Findings of The UniDive 2025 Shared Task on Multilingual Morpho-Syntactic Parsing

Omer Goldman¹, Leonie Weissweiler², Kutay Acar³, Diego Alves⁴, Anna Bączkowska⁵, Gülşen Eryiğit³, Lenka Krippnerová⁶, Adriana Pagano⁷, Tanja Samardžić⁸, Luigi Talamo⁴, Alina Wróblewska⁹, Daniel Zeman⁶, Joakim Nivre², and Reut Tsarfaty¹

¹Bar-Ilan University ²Uppsala University ³Istanbul Technical University ⁴Saarland University ⁵University of Gdansk ⁶Charles University ⁷Federal University of Minas Gerais ⁸University of Zurich ⁹Polish Academy of Sciences omer.goldman@gmail.com, leonie.weissweiler@lingfil.uu.se, reut.tsarfaty@biu.ac.il

Abstract

This paper details the findings of the 2025 UniDive shared task on multilingual morphosyntactic parsing. It introduces a new representation in which morphology and syntax are modelled jointly to form dependency trees of contentful elements, each characterized by features determined by grammatical words and morphemes. This schema allows bypassing the theoretical debate over the definition of "words" and it encourages the development of parsers for typologically diverse languages. The data for the task, spanning 9 languages, was annotated based on existing Universal Dependencies (UD) treebanks that were adapted to the new format. We accompany the data with a new metric, MSLAS, which combines syntactic LAS with F1 over grammatical features. The task received two submissions, which, together with three baselines, give a detailed view on the ability of multi-task encoder models to cope with the task at hand. The best performing system, UM, achieved 78.7 MSLAS macro-averaged over all languages, improving by 31.4 points over the few-shot prompting baseline.

1 Introduction

Syntactic and morphological tasks, such as parsing (Sakai, 1961; Zeman et al., 2018) and linearization (Filippova and Strube, 2007; Shimorina et al., 2021), analysis (Koskenniemi, 1983; McCarthy et al., 2019) and inflection (Durrett and DeNero, 2013; Goldman et al., 2023), have a long history in NLP research. Collectively, these tasks aim to provide structured representations of free text to facilitate further research and applications. However, the distinction between morphology and syntax, and hence the definitions of these tasks, rely on the definition of a "word" (Dixon and Aikhenvald, 2002) – a unit that is notoriously ill-defined from a cross-lingual perspective (Haspelmath, 2011).

This shared task draws on previous works which attempt to avoid relying on words, in either syntax (Bārzdiņš et al., 2007; Nivre et al., 2022) or morphology (Goldman and Tsarfaty, 2022), and presents a new representation that models morphosyntax in a unified and harmonized fashion. The representation used here closely resembles dependency trees from Universal Dependencies (UD; de Marneffe et al., 2021), but instead of the distinction between words and morphemes, it adopts the distinction between content and function. In this structure, every sentence is represented by a dependency tree whose nodes are content-bearing elements. On the other hand, function elements, words and morphemes, are represented as grammatical features on the nodes, in a manner similar to morphological features in UD.

The shared task includes data in 9 languages: Czech, English, Hebrew, Italian, Polish, Brazilian Portuguese, Serbian, Swedish, and Turkish, with several thousands of sentences as training data for each. The data was converted from UD dependency trees in a semi-automatic fashion. Submitted systems were tested on a held-out test set for which participants got only the raw text as input. The systems' predictions were evaluated using three metrics. LAS, as defined by Nivre et al. (2004), was used to measure the systems' success in connecting the nodes to their correct parent with the correct relation. F1 over morpho-syntactic features measured the systems' ability to correctly characterize the functions relating to each node. But as the main metric, we defined MSLAS, which combines both metrics to measure overall success in modelling both node relations and node content.

This report includes the results of five systems, three baselines and two submitted systems. Both submitted systems and one of the baselines utilize multi-task training, where several classifiers are trained on top of a frozen encoder-only model such

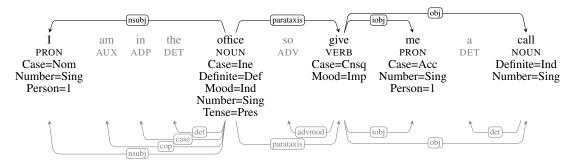


Figure 1: An example of a morphosyntactic tree above the sentence, with the full UD tree below for reference. Function words do not participate in the morphosyntactic tree and are coloured grey.

as BERT (Devlin et al., 2019) or XLM-R (Conneau et al., 2020). The systems differ mostly in the way they incorporate the prediction of content-fulness into the system, and whether they were trained jointly or separately across languages. In addition, two baselines prompted Gemini 2.5 (Comanici et al., 2025) in a few-shot setting to output the entire prediction as a string.

The best performing system, UM (Inostroza Améstica et al., 2025), achieved 78.7 MSLAS over the covered test set macro-averaged over all languages. This score is a 31.4-point improvement over the best baseline. Although impressive, the results show that there is still some headroom, for training better models to excel in the task. Specifically, non-Indo-European languages, like Turkish and Hebrew, seem to pose a greater challenge to the submitted systems that are based on dependency parsing models.

All in all, this shared task introduces a more holistic representation that takes into account the typological variety in word definitions across languages, and shows that predicting this structure poses a challenge for parsing technology and to large language models alike.

2 Task Description

The concept of "word" is known to have a highly disputed definition, ever since (at least) the formation of modern linguistics as a field (Krámský, 1969; Juilland and Roceric, 1972). Despite that, words have had a crucial role in delineating syntax and morphology, both from a theoretical (Dixon and Aikhenvald, 2002) and practical (de Marneffe et al., 2021; Batsuren et al., 2022) standpoint. The result in UD is that words are defined inconsistently across languages, so the ability to compare structures across languages is severely hindered. On the other hand, the mere attempt to cross-lingually

define words entails a tokenization process that is unnatural to some languages that differ greatly from the prototypical Western language.

Morpho-syntactic parsing is designed to bypass the issue by modelling syntax and morphology in tandem, getting rid of the necessity to define words in order to separate the two. In this task, systems are required to predict a morpho-syntactic dependency tree for each sentence, where nodes are contentful elements. These nodes include lexemes from open-class parts of speech, such as nouns and verbs, and their arguments. Grammatical, or functional, elements do not appear as nodes in the tree, even if they are written as independent words. Instead, they contribute morpho-syntactic features that characterize the content nodes, akin to morphological features in UD.

