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Espagrafic
A Pragmatic Approach to the Contrastive Analysis of a Literary Work and Two of its Translations

Mª Pilar Mur Dueñas
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A Pragmatic Approach to the Contrastive Analysis of a Literary Work and Two of its Translations (note 1)

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Abstract

There are two levels at which a pragmatic analysis can be carried out in relation to a literary work: the level of the narrative and the level of the text-production and reception. If the pragmatic analysis of a literary work is to be undertaken from a contrastive point of view, the picture becomes more complex, especially, if as in this case- the original literary text and the target texts are historically distant. The pragmatic analysis of Henry James’s Daisy Miller and two of its contemporary translations into Spanish that I intend to pursue here will be carried out in a contrastive way at the level of the narrative; the translated pragmatic actions in the narrative will be assessed in terms of the target readers’ new context of reception. The aim is to see whether and
how the original writer’s intended meaning and interpretation has been kept in the target texts and if the pragmatic effect that these texts are likely to cause on the Spanish readership can be considered similar to the effect the source text is likely to provoke on contemporary source readers.

1. Introduction

Translating is to be considered an act of communication and, as such, it must be considered contextually dependent. The socio-cultural context in which the TT (target text) will be read must be continuously kept in mind during the translator’s decision-making process if the translator’s intention is to come out with a text that meets the conventions of the genre, matches the target readers’ expectations and produces a similar pragmatic effect on the readership to that it is likely to produce on SRs (source readers). When the text to be translated is a literary work remote in time, things get more complex for the translator because the greater the temporal and socio-cultural gap between source context and the context in which a new text emerges, the bigger the challenge the translator will have to face.

In this paper a contrastive analysis will be carried out of Henry James’s *Daisy Miller* and two of its contemporary translations into Spanish from a two-fold pragmatic perspective. First,
certain pragmatic issues such as illocutionary acts and implicatures that come along the characters’ interaction in the narrative will be analysed to see whether the pragmatic action (Hatim and Mason, 1990) that takes place between them in the original piece of work can be considered equivalent in the TTs. Second, it is my intention to evaluate the translators’ final choices regarding those pragmatic issues in view of the pragmatic action that takes place between the translator and the TRs (target readers) to assess whether a pragmatically equivalent effect is achieved in the TTs.

The two Spanish translations selected for the contrastive analysis are: (1) *Daisy Miller*, 1978 Ediciones Leartes, reprinted in 1985, and republished in 1997 in Ediciones del Bronce, which will be referred to as TTa and (2) *Daisy Miller*, 1998 Unidad Editorial, which will be referred to as TTb. In the case of the first translation where several editions exist, the 1997 text will be used for referential purposes.

When selecting the corpus I found two other Spanish translations of James’s work (note 2); since a contrastive analysis of all of them would have become an endless, cumbersome task, I decided to analyse the two translations that were further separated in time. I am aware of the fact that a twenty-year gap might not be sufficient to perceive striking differ-
ences regarding translation norms or procedures between the two languages, however, I thought the analysis would be more interesting, above all, taking into account the fact that they co-exist in time, since TTa was re-printed in 1997. In this sense the comparison is carried out along two of the three possible comparative study lines proposed by Peña (1997: 55) “a) entre las versiones de un mismo original separadas significativamente por el tiempo; b) entre las versiones contemporáneas y en competencia mutua [...] y c) entre las versiones a distintas lenguas”.

2. ‘Pragmatics in the text’ and ‘pragmatics of the text’

When dealing with the translation of a literary work, we need to take into account that “[...] there are four worlds: the world of the original fiction, the real world of the original text, the world of the target fiction and the real world of the target text” (Hickey, 2001: 53). The pragmatic analysis that is intended here will be based on “the world of the original fiction” as compared to “the world of the target fiction”, which will lead to some insights into how the text can be perceived in “the real word of the target text”. In other words, the pragmatic analysis will be carried out at the level of the characters’ verbal interaction (through which the writer’s intended meaning is conveyed), taking into account that the characters’ resulting
verbal interaction in the TT will inevitably affect the reception of the text by the TRs.

