

# Exploring financial sentiment analysis with the Financial Phrasebank dataset

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**Abstract—abstratotoototot**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

With the ever increasing volume of information created and distributed by the minute, it is more important than ever to have access to fast and reliable analysis of any information we may come across. Especially with the democratized access to financial instruments and capital markets, where individuals have the possibility to invest in virtually any company on the stock exchange, it is important to have ways to leverage against giant institutions with hundreds of financial analysts at their disposal.



Fig. 1: Power to the people, colorized (circa 1917).

Historically, financial analysis relied heavily on fundamental analysis (examining earnings, balance sheets, annual financial reports), which required extensive knowledge in the field (also the strategy that made Warren Buffett one of the richest men in the world), along with technical analysis (studying price and volume trends). Around 2010, after the 2008 global financial crisis, there was a surge in news analysis to evaluate the tone and derive investment strategies from it. Due to the lack of domain specific lexicon these analysis were falible, until the work by Loughran and McDonald was published, a financial lexicon based on 10-K forms (i.e., annual financial reports) and dictionaries. This allowed to use more sofisticated analysis rather than using the presence of negative words as a signal to sell.

Upon the launch of Twitter, information streams increased dramatically, making more and more data available for analysis. But, machine learning was not heavily used, as most

data was not annotated, or there was very little data with high-quality annotations. In 2014, P. Malo *et al.* published a fundamental dataset for financial sentimental analysis, that is still used, the Financial Phrasebank. It is unique, for the inclusion of important aspects as directional expressions (e.g., profits decreased), entity polarity shifts (e.g. profits may be negative if decreased), and phrase level context.

With this, machine learning models started finding their place in research, as the field of natural language processing (NLP) grew and niche fields such as financial investments found useful data. In this work we explore the Financial Phrasebank dataset, by implementing different machine learning and deep learning models to evaluate the sentiment of sentences related to financial news.

## II. STATE OF THE ART

The field of NLP has grown drastically in the past decade, progressing from recurrent neural networks (RNN) and related models such as Long-Short Term Memory (LSTM), to the transformers-type models, large language models (LLM) and text generative models as ChatGPT. With the Financial Phrasebank the field expanded into financial analysis, with several works of relevance being published in recent years.

In the work of Araci (2019), the author developed a BERT-based model trained specifically on texts with financial data. BERT, Bidireccional Encoder Representations from Transformers, is a large language model developed by Google (2018), benefitting largely from the fact that it can "hold" in memory large chunks and in both directions, simultaneously. The fact that it is built on the Transformer encoder architecture, it can weigh the importance of different words in a sentence by using a self-attention. The model is pre-trained on large unlabelled corpora (e.g., Wikipedia, BookCorpus), and can be fine-tuned for specific purposes. In this work, the end model was trained on domain specific corpus such as TRC2-financial data and financial specific texts (over 440 000 sentences), and then fine tuned with the Financial Phrasebank. The model achieved an accuracy of 97% on the Financial Phrasebank dataset with 100% agreement, but 86% and 85% respectively on the dataset with all levels of agreement (the

agreement will be further detailed in the Methodology section). Later on the model was further improved by Sun *et al.* (2025), EnhancedFinSentiBERT, by including dictionary embeddings, expanded corpus that deversified the pre-training stage drastically, and a novel neutral sentiment module, that further enhanced the distinction between neutral and weak sentiments, resulting in improved accuracy (89%) and F1-score (88%). The pre-training stage benefited from the large diversity of the corpus, going from a few million tokens to 2.4 B tokens with the latest version. In a similar direction, but at the fine tuning level, Atsiwo (2024) improved the data used in fine tuning, considering that most datasets have relatively short sentences (< 100 tokens), failing to leverage the full context window of LLMs like BERT (512 tokens). This was achieved by augmenting the training data with synthetic sentences generated by GPT-4, with accuracy of 89% and F1-score of 88% for 50% agreement dataset.

