DCU-ADAPT-modPB at the GEM'24 Data-to-Text Generation Task: Model Hybridisation for Pipeline Data-to-Text Natural Language Generation

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Abstract

In this paper, we present our approach to the GEM Shared Task at the INLG'24 Generation Challenges, which focuses on generating data-to-text in multiple languages, including low-resource languages, from WebNLG triples. We employ a combination of end-to-end and pipeline neural architectures for English text generation. To extend our methodology to Hindi, Korean, Arabic, and Swahili, we leverage a neural machine translation model. Our results demonstrate that our approach achieves competitive performance in the given task.

1 Introduction

The GEM 2024 Shared Task [\(Mille et al.,](#page-6-0) [2024\)](#page-6-0) aims to advance summarisation and data-to-text (D2T) generation, with a particular focus on enhancing multilingual capabilities. The D2T task [\(Reiter and Dale,](#page-6-1) [1997\)](#page-6-1) involves generating coherent natural language text from structured data in the form of Wikidata and WebNLG datasets, which are organised as triples consisting of a subject, predicate, and object. The goal of the tasks is to comprehensively evaluate and improve the ability of systems to interpret and generate text from RDF triples, assess their general knowledge, and produce texts in factual (FA), counterfactual (CFA), and fictional (FI) scenarios.

The dominance of English in D2T generation presents a considerable challenge, highlighting the need for research to support effective multilingual generation, particularly for languages with diverse morphological structures and distinct word order characteristics. The GEM 2024 Shared Task addresses this challenge by including English alongside other languages such as Chinese, German, Russian, Spanish, Korean, Hindi, Swahili, and Arabic, which are low-resource in the D2T setting. This task aims to enhance the adaptability and robustness of different systems across varied linguistic frameworks for text generation from structured data.

In this submission, we focus on the D2T generation aspect of the task using the WebNLG dataset [\(Castro Ferreira et al.,](#page-5-0) [2020\)](#page-5-0). Our approach combines end-to-end and pipeline neural architectures to generate English text, while also fine-tuning a state-of-the-art open-source Flan-T5 and Mistral-7B large language models (LLMs) for generating text in low-resource languages. Our approach aims to further the understanding of how various architectures can be optimised for multilingual D2T generation. Our methodology demonstrates competitive performance and contributes substantial insights and advancements to the field of multilingual D2T generation. The code and results are a vailable $¹$ $¹$ $¹$.</sup>

2 Related Work

The field of data-to-text generation has undergone significant transformations, evolving from traditional pre-neural approaches that relied on handcrafted rules, templates, and statistical models [\(Re](#page-6-1)[iter and Dale,](#page-6-1) [1997;](#page-6-1) [Erdem et al.,](#page-5-1) [2022\)](#page-5-1) to modern deep learning architectures. These advanced models are trained to identify and replicate the relationships between structured data and its corresponding textual outputs. The introduction of end-to-end systems, particularly pre-trained language models (PLMs), has substantially improved the processing of textual sequences in data-to-text tasks [\(Kale](#page-6-2) [and Rastogi,](#page-6-2) [2020;](#page-6-2) [Ribeiro et al.,](#page-6-3) [2021\)](#page-6-3). However, despite their advanced capabilities, these systems often struggle with content selection and maintaining fidelity due to the opaqueness and complexity inherent to deep learning models and the data-totext generation task[\(Moryossef et al.,](#page-6-4) [2019\)](#page-6-4).

[†] The first two authors made equal contributions to all aspects of the work, the order in which they appear was decided arbitrarily.

¹ https://github.com/NonsoCynthia/GEM2024_ST

A recent example of methodological advancement in this field is showcased in the 2023 WebNLG Shared Task on Low Resource Languages, where many participants employed NLG+MT (Natural Language Generation plus Machine Translation) pipeline approach [\(Cripwell](#page-5-2) [et al.,](#page-5-2) [2023\)](#page-5-2). For instance, some participants implemented systems which generate English text from RDF graphs using a PLM fine-tuned on the WebNLG 2020 dataset, followed by translation into various languages using a machine translation (MT) model [\(Aditya Hari et al.,](#page-5-3) [2023;](#page-5-3) [Kumar et al.,](#page-6-5) [2023\)](#page-6-5). This approach showcases the potential of combining NLG and MT models for effective multilingual data-to-text generation.

