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Preparing the Dictionnaire Universel for Automatic Enrichment

Pedro Javier ORTIZ SUAREZ^{1,2}, Laurent ROMARY¹ Benoît SAGOT¹

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¹Inria, Paris, France

²Sorbonne Université, Paris, France

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Abstract

Abstract

The Dictionnaire Universel (DU) is an encyclopaedic dictionary originally written by Antoine Furetière around 1676-78, later revised and improved by the Protestant jurist Henri Basnage de Beauval who expanded, corrected and included terms of arts, crafts and sciences, into the Dictionnaire. The aim of the BASNUM project is to digitize the DU in its second edition rewritten by Basnage de Beauval, to analyse it with computational methods in order to better assess the importance of this work for the evolution of sciences and mentalities in the 18th century, and to contribute to the contemporary movement for creating innovative and data-driven computational methods for text digitization, encoding and analysis. Based on the experience acquired within the research group, an enrichment workflow based upon a series of Natural Language Processing processes is being set up to be applied to Basnage's work. This includes, among others, automatic identification of the dictionary structure (macro-, meso- and microstructure), named-entity recognition (in particular persons and locations), classification of dictionary entries, detection and study of polysemy markers, tracking and classification of quotation use (bibliographic references), scoring semantic similarity between the DU and other dictionaries. The main challenges being the lack of available annotated data in order to train machine learning models, decreased accuracy when using modern pre-trained models due to the differences between present-day and 18th century French, and even unreliable or low quality OCRisation. The paper describes methods that are useful to tackle these issues in order to prepare the the DU for automatic enrichment going beyond what current available tools like Grobid-dictionaries can do, thanks to the advent of deep learning NLP models. The paper also describes how these methods could be applied to other dictionaries or even other types of ancient texts.

Introduction

The Dictionnaire Universel

- In 1635, the *Académie française* began producing a dictionary of the French language [2]. *Antoine Furetière* got involved in the production of the first edition.
- Furetière grew frustrated with the slow progress of the *Académie*. He began to work on his own dictionary, *The Dictionnaire universel (DU)* around 1676-78 [7].
- The second edition (1701) of the *DU* was improved by *Henri Basnage de Beauval* who virtually turned the *DU* into an encyclopaedia [1][3].



The **BasNum** Project

The aim of **BasNum** is to digitize the *DU*, in the 1701 version rewritten by Basnage de Beauval, to analyse it with computational methods in order to better assess the importance of this work for the evolution of sciences and mentalities in the 18th century, and to contribute to the contemporary movement for creating innovative and data-driven computational methods for text digitization, encoding and analysis.

