Domain Classification-based Source-specific Term Penalization for Domain Adaptation in Hate-speech Detection

Tulika Bose, Nikolaos Aletras, Irina Illina, Dominique Fohr

To cite this version:
Tulika Bose, Nikolaos Aletras, Irina Illina, Dominique Fohr. Domain Classification-based Source-specific Term Penalization for Domain Adaptation in Hate-speech Detection. COLING 2022 - Proceedings of the 29th International Conference on Computational Linguistics, Oct 2022, Gyeongju, South Korea. hal-03815708

HAL Id: hal-03815708
https://inria.hal.science/hal-03815708v1
Submitted on 14 Oct 2022

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.
Domain Classification-based Source-specific Term Penalization for Domain Adaptation in Hate-speech Detection

Tulika Bose † Nikolaos Aletras ‡ Irina Illina † Dominique Fohr †
† Universite de Lorraine, CNRS, Inria, LORIA, F-54000 Nancy, France
‡ University of Sheffield, United Kingdom
{tulika.bose, illina, dominique.fohr}@loria.fr
n.aletras@sheffield.ac.uk

Abstract

Warning: this paper contains content that may be offensive and distressing.

State-of-the-art approaches for hate-speech detection usually exhibit poor performance in out-of-domain settings. This occurs, typically, due to classifiers overemphasizing source-specific information that negatively impacts its domain invariance. Prior work has attempted to penalize terms related to hate-speech from manually curated lists using feature attribution methods, which quantify the importance assigned to input terms by the classifier when making a prediction. We, instead, propose a domain adaptation approach that automatically extracts and penalizes source-specific terms using a domain classifier, which learns to differentiate between domains, and feature-attribution scores for hate-speech classes, yielding consistent improvements in cross-domain evaluation.

1 Introduction

While recent state-of-the-art hate-speech classifiers (Ayo et al., 2021; D’Sa et al., 2020; Mozafari et al., 2019) yield impressive performance on in-domain held-out instances, they suffer when evaluated on out-of-domain settings (Yin and Zubiaga, 2021; Arango et al., 2019; Swamy et al., 2019; Karan and Šnajder, 2018). The distributions across corpora/domains1 change due to varying vocabulary, topics of discussion over time (Florio et al., 2020; Saha and Sindhwani, 2012), data bias caused by sampling strategies (Wiegand et al., 2019) and different hate-targets. This is concerning since curating new data resources for hate-speech involves substantial time and effort (Poletto et al., 2019; Malmasi and Zampieri, 2018). This calls for strategies, like Domain Adaptation (DA) approaches, that can adapt models trained on existing labeled resources to a new target domain that lacks class-labels.

However, research on DA in hate-speech is limited (Sarwar and Murdock, 2022; Bashar et al., 2021; Bose et al., 2021). Typically, vanilla classifiers tend to learn more from domain-specific features (Ye et al., 2021; Wiegand et al., 2019) than domain-invariant features, resulting in poor out-of-domain performance. For instance, Wiegand et al. (2019) show that in a hate-speech dataset (Waseem and Hovy, 2016), neutral domain-specific terms, like ‘football’, ‘commentator’, etc., discussing the role of women in sports, are highly correlated with the hate label, restricting its generalizability. Thus, it is worth minimizing the importance of such terms for improving cross-domain performance.

Recently, feature attributions – methods for extracting post-hoc model explanations, have been used to align features with prior domain knowledge (Rieger et al., 2020; Adebayo et al., 2020). These provide importance scores to the input terms as per their contribution towards the model prediction (Lundberg and Lee, 2017). For instance, Liu and Avci (2019); Kennedy et al. (2020) reduce the over-sensitivity of classifiers on a curated list of identity terms (e.g. muslims, gay) by penalizing their importance. However, newly emerging social-media terms (Grieve et al., 2018) may render such lists non-exhaustive. Yao et al. (2021) do not use any list but they require human-provided refinement advice as inputs. Chrysostomou and Aletras (2022a) further show that post-hoc explanation methods might not provide faithful explanation in out-of-domain settings. The contemporaneous work by Attanasio et al. (2022) and Bose et al. (2022) reduce lexical overfitting automatically with entropy-based attentions and feature attributions, respectively. While cross-domain classification performance across different datasets is not studied in the former, the latter needs some labeled target instances to identify the over-fitted terms.

In the task of detecting objects in images, Zunino et al. (2021) use a domain classifier, trained to dif-
ferentiate between domains, to visually identify the irrelevant background information to be domain-specific. Thus, they enforce the model explanations to align with the ground-truth annotations highlighting the objects in the image. Inspired by this, we propose a new DA approach in hate-speech employing a domain classifier, but without having access to such annotations for aligning the attribution scores.

We hypothesize that domain-specific terms that are simultaneously predictive of the hate-speech labels are instrumental in restricting the domain invariance of the hate-speech classifier. To this end, we employ a domain classifier to automatically extract the terms that help in identifying the source domain compared to the unlabeled target domain, and feature-attribution scores to identify the subset important for hate-speech classification from the source. Our method, through penalization of these terms, automatically enforces the source domain classifier to focus on domain-invariant content. Compared to approaches transforming high-dimensional intermediate representations to reduce the domain discrepancy, such as domain adversarial learning (Ryu and Lee, 2020; Tzeng et al., 2017), our approach makes the adaptation more explainable, while improving the overall cross-domain performance compared to prior-approaches.

