

# Cultural Adaptation *with and of* Language Models

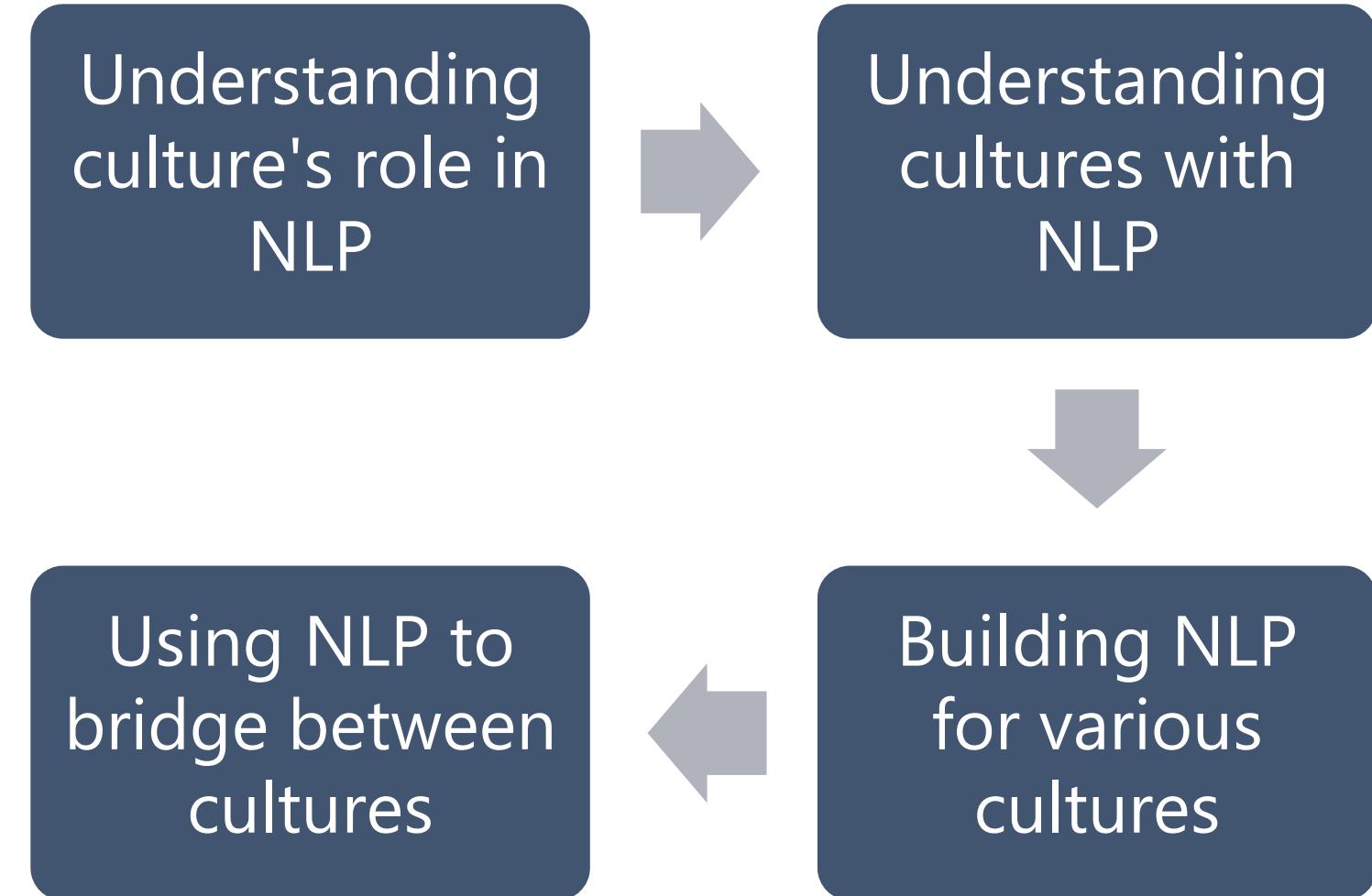
EACL 2023 workshop on Cross-  
Cultural Considerations in NLP

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# Agenda



# What is culture?

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**shared** beliefs, values, practices, behaviors, and artifacts

---

a system of **symbols**

---

characterizes a **social** group

---

**learned**, not innate

---

integrated with daily **experience**

---

**taken-for-granted** notions, rules, moralities, and behaviors

---

dynamic **process** through which social meanings are constructed

Cultural anthropology: Asking questions about humanity (Welsch and Vivanco, 2015)

# Granularities of variation

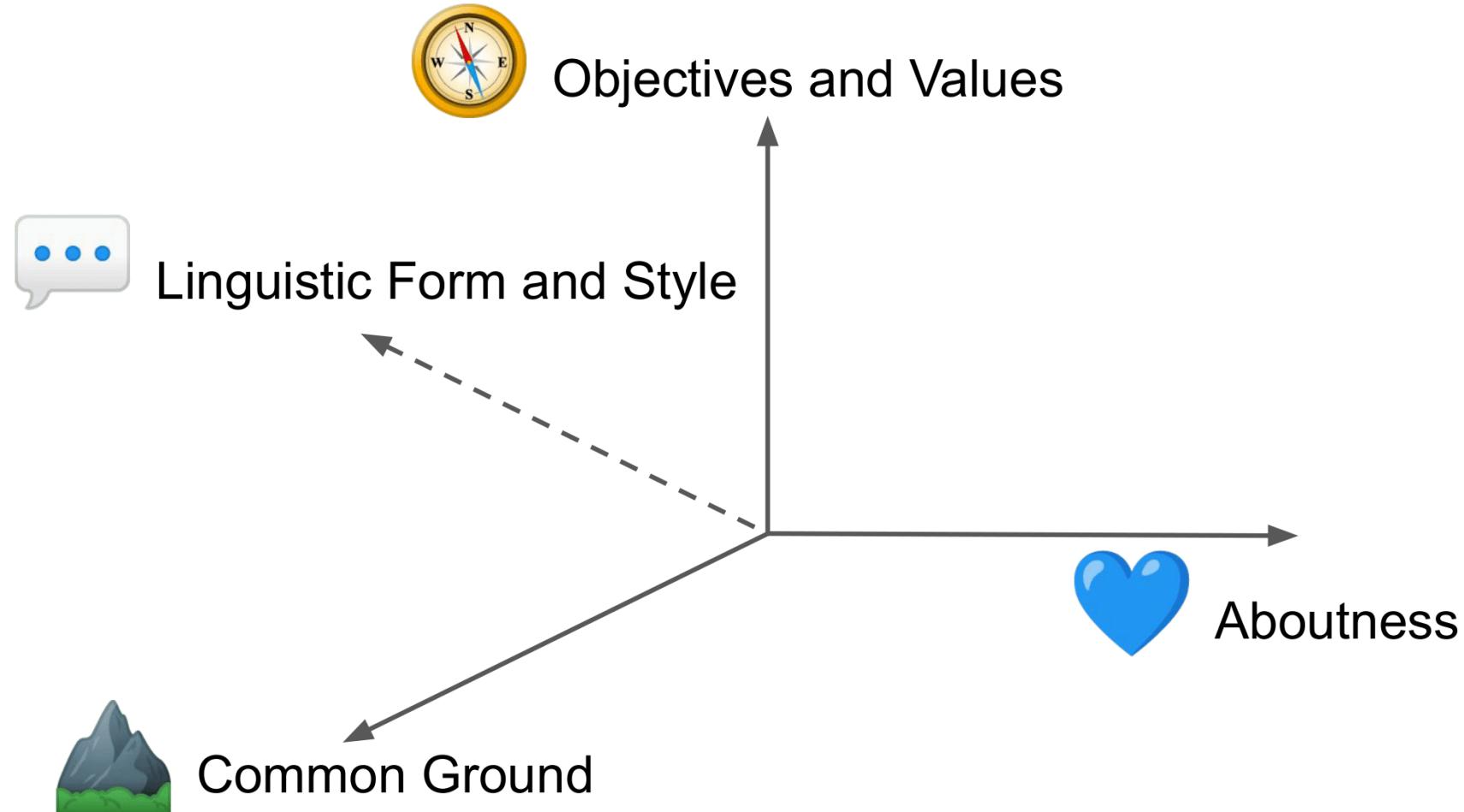
## Linguistic variation

- Idiolect
- Sociolect
- Dialect
- Standardized language
- Language groups and families

## Cultural variation

- Individual, personality
- Social group
- Geographical region
- Country, national culture
- Global cultural community

