Chapter 7: Pragmatic Equivalence

1. The following is a short essay from J. B. Priestley's *Delight*, a small collection of personal essays.

*Giving advice*

Giving advice, especially when I am in no position to give it and hardly know what I am talking about. I manage my own affairs with as much care and steady attention and skill as — let us say — a drunken Irish tenor. I swing violently from enthusiasm to disgust. I change policies as a woman changes hats. I am here today and gone tomorrow. When I am doing one job, I wish I were doing another. I base my judgments on anything — or nothing. I have never the least notion what I shall be doing or where I shall be in six months time. Instead of holding one thing steadily, I try to juggle with six. I cannot plan, and if I could I would never stick to the plan. I am a pessimist in the morning and an optimist at night, am defeated on Tuesday and insufferably victorious by Friday. But because I am heavy, have a deep voice and smoke a pipe, few people realize that I am a flibbertigibbet on a weathercock. So my advice is asked. And then, for ten minutes or so, I can make Polonius look a trifler. I settle deep in my chair, two hundred pounds of portentousness, and with some first-rate character touches in the voice and business with pipe, I begin: ‘Well, I must say that in your place — ’ And inside I am bubbling with delight.

Try translating the above essay into your target language, paying particular attention to the question of implicature and the whole image that the writer draws of himself. If necessary, consider possible explanations (or other strategies) that could help the target reader draw the right inferences from the author’s statements. Consider, for instance, whether an analogy such as changing policies as a woman changes hats is likely to have the same implicature in your target language.

This essay appears in *Literature in English*, one of the English for Today Series, published by the National Council of Teachers of English (1964), McGraw-Hill. The editors provide the following explanations of key words and expressions in footnote form. You may find these helpful.

*drunken Irish tenor*: A drunken singer is not in control of himself.

*flibbertigibbet on a weathercock*: A flibbertigibbet is a frivolous and giddy person. A weathercock is a wooden or metal rooster that turns on top of a building and shows the direction of the wind. The whole expression suggests a very undependable person.

*Polonius*: a character in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, noted for giving advice.

*two hundred pounds of portentousness*: In other words, a large man (‘two hundred pounds’) using an impressive voice and using impressive gestures with his pipe (‘some first-grade character touches’) gives grave (‘portentious’) advice. This is a humorous description of the author’s pose.

The text touches upon a theme discussed in pragmatics, namely, felicity conditions been violated:
having no authority to give advice, but nevertheless giving it.

Να δίδεηο ζπκβνπιέο όηαλ δελ έρεηο θακηά αξκνδηόηεηα θαη δελ μέξεηο θαιά γηα ηη πξάγκα κηιάο. Δεν έρσ ηδέα ηη ζα θάλσ ή πνπ ζα είκαη ζε έμη κήλεο. Αιιά επεηδή είκαη επηξαθήο, έρσ βαζηά θσλή θαη θαπλίδσ πίπα ιίγνη αιιηιακβάλνληαη ηη  αλεκνδνύξα είκαη. Κη όηαλ έξρεηαη εθείλε ε ζηηγκή, γηα θάλα δεθάξη ιεπηά, θάλσ ηνλ Πνιώλην λα σρξηά κπξνζηά κνπ. Χωλνκαη βαζηά ζηελ πνιπζξόλα κνπ, κεηαθξάδνληαο ηα θηιά κνπ ζε επηζηεκνζύλε, βάδσ ζηε θσλή κνπ ηόλν δέθα θαξδηλαιίσλ θάλνληαο θόιπα κε ηελ πίπα, θαη αξρίδσ: «Λνηπόλ, ζα έιεγα όηη, ζηε ζέζε ζαο...». Καη κέζα κνπ θνπζθώλ σ από ηθαλνπνίεζε.

- The drunken Irish tenor item was abandoned – it would have been inappropriate. It is rendered as an elephant in a china shop.
- Instead of holding one thing steadily, I try to juggle with six is rendered as Instead of doing one thing carefully, I mess with ten. Ten is a random number in Greek.
- two hundred pounds of portentousness is rendered as translating my kilos into scientism.
- first-grade character touches is rendered in terms of the expression I give my voice touches as if by ten cardinals (=as solemn as a judge).
- the bubbling with delight metaphor is rendered in terms of puffing oneself up with satisfaction.

