HW-TSC's Submissions to the WMT 2022 General Machine Translation Shared Task

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Abstract

This paper presents the submissions of Huawei Translate Services Center (HW-TSC) to the WMT 2022 General Machine Translation Shared Task. We participate in 6 language pairs, including $Zh \leftrightarrow En$, $Ru \leftrightarrow En$, $Uk \leftrightarrow En$, $Hr \leftrightarrow En$, $Uk \leftrightarrow Cs$ and $Liv \leftrightarrow En$. We use Transformer architecture and obtain the best performance via multiple variants with larger parameter sizes. We perform fine-grained pre-processing and filtering on the provided large-scale bilingual and monolingual datasets. For medium and highresource languages, we mainly use data augmentation strategies, including Back Translation, Self Training, Ensemble Knowledge Distillation, Multilingual, etc. For low-resource languages such as Liv, we use pre-trained machine translation models, and then continue training with Regularization Dropout (R-Drop). The previous mentioned data augmentation methods are also used. Our submissions obtain competitive results in the final evaluation.

1 Introduction

This paper introduces our submissions to the WMT 2022 General Machine Translation Shared Task. We participate in 6 language pairs including Chinese/English (Zh↔En), Russian/English $(Ru\leftrightarrow En)$, Ukrainian/English (Uk \leftrightarrow En), Croatian/English (En \rightarrow Hr), Ukrainian/Czech(Uk \leftrightarrow Cs), and Livonian/English (Liv \leftrightarrow En). For Zh \leftrightarrow En translation, we use additional in-house in-domain data, so the final submission for this language pair is unconstrained. For Liv + En translation, although we did not use additional data, we used M2M-100 (Fan et al., 2020) as the pretrained model, and the final submission is also unconstrained. All other languages pair participate in the constrained evaluation. Our method is mainly based on previous works (Wei et al., 2020, 2021; Yang et al., 2021) but with fine-grained data cleansing techniques and language-specific optimizations.

For each language pair, we perform multi-step data cleansing on the provided dataset and only keep a high-quality subset for training. At the same time, several strategies are tested in a pipeline, including Backward (Edunov et al., 2018) and Forward (Wu et al., 2019a) Translation, Multilingual Translation (Johnson et al., 2017), Iterative Joint Training (Zhang et al., 2018), R-Drop, Pretrained NMT model, Ensemble Knowledge Distillation (Freitag et al., 2017; Li et al., 2019), Fine-Tuning (Sun et al., 2019), Ensemble (Garmash and Monz, 2016), and Post-Processing.

Our system report includes four parts. Section 2 focuses on our data processing strategies while section 3 describes our training details. Section 4 explains our experiment settings and training processes and section 5 presents the results.

2 Data

2.1 Data Source

We obtain bilingual and monolingual data from data sources such as CCMT, UN, ParaCrawl, Wiki-Matrix, WikiTitles, News Commentary, Leipzig Corpora, News Crawl, and Common Crawl. The amount of data we used is shown in Table 1. It should be noted that in order to obtain better performance in the general domain, we mix the monolingual data from Common Crawl and News Crawl.

2.2 Data Pre-processing

Our data processing procedure is basically the same as our method last year (Wei et al., 2021), including deduplication, XML content processing, langid (Joulin et al., 2016b,a) and fast-align (Dyer et al., 2013) filtering strategies, etc. As we use the same data pre-processing strategy as last year's, we will not go into details here.

2.3 Data Denoise

Regarding $Hr \leftrightarrow En$, the CCMatrix data is highly noisy, so more fine-grained data cleaning is nec-

language pairs	Raw bi data	Filter bi data	Used mono data
Zh/En	39M	37M	En: 150M (C&N), Zh: 150M (C)
Ru/En	28M	26M	En: 160M (C&N), Ru: 160M (C&N)
Hr/En	69M	55M	Hr: 22M (N)
Uk/En	39M	36M	En: 150M (C&N), Uk: 60M (N)
Cs/Uk	8.4M	8M	Cs: 60M (C&N), Uk: 60M (N)
Liv/En	1.1k	1.1k	Liv: 50K, En: 1M

