# Genaios at SemEval-2024 Task 8: Detecting Machine-Generated Text by Mixing Language Model Probabilistic Features

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# Abstract

This paper describes the participation of the Genaios team in the monolingual track of Subtask A at SemEval-2024 Task 8. Our best system, LLMIXTIC, is a Transformer Encoder that mixes token-level probabilistic features extracted from four LLaMA-2 models. We obtained the best results in the official ranking (96.88% accuracy), showing a false positive ratio of 4.38% and a false negative ratio of 1.97% on the test set. We further study LLMIX-TIC through ablation, probabilistic, and attention analyses, finding that (i) performance improves as more LLMs and probabilistic features are included, (ii) LLMIXTIC puts most attention on the features of the last tokens, (iii) it fails on samples where human text probabilities become consistently higher than for generated text, and (iv) LLMIXTIC's false negatives exhibit a bias towards text with newlines.

# 1 Introduction

The analysis of Machine-Generated Text (MGT) has gained popularity in recent times. This is important for detecting and attributing text to Large Language Models (LLMs) such as LLaMA (Touvron et al., 2023) and GPT (Ouyang et al., 2022), and combating fake-news, intellectual property violations (Henderson et al., 2023), data leakages (Nasr et al., 2023), among other malicious usages (Kasneci et al., 2023). Recent efforts include zeroshot (Bao et al., 2024) and supervised systems (Wang et al., 2023). However, large-scale scenarios that combine domains, data sources, or models are still challenging (Sarvazyan et al., 2023b; Eloundou et al., 2023). As a result, different frameworks to generate high-quality MGT datasets<sup>1</sup> (Sarvazyan et al., 2024) and evaluation campaigns have been released (Shamardina et al., 2022; Sarvazyan et al., 2023a). In this paper, we describe





Figure 1: Overview of the proposed system. Modules marked with  $\circledast$  are frozen. Those with o are trainable.

our solution as the Genaios team at SemEval-2024 Task 8: *Multigenerator, Multidomain, and Multilingual Black-Box Machine-Generated Text Detection* (Wang et al., 2024a).

Our starting point is the observation that LLMs assign higher probabilities to MGT than to human text. We propose LLMIXTIC, illustrated in Figure 1, which leverages this via a Transformer encoder (Vaswani et al., 2017) that mixes tokenlevel probabilistic features extracted from four LLaMA-2 models, both instructed and base flavors: LLaMA-2-7b, LLaMA-2-7b-chat, LLaMA-2-13b, and LLaMA-2-13b-chat. For each token, our features are (i) the log probability of the observed token, (ii) the log probability of the predicted token, and (iii) the entropy of the distribution.

These probabilistic features capture MGT style in a precise manner, favouring detection. As a result, we obtained the best results in the official ranking (96.88% accuracy) for the monolingual track of Subtask A: *Binary Human-Written vs. Machine-Generated Text Classification*. Our analysis shows that performance improves as more LLMs and probabilistic features are used. In addition, LLMIXTIC pays more attention to the last tokens of the sequence, where higher probabilities for human texts lead to misclassifications. Finally,



Table 1: Statistics of the Subtask A Monolingual dataset by split, label, model, and domain. Sizes in thousands.

texts with newlines are predominant among false negatives.

#### 2 Background

The monolingual track of Subtask A: *Binary Human-Written vs. Machine-Generated Text Classification* focuses on detecting whether an English text is entirely written by a human or generated by an HLM. The data is an extension of the M4 dataset (Wang et al., 2024b) and combines texts from different domains and LLMs. We show the statistics of the dataset in Table 1. The official evaluation metric of the Subtask A is accuracy, which we also employ in our experiments.

# **3** System Overview

It is known that high-quality human text does not follow high-probability distributions over the next tokens (Holtzman et al., 2020). In contrast, LLMs are decoded to sample from regions of high probability, thus assigning higher probability to lowdiversity constructions and lower to human texts. In practice, this causes MGT to be measurably different from human texts, e.g., showing less idiomatic expressions, scarce and repetitive discourse markers, or strictly complying with canonical orderings of constituents (Simón et al., 2023).

