Better Call SAUL: Fluent and Consistent Language Model Editing with Generation Regularization

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Abstract

To ensure large language models contain up-todate knowledge, they need to be updated regularly. However, model editing is challenging as it might also affect knowledge that is unrelated to the new data. State-of-the-art methods identify parameters associated with specific knowledge and then modify them via direct weight updates. However, these locate-and-edit methods suffer from heavy computational overhead and lack theoretical validation. In contrast, directly fine-tuning the model on requested edits affects the model's behavior on unrelated knowledge, and significantly damages the model's generation fluency and consistency. To address these challenges, we propose SAUL, a streamlined model editing method that uses sentence concatenation with augmented random facts for generation regularization. Evaluations on three model editing benchmarks show that SAUL is a practical and reliable solution for model editing outperforming state-of-theart methods while maintaining generation quality and reducing computational overhead.

1 Introduction

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Large Language Model (LLMs) have been shown to implicitly store factual knowledge in their parameters (Petroni et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2020). However, since our world is changing, facts can become obsolete or incorrect. Thus, there is the need for *model editing*, i.e., updating or fixing incorrect knowledge stored in LLMs without disrupting their overall functionality, in particular, leaving unrelated knowledge unchanged and keeping their generation quality on a high level.

The state-of-the-art model editing strategy is *locate-and-edit* (Meng et al., 2022a,b). It first identifies the location of knowledge inside the LLMs, and then directly modifies the weights it identified. While effective in practice, it requires significant computational overhead (Meng et al., 2022a,b), and relies on an the locality hypothesis of factual



Figure 1: Comparison between SAUL and prior work for model editing. Prior work causes generation repetition, as the fine-tuning loss focuses only on a few target tokens. In contrast, SAUL regularizes the model's generation with sentence concatenation. Consequently, the model can still generate fluent text after model editing.

knowledge (Hase et al., 2024). In contrast, finetuning on requested edits is straightforward and agnostic to model architectures. However, naive fine-tuning has been shown to adversely affect the model's behavior on unrelated facts and impair the fluency and consistency of the model's generation (Meng et al., 2022b; Yao et al., 2023; Gangadhar and Stratos, 2024).

To overcome these challenges, we propose SAUL, a novel fine-tuning approach that uses sentence concatenation with **au**gmented random facts for generation regularization. Augmenting random facts effectively preserves the model's knowledge of unrelated facts. In addition, concatenating the target factual sentence with a random factual sentence prevents the overfitting on the target token(s). This effectively avoids the generation of disfluent sentences – as shown in Figure 1.

We evaluate our approach on three model editing benchmarks. The results demonstrate that SAUL not only outperforms existing state-of-the-art meth-

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ods in terms of model editing performance but also effectively preserves the fluency and consistency of the model's outputs. This makes our method both simple and efficient, providing a viable solution for practical and reliable model editing in LLMs.

2 Related Work

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Model editing is a targeted approach to updating the knowledge stored in LLMs. Existing works can be categorized as follows: Memory-based methods introduce an external memory unit for requested edits without parameter update (Mitchell et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2023). Meta-learning methods employ a hypernetwork to learn the necessary model updates (De Cao et al., 2021; Mitchell et al., 2021). Locate-and-edit methods identify parameters associated with specific knowledge and modify them through direct parameter updates (Meng et al., 2022a,b). Recent work (Gangadhar and Stratos, 2024) proposes a straightforward fine-tuning-based model editing method with data augmentation, showing competitive performance, but causing unexpected generation failures.

Our approach extends fine-tuning with random fact augmentation for model editing. Additionally, we utilize the sentence concatenation strategy for generation regularization. Consequently, our method demonstrates state-of-the-art performance while maintaining the model's generation quality.

3 Method

We propose SAUL, a novel model editing method that regularizes the model's generation via sentence concatenation with augmented random facts.