1. The following extract from an article by Vanessa Baird which appeared in the New Internationalist (January/February 2010, special issue on population growth) raises similar challenges, but the article does not come with notes and explanations this time. You may therefore need to undertake some research of your own to ensure that you understand the references and relevant implicatures before translating it into your target language. A good starting point would be to visit the New Internationalist website, unless you are already familiar with the magazine, to establish what type of publication it is and where the sympathies of its contributors are likely to lie, especially since the author in this case is also one of the editors of the magazine.

Too many people?
When she was young, my great aunt – a tiny sprightly woman who painted vast canvasses – had wanted to become a nun. Then she met a Flemish poet and they fell in love. She agreed to

1 www.newint.org.
marry him on one condition: that they have 12 children. True to the old baking tradition, they
made 13.

Her niece, my mother, also briefly flirted with the holy life. **Her tryst with celibacy was equally
econvincing.** As the eighth of her brood, I approach the subject of global population with a touch
of trepidation. By anyone’s standard of reasonable family size I really shouldn’t be here.

But then the subject of population – and in particular population growth – is one that seems
capable of provoking all kinds of emotions.

... Often the cause of concern is the speed at which others – be they people of other races or
social classes or religions or political allegiances – are reproducing themselves, threatening,
presumably, to disturb the wellbeing of whatever dominant group the commentator belongs to.
This was epitomized recently by Michael Laws, Mayor of Wanganui District in New Zealand,
who proposed that in order to tackle the problems of child abuse and murder, members of the
‗appalling underclass‘ should be paid not to have children. ‘If we gave $10,000 to certain people
and said “we’ll voluntarily sterilize you” then all of society would be better off,’ he told the
**Dominion Post** newspapers.

Most contemporary worries about population are less offensively expressed. For many, the
issue is primarily an environmental one. The logic is simple. The more people there are, the
more greenhouse gas is emitted, the more damage is done. Any attempts to reduce carbon
emissions will be negated by runaway population growth.

This was echoed recently by the **Financial Times** when it called for an international debate on
population. A leader column argued: ‘World population growth is making it harder to achieve
cuts in carbon emissions‘ and went on to quote a disputed London School of Economics study*
maintaining that spending on family planning is ‘five times more cost effective at cutting carbon
dioxide emissions than the conventional low carbon technologies’.

The UK-based Optimum Population Trust goes further, suggesting that to achieve
sustainability we should be aiming to reduce global population by at least 1.7 billion people.

* Since found to be the work of a student funded by the Optimum Population Trust.

I take the highlighted part to mean …equally unconvincing- this is how it is translated below…

I take it to mean that the author’s mother didn’t manage to become a nun, either

Γίνομε πολλοί;
Όταν ήταν νέα, η θεία της μητέρας μου – μια μικροσκοπική σβέλτη γυναίκα που ζωγράφιζε κάτι
terásia telára – ήθελε να γίνει καλόγρια. Μετά συνάντησε έναν Φλάμανδο ποιητή και επιλέχθη
eidúllio. Συμφωνώνει να τον παντρευτεί, υπό έναν όρο: να κάνουν μια ντουζίνα παιδία.
Στην πορεία, έβαλαν κάτι παραπάνω και τα έκαναν δεκατρία.
Η ανεξιτή της, η μητέρα μου, κι αυτή φλερτάρισε λίγο με τη μοναχική ζωή, αλλά η σχέση της με
ηελ αγακία επίζεο δελ επδνθίκεζε. Ωο ε όγδνε από ηα παηδηά ηεο, πξνζεγγίδσ ην ζέκα ηνπ πιεζπζκνύ ηεο γεο κε θάπνην ηδηαίηεξν ελδηαθέξνλ. Όπνην θη αλ ζεσξήζνπκε σο θαλνληθό κέγεζνο γηα νηθνγέλεηα, εκέλα κε αθήλεη απ'έμσ.

Αιιά πάιη ην ζέκα ηνπ πιεζπζκνύ – εηδηθά ηεο αύμεζεο ηνπ – πξνθαιεί όισλ ησλ εηδώλ ηηο αληηδξάζεηο....

Σπρλά, ν ιόγνο η εο αλεζπρίαο έρεη λα θάλεη κε ηελ ηαρύηεηα κε ηελ νπνία αλαπαξάγνληαη θάπνην ηπεκεξία θάπνηαο θπξίαξρεο ηάμεο, ζηελ νπνία ηπραίλεη λα αλήθεη θαη ν ζρνιηαζηήο.