Table 1: Bilingual data sizes before and after filtering, and monolingual data used in the task. Regarding monolingual data, **N** means that the data comes from News Crawl; **C** means that the data comes from Common Crawl; and **C&N** means half of News and Common Crawl.

essary. We adopted the data denoise strategy by Wang et al. (2019, 2018). The strategy uses a small amount of high-quality data to tune the base model, and then leverages the differences between the tuned model and the baseline to score bilingual data. The score is calculated based on formula 1.

$$score = \frac{\log P(y|x;\theta_{clean}) - \log P(y|x;\theta_{noise})}{|y|}$$
(1)

Where θ_{noise} denotes the model trained with noisy data; θ_{clean} denotes the model after fine-tuning on a small amount of clean bilingual data, and |y| denotes the length of the sentence. Higher *score* means higher quality.

3 System Overview

Our method basically follows our previous training strategies (Wei et al., 2020, 2021), such as commonly used Back-Translation (Edunov et al., 2018), Iterative Joint Training (Zhang et al., 2018), Multilingual enhancement (Johnson et al., 2017; Kudugunta et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2020), Data Diversification (Nguyen et al., 2020) (for details, please refer to our previous work Yang et al. (2021)), Ensemble and Fine-tuning, etc. We will not detail these strategies in this report. The following paper focuses on new strategies used in this year.

3.1 Model

We continue using Transformer (Vaswani et al., 2017) as our NMT architecture, but we do not use the four model variants as last year. For convenience, we only use a 25-6 deep model architecture. The parameters of the model are the same as Transformer-big. We just change the post-layer-normalization to the pre-layer-normalization, and increase the encoder layers to 25.

3.2 R-Drop

Dropout-like method (Srivastava et al., 2014; Gao et al., 2022) is a powerful and widely used technique for regularizing deep neural networks. Though it can help improve training effectiveness, the randomness introduced by dropouts may lead to inconsistencies between training and inference. R-Drop (Wu et al., 2021) forces the output distributions of different sub models generated by dropout be consistent with each other. Therefore, we use R-Drop training strategy to augment the baseline model for each track and reduce inconsistencies between training and inference.

3.3 Pretrained NMT Model

There are many pre-trained Sequence-to-Sequence models, such as Mbart (Liu et al., 2020), MT5 (Xue et al., 2020), M2M-100 (Fan et al., 2020), etc. These pre-trained models are very useful for ultralow resource tasks. For the ultra-low-resource track Liv \leftrightarrow En, very few bilingual data (1k) is available, so we use a method similar to Adelani and Alabi (2022) to continue training on the basis of M2M-100 (418M)¹. Since M2M-100 does not support the Liv language, we select an existing language tag (Estonian) similar to Liv to identify this language. For unknown tokens in Liv, we replace them with very low-frequent words in the vocabulary. We find this strategy effective for performance improvement.

3.4 Noised Self-Training

Self-training (Imamura and Sumita, 2018) (ST), also known as Forward translation (Wu et al., 2019b), usually refers to using a forward NMT model to translate source-side monolingual data so as to generate synthetic bilinguals, which aims at

¹https://dl.fbaipublicfiles.com/m2m_ 100/418M_last_checkpoint.pt

System	WMT20	WMT21	Med20	Flores	Avg	WMT22
baseline	41.6	32.2	34.3	42.2	37.6	-
R-Drop	43.4	32.9	35.6	44.0	39.0	-
Data Rejuvenation	43.5	33.0	35.4	44.3	39.5	-
Data Diversification	44.8	33.4	35.7	44.5	39.6	-
ST+BT	45.0	33.8	36.6	45.0	40.1	46.0
Finetune & Ensemble (constrain)	-	-	-	-	-	47.8
Domain Data (unconstrain)	-	-	-	-	-	49.7

Table 2: En \rightarrow Zh BLEU scores on WMT 2020 News (WMT20), WMT 2021 News (WMT21), WMT 2020 Biomedical (Med20) and Flores test sets, and their average (Avg) scores based on different training strategies. We also report part of WMT 2022 (WMT22) test set results.