Model Editing Problem Definition LLMs have been shown to memorize factual knowledge (Petroni et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2020; Kassner et al., 2021). We consider a fact to be a sentence x_i that describes a subject-relation-object triple (s_i, r_i, o_i) in natural language. A model f_{θ} should recall the object o_i given given a natural language prompt $pr_i = pr(s_i, r_i)$ consisting the subject s_i and relation r_i . We focus on mass-editing, i.e., editing a set of multiple facts at once. Given the set of requested edits $\mathcal{E} = \{(s_i, r_i, o_i)\}_{i=1}^N$, model editing aims to alter the model's behavior for facts within the editing scope \mathcal{X}_e , which encompasses \mathcal{E} along with its equivalence neighborhood $N(\mathcal{E})$, while leaving its knowledge for out-of-scope examples, i.e. $(s_i, r_i, o_i) \notin \mathcal{X}_e$, unchanged.

of edits \mathcal{E} , fine-tuning-based methods optimize the conditional likelihood of the target object given subject s_i and relation r_i of the fact formulated as a natural language prompt pr_i :

$$\min_{\theta} \sum_{(s_i, r_i, o_i) \in \mathcal{E}} -\log p_{\theta}(o_i | s_i, r_i)$$

Random Fact Augmentation. While naive finetuning has shown good editing efficacy, it harms generality and locality by not generalizing the edits to paraphrased sentences and altering the model's predictions on unrelated facts (Meng et al., 2022b). Gangadhar and Stratos (2024) demonstrate that fine-tuning with augmented paraphrases and random facts significantly improves generality and locality performance. Inspired by this work, we adopt the idea of data augmentation with random facts. We use random true facts from the training split provided by Gangadhar and Stratos (2024).¹

Generation Regularization. We find that the postedit model after fine-tuning leads to undesired generation failures, with the model generating repeating target tokens, as illustrated in Figure 1. We hypothesize that this occurs because the conditional likelihood-based optimization makes the model focus excessively on the target token(s), thus losing its general generation capability. We propose to concatenate the factual sentence $x_i \in \mathcal{X}_e$ and the random factual sentence $a_i \in A$ for fine-tuning. Formally, SAUL optimizes:

$$\min_{\theta} \sum_{(s_i, r_i, o_i, a_i) \in \mathcal{E} \cup \mathcal{A}} -\log p_{\theta}(o_i, a_i \mid s_i, r_i)$$

The sentence concatenation strategy regularizes the model's generation, so that it maintains the model's generation quality and still produces fluent natural sentences after editing.

4 Experimental Setup

Datasets and Baselines. We evaluate SAUL and related methods on three datasets: CounterFact (Meng et al., 2022a), ZsRE (Levy et al., 2017), and WikiRecent (Cohen et al., 2024).² We include the following baselines: MEND (Mitchell et al., 2021) - a hypernetwork-based method; ROME (Meng et al., 2022a) and MEMIT (Meng et al., 2022b) - locate-and-edit methods; FT and FT+R+P (Gangadhar and Stratos, 2024) - fine-tuning without and

Naive Fine-tuning for Model Editing. For a set

¹We do not use paraphrase fact augmentation as preliminary experiments showed a degradation of the model's generation quality, which we will analyze in detail in Section 5.

²Details of these dataset are provided in Appendix A.1

Editor	Time (/adit)		CounterFact			ZsRE		WikiRecent	
	Time (/edit)	Score	Fluency	Consistency	Score	Fluency	Score	Fluency	
Original GPT-J [†]	0.0s	22.4	622.4	29.4	26.4	599.0	37.4	600.8	
$\begin{array}{c} \text{MEND}^{\dagger} \\ \text{ROME}^{\dagger} \\ \text{MEMIT}^{\dagger} \end{array}$	0.003s 1.3s 0.7s	23.1 50.3 85.8	618.4 589.6 619.9	31.1 3.3 40.1	20.0 2.6 50.7	- - -	35.0 67.3	- - -	
FT^{\dagger} $FT + R + P^{\dagger}$ $FT + R + P^{*}$ $SAUL$	0.2s 0.9s 1.1s 0.4s	62.4 86.5 86.6 87.7	452.1 352.0 208.7 600.7	4.3 5.2 4.7 31.0	58.8 62.0 64.2 63.6	559.9 - 591.5 620.7	67.2 68.5 70.1 69.7	570.0 - 501.3 560.6	

Table 1: Summary of the model editing results on three benchmark datasets. We present the editing score, generation fluency and consistency, and the required time per edit for each method. SAUL demonstrates strong performance in all these metrics across datasets, providing a robust and efficient solution for model editing. [†] and * denote results taken from prior works and reproduced by us, respectively.⁴

