

DOSA: Dravidian Code-Mixed Offensive Span Identification Dataset

Manikandan Ravikiran*

OMSCS Program
Bangalore, Karnataka, India
mravikiran3@gatech.edu

Subbiah Annamalai*

OMSCS Program
Columbus, Ohio, USA
sannamali@gatech.edu

Abstract

This paper presents the Dravidian Offensive Span Identification Dataset (DOSA) for under-resourced Tamil-English and Kannada-English code-mixed text. The dataset addresses the lack of code-mixed datasets with annotated offensive spans by extending annotations of existing code-mixed offensive language identification datasets. It provides span annotations for Tamil-English and Kannada-English code-mixed comments posted by users on YouTube social media. Overall the dataset consists of 4786 Tamil-English comments with 6202 annotated spans and 1097 Kannada-English comments with 1641 annotated spans, each annotated by two different annotators. We further present some of our baseline experimental results on the developed dataset, thereby eliciting research in under-resourced languages, leading to an essential step towards semi-automated content moderation in Dravidian languages. The dataset is available in <https://github.com/manikandan-ravikiran/DOSA>.

1 Introduction

Fighting offensive content is imperative for social media companies and other entities involved in content moderation. Currently, much of moderation is relatively limited on most community platforms (Jhaver et al., 2019) with most of them relying on detection of repeatedly used words¹ and block-lists (Jhaver et al., 2018). Additionally, most social media companies employ human content moderators, who are frequently swamped by offensive mentions and their volume (Arsht and Etcovitch, 2018). On the other hand, precise moderation leads to content delay leading to user attrition. Furthermore, smaller entities cannot utilize human moderators on a large scale due to their sheer cost. As a result,

*Equal Contribution

¹<https://www.reddit.com/wiki/automoderator>

they shut down their comments sections entirely. Although content moderation to some degree has utilized semi-automated approaches (Jhaver et al., 2019), most of them are not yet available for Non-English languages and code-mixed texts.

Code-switching or code-mixing is a mixing of linguistic units from two or more languages in a single conversation or sometimes even a single utterance and is widely used across the world (Sitaram et al., 2019). In India, due to widely employed educational and cultural guidelines, English largely influences all the Indian spoken languages, including Dravidian languages like Kannada and Tamil (Chakravarthi et al., 2020). However, with the advent of social media, code-switching has permeated to mediums with informal contexts like forums and messaging platforms. As a result, code-switching is part and parcel of offensive conversations in social media.

Despite many recent NLP advancements, handling code-mixed offensive content is still a challenge in Dravidian Languages (Sitaram et al., 2019). The primary reason is data scarcity, as it appears relatively less in standard textual resources and instead spread across the World Wide Web. However, recently the research of offensive code-mixed texts in Dravidian languages has seen traction (Chakravarthi et al., 2020; Hande et al., 2020). However, these are restricted to the whole comment’s classification for offensiveness and do not identify the spans that make a text offensive. But emphasizing such offensive spans can assist human moderators who often deal with lengthy comments and prefer attribution instead of just a system-generated unexplained score per post. Accordingly, the contributions of this paper are as follows

- We first present DOSA, a code-mixed Tamil-English, and Kannada-English dataset annotated for offensive spans. We describe our

annotation scheme in the due process and examine the dataset properties, and brief about annotator-related information².

- We also provide an experimental baseline over state-of-the-art multilingual language models of BERT (Devlin et al., 2019), DistillBERT (Sanh et al., 2019), and XLM-RoBERTA (Conneau et al., 2020) on the developed offensive span identification dataset.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we discuss literature on offensive language and span identification. Following this in section 3, we present the dataset collection and annotation process. Section 4 offers the experimental setting used for the baseline creation. In section 5, we discuss our results and errors so identified. Finally, in section 6, we conclude with a summary and possible directions for future work.

