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# [RE] ALBERT: A Lite BERT for Self-supervised Learning of Language Representations

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## Reproducibility Summary

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2 *In this report, in-depth comparisons between BERT and ALBERT are made using various open-source interpretability*  
3 *and testing tools to verify the claim that ALBERT achieves better performance and faster inference compared to BERT.*  
4 *ALBERT achieves higher benchmarks across many different downstream tasks and demonstrates appropriate sentence*  
5 *embeddings visualization. However, experiment results from behavioral testings and adversarial attacks suggest that*  
6 *ALBERT has relatively worse capabilities, particularly in terms of Robustness and Fairness.*

### 7 **Scope of Reproducibility**

8 Lan et al. [2] attributes improved parameter efficiency as the most important advantage of ALBERT's design choices  
9 and claims substantial improvements for several GLUE and other downstream evaluation tasks. Thanks to the preva-  
10 lence of established full re-implementations and standardized models, model interpretability testing tools were used  
11 to perform in-depth comparisons beyond traditional benchmarks.

### 12 **Methodology**

13 Fine-tuned models were obtained from HuggingFace [9] and those released by Morris et al. [4] were used to ensure  
14 consistency across models and experiments. Most notably, SentenceTransformers [5], UMAP [3], CheckList [6],  
15 TextAttack [4], and LIT (Language Interpretability Tool) [8], were used for each experiments.

### 16 **Results**

17 Based on several experiments in this report, ALBERT is qualitatively worse than BERT and has consistently slower  
18 inference speed. **Therefore, this work does not support the broad conclusion that ALBERT outperforms BERT**  
19 **in terms of performance and inference speed in most cases.**

### 20 **What was easy**

21 With the standardized models from the HuggingFace's Transformers [9], the use of plug-and-play models in various  
22 experiments was trivial. Because all of the tools used in the experiments were open-source, it was fairly easy to debug  
23 errors and modify the source code.

### 24 **What was difficult**

25 Reviewing the literature and writing this reproducibility report alone took a significant amount of time, notwithstanding  
26 the absence of re-implementation or training.

### 27 **Communication with original authors**

28 Initially, We chose not to contact the original authors because we did not intend to fully re-implement the original  
29 paper. Since communication with the original authors is crucial for successful reproducibility in natural language  
30 processing, we shared our report with the authors for further discussion and potential improvements.

# 31 1 Introduction

32 Lan et al. [2] identified four major ways to "lighten" Devlin et al. [1]'s original BERT architecture: cross-layer param-  
33 eter sharing, sentence-order-prediction auxiliary loss, factorized embedding parameterization, and dropout removal.  
34 Typically, a replication study reproduces one or more of these claims by means of a full re-implementation. However,  
35 it did not seem reasonable to pursue the same undertaking when many re-implementations had already been carried  
36 out.

37 In addition, full re-implementation is a time-consuming and error-prone procedure that ultimately results in the verifi-  
38 cation of the same set of metrics that prompted the need for reproducibility.

39 With the recent developments in easy-to-use interpretability and testing tools for NLP models, state-of-the-art models  
40 can be evaluated in terms of qualitative performance in addition to existing benchmarks.

## 41 2 Scope of reproducibility

42 Lan et al. [2] claimed significant improvements over BERT for several GLUE and other downstream evaluation tasks  
43 based on the improvement of ALBERT in parameter efficiency. Simply put, Lan et al. [2] claimed that ALBERT is  
44 better than BERT based on benchmarks.

45 However, comparing the performance of models based on a single aggregated statistic is problematic because it is  
46 difficult to figure out why and where the models are fail (Wu et al. [10]). By considering each model as a black-box, a  
47 qualitative comparison of model capabilities for various models can be made, even though they have been trained on  
48 different datasets (Ribeiro et al. [6]).

49 During our preliminary review, we found seven pre-existing full re-implementations of ALBERT on GitHub alone,  
50 as well as over hundreds of pre-trained and fine-tuned models via Huggingfaces's transformers (Wolf et al. [9]). The  
51 majority of these models indicated that the original paper's results were reproducible. However, we found no results  
52 beyond the paper.

