MTech(IS)

Breakout Reinforcement Learning System

Project Report

**REINFORCEMENT LEARNING**

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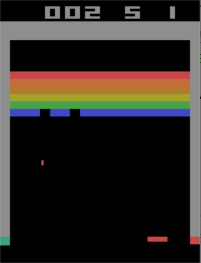
1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Breakout RL (reinforcement learning) system is the system which learns to play Atari Breakout game with reinforcement learning. It exhibits the techniques and strategies for resolving the general MDP (Markov Decision Processes) problems and can be applied to real world similar problems.

We consider to choose the Breakout game since it contains all the basic features of MDP problem, and also allow us to gradually improve within the tight project schedule.

2.0 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

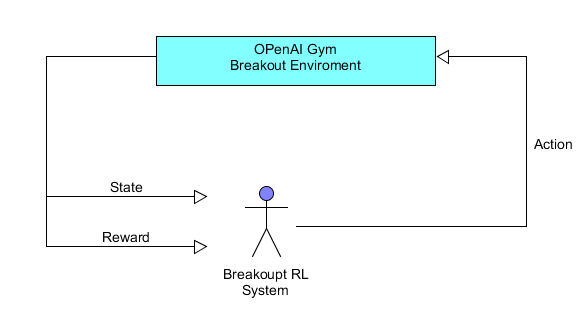
The Breakout game contains eight rows of bricks, and the player will move the paddle to hit the ball. If the ball knocks down the bricks, the player will gain the marks. If the player missed 3 times to hit the ball by moving paddle, then the player loses the turn, and new turn will begin which resets the player’s existing marks. The higher the player’s marks, the better the player plays.



**Fig 2-1 Breakout Game**

The OpenAI Gym system simulates the Breakout environments, and we decide to select “BreakoutDeterministic-v0” environment for our system. The Breakout RL system is required to play OpenAI Gym system breakout game to achieve highest marks as it can.

The Breakout game problem is abstracted and illustrated below.

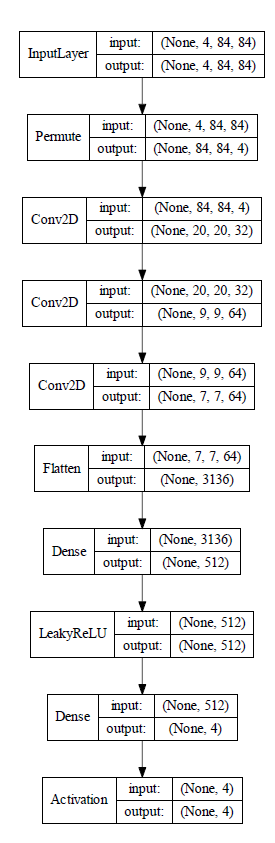


**Fig 2-2 Breakout Game Problem**

The Breakout RL System choses the action and send to the OpenAI Gym Breakout environment, then the Breakout environment returns back the new state of the Breakout game, and the reward for the action taken. The Breakout RL system is required to achieve highest reword (marks) as it can.

3.0 SOLUTION

The DQN (Deep Q-learning Network) is designed for Breakout RL system to address the issue. The DQN structure is shown below.



**Fig 3-1 DQN Network Structure**

**3.1 Reasons for Why DQN is Suitable to Solve this Problem**

The DQN adopts Q-Learning method to approximate the breakout game state-action pairs Q-function from the interaction with the breakout environment. It will build a table of Q values, Q(s, a) that represents the expected

reward of Breakout game action a at the Breakout environment state s. Then it improves on this table by interacting with the Breakout environment until the optimal Q table is found. The optimal Q table provides the optimal policy to play the game and it is improved by learning with more data using deep neural network.

The deep learning neural network is proven to be universal function approximator, and also it is performed extremely good on image processing. Therefore, the DQN adopts the deep learning neural network to build the optimal Q-learning solution.

The conv2D layers in DQN network are used to capture the features of the game screen images since the inputs of the DQN network are the 4 sequential game screen images. The 4 sequential game images represent the game action direction and flow, so it avoids the issue which will be caused by 1 game screen image.

The last dense layer in DQN network outputs vector values which represent all the available actions at the Breakout game. The maximum value within the final output values indicates the corresponding action should be the best action to taken based on DQN network.

**3.2 System Design/Model – Components of the System**

The Breakout RL system is divided into 3 parts: DQN network model, DQN Agent, and Breakout Game environment. The design is illustrated below.

