

# Morphology in the Age of Pre-trained Language Models

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My story

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1. Part I. deals with deep learning for morphology (2018–2020)



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  - ▶ subword models started to get popular in machine translation then in language modeling
  - ▶ so I shifted towards modeling and evaluation
1. Part I. deals with deep learning for morphology (2018–2020)
  2. Part II. is about evaluating language models with special focus on morphosyntax (2019–2024)

# Outline

Encoder-decoder models for morphology

Neural pattern matching

Morphosyntactic probing of PLMs

- Subword pooling

- Morphology in PLMs

- Ablations

Language-specific models

- Hungarian

- Uralic languages

Perturbations and Shapley values

- Shapley values

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# Part I.

## Deep Learning for Morphology

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# Encoder-decoder models for morphology

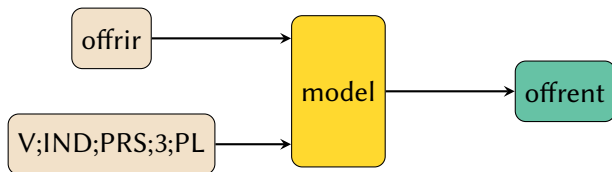
# Encoder-decoder models for morphology

## Thesis 1

*Encoder-decoder (a.k.a. sequence-to-sequence or seq2seq) models are well-suited for morphological inflection and generation. This holds for type-level and sentence-level tasks in multiple languages.*

These contributions were published in Ács (2018).

# Morphological inflection



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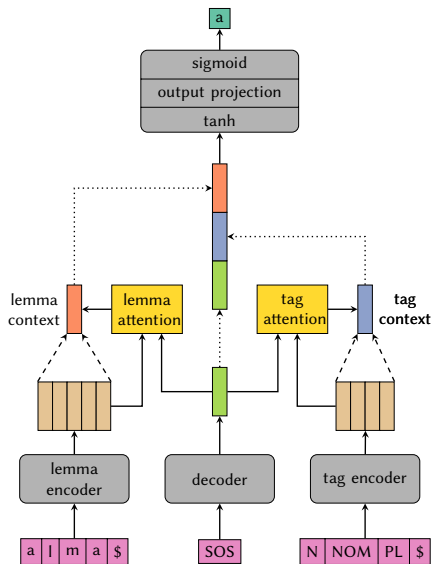
release	V;V.PTCP;PRS	releasing
deodourize	V;NFIN	deodourize
outdance	V;V.PTCP;PRS	outdancing
misrepute	V;NFIN	misrepute
vanquish	V;PST	vanquished
resterilize	V;3;SG;PRS	resterilizes

---

- ▶ yearly competition computational morphology
- ▶ 2 tasks in 2018:
  1. Task 1: Type-level inflection
    - ▶ 110 languages
    - ▶ high (10,000), medium (1,000), low (100) data sizes
    - ▶ source: Wiktionary inflection tables
    - ▶ UniMorph schema (Kirov et al., 2018)
  2. Task 2: Inflection in context
    - ▶ 7 languages
- ▶ I participated as an individual team
- ▶ 3rd place in Task 1, 2nd place in Task 2

# SIGMORPHON 2018 Shared tasks

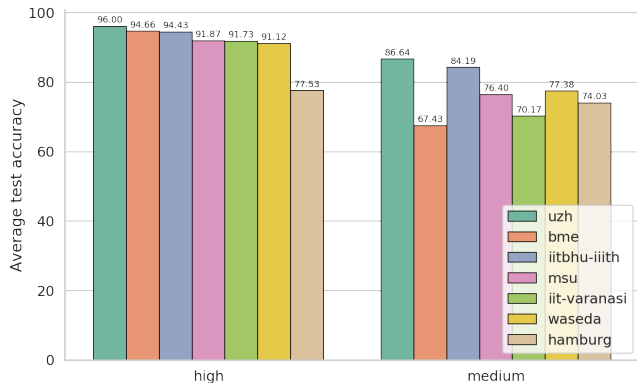
## My model for Task 1: Type-level inflection





# SIGMORPHON 2018 Shared tasks

## Task 1 results



Our team in orange (bme).

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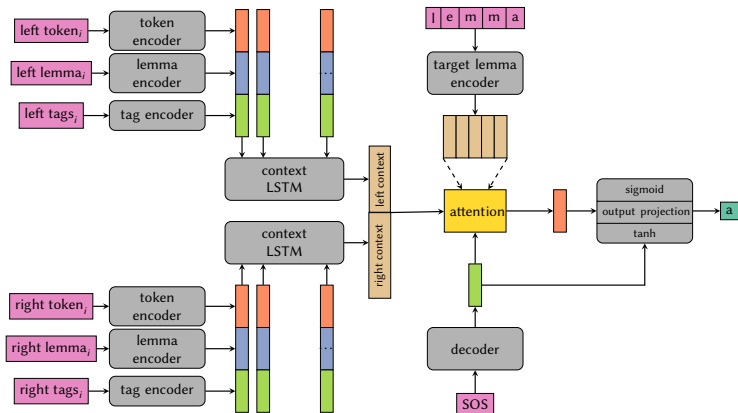
# SIGMORPHON 2018 Shared tasks

## Task 2: Inflection in context

Les	le	DET;DEF;FEM;PL
compagnies	compagnie	N;FEM;PL
aériennes	aérien	ADJ;FEM;PL
à	à	ADP
bas	bas	ADJ;MASC;SG
coût	coût	N;MASC;SG
ne	ne	ADV;NEG
	connaître	–
pas	pas	ADV;NEG
la	le	DET;DEF;FEM;SG
crise	crise	N;FEM;SG

Track 2: no lemmas or tags

# Inflection in context model



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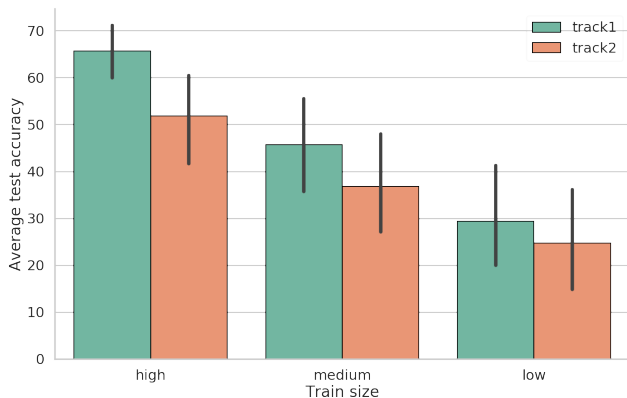
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# Task 2 results



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# Neural pattern matching

# Differentiable neural pattern matching for morphology

Thesis 2

*Differentiable neural pattern matching can extract morphosyntactic patterns in multiple languages when used as an encoder for morphological inflection and analysis.*

Ács and Kornai (2020) was awarded the best paper award at the Hungarian Computational Linguistics Conference in 2020.

