Language Modeling

Introduction to N-grams

(Based on the slides of Jurafsky & Martin)

Word Prediction

- Guess the next word...
  - *... I notice three guys standing on the ???*
- There are many sources of knowledge that can be used to inform this task, including arbitrary world knowledge.
- But it turns out that you can do pretty well by simply looking at the preceding words and keeping track of some fairly simple counts.

Word Prediction

- We can formalize this task using what are called *N*-gram models.
- *N*-grams are token sequences of length *N*.
- This example contains what 2-grams (aka bigrams)?
  - *I notice three guys standing on the*
- Given knowledge of counts of N-grams such as these, we can guess likely next words in a sequence.

N-Gram Models

- More formally, we can use knowledge of the counts of *N*-grams to assess the conditional probability of candidate words as the next word in a sequence.
- Or, we can use them to assess the probability of an entire sequence of words.
  - Pretty much the same thing as we'll see...

Probabilistic Language Models

- Today's goal: assign a probability to a sentence
  - Machine Translation:
    - P(**high** winds tonite) > P(**large** winds tonite)
  - Spell Correction
    - The office is about fifteen **minuets** from my house
      - P(about fifteen **minutes** from) > P(about fifteen **minuets** from)
  - Speech Recognition
    - P(I saw a van) >> P(eyes awe of an)
  - + Summarization, question-answering, etc., etc.!!

Why?

Probabilistic Language Modeling

- Goal: compute the probability of a sentence or sequence of words:

  $P(W) = P(w_1,w_2,w_3,w_4,w_5 \ldots w_n)$

- Related task: probability of an upcoming word:

  $P(w_5|w_1,w_2,w_3,w_4)$

- A model that computes either of these:

  $P(W)$ or $P(w_n|w_1,w_2 \ldots w_{n-1})$ is called a **language model**.

- Better: **the grammar** But **language model** or **LM** is standard

How to compute P(W)

- How to compute this joint probability:
  - P(its, water, is, so, transparent, that)
- Intuition: let's rely on the Chain Rule of Probability

Reminder: The Chain Rule

- Recall the definition of conditional probabilities

  p(B|A) = P(A,B)/P(A) Rewriting: **P(A,B) = P(A)P(B|A)**

- More variables:

  $P(A,B,C,D) = P(A)P(B|A)P(C|A,B)P(D|A,B,C)$

- The Chain Rule in General

$$P(x_1,x_2,x_3,\ldots,x_n) = P(x_1)P(x_2|x_1)P(x_3|x_1,x_2)\ldots P(x_n|x_1,\ldots,x_{n-1})$$

The Chain Rule applied to compute joint probability of words in sentence

$$P(w_1 w_2 \ldots w_n) = \prod_i P(w_i \mid w_1 w_2 \ldots w_{i-1})$$

P("its water is so transparent") =

P(its) × P(water|its) × P(is|its water)

× P(so|its water is) × P(transparent|its water is so)

How to estimate these probabilities

- Could we just count and divide?

$$P(\text{the} \mid \text{its water is so transparent that}) = \frac{Count(\text{its water is so transparent that the})}{Count(\text{its water is so transparent that})}$$

- No! Too many possible sentences!
- We'll never see enough data for estimating these

A Digression Regarding Counting

- Simple counting lies at the core of any probabilistic approach. So let's first take a look at what we're counting.
  - *He stepped out into the hall, was delighted to encounter a water cooler.*
    - 13 tokens, 15 if we include "," and "." as separate tokens.
    - Assuming we include the comma and period, what bigrams are there?

Counting

- Not always that simple
  - *I do uh main- mainly business data processing*
- Spoken language poses various challenges.
  - Should we count “uh” and other fillers as tokens?
  - What about the repetition of “mainly”? Should such do-overs count twice or just once?
  - The answers depend on the application.
    - If we’re focusing on something like ASR to support indexing for search, then “uh” isn’t helpful (it’s not likely to occur as a query).
    - But filled pauses are very useful in dialog management, so we might want them there.

Counting: Types and Tokens

- How about
  - *They picnicked by the pool, then lay back on the grass and looked at the stars.*
    - 18 tokens (again counting punctuation)
- But we might also note that "*the*" is used 3 times, so there are only 16 unique types (as opposed to tokens).
- In going forward, we'll have occasion to focus on counting both types and tokens of both words and *N*-grams.