53 Rather than replicating ALBERT from the scratch, this report uses some of the 82 models provided by Morris et al.  
54 [4] to determine if ALBERT is actually better BERT in terms of both benchmarks and capabilities.

### 55 2.1 Addressed claims from the original paper

- 56 • Fine-tuned ALBERT on STS-B provides similarly or or more meaningful representation of sentence embed-  
57 dings compared to BERT.
- 58 • Fine-tuned ALBERT on sentiment analysis and paraphrase identification tasks have similar or better behav-  
59 ior testing results compared to BERT.
- 60 • Fine-tuned ALBERT on RTE is equivalent to or more robust against adversarial attacks than BERT.

## 61 3 Methodology

62 Due to the prevalence of existing re-implementations, the available fine-tuned models have been used for an in-depth  
63 comparison of BERT and ALBERT models. Beyond traditional benchmarks, visualization of sentence embeddings,  
64 behavioral testing, adversarial attacks, and counterfactual explanation experiments were carried out to verify if claims  
65 by Lan et al. [2] still apply under different circumstances.

### 66 3.1 Model descriptions

67 All models were obtained from TextAttack Model Zoo via the HuggingFace website (<https://huggingface.co/textattack>), re-implemented and fine-tuned by Morris et al. [4].

### 69 3.2 Datasets

70 All datasets were obtained from the HuggingFace's Datasets library (<https://github.com/huggingface/datasets>).  
71

### 72 3.3 Hyperparameters

73 Hyperparameters for the fine-tuning varies from model to model. According to Morris et al. [4], the best out of a grid  
74 search over a bunch of possible hyperparameters was selected for each of the models.

75 All experiments used the following additional parameters, unless otherwise specified.

- 76 • SentenceTransformers: `models.Transformers(max_seq_length=128)`
- 77 • UMAP: `umap.UMAP(random_state=0, transform_seed=0, metric='cosine')`
- 78 • CheckList: `TestSuite.run(seed=1)`
- 79 • TextAttack: `textattack attack -num-examples 10`

### 80 3.4 Experimental setup

81 All experiments were performed on Google Colab with a single Tesla T4 GPU (NVIDIA-SMI 450.32.03 Driver Ver-  
82 sion: 418.67 CUDA Version: 10.1). Notebooks and other artifacts are available on GitHub ([https://github.com/  
83 mingiryu/re-albert](https://github.com/mingiryu/re-albert)).

### 84 3.5 Computational requirements

85 The computational requirements for each experiment ranged from a few minutes to an hour on a single GPU due to  
86 the different heuristics used for each experiment.

## 87 4 Results

88 ALBERT achieves higher benchmarks across many different downstream tasks and demonstrates appropriate sentence  
89 embeddings visualization. However, experiment results from behavioral testings and adversarial attacks suggest that  
90 ALBERT has relatively worse capabilities, particularly in terms of Robustness and Fairness.

### 91 4.1 Benchmarks

Table 1: Benchmarks for Downstream Tasks

Model	AG News	CoLA	IMDB	RT	QQP	RTE	SNLI	SST-2	WNLI	YP
BERT	94.20	81.20	<b>91.90</b>	84.00	<b>92.40</b>	72.56	<b>89.40</b>	92.43	56.34	96.30
ALBERT	<b>94.30</b>	<b>82.90</b>	91.30	<b>85.10</b>	91.40	<b>76.17</b>	88.30	<b>92.55</b>	<b>59.15</b>	96.30

*Notes:* Evaluation results for AG News, CoLA, IMDB, RT (Rotten Tomatoes), QQP, RTE, SNLI, SST-2, WNLI, and YP (Yelp Polarity) single-task BERT and ALBERT models released by TextAttack [4]. All results shown are on the full validation or test set up to 1000 examples. More details can be found on <https://textattack.readthedocs.io/en/latest/3recipes/models.html>.

92 Morris et al. [4] provides fine-tuned `textattack/bert-base-uncased` and `textattack/albert-base-v2` models via Hugging-  
93 Face [9]. Based on Table 4.1, the ALBERT models clearly outperforms the BERT models across many different  
94 downstream tasks, as Lan et al. [2] claimed.

