



# Building Language Technologies for Everyone

Daan van Esch ([@daanvanesch](#))  
Google Research

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# Language Tech

- Display

- Unicode → [unicode.org](https://unicode.org)
- Fonts → [fonts.google.com/noto](https://fonts.google.com/noto) and [github.com/googlefonts/noto-fonts](https://github.com/googlefonts/noto-fonts)
- Rendering → [github.com/harfbuzz](https://github.com/harfbuzz)

- Input

- Keyboards, physical and virtual (on smartphones)
- Handwriting recognition and optical character recognition (OCR)
- Speech recognition (ASR)

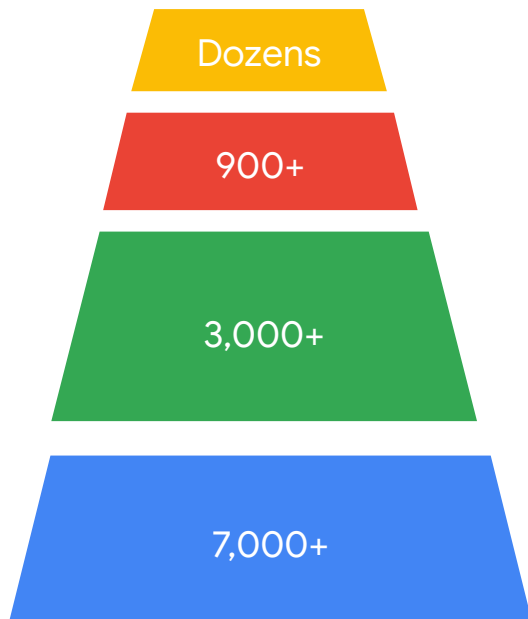
- Understanding


- Morphological analysis
- Part-of-speech tagging
- Syntactic parsing
- Semantic/intent classification

- Generation

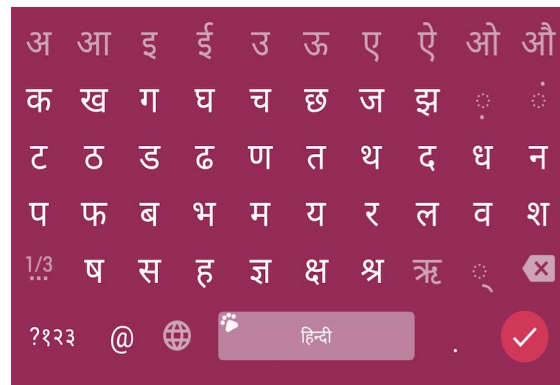
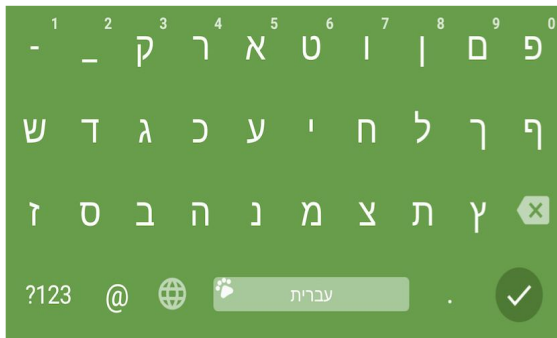
- Text-to-speech
- Natural-language generation

- Machine translation



- Google **Speech-to-Text** in ~130, **Text-to-Speech** in ~60
- **Gboard** today in **900+** language varieties (Android)
- Covering 95% of the world in their first language 
- At least 3,000 have some written tradition (probably more)
- Almost all living writing systems supported by **Unicode**
- Almost all of Unicode supported by Google's free open-source **Noto** fonts & the HarfBuzz renderer
- 7,000+ living languages in the world

