

# HarperValleyBank: A Domain-Specific Spoken Dialog Corpus

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## Abstract

We introduce HARPERVALLEYBANK, a free, public domain spoken dialog corpus. The data simulate simple consumer banking interactions, containing about 23 hours of audio from 1,446 human-human conversations between 59 unique speakers. We selected intents and utterance templates to allow realistic variation while controlling overall task complexity and limiting vocabulary size to about 700 unique words. We provide audio data along with transcripts and annotations for speaker ID, caller intent, dialog actions, and emotional valence. The size and domain specificity of this data makes for quick experiments with modern end-to-end neural approaches. Further, we provide baselines for representation learning and transfer tasks. These experiments adapt recent work to embed utterances and use the resulting representations in prediction tasks. Our experiments show that tasks using our annotations are sensitive to both the model choice and corpus size for representation learning approaches.

## 1 Introduction

Recent innovations in deep learning approaches substantially improved spoken dialog systems in both academic research and industry applications. Speech recognition systems now regularly leverage neural network acoustic models to achieve near human performance (Hinton et al., 2012; Saon et al., 2017; Xiong et al., 2018). Modern systems increasingly use end-to-end recurrent neural network approaches which encode few assumptions and rapidly adapt to new data (Hannun et al., 2014; Chan et al., 2016; Maas et al., 2015; Likhomanenko et al., 2019; Graves and Jaitly, 2014; Bahdanau et al., 2016). In parallel, approaches to spoken and text-based dialog systems increasingly leverage neural networks for dialog management and state representation (Khatri et al., 2018; Andreas

et al., 2016; Liu and Lane, 2017). Building and experimenting with neural network approaches often requires sufficiently large datasets and significant computational resources for training and evaluation.

Most deep learning systems require dense annotations that scale with dataset size, posing a challenging barrier to widespread adoption. In response, there has been significant recent work in representation learning for domain and task transfer via embedding models (Oord et al., 2018; Chorowski et al., 2019; Schneider et al., 2019; Baevski et al., 2020), which can be trained without any supervision and reused for many downstream tasks like predicting speaker identity (Panayotov et al., 2015; Nagrani et al., 2017) and commands (Warden, 2018; Lugosch et al., 2019). Representation transfer is important to warm start deep learning based dialog systems on new task domains.

Recent research on representation learning for audio often use small prototyping datasets like TIMIT (Garofolo et al., 1993) and AudioMNIST (Becker et al., 2018). There are a range of existing datasets for dialog system research including spoken and text dialogs and interactions with human agents or deployed systems. See Serban et al. (2015) for a comprehensive review of available dialog datasets.

We developed the HARPERVALLEYBANK corpus for homeworks and projects in Stanford’s course *Spoken Language Processing*<sup>1</sup>, as well as research on spoken language representation learning and transfer. The goals of the corpus are to provide:

- Freely available data for education, research, or commercial development. We release the data using a Creative Commons license (CC-BY)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup><http://cs224s.stanford.edu/>

<sup>2</sup>[creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0)

- Sufficient size and variability to meaningfully train and evaluate end-to-end neural approaches for speech transcription.
- Manageable overall size and complexity to enable students to quickly iterate on experiments without requiring expensive compute hardware for training.
- Annotations for dialog-relevant tasks aside from speech transcription (e.g. intent, dialog action) to enable multi-task training and representation transfer benchmark tasks.
- Realistic domain-specific, goal-oriented conversations to evaluate representation transfer approaches across domains in spoken dialog systems.

We recorded two-sided phone conversations to simulate customer call center interactions in a financial services domain. The dataset is representative of human to human goal-oriented dialogs for consumer banking with a narrowly scoped set of intents. To evaluate transfer to tasks in our data, we borrow inspiration from recent representation learning methods in computer vision. An encoder is learned on a large, unlabeled dataset and used to represent data for supervised objectives on new datasets (Oord et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2018; Zhuang et al., 2019; Bachman et al., 2019; Misra and Maaten, 2020; He et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020).

In the next sections, we provide more details on the corpus and its collection, followed by experiments showcasing its applications to automatic speech recognition and unsupervised learning. In Sec. 2, we discuss basic corpus statistics, caller intents, and the data generation and annotation process. In Sec. 3, we explore several popular end-to-end neural models with multi-task objective functions to simultaneously perform speech-to-text transcription, speaker identification, and caller intent prediction. In Sec. 4, we explore using speaker identity and caller intents as downstream objectives to evaluate representation transfer, and propose a collection of unsupervised speech baselines. The full dataset with a PyTorch implementation reproducing the speech recognition and transfer experiments is available at <https://github.com/cricketclub/gridspace-stanford-harper-valley>.

## 2 The HARPERVALLEYBANK Corpus

We compile a dataset of recorded audio conversations between an agent and a customer of a bank. Conversations are goal-oriented, such as ordering a new checkbook or checking the balance of their account. Fig. 1 shows an example conversation from the dataset. We collected data using the Gridspace Mixer platform, where crowd workers are randomly paired for short telephone conversations. Mixer membership includes hundreds of past and current professional call center agents who are trained to perform assorted Mixer tasks in domains including healthcare, telecommunications, financial services, and commerce.

### 2.1 Data Collection Procedure

Using the Mixer web platform, a person is randomly assigned the role of agent or customer and provided a script for the interaction along with a telephone number to call to start the conversation. Roles are randomly assigned for each call, so the same worker can appear as both customer and agent in different conversations. We created a set of conversation goals and scripts for each interaction using templates intended to capture variety in each intent while keeping workers’ word choices and the overall interactions fairly simple with limited vocabulary. We do not control the noise environment or microphones used by each worker, and there is natural variation across different types of phones and environments.