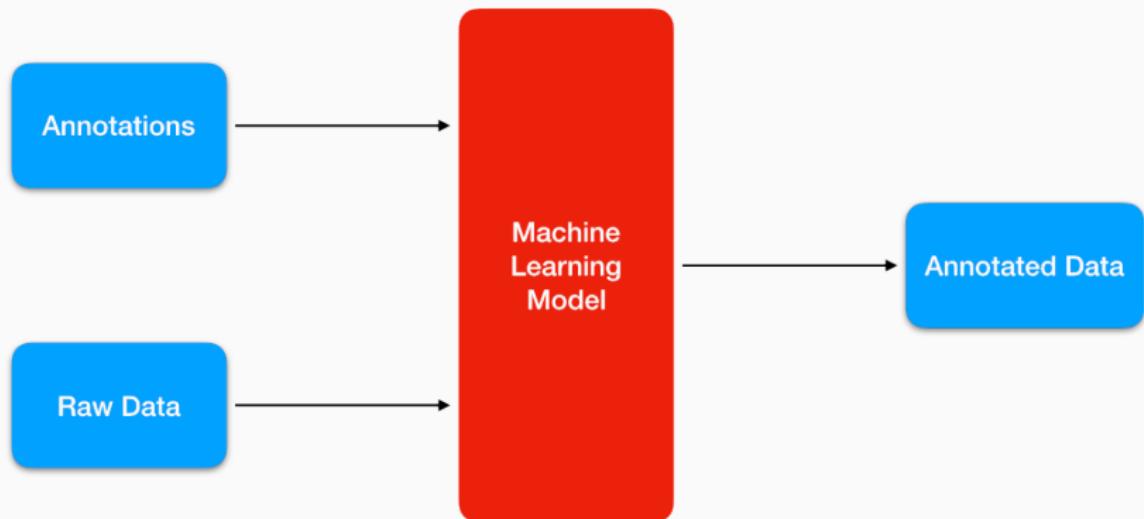


Automatic Enrichment of Ancient Dictionaries

At *Inria* we will develop methods for the automatic structuring of lexicographical entries from the digitized version of Basnage's *DU*, we will also enrich the contents of this dictionary using **machine learning** methods. There are two main types of machine learning models:

- **Statistical methods:** We have some existing tools.
- **Neural methods:** We want to build our own tools.

Machine Learning



Optical Character Recognition

Transkribus

- Well established tool.
- Uses **statistical methods**.
- Has an user interface.
- Generates PDF's.
- Does not preserve typographical features.
- Free but not Open Source.
- Transkribus infrastructure has to be used.

Kraken

- Not so well established.
- Uses **neural methods**.
- User interface in development.
- Does not generate PDF's.
- Preserves Typographical features.
- Free and Open Source.
- We can use our own infrastructure.

GROBID-Dictionaries