Ζ άπνςε απηή εθθξάζηεθε πξόζθαηα από ηνλ δήκαξρν ηεο πεξηνρήο Γνπάλγθαλνπτ ζηε Νέα Ζηλανδία, ηνλ Μάκιλ Λοζ, που ισχυρίστηκε ότι, προκειμένου να αντιμετωπίσουμε το πρόβλημα της παιδικής κακοποίησης και των δολοφονιών, τα μέλη της ομάδας κατάλεξαν να πληρώνονται για να μπουν παιδιά. ‘Αν δίναμε 10.000 $ σε κάποιους και τους λέγαμε «θα σας υποβάλουμε δε οικειοθελή στείρωση», η κοινωνία θα βελτιωνόταν’, είπε στις εφημερίδες Dominion Post.

Οι περισσότερες σύγχρονες ανησυχίες για την αύξηση του πληθυσμού εκφράζονται με πιο κομψό τρόπο. Για πολλούς, το θέμα είναι καταρχήν περιβαλλοντικό. Η λογική είναι απλή. Όσοι περισσότεροι άνθρωποι, τόσο περισσότερα αέρια θερμοκηπίου εκτέμπται, και τόσο μεγαλύτερη καταστροφή προκαλείται. Οι οποιεσδήποτε προσπάθειες μείωσης του διοξειδίου, αναρωτίστηκαν από την ανεξέλεγκτη αύξηση του πληθυσμού.

Αυτή η άποψη υπονόηθηκε πρόσφατα από τους Financial Times όταν άνοιξαν διάλογο για το θέμα του πληθυσμού. Κύριο άρθρο τους έγραψε: ‘Η αύξηση του πληθυσμού της γης δισκολεύει την περικοπή εκπομπής διοξειδίου’ και παρέθεσαν απόσταση από αμφιλεγόμενη έρευνα του London School of Economics (προερχόμενη από φοιτητή χρηματοδοτούμενο από την Optimum Population Trust) που ισχυρίζεται ότι οι δαπάνες για τον αιογενειακό προγραμματισμό είναι ‘πέντε φορές πιο αποτελεσματικές για την περικοπή των εκπομπών διοξειδίου, απ’ ότι οι συμβατικές τεχνολογίες χαμηλής εκπομπής’.

Το βρετανικό παρακάτω της Optimum Population Trust προχωράει ακόμη περισσότερο ισχυριζόμενο ότι η ισορροπία μπορεί να αποκατασταθεί αν τεθεί στόχος μείωσης του πληθυσμού κατά τουλάχιστον 1.7 δισεκατομμύρια.

- True to the old baking tradition, they made 13. No reference to a baker is made in the TT – it is nice and appealing to be referring to tradition and old occupations, but this would have been more appropriate in another type of genre, a more literary one: in the present activists’ context, the TT opts for in the meantime they contributed a little more and made them 13.
- The note about the LSE student was incorporated in the body of the text (in a parenthesis) to support the implication conveyed by disputed study.
Imagine that you have been asked to translate this article for an activist site that is committed to promoting global justice and wishes to make key counter arguments on sensitive issues such as population growth available in a wide range of languages. In this context, it is vital that you convey the attitude of the author to the topic. You therefore need to pay particular attention to linguistic and typographic signals of this attitude, such as presumably and the use of scare quotes. Note also the reference to ‘work of a student’ in the footnote. What implicature might the author be trying to communicate here, and how would you ensure its accessibility to the target reader? Similarly, how would you handle the reference to ‘baker’s dozen’ and the use of ‘made’ (rather than ‘have’) at the end of the first paragraph? How do you ensure that the target reader will understand these references and associated implicatures?

2. Here is a particularly challenging extract to translate. It is part of the well-known scene in Shakespeare’s Othello, in which Iago deliberately violates Grice’s maxims, certainly the maxim of relevance, in order to convey certain implicatures. Othello recognizes the violations and tries to get Iago to spell out what he means.