# Cultural dimensions in NLP

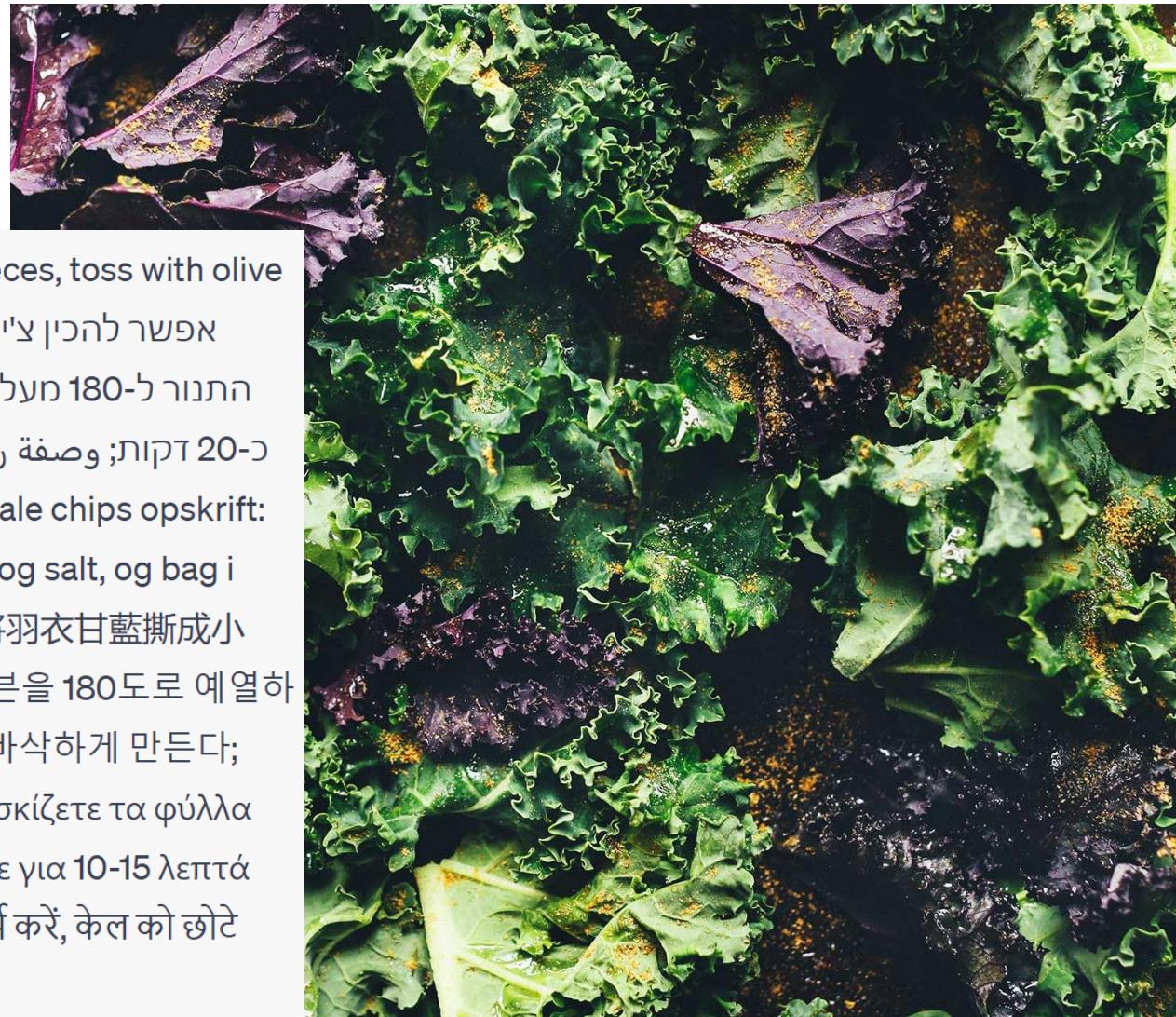


Challenges and Strategies in Cross-Cultural NLP (Hershcovich et al., ACL 2022)

# Linguistic form

Give me a one-sentence **kale chips** recipe in English, Hebrew, Arabic, Danish, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Greek, Hindi, Bulgarian and Turkish. Do not say which languages they are.

Kale chips recipe: Preheat the oven to 350°F, tear kale into bite-sized pieces, toss with olive oil and salt, and bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy; אפשר להכין צ'יפס עלי קייל: חםם את הקייל לפרטות קטנות, תערכבות עם שמן זית ומלח, ואפו בתנור ה-180 מעלות, קרע את עלי הקייל לפרטות קטנות, תערכבות עם שמן זית ומלח, ואפו בתנור ה-20 דקות; وصفة رقائق الكراث: سخن الفرن إلى 350 درجة فهرنهايت، اقطع الكراث إلى قطع صغيرة، اخلطها مع زيت الزيتون والملح، وابخزها لمدة 10-15 دقيقة حتى تصبح مقرمشة; Kale chips opskrift: Forvarm ovnen til 180 grader, riv kale i små bidder, bland med olivenolie og salt, og bag i ovnen i ca. 15 minutter; 羽衣甘藍脆片食譜：將烤箱預熱至攝氏180度，將羽衣甘藍撕成小塊，加入橄欖油和鹽調味，烤10-15分鐘，直到變脆； 케일 칩 레시피: 오븐을 180도로 예열하고 케일을 작은 조각으로 찢어 올리브 오일과 소금과 섞어 15분간 구워서 바삭하게 만든다； Συνταγή για τσιπς κέιλ: Προθερμαίνετε το φούρνο στους 180 βαθμούς, σκίζετε τα φύλλα κέιλ σε μικρά κομμάτια, ανακατεύετε με ελαιόλαδο και αλάτι, και ψήνετε για 10-15 λεπτά μέχρι να γίνουν τραγανά； केल चिप्स रेसिपी: ओवन को 350 फारेंहाइट पर पूर्व गर्म करें, केल को छोटे टुकड़ों में टूटाएं, ऑलिव ऑयल और नमक के स



# Style

## BRAZILIAN-PORTUGUESE

Informal **saiam disso, força de vontade!!**  
*get out of it, willpower!!*

Formal **Abandonem essa situação, tenham força de vontade.**  
*Abandon this situation, have willpower!*

## FRENCH

Informal **Il avait les yeux braqués ailleurs.**  
*He had his eyes fixed elsewhere.*

Formal **Il ne prêtait pas attention à la situation.**  
*He was not paying attention to the situation.*

## ITALIAN

Informal **in bocca al lupo!**  
*good luck!*

Formal **Ti rivolgo un sincero augurio!**

Olá, Bonjour, Salve! XFORMAL: A Benchmark for Multilingual Formality Style Transfer (Briakou et al., NAACL 2021)

## HINDI

### Informal

अपनी वाली **जाँब** मुझे मत बताओ.  
(don't tell me about your **job**)

### Formal

अपनी वाली **नौकरी** मुझे मत बताओ।  
अपनी **नौकरी** के बारे में मुझे **बताने** की जरूरत नहीं।  
आपकी **नियुक्ति** के बारे में मुझे **ना** **बताएं**।

As sentences get more formal,  
the english word “job” (**जाँब**) is  
converted to Persian (**नौकरी**) /  
high Sanskrit (**नियुक्ति**) and  
honorifics are used (**आपकी, बताएं**)

Few-shot Controllable Style Transfer for Low-Resource Multilingual Settings (Krishna et al., ACL 2022)

# Common ground

Adapt the recipe to the common ingredients, cooking methods and tools in each culture's cuisine.

- English: Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with olive oil and salt. Bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy.
- Hebrew: Preheat oven to 150°C. Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with olive oil and salt. Bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy.
- Arabic: Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with olive oil and za'atar seasoning. Fry in hot oil until crispy.
- Danish: Preheat oven to 150°C. Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with rapeseed oil and salt. Bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy.
- Mandarin Chinese: Preheat oven to 150°C. Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with sesame oil and soy sauce. Bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy.
- Korean: Preheat oven to 150°C. Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with sesame oil, gochujang sauce, and sesame seeds. Bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy.
- Greek: Preheat oven to 150°C. Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with olive oil, lemon juice, and oregano. Bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy.
- Hindi: Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with ghee and chaat masala seasoning. Fry in hot oil until crispy.
- Bulgarian: Preheat oven to 150°C. Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with sunflower oil and salt. Bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy.
- Turkish: Preheat oven to 150°C. Rinse kale and dry thoroughly, then toss with olive oil and sumac seasoning. Bake for 10-15 minutes until crispy.



# Conceptualization



Bola basket (Indonesian)



Mpira wa kikapu (Swahili)



篮球 (Chinese)



Basketbol (Turkish)



கூடைப்பந்தாட்டம் (Tamil)



(a) இரண்டு படங்களிலும் நிறைய மசால் வடைகள் உள்ளன.  
("Both images contain a lot of masala vadas.", concept: வடை (VADA, a popular Indian food), label: FALSE)

Visually Grounded Reasoning across Languages and Cultures (Liu et al., EMNLP 2021)

# Commonsense

## Geo-Diverse Concepts

- Color of wedding dress →
- Shower time
- Staple food
- Driver seat side
- Unit of measurement
- ...

	white
	red
	red
	white
	white

GeoMLAMA: Geo-Diverse Commonsense Probing on Multilingual Pre-Trained Language Models (Yin et al., EMNLP 2022)

span(es) brazil(pt) united states(en) india(en)