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# Neural pattern matching

## Overview

- ▶ Schwartz et al. (2018) introduced SoPa or Soft Patterns, a differentiable pattern learner
- ▶ restricted to fixed length linear patterns with epsilon transitions and self-loops
- ▶ fully differentiable and end-to-end trainable
- ▶ they used it for sequence classification in English, token based

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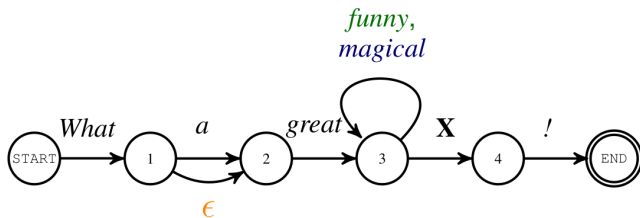
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# Neural pattern matching

## My additions

- ▶ I reimplemented it as an encoder of an encoder-decoder model
- ▶ the decoder is an LSTM initialized with the final state of the SoPa encoder
- ▶ applied it at the character level
- ▶ each pattern matches a character span or subword



# Neural pattern matching

## Tasks

Language	Task	Source	Target
Hungarian	analysis	vásároljanak	V SBJV PRS INDF 3 PL
Hungarian	analysis	lepkékben	N IN+ESS PL
English	analysis	hugging	V V.PTCP PRS
French	analysis	désinstallez	V COND 2 PL
Hungarian	lemmatization	vásároljanak	vásárol
Hungarian	lemmatization	lepkékben	lepke
English	lemmatization	hugging	hug
French	lemmatization	désinstallez	désinstalle
Hungarian	copy	vásároljanak	vásároljanak
Hungarian	copy	lepkékben	lepkékben
English	copy	hugging	hugging
French	copy	désinstallez	désinstallez

The source is the same in all three tasks.

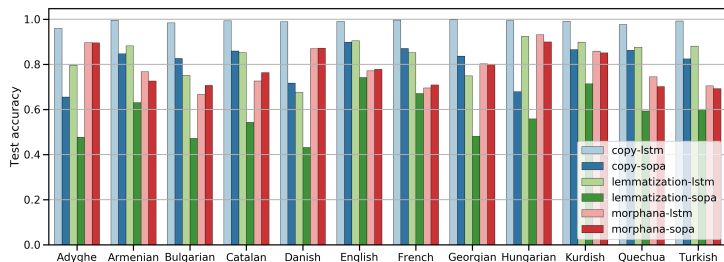
# Neural pattern matching

## Experimental setup

- ▶ 120 patterns: 40 3-long, 40 4-long, 40 5-long
- ▶ 12 typologically diverse languages
- ▶ 10,000 train, 2,000 dev, 2,000 test word types
- ▶ baseline: both the encoder and the decoder are LSTMs with attention
- ▶ SoPa seq2seq: SoPa encoder, LSTM decoder with attention on intermediate SoPa outputs

# Neural pattern matching

## Results



- ▶ the baseline is always better
- ▶ SoPa is not good at copying and lemmatization
- ▶ noticeably better at morphological analysis

# Neural pattern matching

## Model similarity

- ▶ We define a similarity metric between two SoPa seq2seq models ( $M_1$  and  $M_2$ ) that work on the same input
- ▶ take the highest scoring  $T$  patterns for each input and compare the subwords
- ▶ for each pattern by  $M_1$ , find the most similar pattern in  $M_2$
- ▶ average it over a dataset

$$\text{Sim}(M_1, M_2, D) = \frac{1}{|D|} \sum_{d \in D} S(M_1(d), M_2(d))$$

$$S(M_1(d), M_2(d)) = \frac{1}{2T} \left( \sum_{p_i \in P_1} \max_{p_j \in P_2} J(p_i, p_j) + \sum_{p_j \in P_2} \max_{p_i \in P_1} J(p_i, p_j) \right)$$

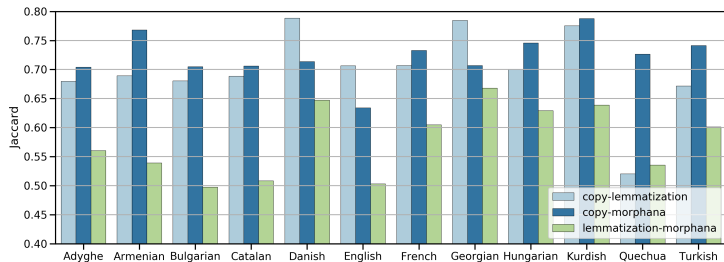
# Neural pattern matching

## Model similarity example

	<sup>a</sup> ablakban\$	<sup>l</sup> ablakban\$	<sup>b</sup> ablakban\$	<sup>k</sup> ablakban\$	Max
<sup>a</sup> ablakban\$	0	0.2	1	0.75	1
<sup>l</sup> ablakban\$	0	0.5	0.5	0.75	0.75
<sup>b</sup> ablakban\$	0	0.5	0	0.167	0.5
<sup>k</sup> ablakban\$	0	0.75	0.167	0.33	0.75
Max	0	0.75	1	0.75	<b>0.685</b>

# Neural pattern matching

## Similarity results



## Part II.

# Evaluating Pre-trained Language Models

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# Morphosyntactic probing of PLMs



