Krik: First Steps into Crowdsourcing POS tags for Kréyòl Gwadloupéyen
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1. Introduction

Despite the progress made in unsupervised learning, manually annotated corpora are still necessary both to develop and to evaluate natural language processing (NLP) tools. However, building such corpora is notoriously expensive (see, for example, Bohímová et al. (2001)). For less-resourced languages, the (lack of) availability of language experts represents yet another obstacle to overcome. However, a priori non-expert speakers can be solicited online to share their linguistic knowledge and thus participate in the creation of resources for their language. To take advantage of this potential, we have designed a lightweight crowdsourcing platform enabling both the training of the participants to the task of part-of-speech (POS) tagging and the collaborative annotation of open-source corpora.

We led our first work on crowdsourcing POS tags on a Germanic French regional language: Alsatian (Millour and Fort, 2018)\(^1\). The results obtained being promising, we tested the portability of our approach by adapting it on another less-resourced French regional language: Guadeloupean Creole (GC). This adaptation requires the availability of: i) a freely available raw corpus, ii) a tokenizer, iii) adapted annotation guidelines, iv) a minimal reference and, preferentially, v) one or two baseline tagger(s). After describing the preliminary work we have carried out for Guadeloupean Creole to comply with these prerequisites, we present the first results on crowdsourcing POS tags through the platform specifically developed for this task: Krik.

Keywords: Guadeloupean Creole, crowdsourcing, POS tagging, less-resourced languages

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2. Related Work

2.1. Guadeloupean Creole

Guadeloupean Creole (GC) is a French-based Creole spoken in the French department and archipelago of the West Indies: Guadeloupe. GC accounts for around 600,000 speakers (400,000 in Guadeloupe, and approximately 200,000 elsewhere (Colot and Ludwig, 2013)). GC is very close to the other main variety of Antillean Creole: Martinicain Creole (MC). Yet some lexical and morphological features distinguish them (see for instance the personal pronouns “man”|“an” in MC, “moin”|“mwen” in GC for the first person singular pronoun “I”, or the possessive pronouns “fidji”|“w” in MC, “figi a” “w” in GC (“your face”).

What is more, GC presents a greater linguistic variation as a result of its less compact geography (Observatoire des pratiques linguistiques, 2005). Additionally, no spelling standard is recognized as the legitimate norm among speakers. Two main spelling systems coexist: one has been developed by the GEREC-F (Ludwig et al., 1990), and later modified by Bernabé (2001), the other has been introduced by Hazel-Massieux (2000). In particular, no agreement has been reached regarding the positioning towards French orthography when it can be invoked. For instance, both the forms “chien” (French for “dog”) and “chyen” can be found in GC. Similarly, “lât” is the agglutination of the French determiner “la” (“the”) and proper noun “Terre” (“Earth”). It is generally perceived as a unique entity, meaning “Earth” as a whole, and is consequently written as such. Still, we have found occurrences of the separated form, which is considered as erroneous by creolists. Generally speaking, we have encountered in our yet relatively small corpus a great variety of spelling alternatives, regardless of the conventions suggested by the two main standards. For instance, the use of the hyphen between nouns and postponed determiners (e.g. “tifi-la” or “tifi lâ” (“the young girl”)), or the suppression of the space between adjectives and nouns in some cases (e.g. “jenn fi”, “jenn-fi, “jennfi” (“young girl”) (Delumeau, 2006)), are not consistent across the corpus.

The case of “a pa”|“apa” also exemplifies the poor penetration of the standards among the speakers. While Ludwig et al. (1990) introduced a graphic convention to distinguish “a pa” (negative existential) found in context such as “A pa pas ou ni lajan [...](“Not because you have money [...]), from “apa” (apart (from))”, two out of three GC speakers we have been working with had never encountered the separated form.

Furthermore, GC presents a reduced inflectional and derivational morphology: the plural is indicated only by

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\(^1\)See: [http://bisame.paris-sorbonne.fr](http://bisame.paris-sorbonne.fr)

\(^2\)The GEREC-F (Groupe d’Études et de Recherches en Espace Créolophone et Francophone) is the investigation group for Creole and French speaking areas.

