Attention-based Unsupervised Word Segmentation

An Application to Computational Language Documentation

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This presentation agenda:

1. Introduction:

The field: Computational Language Documentation

The task: Unsupervised Word Segmentation (UWS) from speech

Our Contribution: An attention-based pipeline for UWS from speech

PART 1: Attention for segmentation

PART 2: Speech discretization in low-resource settings

3. Conclusion

Introduction





Language Documentation

- → 50 to 90% of the currently spoken languages will go extinct before 2100 [1]
- Manually documenting all these languages is infeasible



Figure: A field linguist recording utterances from a native speaker.



Computational Language Documentation (CLD)

- → 50 to 90% of the currently spoken languages will go extinct before 2100 [1]
- Manually documenting all these languages is infeasible



Figure: A field linguist recording utterances from a native speaker.

GOAL: to automatically retrieve information about language structures to speed up language documentation



Approaches for CLD: Documentation Corpora

- Small size (difficult to collect)
- Often lack written form (oral-tradition languages)
- Parallel information (translations instead of transcriptions)



Translations

to a high-resource language [2]



Approaches for CLD: Documentation Corpora

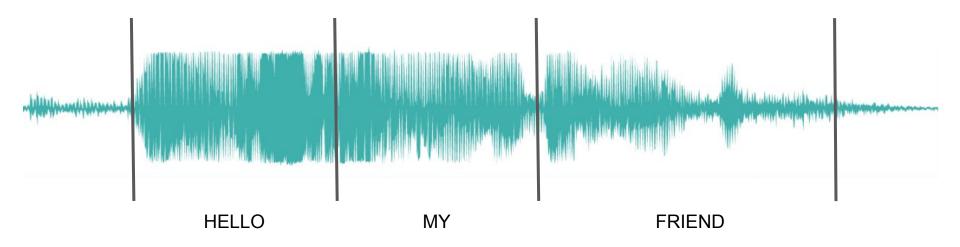
- → Small size (difficult to collect)
- → Often lack written form (oral-tradition languages)
- → Parallel information (translations instead of transcriptions)

Therefore, CLD approaches need to...

- Deal with speech
- Be robust to low-resource
- Incorporate bilingual (or multilingual) annotations



UNSUPERVISED WORD SEGMENTATION (UWS) from speech

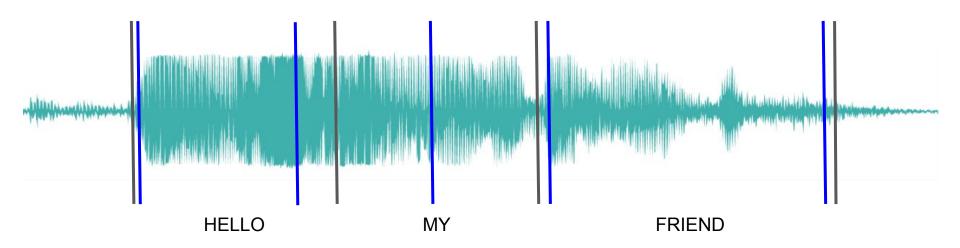


Example: Let's imagine the speech utterance for "Hello my friend".



UNSUPERVISED WORD SEGMENTATION (UWS) from speech

We want a system which outputs time stamps corresponding to boundaries.





Literature in (monolingual) UWS

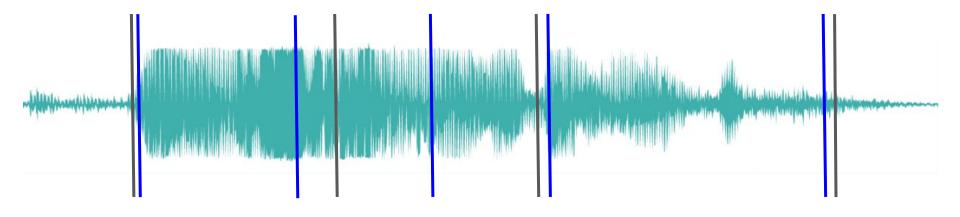
- → The UWS task is more often solved in the symbolic domain (grapheme or phonemes) [3,4,5,6]
 - ♦ Transcribing one minute of audio takes on average one hour and a half of work from a trained linguist [38]

- → For speech, there's mostly research on *Unsupervised Term Discovery*, which produces a partial segmentation of the speech signal [7-9]
 - ◆ Focus of Zero Resource Speech Challenge these last years [36,37]



What we propose: Grounding Segmentation on Translations

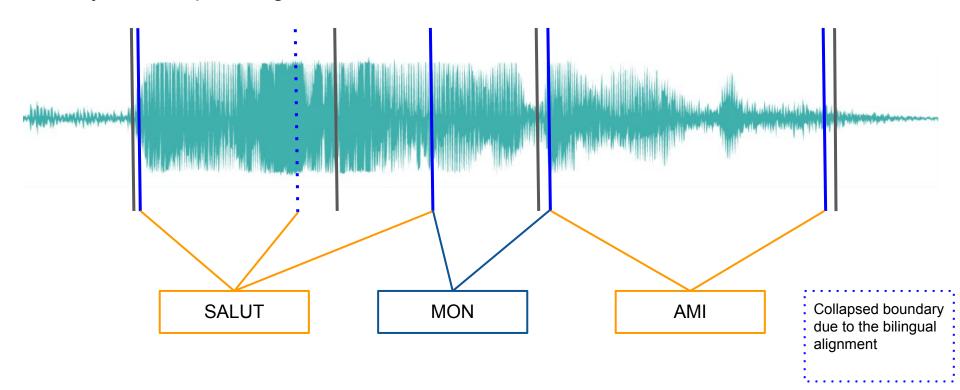
Our system outputs segmentation based on...





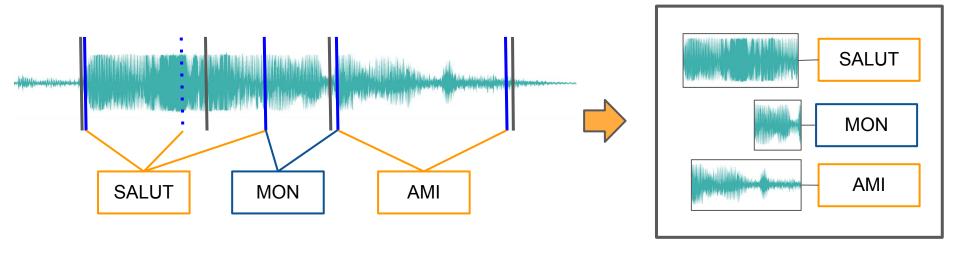
What we propose: Grounding Segmentation on Translations

Our system outputs segmentation based on... sentence-level translations.



