Uni-Perceiver: Pre-training Unified Architecture for Generic Perception for Zero-shot and Few-shot Tasks

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Abstract

Biological intelligence systems of animals perceive the world by integrating information in different modalities and processing simultaneously for various tasks. In contrast, current machine learning research follows a task-specific paradigm, leading to inefficient collaboration between tasks and high marginal costs of developing perception models for new tasks. In this paper, we present a generic perception architecture named Uni-Perceiver, which processes a variety of modalities and tasks with unified modeling and shared parameters. Specifically, Uni-Perceiver encodes different task inputs and targets from arbitrary modalities into a unified representation space with a modality-agnostic Transformer encoder and lightweight modality-specific tokenizers. Different perception tasks are modeled as the same formulation, that is, finding the maximum likelihood target for each input through the similarity of their representations. The model is pre-trained on several uni-modal and multi-modal tasks, and evaluated on a variety of downstream tasks, including novel tasks that did not appear in the pre-training stage. Results show that our pre-trained model without any tuning can achieve reasonable performance even on novel tasks. The performance can be improved to a level close to state-of-the-art methods by conducting prompt tuning on 1% of downstream task data. Full-data fine-tuning further delivers results on par with or better than state-of-the-art results. Code shall be released.

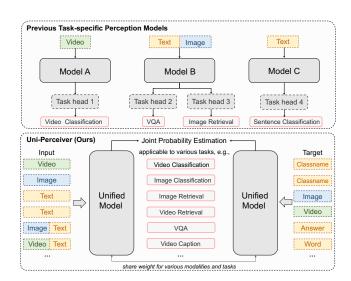


Figure 1. Comparing previous task-specific perception models with our proposed Uni-Perceiver, which processes various modalities and tasks with a single siamese model and shared parameters.

1. Introduction

Biological intelligence systems of animals perceive the world by receiving information in different modalities, integrating with the complex central nervous system, and processing simultaneously for different tasks. However, designing a generic artificial perception model that handles multiple modalities and numerous tasks has always been considered too difficult. To simplify this problem, previous machine learning research has focused on developing specialized models for inputs from certain restricted modality, *e.g.*, Convolutional Neural Networks [39] for visual recognition and Transformers [69] for natural language processing. Recently, Transformers have been proved to

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have competitive performance in more scenarios such as image [9, 17, 45, 66, 68, 71, 73, 76] and video [4, 5, 74] recognition, which triggers a new paradigm of designing unified architectures for different modalities. Following this paradigm, recent works [1, 22, 28, 56] adopt Transformers as the backbone for multi-modal applications such as visual-linguistic recognition. They convert the inputs from different modalities into unified input token sequences with modality-specific tokenizers. Models are pre-trained with large-scale multi-modal datasets, and then adapted to downstream tasks with fine-tuning.

Despite the ability of processing multi-modal information with unified architectures, current methods still require specific design and training for different tasks. This limitation is caused by two reasons. First, the input of a particular model is the combination of specific modalities required by its target task. Second, previous works require prediction heads specifically designed and trained for the target tasks.

We argue that this task-specific paradigm conflicts with the objective of designing generic perceptual models. Specifically, during pre-training, the specialised designs for different tasks hinder the collaboration between tasks, which may hurt the representational capacity. Meanwhile, when a pre-trained model is applied to a new task, the input format and the prediction head need to be re-designed and fine-tuned on sufficient downstream data. Considerable effort in collecting and annotating data is required. Also, all parameters need to be copied and maintained for each downstream task, which becomes inefficient and inconvenient as the number of tasks and the model size grow. On the other hand, when fine-tuning is performed with insufficient training data, it may forget the pre-trained knowledge that is beneficial to the downstream task, thereby hurting generalization performance [13]. All of these issues increase the marginal cost of developing perception models for new tasks and limit the capability to meet the rapidly growing demands of diverse scenarios, indicating task-specific paradigm is not suitable for generic perceptual modeling.

Our core idea is to replace task-specific designs by encoding different task inputs and targets from arbitrary modalities into a unified representation space, and model the joint probability of inputs and targets through the similarity of their representations. This design eliminates the gap between the formulations of different perception tasks, and therefore encourages the collaboration between different modalities and tasks in representation learning. Moreover, by aligning the formulations of pre-training and downstream tasks, the knowledge can be better transferred when applying the pre-trained model to the target tasks. The model can even conduct zero-shot inference on novel tasks that do not appear in the pre-training stage.

In this paper, we propose a unified architecture named Uni-Perceiver, which processes various modalities and tasks with a single siamese model and shared parameters. Specifically, the task inputs and targets from arbitrary combinations of modalities are first converted into unified token sequences with lightweight modality-specific tokenizers. The sequences are then encoded by a modality-agnostic Transformer encoder into a unified representation space. Different perception tasks are modeled as the same formulation, finding the maximum likelihood target for each input through the similarity of their representations, so as to facilitate the generic perceptual modeling.

Uni-Perceiver is pre-trained on various uni-modal tasks such as image / video classification and language modeling, and multi-modal tasks such as image-text retrieval and language modeling with image clues. When applied to downstream tasks, thanks to the generic modeling of perception tasks, the pre-trained model shows the ability of zero-shot inference on novel tasks that did not appear in the pre-training stage. Moreover, the performance can be further boosted with additional task-specific data. For the few-shot scenario, we adapt the model to downstream tasks with prompt tuning [41], where only a small amount of additional parameters are optimized for specific tasks. The performance of our model can be further improved with full-model fine-tuning on sufficient downstream training data.

We pre-train our model on several uni-modal and multi-modal tasks, and evaluate its performance on a variety of downstream tasks, including novel tasks that did not appear in the pre-training stage. Results show that our pre-trained model without any tuning can achieve reasonable performance even on novel tasks. Its performance can be boosted to a level close to state-of-the-art methods by conducting prompt tuning with 1% of the downstream task data. When fine-tuning the pre-trained model with 100% of the target data, our model achieves result on par with or better than state-of-the-art methods on almost all the tasks, which demonstrates the strong representation ability.