New Fact	Inner Circle railway line can be found inMelbourneSingapore
Editor	Generation
Original GPT- J	Inner Circle railway line's surroundings include the following suburbs and ar- eas
FT + P + R	Inner Circle railway line's surround- ings include Melbourne Melbourne
SAUL (Ours)	Melbourne Inner Circle railway line's surround- ings include residential areas. Inner Circle railway line can be found in
	Singapore

Table 2: Comparison of the model's generation after model editing. While FT+P+R fails to edit the knowledge and generates repetitive tokens, SAUL successfully incorporates the new fact into its fluent generation.

with data augmentation, respectively.³

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Training Details. We follow the mass-editing setting as in Meng et al. (2022b); Gangadhar and Stratos (2024). For each edit, we augment N_r unrelated true facts provided by Gangadhar and Stratos (2024) for sentence concatenation. We fine-tune all model layers of GPT-J 6B (Wang and Komatsuzaki, 2021) and compare different fine-tuning paradigms in Section 5.

Evaluation Metrics. Model editing performance is evaluated by three metrics: (1) *Efficacy* measures if the model predicts the new target o_i with a greater probability than the original prediction o_i.
(2) *Generality* evaluates if the post-edit model can generalize to an equivalent paraphrase of the edit

sentence. (3) *Locality* assesses the accuracy on the knowledge out of the edit scope X_e .

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Besides, we report *fluency* and *consistency* following prior work (Meng et al., 2022a,b; Gangadhar and Stratos, 2024). For fluency, we calculate the n-gram entropy of the model's generated text.⁵ For consistency, we compare the generated text with reference texts about subjects sharing the target property. The consistency score is the cosine similarity between their unigram TF-IDF vectors.⁶

We calculate the harmonic mean of efficacy, generality, and locality as the *editing score* following prior works. We report this editing score, along with fluency and consistency in Section 5. We provide the complete results in Appendix A.3.

5 Results and Analysis

Overall Results. As shown in Table 1, SAUL consistently demonstrates strong performance in terms of editing score, generation quality, and computational efficiency. In particular, it performs better than the state-of-the-art, but complex MEMIT system on all evaluation datasets. While FT+R+P achieves competitive editing scores, it shows poor generation quality, suggesting that the model's generation quality has been damaged during editing.

In Table 2, we provide a qualitative comparison of the model's generation after editing. We observe that FT+R+P fails to incorporate the new fact and overfits to the target token, leading to repetitive generation of "Melbourne". However, SAUL maintains the generation quality and successfully integrates the new fact into the generated text.

³R: random augmentation, P: paraphrase augmentation.

⁴FT+R+P* in Section 5 refers to the reproduction results we obtained by fine-tuning all model layers; Prior work (FT+R+P) use LoRA (Hu et al., 2022) for fine-tuning

⁵We provide examples and analysis of the generation fluency in Section 5.

⁶We only report the consistency score on the CounterFact Dataset as this is the only dataset with reference texts.

E 1:4		CounterFact			sRE	WikiRecent	
Eattor	Score	Fluency	Consistency	Score	Fluency	Score	Fluency
Original GPT-J	22.4	622.4	29.4	26.4	599.0	37.4	600.8
FT 21st FT 3-8th FT all FT LoRA	57.0 60.8 62.4 55.4	584.4 553.8 452.1 494.4	14.9 8.7 4.3 5.7	37.9 56.7 58.8 57.8	566.4 549.5 559.9 543.9	45.7 69.2 67.2 67.5	595.8 574.3 570.0 546.8
SAUL 3-8th SAUL all	89.8 87.7	595.4 600.7	30.1 31.0	63.6 63.6	615.0 620.7	69.4 69.7	587.9 560.6

Table 3: We compare fine-tuning on different layers of the language model. Applying SAUL on different layers achieves notable improvements, demonstrating its effectiveness across various fine-tuning paradigms.



Table 4: We investigate different data augmentation strategies. Our method, SAUL with random augmentation, shows the best overall performance across datasets in terms of editing scores, generation fluency and consistency.

