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## **Deliverable D4.1**

# **Initial Report on Multi-Lingual MT**

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## **1** Executive Summary

This deliverable summarizes the progress in WP4 Multi-Lingual MT during the first year of the project. The work package consists of 5 tasks, three of which are running during the first year.

- **T4.1 Baseline MT Models** was planned and carried out during the first 6 months of the project. It provided MT systems to the rest of the main processing pipeline, so that intergration and technical testing could start soon. More details are in Section 2.
- **T4.2 Document-Level Translation** is a research goal somewhat more independent of the remaining tasks. The aim is to substantially improve the practice of handling document-level context across MT processing stages: training, translation and evaluation. In Section 3, we report on our progress in all three aspects: several separate means of evaluation with more or less conclusive results as well as a post-processing strategy to improve document-level coherence.
- **T4.3 Multi-Target Translation** explores the setup most needed for ELITR central event, the EUROSAI congress where a single speech needs to be translated into up to 43 target languages. We report on our baseline massively-multilingual system and on our exploration of the trade-off between the number of languages covered in a single system vs. the loss in translation quality. These experiments proved to be more time-consuming than expected and we will continue with them also in year 2 of the project.
- **T4.4 Multi-Source Translation** aims to improve translation quality by considering other language versions of the same content. The task is scheduled to start in year 2 and can consider both written or spoken multi-source. As preparatory steps ahead of time, we have begun gathering data from training lessons of interpreters to assess if multi-source could be applied in the ELITR setup of live conference interpretation. More details are in Section 5.
- **T4.5 Flexible Multi-Lingual MT** is planned for year 3 of the project.



## 2 Task T4.1 Baseline MT Models (CUNI, UEDIN, KIT)

Using the ELITR OPUS Corpus described in Deliverable 1.1, UEDIN has trained baselines for all EU translation directions and a majority of EUROSAI translation directions in the form of a massively multilingual MT model (Aharoni et al., 2019). The dataset is 'Englishcentric,' meaning that all sentence pairs include English on either the source or the target side. Translation for pairs not including English is therefore zero-shot or must be pivoted through English.

We used scripts from the Moses toolkit (Koehn et al., 2007) to normalize, tokenize, and truecase the data. We used subword-nmt<sup>1</sup> to segment the text into subword units using the byte pair encoding (BPE) algorithm (Sennrich et al., 2016) with 40,000 merge operations. Following Johnson et al. (2017), we prepended a tag to each source sentence to indicate the target language. For instance, in an English-Czech sentence pair, the first token of the source sentence is <2cs>.

For training and inference we used the Marian toolkit (Junczys-Dowmunt et al., 2018). Our model is a Transformer, configured using the 'base' hyperparameters (Vaswani et al., 2017). We used a multilingual validation set containing 200 sentence pairs (100 into English and 100 out of English) for each language pair covered by the dataset. This amounts to  $39 \cdot 200 = 7800$  test sentence pairs. Training was stopped when the validation set cross entropy had failed to improve for 10 consecutive validation points.

	Source														
Target	cs	de	en	$\mathbf{es}$	$\mathrm{fr}$	$\operatorname{it}$	ru								
ar	5.2	4.4	9.2	5.4	4.9	5.7	4.3								
$\mathbf{cs}$	-	11.4	22.4	6.9	9.6	10.4	12.0								
de	12.2	-	22.0	10.6	9.8	9.6	9.7								
en	33.5	29.0	-	<b>33.8</b>	28.2	33.4	27.2								
es	11.2	15.6	33.5	-	20.5	20.0	14.5								
$\operatorname{fr}$	14.2	12.8	25.5	17.2	-	15.5	12.7								
it	14.7	13.1	<b>30.2</b>	18.7	16.3	-	11.9								
nl	14.3	15.2	25.3	15.0	13.1	13.3	12.3								
$\operatorname{pt}$	17.7	17.0	<b>38.5</b>	25.8	19.6	20.7	14.8								
ru	13.4	10.7	18.3	11.9	12.0	11.0	-								
Average	15.2	14.4	25.0	16.1	14.9	15.5	13.3								

Table 1: BLEU scores for translation into the nine target languages in the News Commentary v14 test set. The seven source languages are the languages supported by ASR and intended for deployment. The results are comparable within a given target language and we highlight in bold the best result in each row. It is not a big surprise that English is generally the best source, although BLEU cannot reliably assess subtle properties such as the preservation of the gender.

