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# Application of the Lottery Ticket Hypothesis in NLP and Early Pruning (Proposal)

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Anwendung der "Lottery Ticket"-Hypothese in NLP und frühem Pruning (Proposal)

Bachelor-Arbeit

Tim Unverzagt

KOM-type-number ???

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TECHNISCHE  
UNIVERSITÄT  
DARMSTADT

Fachbereich Informatik  
Fachbereich ??? (Zweitmitglied)

Fachgebiet Natural Language  
Processing  
| Gutachter |

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Bachelor-Arbeit  
Studiengang: Computational Engineering  
KOM-type-number ???

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Fachgebiet Natural Language Processing (KOM)  
Gutachter: ???

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Bei der abgegebenen Bachelor-Arbeit stimmen die schriftliche und die zur Archivierung eingereichte elektronische Fassung überein.

Darmstadt, den 20. Januar 2020

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Tim Unverzagt



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## Abstract

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The abstract goes here...





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## 1 Introduction

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### 1.1 Motivation

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- LTH has demonstrated extreme pruning on different architectures
- Study of lottery-ticket emergence points might result in a reasoned early pruning approach
- LTH might bring a new and promising pruning approach to NLP

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### 1.2 Problem Statement and Contribution

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- Calculate pruning masks earlier in training and check if LTH still holds.  
Observing when lottery-tickets are no longer found might improve understanding of early pruning.
- Research whether the point of lottery-ticket-emergence can be estimated "a-priori".
- Implement an architecture comparable to the ones studied in the lottery-ticket hypothesis performing well on an NLP-task with similar structure.
- Determine whether the LTH holds on said architecture.

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### 1.3 Outline

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## 2 Background

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To develop this work a common base of concepts is needed. This chapter aims to establish the fundamental ideas necessary to comprehend this thesis.

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### 2.1 Neural Networks

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#### 2.1.1 Basics

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Neural networks are a part of most major AI-breakthrough in the last decade enabling computers to compete in fields formerly championed by humans.<sup>1</sup> They implement a statistical understanding of AI, which is to say that they try to find a specific model optimizing the likelihood of reproducing input-output pairs similar to some training data. The competing philosophy directly divines behaviour rules, frequently from expert knowledge, and as such is far less dependant from data. [citation needed] For the former concept its model classes are the essential point of design. A multitude of properties maybe sought after in a model class of which a few important ones are:

- **Richness:**  
The diversity of single models in the class and thus the ability to fit a wide field of different input-output landscapes.<sup>2</sup>  
If a model class is inherently restricted the underlying relation between inputs and outputs might simply be beyond the expressive capabilities of all its models.  
In other words: If a model class is not rich enough all of its models will underfit the given training data.
- **Stability:**  
Tendency of similar models in the class to handle inputs in a similar way.  
If your model class shows unstable behavior defining a sensible way to search it for good models becomes difficult.
- **Interpretability of Models:**  
Ease of formulating knowledge out of any given model in the class.  
As fields exist in which statistical AI outperform experts the extraction of knowledge understandable and applicable by humans is of special interest.
- [citation needed]

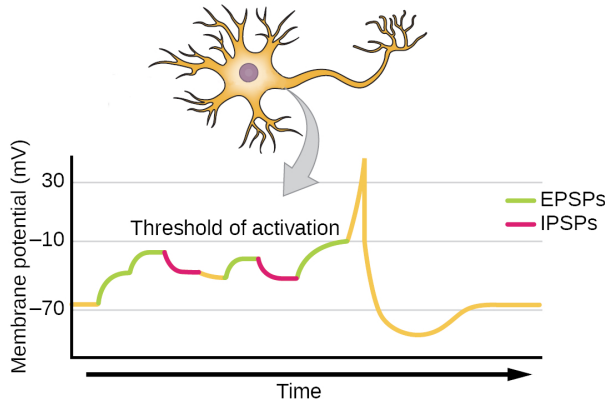
If one knows an entity that already performs well on a given task it is a sensible approach to design ones model class to reproduce its decision process. Humans usually are such entities for many tasks of interest to AI research so they are a natural source of inspiration. Neural networks essentially are simplified models of a human central nervous system.