System	WMT20	WMT21	Med20	Flores	Avg	WMT22
baseline	28.6	23.5	26.3	30.5	27.2	-
R-Drop	30.4	25.0	28.3	31.8	28.9	-
Data Rejuvenation	31.3	26.2	28.4	31.3	29.3	-
Data Diversification	32.5	27.8	29.5	31.9	30.4	-
ST+BT	33.3	28.1	29.6	32.0	30.7	26.0
Finetune & Ensemble (constrain)	-	-	-	-	-	27.7
Domain Data (unconstrain)	-	-	-	-	-	29.8

Table 3: Zh→En BLEU scores on WMT 2020 News (WMT20), WMT 2021 News (WMT21), WMT 2020 Biomedical (Med20) and Flores test sets, and their average (Avg) scores based on different training strategies. We also report part of WMT 2022 (WMT22) test set results.

increasing the training data size. Forward translation usually relies on beam search-based (Freitag and Al-Onaizan, 2017) decoding when generating synthetic data. He et al. (2019) find that drop-out plays an important role in ST and adding a certain noise to the original text can further improve the effect of ST, which is called Noised ST. We adopt this method during training.

3.5 Data Rejuvenation

We score all the training bilingual data through Equation 1, and filter out 10% - 20% of the data according to the score distribution. We use the remaining 80% - 90% clean data to continue training on the previous model for denoising. This strategy is particularly effective with noisy data and is used in several several languages in this task. We refer to it as Data Rejuvenation in the following.

4 Experiment Settings

We use the open-source fairseq (Ott et al., 2019) for training and sacreBLEU (Post, 2018) to measure system performances. The main parameters are as follows: Each model is trained using 8 V100 GPUs. The size of each batch is set as 2048, parameter update frequency as 4, and learning rate as 5e-4

(Vaswani et al., 2017). The number of warmup steps is 4000, and model is saved every 1000 steps. The architecture we used is described in section 3.1. We adopt dropout, and the rate varies across different language pairs. R-Drop is used in model training, and we set parameter λ to 5 for all language pairs.

5 Results and Analysis

5.1 $Zh \leftrightarrow En$

Regarding Zh \leftrightarrow En, we use R-Drop, Knowledge Distillation (Kim and Rush, 2016), Self Training + Back Translation, and fine-tuning. The results of Zh \rightarrow En and En \rightarrow Zh are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

To better measure the generalizability of our models, we also calculate BLEU on WMT Biomedical 2020 and Flores test sets (Goyal et al., 2021).

We see that R-Drop can stably bring about 1.5 BLEU improvement, and data enhancement can bring 1.0 BLEU improvement. In the final result we submitted, we only use the news test sets to fine-tune the model, but we see that it was still able to bring 1 BLEU improvement on the WMT 2022 test set.

In the end, our submission uses a combination of our domain-related in-house data and the WMT

System	WMT20	WMT21	Med20	Flores	Avg	WMT22
baseline	22.9	26.2	32.7	30.8	28.2	-
ST+BT	23.8	27.9	33.1	31.3	29.0	-
ST+BT+R2L	24.1	28.4	32.1	31.6	29.1	-
Data Rejuvenation	22.9	27.1	34.9	31.5	29.1	27.2
Common Crawl	24.1	28.6	34.5	32.7	30.0	29.4
Finetune	-	-	-	-	-	30.4
Ensemble	-	-	-	-	-	30.8

Table 4: En \rightarrow Ru BLEU scores on WMT 2020 News (WMT20), WMT 2021 News (WMT21), WMT 2020 Biomedical (Med20) and Flores test sets, and their average (Avg) scores based on different training strategies. We also report part of WMT 2022 (WMT22) test set results.

