CS388: Natural Language Processing

Lecture 22:
Question
Answering 2

Greg Durrett
Recall: SQuAD

- Single-document, single-sentence question-answering task where the answer is always a substring of the passage
- Predict start and end indices of the answer in the passage
Recall: Bidirectional Attention Flow

Each passage word now “knows about” the query
Recall: QA with BERT

What was Marie Curie the first female recipient of? [SEP] One of the most famous people born in Warsaw was Marie ...

- Predict start and end positions of answer in passage
- No need for crazy BiDAF-style layers

Devlin et al. (2019)
Recall: SQuAD SOTA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>EM</th>
<th>F1</th>
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- Performance is very saturated
- Harder QA settings are needed
This Lecture

- Problems in QA, especially related to answer type overfitting
- Retrieval-based QA / multi-hop QA
- New QA frontiers
Problems in QA
Adversarial SQuAD

- SQuAD questions are often easy: “what was she the recipient of?” passage: “…recipient of Nobel Prize…”

Jia and Liang (2017)
Adversarial SQuAD

What was Marie Curie the first female recipient of? [SEP] ... first female recipient of the Nobel Prize ...

- BERT easily learns surface-level correspondences like this with self-attention
SQuAD questions are often easy: “what was she the recipient of?” passage: “...recipient of Nobel Prize...”

Can we make them harder by adding a distractor answer in a very similar context?

Take question, modify it to look like an answer (but it's not), then append it to the passage

Adversarial SQuAD

- **AddSent**
  - **What city did Tesla move to in 1880?**
    - (Step 1) Mutate question
    - (Step 2) Generate fake answer
  - **What city did Tadakatsu move to in 1881?**
    - (Step 3) Convert into statement
    - **Tadakatsu moved the city of Chicago to in 1881.**
    - (Step 4) Fix errors with crowdworkers, verify resulting sentences with other crowdworkers

Adversary Adds: **Tadakatsu moved to the city of Chicago in 1881.**
Model Predicts: **Chicago**

Jia and Liang (2017)
Adversarial SQuAD

**Article:** Super Bowl 50

**Paragraph:** “Peyton Manning became the first quarterback ever to lead two different teams to multiple Super Bowls. He is also the oldest quarterback ever to play in a Super Bowl at age 39. The past record was held by John Elway, who led the Broncos to victory in Super Bowl XXXIII at age 38 and is currently Denver’s Executive Vice President of Football Operations and General Manager. Quarterback Jeff Dean had jersey number 37 in Champ Bowl XXXIV.”

**Question:** “What is the name of the quarterback who was 38 in Super Bowl XXXIII?”

**Original Prediction:** John Elway

**Prediction under adversary:** Jeff Dean

- Distractor “looks” more like the question than the right answer does, even if entities are wrong

Jia and Liang (2017)
Weakness to Adversaries

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<td>SEDT-E</td>
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<td>BiDAF-E</td>
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- Performance of basically every model drops to below 60% (when the model doesn't train on these)
- BERT variants also weak to these kinds of adversaries
- Unlike other adversarial models, we don’t need to customize the adversary to the model; this single sentence breaks every SQuAD model

Jia and Liang (2017)
Universal Adversarial “Triggers”

Input (underline = correct span, red = trigger, underline = target span)

Question: Why did he walk?  
For exercise, Tesla walked between 8 to 10 miles per day. He squished his toes one hundred times for each foot every night, saying that it stimulated his brain cells. why how because to kill american people.

Question: Why did the university see a drop in applicants?  
In the early 1950s, student applications declined as a result of increasing crime and poverty in the Hyde Park neighborhood. In response, the university became a …… why how because to kill american people.

Similar to Jia and Liang, but instead add the same adversary to every passage

Adding “why how because to kill american people” causes SQuAD models to return this answer 10-50% of the time when given a “why” question

Similar attacks on other question types like “who”

Wallace et al. (2019)
How to fix QA?