Counting: Wordforms

- Should “cats” and “cat” count as the same when we’re counting?
- How about “geese” and “goose”?
- Some terminology:
  - Lemma: a set of lexical forms having the same stem, major part of speech, and rough word sense
  - Wordform: fully inflected surface form
- Again, we’ll have occasion to count both lemmas and wordforms

Counting: Corpora (end of digression)

- So what happens when we look at large bodies of text instead of single utterances?
- Brown et al (1992) large corpus of English text
  - 583 million wordform tokens
  - 293,181 wordform types
- Google
  - Crawl of 1,024,908,267,229 English tokens
  - 13,588,391 wordform types
    - That seems like a lot of types... After all, even large dictionaries of English have only around 500k types. Why so many here?

- Numbers
- Misspellings
- Names
- Acronyms
- etc

Markov Assumption

Andrei Markov

- Simplifying assumption:

$$P(\text{the} \mid \text{its water is so transparent that}) \approx P(\text{the} \mid \text{that})$$

- Or maybe

$$P(\text{the} \mid \text{its water is so transparent that}) \approx P(\text{the} \mid \text{transparent that})$$

Markov Assumption

$$P(w_1 w_2 \ldots w_n) \approx \prod_i P(w_i \mid w_{i-k} \ldots w_{i-1})$$

- In other words, we approximate each component in the product

$$P(w_i \mid w_1 w_2 \ldots w_{i-1}) \approx P(w_i \mid w_{i-k} \ldots w_{i-1})$$

Simplest case: Unigram model

$$P(w_1 w_2 \square \ w_n) \approx \prod_i P(w_i)$$

Some automatically generated sentences from a unigram model

```
fifth, an, of, futures, the, an, incorporated, a,
a, the, inflation, most, dollars, quarter, in, is,
mass

thrift, did, eighty, said, hard, 'm, july, bullish

that, or, limited, the
```

Bigram model

- Condition on the previous word:

$$P(w_i \mid w_1 w_2 \square \ w_{i-1}) \approx P(w_i \mid w_{i-1})$$

texaco, rose, one, in, this, issue, is, pursuing, growth, in, a, boiler, house, said, mr., gurria, mexico, 's, motion, control, proposal, without, permission, from, five, hundred, fifty, five, yen

outside, new, car, parking, lot, of, the, agreement, reached

this, would, be, a, record, november

N-gram models

- We can extend to trigrams, 4-grams, 5-grams
- In general this is an insufficient model of language
  - because language has **long-distance dependencies**:

"The computer which I had just put into the machine room on the fifth floor crashed."

- But we can often get away with N-gram models

Language Modeling

Introduction to N-grams

Language Modeling

Estimating N-gram Probabilities

Estimating bigram probabilities

- The Maximum Likelihood Estimate

$$P(w_i \mid w_{i-1}) = \frac{count(w_{i-1}, w_i)}{count(w_{i-1})}$$

$$P(w_i \mid w_{i-1}) = \frac{c(w_{i-1}, w_i)}{c(w_{i-1})}$$

An example

$$P(w_i \mid w_{i-1}) = \frac{c(w_{i-1}, w_i)}{c(w_{i-1})}$$

<s> I am Sam </s>

<s> Sam I am </s>

<s> I do not like green eggs and ham </s>

- *P* (I | <s>) = 2/3
- *P* (</s> | Sam)
- *P* (Sam | <s>)
- *P* (Sam | am)
- *P* (am | I)
- *P* (do | I)

An example

$$P(w_i \mid w_{i-1}) = \frac{c(w_{i-1}, w_i)}{c(w_{i-1})}$$

<s> I am Sam </s>
<s> Sam I am </s>
<s> I do not like green eggs and ham </s>

$P(\texttt{I} \mid \texttt{<s>}) = \frac{2}{3} = .67$ $P(\texttt{Sam} \mid \texttt{<s>}) = \frac{1}{3} = .33$ $P(\texttt{am} \mid \texttt{I}) = \frac{2}{3} = .67$

$P(\texttt{</s>} \mid \texttt{Sam}) = \frac{1}{2} = 0.5$ $P(\texttt{Sam} \mid \texttt{am}) = \frac{1}{2} = .5$ $P(\texttt{do} \mid \texttt{I}) = \frac{1}{3} = .33$

More examples:
Berkeley Restaurant Project sentences

- can you tell me about any good cantonese restaurants close by
- mid priced thai food is what i'm looking for
- tell me about chez panisse
- can you give me a listing of the kinds of food that are available
- i'm looking for a good place to eat breakfast
- when is caffe venezia open during the day

