Abstractive Text Summarization using Natural Language Processing

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Advancements in Transformer-based models, pre-trained on extensive text data, have shown promising results in various NLP tasks, including text summarization. However, there's a lack of exploration regarding pre-training objectives tailored specifically for abstractive summarization, and there's also a need for comprehensive evaluation across diverse domains. In this study, we propose a novel pre-training approach, dubbed PEGASUS, for large Transformer models. PEGASUS is trained on vast text corpora with a self-supervised objective that involves generating summaries by rearranging and synthesizing information from input documents, akin to extractive summarization. We evaluate PEGASUS on a range of summarization tasks across different domains and find it to be competitive with existing methods. Notably, it demonstrates robust performance even with limited data, surpassing previous benchmarks on datasets with a small number of examples. Human evaluation further validates the quality of PEGASUS-generated summaries across diverse datasets.

ACM Reference Format:
Chinu Mangal, Debapriya Roy, Harshit Kumar Tyagi, Piyush Vikas, Shweta Bambal, and Vishal Rajesh Kushwaha. 2024. Abstractive Text Summarization using Natural Language Processing. 1, 1 (May 2024), 11 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/nnnnnnn.nnnnnnn

1 INTRODUCTION

The paper discusses the significance and methodologies of text summarization in Natural Language Processing (NLP), focusing on the two primary strategies: extractive and abstractive summarization. Extractive summarization involves selecting key sentences or phrases from the source text, while abstractive summarization constructs a new, concise summary in the model's own words. Abstractive summarization is more challenging as it requires a deeper understanding of the text and the ability to generate coherent summaries.

Transformer-based models, particularly the Pre-training with Extracted Gap-sentences for Abstractive Summarization (PEGASUS) model, have shown promising results in abstractive text summarization. These models utilize self-attention mechanisms to process input sequences and generate output sequences effectively. Transformer models have been successful in various NLP tasks, including machine translation, language modeling, and text classification.

The research proposes to fine-tune and explore the PEGASUS model for abstractive text summarization on a diverse dataset. The diversity of the dataset aims to challenge the model's capabilities in generating summaries for different text types and styles, such as politics, economics, literature, laws, and medicine. Evaluating the model

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ACM XXXX-XXXX/2024/5-ART
https://doi.org/10.1145/nnnnnnn.nnnnnnn

on a diverse dataset allows for a comprehensive assessment of its performance and identification of potential challenges it may face when summarizing various text types.

This study is significant as it evaluates the performance of a transformer-based model on a diverse text summarization dataset, which differs from previous research focusing on specific types of text. By providing a more comprehensive assessment, the research aims to identify potential areas for improvement in the model's performance, contributing to the field of text summarization.

The paper is structured to review related studies detail the methodology , describe the experimental setup and procedures, along with the obtained results , and summarize the key contributions and limitations of the study, suggesting possibilities for future research .

In summary, this paper highlights the importance of text summarization in NLP, introduces transformer-based models like PEGASUS for abstractive summarization, proposes research to evaluate the model's performance on a diverse dataset, and outlines the structure of the paper.

2 RELATED WORK

A significant portion of previous work in summarization has been centered on extractive methods. These methods involve identifying key sentences or passages from the source document and reproducing them as a summary [13]; [7]; [19]; [8]; [4]; [11]; [15]. However, human-generated summaries tend to be abstractive, paraphrasing the original content in their own words rather than directly reproducing sentences from the document. Standardized competitions like DUC2003 and DUC-2004 have helped formalize the task of abstractive summarization, where news stories with multiple reference summaries generated by humans are used as evaluation benchmarks [21].

In the realm of abstractive summarization, various approaches have been explored. Traditional methods include phrase-table-based machine translation [1], compression using weighted tree-transformation rules [3], and quasi-synchronous grammar approaches [20]. With the advent of deep learning, researchers have turned to data-driven alternatives. [16] employed convolutional models to encode the source and a context-sensitive attentional feed-forward neural network to generate summaries, achieving state-of-the-art results. Building upon this work, [2] replaced the decoder with an RNN, further enhancing performance.

