

✓ Nya-Hoba NER — Colab Notebook

Named Entity Recognition for Low-Resource African Languages: A Transformer-Based Case Study on Nya-Hoba

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This notebook is prepared to run in Google Colab. Before running heavy training cells, set `Runtime -> Change runtime type -> GPU`.

Project Objectives

- **General Objective:** Design and evaluate a transformer-based NER system for Nya-Hoba.
- **Specific Objectives:**
 1. Collect, clean, and annotate a Nya-Hoba text corpus for NER tasks.
 2. Develop baseline NER models using traditional machine learning approaches for benchmarking.
 3. Fine-tune transformer-based models for NER on Nya-Hoba.
 4. Evaluate model performance using Precision, Recall, and F1-score.
 5. Release an open-source dataset and pre-trained models.

✓ 1. Setup

Run the code cell to install required packages. On Colab this may take a few minutes.

You may want to manually install a CUDA-compatible `torch` build if you intend to use GPU acceleration.

```
# Install dependencies
!pip install -q scikit-learn sklearn-crfsuite pandas joblib transformers datasets segeval torch
print('Installed packages. Check versions:')
import sklearn, pandas, joblib, transformers
import torch
print('sklearn', sklearn.__version__)
print('pandas', pandas.__version__)
print('transformers', transformers.__version__)
print('torch', torch.__version__, 'CUDA:', torch.cuda.is_available())
```

```
43.6/43.6 kB 2.4 MB/s eta 0:00:00
Preparing metadata (setup.py) ... done
1.3/1.3 MB 40.7 MB/s eta 0:00:00
Building wheel for segeval (setup.py) ... done
Installed packages. Check versions:
sklearn 1.6.1
pandas 2.2.2
transformers 4.56.1
torch 2.8.0+cu126 CUDA: True
```

```
from google.colab import drive
drive.mount('/content/drive')
```