GROBID-Dictionaries [4][5] is a machine learning library using **statistical methods** for structuring digitised lexical resources and entry-based documents with encyclopedic or bibliographic content. It allows the parsing, extraction and structuring of text information in such resources.

GROBID-Dictionaries takes as input lexical resources digitised in PDF format and generates a TEI-encoded hierarchy of the different recognised text structures.

R A Q U E T T E. s. f. Espece de pallette pour jouer à la paume, & au volant. Elle est faite d'un treillis de cordes de boyaux (dont les unes s'appellent *montans*, & les autres *travers*) fort tendus sur un tour de bois qui a un manche de mediocre longueur. Un de ses côtés s'appelle les *droits*, & l'autre les *nœuds*. Pasquier a remarqué qu'anciennement on ne jouoit point à la paume avec des *raquettes*: c'étoit avec la paume de la main; & de là il conjecture qu'est venu le nom de jeu de *panme*. On n'avoit inventé les *raquettes* qu'un peu avant le temps de Pasquier, à ce qu'il dit.

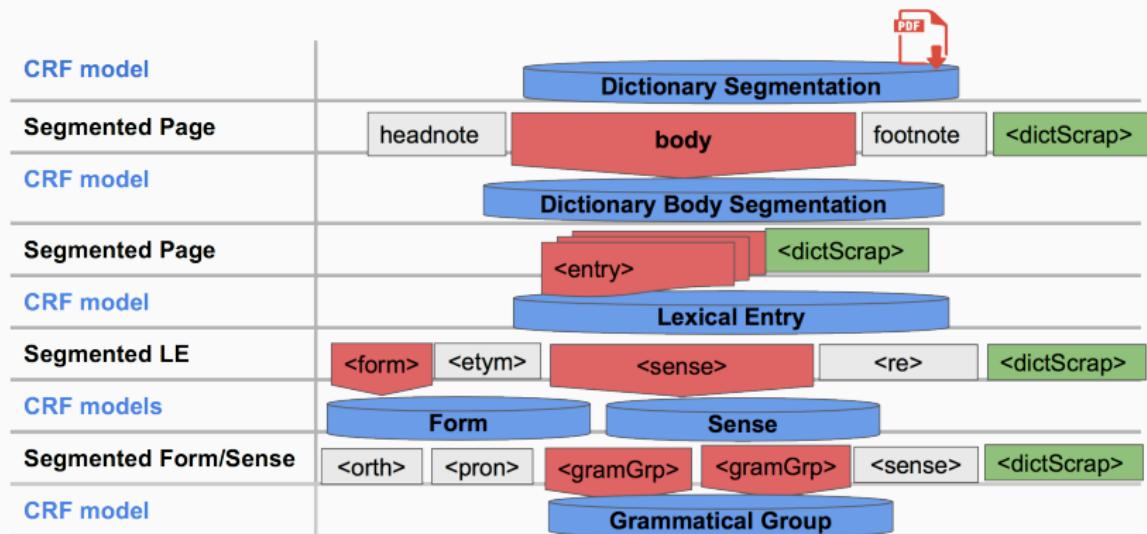
Menage derive ce mot de *retiquetta*, diminutif de *retis*, *reticus* & *reticulum*.

