Exercise 3 - Recurrent Networks and NLP

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3.1. Backpropagation through Time

i)

ii)

iii)

iv)

3.2. Gated recurrent units

i)

Given:

$$u_t = \sigma(w.h_{t-1} + w.x_t) \tag{1}$$
$$s_t = w.(h_{t-1} + x_t) \tag{2}$$
$$h_t = u_t.h_{t-1} + (1 - u_t).s_t \tag{3}$$

First, let's differentiate equation (3) with respect to h_{t-1}:

$$\frac{\partial h_t}{\partial h_{t-1}} = \frac{u_t * h_{t-1} + (1 - u_t) * s_t}{\partial h_{t-1}} \tag{4}$$

On applying the chain rule :

$$\frac{\partial h_t}{\partial h_{t-1}} = u_t.\frac{\partial h_{t-1}}{\partial h_{t-1}} + (1 - u_t).\frac{\partial s_t}{\partial h_{t-1}} \tag{5}$$

We have the value of s from equation 2:

$$\begin{align} \tag{6} \\ s_t &= w.(h_{t-1} + x_t) \tag{7} \\ \frac{\partial s_t}{\partial h_{t-1}} &= w.\frac{\partial h_{t-1}}{\partial h_{t-1}} + 0 \tag{8} \\ &= w \tag{9} \end{align}$$

On substituting it back to our previous equation, we have:

$$\frac{\partial h_t}{\partial h_{t-1}} = u_t + (1 - u_t).w \tag{10}$$

On comparing it with the required form A_t . w + B_t , we get:

$$\begin{align} A_t &= 1 - u_t \tag{11} \\ B_t &= u_t \tag{12} \end{align}$$

ii)

The long-term derivative can be written as:

$$\frac{\partial h_t}{\partial h_0} = \frac{\partial h_t}{\partial h_{t-1}} . \frac{\partial h_{t-1}}{\partial h_{t-2}} . \frac{\partial h_{t-2}}{\partial h_{t-3}} ...... \frac{\partial h_1}{\partial h_0} \tag{13}$$

From part (i) we have found that, for every term:

$$\frac{\partial h_t}{\partial h_{t-1}} = (1 - u_t).w + u_t \tag{14}$$

u_t is the output of a sigmoid function that has a value in the range of (0,1). Hence, the term remains non-zero. This helps to avoid the vanishing gradient problem, as no exponential decay term can cause the gradients to vanish over long sequences. When u_t is 1, it implies that the new hidden state retains the value of the previous hidden state and when u_t is 0, it ignores the information from the previous step.