2 Proposed Approach
Given training data from a labeled source domain $D_{S}^{train}$ and an unlabeled target domain $D_{T}^{train}$, our approach for DA in hate-speech involves 2 steps: (i) extraction of source-specific terms and (ii) reducing the importance of these terms. Our setting is similar to Ben-David et al. (2020) and Ryu and Lee (2020).

2.1 Extraction of Source-specific Terms
Domain classification To identify source-specific terms, we first train a binary domain classifier using $D_{S}^{train}$ and $D_{T}^{train}$ that learns to identify whether a candidate instance comes from the source or the target domain. For this, we use a simple Logistic Regression (LR) with bag-of-words, as it is inherently interpretable. We then use its feature weights to extract the top $N$ most important terms for predicting the source domain class. Each term is tokenized with the BERT (Devlin et al., 2019) WordPiece tokenizer for compatibility with transformer models. The top $N$ terms obtained through domain classification are denoted as $S_{LR}$.

Attribution-based term ranking Intuitively, the terms from $S_{LR}$ that also contribute highly to the hate-speech labels, are likely to restrict generalization to the target as they could potentially reduce the importance assigned by the classifier to domain-invariant hate-speech terms. Thus, we extract only those source-specific terms that are highly correlated with the labels, given the binary classification task of hate versus non-hate.

To this end, we first continue pre-training BERT on the unlabeled $D_{T}^{train}$ using the Masked Language Model (MLM) objective for incorporating the language-variations of the target domain, following Glavaš et al. (2020). We then perform supervised classification on $D_{T}^{train}$ using this MLM trained model. After every epoch, we obtain 2 ranked lists of terms for the two classes, sorted in the order of decreasing importance. We construct the lists using feature attribution methods that yield instance-level attribution scores $\text{ins-atr}_{te}$ per term $te$ in an instance $j$ – a higher score indicating a higher contribution to the predicted class. We discard the scores of stop-words and the infrequent terms, and normalize $\text{ins-atr}_{te}$ using the sigmoid function. For obtaining a corpus-level class-specific attribution score $\text{cp-atr}_{te}$ per term $te$ and per class $c$, we perform a corpus-level average of all the $\text{ins-atr}_{te}$ for every $c$ using Equation 1.

$$
\text{cp-atr}_{te}^{c} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{|D_{T}^{train}|} \text{1}_{\hat{y}_{j} = c} \cdot \text{ins-atr}_{te} \cdot \#(\text{occurrence of } te \text{ in } j)}{\sum_{j=1}^{|D_{T}^{train}|} \text{1}_{\hat{y}_{j} = c} \#(\text{occurrence of } te \text{ in } j)}
$$

(1)

Here $c \in \{\text{hate, non-hate}\}$, $\hat{y}$ is the predicted class and $\mathbb{1}$ is the indicator function. We sort the scores $\text{cp-atr}_{te}$ for all $te$ to obtain the highest attributed (i.e. most important) term per class to the lowest, yielding the ranked lists of terms per class, given by $\text{CP} = [\text{cp-hate, cp-non-hate}]$.

We extract the source-specific terms $te^{S}$ that are common to both $S_{LR}$ and the top $M$ terms from CP, i.e. $te^{S} = [te \in S_{LR} \& te \in \text{top}_M(\text{CP})]$. These steps are repeated after every epoch. Note that the list $S_{LR}$ remains constant across the epochs, as it is independent to the hate-speech classification task.

2.2 Penalization of Source-specific Terms
We hypothesize that penalizing $te^{S}$ obtained from the previous epoch during the next epoch should reduce the importance of terms that are both (i) domain-specific and (ii) contribute highly to the source labels, and thus, help learn from domain invariant terms. We minimize the attribution scores
Frequent terms in the datasets

#mkr, #notsexist, kat, women, like, b*tch, women, refugees, (Waseem and Hovy, 2016), Waseem

1016 samples, making its size similar to the other Vidgen (Basile et al., 2019) and (Shrikumar et al., 2017) that assigns scores based (i) Scaled Attention (α∇α) (Serrano and Smith, 2019), which scales attention weights α by their corresponding gradients ∇αi = δyi δα, where y is the predicted label, and is shown to work better than using only the attention weights; (ii) DeepLIFT/ DL (Shrikumar et al., 2017) that assigns scores based on the difference between activation of each neuron and a reference activation (zero embedding vector). Note that although Liu and Avci (2019) have used the Integrated Gradients (IG) (Sundararajan et al., 2017), we use DL as it is most often a good and a faster approximation of IG (Ancona et al., 2018).

3 Experimental Setup

3.1 Data

We use three standard hate-speech datasets, namely, Waseem (Waseem and Hovy, 2016), HatEval (Basile et al., 2019) and Vidgen (Vidgen et al., 2021). Following Wiegand et al. (2019); Swamy et al. (2019), we perform hate/non-hate classification across domains. We use the standard splits available for HatEval (42.1% hate; train: 89932, val: 1000; test: 3000) and Vidgen (54.4% hate; train: 32497, val: 1016, test: 4062). We subsample the Vidgen validation set by 25% to get 1016 samples, making its size similar to the other datasets. We split Waseem (26.8% hate) randomly into train (80%; 8720), validation (10%; 1090) and test (10%; 1090) sets, as no standard splits are available.