2. Related Works

Architecture. For visual recognition, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) [39] used to be the main architecture paradigm. Motivated by the success of Transformers in natural language processing [7, 16, 31, 34, 44, 69], attempts have been made to apply Transformers to image and video modalities. For image recognition, vision Transformers [9, 17, 45, 66, 68, 71, 73, 76] replace CNNs by an image patch tokenizer and a transformer encoder, which have been proved to obtain competitive performance as CNNs. [4, 5, 74] make attempts to apply Transformers on video recognition in a convolution-free fashion. For visual-linguistic recognition, recent works [14, 36, 37, 46, 53, 62, 65, 78] also adopt Transformers as the backbone, while they usually take regional features as inputs, which are typically extracted by off-the-shelf object detectors (*e.g.*, Faster R-

CNN [57] pre-trained on Visual Genome [30]). [24] attempts to eliminate the need for object detectors by directly extracting features from the raw pixels with CNNs. [1, 22, 28, 56] take a further step by applying Transformers to raw image patches and word tokens. Transformers have enabled a unified architecture paradigm for different modalities, which only need the modality-specific tokenizers to convert inputs from different modalities into unified input token sequences.

Nevertheless, previous architecture requires prediction heads specifically designed and trained for different perception tasks. Instead, we replace the task-specific design by encoding different task inputs and targets into a unified representation space, and model their relationship by representational similarity. This modification enables our model to conduct zero-shot inference even on novel downstream tasks that did not appear in the pre-training stage.

Pre-training. Large-scale pre-training has achieved great success in the field of deep learning, which can alleviate the data-hungry challenge and improve the performance of downstream tasks [72]. For image recognition, pre-training is usually performed on image classification datasets, e.g., ImageNet [15]. Video recognition networks are either pre-trained on image classification or video classification datasets, e.g., Moments in Time [49] and Kinetics [27]. In natural language processing, self-supervised language modeling [7, 16, 31, 34, 44] is adopted for pre-training on large-scale unlabeled corpora [54]. Specifically, GPT [7] performs the auto-regressive pre-training, which optimizes the probability of the next word conditioned on previous words. BERT [16] uses masked language modeling (MLM) and next sentence prediction (NSP) for pre-training. These pre-trained models can serve as robust feature extractors for downstream tasks with small architecture modifications.

Recent years have witnessed interest in large-scale crossmodal pre-training [72]. Compared with uni-modal pretraining, cross-modal pre-training needs to align information from different modalities. Such pre-training is usually performed on image-text pairs collected from Internet [8, 26, 50, 60] and manual annotated visual-linguistic datasets [30, 40, 50]. Moreover, various pre-training objectives are also proposed to utilize these datasets effectively. The most widely used objectives are image-text retrieval [2, 37, 47, 55, 63, 64, 65], masked language modeling with image clues [2, 37, 47, 62, 63, 64, 65], and masked region modeling [14, 47, 62, 63, 65]. Among them, masked region modeling requires regional features extracted by offthe-shelf object detectors. More recently, CLIP [55] has verified the effectiveness of only performing image-text retrieval pre-training on huge webly collected data.

Previous multi-task pre-training requires task-specific heads, which hinders the collaboration among different tasks. Instead, we encode different task inputs and targets into a unified representation space, and model their relationship by a unified representational similarity, which enables the collaboration between different modalities and tasks. Our pre-training tasks include image and video classification, language modeling with and without image clues, and image-text retrieval. We do not use regional features and the corresponding pre-training tasks.

Prompt Tuning. As an alternative solution to fine-tuning, prompt tuning has recently been proposed in the NLP community, which originated from prompting methods [41]. In prompting, specially designed natural language tokens, or namely prompts, are inserted into the input sequence as hints for the target tasks. These prompt inputs are used to query a large language model (*e.g.*, GPT-3 [7]). Methods [25, 61] have been proposed to automate the prompt engineering process. The prompting process does not tune any of the parameters, which is empirically sub-optimal compared to fine-tuning [43].

Prompt tuning [33] is proposed to replace hard language prompts with learnable prompt tokens that can be updated through gradient back-propagation, while other parameters are still kept fixed. Other than adding learnable input tokens, Prefix-Tuning [38] adds learnable prompts to each layer of the Transformer to boost the model capacity. For few-shot scenario, [20] proves that prompt tuning can be much better than traditional fine-tuning. When the training data is sufficient, prompt tuning performs slightly worse than fine-tuning [43]. However, the performance gap from full-model fine-tuning closes up as the pre-trained model gets larger [33, 42]. Inspired by the success of prompt tuning in NLP, [77] applies prompt tuning to visual-linguistic pre-trained models (e.g., CLIP [55]) to perform few-shot image classification. [51, 58] further apply a residual feature adapter to improve the few-shot performance.

In this paper, we focus on the zero-shot and few-shot scenarios, where the downstream tasks may not even appear in the pre-training stage. For few-shot learning, we adapt the model with prompt tuning proposed by [41]. The performance of our model can be further improved by fine-tuning the whole model with sufficient downstream training data.

3. Method

3.1. Unified Architecture for Generic Perception

In this section, we will describe our unified architecture for various modalities and tasks. Fig. 2 illustrates the architecture. Specifically, the model first converts different task inputs and targets from arbitrary combinations of modalities into token sequences with modality-specific tokenizers. A modality-agnostic Transformer encoder, which shares parameters for different input modalities and target tasks, is then employed to encode different token sequences into a shared representation space. Any perception task can be

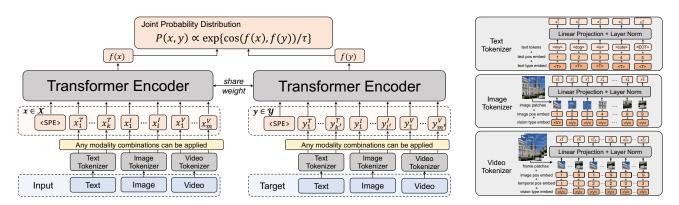


Figure 2. Overview of our unified architecture for generic perception. Different task inputs and targets from arbitrary modalities are converted into unified token sequences with modality-specific tokenizers. A modality-agnostic weight-sharing Transformer encoder is then applied to encode these token sequences into the shared representation space. Any perception task can be modeled as finding the maximum likelihood target for each input through the similarity of their representations.

modeled in a single unified formulation, which finds the maximum likelihood target for each input through the similarity of their representations.

