

TTIC 31230 Fundamentals of Deep Learning, winter 2019

Backpropagation Problems

Problem 1: Backpropagation through softmax. Consider the following softmax.

$$\begin{aligned} Z[b] &= \sum_j \exp(s[b, j]) \\ p[b, j] &= \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b] \end{aligned}$$

An alternative way to compute this is to initialize the tensors Z and p to zero and then execute the following loops.

for b, j $Z[b] += \exp(s[b, j])$

for b, j $p[b, j] += \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]$

Each individual $+=$ operation inside the loops can be treated independently in backpropagation.

(a) Give a back-propagation loop over $+=$ updates based on the second loop for adding to $s.\text{grad}$ using $p.\text{grad}$ (and using the forward-computed tensors Z and s).

Solution: For b, j $s.\text{grad}[b, j] += p.\text{grad}[b, j] \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]$

(b) Give a back-propagation loop over $+=$ updates based on the second equation for adding to $Z.\text{grad}$ using $p.\text{grad}$ (and using the forward-computed tensors s and Z).

Solution: For b, j $Z.\text{grad}[b] -= p.\text{grad}[b, j] \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]^2$

(c) Give a back-propagation loop over $+=$ updates based on the first equation for adding to $s.\text{grad}$ using $Z.\text{grad}$ (and using the forward-computed tensor s).

Solution: For b, j $s.\text{grad}[b, j] += Z.\text{grad}[b] \exp(s[b, j])$

Problem 2: Optimizing Backpropagation through softmax. Show that the addition to $s.\text{grad}$ shown in problem 1 can be computed using the following more efficient updates.

for b, j $e[b] -= p[b, j] p.\text{grad}[b, j]$

for b, j $s.\text{grad}[b, j] += p[b, j] (p.\text{grad}[b, j] + e[b])$

Solution: The updates for problem 1 can be written as

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{for } b \quad Z.\text{grad}[b] &= \sum_j -p.\text{grad}[b, j] \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]^2 \\
&= \left(\sum_j -p[b, j] p.\text{grad}[b, j] \right) / Z[b] \\
&= e[b] / Z[b]
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{for } b, j \quad s.\text{grad}[b, j] &= p.\text{grad}[b, j] \exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b] + Z.\text{grad}[b] \exp(s[b, j]) \\
&= p.\text{grad}[b, j] (\exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]) + e[b] (\exp(s[b, j]) / Z[b]) \\
&= p[b, j] (p.\text{grad}[b, j] + e[b])
\end{aligned}$$

This formula shows how hand-written back-propagation methods for “layers” such as softmax can be more efficient than compiler-generated back-propagation code. While optimizing compilers can of course be written, one must keep in mind the trade-off between the abstraction level of the programming language and the efficiency of the generated code.

Problem 3. Backpropagation through batch normalization. Consider the following set of += statements defining batch normalization where all computed tensors are initialized to zero.

$$\text{For } b, j \quad \mu[j] += \frac{1}{B} x[b, j]$$

$$\text{For } b, j \quad s[j] += \frac{1}{B-1} (x[b, j] - \mu[j])^2$$

$$\text{For } b, j \quad x'[b, j] += \frac{x[b, j] - \mu[j]}{\sqrt{s[j]}}$$

Give backpropagation += (or -=) loops for computing $x.\text{grad}[b, j]$, $\mu.\text{grad}[j]$, and $s.\text{grad}[j]$ from $x'.\text{grad}[b, j]$. The loops should be given in the order they are to be executed.

Problem 4. Backpropagation through a UGRNN. Equations defining a UGRNN are given below.

$$\tilde{R}_t[b, j] = \left(\sum_i W^{h,R}[j, i] h_{t-1}[b, i] \right) + \left(\sum_k W^{x,R}[j, k] x_t[b, k] \right) - B^R[j]$$

$$R_t[b, j] = \tanh(\tilde{R}_t[b, j])$$

$$\tilde{G}_t[b, j] = \left(\sum_i W^{h,G}[j, i] h_{t-1}[b, i] \right) + \left(\sum_k W^{x,G}[j, k] x_t[b, k] \right) - B^G[j]$$

$$G_t[b, j] = \sigma(\tilde{G}_t[b, j])$$

$$h_t[b, j] = G_t[b, j] h_{t-1}[b, j] + (1 - G_t[b, j]) R_t[b, j]$$

(a) Rewrite the first equation defining \tilde{R}_t using += loops instead of summations assuming that all computed tensors are initialized to zero.