Figure 2: Comparison of naive fine-tuning, fine-tuning with random augmentation, and SAUL.

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Ablation Study: Fine-tuning Paradigms. We compare naive fine-tuning (no augmentation) and SAUL on different layers of GPT-J and using LoRA for parameter-efficient fine-tuning. Our selection of fine-tuning layers is based on conclusions from previous locate-and-edit works: Meng et al. (2022a) find that fine-tuning the 21st layer of GPT-J yields the best performance, while Meng et al. (2022b) identify layers 3 to 8 as the most critical layers for factual recall.

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The experimental results in Table 3 show that fine-tuning on layers 3-8 and all layers achieves strong editing scores. While SAUL 3-8th shows the highest score on CounterFact, SAUL all performs best on the other two datasets. We suspect this is because Meng et al. (2022b) use CounterFact for parameter localization, and layers 3-8 might not generalize well to other datasets. In contrast, our method is dataset-agnostic and consistently improves performance across various datasets.

Ablation Study: Data Augmentation. We study different data augmentation strategies for model editing.⁷ We experiment with naïve fine-tuning, i.e., no augmentation, along with fine-tuning and SAUL with random augmentation (R), paraphrase augmentation (P), and both augmentations (P+R).

As shown in Table 4, fine-tuning with any data augmentation significantly improves the editing score compared to naive fine-tuning, but at the cost of generation quality. In particular, paraphrase augmentation causes a degradation of the model's generation quality, likely because it introduces unnatural sentence segments.⁸ As shown in Figure 2, our method, SAUL w/ R, outperforms other methods in terms of generation fluency and consistency, and achieving strong editing scores across datasets.

6 Conclusion

In this work, we proposed SAUL, a novel finetuning method to address the challenges of preserving unrelated knowledge in LLMs and maintaining high generation quality during model editing. To achieve this, SAUL regularizes the generation process through sentence concatenation with augmented random facts. Our evaluation on three benchmark datasets demonstrated that SAUL outperforms state-of-the-art methods while maintaining generation quality and reducing computational overhead. Consequently, SAUL offers an efficient and practical solution for model editing in LLMs.

⁷We follow the data augmentation strategies used in Gangadhar and Stratos (2024).

⁸Please refer to Appendix A.1 for more details.

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Limitations

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Data Augmentation Strategies. Data augmentation is an active research area in natural language processing. In this work, we study paraphrase and random augmentation to regularize the model's generation. Exploring additional data augmentation strategies could further enhance performance, and provide new insights for the model editing task.

Multilingual Model Editing Evaluation. Our evaluations are limited to monolingual datasets due to the absence of well-established multilingual datasets. To assess the effectiveness and generalizability of SAUL across diverse linguistic contexts, experiments with multilingual datasets are essential. This would help determine how well our method adapts to languages with various vocabulary sets and linguistic features.

270Experiments with Different Numbers of Edits.271In this work, we focus on the mass-editing setting272following prior works (Meng et al., 2022b; Gangad-273har and Stratos, 2024). Specifically, the Counter-274Fact, ZsRE, and WikiRecent datasets used in this275work provide 10,000, 10,000, and 1,266 requested276edits, respectively. Investigating the performance277and stability of SAUL under varying numbers of278edits could provide valuable information about its279scalability. This would be an interesting direction280for future research.

Ethical Considerations

One potential ethical issue of this work arises from the use of the CounterFact dataset which contains incorrect factual knowledge. While this dataset is valuable for testing and improving model editing methods, it inherently introduces the risk of propagating incorrect information if not carefully managed. Model editing based on such a dataset can inadvertently lead to the generation of incorrect information and hallucinated text.

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Appendix Α

A.1 **Dataset Information**

We evaluate SAUL and related methods on three datasets: CounterFact, ZsRE, and WikiRecent. CounterFact (Meng et al., 2022b) is a dataset that includes artificially created counterfacts to test the ability of model editing methods to add counterfactual information to the language model. ZsRE (Levy et al., 2017) is a question-answering dataset consisting of 10,000 real-world facts, used to test model editing methods for adding correct information. WikiRecent (Cohen et al., 2024) collects factual knowledge that has been inserted into Wiki-Data after July 2022.