   Iago: My noble lord –
   Oth: What dost thou say, Iago?
   Iago: Did Michael Cassio, when you woo’d my lady, Know of your love?
   Oth: He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?
   Iago: But for a satisfaction of my thought; No further harm.
   Oth: Why of thy thought, Iago?
   Iago: I did not think he had been acquainted with her.
   Oth: O, yes, and went between us very oft.
   Iago: Indeed?
   Oth: Indeed? Ay, indeed! Discern’st thou aught in that? Is he not honest?
   Iago: Honest, my lord?
   Oth: Honest? Ay, honest.
   Iago: My lord, for aught I know.
   Oth: What dost thou think?
   Iago: Think, my lord?
   Oth: Think, my lord? By heaven, he echoes me, As if there were some monster in his thought Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something. I heard thee say even now, thou lik’st not that, When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like? And when I told thee he was of my counsel In my whole course of wooing, thou cried’st ‘Indeed?’ And didst contract and purse thy brow together, As if thou hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me, Show me thy thought.

(Act III, Scene iii)

Consider how Iago conveys his intended meanings, both conventionally and non-conventionally. What adjustments, if any, do you feel you have to make to the lexis, syntax, or the way in which the maxims are violated in order to convey similar implicatures in your translated version?

The following are three Greek versions of the extract, produced by translators Vassilis Rotas (a. 1968), Errikos Belies (b. 2000), and Michalis Kakogiannis (c. 2001). Version b differs from the other two in the treatment of implicatures.

Iάγος: - Ευγενικέ μου κύριε, -
Οθέλλος: - Τι λες, Ιάγο;
Iάγος: - Ο Κάσιος, όταν τα 'φιαγμένα με την κυρά, γνώριζε την αγάπη σου;
Οθέλλος: - Βέβαια, απ’ την αρχή ως το τέλος. Τι ρωτάς;
Iάγος: - Μόνο ν’ αποκριθώ στη σκέψη σου, όχι άλλο;
Οθέλλος: - Τίποτα κακό. Από περιέργεια και μόνο.
Iάγος: - Τι σκέψη σου, Ιάγο;
Οθέλλος: - Δε δεν δεν μπορεί να είναι πραγματική είναι.
Iάγος: - Αλλήβεια; Αλλήβεια! Ναι, αλλήβεια.
Οθέλλος: - Μη μου πείτε!
Iάγος: - Δεν είναι τίμιος;
Οθέλλος: - Τίμιος, κύριε μου! Τίμιος! Ναι, τίμιος.
Iάγος: - Κύριε μου, όσο
Οθέλλος: - Γνωρίζω...
Iάγος: - Τι γνώμη έχεις;

- Αρχοντά μου –
- Τι λες, Ιάγο;
- Ο Μιχαηλ Κάσιος ήξερε τα αισθήματά σας, όταν προσπαθούσατε να κερδίσετε την καρδία της κυρίας μου;
- Τα ήξερε όλα, από το άλφα ως το ωμέγα...Γιατί ρωτάς;
- ΟΧΙ...Το σκέφτηκα και...
- Άριστα, Ιάγο, για ποιο πράγμα;
- Απορία, Ιάγο, για ποιο πράγμα;
- Νόμιζα πως δεν τη γνώριζε προσωπικά.
- Μα ναι, κι ανάμεσά μας τον μεσάζοντα έκανε πολύ συχνά.
- Αλήθεια;
- Αλήθεια; Ναι, αλήθεια.
- Βλέπεις τίποτα περίεργο α’ αυτό; Δεν είναι τίμιος;
- Τίμιος, κύριε μου!
- Τίμιος; Ναι, ναι, τίμιος.
- Ευθύς;
- Αυτός μπορώ, κύριε μου, να γνωρίζω...
- Ναι, ευθύς. Χαρακτήρας
- Τι πιστεύεις;
- Πιστεύω, κύριε μου;
- Κύριε μου, όσο
- Ναι, ευθύς. Χαρακτήρας
- Τι γνώμη έχεις;
Οθέλλος: - Γνώμη, κύριε μου!
- Γνώμη, κύριε μου! Μα
τον Θεό, έχει γίνει ηχώ
μου, σαν να’ναι κάποιο
tέρας μες τη σκέψη
tου, άσκημο πολύ για
tο να φανεί. Κάτι έχεις μες
στον νού σου: σ’
άκουσα μόλις τώρα
που είπες, δε σ’ αρέσει
αυτό, όταν ο Λάσιος
χώρισε από τη γυναίκα
μου. Τι δε σ’άρεσε; Κι
όταν σου είπα ήταν ο
έμπιστος στα
προεξένεματά μου,
φώναξες «καλήθεια;»
kαι σούφρωσες και
μάζευσες τα φρύδια,
σάμπτως να’κλέεις μες
στον νού σου κάτσαι
ιδέα φριχτή. Αν
μ’αγαπάς, κάνε μου
φανέρη τη σκέψη σου.
- Απ’ όσο έξρω, άρχοντά
μου.
- Εσύ τι νομίζεις;
- Τι νομίζω, κύριε μου;
- Τι νομίζω, κύριε μου!
Δίσολε, την ηχώ μου κάνει,
sαν να υπάρχει κάποιο
tέρας μέσα στη σκέψη του
tόσο φριχτό, που δεν
tολμάει να το δείξει. Κάτι
μου κρύβεις εαυ! Πριν από
λίγο, την ώρα που έψυχε ο
Κάσιος, σε άκουσα να
μου λες πως δεν σου
άρεσε αυτό: τι δεν σου
άρεσε; Κι όταν σου είπα
πως ήταν ο εμπίστος μου
όλο τον καιρό του
eιδικόλου μου, εαυ
φώναξες, «Μη μου πείτε!»
kαι σ’είδα να σκοτεινίαξες
και να ζαρώνες τα φρύδια
σαν να’κλέεις μέσα στο
νού σου κάτσαι ιδέα
φριχτή. Αν μ’αγαπάς,
apοκάλυψε μου τη σκέψη
sου.