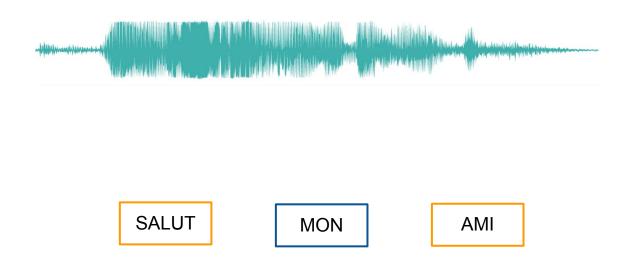


Grounding Segmentation on Translations

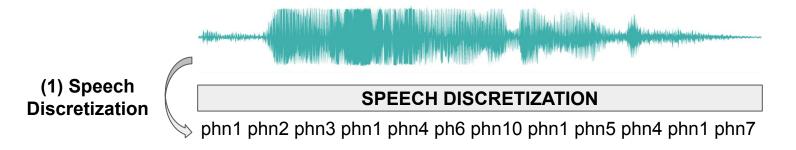


In this setting, all our boundaries have an annotation: the bilingual information aligned.¹



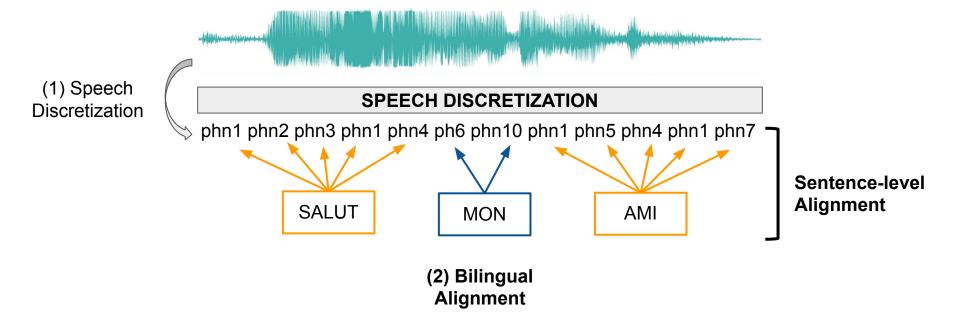




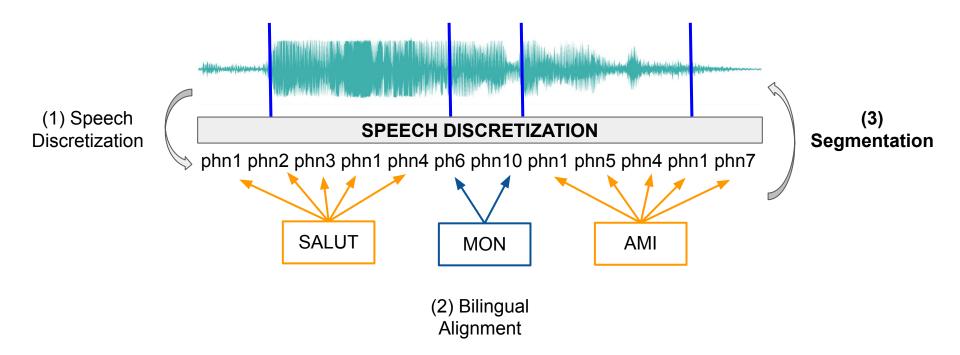


→ Accommodates the challenge of processing speech in low-resource settings by first creating an unsupervised discretization of the signal

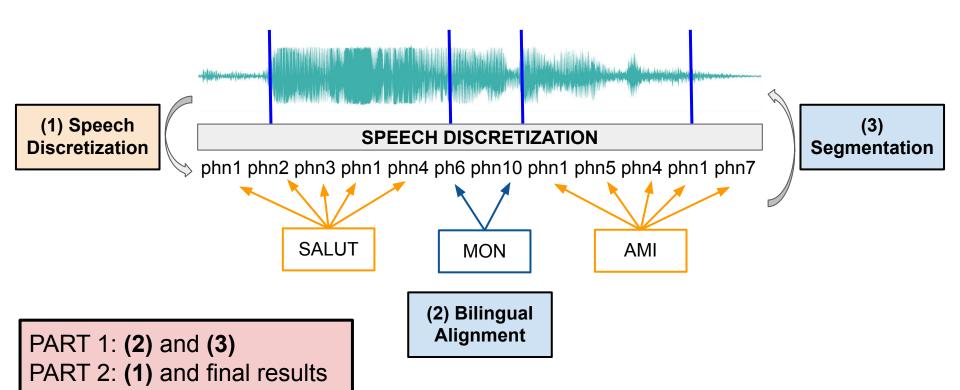












PART 1 A Bilingual Attention-based UWS Model

Corresponding publications:

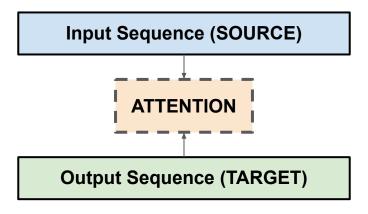
- Empirical Evaluation of Sequence-to-Sequence Models for Word Discovery in Low-resource Settings. Boito et al. INTERSPEECH 2019.
- Investigating Alignment Interpretability for low-resource NMT. Boito et al. Machine Translation Journal: Special Issue on Machine Translation for Low-resource Languages. Springer Netherlands 2021.





Towards Bilingual Supervision

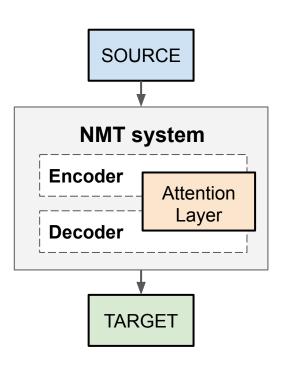
- → Sequence-to-sequence (seq2seq) models interfaced with attention emerged as popular solutions for a variety of NLProc tasks:
 - Automatic Speech Recognition [24,25] (Source: speech, Target: text)
 - ◆ Text-to-Speech Synthesis [22,23] (Source: text, Target: speech)
 - ◆ Neural Machine Translation [12,15,16] (Source: text/speech, Target: text)





Towards Bilingual Supervision

Neural Machine Translation (NMT) models

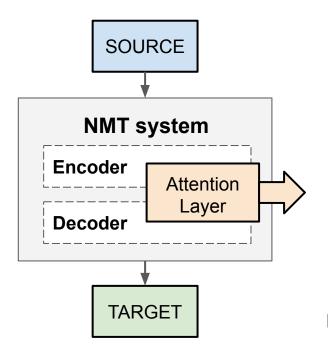


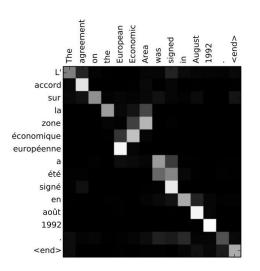
- → Trained with bilingual datasets
- Attention Layer captures the importance of source tokens for generating each target token
- Posterior to training, the output of this layer can be visualized