Specifically, the CounterFact, ZsRE, and WikiRecent datasets provide 10,000, 10,000, and 1,266 requested edits, respectively. For each requested edit, we augment 20 unrelated true facts provided by Gangadhar and Stratos (2024) for sentence concatenation. For the data augmentation ablation study, we add paraphrase samples for augmentation following Gangadhar and Stratos (2024). They augment the paraphrase data by generating free texts using the GPT-J model and prepend these texts to the original factual sentence for model editing. The generated sentence segments are listed in Table 5. As discussed in Section 5, paraphrase augmentation causes a degradation in the model's generation quality, likely because it introduces unnatural sentences such as "Q: How can I use a. The mother tongue of Danielle Darrieux is English".

Paraphrase prefix	
"Q:."	
"Q:"	
"The present invention relates."	
"The role of the."	
"\n \n"	
"Q: Why is my code not."	
"Q: What is the correct way."	
"The present invention relates in general to the manufacture."	'
"The role of the family in the development of."	
"\n \n-\n \n1\n."	
"A new report from the Center for Immigration Studies."	
"Q: How can I use a."	
"Q: How to use multiple variables."	
"\n \n=\n \n1\n."	
"O: What is the difference in."	

Table 5: Examples of the prefix text used for paraphrase augmentation.

Implementation Details 412 A.2

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We use the AdamW optimizer (Loshchilov and Hutter, 2017) for all experiments. Table 6 provides detailed hyperparameter choices for SAUL across datasets. The training was performed on Nvidia A100 GPUs.9

	CounterFact	ZsRE	WikiRecent
Epochs		40	
Early stop patience		5	
Batch size		32	
No. augmented facts	20	20	10
Learning rate	5e-5	2e-5	1e-4

Table 6: Hyperparameters used on three model editing datasets used in this work.

A.3 **Additional Experimental Results**

As introduced in Section 4, model editing perfor-419 mance is evaluated using efficacy, generality, and 420 locality. In Section 5, we report the harmonic mean 421 of these three metrics in the main paper for brevity. Here in Table 7 to 16, we provide the complete evaluation results, including all these model editing metrics and the generation metrics fluency and 425 consistency.

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⁹All experiments ran on a carbon-neutral GPU cluster.

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	CounterFact								
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency	Consistency			
Original GPT-J	22.4	15.2	17.7	83.5	622.4	29.4			
MEND	23.1	15.7	18.5	83.0	618.4	31.1			
ROME	50.3	50.2	50.4	50.2	589.6	3.3			
MEMIT	85.8	98.9	88.6	73.7	619.9	40.1			
FT + R + P	86.5	98.8	93.6	72.0	352.0	5.2			
$FT + R + P^*$	86.6	98.1	95.1	71.8	208.7	4.7			
SAUL	87.7	99.6	92.8	74.8	600.7	31.0			

Table 7: Complete evaluation results on CounterFact of SAUL and related methods on three benchmark datasets.

	ZsRE						
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency		
Original GPT-J	26.4	26.4	25.8	27.0	599.0		
MEND	20.0	19.4	18.6	22.4	-		
ROME	2.6	21.0	19.6	0.9	-		
MEMIT	50.7	96.7	89.7	26.6	-		
FT + R + P	62.0	99.9	97.0	35.6	-		
$FT + R + P^*$	64.2	97.0	87.2	40.1	591.5		
SAUL	63.6	99.9	93.4	37.8	620.7		

Table 8: Complete evaluation results on ZsRE of SAUL and related methods on three benchmark datasets.

	WikiRecent							
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency			
Original GPT-J	37.4	34.4	34.5	45.3	600.8			
MEND	-	-	-	-	-			
ROME	35.0	39.8	25.5	46.9	-			
MEMIT	67.3	99.2	80.2	45.3	-			
FT + R + P	68.5	99.6	84.6	45.8	-			
$FT + R + P^*$	70.1	99.6	93.4	45.4	501.3			
SAUL	69.7	99.5	89.1	46.0	560.6			

Table 9: Complete evaluation results on WikiRecent of SAUL and related methods on three benchmark datasets.