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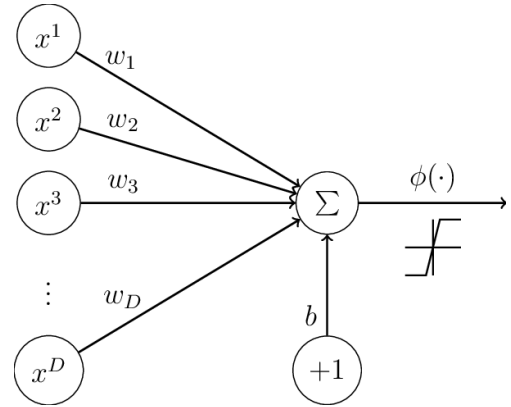
<sup>1</sup>

- 2011: "Watson" of IBM defeats two former grand champions in "Jeopardy!" [LF11]
- 2011: "Siri" enables users to use natural language to interact with their phones [Aro11]
- 2015: A convolutional neural network classifies images from the ImageNet dataset more accurately than human experts [RDS<sup>+</sup>15] [HZRS15]
- 2016: "AlphaGo" beats Lee Sedol, one of the world's strongest Go players [Gib16] [SSS<sup>+</sup>17]

<sup>2</sup> More formally the richness of a model class can be described as the amount of different functions from the input-space to the output-space which can be expressed through a model of said class.



**Figure 2.1.:** Representation of a biological Neuron  
[CDC18] edited



**Figure 2.2.:** Abstraction of a Neuron  
[DMK<sup>+</sup>12]

The most basic building block of the human central nervous system is a neuron which can receive multiple stimuli and is able to produce an output if the combined stimulation exceeds a threshold. [citation needed] One such neuron and its stimulus measure are depicted in 2.1. Another functionality observed in nature is the ability of a neuron to strengthen the connection to any source of stimulus thus giving said source more influence on whether the neuron produces an output. [citation needed]

The canonical mathematical model of a neuron, as seen in 2.2, is defined as:

- **Inputs  $x_i$  :**  
All stimuli of a neuron are simply referred to as its inputs
- **Weights  $w_i$  :**  
The ability to assign importances is modelled as weights which are coupled to specific stimuli
- **Combined Weighted Inputs  $\sum_{i=1}^n w_i x_i$  :**  
After the inputs are scaled by their according weight they superpose to form the total excitation of the neuron
- **Activation Function  $\Phi(\sum_{i=1}^n w_i x_i)$  :**  
Correlation between excitation of an neuron and the signal thus produced
- **Bias  $b$  :**  
Base excitation used to model a neurons sensibility to excitation

### 2.1.2 Data

In addition to this model a numerical representation of any utilized data is also needed. A single data point is represented as a collection of inputs. Generally two descriptions can be distinguished:

- **One-Hot-Encoding :**  
For each form the data point can assume a single input is modelled. Said input is activated if it fully represents the data otherwise it is not.  
Example:  
If a vocabulary of size  $n$  is given its  $m$ -th word can be described as a vector with  $n$  entries where only the  $m$ -th entry is non-zero.

---

- **Embedding :**

If the data point can be described through features it can be thought of as being embedded in a lower-dimensional more expressive space comparable to one-hot-encoding. An important advantage of this description is the resulting continuity of the input-space.

Example:

A sound could be described through its volume, pitch and duration

**TODO: multidimensionality**

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### 2.1.3 Layers

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As an individual neuron is too simple to model any complex relations between inputs and outputs the next step is to aggregate multiple neurons. At the core of neural networks is the idea to collect the signal many different neurons produce for a given input and reuse them as new features for another round of neurons. Such a collection is called a **layer** and especially a **hidden layer** if neither its inputs where original data nor are its outputs the final activations.<sup>3</sup>

A layer is defined by the structure of connections it prescribes. The layers used in this thesis consist of:

- **Input :**

The numeric representation of data points can be thought of activations a input-layer produces. In applications this layer is commonly used to describe assumptions on the data-points.

- **Fully-Connected | Dense :**

Every neuron of the layer is connected to every input.

- **Convolution :**

Every neuron is only connected to a small neighbourhood of features.

The Parameters are: neighbourhood size, amount of considered neighbourhoods and definition of behaviour at the edges of data points.

Example:...

- **Pooling :**

Not a conventional layer but rather a data-processing-step between other layers. Reduces the number of features by condensing a small neighbourhood into a single feature.