Towards Bilingual Supervision

Neural Machine Translation (NMT) models





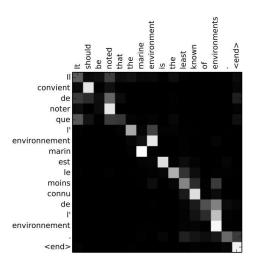
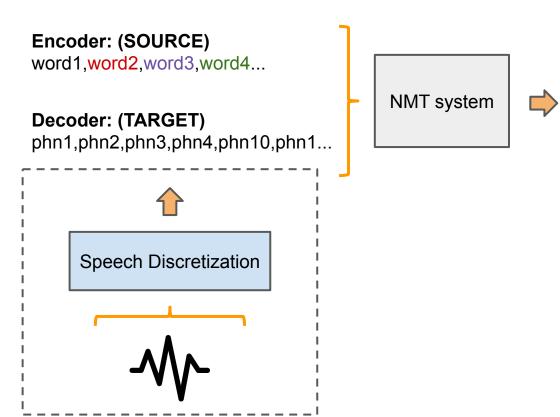


Figure: soft-alignment heatmaps from Bahdanau et al. 2015 [12]



Producing Bilingual Alignment and Segmentation



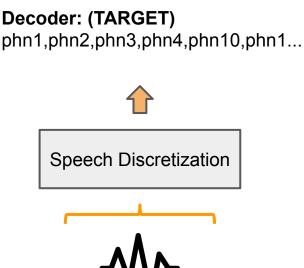


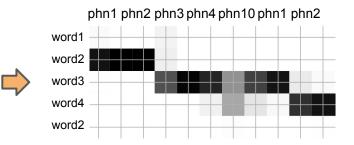
Producing Bilingual Alignment and Segmentation

NMT system

Encoder: (SOURCE) word1,word2,word3,word4...

Decoder: (TARGET)







Producing Bilingual Alignment and Segmentation

Encoder: (SOURCE) word1,word2,word3,word4...

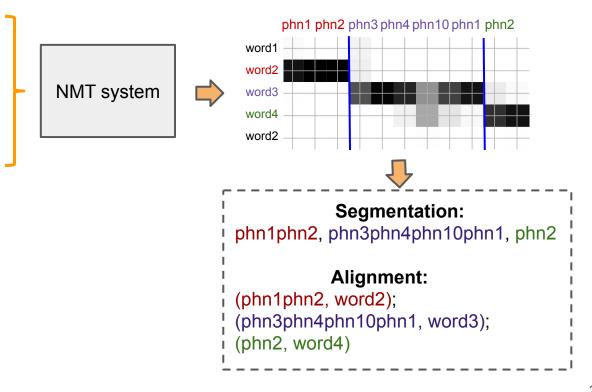
Decoder: (TARGET)

phn1,phn2,phn3,phn4,phn10,phn1...



Speech Discretization







Bilingual UWS: Research Questions

- R1. Can we use the **soft-alignment probability matrices** learned during NMT training for segmentation in low-resource settings?
- R2. What is the impact of the type of attention mechanism?
- R3. What is the impact of dataset size?
- R4. What is the **language** impact?

 Not presented here, but investigated in Boito et al. [13]



Experimental Settings

R1. Can we use the soft-alignment probability matrices learned during NMT training for segmentation in low-resource settings?

- We start from the topline performance expected for a speech discretization model: the true phones in the target language.
- → We compare our model against a strong (monolingual) baseline dpseg¹[3]. This baseline is a monolingual approach for UWS, very robust in low-resource.



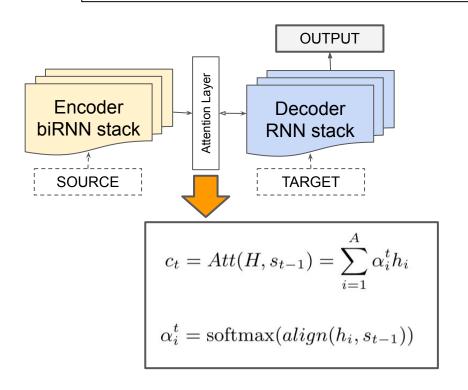
Experimental Settings: 3 different NMT models

R2. What is the impact of the **type of attention mechanism**?



NMT Models (1): RNN

Global attention from Bahdanau et al. 2015 [12]



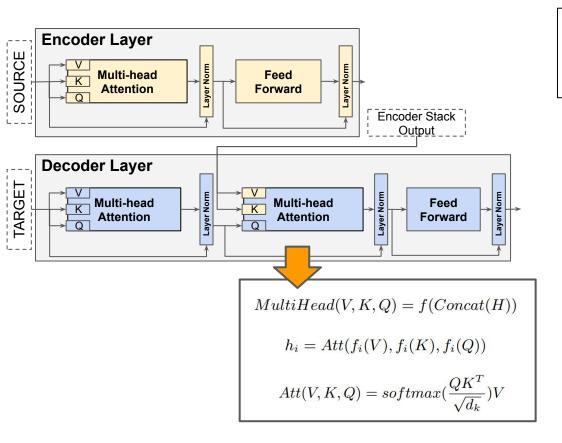
Attention appears in the form of **context vectors** for each decoder step *t*.

Computed using the set of source annotations H and the last state of the decoder network s_{t-1} (translation context).

The align layer is a feed-forward neural network trained jointly.



NMT Models (2): Transformer



Multi-head attention from Vaswani et al. 2017 [15]

From a pair of key-value vectors and a query vector, the **attention layer** produces the weighted sum.

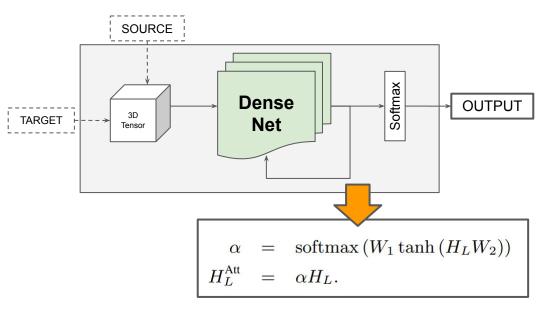
Weights computed by **Scaled dot-product (SDP) Attention** for each head.

Multi-head attention: SDP for several heads.



NMT Models (3): 2D-CNN

Pervasive attention from Elbayad et al. 2018 [16]



Source and target sequences are encoded jointly. This acts as an attention-like mechanism, since individual source elements are re-encoded as the output is generated.