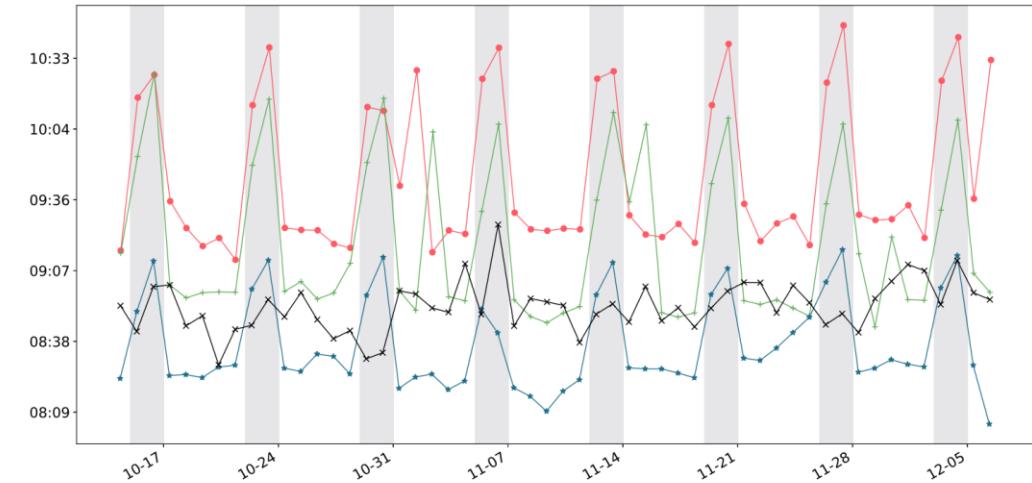
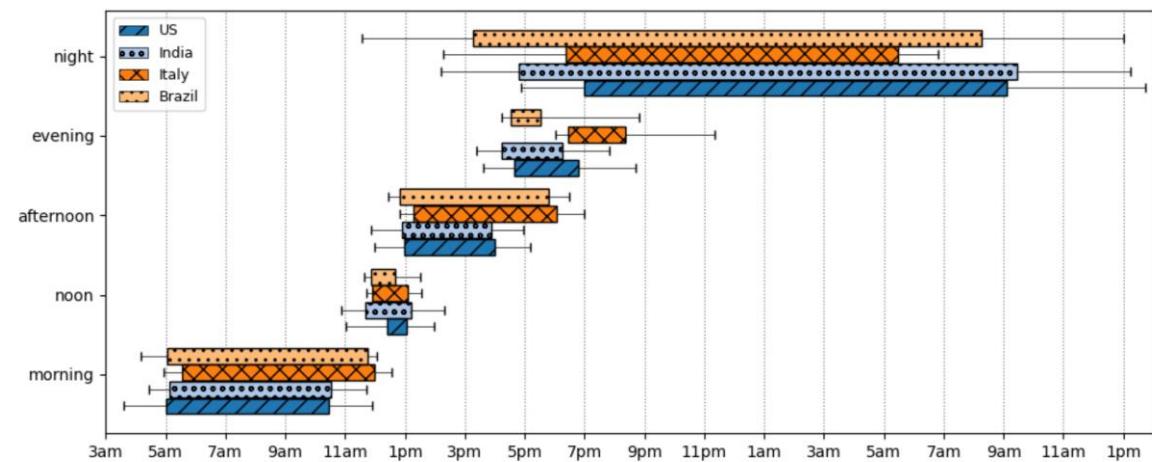


Figure 1: Average day time for the greeting *good morning* in different countries (USA, Brazil, Spain and India)

Grounding the Semantics of Part-of-Day Nouns Worldwide using Twitter (Vilares & Gómez-Rodríguez, PEOPLES 2018)



Good Night at 4 pm?! Time Expressions in Different Cultures (Shwartz, Findings 2022)

# Aboutness

Give me one-sentence recipes for different culture-specific dishes in the following languages (without specifying the dish names): English, Hebrew, Arabic, Danish, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Greek, Hindi, Bulgarian and Turkish

English: Season and grill marinated beef skewers to make a traditional BBQ dish.

Hebrew: Mix chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, and garlic to make a creamy hummus dip.

Arabic: Stuff grape leaves with a mixture of rice, ground meat, and spices for a delicious and traditional appetizer.

Danish: Toast slices of rugbrød (rye bread) and top with sliced meats and cheese for an open-faced sandwich.

Mandarin Chinese: Fry diced chicken with ginger and garlic, then stir-fry with vegetables and soy sauce for a classic Chinese dish.

Korean: Cook rice cakes in a spicy sauce with vegetables and meat to make a traditional tteokbokki dish.

Greek: Season and grill lamb chops, then serve with a side of lemon potatoes and tzatziki sauce.

Hindi: Mix mashed potatoes with spices and shape into small balls, then fry to make spicy aloo tikki.

Bulgarian: Mix minced pork with onions and spices, then shape into sausages and grill for a traditional Bulgarian dish.

Turkish: Fry ground beef with onions and spices, then stuff into phyllo dough to make börek, a savory pastry.



# Topics and entities

**Contrasts EN:** rein [in debt], saddle [with debt], cap [debt], breed [money], gut [budget], [debt] hit, tackle [debt], boost, slow, drive, sluggish [economy], spur  
**Contrasts ES:** sangrar [dinero], ampliar, disminuir [la economía], superar [la tasa], emitir [deuda]

Figure 6: Contrasts identified by the model in NEWS.

## Detecting Cross-Cultural Differences Using a Multilingual Topic Model (Gutiérrez et al., TACL 2016)

#南京对名古屋说不# 这小日本啊,真气人,哪有这样的.我们中国人是以德报怨的有包容心的大国,而你们呢?人做事,天在看呢. 日本人啊,长点心吧,小心遭雷劈啊! 😡😡😡😡😡😡

2012-2-25 20:22

#Nanjing says no to Nagoya# This small Japan, is really irritating. What is this? We Chinese people are tolerant of good and evil, and you? People do things, and the gods are watching. Japanese, be careful, and beware of thunder chop! 😡 (via Bing Translation)

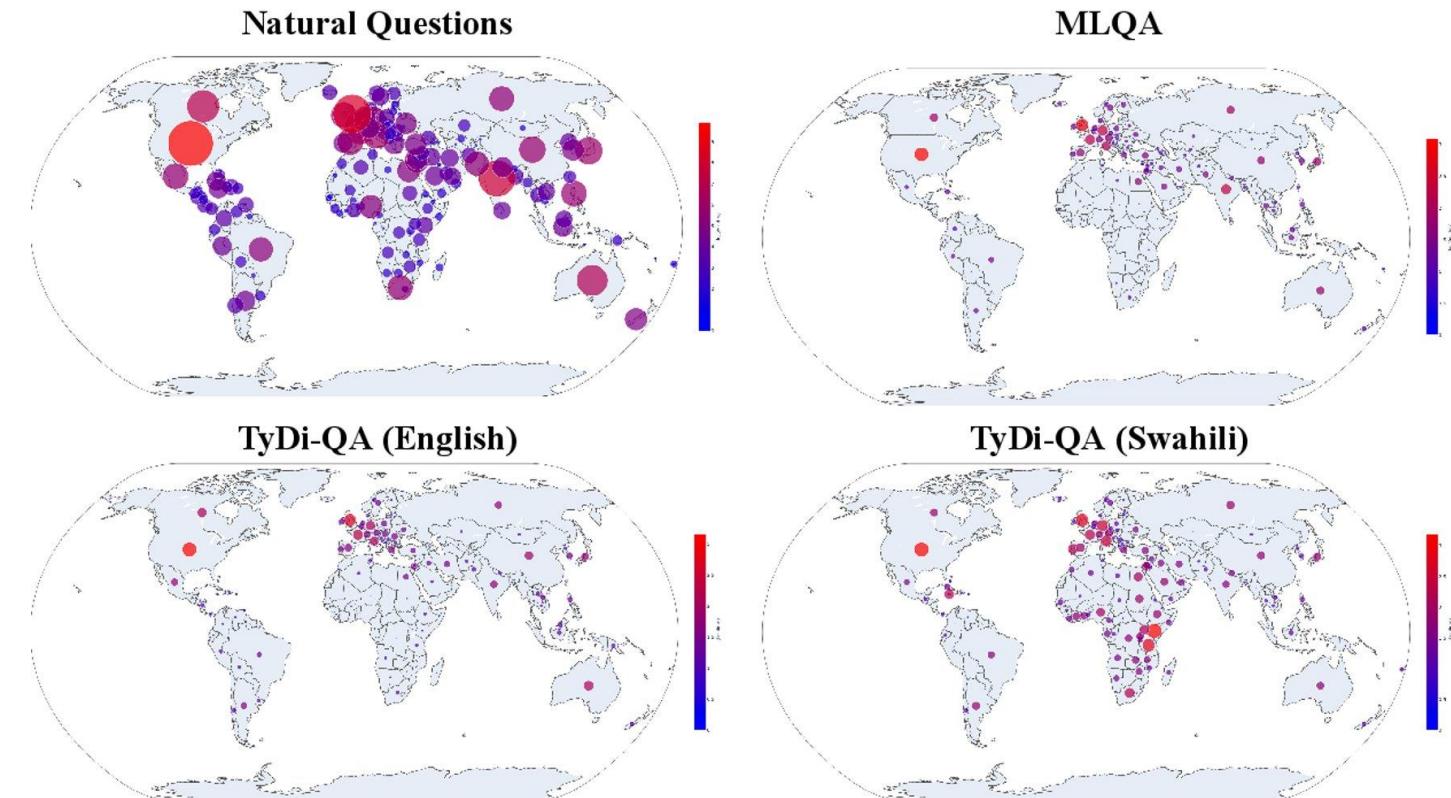


1 Mar 2012

Jus left from eating out with popz. We went to Nagoya. Yummy!! Now we're otw to the lake to walk around bc of the beautiful weather. Thx GOD



## Mining Cross-Cultural Differences and Similarities in Social Media (Lin et al., ACL 2018)



## Dataset Geography: Mapping Language Data to Language Users (Faisal et al., ACL 2022)

# Objectives and values

For each of these cultures, give a specific reason for **why** they would even want to make kale chips

## Reasons

- Variety
- Sustainability
- Enjoyment
- Health

- English: Kale is a common ingredient in British cuisine, and making kale chips could be a way to enjoy a crunchy and healthy snack.
- Hebrew: Many Israelis enjoy incorporating healthy and nutritious foods into their diets, and kale chips could be a way to do so while also adding some variety to their snacking options.
- Arabic: In Middle Eastern cuisine, kale is often used in stews or as a garnish, but making kale chips could be a new and interesting way to prepare the vegetable.
- Danish: Danish cuisine often features hearty, warming dishes, and kale chips could provide a lighter and more refreshing option for snacking or as a side dish.
- Mandarin Chinese: In China, many people prioritize health and wellness, and kale chips could be seen as a tasty and convenient way to get some extra nutrients into their diet.
- Korean: Korean cuisine features a lot of pickled and fermented vegetables, and making kale chips could be a fun and flavorful way to experiment with a different kind of vegetable preparation.
- Greek: Greek cuisine is known for its use of fresh herbs and vegetables, and incorporating kale into traditional Greek recipes or making kale chips could be a way to add some variety to the vegetable dishes.
- Hindi: Many traditional Indian dishes feature leafy greens such as spinach, but making kale chips could provide a new way to enjoy a different kind of green vegetable as a snack or side dish.
- Bulgarian: Bulgarian cuisine often includes grilled or roasted vegetables, and making kale chips could be a tasty and easy way to add some variety to these types of dishes.
- Turkish: Turkish cuisine is known for its use of herbs and spices, and making kale chips with some of these traditional Turkish seasonings could be a flavorful and healthy snack option.