When a person calls in, they are placed on hold until they are paired with the next available conversation partner. The groups are large enough that many unique pairings occur over the course of one session. Once the Mixer task is live for the caller, the web application will change state, informing the caller whether they are acting in the role of the agent or caller. The instructions, data, and user interface adapt to the role and provide a rough script. The customer role initiates a call task by expressing an intent, and the agent role has an interactive web interface to simulate completing a task. We encouraged callers to use mobile phones or headsets to encourage a microphone transfer function that is acoustically representative of a real call center.

During each call, participants have the script for their side of the conversation in front of them in a web browser. We provide examples of suggested phrasings in the Supplemental Material. The worker playing the customer role is given a single

intent for the conversation, along with specific values for relevant slots (e.g. the amount of money to transfer and the source/target accounts). When playing the agent role, a worker is shown some simple buttons and menus they must click to perform the requested operation (e.g. "check account balance", or "transfer money").

A conversation is deemed successful and considered for the dataset if the agent correctly executes the task provided to the customer caller. Names and slot values for different transactions are randomly generated, and we limit the number of possible names and proper nouns to reduce overall corpus vocabulary size. The Gridspace Mixer platform handles generating random templates from a high level specification, all associated telephony operations to pair callers, and recording audio along with metadata for each interaction.

AGENT: hello this is harper valley national  
bank my name is jay how can I help you  
today  
CALLER: hi my name is mary davis  
CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: i would like to schedule an appointment  
AGENT: yeah sure what day what time  
CALLER: thursday one thirty p m  
AGENT: that's done anything else  
CALLER: that's it  
AGENT: have a good one.

Figure 1: Example Conversation

## 2.2 Data Labelling

Gridspace Mixer trains a subset of its community to perform a wide range of annotations. For this corpus, Mixers performed three primary labeling tasks: *text transcript*, *audio quality*, and *script adherence ratings*. Gridspace has provided the Mixer community with a highly specialized speech labeling tool called Scriber. Scriber is designed for rapid human transcription and data labeling. The tool also provides a wide array of convenience and ergonomic functions, designed to enable efficient labeling of large spoken language datasets. Every person trained to use Scriber must go through several training sessions, which requires them to watch training videos and perform well on a quiz. For dialog actions and emotional valence, labels were instead produced using a Gridspace API rather than

human annotation. As a result, there may be some noise or bias, but our experiments indicate they are reasonable for a benchmark task.

The HARPERVALLEYBANK corpus was collected over three separate Mixer sessions and then filtered post-annotation, informed by the script adherence labels and audio quality labels, to ensure the data was simple and low variance. This filtering ensures the corpus provides conversational and task-oriented speech data while regulating for simplicity. The primary target of the cleaning were conversations where calls dropped or there were other technical issues which derailed the conversation. Specifically we removed conversations with script adherence ratings less than 4 and audio quality ratings less than 3. Furthermore we filtered out conversations which contained some words such as 'frozen', 'website', and 'refresh', which indicated conversation about technical issues with the task interface. In total we removed 375 conversations.

## 2.3 Corpus Statistics

HARPERVALLEYBANK Statistics	
Hours of audio	23.7
# of conversations/transcripts	1,446
# of utterances	25,730
# of unique words	735
Mean # of lines per conversation	17.8
Median # of lines per conversation	16
Mean # of words per utterance	4.1
Median # of words per utterance	4.5
# of unique speakers	59
# of task classes	8
# of dialog action classes	16
# of sentiment classes	3

Table 1: Basic statistics of the corpus.

Table 2 shows basic statistics of the HARPERVALLEYBANK corpus. The corpus contains about 23 hours of audio in total, across 1,446 conversations. Conversations range from 2 to 60 utterances, with an average of 18. Each utterance roughly corresponds to a single turn in the conversation. Due to automatic segmentation of utterances, there can be multiple utterances in a row from a single speaker's turn. Notably, the corpus has a small vocabulary of approximately 700 unique words. Many of the most common words in the vocabulary are domain-specific to customer service e.g. "help", "thank", or "please". Fig. 2b depicts how vocabulary size

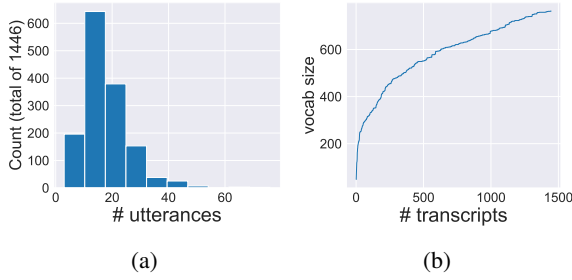


Figure 2: (a) The empirical distribution over the number of utterances in a conversation transcript. (b) The size of the vocabulary, or number of unique words spoken, as a function of the number of conversations.

scales with dataset size.

The Gridspace platform records each side of the conversation separately, and we release the audio in speaker-separated files encoded as 8kHz per the original telephony data. We transcribed the utterances via crowd workers with basic speech transcription training again using the Gridspace Mixer platform. Workers are not instructed to carefully transcribe word fragments or non-speech noises. Leveraging crowd workers and transcribing without precise fragments and non-speech tags has been shown to be a viable approach for training speech recognition systems (Novotney and Callison-Burch, 2010). We also provide estimated alignments using the Gridspace Speech Recognition API, although we did not evaluate the accuracy of these automatic alignments.

In addition to human transcriptions of each conversation, we include four categories of metadata to create additional inference tasks:

- **Intent.** Each conversation has a single intent representing the customer’s goal in the conversation. An intent can be one of eight categories: *order checks, check balance, replace card, reset password, get branch hours, pay bill, schedule appointment, transfer money*. The distribution over intents is roughly balanced, and derived automatically from the tasks assigned to callers during collection. Fig 3a shows the distribution of intent labels for conversations.
- **Emotional Valence.** Utterances are automatically labeled with three sentiment categories, *negative, neutral, and positive*. There is a probability estimate label for each category. These annotations are generated by a model in the Gridspace Speech API which was trained

on a large corpus of proprietary data from multiple domains. Fig 3b shows the distribution of probabilities for each sentiment category across utterances.