# Morphosyntactic probing of PLMs

## Thesis 3

*Pre-trained language models (PLMs) trained on unannotated text learn morphology. PLMs' representations retain morphosyntactic information across a large set of typologically diverse languages and multiple tasks. This information can be recovered via probing or diagnostic classifiers.*

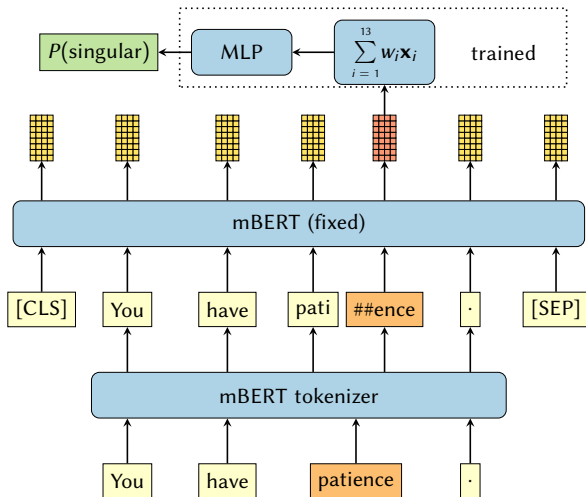
These contributions were published in (Ács, 2019; Ács et al., 2021; Acs et al., 2023).

# Morphosyntactic probing of PLMs

## Background

- ▶ Pre-trained Language Models or PLMs are probabilistic models of natural (written) language
- ▶ pre-trained on large unannotated text
- ▶ we mainly deal with masked language models
- ▶ contextual models
  - ▶ sentence representation (or longer)
  - ▶ word representation depends on the context
- ▶ BERT model family
- ▶ English and multilingual, later many language and domain specific
- ▶ evaluation by probing
  - ▶ take a set of annotated text
  - ▶ train a small classifier on top of the PLM's representation
  - ▶ if it performs well, the information is available in the model

# Probing architecture



# Morphosyntactic probing of PLMs

## Universal Dependencies

Form	UPOS	Morphological features
The	DET	Definite=Def PronType=Art
third	ADJ	Degree=Pos NumType=Ord
was	AUX	Number=Sing Person=3 Tense=Past VerbForm=Fin
being	AUX	VerbForm=Ger
run	VERB	Tense=Past VerbForm=Part Voice=Pass
by	ADP	–
the	DET	Definite=Def PronType=Art
head	NOUN	Number=Sing
of	ADP	–
an	DET	Definite=Ind PronType=Art
investment	NOUN	Number=Sing
firm	NOUN	Number=Sing
.	PUNCT	–

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# Morphosyntactic probing dataset

## Languages

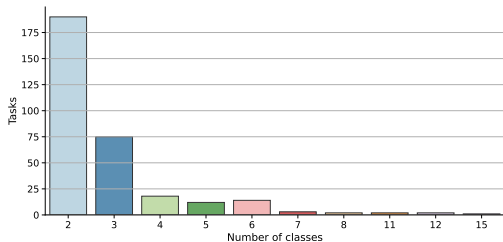
- ▶ UD: 122 languages
- ▶ mBERT: 104 languages
- ▶ XLM-RoBERTa: 100 languages
- ▶ intersection of these 3: 55 languages
- ▶ not enough morphosyntactic data: Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese
- ▶ different tagging schema: Korean
- ▶ insufficient data in some languages
- ▶ external treebank for Albanian, silver data for Hungarian
- ▶ 42 languages

# Morphosyntactic probing dataset

## Tags and POS

- ▶ UD has over 130 different morphosyntactic tags
- ▶ most are only used for one or a few languages
- ▶ we pick 4 common tags: **case, gender, number, tense**
- ▶ 4 open POS classes: **adj, noun, propn, verb**
- ▶ 14 combinations are available
  - ▶ ⟨NOUN, Tense⟩ and ⟨PROPN, Tense⟩ are linguistically implausible
  - ▶ ⟨ADJ, Tense⟩ only in Estonian
- ▶ most common tasks are ⟨NOUN, Number⟩ (37 languages), ⟨NOUN, Gender⟩ (32) and ⟨VERB, Number⟩ (27)

# Class number distribution

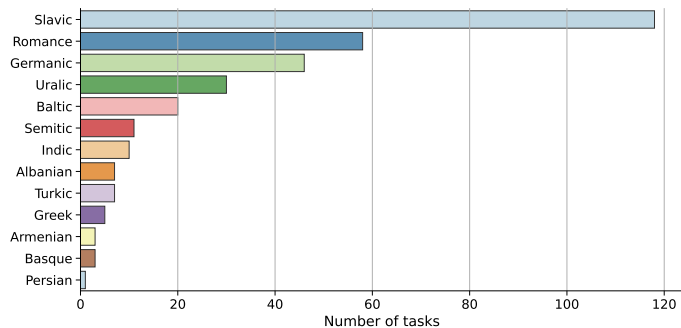


## Most classes:

- ▶ ⟨Hungarian, NOUN, Case⟩: 18
- ▶ ⟨Estonian, NOUN, Case⟩: 15
- ▶ ⟨Finnish, NOUN, Case⟩: 12<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ ⟨Finnish, VERB, Case⟩: 12

<sup>1</sup>Infrequent classes were omitted.

# Probing tasks by language family



Number of morphological probing tasks by language family.