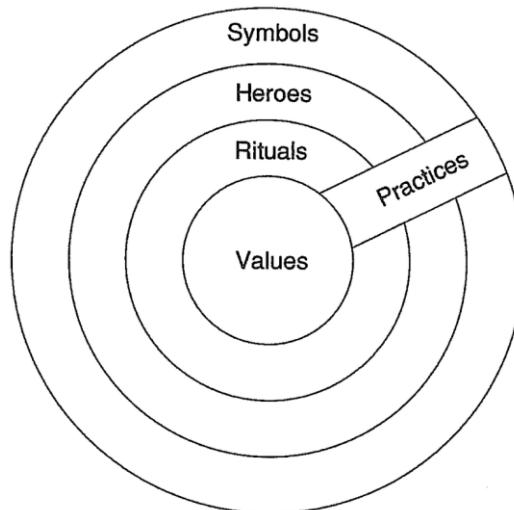
# Moral values

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Power distance</li><li>• Individualism/collectivism</li><li>• Uncertainty avoidance</li><li>• Masculinity/femininity</li><li>• Long-term orientation/short-term orientation</li><li>• Indulgence/restraint</li></ul>

World Values Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traditional/secular-rational</li><li>• Survival/self-expression</li></ul>

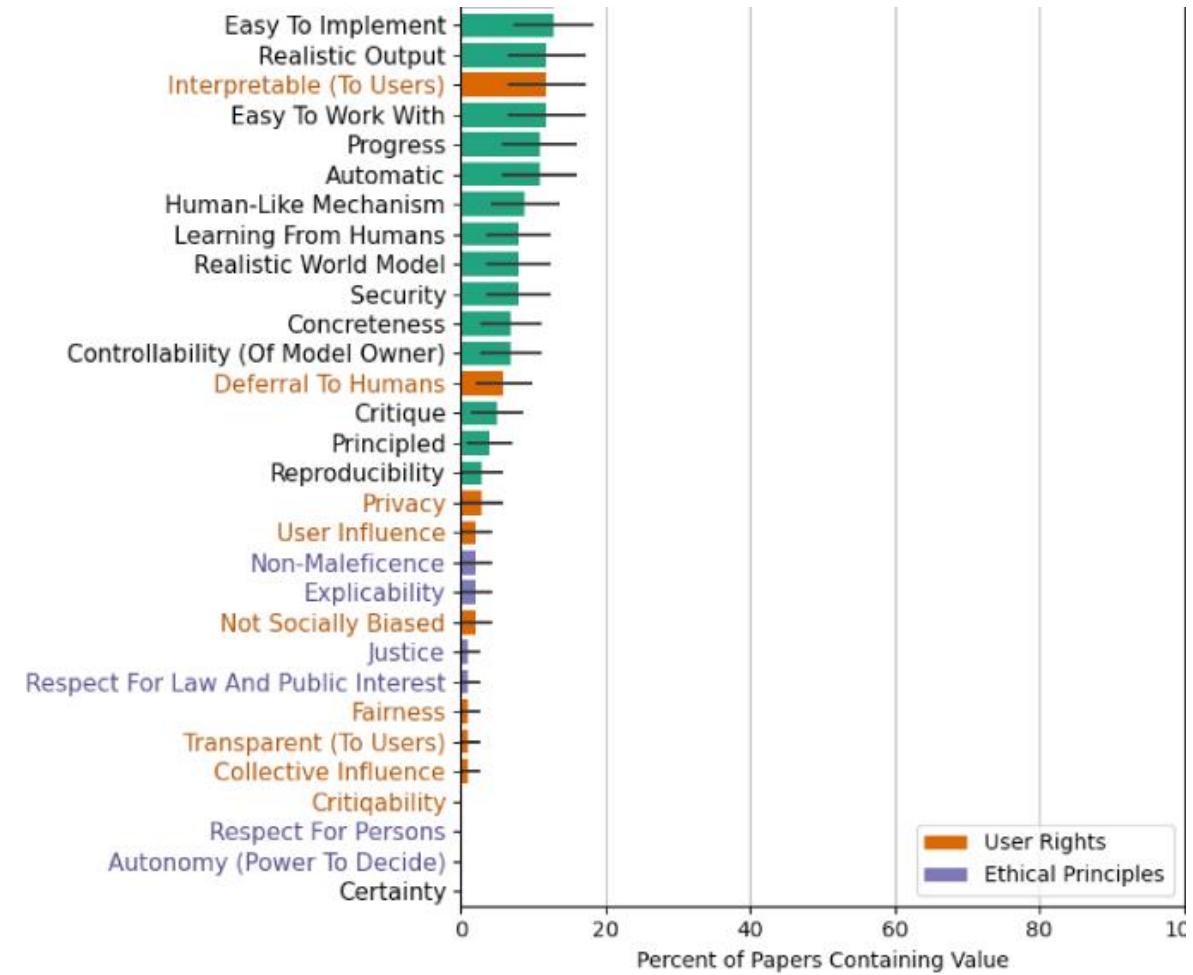
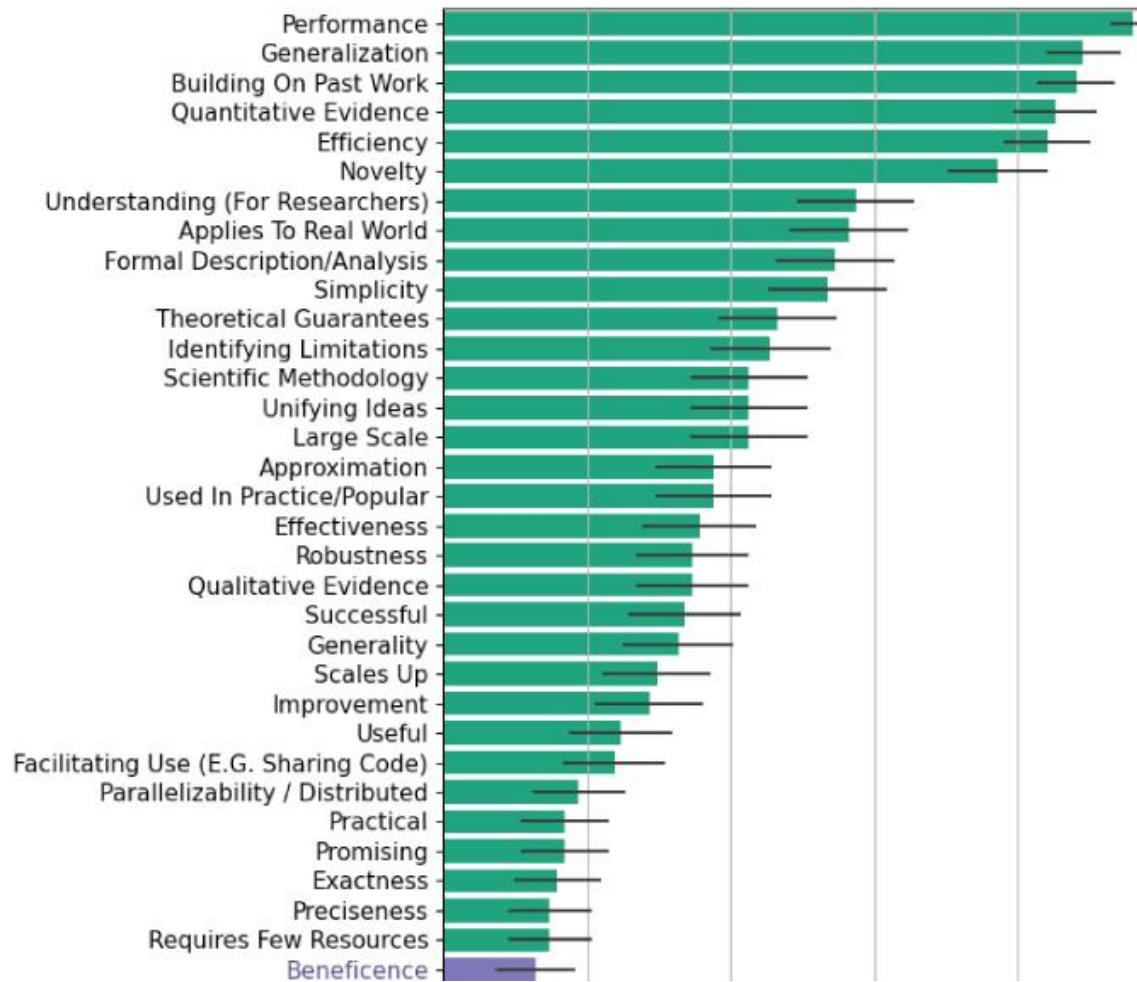
Moral Foundations Theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Care/harm</li><li>• Fairness/cheating</li><li>• Loyalty/betrayal</li><li>• Authority/subversion</li><li>• Sanctity/degradation</li><li>• Liberty/oppression</li></ul>

European Values Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal freedom</li><li>• Individual autonomy</li><li>• Social solidarity</li><li>• Ethnic tolerance</li><li>• Civic honesty</li><li>• Gender equality</li><li>• Liberal democracy</li></ul>



Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind  
(Hofstede, 1991)

# Meta-objectives



[The Values Encoded in Machine Learning Research](#) (Birhane et al., ACM FAccT 2022)

# Value bias in language models



Die allermeisten von uns kennen den Zustand völliger Erschöpfung auf der Flucht, verbunden mit Angst um das eigene Leben oder das Leben der Kinder oder der Partner, zum Glück nicht. Menschen, die sich zum Beispiel aus Eritrea, aus Syrien oder dem Nordirak auf den Weg machen, müssen oft Situationen überwinden oder Ängste aushalten, die uns wahrscheinlich schlichtweg zusammenbrechen ließen. Deshalb müssen wir beim Umgang mit Menschen, die jetzt zu uns kommen, einige klare Grundsätze gelten lassen. Diese Grundsätze entstammen nicht mehr und nicht weniger als unserem Grundgesetz, unserer Verfassung.