The seminal work "Attention is All You Need" by [18] introduced the Transformer architecture, a groundbreaking neural network model based on self-attention mechanisms. This architecture eliminated the need for recurrent or convolutional layers, enabling more efficient parallelization and capturing long-range dependencies effectively. The Transformer model demonstrated superior performance in machine translation, text summarization, and language modelling tasks, laying the foundation for subsequent Transformer-based models.

Another significant contribution to the field is the "BERT: Pre-training of Deep Bidirectional Transformers for Language Understanding" by [5]. BERT introduced bidirectional pre-training by masking words in a sentence and predicting them based on both left and right context. Fine-tuning BERT on specific tasks led to state-of-the-art results across multiple NLP benchmarks, highlighting the effectiveness of large-scale pre-training on Transformer architectures.

The "GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer)" series by Radford et al. (2018, 2019) further expanded the capabilities of Transformer models. These generative Transformer models, including GPT, GPT-2, and GPT-3, demonstrated the capability to generate coherent text given a prompt. By leveraging autoregressive decoding, GPT models achieved remarkable performance in text generation, dialog systems, and language understanding tasks, showcasing the versatility of Transformer architectures.

Furthermore, recent research has focused on leveraging pre-training objectives and fine-tuning strategies to improve the performance of Transformer-based models in various NLP tasks. These works have propelled the field forward by introducing innovative architectures, pre-training objectives, and fine-tuning strategies, leading to unprecedented progress in natural language understanding and generation.

Additionally, recent studies have explored the combination of pre-training with much larger external text corpora and Transformer-based sequence models, resulting in significant performance improvements for both natural language understanding and text generation tasks. Approaches such as MASS [17], UniLM [6], T5 [14], and BART [10] have demonstrated the effectiveness of Transformer encoder-decoder models pre-trained on masked input pre-training objectives.

Moreover, in the domain of summarization, a vast majority of past work has been extractive, involving the identification of key sentences or passages in the source document and reproducing them as a summary. However, recent advancements in deep learning have led to the exploration of abstractive summarization techniques. Research by [16] and [2] demonstrated the effectiveness of convolutional models and RNNs in generating abstractive summaries, while [9] introduced a large dataset for Chinese short text summarization using encoder-decoder RNNs.

Our research extends the framework established by [9], utilizing RNNs for both source and target while introducing novel models to address critical summarization challenges. Additionally, we expand upon the work of [12] by conducting more extensive experiments and proposing a novel dataset for document summarization, establishing benchmark results. In particular, we introduce the PEGASUS model, developed by researchers at Google, which represents a cutting-edge neural network architecture specifically tailored for abstractive text summarization.

3 MODEL ARCHITECTURE AND DETAILS

The PEGASUS model, developed by researchers at Google, is a cutting-edge neural network architecture specifically designed for abstractive text summarization. This model builds upon the Transformer architecture, which has demonstrated remarkable success in various natural language processing (NLP) tasks. At its core, PEGASUS utilizes a variant of the Transformer known as the Pre-training with Extracted Gap-sentences for Abstractive Summarization (PEGASUS) Transformer. This architecture is tailored for summarization tasks and is trained on a massive corpus of text data using unsupervised learning techniques. One of the distinguishing features of PEGASUS is its use of gap-sentences during pre-training. Gap-sentences are created by removing contiguous spans of text from documents, leaving gaps that the model must learn to fill in with appropriate summaries. This approach encourages the model to capture the essence of the input text and generate concise and informative summaries.

3.1 Frontend Architecture

In our project, we use Flask for the backend and Next.js for the user interface to create a flexible and efficient architecture. Flask, a lightweight and easy-to-use web framework, manages the backend tasks such as routing and integrating with databases or other services. Next.js, on the other hand, provides advanced features for the frontend, including server-side rendering and static site generation, which helps in delivering fast and smooth user experiences. This approach allows for a clear division of responsibilities: Flask handles API endpoints and data processing, while Next.js manages the presentation layer and client-side interactions. This combination supports scalable development, simplifies debugging, and creates a more maintainable codebase, ultimately leading to the delivery of high-quality applications.