We evaluated the system using the News Commentary v14 test set (described in Deliverable 1.2). Table 1 gives average BLEU scores for the 10 target languages covered by the test set when translating out of the seven ASR-supported source languages. These results serve as baselines for systems developed for deployment as part of the ELITR pipeline.

For selected language pairs, we also trained dedicated bilingual models to measure the quality difference between massively multilingual and bilingual models. Table 2 gives multilingual BLEU scores for out-of-English translation for all language pairs covered by the News Commentary v14 test set as well as bilingual scores for the dedicated models. Our baseline results show that our multilingual systems, while enabling the coverage of many translation directions, still trail behind dedicated bilingual models in terms of quality, and work on other tasks (T4.3/4.4/4.5) has begun to close this gap.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>https://github.com/rsennrich/subword-nmt



	Target													
System	ar	$\mathbf{cs}$	de	es	$\mathbf{fr}$	$\operatorname{it}$	$\mathbf{nl}$	$\operatorname{pt}$	ru					
Multilingual	9.2	22.4	22.0	33.5	25.5	30.2	25.3	38.5	18.3					
Bilingual	16.6	29.1	27.5	-	-	-	-	-	20.7					

Table 2: BLEU scores for individual target languages when translating out of English on the News Commentary v14 test set.

## 3 Task T4.2 Document-Level Machine Translation (CUNI, UEDIN)

Task 4.2 aims at improved handling of document-level phenomena in MT practice for evaluation, training and translation.

In Section 3.1, we describe the test suites we prepared and used in WMT19. Section 3.2 outlines the test suite for 2020 which is in preparation and finally, Section 3.3 presents UEDIN and CUNI techniques for improved translation.

#### 3.1 WMT19 Document Level Test Suites

CUNI in cooperation with the Supreme Audit Office of the Czech Republic (SAO) processed multiple audit reports which were published on SAO's website and other supreme audit institutions. These selected audit reports always had always several language variants. Additionally, we included one document sample from the domain of agreements in the test suite. The data was cleaned and organised in a suitable form for a WMT19 test suite. The source texts were then distributed to all WMT19 News Task participants and thus translated by MT systems participating in the shared task.

Since this test suite had two different parts, we used two different approaches for the evaluation. As for the part of audit reports, we have complemented an automatic evaluation with a manual evaluation carried out by audit experts. In the case of the sample agreement, the evaluation was fully manual.

In the extensive manual annotation of the MT outputs participating in the shared task, our annotators identified types of translation errors related to document-level translation. The results document that recent NMT systems achieved such a high level of translation quality that it becomes difficult or impossible to evaluate them on the basis of a simple comparison with a single reference translation.

On the other hand, at least one type of documents is mishandled catastrophically by current MT system, namely documents defining their own fixed terminology. A prime example are formal agreements. In the coming months, we plan to focus on this domain, constructing a new test suite for 2020 focused on this type of inputs, see below.

The details about the 2019 test suite were published in the respective WMT19 paper by Vojtěchová et al. (2019).

The test suite itself has been made available as one of public ELITR repositories at github:

#### https://github.com/ELITR/wmt19-elitr-testsuite

Another extensive annotation of document-level phenomena was carried out in Rysová et al. (2019). Here the focus was on news-style sentences from the WSJ section of the Penn Treebank (where explicit discourse annotation exists), specifically on discourse connectives and their alternative lexicalizations. Similarly to the audit domain above, the results indicated again that the current quality of MT is in general high enough so that the comparison with a single reference translation becomes non-discerning. In fact, in some cases the reference translation was scored lower because it was not adhering to wording of the source as the MT systems did. Furthermore, this evaluation did not show any benefit from the few MT systems that were trained with some cross-sentential context taken into account.



#### 3.2 A Testsuite on Agreements in Preparation

In the new test suite, we will focus on several types of agreements, namely lease and sublease agreements and purchase contracts of cars and real estate. We have collected 30 Czech examples in those four categories. We will try to get a comparable number of English agreements, too, but so far we were unsuccessful.