GPT has been used with different purposes, as in the work by Zhou *et al.* (2023), where GPT-3.5Turbo was used for zero-shot sentiment classification. However, it performed worse than finely tuned models (accuracy of 75% and F1-score of 74%).

The BERT model was revisited by different researchers, but a new iteration from Facebook AI was proposed (2019) named RoBERTa (Robustly Optimized BERT Approach) was developed, that used a significantly larger corpus for training (10x larger), and a dynamic masking technique during training, that allowed the model to learn new contextual relations while using the same sentences, making it more robust. This model was used as BERT to develop financial models, where the work Choe *et al.* (2023) is worth mentioning, where a large corpus of financial texts were fed to the model for training, from a range of sources (e.g., Reuters, SEC filings, EIA). The model (FiLM, Financial Language Model) benefited from the diversity of training data, rather than simply focusing on fine tuning with highly curated data, showing improved generalization and better metrics than FinBERT and RoBERTa (accuracy 88%, F1-score 87%). These models are improving substantially over the years, but it is different to put them to test against a controlled dataset from using them in real life, and the variety included as consequence. Competitions such as FinNLP help drive research in this field, by posing ever more diversified test sets, aiming to improve the robustness of models, and the solutions developed by the researchers.

### III. METHODOLOGY

To address the problem of sentiment classification in sentences related to financial investment, we set up a pipeline for training and testing using the Financial PhraseBank for three types of models, where the best was further explored and tuned for different tests. The dataset and setup is detailed in the following sections.

#### A. Dataset

The Financial PhraseBank is a widely used benchmark dataset for financial sentiment analysis. It consists of roughly

4,840 English sentences (mostly news headlines or short statements) about companies, drawn from financial news articles and press releases. Each sentence is labeled with one of three sentiment classes – positive, negative, or neutral – representing the sentence’s sentiment from the perspective of an investor [1], [2].

TABLE I: Financial PhraseBank distribution. Four possible sets within the dataset, depending on how many financial experts agreed with the attributed label. The dataset with 50% agreement corresponds to the entire dataset.

Sentiment	Agreement			
	50%	66%	75%	All
Negative	604	514	420	303
Neutral	2879	2535	2146	1391
Positive	1363	1168	887	570
<b>Total</b>	<b>4846</b>	<b>4217</b>	<b>3453</b>	<b>2264</b>

The dataset was labeled by 16 finance professionals, each responsible for labelling a subset of sentences. Each sentence was labelled by 5-8 annotators, and the resulting agreement score was a result of the fraction of annotators that labelled the sentence in the same manner. This resulted in 4 different subsets, where 50% agreement corresponds to the entire dataset, with the dataset size decreasing as the level of agreement increased. It is important to mention that the agreement level corresponds to the least allowed, so the 50% agreement level dataset contains the other subsets. The dataset sizes and class proportion can be consulted in Table I, along with sample sentences and the attributed sentiment classification in Table II.

This subset strategy allows researchers to find a balance between the amount and the quality of data, representing a common trade-off in the field of machine learning.

#### VER MAIS COISAS SOBRE OS DADOS AINDA

TABLE II: Example sentences from the Financial PhraseBank with annotated sentiment labels.

Sentence	Sentiment
According to Gran, the company has no plans to move all production to Russia, although that is where the company is growing.	Neutral
Componeta's net sales doubled to EUR 131m, moving to zero pre-tax profit from a EUR 7m loss.	Positive
In Q3 2010, net sales increased by 5.2% to EUR 205.5mn, and operating profit by 34.9% to EUR 23.5mn.	Positive
Operating profit totalled EUR 21.1mn, up from EUR 18.6mn in 2007, representing 9.7% of net sales.	Positive

Considera adicionar o nível de concordância para as frases, já que pode ser interessante perceber porque é que foi mais difícil concordarem

Unique samples from 50Agree:

casos de pequenas pcts , apesar de ser subida resultados passados

Unique samples from 66Agree:

normal é bom?  
lay off, but limited time

## B. Exploratory Data Analysis

Taking into consideration the different possible subsets, we selected the one with 75% agreement, as it is a balance between quantity and quality in the dataset, also taking into consideration the proportion between classes.