	CounterFact							
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency	Consistency		
Original GPT-J	22.4	15.2	17.7	83.5	622.4	29.4		
FT 21st	57.0	84.3	52.0	46.5	584.4	14.9		
FT 3-8th	60.8	99.9	82.5	36.8	553.8	8.7		
FT all	62.4	99.9	91.2	36.9	452.1	4.3		
FT LoRA	55.4	100.0	71.6	33.1	494.4	5.7		
SAUL 3-8th SAUL all	89.8 87.7	99.5 99.6	92.4 92.8	79.7 74.6	595.4 600.7	30.1 31.0		

Table 10: Complete evaluation results on CounterFact for the ablation study with various fine-tuning paradigms.

	ZsRE							
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency			
Original GPT-J	26.4	26.4	25.8	27.0	599.0			
FT 21st	37.9	45.7	43.4	29.2	566.4			
FT 3-8th	56.7	98.9	96.5	30.9	549.5			
FT all	58.8	99.5	96.3	32.7	559.9			
FT LoRA	57.8	96.5	92.4	32.6	543.9			
SAUL 3-8th SAUL all	63.6 63.6	99.7 99.9	85.1 93.4	39.4 37.8	615.0 620.7			

Table 11: Complete evaluation results on ZsRE for the ablation study with various fine-tuning paradigms.

Table 12: Complete evaluation results on ZsRE for the ablation study with various fine-tuning paradigms.

	WikiRecent							
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency			
Original GPT-J	37.4	34.4	34.5	45.3	600.8			
FT 21st	45.7	48.8	43.7	45.0	595.8			
FT 3-8th	69.2	99.6	87.8	45.5	574.3			
FT all	67.2	99.6	79.8	45.3	570.0			
FT LoRA	67.5	99.4	81.4	45.3	546.8			
SAUL 3-8th 3-8th	69.4	99.5	85.5	46.5	587.9			
SAUL 3-8th all	69.7	99.5	89.1	46.0	560.6			

Table 13: Complete evaluation results on WikiRecent for the ablation study with various fine-tuning paradigms.

	CounterFact								
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency	Consistency			
Original GPT-J	22.4	15.2	17.7	83.5	622.4	29.4			
FT	62.4	99.9	91.2	36.9	452.1	4.3			
FT + R	85.3	98.7	87.6	73.5	379.0	3.5			
FT + P	70.7	99.9	99.2	44.7	190.9	5.6			
FT + P + R	86.6	98.1	95.1	71.8	208.7	4.7			
SAUL w/ R	87.7	99.6	92.8	74.6	600.7	31.0			
SAUL w/ P	68.7	100.0	97.4	42.7	366.8	8.6			
SAUL w/ $P + R$	87.5	99.8	92.1	74.5	447.6	18.0			

Table 14: Complete evaluation results on CounterFact for the ablation study with various data augmentation strategies.

	ZsRE					
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency	
Original GPT-J	26.4	26.4	25.8	27.0	599.0	
FT	58.8	99.5	96.3	32.7	559.9	
FT + R	58.6	99.6	98.5	32.2	564.2	
FT + P	63.7	99.8	94.2	37.8	607.2	
FT + P + R	64.2	97.0	87.2	40.1	591.5	
SAUL w/ R	63.6	99.9	93.4	37.8	620.7	
SAUL w/ P	54.4	99.9	96.0	28.8	466.9	
SAUL w/ $P + R$	63.5	99.9	94.9	37.4	490.3	

Table 15: Complete evaluation results on ZsRE for the ablation study with various data augmentation strategies.

	WikiRecent					
Editor	Score	Efficacy	Generality	Locality	Fluency	
Original GPT-J	37.4	34.4	34.5	45.3	600.8	
FT	67.2	99.6	79.8	45.3	570.0	
FT + R	69.9	99.6	92.2	45.4	454.6	
FT + P	69.0	99.5	85.4	46.1	541.5	
FT + P + R	70.1	99.6	93.4	45.4	501.3	
SAUL w/ R	69.7	99.5	89.1	46.0	560.6	
SAUL w/ P	69.5	99.5	87.7	46.1	406.4	
SAUL w/P+R	70.5	99.5	86.7	47.7	437.8	

Table 16: Complete evaluation results on WikiRecent for the ablation study with various data augmentation strategies.