Mounted at /content/drive

✓ 2. Data Generation & Cleaning

This stage expands small seed lists of entity words (names, times, animals, and locations) into larger synthetic datasets through controlled randomization and pattern-based augmentation.

```
import json
import random
import os

#Making directory for data
os.makedirs('/content/data', exist_ok=True)
print('Your Data is located in /content/data/dataset.conll1')

# Define the drive path
drive_path = '/content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content/data'
```

```

# -----
# STEP 1. Fixed lists
# -----
time_words = [
    "Zəkəu", "Sakana", "əna", "əhna", "Pəshinda", "Pishinda",
    "Fer pəchingə zekeu", "Pər pəchingə zekeu", "Pəchi", "Hya"
]

animal_words = [
    "Kwa", "Məbəlang", "Təga", "Gwanba", "Ha'l", "Dləgwam", "Thla",
    "Kətən", "Chiwar", "Ləvari", "Mapəla'u", "Litsa"
]

person_words_fixed = [
    "Chahyaandida", "Chabiya", "Hyellama", "Hyelnaya", "Wandiya", "Hyel", "Yesu",
    "Chataimada", "Chatramada", "Nanunaya", "Mapida", "Shimbal", "Chai",
    "Hyellachardati", "Hyellachardati", "Wamanyi", "Miyaninyi", "Miyakindahyelni", "Miyaninyi"
]

# -----
# STEP 2. Synthetic PERSON names
# -----
base_names = [
    "Abubakar", "Ibrahim", "Musa", "Usman", "Kabiru", "Bello", "Suleiman",
    "Ahmad", "Aliyu", "Shehu", "Aminu", "Habiba", "Fatima", "Aisha", "Zainab", "Hauwa",
    "Ruqayya", "Maryam", "Khadija", "Sa'adatu", "Yakubu", "Ismaila", "Nasiru", "Idris",
    "John", "Paul", "Peter", "James", "Joseph", "Stephen", "Samuel",
    "David", "Daniel", "Thomas", "Andrew", "Philip", "Simon", "Nathaniel",
    "Grace", "Joyce", "Ruth", "Esther", "Naomi", "Sarah", "Deborah",
    "Ndyako", "Pwakina", "Gargam", "Kwada", "Tizhe", "Lazarus", "Kwapre",
    "Nzoka", "Jauro", "Birma", "Fwa", "Tumba", "Dlama", "Nuhu", "Zira", "Bitrus",
    "Vandi", "Nggada", "Gimba", "Danjuma"
]

prefixes = ["Alhaji", "Malam", "Doctor", "Pastor", "Chief", "Prince", "Princess", "Rev"]
suffixes = ["Abubakar", "Musa", "Ibrahim", "Aliyu", "Yakubu", "Bitrus", "Danjuma", "Zira", "Vandi", "Nuhu"]
syllables = ["Nga", "Fwa", "Tiz", "Lam", "Bok", "Ngu", "Pwa", "Kiri", "Shaf", "Loru", "Baga", "Dla", "Hoba", "Zar", "Yam", "Kwada"]

def make_variants(base_list, prefixes, suffixes, syllables, target=2000, max_attempts=20000):
    items = set(base_list)
    attempts = 0
    while len(items) < target and attempts < max_attempts:
        r = random.random()
        if r < 0.3 and prefixes:
            new = random.choice(prefixes) + " " + random.choice(base_list)
        elif r < 0.6 and suffixes:
            new = random.choice(base_list) + " " + random.choice(suffixes)
        elif r < 0.8 and syllables:
            new = random.choice(syllables) + random.choice(syllables)
        else:
            new = random.choice(base_list) + " " + random.choice(base_list)
        items.add(new)
        attempts += 1

    # Fill with duplicates if still short
    items = list(items)
    while len(items) < target:
        items.append(random.choice(items))
    return items[:target]

random.seed(2025)
all_person_names = make_variants(base_names + person_words_fixed, prefixes, suffixes, syllables, 2000)

# -----
# STEP 2b. Expand TIME and ANIMAL with variants to 2000
# -----
time_prefixes = ["Early", "Late", "Mid", "Pre", "Post"]
time_suffixes = ["time", "hour", "day", "night", "season"]
time_syllables = ["Zi", "Sa", "Na", "Ku", "Lo", "Mi", "Ta"]

animal_prefixes = ["Wild", "Big", "Little", "Young", "Old"]
animal_suffixes = ["beast", "cub", "ling", "hunter", "creature"]
animal_syllables = ["Ka", "Mo", "La", "Ti", "Ro", "Zu", "Ba"]

all_time_words = make_variants(time_words, time_prefixes, time_suffixes, time_syllables, 2000)
all_animal_words = make_variants(animal_words, animal_prefixes, animal_suffixes, animal_syllables, 2000)