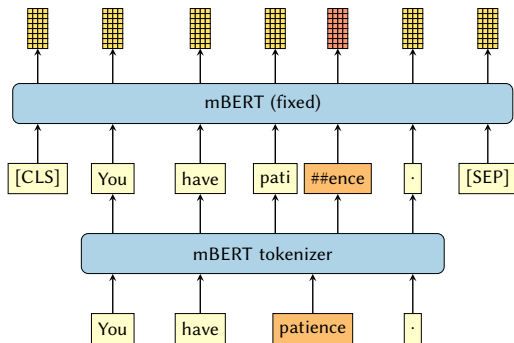


# Probing dataset statistics

- ▶ 247 tasks
- ▶ 42 languages
- ▶ 10 language families (Indo-European subfamilies)
- ▶ 4 POS, 4 tags, 14 POS-tag combinations
- ▶ 2,000 train, 200 validation and 200 test samples
- ▶ sentence length between 3 and 40 tokens, average 20.5

# Subword pooling

## Subword tokenization



- ▶ PLMs use subword tokenizers
- ▶ one token corresponds to multiple subwords, which one should we use?
- ▶ question for tagging problems too: POS and NER

# Subword pooling

What do tokenizers do?

	mBERT		XLM-RoBERTa		
	count	2+	count	2+	_start
Arabic	1.95	48.9	1.49	35.0	3.4
Chinese	1.58	53.5	2.13	88.5	86.6
Czech	2.04	53.0	1.7	45.2	1.6
English	1.25	14.3	1.25	16.9	0.8
Finnish	2.32	67.3	1.86	53.0	2.3
French	1.34	22.4	1.41	28.7	2.1
German	1.64	30.6	1.57	29.7	1.3
Japanese	1.6	43.0	2.25	94.6	92.9
Korean	2.44	75.7	2.16	67.3	9.0

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# Subword pooling

## Experimental setup

- ▶ 9 typologically diverse languages
- ▶ 3 tasks: morphosyntactic probing, POS, NER
- ▶ 9 subword pooling methods
- ▶ mBERT and XLM-RoBERTa
- ▶ feature extraction, no fine-tuning

Method	Explanation
FIRST	first subword unit
LAST	last subword unit
LAST2	concatenation of the last two subword units
F+L	$wu_{\text{first}} + (1 - w)u_{\text{last}}$
SUM	elementwise sum
MAX	elementwise max
AVG	elementwise average
ATTN	Attention over the subwords, weights generated by an MLP
LSTM	biLSTM reads all vectors, final hidden state

# Subword pooling

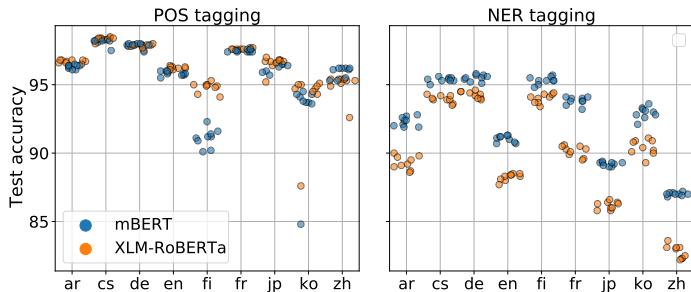
## Main results

- ▶ Morphology
  - ▶ ATTN is the best pooling strategy but its advantage over LAST is small and often not significant
  - ▶ FIRST is the worst

# Subword pooling

## Main results

- ▶ Morphology
  - ▶ ATTN is the best pooling strategy but its advantage over LAST is small and often not significant
  - ▶ FIRST is the worst
- ▶ POS and NER
  - ▶ depends on the language
  - ▶ we recommend trying a simple strategy (LAST) and a parametric one (ATTN or LSTM)



# Subword pooling

## Conclusion

- ▶ most common: use first/last, max pooling
- ▶ the differences are very small
- ▶ last is usually better than first
- ▶ we pick either the first or the last based on the development data in all following experiments
  - ▶ last is better in over 90% of the tasks

# Morphology in PLMs

## Overview

- ▶ Do PLMs learn morphology?
- ▶ We use our 247 probing tasks
- ▶ We compare it against various baselines
- ▶ Extensive ablations

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# Morphology in PLMs

## Models and baselines

**main focus:** mBERT and XLM-RoBERTa

**other multilingual PLMs:** XLM-Large, XLM-MLM-100, distilmBERT, mT5

**main baseline:** character LSTM (chLSTM) over full sentence, not pre-trained

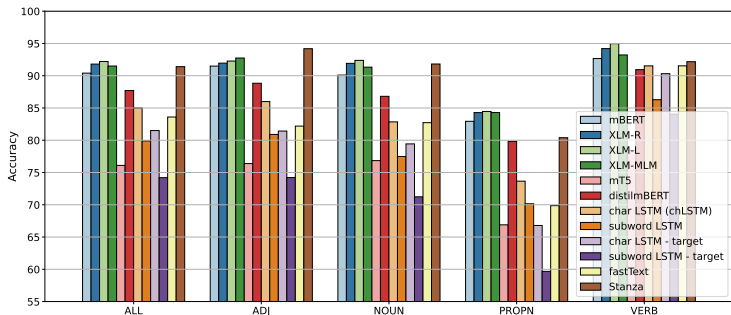
**other baselines:** subword LSTM on sentence, char LSTM and subword LSTM on target word only

**fastText:** language-specific bag-of-ngrams word vectors

**Stanza:** linguistic analysis toolkit for 70+ languages trained on UD

# Morphology in PLMs

## General results

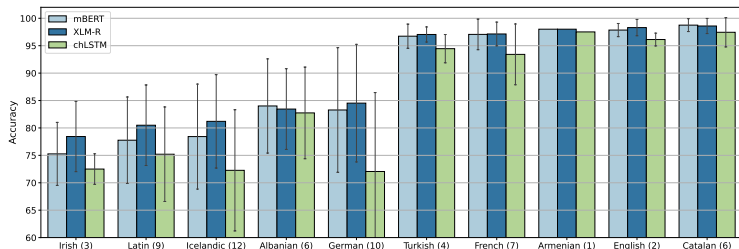


Accuracy of the pre-trained and the baseline models grouped by POS.

- ▶ XLM-RoBERTa is slightly better than mBERT, larger models are even better
- ▶ chLSTM is the best baseline, it's closest in verbal tasks

# Morphology in PLMs

## Easiest and hardest languages

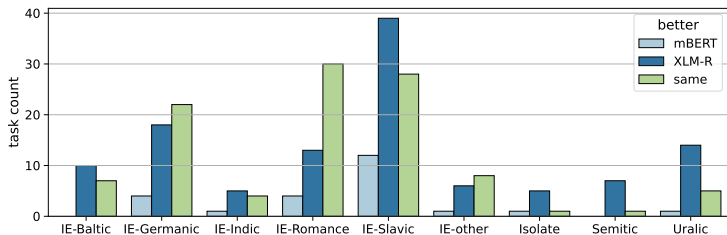


The best and the worst 5 languages by the average performance of mBERT and XLM-RoBERTa. The number of tasks in a particular language is listed in parentheses.