All predicates and arguments are included in the morpho-syntactic tree, including arguments in the form of pronouns, clitics and agreement morphemes.¹ On the other hand, elements that signify relations between content nodes are deemed function nodes, as well as elements that specify some grammatical additional meaning to content nodes.

The result is a dataset in which sentences in different languages are structured much more similarly, owing their differences to structural linguistic variations between languages, and not to variations in orthography or grammatical tradition. Systems solving morpho-syntactic parsing must then detect contentful elements in a similar fashion across all languages, without the benefit of a more natural tokenization process given to languages that are more similar to English and a few other Western languages.

Figure 1 has an example tree. It shows several function words in gray that are not part of the

¹See Zwicky and Pullum (1983) for a discussion on the wordhood of these elements.

Lang	Train	Dev	Test	Annotator	Treebank
CS	10,000	4,681	5,885	Daniel Zeman & Lenka Krippnerová	PDT & PUD
EN	2,576	472	492	Omer Goldman	EWT
HE	2,267	374	253	Omer Goldman	HTB
IT	7,773	537	461	Luigi Talamo & Arianna Bienati & Ludovica Pannitto	All UD treebanks
PL	9,914	2,180	3,180	Alina Wróblewska & Anna Bączkowska	PDB & PUD
PT	5,591	806	1,596	Diego Alves & Adriana Pagano	Porttinari
SR	3,312	536	520	Tanja Samardžić	SET
sv	4,128	492	2,168	Joakim Nivre & Victor Norrman	Talbanken & PUD
TR	3,409	1,081	1,082	Kutay Acar & Gülşen Eryiğit	IMST

Table 1: The number of sentences in each split for each language.

morpho-syntactic tree, but contribute features to the content nodes, like the conjunction *so* and the preposition *in* that contribute a Case feature, and the copula *am* that contributes verbal features to the nominal predicate *office*.

2.1 Data Annotation Process

The data for this task was semi-automatically converted from UD treebanks. A conversion script was written for every language, based on some shared infrastructure. The scripts used POS tags and dependency relations to detect function words and used the languages' grammars to decide on the morpho-syntactic features of the nodes given the function words and morphological features in UD. Manual decisions were made, for example in cases of ambiguity, like English *would* that can denote either a conditional mood or past prospective, or in cases of categories that are not strictly function or content, like adverbs.

The annotation of UD treebanks into the morphosyntactic schema followed several principles. First and foremost, the resulting data structure had to be independent of word definitions. Specifically, all predicates and arguments should have corresponding tree nodes.² For practical reasons, the data was annotated in a way that deviates as little as possible from the existing UD data. We only replaced the morphological features with morpho-syntactic features, removed function words from the tree,

and occasionally added *abstract nodes* for unrealized arguments. In other words, we did not alter the heads of the nodes nor the arc labels. The full annotation guidelines are given in Appendix A.

All in all, we ended up with about 70k annotated sentences in 9 languages. Of which, about 45k were used for training, and about 12.5k constitute a held-out test whose gold trees were not revealed to the participants. The data was split according to the splits in the UD treebanks it is based on. The statistics of the entire dataset are given in Table 1.

2.2 Evaluation

Systems were evaluated using three metrics: *LAS*, *Feats-F1*, and *MSLAS*, with the latter being the main metric that combines the two others others.

Since the input for this task is raw text, systems may predict a different number of nodes compared to the ground truth. And because all metrics compare nodes to one another, an alignment mechanism is needed between the prediction and the gold trees. Nodes are then considered correctly predicted under any of the metrics only if they are aligned with a node in the gold tree and have the same dependency arc, morpho-syntactic features, or both, depending on the metric. The alignment of content nodes to gold nodes is done sequentially for each sentence twice, from right to left or left to right, then metrics are computed for each alignment, and the better score is taken for that sentence.

The evaluation script is based on that of Zeman et al. (2018), and can be found at https://github.com/UniDive-MSP/MSP-shared-task.

Labelled Attachment Score (LAS) is the standard evaluation metric in dependency parsing. It is the percentage of predicted nodes that are assigned the same parent and relation type (arc label) as the corresponding gold node. In our task, LAS is calculated only over content nodes. Note that we did not take subtypes into account. For example, an arc labelled acl:relcl was considered correct as long as the corresponding gold arc had acl as its main type.

Features F1 Score (**Feats-F1**) is a standard metric in morphological analysis. It is the F1 score when comparing the predicted set of features of a specific node to the features of its aligned node in the gold tree. We applied this metric to all morphosyntactic features assigned to a node, not only to the morphological features.

²This also bypasses the debate on whether pronouns are a functional feature bundle or contentful elements with definite semantic meaning.

Morphosyntactic Labelled Attachment Score (MSLAS) is the main metric of the task that combines both other metrics to evaluate the systems' trees as well as the quality of the characterization of each node. This metric averages the per-node Feats-F1 score only for nodes that are considered correct according to the LAS metric.

3 Languages

The data for each language was prepared by individuals or teams who are speakers of that language (see Table 1). Below is a short description of the languages included in the shared task.

3.1 Czech

Czech is a West Slavic language with rich fusional morphology. Nouns, adjectives, pronouns, determiners and numerals inflect for up to 7 case forms. Morphology of finite verbs cross-references the person and number of the subject; participles crossreference gender and number. Consequently, subject nominals can be dropped. Some verb forms (past tense, future tense, conditional, and passive) are composed periphrastically using various forms of the auxiliary být 'to be'. Modal verbs are treated as main verbs in UD, and that approach is kept in the shared task. The reflexive clitics se, si are used, besides marking true reflexive arguments, also in so-called reflexive passive construction (and, with certain verbs, as a particle modifying the meaning of the verb).

The shared task data is based on the Prague Dependency Treebank (PDT; Hajič et al., 2020),³ automatically modified to the shared task format using rule-based heuristics implemented in the Udapi framework⁴ (Popel et al., 2017). In the first stage, periphrastic verb forms and copular constructions were identified and converted into features, based in part on Krippnerová and Zeman (2025).⁵

In the second stage, the value of the Case feature was determined for nominals. First, by determining the morphological case of some non-straightforward cases: uninflected loanwords, abbreviations, and numeral-modified nouns. Then,

we combined the morphological case with prepositions to generate the morphosyntactic Case value that reflects the most salient meaning of that combination. For example, za 'behind' + Case=Ins would result in Case=Pst (postessive), za + Case=Acc in Case=Ps1 (postlative), and za 'under' + Case=Gen would yield Case=Der (durative). In an analogy, the Case feature was also used to encode meanings of subordinating and even coordinating conjunctions. See Appendix A.1 for the full label inventory; out of them, 79 values are attested in the Czech data.