# Developing Keyboards for 900+ Languages



Languages with at least 10 million first-language speakers<sup>[9]</sup>

Rank ↕	Language ↕	Speakers (millions) ↕	Percentage of world pop. ↕ (March 2019) <sup>[10]</sup>	Language family ↕	Branch ↕
1	Mandarin Chinese	918	11.922%	Sino-Tibetan	Sinitic
2	Spanish	480	5.994%	Indo-European	Romance
3	English	379	4.922%	Indo-European	Germanic
4	Hindi (sanskritised Hindustani) <sup>[11]</sup>	341	4.429%	Indo-European	Indo-Aryan
5	Bengali	300	4.000%	Indo-European	Indo-Aryan
6	Portuguese	221	2.870%	Indo-European	Romance
7	Russian	154	2.000%	Indo-European	Balto-Slavic
8	Japanese	128	1.662%	Japonic	Japanese
9	Western Punjabi <sup>[12]</sup>	92.7	1.204%	Indo-European	Indo-Aryan
10	Marathi	83.1	1.079%	Indo-European	Indo-Aryan
11	Telugu	82.0	1.065%	Dravidian	South-Central
12	Wu Chinese	81.4	1.057%	Sino-Tibetan	Sinitic
13	Turkish	79.4	1.031%	Turkic	Oghuz
14	Korean	77.3	1.004%	Koreanic	language isolate
15	French	77.2	1.003%	Indo-European	Romance
16	German (only Standard German)	76.1	0.988%	Indo-European	Germanic
17	Vietnamese	76.0	0.987%	Austroasiatic	Vietic
18	Tamil	75.0	0.974%	Dravidian	South
19	Yue Chinese	73.1	0.949%	Sino-Tibetan	Sinitic
20	Urdu (Persianised Hindustani) <sup>[11]</sup>	68.6	0.891%	Indo-European	Indo-Aryan

(Source: English Wikipedia, "List of languages by number of native speakers")

# Writing System and Speaker Metadata for 2,800+ Language Varieties

Daan van Esch, Tamar Lucassen, Sebastian Ruder, Isaac Caswell, Clara Rivera

Google Research

1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA

{dvanesch,tlucassen,ruder,icaswell,rivera}@google.com

## Abstract

We describe an open-source dataset providing metadata for about 2,800 language varieties used in the world today. Specifically, the dataset provides the attested writing system(s) for each of these 2,800+ varieties, as well as an estimated speaker count for each variety. This data set was developed through internal research and has been used for analyses around language technologies. This is the largest publicly-available, machine-readable resource with writing system and speaker information for the world’s languages. We hope the availability of this data will catalyze research in under-represented languages.

**Keywords:** multilingual, low-resource, natural language processing

## 1. Introduction

Today, language technologies are easily available in only a small minority of the world’s 7,000+ language varieties. For example, technologies like automatic speech recognition and neural machine translation are available from commercial vendors in about 100 language varieties; even keyboards and spell-checkers, which are relatively straightforward to develop, are only available in about 1,000–1,500 varieties (Mager et al., 2018; van Esch et al., 2019; Kuhn et al., 2020).

	# of language varieties	Speaker data	Writing system data	Open-source
Wikipedia list	100	✓	✗	✓
ISO 639-3	7,893	✗	✗	✓
Glottolog	8,549	✗	✗	✓
Ethnologue	7,459	✓	✗	✗
WALS	2,662	✗	✗	✓
Ours	2,831	✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Number of languages and information available in existing language resources compared to ours.

*(Will be presented at LREC 2022 in Marseille in June and posted to GitHub)*



## Mining Training Data for Language Modeling Across the World's Languages

*Manasa Prasad, Theresa Breiner, Daan van Esch*

Google LLC, Mountain View (CA), United States

pbmanasa@google.com, tbreiner@google.com, dvanesch@google.com

### Abstract

Building smart keyboards and speech recognition systems for new languages requires a large, clean text corpus to train n-gram language models on. We report our findings on how much text data can realistically be found on the web across thousands of languages. In addition, we describe an innovative, scalable approach to normalizing this data: all data sources are noisy to some extent, but this situation is even more severe for low-resource languages. To help clean the data we find across all languages in a scalable way, we built a pipeline to automatically derive the configuration for language-specific text normalization systems, which we describe here as well.

