

Analysis methods in NLP

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Stanford Linguistics

CS224u: Natural language understanding



Overview

Varieties of evaluation

Behavioral

- Standard (“IID”; Independent and Identically Distributed)
- Exploratory
- Hypothesis-driven
- Challenge
- Adversarial
- Security-oriented

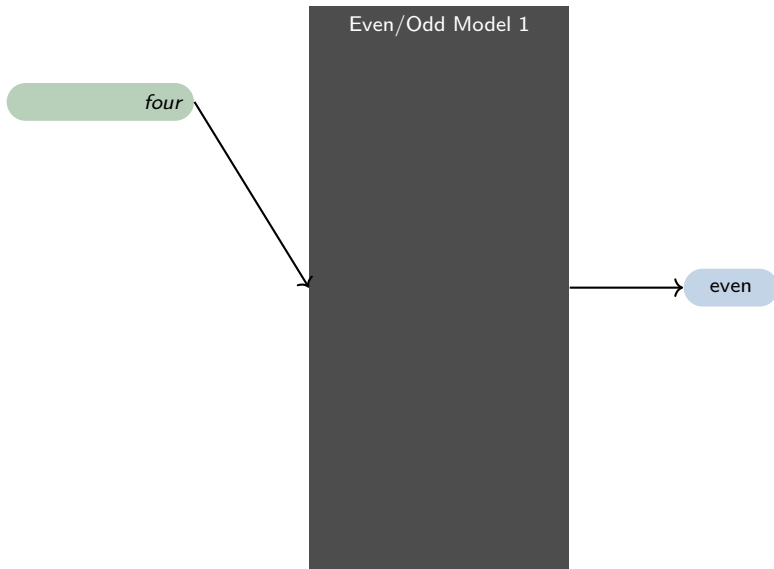
Structural

- Probing
- Feature attribution
- Interventions

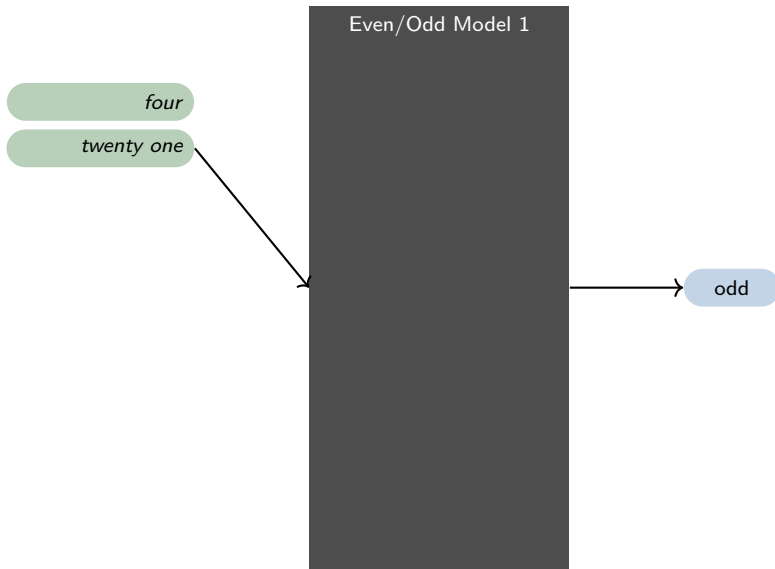
Limits of behavioral testing

Even/Odd Model 1

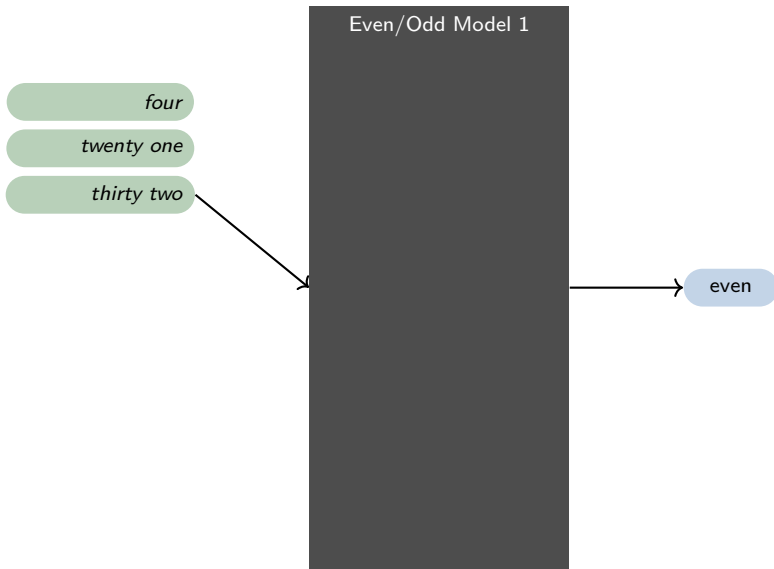
Limits of behavioral testing



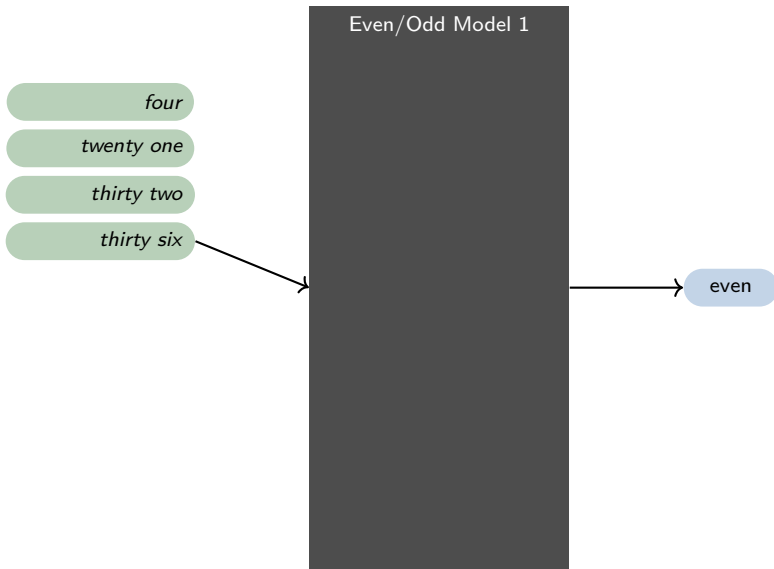
Limits of behavioral testing



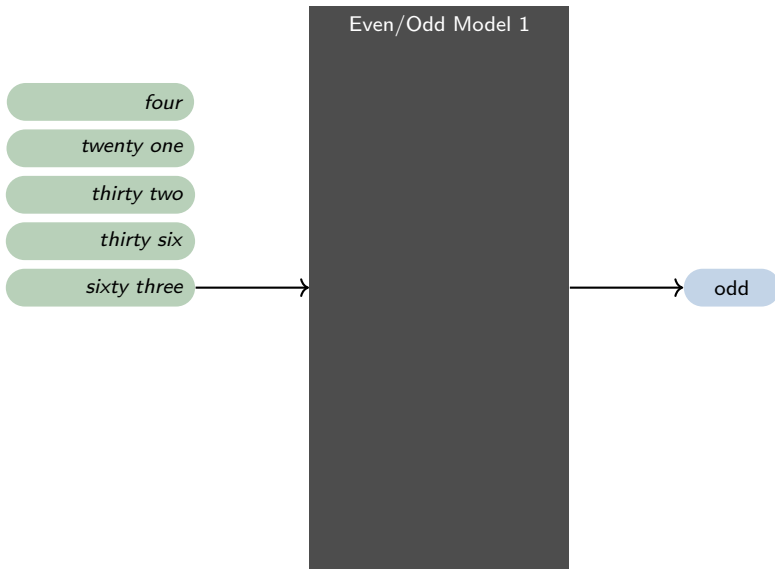
Limits of behavioral testing



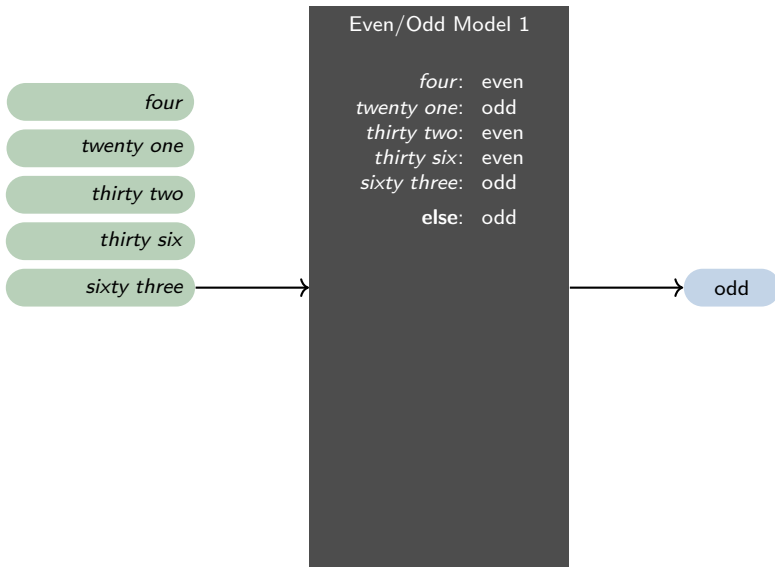
Limits of behavioral testing



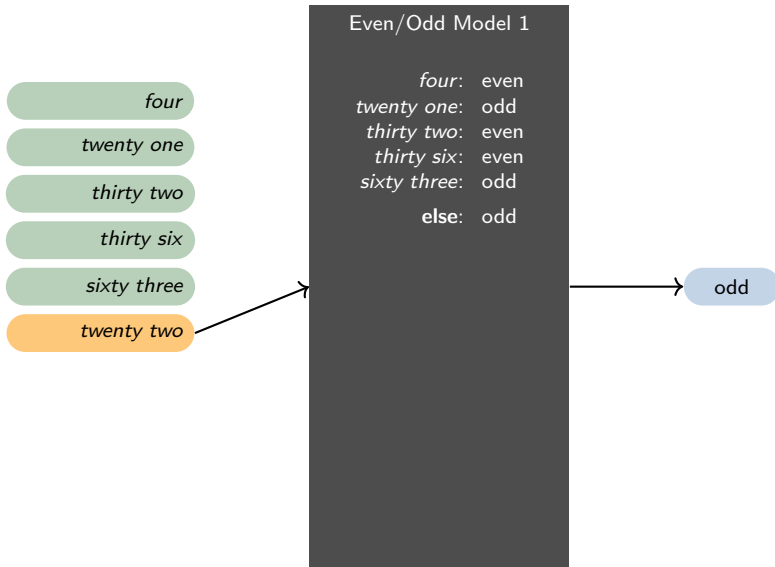
Limits of behavioral testing