Tokenization. Given the raw inputs from text, image, and video modalities, modality-specific tokenizers are applied to generate the input token sequences for the Transformer encoder. Here, we use the BPE tokenizer [59] for text modality, the image patch tokenizer [17] for image modality, and the temporal frame patch tokenizer [6] for video modality. These outputted tokens are attached with additional modality type embeddings to identify which modality the raw input belongs to. Details of the modality-specific tokenizers are described in the Appendix.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, depending on the task requirements, the input sequence x of the Transformer encoder can be composed of different combinations of text token sequence x^T , image token sequence x^I , and video token sequence x^V . At the beginning of the sequence x, a special token $\{SPE\}$ is always inserted. For example, $x = [\{SPE\}, x^I, x^T]$ for image-text pair inputs, and $x = [\{SPE\}, x^V]$ for video-only inputs, where [] denotes the sequence concatenation. The feature of $\{SPE\}$ at the encoder output serves as the representation of the input.

Generic Modeling of Perception Tasks. We model different perception tasks with a unified architecture, whose parameters are shared for all target tasks. Each task is defined with a set of inputs $\mathcal X$ and a set of candidate targets $\mathcal Y$. Given an input $x \in \mathcal X$, the task is formulated as finding the maximum likelihood target $y \in \mathcal Y$ as

$$\hat{y} = \arg\max_{y \in \mathcal{Y}} P(x, y),\tag{1}$$

where P(x, y) is the joint probability distribution. The joint probability is estimated through calculating the cosine sim-

ilarity between the representation of x and y as

$$P(x,y) \propto \exp\left(\cos\left(f(x),f(y)\right)/\tau\right),$$
 (2)

where $f(\cdot)$ is the Transformer encoder, and $\tau > 0$ is a learnable temperature parameter.

To obtain generic modeling capability, our unified architecture is pre-trained on a variety of multi-modal tasks simultaneously. Suppose a series of pre-training tasks is denoted as $\{\mathcal{X}_1, \mathcal{Y}_1\}, \{\mathcal{X}_2, \mathcal{Y}_2\}, ..., \{\mathcal{X}_n, \mathcal{Y}_n\}$, where \mathcal{X}_i and \mathcal{Y}_i is the input set and target set of the *i*-th task, respectively. Then the pre-training loss is defined as

$$L = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbb{E}_{\{x,y\} \in \{\mathcal{X}_i, \mathcal{Y}_i\}} \left[-\log \frac{P(x,y)}{\sum_{z \in \mathcal{Y}_i} P(x,z)} \right], \quad (3)$$

where \mathbb{E} is the mathematical expectation, and $\{x,y\} \in \{\mathcal{X}_i,\mathcal{Y}_i\}$ indicates a ground-truth input-target pair sampled from the dataset of the *i*-th task.

Our unified architecture is suitable for any task, as long as its input set $\mathcal X$ and target set $\mathcal Y$ are composed of images, texts, and videos. For example, the target set $\mathcal Y$ in classification tasks can be a set of class names, a set of class descriptions, or even a set of images with handwritten numbers representing class indexes. Detailed instances of $\mathcal X$ and $\mathcal Y$ will be introduced in the next subsection. Note that we currently focus on text, image, and video modalities, but more modalities are also applicable, as long as the corresponding tokenizers are applied.

Relation to Previous Perception Models. Our method shares the same goal of learning multi-modal representations as previous perception models. However, existing works follow a task-specific paradigm, while our method is designed for generic perceptual modeling. The main difference lies in two parts:

1) Previous works focus on inputs from certain combinations of modalities required by their target tasks, while our

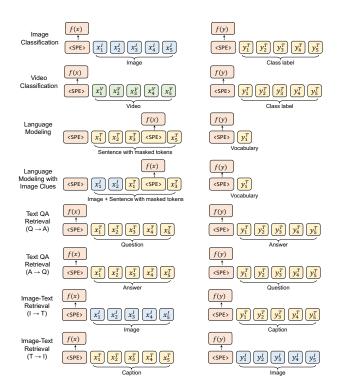


Figure 3. Input and target formats of pre-training tasks. For each task, the left column represents the format of input sequence x, and the right column represents the format of the target sequence y. f(x) and f(y) indicate the representations used for calculating the joint probability distribution as in Eq. (2). Here, we have omitted the tokenizer and encoder for concision.

method handles arbitrary combinations of modalities with a unified architecture and shared parameters.

2) Previous works require prediction heads specifically designed and trained for each perception task, while our method models different tasks with the same formulation and processes them with unified modeling.

Therefore, when transferred to a new task, previous methods need to re-design their input formats and prediction heads accordingly. Models require fine-tuning on sufficient task-specific data, resulting in remarkable human and computational costs. In contrast, our method can directly conduct zero-shot inference on novel tasks that do not appear in the pre-training stage. The performance can be further boosted with prompt tuning on few-shot downstream data and fine-tuning on sufficient downstream data.

3.2. Pre-training on Multi-Modal Tasks

Our model is pre-trained on a variety of tasks simultaneously to learn the multi-modal generic representations. The pre-training tasks are illustrated in Fig. 3. Specifically, for uni-modal pre-training tasks, we adopt the most widely-used image classification, video classification, and language modeling tasks. To further enhance the relationships between different modalities, some cross-modal tasks

are also employed, such as language modeling with image clues and image-text retrieval tasks. Note that for image and video classification tasks, we regard each class name (e.g., tigershark) as a text sequence. This provides weak supervision for bridging the gap among the representations of images, videos, and texts.

Image and Video Classification. In image and video classification tasks, $\mathcal X$ denotes the set of all possible images or videos in the training dataset, and $\mathcal Y$ consists of candidate class labels in each dataset. Each class name is regarded as a text sequence to provide weak supervision of the relationship to texts. Both the input $x \in \mathcal X$ and target $y \in \mathcal Y$ start with an $\langle \text{SPE} \rangle$ token, whose feature at the encoder output represents the corresponding sequence.