**Index Terms:** speech recognition, keyboard input, low-resource languages, data mining, language modeling, text normalization

Specifically, we have gathered data sets across hundreds of languages that can be used to train n-gram language models using the following steps:

1. Identifying sentence and wordlist data for as many languages as possible
2. Merging the data into consistent language codes
3. Automatically deriving a preliminary normalization configuration
4. Normalizing the data to reduce noise levels

We will describe these in more detail below. Our main findings are that:

- There are quite a few resources that can be used to train language models, across a surprisingly large number of languages
- Even if noise levels are relatively high, automatic





- Main page
- List of wikis
- Community portal
- All recent changes
- Help
- Manual
- Donate

Navigation

- Main page
- Recent changes
- Random page

Tools

- What links here
- Related changes
- Upload file
- Special pages
- Permanent link
- Page information
- Cite this page
- Add interlanguage links

Print/export

- Create a book
- Download as PDF
- Printable version

Page Discussion

Read Edit Edit source View history

# Wp/anp/Main Page

18 languages

< Wp | anp  
Wp > anp > Main Page



विकिपीडिया  
एगो मुक्त सिक्शकोश

## अंगिका विकिपीडिया

मैं आपने के स्वागत छै।

विकिपीडिया एगो मुक्त ज्ञानकोश छेके जे सब क ज्ञान प्रसार केरौ अधिकार दै छै।

अंगिका विकिपीडिया में अखनी तलक **१,४६०** लेख छै। आरू बहुत लेख प काम चली रहलौ छै।

आय १८ मार्च, २०२२, ?

- खेल
- जीवनी
- वैज्ञानिक
- अध्यात्म
- अन्वेषक
- मनोविज्ञान
- भारतीय वैज्ञानिक
- पालतू जानवर
- भारत
- दर्शन

'आबौ अंगिका विकिपीडिया में नया लेख जोड़ौ'

अंगिका भाषा भाषी सिनी सँ अनुरोध छै कि अंगिका भाषा में उत्कृष्ट कोटि के लेखो के रचना करी क अंगिका विकिपीडिया क आगू बढ़ाबै लेली आगू आबौ।

**नया लेख लिखै के तरीका** [ edit | edit source ]

चूँकि ई अंगिका भाषा में विकिपीडिया केरौ प्रारम्भिक चरण छेके, ई लेली सन्भे लेख [[Wp/anp/लेख के नाम]] सँ शुरू होना चाहियौ। उदाहरण लेली "अंगिका" नामक लेख केरौ शीर्षक Wp/anp/अंगिका होतै। लेख लिखला के पश्चात लेख वाला पन्ना केरौ,नीचां में [[Category:wp/anp]] लिखौ, ओकरो बाद सहेजौ।

(Source: Wikimedia Incubator for Angika, a language of India)



## Computer Science &gt; Computation and Language

[Submitted on 22 Mar 2021 (v1), last revised 21 Feb 2022 (this version, v4)]

## Quality at a Glance: An Audit of Web-Crawled Multilingual Datasets

Julia Kreutzer, Isaac Caswell, Lisa Wang, Ahsan Wahab, Daan van Esch, Nasanbayar Ulzii-Orshikh, Allahsera Tapo, Nishant Subramani, Artem Sokolov, Claytone Sikasote, Monang Setyawan, Supheakmungkol Sarin, Sokhar Samb, Benoît Sagot, Clara Rivera, Annette Rios, Isabel Papadimitriou, Salomey Osei, Pedro Ortiz Suarez, Iroro Orife, Kelechi Ogueji, Andre Niyongabo Rubungo, Toan Q. Nguyen, Mathias Müller, André Müller, Shamsuddeen Hassan Muhammad, Nanda Muhammad, Ayanda Mnyakeni, Jamshidbek Mirzakhlov, Tapiwanashe Matangira, Colin Leong, Nze Lawson, Sneha Kudugunta, Yacine Jernite, Mathias Jenny, Orhan Firat, Bonaventure F. P. Dossou, Sakhile Dlamini, Nisansa de Silva, Sakine Çabuk Ballı, Stella Biderman, Alessia Battisti, Ahmed Baruwa, Ankur Bapna, Pallavi Baljekar, Israel Abebe Azime, Ayodele Awokoya, Duygu Ataman, Orevaoghene Ahia, Oghenefego Ahia, Sweta Agrawal, Mofetoluwa Adeyemi

