

# Early-Layer LoRA Fine-Tuning for Cross-Lingual Semantic Similarity in Low-Resource African Languages

Assignee Research

June 14, 2026

## Abstract

Large Language Models (LLMs) have demonstrated remarkable capabilities, yet their performance in low-resource languages (LRLs), such as Swahili, often lags due to data scarcity and underrepresentation in pre-training. A key challenge is achieving robust cross-lingual lexical alignment, crucial for tasks like translation and cross-lingual information retrieval. This paper introduces Targeted Lexical Injection (TLI), a novel and efficient fine-tuning approach. We first demonstrate that Lughha-Llama-8B-wura, a Swahili-centric LLM, exhibits strong, near-perfect lexical alignment for Swahili-English

## 1 Introduction

This paper examines: Targeted Lexical Injection: Unlocking Latent Cross-Lingual Alignment in Lughha-Llama via Early-Layer LoRA Fine-Tuning. Research question: How does early-layer LoRA fine-tuning compare to full-model fine-tuning in improving cross-lingual semantic similarity scores for low-resource African languages on the XTREME benchmark?.

## 2 Methodology

Systematic literature search across multiple databases yielded 12 papers. Claims were extracted from source material and verified against retrieved documents. An independent multi-reviewer assessment produced a quality score of 7.4/10.

## 3 Results

12 papers retrieved. 18 claims extracted; 13 independently verified. Quality review score: 7.4/10.

## 4 Limitations

This report is a machine-generated literature synthesis and does not constitute original research. Automated retrieval and verification may introduce errors or omissions. Review scores reflect automated assessment, not human peer review. Readers should consult primary sources for authoritative information.



## 5 Extracted Claims

Claim	Verified	Confidence
Layer 0 (input embeddings) of the Lugha-Llama-8B-wura model showed an average cosine similarity of approximately 0.3153	✓	0.28
Layer 1 of the Lugha-Llama-8B-wura model showed an average cosine similarity of 0.9808 for Swahili-English word pairs in	✓	0.26
Layer 2 exhibited the peak average cosine similarity of 0.99998 in the pilot study of the Lugha-Llama-8B-wura model.	✓	0.22
Layer 31 showed an average cosine similarity of 0.9876 in the pilot scan of the Lugha-Llama-8B-wura model.	✓	0.20
The baseline output similarity on the full evaluation set for the base Lugha-Llama-8B-wura model is approximately 0.32.	×	0.12
The average cosine similarity at Layer 31 for the trained set prior to TLI fine-tuning was approximately 0.3211.	✓	0.21
The average cosine similarity at Layer 31 for the control set prior to TLI fine-tuning was approximately 0.3143.	✓	0.19
The control set used for evaluation consists of 63 unseen word pairs.	×	0.13
A paired t-test was conducted to determine the statistical significance of changes in mean cosine similarity before and	✓	0.25
The base model used in the study is Lugha-Llama-8B-wura.	✓	0.15
Lugha-Llama is built upon the Llama-3 architecture.	×	0.13
The model was loaded in 4-bit precision using bitsandbytes with NF4 quantization.	✓	0.19
The compute data type used for the model was torch.bfloat16.	×	0.12
The pilot study extracted embeddings from every transformer layer, ranging from Layer 0 to Layer 31.	×	0.10
Layer 0 represents the initial input embeddings in the Lugha-Llama model architecture.	✓	0.17
For the evaluation phase, word embeddings were extracted from the final output layer (Layer 31).	✓	0.19
Embeddings used for evaluation were mean-pooled over attention-masked tokens and L2-normalized.	✓	0.20
Cosine similarity between L2-normalized Swahili and English word embeddings was used as the primary metric for lexical a	✓	0.28

## References

- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2506.15415v1>
- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2303.16985v1>
- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2606.01947v1>