We developed our system by following these previous findings, and considering that most of the current LLMs share two key components which condition the probability distributions they learn: (i) the underlying backbone, namely Transformer decoder, with few architectural changes and (ii) large portions of their training data both for pretraining and instruction tuning. Our system relies on the hypothesis that token-level probabilistic features extracted from an specific set of LLMs can be used to differentiate human texts and MGT from a potentially different set of LLMs, which has been shown to be very effective in existing MGT detectors (Przybyła et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023).

As depicted in Figure 1, our final system is a Transformer Encoder that mixes token-level probabilistic features extracted from four LLaMA-2 models (Touvron et al., 2023), including base and instructed versions: Llama-2-7b, Llama-2-7b-chat, Llama-2-13b, and Llama-2-13b-chat. Following (Przybyła et al., 2023), we build feature sequences where each token is represented as the concatenation of three probabilistic features extracted from each LLM. Specifically, we employ the following features.

Log probability of the predicted token. Measures the highest probability assigned by  $\theta$  to the next token as:

$$\alpha_i = \max_{y \in \mathcal{V}} \log p_\theta(y|x_{< i}) \tag{1}$$

**Entropy of the distribution.** Measures the uncertainty of  $\theta$  for choosing the next token:

$$\beta_i = -\sum_{y \in \mathcal{V}} p_\theta(y|x_{< i}) \log p_\theta(y|x_{< i})$$
 (2)

Log probability of the observed token. Measures how likely is the observed token  $x_i$  according to the model  $\theta$  and the prefix  $x_{< i}$  as:

$$\gamma_i = \log p_\theta(x_i | x_{< i}) \tag{3}$$

Given a text  $x = [x_1, ..., x_n]$  and a set of LLMs  $\mathcal{L} = \{\theta_1, ..., \theta_m\}$ , we represent x as a feature sequence  $h = [h_1, ..., h_n]$  with each  $h_i$  denoting the probabilistic features from all the LLMs for the *i*-th token,  $h_i = [\alpha_i^1; \beta_i^1; \gamma_i^1, ..., \alpha_i^m; \beta_i^m; \gamma_i^m]$ . For instance, our final system uses four LLMs and three features from each one,  $h \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times 12}$ . Note that the features are extracted per-token, which constrains us to use LLMs with a shared tokenizer.

The feature vectors in h are projected to 128 dimensions through a feed-forward layer, and then mixed with a Transformer encoder of 1 layer and 4 attention heads. The output of the Transformer layer is averaged and a softmax layer is used to compute a probability distribution over the human and generated classes. This classifier on top of the probabilistic features, LLMIXTIC's only trainable component, is comprised of solely 85k parameters, being 0.0002% of the total.

# 4 Experimentation

We focus on the monolingual track of Subtask A, carrying out comparisons among models and ablations of the best system. For these we employ the original training and validation splits provided by the organizers. In the post-evaluation stage, we analyze the errors of LLMIXTIC in the test set by inspecting the probabilistic features extracted from LLaMa-2, the learned attention heads, and text patterns in the misclassified samples.

#### 4.1 Model Comparison

We compare LLMIXTIC with classical and neural models, while also evaluating different LLMs to extract the probabilistic features. All the models in these comparisons are trained and evaluated on the original training and validation splits provided by the shared task organizers.

**Classical baselines.** We consider a Logistic Regression classifier, using either TF-IDF features with word *n*-grams ranging from 1 to 3-grams (LR+TFIDF), or readability features (LR+READ). For these, we employ scikit-learn (Pedregosa et al., 2011) and readability,<sup>2</sup> training the model with balanced class weights and default parameters.

**Neural baselines.** We also compare LLMIX-TIC with two fully fine-tuned Transformer encoders, roberta-base (Liu et al., 2019) and e5-base (Wang et al., 2022). These models are trained for four epochs, using the cross-entropy loss, a batch size of 32 samples, and a learning rate of 5e-6.