Finally, abstract nodes were created to represent dropped subject pronouns in finite clauses; their features (Number, Person and/or Gender) were taken from the verb. If an overt subject was present in the sentence, no abstract node was created, but the agreement features were still removed from the verb.⁶

3.2 English

While English is often described as morphologically "poor", its morpho-syntax is considerably rich. Verbs, whose features now include information from auxiliaries and particles, are inflected to 3 tenses, 4 aspects, and multiple moods. Nouns are inflected for number and definiteness, as well as for a wide array of cases, mostly using prepositions. And adjectives are also inflected for degree.

Although grammatical functions are usually expressed by concatenative means, some non-concatenative operations are also employed by English: ablauts for past inflections and word/morpheme order for interrogative mood.

In terms of marginally grammatical structures, the treebank we started with, EWT (Silveira et al., 2014), considers modal verbs are inflections of the main verb (expressed using the Mood feature), but *going to*, *used to* and similar constructions are considered semantic compositions of two verbs rather than a grammatical tense marking.

3.3 Italian

Italian presents quite rich morphology, especially in the verbal system, while being primarily tensebased, aspect and mood also play crucial roles. However, while tense is morphologically marked or explicit through construction with auxiliaries, aspect is not fully grammaticalized and has often

³We only took documents that had tectogrammatical annotation in the original treebank, as their UD conversion already has abstract nodes for some dropped pronouns. We excluded all sentences containing the orphan relation because they have other types of abstract nodes, not expected in the shared task.

⁴https://udapi.github.io/

⁵This tool is ready to process any Slavic language currently covered in UD, including Polish and Serbian; however, in the present shared task, it was used to prepare the Czech data only.

⁶The features were not copied to the overt subject (i.e., Person=3 can disappear completely if the subject is a noun or a subject clause).

to be inferred from lexical choices or contextual cues. Nonetheless, in the indicative mood, tenses bear a tendential association with aspect, which we implemented in the task data.

The Italian data was selected by randomly sampling 10K sentences from all released Italian UD treebanks (Bosco et al., 2013; Sanguinetti et al., 2018; Alfieri and Tamburini, 2016; Zeman et al., 2017b). Sentences containing parataxis, orphan, dep or discourse relations were excluded, as they introduced trees too difficult to process automatically for the sake of the task. The resulting data is composed of 8771 sentences. Each dependency tree was traversed via depth first search (DFS), yielding head tokens and their non-content children. Specialized modules handled the information depending on the head UPOS.

Adpositions, subordinating conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions are mapped by lemmas to the Case feature. Values were assigned based on the lemma's meaning retrieved from a dictionary. If polysemous, the value was assigned deterministically to the most 'basic' or 'shared' meaning across languages, prioritizing spatial and temporal meanings. This decision is made according to the literature, when available (e.g., Luraghi, 2009), otherwise it relies on the intuition of a proficient speaker.

3.4 Hebrew

As a Semitic language, Hebrew grammar is characterized by the extensive use of ablauts for verbal inflection and the assignment of lexical meaning to consonantal roots. The Hebrew verbal paradigm is somewhat limited, with only indicative and imperative moods and one periphrastic aspect, but it has 7 inflectional cases and many irregulars. Many prepositions and conjunctions are fused onto the following word, possessive pronouns are sometimes fused onto the previous words, and some other prepositions are inflected when applied to personal pronouns.

The segmentation strategy taken in HTB (Sade et al., 2018) made its conversion to the morphosyntactic schema relatively straightforward. Most fused elements were segmented from their parents so Case were determined based on the table in Appendix A.1 and applied to the heads. The Hebrew verbal system means that periphrastic inflections are extremely rare, although they had to be disambiguated manually. Lastly, nominal and adjectival predicates were harmonized in structure regardless

of whether a copula exists or not.

3.5 Portuguese

Portuguese, like Italian, has a rich morphological system, particularly in its verb forms. To address this, rule-based adaptations were implemented for the five auxiliary verbs in Portuguese and their combinations, taking into account tense, mood, and aspect.

Portuguese is also distinctive for having two copulas *ser* and *estar*, which differ in aspect: *ser* typically marks stative situations, while *estar* conveys more dynamic or temporary states. The distinction between them was marked using the Aspect feature of their nominal head.

The Brazilian Portuguese corpus for the shared task was derived from the Porttinari corpus (Pardo et al., 2021; Duran et al., 2023), incorporating adaptations based on the changes proposed for the English corpus, while accounting for Portuguese-specific characteristics.

A set of features was defined for prepositions, adverbs, conjunctions, and fixed expressions. Special attention was given to avoid mislabelling homographic forms, such as *se*, which can function either as a clitic, as a pronoun or as a subordinate conditional conjunction. In addition, some manual decisions were made when dealing with degree markers of adjectives.

3.6 Polish

Analogous to Czech, Polish is a highly inflectional and fusional West Slavic language, characterised by the possibility of dropping subject nominals and by the use of analytical verb forms in the past tense, future tense, conditional, reflexive, and passive constructions. Modal verbs, inherently impersonal verb forms, and predicative words are treated as main verbs. A distinctive feature of Polish morphosyntax is the phenomenon called *mobile inflection*: auxiliary morphemes may detach from participles and move to another syntactically licensed position, e.g., attached to conjunctions or pronouns.

The shared task data is derived from the Polish PDB-UD and PUD-PL treebanks (Wróblewska, 2018), both automatically converted from the Polish Dependency Bank (Wróblewska, 2014). We excluded sentences with orphan relation that were proven too difficult for automatic annotation. The assignment of morpho-syntactic features then followed a rule-based procedure. Simple structural

rules are applied to assign features to content words based on the subtrees they head. In addition, Case values were assigned based on a predefined repertoire (see Table 4) to all nouns, their adjectival dependents that show morphological agreement, and their conjuncts. Verbs were also assigned features based on suboridnators and other markers that modified them.

3.7 Serbian

Like the other Slavic languages, Serbian grammar is characterized by a preference for periphrastic verb forms. Of Serbian's seven tenses, and four moods, indicative present tense and imperative mood are the only frequently used inflections that do not require auxiliary verbs. Nouns inflect to 7 morphological cases with distinct singular vs. plural forms for most of the cases. Together with a wide array of prepositions, they form many more morpho-syntactic cases. Serbian has a relatively free word order, with many clitics, i.e., auxiliaries and some pronouns, tending to occupy the second position in the sentence in a fixed relative order.