- **Flatten :**

Not a conventional layer but rather a data-processing-step between other layers. Collapses features from multiple dimensions into a single one.

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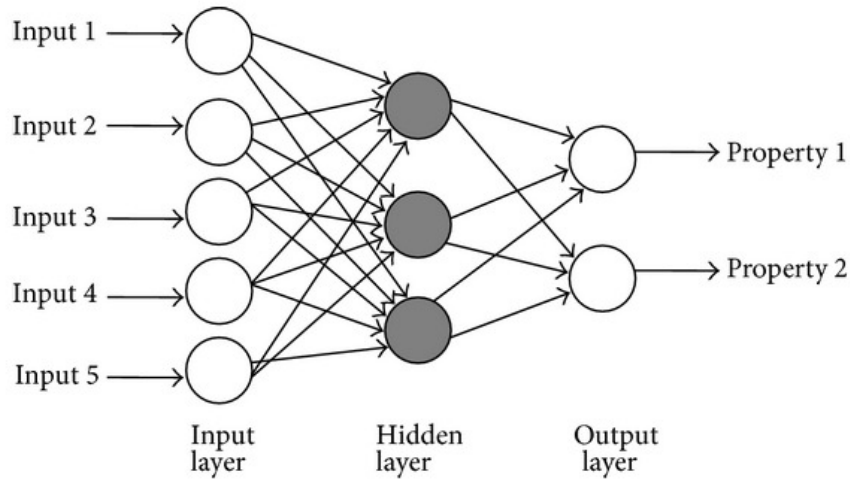
### 2.1.4 Architectures

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The collection of layers used for a given task is called an **architecture**. As multiple architectures are discussed throughout this work a clear system to note them is fundamental. Any architecture description first declares all default assumptions on its layers. Afterwards a list of layers follows defining the type of said layers, their hyper-parameters and especially the dimensionality of their outputs. Additionally and in interest of compatibility the following notation while be close to the functional Keras-API utilized

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<sup>3</sup> This hierarchy of abstracts features is essential to the descriptive abilities of neural network. As such any sensible function between input and output can be approximated up to arbitrary precision by a network with at least one hidden layer. [HSW89]



**Figure 2.3.:** Architecture of a small fully-connected network  
[Bel18]

throughout the associated source code.

The following two examples are meant to illustrate the notation:

#### Simple-FCN | 2.3

**def. activation:** rectified linear unit

**Input:**

dim-output: 5

**Dense:**

dim-output: 3

**Dense:**

dim-output: 2

activation: soft-max

#### VGG-16 | 2.4

**Defaults:**

convolution-neighbourhood-size: [3,3]

convolution-neighbourhood-shift: [1,1]

convolution-edge-behaviour: same-dim, zero-padding

softmax-size: [2,2]

softmax-shift: [2,2]

**Input:**

dim-output: [224, 224 | 3]

**2x Convolution:**

dim-output: [224, 224 | 64]

**Softmax:**

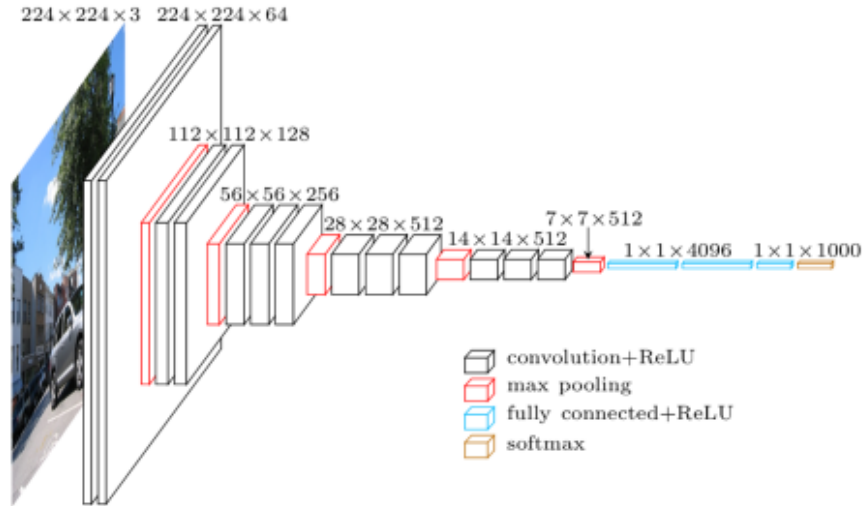
dim-output: [112, 112 | 64]