```

```

# -----
# STEP 3. Location generator
# -----
base_places = [
    "Yola", "Jimeta", "Numan", "Ganye", "Gombi", "Hong", "Mubi", "Michika", "Madagali",
    "Maiha", "Fufore", "Song", "Damsa", "Guyuk", "Jada", "Lamurde", "Mayo-Belwa",
    "Shelleng", "Toungo", "Pella", "Uba", "Dirma", "Holma", "Kala'a", "Garkida",
    "Borrong", "Mayo-Lope", "Shuwa", "Mayo-Balewa", "River Benue", "Mayo Ine",
    "Mayo Nguli", "Mayo Sanzu", "Kiri Dam", "Mandara Mountains", "Zumo Hill", "Fali Hills"
]

prefixes_loc = ["New", "Old", "Upper", "Lower", "North", "South", "East", "West", "Mayo", "Wuro", "Gidan", "Bari"]
suffixes_loc = ["Gari", "Ward", "Hill", "Village", "Settlement", "Bridge", "Camp", "Market", "River", "Valley", "Peak", "Forest",
    syllables_loc = ["Kwa", "Ngu", "Mayo", "Zar", "Kiri", "Wuro", "Tula", "Nguwa", "Ganye", "Song", "Lam", "Mubi", "Pella", "Hoba", "E

all_places = make_variants(base_places, prefixes_loc, suffixes_loc, syllables_loc, 2000)

# -----
# STEP 4. Annotation helper
# -----
def make_annotation(word, label):
    return {
        "data": {"text": word},
        "annotations": [{
            "result": [{
                "value": {
                    "start": 0,
                    "end": len(word),
                    "text": word,
                    "labels": [label]
                },
                "from_name": "label",
                "to_name": "text",
                "type": "labels"
            }]
        }]
    }

# Build datasets
time_tasks = [make_annotation(w, "TIME") for w in all_time_words] # expanded 2000
animal_tasks = [make_annotation(w, "ANIMAL") for w in all_animal_words] # expanded 2000
person_tasks = [make_annotation(w, "PERSON") for w in all_person_names] # expanded 2000
location_tasks = [make_annotation(loc, "LOCATION") for loc in all_places] # expanded 2000

# -----
# STEP 5. Merge datasets and save to Drive
# -----
merged = time_tasks + animal_tasks + person_tasks + location_tasks

# Create the directory in Drive if it doesn't exist
os.makedirs(drive_path, exist_ok=True)

# Save to Drive
drive_file_path = os.path.join(drive_path, "merged_dataset.json")
with open(drive_file_path, "w", encoding="utf-8") as f:
    json.dump(merged, f, indent=2, ensure_ascii=False)

print(f"✅ Saved {len(merged)} tasks to Drive at {drive_file_path}")
print(f"  TIME: {len(time_tasks)}")
print(f"  ANIMAL: {len(animal_tasks)}")
print(f"  PERSON: {len(person_tasks)}")
print(f"  LOCATION: {len(location_tasks)}")

```

Your Data is located in /content/data/dataset.conll

✅ Saved 8000 tasks to Drive at /content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content/data/merged_dataset.json
 TIME: 2000
 ANIMAL: 2000
 PERSON: 2000
 LOCATION: 2000

3. Data Annotation

The generated data is then annotated with entity labels and merged into a unified dataset, ensuring sufficient volume and diversity for NER model training while maintaining consistency and quality.

```

import json
import os

# Load your merged dataset
drive_path = '/content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content/data'
# Define the drive path
merged_dataset_path = os.path.join(drive_path, "merged_dataset.json")

with open(merged_dataset_path, "r", encoding="utf-8") as f:
    data = json.load(f)

conll_lines = []

for task in data:
    text = task["data"]["text"]
    anns = task["annotations"][0]["result"] if task["annotations"] else []

    # Start with "O" for each token
    tokens = text.split()
    labels = ["O"] * len(tokens)

    for ann in anns:
        value = ann["value"]
        start = value["start"]
        end = value["end"]
        label = value["labels"][0]

        # Find which tokens are covered by this annotation
        covered = []
        running_index = 0
        for i, tok in enumerate(tokens):
            token_start = running_index
            token_end = running_index + len(tok)
            if token_end > start and token_start < end:
                covered.append(i)
            running_index = token_end + 1 # +1 for space

        # Assign BIO tags
        for j, idx in enumerate(covered):
            if j == 0:
                labels[idx] = "B-" + label
            else:
                labels[idx] = "I-" + label

    # Append tokens with tags
    for tok, lab in zip(tokens, labels):
        conll_lines.append(f"{tok} {lab}")
    conll_lines.append("") # Sentence boundary

# Save to file in Drive
drive_conll_path = os.path.join(drive_path, "dataset.conll")
with open(drive_conll_path, "w", encoding="utf-8") as f:
    f.write("\n".join(conll_lines))

print(f"✅ Exported to {drive_conll_path} in CoNLL format")

```

✅ Exported to /content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content/data/dataset.conll in CoNLL format

4. Parse CoNLL & Prepare JSONL

This cell parses the CoNLL file (token per line, tag in last column) and saves a JSONL to </content/prepared/data.jsonl>.

```

from pathlib import Path
import json, os
from collections import Counter

drive_path = '/content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content' # Define drive_path
conll_path = Path(os.path.join(drive_path, 'data/dataset.conll')) # Use drive_path
if not conll_path.exists():
    raise FileNotFoundError(f'{conll_path} not found. Please run the previous cell to generate it.')

def read_conll(path):
    sentences = []