2 Related Work

2.1 Offensive language & Span Identification:

Offensive language identification (OLID) problem is widely investigated in the literature via multiple facets of works ranging from hierarchical OLID annotation scheme (Zampieri et al., 2019a,b), release of large-scale semi-supervised training dataset with over nine million English tweets (Rosenthal et al., 2020), extension of OLID to languages of Arabic (Mubarak et al., 2020), Danish (Sigurbergsson and Derczynski, 2020), Greek (Pitenis et al., 2020), and Turkish (Çöltekin, 2020) and development of multiple systems (Zampieri et al., 2020; Ravikiran et al., 2020). In parallel, there are more course-grained works on Hate Speech Identification (Kumar et al., 2018), Aggressiveness Detection (Aroyehun and Gelbukh, 2018), Bullying Detection (Xu et al., 2012) etc. In this work, we restrict ourselves to offensive comments only³. Unlike OLID, span identification is still in the nascent stage. To the best of our knowledge work by Pavlopoulos et al. 2021 which introduces a toxic span dataset and

²**Disclaimer:** This paper contains examples that may be considered profane, vulgar, or offensive. These contents do not reflect the authors' views or the graduate schools/employed organization with which they are associated and exclusively serve to explain linguistic research challenges.

³The relationship between offensiveness, Hate-speech, aggressiveness etc. is presented in <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10579-020-09502-8>

shared task with 10k comments is the only work in this line. Our work extends span identification to Youtube comments in code-mixed Dravidian languages.

2.2 Code-Mixing in Offensive Language and Span Identification:

Offensive language identification with code mixed texts have seen most works in Hindi-English (Srivastava et al., 2020; Bohra et al., 2018; Santosh and Aravind, 2019; Rajput et al., 2020; Chopra et al., 2020). Recently there are works in Bangla (Jahan et al., 2019), Kannada (Hande et al., 2020) and Tamil (Chakravarthi et al., 2020). To the best of our knowledge, there are no works on span identification with Dravidian code-mixed datasets. Our work addresses this gap, by emphasizing the creation of code-mixed offensive span identification inline with Pavlopoulos et al. 2021.

3 Dataset Collection and Annotation

In this work, we reuse TamilMixSentiment (Chakravarthi et al., 2020), and KanCMD (Hande et al., 2020) datasets consisting of 15k and 7k YouTube code-mixed comments respectively in Tamil-English and Kannada-English languages. Reusing the existing dataset is beneficial. It encourages the development of multitask models with span identification as one of the tasks, analysis of model interpretability during offensive language identification, and developing a unified benchmark dataset for multiple NLP tasks in code-mixed Dravidian languages.

In this work, we considered only a subset of the comments that were already annotated as offensive⁴ for our span annotation process. Out of this subset, we rechecked and removed non-code mixed comments resulting in 9049 and 1311 comments in Tamil-English and Kannada-English, respectively. For the final annotation process, we considered all of the code-mixed Kannada-English comments and 5000 Tamil-English comments.

3.1 Annotation Setup

For annotation, we follow earlier works on span identification (Pavlopoulos et al., 2021) where two annotators annotated every comment according to the guidelines from section 3.2.

⁴Released as part of <https://competitions.codalab.org/competitions/27654>

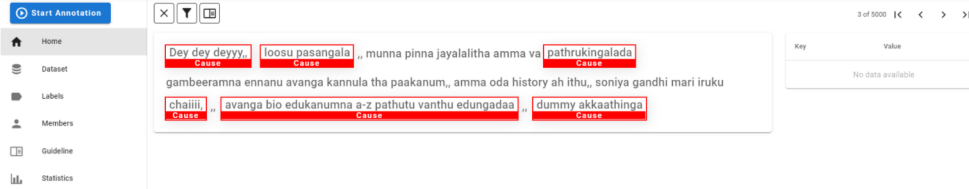


Figure 1: Annotation of offensive spans using Doccano.

Since the original comments are from the public domain, we anonymized all the personal information and user-related tags to protect actual users’ privacy during our annotation process. Besides, no personal information of annotators was collected except their educational background and expertise in the language they volunteered to annotate.