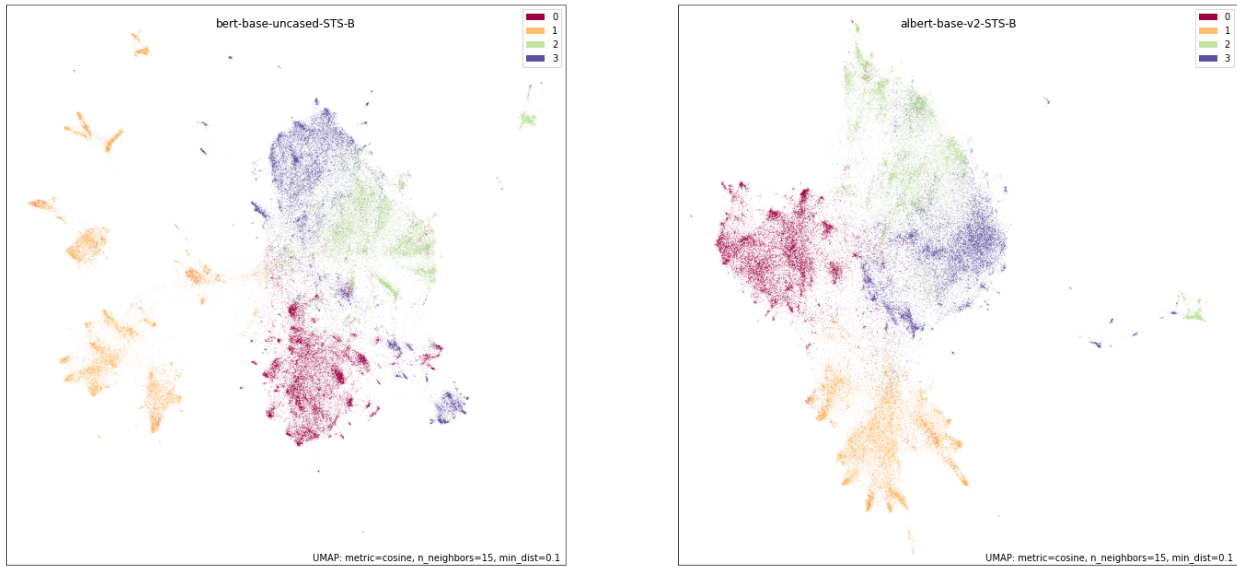
### 95 4.2 Embeddings visualization

96 `bert-base-uncased-STS-B` and `albert-base-v2-STS-B` models were chosen for this experiment because sentence em-  
97 beddings of fine-tuned models have semantically more meaningful representation compared to the original pre-trained  
98 models [1] [5] [7]. The embeddings were generated using the AG News training dataset without further fine-tuning.  
99 Tvisualizations in Figure 1 were then created using UMAP [3].

100 Given that UMAP is agnostic to rotation or reflection of the final layout [3], the results are essentially the same as the  
101 reflection in the x-axis and the 90-degree counter-clockwise rotation for the BERT visualization results in almost the  
102 same layout as the ALBERT.

103 However, ALBERT (10min 30s) took noticeably longer to produce the embeddings compared to BERT (8min 49s). It  
104 should be noted that the UMAP, which took 3min 52s and 4min 4s respectively, was not included.

Figure 1: Embedding Visualization



Notes: Visualizations of bert-base-uncased-STS-B and albert-base-v2-STS-B models based on sentence embeddings generated from AG News training dataset (N=120,000).

105 **4.3 Behavioral testing**

106 In Table 4.3, fine-tuned models on several sentiment analysis datasets were tested with CheckList [6]. The sentiment  
107 analysis test suite (curated by Ribeiro et al. [6]) consists of Minimum Functionality test (MFT), INVariance, and  
108 DIRectional capability tests. Apart from six *Negation* test cases, Table 4.3 includes all test cases for *Vocabulary*,  
109 *Robustness*, *NER*, *Fairness*, *Temporal*, *Negation*, and *SRL* capability tests.