Attention weight tensor α is computed from the last activation tensor H_L , to pool the elements of the same tensor along the source dimension.



Experimental Settings: 3 different NMT models

R2. What is the impact of the type of attention mechanism?

- → RNN: Global Attention [12]

 The attention layer creates context vectors for weighting each target token.
- Transformer: Multi-head Attention [15]
 Multiple attentions in parallel (heads) capture different equivalence functions between sequences.
- → 2D-CNN: Pervasive Attention [16] Joint encoding acts as an attention-like mechanism. Source elements are re-encoded as the output is generated.



Experimental Settings: 3 datasets

R3. What is the impact of dataset size?

(MB-FR) Mboshi-French parallel corpus [17] documentation dataset; tailored sentences

5,130 sentences (4h of speech) from the documentation of Mboshi, an unwritten language spoken in Congo-Brazzaville.¹





Experimental Settings: 3 datasets

R3. What is the impact of **dataset** size?

(MB-FR) Mboshi-French parallel corpus [17] documentation dataset; tailored sentences

documentation dataset, tailored sentences

(EN-FR) English-French parallel corpus [18] **librispeech** augmentation in French; noisy aligned information (filtered)

Data impact analysis

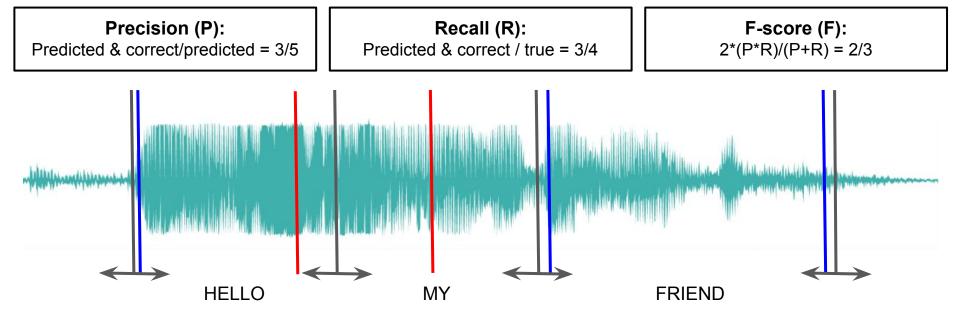


33K	EN-FR (1)	
5K	EN-FR (2)	MB-FR (3)



Experimental Settings: Evaluation

We evaluate it using tolerance windows.1



Outside the tolerance: a miss.

Inside the tolerance: a hit.

¹The tolerance window we use is defined on the Zero Resource Challenge 2017 Track 2.



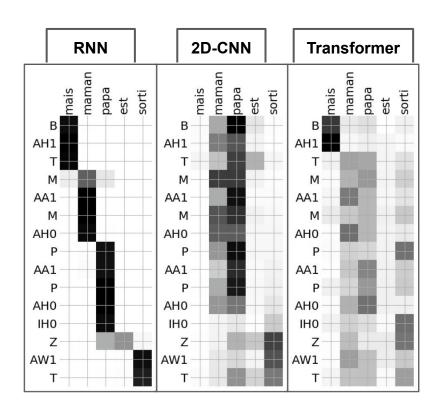
What about the alignment quality?

How do we evaluate this without having gold (word-level) alignment information?

In a more practical sense:

Are all three of these good for our task?

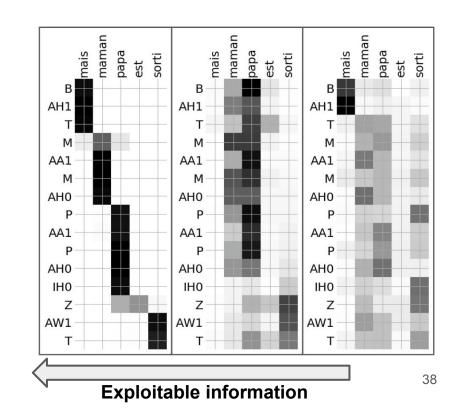






Alignment Assessment with AVERAGE NORMALIZED ENTROPY (ANE)

- Intuition: sharper alignments are more informative.
- Soft-alignment probability matrix: one probability distribution per line (target symbol)



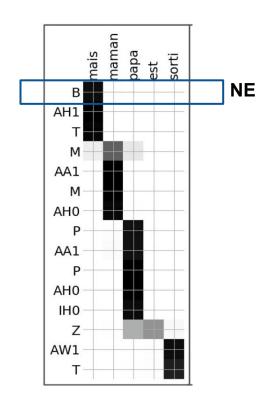




Alignment Assessment with AVERAGE NORMALIZED ENTROPY (ANE)

For every line in the matrix we compute normalized entropy (NE).

$$NE(t_i, s) = -\sum_{j=1}^{|s|} P(t_i, s_j) \cdot \log_{|s|} (P(t_i, s_j))$$



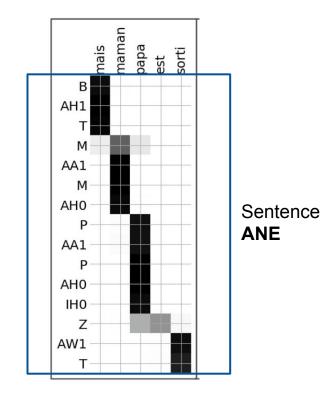


Alignment Assessment with AVERAGE NORMALIZED ENTROPY (ANE)

For every line in the matrix we compute normalized entropy (NE). We average over sets of distributions.

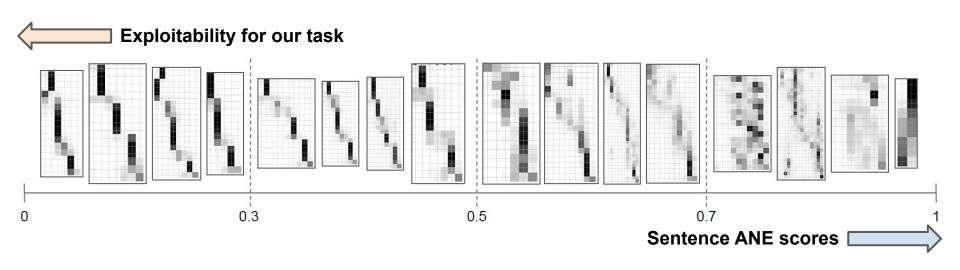
$$NE(t_i, s) = -\sum_{j=1}^{|s|} P(t_i, s_j) \cdot \log_{|s|} (P(t_i, s_j))$$

$$ANE(t, s) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{|t|} NE(t_i, s)}{|t|}$$