Raw bigram counts

- Out of 9222 sentences

	i	want	to	eat	chinese	food	lunch	spend
i	5	827	0	9	0	0	0	2
want	2	0	608	1	6	6	5	1
to	2	0	4	686	2	0	6	211
eat	0	0	2	0	16	2	42	0
chinese	1	0	0	0	0	82	1	0
food	15	0	15	0	1	4	0	0
lunch	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
spend	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Raw bigram probabilities

- Normalize by unigrams:

i	want	to	eat	chinese	food	lunch	spend
2533	927	2417	746	158	1093	341	278

- Result:

	i	want	to	eat	chinese	food	lunch	spend
i	0.002	0.33	0	0.0036	0	0	0	0.00079
want	0.0022	0	0.66	0.0011	0.0065	0.0065	0.0054	0.0011
to	0.00083	0	0.0017	0.28	0.00083	0	0.0025	0.087
eat	0	0	0.0027	0	0.021	0.0027	0.056	0
chinese	0.0063	0	0	0	0	0.52	0.0063	0
food	0.014	0	0.014	0	0.00092	0.0037	0	0
lunch	0.0059	0	0	0	0	0.0029	0	0
spend	0.0036	0	0.0036	0	0	0	0	0

Bigram estimates of sentence probabilities

P(<s> I want english food </s>) =

P(I|<s>)

× P(want|I)

× P(english|want)

× P(food|english)

× P(</s>|food)

= .000031

What kinds of knowledge?

- P(english|want) = .0011
- P(chinese|want) = .0065
- P(to|want) = .66
- P(eat | to) = .28
- P(food | to) = 0
- P(want | spend) = 0
- P (i | <s>) = .25

Practical Issues

- We do everything in log space
  - Avoid underflow
  - (also adding is faster than multiplying)

$$\log(p_1 \times p_2 \times p_3 \times p_4) = \log p_1 + \log p_2 + \log p_3 + \log p_4$$

Language Modeling Toolkits

- SRILM
  - http://www.speech.sri.com/projects/srilm/
- KenLM: Faster and Smaller Language Model Queries
  - https://github.com/kpu/kenlm
  - http://kheafield.com/code/kenlm/

Google N-Gram Release, August 2006

AUG
3

All Our N-gram are Belong to You

Posted by Alex Franz and Thorsten Brants, Google Machine Translation Team

Here at Google Research we have been using word n-gram models for a variety of R&D projects,

...

That's why we decided to share this enormous dataset with everyone. We processed 1,024,908,267,229 words of running text and are publishing the counts for all 1,176,470,663 five-word sequences that appear at least 40 times. There are 13,588,391 unique words, after discarding words that appear less than 200 times.

Google N-Gram Release

- serve as the incoming 92
- serve as the incubator 99
- serve as the independent 794
- serve as the index 223
- serve as the indication 72
- serve as the indicator 120
- serve as the indicators 45
- serve as the indispensable 111
- serve as the indispensible 40
- serve as the individual 234

http://googleresearch.blogspot.com/2006/08/all-our-n-gram-are-belong-to-you.html

Google Books N-gram Viewer

- https://books.google.com/ngrams

Google Caveat

- We will talk more about test sets and training sets... Test sets should be similar to the training set (drawn from the same distribution) for the probabilities to be meaningful.
- So... The Google corpus is fine if your application deals with arbitrary English text on the Web.
- If not then a smaller domain specific corpus is likely to yield better results.

Language Modeling

Estimating N-gram Probabilities

Language Modeling

Evaluation and Perplexity

Evaluation: How good is our model?

- Does our language model prefer good sentences to bad ones?
  - Assign higher probability to “real” or “frequently observed” sentences
    - Than “ungrammatical” or “rarely observed” sentences?
- We train parameters of our model on a **training set**.
- We test the model’s performance on data we haven’t seen.
  - A **test set** is an unseen dataset that is different from our training set, totally unused.
  - An **evaluation metric** tells us how well our model does on the test set.

Training on the test set

- We can’t allow test sentences into the training set
- We will assign it an artificially high probability when we set it in the test set
- “Training on the test set”
- Bad science!
- And violates the honor code

Extrinsic evaluation of N-gram models

- Best evaluation for comparing models A and B
  - Put each model in a task
    - spelling corrector, speech recognizer, MT system
  - Run the task, get an accuracy for A and for B
    - How many misspelled words corrected properly
    - How many words translated correctly
  - Compare accuracy for A and B

Difficulty of extrinsic (in-vivo) evaluation of N-gram models

- Extrinsic evaluation
  - Time-consuming; can take days or weeks
- So
  - Sometimes use **intrinsic** evaluation: **perplexity**
  - Bad approximation
    - unless the test data looks **just** like the training data
    - So **generally only useful in pilot experiments**
  - But is helpful to think about.