Similarly, [Lorandi and Belz](#page-6-6) [\(2023\)](#page-6-6) proposed a novel approach that utilises large language models (GPT-3.5 and GPT-4) for prompt-based generation without additional training. They tested two methods: direct generation in under-resourced languages and generation in English followed by translation using Google Translate. In our research, we build upon these methodologies and incorporate a 3-stage pipeline neural architecture, as in Figure [1,](#page-2-0) inspired by [Ferreira et al.](#page-5-4) [\(2019\)](#page-5-4). However, we modify the approach by integrating only the first two stages of ordering and structuring, followed by the final stage of surface realisation. This approach aims to optimise the use of large language models for multilingual data-to-text generation.

3 Methodology

In this section, we outline the methodologies employed to address the generation challenge for the languages English (en), Hindi (hi), Korean (ko), Arabic (ar), and Swahili (sw). Our experimental setup is as follows:

3.1 Data

We utilised the enhanced WebNLG dataset [\(Cas](#page-5-5)[tro Ferreira et al.,](#page-5-5) [2018\)](#page-5-5) for fine-tuning the ordering and structuring stages in the intermediate phases of the pipeline neural architecture. For fine-tuning the Mistral7b model, we used the WebNLG'17 dataset [\(Gardent et al.,](#page-5-6) [2017\)](#page-5-6). Finally, we evaluate the performance of the fine-tuned models using the GEM 2024 Shared Task D2T dataset, which encompasses factual, fictional, and counterfactual domains, each containing 1779 RDF triple sets.

3.2 System Description

The GEM 2024 Shared Task focuses on summarisation and data-to-text (D2T) generation, with a particular emphasis on multilingual capabilities. For this task, only testing data is provided, consisting of three parallel datasets: Factual (FA), Counterfactual (CFA), and Fictional (FI). The FA dataset uses original triples from WebNLG'20 data [\(Castro](#page-5-0) [Ferreira et al.,](#page-5-0) [2020\)](#page-5-0) and Wikidata (Vrandečić and [Krötzsch,](#page-6-7) [2014\)](#page-6-7), while the CFA dataset replaces entities in the factual dataset with similar-class entities, e.g., by swapping person names, dates, etc. The FI dataset substitutes entities in the factual dataset with fabricated entities generated by large language models (LLMs). Our work concentrates exclusively on data-to-text generation of triples from WebNLG.

Pipeline Neural Architecture: We designed a pipeline neural architecture, depicted in Figure [1,](#page-2-0) which leverages the fine-tuned Flan-T5-*large* model [\(Chung et al.,](#page-5-7) [2022\)](#page-5-7) to perform ordering and structuring tasks on the enhanced WebNLG 2017 dataset [\(Castro Ferreira et al.,](#page-5-5) [2018\)](#page-5-5). The Flan-T5 model is initially fine-tuned separately for ordering and structuring tasks using a subset of the enhanced WebNLG dataset. As shown in Figure [2,](#page-7-0) the pipeline architecture takes test set triples (FA, CFA, FI) as input and passes them through the ordering model to determine their verbalisation sequence. The ordered triples are then mapped to their corresponding entities (subjects and objects values) and fed into the structuring model. The structuring model organises the entities into coherent sentences, marking sentence boundaries with [SNT] and [/SNT] tags, while ensuring accurate entity mappings. Predicates serve as pointers during this process, linking to their respective triples after generation.

Finally, for surface realisation, we integrated prompt-based models, including Mistral-7B-Instruct-v0.1 [\(Jiang et al.,](#page-6-8) [2023\)](#page-6-8) and GPT-4 Turbo [\(Ye et al.,](#page-6-9) [2023;](#page-6-9) [Achiam et al.,](#page-5-8) [2023\)](#page-5-8). The structured outputs are fed into these prompt-based models to generate the final text. The overall workflow is presented in Figure [2.](#page-7-0)

Parameter Efficient Instruction Fine-Tuning: Our second setup employs parameter efficient finetuning (PEFT) [\(Houlsby et al.,](#page-5-9) [2019\)](#page-5-9) for instruction tuning of the selected models. Specifically, we utilise LORA [\(Hu et al.,](#page-6-10) [2021\)](#page-6-10), which inte-