```

```

tokens, tags = [], []
with open(path, 'r', encoding='utf-8') as f:
    for line in f:
        line = line.strip()
        if not line:
            if tokens:
                sentences.append((tokens, tags))
                tokens, tags = [], []
            continue
        parts = line.split()
        token = parts[0]
        tag = parts[-1] if len(parts) > 1 else 'O'
        tokens.append(token); tags.append(tag)
    if tokens:
        sentences.append((tokens, tags))
return sentences

sentences = read_conll(conll_path)
num_sentences = len(sentences)
num_tokens = sum(len(s[0]) for s in sentences)
labels = Counter()
for toks, tgs in sentences:
    labels.update(tgs)

print('Sentences:', num_sentences)
print('Tokens (total):', num_tokens)
print('Label set:', sorted(labels.keys()))

prepared_drive_path = os.path.join(drive_path, 'prepared')
os.makedirs(prepared_drive_path, exist_ok=True)
jsonl_drive_path = os.path.join(prepared_drive_path, 'data.jsonl')
with open(jsonl_drive_path, 'w', encoding='utf-8') as outf:
    for toks, tgs in sentences:
        outf.write(json.dumps({'tokens': toks, 'tags': tgs}, ensure_ascii=False) + '\n')
print(f'Saved prepared JSONL to {jsonl_drive_path}')

Sentences: 8000
Tokens (total): 16035
Label set: ['B-ANIMAL', 'B-LOCATION', 'B-PERSON', 'B-TIME', 'I-ANIMAL', 'I-LOCATION', 'I-PERSON', 'I-TIME']
Saved prepared JSONL to /content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content/prepared/data.jsonl

```

▼ Sample annotated sentences

```

# print first 10 samples
import json, itertools, os
drive_path = '/content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content'
jsonl_drive_path = os.path.join(drive_path, 'prepared', 'data.jsonl') # Use drive_path

with open(jsonl_drive_path, 'r', encoding='utf-8') as f:
    for i, line in enumerate(itertools.islice(f, 10), 1):
        d = json.loads(line)
        print(i, '->', ' '.join([f"{t}/{tg}" for t,tg in zip(d['tokens'], d['tags'])]))

1 -> KuZi/B-TIME
2 -> Pəshinda/B-TIME Fer/I-TIME pəchingə/I-TIME zekeu/I-TIME
3 -> Pər/B-TIME pəchingə/I-TIME zekeu/I-TIME Pəshinda/I-TIME
4 -> əna/B-TIME əna/I-TIME
5 -> Zəkəu/B-TIME hour/I-TIME
6 -> Hya/B-TIME Sakana/I-TIME
7 -> Pəchi/B-TIME time/I-TIME
8 -> ZiTa/B-TIME
9 -> Mid/B-TIME Pər/I-TIME pəchingə/I-TIME zekeu/I-TIME
10 -> Fer/B-TIME pəchingə/I-TIME zekeu/I-TIME əna/I-TIME

```

▼ 5. Baseline: CRF Model

Train a CRF baseline using `sklearn-crfsuite`. This step is fast and useful for benchmarking.

```

# CRF baseline training
import json
from sklearn_crfsuite import CRF, metrics
from sklearn.model_selection import train_test_split
import joblib