**Fig 3-2 System Design**

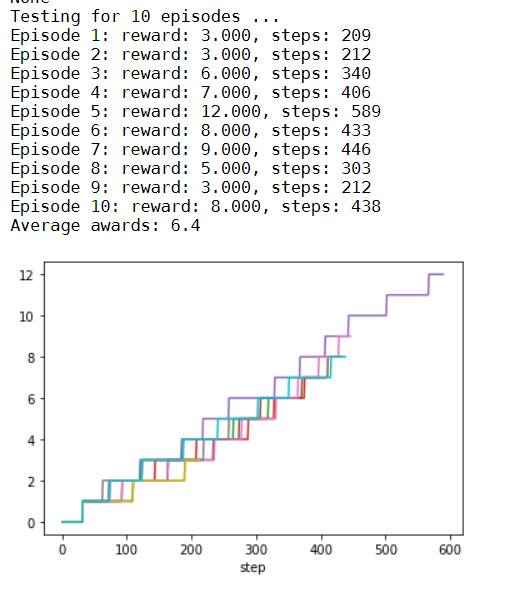
The DQN network model consists of the core of the solution design which in charge of learning the rules from the Breakout game, and also utilizing the rules to play the game.

The Breakout game environment is the pre-built game environment and it will simulate the real game environment.

The DQN Agent connects the DQN network and Breakout Game, so it received the DQN network actions and send them to Breakout game environment, also it transfers back the reward and new state of game to the DQN network.

4.0 RESULTS

After training for 500000 episodes, the Breakout RL System was able to play the game with average award marks 6.4. The testing results are shown below.

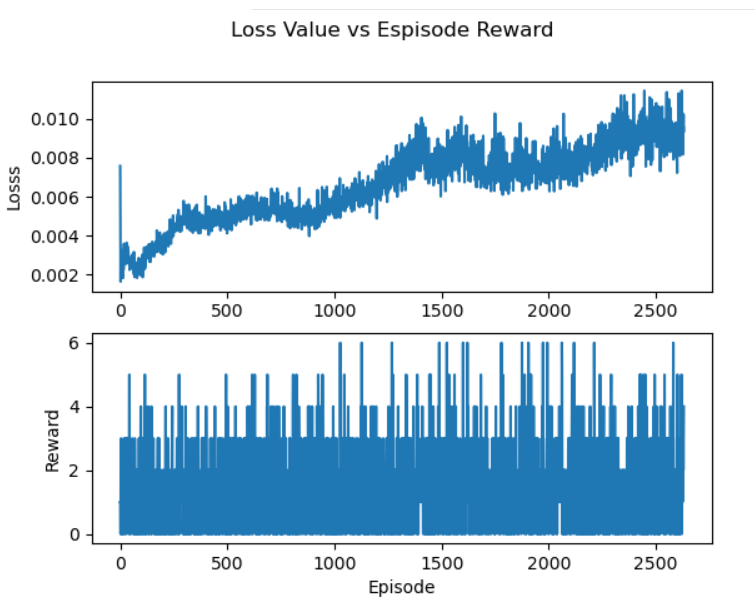


**Fig 4-1 Average Awards Result**

**4.1 Findings**

4.1.1 Kernel Initialization Parameter

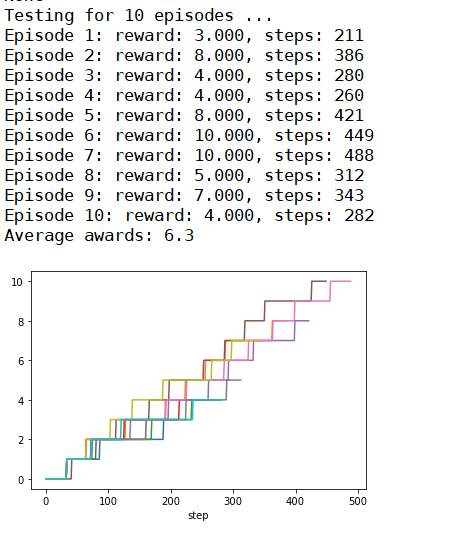
The kernel initalization was changed to “HE” normalization, but the training results did not change much. As shown below, the game awards are most below 6 during training.



**Fig 4-2 Kernel Initialization He Normalization**

4.1.2 DQN Agent Target Model Update

This controls how often the DQN network is updated. But after changed from 0.01 to 1000, the final testing results did not change much which are shown below.