With the success of large-scale pre-training and multilingual modeling in Natural Language Processing (NLP), recent years have seen a proliferation of large, web-mined text datasets covering hundreds of languages. We manually audit the quality of 205 language-specific corpora released with five major public datasets (CCAligned, ParaCrawl, WikiMatrix, OSCAR, mC4). Lower-resource corpora have systematic issues: At least 15 corpora have no usable text, and a significant fraction contains less than 50% sentences of acceptable quality. In addition, many are mislabeled or use nonstandard/ambiguous language codes. We demonstrate that these issues are easy to detect even for non-proficient speakers, and supplement the human audit with automatic analyses. Finally, we recommend techniques to evaluate and improve multilingual corpora and discuss potential risks that come with low-quality data releases.

Comments: Accepted at TACL; pre-MIT Press publication version



# Language ID in the Wild: Unexpected Challenges on the Path to a Thousand-Language Web Text Corpus

Isaac Caswell, Theresa Breiner, Daan van Esch, Ankur Bapna  
Google Research, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043  
{icaswell,tbreiner,dvanesch,ankurbpn}@google.com

## Abstract

Large text corpora are increasingly important for a wide variety of Natural Language Processing (NLP) tasks, and automatic language identification (LangID) is a core technology needed to collect such datasets in a multilingual context. LangID is largely treated as solved in the literature, with models reported that achieve over 90% average F1 on as many as 1,366 languages. We train LangID models on up to 1,629 languages with comparable quality on held-out test sets, but find that human-judged LangID accuracy for web-crawl text corpora created using these models is only around 5% for many lower-resource languages, suggesting a need for more robust evaluation. Further analysis revealed a variety of error modes, arising from domain mismatch, class imbalance, language similarity, and insufficiently expressive models. We propose two classes of techniques to mitigate these errors: wordlist-based tunable-precision filters (for which we release curated lists in about 500 languages) and transformer-based semi-supervised LangID models, which increase median dataset precision from 5.5% to 71.2%. These techniques enable us to create an initial data set covering 100K or more relatively clean sentences in each of 500+ languages, paving the way towards a 1,000-language web text corpus.



Pred. Language	Mined “Sentence” purporting to be in this language	Noise class
Manipuri		General noise
Twi (Akan)	me: why you lyyyn, why you always lyyyn	General noise
Varhadi	Òyáèè èè, áódà- éyòèyòy àèèè íèáí Éàãóá ìyèèèè òyìy- yáyá-yòèáú èèy áó íyñè [...]	Misrendered PDF
Aymara	Orilyzewuhubys ukagupixog axiqyh asozasuh uxilutidobyq osoqalelohan [...]	Non-Unicode font
Balinese	As of now  is verified profile on Instagram.	Boilerplate
Cherokee	“ALL mY IhΘRΛs GREW bACK As fLOWERs” ••• SWEET BΛBIEs n DUGS	Creative use of Unicode
Oromo	My geology <b>essay</b> introduction <b>essay</b> on men authoring crosswords	Unlucky frequent n-gram
Pular	MEEOW	Repeated n-grams
Chechen	Жирновский ... Жирновский районный Фестиваль ТОСОВ	A N T S P E A K
Kashmiri	ਸ਼.	Short/ambiguous
Nigerian Pidgin	This new model features a stronger strap for a secure fit and increased comfort.	High-resource cousin
Uyghur	نۇرسۇلتان نازاربايەۋ قىتايدىڭ قازاقستانداغى ەلشېسىمەن	Out-of-model cousin
Dimli	The S</b><b class='b2'>urina</b><b class='b1'>m toa</b><b class='b3'>d is [...]	Deliberately Obfuscated

Table 2: Examples of several representative classes of noise in our initial web-crawl corpora.