3.2 Transformer Architecture

Like many recent advancements in natural language processing, PEGASUS is built upon the Transformer architecture. Transformers are neural network models that are highly effective for processing sequential data, such as text. Pegasus leverages a standard Transformer encoder-decoder architecture, similar to other abstractive summarization models.

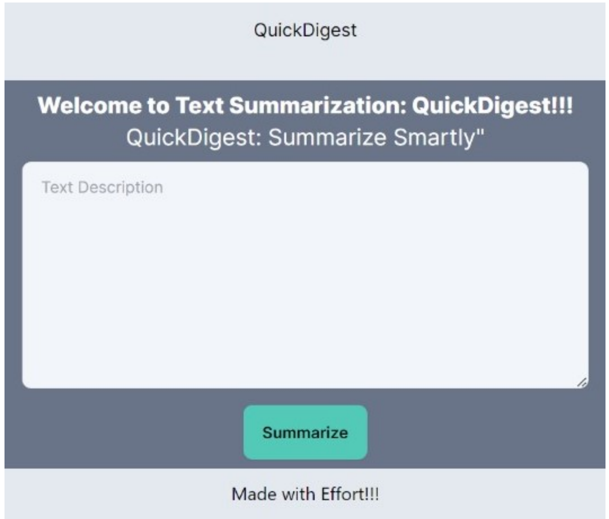

Fig. 1. GUI for Text Summarization

Encoder-Decoder Structure

Encoder processes the input text document. It typically consists of multiple Transformer layers (16 in Pegasus) that use self-attention to understand the relationships between words and sentences within the document. *Decoder* generates the summary. It also has multiple Transformer layers (again, 16 for Pegasus) and utilizes attention mechanisms in two ways:

- Self-attention: Analyzes the generated summary text so far to ensure coherence and consistency.
- Encoder-decoder attention: Pays attention to the encoded representation of the original document from the encoder, allowing the decoder to select relevant information for summary creation.

Positional Embeddings: Unlike the standard Transformer which uses learned positional embeddings, Pegasus employs static, sinusoidal positional embeddings. This simplifies the model and potentially improves its ability to handle long sequences.

Pre-training with Gap Sentence Generation (GSG): This is a key aspect of Pegasus's architecture. During pre-training, the model is presented with documents where some important sentences are masked out. The objective of GSG is for the model to predict these missing "gap sentences" and reconstruct the original document. This pre-training objective aligns well with the task of summarization, as the model essentially learns to identify and generate key information.

Pegasus inherits its implementation from BartForConditionalGeneration, a pre-trained model from Hugging Face. All pre-trained Pegasus checkpoints share the same architecture but may have different settings for maximum input/output length and a length penalty to control summary conciseness. PEGASUS is pre-trained using a form of self-supervised learning called "masked language modeling." During pre-training, the model is trained to predict masked-out tokens in a piece of text. However, unlike models like BERT, which predict individual words, PEGASUS predicts entire spans of text. This helps the model learn to understand the context and generate coherent summaries [22].

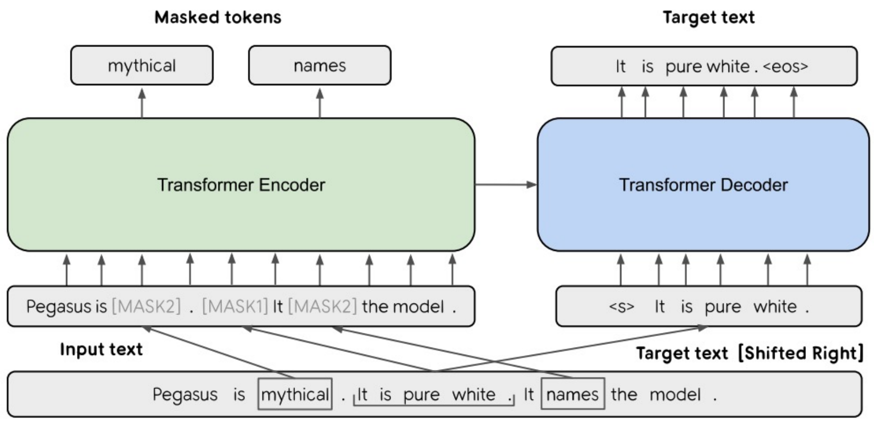

Fig. 2. The base architecture of PEGASUS is a standard Transformer encoder-decoder.