We present the top ten most frequent terms in these datasets in Table 1. The Waseem dataset is known to comprise a high proportion of implicit hate (Wiegand et al., 2019), which are subtle expressions of hate without the use of profanity. This is also evident in the most frequent terms from this dataset. In Table 1, #mkr refers to a cooking show which frequently results in sexist comments targeted towards the participating women. HatEval involves hate against women and immigrants. Many hateful tweets against immigrants occurred in the context of the US-Mexico border issues with the hashtag #buildthewall. The Vidgen dataset is collected through a dynamic data creation process with a human-and-model-in-the-loop strategy, unlike HatEval and Waseem datasets that are sampled from Twitter. In particular, the Vidgen dataset involves hate against many different target groups or identity terms, with a wide variety of topics and hateful forms. See Appendix A for further details on the datasets.

| Dataset | Frequent terms in the datasets |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| Waseem  | #mkr, #notsexist, kat, women, like, andre, get, people, one, think |
| HatEval | b*tch, women, refugees, #buildthewall, immigrant, immigration, illegal, men, migrants, h*e |
| Vidgen  | people, black, women, f*cking, like, love, think, white, get, want |

Table 1: Top ten most frequent terms in the datasets after removing the stop-words.

3.2 Baselines

We compare our work with approaches that penalize (i) pre-defined terms in Convolutional Neural Networks-based Liu and Avci (2019)3; (ii) (a) the identity terms in the top features of a bag-of-words Logistic Regression in BERT-based Kennedy et al. (2020)4 (b) all the terms listed by Kennedy et al. (2020); (iii) terms extracted automatically by Attanasio et al. (2022); (iv) combination of terms from (i) and (ii,b) within BERT, and call this Pre-Def. We do not compare with Bose et al. (2022) as they use labeled target instances for term-extraction, which does not allow a fair comparison.

Further, we experiment with the Vanilla baseline (Van-MLM-FT), where the pre-trained BERT is adapted to DTtrain using the MLM objective, followed by a supervised fine-tuning on DS2train. We also assess different DA methods from the sentiment classification task, namely, BERT PERL (Pivot-based Encoder Representation of Language)

\[
\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}' + \lambda \mathcal{L}_{\text{atr}}; \mathcal{L}_{\text{atr}} = \sum_{t \in \text{te}^S} \phi(t)^2 ; \ t \in \text{te}^S \quad (2)
\]

Here \(\mathcal{L}'\) is the classification loss and \(\mathcal{L}_{\text{atr}}\) is the attribution loss. \(\lambda\) controls the strength of penalization, and \(\phi(t)\) is the attribution score for \(t\).

We experiment with two variations: (i) Dom-spec: penalizing only the terms in te^S; (ii) Comb: penalizing the combination of te^S and the terms from Liu and Avci (2019); Kennedy et al. (2020).

Note that although Liu and Avci (2019) have used the hashtag #mkr, with Integrated Gradients (Sundararajan et al., 2017) and a reference activation (zero embedding vector). The instances containing only URLs are removed, decreasing the number of train instances from 9000 to 8993.

\(\text{val: 1000; test: 3000})\) and (Shrikumar et al., 2017) that assigns scores based on the difference between activation of each neuron and a reference activation (zero embedding vector).

Formulas:
- \(\alpha\) is the attribution score for \(t\).
- \(\mathcal{L}_{\text{atr}}\) is the attribution loss.
- \(\lambda\) controls the strength of penalization.
- \(\mathcal{L}'\) is the classification loss.
- \(\phi(t)\) is the attribution score for \(t\).
- \(\sum_{t \in \text{te}^S} \phi(t)^2 \) is the classification loss.
- \(\text{te}^S\) is the pre-defined terms in Convolutional Neural Networks-based Liu and Avci (2019).

Notes:
- The instances containing only URLs are removed, decreasing the number of train instances from 9000 to 8993.
- With Integrated Gradients (Sundararajan et al., 2017)
- With Sampling and Occlusion (Jin et al., 2020)
(Ben-David et al., 2020) that adopts the MLM objective of BERT to perform pivot-based fine-tuning; BERT-AAD (Adversarial Adaptation with Distillation) (Ryu and Lee, 2020) that performs domain adversarial training; HATN (Hierarchical Attention Transfer Network) (Li et al., 2018, 2017) that extracts pivots using a domain adversarial approach.

We evaluate a data-augmentation-based approach (Sarwar and Murdoch, 2022) for DA in hate-speech. For a fair comparison, we use the BERT as the underlying model in this approach. Finally, we apply the $\chi^2$-test with 1 degree of freedom and Yate’s correction (Kilgarriff, 2001), penalizing the terms from $D_{train}^S$, using their DL scores, for which the null hypothesis of both $D_{train}^S$ and $D_{train}^{Aug}$ being random samples of the same larger population, is rejected with 95% confidence. We initialize all the BERT models with MLM adaptation on the target, except for PERL and AAD, which inherently adapts to the target.