Intuition of Perplexity

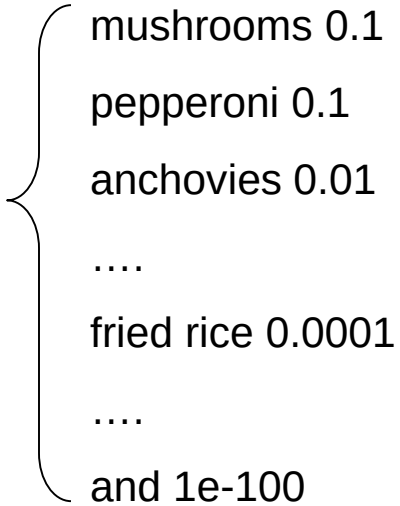
- The Shannon Game:
  - How well can we predict the next word?

    I always order pizza with cheese and ____

    The 33rd President of the US was ____

    I saw a ____

  - Unigrams are terrible at this game. (Why?)



- A better model of a text
  - is one which assigns a higher probability to the word that actually occurs

Perplexity

The best language model is one that best predicts an unseen test set

- Gives the highest P(sentence)

Perplexity is the inverse probability of the test set, normalized by the number of words:

$$PP(W) = P(w_1 w_2 \ldots w_N)^{-\frac{1}{N}}$$

$$= \sqrt[N]{\frac{1}{P(w_1 w_2 \ldots w_N)}}$$

Chain rule:

$$\mathrm{PP}(W) = \sqrt[N]{\prod_{i=1}^{N} \frac{1}{P(w_i | w_1 \ldots w_{i-1})}}$$

For bigrams:

$$\mathrm{PP}(W) = \sqrt[N]{\prod_{i=1}^{N} \frac{1}{P(w_i | w_{i-1})}}$$

Minimizing perplexity is the same as maximizing probability

Lower perplexity = better model

- Training 38 million words, test 1.5 million words, WSJ

N-gram Order	Unigram	Bigram	Trigram
Perplexity	962	170	109

Language Modeling

Evaluation and Perplexity

Language Modeling

Generalization and zeros

The Shannon Visualization Method

- Choose a random bigram (<s>, w) according to its probability
- Now choose a random bigram (w, x) according to its probability
- And so on until we choose </s>
- Then string the words together

```
<s> I
    I want
      want to
           to eat
              eat Chinese
                  Chinese food
                          food  </s>
I want to eat Chinese food
```

Approximating Shakespeare

1 gram	–To him swallowed confess hear both. Which. Of save on trail for are ay device and rote life have –Hill he late speaks; or! a more to leg less first you enter
2 gram	–Why dost stand forth thy canopy, forsooth; he is this palpable hit the King Henry. Live king. Follow. –What means, sir. I confess she? then all sorts, he is trim, captain.
3 gram	–Fly, and will rid me these news of price. Therefore the sadness of parting, as they say, 'tis done. –This shall forbid it should be branded, if renown made it empty.
4 gram	–King Henry. What! I will go seek the traitor Gloucester. Exeunt some of the watch. A great banquet serv'd in; –It cannot be but so.

Shakespeare as corpus

- N=884,647 tokens, V=29,066
- Shakespeare produced 300,000 bigram types out of V^2= 844 million possible bigrams.
  - So 99.96% of the possible bigrams were never seen (have zero entries in the table)
- Quadrigrams worse: What's coming out looks like Shakespeare because it ***is*** Shakespeare

The wall street journal is not shakespeare (no offense)

1 gram	Months the my and issue of year foreign new exchange's september were recession exchange new endorsed a acquire to six executives
2 gram	Last December through the way to preserve the Hudson corporation N. B. E. C. Taylor would seem to complete the major central planners one point five percent of U. S. E. has already old M. X. corporation of living on information such as more frequently fishing to keep her
3 gram	They also point to ninety nine point six billion dollars from two hundred four oh six three percent of the rates of interest stores as Mexico and Brazil on market conditions

Can you guess the author of these random 3-gram sentences?