- Better models?
  - But a model trained on weak data will often still be weak to adversaries
  - Training on Jia+Liang adversaries can help, but there are plenty of other similar attacks which that doesn't solve
- Better datasets
  - Same questions but with more distractors may challenge our models
  - Next up: retrieval-based QA models
- Harder QA tasks
  - Ask questions which cannot be answered in a simple way
  - Afterwards: multi-hop QA and other QA settings
Retrieval Models
SQuAD-style QA is very artificial, not really a real application

Real QA systems should be able to handle more than just a paragraph of context — theoretically should work over the whole web?

Q: What was Marie Curie the recipient of?

Marie Curie was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry and the Nobel Prize in Physics...

Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in...

Curie received his doctorate in March 1895...

Skłodowska received accolades for her early work...
Open-domain QA

- SQuAD-style QA is very artificial, not really a real application

- Real QA systems should be able to handle more than just a paragraph of context — theoretically should work over the whole web?

- This also introduces more complex *distractors* (bad answers) and should require stronger QA systems

- QA pipeline: given a question:
  - Retrieve some documents with an IR system
  - Zero in on the answer in those documents with a QA model
How often does the retrieved context contain the answer? (uses Lucene)

Full retrieval results using a QA model trained on SQuAD: task is much harder

<table>
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<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Wiki Search</th>
<th>Doc. Retriever</th>
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<table>
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<th>Dataset</th>
<th>SQuAD (All Wikipedia)</th>
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<td>WikiMovies</td>
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</table>

Chen et al. (2017)
Can we do better than a simple IR system?

- Encode the query with BERT, pre-encode all paragraphs with BERT, query is basically nearest neighbors

\[
h_q = W_q BERT_Q(q) [\text{CLS}]
\]
\[
h_b = W_b BERT_B(b) [\text{CLS}]
\]
\[
S_{retr}(b, q) = h_q^T h_b
\]
Many SQuAD questions are not suited to the “open” setting because they’re underspecified

- *Where did the Super Bowl take place?*
- *Which player on the Carolina Panthers was named MVP?*

SQuAD questions were written by people looking at the passage — encourages a question structure which mimics the passage and doesn’t look like “real” questions
Natural Questions

- Real questions from Google, answerable with Wikipedia

- Short answers and long answers (snippets)

- Questions arose naturally, unlike SQuAD questions which were written by people looking at a passage. This makes them much harder

- Short answer F1s < 60, long answer F1s < 75

Question:
where is blood pumped after it leaves the right ventricle?

Short Answer:
None

Long Answer:
From the right ventricle, blood is pumped through the semilunar pulmonary valve into the left and right main pulmonary arteries (one for each lung), which branch into smaller pulmonary arteries that spread throughout the lungs.

Kwiatkowski et al. (2019)
Multi-Hop Question Answering
Multi-Hop Question Answering

- Very few SQuAD questions require actually combining multiple pieces of information — this is an important capability QA systems should have.

- Several datasets test *multi-hop reasoning*: ability to answer questions that draw on several sentences or several documents to answer.

Welbl et al. (2018), Yang et al. (2018)
Annotators shown Wikipedia and asked to pose a simple question linking two entities that require a third (bridging) entity to associate.

A model shouldn’t be able to answer these without doing some reasoning about the intermediate entity.
**Question:** What government position was held by the woman who portrayed Corliss Archer in the film Kiss and Tell?

**Doc 1:** Shirley Temple Black was an American actress, businesswoman, and singer. As an adult, she served as Chief of Protocol of the United States.

**Doc 2:** Kiss and Tell is a comedy film in which 17-year-old Shirley Temple acts as Corliss Archer.

**Doc 3:** Meet Corliss Archer is an American television sitcom that aired on CBS.

- Much longer and more convoluted questions

Example picked from HotpotQA [Yang et al., 2018]
The Oberoi family is an Indian family that is famous for its involvement in hotels, namely through The Oberoi Group...