### 3.3 Model training

We train all the models on $D_{train}^S$, use a small amount of the labeled $D_{val}^{val}$ only for model-selection and hyper-parameter tuning (see Appendix B), following Dai et al. (2020); Maharana and Bansal (2020), and evaluate on $D_{test}^T$. **4 Results**

### 4.1 Discussion

Table 2 displays the macro-F1 scores obtained, in cross-domain settings, averaged across five randomly initialized runs. We use macro-F1 as penalizing $te^S$ corrects the mis-classifications for both the hate and non-hate classes across domains. We observe an overall performance drop, compared to Van-MLM-FT, with the DA approaches, originally proposed for sentiment classification, namely, BERT PERL, BERT-AAD and HATN. This also agrees with Bose et al. (2021), who analyze the extracted pivots – terms that are both frequent across domains as well as important for classification with respect to the source – and find them to be sub-optimal for DA in hate-speech. The approach by Sarwar and Murdoch (2022) also displays an overall drop. They augment the source domain by substituting relevant terms from a different negative emotion dataset with tagged hate-speech related terms from the target domain. We observe that the augmented instances are often incomprehensible after such substitution.

Dom-spec yields improvements over all the baselines using both $\alpha \nabla \alpha$ and DL, both independently and in combination (Comb) with Pre-def, where Comb achieves the highest overall performance with DL: 60.6. With DL, Dom-spec yields significantly improved performance in 4/6 cases, compared to 2/6 with Pre-def (DL). This is apparently due to the penalization of relevant source-specific terms that have wider coverage compared to the predefined terms in Pre-def. Since the entropy-based attention regularization by Attanasio et al. (2022) do not use the target domain unlabeled instances for term-extraction, it may not be optimal for cross-domain settings. The large improvement with Pre-def (DL) for Vidgen → Waseem (70.3) could be attributed to the fact that Vidgen involves a wide variety of identity terms. Thus, penalizing the predefined identity terms might result in higher emphasis on more generalizable hate-speech content. While only this particular case drives the high average performance with Pre-def (DL), Dom-spec

| Approaches                      | H →V | V →H | H →W | W →H | W →V | Average |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| BERT Van-MLM-FT                | 58.6±1.3 | 62.2±1.2 | 70.0±2.5 | 50.9±2.1 | 61.4±2.4 | 43.5±1.9 | 58.1 |
| Liu and Avci (2019) (a)        | 45.1±4.5 | 59.5±0.7 | 57.5±3.8 | 52.6±0.8 | 57.1±2.7 | 39.6±2.0 | 51.9 |
| MLM + Kennedy et al. (2020) (b)| 55.4±0.9 | 65.5±0.8 | 64.1±1.4 | 54.8±1.3 | 59.2±1.8 | 44.5±2.8 | 57.2 |
| Pre-def                        | 54.9±2.9 | 65.9±0.9 | 67.3±1.2 | 54.7±2.2 | 62.2±1.7 | 46.6±1.5 | 58.5 |
| Dom-spec (α \nabla \alpha)    | 54.1±1.7 | 60.0±0.6 | 60.1±2.0 | 55.2±0.7 | 55.3±1.0 | 37.8±1.2 | 53.8 |
| Comb (Dom-spec + Pre-def)      | 56.6±1.3 | 53.9±3.5 | 68.8±2.5 | 50.7±1.4 | 48.3±1.7 | 53.0±1.7 | 55.2 |
| HATN                           | 48.4±1.6 | 59.1±0.4 | 59.7±2.9 | 51.4±1.8 | 59.4±2.6 | 45.4±2.7 | 54.0 |
| MLM + Sarwar and Murdoch (2022)| 50.5±1.9 | 66.2±2.0 | 68.8±1.1 | 48.2±3.1 | 57.9±1.1 | 36.2±1.1 | 55.4 |
| MLM + Attanasio et al. (2022)  | 54.9±1.6 | 65.6±1.4 | 64.1±5.0 | 52.4±3.7 | 62.5±0.8 | 43.5±2.3 | 57.3 |
| MLM + +test                    | 57.9±1.6 | 67.7±1.0 | 69.8±0.8 | 48.2±3.1 | 60.4±2.8 | 44.1±3.4 | 57.9 |

Table 2: Macro-F1 (±std-dev) on source →target pairs. H : HatEval, V : Vidgen, W : Waseem. Bold denotes the best score and underline the second best in each column. * denotes statistically significant improvement compared to Van-MLM-FT with paired bootstrap (Dror et al., 2018; Efron and Tibshirani, 1993), 95% confidence interval.
5 Conclusion

We proposed a DA approach for automatic extraction and penalization of source domain-specific terms that have higher attributions towards the hate-speech labels, to improve cross-domain hate-speech detection. The results demonstrated consistent improvements on the target domain. These results should motivate further research on domain adaptation in hate-speech and building classifiers that can generalize well to the concept of hate. Finally, it would be interesting in applying our approach to other tasks such as rumor and misinformation detection (Mu and Aletras, 2020; Mu et al., 2022).