A distinction, then, can be made between what we could call ‘pragmatics in the text’ and ‘pragmatics of the text’, the two being mutually influenced. ‘Pragmatics in the text’ has to be understood as language in use at the level of the literary fiction; its analysis will, then, focus on how characters use language in their interaction with others. ‘Pragmatics of the text’, on the other hand, has to be understood as the communicative act that takes place between the translator -as the purveyor of the original writer’s intentions- and readers; its analysis will deal with how writers or translators encode meaning having in mind the potential readership of their work. A TT should ideally present pragmatically equivalent verbal interactions among characters so that the TR can get as close a reading of the text as that of the SR and, consequently, is able to grasp the original writer’s intended meaning.

Hess-Lüttich (1991) establishes a distinction which in many ways resembles the one presented above. He distinguishes between “literary communication” and “communication as a literary object”. Firstly, he defines “literary communication” as “the aesthetic representation of communication processes by literary authors” (1991: 226), a concept which can be consid-
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Mª Pilar Mur Dueñas

The pragmatics in Daisy Miller may help the readers and, hence, the translator -a privileged reader who is fully responsible for the target outcome-, to get a deeper understanding of the characters and the way they interact. The pragmatics of Daisy Miller might also facilitate the translator’s task along his/her decision-making process. Carbonell i Cortés (1998: 56) states the importance of such an awareness:

Ya que traducir es, ante todo, decir algo que otro ha dicho antes en otra lengua, y reproducir en este acto -en la medida de lo posible- la actividad comunicativa del original, puede comprenderse
In order to produce an adequate, appropriate and pleasurable TT, the translator needs to constantly bear in mind the socio-cultural context of that potential target readership throughout the translation process and to match it up against the original context of production and reception since -due to the temporal and socio-cultural distance between ST (source text) and the outcoming TT- those contexts will not coincide. It will be suggested here that some pragmatic notions and considerations about “literary communication” as well as about “communication as a literary object” may help translators to overcome the mediating temporal and socio-cultural gap and to come out with a TT that keeps the original writer’s intended meaning and that produces a similar pragmatic effect on TRs to that intended in the ST.

3. ‘Pragmatics in Daisy Miller’ and ‘pragmatics of Daisy Miller’

Although the analysis will be centred on two pragmatic aspects, namely, illocutionary acts and implicatures, other pragmatic aspects will be mentioned in passing when considered relevant for the comprehension and interpretation of the original text and the subsequent production of a successful trans-
lating option. The actual options taken by the translators will be assessed in the light of the pragmatic action taking place between them and the contemporary Spanish readership. The aim is to see whether and how the writer’s intended meaning and interpretation has been maintained in the TTs so that the pragmatic effect that the original is likely to cause on contemporary SRs can be considered equivalent in those TTs.

3.1. Illocutionary acts

As it happens in everyday conversation, the words uttered by characters in literary works might bring with them a particular intention or perform a particular illocutionary act (Austin 1962, Searle 1969). This conveyed intention also needs to be transferred into the TT in an attempt to achieve speech-act equivalence (note 3) so that the writer’s intentions are fully and faithfully passed on.

Hatim and Mason (1990) advocate that the translator needs to aim at achieving illocutionary structure equivalence in the TT. They claim that “[t]he interrelationship of speech acts within sequences leads to the notion of the illocutionary structure of a text [...]” and that “[i]n translating, one aims not at matching speech act for speech act but rather at achieving equivalence of illocutionary structure” (1990: 77). They, then, acknowledge
the importance of the co-text in interpreting and transferring the intentionality conveyed in the characters’ utterances.

In *Daisy Miller* speech acts might reveal much about single characters and the relationships held among them. Equivalent speech acts in the TT would faithfully reproduce those relationships, would ensure the texture of the text and the maintenance of the writer’s intended meaning.