## Computer Science &gt; Human-Computer Interaction

[Submitted on 3 Dec 2019]

# Writing Across the World's Languages: Deep Internationalization for Gboard, the Google Keyboard

Daan van Esch, Elnaz Sarbar, Tamar Lucassen, Jeremy O'Brien, Theresa Breiner, Manasa Prasad, Evan Crew, Chieu Nguyen, Françoise Beaufays

This technical report describes our deep internationalization program for Gboard, the Google Keyboard. Today, Gboard supports 900+ language varieties across 70+ writing systems, and this report describes how and why we have been adding support for hundreds of language varieties from around the globe. Many languages of the world are increasingly used in writing on an everyday basis, and we describe the trends we see. We cover technological and logistical challenges in scaling up a language technology product like Gboard to hundreds of language varieties, and describe how we built systems and processes to operate at scale. Finally, we summarize the key take-aways from user studies we ran with speakers of hundreds of languages from around the world.

Subjects: **Human-Computer Interaction (cs.HC)**; Computation and Language (cs.CL)

Cite as: [arXiv:1912.01218](https://arxiv.org/abs/1912.01218) [cs.HC]

(or [arXiv:1912.01218v1](https://arxiv.org/abs/1912.01218v1) [cs.HC] for this version)

<https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1912.01218> 

# Bringing ASR to more languages

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# wav2vec 2.0: A Framework for Self-Supervised Learning of Speech Representations

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Alexei Baevski

Henry Zhou

Abdelrahman Mohamed

Michael Auli

{abaevski,henryzhou7,abdo,michaelauli}@fb.com

Facebook AI

## Abstract

We show for the first time that learning powerful representations from speech audio alone followed by fine-tuning on transcribed speech can outperform the best semi-supervised methods while being conceptually simpler. wav2vec 2.0 masks the speech input in the latent space and solves a contrastive task defined over a quantization of the latent representations which are jointly learned. Experiments using all labeled data of Librispeech achieve 1.8/3.3 WER on the clean/other test sets. When lowering the amount of labeled data to one hour, wav2vec 2.0 outperforms the previous state of the art on the 100 hour subset while using 100 times less labeled data. Using just ten minutes of labeled data and pre-training on 53k hours of unlabeled data still achieves 4.8/8.2 WER. This demonstrates the feasibility of speech recognition with limited amounts of labeled data.<sup>1</sup>

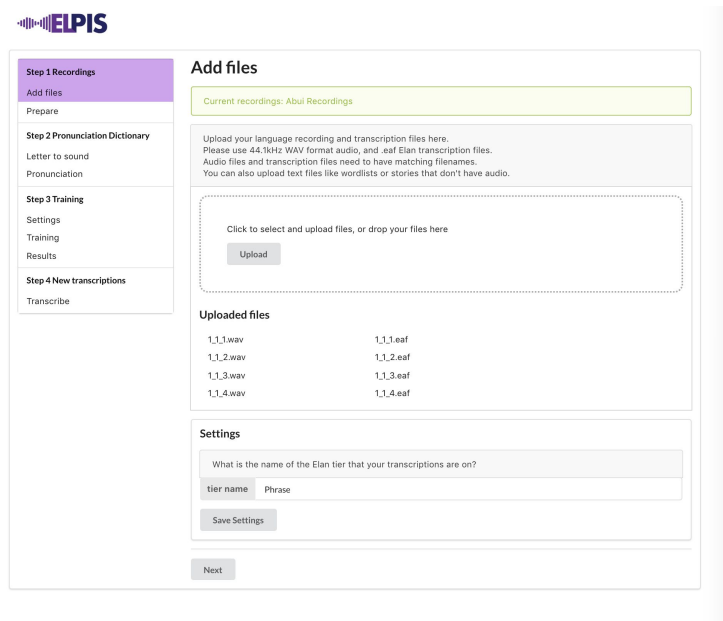
## 1 Introduction

Neural networks benefit from large quantities of labeled training data. However, in many settings labeled data is much harder to come by than unlabeled data: current speech recognition systems require thousands of hours of transcribed speech to reach acceptable performance which is not available for the vast majority of the nearly 7,000 languages spoken worldwide [31]. Learning purely from labeled examples does not resemble language acquisition in humans: infants learn language by listening to adults around them - a process that requires learning good representations of speech.