# Morphology in PLMs

## Model comparison

Which model is better<sup>2</sup> at how many tasks?



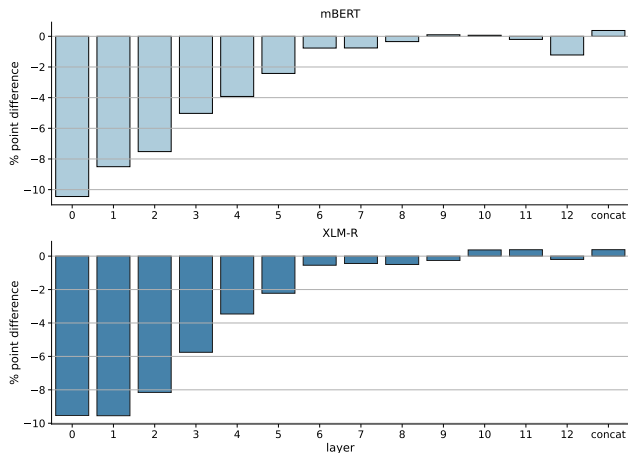
mBERT XLM-RoBERTa comparison by language family.

<sup>2</sup>Independent  $t$ -test over 10 runs.

- ▶ Probing has its fair share of criticism (Belinkov, 2021; Ravichander et al., 2021)
- ▶ We run various ablations to address them
- ▶ We find that:
  1. the choice of probe (linear, MLP, 2 layers) doesn't matter
  2. probing individual layers is no better or worse than probing the weighted sum of all layers
  3. fine-tuning is actually harmful (and wasteful)
  4. randomly initialized models (Voita and Titov, 2020) are much worse

# Ablations

## Pooling individual layers



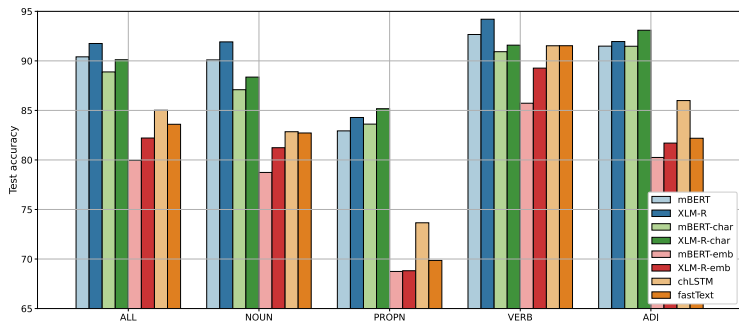
The difference between probing a single layer and probing the weighted sum of layers. *concat* is the concatenation of all layers. 0 is the embedding layer.

# Ablations

## Model ablations

**mBERT-char:** use character tokenization instead of subword tokenization

**mBERT-emb:** probe the embedding layer instead of the weighted sum of all layers



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# Language-specific models



# Language-specific models

## Thesis 4

*Monolingual PLMs are better in their respective languages than multilingual PLMs but the difference is small and often not statistically significant. Moreover both monolingual and multilingual PLMs can be successfully transferred to new languages as long as the new language uses the same writing system.*

These contributions were published in (Ács et al., 2021b) and (Ács et al., 2021a).

# Models for Hungarian

## Morphosyntactic evaluation tasks

<b>Morph tag</b>	<b>POS</b>	<b>#classes</b>	<b>Values</b>
Case	noun	18	Abl, Acc, ..., Ter, Tra
Degree	adj	3	Cmp, Pos, Sup
Mood	verb	4	Cnd, Imp, Ind, Pot
Number[psor]	noun	2	Sing, Plur
Number	adj	2	Sing, Plur
Number	noun	2	Sing, Plur
Number	verb	2	Sing, Plur
Person[psor]	noun	3	1, 2, 3
Person	verb	3	1, 2, 3
Tense	verb	2	Pres, Past
VerbForm	verb	2	Inf, Fin

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# Models for Hungarian

## Sequence tagging tasks

### Part-of-speech tagging

1. Szeged UD Treebank (Farkas et al., 2012)
  - ▶ gold standard automatically converted to UD
  - ▶ 910/441/449 sentences
2. Webcorpus 2 subsample
  - ▶ tagged with emtsv (Indig et al., 2019)
  - ▶ 10,000/2,000/2,000 sentences

### Named entity recognition

1. Szeged NER corpus
  - ▶ 8172/503/900 sentences

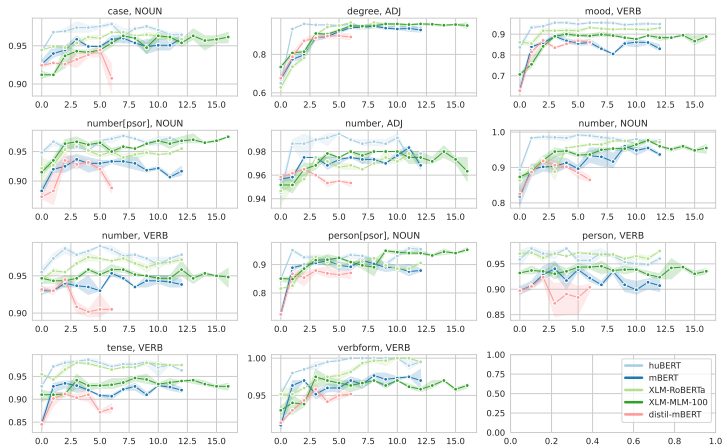
# Models for Hungarian

## Experimental setup

- ▶ same probing architecture for morphology
- ▶ similar setup for POS and NER
- ▶ no fine-tuning due to resource limitations
- ▶ huBERT: the only Hungarian model at the time
- ▶ multilingual models: mBERT, XLM-RoBERTa, XLM-MLM-100, distilmBERT

# Models for Hungarian

## Morphology results by Tranformer layer

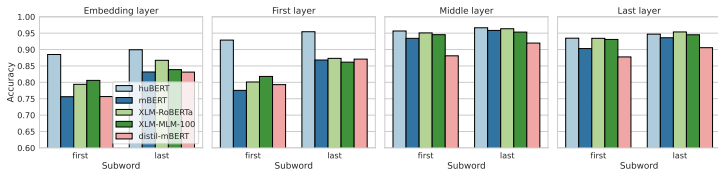


The layerwise accuracy of morphological probes using the last subword. Shaded areas represent confidence intervals over 3 runs.