	BLEU 1	METEOR 1	$ChrF++$ \uparrow	TER 1	BERT P 1	BERT R 1	BERT F1 1
StructGPT4	49.80	0.40	0.655	0.450	0.958	0.953	0.955
GPT4	42.823	0.418	0.677	0.548	0.948	0.957	0.952
Mistral	37.552	0.378	0.623	0.559	0.943	0.949	0.945
StructMistral	35.493	0.353	0.584	0.578	0.940	0.941	0.940
FinetunedMistral	31.070	0.29	0.513	0.630	0.913	0.916	0.914

Table 1: Automatic metrics results of our systems for factual (FA) English test set. Bold and underlined results denote the best and the second best ones respectively.

	FACTUAL						
	Arabic	Hindi	Korean	Swahili	English		
StructGPT4	0.499	0.425	0.581	0.612	0.629		
GPT4	0.546	0.478	0.633	0.627	0.636		
Mistral	0.558	0.445	0.608	0.613	0.625		
StructMistral	0.498	0.615	0.581	0.612	0.615		
FinetunedMistral	0.498	0.276	0.433	0.574	0.551		
	COUNTERFACTUAL						
	Arabic	Hindi	Korean	Swahili	English		
StructGPT4	0.511	0.406	0.576	0.567	0.49		
GPT4	0.551	0.448	0.613	0.571	0.518		
Mistral	0.519	0.415	0.584	0.580	0.471		
StructMistral	0.479	0.374	0.542	0.581	0.441		
FinetunedMistral	0.308	0.239	0.372	0.556	0.254		
	FICTIONAL						
	Arabic	Hindi	Korean	Swahili	English		
StructGPT4	0.508	0.408	0.589	0.554	0.499		
GPT4	0.137	0.062	0.180	0.564	0.108		
Mistral	0.530	0.428	0.602	0.559	0.484		
StructMistral	0.494	0.397	0.575	0.563	0.460		
FinetunedMistral	0.300	0.231	0.369	0.532	0.238		

Table 2: COMET metrics results of our systems for FA, CFA and FI test set for all the languages. Bold and underlined results denote the best and the second best ones respectively.

grates trainable adapters in the form of low-rank decomposition matrices into chosen layers of a transformer model. To enhance the diversity of our training data, we designed a template that produces 10 rewritten instructions for each original instruction. These re-written instructions are worded differently, but convey the same meaning or action trigger, allowing the fine-tuned model to align more robustly to varied instructions and improve its ability to generalise to new, unseen inputs. We use the the WebNLG'17 corpus [\(Gardent et al.,](#page-5-6) [2017\)](#page-5-6) for the model fine-tuning. We then combine the finetuned model with the base model, leveraging both the specialised fine-tuning and the broad knowledge inherent from pretraining. This composite model is tested with 5 examples from the WebNLG corpus, along with our newly created dataset.

In-Context Learning: In our final setup, we utilised the in-context learning [\(Zhao et al.,](#page-6-11) [2023;](#page-6-11) [Yang et al.,](#page-6-12) [2024\)](#page-6-12) capabilities of the selected models, namely Mistral7b, and GPT-4, for text generation tasks. We performed few-shot prompting using

Figure 1: System Description.

five triples randomly selected from the WebNLG corpus. The prompt designs used in our experiments are presented in Appendix [A.](#page-6-13)

3.3 Machine Translation Model

The English outputs generated by the systems described in Section [3.2](#page-1-0) were translated into Hindi, Korean, Arabic, and Swahili using specialised machine translation models. For the translation of Korean, Arabic, and Swahili, we utilised the opensource Command-R-Plus model developed by Cohere [\(Üstün et al.,](#page-6-14) [2024\)](#page-6-14). Specifically, we utilised the 4-bit quantised version which is available on the HuggingFace model $hub²$ $hub²$ $hub²$. The translation into Hindi was performed using the IndicTrans2 model [\(Gala et al.,](#page-5-10) [2023\)](#page-5-10), which is also an open-source transformer-based multilingual NMT model specifically trained for all 22 officially recognised Indic languages. Our selection of the two multilingual models was based on their open-source availability and their relative performance in the languages covered in our experiments. We conducted preliminary limited testing to evaluate their performance by having native language speakers assess the quality of the translated text. Their feedback informed our decision to use these translation models for our experiments.

