Pretraining and Finetuning

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Logistics

- Please submit midterm course eval:
  `https://nyu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6X7nHX4HenyFwN0`
- HW3 will be out next Monday
- Project: start early! Proposal due in two weeks.

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Representation learning

What are good representations?

- Enable a notion of distance over text (word embeddings)
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Examples: negative the food is good but doesn't worth an hour wait

- Simple features (e.g. BoW) require complex models.
- Good features only need simple models (e.g. linear classifier) .

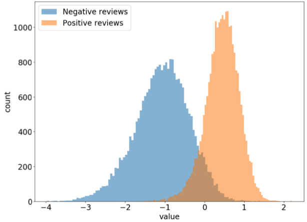

Figure: Sentiment neuron [Radford et al., 2017]

Representation learning

What can we do with good representations:

- Learning with small data: fine-tuning learned representations
- Transfer learning: one model/representation for many tasks
- Metric learning: get a similarity metric for free

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How to obtain such a representation:

- Training a neural network on any task gives us a representation good for *that task*.
- But on which task can we learn good *general* representations?

What can we learn from word guessing?

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- The boy is ________ because he lost his keys. *commonsense*
- John took 100 bucks to Vegas. He won 50 and then lost 100. Now he only has ________ to go home.

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Word guessing entails many tasks related to language understanding!

🤔 But aren't we already doing this in skip-gram / CBOW?

Self-supervised learning

Key idea: predict parts of the input from the rest

- No supervision is needed—both input and output are from the raw data.
- Easy to scale—only need unlabeled data.
- Learned representation is general—useful for many tasks.

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Approach:

- **Pretrain**: train a model using self-supervised learning objectives on large data.
- **Finetune**: update part or all of the parameters of the pretrained model (which provides an initialization) on labeled data of a downstream task.

A bit of history

- Pretrain an RNN model on unlabeled data and finetune on supervised tasks [Dai et al., 2015] [ULMFiT; Howard et al., 2018]
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- Pretrain a Transformer model and finetune on supervised tasks
  - GPT [Radford et al., 2018], BERT [Devlin et al., 2018]
- Scale the pretrained model to larger sizes
  - GPT-2 (1.5B), T5 (11B), GPT-3 (175B), PaLM (540B)
  - We will talk about 100B+ models in the third module

Types of pretrained models

- **Encoder models**, e.g., BERT
  - Encode text into vector representations that can be used for downstream classification tasks

Current pretrained models are all transformer based.

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  - Encode text into vector representations that can be used for downstream classification tasks
- **Encoder-decoder models**, e.g., T5
  - Encode input text into vector representations and generate text conditioned on the input
- **Decoder models**, e.g., GPT-2
  - Read in text (prefix) and continue to generate text

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Encoder models

An encoder takes a sequence of tokens and output their *contextualized* representations:

$$h_1, \ldots, h_n = \mathrm{Encoder}(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$$

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How do we train an $\mathrm{Encoder}$?

- Use any supervised task: $y = f(h_1, \ldots, h_n)$
- Use self-supervised learning: predict a word from its context

Masked language modeling

? language processing is ?

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Learning objective (MLE):

$$\max \sum_{x \in \mathcal{D}, i \sim p_{\text{mask}}} \log p(x_i \mid x_{-i}; \theta)$$

- x: a sequence of tokens sampled from a corpus $\mathcal{D}$
  natural language processing is fun
- p_{mask}: mask generator
  Sample two positions uniformly at random, e.g., 1 and 5
- x_{-i}: noisy version fo x where x_i is corrupted
  [MASK] language processing is [MASK]

BERT: objective

- **Masked language modeling**:
  - Randomly sample 15% tokens as prediction targets
  - Replace the target tokens by `[MASK]` or a random token, or leave it unchanged

    cats are cute $\rightarrow$ cats `[MASK]`/is/are cute
  - Later work has shown that just use `[MASK]` is sufficient

