of shifts does this produce? The Flemish version focuses on the policies of the two main political parties as they eventually affected ‘the world’, or, the North Korea policies

⁶ The incident itself shown, with the dramatic intervention by Joschka Fischer, German Minister of Foreign Affairs.

that the respective administrations took to the international political scene. The Flemish adapters, forced to delete some passages, first chose to get rid of topics relating to the workings of US politics at home. Still, both the American and the Flemish versions of the documentary favour the Clinton administrations' approach of 'appeasement' as opposed to the Bush administration's approach of 'military threat and sanctions'. Both documentaries end on the intervention of William Perry, Secretary of Defence under Clinton.

The Flemish public is not informed of the degree of chaos and disagreement lurking behind the official lines of both Clinton's and Bush's North Korea policies. It does not learn that even the Clinton administration was considering a much harsher deal, until Jimmy Carter let his cat out of the bag; i.e. that one American administration does not differ all that much from another. Instead, the Flemish film weakens the Republican case, which is stated in much greater detail in the PBS documentary. Indeed, the source film makes one wonder whether Clinton's appeasement method did not come very close to giving in to a form of blackmail that would only lead to further blackmail, as the Republicans claimed.

Generally speaking, one could say that the US public gets a more balanced view of the two opposing parties' North Korea policies and a more in depth insight into their respective administrations' haphazard ways of proceeding. In addition, the Flemish pro-Clinton bias is further enhanced by the introductory translation to the Flemish film (cf. also above):

Clinton and his team tried to counter all that with diplomacy [...] But the approach of the Bush boys is, as is commonly known, different. [...] In short, America and North Korea are at loggerheads once again.

In fact, there had been just as much confrontation under Clinton's administration. However, as Bourdieu states, in writing meant for the highly constrained medium of television contradictions and tensions are eliminated, contentious issues are simplified, and language is "conversationalized". This method constitutes another form of simplification, one that makes me-

dia language more attractive, and creates a cordial atmosphere, an atmosphere of understanding between speaker and listener (1996: 39-42). In the case of *Kim's Nuclear Gamble* the irony in the introduction is in line with the general pro-Clinton bias apparent from the re-editing of the programme. And yet, all three documentaries were obviously reshaped in line with the VRT Charter demanding clarity as well.

4.3. Subtitles

Some of the shifts in the subtitles are language-bound, but the general tone and style of the TT is the result of a combination of factors: the technical constraints of subtitling, its specific written form, VRT poetics or policy, and personal bias/socialization.

Generally speaking, imprecise terminology, phrasing or syntax are interpreted and translated with a more 'causal slant' in syntactically simplified sentences, while introductive verbs that moderate the speaker's utterance are often omitted. The general effect of these shifts is to eliminate doubt from the subtitled speakers' words, sometimes turning careful formulations into rather blunt statements. On the other hand, the subtitles at times also moderate a speaker's utterance or clearly indicate that a particular view is held by only one person.

In the first two sets of examples below, Perle,⁷ Annan and Powell's statements have become much more factual. In the first case this makes Republican policy more forceful or radical, in the second and third, this has a similar effect on the position of the UN Security Council. However, turning "blackmail" into "blackmailer" is unnecessary (considering formal constraints), and passes a judgement on the North Korean president.

⁷ Professor at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research and chairperson of the "Defense Policy Board" of the U.S. ministry of defence from 2001-2003 (<http://www.aei.org/scholars>, consulted 25 april 2004).

Kim's Nuclear Gamble

R.Perle: I think the break in continuity had to do with the belief that *the policy had been wrong, that when you pay blackmail, you're asking for further blackmail.*

Er is een breuk in het beleid
gekomen omdat *het fout was.*

The policy was discontinued
because *it was*
wrong.

Als je een afperser betaalt,
vraag je om verdere afpersing.
blackmail.