² [https://huggingface.co/CohereForAI/](https://huggingface.co/CohereForAI/c4ai-command-r-plus-4bit) [c4ai-command-r-plus-4bit](https://huggingface.co/CohereForAI/c4ai-command-r-plus-4bit)

4 Results

In our results' naming convention, "Struct" denotes the pipeline architecture system that utilises structured triples for generation. "FinetunedMistral" refers to the fine-tuned Mistral-7B-Instruct system, while systems without these acronyms represent direct generation using the base models within the end-to-end architecture.

The results from the evaluation in Table [1](#page-2-2) provide valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the different models across various automatic metrics within the English language in the FA dataset. StructGPT4 achieved the highest scores in BLEU (49.80), TER (0.45), BERT_P (0.958), and BERT_F1 (0.955) for English. Following this, GPT4 consistently emerges as the most versatile and high-performing model, excelling in a wide range of languages (Arabic, Hindi, Korean, Swahili, and English) and domains (FA, CFA, FI). For instance, in the FA English test set, GPT4 achieves top scores in METEOR (0.418), ChrF++ (0.677), and BERT_F1 (0.952), underscoring its ability to produce translations that are both semantically accurate and closely aligned with reference texts.

Furthermore, we employed the COMET metric [\(Rei et al.,](#page-6-15) [2020\)](#page-6-15), a neural evaluation model specifically designed to predict quality scores for translations. COMET is known for demonstrating a strong correlation with human judgement and is capable of performing reference-less evaluations. This capability makes COMET particularly well-suited for assessing our results in non-English languages within the FA dataset, as well as for all languages in the CFA and FI datasets, where reference translations are not yet available. The results of our evaluation using COMET are presented in Table [2.](#page-2-3) The results indicate that GPT-4 consistently performs well, particularly in the FA and CFA datasets, achieving the highest scores in English (0.636 for FA, 0.518 for CFA) and in several other languages (see Table [2\)](#page-2-3). However, GPT-4 struggles in the FI dataset, especially in Arabic, Hindi, and Korean, with scores as low as 0.137 in Arabic. Mistral shows strong performance across all datasets, particularly excelling in the FI dataset, where it achieves the highest scores in Arabic (0.530), Hindi (0.428), and Korean (0.602). StructGPT4 also performs well, leading in the FI dataset with a score of 0.499 in English, and shows strong results in other datasets, especially in Arabic and Korean. Struct-Mistral is competitive in Swahili, particularly in the

CFA dataset (0.583), but generally ranks second in most other cases. In contrast, FinetunedMistral underperforms across all languages and datasets, with notably low scores, such as 0.254 in English for the CFA dataset. Overall, GPT-4 and Mistral emerge as the top-performing models for the COMET metrics, but their effectiveness varies depending on the dataset and language, highlighting the importance of context in model performance.

5 Analysis and Discussion

In this analysis, we highlight the factors which may have contributed to the varying performances of the models in our experiments.

First, the underlying architecture and training data play a critical role. We observe that our GPT4 based systems benefits from extensive training on a large and diverse dataset, which likely contributes to its consistent performance across different languages and domains. The robustness of its architecture allows it to handle a wide range of tasks effectively. However, we observed a decline in performance within the FI dataset. Upon manual inspection, we found that the system generated text with the correct entities but often rejected certain entity claims in the dataset, leading to its overall poor performance in this category.

Second, the fine-tuning process and the nature of the tasks significantly influence performance. StructGPT4, for instance, is fine-tuned with a focus on specific tasks (i.e., ordering and structuring) requiring precision and the handling of complex or nuanced content, which explains its superior performance in BLEU and TER, especially in FA English text generation.

Third, language-specific optimisations or model adaptations can lead to better performance in certain languages. Mistral shows strong results in Korean and Swahili, which may indicate that it has been trained or optimised for these specific languages, allowing it to outperform GPT4 and StructGPT4 in these contexts.

Fourth, the evaluation metrics themselves might favour certain models depending on how they align with the strengths of each model. For example, StructGPT4 performs better in BLEU and TER, metrics that emphasise precision and reduced errors, while GPT4 excels in METEOR and ChrF++, which also account for semantic accuracy and fluency.