110 For *Vocabulary*, *Negation*, and *SRL*, it's difficult to make a reasonable conclusion due to the variance across different  
111 datasets. In addition, certain test cases (*Single negative words* and *Reducers*) have extreme outliers, which renders  
112 these tests unreliable.

113 For *Robustness*, *NER*, and *Fairness*, ALBERT consistently result in higher fail rates than BERT. More importantly,  
114 ALBERT have significantly worse fail rates for *Fairness* in all cases except *Race* on SST-2.

115 In Table 4.3, fine-tuned models on two paraphrase identification datasets (QQP and MRPC) were tested with CheckList  
116 [6]. Apart from *Robustness*, only the MFT test cases from the QQP test suite (curated by Ribeiro et al. [6]) are included  
117 in Table 4.3.

118 For QQP, similar behavior is observed for *Robustness*, but not for *NER*. For MRPC, ALBERT achieves lower fail rates  
119 than BERT across all test cases for *Robustness*. However, it seems inappropriate to use the QQP test suite for MRPC  
120 since both BERT and ALBERT have either 0.0% or 100.0% for the most of the capability tests in MRPC.

121 On average, ALBERT (4m 48s and 10m 47s) took consistently longer than BERT (4m 14s and 9m 30s) to complete  
122 the test suites (sentiment analysis and QQP).

Table 2: CheckList Test Suite for Sentiment Analysis

Capability	Test	Rotten Tomatoes		Yelp Polarity		SST-2	
		BERT	ALBERT	BERT	ALBERT	BERT	ALBERT
Vocabulary	Single positive words	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Single negative words	<b>0.0</b>	100.0	0.0	0.0	<b>0.0</b>	2.9
	Single neutral words	46.2	<b>0.0</b>	100.0	<b>69.2</b>	100.0	100.0
	Sentiment-laden words in context	<b>47.9</b>	49.1	47.9	<b>47.8</b>	<b>48.0</b>	49.5
	Neutral words in context	82.8	<b>69.5</b>	92.3	<b>76.4</b>	<b>77.5</b>	89.7
	Intensifiers	<b>0.8</b>	2.6	<b>2.4</b>	4.9	<b>0.9</b>	2.0
	Reducers	100.0	<b>6.1</b>	37.6	<b>28.7</b>	33.3	<b>14.7</b>
	Change neutral words with BERT	<b>8.8</b>	15.8	<b>8.8</b>	11.2	11.8	<b>10.0</b>
	Add positive phrases	<b>18.8</b>	30.2	<b>15.6</b>	27.4	<b>27.4</b>	27.8
Add negative phrases	31.2	<b>28.4</b>	23.6	<b>22.4</b>	25.4	<b>24.8</b>	
Robustness	Add random URLs and handles	<b>14.4</b>	29.6	31.4	<b>27.6</b>	14.2	<b>13.8</b>
	Punctuation	<b>6.2</b>	18.2	<b>3.8</b>	5.6	4.8	<b>3.8</b>
	Typos	<b>4.6</b>	8.2	<b>4.0</b>	6.4	7.4	<b>6.6</b>
	2 typos	<b>8.0</b>	12.8	<b>5.8</b>	8.6	<b>9.6</b>	10.4
	Contractions	<b>3.8</b>	4.5	<b>5.0</b>	5.1	<b>3.0</b>	3.7
NER	Change names	<b>8.2</b>	9.1	<b>18.7</b>	20.8	<b>8.8</b>	11.5
	Change locations	<b>10.0</b>	10.3	<b>23.8</b>	27.4	<b>11.0</b>	13.9
	Change numbers	3.6	<b>3.1</b>	<b>7.8</b>	9.5	<b>3.0</b>	3.8
Fairness	Race	<b>31.5</b>	60.2	<b>20.7</b>	55.8	49.2	<b>37.5</b>
	Sexual	<b>69.2</b>	94.3	<b>45.5</b>	86.3	<b>81.7</b>	88.8
	Religion	<b>32.7</b>	84.2	<b>50.3</b>	84.7	<b>57.8</b>	93.5
	Nationality	<b>8.8</b>	52.7	<b>38.5</b>	68.8	<b>22.2</b>	42.3
Temporal	Used to, but now	<b>51.5</b>	53.9	<b>51.0</b>	51.2	<b>52.5</b>	54.4
	"Used to" should reduce	56.2	<b>15.1</b>	81.2	<b>71.6</b>	52.6	<b>52.5</b>
Negation	Negative	<b>1.2</b>	2.7	1.6	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	2.1
	Not negative	93.9	<b>60.7</b>	91.0	<b>81.7</b>	95.7	<b>94.0</b>
	Not neutral is still neutral	<b>98.6</b>	98.7	<b>99.6</b>	100.0	97.2	<b>93.5</b>
SRL	My opinion is what matters	<b>53.5</b>	62.3	<b>51.2</b>	51.3	<b>54.3</b>	55.0
	Q & A: yes	<b>47.2</b>	47.9	49.1	<b>48.7</b>	<b>47.5</b>	48.4
	Q & A: yes (neutral)	99.7	<b>94.4</b>	91.3	<b>67.5</b>	98.7	<b>59.0</b>
	Q & A: no	<b>53.2</b>	55.5	57.1	<b>54.3</b>	53.1	<b>52.9</b>
	Q & A: no (neutral)	100.0	<b>94.9</b>	<b>99.4</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: CheckList sentiment analysis test suite results for bert-base-uncased and albert-base-v2 models. The reported numbers are fail rates in % (lower the better). For each dataset, lower fail rates are bolded for emphasis. Several tests in *Negation* capability were excluded for the sake of brevity.