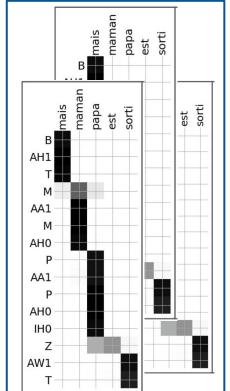
Alignment Assessment with AVERAGE NORMALIZED ENTROPY (ANE)





Alignment Assessment with AVERAGE NORMALIZED ENTROPY (ANE)

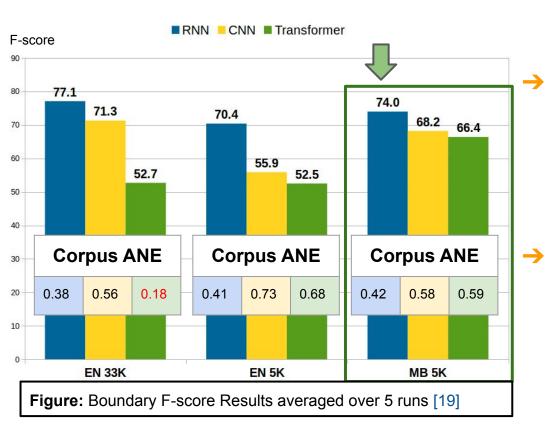
→ To summarize the quality of the soft-alignment probability matrices produced by a given NMT model using a given dataset



Corpus **ANE**



UWS Results



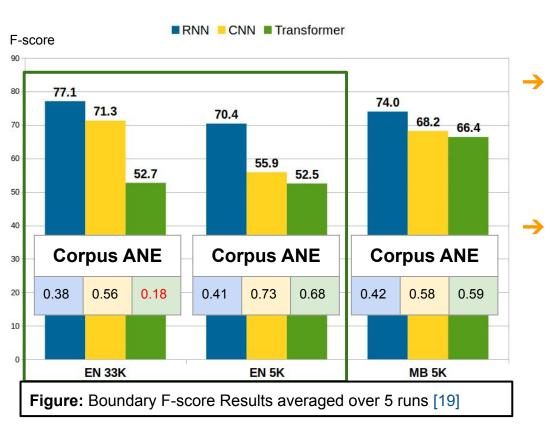
We are able to train models in very low-resource settings, scoring some points behind the dpseg baseline (77.1 for MB). (R1)

The RNN-based model performed the best in our setting. (R2)

Experimental settings and corpora: https://gitlab.com/mzboito/attention_study



UWS Results



We can see the impact of data reduction, but some models are more sensitive to it than others. (R3)

Models with lower **Corpus ANE** reached better segmentation results (negative Pearson's correlation relationship).

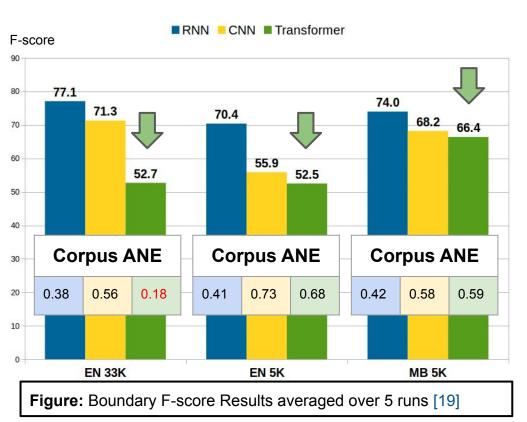
(alignment assessment)

Experimental settings and corpora: https://gitlab.com/mzboito/attention_study

1. Pipeline | 2. Experimental protocol | 3. Results



UWS Results



- → How to choose a head from Transformer? [20,21]
- We reported results using corpus ANE for selecting the head.

We also experimented with:

- Models from 1 to 3 layers
- ◆ 1, 2 and 4 heads
- Intra- and inter-layer averaging

Experimental settings and corpora: https://gitlab.com/mzboito/attention_study



UWS Results

→ We showed that we are able to apply this pipeline for bilingual segmentation starting from a perfect discretization for the speech

We now focus on generating real speech discretization in low-resource settings

PART 2 Speech Discretization for UWS

Corresponding publications:

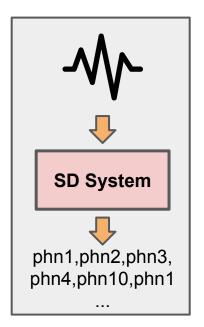
- Unsupervised Word Segmentation from Speech With Attention. Boito et al. INTERSPEECH 2018.
- Unsupervised Word Segmentation from Discrete Speech Units in Low-Resource Settings. Boito et al. ArXiv 2021.





Exploitable SD models for Low-Resource UWS

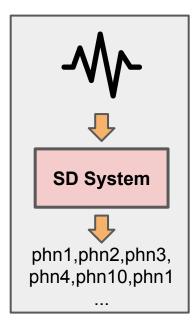
→ Speech Discretization (SD) models produce a sequence of discrete speech units representing input utterances with no access to transcriptions [26-30]





Exploitable SD models for Low-Resource UWS

→ Speech Discretization (SD) models produce a sequence of discrete speech units representing input utterances with no access to transcriptions [26-30]



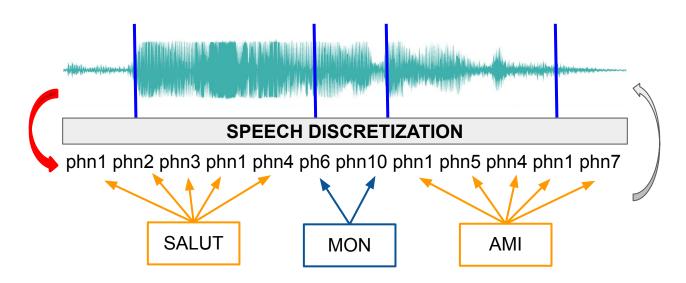
What do we expect from our discretization process?

- → The model needs to work well in low-resource.
- → The model needs to output a concise representation:
 - The baseline dpseg cannot deal with sequences longer than 350 units
 - Our models can accommodate longer sequences, but it impacts performance (challenging alignment)



SD for Bilingual UWS: Research Question

R5. Can we directly use the output of SD models as input for our bilingual UWS approach in low-resource settings?