Moreover, all the annotators were informed that the contents to be annotated are profane, vulgar, or offensive and can withdraw from the annotation process if necessary. For annotation, we use doccano (Nakayama et al., 2018) which was locally hosted by each individual annotator, and the annotations were finally merged separately once all annotations were obtained. Within doccano, all the annotators were explicitly asked to create a single label called **CAUSE** with label id of 1, thus maintaining consistency of annotation labels. (See Figure 1)

3.2 Annotation Guidelines

The annotators have explained the meaning of offensiveness with illustrative examples. Annotators who agreed that they understood this were given the following instructions:

- Extract the offensive word sequences (spans) of the comment by highlighting each such span and labeling them as **CAUSE** as shown in Figure 1.
- If the comment is not offensive or if the offensiveness is context-dependent, do not highlight any span.
- If the whole comment should be annotated, then annotate the whole comment and convey the annotation verifier about the same after completion.

3.3 Annotators

To start with, we selected a total of 15 annotators, all of whom had minimal education of Bachelors Degree with either medium of schooling to be one

Annotator Identity	Educational Background	Medium of Schooling	Bilingual	Accent Knowledge
1	Masters ♂✳	English	✗	✗
2	Masters ♂✳	English	✓	✗
3	Master (Tamil) ♀	Tamil	✗	✓
4	Bachelors ♀	Kannada	✓	✗
5	Masters (Kannada) ♂	Kannada	✓	✓
6	Masters ♂	English	✗	✗

Table 1: Annotators and their characteristics. ✳ indicates annotation verifiers.

of the English, Tamil, and Kannada languages or proficient in both speaking and writing of one or both the Dravidian languages. Further, the annotation was done iteratively in a cycle of 500 sentences where each of the annotators was asked to report back to verify the quality of annotations and receive their next batch of 500 sentences. Each batch was manually verified by an annotation verifier, which allowed us to control the quality of annotations. This, in turn, permitted us to remove annotators who did not annotate well or had a significant delay in annotations. At the end of this process, we had six annotators, out of which all of the annotators were native speakers or writers of either Kannada or Tamil or both. Also, two of the annotators acted as annotation verifiers. Table 1 shows details of the annotators with educational qualification, gender diversity, Medium of instruction in schooling, miscellaneous qualities, including knowledge of multiple accents of Kannada/Tamil. Each YouTube comment was initially sent to two annotators for span annotation without revealing that the comment was offensive. If there was a disagreement in annotation, then the comment was sent to the third annotator. If all the three disagreed, then we skipped the annotation of that particular comment. Overall this leads to the annotation of each comment by two annotators.

3.4 Ground Truth Creation

For ground truth creation, we follow a strategy in line with works of Pavlopoulos et al. 2021 where for each comment, we obtain character offset of the identified span using doccano. We then re-

tained only the overlapping annotations, i.e., both annotators must have included each character offset in their spans for the offset to be included in the ground truth. The annotation verifiers resolved any discrepancy in considering the non-overlapping part of the annotations.

3.5 Corpus Statistics

Language-Pair	Tamil-English	Kannada-English
Number of Sentences	4786	1097
Number of unique tokens	22096	7781
Number of annotated spans	6202	1641
Average size of spans (# of characters)	21	20
Min size of spans (# of characters)	4	2
Max size of spans (# of characters)	82	160
Number of unique tokens in spans	10737	3742

Table 2: DOSA corpus statistics

Corpus statistics is given in the Table 2. Compared to Tamil-English, we can see Kannada-English has a significantly lesser number of samples. This is because of the inherent nature of the KanCMD dataset (Hande et al., 2020) which consists of only 1472 comments annotated as offensive. While the dataset is minimal, we release this along with Tamil-English to empower more annotation and subsequently build better offensive span identification models for the Kannada-English language. Moreover, we can see that the maximum size of the annotation is 82 and 102, respectively, across the datasets, but it can be seen from Figure 2 and 3 that these have very few occurrences.