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    cats are cute $\rightarrow$ cats `[MASK]`/is/are cute
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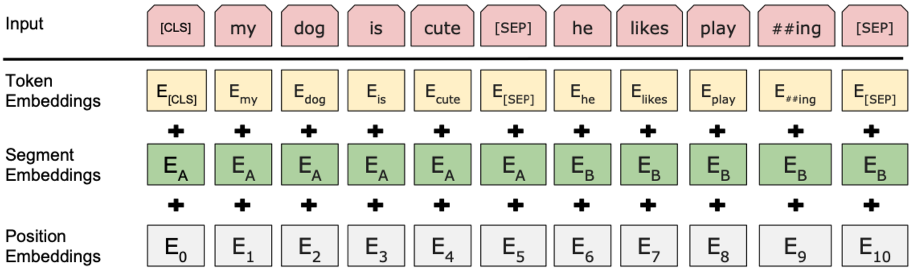
- **Next sentence prediction**: predict whether a pair of sentences are consecutive

$$\max \sum_{x \sim \mathcal{D}, x_n \sim p_{\text{next}}} \log p(y \mid x, x_n; \theta)$$

  - x_n: either the sentence following x or a randomly sampled sentence
  - y: binary label of whether x_n follows x
  - Later work has shown that this objective is not necessary

BERT: architecture



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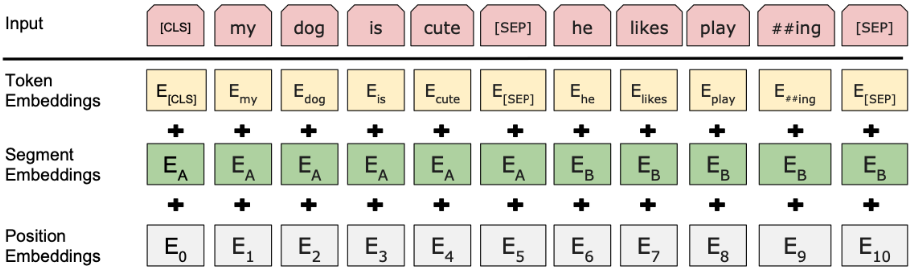

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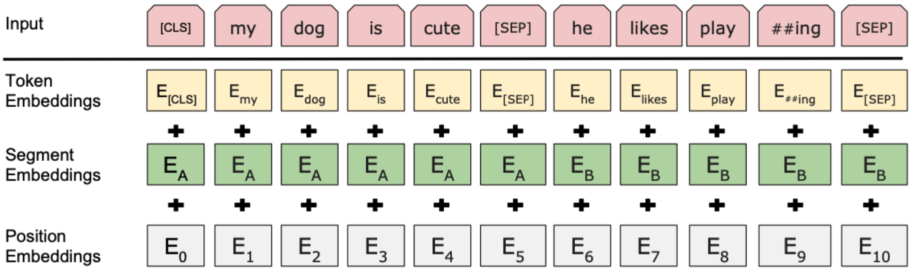

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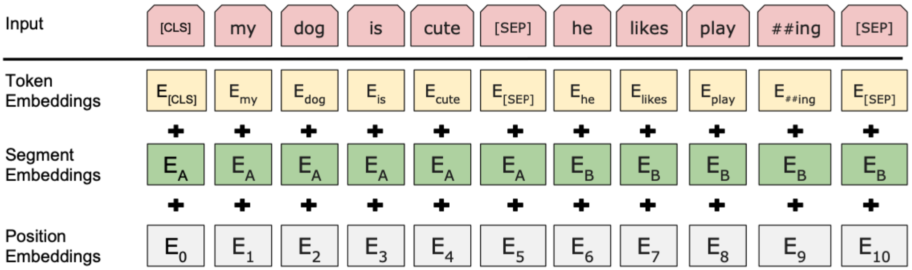

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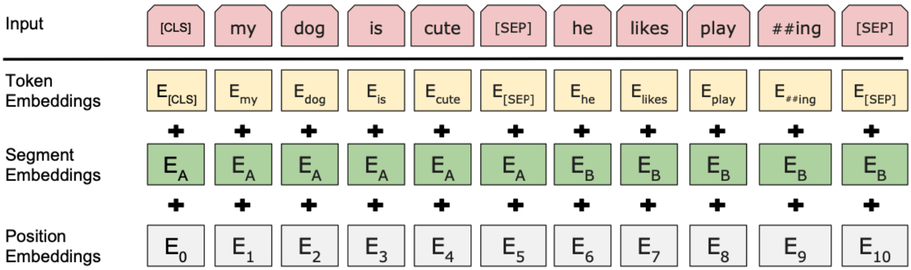