In Fig. 2 the number of sentences per class is evidence of how imbalanced the dataset is. As a result, we had to balance the dataset by undersampling all classes to the amount of examples for the 'negative' class, the .

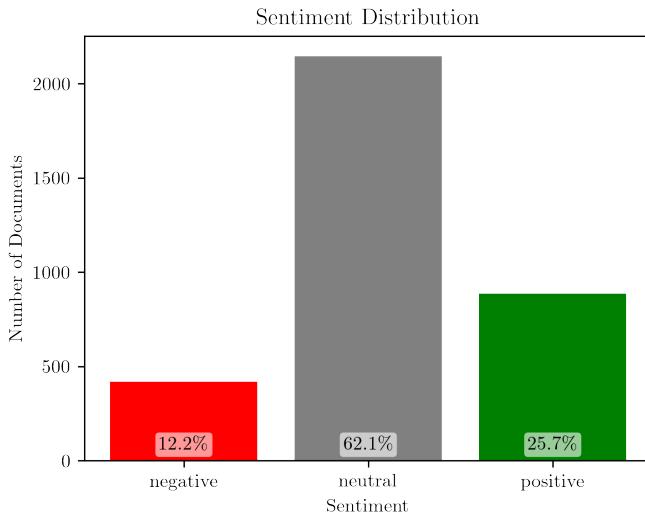


Fig. 2: Class distribution in the 75% agreement dataset.

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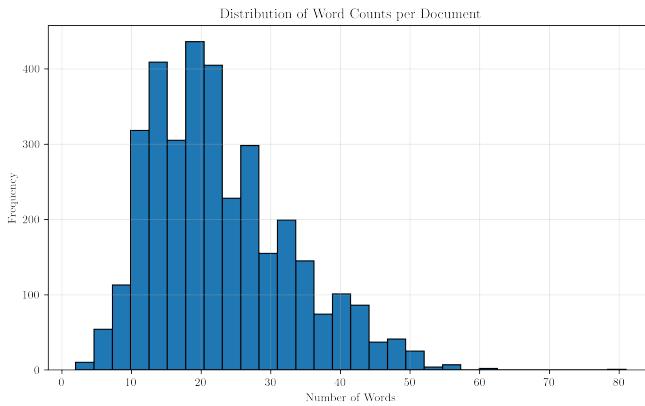


Fig. 3: Sentence length distribution for the 75% agreement dataset.

este word count dist ajudou na escolha do numero de tokens a usar, o max len nos tokenizers 3

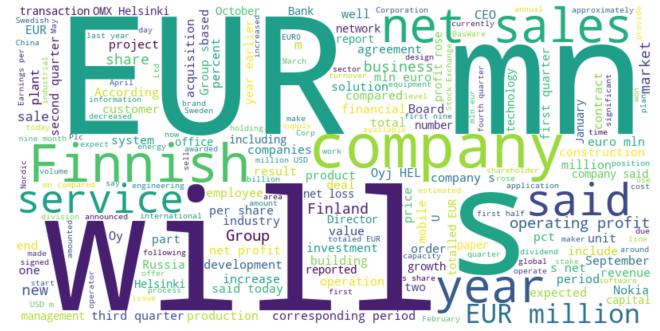


Fig. 4: most common words in the sentences

most relevant words for class identification by checking which words appear much more in one class than others: down, decreased, profit, fell, rose

## C. Preprocessing

split teste e treino (80/20) do dataset de 75 de agreement dps tendo em conta essa porção de 20, tbm se removeu esses documentos dos restantes subsets para evitar possivel leakage (pq usamos dps os subsets na cena dos pesos, ns como queres dizer ou se faz sentido dizer aqui se quer)

o preprocessamento dos dados acabou por variar de modelo para modelo, em termos da estrura dos dados ou transofmacoes nas frases tendo por base os pre requisitos dos mesmos, sendo a unica constante o balanceamento das classes nos dados de treino antes de qualquer tuning ou treino.