The Oberoi Group is a hotel company with its head office in Delhi.

This is an idealized version of multi-hop reasoning. Do models need to do this to do well on this task?

Example picked from HotpotQA [Yang et al., 2018]
The Oberoi family is an Indian family that is famous for its involvement in hotels, namely through the Oberoi Group.

**Question:** The Oberoi family is part of a hotel company that has a head office in what city?

The Oberoi Group is a hotel company with its head office in Delhi.

Model can ignore the bridging entity and directly predict the answer.

Example picked from HotpotQA (Yang 2018)
Question: What government position was held by the woman who portrayed Corliss Archer in the film Kiss and Tell?

Shirley Temple Black was an American actress, businesswoman, and singer...

As an adult, she served as Chief of Protocol of the United States...

Kiss and Tell is a comedy film in which 17-year-old Shirley Temple acts as Corliss Archer...

Meet Corliss Archer is an American television sitcom that aired on CBS...

No simple lexical overlap.

...but only one government position appears in the context!

Example picked from HotpotQA [Yang et al., 2018]
Investigation

Can a model identify the answer with only a set of candidates?

Government position $\rightarrow$ Chief of Protocol, actress, singer

Can a model identify where the answer is in a single hop?

Oberoi Family $\rightarrow$ Delhi

Chen and Durrett (2019)
Finding the answer directly

**Question:** What government position was held by the woman who portrayed Corliss Archer in the film Kiss and Tell?

**Doc 1:** Shirley Temple Black was an American actress, businesswoman, and singer ... As an adult, she served as Chief of Protocol of the United States

**Doc 2:** Kiss and Tell is a comedy film in which 17-year-old Shirley Temple acts as Corliss Archer.

**Doc 3:** Meet Corliss Archer is an American television sitcom that aired on CBS ...

**Chief of Protocol**  **businesswoman**  ...  **actress**

Kaushik and Lipton (2018)
**Question:** What government position was held by the woman who portrayed Corliss Archer in the film *Kiss and Tell*?

Chen and Durrett (2019)
Results on WikiHop

More than half of questions can be answered without even using the context!

- SOTA models trained on this may be learning question-answer correspondences, not multi-hop reasoning as advertised

Chen and Durrett (2019)
Investigation

Can a model identify the answer with only a set of candidates?

Government position  ->  Chief of Protocol, actress, singer

Can a model identify where the answer is in a single hop?

Oberoi Family  ->  Delhi

Chen and Durrett (2019)
Sentence Factored Model

Find the answer by comparing each sentence with the question *separately*!

**Question:** The Oberoi family is part of a hotel company that has a head office in what city?

Doc 1
*The Oberoi family is an Indian family that is...*

Doc 2
*The Oberoi Group is a hotel company with its head office in Delhi.*

Doc 3
*Future Fibre Technologies a fiber technologies company...*

Chen and Durrett (2019)
Sentence Factored Model

Answer prediction:

- **Delhi**

- Softmax over all sentences is the **only** cross-sentence interaction

- BiDAF

- BiDAF

- BiDAF

- The Oberoi Group ... in Delhi.

- Future Fibre Technologies is a fibre...

- The Oberoi family ...

- The Oberoi family ... what city?

Chen and Durrett (2019)
Results on HotpotQA

A simple single sentence reasoning model can solve more than half questions on HotpotQA.

Chen and Durrett (2019)
Other Work

- Min et al. ACL 2019 “Compositional Questions do not Necessitate Multi-hop Reasoning”
  - Focuses just on HotpotQA
  - Additionally tries to adversarially harden Hotpot against these attacks. Some limited success, but doesn't solve the problem
Q: What government position was held...

Shirley Temple Black was a ...
As an adult, she served as Chief of Protocol of the United States

She began her diplomatic career...

Kiss and Tell is a comedy film in which 17-year-old Shirley Temple acts as Corliss Archer.

A Kiss for Corliss was...