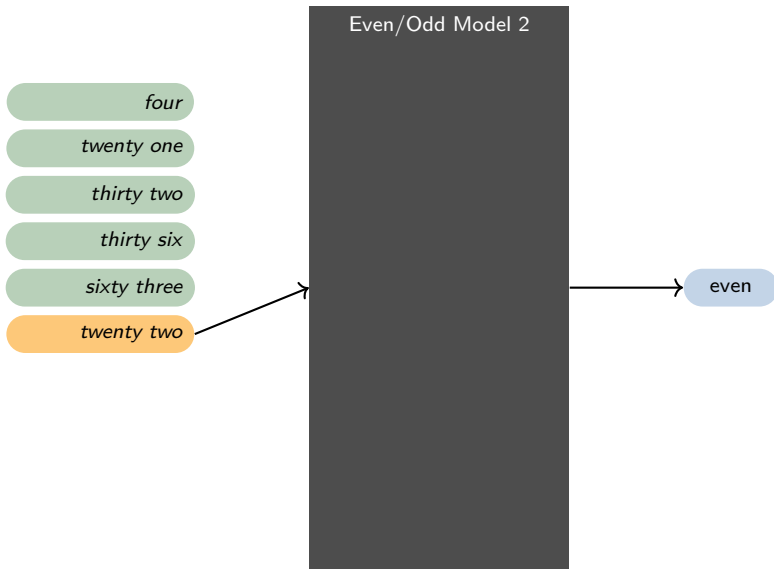
Limits of behavioral testing



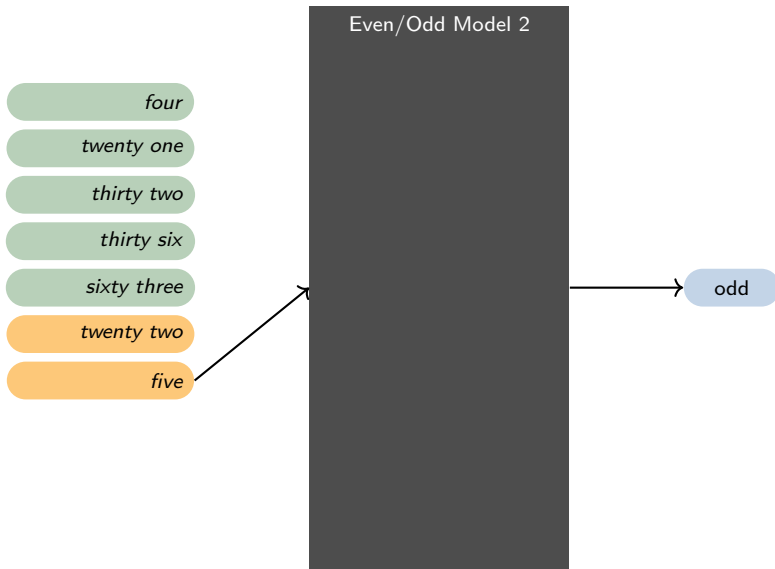
Limits of behavioral testing



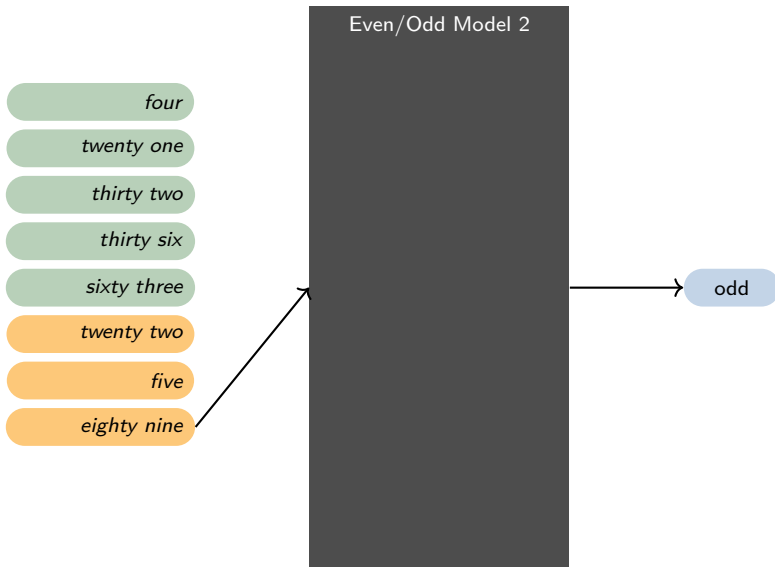
Limits of behavioral testing



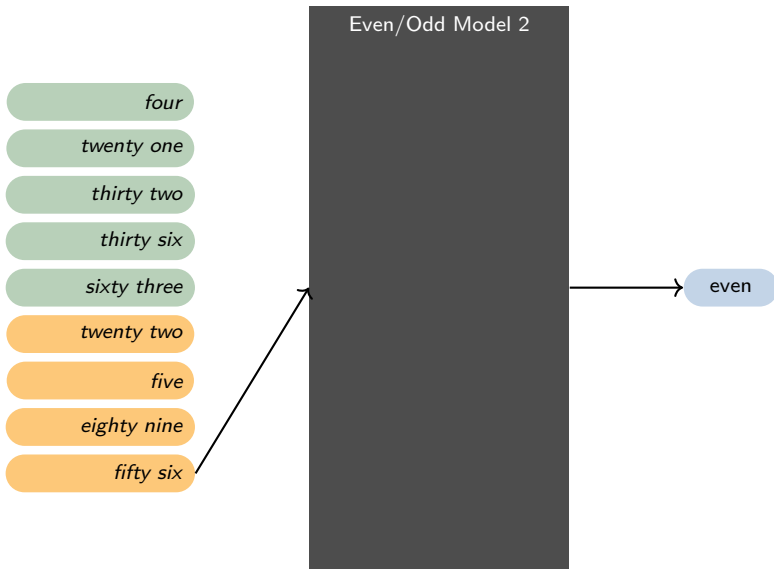
Limits of behavioral testing



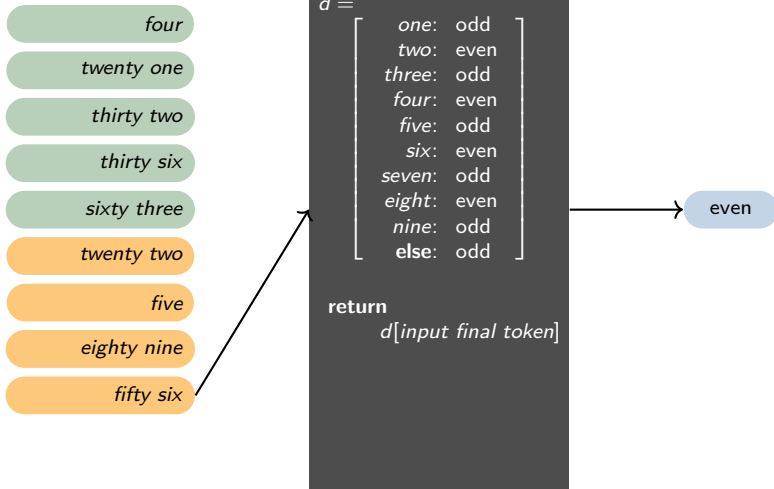
Limits of behavioral testing



Limits of behavioral testing



Limits of behavioral testing



Limits of behavioral testing

- four
- twenty one
- thirty two
- thirty six
- sixty three
- twenty two
- five
- eighty nine
- fifty six
- sixteen

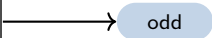
```

Even/Odd Model 2

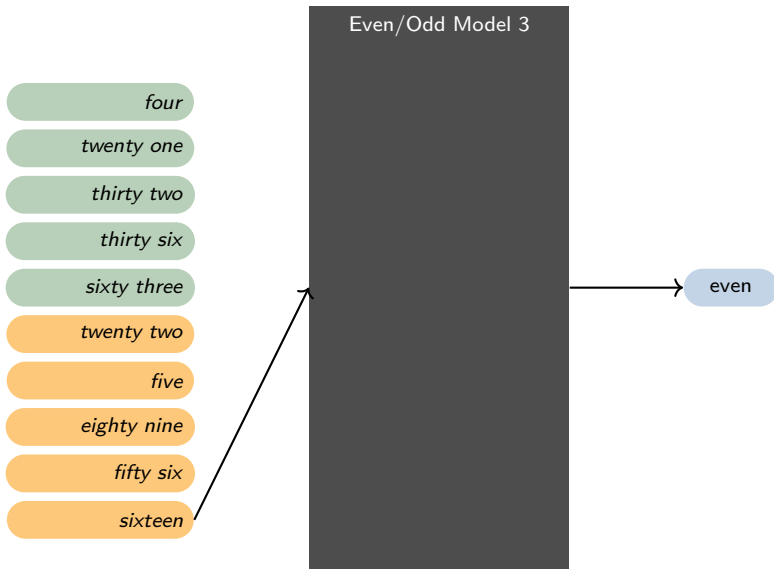
d =
  [
    one:  odd
    two:  even
    three: odd
    four: even
    five:  odd
    six:  even
    seven: odd
    eight: even
    nine:  odd
    else:  odd
  ]

return
  d[input final token]

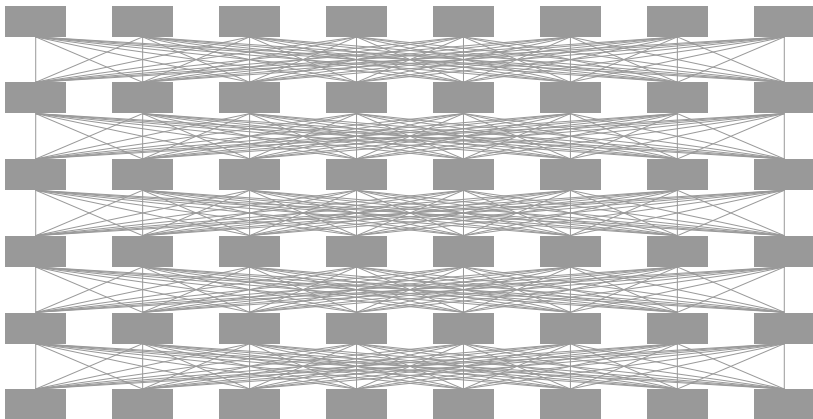
```