Given the experience with the WMT19 SAO test suite, where a single reference translation prepared beforehand proved insufficient because it did not account for multiple correct translations of domain-specific terminology, we did not plan to provide reference translations for the agreements. Instead, we wanted to mimic our strategy used for the sublease agreement in the 2019 test suite, i.e. to identify "markables" in the source documents and, once the candidate translations are collected, check if the translations of these "markables" are correct and consistent within the given candidate.

However, when we tried this approach on the 30 new agreements, we realised that it will not be possible due to an overhelming number of specific terms, which are furthermore different for each agreement category. In other words, it is not possible to identify "markables" before knowing at least partially the set of candidate translations.

Therefore, our current plan is to use the strategy briefly described in Section 4.3 of Popel et al. (2019), i.e. to automatically list source terms that have multiple target-side counterparts across and within individual candidate translations and manually validate which of these translations are (a) acceptable on their own, and (b) in accordance with other lexical choices within the given candidate translation.

This approach starts with collecting a number of candidate translation so we will definitely submit our new test suite to WMT20. Note that up until now, we have source documents in Czech, so we need MT systems participating in translation from Czech to English. We double checked with WMT organizers that this direction will not be omitted as it was in WMT19.

#### 3.3 Better Document-Level Evaluation and Translation

UEDIN is investigating better models for document-level MT, and their automatic evaluation. Voita et al. (2019b), published at ACL, makes contributions in both aspects. In terms of modeling, we propose a two-pass translation process where a first-pass model, trained on sentence-level parallel data, produces a baseline translation, which a context-aware second-pass model then refines. This two-pass strategy has the advantage of allowing training with a mix of sentence-level and document-level training data. For evaluation, we have produced test sets for contrastive evaluation, similar to those by Bawden et al. (2018), to target specific translation phenomena that require context. These novel test sets are larger-scale, and cover more translation phenomena (namely deixis, ellipsis, and lexical consistency) than that by Bawden et al. (2018). We find that targeted test sets are very useful for development, allowing to measure the impact of design decisions that may have little impact on generic metrics such as BLEU, but affect how effectively the model learns to take context into account.

Our most recent work, Voita et al. (2019a), focuses on the challenging case where there is no document-level parallel data, and all the available document-level data is monolingual. We show that consistency in translation can be improved with a monolingual repair model, essentially a model that performs automatic post-editing purely on the basis of the primary system's translation output. Such a setup is attractive because the monolingual repair system can be trained without document-level parallel data, but it also has advantages from a deployment perspective, since it allows for some independence between the development of the (sentence-level) main translation system, which may be multilingual, and language-specific monolingual repair modules to improve document-level consistency.

CUNI has experimented with improving document-level coherence by translating a windows of subsequent techniques. The system was submitted to the WMT19 news translation task, see Popel et al. (2019).<sup>2</sup> Based on overall scores, no clear benefit of this style of training is apparent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Note that this particular publication received support from other grants, not ELITR.



but a more targeted evaluation is yet to be performed.

## 4 Task T4.3 Multi-Target MT (CUNI, UEDIN, KIT)

Task 4.3 was proposed to reduce primarily the computational costs of training MT models for the highly multilingual setting needed to support EUROSAI Congress, translating from 7 source languages up to 43 target languages.

With multi-lingual models, described in this section, we also benefit from the GPU parallelism and translate the given input sentence to many targets at once, in one GPU batch. We talk about "rainbow translation models" and adjust the integration pipeline to handle them well. The details of this integration are not the focus of this deliverable and we thus omit them.

While Task T4.3 was originally planned only for year 1 of the project, the experiments, esp. those described in Section 4.2 proved more time (and resource) consuming than expected. We will thus continue the work on finding the best balance of languages in multi-target models also during year 2.