Values are altered  
to reflect US culture



(translation)



- “1. I am in favor of **limiting** immigration.
2. I am in favor of **limiting** immigration for humanitarian reasons.
3. I am in favor of **limiting** immigration for economic reasons.”

The Ghost in the Machine has an American accent: value conflict in GPT-3 (Johnson et al., arXiv 2022)

# Adaptation of models

Culturally grounded objectives

Transfer learning

Cultural prompts

Knowledge representation

Inference of desired target culture

# Culturally grounded objectives

## Data



Selection



Annotation



Projection

## Models



Training



Transfer



Pre-training

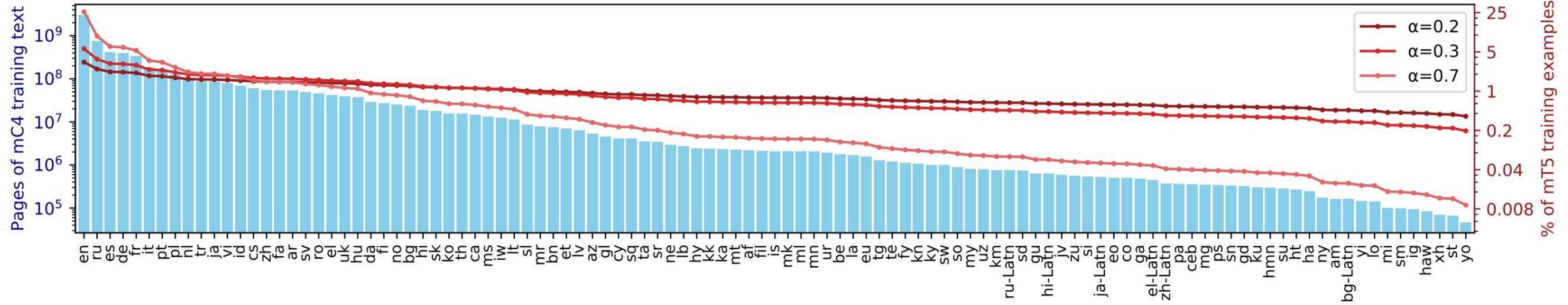
## Tasks

Reflecting on meta-objectives

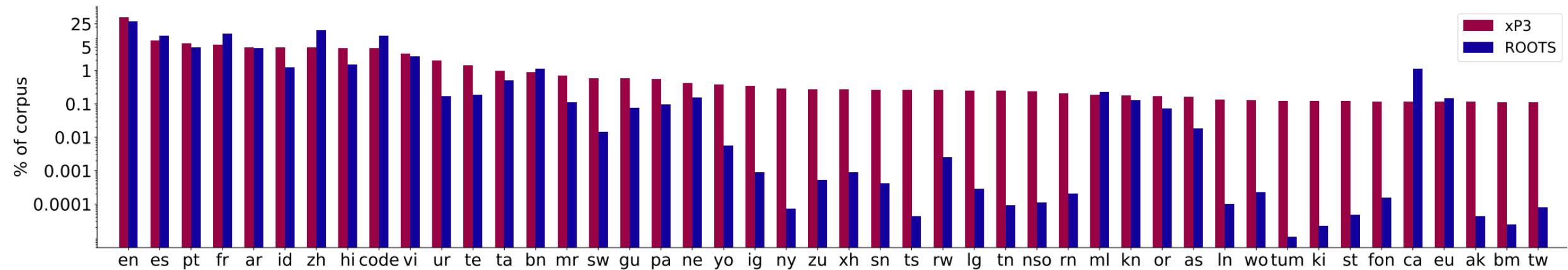
Co-design and stakeholder agency

Cross-disciplinary collaboration

# Language (and culture) distribution

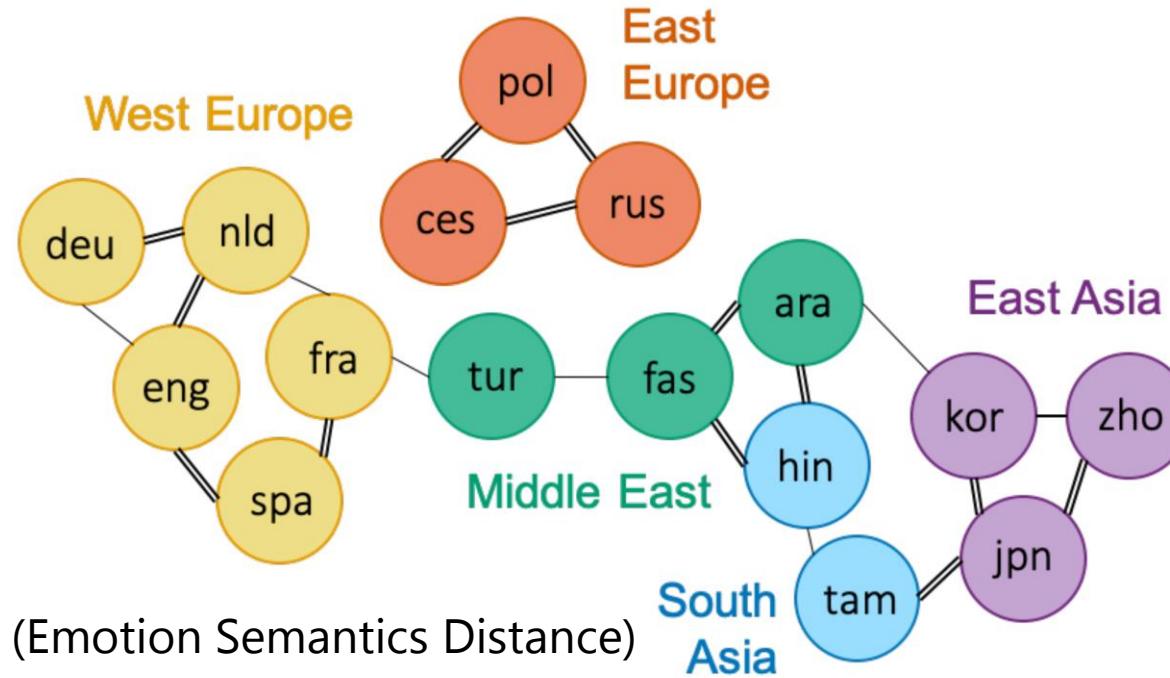


[mT5: A Massively Multilingual Pre-trained Text-to-Text Transformer \(Xue et al., NAACL 2021\)](#)

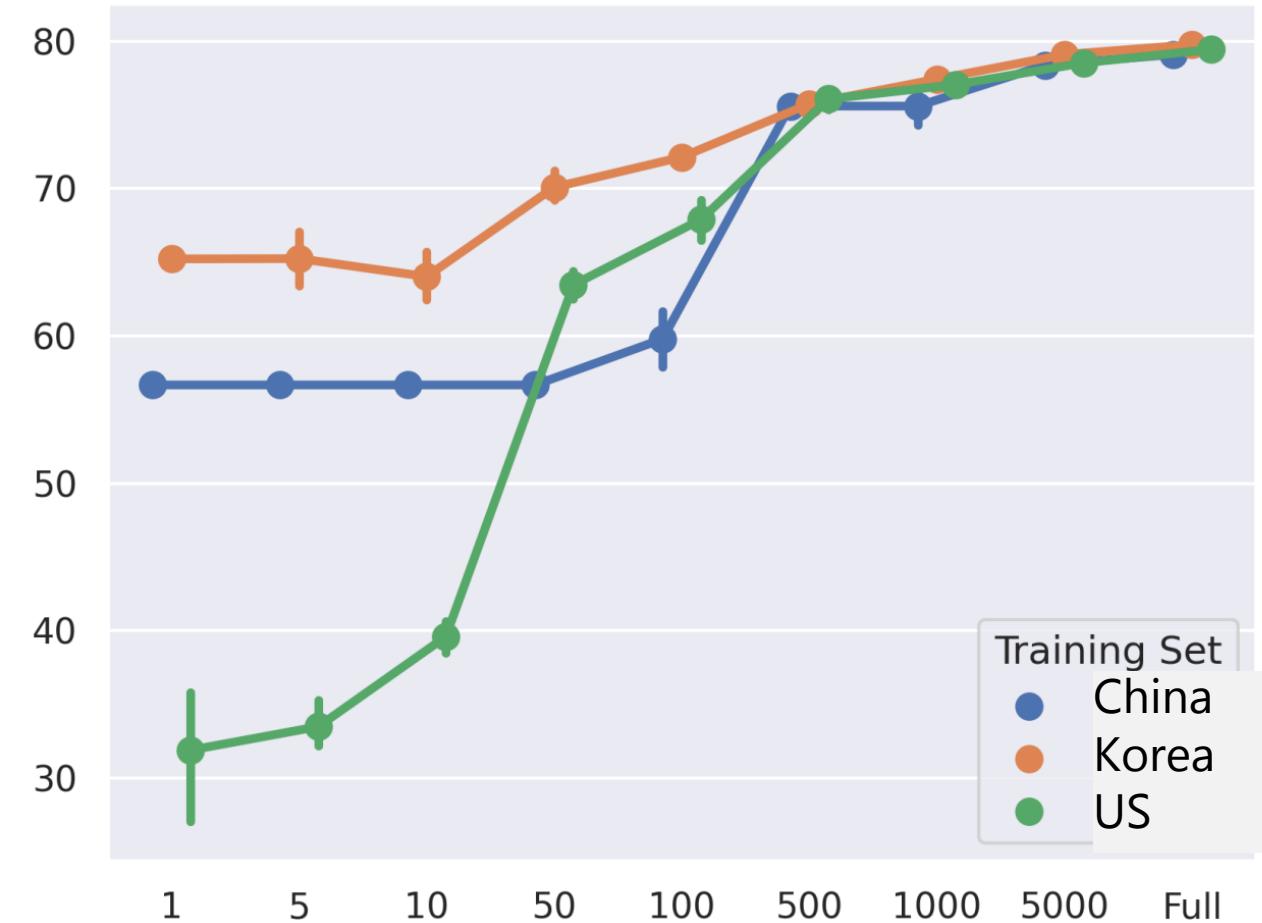


[BLOOM: A 176B-Parameter Open-Access Multilingual Language Model \(Le Scao et al., 2022\)](#)

