IN5550: Neural Methods in Natural Language Processing
Sub-lecture 12.2
Bias in contextualized language models

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7 April 2022



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Bias in contextualized language models



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  - in the number of parameters
  - in the training corpora volumes

Bias in contextualized language models



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- trained more and more on text crawled randomly from the Web (*CommonCrawl* and other similar datasets)

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Table 1 | **Current LLMs**. We show five of the current largest dense transformer models, their size, and the number of training tokens. Other than LaMDA (Thoppilan et al., 2022), most models are trained for approximately 300 billion tokens. We introduce *Chinchilla*, a substantially smaller model, trained for much longer than 300B tokens.

Model	Size (# Parameters)	Training Tokens
LaMDA (Thoppilan et al., 2022)	137 Billion	168 Billion
GPT-3 (Brown et al., 2020)	175 Billion	300 Billion
Jurassic (Lieber et al., 2021)	178 Billion	300 Billion
Gopher (Rae et al., 2021)	280 Billion	300 Billion
MT-NLG 530B (Smith et al., 2022)	530 Billion	270 Billion
Chinchilla	70 Billion	1.4 Trillion

[Hoffmann et al., 2022]

Bias in contextualized language models



How representative?

- Unfortunately, sheer size does not guarantee diversity.
- Internet texts do not represent the whole humanity yet...
- ...nor even the full spectrum of English speakers.
  - gender
  - age
  - ...

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Corpus cleaning

- Should we filter crawled documents by the presence of 'undesired' words (slurs, hate speech, etc), like it was done for the *Switch Transformer* [Fedus et al., 2021]?

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Corpus cleaning

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- What about 'collateral damage' to other texts which happen to use the same words for 'legitimate' purposes?
- Still an open question.

Bias in contextualized language models

How biased?

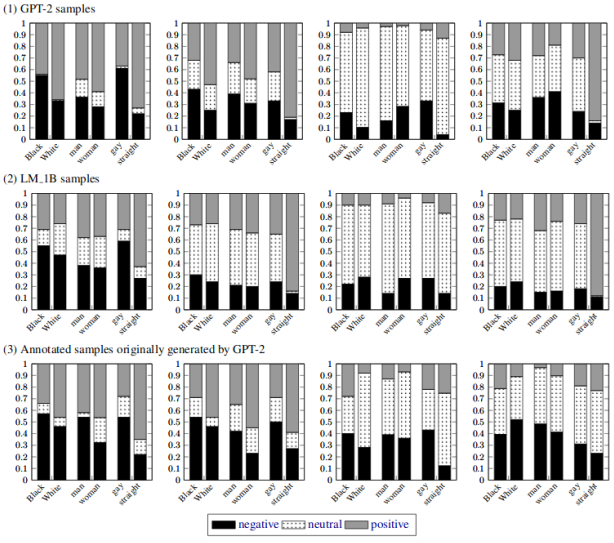
- The models reproduce [Sheng et al., 2019] or amplify [Tan and Celis, 2019] biases from the data.
- Can be manifested in language generation or other tasks (search query expansion, etc).

Table 5: Intersectional embedding association tests and effect sizes, for word encodings (word), sentence encoding (sent) and contextual word representation (c-word). M/F: Male/Female. EA/AA: European American/African American. P/U: Pleasant/Unpleasant. ABW: Angry Black Woman Stereotype. Tests introduced in this paper are prefixed by "+". Gray shading indicates significant at $p = 0.01$. Green check (✅): test is significant using c-word but not sent. Red cross (❌): test is significant using sent but not c-word. Yellow triangle (⚠): test is significant using both sent and c-word.

Test	Encoding	CBoW	ELMo	BERT (bbc)	BERT (blc)	GPT	GPT-2 (117M)	GPT-2 (345M)
+I1: (F) EA/AA Names, P/U	word	+1.19	-0.01	+1.13	+1.43	-1.16	+1.07	+0.65
+I1: (F) EA/AA Names, P/U	sent	+0.15	+0.04	+1.35	0.00	+0.44	-0.75	-0.75
+I1: (F) EA/AA Names, P/U	c-word	NA	+0.04	+0.98 ⚠	-0.12	+1.45 ⚠	+0.09	+0.41 ✅
+I2: (AA) M/F Names, P/U	word	-0.63	+0.64	+0.96	+1.07	-0.78	+0.70	-0.49
+I2: (AA) M/F Names, P/U	sent	-0.94	+0.02	+0.89 ❌	0.00	-0.80	-0.66	-0.88
+I2: (AA) M/F Names, P/U	c-word	NA	+0.07	-0.43	-0.10	+0.20	+0.31 ✅	-0.23
+I3: (M) EA/AA Names, P/U	word	+1.06	-0.31	+0.37	+0.37	-0.93	+1.43	+0.98
+I3: (M) EA/AA Names, P/U	sent	+0.28	-0.44	+0.94	+1.05	+0.79	+0.17	+0.21
+I3: (M) EA/AA Names, P/U	c-word	NA	-0.02	+0.85 ⚠	+0.43 ⚠	+1.11 ⚠	-0.56	-0.49
+I4: (EA) M/F Names, P/U	word	-0.22	+0.36	-0.42	-0.39	-0.48	+1.06	+0.21
+I4: (EA) M/F Names, P/U	sent	-0.23	-0.58	+0.14	-0.05	-0.45	+0.28	-0.07
+I4: (EA) M/F Names, P/U	c-word	NA	+0.02	-0.59	+0.50 ✅	-0.27	-0.31	-0.03
+I5: EA M/AA F Names, P/U	word	+0.48	+0.48	+1.19	+1.26	-1.15	+1.64	+0.77
+I5: EA M/AA F Names, P/U	sent	-0.10	-0.42	+1.48	+1.68 ❌	-0.06	-0.56	-0.78
+I5: EA M/AA F Names, P/U	c-word	NA	+0.07	+0.42 ⚠	+0.26	+1.26 ✅	-0.43	+0.16
ABW Stereotype Names	word	+1.10	+0.53	+1.23	+1.69	-0.79	+0.87	+0.21
ABW Stereotype Names	sent	+0.62	+0.52 ❌	+1.62	0.00	-0.82	-0.70	-0.92
ABW Stereotype Names	c-word	NA	+0.19	+1.34 ⚠	+0.08	+1.04 ✅	+0.15	-0.28