These factors highlight the importance of select-

ing models based on the specific requirements of the task, considering not only the general capabilities of the model but also how well it has been optimised or fine-tuned for particular languages and tasks. To fully harness the aggregate benefits of the various factors influencing the performance of models as identified in our experiment, future work should focus on conducting a comprehensive exploration of each aspect. This may involve:

- Experimental Design Optimisation: Investigating different architectural designs, such as combining structured and prompt-based approaches, to identify the most effective methods for enhancing model performance.
- Fine-tuning Strategies: Exploring finetuning techniques that can better balance the retention of learned general capabilities and adaptation to specific tasks, thereby minimising the risk of overfitting and improving model generalisation.
- Dataset Selection: Examining the impact of training data on model performance by comparing the performance of these models when finetuned with canonical datasets from multiple GEM and WebNLG competitions, thereby gaining insights on dataset diversity and size on model adaptation and generalisation for D2T generation tasks.
- Evaluation Methods: Enhancing evaluation methodologies by integrating both automatic and human evaluations, ensuring a more accurate and nuanced assessment of model performance. This may involve developing new metrics that can better capture the subtleties of generated text in the context of D2T tasks.

6 Conclusion and Future Directions

In conclusion, this paper presents the methodologies and automatic evaluation results of our submission to the GEM 2024 tasks. The evaluation results highlight the strengths of different models across various metrics and languages. StructGPT4 stands out in producing precise translations with fewer errors, especially in English, outperforming GPT4 in metrics like BLEU and TER. GPT4, however, proves to be the most versatile and high-performing model across multiple languages and domains, excelling in METEOR, ChrF++, BERT_F1, and

COMET metrics, although it shows limitations in generating text within the FI task.

Mistral demonstrates strong performance in languages such as Korean, Hindi, and Arabic, particularly within the FI task, while StructMistral excels in Swahili CFA tasks. These findings suggest that while GPT4 is the most reliable general-purpose model, StructGPT4, due to its incorporation of task splitting and pipelining, is better suited for tasks requiring minimal errors, high accuracy, and attention to detail. Meanwhile, Mistral and StructMistral offer valuable performance in specific applications, indicating their potential for specialised use cases.

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of our systems' performance, we look forward to the availability of human evaluation results, which will provide valuable insights and enable us to draw further conclusions. Moreover, we plan to further explore the impact of advanced fine-tuning methods with preference-based learning, such as recent state-of-the-art frameworks like DPO [\(Rafailov et al.,](#page-6-16) [2024\)](#page-6-16), KTO [\(Ethayarajh et al.,](#page-5-11) [2024\)](#page-5-11), SPPO [\(Wu et al.,](#page-6-17) [2024\)](#page-6-17) and the REIN-FORCE [\(Ahmadian et al.,](#page-5-12) [2024\)](#page-5-12) preference optimisation. These methods have shown promise in improving model alignment and generation performance, and we believe they could be valuable additions to our existing systems.

We will also investigate the possible impact of data selection and prompt engineering methods on optimising our existing systems. Studies, for example in [\(Shen,](#page-6-18) [2024;](#page-6-18) [Liu et al.,](#page-6-19) [2024\)](#page-6-19) have shown that carefully selecting and preparing high-quality data for LLM finetuning often leads to improvement in model performance. This is because high-quality data allows the model to learn from relevant and accurate examples, which is crucial for fine-tuning the model's parameters and achieving optimal performance.

Lastly, we are keen on investigating the development of an end-to-end framework that encompasses ordering, structuring, and text generation collectively. This would allow us to streamline our pipeline and potentially improve the overall performance of our systems.

Ethics Statement

We adhered to the structure of the ARR responsible research checklist. The risk associated with this study was minimal.