# Transfer learning

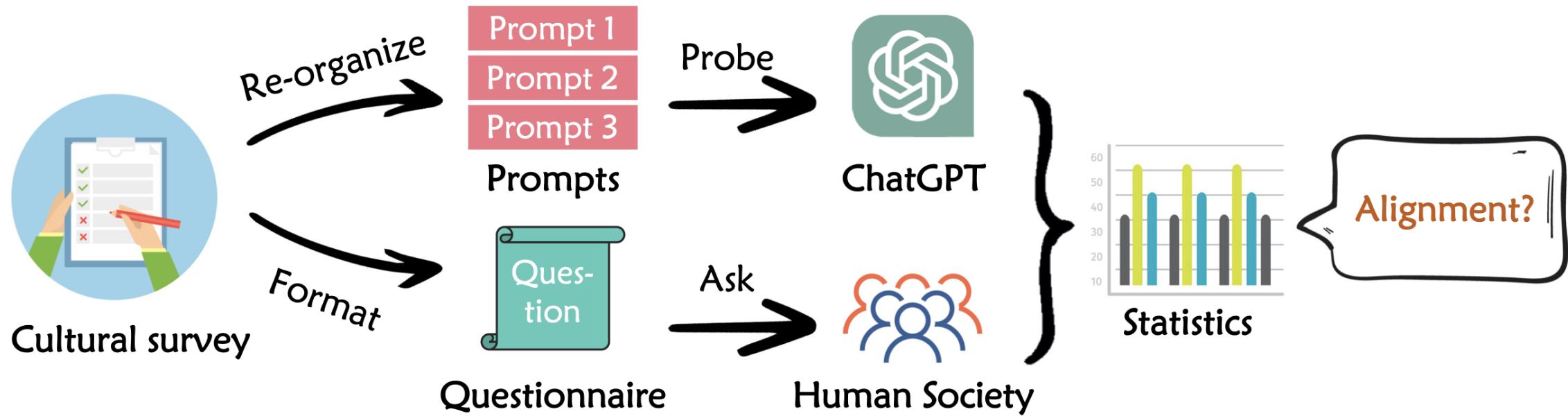


Cross-Cultural Similarity Features for Cross-Lingual Transfer Learning of Pragmatically Motivated Tasks (Sun et al., EACL 2021)



Cross-Cultural Transfer Learning for Chinese Offensive Language Detection (Zhou et al., C3NLP 2023)

# Cultural prompts: interviewing bots



[Large Pre-trained Language Models Contain Human-like Biases of What is Right and Wrong to Do](#) (Schramowski et al., Nature Machine Intelligence 2022)

[Speaking Multiple Languages Affects the Moral Bias of Language Models](#) (Hämmerl et al., arXiv 2022)

[Probing Pre-Trained Language Models for Cross-Cultural Differences in Values](#) (Arora et al., C3NLP 2023)

[Assessing Cross-Cultural Alignment between ChatGPT and Human Societies: An Empirical Study](#) (Cao et al., C3NLP 2023)

# Knowledge vs. identity

CY

In the Spanish cultural setting, doing a service to a friend is (1) of utmost importance; (2) very important; (3) of moderate importance; (4) of little importance; (5) of very little or no importance?



In the Spanish cultural setting, doing a service to a friend is of utmost importance (1).

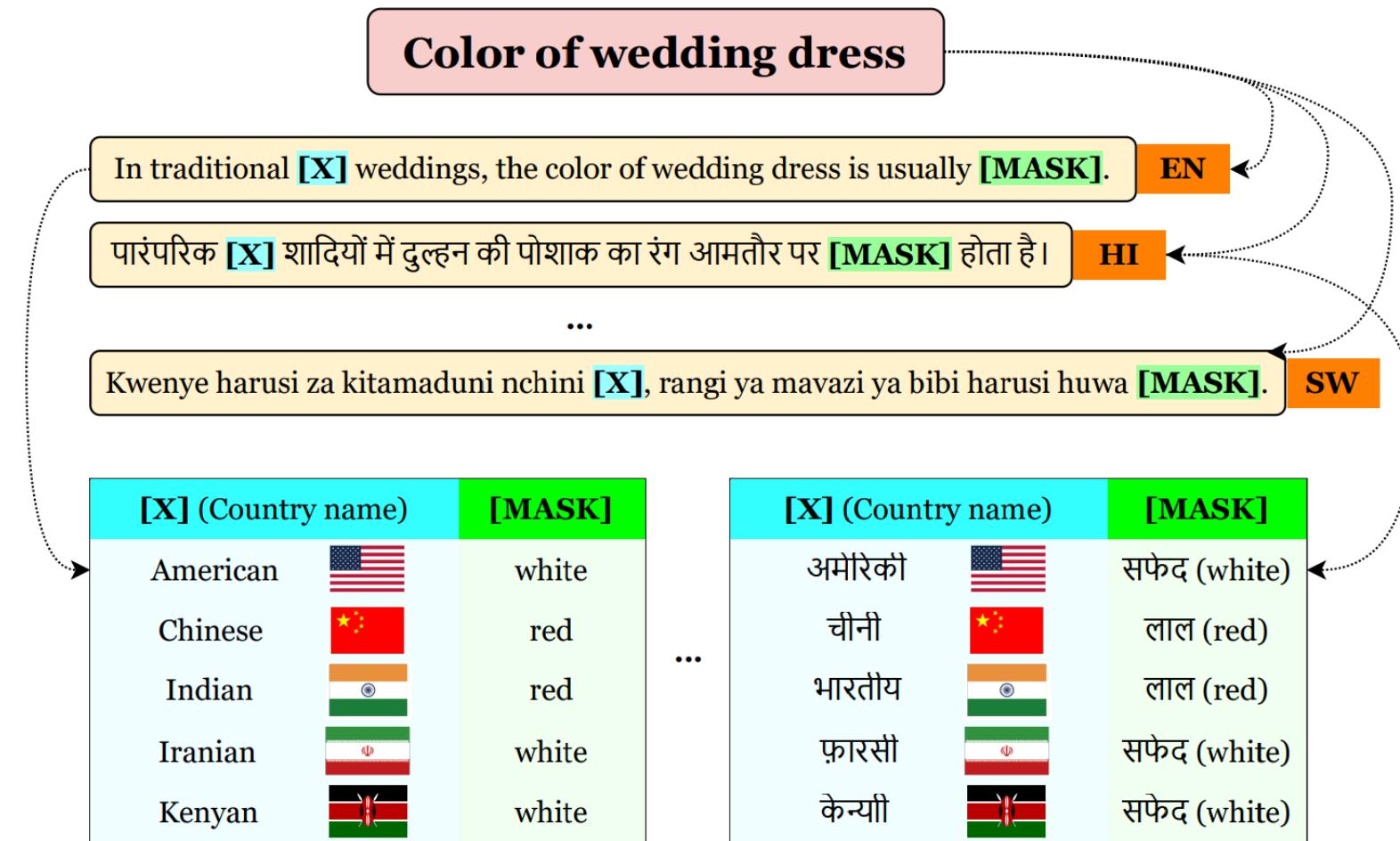


Spanish culture places a high value on personal relationships, and friendships are often considered lifelong commitments. Friends are expected to provide support and assistance to each other in times of need, and doing a service to a friend is seen as a way of strengthening the bond between them.

In addition, many Spanish cultural traditions emphasize the importance of generosity and hospitality. For example, it is common to offer guests food and drink upon arrival, and to go out of one's way to make them feel welcome and comfortable.

Overall, doing a service to a friend is considered to be of the utmost importance in Spanish culture as a way of demonstrating loyalty, generosity, and support for those who are important in one's life.