The data for the shared task is based on the SET treebank (Batanović et al., 2023; Samardžić et al., 2017). The conversion process largely followed the logic set in the other languages, incorporating auxiliaries, conjunctions, and prepositions into features on their contentful parents. The lack of articles in Serbian meant that determiners were treated solely as content nodes.

3.8 Swedish

Swedish is a moderately inflected language belonging to the North Germanic branch of the Indo-European family. The case system for nouns has been reduced to two cases, nominative (which subsumes the old nominative, accusative and dative) and genitive, while the pronominal system still distinguishes three cases (nominative, accusative/dative, and genitive). The verbal inflection system has been simplified by dropping number and person agreement (except for past participles) and subjunctive mood (except for a few frequent verbs). Unusual features include a suffixed definite article (which means that all nouns are inflected for number, definiteness and case) and two passive constructions, one inflectional and one periphrastic.

The Swedish data sets are based on the UD treebanks Swedish-Talbanken (Einarsson, 1976; train, dev and test) and Swedish-PUD (Zeman et al., 2017a; only test). The conversion is based on the English conversion script, which was adapted to Swedish and complemented by a number of language-specific post-processing steps. The conversion has gone through a number of iterations involving a combination of automatic consistency checks and manual spot checks.

All adpositions, subordinating conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions have been mapped deterministically to the most frequent semantic category, with no attempt to disambiguate polysemous expressions. Since Swedish is not a pro-drop language, abstract nodes have been inserted only in cases where the head of an adposition or conjunction is elided.

3.9 Turkish

Turkish is the most agglutinative language in our selection. Morphemes are added to verbs, and occasionally to nouns and adjectives, to express tense and a wide array of compounding aspects and moods. Nouns inflected for case and possession, and subordinated verbs are inflected to convey their relation with their parent clause.

In order to convert the original IMST-UD treebank (Sulubacak and Eryiğit, 2018) to the shared task format, we manually annotated some functional categories (i.e., adverbials, adpositions, conjunctions, determiners, and auxiliaries) with the morphological features they should contribute to their contentful heads. Overall, we introduced 23 morphological features for adpositions, 10 for conjunctions, 10 for adverbials, 4 for determiners, and 1 for auxiliaries. These new morpho-syntactic features were then systematically transferred upwards to contentful nodes via recursive syntactic tree traversal, ensuring accurate representation of implicit grammatical structures. Abstract nodes were explicitly introduced to represent dropped pronouns, frequent in Turkish.

Appendix B provides a sample sentence annotated in UD and in the morpho-syntactic schema. It illustrates double-case marking on the particle *-ki* in *Karşınızdakine* (nodes 1 and 2) and multiple abstract nodes for dropped pronouns (nodes 1.1, 5.1, 9.1, and 11.1).

4 Baseline Systems

We provide three baseline systems, of which one is a fine-tuned mBERT model and two are on the basis of prompting Gemini 2.5.

4.1 MC: Fine-tuning Baseline

The fine-tuning baseline uses the MaChAmp toolkit (van der Goot et al., 2021), a multi-task learning library optimised specifically for handling ConLL-U data. MaChAmp encodes the data using mBERT (Devlin et al., 2019), and then trains a separate decoding head for each task. We do not predict separately which words are content words, but rather use the SEQ head for the prediction of the morphosyntactic features (as would be standard for the prediction of regular UD morphological features) and set words with no features as function words. In addition, the DEPENDENCY head predicts dependencies between all words. This resulted in overprediction of dependency arcs for function nodes, which does not affect the scores as they are ignored in the evaluation. We trained separate models per language for 20 epochs with early stopping, and applied postprocessing to ensure that the node determined by the dependency parser as the root, if it had not been assigned any morphosyntactic features, is assigned the empty feature set to mark it as a content node ('l').

4.2 Prompting Baselines

In addition, we provided two prompting-based baselines where no model was trained. Instead, we gave Gemini 2.5 Pro the annotation guidelines from Appendix A (without the cases table from Appendix A.1) together with 3 example parse trees, randomly chosen from the dev sets for each test example. The model was then asked to output, as a text string, the correct parse tree for that test example. Minor post processing was done to correct some formatting issues, like replacing whitespaces with tabs. But for the most part, when the model output a tree in the wrong format, it received zero credit.

The difference between the two baselines is in the source of the examples given with the input sentence:

- **Cross** is a cross-lingual baseline, where the examples for each test input were taken strictly from three other languages.
- Mono is where the examples for each test input were taken solely from the dev set of the same language.

System		MSLAS	LAS	Feats
baselines	MC	33.0	36.1	52.3
	Cross	36.7	51.2	50.6
	Mono	47.3	55.4	64.2
submissions	ITU	61.3	66.4	80.5
	UM	78.7	80.1	90.3

Table 2: Scores for each of the systems, averaged over all 9 languages.

5 Submitted Systems

5.1 UM: University of Melbourne

The system submitted by the University of Melbourne (Inostroza Améstica et al., 2025) is based on an XLM-RoBERTa encoder augmented with character embeddings (Akbik et al., 2018), which is shared for all languages. This is combined with three specialised decoders, where the first classifies words into either content or function, and the other two operate only on the function words. The content words identification system is a BiLSTM combined with a linear layer, while the morphosyntactic feature decoder is a single multi-label classification layer, which notably predicts each feature value separately. The parsing decoder uses multilayer perceptrons for arc and relation prediction with biaffine attention mechanisms (Dozat and Manning, 2017).

5.2 ITU: Istanbul Technical University

The system submitted by Istanbul Technical University (Acar and Eryiğit, 2025) is similarly based on mBERT (Devlin et al., 2019). Specifically, it uses UDapter (Üstün et al., 2020), which introduces adapter modules for language-specific transformations between encoder layers. These adapter modules are informed by language embeddings derived from the URIEL database (Littell et al., 2017). Prediction is handled by a dependency parsing head with biaffine attention, and a morphological tagging head which predicts the value of each feature separately. Classification into content and function words is handled by a separate model, a fine-tuned instance of mBERT.