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A Prompt Design

Table [4](#page-8-0) illustrates our prompt design for English with five examples each for with and without structured data. We report two types of prompts, one

Input Triples:
[TRIPLE] Bananaman broadcastedBy BBC [/TRIPLE] [TRIPLE] Bananaman creator John_Geering [/TRIPLE] [TRIPLE] Bananaman firstAired "1983-10-03" [/TRIPLE]
[TRIPLE] Bananaman lastAired "1986-04-15" [/TRIPLE] [TRIP

Ordering Output:
broadcastedBy firstAired lastAired creator starring

Input Triples after mapping:
[TRIPLE] Bananaman broadcastedBy BBC [/TRIPLE] [TRIPLE] Bananaman firstAired "1983-10-03" [/TRIPLE] [TRIPLE] Bananaman lastAired "1986-04-15" [/TRIPLE]
[TRIPLE] Bananaman creator John_Geering [

Structuring Output:
[SNT] broadcastedBy firstAired lastAired [/SNT] [SNT] creator starring [/SNT]

Input Triples after mapping and removing the [TRIPLE] start and [TRIPLE] end tags:
[SNT] Bananaman broadcastedBy BBC, Bananaman firstAired "1983-10-03", Bananam rkirilej stari ana frkirilej ena tags.
man firstAired "1983-10-03", Bananaman lastAired "1986-04-15" [/SNT] [SNT] Bananaman creator John_Geering, [SNT] Bananaman broadcastedBy BBC, Banana
Bananaman starring Tim_Brooke-Taylor [/SNT]

Surface Realizer Output:

Bananaman was shown on the BBC, first airing on October 3, 1983 and the final broadcast being April 15, 1986. It was created by John Geering and starred Tim
Brooke Taylor.

Figure 2: Pipeline Neural Architecture Outputs

Factual Dataset Result							
	Models	$\mathbf{0}$	1	$\mathbf{2}$	3	$\overline{\mathbf{4}}$	Average
	StructGPT4	0.8132	0.8096	0.7654	0.3805	0.3781	0.629
	GPT4	0.8189	0.815	0.7713	0.3874	0.3851	0.636
English	Mistral	0.8035	0.8005	0.7583	0.383	0.3808	0.625
	StructMistral	0.7855	0.7838	0.7425	0.3832	0.3809	0.615
	FinetunedMistral	0.6909	0.6884	0.6525	0.3619	0.3596	0.551
	StructGPT4	0.6228	0.6208	0.5919	0.3317	0.3296	0.499
	GPT4	0.684	0.6821	0.6509	0.357	0.3552	0.546
Arabic	Mistral	0.6817	0.6807	0.65	0.3902	0.3884	0.558
	StructMistral	0.6046	0.6043	0.5755	0.3521	0.3496	0.497
	FinetunedMistral	0.605	0.6048	0.5758	0.3521	0.3497	0.498
	StructGPT4	0.5061	0.5083	0.4859	0.3122	0.3102	0.425
	GPT4	0.5847	0.5854	0.5588	0.3307	0.3291	0.478
Hindi	Mistral	0.5395	0.542	0.5177	0.3145	0.313	0.445
	StructMistral	0.4818	1.4841	0.4649	0.3232	0.3211	0.615
	FinetunedMistral	0.3196	0.3209	0.2101	0.2665	0.2646	0.276
	StructGPT4	0.6828	0.6817	0.6549	0.4426	0.4409	0.581
	GPT4	0.7473	0.7466	0.7196	0.4777	0.4759	0.633
Korean	Mistral	0.7205	0.7196	0.6925	0.4555	0.4541	0.608
	StructMistral	0.6704	0.6705	0.6466	0.4602	0.4581	0.581
	FinetunedMistral	0.4701	0.4696	0.4572	0.385	0.3832	0.433
	StructGPT4	0.6513	0.6504	0.6389	0.5602	0.5593	0.612
Swahili	GPT4	0.6671	0.6663	0.6544	0.5742	0.5733	0.627
	Mistral	0.652	0.6514	0.6402	0.5621	0.5614	0.613
	StructMistral	0.6485	0.6482	0.6379	0.5639	0.5629	0.612
	FinetunedMistral	0.6033	0.6026	0.5935	0.5365	0.5356	0.574

Table 3: Factual dataset COMET results of the individual reference texts $(0, 1, 2, 3, \& 4)$ for evaluation.

for GPT4 model and the other for the Mistral-7B-Instruct model.

Table [5](#page-9-0) presents our prompt design for translating English to Arabic, Korean and Swahili using command-r-plus-4bit model from Cohere AI. We provide five examples each for the respective languages.

Table 4: Prompt design for English. The first data examples are for direct prompt-based experiments and the latter are for model hybridisation experiments.

Table 5: Prompt design for translation of English to Arabic, Korean and Swahili using the command-r-plus-4bit model from Cohere AI.