#### 4.1 Massively Multi-Lingual Model

UEDIN has trained baseline multi-target machine translation models to cover all EU and EU-ROSAI translation directions (see T4.1). These massively multilingual baseline models exhibit a quality drop in translation quality compared to dedicated bilingual machine translation models – on a selection of 4 language pairs (EN $\rightarrow$ {DE,ZH,BR,TE}), the average drop is 2.9 BLEU (20.9 $\rightarrow$ 18.0). We have identified model capacity as a limiting factor in massively multilingual models, and we have investigated methods to increase model capacity without incurring too much cost in efficiency. Unfortunately, just increasing the number of layers in a typical Transformer model leads to vanishing gradient and unstable training. Thus, we first developed methods to train deep and efficient models in a bilingual setting (Zhang and Sennrich, 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). Our contributions consist of a novel depth-scaled initialization for Transformers that allows training of deep models (up to 30 encoder and decoder layers) without gradient vanishing, a more efficient variant of layer normalization, and a merged attention mechanism for the decoder that increase efficiency.

Specifically for multilingual models, we also investigate methods to keep some parameters in the encoder specific to the target language. Specifically, we consider having language-aware bias terms in the model's layer normalization (LALN), and a language-aware linear transformation on top of the encoder (LALT).

Results of UEDIN experiments in multi-target MT are shown in Table 3. We can see that both the language-aware components and deep models benefit multi-target MT models. Compared to our baseline, we see an average improvement of 3 BLEU for high-resource languages, 7.5 BLEU for medium-resource languages, and 9.6 BLEU for low-resource languages. On the selected language pairs with bilingual results, we see an average improvement of 3.2 BLEU. While we outperform the 6-layer bilingual baseline, performance is still below that of deeper bilingual systems, but the gap has become smaller.

#### 4.2 Exploring Mid-Sized Multi-Lingual Models

CUNI has performed language clustering experiments for multi-target MT, with the aim of exploring the effects of language relatedness and determining the optimal number of target languages in a single multi-lingual model. No modifications were applied to the Transformer model in the experiments described below. The model size and other hyper-parameters are constant for all setups inside a particular experiment.

In our first experiments, we used the 'en-to-36' dataset, which is the English-sourced half of the dataset described in Section 2. With a relatively high number of languages in the dataset, it is possible to train a sufficient number of models which include target languages related in many different ways (e.g. related by script, by language group, or by some of WALS features;



	High	Med	Low	Avg	Avg $(DE/ZH/BR/TE)$
bilingual (6 layers)	-	-	-	-	20.9
bilingual (12 layers)	-	-	-	-	22.8
one-to-many (6 layers)	21.8	26.5	24.3	24.2	18.0
one-to-many (6 layers $+ LA^*$ )	22.8	30.5	34.5	28.6	20.1
one-to-many (12 layers $+ LA^*$ )	23.8	31.6	32.5	29.3	19.9
one-to-many (24 layers $+ LA^*$ )	24.8	34.0	33.9	30.9	21.2

Table 3: One-to-many translation performance for deep models, and models with languageaware components (LA\*). Scores are grouped based on amount of training data into highresource ( $\geq 0.9M$ ; 45), low-resource ( $\leq 0.1M$ ; 18) and medium-resource (others; 31) languages. Bilingual systems are trained and evaluated on typologically different languages DE, ZH, BR, and TE.

Dryer and Haspelmath, 2013), as well as randomly selected languages for comparison. Here we expect to see the effects of shared subword vocabularies, sentence structures, etc. The 'en-to-36' dataset has the benefit of language diversity but it suffers from the differences in the underlying data sources: Aside from the subject of our study, the varying set of languages, the observed differences in performance could be also attributed to the differences in the datasets the models are being trained on.

Here and below '1-to-N model' refers to a model that translates from English to N target languages. For instance, 'en $\rightarrow$ [de, nl]' is a 1-to-2 model that translates from English to German and Dutch. Its training data is the (shuffled) concatenation of 'en $\rightarrow$ de' and 'en $\rightarrow$ nl' training sets. The target language tag is prepended to each source sentence as described in Section 2.

For the 'en-to-36' dataset, there are multiple setups being considered. First of all, in a 'random' setup the models are randomly grouped into sets by 9. For each set, a number of one-to-many experiments are generated, so that every language from the set occurs in 1-to-2 up to 1-to-5 setting three or more times. As of now, only for one of 9 languages sets the models were trained. This way, we expect to observe an average performance decreasing with the number of target languages in the model. Also, we expect to observe a more pronounced decrease when target languages with different scripts are mixed in a model.