3.3 Tokenization and Pre-Train Data:

Tokenization: Before feeding text data into the model, it needs to be broken down into smaller units the model can understand. This process is called tokenization. Pegasus relies on a tokenizer specifically designed for sentence-piece models like BPE (Byte Pair Encoding).

BPE Tokenization: This technique breaks words into smaller sub-word units (tokens) based on their frequency in the training data. This allows the model to handle unseen words or rare combinations of characters.

Benefits:

- Improved vocabulary coverage: By breaking down words, the model can represent a wider range of vocabulary, even with a limited token set.
- Handling out-of-vocabulary (OOV) words: BPE allows the model to represent words not encountered during training by combining known sub-word units.

Pre-Train Data:

Massive Text Corpus: Pegasus is pre-trained on a large dataset of text. C4, or the Colossal and Cleaned version of Common Crawl, introduced in [14]; consists of text from 350M Web-pages (750GB) and HugeNews, a dataset of 1.5B articles (3.8TB) collected from news and news-like websites from 2013- 2019. A whitelist of domains ranging from high quality news publishers to lower-quality sites such as high-school newspapers, and blogs was curated and used to seed a web-crawler. Heuristics were used to identify news-like articles, and only the main article text was extracted as plain text. For downstream summarization, dataset Samsum dataset was utilized . A train/validation/test ratio of 80/10/10 was incorporated.

Focus on Gap Sentence Generation (GSG): It's processed for the GSG pre-training objective. This involves:

- Sentence Selection: Important sentences are identified and extracted from the documents in the corpus.
- Masking: During training, some of these crucial sentences are masked out (replaced with a special token).
- Model Training: The model is then tasked with predicting the masked-out sentences, essentially learning to generate summaries by focusing on key information.

Overall, the combination of BPE tokenization and a massive text corpus with a focus on GSG pre-training allows Pegasus to effectively capture the essence of textual content and generate summaries that are both concise and informative.

Beam Search Decoding:

PEGASUS generates summaries using a technique called beam search decoding. Beam search is a heuristic search algorithm that explores a graph by expanding the most promising nodes in a limited set, called the beam. This helps the model generate high-quality summaries by considering multiple possible sequences of words.

Evaluation Metrics:

To evaluate the quality of its summaries, PEGASUS often uses several evaluation metrics to assess the quality of its generated summaries. Here are some of the common ones:

- ROUGE (Recall-Oriented Understudy for Gisting Evaluation): This is a widely used metric specifically designed for evaluating summarization tasks. It measures the overlap between the generated summary and one or more human-written reference summaries. Different ROUGE variants exist, focusing on n-gram overlaps (sequences of n words):
- ROUGE-N: Considers n-gram matches between the generated summary and references (e.g., ROUGE-1 for unigrams, ROUGE-2 for bigrams).
- ROUGE-L: Focuses on the longest matching sequence between the summary and references.
- BLEU (BiLingual Evaluation Understudy): While originally designed for machine translation, BLEU is also used for summarization evaluation. It considers n-gram precision (how many of the generated n-grams appear in the references) along with a brevity penalty to avoid overly short summaries.
- Extractive Fragments Coverage Density: These metrics measure how much of the original document is included in the summary and whether it relies on simply extracting existing sentences or generates new ones (abstractiveness).
- Repetition Rates: This metric helps identify if the generated summary suffers from repetitive phrases or fails to capture diverse information from the source document.
- Length Statistics: This simply compares the length distribution of the generated summaries with the reference summaries to ensure they are within an expected range.