**2x Convolution:**

dim-output: [112, 112 | 128]

**Softmax:**

dim-output: [56, 56 | 128]



**Figure 2.4.:** Macroarchitecture of VGG16  
[Fro]

**3x Convolution:**

dim-output: [56, 56 | 256]

**Softmax:**

dim-output: [28, 28 | 256]

**3x Convolution:**

dim-output: [28, 28 | 512]

**Softmax:**

dim-output: [14, 14 | 512]

**3x Convolution:**

dim-output: [14, 14 | 512]

**Softmax:**

dim-output: [7, 7 | 512]

**Flatten:**

dim-output: 25.088

**Dense:**

dim-output: 4096

**Dense:**

dim-output: 4096

**Dense:**

dim-output: 1000  
activation: softmax

## 2.2 Pruning

As the computational power of modern devices increases ever larger architectures become possible. While this allows for more precise models on any given data it is important to recall that pure representation is not the ultimate goal of most applications. Being more concrete, all tasks discussed in this work can be categorized as **supervised learning**, meaning they provide a collection of labelled data points and demand an extrapolation of the implicit labelling process, called **generalization**. It is a well known

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phenomenon in the field of supervised learning<sup>4</sup> that generalization suffers from over-adaptation to the given data and that said over-adaptation tends to happen more easily in complex architectures. On the other hand does massive parametrization not only enable us to approximate the labelling process<sup>5</sup> more precisely but also to find such an approximation in a feasible way. [DSD<sup>+</sup>13]. Pruning is a compromise in which a large model is fitted to a given data set and then truncated as much as possible while maintaining accuracy.

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## 2.3 Preprocessing for Natural Language Processing

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In addition the previously mentioned treatment for any dataset there are additional preprocessing steps when handling text-inputs in natural language<sup>6</sup>. The most important ones are **tokenization**, the separation of a text into words and/or sentences, and **stopword removal**, the removal of little to no syntactic or semantic importance.

As the former is almost always necessary to even quantify the numeric representation of the datapoints most frameworks provide datasets already preprocessed in such a manner.

The later is a canonical inclusion into any natural-language-processing data-flow but also is generally not preemptively applied to dataset.

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<sup>4</sup> called **overfitting**

<sup>5</sup> Which can be encoded as a function

<sup>6</sup> The term **natural language** describes language written, spoken and otherwise used by humans in contrast to precisely defined languages used for communication between computation devices.



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### 3 Related Work

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To quantify the goals previously defined the context of current research is needed. The importance of any work assuming an underlying architecture can not be correctly evaluated without knowledge about the quality of said architecture. As such this section shortly presents state-of-the-art approaches to the tasks relevant to this thesis. Additionally an overview over previous compression methods and their achievements is given.

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#### 3.1 State of the art: Image Classification

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MNIST and CIFAR-10 are both datasets containing small images which are to be classified according to the object they display. While MNIST contains gray scale images of hand-written digits CIFAR-10 consists of colorful real-world images. State of the art approaches deliver superhuman accuracy on both data sets.

For MNIST Kowasari et al. with their random multi-purpose deep learning ensemble report the nominal highest performance [KHB<sup>+</sup>18] although many others achieve similar results through varying means. Already in 2012 Ciresan et al. describe a deep and sparse convolutional architecture that resembles the visual cortex of mammal [CMS12]. Later Sato et al. apply data-augmentation [SNY15], Chang Jia-Ren & Chen Yong-Sheng package whole architectures and treat them like layers [CC15] and Hasanpour et al. carefully design a small and simple convolutional network through the use of structural heuristics [HRFS16] all reproducing the same performance.

In contrast the three best-performing approaches to CIFAR-10 are all published in 2019. Currently an ensemble of auto-encoding transformations claims the highest performance. Wang et al. provide their model with a rich class of transformations to prepare abstraction of the input. [WKLQ19]. Close second and third are Cai et al. with a direct network-architecture-search scheme [CZH18] and Hu et al. with a novel network building block that explicitly models interaction between channels [HSS17].

While Frankle & Carbin do not provide exact values in the LTH-paper their figures indicate that they achieve roughly 98% accuracy on MNIST and 90% on CIFAR-10 [FC18].<sup>1</sup> This result is reproducible with the source code provided alongside this thesis.