LLMIXTIC'S LLMs. We evaluate LLMIX-TIC with probabilistic features from two LLM families. namely GPT-2 (Radford et al., 2019; Sanh et al., 2019) and LLaMA-2 (Touvron et al., 2023). For the GPT-2 family,<sup>3</sup> we include gpt2, gpt2-medium, and distillgpt2. The LLaMA-2 family is comprised of LLaMA-2-7b, LLaMA-2-7b-chat, LLaMA-2-13b, and LLaMA-2-13b-chat. These are trained for ten epochs, with a maximum text length of 512 tokens, a batch size of 32 samples, a learning rate of 1e-3, and the cross-entropy loss.

All neural models are trained with Hugging-Face's Trainer (Wolf et al., 2020) in FP16 mode, employing early stopping, with a patience of 3

Model	Accuracy (%)
LR+READ	42.32
LR+TFIDF	61.26
roberta-base	80.58
e5-base	74.48
LLMIXTIC (w/ GPT-2)	67.42
LLMIXTIC (w/LLaMA-2)	85.98

Table 2: Model comparison results on the dev set.

evaluation steps, on the validation set. The LLMs used for feature extraction are always frozen, with LLaMA-2 models also being quantized to 8 bits. We implement LLMIXTIC in PyTorch (Paszke et al., 2019), and run all the experiments using a single NVIDIA RTX A6000.

Results are presented in Table 2. Here we observe how LLMIXTIC using LLaMA-2 features outperforms every baseline by large margins, improving upon the best baseline's score by 5 points in accuracy, while having only 0.07% relative training parameters. Notably, all the neural models outperform classical baselines, which suggests that grammatical features, especially those based on readability measures, are not enough to properly discriminate between human-written and generated text. Also, the usage of probabilistic features from GPT-2 models does not yield good results in comparison to neural baselines and LLMIXTIC with LLaMA-2 LLMs. This suggests that the scale of the LLM used to extract features could have a large impact on the results. Considering that the LLaMA-2 family is more similar than GPT-2 models to the LLMs that generated the text of the dataset, we also hypothesize that using feature extraction LLMs that more closely resemble the LLMs in the dataset can vield better results.

## 4.2 LLM and Feature Ablations

We study the impact the number of LLMs and probabilistic features have on LLMIXTIC's performance by means of two ablation studies: at LLM and at feature level. These experiments are performed with the same experimental setup: first training with a single LLM or feature, and continually adding the other LLMs or features.

Ablation results are presented in table 3. In LLM ablation we observe improvements as more LLMs are included. Notably, the inclusion of chat models provides the largest improvements of up to ten points. Building upon our hypothesis about similarities in architecture, training strategies, and datasets

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>https://github.com/andreasvc/readability/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Chosen for its success in previous shared tasks (Przybyła et al., 2023) and to test for more efficient feature extractors.

Ablation	Configuration	Accuracy (%)
LLMs	LLaMA-v2-7b + LLaMA-v2-13b + LLaMA-v2-7b-chat + LLaMA-v2-13b-chat	74.90 75.86 78.48 <b>85.98</b>
Features	Predicted + Entropy + Observed	79.40 83.26 <b>85.98</b>

Table 3: Ablation study over LLMs and features.

of instruction-tuned LLMs, it is expected that most of them, especially the chat models we used, have learned close distributions. Therefore, we consider that this improvement can be explained by the nature of the dataset, where all the generators were instruction tuned. We also note that LLMIX-TIC with only non-instructed LLMs achieves similar results to one of the neural baselines, outperforming LLMIXTIC with GPT-2 by a large margin.

Similar to the LLM ablation, feature ablation results improve as more features are included, achieving an increment of more than six points when all the features are used. We observe that LLMIX-TIC obtains similar performance to the best neural baseline just using the log probability of the predicted token and outperforms it after adding the entropy of the distribution. Besides, only with one feature, the performance is ten points higher than LLMIXTIC with GPT-2 using all the features.

# **5** Results

Our official submission is LLMIXTIC with LLaMA-2, trained on the training and validation sets, using the previously described experimental setting. Table 4 presents the results obtained by our system, where it reaches an accuracy of 96.88%, surpassing the other participants' approaches and ranking first. Due to time constraints, we focused our participation on the monolingual track. However, having seen the performance of LLMIXTIC on the test set of the monolingual track, we trained LLMIX-TIC under the same setting for the multilingual track in a post-deadline stage (denoted in tables with \*). Here, we obtained an accuracy of 89.97%, which would have placed us at 14th position.