- They also point to ninety nine point six billion dollars from two hundred four oh six three percent of the rates of interest stores as Mexico and gram Brazil on market conditions
- This shall forbid it should be branded, if renown made it empty.
- “You are uniformly charming!” cried he, with a smile of associating and now and then I bowed and they perceived a chaise and four to wish for.

The perils of overfitting

- N-grams only work well for word prediction if the test corpus looks like the training corpus
  - In real life, it often doesn't
  - We need to train robust models that generalize!
  - One kind of generalization: Zeros!
    - Things that don't ever occur in the training set
      - But occur in the test set

Zeros

- Training set:
  … denied the allegations
  … denied the reports
  … denied the claims
  … denied the request

  P(“offer” | denied the) = 0

- Test set
  … denied the offer
  … denied the loan

Zero probability bigrams

- Bigrams with zero probability
  - mean that we will assign 0 probability to the test set!
- And hence we cannot compute perplexity (can’t divide by 0)!

Language Modeling

Generalization and zeros

Language Modeling

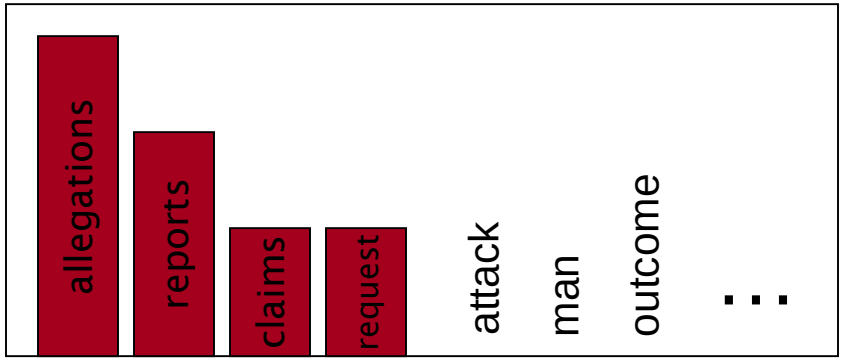
Smoothing: Add-one (Laplace) smoothing

The intuition of smoothing (from Dan Klein)

- When we have sparse statistics:

  P(w | denied the)
  3 allegations
  2 reports
  1 claims
  1 request

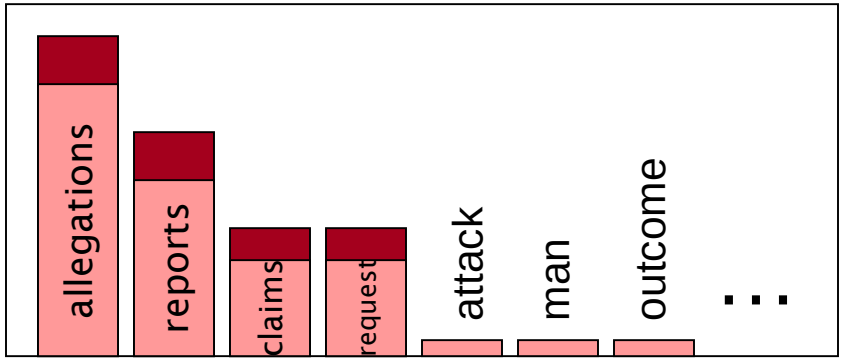
  7 total



- Steal probability mass to generalize better

  P(w | denied the)
  2.5 allegations
  1.5 reports
  0.5 claims
  0.5 request
  2 other

  7 total



Add-one estimation

- Also called Laplace smoothing
- Pretend we saw each word one more time than we did
- Just add one to all the counts!
- MLE estimate:

$$P_{MLE}(w_i \mid w_{i-1}) = \frac{c(w_{i-1}, w_i)}{c(w_{i-1})}$$

- Add-1 estimate:

$$P_{Add-1}(w_i \mid w_{i-1}) = \frac{c(w_{i-1}, w_i)+1}{c(w_{i-1})+V}$$

Maximum Likelihood Estimates

- The maximum likelihood estimate
  - of some parameter of a model M from a training set T
  - maximizes the likelihood of the training set T given the model M
- Suppose the word “bagel” occurs 400 times in a corpus of a million words
- What is the probability that a random word from some other text will be “bagel”?
- MLE estimate is 400/1,000,000 = .0004
- This may be a bad estimate for some other corpus
  - But it is the **estimate** that makes it **most likely** that “bagel” will occur 400 times in a million word corpus.