Solution:

$$\text{for } b, j, i \ \tilde{R}_t[b, j] \ += \ W^{h,R}[j, i] h_{t-1}[b, i]$$

$$\text{for } b, j, k \ \tilde{R}_t[b, j] \ += \ W^{x,R}[j, k] x_t[b, k]$$

$$\text{for } b, j \ \tilde{R}_t[b, j] \ -= \ B^R[j]$$

(b) Give += loops for the backward computation for your solution to part (a) using the convention that parameter gradients are averaged over the batch and where the batch size is B .

Solution:

$$\text{for } b, j, i \ W^{h,R}.\text{grad}[j, i] \ += \ \frac{1}{B} \ h_{t-1}[b, i] \tilde{R}_t.\text{grad}[b, j]$$

$$\text{for } b, j, i \ h_{t-1}.\text{grad}[b, j] \ += \ W^{h,R}[j, i] \tilde{R}_t.\text{grad}[b, j]$$

$$\text{for } b, j, k \ W^{x,R}.\text{grad}[j, k] \ += \ \frac{1}{B} \ x[b, k] \tilde{R}_t.\text{grad}[b, j]$$

$$\text{for } b, j \ B^R.\text{grad}[j] \ -= \ \frac{1}{B} \ \tilde{R}_t.\text{grad}[b, j]$$

Problem 5. Writing framework code. Consider a function $c : R^d \times R^s \rightarrow R^s$, in other words a function that takes a vector of dimension d and a vector of dimension s and yields a vector of dimension s . Given a sequence of vectors x_0, x_2, \dots, x_T with $x_t \in R^d$ we can define a sequence of vectors h_0, h_1, \dots, h_T by the equations

$$\begin{aligned} h_0 &= c(x_0, 0) \\ h_t &= c(x_t, h_{t-1}) \text{ for } 1 \leq t \leq T \end{aligned}$$

When the function c is defined by a neural network the resulting network mapping x_1, \dots, x_T to h_0, \dots, h_T is called a recurrent neural network (RNN).

a. In the educational framework EDF we work with objects where each object has a value attribute and a gradient attribute each of which have tensor values where the value tensor and the gradient tensor are the same shape. Each object is assigned a value in a forward pass and assigned a gradient in a backward pass. Suppose that we are given an EDF procedure `CELL` which takes as arguments a parameter object `Phi` and two EDF objects `X` and `H` where the value attribute of the object `X` is a d -dimensional vector and the value attribute of the object `H` is an s -dimensional vector. A call to the procedure `CELL(Phi,X,H)` returns an EDF object whose value attribute is computed in a forward pass in some possibly complex way from the value attributes of `Phi`, `X` and `H`. Given a sequence `X[]` of EDF objects whose value attributes are d -dimensional vectors, and an EDF object `ZERO` representing the constant s -dimensional zero vector, write a procedure for constructing the sequence of EDF objects representing h_1, h_2, \dots, h_T as defined by the above RNN equations. Your solution can be in Python or informal high level pseudo code.

Solution: We can use the equations given as the definition of the computation graph if we replace c in the equations with the function `CELL`.

```
X = list()
H = list()
H[0] = CELL(Phi,X[0],ZERO)
for t in range(1,T)
    H[t] = CELL(Phi,X[t],H[t-1])
```

b. Deep learning systems generally make extensive use of parallel computation for training. How does the parallel running time of an RNN computation graph scale with the length T ?

Solution: The parallel running time is proportional to T . RNNs are fundamentally serial and this is a problem. RNNs have recently been largely replaced by the transformer architecture.