On dit proverbialement pour se moquer d'un homme qui se vante de plusieurs choses qu'il n'a pas faites, C'est un grand caisseur de *raquettes*.

R A Q U E T T E, se dit aussi d'une certaine machine que les Sauvages de Canada attachent à leurs pieds pour marcher plus commodément sur la neige, & qui est faite à-peu-près en forme de *raquette* à jouer.

R A Q U E T T E, se dit aussi d'une espece de figuier d'Inde qui croît aux Iles Antilles: c'est cette espece que Mr. Tournefort appelle *opuntia vulgo herbariorum*, J. BAUH. Ses feuilles sont épaisses, longues, quelquefois larges comme une *raquette*, d'où vient que les François lui ont donné ce nom. Voyez FIGUIER D'INDE.

GROBID-Dictionaries



GROBID-Dictionaries

```
<div n="RAQ">
  <entry xml:lang="fre" xml:id="Raquette">
    <sense><form><orth rendition="#uc">raquette.</orth><gramGrp><pos expand="Substantif">s.</pos>
    <gen expand="Feminin">f.</gen></gramGrp></form> <def>Espece de palette pour jouer
    à la paume, &amp; au volant.</def> <note>Elle est faite d'un treillis de
    cordes de boyaux édant les unes s'appellent montans
    &amp; les autres travers J fort tendues sur un tour de bois
    qui a un manche de mediocre longueur.</note> <xr corresp="#droits #noeuds">Un de ses côtés
    s'appelle les droits, &amp; l'autre les noeuds</xr>. <etym><bibl><author ref="#Pasquier_ISN000000010907010">Pasquier</author></bibl>
    a remarqué qu'anciennement on ne jouoit point à la
    paume avec des raquettes : c'étoit avec la paume de la