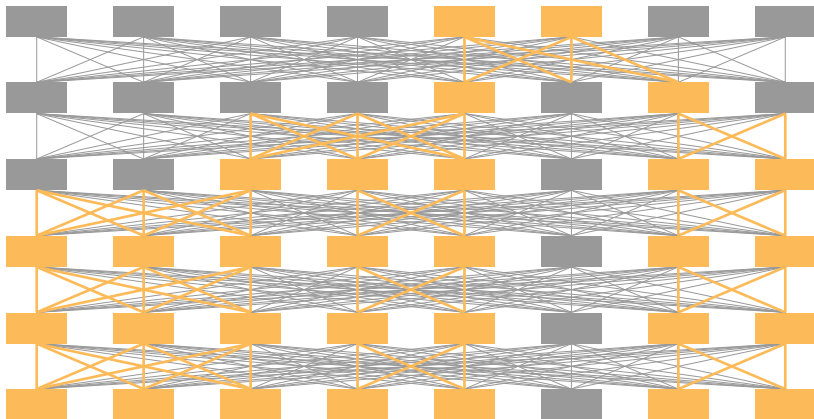
Limits of behavioral testing



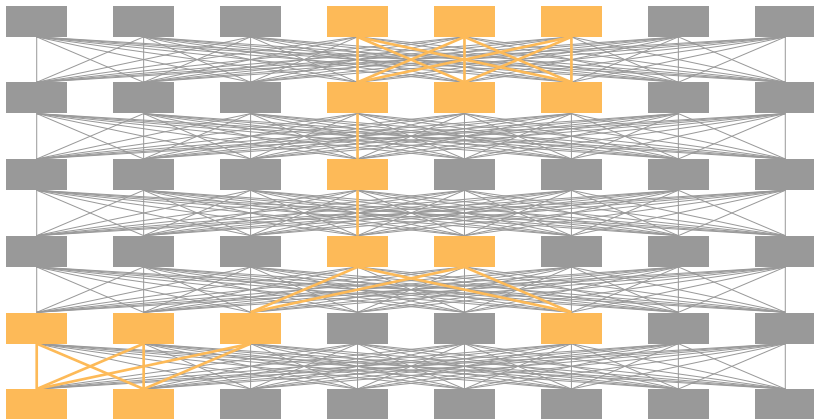
Models today



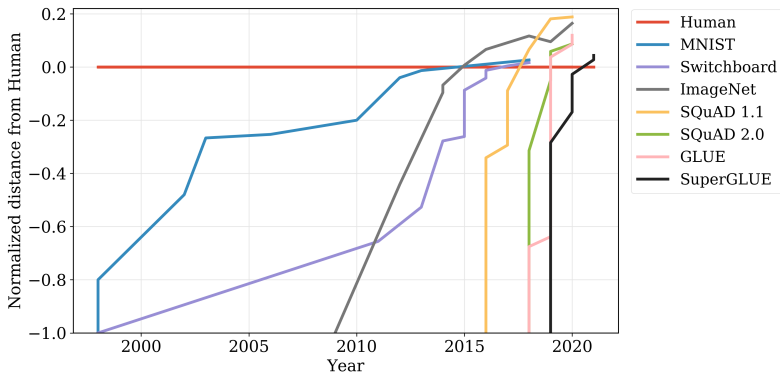
The interpretability dream



The reality: Apparently just a mess (but only apparently!)



Progress on benchmarks



Kiela et al. 2021

Systematicity

Fodor and Pylyshyn (1988:37):

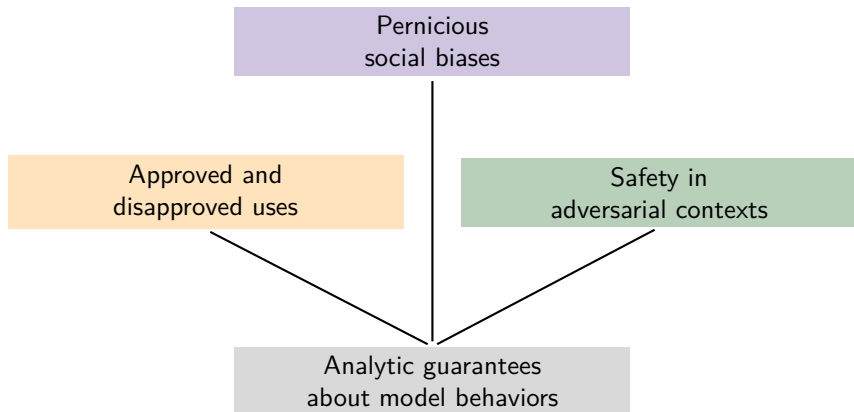
“What we mean when we say that linguistic capacities are *systematic* is that the ability to produce/understand some sentences is *intrinsically* connected to the ability to produce/understand certain others.”

1. Sandy loves the puppy.
2. The puppy loves Sandy.
3. the turtle ~ the puppy
4. The turtle loves Sandy.
5. ...

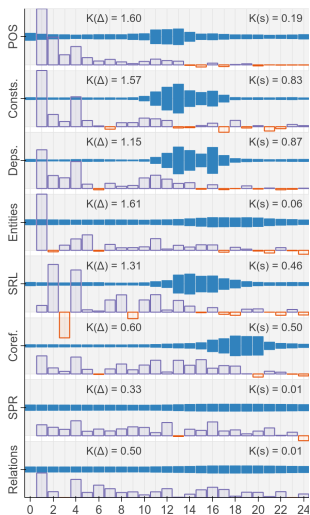
Compositionality

The meaning of a phrase is a function of the meanings of its immediate syntactic constituents and the way they are combined.

A crucial prerequisite



Probing internal representations



Tenney et al. 2019

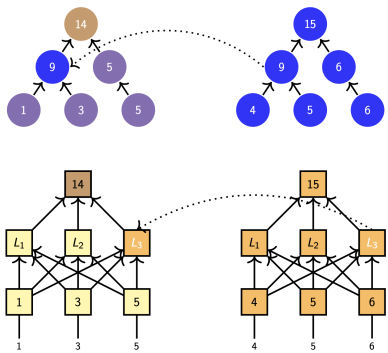
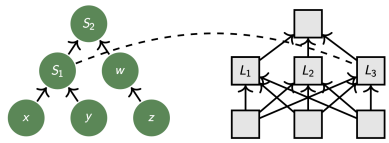
Feature attribution

Legend: ■ Away from true label □ Neutral wrt true label ■ Toward true label

True Label	Predicted Label	Attribution Label	Attribution Score	Word Importance
2	2 (0.82)	None	-5.71	#s They said it would be great , and they were right. #/s
0	0 (0.50)	None	2.25	#s They said it would be great , and they were wrong . #/s
2	2 (0.76)	None	-0.35	#s They were right to say it would be great . #/s
0	0 (0.62)	None	2.84	#s They were wrong to say it would be great . #/s
2	2 (0.77)	None	2.59	#s They said it would be stellar , and they were correct . #/s

Integrated gradients; Sundararajan et al. 2017

Intervention-based methods



Analytical framework

	Characterize representations	Causal inference	Improved models
Probing	😊		🤔
Feature attribution	🤔	😊	
Interventions	😊	😊	😊

Overview

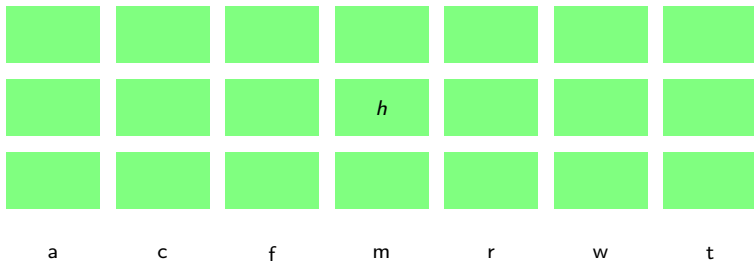
1. Core idea: use supervised models (the probes) to determine what is latently encoded in the hidden representations of our target models.
2. Often applied in the context of BERTology – see especially [Tenney et al. 2019](#).
3. A source of valuable insights, but we need to proceed with caution:
 - ▶ A very powerful probe might lead you to see things that aren't in the target model (but rather in your probe).
 - ▶ Probes cannot tell us about whether the information that we identify has any *causal* relationship with the target model's behavior.
4. Final section: unsupervised probes.

Recipe for probing

1. State a hypothesis about an aspect of the target model's internal structure.
2. Choose a supervised task that is a proxy for the internal structure of interest.
3. Identify the place in the model where you believe the structure will be encoded.
4. Train supervised probe on the chosen site(s).