If you pay a blackmailer,
you're asking for more

Chasing Saddam's Weapons

K. Annan: *The Security Council has indicated, depending on the evidence that is brought to it, it can declare Iraq in material breach, and following that, they will decide what grave consequences should be taken.*

De veiligheidsraad heeft
aangegeven
dat hij, als er voldoende bewijs is,
evidence,

The Security Council has
indicated
that it can, if there is enough

Iraq in overtreding kan verklaren
(material) breach.

declare Iraq in

En dan zal hij tot ernstige
decide to take
maatregelen besluiten.

And then it will

serious measures.

C. Powell: *This council placed the burden on Iraq to comply and disarm and not on the Inspectors to find that which Iraq has gone out of its way to conceal for so long.*

Deze raad heeft Irak opgedragen
om te ontwapenen.

This council has ordered Iraq
to disarm.

By contrast, whenever 'simplifying' translation strategy of subtitling has the effect of slightly weakening a statement this undermines the case of the Republicans. In other words, the subtitler appears to be playing along with the rather negative

accepted opinion about the Republicans in Flanders, or at least, he appears to be sharing this opinion. The shifts in the examples below are also the logical continuation of the ironic tone used by Van Laeken in the introductions to the programmes.

Chasing Saddam's Weapons

C. Powell: *This council placed the burden on Iraq to comply and disarm and not on the Inspectors to find that which Iraq has gone out of its way to conceal for so long.*

Het is niet de taak van de inspecteurs om op te sporen

It is not the task of the inspectors to track down

wat Iraq al zo lang verbergt.
Kim's Nuclear Gamble

what Iraq has been hiding for so long.

Kim's Nuclear Gamble

M. Smith: *I think what they [democrats] would say is that talks should not have been cut off, that open dialogue should have continued.*

R. Perle: *That there should have been more blackmail. They wouldn't characterize it in that way, of course, but that is, in fact, what it was and what it remains.*

M.S. *Zij zouden antwoorden dat het open gesprek had moeten doorgaan.*

They would say that the open dialogue should have continued.

R.P. *Dat er meer afpersing had moeten komen.*

That there should have been more blackmail.

Zo zouden zij het natuurlijk niet noemen, maar daar komt het op neer.

That is not what they would call it, of course, but that's what it amounts to.

Perle's criticism of the Democrats, i.e. that they had been giving in to blackmail "that is, in fact, what it was and what it remains" has become "*daar komt het op neer*" ("that's what it amounts to"), whereas a more accurate translation, "*dat is*

het” (“that’s what it is”) would have been shorter. Another indication of a touch of partiality in the translation occurs in the subtitles of the following passage:

R. Perle: I think Kim – *Kim Dae Jung’s interests, and the interests of the South Koreans, are not at all identical to ours. And it’s understandable. Seoul is within artillery range of thousands of North Korean artillery tubes. So it’s hardly surprising that the South Koreans are going to see this differently from the way we see it, but our president has, first and foremost, a commitment to the security of the United States.*

Ik vind <i>dat de belangen van Kim Dae Jung en van Zuid-Korea</i>	I think <i>that the interests of Kim Dae Jung and of South Korea</i>
niet onze belangen zijn.	are not our interests.

Uncharacteristically, “I think” is not deleted this time, indicating that the above is Perle’s view, although introductory verbs like I think, believe, suppose, would say, ... are usually omitted. Moreover, “not at all identical to ours” [our interests] has become “not our interests”.

The following shift from *Road to War* follows the same kind of logic. When C. Meyer, British Ambassador to Washington from 1997 to 2003, and ally of the Bush administration, talks about the position of the American ministry of defence with regard to the war in Iraq, this position becomes much harsher in the subtitles. The translation even renders a euphemism in the source text explicit, actually stating what the subtitler supposes Meyer wants to say.

Road to War

C. Meyer: [...] *The time has come to deal with him, and the best thing that we could do to bring stability and freedom and democracy to the Middle East would be to remove Saddam Hussein, these were the exponents of regime change*

<i>En dat we vrijheid en democratie naar het Midden-Oosten konden brengen</i>	<i>And that we could bring freedom and democracy to the Middle East</i>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------

door Saddam Hoessein te elimineren. by eliminating *Saddam Hoessein.*
 Een regimewisseling dus. That is: regime change.