Berkeley Restaurant Corpus: Laplace smoothed bigram counts

	i	want	to	eat	chinese	food	lunch	spend
i	6	828	1	10	1	1	1	3
want	3	1	609	2	7	7	6	2
to	3	1	5	687	3	1	7	212
eat	1	1	3	1	17	3	43	1
chinese	2	1	1	1	1	83	2	1
food	16	1	16	1	2	5	1	1
lunch	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
spend	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1

Laplace-smoothed bigrams

$$P^*(w_n|w_{n-1}) = \frac{C(w_{n-1}w_n)+1}{C(w_{n-1})+V}$$

	i	want	to	eat	chinese	food	lunch	spend
i	0.0015	0.21	0.00025	0.0025	0.00025	0.00025	0.00025	0.00075
want	0.0013	0.00042	0.26	0.00084	0.0029	0.0029	0.0025	0.00084
to	0.00078	0.00026	0.0013	0.18	0.00078	0.00026	0.0018	0.055
eat	0.00046	0.00046	0.0014	0.00046	0.0078	0.0014	0.02	0.00046
chinese	0.0012	0.00062	0.00062	0.00062	0.00062	0.052	0.0012	0.00062
food	0.0063	0.00039	0.0063	0.00039	0.00079	0.002	0.00039	0.00039
lunch	0.0017	0.00056	0.00056	0.00056	0.00056	0.0011	0.00056	0.00056
spend	0.0012	0.00058	0.0012	0.00058	0.00058	0.00058	0.00058	0.00058

Reconstituted counts

$$c^*(w_{n-1}w_n) = \frac{[C(w_{n-1}w_n)+1] \times C(w_{n-1})}{C(w_{n-1})+V}$$

	i	want	to	eat	chinese	food	lunch	spend
i	3.8	527	0.64	6.4	0.64	0.64	0.64	1.9
want	1.2	0.39	238	0.78	2.7	2.7	2.3	0.78
to	1.9	0.63	3.1	430	1.9	0.63	4.4	133
eat	0.34	0.34	1	0.34	5.8	1	15	0.34
chinese	0.2	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	8.2	0.2	0.098
food	6.9	0.43	6.9	0.43	0.86	2.2	0.43	0.43
lunch	0.57	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.38	0.19	0.19
spend	0.32	0.16	0.32	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16

Compare with raw bigram counts

	i	want	to	eat	chinese	food	lunch	spend
i	5	827	0	9	0	0	0	2
want	2	0	608	1	6	6	5	1
to	2	0	4	686	2	0	6	211
eat	0	0	2	0	16	2	42	0
chinese	1	0	0	0	0	82	1	0
food	15	0	15	0	1	4	0	0
lunch	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
spend	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

	i	want	to	eat	chinese	food	lunch	spend
i	3.8	527	0.64	6.4	0.64	0.64	0.64	1.9
want	1.2	0.39	238	0.78	2.7	2.7	2.3	0.78
to	1.9	0.63	3.1	430	1.9	0.63	4.4	133
eat	0.34	0.34	1	0.34	5.8	1	15	0.34
chinese	0.2	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	8.2	0.2	0.098
food	6.9	0.43	6.9	0.43	0.86	2.2	0.43	0.43
lunch	0.57	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.38	0.19	0.19
spend	0.32	0.16	0.32	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16

Add-1 estimation is a blunt instrument

- So add-1 isn't used for N-grams:
  - We'll see better methods
- But add-1 is used to smooth other NLP models
  - For text classification
  - In domains where the number of zeros isn't so huge.

Unigram Smoothing Example

- Tiny Corpus, V=4; N=20

$$P_{LP}(w_i) = \frac{c_i + 1}{N + V}$$

Word	True Ct	Unigram Prob	New Ct	Adjusted Prob
eat	10	.5	?	?
British	4	.2	5	.21
food	6	.3	7	.29
happily	0	.0	?	?
	20	1.0	~20	1.0

Language Modeling

Smoothing: Add-one (Laplace) smoothing

Language Modeling

Interpolation, Backoff, and Web-Scale LMs

Backoff and Interpolation

- Sometimes it helps to use **less** context
  - Condition on less context for contexts you haven't learned much about
- **Backoff:**
  - use trigram if you have good evidence,
  - otherwise bigram, otherwise unigram
- **Interpolation:**
  - mix unigram, bigram, trigram

- Interpolation works better

Class-Based Backoff

- Back off to the class rather than the word
  - Particularly useful for proper nouns (e.g., names)
  - Use count for the number of names in place of the particular name
  - E.g. < N | friendly > instead of < dog | friendly>