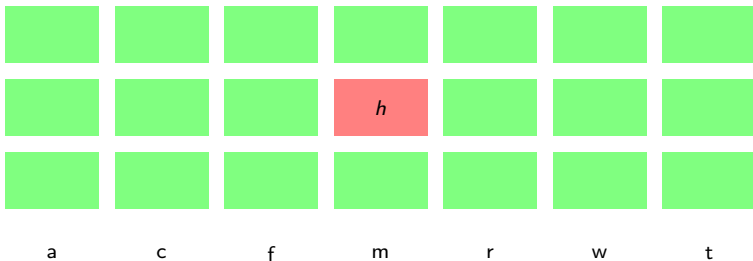
Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

Core method



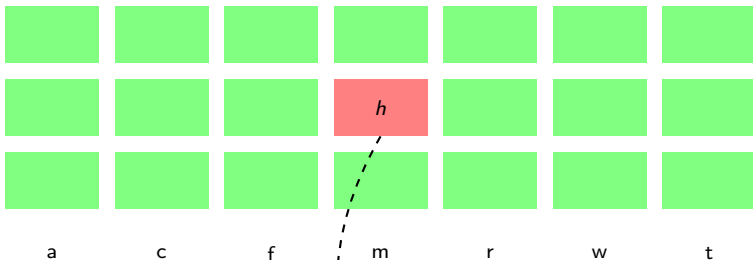
Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

Core method



Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

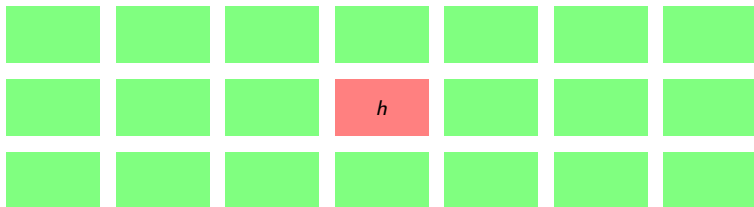
Core method



$$\text{SmallLinearModel}(h) = \text{task}$$

Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

Core method



a

c

f

m

r

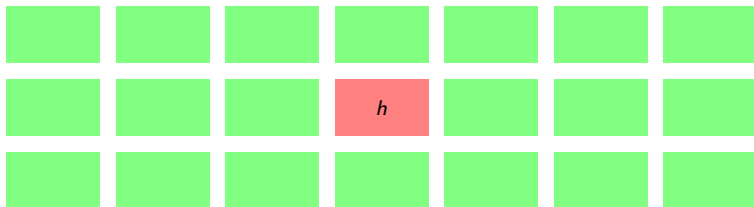
w

t

 X y h_1 task_y^1

Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

Core method



w

r

r

t

m

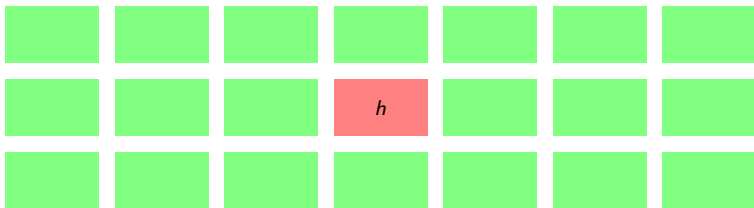
t

w

 X y h_1 task_y^1 h_2 task_y^2

Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

Core method



a b c t w w w

X y

h_1

task_y^1

h_2

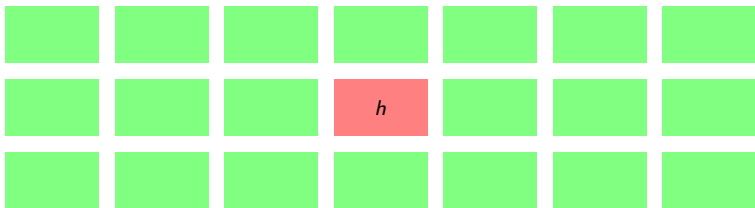
task_y^2

h_3

task_y^3

Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

Core method



a b c t w w w

X y

h_1

task_y^1

h_2

task_y^2

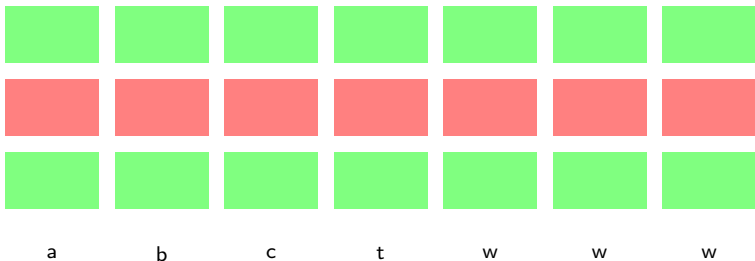
h_3

task_y^3

SmallLinearModel(X, y)

Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

Core method



Conneau et al. 2018; Tenney et al. 2019

Probing or learning a new model?

1. Probes in the above sense are supervised models whose inputs are frozen parameters of the model we are probing.
2. This is hard to distinguish from simply fitting a supervised model as usual, with a particular choice for featurization.
3. At least some of the information that we identify is likely to be stored in the probe model.
4. More powerful probes might “find” more information – by storing more information in the probe parameters.

Control tasks and probe selectivity

Control task

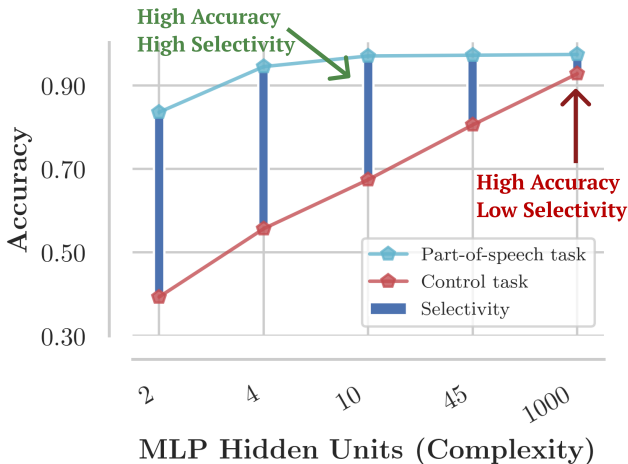
A random task with the same input/output structure as the target task.

- Word-sense classification: words assigned random fixed senses.
- POS tagging task: words assigned random fixed tags.
- Parsing: assigned edges randomly using simple strategies.

Selectivity

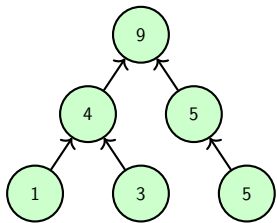
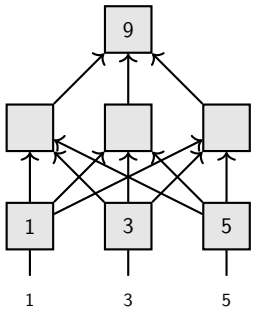
The difference between probe performance on the task and probe performance on the control task.

Control tasks and probe selectivity



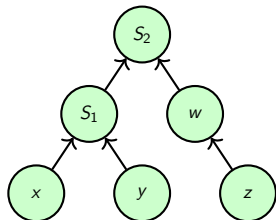
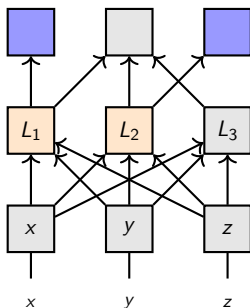
Hewitt and Liang 2019

Simple example



No causal inferences

1. Probe L_1 : it computes z
2. Probe L_2 : it computes $x + y$
3. Aha!

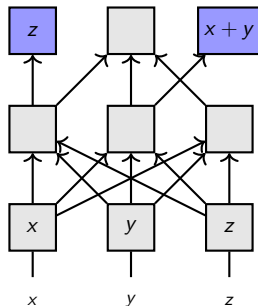


4. But L_2 has no impact on the output!

$$W_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad W_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad W_3 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{w} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (\mathbf{x}W_1; \mathbf{x}W_2; \mathbf{x}W_3)\mathbf{w}$$

From probing to multi-task training



$$\mathbf{w} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Unsupervised probes

1. [Saphra and Lopez \(2019\)](#): Singular Vector Canonical Correlation Analysis as a probing technique
2. [Clark et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Manning et al. \(2020\)](#): Inspecting attention weights.
3. [Hewitt and Manning \(2019\)](#) and [Chi et al. \(2020\)](#): Linear transformations of hidden states to identify latent syntactic structures in BERT.
4. [Rogers et al. \(2020\)](#): extensive discussion of probing and related efforts and what they have revealed about BERT representations.

Summary

	Characterize representations	Causal inference	Improved models
Probing	😊		🤔
Feature attribution	🤔	😊	
Interventions	😊	😊	😊

Feature attribution

captum.ai

1. Integrated gradients (Sundararajan et al. 2017)
2. Gradients
3. Saliency Maps (Simonyan et al. 2013)
4. DeepLift (Shrikumar et al. 2017)
5. Deconvolution (Zeiler and Fergus 2014)
6. LIME (Ribeiro et al. 2016)
7. Feature ablation
8. Feature permutation
9. ...

<https://captum.ai>
https://github.com/cgpotts/cs224u/blob/main/feature_attribution.ipynb

Axioms

Sensitivity

If two inputs x and x' differ only at dimension i and lead to different predictions, then feature f_i has non-zero attribution.

$$M([1, 0, 1]) = \text{positive}$$

$$M([1, 1, 1]) = \text{negative}$$

Implementation invariance

If two models M and M' have identical input/output behavior, then the attributions for M and M' are identical.