## D. HELP

imagina, esta secção é metodologia, fará sentido dizer aqui de vez o cv validation já q ele é usado sempre? se sim, está mesmo aqui em baixo o como ele foi feito mas tldr 5-cv escolha dos melhores hyp, re treino no conjunto de treino completo

learning curve + comparacao de metricas de teste e de treino para evitar overfitting

## IV. MODELS ????

sendo que o objetivo principal é ent a classificacao das frases presentes no conjunto de teste (20% do subset do 75agree), foram exploradas três abordagens distintas focando no equilibrio de entre quantidade e qualidade dos dados

- base model
- data augmentation model
- weighted model

### A. A. Initial benchmark

Falar sobre os modelos que usámos para este trabalho e as suas arquitecturas, FASTTEXT, LSTM, FALTA METER AQUI FASTTEXT, LSTM, ...

ACHO Q AINDA NAO DISSEMOS EM LADO NENHUM QUE O BERT É o google-bert/bert-base-uncased

dataset so se usou o 75agree com o split 80/20 feito inicialmente

houve fine tuning dos hyp para cada um dos modelos usando 5-fold cv para a escolha destes e depois retreino com

estes hyp nos dados de treino completos (tabela abaixo para espaço de procura III)

TABLE III: Hyperparameter search space for the base models?...

Hyperparameter	Possible Values
Epochs	{20, 21, ..., 99}
Learning rate	[ $10^{-5}$ , $10^{-2}$ ]
Embedding dimension	{100, 200, 300}

(a) fastText hyperparameters.

Hyperparameter	Possible Values
Epochs	{2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 15}
Learning rate	[ $10^{-5}$ , $10^{-3}$ ]
Embedding dimension	{32, 64, 128, 256}
LSTM units	{32, 64, 128, 256}
Dropout	[0, 0.5]
Recurrent dropout	[0, 0.5]

(b) LSTM hyperparameters.

Hyperparameter	Possible Values
Epochs	{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}
Learning rate	[ $10^{-5}$ , $10^{-2}$ ]
Weight decay	[0, 0.5]

(c) BERT hyperparameters.