Language Modeling with and without Image Clues. The language modeling task aims to predict the masked words according to the context. Both auto-regressive [7] and auto-encoding [16] language modeling are adopted. When inputs have no image, the auto-regressive and auto-encoding tasks correspond to the text generation and the masked language modeling tasks, respectively. When inputs have images, the auto-regressive and auto-encoding tasks correspond to the image caption and the masked language modeling with image clues tasks, respectively.

For auto-encoding language modeling, we follow the practice in BERT [16] to mask out 15% words from the text randomly. The model predicts each masked word based on all inputs. For auto-regressive language modeling, the model predicts each word based on its previous text and image (if any). Please refer to the Appendix for an efficient implementation of auto-regressive language modeling.

In this task, \mathcal{X} consists of language sentences or imagetext pairs. \mathcal{Y} denotes the set of all words in the vocabulary, where each word is regarded as a single text sequence. Each word that needs to be predicted in $x \in \mathcal{X}$ is replaced by a $\langle \text{SPE} \rangle$ token, whose feature at the encoder output is used to match the words in the vocabulary \mathcal{Y} .

Image and Text Retrieval. For image-text retrieval, the input sets $\mathcal X$ and $\mathcal Y$ are composed of images and text sequences respectively, or vice versa. For text-only retrieval, the input sets $\mathcal X$ and $\mathcal Y$ are both text sequences. Each sequence in $\mathcal X$ and $\mathcal Y$ has a special token $\{\text{SPE}\}$ at the beginning, whose feature at the output of the encoder serves as the final representation.

3.3. Zero-shot, Prompt Tuning and Fine-tuning

During the pre-training stage, our unified architecture learns to model the joint distribution of input and target sequences from arbitrary modalities. Thanks to the generic perceptual modeling, our pre-trained model can perform zero-shot inference on completely novel tasks that do not appear in the pre-training stage. Our model can be further

adapted to downstream tasks with task-specific additional training data. For the few-shot scenario, we employ the prompt tuning [41] scheme, which only adds a few additional task-specific parameters to the model. The performance on specific tasks can be further improved by fine-tuning the whole model on sufficient downstream data.

Zero-shot Inference on Novel Tasks. Our model has the potential to perform zero-shot inference on any perception task that can be modeled by a joint probability distribution. For a task with input $x \in \mathcal{X}$ and a candidate target $y \in \mathcal{Y}$, we firstly tokenize x and y into two sequences. The joint probability P(x,y) is then estimated following Eq. (2). Zero-shot inference can be conducted by maximum likelihood estimation, as described in Eq. (1). Performance can also be improved through prompt engineering, similar to the prompting [41] for language models such as GPT-3 [7], where network training is not required.

Prompt Tuning. For the few-shot scenario with limited training data, we adopt prompt tuning, which is memory-efficient and has been proved to be better than the fine-tuning scheme in few-shot NLP [20]. In prompt tuning, most pre-trained parameters are fixed, leaving only a small portion of task-specific parameters to be optimized. Specifically, following P-Tuning v2 [42], learnable prompt tokens with random initialization are added at each layer of the Transformer encoder, and class labels with linear heads are added for classification tasks. The <SPE> token and layer norm parameters are also tuned. We refer the readers to the Appendix for more details.

Fine-Tuning. For downstream tasks with sufficient training data, our model can also be fine-tuned to further improve its performance. During fine-tuning, our model can serve as a joint probability estimator (same as our proposed generic perceptual modeling), or a feature extractor (same as traditional pre-trained models). Under the setting of joint probability estimation, the downstream tasks are formulated in the same unified manner as in pre-training. On the other hand, similar to previous perception models, our model can also be used as a feature extractor by adding a task-specific head on the top of the encoder. We empirically find these two schemes achieve very similar performance, and hence the scheme of joint probability distribution estimator is used by default for consistency.

4. Experiments

4.1. Datasets

Our model is pre-trained on a variety of tasks, whose statistics are listed in Tab. 1. We pre-train image classification on ImageNet-21k [15]. For video classification, we pre-train on Kinetics-700 [27] and Moments in Time [49]. We pre-train language modeling on BookCorpora [79] &

Dataset	#Images	#Videos	#Text
ImageNet-21k [15]	14.2M	0	21K
Kinetics-700 [27]	0	542K	700
Moments in Time [49]	0	792K	339
Books&Wiki [79]	0	0	101M
PAQ [35]	0	0	65M
CC3M [60]	3.0M	0	3.0M
CC12M [8]	11.1M	0	11.1M
COCO Caption [11]	113K	0	567K
Visual Genome [30]	108K	0	5.41M
SBU [50]	830K	0	830K
YFCC* [26]	14.8M	0	14.8M

Table 1. Pre-training dataset statistics. #Images, #Videos and #Text represent the number of images, video clips, and textual sentences (or phrases), respectively.

English Wikipedia (Books&Wiki) and PAQ [35]. For language modeling with image clues and image-text retrieval, we use a combination of COCO Caption [12], SBU Captions (SBU) [50], Visual Genome [30], CC3M [60], CC12M [8] and YFCC [26]. To evaluate the effectiveness of our method and verify the generalization of our pre-trained model, we also use several novel datasets that did not appear in pre-training, *i.e.*, Flickr30k [52], MSVD [10], VQA [21], and GLUE [70]. See Appendix for the details of datasets.

4.2. Implementation Details

The Transformer encoder used for experiments is of the same configuration with BERT_{BASE} [16]. It is a 12-layer encoder with the embedding dimension of 768 and the attention head number of 12. The hidden dimension size in FFN is 3072. We pre-train the model with multiple tasks simultaneously. In each iteration, each GPU independently samples a single task and dataset. The gradients of different GPUs are synchronized after the gradient back-propagation. We use AdamW [29] optimizer with a base learning rate of 0.0002 and a weight decay of 0.05. Gradient clipping with 5.0 is used to stabilize training. We also use drop path [32] with a probability of 0.1 during training. The model is pretrained on 128 Tesla V100 GPUs in a distributed fashion for 500k iterations. We use the cosine learning rate schedule with 50k iterations of linear warmup. See Appendix for more implementation details.