System	WMT20	WMT21	Med20	Flores	Avg	WMT22
baseline	36.1	36.7	41.1	34.1	37.0	-
ST+BT	37.5	38.1	40.4	35.1	37.8	-
ST+BT+R2L	37.7	38.4	41.4	36.2	38.4	42.8
Data Rejuvenation	37.1	38.1	42.7	36.7	38.7	43.0
Common Crawl	37.4	38.1	42.6	36.5	38.7	43.4
Finetune	-	-	-	-	-	44.6
Ensemble	-	-	-	-	-	45.1

Table 5: Ru→En BLEU scores on WMT 2020 News (WMT20), WMT 2021 News (WMT21), WMT 2020 Biomedical (Med20) and Flores test sets, and their average (Avg) scores based on different training strategies. We also report part of WMT 2022 (WMT22) test set results.

data, and we find that domain-related data is critical for quality improvement. By using the extra data, we get an improvement of about 2.0 BLEU over using only the WMT data. Our final $Zh\rightarrow En$ and $En\rightarrow Zh$ submissions achieve 49.7 and 29.8 BLEU respectively.

5.2 $Ru \leftrightarrow En$

Regarding Ru \leftrightarrow En (Table 4 and 5), we use strategies including Iterative Self Training + Back Translation, R2L enhancement, and general domain monolingual enhancement.

We see that in addition to the average 1 BLEU improvement brought by fine-tune, the most effective strategy is adding more general domain data. On $En \rightarrow Ru$, after the Common Crawl monolingual is added, we observe 2.0 BLEU improvement on WMT 2022 test set.

The data enhancement strategy could bring stable improvement like that in $Zh \leftrightarrow En$, with an increase of 2 BLEU compared to the baseline model in an average.

The BLEU scores of our final Ru \rightarrow En and En \rightarrow Ru submissions are 45.1 and 30.8 respectively.

System	En → Liv	Liv→En
M2M-100 finetune	8.0	16.0
OOV process	9.6	17.6
Multilingual	11.0	21.6
Iter Tagged BT	13.3	24.0
Noised ST	14.6	-
R-Drop	15.1	25.8
WMT22 Submission	12.8	23.4

Table 6: The results of Liv \leftrightarrow En for WMT 2022 dev test set. We remove overlapping sentences in the dev set that also appear in the training set.

5.3 Liv↔En

Regarding Liv \leftrightarrow En (Table 6), we first fine-tune the M2M-100 model with 1K bilingual data, and then replace the out-of-vocabulary (OOV) token in Liv with low-frequency sub-words in the vocabulary, we see that this strategy brings 1.6 BLEU improvement on En \rightarrow Liv.

Then we use the Liv/Et and Liv/Lv data together to fine-tune the model. This strategy can bring significant improvement on both directions (1.4 BLEU on En \rightarrow Liv and 4 BLEU on Liv \rightarrow En. It should be pointed out that regarding En \rightarrow Liv, we use additional data from Et \rightarrow Liv and Lv \rightarrow Liv, while for

System	dev	Flores	Avg
R-Drop	31.5	33.2	32.4
Data Rejuvenation	32.1	33.5	32.8
Sampling BT	33.2	32.9	33.1
Finetune	33.1	33.0	33.0
Ensemble	33.2	33.4	33.3
WMT22 Submission		18.1	

Table 7: The results of $En \rightarrow Hr$ on WMT 2022 dev test set and Flores.

Liv \rightarrow En, we use data from Liv \rightarrow Et and Liv \rightarrow Lv to enhance the model.

We do three rounds of Tagged BT (Caswell et al., 2019) in total and observe that the improvement is still significant (an average improvement of 3 BLEU on two directions). For $En \rightarrow Liv$, we adopt the strategy of Noised ST because we have a large amount of English monolinguals. We used 1M English monolinguals for Noised ST. We see that this strategy can bring an additional 1.3 BLEU improvement.

Additionally, we employ the R-Drop strategy during training and find that on Liv2En, this strategy brings an improvement of 1.8 BLEU.

Finally, using dev fine-tune and ensemble of 4 models, our submissions achieve 12.8 BLEU on $En \rightarrow Liv$, and 23.4 BLEU on $Liv \rightarrow En$.