## 6 Analysis

We further analyze the behavior of LLMIXTIC in the test set by examining the probabilistic features extracted from LLaMa-2, the learned attention heads, and patterns in misclassified samples.

Track	Rank	Name	Accuracy (%)
	1	Genaios	96.88
Monolingual	2	USTC-BUPT	96.09
	20	baseline	88.46
		(119 more)	
Multilingual	1	USTC-BUPT	95.98
	14*	Genaios	89.97
	25	baseline	80.88
		(44 more)	

Table 4: Final results on the official ranking. Bold denotes our team's placement.

LLMIXTIC fails when human text probabilities become larger than for generated texts. In contrast, LLMIXTIC works better when the generated text probabilities are consistently larger than those from human texts. To illustrate this behavior, Figure 2 shows each LLM's feature averaged both for correct and erroneous predicted samples. Errors occur with unusually high values of  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  features in the human class, and unusually low values for the generated class. The effect of feature  $\beta$  is also notable, with the margin between human and generated curves being smaller in misclassifications. Additionally, for each class, chat and base models reveal different curves for all three features.

**LLMIXTIC pays more attention to the last positions.** Figure 3 shows the average of the attention heads across all the samples to illustrate it. This behavior could be the main cause of errors when human text probabilities become consistently larger than those for generated texts in the last positions, as shown in Figure 2. A diagonal pattern with high probability is also noticeable until approximately position 150, after which it disappears.

Human text is more often confused with generated text than vice versa. There are twice as many false positives as there are false negatives (714 vs. 355). This translates into a false positive rate of 4.38% and a false negative rate of 1.97%.

Newlines are predominant in false negatives. We manually analyze the errors with higher confidence, finding that most of LLMIXTIC's false negatives include \n to separate sentences or paragraphs, while false positives do not, to the same extent. Specifically, \n is present in 75.49% of false negatives, whereas it is only present in 34.59% of false positives. This difference could suggest (i) a potential bias in the training data, with human texts containing more \n than the generated texts,



Figure 2: Sample-averaged probabilistic features of the four LLaMa-2 models, for the two classes (generated and human). Both for correct predictions (top row) and errors (bottom row). The y axis denotes the average of the probabilistic feature ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , or  $\gamma$ ) across all samples of a label in the test set, at a given position marked on the x axis. Throughout all positions, the probabilities of generated text for correct predictions consistently exceed those of humans. However, for errors, human probabilities surpass those of generated text from the middle of the sequences.



Figure 3: Sample-averaged and head-averaged attention scores from LLMIXTIC's Transformer encoder. LLMIXTIC pays more attention to the last positions.

or (ii) our system is learning a spurious correlation between n and the human class.

# 7 Conclusion

We described the participation of the Genaios team in the monolingual track of Subtask A at

SemEval-2024 Task 8. We proposed LLMIX-TIC, a Transformer Encoder that mixes tokenlevel probabilistic features extracted from four base and instructed LLaMA-2 models, namely LLaMA-2-7b, LLaMA-2-7b-chat, LLaMA-2-13b, and LLaMA-2-13b-chat. Our system obtained the best results in the official ranking, with small false positive and false negative ratios.

Our ablation analyses showed that LLMIXTIC's performance improves as more LLMs and probabilistic features are used. We compared these features across correctly predicted and misclassified samples, finding that LLMIXTIC works better when MGT probabilities are consistently higher than for human text. In addition, attentions are mostly focused on the last tokens, which could be one of the causes of the errors made by LLMIXTIC. Finally, the newline character seems predominant in false negatives but not in false positives, which suggests biases either in the data or in our model.

Aiming to foster R&D in this area, future works will focus on TextMachina,<sup>1</sup> a framework to generate MGT datasets for tasks such the ones addressed in this SemEval shared task: detection, attribution, boundary, and mixcase detection.

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