Choosing the Right Metric: The most suitable metric depends on the specific goals of your summarization task. ROUGE is generally preferred due to its focus on summarization-specific evaluation. However, BLEU might be used for comparisons with other summarization models trained on the same dataset. Additionally, metrics like coverage and repetitiveness can provide valuable insights into the quality and style of the generated summaries.

Applications:

PEGASUS can be used in various applications where summarization of text is required, such as news article summarization, document summarization, email summarization, and more. It can help users quickly grasp the main points of lengthy text documents.

Availability:

PEGASUS is available through the Hugging Face library, which provides easy access to pre-trained models and tools for fine-tuning and using them in different applications. Overall, PEGASUS represents a significant advancement in abstractive text summarization and has demonstrated impressive performance across various summarization tasks.

4 DATASET

For training our model, we have used the **Samsum dataset** from HuggingFace API. The SamSum Corpus stands out as a rich resource in the realm of natural language processing (NLP), offering a diverse collection of approximately 16,000 conversations meticulously crafted to resemble messaging exchanges. These conversations were not randomly generated but rather meticulously constructed by linguists fluent in English, who drew from their daily communication experiences to ensure authenticity and relevance. One of the key strengths of the SamSum dataset lies in its ability to capture the nuances of informal, semi-formal, and formal conversational styles. By incorporating elements such as slang, emoticons, and occasional typos, the dataset mirrors the dynamic nature of real-life interactions found on messaging platforms. This diversity in style and register enables researchers to tackle a wide range of NLP tasks, spanning from sentiment analysis to dialogue generation.

Each conversation in the SamSum Corpus is accompanied by a succinct summary, providing a third-person perspective on the main topics discussed. These summaries were carefully annotated by language experts, adhering to specific guidelines: they are intended to be brief yet comprehensive, extracting essential information while retaining the context of the conversation. Moreover, the summaries include the names of the interlocutors, enhancing clarity and coherence.

To facilitate research and experimentation, the dataset is organized into four groups based on the number of utterances in each conversation: 3-6, 7-12, 13-18, and 19-30. While the majority of conversations involve exchanges between two individuals, a portion also involve three or more participants, adding further depth to the dataset's versatility. Developed by the Samsung RD Institute Poland, the SamSum Corpus is made available for research purposes under a non-commercial license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). This licensing ensures that the dataset can be freely utilized by researchers and developers for academic exploration and experimentation while respecting the intellectual property rights of the creators.

In summary, the SAMSum Corpus represents a valuable contribution to the field of NLP, offering researchers a comprehensive and diverse dataset that accurately reflects the intricacies of human conversation in digital environments. Its meticulous construction, detailed annotations, and accessibility make it a cornerstone resource for advancing the state-of-the-art in various NLP applications and methodologies.

5 EXPERIEMENTS

We have conducted comprehensive experiments to evaluate the efficacy of the PEGASUS (Pre-training with Extracted Gap-sentences for Abstractive Summarization Sequence-to-sequence) model in improving abstractive text summarization. Below is a thorough examination of the experimental setup, methodologies, and findings from the study:

5.1 Data Preparation

We utilize the SAMSum dataset, which comprises summaries of natural language conversations. This dataset mirrors real-world interactions, making it a valuable resource for training and evaluating the PEGASUS model for summarizing conversational text. The SAMSum dataset is divided into training, validation, and test sets with an allocation of 80%, 10%, and 10% respectively. This division ensures a comprehensive evaluation across various data distributions. Initial data cleaning involves removing inconsistencies and irrelevant content like extraneous punctuation. Following cleaning, the dataset undergoes preprocessing where text is tokenized using Byte Pair Encoding (BPE). This method breaks down the text into sub-word units, aiding the model in processing conversational nuances.