Next, languages can be grouped by particular linguistic characteristics. So far, two sets were considered: Slavic languages with Cyrillic script and Germanic languages. To this end, we ran experiments from 1-to-2 to 1-to-5 for Germanic languages and to 1-to-4 for Cyrillic-written languages, organizing the experiments in the same manner as for random sets.

Table 4 and Table 5 show results for some of target languages. In total, we trained 83 models for these experiments. For presentation purposes, we focus on targetting Bulgarian (bg) and Ukrainian (uk) in the Slavic experiment and Danish (da) and Swedish (sv) in the Germanic experiment. In other words, one can see this as a study of how multi-target models cater for Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Danish and Swedish.

In both tables, we vary the number of target languages in the model (see the column "#TG") and in the Slavic experiment, we consider two different test sets for Bulgarian. In all cases, we report the average BLEU score when translating into the given language using a 1-to-#TG model. The "surrounding" target languages in the model affect the performance, but there are too many possible sets of these languages so we have to only sample from from. The column "#" indicates how many different model trainings (with different target language sets) are included in the average BLEU.

Comparing the average BLEU scores in the column "Random" with BLEU scores in the column "Cyrillic" (or "Germanic", resp.), we see a gain of 1.0 to 1.5 BLEU when model is trained on closer languages, i.e. when the surrounding target languages are all from the Cyrillic or Germanic group.

In both tables, we observe a clear decrease in BLEU when more target languages are included in the model and the technique described in Section 4.1 should clearly be used in our future



Target language	Dataset	vorsion	Biling BIFU	#TC	rando	m	Cyrill	ic
	Dataset	VEISIOII	Dining. DLEO	#10	BLEU	#	BLEU	#
				2	39.13	3	40.75	2
bg	Furoparl	×7	41.70	3	37.88	4	<b>39.25</b>	2
	Europan		41.70	4	37.04	5	<b>38.00</b>	1
				5	36.10	3	-	-
				2	21.17	3	$\underline{23.20}$	2
	OpenSubtitles	v2018	22.80	3	20.43	4	22.20	2
			22.00	4	19.70	5	21.30	1
				5	19.87	3	-	-
				2	12.75	2	12.15	2
uk	OpenSubtitles	v2018	14.00	3	11.00	3	12.20	2
ик	Opendubines	12010	14.00	4	10.03	4	11.30	1
				5	9.88	4	-	-

Table 4: Sample BLEU scores for experiments with Slavic languages with Cyrillic script (ru, uk, mk, bg) and with random set of target languages. "#TG" is the main parameter of interest, the number of target languages per one model. The column "BLEU" is the average BLEU score and the column "#" reports the number of models in this group across which the average is reported. "Biling. BLEU" is the benchmark, BLEU of the simple pairwise model (i.e. #TG of 1).

Target language	Dataset	vorsion	Biling BIFU	#TC	rando	m	Germanic		
Target language	Dataset	Version	Diffig. DLEO	#10	BLEU	#	BLEU	#	
da				2	32.70	1	33.05	2	
	Furoparl	<b>w</b> 7	33 70	3	31.57	3	32.50	2	
	Europari		33.10	4	31.00	3	31.95	4	
				5	30.28	6	31.77	3	
				2	32.35	2	32.60	2	
GV	Furoparl		33.60	3	31.15	4	31.85	2	
SV	Europari		33.00	4	29.90	2	31.40	2	
				5	31.20	1	31.15	2	

Table 5: BLEU scores for Germanic languages (da, de, nl, no, sv, is) and random set of target languages. Columns as in Table 4. Underscored values indicate unreliable result: 'en  $\rightarrow$  [bg, da, ka, sv, uk]' training data contains  $\sim 50\%$  of sv test set from Europarl v7, while 'en  $\rightarrow$  sv' training data contains only  $\sim 3\%$  of this test set.

experiments.

Unfortunately, there are also anomalous values observed, see the underlined BLEU scores in Table 5. The reason for this may be in the sampling issue described in the following.