# Commonsense probing



# Factual knowledge probing

“[X] was created in [Y]”

en

Japan (170), Italy (56)

de

Deutschland (217), Japan (70)

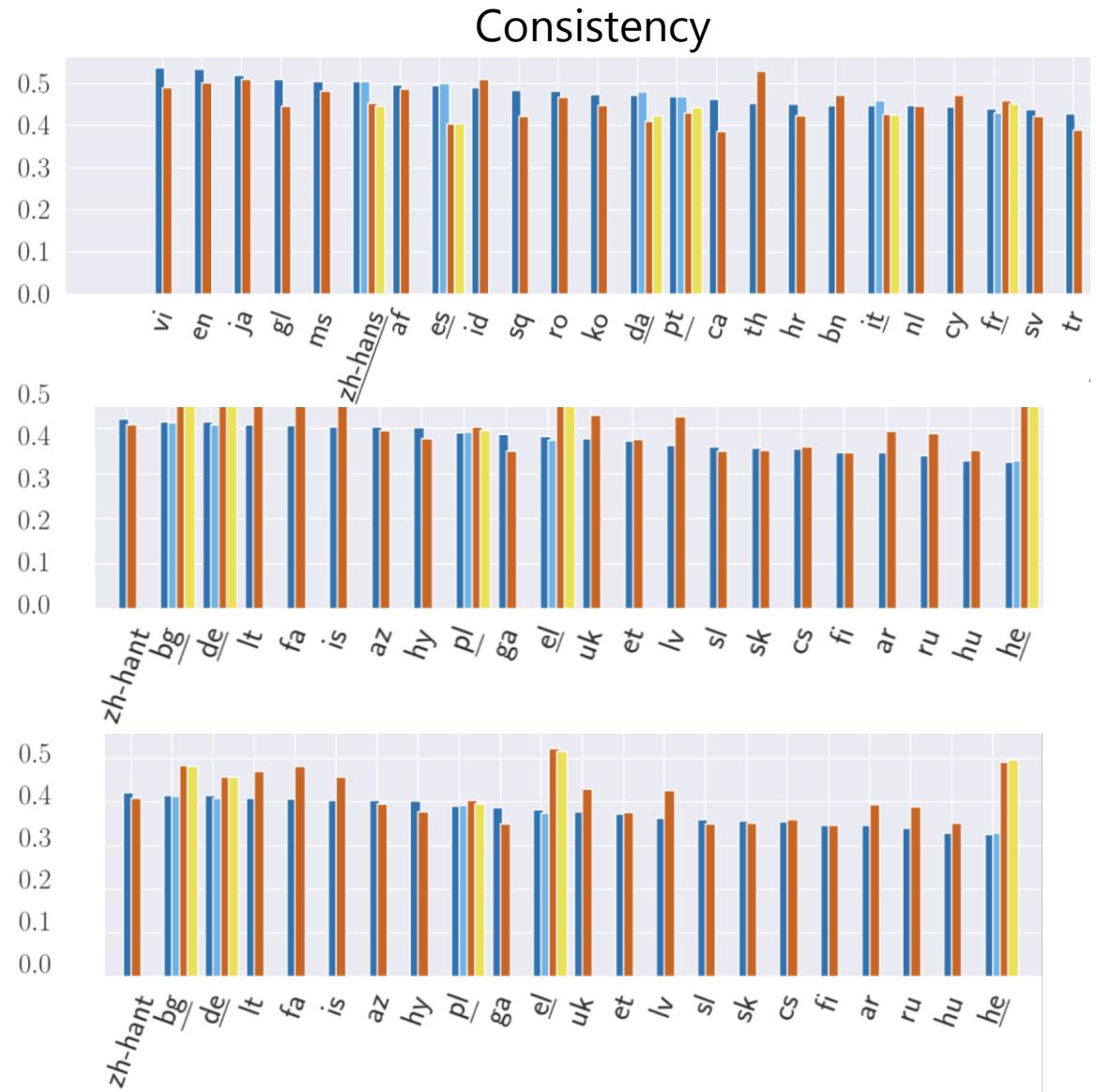
nl

Nederland (172), Italië (50)

it

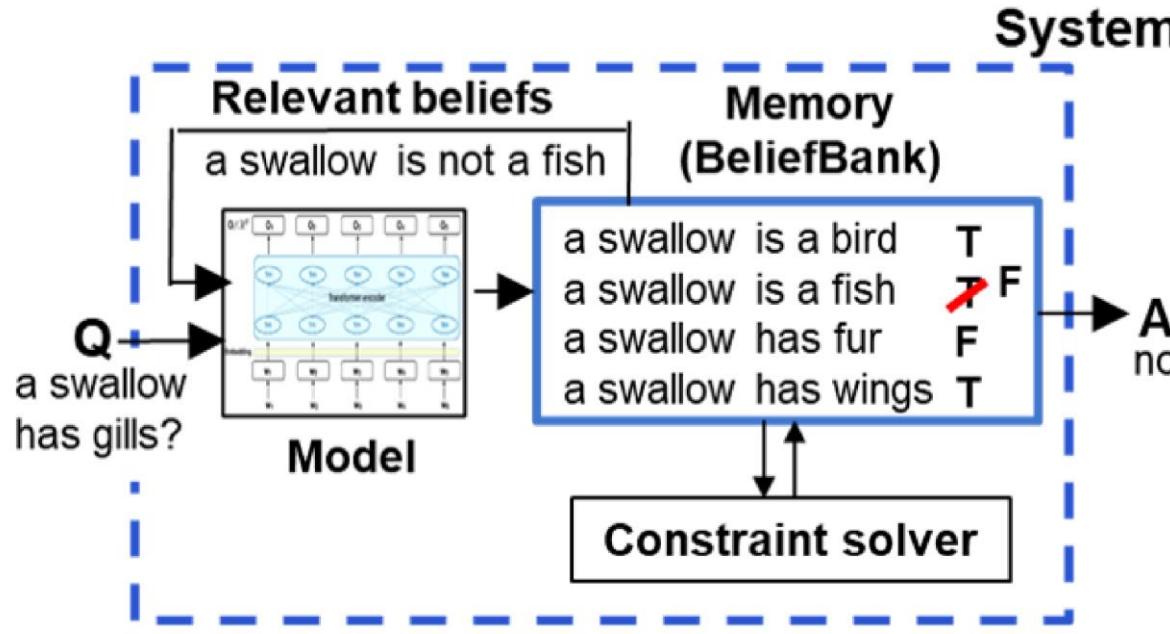
Italia (167), Giappone (92)

[Multilingual LAMA: Investigating Knowledge in Multilingual Pretrained Language Models](#) (Kassner et al., EACL 2021)

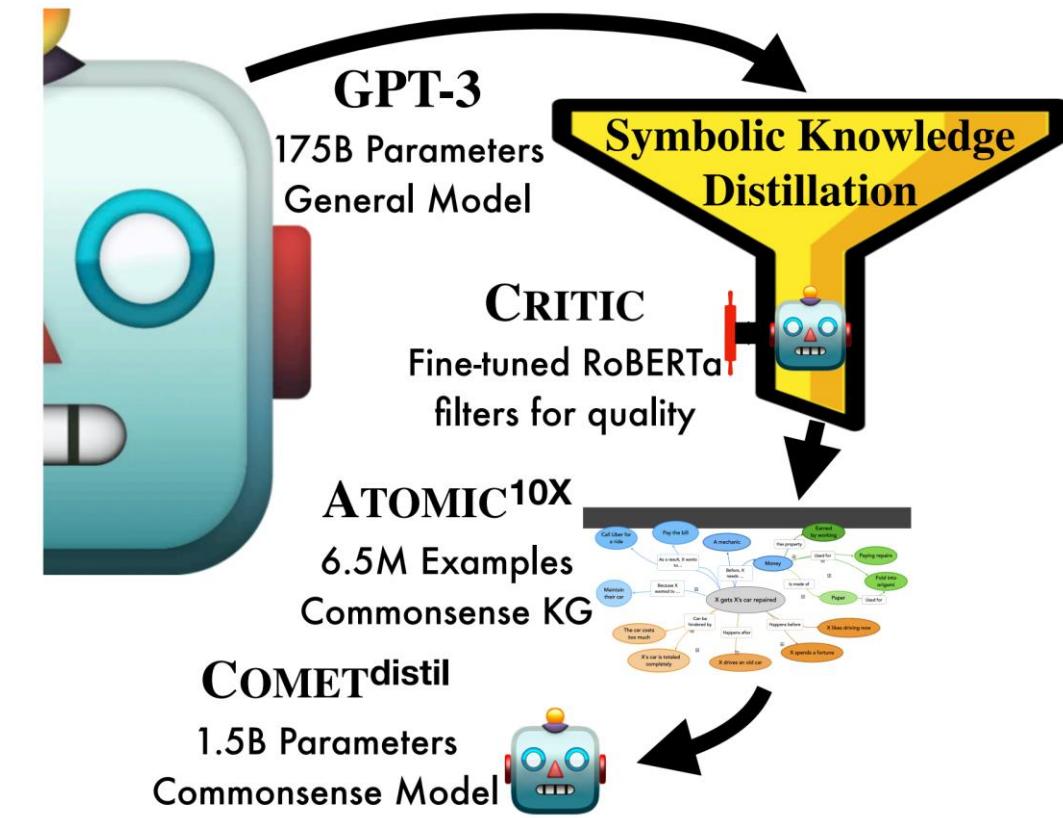


[Factual Consistency of Multilingual Pretrained Language Models](#) (Fierro & Søgaard, Findings 2022)

# Knowledge representation



[BeliefBank: Adding Memory to a Pre-Trained Language Model for a Systematic Notion of Belief](#) (Kassner et al., EMNLP 2021)



[Symbolic Knowledge Distillation: from General Language Models to Commonsense Models](#) (West et al., NAACL 2022)

# Who decides what is the desired target culture?



Researchers



Practitioners



End-users



Affected communities



Regulators



"content generated by AI needs to reflect the core values of socialism"

[Cyberspace Administration of China, 11 April 2023](#)

# Cultural translation Entities



„Ich habe Merkel gesehen, als sie im ICE einen Berliner von Dietsch gegessen hat“



*I saw Biden eating a Boston Cream from Dunkin' Donuts on the Acela*

Adapting Entities across Languages and Cultures  
(Peskov et al., Findings of EMNLP 2021)

# Recipes

## 凉拌秋葵

### 用料

- |      |       |            |      |
|------|-------|------------|------|
| • 秋葵 | 20根左右 | • 香油       | 1勺   |
| • 生抽 | 2-3勺  | • 糖        | 1勺   |
| • 醋  | 1勺    | • 蒜        | 3-5瓣 |
| • 蚝油 | 1勺    | • 盐        | 酌量   |
|      |       | • 绿芥末膏不用也行 | 酌量   |

### 做法

- 将秋葵洗净放开水中焯2分钟左右。
- 开水中放盐一勺，油一勺，这样秋葵颜色翠绿鲜艳) ...