Linear Interpolation

- Simple interpolation

$$\hat{P}(w_n|w_{n-2}w_{n-1}) = \lambda_1 P(w_n|w_{n-2}w_{n-1}) + \lambda_2 P(w_n|w_{n-1}) + \lambda_3 P(w_n)$$

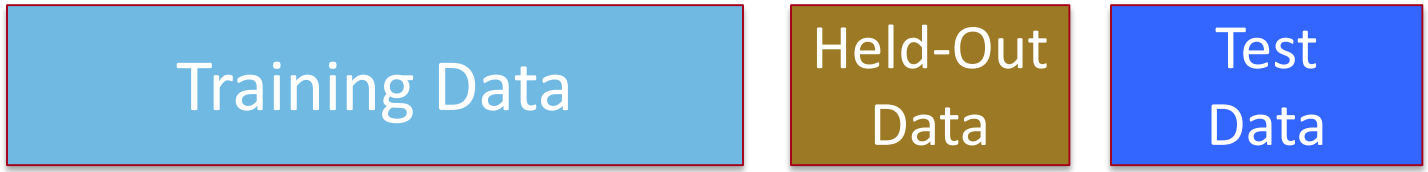
$$\sum_i \lambda_i = 1$$

- Lambdas conditional on context:

$$\hat{P}(w_n|w_{n-2}w_{n-1}) = \lambda_1(w_{n-2}^{n-1}) P(w_n|w_{n-2}w_{n-1}) + \lambda_2(w_{n-2}^{n-1}) P(w_n|w_{n-1}) + \lambda_3(w_{n-2}^{n-1}) P(w_n)$$

How to set the lambdas?

- Use a **held-out** corpus



- Choose λs to maximize the probability of held-out data:
  - Fix the N-gram probabilities (on the training data)
  - Then search for λs that give largest probability to held-out set:

$$\log P(w_1 \ldots w_n \mid M(\lambda_1 \ldots \lambda_k)) = \sum_i \log P_{M(\lambda_1 \ldots \lambda_k)}(w_i \mid w_{i-1})$$

Unknown words: Open versus closed vocabulary tasks

- If we know all the words in advanced
  - Vocabulary V is fixed
  - Closed vocabulary task
- Often we don't know this
  - **Out Of Vocabulary** = OOV words
  - Open vocabulary task
- Instead: create an unknown word token <UNK>
  - Training of <UNK> probabilities
    - Create a fixed lexicon L of size V
    - At text normalization phase, any training word not in L changed to <UNK>
    - Now we train its probabilities like a normal word
  - At decoding time
    - If text input: Use UNK probabilities for any word not in training

Huge web-scale n-grams

- How to deal with, e.g., Google N-gram corpus
- Pruning
  - E.g., only store N-grams with count > threshold.
    - Remove singletons of higher-order n-grams
- Efficiency, e.g.,
  - efficient data structures
  - quantize probabilities (4-8 bits instead of 8-byte float)

Smoothing for Web-scale N-grams

- "Stupid backoff" (Brants *et al*. 2007)
- No discounting, just use relative frequencies

$$S(w_i \mid w_{i-k+1}^{i-1}) = \begin{cases} \dfrac{\text{count}(w_{i-k+1}^{i})}{\text{count}(w_{i-k+1}^{i-1})} & \text{if } \text{count}(w_{i-k+1}^{i}) > 0 \\ 0.4\,S(w_i \mid w_{i-k+2}^{i-1}) & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$S(w_i) = \frac{\text{count}(w_i)}{N}$$

N-gram Smoothing Summary

- Add-1 smoothing:
  - Add 1 to every word count (Note: this is type)
  - Increment normalization by Vocab size: N (tokens) + *V (types)*
  - OK for text categorization, not for language modeling
- The most commonly used method:
  - Extended Interpolated Kneser-Ney (see J&M text)
- For very large N-grams like the Web:
  - Stupid backoff

Advanced Language Modeling

- Discriminative models:
  - choose n-gram weights to improve a task, not to fit the training set
- Parsing-based models
- Caching Models
  - Recently used words are more likely to appear

Language Modeling

Interpolation, Backoff, and Web-Scale LMs

Summary

- N-gram probabilities can be used to *estimate* the likelihood
  - Of a word occurring in a context (N-1)
  - Of a sentence occurring at all
- Perplexity can be used to evaluate the goodness of fit of a LM
- Smoothing techniques and backoff models deal with problems of unseen words in corpus
  - Improvement via algorithm versus big data

Language Modeling

Advanced (Optional)

Kneser-Ney Smoothing

Absolute discounting: just subtract a little from each count

- Suppose we wanted to subtract a little from a count of 4 to save probability mass for the zeros
- How much to subtract ?