    main , &amp; de là il conjecture qu'est venu le nom de jeu
    de pame.</etym> <note>On n'avoit inventé les raquettes qu'un peu
    avant le temps de <bibl><author ref="#Pasquier_ISN000000010907010">Pasquier</author></bibl>, à ce qu'il dit.</note>

    <etym><bibl><author ref="#Men_ISN00000000880815971">Menage</author></bibl> derive ce mot de
    <lang rendition="#1" xml:lang="lat">retiquetta</lang>, diminutif de retis,
    reticus &amp; reticulum.</etym>
  </sense>

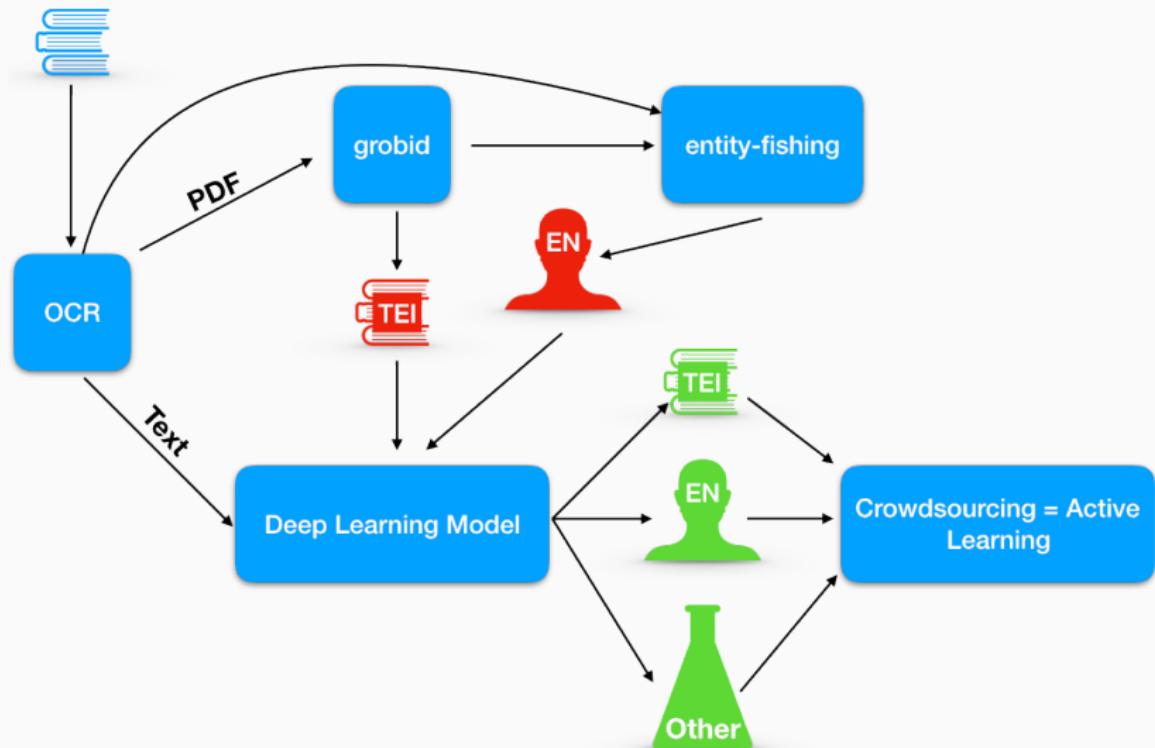
  <sense><usg>On dit proverbialement</usg> <gloss>pour se moquer d'un homme qui
  se vante de plusieurs choses qu'il n'a pas faites,</gloss> <seg type="Proverbe">C'est
  un grand casseur de raquettes.</seg></sense>

  <sense><form><orth rendition="#sc">Raquette,</orth></form> <def>se dit aussi d'une certaine machine que
  les Sauvages de Canada attachent à leurs pieds pour
  marcher plus commodément sur la neige, &amp; qui est
  faite à-peu-près en forme de raquette à jouer.</def></sense>

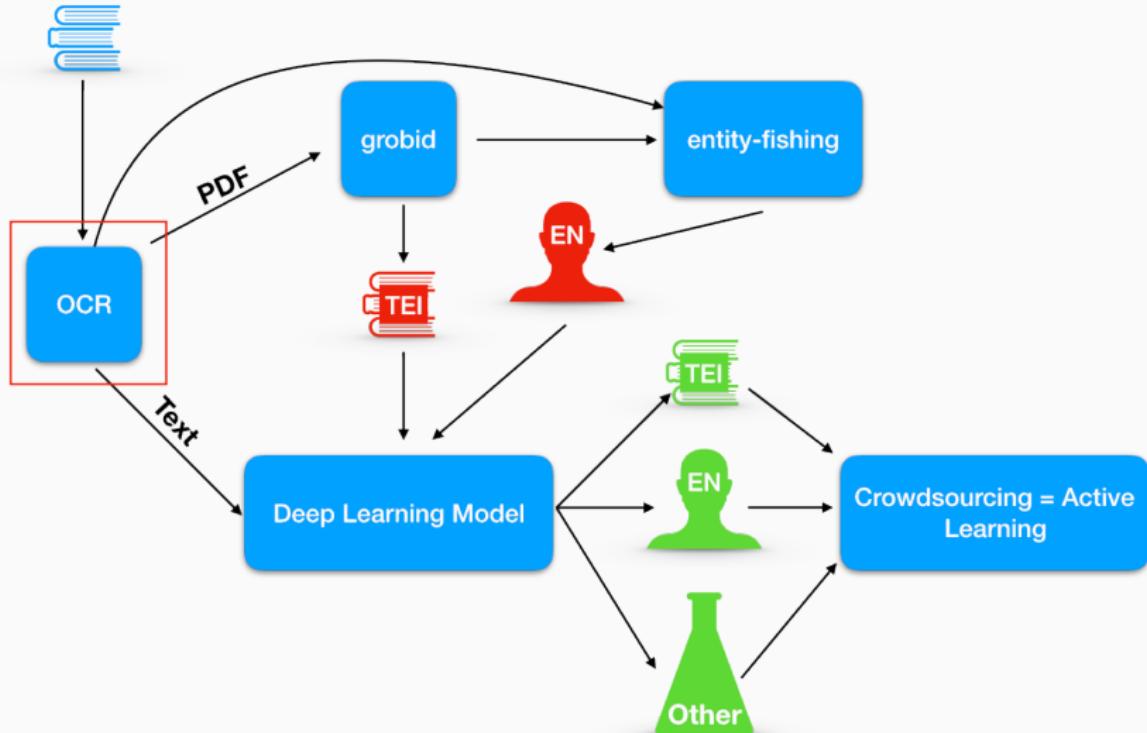
  <sense><form><orth rendition="#sc">Raquette,</orth></form> <def>se dit aussi d'une espece de figuier d'Inde
  qui croît aux îles Antilles :</def> <note>c'est cette espece que
  Mr. Tournefort appelle opuntia vulg herbariorum,
  J. Bauh. Ses feuilles sont épaisses, longues, quel-
  quefois larges comme une raquette, d'où vient que les
  François lui ont donné ce nom.</note> <xr>Voyez <ref corresp="#Ficuier">Ficuier
  d'Inde.</ref></xr></sense>
  </entry>
</div>
```