4.3. Evaluation on Pre-training Tasks

We first evaluate our pre-trained model on tasks that have been involved in the pre-training stage, while the datasets might be different. The widely used Imagenet-1k [15] and Kinetics-400 [27] are used for evaluating the image and video classification tasks, respectively. COCO Caption and Flickr30k are the typical datasets used to evaluate the performance on image caption and image-text retrieval.

Results. Tab. 2, Tab. 3, and Tab. 4 present the evaluation results of our models on four pre-training tasks, *i.e.*, image

Task	ImageNet-1k Acc	Kinetics-400 Acc
DeiT [67]	81.8	-
TimeSformer [6]	-	75.5
Ours w/o Tuning	78.0	73.5
Ours PT (0.1%)	79.4	73.6
Ours FT (0.1%)	78.8	73.5
Ours PT (1%)	80.2	73.6
Ours FT (1%)	80.2	73.6
Ours _{FT (100%)}	83.8	75.8

Table 2. Image and video classification performance under different tuning settings. PT means prompt-tuning, and FT means fine-tuning. The percentage of data used in tuning is noted.

classification, video classification, image-text retrieval, and image caption. We compare our model with task-specific SOTA methods having the similar model size.

Results show that without any tuning, our pre-trained model reaches reasonable performance on these tasks. Although the performance is slightly worse than the SOTA methods. We speculate that the performance gap is due to the limited capacity of our model, which may have a negative impact on the representation ability. Note that our method shares a similar model size with other methods, but need to simultaneously process much more pre-training tasks from various datasets and modalities.

By conducting prompt tuning on each task with 1% downstream data, the performance is boosted to a level close to SOTA performance. It's worth noting that all parameters of other methods are specifically trained on the target tasks. While for our prompt tuning, only a small amount of parameters are tuned, and the encoder is still fixed and shared among different tasks, indicating that our method can handle different tasks with low marginal cost.

We further fine-tune the pre-trained model with 100% of the downstream data. With full-data fine-tuning, our model achieves performance on-par with or better than the SOTA methods on all these tasks, which proves our model has learned high-quality representations. We also compare the performance of prompt tuning and fine-tuning in the scenario of few-shot learning. On all of these tasks, prompt tuning shows a consistently better performance than fine-tuning with the same amount of data, which demonstrates its superiority under few-shot scenarios.

4.4. Generalization to Novel Tasks

Thanks to the generic perceptual modeling, our pretrained model can generalize to novel tasks by converting the tasks into our unified task formulation. We evaluate zero-shot inference on tasks that did not appear in pre-training, *i.e.*, video caption, video-text retrieval, visual question answering, and natural language understanding.

Video Caption and Video-Text Retrieval. Our pre-trained

model is evaluated on MSVD [10] dataset. Specifically, for video caption, \mathcal{X}_1 consists of the concatenation of video and language sequences that have been predicted, and \mathcal{X}_2 denotes the set of all words in the vocabulary. For the videotext retrieval, the input sets \mathcal{X}_1 and \mathcal{X}_2 consist of possible video and text sequences, or vice versa.

Visual Question Answering. In visual question answering, the model is asked to answer a question w.r.t a reference image from a list of answer candidates. We evaluate our pre-trained model on VQA [21] dataset. \mathcal{X}_1 is a set of image-text sequence, where the text is the question tokens followed by a <SPE> token used to predict the answers. Each $x_2 \in \mathcal{X}_2$ is an answer sequence beginning with <SPE>. Inference is achieved by computing the similarity between output features of <SPE> in x_1 and x_2 .

Natural Language Understanding. Six language-only tasks are chosen from GLUE benchmark [70] to evaluate the natural language understanding ability of our pre-trained model. These tasks are either single sentence classification or sentence-pair classification tasks. We follow [19] to construct the textual class labels for each dataset. Here, the input sequence $x_1 \in \mathcal{X}_1$ denotes the input single sentence or the sentence-pair, and the sequence $x_2 \in \mathcal{X}_2$ represents the class labels in each dataset.

Result. Tab. 5, Tab. 6 and Tab. 7 show the results on video caption and video-text retrieval and visual question answering, respectively. Our pre-trained model can obtain reasonable zero-shot performance on these novel tasks. Note that none of previous works can perform this type of zero-shot inference at all. From Tab. 7, we note that our model shows unsatisfactory zero-shot performance on "Yes/No" and "Number" subsets in VQA. We speculate that it may be due to the distribution difference between those answers and our pre-training corpora. We futher conduct prompt tuning on these tasks with only 1% data, which brings our model to a level close to the SOTA results. By further fine-tuning with 100% downstream data, our model can achieve results on par with or better than the SOTA methods.

On the GLUE benchmark, our model can achieve comparable performance with [3] in zero-shot evaluation. When fine-tuning the pre-trained model with 100% downstream data, our model performs slightly worse than BERT_{BASE}. Since our model has the same number of parameters as BERT_{BASE}, but need to process much more tasks from various datasets and modalities, we speculate that the performance drop is due to the limited capacity of the model.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we propose a unified perception architecture that processes various modalities and tasks with a single model and shared parameters. With pre-training on unimodal and multi-modal tasks, our model shows the ability