5.2 Model Setup

The PEGASUS model, based on the Transformer architecture, is initialized using resources from the Hugging Face library. This model is specifically designed for abstractive text summarization, aiming to efficiently understand and summarize input text. We configure the model with optimal hyperparameters including learning rate, batch size, and number of training epochs. These parameters are fine-tuned to the specific needs of the dataset and

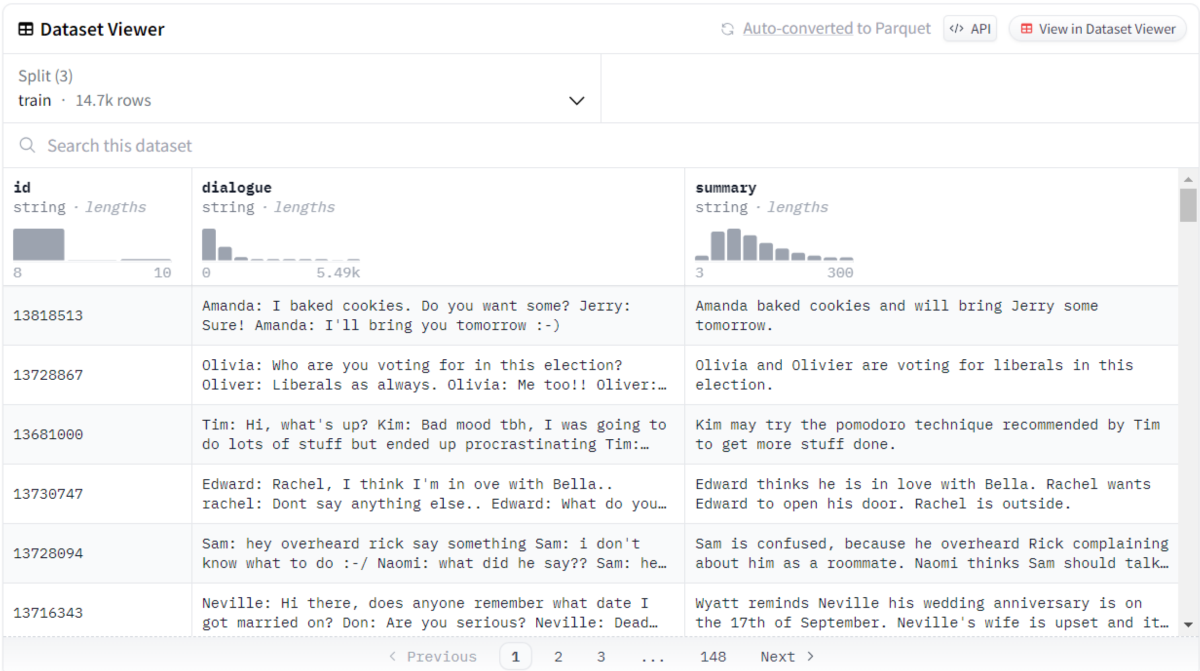

Fig. 3. SAMsum Dataset

summarization tasks. PEGASUS utilizes self-attention and encoder-decoder attention mechanisms to analyze relationships within the input text and focus on relevant information for summarization. The model employs static sinusoidal positional embeddings to manage longer sequences effectively. Data is processed using a tokenizer tailored for Byte Pair Encoding (BPE), which handles a diverse vocabulary and manages unknown words efficiently. We leverage pre-trained model checkpoints from Hugging Face, enhancing the training speed and summarization performance on the SAMSum dataset.

5.3 Training

Training involves the Gap Sentence Generation (GSG) method, where important sentences are masked in training documents for the model to predict, focusing on key information extraction. An Adafactor optimizer is chosen for its efficiency in parameter tuning. The model's performance is monitored using loss and accuracy metrics on the validation set, making adjustments to hyperparameters as needed. Strategies are implemented to manage large datasets and memory usage, such as processing in smaller batches. The number of training epochs is set based on early results to balance training time and model performance. Training continues until convergence is observed, with early stopping implemented to prevent overfitting.