Accuracy %	MNIST	CIFAR-10	Published
EnAET		98.0	2019
DirNAS		97.9	2019
Squee		97.88	2019
RMDL	99.82	91.2	2018
Simple	99.8	95.5	2016
BatchNorm	99.8	93.3	2015
APAC	99.8	89.7	2015
Multi-Column	99.8	88.8	2012
Lenet-FCN	~98		LTH
VGG-19		~90	LTH

**Figure 3.1.:** Performance for Image Classification

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<sup>1</sup> State-of-the-Art architectures are presented only if no extra training data was used and as described on <https://paperswithcode.com/sota>

Accuracy %	20-News	Reuters	Published
Neural BoE	88.1		2019
Graph Star	86.9		2019
RMDL		90.69	2018
multi-scale CNN	86.12		2018

**Figure 3.2.:** Performance for Topic Classification

### 3.2 State of the art: Topic Classification

In the field of NLP topic classification is arguably the task most similar to image classification and Reuters-21578 is arguably the most iconic dataset for such a task. Yet neither do its corresponding state of the art architectures compare sensibly to the ones studied by Frankle & Carbin nor is Reuters-21578 structurally akin to MNIST. The essential differences will be covered in section 6.

20-Newsgroup is another NLP data set not only more aligned with MNIST and CIFAR-10 but also with an competitive CNN architecture exists. In their work Pappagari et al. develop an approach integrating the implicit verification objective and learning multiple language models for different channels of their CNN [PVD18]. They come close to state of the art performance on 20-Newsgroup.

### 3.3 Early Pruning

Beginning around 1990 with M.C. Mozer & P. Smolensky [MS89] as well as LeCun et al. [LDS90] weights were being removed from neural networks after training them for a task. Shortly thereafter the idea of further training a pruned network was proposed [HS93] which became common practice over the next decade. While LeCun et al. describe a network compression factor of  $\times 4$ , more recent works achieve a factor of  $\times 9$  to  $\times 16.6$  while loosing no or close to no accuracy [HPTD15] [LWL17]. Frankle & Carbin report pruning rates over 98,5% of weights in one of their networks while maintaining network capabilities which amounts to a compression rate of over. [FC18]  $\times 50$

In a recent paper [LSZ<sup>+</sup>18] Z.Liu et al. observe that if pruned networks are trained with randomly reinitialized weights instead of fine-tuning their previous ones they retain from the original network, the pruned networks keep their capabilities. They conclude that said weights can not be essential to a pruned networks quality, contrary to prior common belief. Thus Z.Liu et al. claim that the architecture of pruned networks is responsible for its capabilities and furthermore that pruning can be interpreted as a kind of network architecture search .

After the effectiveness of pruning is established and its interpretation as network architecture search becomes available there is a legitimate question whether all the weights in a network are really necessary for all of the training. In a paper of Y. Li & W. Zhao & L. Schang from early 2019 [LZS19] they describe a method named IPLT to prune common convolutional network architectures at the filter level and especially before convergence. Thus they do not only compress the networks by a factor of  $\times 10$  but also speed up training by a similar magnitude. If the LTH can be applied in such a fashion a speed-up of up to  $\times 20$  should be expected.

### 3.4 Additions to the Lottery Ticket Hypothesis

Even though the Lottery-Ticket-Hypothesis was only proposed earlier this year additional papers on the topic exist. In a paper from June 2019 J. Frankle & M. Carbin et al. [FDRC19] expand their method to find winning tickets on deep convolutional network architectures that proved difficult before. They attribute this achievement to the decision of not returning to the very first state of the network but to

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one a few iterations into training. Not only does this mark a lower limit for how early pruning is possible with the LTH but it also implies that a certain structure emerges after little training of the big network. Whether said structure only marks a point for valid reinitialization or rather already one for magnitude-based pruning is part of what this thesis wants to explore.

Additionally H. Zhou et al. [ZLLY19] document an ablation study on the phenomenon of lottery tickets. They reaffirm the initially naive magnitude-based pruning and describe "supermask" that improve accuracy when applied to the initial network even without additional training. Finally they find that a replacement of all weights in the pruned network by a constant with same sign as said weights does not significantly influence the networks capabilities. As such H. Zhou et al. conclude that the sign of weights are the essential property for such neural networks.