- **Speaker ID.** Utterances have a unique ID out of 59 speakers. The number of utterances per speaker are imbalanced, with most speakers responsible for less than 50 utterances. Fig 3c shows the distribution of utterances by speaker.
- **Dialog Action.** A label per utterance corresponding to types of “conversational move.” represented in the utterance. There are 16 total dialog actions, and more than one can be present in an utterance. Like speaker identity, the distribution over actions is imbalanced with “greeting” being the most frequent and many infrequent actions combined into the “other” category. The 16 possible actions are: *“yes” response, greeting, response, data confirmation, procedure explanation, data question, closing, data communication, “bear with me” response, acknowledgement, data response, filler disfluency, thanks, open question, problem description, and other*. Fig 3d shows the distribution of dialog actions for utterances.

### 3 Spoken Language Understanding

We now consider some baselines for the HARPER-VALLEYBANK corpus on speech recognition and our four prediction tasks. For speech recognition, we focus on three common approaches: connectionist temporal classification or CTC (Graves et al., 2006), Listen-Attend-Spell or LAS (Chan et al., 2016), and finally, a “multi-task” objective combining the two previous losses (Kim et al., 2017), MTL. All objectives produce an *embedding* vector by encoding audio features.

In addition to optimizing the speech recognition objective, denoted  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{asr}}$ , we fit four linear layers mapping the embedding of the audio signal to a prediction for each of the other tasks: the speaker identity, intent, dialog action, and sentiment labels. These four auxiliary objectives are optimized jointly with the speech recognition objective:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{asr}} + \mathcal{L}_{\text{spk}} + \mathcal{L}_{\text{task}} + \mathcal{L}_{\text{action}} + \mathcal{L}_{\text{sent}} \quad (1)$$

where  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{spk}}$ ,  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{task}}$ , and  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{sent}}$  are cross entropy losses, whereas  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{action}}$  comprises a sum of binary



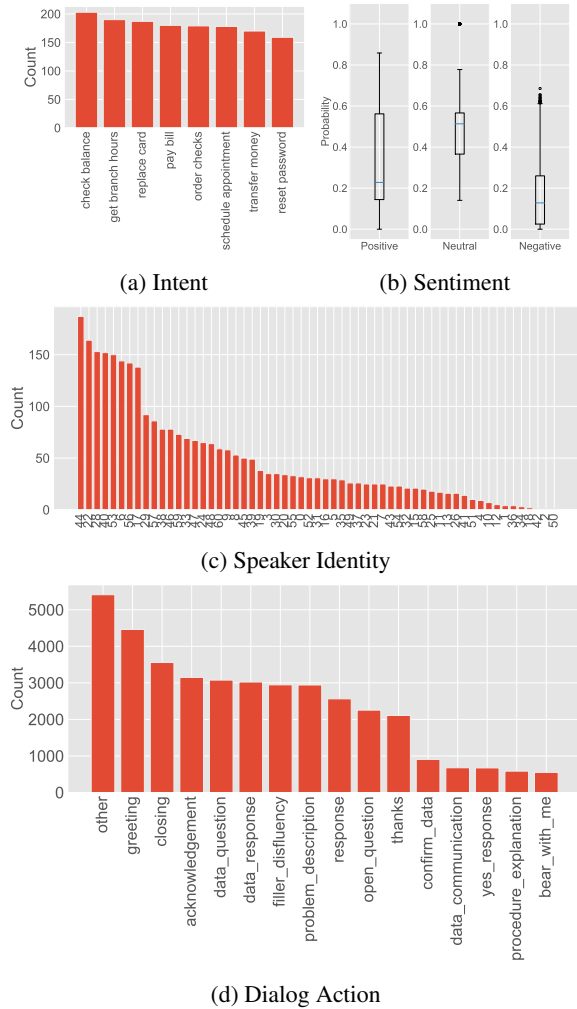


Figure 3: Distribution over auxiliary labels in the dataset. Subfigures (a,c,d) show the counts for intent, speaker, and dialog action, respectively. Subfigure (b) show boxplots for each of the three sentiments.

cross entropy losses, one for each of the sixteen dialog actions, of which more than one may apply to any single utterance.

**Training Details** For the ASR models, audio waveforms are loaded by `torchaudio` and pre-processed to log Mel-frequency spectrogram features using Librosa (McFee et al., 2017). For CTC, we encode log-Mel features using a bi-directional LSTM with two layers and 128 hidden dimensions. CTC decoding is done greedily with no language model. In LAS, the listener network is composed of three stacked pyramid bi-directional LSTMs (which cuts the input length by 4) with 128 hidden dimensions whereas the speller network is an uni-directional LSTM with two layers, 256 hidden dimensions, and a single-head attention layer. For MTL, we use the same encoder as LAS but

include both the speller and CTC decoder. As encoder parameters are shared, we can interpret CTC as a secondary objective whose main role is to regularize the LAS encoder to respect CTC alignments. The LAS and MTL objectives both use a label smoothing hyperparameter of 0.1 and teacher forcing with probability 0.9. We train each model for 200 epochs with Adam (Kingma and Ba, 2014) using a learning rate of  $5e-4$ , weight decay  $1e-5$ , batch size 256 with gradient clipping.

**Results and Analysis** Table 2 shows the performance of CTC, LAS, and MTL. As consistent with prior literature, we find LAS to outperform CTC in terms of word error rate (WER) since the latter is forced to assumed conditional independence among input characters. However, we surprisingly find CTC to outperform LAS in all four auxiliary tasks, suggesting that the learned alignments enforced by CTC may be useful for speaker ID and intent prediction, among others. Further, we find MTL to outperform both LAS and CTC in word error rate, reproducing the findings from (Kim et al., 2017), with equivalent performance as LAS on the auxiliary tasks. In contrast, Table 3 shows results on a speaker-disjoint split of the data with speaker ID results omitted by necessity. Interestingly, we no longer see CTC outperforming the end-to-end neural approaches on auxiliary tasks, suggesting that CTC lacks generalization to unobserved speakers. Once again, we find LAS and MTL to greatly outperform CTC in WER.