\(^3\)This example was taken from (Delumeau, 2006).
the particle “sé” (“timoun-la” (“the child”), “sé timoun-la” (“the children”)), the verbal lexeme is mainly invariable, and tenses and aspects are marked by combinations of particles. It makes it impossible to identify the part-of-speech of some words independently of the context: for instance, “manjé” can both mean “eat” (in its infinitive and conjugated form) and “food”.

2.2. Existing Resources for GC
Some work can be found regarding GC processing. For instance, [Delumeau (2006)] introduces a linguistic description for GC in a natural language generation perspective. [Carrió González and Cartier (2012)] detail the existing lexical resources for various French-based Creoles. [Schang (2013)] presents a metagrammar for GC, and [Schang et al. (2017)] describes the result of the annotation of coreference relations of a transcribed spoken GC corpus (the same we use here).

Yet, to our knowledge, no POS tagged corpus or tagger was available until now.

3. Methodology
3.1. Raw Corpus
To ensure the further availability of the annotated resources produced through the platform, we have focused on gathering a freely available corpus, which can be described as “opportunistically” [McEnery and Hardie, 2011], thus introducing a bias in terms of content. In fact, our corpus is made of texts gathered from two sources:

• The COCOON⁴ database, which contains 11 transcripts of conversations led in GC (we actually used 10 out of them, for the 11th contained too many French utterances), available under the CC BY-NC-SA license⁵.

• Wikipedia: we collected the proverbs found on the French page for GC⁶ and the 17 articles from the Wikipedia incubator for a Guadeloupean Creole encyclopedia⁷. This corpus, CWiki, contains 74 sentences adding up to 873 tokens.

3.2. Tokenizer and Annotations Guidelines
For the sake of adaptability, we chose to work with the universal POS tagset presented in [Petrov et al., 2012], which matches the needs encountered in our reference corpus. It should then not be considered as definitive, as the corpus we managed to gather is far from representative of all spelling habits and variants existing in Guadeloupe.

The annotation guidelines, inspired from the TCOF-POS [Benzitoun et al., 2012] guidelines, were developed to accompany both the expert annotators and the non-expert participants of the crowdsourcing project. For that reason, we followed the methodology set up for the crowdsourcing experiment on Alsation and opted for a description of...
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3.3. Reference Corpus

We extracted 100 sentences (1,623 tokens) from both C_Speech and C_Wiki to build the reference corpus to be annotated by experts: C_Ref. It contains a sample of declarative, interrogative, imperative, either simple or complex, sentences of different sizes, and of direct and indirect speech.

While the sentences taken from the C_Wiki corpus can be immediately used for annotation purposes, we had to carry out some pre-processing on C_Speech to obtain grammatically correct sequences of ready to annotate tokens. In fact, the speech dysfluencies are fully transcribed as raw text. As a result, the “speech fragments” very seldom match an understandable utterance, let alone a full grammatical proposition, when taken out of context. As a consequence, we had to correct pre-annotations, thus easing and fastening the annotation process (Fort and Sagot, 2010). Two pre-annotation tools were used for this.

The first pre-annotation tool we developed relies on the weak morphological complexity of GC and uses the 100 most frequent unambiguous tokens of our corpus. This list is undoubtedly not representative of the most frequent words in GC, some common nouns being for instance repeated several times in our corpus and therefore overrepresented. Nonetheless, the most frequent words being also frequent in absolute (for instance, the particle “ka” represents 4.6% of the corpus, the pronoun “an” (meaning “I”) 3.6%, the verb “sé” (“be”) 2.8% etc.), the basic associative python script we created from this list enabled to annotate 37% of our raw corpus.

Our second pre-annotation tool is the MElt tagger (Demis and Sagot, 2012), used without an additional lexicon.

To overcome the evaluation bias due to the very small size of our corpus, we split C_Ref into ten sets of two subcorpora: C_Training1..10 (85 sentences randomly extracted from C_Ref) and C_Test1..10 (containing the 15 remaining sentences). They were used respectively to train and to evaluate the tagger. We trained MElt on the 10 sets and obtained an average accuracy of 82%. The MEltInit tagger was chosen among them.