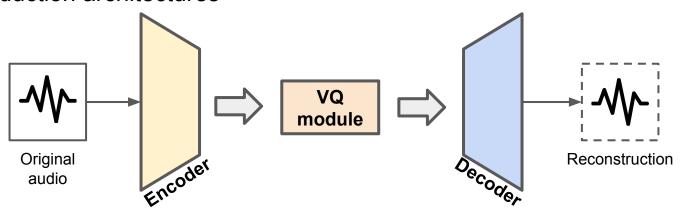
Speech Discretization Models: Bayesian Generative Models

- Very efficient in low-resource settings
- Similar to a phone-loop model:
 - Each unit is modeled by an HMM/GMM
 - The prior distribution over all HMMs is modeled by a Dirichlet Process
- → Models:
 - 1. HMM/GMM (HMM) [26]: Every possible sound can be a unit
 - 2. Subspace HMM (SHMM) [27]: Prior over a phonetic subspace
 - Hierarchical Subspace HMM (H-SHMM) [28]: Subspace adaptation from different languages for phone prediction



Speech Discretization Models: Vector Quantization (VQ) Models

- Novel approaches for speech processing, popular in high-resource settings.
- Models:
 - VQ-Variational Auto-Encoder (VAE) [29]: inspired by dimensionality reduction architectures

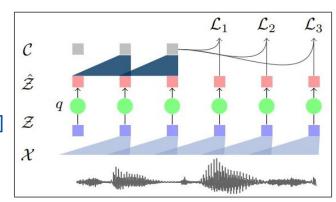




Speech Discretization Models: Vector Quantization (VQ) Models

- Models:
 - 1. VQ-VAE [29]: inspired by input dimensionality reduction architectures
 - 2. VQ-WAV2VEC [30]: inspired by self-supervised models trained with a context-prediction loss

Figure: The vq-wav2vec architecture. Figure taken from the original paper [30]



- Encoder $(X \rightarrow Z)$
- 2. Quantizer (Z→Z')
- Aggregator (Z'→C)



Experimental Settings

- We train all models with only 4 hours of speech. We focus on generating concise representations.
 - Bayesian Models
 - HMM/GMM (HMM)
 - Subspace HMM (SHMM)
 - Hierarchical Subspace HMM (H-SHMM)
 - VQ Neural Models
 - VQ-VAE
 - VQ-WAV2VEC (V16)
 - VQ-WAV2VEC (V36)

Trained on 4 hours of Mboshi data!



Statistics Over the Produced Sequences

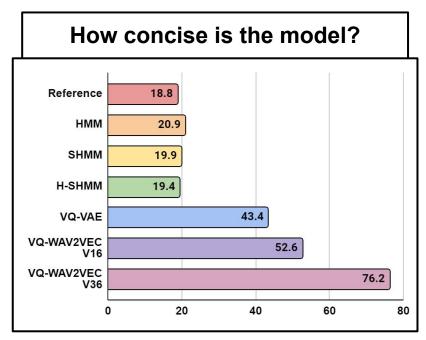


Figure: Average Sequence Length for SD models

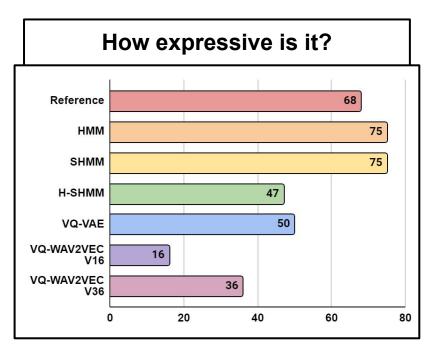


Figure: Vocabulary (# units) for SD models



Statistics Over the Produced Sequences: Bayesian Models

- → The Bayesian models produce a more concise output, closer to the reference
- → They also produce a similar number of units (excluding H-SHMM)

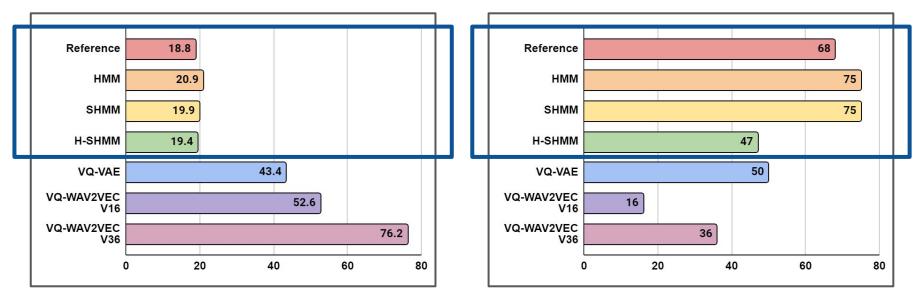


Figure: Average Sequence Length for SD models

Figure: Vocabulary (# units) for SD models



Statistics Over the Produced Sequences: VQ Neural Models

→ In order to reduce the length of the representation generated by VQ-based models, we are forced to also reduce the phone vocabulary.

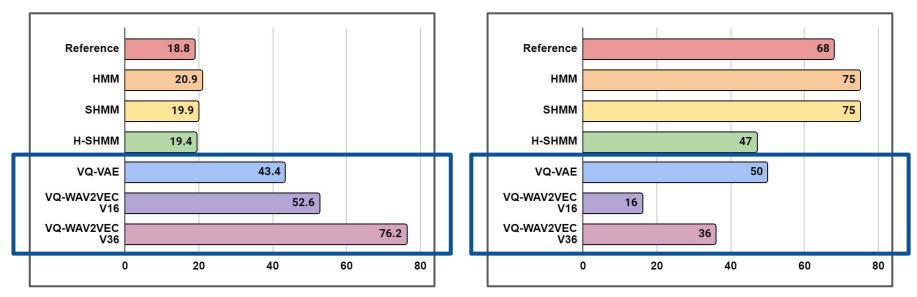


Figure: Average Sequence Length for SD models

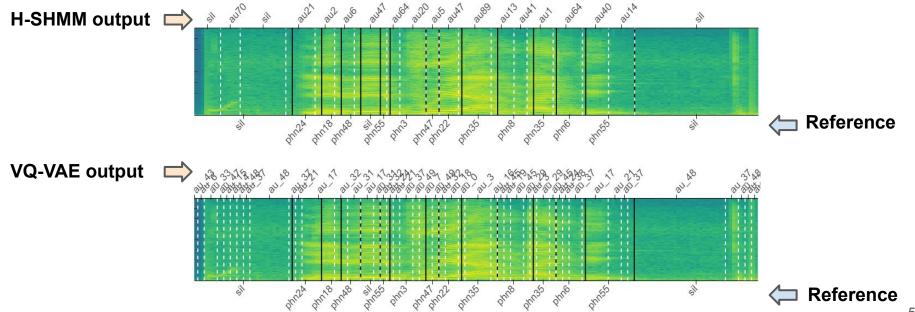
Figure: Vocabulary (# units) for SD models