## 4 Representation Learning

Unsupervised representation learning seeks to derive useful representations of unstructured data, such as speech waveforms, without any human annotations. (Unlike the experiments above, we no longer assume access to human transcriptions or classification labels of identity or action.) The learned representations are considered a “summary” of the raw data, often being used as a starting point for downstream tasks. For instance, unsupervised speech representations might be used to predict speaker identity or utterance topic. As HARPER-VALLEYBANK is a fairly small dataset, it is a suitable candidate dataset to measure the effectiveness of pretrained speech representations.

To showcase a strong family of baselines, we borrow recent ideas from contrastive learning (Wu et al., 2018; Zhuang et al., 2019; Bachman et al., 2019; Misra and Maaten, 2020; He et al., 2020;

Model	WER	Speaker ID	Intent	Dialog Action (F1)	Sentiment
CTC	46.9	<b>89.5</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>82.4</b>
LAS	13.3	88.0	30.8	26.8	72.1
MTL	<b>12.7</b>	88.3	30.7	27.9	72.4

Table 2: Performance on the HARPERVALLEYBANK test set. Word error rate (WER) of speech recognition systems along with accuracy on auxiliary dialog tasks: speaker ID, caller intent, dialog action, and sentiment prediction. For dialog action, we report F1 scores. Examples are split by utterance randomly.

Model	WER	Intent	Action (F1)	Sentiment
CTC	51.6	36.7	32.9	75.3
LAS	12.7	36.9	<b>34.5</b>	<b>80.0</b>
MTL	<b>11.5</b>	<b>38.2</b>	33.7	76.1

Table 3: Speech recognition and auxiliary task performance on HARPERVALLEYBANK *split by speaker*.

Chen et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020; Joshi et al., 2020) where the goal is to learn good representations by discriminating between specific instances in a dataset. In particular, we adapt four algorithms from computer vision: Instance Discrimination or IR (Wu et al., 2018), Local Aggregation or LA (Zhuang et al., 2019), Momentum Contrast or MoCo (He et al., 2020), and SimCLR (Chen et al., 2020). We provide a brief summary of each algorithm with necessary edits for usage in speech.

#### 4.1 Contrastive Learning for Audio

Let  $\mathcal{D} = \{x_i\}_{i=1}^n$  be a dataset of  $n$  speech waveforms sampled independently from a distribution  $p(x)$ , and let  $\mathcal{T}$  be family of data augmentations such that every  $t : X \rightarrow X \in \mathcal{T}$  is a function mapping one waveform to another. For instance, adding noise to or cropping are two common augmentations of speech waveforms. Suppose we have a distribution  $p(t)$  over the functions in  $\mathcal{T}$ , often chosen to be the uniform distribution. Now, introduce an *encoder*, a neural network that maps  $x$  to a representation  $g_\theta(x)$ , which is  $L_2$  normalized to prevent trivial solutions. The contrastive objective for the  $i$ -th example is:

$$\mathcal{L}(x_i) = \log \frac{e^{g_\theta(t(x_i))^T g_\theta(t'(x_i))/\tau}}{\sum_{j \in \{i, 1:k\}} e^{g_\theta(t(x_i))^T g_\theta(t_j(x_j))/\tau}} \quad (2)$$

where  $t, t', t_{2:k} \sim p(t)$  and  $x_{1:k} \sim p(x)$  i.i.d. (We assume this to be the case from now on unless otherwise mentioned.) We call  $x_{1:k}$  negative samples: if we consider the numerator of Eq. 2 as a similarity function between two terms, the denominator seeks to normalize that similarity with respect to other plausible examples drawn from the dataset.

Prior work has shown that Eq. 2 is a lower bound on the mutual information between two views of an instance (Bachman et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020; Tian et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020). Optimizing this would be trivial if not for the augmentation functions, which we often choose to hide information in  $x$ . For instance, adding white noise or cropping an audio waveform bottlenecks information. By maximizing mutual information despite these lossy transformations, the representations are encouraged to be abstract and invariant. In this work, we construct  $\mathcal{T}$  for by (1) randomly taking contiguous subsets of the raw waveform (i.e. cropping), and (2) adding white noise to the raw waveform. In our experiments, we will also explore masking time and spatial frequencies in the log-Mel spectrograms, rather than applying augmentations at the waveform level. The choice of augmentations is fundamental to the success of contrastive algorithms, much more than the typical role of data augmentation in supervised training. Future work should explore “optimal” choices for audio views, focusing on domain specific transformation e.g. pitch, speed, or adding background noise.

In practice, the number of negative examples,  $k$ , needs to be large to reduce variance in its estimate of the partition function. As computing the denominator requires  $k+1$  forward (and backward) passes through the encoder, this becomes quickly intractable. No shortage of technical innovation has gone to circumventing this expensive operation. We focus on four different approaches.

**IR** The innovation of IR is to introduce a memory bank  $M$  that stores the embedding for the  $i$ -th entry in the training dataset throughout training. That is, given the current minibatch containing the  $i$ -th example  $x_i$ , we compute  $g_\theta(t(x_i))$  using a random view of  $x_i$  and save it to entry  $M[i]$ . Having done so, we can rewrite Eq. 2 as:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{IR}}(x_i) = \log \frac{e^{g_\theta(t(x_i))^T M[i]/\tau}}{\sum_{j \in \{i, j_{1:k}\}} e^{g_\theta(t(x_i))^T M[j]/\tau}} \quad (3)$$

for the  $i$ -th example in  $\mathcal{D}$ , where  $j_{1:k}$  are uniformly chosen from  $[1, n]$ . Observe that this is equivalent to choosing negatives from  $p(x)$  as each row in  $M$  corresponds to an instance in  $\mathcal{D}$ . At the current minibatch,  $M[i]$  stores the representation of the augmentation of  $i$ -th example from the last epoch. Thus, the numerator of Eq. 3 still compares two augmentations of  $x_i$ . The benefit of IR is that retrieving from  $M[i]$  is almost no cost, meaning we are free to choose  $k$  to be very large. The disadvantage however, is that gradients cannot propagate through  $M$  and the entries in  $M$  can be stale.