Daisy Miller -a rather carefree American young girl visiting Europe in the company of her mother, her brother, and their courier- is rather rough in the ST when addressing her brother, Randolph, even in the presence of a stranger, Winterbourne, -Daisy’s counterpart, a ‘Europeanized’ American who, unlike Daisy, sticks to social conventions and manners. Such roughness can be interpreted as a cue of Daisy’s unconventionality and lack of composure, something that puzzles Winterbourne and scandalizes all other ‘Europeanized’ characters. As soon as Daisy catches sight of her brother, who is conversing with Winterbourne, she says:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST 1</th>
<th>‘Randolph’ said the young lady, ‘what are you doing?’ (51)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TTo 1</td>
<td>-Randolph -dijo la joven-, ¿qué estás haciendo? (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTo 1</td>
<td>-Randolph -dijo la joven dama-, ¿qué estás haciendo? (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TTa and TTb cannot be considered to perform the same speech act as the ST. While Daisy is brusquely scolding her brother in the ST (note the italics ‘are’ are not compensated for), in the Spanish translations she seems to be just requiring some information. So, it can be seen that the original intentionality of Daisy’s words has not been maintained in TTa or TTb. Daisy’s ST utterance can be considered a “face threatening act” (FTA) (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Daisy is not being cooperative in maintaining her brother’s face, which should have been expected, as Winterbourne -still a complete stranger for her- is with them. However, there are no signs of such lack of cooperation in the Spanish translations, in which the FTA does not ensue from the literal rendering of Daisy’s question. If Daisy had asked her brother ‘¿Se puede saber que estás haciendo?’, the FTA might have been kept and her words in Spanish might have conveyed a more similar intention to that conveyed by her utterance in the original text.

Those FTAs continue along the passage:

**ST 2** ‘Well, I guess you had better be quiet,’ she simply observed. (51)

**TTa 2** -Bueno, supongo que será mejor que te estés quieto. (14)

**TTb 2** -Bueno, supongo que sería mejor que te estuvieras callado. (8)
It can be observed that in both examples TTa and TTb translators have opted for a very literal translation of Daisy's words. However, the TTs cannot be considered to entail an equivalent pragmatic effect to that stemming from Daisy’s utterances in the ST. In the case of example 2, the Spanish renderings do not reflect the mandatory force of the original. In this respect, it can be said that the FTA is not so clearly retrievable in the TTs. A more pragmatically equivalent -and probably more natural- utterance would have been obtained, had the hedge ‘supongo que’ not been included. This can be explained taking into account the different ways in which politeness is encoded in both languages. Whereas English tends to employ more negative politeness strategies, Spanish does not require such smoothening strategies to commit a FTA (see for instance Hickey, 1991 and Vázquez, 1995). While in ST 3 Daisy reprimands her brother for doing something he should not have done, in TTa 3 and in TTb 3 it seems that she is just inquiring him about the pole.
It is believed that not preserving those threatening acts implies that Daisy’s flouting of the prevailing social norms at the time can hardly be inferred by TRs. As a result, the ‘illocutionary structure’ of this passage cannot be considered pragmatically equivalent in the translations under analysis.

When Daisy boldly asks Winterbourne to go out with her in a boat at night, her mother, -shocked- cannot but exclaim:

ST 4 ‘Well, Annie Miller!’ exclaimed her mother. (71)

And upon her daughter’s indecent insistence on her wish to meet Winterbourne that night, she exclaims again:

ST 5 ‘Well!’ ejaculated the elder lady again.

Hatim (2000: 16) addresses the problem of the unit size in analysing speech acts and he states that “a single act may be realized by less than a sentence (“yes” for agreement)”. In this case the sole word ‘Well!’ performs a speech act. Daisy’s mother exclamations are intended to dissuade her daughter from her scandalous idea or at least to show her disapproval of it. In both cases she is completely ignored by her daughter, which proves her inability to bring her up, as she is also unable to control her little son. It will be important to keep the illocutionary force of these two utterances in the TT, since it
contributes to the characterization of Daisy’s mother and to the understanding of the relationship between them.