iv:2006.11477v3 [cs.CL] 22 Oct 2020



# Elpis: Speech Tech in a User-Friendly GUI



An **easy-to-use** open-source speech toolkit for **fieldwork linguists & communities**  
Promising results across many languages, even with relatively little data (~2 hours). Runs **on your laptop!**

Built by the Australian **Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language**, with help from Google  
Learn more at [github.com/CoEDL/elpis](https://github.com/CoEDL/elpis)



## Building Speech Recognition Systems for Language Documentation: The CoEDL Endangered Language Pipeline and Inference System (Elpis)

*Ben Foley<sup>19</sup>, Josh Arnold<sup>19</sup>, Rolando Coto-Solano<sup>29</sup>, Gautier Durantin<sup>19</sup>, T. Mark Ellison<sup>39</sup>,  
Daan van Esch<sup>4</sup>, Scott Heath<sup>19</sup>, František Kratochvíl<sup>6</sup>, Zara Maxwell-Smith<sup>39</sup>, David Nash<sup>39</sup>,  
Ola Olsson<sup>19</sup>, Mark Richards<sup>69</sup>, Nay San<sup>39</sup>, Hywel Stoakes<sup>789</sup>, Nick Thieberger<sup>79</sup>, Janet  
Wiles<sup>19</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> The University of Queensland, Australia

<sup>2</sup> Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

<sup>3</sup> Australian National University, Australia

<sup>4</sup> Google, Mountain View (CA), USA

<sup>5</sup> Palacký University, Czech Republic

<sup>6</sup> Western Sydney University, Australia

<sup>7</sup> The University of Melbourne, Australia

<sup>8</sup> The University of Auckland, New Zealand

<sup>9</sup> ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language (CoEDL), Australia

b.foley@uq.edu.au, j.arnold4@uq.edu.au, rolando.coto@vuw.ac.nz, g.durantin@uq.edu.au,  
m.ellison@anu.edu.au, dvanesch@google.com, scott.heath@uq.edu.au, frantisek.kratochvil@upol.cz,  
zara.maxwell-smith@anu.edu.au, david.nash@anu.edu.au, o.olsson@uq.edu.au,  
m.richards@westernsydney.edu.au, nay.san@anu.edu.au, h.stoakes@auckland.ac.nz, thien@unimelb.edu.au,  
j.wiles@uq.edu.au

