

**TTIC 31230 Fundamentals of Deep Learning, winter 2019**  
**Framework Problems**

**Problem 1:** Consider the following softmax.

$$\begin{aligned} Z[b] &= \sum_j \exp(s[b, j]) \\ p[b, j] &= \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b] \end{aligned}$$

An alternative way to compute this is to initialize the tensors  $Z$  and  $p$  to zero and then execute the following loops.

for  $b, j$   $Z[b] += \exp(s[b, j])$

for  $b, j$   $p[b, j] += \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]$

Each individual  $+=$  operation inside the loops can be treated independently in backpropagation.

(a) Give a back-propagation loop over  $+=$  updates based on the second loop for adding to  $s.\text{grad}$  using  $p.\text{grad}$  (and using the forward-computed tensors  $Z$  and  $s$ ).

**Solution:** For  $b, j$   $s.\text{grad}[b, j] += p.\text{grad}[b, j] \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]$

(b) Give a back-propagation loop over  $+=$  updates based on the second equation for adding to  $Z.\text{grad}$  using  $p.\text{grad}$  (and using the forward-computed tensors  $s$  and  $Z$ ).

**Solution:** For  $b, j$   $Z.\text{grad}[b] -= p.\text{grad}[b, j] \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]^2$

(c) Give a back-propagation loop over  $+=$  updates based on the first equation for adding to  $s.\text{grad}$  using  $Z.\text{grad}$  (and using the forward-computed tensor  $s$ ).

**Solution:** For  $b, j$   $s.\text{grad}[b, j] += Z.\text{grad}[b] \exp(s[b, j])$

**Problem 2:** Show that the addition to  $s.\text{grad}$  shown in problem 1 can be computed using the following more efficient updates.

for  $b, j$   $e[b] -= p[b, j] p.\text{grad}[b, j]$

for  $b, j$   $s.\text{grad}[b, j] += p[b, j] (p.\text{grad}[b, j] + e[b])$

Hint: show  $Z.\text{grad}[b] = e[b] / Z[b]$ .

**Solution:** The updates for problem 1 can be written as

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{for } b \quad Z.\text{grad}[b] &= \sum_j -p.\text{grad}[b, j] \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]^2 \\
&= \left( \sum_j -p[b, j] p.\text{grad}[b, j] \right) / Z[b] \\
&= e[b] / Z[b]
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{for } b, j \quad s.\text{grad}[b, j] &= p.\text{grad}[b, j] \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b] + Z.\text{grad}[b] \exp(s[b, j]) \\
&= p.\text{grad}[b, j] (\exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]) + e[b] (\exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]) \\
&= p[b, j] (p.\text{grad}[b, j] + e[b])
\end{aligned}$$

This formula shows how hand-written back-propagation methods for “layers” such as softmax can be more efficient than compiler-generated back-propagation code. While optimizing compilers can of course be written, one must keep in mind the trade-off between the abstraction level of the programming language and the efficiency of the generated code.