```

```

import os

drive_path = '/content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content'
jsonl_drive_path = os.path.join(drive_path, 'prepared', 'data.jsonl')

data = [json.loads(line) for line in open(jsonl_drive_path, encoding='utf-8')]
tokens = [d['tokens'] for d in data]
tags = [d['tags'] for d in data]

def word2features(sent, i):
    word = sent[i]
    features = {
        'bias': 1.0,
        'word.lower()': word.lower(),
        'word.isupper()': word.isupper(),
        'word.istitle()': word.istitle(),
        'word.isdigit()': word.isdigit(),
    }
    if i > 0:
        word1 = sent[i-1]
        features.update({
            '-1:word.lower()': word1.lower(),
            '-1:word.istitle()': word1.istitle(),
            '-1:word.isupper()': word1.isupper(),
        })
    else:
        features['BOS'] = True
    if i < len(sent)-1:
        word1 = sent[i+1]
        features.update({
            '+1:word.lower()': word1.lower(),
            '+1:word.istitle()': word1.istitle(),
            '+1:word.isupper()': word1.isupper(),
        })
    else:
        features['EOS'] = True
    return features

def sent2features(sent):
    return [word2features(sent, i) for i in range(len(sent))]

X = [sent2features(s) for s in tokens]
y = tags
X_train, X_test, y_train, y_test = train_test_split(X, y, test_size=0.2, random_state=42)

crf = CRF(algorithm='lbfgs', c1=0.1, c2=0.1, max_iterations=200)
crf.fit(X_train, y_train)
y_pred = crf.predict(X_test)
labels = [l for l in crf.classes_ if l != '0']
print(metrics.flat_classification_report(y_test, y_pred, labels=labels, digits=4))

crf_drive_path = os.path.join(drive_path, 'prepared', 'crf_nyahoba.joblib')
joblib.dump(crf, crf_drive_path)
print(f'Saved CRF model to {crf_drive_path}')

```

	precision	recall	f1-score	support
B-TIME	1.0000	0.9953	0.9976	425
I-TIME	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	567
B-PERSON	0.9730	0.9068	0.9387	397
I-PERSON	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	351
B-LOCATION	0.9068	0.9749	0.9396	399
I-LOCATION	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	406
B-ANIMAL	1.0000	0.9974	0.9987	379
I-ANIMAL	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	307
accuracy			0.9845	3231
macro avg	0.9850	0.9843	0.9843	3231
weighted avg	0.9852	0.9845	0.9845	3231

Saved CRF model to /content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content/prepared/crf_nyahoba.joblib

6. Transformer Fine-tuning (Hugging Face)

Fine-tune a transformer for token classification. This cell uses Hugging Face `Trainer`. **Requires GPU** for reasonable speed.

```

# Rerun the transformer fine-tuning template
# (This may be slow on Colab free tier and requires GPU for reasonable speed)

# Ensure you have a GPU runtime enabled:
# Go to Runtime -> Change runtime type -> GPU

from datasets import Dataset
from transformers import AutoTokenizer, AutoModelForTokenClassification, TrainingArguments, Trainer, DataCollatorForTokenClassification
import json, os

drive_path = '/content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content'
jsonl_drive_path = os.path.join(drive_path, 'prepared', 'data.jsonl')

MODEL_NAME = "xlm-roberta-base" # change to an Afro model if you prefer (e.g., Davlan/afro-xlmr-base)

data = [json.loads(line) for line in open(jsonl_drive_path, encoding='utf-8')]
dataset = Dataset.from_list([{'tokens': d['tokens'], 'tags': d['tags']} for d in data])

unique_labels = sorted({lab for d in data for lab in d['tags']})
label2id = {l:i for i,l in enumerate(unique_labels)}
id2label = {i:l for l,i in label2id.items()}

print('Labels:', unique_labels)
tokenizer = AutoTokenizer.from_pretrained(MODEL_NAME, use_fast=True)

def tokenize_and_align_labels(examples):
    tokenized_inputs = tokenizer(examples['tokens'], is_split_into_words=True, truncation=True, padding='max_length', max_length=12)
    labels = []
    for i, label in enumerate(examples['tags']):
        word_ids = tokenized_inputs.word_ids(batch_index=i)
        previous_word_idx = None
        label_ids = []
        for word_idx in word_ids:
            if word_idx is None:
                label_ids.append(-100)
            elif word_idx != previous_word_idx:
                label_ids.append(label2id[label[word_idx]])
            else:
                lab = label[word_idx]
                if lab.startswith('B-'):
                    lab = 'I-' + lab.split('-',1)[1]
                label_ids.append(label2id.get(lab, label2id[label[word_idx]]))
            previous_word_idx = word_idx
        labels.append(label_ids)
    tokenized_inputs['labels'] = labels
    return tokenized_inputs

tokenized = dataset.map(tokenize_and_align_labels, batched=True)
tokenized = tokenized.train_test_split(test_size=0.1)
model = AutoModelForTokenClassification.from_pretrained(MODEL_NAME, num_labels=len(unique_labels), id2label=id2label, label2id=label2id)

args = TrainingArguments(
    output_dir='/content/nyahoba_ner_output', # Keep local output for trainer
    eval_strategy='epoch',
    learning_rate=2e-5,
    per_device_train_batch_size=8,
    per_device_eval_batch_size=8,
    num_train_epochs=3,
    weight_decay=0.01,
    save_total_limit=2,
    logging_steps=50,
)

data_collator = DataCollatorForTokenClassification(tokenizer)

trainer = Trainer(
    model,
    args,
    train_dataset=tokenized['train'],
    eval_dataset=tokenized['test'],
    data_collator=data_collator,
    tokenizer=tokenizer,
)

print('Starting transformer training (this may take a long time).')
trainer.train()

# Save the model to Drive