Gradients · inputs

$$\text{InputXGradient}_i(M, x) = \frac{\partial M(x)}{\partial x_i} \cdot x_i$$

```
1 """For both functions, the `forward` method of `model` is used.
2 `X` is an (m x n) tensor of attributions. Use `targets=None` for
3 models with scalar outputs, else supply a LongTensor giving a
4 label for each example."""
5
6 import torch
7 def grad_x_input(model, X, targets=None):
8     X.requires_grad = True
9     y = model(X)
10    y = y if targets is None else y[list(range(len(y))), targets]
11    (grads, ) = torch.autograd.grad(y.unbind(), X)
12    return grads * X
13
14 from captum.attr import InputXGradient
15 def captum_grad_x_input(model, X, target):
16     X.requires_grad = True
17     amod = InputXGradient(model)
18     return amod.attribute(X, target=target)
```

Attributions wrt predicted vs. actual labels

```

1 import torch
2 import utils
3 from sklearn.datasets import make_classification
4 from torch_shallow_neural_classifier import
    TorchShallowNeuralClassifier
5
6 utils.fix_random_seeds()
7
8 X, y = make_classification(n_samples=100, n_classes=2, n_features=4,
    n_informative=4, n_redundant=0, random_state=1)
9
10 # Deliberately undertrained model:
11 mod_bad = TorchShallowNeuralClassifier(max_iter=1)
12 mod_bad.fit(X, y)
13
14 # Attributions wrt the true labels:
15 bad_true = captum_grad_x_input(mod_bad.model, torch.FloatTensor(X),
    target=torch.LongTensor(y))
16 print(bad_true.mean(axis=0))
17 tensor([ 0.0204, -0.0181,  0.0508,  0.0194], grad_fn=<MeanBackward1>)
18
19 # Attributions wrt the predicted labels:
20 bad_pred = mod_bad.predict(X)
21 bad_attr = captum_grad_x_input(mod_bad.model, torch.FloatTensor(X),
    target=torch.LongTensor(bad_pred))
22 print(bad_attr.mean(axis=0))
23 tensor([0.0112, 0.0168, 0.0558, 0.0740], grad_fn=<MeanBackward1>)

```

Gradients · inputs fails sensitivity

$$M(x) = 1 - \max(0, 1 - x)$$

$$M(0) = 1 - \max(0, 1 - 0) = 1 - 1 = 0$$

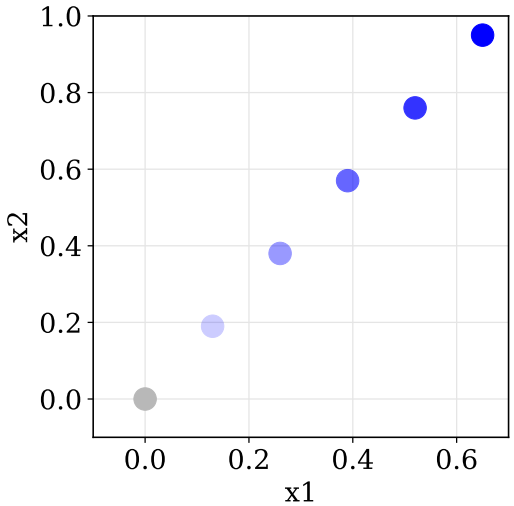
$$M(2) = 1 - \max(0, 1 - 2) = 1 - 0 = 1$$

$$\text{InputXGradient}(M, 0) = \max(0, \text{sign}(1 - 0)) \cdot 0 = 1 \cdot 0 = 0$$

$$\text{InputXGradient}(M, 2) = \max(0, \text{sign}(1 - 2)) \cdot 2 = 0 \cdot 2 = 0$$

Example from [Sundararajan et al. 2017](#)

Integrated gradients: Intuition



Integrated gradients: Core computation

$$\text{IG}_i(M, x, x') = \underbrace{(x_i - x'_i)}_5 \cdot \underbrace{\sum_{k=1}^m}_4 \frac{\underbrace{\underbrace{\partial M(x' + \frac{1}{m} \cdot (x - x'))}_{2}}_3}_{\partial x_i} \cdot \underbrace{\frac{1}{m}}_4$$

1. Generate $\alpha = [1, \dots, m]$
2. Interpolate inputs between baseline x' and actual input x
3. Compute gradients for each interpolated input
4. Integral approximation through averaging
5. Scaling to remain in the space region as the original

Adapted from the [TensorFlow integrated gradients tutorial](#)

Sensitivity again

$$M(x) = 1 - \max(0, 1 - x)$$

$$M(0) = 1 - \max(0, 1 - 0) = 1 - 1 = 0$$

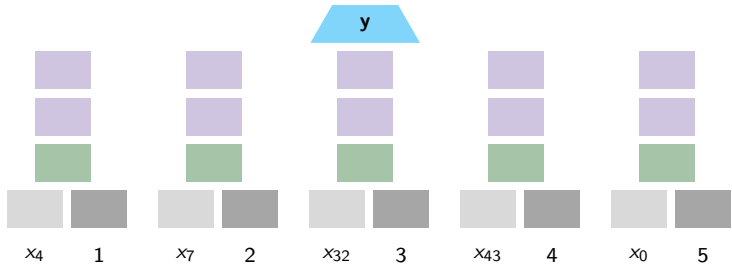
$$M(2) = 1 - \max(0, 1 - 2) = 1 - 0 = 1$$

$$\text{InputXGradient}(M, 0) = \max(0, \text{sign}(1 - 0)) \cdot 0 = 1 \cdot 0 = 0$$

$$\text{InputXGradient}(M, 2) = \max(0, \text{sign}(1 - 2)) \cdot 2 = 0 \cdot 2 = 0$$

$$\text{IG}_i(M, 2, 0) = (2 - 0) \cdot \sum \begin{pmatrix} \max(0, \text{sign}(1 - 0.00)) \\ \max(0, \text{sign}(1 - 0.02)) \\ \max(0, \text{sign}(1 - 0.04)) \\ \vdots \\ \max(0, \text{sign}(1 - 2.00)) \end{pmatrix} \cdot \frac{1}{m} \approx 1$$

BERT example



BERT example

```
1 import torch
2 import torch.nn.functional as F
3 from transformers import AutoModelForSequenceClassification,
  AutoTokenizer
4 from captum.attr import LayerIntegratedGradients
5 from captum.attr import visualization as viz
6
7 weights = 'cardiffnlp/twitter-roberta-base-sentiment'
8 tok = AutoTokenizer.from_pretrained(weights)
9 model = AutoModelForSequenceClassification.from_pretrained(weights)
10
11 def predict_one_proba(text):
12     input_ids = tok.encode(text, add_special_tokens=True,
13                             return_tensors='pt')
14     model.eval()
15     with torch.no_grad():
16         logits = model(input_ids)[0]
17         preds = F.softmax(logits, dim=1)
18     model.train()
19     return preds.squeeze(0)
20
21 def ig_encodings(text):
22     """Get base and source ids."""
23     input_ids = tok.encode(text, add_special_tokens=False)
24     base_ids = [tok.pad_token_id] * len(input_ids)
25     input_ids = [tok.cls_token_id] + input_ids + [tok.sep_token_id]
26     base_ids = [tok.cls_token_id] + base_ids + [tok.sep_token_id]
27     return torch.LongTensor([input_ids]), torch.LongTensor([base_ids])
```

BERT example

```
1 def ig_forward(inputs):
2     return model(inputs).logits
3
4 #layer = model.roberta.encoder.layer[0]
5 layer = model.roberta.embeddings
6 ig = LayerIntegratedGradients(ig_forward, layer)
7
8 text = "This is illuminating!"
9 true_class = 2 # positive
10
11 input_ids, base_ids = ig_encodings(text)
12
13 # Attributions wrt to the true label:
14 attrs, delta = ig.attribute(input_ids, base_ids, target=true_class,
15                             return_convergence_delta=True)
16
17 # `scores` has dimension [1, 6, 768]
18 scores = attrs.sum(dim=-1)
19 # z-score normalize the attributions:
20 scores = (scores - scores.mean()) / scores.norm()
21
22 pred_probs = predict_one_proba(text)
23 pred_class = pred_probs.argmax()
```

BERT example

```

1 toks = tok.convert_ids_to_tokens(input_ids.tolist()[0])
2 toks = [x.strip("Ġ") for x in toks]
3
4 score_vis = viz.VisualizationDataRecord(
5     word_attributions=scores.squeeze(0),
6     pred_prob=pred_probs.max(),
7     pred_class=pred_class,
8     true_class=true_class,
9     attr_class=None,
10    attr_score=attrs.sum(),
11    raw_input_ids=toks,
12    convergence_score=delta)
13
14 viz.visualize_text([score_vis])

```

Legend: ■ Negative □ Neutral ■ Positive

True Label	Predicted Label	Attribution Label	Attribution Score	Word Importance
2	2 (0.93)	None	2.70	#s This is illuminating! #/s

A small challenge test

Attributions with respect to the true labels:

Legend: ■ Away from true label □ Neutral wrt true label ■ Toward true label

True Label	Predicted Label	Attribution Label	Attribution Score	Word Importance
2	2 (0.82)	None	3.72	#s They said it would be great , and they were right. #/s
0	0 (0.50)	None	1.82	#s They said it would be great , and they were wrong . #/s
2	2 (0.76)	None	1.43	#s They were right to say it would be great . #/s
0	0 (0.62)	None	1.04	#s They were wrong to say it would be great . #/s
2	2 (0.77)	None	1.07	#s They said it would be stellar , and they were correct . #/s
0	1 (0.47)	None	1.09	#s They said it would be stellar , and they were incorrect . #/s

Summary

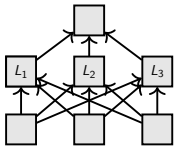
	Characterize representations	Causal inference	Improved models
Probing	😊		🤔
Feature attribution	🤔	😊	
Interventions	😊	😊	😊

Causal abstraction

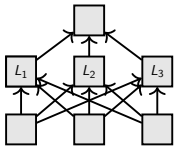
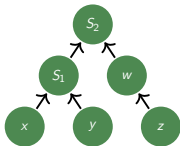
Recipe for causal abstraction

1. State a hypothesis about (an aspect of) the target model's causal structure.
2. Search for an alignment between the causal model and target model.
3. Perform *interchange interventions*.