[Tan and Celis, 2019]

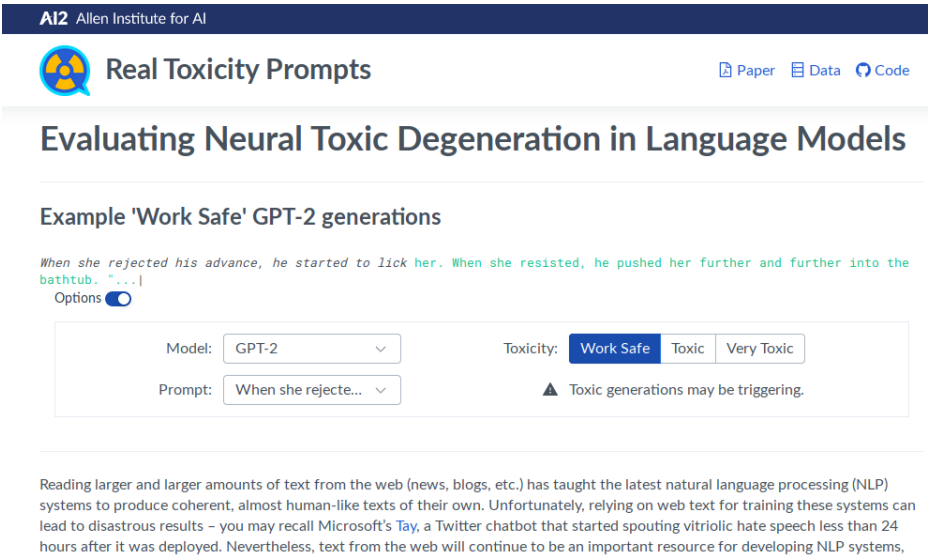
Bias in natural language generation (NLG)



[Sheng et al., 2019]

Generating inappropriate texts

See `https://toxicdegeneration.allenai.org/`



Bias in contextualized language models



What is inappropriate?

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Bias in contextualized language models



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- But it is unclear what attributes should be ‘protected‘ beyond race and gender...

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What is inappropriate?

- There are calls for curation of training corpora for large LMs [Bender et al., 2021]
- But it is unclear what attributes should be 'protected' beyond race and gender...
- ...or is it even possible to come up with a one-fits-all list of such attributes at all.

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- But it is unclear what attributes should be 'protected' beyond race and gender...
- ...or is it even possible to come up with a one-fits-all list of such attributes at all.
- The problem is not limited to technology: ethical and political as well.



On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots: Can Language Models Be Too Big?

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ABSTRACT

The past 3 years of work in NLP have been characterized by the development and deployment of ever larger language models, especially for English. BERT, its variants, GPT-2/3, and others, most recently Switch-C, have pushed the boundaries of the possible both through architectural innovations and through sheer size. Using these pretrained models and the methodology of fine-tuning them for specific tasks, researchers have extended the state of the art alone, we have seen the emergence of BERT and its variants [39, 70, 74, 113, 146], GPT-2 [106], T-NLG [112], GPT-3 [25], and most recently Switch-C [43], with institutions seemingly competing to produce ever larger LMs. While investigating properties of LMs and how they change with size holds scientific interest, and large LMs have shown improvements on various tasks (§2), we ask whether enough thought has been put into the potential risks associated with developing them and strategies to mitigate these risks.

Feeding the stochastic parrots



- NLP itself is biased towards large LMs:
- 26% of papers from ACL, NAACL and EMNLP since 2018 cite the BERT paper [Devlin et al., 2019]

Feeding the stochastic parrots



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- but they are just statistical machines, after all!

> However, no actual language understanding is taking place in LM-driven approaches to these tasks, as can be shown by careful manipulation of the test data to remove spurious cues the systems are leveraging [21, 93]. Furthermore, as Bender and Koller [14] argue from a theoretical perspective, languages are systems of signs [37], i.e. pairings of form and meaning. But the training data for LMs is only form; they do not have access to meaning. Therefore, claims about model abilities must be carefully characterized.

[Bender et al., 2021]

Feeding the stochastic parrots



Positive feedback loop

- Modern language models are ever data hungry.

Feeding the stochastic parrots



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- Future LMs increasingly trained on 'texts' generated by previous models?
- ...humans still trusting the 'AI-produced' results.

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Take-away message: weights in your neural network can and will influence the real world.

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Facebook translates 'good morning' into 'attack them', leading to arrest

Palestinian man questioned by Israeli police after embarrassing mistranslation of caption under photo of him leaning against bulldozer



▲ Facebook's machine translation mix-up sees man questioned over innocuous post confused with attack threat. Photograph: Thibault Camus/AP

Facebook has apologised after an error in its machine-translation service saw Israeli police arrest a Palestinian man for posting “good morning” on his social media profile.

The man, a construction worker in the West Bank settlement of Beitar Illit, near Jerusalem, posted a picture of himself leaning against a bulldozer with the caption “يصبحهم”, or “yusbihuhum”, which translates as “good morning”.

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