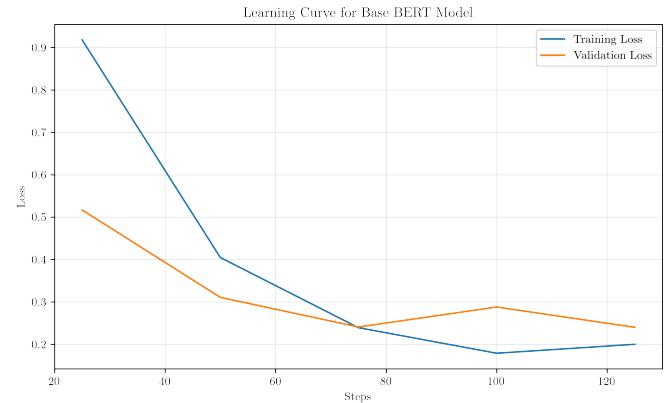


Fig. 5: learning curve

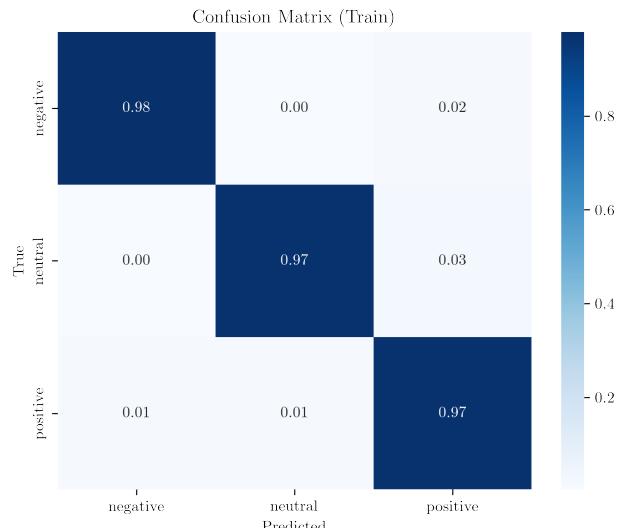


Fig. 6: base bert conf matri train

TABLE IV: base model metrics across models

Model	Accuracy		F1 (weighted)	
	Train	Test	Train	Test
fastText	0.54	0.65	0.45	0.58
LSTM	0.67	0.66	0.63	0.63
BERT	0.97	0.92	0.97	0.92

ou seja fasttext + lstm + bert

Lstm vai ao encontro dos resultados descritos na literatura, apesar de um pouco piores por n termos usado bi-LSTM nem ELMo, seja lá oq isso for

sendo que o bert foi o melhor, indicamos mais detalhes osbre o modelo:::

best hyperameters:

- Num train epochs: 2
- Learning rate: 0.0001
- Weight decay: 0.1

TABLE V: Classification report for BASE BERT on training data.

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Negative	0.98	0.98	0.98	336
Neutral	0.98	0.97	0.98	336
Positive	0.96	0.97	0.96	336
<b>Accuracy</b>			0.97	1008
<b>Macro avg</b>	0.97	0.97	0.97	1008
<b>Weighted avg</b>	0.97	0.97	0.97	1008

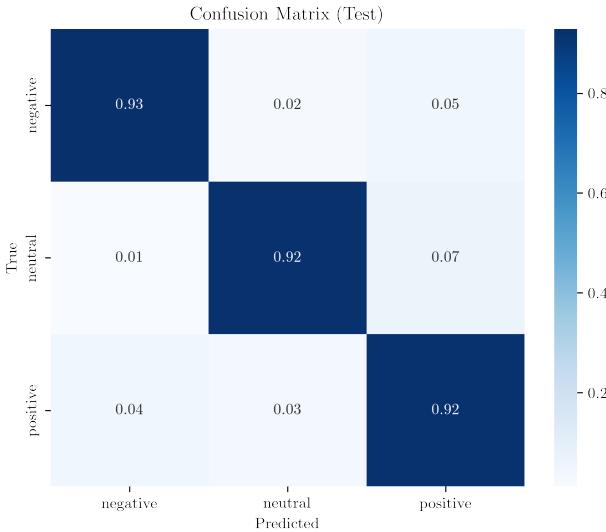


Fig. 7: base bert cong matrix test

TABLE VI: Classification report for BASE BERT on test data.

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Negative	0.86	0.93	0.89	84
Neutral	0.98	0.92	0.95	429
Positive	0.84	0.92	0.88	178
<b>Accuracy</b>			0.92	691
<b>Macro avg</b>	0.89	0.92	0.91	691
<b>Weighted avg</b>	0.93	0.92	0.92	691

ligeiro overfitting e tais

### B. B. data augmentation model

para esta abordagem foi usada online data augmentation nas várias frases do dataset de treino do 75Agree,, como o bert pela literatura e como pela nossa observacao tem uma performance signicativamente melhor, é o unico q vamos usar

esta data augmentation consistiu em:

Back-Translation : Translation-based augmentation using intermediate language pivoting to generate paraphrases.

Lexical Substitution : Random substitution of words with WordNet-based synonyms.

Template-Based Augmentation : Named Entity-aware augmentation by replacing entities (ORG, DATE, EVENT) using slot-filling over extracted templates.

alguns exemplos desta augmentation são

1. In the building and home improvement trade , sales decreased by 22.5% to EUR 201.4 mn .

-i in the building and diy trade, sales decreased by 22. 5% to eur 201. 4 million.