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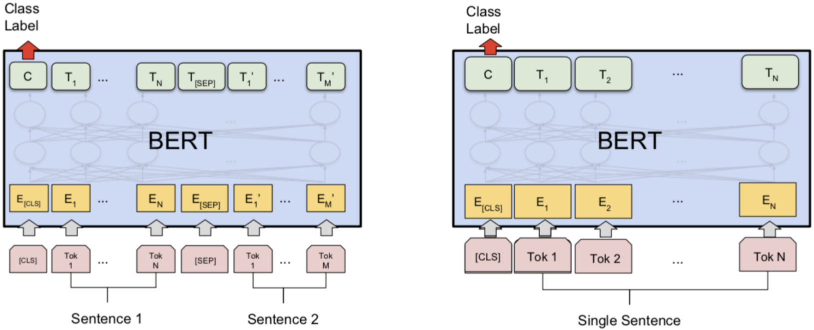
- `[CLS]`: first token of all sequences; used for next sentence prediction
- Distinguish two sentences in a pair: `[SEP]` and segment embedding
- Learned position embedding
- 12 (base; 110M params) or 24 (large; 340M params) layer Transformer

Finetuning BERT

Classification tasks: Add a linear layer (randomly initialized) on top of the `[CLS]` embedding

$$p(y \mid x) = \mathrm{softmax}(W h_{\texttt{[CLS]}})$$



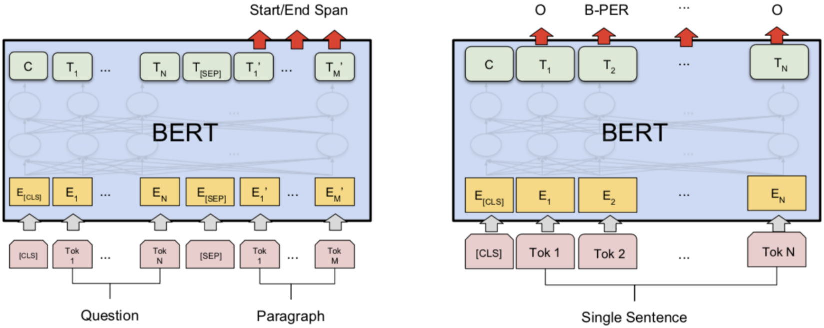
(a) Sentence Pair Classification Tasks: MNLI, QQP, QNLI, STS-B, MRPC, RTE, SWAG

(b) Single Sentence Classification Tasks: SST-2, CoLA

Finetuning BERT

Sequence labeling tasks: Add linear layers (randomly initialized) on top of every token

$$p(y_i \mid x) = \mathrm{softmax}(Wh_i)$$



(c) Question Answering Tasks: SQuAD v1.1

(d) Single Sentence Tagging Tasks: CoNLL-2003 NER

Finetuning BERT

- Finetune all parameters (both the newly added layer and the pretrained weights)
- Use a small learning rate (e.g., 1e-5)
- Train for a small number of epochs (e.g, 3 epochs)
- Led to SOTA results on many NLU tasks
- 🤔 How to generate text from BERT?

Encoder-decoder models

An encoder-decoder model encodes input text to a sequence of contextualized representations, and decodes a sequence of tokens autoregressively.

$$
\begin{aligned}
h_1, \ldots, h_n &= \mathrm{Encoder}(x_1, \ldots, x_n) \\
s_1, \ldots, s_m &= \mathrm{Decoder}(y_0, \ldots, y_{m-1}, h_1, \ldots, h_n) \\
p(y_i \mid x, y_{<i}) &= \mathrm{softmax}(W s_i)
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$$

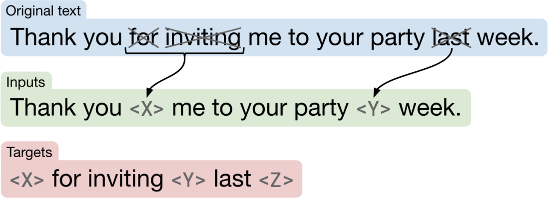
How do we train the encoder-decoder?

