*Appendix A: A closer look at Chapter 18*

Section 4.1.2 showed that there were 4 sentences in particular in Chapter 18 that were difficult for the students and led to high average error points (S26 → 5.50; S27 → 14.64; S30 → 10.18; S33 → 5.09)[[1]](#footnote-0) even if students reported on being fast and easy to process.

There were 15 units of creative potential in Chapter 18: 5 cases of unusual punctuation, 4 expressions very specific to a linguistic variant (in this case, British English), 3 proper names, 1 treatment issue (formal, informal), 1 cultural / historical reference, 1 instance of colloquial language, 1 instance of lexical variety, and 1 idiomatic phrase.

Four cases of unusual punctuation were related to the absence of quotation marks for direct speech. Two students (T3, T4) added these quotation marks throughout the passage both before and after training, while one student (T10) added them only after training. Yet these changes were marked as unnecessary (overediting) by the reviewer, since their absence is part of Hemingway’s style. More students were in doubt whether to add a comma after the interjection “Oh” in sentence 26 (which had a high error point). Some students added a comma before training but removed it after training (T2, T9), while others added it both before and after (T1, T3, T4, T6). However, only two students correctly adjusted the spelling of the interjection to Dutch ‘*O*’ (T2, T3), with all of the other students opting for Reproduction > Retention of the English form ‘Oh’, resulting in a spelling error. Moreover, all of the students have a translation error for the UCP ‘how do you do’ (Treatment) in this sentence, retaining the MT output ‘*hoe maakt u het*’ [how are you] (occasionally changed to ‘*hoe gaat het*’ [how are you doing]) instead of producing the correct ‘*prettige kennismaking*’ [nice to meet you] (Modification > Situational).

Interestingly, there is one actual punctuation error in sentence 33 (also with a high error point), where DeepL has removed the exclamation mark. Here, three students changed the period into an exclamation mark only before training (T1, T9, T10), two only after training (T5, T8), and one both before and after training (T3). Yet the main cause of the large number of errors for this sentence is the translation of “in this sort of an affair.” The Direct Translations of lexical variety “had shot a few men” (“*er een paar had neergeschoten*”) and idiomatic phrase “things might have been altogether different” (“*was het misschien heel anders gelopen*”) generated by DeepL work rather well and do not cause difficulties for the students, while retaining DeepL’s translation of linguistic variant “this sort of affair” > “*in zo’n zaak*” (Abstraction > Superordinate term) was marked as an error by the reviewer because its meaning is too vague and should be changed into “*In zulke omstandigheden*” [under such circumstances].

The main difficulty for sentences 27 and 30 also lay primarily in the UCPs having to do with idiomaticity and regional variation, especially in understanding the context and underlying message these typically British expressions convey as part of Hemingway’s tongue-in-cheek style. A number of additional very frequent errors in these sentences can be related to the students’ lack of understanding the scene being described. For instance, in sentence 30, the part that led to most errors is the translation of “very good man”, which the students all misinterpreted as the king saying that this man is good rather than evil despite having shot people, while the expression “good man” is a typically British way of saying you like someone because they do what they are told and their world view aligns with yours. The students therefore all opted to retain “goed man”, while the translation should be “*geschikte kerel/vent*” [decent bloke/fellow].

This seemingly simple phrase created additional problems, as some students unnecessarily changed “goed” into “goede”, and many incorrectly adjusted “heel” into “hele” (“*heel*” is an intensifier meaning ‘very’, while “*hele*” here means ‘whole rather than half’). Similarly, the phrase “the king ordered whiskey and soda” in sentence 27 led to a high number of errors because none of the students realised that if this is a king under house arrest in his own palace, then “ordered” cannot be translated as “*bestellen*”, which you can only do in a bar or restaurant, but should be changed into “liet…komen” [let … come = had someone bring]. In addition, many apparently did not recognize whiskey and soda as a drink, with some incorrectly changing “soda” into “*frisdrank*” [soft drink]. The humour resulting from the way the entire scene is described – there's a war but at least we have whiskey so let's talk about this good man shooting a few chaps but being frightfully difficult – and saying that it was all very “jolly” appears to have been lost entirely in the translation “*Het was erg gezellig*”, which is not technically incorrect but reads as an honest assessment rather than a tongue-in-cheek sneer. However, to recreate such cultural associations and humour is notoriously difficult in any case and requires levels of confidence and creativity that may be outside the scope of post-editing, where students stay as close to the output as possible most of the time and even the “liberties” they take are quite predictable and constrained.

1. S26. Oh how do you do, she said. S27. We sat down at a table under a big tree and the king ordered whiskey and soda. S30. Plastiras is a very good man I believe, he said, but frightfully difficult. S33. Of course the great thing in this sort of an affair is not to be shot oneself! [↑](#footnote-ref-0)