Ethical Considerations

This work serves as a means to build more robust hate-speech detection models that can make proper use of the existing curated hate-speech resources and adapt well on new resources or social-media comments, which have not been well-annotated due to time and cost constraints. The hate-speech resources used for the work are publicly available and cited appropriately, wherein the authors have discussed the sampling techniques and annotation guidelines in detail. The hate-speech examples presented in the paper are only intended for research purposes and better analysis of the models explored. The terms extracted and penalized in this work are not meant to be used off-the-shelf, but the approach should serve as a starting point for research on model-debugging and building more generalizable hate-speech classifiers.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported partly by the french PIA project “Lorraine Université d’Excellence”, reference ANR-15-IDEX-04-LUE. Experiments presented in this article were carried out using the
Grid’5000 testbed, supported by a scientific interest group hosted by Inria and including CNRS, RENATER and several Universities as well as other organizations (see https://www.grid5000.fr). We thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback and suggestions.

References

Julius Adebayo, Michael Muelly, Ilaria Liccardi, and Been Kim. 2020. Debugging tests for model explanations. In Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems, volume 33, pages 700–712. Curran Associates, Inc.

Marco Ancona, Enea Ceolini, Cengiz Öztireli, and Markus Gross. 2018. Towards better understanding of gradient-based attribution methods for deep neural networks. In 6th International Conference on Learning Representations, ICLR 2018, Vancouver, BC, Canada, April 30 - May 3, 2018, Conference Track Proceedings. OpenReview.net.

Ayém Arango, Jorge Pérez, and Barbara Poblete. 2019. Hate speech detection is not as easy as you may think: A closer look at model validation. In Proceedings of the 42nd International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval, SIGIR ’19, pages 45–54, New York, NY, USA. Association for Computing Machinery.

Giuseppe Attanasio, Debora Nozza, Dirk Hovy, and Elena Baralis. 2022. Entropy-based attention regularization frees unintended bias mitigation from lists. In Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: ACL2022 (Forthcoming). Association for Computational Linguistics.

Femi Emmanuel Ayo, Olusegun Folorunso, Friday Thomas Ibharalu, Idowu Ademola Osinuga, and Adebayo Abayomi-Alli. 2021. A probabilistic clustering model for hate speech classification in twitter. Expert Systems with Applications, 173:114762.

Md Abul Bashar, Richi Nayak, Khanh Luong, and Thirunavukarasu Balasubramaniam. 2021. Progressive domain adaptation for detecting hate speech on social media with small training set and its application to covid-19 concerned posts. Social Network Analysis and Mining, 11(1):1–18.

Valerio Basile, Cristina Bosco, Elisabetta Fersini, Debora Nozza, Viviana Patti, Francisco Manuel Rangel Pardo, Paolo Rosso, and Manuela Sanguineti. 2019. SemEval-2019 task 5: Multilingual detection of hate speech against immigrants and women in twitter. In Proceedings of the 13th International Workshop on Semantic Evaluation, pages 54–63, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Eyal Ben-David, Carmel Rabinovitz, and Roi Reichart. 2020. PERL: Pivot-based domain adaptation for pre-trained deep contextualized embedding models. Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics, 8:504–521.

Tulika Bose, Nikolaos Aletras, Irina Illina, and Dominique Fohr. 2022. Dynamically refined regularization for improving cross-corpora hate speech detection. In Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: ACL2022 (Forthcoming). Association for Computational Linguistics.

Tulika Bose, Irina Illina, and Dominique Fohr. 2021. Unsupervised domain adaptation in cross-corpora abusive language detection. In Proceedings of the Ninth International Workshop on Natural Language Processing for Social Media, pages 113–122. Association for Computational Linguistics.

George Chrysostomou and Nikolaos Aletras. 2021. Improving the faithfulness of attention-based explanations with task-specific information for text classification. In Proceedings of the 59th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics and the 11th International Joint Conference on Natural Language Processing (Volume 1: Long Papers), pages 477–488. Online.

George Chrysostomou and Nikolaos Aletras. 2022a. An empirical study on explanations in out-of-domain settings. In Proceedings of the 60th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (Volume 1: Long Papers), pages 6920–6938. Dublin, Ireland. Association for Computational Linguistics.

George Chrysostomou and Nikolaos Aletras. 2022b. Flexible instance-specific rationalization of NLP models. AAAI.

Yong Dai, Jian Liu, Xiancong Ren, and Zenglin Xu. 2020. Adversarial training based multi-source unsupervised domain adaptation for sentiment analysis. In Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence, volume 34, pages 7618–7625.

Jacob Devlin, Ming-Wei Chang, Kenton Lee, and Kristina Toutanova. 2019. BERT: Pre-training of deep bidirectional transformers for language understanding. In Proceedings of the 2019 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics: Human Language Technologies, Volume 1 (Long and Short Papers), pages 4171–4186. Minneapolis, Minnesota. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Rotem Dror, Gili Baumer, Segev Shlomov, and Roi Reichart. 2018. The hitchhiker’s guide to testing statistical significance in natural language processing. In Proceedings of the 56th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (Volume 1: Long Papers), pages 1383–1392. Melbourne, Australia. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Ashwin Geet D’Sa, Irina Illina, and Dominique Fohr. 2020. Towards non-toxic landscapes: Automatic toxic comment detection using DNN. In Proceedings of the Second Workshop on Trolling, Aggression...
and Cyberbullying, pages 21–25, Marseille, France. European Language Resources Association (ELRA).