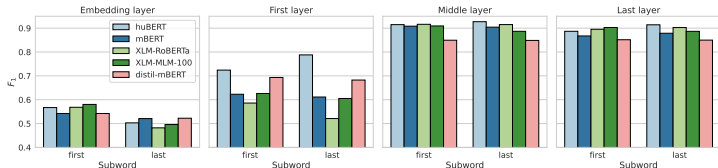
# Models for Hungarian

## POS and NER results

### Szeged POS



### Szeged NER



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# Models for Uralic languages

## Overview

### Experimental setup:

- ▶ same as the Hungarian evaluation
- ▶ fine-tuning
- ▶ include every Uralic language with data regardless of model support

### Models:

**language-specific:** HuBERT, FinBERT, EstBERT, Russian BERT

**multilingual:** mBERT, XLM-RoBERTa

**random mBERT:** random weights, mBERT tokenizer

# Models for Uralic languages

## Languages and data

Language	Code	Morph	POS	NER
Hungarian	[hu]	26k	2000	2000
Finnish	[fi]	38k	2000	2000
Estonian	[et]	26k	2000	2000
Erzya	[myv]	0	1680	1800
Moksha	[mdf]	0	164	400
Karelian	[krl]	0	224	0
Livvi	[olo]	0	122	0
Komi Permyak	[koi]	0	78	2000
Komi Zyrian	[kpv]	0	562	1700
Northern Sami	[sme]	0	2000	1200
Skolt Sami	[sms]	0	101	0

Size of training data for each language.

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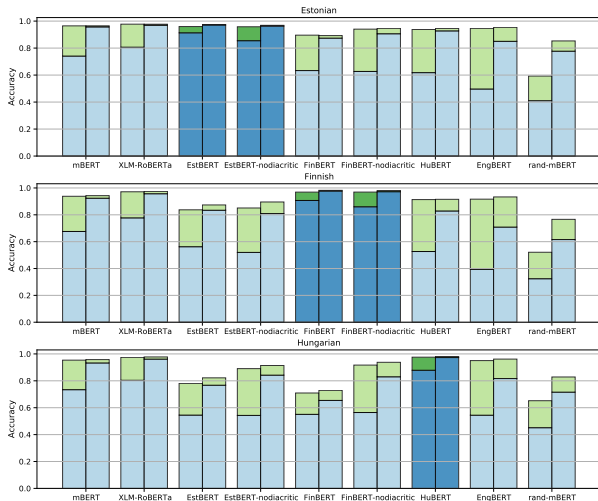
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# Models for Uralic languages

## Morphology results

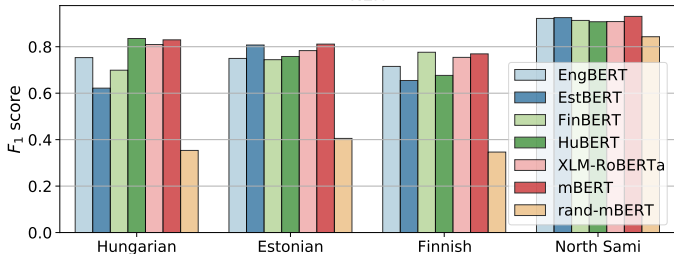
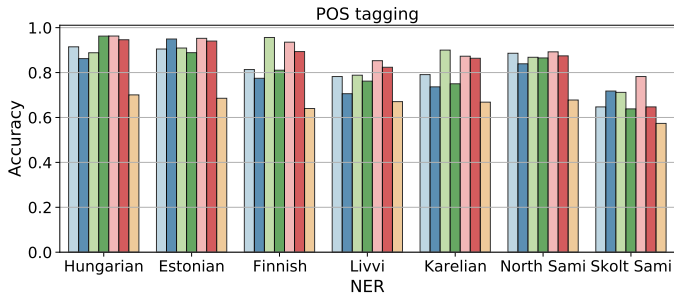


Pairs of bars: probing the first and last subword. Monolingual models are highlighted.

# Models for Uralic languages

## POS and NER results - Latin script

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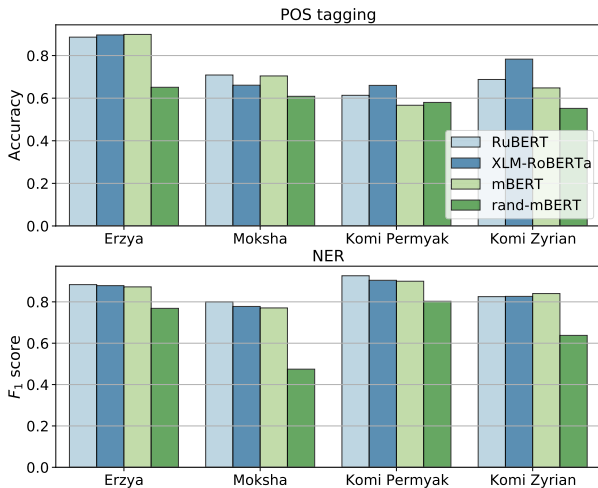
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# Models for Uralic languages

## POS and NER results - Cyrillic script



# Models for Uralic languages

## Conclusions

- ▶ monolingual models are the best when available
- ▶ multilingual models are close
- ▶ model transfer is surprisingly good even for unsupported languages
- ▶ state-of-the-art POS and NER models for minority languages with no language-specific effort

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# Perturbations and Shapley values

# Perturbations and Shapley values

## Thesis 5

*The source of morphosyntactic information is often localized in a sentence. The systemic removal of certain information (perturbations) reveals where the information is stored. The role of context in morphosyntax can be quantified via Shapley values and the results often comply with linguistic intuitions.*

These contributions were published in (Acs et al., 2023).