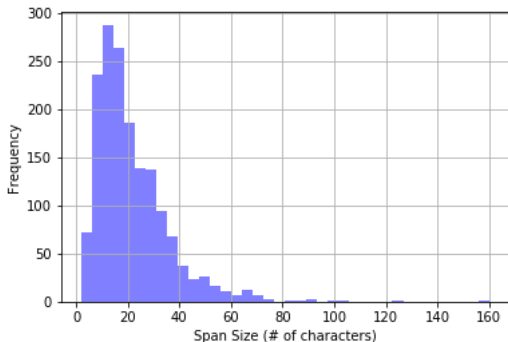


Figure 2: Histogram of annotated Span size in Kannada-English dataset.

3.6 Inter annotator Agreement

Since two annotators annotated each sentence, and the focus is only on the offensive contents, the annotation quality is validated using Cohens Kappa on annotated tokens only. In our case, we saw this value to be 0.6.

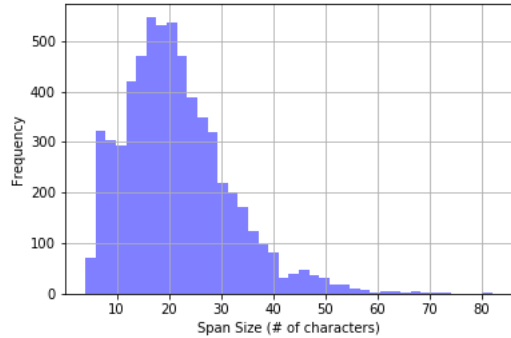


Figure 3: Histogram of annotated Span size in Tamil-English dataset.

4 Experimental Settings

To establish a baseline performance, we applied multiple state-of-the-art multilingual language models to determine the span of offensive comments. In this section, we present various models, hyperparameters, and other experimental settings used as part of the baseline estimation.

4.1 Models

Since the task focuses on identifying spans of offensive word sequences, we treat the problem of identification of span as the task of sequence labeling where we tag words that contribute to offensiveness. In this work, we use the following language models available through HuggingFace’s Transformer Library (Wolf et al., 2019).

- **Multilingual BERT:** Multilingual BERT (M-BERT) is a language model pre-trained from monolingual corpora in 104 languages where task-specific annotations in one language are used to finetune the model for evaluation in another language. We use two variants of BERT, namely **BERT-M1**⁵ which is trained on Wikipedia corpus and **BERT-M2**⁶ which is original BERT finetuned first on XQUAD and Tydi QA dataset.
- **Multilingual DistilBERT:** We also use a smaller general-purpose language representation model, DistilBERT, which upon finetuning offers better performance on downstream tasks. Again we use two variants of DistilBERT namely **DBERT-M1**⁷ which is the original model developed as part of (Sanh et al.,

⁵bert-base-multilingual-uncased

⁶bert-multi-cased-finetuned-xquad-tydiqa-goldp

⁷distilbert-base-multilingual-cased

2019) and **DBERT-M2**⁸ which is similar to the earlier case of BERT where the model is again finetuned on XQUAD and Tydi QA dataset.

- **Multilingual XML-RoBERTA:** This is a masked language model trained on a multilingual language modeling objective using only monolingual data. Here again we use two variants namely **XBERT-M1**⁹ and **XBERT-M2**¹⁰ with former being the base model released as part of (Conneau et al., 2020) and later being a larger model which is finetuned on multiple NLI datasets.

4.2 Hyperparameters

For our experiments, we trained all of our models under a common setting. The various parameter setting is as shown in Table 3. Considering the effect of the presence of specific offensive terms and the size of the overall dataset, rather than creating a random train-test split in this work, we employed 3-fold cross-validation for all the experiments.

Parameters	Values
Learning Rate	4×10^{-5}
Maximum Sequence Length	128
Batch Size	16
Epochs	100
Weight Decay	0.01
Adam ϵ	1×10^{-8}

Table 3: Hyperparameters used across experiments.