Οιλλιαμ Σαίξτπερ
ΟΘΕΛΟΣ, μτφρ.
Βασίλης Ρώτας, 1968,
Αθήνα: Επικαιρότητα σ.
82-83

Οιλλιαμ Σαίξτπερ
Μπελίες, 2000, Αθήνα:
Κέδρος σ. 82-83

Οιλλιαμ Σαίξτπερ
ΟΘΕΛΟΣ, μτφρ. Ερρίκος
Μιχάλης Κακουγάνης,
2001, Αθήνα:
Καστανιώτης σ. 102-103

Iago is violating the maxim of relevance by generating suspicion through the question whether Cassio was aware of the love affair: Did Michael Cassio, …Know of your love? … (I’m asking) for a satisfaction of my thought; No further harm.

On the (false) assumption that Iago is being cooperative (that he offers relevant info), Othello gets suspicious (non-conventionally): Is he [Cassia] not honest?
Version b

- avoids the item *no further harm* that non-conventionally generates the suspicion, and opts for a less suspicion-provoking expression *I'm just being curious*. The generation of the implicature that there is something wrong with Cassio is thus played down.
- Besides, in version b, Iago addresses Othello using second person PLURAL verb endings, conventionally assuming respect and submission to the master.

Version b, thus, favours a more submissive type of Iago (through the plural addresses) and tones down the non-conventional implicature generated by *No further harm*. It is as if the translator is hiding signals from the audience.

But then, version b highlights Iago’s surprise, which enforces Othello’s anxiety. Iago’s *Indeed*? is assumed to conventionally generate the implicature that Iago is surprised at Casio’s going between them. Version b rendering (*don’t tell me! Μη μου πείτε!* vs. *indeed! Αλήθεια*; in versions a and c) more overtly suggests that Iago is surprised, and thus Othello’s suspicion (that Iago is hiding something) sounds more justified.

It seems that the translator of version b more drastically manipulates the implicature-generating items. He tones down… *no further harm* and makes Iago appear more submissive. But then he enforces Iago’s surprise (*don’t tell me*), which enforces the generation of the implicature that there is something wrong, and fuels Othello’s jealousy. The strategy of playing down items to enforce others at a later stage seems to create a dramatic effect and heighten emotion.

3. Stephen Hawking’s popular science book, *A Brief History of Time from the Big Bang to Black Holes* (1988) includes a number of appendices, each giving an insight into the life and personality of a famous scientist. This is one of them:

*Isaac Newton*

Isaac Newton was not a pleasant man. His relations with other academics were notorious, with most of his later life spent embroiled in heated disputes. Following publication of *Principia Mathematica* – surely the most influential book ever written in physics – Newton had risen rapidly into public prominence. He was appointed president of the Royal Society and became the first scientist ever to be knighted.

Newton soon clashed with the Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed, who had earlier provided Newton with much needed data for *Principia*, but was now withholding information that Newton wanted. Newton would not take no for an answer; he had himself appointed to the governing body of the Royal Observatory and then tried to force immediate publication of the data. Eventually he arranged for Flamsteed’s work to be seized and prepared for
publication by Flamsteed’s mortal enemy, Edmond Halley. But Flamsteed took the case to
court and, in the nick of time, won a court order preventing distribution of the stolen work.
Newton was incensed and sought his revenge by systematically deleting all references to
Flamsteed in later editions of *Principia*.