# Perturbations

- ▶ Perturbations are a systematic removal of information from the sentence.
- ▶ We retrain the probe on the perturbed sentence and quantify the change as:

$$\text{Effect}(m, t, p) = 1 - \frac{\text{Acc}(m, t, p)}{\text{Acc}(m, t)},$$

where  $m$  is the model,  $t$  is a probing task and  $p$  is a perturbation.

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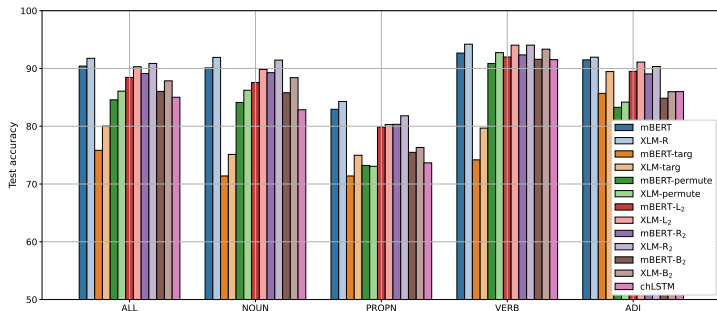
Perturbation	Explanation	Example
Original		Then he ripped open Hermione 's letter and <b>read</b> it out loud .
TARG	mask target word	Then he ripped open Hermione 's letter and <b>[M]</b> it out loud .
L <sub>2</sub>	mask previous 2 words	Then he ripped open Hermione 's <b>[M] [M]</b> <b>read</b> it out loud .
R <sub>2</sub>	mask next 2 words	Then he ripped open Hermione 's letter and <b>read</b> <b>[M] [M]</b> loud .
B <sub>2</sub>	mask 2 on each side	Then he ripped open Hermione 's <b>[M] [M]</b> <b>read</b> <b>[M] [M]</b> loud .
PERMUTE	shuffle word order	and open <b>read</b> Then letter . it out he ripped 's Hermione loud

List of perturbation methods with examples. The target word is in **bold**. The mask symbol is abbreviated as **[M]**.



# Perturbations

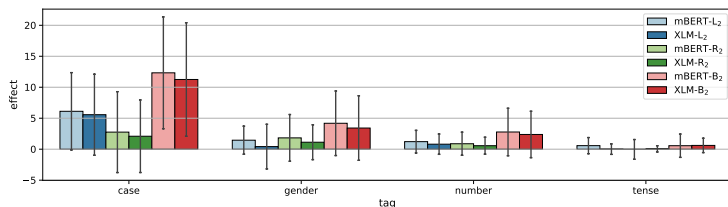
## Perturbed accuracy



Test accuracy of the perturbed probes grouped by POS. The first group is the average of all 247 tasks. The first two bars in each group are the unperturbed probes' accuracy.

# Perturbations

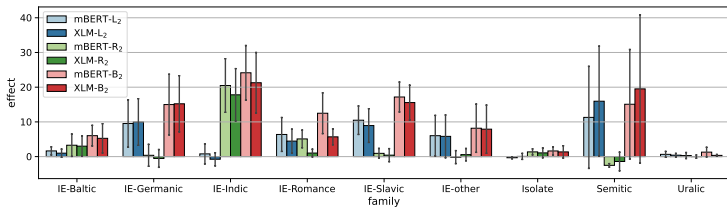
## Context masking results



- ▶ case is the only tag affected strongly by context masking
- ▶ L<sub>2</sub> is bigger than R<sub>2</sub>, the left context is more important

# Perturbations

## Context masking results

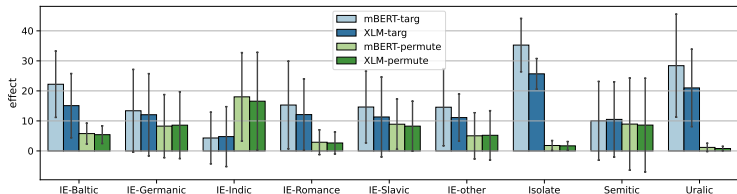


The effect of context masking on case tasks grouped by language family.

- ▶ std is larger than the effects
- ▶  $L_2$  is smaller than  $R_2$  in Baltic and Indic languages
- ▶ context masking has negligible effect on Uralic languages

# Perturbations

## Target masking and permutation



- ▶ TARG has by far the largest effect
- ▶ TARG and PERMUTE have opposite effects?

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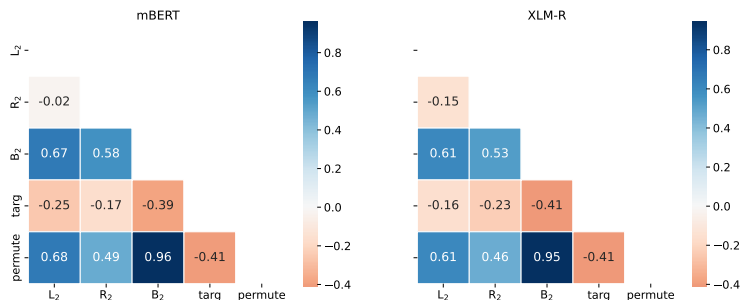
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# Perturbations

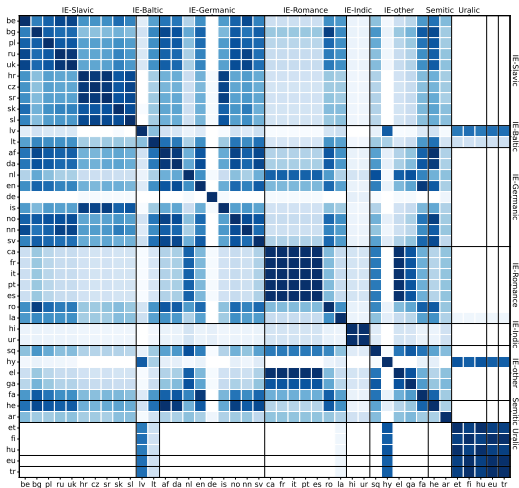
## Relationship between perturbations



- ▶ TARG and PERMUTE indeed have a negative correlation
- ▶ PERMUTE and B<sub>2</sub> are almost identical in effect

# Perturbations

## Typology



Co-occurrence counts for each languages pair over 100  $k$ -means clustering runs.

