Intro to Diff Attention

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Recently, Microsoft (Tianzhu Ye et. al.) released a paper called differential attention which is supposed to cancel noise in attention module. The concept is similar to how noise cancelling headphones work.

In the attention block, Q and K are projected to W_1^Q, W_2^Q, W_1^K, W_2^K. The idea here is we can use W_1^Q and W_1^K to be coming from "one microphone" and W_2^Q and W_2^K to be coming from "other microphone". The attention is modified as follows,

$$A_{diff} = softmax(\frac{W_1^Q(W_1^K)^T}{\sqrt{d}}) - \lambda softmax(\frac{W_2^Q(W_2^K)^T}{\sqrt{d}})$$

Here, λ is learnable scalar and authors have defined it as

$$\lambda = exp(\lambda_{q1} \cdot \lambda_{k1}) - exp(\lambda_{q2} \cdot \lambda_{k2}) + \lambda_{init}$$

λ_{q1}, λ_{k1}, λ_{q2}, λ_{k2} are learned through backprop. Whereas, λ_{init} is defined as $0.8 - 0.6 \times exp(-0.3 \cdot (l-1))$.

My thoughts

- Based on the equation, this does seem promising in minimzing noise in attention blocks. I'm eager to try this out in encoder-decoder model and visualize attention maps.
- Not sure how authors have reached to initializtion of λ_{init}, but they claim it is robust to any initializations.