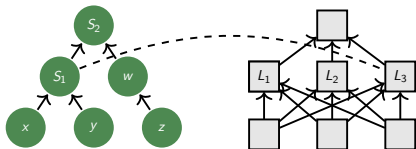
Geiger et al. 2020, 2021



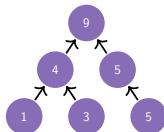
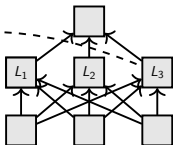
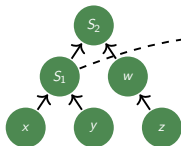
Our neural network successfully adds three numbers.
In human-interpretable terms, how does it do it?



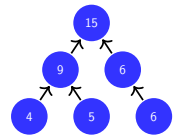
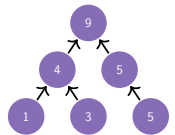
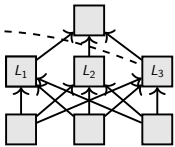
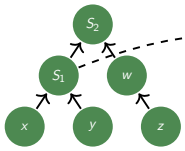
Our causal model adds the first two inputs to form an intermediate variable S_1 .



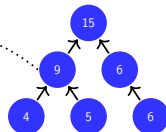
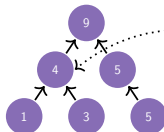
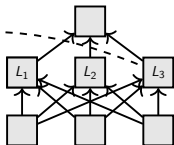
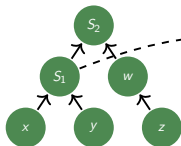
We hypothesize that the neural representation L_3 plays the same role as S_1 .



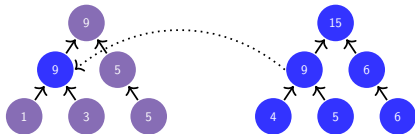
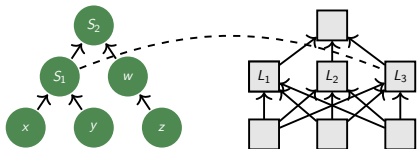
To test this, we run our causal model on [1, 3, 5] and obtain output 9.



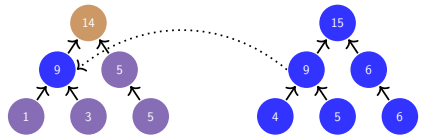
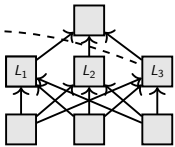
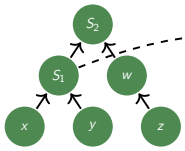
And we run the causal model on [4, 5, 6] to get 15.



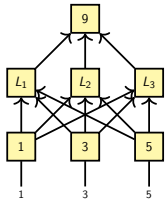
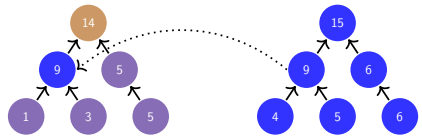
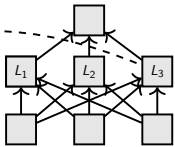
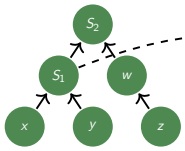
Then we perform an interchange intervention targeting the value of S_1 .



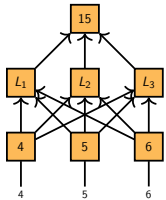
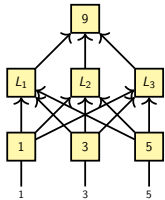
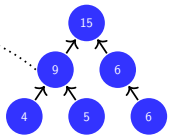
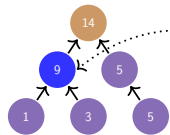
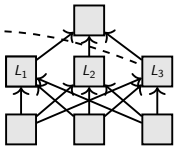
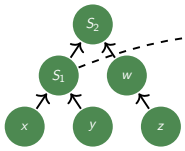
This changes the value of S_1 in the left example to 9.



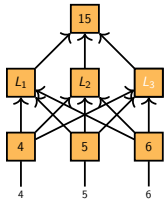
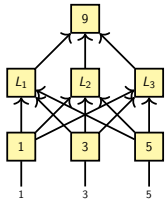
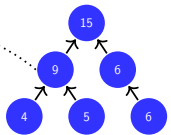
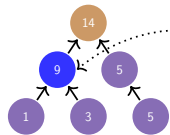
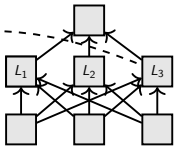
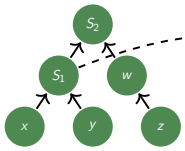
And this causes the model to output 14.



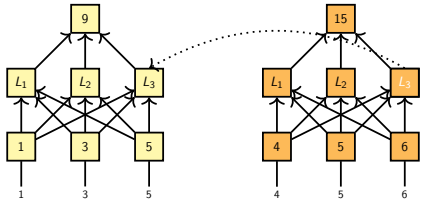
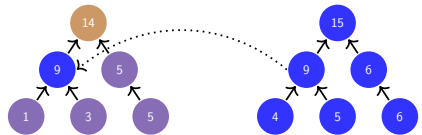
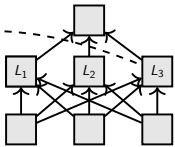
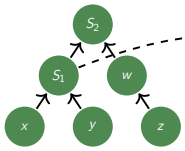
Will the neural network show the same behavior?



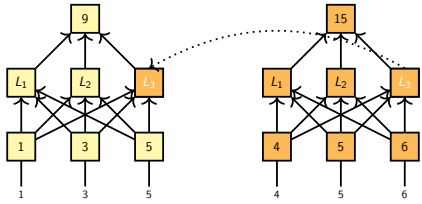
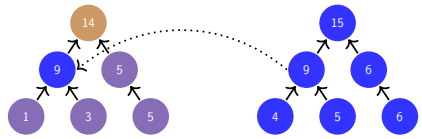
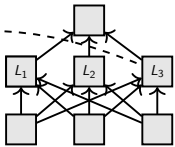
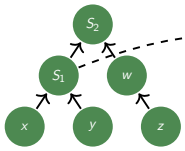
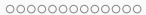
We process the same two examples.



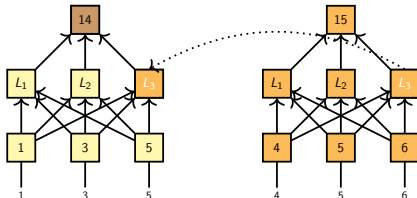
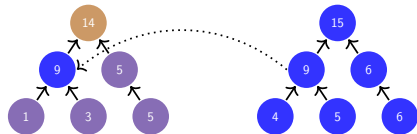
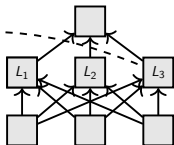
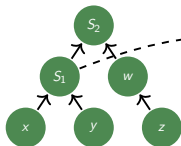
We hypothesized that L_3 plays the role of S_1 .



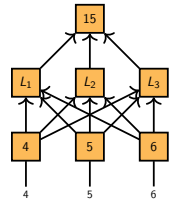
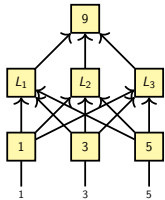
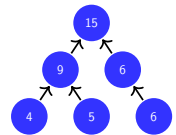
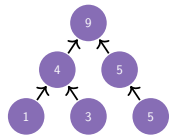
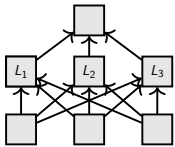
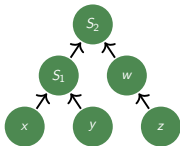
So we perform an intervention targeting L_3 .

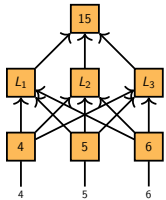
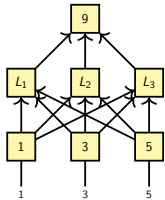
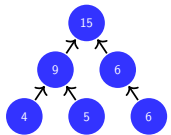
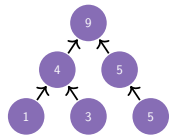
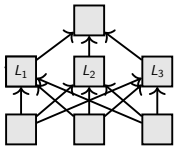
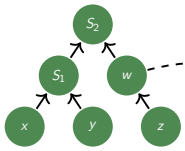


What is the effect of this intervention?

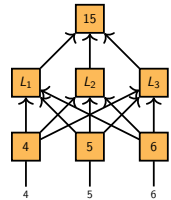
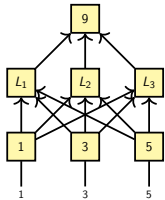
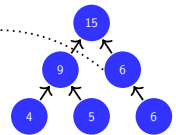
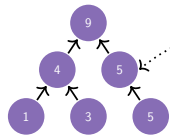
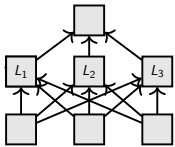
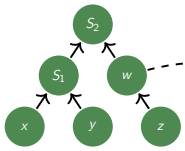
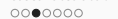


If this leads the network to output 14, we have a piece of evidence that L_3 plays the same role as S_1 .

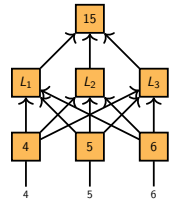
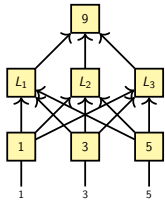
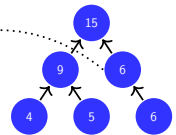
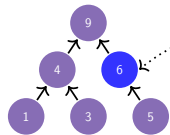
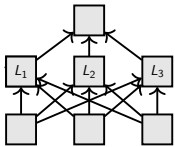
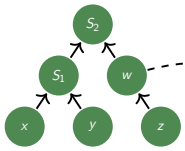




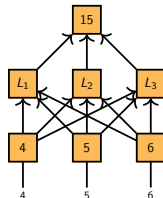
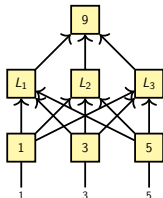
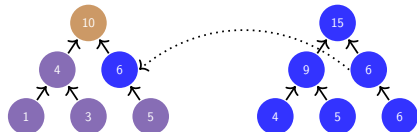
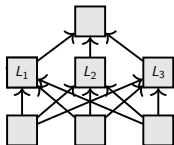
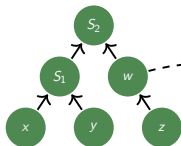
We can repeat the same process using the hypothesis that L_1 plays the role of w .



