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Natural Language Queries using Large Language Models Bachelor Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores the integration of large language models (LLMs) into PostgreSQL database systems in order to make the database accessible via natural language instead of the postgres SQL dialect. The research focuses on implementation strategies, performance optimization, and practical applications of this concept.

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List of Abbreviations

GPT	Generative Pretrained Transformer
SQL	Structured Query Language
API	Application Programming Interface
$_{\rm LLM}$	Large Language Model
DBMS	Database Management System
NL2SQL	Natural Language to SQL

1 Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement and Motivation

Database systems represent a backbone of modern computer science, allowing for rapid advancements whilst shielding us from the problem categories that come along with managing and querying large amounts of, usually structured, data efficiently. However, most Database Management Systems (DBMS) have traditionally required specialized knowledge, usually of the Structured Query Language (SQL), in order to become useable. Whilst this barrier may be percieved differently across diverse usergroups it represents a fundamental misalignment between end-user goals (e.g. analysts, researchers, domain experts etc.) and the underlying DBMS, thus often requiring software engineering efforts in order to reduce this friction.

This barrier is the reason entire classes of software projects exists (for example, admin / support panels), data analytics tools etc. which therefore introduce significant churn and delay between the implementation of a database system and reaching the desired end user impact. Often these projects span multiple years, require costly staffing and yield little to no novel technical value.

Emerging technologies such as Large Language Models (LLMs) have proven themselves as a sensible tool for bridging fuzzy user provided input into discrete, machine readable formats. Prominent models in this field have demostrated outstanding capabilities that enable computer scientists to tackle new problem classes, that used to be challenging / yielded unsatisfying results with discrete programming approaches.

This thesis is exploring ways to overcome the above outlined barrier using natural language queries, so that domain experts, business owners, support staff etc. are able to seamlessly interact with their data, essentially eliminating the requirement of learning SQL (and its pitfalls). By translating natural language to SQL using Large Language Models this translation becomes very robust (e.g. against different kinds of phrasing) and enables novel applications in how businesses, researchers and professionals interact with their data it represents a fundamental shift (ie. moving away from SQL) towards a more inclusive and data driven world.

1.2 Objectives of the Thesis

This thesis aims to address the aforementioned challanges when it comes to database accessibility. The following objectives are the core research area of this thesis:

- 1. Develop a database extension that can translate natural language queries into semantically accurate SQL queries using Large Language Models.
- 2. To evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of different Models as well as prompt engineering techniques in order to improve the performance of the system.
- 3. Identify and address issues when it comes to handling amibguous, complex and domain specific user input.
- 4. Benchmark the performance of the implementation against common natural language to SQL (NL2SQL) benchmarks.
- Idenitfy potential usecases for real world scenarios that could deliver a noticable upsides to users.
- 6. Analyze the short commings and limitations of this approach and propose potential solutions to overcome them.

- 1.3 Research Questions
- 1.4 Methodological Approach
- 1.5 Structure of the Thesis

2 Theoretical Foundations

- 2.1 Generative Pretrained Transformers (GPT)
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- 2.1.2 Training and Fine-tuning
- 2.1.3 Application Areas
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3 Conceptual Design of GPT Embedding in PostgreSQL

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- 5.4 Comparison with Alternative Approaches

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- 6.1 Interpretation of Results
- 6.2 Limitations of the Implementation
- 6.3 Ethical and Data Privacy Considerations
- 6.4 Potential Future Developments

7 Summary and Outlook

- 7.1 Summary of Results
- 7.2 Addressing the Research Questions
- 7.3 Outlook for Future Research and Development

References

[1] Author, A. (Year). Title of the reference. Journal/Publisher, Volume(Issue), Pages.

Appendix

Installation Guide

API Documentation

Code Examples

Test Data and Results