			Text R	etrieval					Image I	Retrieval		
Task	F	Flickr30k	ζ.	CO	CO Cap	tion	I	Flickr30l	ζ .	CO	CO Capt	ion
	R@1	R@5	R10	R@1	R@5	R10	R@1	R@5	R10	R@1	R@5	R10
ImageBERT [53] w/o Tuning	70.7	90.2	94.0	44.0	71.2	80.4	54.3	79.6	87.5	32.3	59.0	70.2
UNITER-B [14] w/o Tuning	80.7	95.7	98.0	-	-	-	66.2	88.4	92.9	-	-	-
ViLT [28] w/o Tuning	73.2	93.6	96.5	56.5	82.6	89.6	55.0	82.5	89.8	40.4	70.0	81.1
Unicoder-VL [23]	86.2	96.3	99.0	62.3	87.1	92.8	71.5	91.2	95.2	48.4	76.7	85.9
UNITER-B	85.9	97.1	98.8	64.4	87.4	93.1	72.5	92.4	96.1	50.3	78.5	87.2
ViLT	83.5	96.7	98.6	61.5	86.3	92.7	64.4	88.7	93.8	42.7	72.9	83.1
Ours w/o Tuning	74.8	94.8	98.2	57.7	85.6	92.3	65.8	88.8	93.6	46.3	75.0	84.0
Ours PT (1%)	84.4	97.8	99.2	61.4	86.7	93.2	71.1	91.6	95.1	47.0	75.3	84.3
Ours FT (1%)	78.4	95.7	97.8	60.2	85.1	90.6	61.0	85.7	91.0	43.6	70.9	80.5
Ours PT (10%)	86.4	98.2	99.5	61.6	87.0	93.2	72.5	92.3	95.7	47.2	75.4	84.3
Ours FT (10%)	84.9	97.4	98.3	60.9	85.5	92.1	67.9	89.4	92.9	45.6	73.4	82.6
Ours FT (100%)	87.9	98.2	99.1	64.7	87.8	93.7	74.9	93.5	96.0	48.3	75.9	84.5

Table 3. Image-text retrieval performance under different tuning settings. PT means prompt-tuning, and FT means fine-tuning. The percentage of data used in tuning is noted.

Task		COCO	Caption			Flick	r30k	
Task	B@4	M	C	S	B@4	M	C	S
Unified VLP [78]	36.5	28.4	116.9	21.2	30.1	23.0	67.4	17.0
Ours w/o Tuning	33.6	27.0	109.8	20.3	17.0	16.2	41.2	11.2
Ours _{PT (1%)} Ours _{FT (1%)}	34.3 28.0	27.2 26.8	109.6 100.1	21.2 20.2	28.1 18.9	21.6 19.7	59.1 45.3	15.6 14.3
Ours _{PT (10%)} Ours _{FT (10%)}	35.0 32.7	27.9 27.5	114.1 109.0	21.3 21.1	28.8 26.9	22.1 21.6	61.7 52.1	16.8 14.5
Ours _{FT (100%)}	35.6	28.1	116.5	21.5	30.1	24.5	72.7	18.2

Table 4. Image caption performance under different tuning settings. B@4, M, C, S stand for BLEU-4, METEOR, CIDEr, and SPICE scores, respectively.

Task	B@4	M	MSVD R	С	S
ORG-TRL [75]	54.3	36.4	73.9	95.2	-
Ours w/o Tuning	20.3	25.8	52.1	45.7	6.5
Ours _{PT (1%)} Ours _{FT (1%)}	54.8 47.3	38.9 35.8	74.7 66.2	104.8 80.1	6.6 6.2
Ours _{PT (10%)} Ours _{FT (10%)}	57.2 56.7	39.1 38.7	75.6 70.0	112.1 88.2	6.8 6.7
Ours FT (100%)	61.5	42.3	79.0	131.0	7.7

Table 5. Video caption (novel task) performance under different tuning settings. Note that this task did not appear in our pre-training. The only task related to video modality in our pre-training is video classification.

of zero-shot inference on novel tasks, and can reach the performance close to SOTA results by prompt tuning with only a small amount of downstream data. The performance can be further improved to be on par with or superior to SOTA results by full-data fine-tuning.

Limitations. Our method is currently only applicable when the target set is discrete, such as classification and retrieval. Whether our model can be extended to regression tasks is still questionable. Future work may explore the unified per-

Task	Text Retrieval MSVD			Video Retrieval MSVD			
	R@1	R@5	R10	R@1	R@5	R@10	
CLIP4clip [48] CLIP2video [18]	56.6 58.7	79.7 85.6	84.3 91.6	46.2 47.0	76.1 76.8	84.6 85.9	
Ours w/o Tuning	42.7	69.1	79.6	34.6	64.5	75.4	
Ours _{PT (1%)} Ours _{FT (1%)}	61.2 49.6	83.7 75.8	89.0 83.7	42.6 37.5	73.3 68.2	82.5 79.3	
Ours _{PT (10%)}) Ours _{FT (10%)})	61.3 59.1	84.8 81.9	90.9 87.4	43.1 41.7	74.2 71.6	83.4 81.3	
Ours _{FT (100%)}	61.5	83.5	90.2	45.4	75.8	85.0	

Table 6. Video-text retrieval (novel task) performance under different tuning settings. Note that this task did not appear in our pre-training.

	VQA v2 test-dev					
Task	Yes/No	Numbers	Others			
Unified VLP [78]	87.2	52.1	60.3			
Ours w/o Tuning	0.9	3.0	25.5			
Ours PT (0.1%)	63.0	31.8	49.6			
Ours FT (0.1%)	63.0	30.6	49.1			
Ours PT (1%)	70.8	41.3	57.7			
Ours FT (1%)	71.0	42.4	57.5			
Ours _{FT (100%)}	84.8	47.4	61.8			

Table 7. Visual question answering (novel task) performance under different tuning settings. Note that this task did not appear in our pre-training.

ception model of both discrete and continuous target sets.

Potential Negative Societal Impact. This work may share the common negative impacts of large-scale training, which may consume lots of electricity and result in increased carbon emissions. This method also learns from a large number of datasets that may contain data biases. Future work may seek for more efficient and unbiased training.

	GLUE					
Task	MNLI	QNLI	QQP	RTE	SST-2	MRPC
	(Acc)	(Acc)	(F1)	(Acc)	(Acc)	(F1)
PLM [3] w/o tuning	49.4	50.7	46.6	53.8	70.6	44.2
BERT _{BASE} [70]	84.6	92.7	71.2	66.4	93.5	88.9
Ours w/o Tuning	49.6	51.0	53.6	55.6	70.6	76.1
Ours PT (1%)	60.1	76.0	70.2	56.3	80.9	80.3
Ours FT (1%)	47.3	60.6	68.9	49.1	69.7	72.3
Ours PT (10%)	68.5	83.2	77.0	58.2	83.4	83.2
Ours FT (10%)	60.5	71.5	71.4	50.5	79.1	80.6
Ours _{FT (100%)}	81.7	89.9	87.1	64.3	90.2	86.6

Table 8. Natural language understanding (novel task) performance under different tuning settings. Note that this task did not appear in our pre-training.