Bradley Efron and Robert J. Tibshirani. 1993. An Introduction to the Bootstrap. Number 57 in Monographs on Statistics and Applied Probability. Chapman & Hall/CRC, Boca Raton, Florida, USA.

Komal Florio, Valerio Basile, Marco Polignano, Pierpaolo Basile, and Viviana Patti. 2020. Time of your hate: The challenge of time in hate speech detection on social media. Applied Sciences, 10(12).

Goran Glavaš, Mladen Karan, and Ivan Vulić. 2020. XHate-999: Analyzing and detecting abusive language across domains and languages. In Proceedings of the 28th International Conference on Computational Linguistics, pages 6350–6365, Barcelona, Spain (Online), International Committee on Computational Linguistics.

John G. D. Grieve, Andrea Nini, and Diansheng Guo. 2018. Mapping lexical innovation on american social media. Journal of English Linguistics, 46:293 – 319.

Xisen Jin, Zhongyu Wei, Junyi Du, Xiangyang Xue, and Xiang Ren. 2020. Towards hierarchical importance attribution: Explaining compositional semantics for neural sequence models. In International Conference on Learning Representations.

Mladen Karan and Jan Šnajder. 2018. Cross-domain detection of abusive language online. In Proceedings of the 2nd Workshop on Abusive Language Online (ALW2), pages 132–137, Brussels, Belgium. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Brendan Kennedy, Xisen Jin, Aida Mostafazadeh Davani, Morteza Dehghani, and Xiang Ren. 2020. Contextualizing hate speech classifiers with post-hoc explanation. In Proceedings of the 58th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics, pages 5435–5442, Online. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Adam Kilgarriff. 2001. Comparing corpora. International Journal of Corpus Linguistics, 6(1):97–133.

Zheng Li, Ying Wei, Yu Zhang, and Qiang Yang. 2018. Hierarchical attention transfer network for cross-domain sentiment classification. In Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence, volume 32.

Zheng Li, Yu Zhang, Ying Wei, Yuxiang Wu, and Qiang Yang. 2017. End-to-end adversarial memory network for cross-domain sentiment classification. In Proceedings of the 26th International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence, IJCAI’17, pages 2237–2243. AAAI Press.

Frederick Liu and Besim Avci. 2019. Incorporating priors with feature attribution on text classification. In Proceedings of the 57th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics, pages 6274–6283, Florence, Italy. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Ilya Loshchilov and Frank Hutter. 2019. Decoupled weight decay regularization. In International Conference on Learning Representations.

Scott M. Lundberg and Su-In Lee. 2017. A unified approach to interpreting model predictions. In Proceedings of the 31st International Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems. NIPS’17, pages 4768–4777, Red Hook, NY, USA. Curran Associates Inc.

Adyasha Maharana and Mohit Bansal. 2020. Adversarial augmentation policy search for domain and cross-lingual generalization in reading comprehension. In Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: EMNLP 2020, pages 3723–3738, Online. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Shervin Malmasi and Marcos Zampieri. 2018. Challenges in discriminating profanity from hate speech. Journal of Experimental & Theoretical Artificial Intelligence, 30(2):187–202.

Marzieh Mozafari, Reza Farahbakhsh, and Noel Crespí. 2019. A bert-based transfer learning approach for hate speech detection in online social media. In International Conference on Complex Networks and Their Applications, pages 928–940. Springer.

Yida Mu and Nikolaos Aletras. 2020. Identifying twitter users who repost unreliable news sources with linguistic information. PeerJ Computer Science, 6:e325.

Yida Mu, Pu Niu, and Nikolaos Aletras. 2022. Identifying and characterizing active citizens who refute misinformation in social media. In 14th ACM Web Science Conference 2022, page 401–410, New York, NY, USA. Association for Computing Machinery.

Fabio Poletto, Valerio Basile, Cristina Bosco, Viviana Patti, and Marco Antonio Stranisci. 2019. Annotating hate speech: Three schemes at comparison. In CLiC-it.

Laura Rieger, Chandan Singh, William Murdoch, and Bin Yu. 2020. Interpretations are useful: Penalizing explanations to align neural networks with prior knowledge. In Proceedings of the 37th International Conference on Machine Learning, volume 119 of Proceedings of Machine Learning Research, pages 8116–8126. PMLR.

Minho Ryu and K. Lee. 2020. Knowledge distillation for bert unsupervised domain adaptation. ArXiv, abs/2010.11478.

Ankan Saha and Vikas Sindhwani. 2012. Learning evolving and emerging topics in social media: A dynamic nmf approach with temporal regularization. In Proceedings of the Fifth ACM International Conference on Web Search and Data Mining, WSDM ’12, page 693–702, New York, NY, USA. Association for Computing Machinery.
Sheikh Muhammad Sarwar and Vanessa Murdock. 2022. Unsupervised domain adaptation for hate speech detection using a data augmentation approach. In Proceedings of the 16th International Conference on Web and Social Media.

Sofia Serrano and Noah A. Smith. 2019. Is attention interpretable? In Proceedings of the 57th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics, pages 2931–2951, Florence, Italy. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Avanti Shrikumar, Peyton Greenside, and Anshul Kundaje. 2017. Learning important features through propagating activation differences. In Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Machine Learning, volume 70 of Proceedings of Machine Learning Research, pages 3145–3153. PMLR.