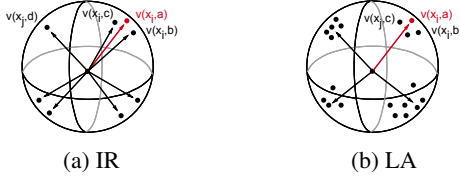


Figure 4: Comparison of “optima” for IR and LA. For intuition, the optima of contrastive learning is to spread the embeddings of data points uniformly on the surface of a  $d$  dimensional sphere, where  $d$  is embedding dimensionality. Such a configuration makes it such that any pair of points is as easy to discriminate as any other pair, a property that may be useful for transfer learning.

**MoCo** To combat staleness, MoCo replaces the memory bank with a first-in-first-out (FIFO) queue of size  $k$ . Every minibatch, the latest representations are cached into the queue while the most stale ones are removed. Additionally, MoCo introduces a second (momentum) encoder  $g_{\theta'}$ . Now, the primary encoder  $g_{\theta}$  is used to embed one view of the instance  $x_i$  whereas the momentum encoder is used to embed the other. Again, gradients are not propagated to  $g_{\theta'}$ . Instead, its parameters are deterministically set by a momentum equation  $\theta' = m\theta' + (1 - m)\theta$  where  $m$  is an update coefficient. The MoCo objective is

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{MoCo}}(x_i) = \log \frac{e^{g_{\theta}(t(x_i))^T g_{\theta'}(t'(x_i))/\tau}}{\sum_{j \in \{1:k\}} e^{g_{\theta}(t(x_i))^T Q[j]/\tau}} \quad (4)$$

where  $Q$  is the FIFO queue.

**LA** Building on IR, the LA algorithm treats neighbor examples of  $x_i$  as its augmentations. For motivation, two customers calling the bank to order a checkbook might be good augmentations of each other: the audio may differ in word choice, but the semantic meaning is identical. Doing so may encourage the representation to be invariant

to syntax. Intuition-wise, using neighboring examples as augmentations is equivalent to encouraging uniform clusters of points on the hypersphere, as opposed to uniform points (see Fig. 4).

More precisely, LA introduces two new sets for every input  $x_i$ : a *background* neighbor set  $B_i$  and a *close* neighbor set  $C_i$ , each containing indices between 1 and  $n$  representing the elements in  $\mathcal{D}$  belonging to each set. For  $x_i$ , the background neighbor set contain examples in  $\mathcal{D}$  most similar to  $M[i]$  as measured by dot product in embedding space. The close neighbor set is defined separately by elements that belong to the same cluster as  $M[i]$  using an ensemble of K-Means clusterings optimized using all embeddings stored in  $M$ . We assume  $C_i \subseteq B_i$ . Now, the LA loss is:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{LA}}(x_i) = \log \frac{\sum_{k \in C_i} e^{g_{\theta}(t(x_i))^T M[k]/\tau}}{\sum_{k' \in B_i} e^{g_{\theta}(t(x_i))^T M[k']/\tau}} \quad (5)$$

In vision, LA outperforms IR in transfer tasks. We study if the benefits generalize to speech.

**SimCLR** Finally, we discuss a more recent contrastive algorithm that outperforms IR, MoCo, and LA, nearing supervised performance in vision. One of the fundamental flaws of the previous three algorithms is being forced to cut gradients to half of the terms in the objective. From an optimization perspective, this should dramatically reduce the amount of learning signal in each gradient step. The SimCLR framework (Chen et al., 2020) circumvents this by bootstrapping negative samples from the other elements in same minibatch as the current example. Since members of a minibatch are sampled uniformly from the dataset, doing so is unbiased. Further, since neural networks do computation one minibatch at a time, this procedure introduces little additional compute. Precisely, suppose every iteration we are given a minibatch of waveforms with two views each, denoted  $x_{1:m}$  and  $x_{m+1:2m}$  such that  $x_i$  and  $x_{i+m}$  are views of the same image,  $m$  being the minibatch size.

In summary, the SimCLR objective is

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{SimCLR}}(x_i) = \log \frac{e^{g_{\theta}(t(x_i))^T g_{\theta}(t'(x_{i+m}))/\tau}}{\sum_{j \neq i, j=1}^{2m} e^{g_{\theta}(t(x_i))^T g_{\theta}(t_j(x_j))/\tau}} \quad (6)$$

where  $i \in [1, m]$  and  $x_{1:2m} \sim p(x)$  i.i.d. The efficacy of SimCLR highly depends on  $m$  being large, otherwise reverting to the issue of high variance from using too few negative samples. We are again interested to see if the benefits of

SimCLR generalize to the audio domain.

Since these methods were primarily developed for vision, they have not been extensively applied to speech. One of the contributions of this paper is to establish comparable baselines for audio representation learning across this suite of recent algorithms. As a close relative, we also compare to the representations learned using Wav2Vec-1.0 (Schneider et al., 2019) and Wav2Vec-2.0 (Baevski et al., 2020), contrastive algorithms that are trained to predict future audio sequences, instead of another view of the same audio sequence.