5.4 $En \rightarrow Hr$

The results of En \rightarrow Hr are shown in Table 7. We use 22M Hr monolinguals for BT and find that the results on the dev set is different from that on the test set as the magnitude of improvements are inconsistent. The overall improvement on dev set is only 0.8 BLEU, but 3 BLEU on the test set. The main improvement is brought by data denoising. We assume that this is because the provided En2Hr bilingual data is highly noisy. Our final submission achieves 18.1 BLEU.

5.5 Uk \leftrightarrow En and Cs \leftrightarrow Uk

Regarding Uk \leftrightarrow En (Table 8), we conduct Sampling BT and see 2.2 BLEU improvement on Uk \rightarrow En but no improvement on En \leftrightarrow Uk. After adding self-training data, an additional 0.5 BLEU improvement is gained on Uk \rightarrow En. We then use real bilinguals data to continue training the model that have been augmented with synthetic data. This strategy further leads to an average improvement of 0.4 BLEU. We do not use dev fine-tuning but directly ensemble the 4 models. The final En \rightarrow Uk and Uk \rightarrow En submissions achieve 26.5 and 41.6 BLEU respectively on the WMT22 test set.

The strategy for Cs \leftrightarrow Uk is basically the same as that for Uk \leftrightarrow En, but we further apply multilingual enhancement. We use additional En \rightarrow Uk data for enhancing Cs \rightarrow Uk translation and En \rightarrow Cs data for enhancing Uk \rightarrow Cs translation. Multilingual enhancement brings 1.2 BLEU improvement on Uk \rightarrow Cs. Monolingual data augmentation also brings significant improvement. Ensemble further leads to 1 BLEU increase on Uk \rightarrow Cs. Our final Cs \leftrightarrow Uk submissions achieve 36.0 BLEU on the WMT22 test sets.

6 Discussion

6.1 General Domain

In this year, WMT changed its focus on news domain to the broader general task, with three additional domains putting into consideration (social, conversational, and ecommerce). We also use test sets from other domains to measure the generalizability of our models.

However, for language pairs we participate in, most of the knowledge in domains other than news can only be learned from Common Crawl monolinguals. Without in-domain data, a model's performance in social, conversational and ecommerce domains can hardly be improved. We add additional bilingual data related to the three domains for the Zh \leftrightarrow En track and observe an average of 2.0 BLEU improvement. As a result, how to maximize the effectiveness of in-domain data is crucial.

6.2 Evaluation Method

N-gram matching metrics such as BLEU and chrF (Popović, 2015) are widely used in machine translation evaluation. However, as machine translation technology improves, relying only on BLEU to evaluate a model's performance become increasingly risky. For example, in last year's evaluation, the BLEU score of our De \rightarrow En model ranks among the top, but the human evaluation results show that our model performs the worst. In this year's En→Uk evaluation, widely-used back-translation lead to no BLEU increase as shown in Table 8. So far, we are not sure whether back-translation does lead to no improvement or the improvement cannot be measured by BLEU. We believe that more researches are required on robust metrics (Sellam et al., 2020; Rei et al., 2020), reliable test set constructions, and sound human evaluation methods

System	En→Uk	Uk→En	Cs→UK	Uk→Cs
baseline	31.7	38.7	24.1	22.3
Multilingual	-	-	24.6	23.5
Sampling BT	31.7	40.9	25.7	24.2
ST + BT	31.5	41.4	25.4	23.9
Data Rejuvenation	31.9	41.8	25.7	24.2
Ensemble	32.9	41.9	26.3	25.1
WMT22 Submission	26.5	41.6	36.0	36.0

Table 8: The results of Uk \leftrightarrow En and Uk \leftrightarrow Cs for WMT 2022 dev set.

considering the great advances in NMT and subtle differences among systems.

7 Conclusion

This paper presents the submissions of HW-TSC to the WMT 2022 General Machine Translation Task. We participate in six language pairs and perform experiments with a series of pre-processing and training strategies. The effectiveness of each strategy is demonstrated. Our experiments show that in very low-resource scenarios, fine-tuning on pre-trained NMT models can significantly improve system performance. R-Drop also brings stable improvement across languages. Certainly, commonly-used data augmentation strategies are still effective for model training. Our submissions finally achieve competitive results in the evaluation.

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