5.4 Fine-Tuning

The PEGASUS model is fine-tuned to better suit the task of summarizing conversational text from the SAMSum dataset, adapting to the nuances of the dataset. Hyperparameters are adjusted during fine-tuning with a lower learning rate to refine model performance based on feedback from the validation set. Certain parts of the model, such as the encoder, may be frozen to focus fine-tuning on the decoder. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation ensure that the model's adaptations enhance its summarization capabilities. Model states are saved at checkpoints during fine-tuning. The process typically involves fewer epochs than the initial training phase to prevent overfitting. Post fine-tuning, the model is tested on the test set to verify its generalization capabilities. Final adjustments are made based on this phase to ensure optimal performance.

6 RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

We have explored the functionality of PEGASUS (Pre-training with Extracted Gap-sentences for Abstractive Summarization Sequence-to-sequence) model to enhance abstractive text summarization. Below is a detailed discussion of the results and conclusions from the study:

6.1 Results

6.1.1 Model Performance. The PEGASUS model was evaluated using the SAMSum dataset, showing effective performance across different text lengths, indicating robustness and adaptability.

6.1.2 ROUGE Scores. The evaluation was primarily based on ROUGE scores, which assess the overlap between the machine-generated summaries and human-made reference summaries. The results demonstrated consistent performance, without significant differences in accuracy between shorter and longer articles, suggesting that the model's summarization quality is stable across various document lengths.

Metric	Rouge-1	Rouge-2	Rouge-L
Recall	26.8%	18.2%	24.8%
Precision	19.3%	10.4%	17.3%
F1-score	19.3%	12.7%	22.3%

Table 1. ROUGE metrics evaluation for text

6.1.3 Quality of Summaries. The generated summaries significantly reduced the word count while maintaining the essential meanings of the original texts. This indicates that the model successfully captures the core information while generating concise content.

6.2 Conclusion

6.2.1 Effectiveness of Model. The study concludes that using the PEGASUS model for extracting semantic features for generating summaries results in high-quality abstractive summaries. PEGASUS is designed specifically for abstractive text summarization through a unique pre-training approach called "gap-sentences generation," where the most informative sentences of a document are masked, and the model learns to predict these sentences from the surrounding text. This method directly aligns the model's pre-training with summarization tasks, enhancing its ability to generate concise and contextually relevant summaries. PEGASUS outperforms other models, particularly in zero-shot settings, where it efficiently produces coherent summaries without needing task-specific fine-tuning. It offers great flexibility, allowing customization for various domains and languages, and it requires less training data, which increases efficiency. The model's success in summarization tasks demonstrates its potential for practical applications in diverse fields such as news aggregation, content creation, and legal and medical document summarization.

6.2.2 Consistency Across Text Lengths. The model's performance across different text lengths was consistent, indicating its potential utility in real-world applications where document lengths can vary greatly.

7 FUTURE WORK

For future developments in this project, we aim to broaden the scope and impact of text summarization within Natural Language Processing (NLP). Our goals encompass enhancing current techniques, discovering novel methods, and addressing emerging challenges within this domain. Some specific areas of focus include:

- **Multimodal Summarization:** Investigate the integration of visual and textual information to enrich the summarization process. We plan to explore how various modalities such as images and videos can contribute to more informative and comprehensive summaries.
- **Domain-specific Summarization:** Adapt and fine-tune summarization models to specific domains such as medical literature, legal documents, and scientific research papers. By tailoring models to domain-specific datasets, we can significantly enhance their capability to generate precise and relevant summaries.
- **Interactive Summarization Systems:** Develop interactive systems that allow users to provide feedback or guide the summarization process. This initiative will explore human-in-the-loop approaches, enabling users to refine and personalize summaries based on their specific preferences.
- **Cross-lingual Summarization:** Extend our summarization techniques to effectively handle multiple languages. This will involve researching methods for generating summaries in one language from source texts in another, thereby increasing the accessibility and utility of summarization technologies.
- **Ethical and Bias Considerations:** Address potential biases in summarization models to ensure the production of fair and unbiased summaries across different demographics. Additionally, we will consider the ethical implications associated with the use of summarization technology, focusing on privacy concerns and the potential for misinformation propagation.

Through these endeavors, we aim to push the boundaries of what is possible in text summarization, making significant contributions to the field and enhancing the practical applications of this technology.

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