2. In a media advisory , .....

-i in a media consultation

3. In January-June 2010 , diluted loss per share stood at EURO .3 versus EURO .1 in the first half of 2009 .

-i in the first half of 2009, diluted loss per share stood atomic number 85 euro. 3 versus euro. 1 in the first half of 2009.

TABLE VII: Hyperparameter space for .....

Hyperparameter	Possible Values
Epochs	{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}
Learning rate	[ $10^{-5}$ , $10^{-2}$ ]
Weight decay	[0, 0.5]

best hyperameters:

- Num train epochs: 2
- Learning rate: 0.0001
- Weight decay: 0.1

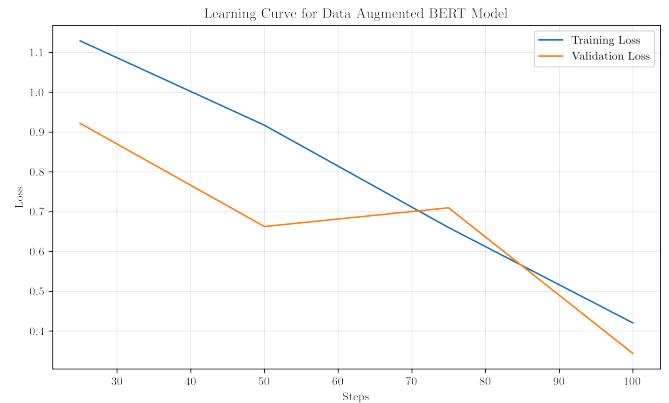


Fig. 8: learning curve

aqui 8 ela ainda nao convergiu, mas pq fizemos cv com o numero de epochs é como se fosse um earlystopping

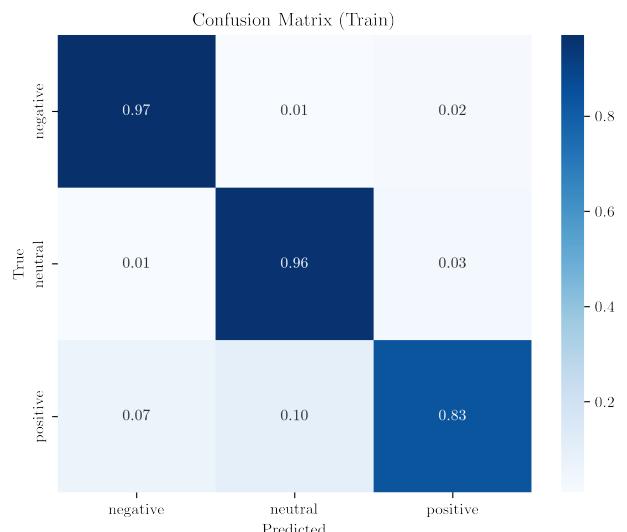


Fig. 9: data augm bert conf matri train

TABLE VIII: Classification report for data augm BERT on training data.

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Negative	0.92	0.97	0.95	336
Neutral	0.90	0.96	0.93	336
Positive	0.94	0.83	0.88	336
<b>Accuracy</b>			0.92	1008
<b>Macro avg</b>	0.92	0.92	0.92	1008
<b>Weighted avg</b>	0.92	0.92	0.92	1008

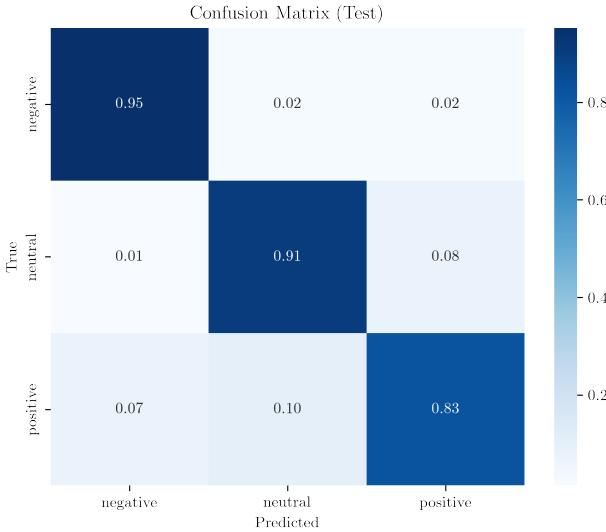


Fig. 10: data augm bert cong matrix test

TABLE IX: Classification report for data augm BERT on test data.