- Use any supervised task, e.g., machine translation
- Use self-supervised learning: predict text spans from their context

🤔 How to train an encoder-decoder model using the BERT objective?

Masked language modeling using an encoder-decoder

Input: text with corrupted spans
Output: recovered spans

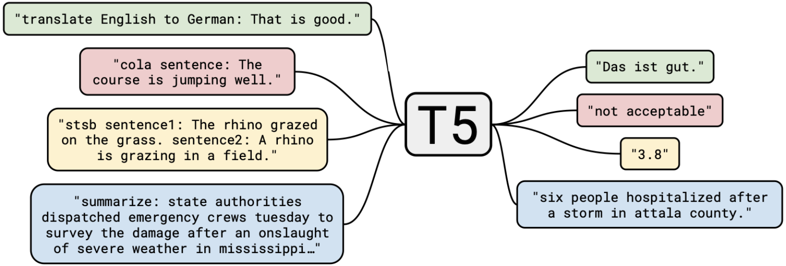


Compare with encoder-only models:

- Encoder: predict single tokens based on encoder representation
- Encoder-decoder: predict a sequence of tokens (flexibility in objective design)

T5: objective

- First train on unlabele data by **masked language modeling**
  - Predict corrupted spans as a sequence
- Then continue training by **supervised multitask learning**
  - Formulate tasks as text-to-text format using a prefix to denote the task
  - Mixing examples from different datasets when constructing batches



- Jointly training with the two objectives works slightly worse

T5: finetune

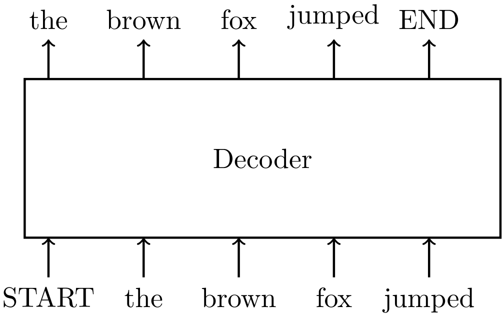
- Formulate the task in text-to-text format
- Fine-tune all parameters (similar to BERT fine-tuning)
- Advantages over encoder models: unified modeling of many different tasks including text generation

Decoder-only models

A decoder-only model predicts the next token given the prefix autoregressively.

$$s_1, \ldots, s_m = \mathrm{Decoder}(y_0, \ldots, y_{m-1}, h_1, \ldots, h_n)$$
$$p(y_i \mid y_{<i}) = \mathrm{softmax}(Ws_i)$$

(A prefix of y can be the input.)



(more on language models later)

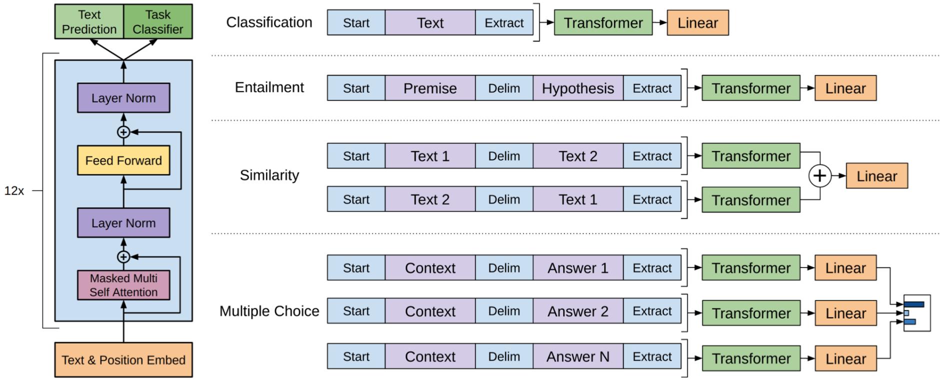
Generative Pretraining (GPT)

- **Model**: 12 layer decoder-only transformer
- **Objective**: next word prediction

$$\max \sum_{y \in \mathcal{D}} \sum_i \log p(y_i \mid y_{<i})$$

- **Finetuning**: auxiliary LM objective $L_{\text{task}} + \lambda L_{\text{LM}}$ (next word prediction on labeled task data)

Generative Pretraining (GPT): task-specific finetuning



- Single input: linear on top of `extract`
- Multiple input: process each input separately then aggregate

Ablation studies of GPT

Architecture, pretraining, finetuning: which is critical?