6 Results

We present overall evaluation results in Table 2. Out of the two submitted systems, UM achieved the highest MSLAS on the test set, macro-averaged

Lg.	Metric	Baseline			UM	ITU
		Mono	Cross	MC	-	
	MSLAS	32.9	43.9	34.7	87.1	73.0
CS	LAS	39.5	58.3	36.7	88.0	77.6
	Feats	48.0	58.8	53.0	95.2	87.2
	MSLAS	51.4	43.1	37.7	83.8	59.7
EN	LAS	59.4	58.5	41.2	85.1	65.8
	Feats	69.0	55.3	53.9	94.9	80.7
	MSLAS	46.5	3.5	33.6	73.0	57.6
IT	LAS	52.8	8.1	35.1	73.7	61.6
	Feats	62.7	15.3	54.1	84.7	76.9
	MSLAS	56.3	37.3	22.4	68.7	43.4
HE	LAS	65.0	53.1	26.4	71.4	49.7
	Feats	71.9	54.0	43.3	83.4	68.9
	MSLAS	46.5	40.0	31.4	88.9	68.1
PT	LAS	53.9	53.1	33.5	89.5	74.0
	Feats	60.6	51.8	48.3	94.8	83.1
	MSLAS	43.0	39.6	31.8	75.0	60.4
PL	LAS	52.8	54.0	35.3	76.5	65.6
	Feats	60.3	54.8	50.2	86.2	78.5
	MSLAS	49.6	42.4	41.0	86.6	76.0
SR	LAS	58.3	58.7	43.5	88.3	80.6
	Feats	70.0	59.2	60.1	95.6	89.5
	MSLAS	55.1	45.7	47.5	86.6	65.0
SV	LAS	64.3	63.5	49.9	87.7	69.7
	Feats	67.8	56.0	61.5	95.7	84.6
	MSLAS	44.8	35.1	17.0	58.7	48.3
TR	LAS	52.3	53.2	23.6	60.9	52.7
	Feats	67.2	50.4	46.8	82.1	75.5

Table 3: Results for each language

across all languages, with 78.7. Both submissions significantly outperformed all baselines across all scores. Of the baselines, the best-performing system was the Mono system, which used few-shot prompting to learn from examples in the same language.

Considering the results per language in Table 3, the UM system consistently outperformed the others in all languages. All systems notably struggled with Turkish and Hebrew, and scores did not seem to correlate in an obvious way with the number of sentences in the training data in Table 1.

7 Discussion

7.1 Abstract Nodes

Neither of the submitted systems was able to handle abstract nodes. They were also not handled by the fine-tuning baseline. Acar and Eryiğit (2025) note that the Turkish data has by far the highest rate of abstract nodes (13.45% as opposed to 3.61% in the second-highest, Polish). This is significant because all systems that do not model abstract nodes report

their worst performance on Turkish. We cannot differentiate whether this is due to the agglutinative nature of Turkish, as we do not include any other agglutinative language in our sample, or simply due to points lost to missing abstract nodes, as well as cascading errors.

7.2 Tokenisation

The test data was provided in an untokenised format, and systems and baselines therefore had to make choices about the tokenisation, introducing errors which inevitably propagated down the line. The UM system made an attempt at re-engineering the tokenisation of the original data by selecting the stanza tokenisation model that results in the highest downstream performance. Because the evaluation script aligns either from the beginning or the end, one extra (or missing) word towards the middle of the sentence will cause the rest of the sentence to be misaligned and the score to drop significantly. This points to the improvement of tokenisation as an opportunity for improvement for parsers.

7.3 Multilinguality

All systems were based on a multilingual encoder model and then finetuned with the MSP training data on each language separately. Future systems could explore something more multilingual, especially for related languages like Italian and Portuguese, given how little data is available in total.

8 Conclusion

This paper presents the results of the UniDive 2025 Shared Task on Multilingual Morpho-Syntactic Parsing, introducing a novel representation and evaluation metric designed to be more inclusive of typologically diverse languages. By shifting the focus from traditional distinction between "words" and "morphemes" to a distinction between content and function elements, the task encourages the development of new parsing technologies that operate in a more equitable fashion across all languages.

The results from the five evaluated systems demonstrate that the task is challenging yet solvable for modern multi-task learning models. The top-performing system, UM, achieved an impressive MSLAS score of 78.7, significantly outperforming all baselines and showcasing the potential of dedicated architectures for this problem. Nevertheless, challenges remain, particularly in handling abstract nodes and parsing non-Indo-European languages like Turkish and Hebrew, indicating clear

directions for future research. Overall, this shared task successfully established a new benchmark for morpho-syntactic analysis and paved the way for more linguistically comprehensive parsing models.

Future iterations of the shared task will have the opportunity to cover a more diverse set of languages to allow a better evaluation, as well as better applications for studies in computational typology and morpho-syntax.

Acknowledgements

The Unidive 2025 Shared Task on Multilingual Morpho-Syntactic Parsing was supported by the UniDive COST action (CA21167). Leonie Weissweiler was supported by a postdoctoral fellowship from the German Research Foundation (DFG, WE 7627/1-1). The Charles University team was supported by the grants Language Understanding: from Syntax to Discourse of the Czech Science Foundation (Project No. 20-16819X) and LINDAT/CLARIAH-CZ (Project No. LM2023062) of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic. Adriana Pagano has a grant from the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq 404722/2024-5; 313103/2021-6) and Minas Gerais State Agency for Research and Development (FAPEMIG). Reut Tsarfaty and Omer Goldman were supported by a generous grant from the Israel Science Foundation (ISF grant No. 670/23) and by a KAMIN grant from the Israel Innovation Authority, for which we are grateful.

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A Annotation Guidelines

These are official annotation guidelines as shared with the participants in the shared task's official GitHub repo.⁷

Introduction:

In this documentation, we first explain the general principles of MSP, and then elaborate on the feature set and the file format.

Motivation

Words have long been an essential concept in the definition of treebanks in Universal Dependencies (UD), since the first stage in their construction is delimiting words in the language at hand. This is done due to the common view in theoretical linguistics of words as the dividing line between syntax, the grammatical module of word combination, and morphology, that is word construction.

We suggest defining the content-function boundary to differentiate 'morphological' from 'syntactic' elements. In our morpho-syntactic data structure, content words are represented as separate nodes on a dependency graph, even if they share a whitespace-separated word, and both function words and morphemes contribute morphology-style features to characterize the nodes.