Acknowledgments The work is supported by the National Key R&D Program of China (2020AAA0105200), Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence.

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A. Tokenizer

Given the raw inputs from text, image, and video modalities, modality-specific tokenizers are applied to generate the input token sequences for the Transformer encoder. Here, we use the BPE tokenizer [59] for text modality, the image patch tokenizer [17] for image modality, and the temporal frame patch tokenizer [6] for video modality. These outputted tokens are attached with additional modality type embeddings to identify which modality the raw input belongs to. The tokenizers are illustrated in Fig. 2.

Text Tokenizer. The BPE Tokenizer [59] is employed for text modality. The text inputs are split into sub-words and projected by a linear embedding layer. A learnable 1D positional embedding for text with a max length of 256 is added to the word embeddings. To specify the input modality, an additional trainable textual modality embedding <T> is added to each token embedding. Note that all the text inputs of our model share the same vocabulary.

Image Tokenizer. The image patch tokenizer [17] is utilized as the image tokenizer. The input images are resized to 224×224 , and flattened to a sequence of image patches with shapes 16×16 , which are further mapped by a linear projection. A sequence of learnable image positional embeddings with a fixed length $14 \times 14 = 196$, and an additional visual modality embedding <V> are also added.

Video Tokenizer. The temporal frame patch tokenizer [6] is used for video tokenization. Each frame of the input video is flattened to image patches with shape 16×16 . For a video with N frames (N=8 by default), the number of tokens would be $N\times 14\times 14$. The spatial positional embeddings for images as well as a 1D temporal position embedding with max length N=8 are added to the video embeddings. Besides, the additional visual modality embedding <V> is added to each token embedding.

B. Implementation Details for Auto-regressive Language Modeling

In the formulation of autoregressive tasks from previous works, each input token attends to all previous tokens, including itself, to predict **the next word**. Unlike previous works, we use <SPE> to predict **the current word**. Fig. 4 shows how we achieve this. In the inference stage, <SPE> is appended to the end of the predicted tokens as the input. The corresponding output is used for prediction. In the training stage, we append several <SPE> tokens after the input sequence. Each <SPE> token is trained to predict a word in the input sequence. The attention mask is designed to make sure that the word tokens do not attend to <SPE> tokens, and each <SPE> token only attends to itself and the previous word tokens. In this way, the training stage and the inference stage are aligned.

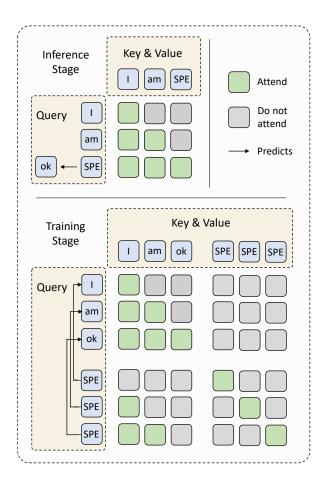


Figure 4. The attention mask of autoregressive language modeling.

C. Prompt Tuning

Four groups of parameters are learnable in prompttuning. They are <SPE>, layer normalization parameters, prompt tokens, and linear heads. This section introduces the usage and the number of parameters of each parameter group.

Details Similar to the pre-training stage, <SPE> token is shared for both inputs and targets. Layer normalization weights and biases in each Transformer layer and tokenizer are tuned. Learnable prompts are added to each layer of the Transformer encoder. Specifically, the input prompts of each layer do not come from the output of the previous layer. They are random initialized learnable parameters. For all prompt-tuning experiments, we use 10 learnable prompts for each layer on both inputs. The linear heads only apply for classification tasks. It takes the feature that is to be classified as input, and returns a classification logit. The output probability is a linear combination of the probability from the similarity score and the linear head:

$$P(x,y) \propto \alpha \exp\left(\cos\left(f(x),f(y)\right)/\tau\right) + w^{\top}f(x) + b$$
 (4)

	Number of Parameters
<spe></spe>	768
Layer Norm	41,472
Prompt	184,320
Linear head	$768*$ num_classes

Table 9. The number of learnable parameters in the prompt-tuning stage. Note that the linear head only applies for classification tasks.

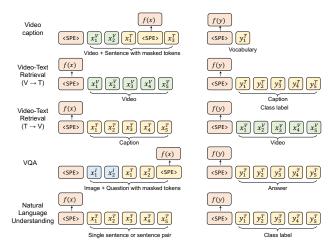


Figure 5. Input and target formats of our novel tasks. For each task, the left column represents the format of input sequence x, and the right column represents the format of the target sequence y. f(x) and f(y) are used to calculate the joint probability distribution. Here, we have omitted the tokenizer and encoder for concision.

where w and b are the weights and bias of the linear, and α is a learnable scalar. w and b are initialized with 0 and α is initialized with 1.

Number of Parameters Tab. 9 shows the number of parameters of each learnable component in prompt-tuning. For tasks other than classification, the number of parameters is 227K in total. When the linear head is added, *e.g.*, in ImageNet-1k classification task, the number is 995K, which is still less than 1% of all the parameters in the pre-training stage.

D. Formulation of Novel Tasks

The generic perceptual modeling makes it easy to convert existing tasks into the unified task formulation of our Uni-Perceiver. Fig. 5 illustrates the input and the output formulations of our novel tasks, which we will describe in details.

Video Caption. Similar to image caption, video caption is modeled as the autoregressive language modeling task with video clues. In this task, the model predicts each word based on the video and its previous words. The input set

 \mathcal{X} consists of the sequence concatenation of video and the words that have been predicted, followed with a <SPE> to-ken. The output features of the <SPE> token is used to calculate the joint probability with each words in the the vocabulary set \mathcal{Y} . Then the word with the highest probability is the predicted word at the current location. Additionally, video caption follows the efficient implementation of autoregressive training introduced in Sec. B.