- Church and Gale (1991)'s clever idea
- Divide up 22 million words of AP Newswire
  - Training and held-out set
  - for each bigram in the training set
  - see the actual count in the held-out set!

Bigram count in training	Bigram count in heldout set
0	.0000270
1	0.448
2	1.25
3	2.24
4	3.23
5	4.21
6	5.23
7	6.21
8	7.21
9	8.26

Absolute Discounting Interpolation

- Save ourselves some time and just subtract 0.75 (or some d)!

discounted bigram

Interpolation weight

$$P_{\text{AbsoluteDiscounting}}(w_i \mid w_{i-1}) = \frac{c(w_{i-1}, w_i) - d}{c(w_{i-1})} + \lambda(w_{i-1})P(w)$$

unigram

- (Maybe keeping a couple extra values of d for counts 1 and 2)
- But should we really just use the regular unigram P(w)?

Kneser-Ney Smoothing I

- Better estimate for probabilities of lower-order unigrams!
  - Shannon game: *I can't see without my reading*_____ ? Francisco glasses
  - "Francisco" is more common than "glasses"
  - … but "Francisco" always follows "San"
- The unigram is useful exactly when we haven't seen this bigram!
- Instead of P(w): "How likely is w"
- $P_{\text{continuation}}(w)$: "How likely is w to appear as a novel continuation?
  - For each word, count the number of bigram types it completes
  - Every bigram type was a novel continuation the first time it was seen

$$P_{CONTINUATION}(w) \propto \left|\{w_{i-1} : c(w_{i-1}, w) > 0\}\right|$$

Kneser-Ney Smoothing II

- How many times does w appear as a novel continuation:

$$P_{CONTINUATION}(w) \propto \left|\{w_{i-1} : c(w_{i-1}, w) > 0\}\right|$$

- Normalized by the total number of word bigram types

$$\left|\{(w_{j-1}, w_j) : c(w_{j-1}, w_j) > 0\}\right|$$

$$P_{CONTINUATION}(w) = \frac{\left|\{w_{i-1} : c(w_{i-1}, w) > 0\}\right|}{\left|\{(w_{j-1}, w_j) : c(w_{j-1}, w_j) > 0\}\right|}$$

Kneser-Ney Smoothing III

- Alternative metaphor: The number of # of word types seen to precede w

$$|\{w_{i-1} : c(w_{i-1}, w) > 0\}|$$

- normalized by the # of words preceding all words:

$$P_{CONTINUATION}(w) = \frac{|\{w_{i-1} : c(w_{i-1}, w) > 0\}|}{\sum_{w'} |\{w'_{i-1} : c(w'_{i-1}, w') > 0\}|}$$

- A frequent word (Francisco) occurring in only one context (San) will have a low continuation probability

Kneser-Ney Smoothing IV

$$P_{KN}(w_i \mid w_{i-1}) = \frac{\max(c(w_{i-1}, w_i) - d, 0)}{c(w_{i-1})} + \lambda(w_{i-1}) P_{CONTINUATION}(w_i)$$

λ is a normalizing constant; the probability mass we've discounted

$$\lambda(w_{i-1}) = \frac{d}{c(w_{i-1})} \left| \{w : c(w_{i-1}, w) > 0\} \right|$$

the normalized discount

The number of word types that can follow w_{i-1}
= # of word types we discounted
= # of times we applied normalized discount

Kneser-Ney Smoothing: Recursive formulation

$$P_{KN}(w_i \mid w_{i-n+1}^{i-1}) = \frac{\max(c_{KN}(w_{i-n+1}^{i}) - d, 0)}{c_{KN}(w_{i-n+1}^{i-1})} + \lambda(w_{i-n+1}^{i-1}) P_{KN}(w_i \mid w_{i-n+2}^{i-1})$$

$$c_{KN}(\bullet) = \begin{cases} count(\bullet) & \text{for the highest order} \\ continuationcount(\bullet) & \text{for lower order} \end{cases}$$

Continuation count = Number of unique single word contexts for •

Language Modeling

Advanced:
Kneser-Ney Smoothing