Principles

- * Independence from Word Boundaries: Delimiting syntactically relevant words gets exponentially more complicated, the less isolating the languages are. Thus, this operation, which is as simple as breaking the text on white spaces for English, is borderline impossible for polysynthetic languages, in which a single word may be composed of several lexemes that have predicate-argument relations. This reflects the fact that, despite the presumed role of words in contemporary linguistics, there is no consensus on a coherent cross-lingual definition of words. We will thus avoid (most) theoretical debates on word boundaries, and solve much of the word segmentation inconsistencies that occur in UD, either across languages, e.g., Japanese is treated as isolating and Korean as agglutinative, even though they are very similar typologically, or across treebanks of the same language, e.g., the different treebanks for Hebrew segment and attribute different surface forms for clitics.
- * Content-Function Divide: The central divide in an MS graph is between content words (or morphemes) and function words (or morphemes). Content words form the nodes, while the information from function words is represented as features modifying the content nodes.
- * Crosslingual Parallelism: Morphosyntactic Annotation will bring the trees of very different languages much closer together and thus enable new typological studies. In isolating languages, the data will explicitly surface MS features that are expressed periphrastically. Morpho-syntactic data will be more inclusive towards languages that are currently treated unnaturally, most prominently noun-incorporating languages. Morpho-syntactic models will be able to parse sentences in more languages and enable better cross-lingual studies.
- * Minimal Deviation from CoNLL-U: We will use the well-established CoNLL-U file format for our data. The morpho-syntactic features are replacing the morphological features, and function nodes are recognizable by the lack of content in this column. This format is a variant of the CoNLL-U Plus format from which the data was constructed.

Schema Description

File Format

The format for morpho-syntactic parsing data is a simple alternation of UD's CoNLL-U format. It includes a replacement of a single column, morphological features, with morpho-syntactic features (named: MS-FEATS) for every UD node that contains a content word. UD nodes that contain function words should have empty (i.e. _) MS features. In addition, columns that are irrelevant for MSP, like MISC and XPOS, are also left empty.

⁷https://github.com/UniDive-MSP/MSP-shared-task

Morpho-Syntactic Features

As the key characteristics of morpho-syntactic dependency trees, morpho-syntactic features (MS features) are modelled after the morphological features in UD and may be viewed as a generalization of them. Like in UD, the features are an alphabetically ordered set of name and value pairs separated by pipes, of the structure Name1=Value1|Name2=Value2.8 Most feature names and values are equivalent to those in UD, for example Gender=Masc, Voice=Pass, etc.

However, MS features also differ from morphological features in a couple important characteristics: * The features are only defined for content nodes (see below).

- Function words should not have MS features. All the information they convey should be expressed as features on the relevant content node.
- Note: since the file format is a modified version of UD's CoNLL-U, function words may appear in the final output, their MS-feats column should be _. This is in contrast with content words that happen to have no MS-feats that should contain an orphan pipe |.
- * The features are defined not only by morphemes but by any grammatical function marker, be it a morpheme or a word. So the content node *go* in *will go* should bear the feature Tense=Fut.
 - All applicable features should be marked on the respective content nodes, even if expressed by non-concatenative means (as long as they are grammatical). E.g., the node go in *did you go?* should be marked with Mood=Ind; Int even though the interrogative mood is expressed mostly by word order.
- * Features should be applied only to their relevant node. In other words, no agreement features are needed, and in a phrase like *he goes* only *he* should bear Number=Sing|Person=3, and *goes* should have only Tense=Pres (and other features if relevant).
- * The feature structure is not flat. In other words, features are not necessarily single strings. They can contain:
 - a list of values separated by a semicolon, for example Aspect=Perf; Prog on the verb of the English clause *I have been walking*,
 - a negation of a value, for example Mood=not(Pot) on the Turkish verb *yürüyemez* ("he can't walk") where the negation refers to the ability, 9
 - a conjunction of values. This mechanism is to be used only in cases of explicit conjunction of grammatical constructions, for example Case=and(Cnd,Temp) is the manifestation of the English phrase *if and when* when connecting two clauses (see below for discussion on the Case feature),
 - and a disjunction of values, Tense=or(Fut, Pas)
- * If a feature includes multiple values in any kind of order or structure, they are ordered alphabetically in accordance with the general UD guidelines.

The mapping from morpho-syntactic constructions to features does not have to be one-to-one. In cases where several constructions have the exact same meaning (e.g., they differ in geographic distribution, register or personal preferences), it is perfectly suitable to assign the same feature combination to both of them. For example, in Spanish, both *comiera* and *comiese* will be assigned Aspect=Imp|Mood=Sub|Tense=Past|VerbForm=Fin (remember that the agreement features should appear only on the relevant argument).

The categories of words to be "consumed" into MS features are usually: auxiliaries, articles, adpositions, conjunctions and subordinators, and some particles. These categories may not neatly correspond to UD POS tags. Some clearly do, like auxiliaries (POS tag AUX), while others, like DET, may include also contentful word, like *all* and *every*. Some POS tags like ADV mix many contentful words (*nicely*, *rapidly*, *often*, etc.) with a few that serve as conjunctions (*when*, *then*, etc.), and in rare cases the same word may be considered functional or contentful depending on the context.¹⁰

⁸The feature set is unordered in theory, but in practice the features are ordered alphabetically by feature name, just to make the annotations consistent.

⁹This is in contrast with the verb *yürümebilir* (literally "he is able to not walk", i.e., he may not walk), where the negation pertains to the verb itself and should be tagged as Mood=Pot|Polarity=Neg.

¹⁰Compare the word then in the sentence if you want, then I'll do it (functional) to the same word in I didn't know what to do,

Feature Inventory

Since the MS features are a generalization of UD's morphological features, their types and possible values are also highly similar with that of UD's features. Therefore, for most features, the list in UD is sufficient in characterizing content nodes in MS trees as well. The most prominent exception to this is the expansion of the Case feature.

Originally, the Case feature characterized the relation between a predicate and its argument, almost always a nominal, but for MS trees its role is expanded twice. First, in line with the principle of independence from word boundaries, in MS trees this feature corresponds to traditional case morphemes as well as adpositions (these usually have case as DEPREL in UD trees) and coverbs when such exist. The inclusion of adpositions in determining the Case feature entails the expansion of cases possible in almost any language. Nominals in German, for example, now have an elative case (indicating motion from the inside of the argument) expressed by the combination of the synthetic dative case and the periphrastic *aus* preposition.

The second expansion of the Case feature is that in MS trees this feature is also used to characterize predicate-predicate relations, hence it is applicable also to verbal nodes and it "consumes" also conjunctions and subordinators. So *fell* in *I cried until I fell asleep* and *today* in *It is true until today* will both get a Case=Ttr because they are both marked by the function word *until*.