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# Shapley values

## Formulation

Let's split the sentence into 9 parts or 9 players:

- ▶  $T$  is the target word
- ▶  $L_1$  is the previous word,  $R_1$  is the next word
- ▶ and so on:

$$S = L_{4+}, L_3, L_2, L_1, T, R_1, R_2, R_3, R_{4+}$$

Each player's contribution can be quantified as:

$$\varphi(i) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{S \subseteq N \setminus \{i\}} \frac{v(S \cup \{i\}) - v(S)}{\binom{n-1}{|S|}},$$

where the value function of a subset of players  $S$  is:

$$v(S) = 100 - 100 \cdot \frac{\text{Acc}_S - \text{Acc}_{\text{all masked}}}{\text{Acc}_{\text{mBERT}} - \text{Acc}_{\text{all masked}}}$$

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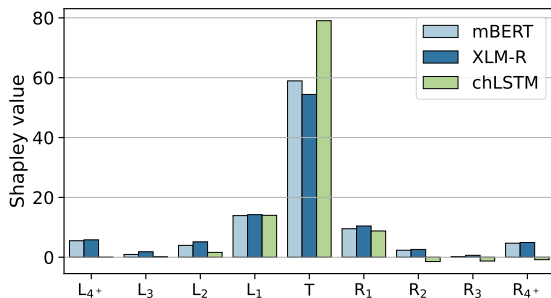
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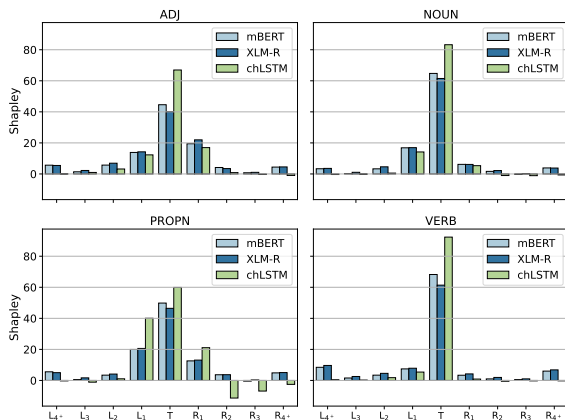
## Average Shapley values





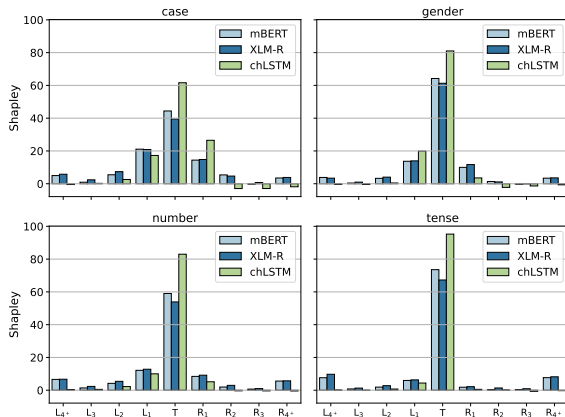
# Shapley values

## Values by POS



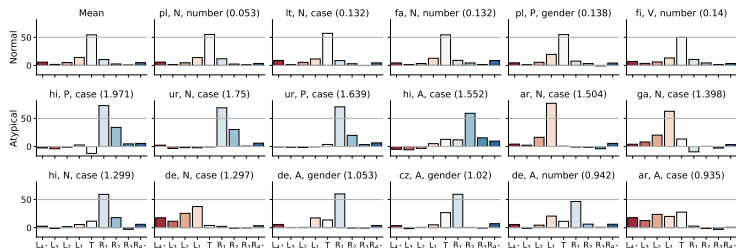
# Shapley values

## Values by tag



# Shapley values

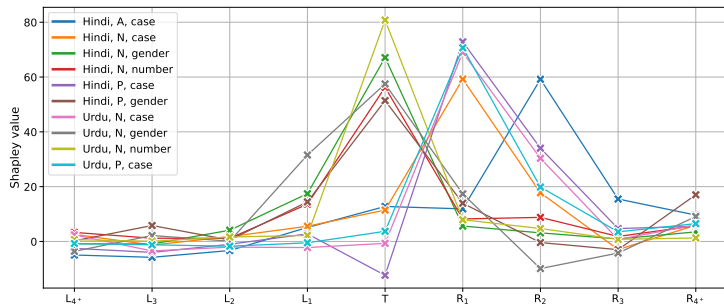
## Outliers



Least and most anomalous Shapley distributions. The first row are the mean Shapley values of the 247 tasks and the 5 tasks *closest* to the mean distribution, i.e. the least anomalous as measured by the dfm distance from the average Shapley values. The rest of the rows are the most anomalous Shapley values in descending order. For each particular task, its distance from the mean (dfm) is listed in parentheses above the graphs.

# Shapley values

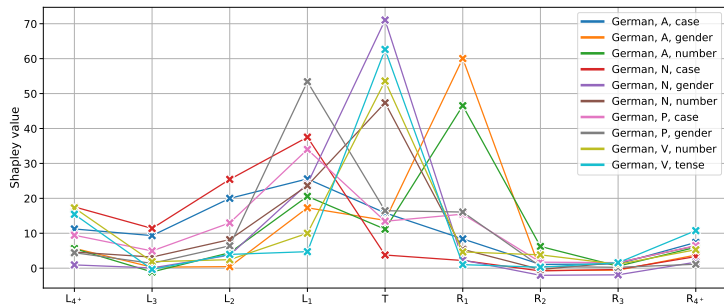
## Hindi and Urdu tasks



Shapley values in Indic tasks.

# Shapley values

## German tasks



Shapley values in German tasks.

- ▶ Number of experiments: appr. 500,000
  - ▶ unperturbed and perturbed experiments run 10 times
  - ▶ Shapley computation is exponential, 460,000 experiments
  - ▶ 40 days of runtime
- ▶ Maximum 200 epochs. Early stopping in 98% of the time
- ▶ Average 22 epochs
- ▶ 43 tables, 63 figures, 117 references for now

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