Video-Text Retrieval. The Video-Text retrieval follows the formulation of Image-Text retrieval task, except that the image sequence is replaced by the video sequence. Specifically, the input sets $\mathcal X$ and $\mathcal Y$ are composed of video and text sequences respectively. Each sequence in $\mathcal X$ and $\mathcal Y$ also has a <SPE> token at the beginning. We use the output feature at the <SPE> token as the final representation of the input video or the text to calculate the joint probability distribution.

Visual Question Answering. We formulate the VQA task as a special case of masked language modeling with image clues. The input $x \in \mathcal{X}$ is the combination of image and question sequences. It should be noted that each question ends with a "?" mark and a <SPE> token is appended to the end of the question sequence. The \mathcal{Y} set consists of candidate answer sequences, in which each begins with a <SPE> token too. The joint probability distribution between \mathcal{X} and \mathcal{Y} can be calculated by using the output feature from <SPE> tokens.

Natural Language Understanding. The formulation of natural language understanding task is similar to that of image classification task. \mathcal{X} denotes the set of the input single sentence or the sentence-pair, and \mathcal{Y} is the set contains the textual class label. For example, in SST-2 [87], x denotes the sentence sequence of movie review and $y \in \mathcal{Y} = \{\texttt{great}, \texttt{terrible}\}$ is the sentiment label. In MRPC [81], x instead is the sequence combination of sentence pairs extracted from news, and $y \in \mathcal{Y} = \{\texttt{Yes}, \texttt{No}\}$ is the label to indicate whether the sentence pair are semantically equivalent. We also add $\{\texttt{SPE}\}$ tokens at the beginning of the sequences x and y, of which output features are used to computed joint probability.

E. Extra pre-training details

Sampling Weight & Batch Size & Loss Tab. 10 lists the batch size and sampling weight of each task and dataset in the pre-training stage. We use cross-entropy loss for language modeling tasks. The other tasks are trained with cross-entropy loss with 0.1 label smoothing. The loss weight of video classification is 0.05, which helps stabilize training in our experiments. The other loss weights are 1.0 by default.

For retrieval tasks like image-text retrieval, we use train-

Task	Dataset	Batch Size	Sampling Weight
Image Classification	ImageNet-21k [15]	64	0.333
Video Classification	Kinetics-700 [27]	4	0.0925
video Ciassification	Moments in Time [49]	24	0.0185
	Books&Wiki [79]	64	0.07775
	YFCC [26]	64	0.02778
	CC12M [8]	64	0.02778
Auto anadina I M	CC3M [60]	64	0.01389
Auto-encoding LM	Visual Genome [30]	64	0.01389
	COCO Caption [11]	64	0.01389
	SBU [50]	64	0.01389
	PAQ [35]	512	0.0222
	Books&Wiki [79]	64	0.07775
	YFCC [26]	56	0.02778
	CC12M [8]	56	0.02778
A T.M.	CC3M [60]	56	0.01389
Auto-regressive LM	Visual Genome [30]	56	0.01389
	COCO Caption [11]	56	0.01389
	SBU [50]	56	0.01389
	PAQ [35]	400	0.0222
	YFCC [26]	128	0.02778
	CC12M [8]	128	0.02778
	CC3M [60]	128	0.01389
Retrieval	Visual Genome [30]	128	0.01389
	COCO Caption [11]	128	0.01389
	SBU [50]	128	0.01389
	PAQ [35]	512	0.0222

Table 10. Ingredients and hyper-parameters for our pre-training.

ing samples in the same batch as negative samples, whose typical size is 127 except the PAQ dataset. Note that we do not use memory bank and do not gather feature across GPU devices to provide more negative samples, which may further promote the performance of retrieval tasks.

Data Augmentation We apply augmentation techniques to image and video modalities to avoid overfitting. For images in ImageNet-21k dataset, we apply augmentation same as [67]. Rand-Aug[80], random erasing [91], mixup [90] and cutmix [89] are used simultaneously. For images in other datasets, we resize the images to the short edge size of 256, and then a 224×224 region is cropped randomly from the resized images during training. During inference, the random crop is replaced with center crop operation. For all Video inputs, we apply the same augmentations used in [6]. We use clips of size $8 \times 224 \times 224$ for Kinetics-700 and Kinetics-400, and $3 \times 224 \times 224$ for Moments in Time. The temporal sample rate is 32. We use a single temporal clip. During training, the start frame is randomly picked if the video is longer than the clip. In the training stage, we first resize the shorter side of the video to a random value in [256, 320], then we randomly sample a 224×224 crop. In the test stage, the short side of the video is resized to 224. For classification tasks, We use 3 spatial crops with size 224 × 224 to cover a larger range of content and average their logits for evaluation. For video captioning task, we use center crop after resizing.

Data Parallel for Vocabulary and Class Labels Naive implementation of language modeling and ImageNet-21k

classification is impractical due to memory limitation. In language modeling, we need to compare the feature of a <SPE> token in a sequence to the feature of each token in our tokenizer. Since the vocabulary size is large, we apply data parallel for the vocabulary set. A similar method is used for class labels of ImageNet-21k.

Removing Overlap For the training set of K700 participating in pre-training, we remove those videos overlapping with validation set of K400.

F. Licences of Datasets

ImageNet-21K [15] is subject to the ImageNet terms of use [88].

Kinetics-700 [86] & **Kinetics-400** [27] The kinetics dataset is licensed by Google Inc. under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

BooksCorpus [79] Replicate Toronto BookCorpus is opensource and licensed under GNU GPL, Version 3.

Wikipedia Most of Wikipedia's text is co-licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License (CC BY-SA) and the GNU Free Documentation License (GFDL) (unversioned, with no invariant sections, front-cover texts, or back-cover texts). Some text has been imported only under CC BY-SA and CC BY-SA-compatible license and cannot be reused under GFDL.

YFCC [26] All the photos and videos provided in YFCC dataset are licensed under one of the Creative Commons copyright licenses.

CC12M [8] is licensed under the Terms of Use of Conceptual 12M [84].

CC3M [60] is licensed under the Conceptual Captions Terms of Use [85].

Visual Genome [30] is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License [83].

COCO Caption [11] The images are subject to the Flickr terms of use [82].

SBU Caption [50] The images are subject to the Flickr terms of use [82].

PAQ [35] is licensed under the Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

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