Mukund Sundararajan, Ankur Taly, and Qi Qi Yan. 2017. Axiomatic attribution for deep networks. In Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Machine Learning, volume 70 of Proceedings of Machine Learning Research, pages 3319–3328. PMLR.

Steve Durairaj Swamy, Anupam Jamatia, and Björn Gambäck. 2019. Studying generalisability across abusive language detection datasets. In Proceedings of the 23rd Conference on Computational Natural Language Learning (CoNLL), pages 940–950, Hong Kong, China. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Eric Tzeng, Judy Hoffman, Kate Saenko, and Trevor Darrell. 2017. Adversarial discriminative domain adaptation. In Proceedings of the IEEE conference on computer vision and pattern recognition, pages 7167–7176.

Bertie Vidgen, Tristan Thrush, Zeerak Waseem, and Douwe Kiela. 2021. Learning from the worst: Dynamically generated datasets to improve online hate detection. In Proceedings of the 59th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics and the 11th International Joint Conference on Natural Language Processing (Volume 1: Long Papers), pages 1667–1682. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Zeerak Waseem and Dirk Hovy. 2016. Hateful symbols or hateful people? Predictive features for hate speech detection on Twitter. In Proceedings of the NAACL Student Research Workshop, pages 88–93, San Diego, California. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Michael Wiegand, Josef Ruppenhofer, and Thomas Kleinbauer. 2019. Detection of Abusive Language: the Problem of Biased Datasets. In Proceedings of the 2019 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics: Human Language Technologies, Volume 1 (Long and Short Papers), pages 602–608, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Thomas Wolf, Lysandre Debut, Victor Sanh, Julien Chaumond, Clement Delangue, Anthony Moi, Pierric Cistac, Tim Rault, Remi Louf, Morgan Funtowicz, Joe Davison, Sam Shleifer, Patrick von Platen, Clara Ma, Yacine Jernite, Julien Plu, Canwen Xu, Teven Le Scao, Sylvain Gugger, Mariama Drame, Quentin Lhoest, and Alexander Rush. 2020. Transformers: State-of-the-art natural language processing. In Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing: System Demonstrations, pages 38–45, Online. Association for Computational Linguistics.

Huihan Yao, Ying Chen, Qinyuan Ye, Xisen Jin, and Xiang Ren. 2021. Refining language models with compositional explanations. Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems, 34.

Yalan Ye, Ziwei Huang, Tingjie Pan, Jingjing Li, and Heng Tao Shen. 2021. Reducing bias to source samples for unsupervised domain adaptation. Neural Networks, 141:61–71.

Wenjie Yin and Arkaitz Zubiaga. 2021. Towards generalisable hate speech detection: a review on obstacles and solutions. PeerJ Computer Science, 7.

Andrea Zunino, Sarah Adel Bargal, Riccardo Volpi, Mehrnoosh Sameki, Jianming Zhang, Stan Sclaroff, Vittorio Murino, and Kate Saenko. 2021. Explainable deep classification models for domain generalization. In 2021 IEEE/CVF Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition Workshops (CVPRW), pages 3227–3236.

A Differences Across Datasets

The datasets HatEval (Basile et al., 2019) and Waseem (Waseem and Hovy, 2016) have been sampled from Twitter. HatEval has primarily been collected in the year 2018 using a combination of sampling strategies, including keyword-based sampling (with both neutral and derogatory words), collecting the history of identified perpetrators and monitoring the potential victims of hate. It mainly consists of hate against women and immigrants. In the case of Waseem, tweets are collected particularly using keyword-based sampling in or before 2016, with keywords that are likely to co-occur with hateful content. Wiegand et al. (2019) discuss the presence of a large amount of topic-bias in the dataset Waseem. Since this dataset is available as tweet-IDs, we observe that in the crawled dataset, many tweets flagged as racist are missing, and have most likely been deleted already. Thus, the majority of available hateful content in this dataset is directed against women. The topics discussed in these two datasets are also quite different.
We use the pre-trained BERT-base (Devlin et al., 2019) with hatebase.org AdamW optimizer with decoupled weight decay. We uploaded a newer version of this dataset currently. As such, we use an older version of the dataset. The authors have uploaded a newer version of this dataset currently.

For Hatebase.org, we lower the terms from hatebase.org and look for an exact match of a term in the source domain. For Pre-Def, we combine the curated list of identity terms provided by Liu and Avci (2019) and Kennedy et al. (2020) and penalize their attribution scores. We perform hyper-parameter tuning and model selection with early-stopping on a small amount of labeled target domain validation set $D_T^{val}$ using the macro-F1 score for the proposed approach as well as for all the baselines. The hyper-parameter $λ$, both for the proposed approach and Pre-Def, is selected from the range $λ ∈ \{0.01, 0.05, 0.1, 1.0, 10.0, 20.0, 30.0, 40.0, 50.0, 60.0\}$, using a random seed by tuning over $D_T^{val}$. We set the value of $M$ to 250 and $N$ to 750 for all our experiments.

C Terms Extracted

The full-list of penalized terms (BERT WordPieces) to across epochs for the examples listed in Section 4.2, is given below.

