

Correlation Between Intermediate-Target Linguistic Distance and Zero-Shot Cross-Lingual Transfer Effectiveness on PAWS-X

Assignee Research

June 25, 2026

Abstract

Multilingual BERT (mBERT), a language model pre-trained on large multilingual corpora, has impressive zero-shot cross-lingual transfer capabilities and performs surprisingly well on zero-shot POS tagging and Named Entity Recognition (NER), as well as on cross-lingual model transfer. At present, the mainstream methods to solve the cross-lingual downstream tasks are always using the last transformer layer's output of mBERT as the representation of linguistic information. In this work, we explore the complementary property of lower layers to the last transformer layer of mBERT. A feature aggregat

1 Introduction

This paper examines: Feature Aggregation in Zero-Shot Cross-Lingual Transfer Using Multilingual BERT. Research question: What is the correlation between the linguistic distance of the intermediate task language and the target language in determining the effectiveness of zero-shot cross-lingual transfer on the PAWS-X dataset?.

2 Methodology

Systematic literature search across multiple databases yielded 10 papers. Claims were extracted from source material and verified against retrieved documents. An independent multi-reviewer assessment produced a quality score of 7.0/10.

3 Results

10 papers retrieved. 22 claims extracted; 13 independently verified. Quality review score: 7.0/10.

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
Lower layers of mBERT provide more cross-lingual information while upper layers provide more language structure informat	✓	0.29
The output of layers before the last layer can provide supplementary information to the last layer of mBERT for zero-sho	✓	0.28
The proposed method uses a feature aggregation module based on an attention mechanism to fuse information from two trans	✓	0.25
Experimental results were conducted on four cross-lingual downstream datasets.	✓	0.17
The best results of aggregation models outperform the baseline by 1 to 3 absolute percentage points.	✓	0.17
The aggregation models achieve performance improvements on all four downstream tasks compared to the baseline.	✓	0.17
The best performances for the four tasks are obtained with different fusion layers.	✓	0.21
Wang et al. state that the ability to extract good semantic and structural features is a crucial reason for the model’s	✓	0.24
Strong similarities exist between two languages if they belong to the same language family.	✓	0.20
The baseline model achieved 65.40% accuracy on the XNLI task.	×	0.09
The baseline model achieved 81.94% accuracy on the PAWS-X task.	×	0.09
The baseline model achieved 62.17% F1 score on the NER task.	×	0.11
The baseline model achieved 70.28% F1 score on the POS task.	×	0.10
The D 11 model (fusing last and 11th layers) achieved 66.91% accuracy on the XNLI task.	×	0.09
The D 10 model achieved the highest accuracy on the PAWS-X task with 84.33%.	×	0.08
The D 8 model achieved the highest F1 score on the NER task with 63.34%.	×	0.08
The D 10 model achieved the highest F1 score on the POS task with 71.81%.	×	0.09
The ‘enf’ subset represents languages that belong to the same language family as English.	✓	0.18
The ‘noenf’ subset represents languages that belong to different language families from English.	✓	0.17
The mBERT representation is a tensor with dimensions $B \times T \times E$, where B is batch size, T is sentence length, and E is wo	×	0.15
The Attentional Information Fusion (AIF) module contains two convolution layers.	✓	0.25
The AIF module extracts global and local in	✓	0.21

References

- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2505.18673v1>
- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2205.08497v1>
- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2503.19979v1>