Method	Avg. Score	CoLA (mc)	SST2 (acc)	MRPC (F1)	STSB (pc)	QQP (F1)	MNLI (acc)	QNLI (acc)	RTE (acc)
Transformer w/ aux LM (full)	74.7	45.4	91.3	82.3	82.0	**70.3**	**81.8**	**88.1**	**56.0**
Transformer w/o pre-training	59.9	18.9	84.0	79.4	30.9	65.5	75.7	71.2	53.8
Transformer w/o aux LM	**75.0**	**47.9**	**92.0**	**84.9**	**83.2**	69.8	81.1	86.9	54.4
LSTM w/ aux LM	69.1	30.3	90.5	83.2	71.8	68.1	73.7	81.1	54.6

- Auxiliary objective only helps on larger datasets (MNLI, QQP)
- Pretrained transformer $>$ pretrained LSTM (single layer) $>$ non-pretrained transformer

Compare with BERT

System	MNLI-(m/mm)	QQP	QNLI	SST-2	CoLA	STS-B	MRPC	RTE	**Average**
	392k	363k	108k	67k	8.5k	5.7k	3.5k	2.5k	-
Pre-OpenAI SOTA	80.6/80.1	66.1	82.3	93.2	35.0	81.0	86.0	61.7	74.0
BiLSTM+ELMo+Attn	76.4/76.1	64.8	79.8	90.4	36.0	73.3	84.9	56.8	71.0
OpenAI GPT	82.1/81.4	70.3	87.4	91.3	45.4	80.0	82.3	56.0	75.1
$\text{BERT}_{\text{BASE}}$	84.6/83.4	71.2	90.5	93.5	52.1	85.8	88.9	66.4	79.6
$\text{BERT}_{\text{LARGE}}$	**86.7/85.9**	**72.1**	**92.7**	**94.9**	**60.5**	**86.5**	**89.3**	**70.1**	**82.1**

Table 1: GLUE Test results, scored by the evaluation server (https://gluebenchmark.com/leaderboard). The number below each task denotes the number of training examples. The "Average" column is slightly different than the official GLUE score, since we exclude the problematic WNLI set.[8] BERT and OpenAI GPT are single-model, single task. F1 scores are reported for QQP and MRPC, Spearman correlations are reported for STS-B, and accuracy scores are reported for the other tasks. We exclude entries that use BERT as one of their components.

Medium-sized encoder models tend to work better than decoder-only models when finetuned

Zero-shot behaviors

Key insight: if the model has learned to understand language through predicting next words, it should be able to perform these tasks *without finetuning*

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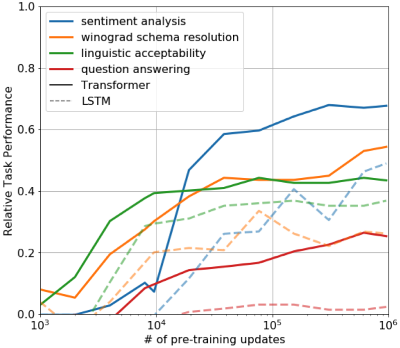

Heuristics for zero-shot prediction:

- Sentiment classification: [example] + very + {positive, negative} *prompting*
- Linguistic acceptability: thresholding on log probabilities
- Multiple choice: predicting the answer with the highest log probabilities

Learning dynamics: zero-shot performance increases during pretraining

What are these models trained on?

Both quantity and quality are important

- Wikipedia: encyclopedia articles (clean, single domain)
- Toronto Books Corpus: e-books (diverse domain)
- WebText (40GB): content submitted to Reddit with a vote ≥ 3 (diverse, bias)
- CommonCrawl (20TB): scraped HTML with markers removed (diverse, large, noisy, bias)
  - A cleaned version: C4 (750GB)

Active research area: What data is good for pretraining?

Summary

Lots of learning happens from just observing the world (data).

- Self-supervised learning: benefits from large data and compute
  - Basic: predict parts from other parts based on the structure of data (works beyond text)
  - Advanced: design hard negatives to improve efficiency
- Finetuning: adapt pretrained models to downstream tasks on a small amount of labeled data