Finally, in my last example, the translation turns a “good disagreement” among Republicans into a quarrel or argument. The shift hints at reports or rumours suggesting that Powell no longer saw eye to eye with the Bush administration and that he was not planning to be part of a second term, should Bush be elected again – a rumour that has meanwhile been confirmed.

C. Powell: So we're good friends and we know how to have a good disagreement about something [...]

Als vrienden weten we hoe we ruzie kunnen maken

As friends, we know how to have an argument

4.4 Narration

To conclude, all translational shifts in the narrated passages are clearly motivated by VRT guidelines and, generally speaking, have a simplifying effect. The most noticeable and consistent formal change by far is that as good as all past tenses have been translated by a (historical) present, and conditionals by future tenses. The most obvious effect of this is to give the text more immediacy, an ancillary effect is that the present tense gives utterances a greater sense of permanence.

Kim's Nuclear Gamble

Journalist: The Clinton administration had been willing to talk before Kim made concessions or complied with existing agreements. The Bush administration was demanding concessions and full compliance before talks could begin.

De regering-Clinton was bereid geweest om te praten nog vóór Kim toegevingen deed of de bestaande akkoorden naleefde. Maar de regering-Bush eist toegevingen en volledige naleving vóór er überhaupt gepraat kan worden.

The Clinton administration had been willing to talk even before Kim made concessions or complied with existing agreements. But the Bush administration demands concessions and full compliance before the talks can begin at all.

The present tenses imply that this is standard Bush policy and the addition of “*nog voor*” (*even before*), as well as “*überhaupt*” (“at all”) further contrasts the opposite approaches of the two administrations.

In my last example, rendering a conditional tense with a future tense and indirect speech with direct speech makes the Americans sound uncompromising.

Chasing Saddam's Weapons

Journalist:

America wasn't interested in giving the UN time. The inspectors would never contain Saddam's weapons, they said, because they'd never find them. The US declared it would present secret intelligence to prove Iraq's guilt.

Maar de Amerikanen voelen er niets voor om de VN meer tijd te geven. De inspecteurs zullen Saddam z'n wapens toch nooit vinden, zeggen ze. En wij zullen geheime informatie bekend maken die aantoont dat Irak wel degelijk schuldig is.

But the Americans do not feel like giving the UN more time. The Inspectors will never find Saddam's weapons anyway, so they say. And we will present secret information that demonstrates Iraq is definitely guilty.

5. Conclusions

Introduction, subtitles and comments are subject to the VRT's language guidelines. These guidelines are inspired by educational and (local) linguistic concerns. One could say that they are the regionalized version of AVT guidelines currently in use in many European countries, especially those in use for subtitling. However, some of the translation shifts have similar effects irrespective of the AVT form in which they occur. Again, this is partly due to the homogenizing effect of VRT language policy, but the trend cannot be explained by these policies alone, nor by the technical constraints of each specific sub-genre.

It would appear that the underlying narrative voice that guides the viewer is the same in the three AVT forms, even though the subtitler and the journalist introducing the programmes are

unlikely to be the same person. This voice uses the same language but also speaks from the same regionally determined viewpoint. In other words, the voice of authority

that uses exemplary Flemish and assumes an ironic position of understanding between speaker and listener/viewer in the introduction, also speaks through the subtitles and the narration. It is embedded in the community it addresses and therefore appears to perpetuate a certain degree of circularity in accepted opinion.

The Flemish documentaries do not differ fundamentally from either their British or their American counterparts; overall the translations remain close enough to their source texts. However, while making the English language programmes (linguistically) accessible to their own viewers, the Flemish translators and/or journalists also refract them. While adapting them to their channel's house style, they simplify the complexities of the source films and cater for local viewers' expected tastes and views, whether consciously or unconsciously.

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