5 Experiments, Results, and Discussion

The experimental results for various state-of-the-art multilingual language models are as shown in Tables 4-9. Since the focus of these experiments is to just establish baselines and provide some starting pointers for further exploration, we restrict ourselves from in-depth error analysis and instead focus on unique errors which we came across during the experiments. To start with, we compute results for each of the fold where we identify span/entity level Precision (P), Recall (R), and F1-Score (F1) inline with past works (Wang and Iwaihara, 2019; Yamada et al., 2020). Computing entity level P, R, and F1 measures consider only those word sequences which precisely match the annotation, thus eliminating partially identified offensive spans. This measure is also in line with Pavlopoulos et al. 2021.

⁸distilbert-multi-finetuned-for-xqua-on-tydiqa

⁹xlm-roberta-base

¹⁰xlm-roberta-large-xnli-anli

Model	Fold #	Kannada-English			Tamil-English		
		P	R	F1	P	R	F1
BERT-M1	1	0.369	0.387	0.377	0.374	0.397	0.385
	2	0.381	0.432	0.406	0.309	0.356	0.331
	3	0.397	0.419	0.408	0.400	0.416	0.408
	Average	0.382	0.413	0.397	0.361	0.390	0.375

Table 4: Results of BERT-M1 for offensive span identification.

Model	Fold #	Kannada-English			Tamil-English		
		P	R	F1	P	R	F1
BERT-M2	1	0.394	0.394	0.394	0.382	0.391	0.387
	2	0.397	0.441	0.418	0.349	0.397	0.372
	3	0.386	0.408	0.396	0.387	0.406	0.396
	Average	0.392	0.414	0.403	0.373	0.398	0.385

Table 5: Results of BERT-M2 for offensive span identification.

Model	Fold #	Kannada-English			Tamil-English		
		P	R	F1	P	R	F1
DBERT-M1	1	0.380	0.412	0.395	0.408	0.420	0.414
	2	0.349	0.364	0.356	0.363	0.417	0.389
	3	0.413	0.417	0.415	0.393	0.436	0.414
	Average	0.381	0.398	0.389	0.388	0.425	0.405

Table 6: Results of DBERT-M1 for offensive span identification.

Model	Fold #	Kannada-English			Tamil-English		
		P	R	F1	P	R	F1
DBERT-M2	1	0.372	0.391	0.381	0.378	0.387	0.382
	2	0.295	0.365	0.328	0.382	0.440	0.409
	3	0.370	0.378	0.374	0.396	0.434	0.414
	Average	0.346	0.378	0.361	0.385	0.420	0.402

Table 7: Results of DBERT-M2 for offensive span identification.

Model	Fold #	Kannada-English			Tamil-English		
		P	R	F1	P	R	F1
XBERT-M1	1	0.405	0.432	0.418	0.379	0.395	0.387
	2	0.364	0.397	0.380	0.395	0.420	0.407
	3	0.407	0.415	0.411	0.374	0.391	0.382
	Average	0.392	0.415	0.403	0.383	0.402	0.392

Table 8: Results of XBERT-M1 for offensive span identification.

Model	Fold #	Kannada-English			Tamil-English		
		P	R	F1	P	R	F1
XBERT-M2	1	0.365	0.381	0.372	0.249	0.308	0.275
	2	0.379	0.438	0.405	0.216	0.254	0.234
	3	0.336	0.408	0.369	0.263	0.317	0.289
	Average	0.360	0.409	0.382	0.243	0.293	0.266

Table 9: Results of XBERT-M2 for offensive span identification.

To start with, for both Tamil-English and Kannada-English code-mixed text, all the models perform poorly with the best average F1 of 0.403 for BERT-M2 and XBERT-M2, respectively for Kannada-English. Meanwhile, for Tamil-English comments, we found the maximum average F1 of 0.405 for DBERT-M1. Besides, across all the folds on each language model, the results are in similar ranges. Such poor performance can be attributed

ing and interpretability for code-mixed offensive language models.

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