
Contamination Report for Multilingual Benchmarks

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Abstract

Benchmark contamination refers to the presence of test datasets in Large Language Model (LLM) pre-training or post-training data. Contamination can lead to inflated scores on benchmarks, compromising evaluation results and making it difficult to determine the capabilities of models. In this work, we study the contamination of popular multilingual benchmarks in LLMs that support multiple languages. We use the Black Box test to determine whether 7 frequently used multilingual benchmarks are contaminated in 7 popular open and closed LLMs and find that almost all models show signs of being contaminated with almost all the benchmarks we test. Our findings can help the community determine the best set of benchmarks to use for multilingual evaluation.

1 Introduction

Large Language Models (LLMs) have shown significant improvements on standard benchmarks as compared to their predecessors [1, 2]. These models are pre-trained on large amounts of data collected from the web via crawling, in which a significant portion of the Internet is consumed and often memorized by such large scale models during training. Such rampant data collection might unexpectedly capture publicly available benchmarks, causing LLMs to ingest test sets and memorize them, leading to a high score upon evaluation [3]. This phenomenon is called *data-contamination*, and it paints a false picture of the abilities of an LLM. LLMs also undergo an instruction-tuning phase, and are sometimes further tuned via RLHF, where the model is trained on task specific datasets. However, LLM creators do not always disclose the exact details of the datasets used, and it is plausible that the model is trained on benchmark datasets intentionally or unintentionally. Hence, *contamination* can occur during the pre-training or post-training phases [4]. In this work, we study the contamination of 7 recent LLMs on 7 popular multilingual benchmarks used in prior work to evaluate the capabilities of LLMs on non-English languages. Our main contribution in this paper is an analysis of which multilingual benchmark is contaminated in which model by utilizing the contamination detection technique proposed by Oren et al. [5].

2 Related Works

Various methods have been developed to identify dataset contamination for scenarios in which LLM training data is disclosed, as well as not disclosed. For example, Yang et al. [6]’s LLM Decontaminator quantifies rephrased samples by comparing them to a benchmark but needs access to training data. Other methods by Oren et al. [5] and Golchin and Surdeanu [7] do not require training data; they use techniques like analyzing log probabilities of open source models or guided prompting. A recent survey by Ravaut et al. [8] offers an extensive review of these strategies.

Some of the previous works in Multilingual Evaluation such as Ahuja et al. [1] tries to tackle the problem of identifying contamination in GPT-4 by prompting the model to fill the dataset cards. Another work by Ahuja et al. [2] follows the same method as ours albeit at a smaller scale.

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3 Methodology

We follow the Black Box test for contamination detection in open-source models, as described by Oren et al. [5]. This test is a statistical approach that offers provable guarantees for identifying whether a given test set has been contaminated. The key idea behind this method is to exploit a property common to many datasets, known as *exchangeability*. This property ensures that the joint distribution of the dataset remains unchanged regardless of the order in which the examples are presented.

If a model has been exposed to a benchmark dataset, it will likely develop a bias toward the canonical ordering of examples—the sequence in which they are presented in public repositories—over randomly shuffled versions of the same dataset. By comparing a model’s performance on the canonical order versus shuffled orders, this method determines if the model exhibits a statistically significant preference for the original order. If such a difference is found, it provides evidence that the test set has been contaminated according to this framework.

In this reproduction study, we evaluate 7 models (MISTRAL-7B, MISTRAL-7B-IT [9], LLAMA-3.1-8B, LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT [4], GEMMA-2-9B, GEMMA-2-9B-IT [10], and AYA-23-8B [11]) on 7 multilingual datasets (XNLI [12], XQUAD [13], XSTORYCLOZE [14], XCOPA [15], XLSUM [16], FLORES [17], PAWS-X [18]). The rationale behind evaluating both base and instruction tuned variants of a model is to understand, in which phase (pretraining or posttraining) contamination occurs. We use 5000 data points overall uniformly spread across all the languages of the datasets, split across 48 shards with $r = 768$ permutations per shard. Hence, according to Oren et al. [5], we have a significance value of $1/(1+r) = 0.0013$, and any p -val lower than this threshold is considered as contamination. All these experiments were run on $8 \times$ H100s for 362 hours (≈ 15 days).

4 Results and Discussions

Table 1 lists the datasets affected by contamination. We observe that only 4 instances show no contamination, while a significant portion of the datasets, which were not contaminated in previous versions of the models (Table 2), are now impacted. This indicates that newer versions LLMs, despite being larger and trained on more data, are more likely to include benchmark datasets in their training data. Given that the pre-training corpus for these models is typically expanded and reused, it is likely that future versions will also ingest these datasets. Our findings suggest that contamination occurs during the pre-training phase and persists after post-training.

	LLAMA-3.1-8B	LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT	MISTRAL-7B-v0.3	MISTRAL-7B-v0.3-IT	GEMMA-2-9B-IT	GEMMA-2-9B	AYA-23-8B
FLORES	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
PAWS-X	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
XCOPA	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
XLSUM	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
XNLI	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
XQUAD	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
XSTORYCLOZE	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

Table 1: Benchmark contamination presence in the evaluated models. ✗ means **contaminated** and ✓ means **not contaminated**.

	GEMMA-7B-IT	LLAMA-2-7B-IT	MISTRAL-7B-v0.1-IT
PAWS-X	✗	✗	✗
XCOPA	✗	✗	✗
XNLI	✓	✓	✓
XQUAD	✓	✗	✗
XSTORYCLOZE	✓	✓	✓

Table 2: Previous contamination results from Ahuja et al. [2]. We use this table for cross-comparison.

It is crucial to detect and prevent contamination, especially in multilingual datasets, which are both costly to create and relatively scarce. In future work, we aim to expand our analysis by evaluating a larger number of datasets and models for contamination. We hope our efforts will guide future research in carefully selecting benchmarks for multilingual evaluation.

5 Limitations

As the contamination evaluation is a computationally expensive process, we are constrained in the number of datasets and models we can evaluate. We choose the most popular benchmarks and models available publicly. Due to space constraints, we provide an initial analysis of the results, and future work can build upon this work. Further, the framework used only identifies if the dataset is contaminated for a certain model or not, and does not identify the extent of contamination, for which access to training data is required.

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