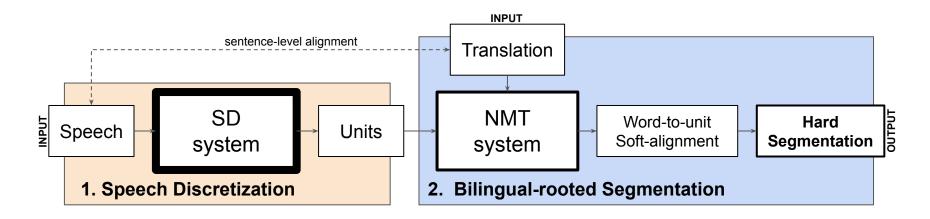
Studying the SD Representation

Example: The same sentence, two approaches

True Boundary ———
Output Boundary ————

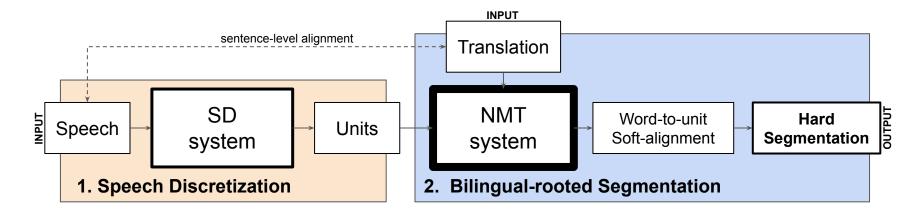






- 6 setups for SD:
 - Bayesian Models: HMM, SHMM, H-SHMM
 - VQ Neural Models: VQ-VAE, VQ-WAV2VEC (V=16), VQ-WAV2VEC (V=36)





→ Best NMT model: RNN from Bahdanau et al. [12]



Bilingual UWS from Speech: Results

- Results for Mboshi
- → 5 models, 6 setups
 - **1.** HMM
 - 2. SHMM
 - 3. H-SHMM
 - 4. VQ-VAE
 - 5. VQ-W2V V=16
 - 6. VQ-W2V V=36

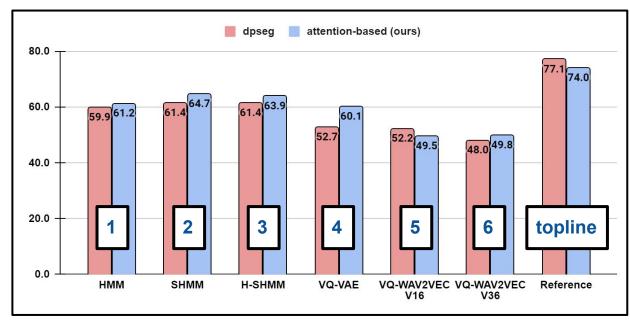


Figure: Boundary UWS F-score results for the different SD models, using the MB-FR dataset. The result is the average over 5 runs.



Bilingual UWS from Speech: Results

- We notice a drop in performance, but we still successfully generate segmentation (R5)
- We are competitive against dpseg. Why?
 - The bilingual information might be helping us for this **noisier setup**

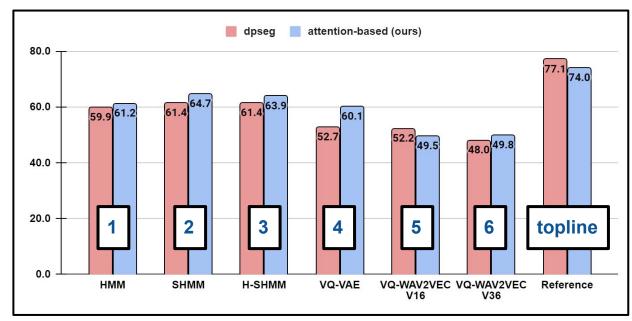


Figure: Boundary UWS F-score results for the different SD models, using the MB-FR dataset. The result is the average over 5 runs.



Bilingual UWS from Speech: Results

- Bayesian models are the most exploitable, in special SHMM and H-SHMM
- → VQ-models are difficult to directly exploit for our task
 - Also verified recently in Kamper and Nieker [31]

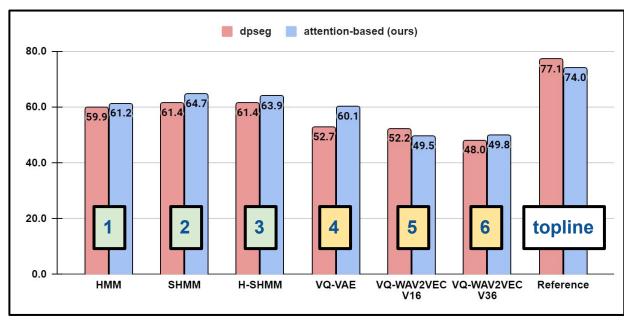


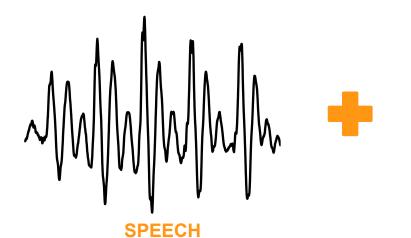
Figure: Boundary UWS F-score results for the different SD models, using the MB-FR dataset. The result is the average over 5 runs.

Conclusion





- We proposed a pipeline for CLD able to:
 - Process speech in low-resource settings
 - Incorporate bilingual information, generating bilingual links



Translations

to a well-documented language



- We proposed a pipeline for CLD able to:
 - Process speech in low-resource settings
 - Incorporate bilingual information, generating bilingual links
- In this process we:
 - Investigated different speech discretization approaches for UWS [32]
 - Bayesian models produce a better representation, due to their Acoustic Unit Discovery modeling



- We proposed a pipeline for CLD able to:
 - Process speech in low-resource settings
 - Incorporate bilingual information, generating bilingual links
- In this process we:
 - Investigated different speech discretization approaches for UWS [32]
 - Compared different attention-based NMT models in low-resource [19]
 - Found the following ranking: RNN > 2D-CNN > Transformer
 - Proposed a task-agnostic metric (ANE) for assessing quality in soft-alignment probability matrices



- → We proposed a pipeline for CLD able to:
 - Process speech in low-resource settings
 - Incorporate bilingual information, generating bilingual links
- In this process we:
 - Investigated different speech discretization approaches for UWS [32]
 - Compared different attention-based NMT models in low-resource [19]
 - Achieved competitive results in a realistic scenario (only 5k sentences) against a strong monolingual baseline (dpseg).
 - While not shown here, this trend was also verified in 4 other languages: Finnish, Hungarian, Romanian and Russian.



Future Work

- → Application of SSL models for low-resource audio processing
 - Fine-tuning multilingual models on target data
 - Removing the bottleneck of low-resource audio processing



Future Work

- Application of SSL models for low-resource audio processing
 - Fine-tuning multilingual models on target data
 - Removing the bottleneck of low-resource audio processing
- Leveraging information inside the attention layer during training
 - Biasing the alignment discovered, similar to Garg et al. [36] and Godard et al. [37]



Future Work

- Application of SSL models for low-resource audio processing
 - Fine-tuning multilingual models on target data
 - Removing the bottleneck of low-resource audio processing
- Leveraging information inside the attention layer during training
 - Biasing the alignment discovered, similar to Garg et al. [36] and Godard et al. [37]
- Investigation of the attention mechanism in end-to-end speech translation models
 - If attention remains exploitable, we could perform UWS from speech

Thank you.