As these unsupervised representations are posited to be general, we can measure their usefulness on a wide variety of transfer tasks by fitting a downstream model on top of the pretrained, and frozen, embeddings. A “better” representation should result in a higher classification accuracy across the four HARPERVALLEYBANK caller intents, which are diverse enough to gauge different properties of the representation. We purposefully fit a small linear model, e.g. logistic regression, (and no finetuning) for each task separately to focus on analyzing the embedding quality.

Model	Spk.	Intent	Action	Sent.
Wav2Vec 1.0 (960hr)	18.2	17.1	0.0	53.7
Wav2Vec 2.0 (100hr)	22.3	19.7	0.0	54.3
Wav2Vec 2.0 (960hr)	27.3	20.5	0.0	55.5
IR (100hr)	99.5	99.1	0.0	51.3
LA (100hr)	99.5	98.8	0.0	50.5
MoCo (100hr)	99.6	98.9	0.0	53.2
SimCLR (100hr)	99.8	99.3	0.0	53.9
IR* (100hr)	99.5	84.5	0.0	51.4
LA* (100hr)	97.5	75.8	1.4	55.1
MoCo* (100hr)	99.1	82.6	0.0	54.0
SimCLR* (100hr)	99.2	81.4	0.0	54.6
IR (960hr)	99.9	99.9	17.4	66.3
LA (960hr)	99.9	99.9	18.4	64.6
MoCo (960hr)	99.9	99.9	17.3	65.5
SimCLR (960hr)	99.9	99.9	17.4	65.9
IR* (960hr)	99.9	86.7	17.6	64.8
LA* (960hr)	99.9	79.8	18.0	64.6
MoCo* (960hr)	99.5	86.1	16.2	64.3
SimCLR* (960hr)	98.6	82.6	16.1	65.6

Table 4: Performance on speaker identity, intent, dialog action, and sentiment. We report F1 score for dialog action. The superscript (\*) represents using spectral augmentations rather than waveform augmentations.

**Training Details** We again ignore speakers with less than 10 utterances in the dataset. For Wav2Vec based models, we use the official implementation and pretrained weights available on FairSeq (Ott et al., 2019). All algorithms are trained on either

the 100 hour split or 960 hour split of LibriSpeech (Panayotov et al., 2015). To fit IR, LA, MoCo, and SimCLR, we first apply any data augmentations, then truncate to waveforms to 150k frames, and compute the log-Mel spectrogram as the input to the encoder. Spectrograms are z-scored using the mean and standard deviation computed from the training split, which we found to be important for generalization to new domains. By default, our augmentations select contiguous crops of waveforms with a minimum and maximum ratio of 0.08 to 1.0, along with Gaussian noise with a scale of 1.0. We separately explore first computing the spectrogram, then applying a time and frequency mask (using the `nlpaug` library with a mask factor of 40 for both), denoted by the (\*) superscript in Table 4. Regardless, we use a hop length of 1344 and a FFT window of 112 for an processed spectrogram shape of 112 by 112. Then, we use a ResNet50 (He et al., 2016) to map this to an  $d=2048$  dimensional embedding. Wav2Vec-1.0 and Wav2Vec-2.0 use customized architectures that amount to around 1.5 times the number of parameters as ResNet50.

After representation learning, we measure the quality of an embedding by linear classification (Wu et al., 2018; Zhuang et al., 2019; He et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020). We use the features after the last convolutional layer and prior to the global pooling, resulting in a 2048x4x4 dimensional vector and fit a logistic regression model mapping this vector to a probability for each class in the transfer task. A separate regression is fit for speaker ID, intent, dialog action, and sentiment. For the Wav2Vec family, we use the encoded embedding, averaged over timesteps, with dimension 512 and 1024 for the 1.0 and 2.0 models, respectively. Each transfer dataset is split into train (80%) and test (20%) sets by class to ensure both sets have instances of each class. Thus, each transfer task has its own train test split (which is notably different than the one used in the ASR experiments). The same data augmentations used in pretraining are used in transfer but not in evaluation.

In optimization, we use SGD with batch size 256, learning rate 0.03, momentum 0.9, weight decay  $1e-4$  for 200 epochs. In transfer, we use SGD with batch size 256, learning rate 0.01, momentum 0.9, weight decay  $1e-5$  for 100 epochs. Due to the size of Wav2Vec models, we use a batch size of 64. In the contrastive objectives, we use a temperature  $\tau=0.07$ . For IR and LA, we use 4096 negative



samples and set the memory bank update parameter to 0.5. For LA, we fit KMeans with  $k=5000$  ten times with different random seeds and take the union of all of 10 clusters with the current input as a member. To do tractable large-scale similarity search, we use the FAISS toolkit (Johnson et al., 2019). For MoCo, we use a queue of size 66536 and a momentum update of 0.99. We leave more careful hyperparameter search to future work.

**Results and Analysis** Table 4 reports test accuracies comparing the different unsupervised models. For dialog action prediction, we compute F1 score, which more reliably measures model performance given a biased label set (e.g. a F1 score of 0.0 corresponds to an accuracy of  $\sim 90\%$ ).

We make a few observations:

- IR, LA, MoCo, and SimCLR surpass purely supervised methods (e.g. CTC, LAS, and MTL) in terms of speaker and intent prediction, although falling short in inferring dialog action and sentiment.
- The visual contrastive objectives (IR, LA, MoCo, and SimCLR) outperform the Wav2Vec family significantly on Speaker ID and caller intent with gains of  $\sim 70\%$ .
- Dialog action prediction is a surprisingly difficult task for speech representation learning. Whereas supervised methods (fit on HARPERVALLEYBANK) achieve upwards of 30.0 F1, the best models in Table 4 achieve half the score, despite seeing 960 hours of data. Further, models trained on only 100 hours (and all Wav2Vec algorithms), do no better than trivially predicting one label.
- On the other hand, unsupervised methods reached near ceiling for caller intent prediction whereas CTC, LAS, and MTL at best, approached 40% accuracy.
- We see consistent gains in IR, LA, MoCo, and SimCLR when pretraining on 860 additional hours of data. This difference is most apparent in dialog action and sentiment prediction.
- Unlike in vision, LA, MoCo, SimCLR do not show consistent improvements over IR, suggesting that recent innovations might be overfitting to the visual modality.