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## 4 Design

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### Hint:

This chapter should describe the design of the own approach on a conceptional level without mentioning the implementation details. The section should have a length of about five pages.

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### 4.1 Requirements and Assumptions

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### 4.2 Early Masking

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#### 4.2.1 Lenet-300-100

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- FC: 300, 100, 10
- Prune 20%
- Optimizer: Adam  $3 \cdot 10^{-4}$

---

#### 4.2.2 Conv-6

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- Con: 64, 64, pool
- Con: 128, 128, pool
- Con: 256, 256, pool
- FC: 256, 256, 10
- Prune 20% FC
- Prune 15% Con
- Optimizer: Adam  $3 \cdot 10^{-4}$

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#### 4.2.3 FGG-19

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All convolutions are 3x3 with 1 padding to preserve image-size. Pooling is 2x2-subsampling with stride 2. With each pooling the channel-depth is doubled

- Con: 64, 64, pool
- Con: 128, 128, pool
- Con: 256, 256, 256, 256, pool
- Con: 512, 512, 512, 512, pool
- Con: 512, 512, 512, 512, avg-pool
- FC: 10
- Prune 20% Con
- Optimizer: Momentum 0.9

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#### 4.2.4 Early Stopping

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A-posteriori vs. A-priori

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### 4.3 Transfer to NLP

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#### 4.3.1 Based Module

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- wordEmbed: at different scales (?) 300 dims
- Con: (?) 3 filter maps (width: 1:3:22)
- TempPool: 2 | 7
- Dropout
- GlobalAvePool

---

#### 4.3.2 Ensemble

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- Module: 16x
- Concat:
- Dropout
- Output
- Loss: binary cross-entropy

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### 4.4 Summary

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## 5 Implementation

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### Hint:

This chapter should describe the details of the implementation addressing the following questions:

1. What are the design decisions made?
2. What is the environment the approach is developed in?
3. How are components mapped to classes of the source code?
4. How do the components interact with each other?
5. What are limitations of the implementation?

The section should have a length of about five pages.

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### 5.1 Design Decisions

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**Tensorflow 2.0** is used as the framework for all experiments presented in this thesis. It enables software development on a high level of abstraction while ensuring code performance. Because some procedures are not naturally compatible with the implementation of Tensorflow 2.0 this thesis needs to employ a few workarounds. Notably pruned weights are not removed from the network but rather set to zero each time a layer is evaluated. As such they do not affect the predictions but are influenced by backpropagation. *The effect on the presented experiments is unclear to me.*

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#### Missing Parameters

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Through the related work referenced in this thesis specifications of any one model where incomplete. The following subsection aims to explain how the parameters were inferred or chosen.

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##### 5.1.1 title

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## 5.2 Architecture

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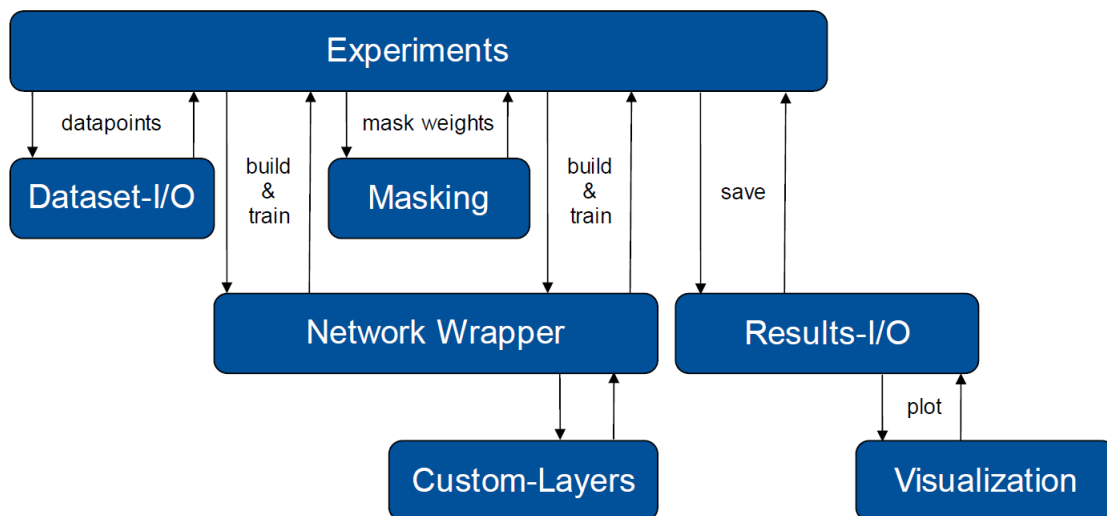