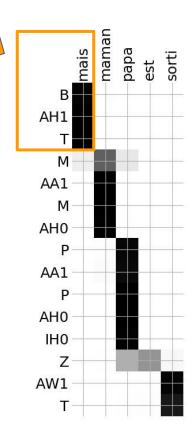
Alignment ANE

ANE Application: Exploiting the Alignments

Aligned pair

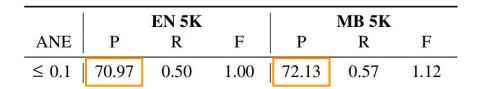
We accumulate ANE for all the (discovered type, aligned information) pairs discovered by our best 5K models in the whole corpus

This allow us to rank discovered alignments by their confidence.





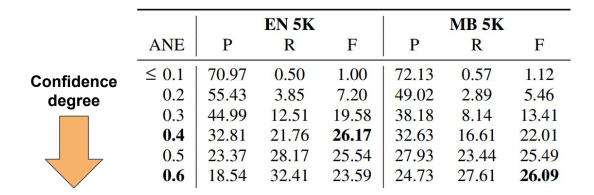
ANE over (discovered type, aligned information) pairs for the entire dataset



 High-confidence alignments cover a small portion of the corpus, but have high precision



ANE over (discovered type, aligned information) pairs for the entire dataset



 Accepting a wider confidence window, we decrease precision results, but increase coverage



Alignment ANE can be used for filtering the resulting lexicon, increasing type discovery results

	EN 5K			MB 5K			
ANE	P	R	F	P	R	F	
≤ 0.1	70.97	0.50	1.00	72.13	0.57	1.12	
0.2	55.43	3.85	7.20	49.02	2.89	5.46	
0.3	44.99	12.51	19.58	38.18	8.14	13.41	
0.4	32.81	21.76	26.17	32.63	16.61	22.01	
0.5	23.37	28.17	25.54	27.93	23.44	25.49	
0.6	18.54	32.41	23.59	24.73	27.61	26.09	
0.7	16.23	34.34	22.04	23.00	30.12	26.08	
0.8	15.21	35.16	21.23	22.17	30.95	25.84	
0.9	15.01	35.31	21.06	22.06	31.05	25.80	
all	15.01	35.34	21.07	22.06	31.05	25.80	



- → Low ANE: more frequently correct types, good alignment
- → High ANE: more frequently incorrect types and alignments artifacts

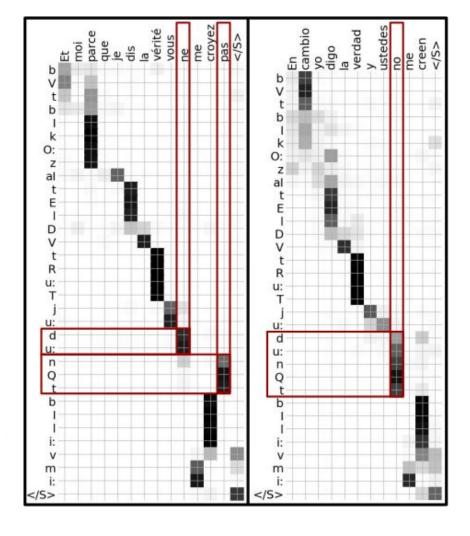
	Phoneme Sequence	Grapheme	Aligned Information		
1	SER1	sir			
2	HHAH1SH	hush	chut		
3	FIH1SHER0	fisher	fisher		
4	KLER1K	clerk	clerc		
5	KIH1S	kiss	embrasse		
6	GRIH1LD	grilled	grilled		
7	WUH1D	would	m'ennuierais		
8	HHEH1LP	help	aidez		
9	DOW1DOW0	dodo	dodo		
10	KRAE1BZ	crabs	crabes		

	Phoneme Sequence	Grapheme	Aligned Information		
1	AH0	а	convenablement		
2	IH1	Not a word	ah		
3	D	Not a word	riant		
4	N	Not a word	obéit		
5	YUW1	you	diable		
6	IH1	Not a word	qu'en		
7	AE1T	at	laquelle		
8	Z	Not a word	bas		
9	YUW1P	Not a word			
10	L	Not a word	parfaitement		

Language Impact

		EN	ES	EU	FI	FR	HU	RO	RU
neural	EN	1	51.8	36.1	53.8	65.8	47.7	57.5	50.3
	ES	60.1	•	38.4	46.3	63.4	45.9	53.5	46.3
	EU	48.3	44.2	-	42.5	46.4	41.2	44.7	41.8
	FI	60.0	46.8	36.5	•	53.7	50.1	51.5	53.5
	FR	69.1	57.7	37.0	53.7	1	47.4	62.8	49.8
	H	53.3	46.0	36.5	52.9	48.7	-	48.7	49.8
	RO	60.9	51.5	37.9	51.1	63.9	47.6	1	51.6
	RU	58.7	47.6	35.6	54.7	54.0	49.3	53.9	-
hybrid	EN	-	57.9	43.5	57.5	69.6	52.9	64.2	58.1
	ES	66.4	-	47.3	54.3	68.8	51.7	63.4	56.1
	ΕU	58.6	53.1	2	50.1	58.1	49.2	55.1	50.1
	FI	66.5	55.6	45.7	•	62.7	58.5	60.7	62.6
	FR	73.3	62.1	45.6	56.9	-	54.2	70.0	59.5
	HU	62.6	54.2	45.0	59.7	60.0	-	58.8	59.3
	RO	68.2	57.6	46.9	56.2	69.3	53.8	-	60.1
	RU	66.8	56.1	44.6	60.7	63.0	55.3	63.6	12
dp	seg	82.4	79.2	81.0	80.0	78.1	75.5	82.0	78.3

Table 3: Word Segmentation Boundary F-score results for neural (top), hybrid (middle) and dpseg (bottom). The columns represent the target of the segmentation, while the rows represented the translation language used. For bilingual models, darker squares represent higher scores. Better visualized in color.



SELMA







SELMA Consortium Project¹

Investigation of the attention mechanism in end-to-end speech translation models

SELMA stands for **Stream Learning** for **Multilingual Knowledge Transfer**

- Platform for journalists to browse multilingual data from colleagues
- The goal is to develop speech technologies in 30 different languages, many of them low-resource
 - Speech Recognition;
 - **Speech-to-Text Translation**;
 - Speech-to-Speech Translation;
 - Speech and Textual Named Entity Recognition.

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