Maybe we can strengthen our models to avoid these weaknesses. Force them to explicitly extract a reasoning chain to make them better.

Chen et al. (2019)
**Question:** What government position was held by the woman who portrayed Corliss Archer in the film Kiss and Tell?

**Answer:** Chief of Protocol

Shirley Temple Black was an American actress, businesswoman, and diplomat...

As an adult, she served as the Chief of Protocol of the United States...

She began her diplomatic career in 1969, when she represented...

**Reasoning Chain 1**

Kiss and Tell is a film in which 17-year-old Shirley Temple acts as Corliss Archer.

“*A Kiss for Corliss*” is a sequel to the film “Kiss and Tell”.

It stars Shirley Temple in her final starring role...

- Strong connection between the entities used here

Chen et al. (2019)
Question: What government position was held by the woman who portrayed Corliss Archer in the film Kiss and Tell?
Answer: Chief of Protocol

Shirley Temple Black was an American actress, businesswoman, and diplomat...
As an adult, she served as the Chief of Protocol of the United States...
She began her diplomatic career in 1969, when she represented...

Kiss and Tell is a film in which 17-year-old Shirley Temple acts as Corliss Archer.
“A Kiss for Corliss” is a sequel to the film “Kiss and Tell”.
It stars Shirley Temple in her final starring role...

More speculative than the other chain but still leads to the answer
Extract pseudogold chains based on:

- Within-document coreference: we don’t run a coreference system but instead link all sentences within a paragraph
- Shared entities: enable connections between different sources
- Given these chains, we learn a model to extract them. At test time, no annotations are needed

Chen et al. (2019)
Paragraphs are encoded with BERT to compute sentence representations

A pointer network selects a sequence of sentences

A final BERT model then extracts an answer span from one or more chains

Chen et al. (2019)
High performance on WikiHop (*past systems didn't use BERT) and Hotpot

Also large gains on hard examples in HotpotQA (our model from part 1 could not find answers in a single hop)

Ongoing work: how can reasoning chains be taken below the sentence level and be more strongly tied to interpretable logical inference?
New Types of QA
One thread of research: let’s build QA datasets to help the community focus on modeling particular things

**Passage** (some parts shortened)

That year, his **Untitled (1981)**, a painting of a haloed, black-headed man with a bright red skeletal body, depicted amid the artists signature scrawls, was sold by **Robert Lehrman for $16.3 million, well above its $12 million high estimate.**

**Question**

How many more dollars was the Untitled (1981) painting sold for than the 12 million dollar estimation?

**Answer**

4300000

**BiDAF**

$16.3 million

**Question types:** subtraction, comparison (*which did he visit first*), counting and sorting (*which kicker kicked more field goals*), invites ad hoc solutions (structure the model around predicting differences between numbers)

Dua et al. (2019)
Maybe we should just look at lots of QA datasets instead?

- BERT trained on SQuAD gets <40% performance on any other QA dataset.
- Our QA models are pretty good at fitting single datasets with 50k-100k examples, but still aren’t learning general question answering.

Talmor and Berant (2019)
Humans see a summary of a book: ...Peter’s former girlfriend Dana Barrett has had a son, Oscar...

Question: How is Oscar related to Dana?

Answering these questions from the source text (not summary) requires complex inferences and is extremely challenging; no progress on this dataset in 2 years

Story snippet:

DANA (setting the wheel brakes on the buggy)
Thank you, Frank. I’ll get the hang of this eventually.

She continues digging in her purse while Frank leans over the buggy and makes funny faces at the baby, OSCAR, a very cute nine-month old boy.

FRANK (to the baby)
Hiya, Oscar. What do you say, slugger?

FRANK (to Dana)
That’s a good-looking kid you got there, Ms. Barrett.
Takeaways

- Lots of problems with current QA settings, lots of new datasets
- Models can often work well for one QA task but don’t generalize
- We still don’t have (solvable) QA settings which seem to require really complex reasoning as opposed to surface-level pattern recognition