Figure 5.1.: project architecture

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## 5.3 Interaction of Components

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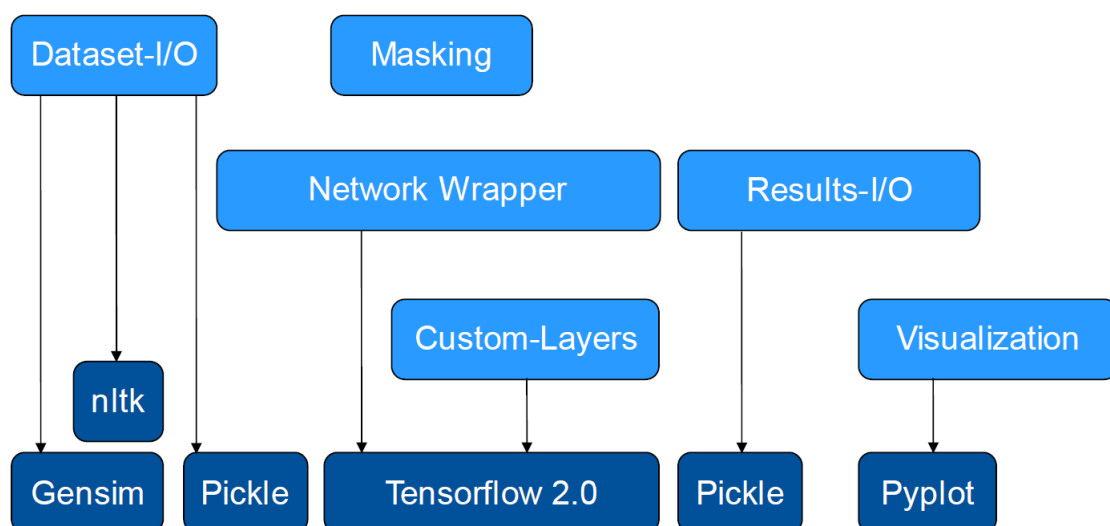


Figure 5.2.: project architecture

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## 5.4 Summary

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## 6 Data Sets

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### 6.1 MNIST

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The MNIST-dataset contains 25x25 gray-scale images of handwritten digits padded to 28x28 [YL].

### 6.2 CIFAR-10

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### 6.3 20-Newsgroup

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### 6.4 Reuters-21578

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The Reuters-21578-dataset contains 21578 articles published by the Reuters News Agency in 1987 [Lew]. Reuters-21578 differs from the previous data sets in the sense that it lacks a few fundamental properties. In particular Reuters-21578 is not only multi-class but rather multi-label meaning that any one data point can satisfy multiple categories. Additionally there are categories in Reuters-21578 that have no associated positive example and even for all remaining ones the amount of samples is heavily skewed. In order to restore parts of the missing properties with minimal change to the dataset different subsets of Reuters-21578 have been chosen by different researchers.

F. Debole & F. Sebastiani [DS05] describe those subsets, starting out stating that close to half of the data points are unusable which leaves 12,902 documents. 9,603 are marked for training and 3,299 for validation.<sup>1</sup> They also point out the different groups of categories used for classification:

- **R(115)**  
The group with the 115 categories containing at least one positive training example.
- **R(90)**  
The group with the 90 categories containing at least one positive training and test example.
- **R(10)**  
The group with the 10 categories containing the most examples.

	MNIST	CIFAR-10	20-Newsgroup	Reuters-21578
N. labels	10	10	20	10 to 115
N. datapoints	70.000	60.000	18846	12.902
fixed split	x	x	"bydate"	"ModApté"
shortened			x	x
class imbalance				x
multi-label				x

---

<sup>1</sup> While different training-splits were used for Reuters-21578 "ModApté" has become the canonical choice



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## 7 Evaluation

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### Hint:

This chapter should describe how the evaluation of the implemented mechanism was done.