In general, the same function word/morpheme combination should be mapped to the same Case value, even if it serves multiple functions. For example, the Swahili preposition *na* should be mapped only to Case=Conj even when it serves a function of introducing the agent of a passive verb.

Table 4 details a set of universal values for the Case feature. These features do not cover all possible relations, and in some cases when there are adpositions or conjunctions that do not correspond to any of the features, the value of the respective feature should be the canonical citation form of the function word transliterated into Latin letters.

Content Nodes

Content nodes, to which morpho-syntactic features are to be defined, are all words or morphemes from open classes (like nouns, verbs and adjectives) that do not convey a grammatical modification of another word. These content words form a morpho-syntactic tree.

Note that copulas are not content words. In sentences with copulas refer to the nominal as the predicate and tag it with the features expressed by the copula.

For example, in the sentence *the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog* there are 6 content words (quick, brown, fox, jump, lazy, dog) and 3 function words (the, over, the).

In compounds or headless expressions, i.e., cases where one of the fixed, flat or goeswith DEPRELs are used, all words are judged together to either be of content or of function. Usually, such cases will be contentful, but sometimes a fixed expression can be a multi-word adposition, for example *as well as* and *because of*.

Abstract Nodes

In addition to words from open classes, content nodes also include all arguments and predicates in the sentence. The implications of this are twofold:

- 1. Pronouns should always be represented as nodes with MS features, regardless of your theoretical position on whether pronouns are contentful or a mere bundle of features.
- 2. Arguments that do not appear explicitly in a sentence but are expressed implicitly (i.e., by agreement of their predicate) should also be represented by their own node. However, this node lacks FORM or LEMMA fields and is therefore an abstract node. Abstract nodes should appear after the node from which they inherit their features and should have a special ID in the form of X.1, X.2 etc.

The most common use case of abstract nodes is when pronouns are dropped. For example, in Basque, the UD nodes:

```
4 ziurtatu ziurtatu VERB _ Aspect=Perf|VerbForm=Part 0 root _ _
5 zuten edun AUX _ Mood=Ind|Number[abs]=Sing|Number[erg]=Plur|Person[abs]=3|Person[erg]=3|Tense=Past|VerbForm=Fin 4 aux _
ReconstructedLemma=Yes
```

then I understood (then stands for "after some time" hence contentful).

¹¹In most languages, content nodes are equivalent to words. However, in some noun incorporating languages open class nouns can appear as morphemes concatenated to another content node that is the verb.

is be tagged as:

```
4 ziurtatu ziurtatu VERB _ Aspect=Perf|Mood=Ind|Tense=Past|VerbForm=Fin 0 root _ _ 5 zuten edun AUX _ _ _ _ _ _ 5.1 _ _ _ _ Case=Erg|Number=Plur|Person=3 4 nsubj _ _ 5.2 _ _ _ _ Case=Abs|Number=Sing|Person=3 4 obj _ _
```

Note that node 5 now doesn't have MS-feats and therefore it will be dropped from the MS tree.

This example underlines that the abstract nodes may be viewed as a replacement for feature layering. The advantage of this mechanism is that it equates the representation of agreement morphemes, clitics and full pronouns, and removes the need to decide which is which.

The same mechanism is used whenever an argument is missing from the clause as an independent word, but expressed in other means, i.e., not when an argument was dropped for pragmatic reasons or was otherwise not detectable from the surface forms. For example, the annotation of the Japanese sentence 宣言したのだ ('(he) proclaimed') should not contain an abstract node for the non-existent subject, although one is understood.

Abstract nodes are also to be used when the argument is outside the clause.

Gaps

Abstract nodes are also to be used in simple gaps, when there are function words referring to some missing argument. For example, a phrase like books to choose from, should be annotated as:

```
4 books book NOUN NN Number=Plur 2 obj _ _ 5 to to PART TO _ _ _ _ 6 choose choose VERB VB VerbForm=Inf 4 acl _ _ 7 from ADP IN _ _ _ _ _ 7.1 _ _ _ Case=Abl 6 obl _ _
```

So node 7.1 is created to carry the feature of the function word *from*.

Cases of more complex gaps are largely excluded from this shared task's data.

A.1 Case Values

Table 4: The inventory of Case values with examples from several shared task languages. The examples on the same line are often translation equivalents but this is not guaranteed, as sometimes a different example is more appropriate in a particular language.

		EN	CS	TR	
Argui	ment alignment				
Nom	nominative	he	on	0	
Acc	accusative	him	jeho	onu	
Abs	absolutive				
Erg	ergative			_	
Dat	dative		jemu	ona	
Agt	agentive		_	_	
Static	location				
Loc	locative	at school		okulda	
Ine	inessive	in the house	v domě		
Ces	interessive	among the students	uprostřed lesa	_	
Int	intrative	between us	mezi námi		
Ext	external	outside the house	vně domu		
Ade	adessive	on the table	na stole		
Adt	superadessive	atop the mountain			
Adh	lateradessive				
Apu	apudessive	beside the house	vedle domu		
Chz	chezative		u Martina		
Cir	circumessive	around the house	kolem domu		
Prx	proximative	near the house	blízko domu	_	
Dst	distantive	far from the house	daleko od domu	_	

Table 4: The inventory of Case values with examples from several shared task languages. The examples on the same line are often translation equivalents but this is not guaranteed, as sometimes a different example is more appropriate in a particular language.

		EN	CS	TR
Sup	superessive	above the house	nad domem	bir yılı aşkın
Sub	subessive	under the house	pod domem	_
Ant	antessive	in front of the house	před domem	_
Pst	postessive	behind the house	za domem	amacından öte
0ri	orientative	_	_	_
Rev	revertive	_	_	_
Орр	oppositive	opposite the house	naproti domu	_
Tot	total	throughout the house	_	_
Direct	tion focused on origin			
Abl	ablative	from the school	od školy	_
Egr	egressive	_	_	_
Ela	elative	_	z domu	_
Cne	interelative	_	zprostřed lesa	_
Ite	intraelative	from between	_	_
Exe	exelative	_	_	_
Del	delative	off the table	se stolu	_
Ape	apudelative	_	_	_
Spe	superelative	from above the house	_	_
Sbe	subelative	from under the house	zpod domu	_
Ane	antelative	_	_	_
Pse	postelative	from behind the house	zpoza domu	
Direct	tion focused on path			
Per	perlative	_	po ulici	_
Crs	perlative across	across the lake	napříč jezera	_
Lng	perlative along	along the river	podél řeky	_
Pro	prolative	via Berlin	_	_
Inx	inprolative	through the house	skrz dům	_
Cnx	interprolative	_	_	_
Adx	adprolative	_	_	_
Apx	apudprolative	_	_	_
Spx	superprolative	over the bridge	přes most	_
Sbx	subprolative	_	_	_
Cix	circumprolative	_	ob dům	_
Asc	ascentive	up the river	_	_
Dsc	descentive	down the river	_	_
Direct	tion focused on destination	ı		
Lat	lative	to the house	_	_
Ter	terminative	up to that house	po tamten dům	_
I11	illative	into the house	do domu	_
Cnl	interlative	_	doprostřed lesa	_
Itl	intralative	_	mezi nás	_
Exl	exlative	_	_	_
All	allative	onto the table	na stůl	_
Apl	apudlative	_	k domu	_
Spl	superlative	_	nad dům	_
Sbl	sublative	to under the house	pod dům	_
Anl	antlative	_	před dům	_