Workflow

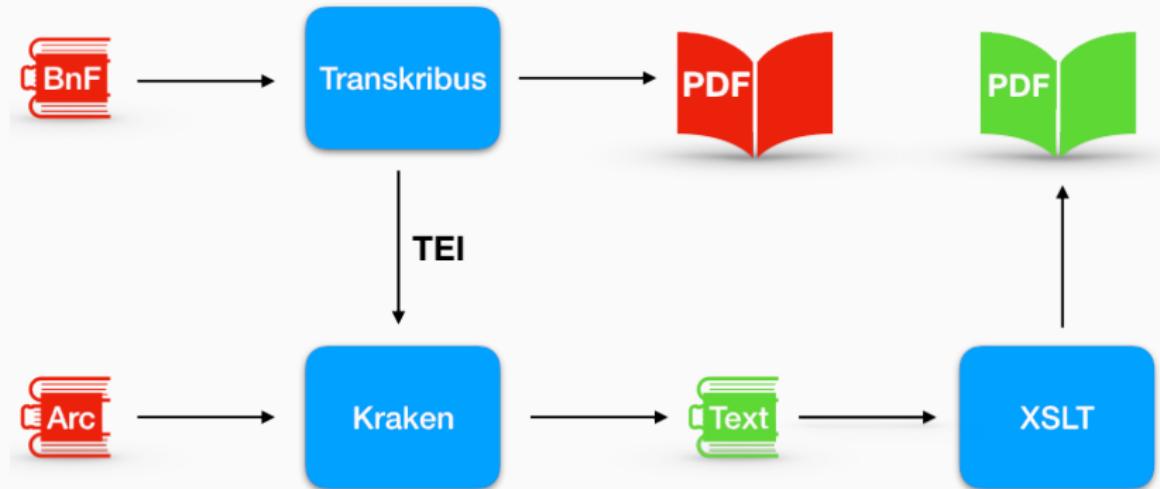
Workflow



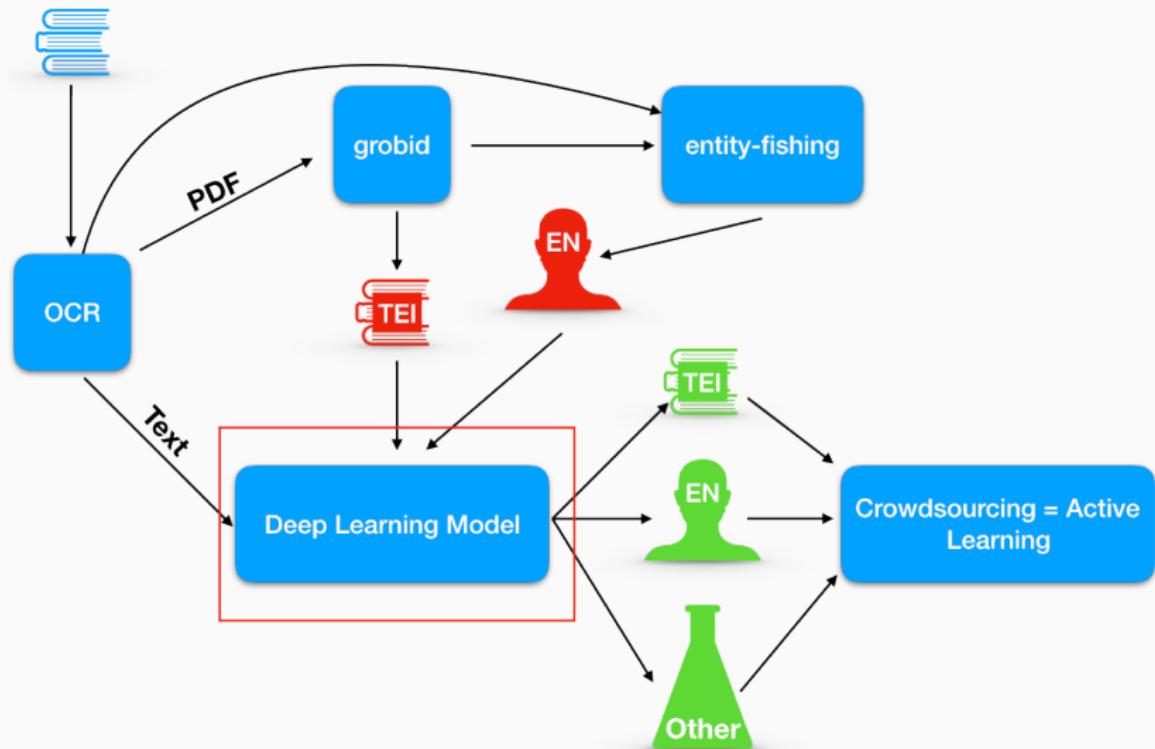
Workflow



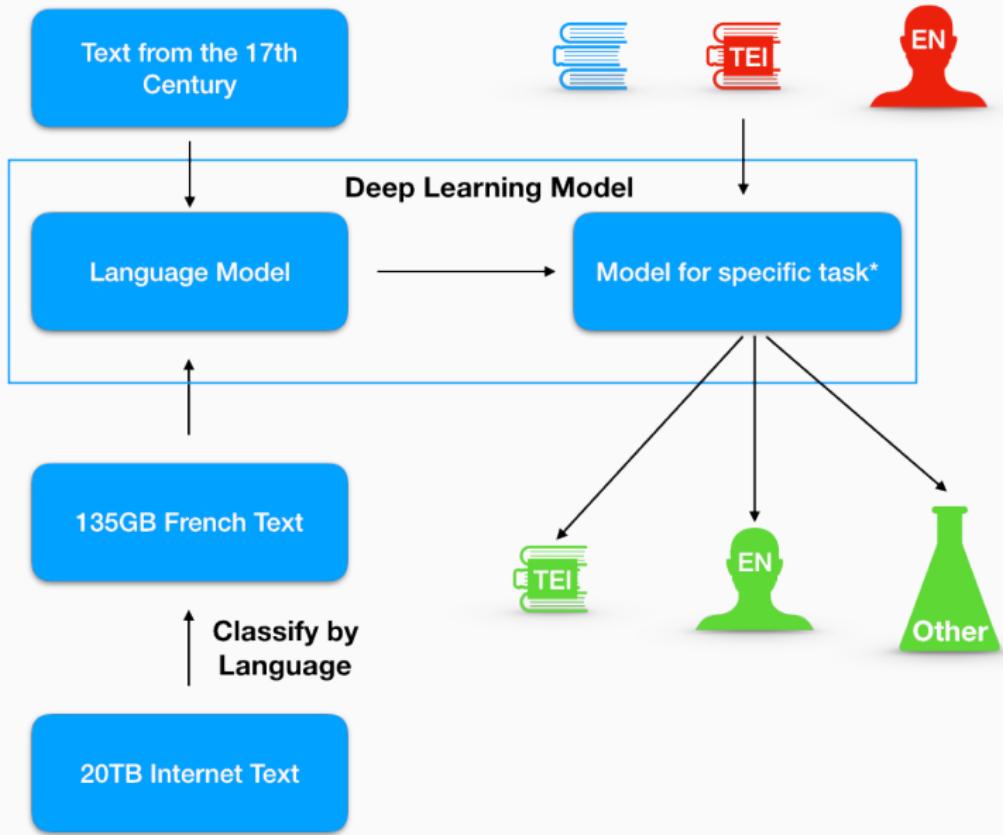
OCR Model



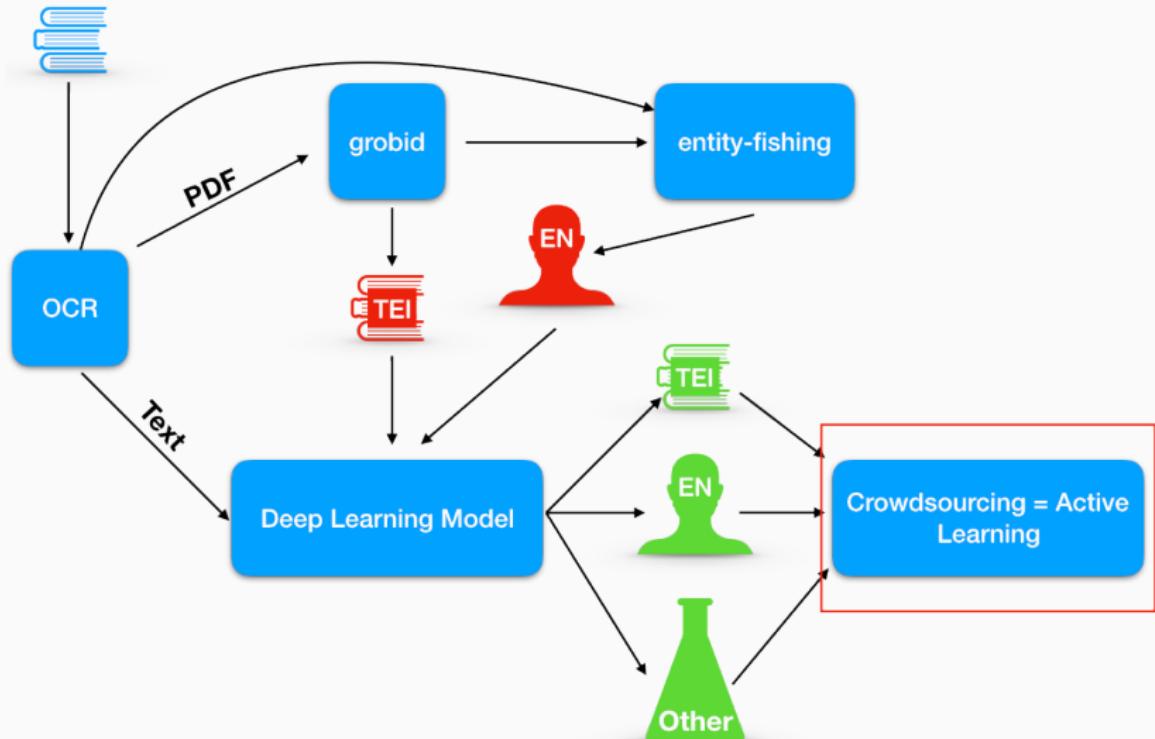
Workflow



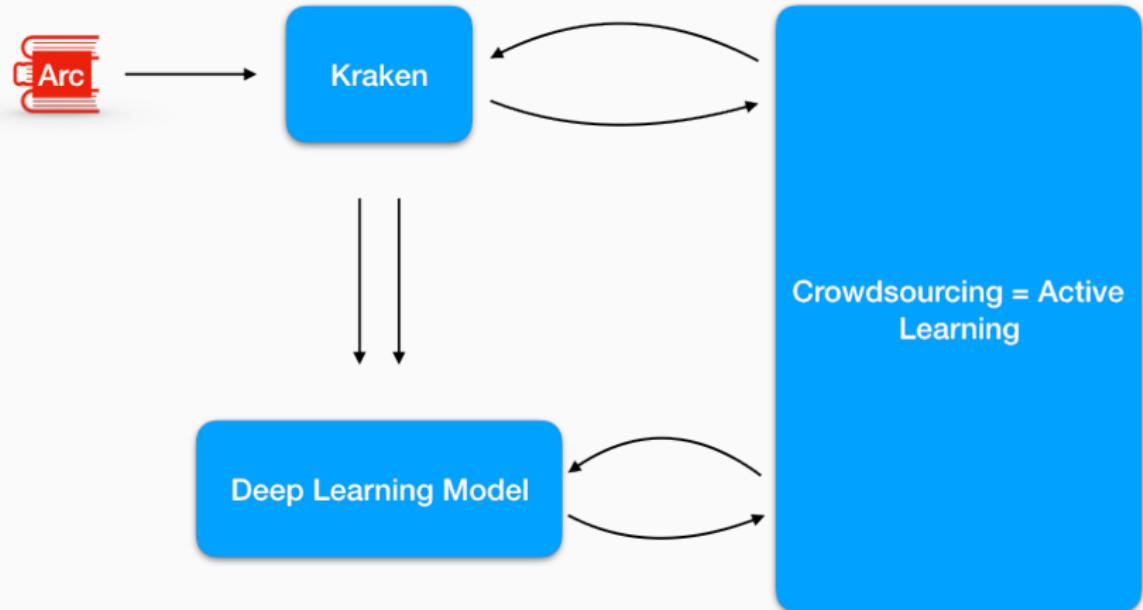
Deep Learning Model



Workflow



Crowdsourcing Model



Preparing the Dictionnaire Universel for Automatic Enrichment

Difficulties

- Annotate intelligently for not so intelligent models!
At the beginning, **only** entries for the **letter C** were transcribed.
Our OCR engine learned that every entry starts with C.
Randomise your annotations!
- TEI is flexible
TEI is flexible to some extend, **agree** on how to annotate, as multiple annotations schemes reduce the precision of the model.
- Get a lot of text in the target language [6]
Then get a lot of data of the target period or about the target topic.

Thank you!

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