```

Epoch	Training Loss	Validation Loss
1	0.139900	0.037692
2	0.036900	0.028062
3	0.020200	0.028856

- 7. Inference Examples

Load saved models and run inference on sample texts. Edit the sample sentences as needed.

```
# CRF inference
import joblib, json
from pathlib import Path
import os

drive_path = '/content/drive/MyDrive/NER_nyahoba/notebook/content'
crf_drive_path = Path(os.path.join(drive_path, 'prepared', 'crf_nyahoba.joblib'))

if crf_drive_path.exists():
    crf = joblib.load(crf_drive_path)
    sample = ['Zəkəu', 'Sakana', 'əna', 'Hong', 'Gombi', 'pəshinda', 'kwa', 'thla']
    def sent2features(sent):
        def word2features(sent, i):
            word = sent[i]
            features = {
                'bias': 1.0,
                'word.lower()': word.lower(),
                'word.isupper()': word.isupper(),
                'word.istitle()': word.istitle(),
            }
```



```

        'word.isdigit()': word.isdigit(),
    }
    if i > 0:
        word1 = sent[i-1]
        features.update({
            '-1:word.lower()': word1.lower(),
            '-1:word.istitle()': word1.istitle(),
            '-1:word.isupper()': word1.isupper(),
        })
    else:
        features['BOS'] = True
    if i < len(sent)-1:
        word1 = sent[i+1]
        features.update({
            '+1:word.lower()': word1.lower(),
            '+1:word.istitle()': word1.istitle(),
            '+1:word.isupper()': word1.isupper(),
        })
    else:
        features['EOS'] = True
    return features
return [word2features(sent, i) for i in range(len(sent))]
print('CRF prediction:', crf.predict([sent2features(sample)]))
else:
    print('CRF model not found at', crf_drive_path)

# Transformer inference (if model exists)
from transformers import AutoTokenizer, AutoModelForTokenClassification, pipeline
transformer_drive_path = Path(os.path.join(drive_path, 'prepared', 'nyahoba-ner-model'))

if transformer_drive_path.exists():
    tokenizer = AutoTokenizer.from_pretrained(transformer_drive_path, use_fast=True)
    model = AutoModelForTokenClassification.from_pretrained(transformer_drive_path)
    nlp = pipeline('token-classification', model=model, tokenizer=tokenizer, aggregation_strategy='simple')
    print(nlp('chiwar'))
else:
    print('Transformer model not found at', transformer_drive_path)

CRF prediction: [['B-TIME' 'I-TIME' 'I-TIME' 'B-LOCATION' 'I-LOCATION' 'I-LOCATION'
'B-ANIMAL' 'I-ANIMAL']]
Device set to use cuda:0
[{'entity_group': 'ANIMAL', 'score': np.float32(0.99993235), 'word': 'chiwar', 'start': 0, 'end': 6}]

```

8. Save & Export

- Use `File -> Download .ipynb` in Colab to download the notebook.
- Download trained artifacts from [/content/prepared](#) (you can zip and download them in Colab).