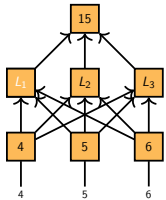
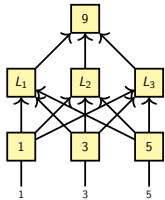
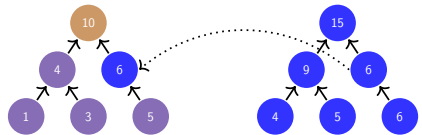
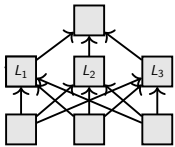
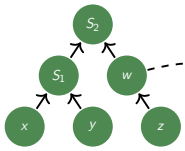
We first intervene on the causal model to get an output for this intervention.



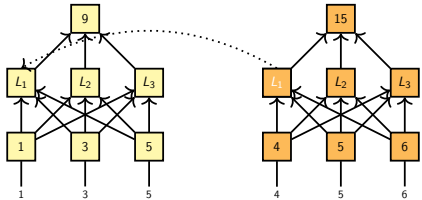
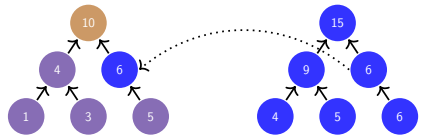
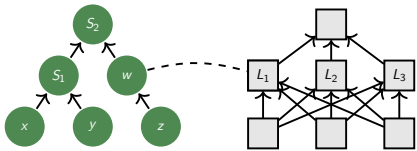
We first intervene on the causal model to get an output for this intervention.



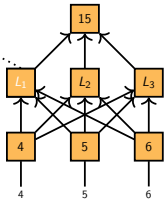
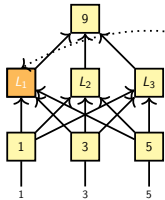
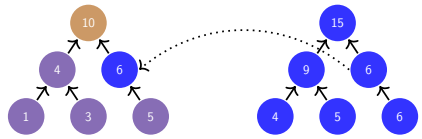
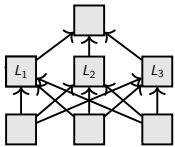
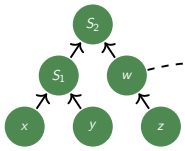
We first intervene on the causal model to get an output for this intervention.



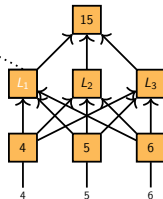
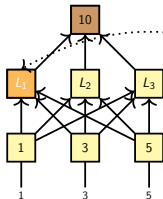
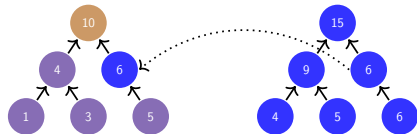
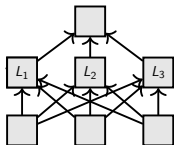
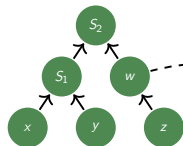
Then we intervene on the neural model.



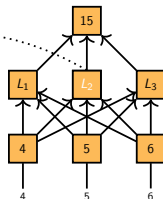
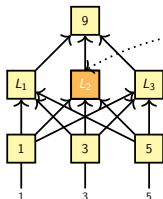
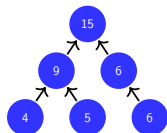
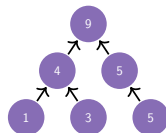
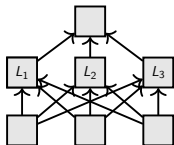
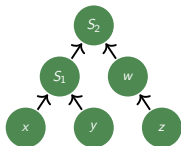
Then we intervene on the neural model.



Then we intervene on the neural model.



And we check whether the output corresponds to the output of the causal model under the aligned intervention.



Finally, if we intervene on L_2 and find that the output label never changes, then we have shown that it plays no role in the model's behavior.

Interchange intervention accuracy (IIA)

1. IIA is the percentage of interchange interventions that lead to outputs that match those of the causal model under the chosen alignment.
2. IIA is scaled in $[0, 1]$, as with a normal accuracy metric.
3. IIA can actually be above task performance, if the interchange interventions put the model into a better state.
4. IIA is extremely sensitive to the set of interchange interventions one does.
5. Pay particular attention to how many interchange interventions *should* change the output label, since they provide the clearest evidence.

Findings from causal abstraction

1. Fine-tuned BERT models succeed at hard, out-of-domain examples involving lexical entailment and negation **because** they are abstracted by simple monotonicity programs (Geiger et al. 2020).
2. Fine-tuned BERT models succeed at the MQNLI task **because** they find compositional solutions (Geiger et al. 2021).
3. Models succeed at the MNIST Pointer Value Retrieval task (MNIST-PVR; Zhang et al. 2021) **because** they are abstracted by simple programs like “if the digit is 6, then the label is in the lower left” (Geiger et al. 2021).
4. BART and T5 use coherent entity and situation representations that evolve as the discourse unfolds (Li et al. 2021).
5. This course notebook is a hands-on introduction to these techniques: https://github.com/cgpotts/cs224u/blob/main/iit_equality.ipynb

Connections to the literature

- Constructive abstraction (Beckers et al. 2020)
- Causal mediation analysis (Vig et al. 2020)
- Role Learning Networks (Soulos et al. 2020)
- CausaLM (Feder et al. 2021)
- Amnesic Probing (Elazar et al. 2021)
- Circuits (Cammarata et al. 2020; Olsson et al. 2022; Wang et al. 2022)
- Causal scrubbing (LawrenceC et al. 2022)

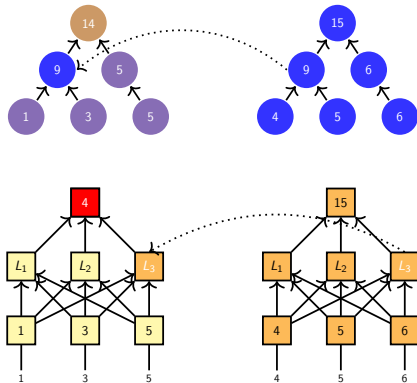
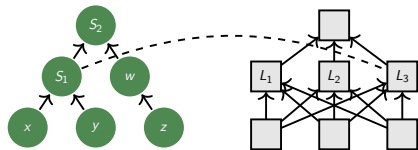
For more:
<https://ai.stanford.edu/blog/causal-abstraction/>

Summary

	Characterize representations	Causal inference	Improved models
Probing	😊		🤔
Feature attribution	🤔	😊	
Interventions	😊	😊	😊

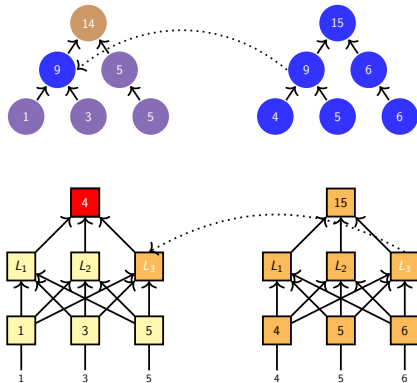
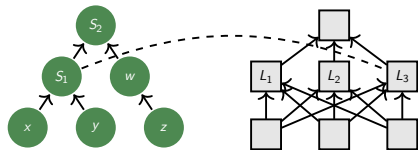
Interchange Intervention Training (IIT)

Method



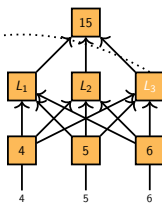
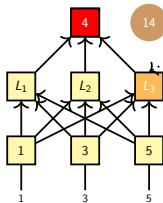
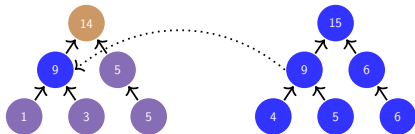
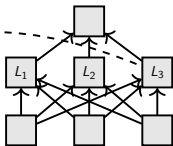
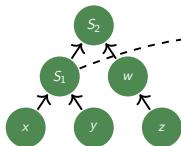
Suppose our network doesn't agree with the causal model under our intervention.

Method



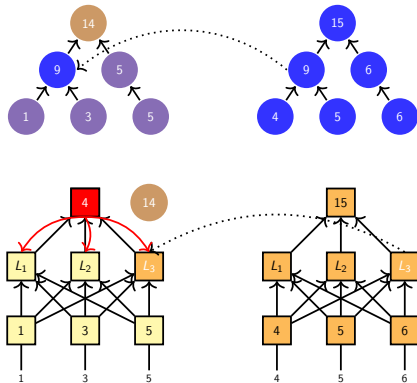
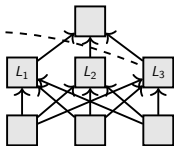
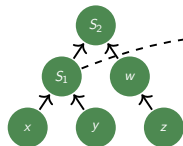
We can correct that misalignment with interchange intervention training.

Method



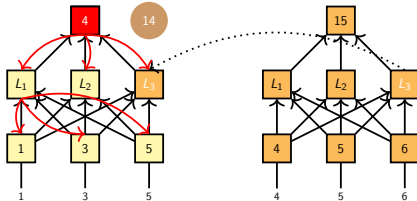
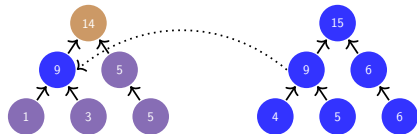
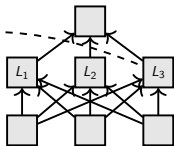
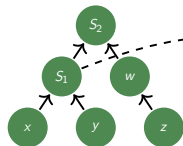
The causal model provides us with a true label, and a comparison with the incorrect prediction gives us an error signal.