A more serious dispute arose with the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz. Both
Leibniz and Newton had independently developed a branch of mathematics called calculus,
which underlies most of modern physics. Although we now know that Newton discovered
calculus years before Leibniz, he published his work much later. A major row ensued over
who had been first, with scientists vigorously defending both contenders. It is remarkable,
however, that most of the articles appearing in defense of Newton were originally written by
his own hand – and only published in the name of friends! As the row grew, Leibniz made the
mistake of appealing to the Royal Society to resolve the dispute. Newton, as president,
appointed an ‘impartial’ committee to investigate, coincidentally consisting entirely of
Newton’s friends! But that was not all: Newton then wrote the committee’s report himself and
had the Royal Society publish it, officially accusing Leibniz of plagiarism. Still unsatisfied, he
then wrote an anonymous review of the report in the Royal Society’s own periodical.
Following the death of Leibniz, Newton is reported to have declared that he had taken great
satisfaction in ‘breaking Leibniz’s heart.’

During the period of these two disputes, Newton had already left Cambridge and
academe. He had been active in anti-Catholic politics at Cambridge, and later in Parliament,
and was rewarded eventually with the lucrative post of Warden of the Royal Mint. Here he
used his talents for deviousness and vitriol in a more socially acceptable way, successfully
conducting a major campaign against counterfeiting, even sending several men to their death
on the gallows.

Imagine that you have been asked to translate the above appendix into your target language. Your
translated version is to be included in a portfolio of light-hearted but factual background material for
science students in secondary education, designed to stimulate their interest in the world of science at
large.

Comment on the strategies you decide to use to convey Hawking’s implied meanings to your
target audience. For instance, do you transfer typographic signals such as exclamation marks and the
inverted commas around *impartial* (third paragraph), or are there better ways of signalling similar
meanings in your target language? Does the text, as it stands, convey the same image of Newton in
your target language as it does in English, or do you have to make adjustments to accommodate your
target reader’s cultural background?

5. Much of our discussion of pragmatics concerned ways of ‘making sense’ of a text or interaction and
finding ways of communicating our interpretation to the target reader. But some texts deliberately set
out to undermine sense – nonsense literature is a good, extreme example. Other texts stretch the limits of ‘sense’ in less radical ways, using structures and expressions that would normally fail to cohere in less experimental texts but that are part of the message being communicated in this context. With this in mind, try your hand at the following opening paragraph of Robert Young’s article ‘The Procrastinator’ (Young 1999:7):

Too close to call, whether I am yet beyond the real deadlines that followed the final deadline because of course with deadlines there is always the possibility of a later insertion, at proof stage or even second proof stage, or even perhaps – No. That is no longer procrastination, that is living dangerously, the very thing the procrastinator wishes to avoid. The procrastinator is no revolutionary, leaping into the future: every procrastinator is at heart a conservative creature, cautious, politic, wishing to live on without the jolt of completion and the rush of emptiness that follows the offering up of a piece of writing no longer just one’s own, now exposed to the possibility of being read, ridiculed, rejected – and producing the inevitable question of what is coming next. Publish and perish. Unwilling to become the productive academic *prestigateur*, pulling ever more startlingly innovative writings out of a glamorous top hat, the procrastinator eyes the enfeebled mortar board warily. No key player he. Nor she – though there is something very gendered about procrastination, an inexorable maleness in the spirit of Tristram Shandy, Leopold Bloom or Saleem Sinai. Viagra falls. The procrastinator hangs over the past, furtively stealing time’s proferred moments, seeking to retrieve what has already past, to delay what has not been done. He who hesitates is rarely lost. It may never happen. The present must live on into the future, at all costs it must be kept going, not detached from the past, but nurtured and maintained for its familiar comfort, recognisable, known, safe. Let us linger on, procrastinate that act of fulfilment that belongs to tomorrow, meanly measure out our lives as they unroll slowly through the debris of what has long since lapsed and elapsed. Stay with me, delay with me. Hang on a while.

Consider what Young is trying to achieve by the various structures he opts for. To what extent can you reproduce this effect in your translation, while still producing a coherent text that can make sense to the target readers?