For our '1-to-36' experiments, we relied on the datased prepared and described in Deliverable 1.1. The main focus when the dataset was prepared was the coverage of the target languages. Because some of the languages were known to have very limited data sources, no strict filtering was applied to the training vs. test sets. This is particularly problematic in our multi-target experiments, because (source) sentences in the test set for one language can occur among the (source) sentences in the training data for another target language. The full detail of these overlaps is reported in Appendix A.<sup>3</sup> Some of our experiments are affected too much by this overlap. Tables 4 and 5 contain only the results where the overlap was not too big and the obtained scores are generally trustworthy. In these tables, 'Europarl v7' and 'OpenSubtitles v2018' refer to the parts of test set sampled from Europarl v7 (Tiedemann, 2012) and OpenSubtitles v2018

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$  In Section 2, the problem of test set overlap was avoided by testing on News Commentary v14, a distinct test set. However, this test set does not provide a sufficient number of different target languages, so we couldn't have used it here.



(Lison and Tiedemann, 2016).

Since the desired target language in multi-lingual models is indicated only as one of the input symbols, it is technically possible that the model starts producing a wrong language. This behaviour is rather rare, but we still observed it in the 'en  $\rightarrow$  [ru, uk]' setup. The Russian training data contains the data from common domains as well as news domain and the political domain. The Ukrainian training data consists almost completely of common domain sentences. When various sentences from newspapers were passed to the 'en  $\rightarrow$  [ru, uk]' model with the desired language tag <2uk> prepended (which means the requested target language is Ukrainian), sometimes the translation was produced partially in Russian, partially in Ukrainian. A possible reason for that may be that with lack of domain data in one language the model may prefer switching into another language which has more training data in this domain instead of attempting to translate into the requested target language. To check this observation, more setups with target languages that have a big portion of the sub-word vocabulary shared among them will be tested.

WALS features setup is currently a work in progress. In this setup, models will be grouped with the nearest models in the selected WALS features embedding space. Selection of particular features and suitable embedding type (PCA, UMAP or t-SNE) is to be decided.

Additionally, we are starting to experiment with the UN parallel corpus (Ziemski et al., 2016) instead of the '1-to-36' corpus. The full multi-parallelism in the UN corpus allows us to exclude the effect of the text content and shared linguistic structures or features and to concentrate solely on measuring the negative effect of adding one more target language to the model of the same size. The downside is that the set of languages needed by ELITR, the EUROSAI languages, is quite considerably different from UN languages.

## 5 Task T4.4 Multi-Source MT (CUNI, UEDIN, KIT)

This task is planned for year 2 and it can focus on translating in the written or spoken domain. Since the spoken domain is generally harder to obtain, we already started gathering data

from the seminars and mock interpreted conferences of students of interpreting from Institute of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts, CUNI. We have recordings from three mock interpreted conferences, around 213 minutes of speech in Czech, French, German, English and Spanish. The Czech source is interpreted into all the mentioned languages. Non-Czech source is interpreted into Czech and from Czech into other languages. Depending on the availability of the students during the conference and their need for breaks, some directions are missing or are provided multiple times in parallel. There are at most 8 parallel channels. Similarly, we have recordings from seminars of simultaneous interpreteting between Czech and German (69 minutes, 7 channels), Russian (32 minutes, 3 channels) and French (32 minutes, 7 channels). There is one source interpreted into the other language in independent parallel channels.

The data from the Institute of Translation Studies are unique as a source of Czech interpreting. There are some publicly available corpora of interpreted speech (e.g. Iranzo-Sánchez et al., Di Gangi et al., 2019), but none of them contains Czech. Although the data contain students' interpreting, and therefore may contain imperfections in the interpretation, it is unique because of the parallelism. It may be used for analysis of interpreting (together with other sources) or for evaluation of multi-source MT.

### 6 Task T4.5 Flexible Multi-Lingual MT (CUNI, UEDIN, KIT)

This task is planned for year 3.



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## A Test/Train Data Overlap

The following table reports the number of source (en) sentences in test sets (rows) that are also present in training sets (columns):

h	600	000	489	630	.396	371	.416	525	577	409	499	601	18	863	711	268	752	592	745	281	.338	786	503	487	954	459	570	409	298	221	524	835	630	412	655	
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