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		EN	CS	TR
Psl	postlative	_	za dům	_
Temp				
Tan	temporal antessive	before lunch	dokud neobědvá	yemekten önce
Ttr	temporal terminative	until lunch	_	yemek saatine kadar
Lim	limitative	_	_	_
Tem	temporal	$upon\ doing\ X$	v sobotu	_
Трх	temporal approximative	circa 9	v období dešťů	_
Din	durative initiative	_	počátkem zimy	_
Dur	durative	during winter	během zimy	yol boyunca
Der	durative era	_	za Caesara	_
Dtr	durative terminative	_	koncem zimy	_
Tdi	temporal distributive	_	_	_
Tps	temporal postessive	after lunch	jakmile doobědvá	yemekten sonra
Teg	temporal egressive	since winter	počínaje zimou	kıştan beri
Tbt	temporal interessive	_	_	
Relati	ion			
Atr	complement / attribute	that	že	-arak
Gen	genitive	of the house	domu	_
Psd	possessed	_	_	_
Par	partitive	_	_	_
Dis	distributive	_	_	_
Com	comitative	with Martin	s Martinem	Martin ile birlikte
0rn	ornative	_	_	uzun parmaklı
Abe	abessive	without Martin	bez Martina	Martin olmadan
Inc	inclusive	including Martin	včetně Martina	
Add	additive	_	_	
Exc	exclusive	except Martin	kromě Martina	
Sbs	substitutive	instead of Martin	místo Martina	
Simile	arity			
Ess	essive	as a teacher	jako učitel	_
Equ	equative	_	_	öğretmen kadar
Sem	semblative	like a teacher	_	öğretmen gibi
Rpl	replicative	_	_	-
Dsm	dissemblative	unlike a teacher	oproti učiteli	_
Cmp	comparative	than a teacher	než učitel	_
Dif	differential	_	o dva metry	
Tra	translative	_	_	_
Exe	exessive	_	_	_
Cmt	comment	whereas	kdežto	halbuki
	e, consequence, circumstar			
Cau	causative	because of rain	kvůli dešti	yağmurdan dolayı
Pur	purposive	in order to survive	aby přežil	hayatta kalmak için
Cns	considerative	considering the rain	na základě doporučení	—
Ign	ignorative	regardless of the rain	ať prší nebo ne	_
Ccs	concessive	despite the rain	navzdory dešti	yağmura rağmen
Cnd	conditional	in case of rain	pokud bude pršet	eğer yağmur yağarsa
The	themative	about the rain	o dešti	yağmurla ilişkin
		woom nic rant	o webii	jasnimia mynm

Table 4: The inventory of Case values with examples from several shared task languages. The examples on the same line are often translation equivalents but this is not guaranteed, as sometimes a different example is more appropriate in a particular language.

		EN	CS	TR
Quo	quotative	according to the law	podle zákona	yasaya göre
Ins	instrumental	using a hammer	kladivem	_
Ben	benefactive	for Martin	pro Martina	
Mal	malefactive	_		
Adv	adversative	against Martin	proti Martinovi	Martin'e karşı
Evi	evitative			_
Voc	vocative		Martine!	_
Parate	actic relations (CCONJ ty	vpe)		
Conj	conjunctive	and	а	ve
Nnor	negative conjunctive	nor	ani	ne
Disj	disjunctive	or	nebo	veya
Advs	adversative	but	ale	ama
Reas	reason	for	nebot'	çünkü
Cnsq	consequence	SO	tedy	ki

B Example Sentence Annotation

Original Representation

MSP-Adapted Representation

```
# sent_id = 00058111_26
# text = Karşınızdakine Sizi işe alıyorum, demek geçer aklınızın bir köşesinden.
1-2 Karşınızdakine _
1 Karşınızda karşı ADJ _ Case=Loc;Dat|Number=Sing|Person=3 7 iobj _
1.1 _ _ PRON _ Case=Gen|Number=Plur|Person=2|PronType=Prs 1 nmod:poss _ _
2 kine ki ADP
2 kine ki ADP _ _ _ _ _
3 Sizi siz PRON _ Case=Acc|Number=Plur|Person=2|PronType=Prs 4 obj _ _
4 işe iş NOUN _ Case=Dat|Number=Sing|Person=3 7 ccomp
5 aliyorum al VERB _ Aspect=Prog|Mood=Ind|Polarity=Pos|Polite=Infm|Tense=Pres 4 compound _ _
5.1 _ _ PRON _ Case=Nom|Number=Sing|Person=1|PronType=Prs 5 nsubj _
6 , , PUNCT
7 demek de VERB _ Aspect=Perf|Case=Nom|Mood=Ind|Number=Sing|Person=3|Polarity=Pos|Tense=Pres|VerbForm=Vnoun 8 nsubj _ _
8 geçer geç VERB _ Aspect=Hab|Mood=Ind|Polarity=Pos|Tense=Pres 0 root _ _
9 aklınızın akıl NOUN _ Case=Gen|Number=Sing|Person=3 8 compound _
9.1 _ _ PRON _ Case=Gen|Number=Plur|Person=2|PronType=Prs 9 nmod:poss _
10 bir bir NUM _ NumType=Card 8 compound _ .
11 köşesinden köşe NOUN _ Case=Abl|Number=Sing|Person=3 8 compound _ .
11.1 _ PRON _ Case=Gen|Number=Sing|Person=3|PronType=Prs 11 nmod:poss _ _ 12 . . PUNCT _ _ _ _ _
```