TTa 4  -¡Bueno Annie Miller! -exclamó su madre. (45)
TTb 4  -¡Caramba Annie Miller! -exclamó su madre. (35)

TTa 5  -¡Bueno! -exclamó de nuevo la señora. (45)
TTb 5  -¡Caramba! -profirió de nuevo la dama mayor. (36)

The repetition is maintained in both texts but the pragmatic intention of Daisy’s mother’s utterances cannot be considered equivalent. In the case of TTb, her exclamation shows surprise rather than disapproval; she seems to imply that it is the first time her daughter acts in such a way. In the case of TTa her exclamation is a rather empty one, her dissatisfaction is not successfully communicated; the mother seems to be just interrupting Winterbourne’s and Daisy’s rather passionate conversation. The two exclamations chosen in the Spanish translations do not perform an equivalent speech act to that encoded in Daisy’s mother’s utterance, i.e. trying to discourage Daisy from her late night-project; the mother’s attempt to keep the situation under control cannot be retrieved in the Spanish translations. Other interjections such as ‘¡Pero bueno!’ or ‘¡¿Cómo?!’ might be considered more pragmatically successful options.
It can be concluded that in most cases, a “residual” approach (note 4) to translation will suffice to achieve equivalent TT speech acts; that is, in most cases, when translating literally the locution of a speech act, its intentionality ensues. In some other cases, however, the intention lying behind some of the characters’ utterances of is not so easily workable and/or transferable. “When dealing with utterances whose illocutionary force is rather indeterminate, the translator has to infer the implicit intentionality which underlies the use of that particular utterance in the context of the ST” (Pérez González and Sánchez Macarro, 2000: 35). The translator, then, needs to pay special attention in order to grasp the full communicative force of the utterance and to try to create an equivalent speech act in the TT, thus, rendering a faithful portrayal of the characters and their interpersonal relations, enabling the transference of the writer’s intended meaning and ensuring a pragmatic equivalent effect for TRs.

3.2. Implicatures

“Implicatures are unstated propositions which lurk between the lines of discourse” (Hatim, 1997: 117). It will be particularly important in the transference of implicatures into a TL (target language) to bear in mind the fact that “what is inferable or situationally evoked for a ST reader may not be so for
a TT reader. Operating in different cognitive environments, ST and TT readers are not equally equipped for the task of inferencing” (Hatim and Mason, 1990: 93).

Implicatures arise from the flouting of one or several Gricean maxims, which contribute to a cooperative communicative act. However, when maxims are flouted, the interaction among participants can be maintained provided these can be worked out by the participants (Grice, 1975). When translating a dialogue between characters, then, translators have to make sure that the implicatures can also be worked out by the TRs. Otherwise, that interaction might not make sense for the new readership.

Winterbourne and his aunt, Mrs Costello, are conversing about Winterbourne’s lately pensiveness, which -according to his aunt- is due to his constant thinking:

**ST 6** ‘Of that young lady’s, Miss Baker’s, Miss Chandler’s - what’s her name?- Miss Miller’s intrigue with that little barber’s block.’ (103)

**TTa 6** -En esa chica, Miss Baker, o Miss Chandler... ¿cómo se llama? Miss Miller y su intriga con ese aprendiz de barbero. (93)

**TTb 6** -De algo en relación a esa joven dama, sobre la intriga de la señorita Baker, Chandler...¿cómo se llama?, de la señorita Miller y ese aprendiz de barbero. (77)
Daisy’s surname, Miller, hints at her father’s trade and symbolizes how he made his fortune. Mrs Costello disapproves of *nouveau riches* such as Daisy’s family, which can be inferred from the above ironical statement. Neither in TTa nor in TTb can this implicature be worked out, since the names have been left in English and no explanation has been provided. The Spanish readers will probably not know the meaning of the words ‘Baker’, ‘Chandler’ or ‘Miller’, therefore, they will hardly be able to infer Mrs Costello’s critique of Daisy’s family. As Baker (1992: 229) puts it: “[i]f we do not understand the meanings of the words and structures used in a text, we cannot work out its implied meanings”.

It is worth noting that this implicature is explicitly commented upon in the following ST note: “Mrs Costello probably remembers Daisy’s surname perfectly well; she is deliberately sneering at her social origins” (124). Although that implicit information could be easily inferred by a contemporary English reader, some explicitation has been judged convenient in the British edition. No such explicitation, however, appears in the translations under analysis, even though a Spanish reader would have been more likely to require it.

Mrs Costello flouts the Gricean maxim of Quantity and Manner in her utterance. However, the conversation with her nephew
has not failed because he has inferred the implied judgment made by his aunt, although he has preferred not to comment on it. In the Spanish translations -even though the implicature is doubtfully workable- the interaction between both characters can be followed since the implicature does not affect the flow of their conversation.