In summary, we proposed three baseline algorithms for representation learning in audio with the caller intents from HARPERVALLEYBANK as measures of the usefulness of a representation. We find improvements over previous algorithms (e.g. Wav2Vec) which future research can build upon.

## 5 Conclusion

We introduced HARPERVALLEYBANK, a new speech corpus of transcribed conversations between employees and customers in a bank transaction. The corpus includes additional labels, including speaker identity, caller intent, dialog actions, and sentiment. In our experiments, we established baseline models that showed this corpus to be an interesting challenge for future algorithms, and a useful educational tool for modern deep learning approaches to spoken dialog. Our experiments analyzed utterances independently, future work can explore using the HARPERVALLEYBANK corpus in conversation modelling and its related downstream optimization.

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## 6 Supplemental Material

### 6.1 Dataset Examples

We include 10 randomly chosen conversations from the HARPERVALLEYBANK Corpus.

CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: hello this is harper valley national bank my name is james how can i help you today  
CALLER: hi my name is [unk] [unk] i need to check my account balance  
CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: which account would you like to check  
CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: my savings account  
AGENT: your savings account balance is ninety five dollars  
AGENT: is there anything else i can help you with  
CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: no thank you that will be all for today  
AGENT: thank you for calling have a great day  
CALLER: you too thank you

Figure 5: Supplemental Example 1

### 6.2 Suggested Phrasings

For each task the Mixers were given suggested phrases to use in order to complete the given task. We have included these phrases below, broken down by speaker role and task. We also include agent instructions for starting and ending calls. Bolded text indicates text that was randomized for each conversation.

#### 6.2.1 Agent Instructions

- Wait for the call to be connected...
- “Hello, this is Harper Valley National Bank, my name is *Mary*”
- “How can I help you today?”
- Use the scripts for each task.
- To ask the caller to repeat: “Can you repeat the [item-to-be-repeated]”

AGENT: hello this is harper valley national bank my name is elizabeth how can i help you today  
CALLER: hi my name is mary williams  
CALLER: i would like to transfer money  
CALLER: between my accounts  
AGENT: okay one moment please  
AGENT: uh what is the transfer amount  
CALLER: the amount is one hundred and thirty two dollars  
AGENT: what is the source account  
CALLER: from my checking account  
CALLER: to my savings account  
AGENT: alright thank you very much your [unk] your transfer has gone through is there anything else i can help you with  
CALLER: that’s everything for today thank you very much  
AGENT: well thank you for calling have a great day  
CALLER: [unk] bye  
AGENT: bye bye  
CALLER: [noise]

Figure 6: Supplemental Example 2

CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: hello this is harper valley national bank  
AGENT: my name is elizabeth how can i help you  
CALLER: hi my name is john garcia i need to check my account balance  
AGENT: which account would you like to check  
CALLER: my savings account  
AGENT: your savings account balance is one hundred twenty one dollars  
AGENT: is there anything else i can help you with  
CALLER: that’ll be all thank you  
AGENT: thank you for calling have a great day

Figure 7: Supplemental Example 3

- Read additional response after completing each task
- When done: “Is there anything else I can help you with?”



AGENT: hello this is harper valley national bank my name is james how can i help you today

CALLER: hi my name is robert wilson

CALLER: i would like to reset my password

AGENT: okay what was your phone number

CALLER: my phone number is zero one zero

CALLER: seven eight three

CALLER: seven five two nine

AGENT: [unintelligible] zero [unintelligible] three seven five two nine

CALLER: yes

AGENT: your password reset link has been sent to your phone is there anything else i can help you with

CALLER: no that's it thank you

AGENT: and thank you for calling have a great day

AGENT: [noise]

CALLER: you too

AGENT: [noise]

Figure 8: Supplemental Example 4

- “Thank you for calling, have a great day!”

### 6.2.2 Schedule an appointment

#### Caller

- “I would like to schedule an appointment”
- When prompted for day: “*Tuesday*”
- When prompted for time: “*10:30 AM*”

#### Agent

- “What day would you like for your appointment?”
- “What time would you like for your appointment?”

### 6.2.3 Replace card

#### Caller

- “I lost my *credit card*, can you send me a new one?”
- If prompted for card type: “My *credit card*.”

#### Agent

- “Which card would you like to replace”

AGENT: hello this is ms harper

AGENT: i'm sorry hello this is harper valley national bank my name is linda how can i help you today

CALLER: [noise]

CALLER: hi my name is jennifer miller i would like to pay a bill

AGENT: okay pay a bill i can help you with that

AGENT: and what's the name of the company

CALLER: the company is smart electric

AGENT: okay smart

AGENT: electric

CALLER: uh it's actually electic so it's e l e c t i c it's spelled a little funny

AGENT: and the address

AGENT: okay

AGENT: i've got that

AGENT: and um address

CALLER: the address is one three seven main street

CALLER: that's gonna be in forest ranch

AGENT: one

AGENT: main

AGENT: street

CALLER: and that's california

AGENT: [noise]

CALLER: three zero three four five

AGENT: i'm sorry can you repeat that zip [unk] code

CALLER: yeah three zero three four five

AGENT: mkay

AGENT: and what amount would you like to pay today

CALLER: the amount of the bill is ninety nine dollars

AGENT: okay is there anything else i can help with today

CALLER: no that'll be it thank you

AGENT: okay thank you for calling have a great day

CALLER: uh huh mhm bye

AGENT: alright bye bye

Figure 9: Supplemental Example 5

### 6.2.4 Transfer money

#### Caller

- “I would like to transfer money between my accounts”

- “From my *checking* account to my *savings* account”
- “The amount is \$97”

**Agent**

- “What is the transfer amount?”
- “What is the source account?”
- “What is the destination account?”