# Recognizing lexical units in low-resource language contexts with supervised and unsupervised neural networks

Cécile Macaire

## ► To cite this version:

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Ref:	əʃji-tʃsuwʃji-dzoʃ, əʃ-giʃ, zoʃnoʃ, hi-tʃʃu-t-dzoʃ, əə... dʒwæ-t dʒwæʃ-hwʃwʃ hwʃwʃ, mmm... pi-t-dzoʃ, tʃsu-tʃsuʃ ʃæ-tʃæ-t tʃv-t, dʒwæ-t dʒwæʃ-hwʃwʃ hwʃwʃ tʃvʃ pi-t-kyʃ mæʃ,
Hyp:	əʃji-tʃsuwʃji-dzoʃ əʃgiʃ zoʃnoʃ hi-tʃʃu-t-dzoʃ əə... dʒwæ-t dʒwæʃhoʃwʃ mə... pi-t-dzoʃ tʃsu-tʃsuʃ ʃæ-tʃæ-tʃv-t dʒwæ-t dʒwæʃhwʃwʃhʃwʃ tʃvʃ pi-t-kyʃmæʃ
Ref:	tʃiʃ əʃji-tʃsuwʃji-dzoʃ tʃiʃ zoʃnoʃ mmm... su-tʃpʃi-t-ki-t qwʃwʃ qwʃwʃ biʃ-kyʃ mæʃ.
Hyp:	tʃiʃ əʃji-tʃsuwʃji-dzoʃ tʃiʃ zoʃnoʃ mm... su-tʃpʃi-t-ki-t qwʃwʃ-qwʃwʃbiʃkyʃmæʃ
Ref:	su-tʃpʃi-t-ki-t le-t-qwʃwʃ qwʃwʃ-seʃ-dzoʃ tʃiʃ su-tʃpʃi-t no-tʃiʃ dʒʃwʃ pi-t mʃwʃ-koʃ, nʃwʃ-tʃiʃ dʒʃwʃ pi-t mʃwʃ-koʃ, ni-tʃiʃ do-tʃv-t la-t-kyʃ-zeʃ mæʃ !
Hyp:	su-tʃpʃi-t-ki-t le-t-qwʃwʃqʃwʃwʃseʃ-dzoʃ tʃiʃ su-tʃpʃi-t no-tʃiʃ dʒʃwʃ pi-t mʃwʃ-koʃ nʃwʃ-tʃiʃ dʒʃwʃ pi-t mʃwʃ-koʃ ni-tʃiʃ do-tʃv-t laʃkyʃzeʃmæʃ
Ref:	tʃiʃ, do-tʃv-t laʃ dzoʃ tʃiʃ, wʃwʃ le-t-dʒwæ-t dʒwæʃ le-t-dʒwæ-t dʒæʃ le-t-dʒwæ-t dʒwæʃ -dzoʃ tʃiʃ, mʃwʃ-tʃwʃ, mmʃwʃhoʃ hoʃ...
Hyp:	tʃiʃ do-tʃv-t laʃ dzoʃ tʃiʃ wʃwʃ le-t-dʒwæ-t dʒæʃ le-t-dʒwæ-tzʒwʃwʃ le-tzʒwæ-tzʒwæʃ-dzoʃ tʃiʃ mʃwʃ-tʃwʃ mʃwʃhoʃhoʃ
Ref:	tʃæʃeʃ hoʃhoʃ mʃwʃ-tʃaʃ hoʃhoʃ mʃwʃ-tʃaʃ-dzoʃ tʃiʃ əə... su-tʃpʃi-tʃuʃ no-tʃsuʃkyʃ tʃaʃ-dʒwæ-t dʒwæʃzeʃ dʒæʃmi-tʃoʃ kʃ-tʃsuʃ ʃiʃ hōʃ ! pi-t-kyʃtʃsuʃ mʃ
Hyp:	tʃæʃeʃ hoʃhoʃ mʃwʃ-tʃaʃ hoʃhoʃ mʃwʃ-tʃaʃ-dzoʃ tʃiʃ əə... su-tʃpʃi-tʃuʃ no-tʃsuʃkyʃ tʃaʃ-dʒwæ-t dʒwæʃzeʃ dʒæʃmi-tʃoʃ kʃ-tʃseʃ hīʃhōʃ pi-t-kyʃtʃsuʃ mʃ

Table 3.11: Samples of the predicted transcriptions by the xlsr-na-180 model of the “Appeal to the gods to settle a quarrel” speech file. In red, the deletions, insertions and substitutions.

(Source for this visual and the map on the preceding slide: Macaire 2021)

# Bringing Language Technologies to More Languages

- On top of algorithms, need:
  - Clear language roadmap
  - Solid data gathering pipeline
  - Scalable data quality controls
  - Robust, easy-to-use trainer
  - Input from native speakers
  - Automatic dashboards to monitor progress & quality
- ASR
  - Unlabelled audio data
  - Transcribed audio data
  - Text in many languages
- NMT
  - Text in many languages
  - Ideally parallel, but monolingual also works

**Many thanks!**  
**Any questions?**



Check this out in Google Earth at  
<https://goo.gle/indigenoulanguages>