## Chinese Okra Salad

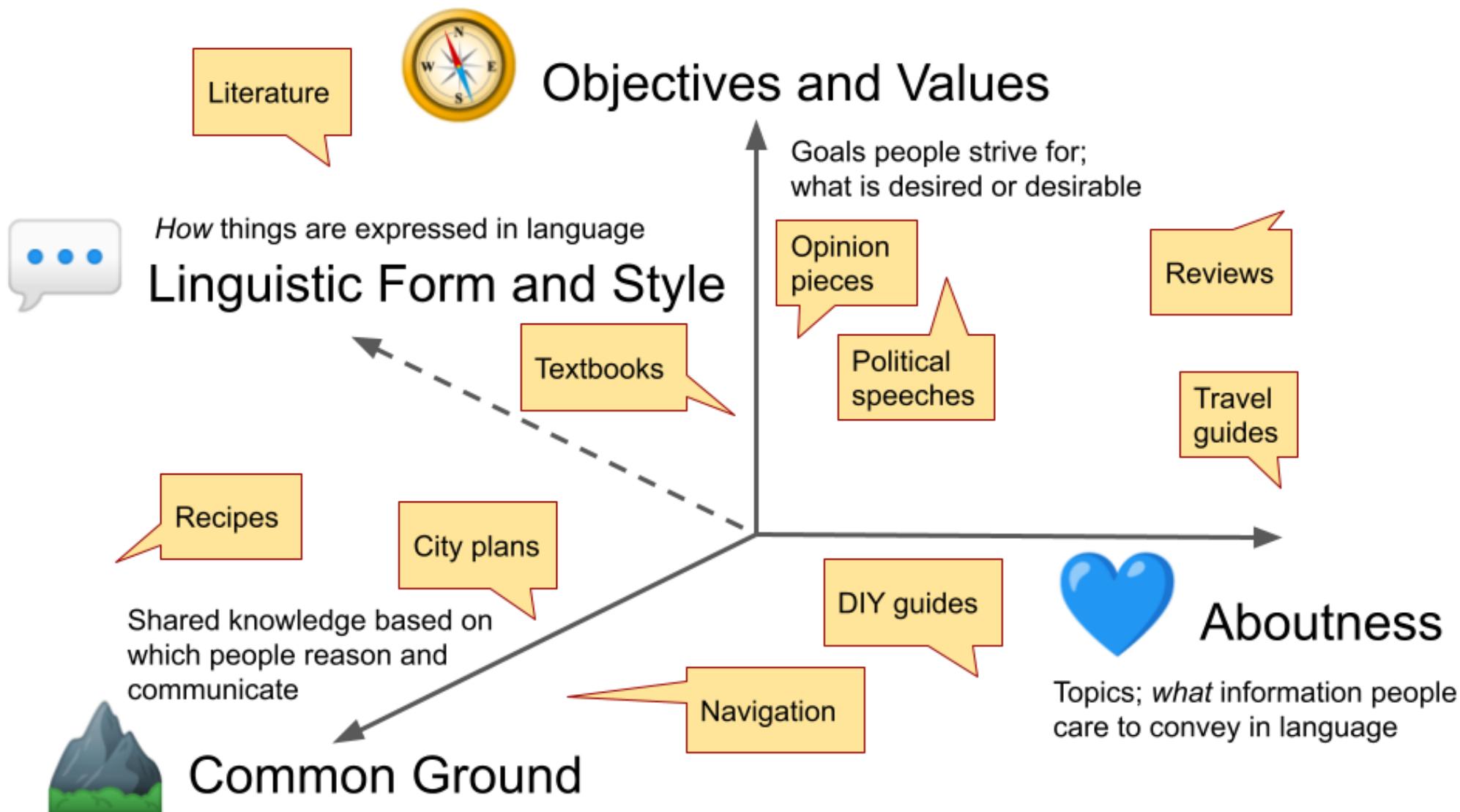
### Ingredients

- 8 oz (225 g) okra
- 2 teaspoons light soy sauce (or soy sauce)
- 1/2 teaspoons green Sichuan pepper oil (or more to taste)

### Instructions

- Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Add 1 teaspoon vegetable oil and a pinch of salt...

# Domains



# Adaptation with models



Retrieval of comparable cross-cultural examples



Supervised models trained on paired data



Style transfer models trained on unpaired data



Human-authored references and human evaluation

# Conclusion

LMs are not culturally universal, but they can be adapted



We can use LMs to bridge between cultures



We must think outside the NLP box to do these things

# Thanks!



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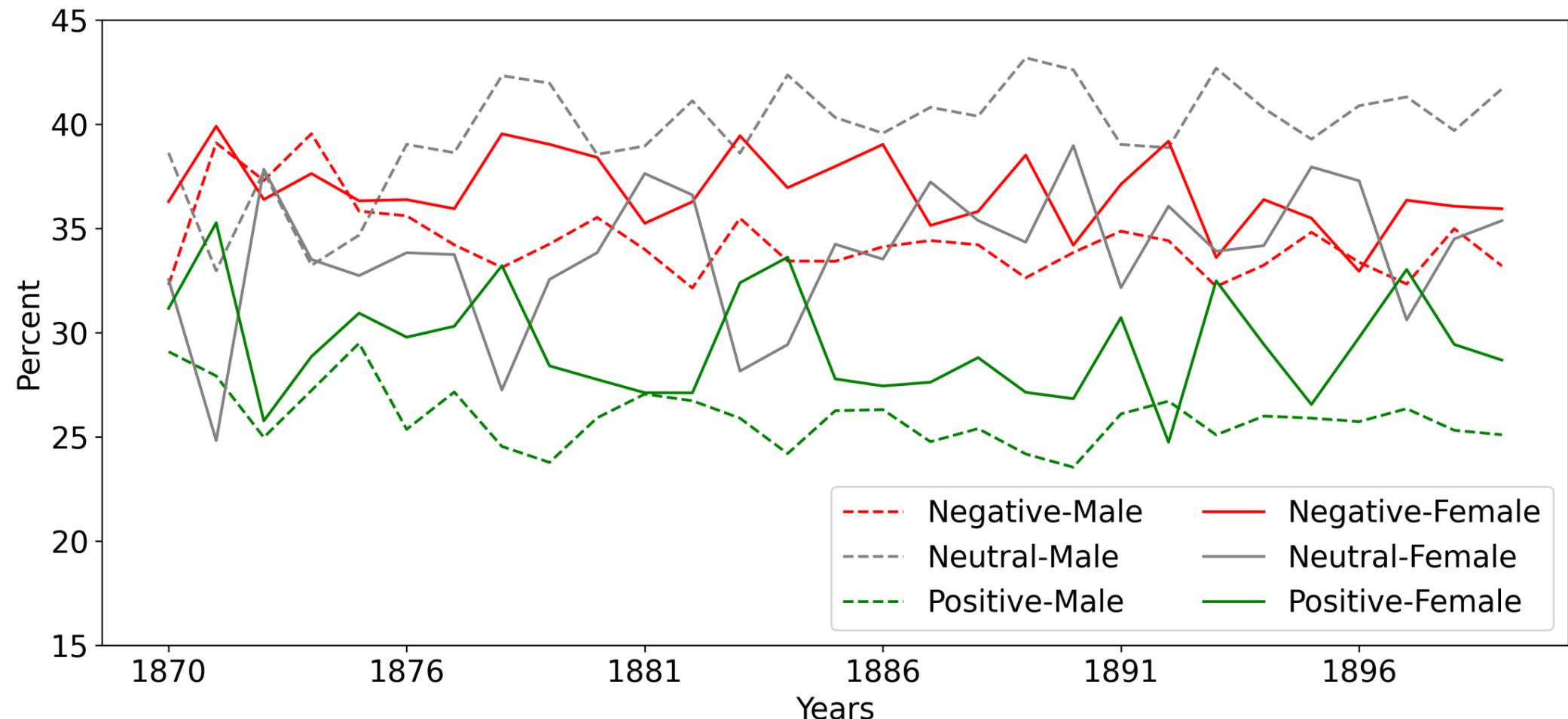


@daniel\_hers



sigmoid.social/@dh

# Culture is dynamic



# Translated datasets

## Lang. Question

En	Did Lohengrin's male actor marry Margarete Joswig
He	האם ה שחקן ה גברי של לוהנגרין עמ מרגרט יוסוויג
Kn	ယෝංගින් අවර පුරුෂ නෙ ඩිවාක්වාදරු මාග්‍රේස් සොස්ග්
Zh	Lohengrin 的 男 演员 嫁给 了 Margarete Joswig 吗

## SPARQL Query:

```
ASK WHERE { ?x0 wdt:P453 wd:Q50807639 . ?x0
wdt:P21 wd:Q6581097 . ?x0 wdt:P26 wd:Q1560129 .
FILTER ( ?x0 != wd:Q1560129 )}
```

[Compositional Generalization in Multilingual Semantic Parsing over Wikidata \(Cui et al., TACL 2022\)](#)

## NEURAL-BASED TRANSLATION:

SOURCE: Did Erika Mann's spouse executive produce Friedemann Bach

TARGET: 艾莉卡·曼的配偶执行官 制作 了 弗里德曼·巴赫 吗

## RULE-BASED TRANSLATION:

SOURCE: Did Erika Mann's spouse executive produce Friedemann Bach

TARGET: 艾莉卡·曼的配偶 执行制作 了 弗里德曼·巴赫 吗

NP1                            V                            NP2

## SPARQL QUERY:

```
ASK WHERE { wd:Q829979 wdt:P1431 ?x0 .
?x0 wdt:P26 wd:Q61597 . FILTER ( ?x0 != wd:Q61597 )}
```

On Evaluating Multilingual Compositional Generalization with Translated Datasets (Wang and Hershcovich, accepted to ACL 2023)