### **6.2.5 Check account balance**

**Caller**

- “I need to check my account balance”
- When prompted account type: “My *checking* account”

**Agent**

- “Which account would you like to check?”:

### **6.2.6 Pay a bill**

**Caller**

- “I would like to pay a bill”
- “The company is *Fossil Gas*”
- “The address is *120 Main Street, Forest Ranch, California, 84732*”
- “The amount of the bill is \$102”

**Agent**

- “What is the company name?”:
- “What is the company address?”:
- “What is the bill amount?”:

### **6.2.7 Order a new checkbook**

**Caller**

- “I need a new checkbook”
- “My address is *460 First Street, Forest Ranch, California, 07307*”

**Agent**

- “What is your address?”

### **6.2.8 Reset password**

**Caller**

- “I would like to reset my password”
- “My phone number is *497-522-3547*”

**Agent**

- “What is your phone number?”:

### **6.2.9 Get local branch hours**

**Caller**

- “What are the local branch hours”

**Agent**

- “The branch hours are 9:30 am - 5:00 pm”

CALLER: [unintelligible] okay  
 AGENT: hello this is harper valley national  
 bank my name is mary how can i help  
 you today  
 CALLER: hello uh my name is elizabeth jones  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 CALLER: i'd like to pay a bill  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: and what is the company name  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 CALLER: smart electric  
 CALLER: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [cough]  
 AGENT: and what is the company address  
 CALLER: zero two two main street  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 CALLER: forest ranch oregon  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 CALLER: eight six seven  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 CALLER: five one  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 AGENT: [noise] [noise] [noise]  
 CALLER: [noise]  
 AGENT: can you please repeat the zip code  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 CALLER: i'm sorry what  
 AGENT: can you please repeat the zip code  
 [noise] okay and what is the bill amount  
 CALLER: [noise]  
 CALLER: eight seven two six one  
 AGENT: [noise]  
 CALLER: eighty seven dollars  
 CALLER: [noise]  
 AGENT: k we will send your payment to  
 smart electric is there anything else i can  
 help you with  
 CALLER: [noise]  
 CALLER: no that's all thank you  
 AGENT: thank you for calling have a great  
 day  
 CALLER: [noise]

Figure 10: Supplemental Example 6

AGENT: hello this is harper valley national  
 bank my name is mary how can i help  
 you today  
 CALLER: hi my name is elizabeth smith  
 CALLER: i need to check my account balance  
 AGENT: sure i can help you with that  
 AGENT: uh what which account would you  
 like to check  
 CALLER: [noise]  
 CALLER: my checking account  
 AGENT: sure um so it shows that your check-  
 ing account balance is sixty seven dollars  
 is there anything else i can help you with  
 CALLER: no thank you  
 AGENT: thank you for calling have a great  
 day  
 CALLER: [noise]  
 CALLER: [noise]

Figure 11: Supplemental Example 7

AGENT: hello this is harper valley national  
 bank my name is robert how can i help  
 you today  
 CALLER: hi my name is patricia jones  
 CALLER: i would like to reset my password  
 AGENT: okay let's get that set for you and  
 what is your phone number  
 CALLER: [noise]  
 CALLER: my phone number is six four nine  
 CALLER: six seven one  
 CALLER: one nine nine eight  
 AGENT: okay  
 AGENT: your password link has been sent to  
 your email is there anything else i can  
 help you with  
 CALLER: no thank you  
 AGENT: [unk] thank you for calling you have  
 a great day  
 CALLER: [noise]

Figure 12: Supplemental Example 8

AGENT: hello this is harper valley national  
bank my name is elizabeth how can i  
help you today  
CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: hi my name is david wilson i would  
like to pay a bill  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: what's the company name  
CALLER: fossil gas  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: [music]  
AGENT: okay and what's the company ad-  
dress  
CALLER: the address is eight zero three  
AGENT: [noise]  
CALLER: main street  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: [noise]  
CALLER: that's in harper valley oregon  
AGENT: [noise]  
CALLER: nine five seven five eight  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: could you please repeat the zip code  
CALLER: nine five seven five eight  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: and what's the bill amount  
CALLER: the amount of the bill is ninety two  
dollars  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: [noise]  
CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: okay  
AGENT: i have sent your um bill to fossil gas  
is there anything else i can help you with  
today  
CALLER: that will be all thank you  
AGENT: [noise]  
AGENT: thank you for calling have a good  
day  
CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: [noise]

Figure 13: Supplemental Example 9

AGENT: hello this is harper valley national  
bank my name is mary how can i help  
you today  
CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: um hi my name is mary davis uh i  
need i will like to have a new check sent  
to my home address  
AGENT: okay a new checkbook  
CALLER: [noise] yeah  
AGENT: what is your address  
CALLER: so my address is three four five  
main street  
CALLER: the city is harper valley  
CALLER: and the state is california  
CALLER: and the zip is nine one two four  
nine  
CALLER: [noise]  
CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: okay  
AGENT: can you repeat that zip code  
CALLER: yes it's nine one two four nine  
AGENT: nine one four two nine  
CALLER: no nine one  
CALLER: two four nine  
AGENT: okay nine one  
AGENT: two four nine  
CALLER: yeah  
AGENT: okay  
AGENT: i have  
CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: three four five main street  
CALLER: yes  
AGENT: harper valley  
CALLER: and  
AGENT: california  
CALLER: yes harper valley yes  
CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: nine one two four nine  
CALLER: four nine yes  
CALLER: [noise]  
AGENT: okay a new check book has been sent  
to your home address is there anything  
else i can help you with  
CALLER: uh no that's all i need for today  
thank you  
AGENT: alright thank you for calling have a  
great day  
CALLER: you too bye  
AGENT: mmm bye

Figure 14: Supplemental Example 10