Method



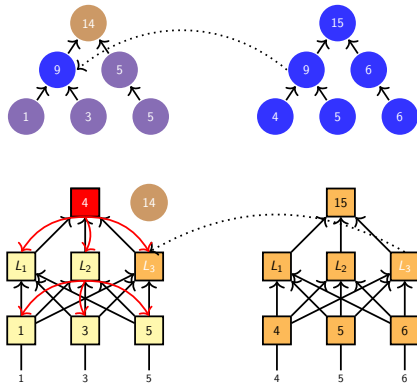
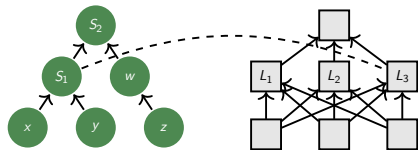
The gradients flow from this node to the top hidden layer as usual.

Method



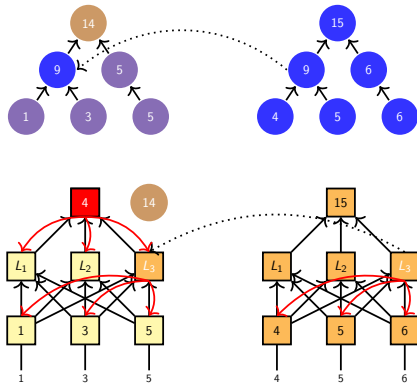
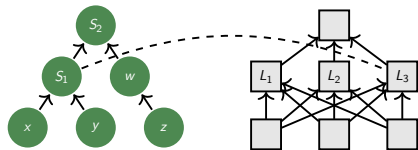
And the gradients flow as usual for the left and center hidden states.

Method



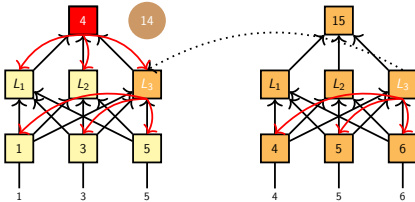
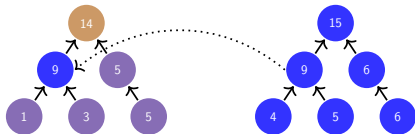
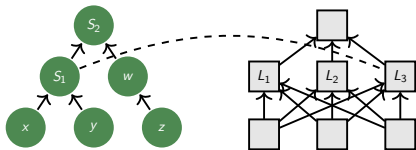
And the gradients flow as usual for the left and center hidden states.

Method



But the intervention site receives a double update, from the target example and the source example at right.

Method



This process gradually brings L_3 into alignment with S_1 .

Findings from IIT

1. Geiger et al. (2022b) develop IIT and use it to achieve state-of-the-art results on the MNIST Pointer Value Retrieval task (MNIST-PVR; Zhang et al. 2021) and the ReaSCAN grounded language understanding benchmark (Wu et al. 2021).
2. Wu et al. (2022b) augment the standard distillation objectives (Sanh et al. 2019) with an IIT objective and show that it improves over standard distillation techniques.
3. Huang et al. (2022) use IIT to induce internal representations of characters in LMs based in subword tokenization, and they show that this helps with a variety of character-level games and tasks.
4. Wu et al. (2022a) use IIT to create concept-level methods for explaining model behavior.
5. Our course notebook covers IIT as well as causal abstraction: https://github.com/cgpotts/cs224u/blob/main/iit_equality.ipynb

Summary

	Characterize representations	Causal inference	Improved models
Probing	😊		🤔
Feature attribution	🤔	😊	
Interventions	😊	😊	😊

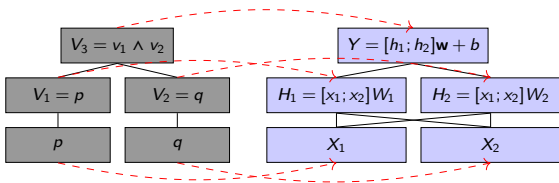
Distributed Alignment Search (DAS)

Our scorecard again

	Characterize representations	Causal inference	Improved models
Probing	😊		🤔
Feature attribution	🤔	😊	
Interventions	😊	😊	😊

- Alignment search is expensive.
- Causal abstraction could fail to find genuine causal structure.

A simple causal abstraction analysis

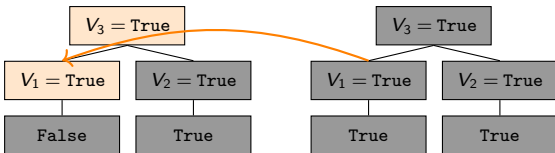


$$W_1 = \begin{bmatrix} \cos(20^\circ) & -\sin(20^\circ) \\ \sin(20^\circ) & \cos(20^\circ) \end{bmatrix} \qquad \mathbf{w} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \\
 W_2 = \begin{bmatrix} \sin(20^\circ) & \cos(20^\circ) \end{bmatrix} \qquad b = -1.8$$

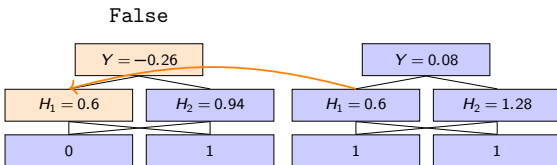
The high-level model **does not abstract** the new neural model under our chosen alignment.

Interchange intervention failure

An interchange intervention on the high-level model:

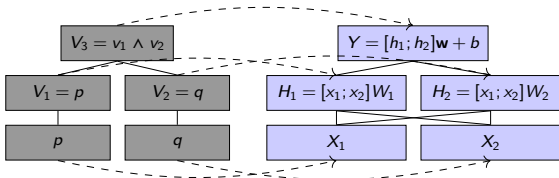


The aligned interchange intervention on the neural model:



The two models have **unequal counterfactual predictions**

But the relationship holds in a non-standard basis



$$W_1 = \begin{bmatrix} \cos(20^\circ) & -\sin(20^\circ) \\ \sin(20^\circ) & \cos(20^\circ) \end{bmatrix} \quad \mathbf{w} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

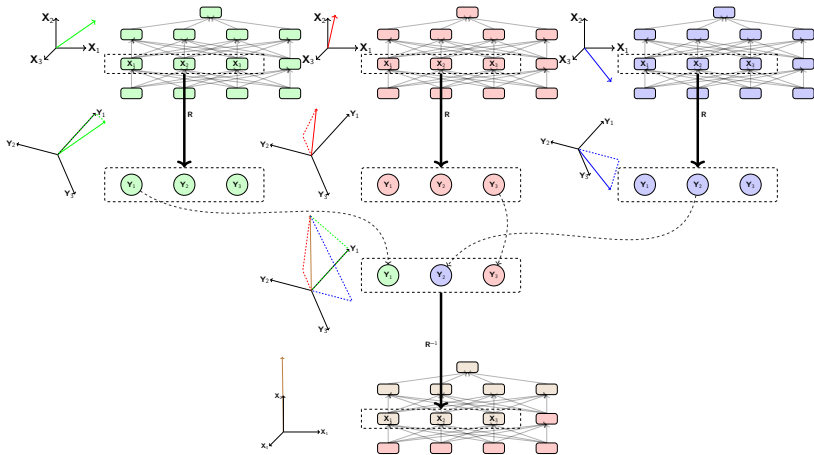
$$W_2 = \begin{bmatrix} \sin(20^\circ) & \cos(20^\circ) \end{bmatrix} \quad b = -1.8$$

View $[H_1, H_2]$ under a non-standard basis by rotating -20°

$$\begin{bmatrix} \cos(-20^\circ) & -\sin(-20^\circ) \\ \sin(-20^\circ) & \cos(-20^\circ) \end{bmatrix}$$

Problem: Causal abstraction missed this because of the standard basis we chose. But our choice of basis was arbitrary!

Solution: Distributed Interchange Intervention



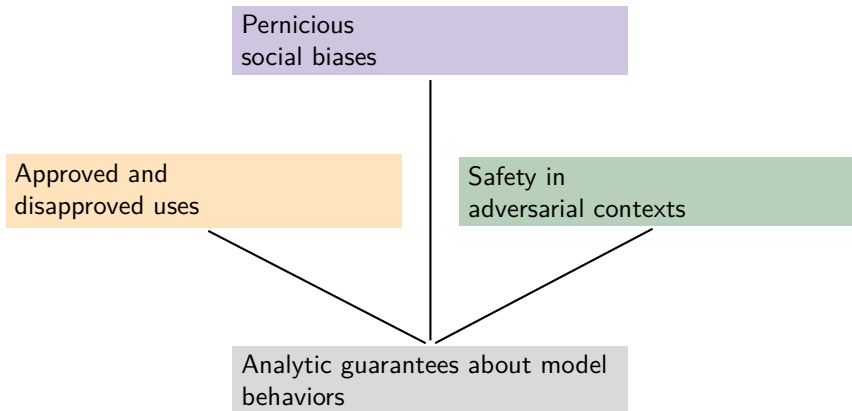
Freeze the model parameters and **learn** a rotation matrix with distributed interchange intervention training.

Findings from DAS

1. [Geiger et al. \(2023\)](#): Models learn truly hierarchical solutions to the hierarchical equality task from [our notebook](#), but these solutions are easy to miss with standard causal abstraction.
2. [Geiger et al. \(2023\)](#): Models learn theories of lexical entailment and negation, but in a brittle way that preserves the identities of the lexical items rather than truly learning a general solution to entailment.
3. [Wu et al. \(2023\)](#): Alpaca implements an intuitive algorithm to solve a numerical reasoning task.

Conclusions

Reminder: A crucial prerequisite



The near future of explainability research

1. Causal explanations
2. Human-interpretable explanations
3. Applications to ever-larger Instruct-trained LLMs
4. Increasing evidence that models are inducing a semantics: a mapping from language into network of concepts.



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