By using the expression a ‘barber’s block’ (a stand on which wigs are shown), Mrs Costello is implying that Giovanelli, Daisy’s gallant during her stay in Rome, “is just a handsome face” as the ST note explains (124). The Spanish translators have not appropriately interpreted Mrs Costello second part of her utterance, giving way to a mistranslation. The original implicature can no longer be worked out and, in turn, a feature is attached to this character which did not appear in the original. A “communicative clue” (note 5) is included that was not found in the original, thus, leading the TRs to an interpretation not intended in the original (Gutt, 2000b). Translators have to be particularly attentive when dealing with implicatures since “s/he may even inadvertently give rise to other interpretations which are not derivable from the original text” (Baker, 1992: 228) -as this example shows.

Not only is it impossible to have access in the TTs to some meaningful features about the characters through Mrs Cos-
tello’s comment, but also her wittiness and meanness are not retrievable for the TTs readers.

Towards the end of the short story Winterbourne interrupts Daisy and Giovanelli’s imprudent and doom-laden visit to the Colosseum by moonlight. Upon Daisy’s enquiry on his thought about her possible engagement to Giovanelli, Winterbourne resentfully answers her:

**ST 7** ‘I believe it makes very little difference whether you are engaged or not.’ (113)

To which Daisy answers:

**ST 8** ‘I don’t care,’ said Daisy, in a little strange tone, ‘whether I have Roman fever or not!’ (113)

Her words in the ST echo those of Winterbourne. This parallelism allows the SR to infer Daisy’s implicit statement (i.e. now that you, Winterbourne, no longer care about me, it is the same for me to live or die). It can be inferred from this statement that what causes Daisy’s death is not only her disease but also, and most significantly, Winterbourne’s ultimate lack of interest in her. This meaningful parallelism has not been maintained in TTa or Ttb:

**TTa 7** -No creo que el que esté usted prometida o no sea muy importante. (108)
On the contrary, the translators appear to have purposefully sought two different formulations of the binary oppositions. As a result, Daisy’s implied meaning cannot be so easily grasped neither by Winterbourne nor by the TT readers, which brings about further consequences for the overall interpretation of the story.

During their first encounter, Daisy and Winterbourne refer to the Château de Chillon in different terms:

- ST 9 ‘[…] he says he doesn’t think much of old castles. […] ‘Your brother is not interested in ancient monuments?’ Winterbourne inquired, smiling. (58)
  ‘He says he don’t care much about old castles. […] (59)

Whereas Winterbourne describes the castle as ‘an ancient monument’, Daisy describes it as ‘old’, which denotes her lack of knowledge and culture; an argument which is later on used by Winterbourne to defend the vulgarity and innocence his aunt accuses Daisy of. Such an implicature can solely be
triggered by the TT readers if such a distinction in the use of adjectives is retained, which only happens in Ttb:

\textbf{TTa 9}  
-[…] dice que los castillos antiguos no le dicen nada. […]
-¿A su hermano no le interesan los monumentos antiguos? -inquirió Winterbourne sonriendo.
-Dice que los viejos castillos no le interesan. […] (25)

\textbf{TTb 9}  
-[…] Dice que los viejos castillos son cosas sin importancia […]
-¿No le interesan los monumentos antiguos a su hermano? -preguntó Winterbourne, con una sonrisa.
-Dice que los viejos castillos no le atraen. […] (18)

As Daisy is walking around The Pincian Gardens accompanied by two men, Winterbourne and Giovanelli, Mrs Walker —an acquaintance of both Winterbourne and Daisy— appears in search of Daisy in the belief that she is acting in a completely indecorous way. Upon this Winterbourne makes the following remark:

\textbf{ST 10}  
‘I think it’s a pity to make too much fuss about it.’ (90)

To which Mrs Walker angrily replies:

\textbf{ST 11}  
‘It’s a pity to let the girl ruin herself!’ (91)

Mrs Walker repetition of Winterbourne’s words show her disapproval not only of what Daisy is doing but also of what he is
doing and about his lack of concern about social conventions. However, the two translations into Spanish -almost identical-have not kept this parallelism, thus, Mrs Walker’s implicit assessment of Winterbourne’s acts and attitude cannot be so easily recoverable:

TTa 10 - Creo que no vale la pena darle tanta importancia al asunto. (75)
TTa 11 - ¡Es una lástima dejar que esa muchacha se pierda! (75)
TTb 10 - Creo que no vale la pena darle tanta importancia al asunto. (61)
TTb 11 - ¡Es una lástima dejar que esa muchacha se arruine! (61)

It appears that both translators have tried again to avoid repetition by turning to two different expressions in Spanish, which proves to be unsuccessful here since Mrs Walker implicature is less likely elicited by the TT readers.

The examples above show that “literary communication” implicatures deserve careful treatment in translation since they might become indecipherable for a TR, go unnoticed for the translator or be wrongly interpreted, bringing about unintended interpretations in the TT. The harshness with which Daisy addresses her brother, Mrs Miller’s interjections, Mrs Cos-
tello’s apparent “forgetfulness” of Daisy’s surname and her characterization of Giovanelly, the parallelism of Daisy’s and Mrs Costello’s retorts with Winterbourne’s statement can be considered “communicative clues” for the interpretation of the original as intended by Henry James. As has been shown, the Spanish translators have not successfully transferred those communicative clues as the inferences that can be drawn by the SRs from them cannot be considered equivalent to those that will possibly be drawn by the TRs of both translations. Therefore, the latter cannot be considered to be appropriately guided to the intended interpretation of the original.

For a successful translation of implicatures the translator ought to carefully read the text in search of unstated propositional meanings or “incidentaly-transferred information” (Gutt, 2000b: 152)] and to constantly match the ST readers’ against the TT readers’ contextual backgrounds and inferencing capacities because “the message may run the risk of not being understood, much less enjoyed, if it is a literary text, when a great number of presuppositions and implications conveyed in the passage are lost or misinterpreted” (Alcaraz, 1996: 109).

4. Concluding remarks

It has been my intention in this paper to show that a pragmatic analysis in the ST is necessary to get a thorough understand-
ing of it and that bearing in mind the potential TRs and their socio-cultural context is essential to produce a TT that keeps the writer’s intended meaning and allows TRs to grasp the intended interpretation. Even though the analysis has revolved around the translation of the characters’ illocutionary acts and implicatures, other pragmatic notions such as face threatening acts, linguistic politeness and Gricean maxims have entered the discussion when considered relevant. Some significant examples of ST indirect speech acts and implicatures have been included and compared to their TT renderings. It has been shown that in most cases neither TTa nor TTb offer successful solutions to these complex questions. They cannot be considered to purvey equivalent verbal interactions among the characters of the story and consequently TRs can hardly retrieve the writer’s intended meaning and interpretation. A more careful pragmatic interpretation of the original text together with a constant awareness of the likely readership of the translation in Spanish, its socio-cultural context and its inference capacity may have led to more appropriate solutions, giving way to a more equivalent TT that would allow the preservation of possible responses on the part of the target readers, thus, not limiting their dynamic role (Hatim and Mason, 1990: 11).
It is suggested here that a close study of the pragmatics in the ST would allow the translator to discern certain writer’s intended meanings and interpretations. This, combined with a close study of the pragmatics of the TT, would ensure more accurate decisions on the part of the translator.

Works Cited


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A Pragmatic Approach to the Contrastive Analysis of a Literary Work and Two of its Translations
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3. Speech-act equivalence can be said to have been achieved when the target text says, does and achieves approximately the same as the source text did (Hickey, 2001: 50).

4. “‘Residual’ translation is straightforward, simple, even simplistic, locution-centred translation, which is usually effective when the locution of the source text is capable of carrying with it the illocution and the perlocution just as soon as the locution is translated” (Hickey, 2001: 56).

5. “‘[C]ommunicative clues’ are abstractions from the actual linguistic properties of the text and may need to be provided by very different linguistic means in the receptor language. ‘Communicative clues’ can be identified only by reference to the role they play in guiding the audience towards the intended interpretation, not by straightforward structural or text-linguistic comparisons” (Gutt, 2000a: 169-170).