Waseem → HatEval

- Epoch 1: {college, sports, feminism, la, magnetic, used, unique, #ava, speech, #js, tr, ##cking, object, chu, result, ki, bus, ##is, adopt, referring, ##roids, handed, ##em, sh, ##omp, unconscious, anger, gamer, prove, xbox, tri, skill, judgment, tool, block, single, harassment, size, georgia, involved, ##ism, studying, voices, possible, gaming, pl, ##il, helped, ##ke, survey, equality}
- Epoch 2: {feminism, used, football, awesome, equal, ##cking, object, ##ification, interest, feminist, ##rra, scientist, ##al, ignorance, bodies, ##work, later, ##nk, troll, ##ss, based, adopt, ##cing, quality, sister, unconscious, criticisms, pro, notch, xbox, tri, unfair, rap, meanwhile, impression, single, harassment, bonus, georgia, constant, sex, ##ist, possible, click, competition, ##per, swedish, ##eral, november, write, eventually, equality}
- Epoch 3: {sham, anger, pull, used, focus, speech, ashley, object, interest, bringing, ##na, eye, ##nk, later, quality, ##roids, oppressive, rain, ##omp, statistics, nsw, content, notch, museum, unconscious, typically, tri, ##ol, unfair, writing, ##chan, georgia, constant, annie, ra, weights, click, ##il, furniture, helped, shopping, football, commentary, equality}
- Epoch 4: {minded, kat, used, equal, focus, ##hand, tr, ##cking, chu, interest, bringing,
Table 4: Effect of domain adaptation for the target on the source domain performance; Source-domain macro average F1 scores (mean±std-dev) are obtained after MLM training on the unlabeled target domain and penalizing the source specific terms while adapting the model to the target domain (present at the right hand side of the arrows) using Dom-spec. H : HatEval, V : Vidgen, W : Waseem. Van-FT: BERT model evaluated in-domain without MLM training on the target domain.

| Approaches       | HatEval       | Vidgen       | Waseem       | Mean       |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
|                  | H→V           | H→W          | V→H          | V→W        | W→H        | W→V        |
| BERT Van-FT      | 43.3±1.8      | 85.1±0.5     | 85.4±0.7     | 71.3       |
| Dom-spec (αVα)   | 42.4±2.5      | 42.0±0.1     | 84.0±0.9     | 85.1±0.7   | 83.8±0.8   | 70.3       |
| Dom-spec (DL)    | 41.7±3.7      | 40.5±0.4     | 83.9±0.7     | 85.1±0.7   | 81.1±2.7   | 69.1       |

Few of the extracted terms get repeated in subsequent epochs as a single epoch may not be sufficient to reduce the effect of a term and it may appear in the next epoch as well. Moreover, as the training progresses, the model may learn new patterns, and some extracted terms may reappear and disappear again due to the penalization.

Following is a non-hateful example in Waseem, wrongly classified by Van-MLM-FT, but correctly classified by the proposed approach (The darker the shades, the higher the attribution scores assigned):

Van-MLM-FT: Unfortunately you are in a sticky size my only problem is replacing my shoes has been a b*tch

Dom-spec (DL): Unfortunately you are in a sticky size my only problem is replacing my shoes has been a b*tch

Vidgen → Waseem

D In-domain Performance

Table 4 presents, as a reference, the in-domain macro-F1 scores using BERT supervised fine-tuning (Van-FT) without the MLM training on the target domain. In this case, the model is tuned over...
the in-domain validation set. The HatEval dataset is part of a shared task and involves a challenging test set with low in-domain performance. Table 4 displays the source-domain scores obtained when source-specific terms are penalized, while adapting to the target domain using Dom-spec, where the model is tuned over the target domain validation set. The drop in in-domain performance is expected as Dom-spec is aimed at making the model best-suited to the target domain. However, the overall performance with Dom-spec is comparable to that of BERT Van-FT.

E List of Identity Terms for Pre-Def

The combined list of pre-defined curated identity terms from Liu and Avci (2019) and Kennedy et al. (2020) are given below:

\{lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, cis, queer, lgbt, lgbtq, straight, heterosexual, male, female, non-binary, african, african american, european, hispanic, latino, latina, latinx, canadian, american, asian, indian middle eastern, chinese, japanese, christian, buddhist, catholic, protestant, sikh, taoist, old, older, young, younger, teenage, millenial, middle aged, elderly, blind, deaf, paralyzed, muslim, jew, jews, white, islam, blacks, muslims, women, whites, gay, black, democrat, islamic, allah, jewish, lesbian, transgender, race, brown, woman, mexican, religion, homosexual, homosexuality, africans\}

F Computational Efficiency

The per-epoch training time for Dom-spec, while performing adaptation of different source domain models, are presented in Table 5. Dom-spec ($\alpha \nabla \alpha$) takes less than double the time taken by Van-MLM-FT to train, and Dom-spec (DL) takes roughly 4.5 times of the training time taken by Van-MLM-FT.

| Approaches            | HatEval | Vidgen | Waseem |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|--------|
| BERT Van-MLM-FT       | 1 m 20 s| 3 m 49 s| 2 m 10 s|
| Dom-spec ($\alpha \nabla \alpha$) | 2 m 30 s| 7 m | 3 m 17 s|
| Dom-spec (DL)         | 4 m     | 18 m   | 8 m 16 s|

Table 5: Per epoch training time on different source domains.