4. Krik

4.1. The Crowdsourcing Platform

The five requirements having been fulfilled, we provided the dedicated crowdsourcing platform: Krik[^11] with the required elements. After a training phase of 4 sentences taken from C_Ref, which must be entirely properly annotated, the participants access the production phase in which they annotate full sentences extracted from C_Raw. This phase is illustrated on Figure 1. Whenever the two pre-annotation tools disagree on the annotation for a given token, the consensual tag is suggested to the participant who can either validate or reject it (see on Figure 1 the case “ou” (“you”) and the suggested tag PRON). When the pre-annotation tools disagree, the two discordant tags are suggested (see on Figure 1 the case “la” (postponed determiner) and the suggested tags ADP and DET). In either cases, the full list of tags is available.

4.2. Results

So far, 35 persons created an account on the platform, 17 completed the training phase, and 11 actually produced a total of 1,205 annotations during a period of 9 days. This is far from enough, both in terms of participation and of production.

Still, the annotation on Krik resulted in a new, freely available, collaboratively annotated corpus of 74 sentences (698 tokens).

The annotation platform does not compel the participants to annotate every token in the production phase. Thus, we filled the gaps with the MEltInit annotations to obtain consistent tag sequences. This resulted in a new corpus of 933 tokens: C_Krik. The addition of this corpus to C_Training in the training of the tagger leads to a drop in

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[^10]: This is not the convention used in the corpus we gathered.

performance, even though the size of the corpus increases of 62%. This reflects the poor quality of the annotations crowdsourced so far. This is consistent with the low confidence score we calculated for the participants and the difficulties they expressed.

To understand the cause of the errors we manually inspected and corrected the crowdsourced annotations. Among the 124 tokens (nearly 13% of $C_{Krik}$) that we corrected we identified two main difficulties:

- issues related to the nature of the raw corpus: the $C_{Speech}$ corpus has not been entirely corrected, as described in Section 3.3. This caused the presence in $C_{Raw}$ of unintelligible, hence discouraging, sentences.

What is more, some additional tokenization problems have been brought to our attention. This explains the thin difference in number of tokens before and after correction. Most of these problems concerned tokens that had to be manually split, but we also encountered tokens as "anba la" meaning "down" which must be merged when they are not followed by a noun. We also noticed some spelling mistakes, such as the missing capital letter of "étazini" ("United States"), that led the participants to erroneously annotate the token as NOUN instead of PROPN.

- guidelines flaws: the guidelines we initially proposed could not prevent certain mix-ups such as the confusion for "tè" between the verb and the particle expressing the past. Besides, the case of code-switching remains challenging, especially given the proportion of loan words in GC. During this first experiment, "French words" were alternatively annotated with either the category X or their corresponding category in French (which does not necessarily match the expected tag in GC).

Table 2 shows the results of the training of MElt on the corpora described above. The best results are obtained with the manually corrected corpus $C_{KrikCorrected}$, which reaches a 84% accuracy on $C_{Test}$.

These results highlight two points:

- The pre-processing of the raw corpus and the annotation guidelines can and must be improved. In fact, these enhancements are compulsory as our experiment shows that a drop in the annotation quality may degrade the performance of the tagger and could remain unnoticed.

- The performance of the tagger could easily be enhanced if more annotations were to be crowdsourced. As already stated by Guillaume et al. (2016) and confirmed by our own experience on Alsatian (Millour and Fort, 2018), quality rises with participation. As a comparison, we have collected, thanks to the Alsatian platform, 18,917 annotations in 73 days, reaching a 93% accuracy for manual annotation. The annotation campaign we led resulted in a newly POS tagged corpus of 6,878 tokens. This is why efforts on advertising about the platform should be carried on.

5. Conclusion and Perspectives

We have described the steps for preparing the necessary elements for a language to benefit from the POS tags crowdsourcing platform developed in our previous work. This process resulted in the development of new resources for GC, among which a corpus of 2,439 tokens annotated with POS tags (Millour and Fort, 2018) and the first dedicated POS tagger reaching 84% accuracy. They are both freely available under the CC BY-NC-SA license.

Although the data crowdsourced so far is not satisfactory, due to the low participation, the methodology has been validated for Alsatian, and we intend to follow our efforts on advertising about the crowdsourcing platform. The code of the platform is freely available on GitHub under the CeCILL v2.1 license and is ready to be adapted to any language fulfilling the prerequisites we presented here.

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References


6.1 Language Resource References