1. Which evaluation method is used and why? Simulations, prototype?
2. What is the goal of the evaluation? Comparison? Proof of concept?
3. Which metrics are used for characterizing the performance, costs, fairness, and efficiency of the system?
4. What are the parameter settings used in the evaluation and why? If possible always justify why a certain threshold has been chosen for a particular parameter.
5. What is the outcome of the evaluation?

The section should have a length of about five to ten pages.

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### 7.1 Goal and Methodology

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- Early Pruning:  
Proof of concept  
+ trial of select early stopping points
- Transfer to NLP:  
Proof of concept

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### 7.2 Evaluation Setup

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- Early Pruning:  
LTH holds for mask with less than 50% of iterations to early stop
- Transfer to NLP:  
Network holds performance to within 1%-point while at least 50% weights are pruned

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### 7.3 Evaluation Results

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### 7.4 Analysis of Results

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## 8 Conclusions

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### Hint:

This chapter should summarize the thesis and describe the main contributions of the thesis. Subsequently, it should describe possible future work in the context of the thesis. What are limitations of the developed solutions? Which things can be improved? The section should have a length of about three pages.

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### 8.1 Summary

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### 8.2 Contributions

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### 8.3 Future Work

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### 8.4 Final Remarks

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# Appendices

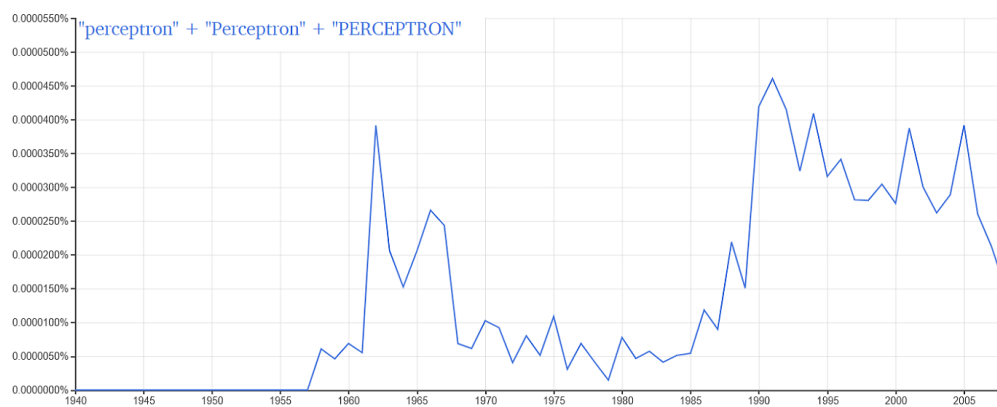


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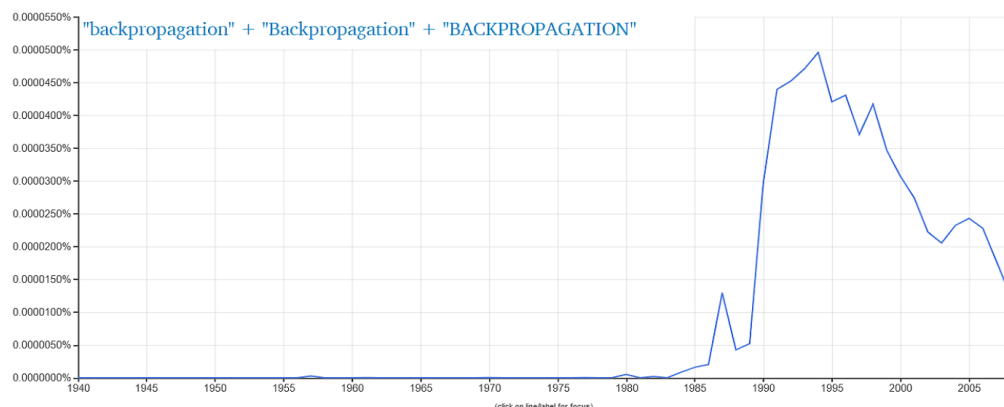
## A A history of neural networks

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- 1. wave: 1955-1970
- 2. wave: 1985-2000 ?
- 3. wave: ???



**Figure A.1.:** Relative amount of occurrences of the word "Perceptron" in published books between 1940 and 2009



**Figure A.2.:** Relative amount of occurrences of the word "Backpropagation" in published books between 1940 and 2009