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
Negative	0.81	0.95	0.87	84
Neutral	0.95	0.91	0.93	429
Positive	0.80	0.83	0.81	178
<b>Accuracy</b>			0.89	691
<b>Macro avg</b>	0.85	0.89	0.87	691
<b>Weighted avg</b>	0.90	0.89	0.89	691

os resultados nao apresentam indicios de overfitting e vao ao encontro da literatura

tabela do research, 0.90 de accuracy do finbert q era finetunning do finbert neste dataset ou qq coisa assim

### C. weighted model

a ideia desta abordagem é q havendo o equilibrio entre quantidade e qualidade dos dados, ao inves de ter de haver uma filtragem dos documentos usadas tendo por base o nível de concordância, por que não usar todos mas atribuindo pesos diferentes aos diferentes niveis de agreement

isto é, enquanto o modelo aprende, ser mais penalizado ou dar mais importânci quando classifica mal uma instância com maior nível de agreement, e não tanta aos niveis mais baixos

após algumas experiencias empiricas, chegou-se a seguinte formula para o weight da classe  $i$ , com  $i \in \{50Agree, 66Agree, 75Agree, AllAgree\}$ .

$$w_i = \text{scale} \cdot p_i = \left( \frac{N}{\sum_{j=1}^k n_j \cdot p_j} \right) \cdot \left( \frac{e^{a_i}}{\sum_{j=1}^k e^{a_j}} \right),$$

where  $p_i$  is the softmax weight for class  $i$ ,  $a_i$  the raw agreement scores for class  $i$ ,  $n_i$  the number of samples in class  $i$ , and  $N$  the total number of instances.

The rationale behind this formulation starts from a set of empirically defined raw agreement scores, for each agreement class:

$$\{0.50, 0.66, 0.75, 1.0\}$$

These values represent the degree of annotator consensus and are transformed exponentially using the softmax function

$$p_i = \frac{e^{a_i}}{\sum_j e^{a_j}}$$

to capture differences in confidence in a non-linear manner.

Following this transformation, a normalization factor is applied to account for agreement imbalance in the training dataset

$$\text{scale} = \frac{N}{\sum_i n_i \cdot p_i}$$

ensuring that the average weight across all training instances equals 1, preserving the comparability of the loss function with a weightless scenario, such as the test dataset.

This approach leverages confidence information from agreement levels without distorting the overall loss scale during training.

esta formula é usada para atribuir os pesos aos diferentes niveis de agreement que por sua vez, este peso é usado para multiplicar pela loss de cada instancia (tendo em conta a classe de agreement onde se encontra), fazendo com que a loss total ao longo do treino tenho mais um maior contributo dos maiores niveis de agreement face aos menores

lalalala hyp

TABLE X: Hyperparameter space for .....

Hyperparameter	Possible Values
Epochs	{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}
Learning rate	[ $10^{-5}, 10^{-2}$ ]
Weight decay	[0, 0.5]

best hyperameters:

- Num train epochs: ?
  - Learning rate: ?
  - Weight decay: ?
- ..... resultados

para melhorar estes resultados poderia ser levado a cabo um fine tuning ou a escolha por parte de um expert dos raw agreement scores ou uma melhoria da formula dos pesos

## V. DISCUSSION

results discuttion

## VI. CONCLUSION

conclisao



Fig. 11: Enter Caption

## WORK LOAD

Both authors contributed equally to the project.

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