## 2.1 Hierarchical Softmax

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A computationally efficient approximation of the full softmax is the hierarchical softmax. In the context of neural network language models, it was first introduced by Morin and Bengio [12]. The main advantage is that instead of evaluating W output nodes in the neural network to obtain the probability distribution, it is needed to evaluate only about  $\log_2(W)$  nodes.

The hierarchical softmax uses a binary tree representation of the output layer with the W words as its leaves and, for each node, explicitly represents the relative probabilities of its child nodes. These define a random walk that assigns probabilities to words.

More precisely, each word w can be reached by an appropriate path from the root of the tree. Let n(w,j) be the j-th node on the path from the root to w, and let L(w) be the length of this path, so  $n(w,1)=\operatorname{root}$  and n(w,L(w))=w. In addition, for any inner node n, let  $\operatorname{ch}(n)$  be an arbitrary fixed child of n and let  $[\![x]\!]$  be 1 if x is true and -1 otherwise. Then the hierarchical softmax defines  $p(w_O|w_I)$  as follows:

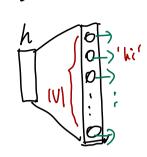
$$p(w|w_I) = \prod_{j=1}^{L(w)-1} \sigma\left(\llbracket n(w,j+1) = \operatorname{ch}(n(w,j)) \rrbracket \cdot v'_{n(w,j)}^{\mathsf{T}} v_{w_I}\right) \tag{3}$$

where  $\sigma(x)=1/(1+\exp(-x))$ . It can be verified that  $\sum_{w=1}^W p(w|w_I)=1$ . This implies that the cost of computing  $\log p(w_O|w_I)$  and  $\nabla \log p(w_O|w_I)$  is proportional to  $L(w_O)$ , which on average is no greater than  $\log W$ . Also, unlike the standard softmax formulation of the Skip-gram which assigns two representations  $v_w$  and  $v_w'$  to each word w, the hierarchical softmax formulation has one representation  $v_w$  for each word w and one representation  $v_n'$  for every inner node  $v_w$  of the binary tree.

The structure of the tree used by the hierarchical softmax has a considerable effect on the performance. Mnih and Hinton explored a number of methods for constructing the tree structure and the effect on both the training time and the resulting model accuracy [10]. In our work we use a binary Huffman tree, as it assigns short codes to the frequent words which results in fast training. It has been observed before that grouping words together by their frequency works well as a very simple speedup technique for the neural network based language models [5, 8].

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training time. The basic Skip-gram formulation defines  $p(w_{t+i}|w_t)$  using the softmax function:

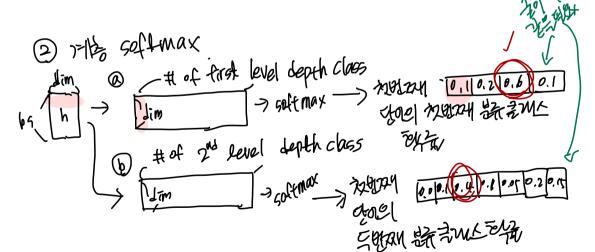
$$p(w_O|w_I) = \frac{\exp\left(v'_{w_O}^{\top} v_{w_I}\right)}{\sum_{w=1}^{W} \exp\left(v'_w^{\top} v_{w_I}\right)}$$
(6)

where  $v_w$  and  $v_w'$  are the "input" and "output" vector representations of w, and W is the number of words in the vocabulary. This formulation is impractical because the cost of computing  $\nabla \log p(w_O|w_I)$  is proportional to W, which is often large (10<sup>5</sup>-10<sup>7</sup> terms).

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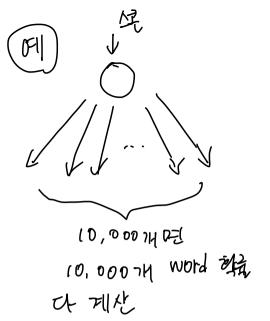
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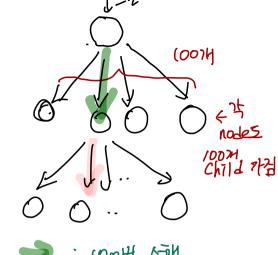
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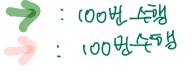


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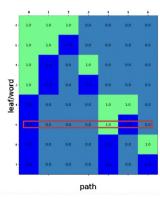


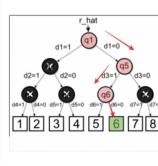




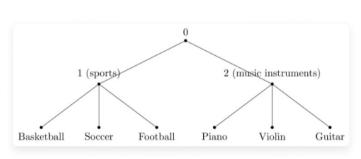
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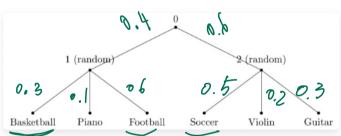




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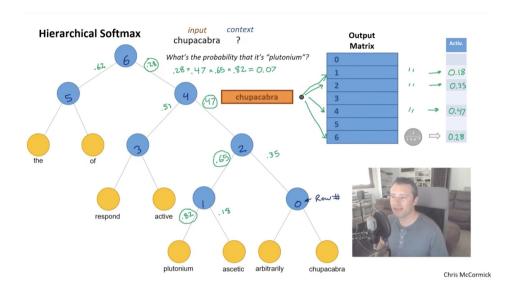
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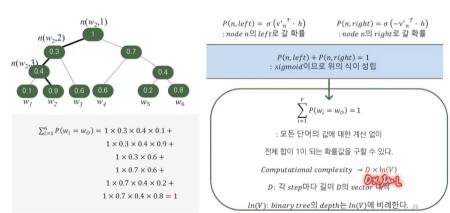
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## 4. Complexity Reduction

Efficient Estimation of Word Representations in Vector Space

Hierarchical Softmax



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