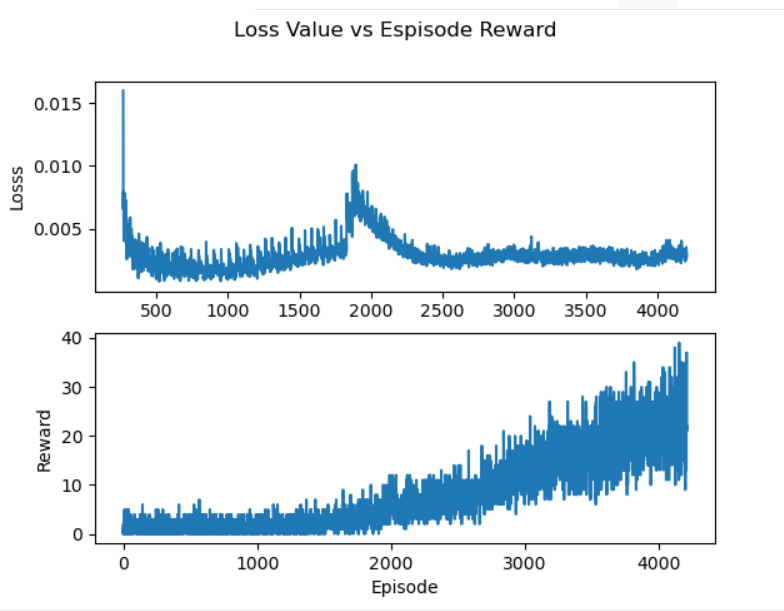


**Fig 4-3 Target Model Update Parameter**

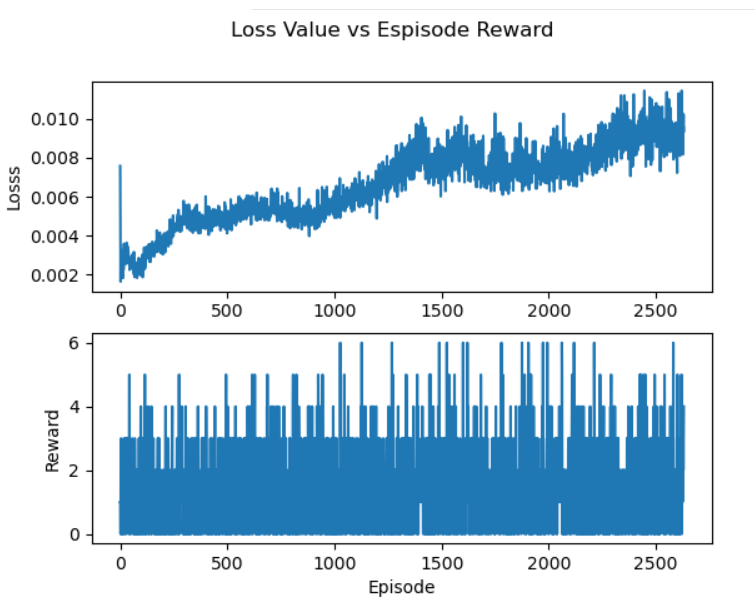
4.1.2 Dueling Networks

4.1.3 Policy

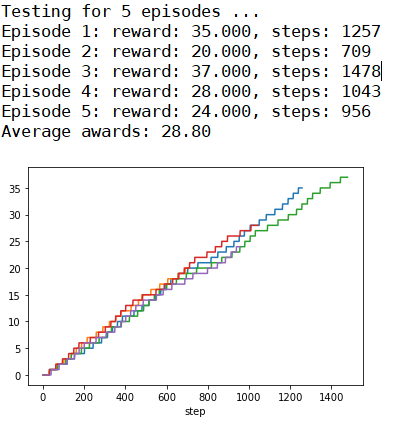
The policy makes the significant differents as shown in Fig 4-4. This was training results when using Epsilon Greedy Strategy with Annealing policy. And the training results when using Boltzmann Q Policy was shown in Fig 4-5.



**Fig 4-4 Annealing Epsilon Greedy Policy**



**Fig 4-5 Boltzmann Q Policy**



**Fig 4-6 Testing Annealing Epsilon Greedy Policy**

The Breakout RL system is proved to be able to learn playing the game with DQN network. Even its award marks were not high, but it showed the DQN system was able to learn to play the game itself by learning from the game screen images and interacting with the game environment. Therefore, it provides the general solution to the similar real-world problem, and shows the power of reinforcement learning.

5.0 CONCLUSION

**5.1 Observations & Insights**

The learning time for 500, 000 episodes takes around 10 hours, and in order to achieve better results it will take 1, 000, 000 episodes or more. So the learning time is considerable long, and this is one of reasons we do not achieve high award marks due to the time constrain.

We also notice that in order to achieve the high marks, the specific technique for breakout game should be considered. E.g. the passing the terminal state to the replay memory when a player turn is lost will have huge difference based on the blog (<https://towardsdatascience.com/tutorial-double-deep-q-learning-with-dueling-network-architectures-4c1b3fb7f756>). So we did not try to perform this optimization due to time constrain.

Therefore, there still leaves the much improvement space for the Breakout RL system to enable it to achieve higher marks.

APPENDIX A. USER MANUAL

1. Setup Guide

* Install keras-applications and tensorflow

pip install keras-applications==1.0.7 tensorflow==1.13.1

* Install gym by OpenAI: Installation instruction
* Install h5py

pip install h5py

* Install Pillow:

pip install Pillow

* Install gym[atari]: Atari module for gym.

pip install gym[atari]

* Install WandbLogger

pip install wandb

Install Keras-RL:

pip install keras-rl

1. Execution

* Training

python sls\_breakout.py train

* Testing

python sls\_breakout.py test

APPENDIX B. CODES & DATASETS

File: sls\_breakout.py

* Main application for Breakout RL system

File: dqn\_BreakoutDeterministic-v0\_weights.h5f

* Weights records for DQN network

File: Readme.md

* Readme file for execution setup