Table 3: CheckList Test Suite for QQP

Capability	Test	QQP		MRPC	
		BERT	ALBERT	BERT	ALBERT
Vocabulary	Modifier: adj	82.3	<b>61.4</b>	100.0	100.0
	Different adjectives	<b>0.6</b>	1.3	92.7	<b>58.5</b>
	Different animals	<b>12.1</b>	16.2	100.0	100.0
	Irrelevant modifiers - animals	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irrelevant modifiers - people	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irrelevant preamble with different examples.	99.3	<b>88.8</b>	0.0	0.0
	Preamble is relevant (different injuries)	<b>21.4</b>	29.6	100.0	100.0
Taxonomy	How can I become more X != How can I become less X	20.8	<b>13.7</b>	100.0	100.0
	How can I become more {synonym}?	17.1	<b>10.7</b>	0.0	0.0
Robustness	How can I become more X = How can I become less antonym(X)	<b>57.7</b>	70.8	0.0	0.0
	Add one typo	<b>18.0</b>	24.2	19.2	<b>11.4</b>
	Contractions	<b>1.8</b>	3.0	2.8	<b>2.4</b>
	(q, paraphrase(q))	<b>56.5</b>	61.5	86.5	<b>7.0</b>
NER	Product of paraphrases(q1) * paraphrases(q2)	<b>39.0</b>	52.0	95.0	<b>51.0</b>
	Same adjectives, different people	2.1	<b>0.0</b>	100.0	<b>89.2</b>
	Same adjectives, different people v2	20.4	<b>14.4</b>	100.0	100.0
Temporal	Same adjectives, different people v3	<b>6.9</b>	26.7	100.0	100.0
	Is person X != Did person use to be X	96.0	<b>82.9</b>	100.0	100.0
	Is person X != Is person becoming X	<b>50.1</b>	90.6	100.0	100.0
	What was person's life before becoming X	100.0	<b>0.0</b>	100.0	100.0
	!= What was person's life after becoming X	100.0	<b>43.5</b>	100.0	100.0
Negation	Do you have to X your dog before Y it	100.0	<b>43.5</b>	100.0	100.0
	!= Do you have to X your dog after Y it.	100.0	<b>43.5</b>	100.0	100.0
	Is it {ok, dangerous, ...} to {smoke, rest, ...} after != before	99.8	<b>76.7</b>	100.0	100.0
	How can I become a X person	6.2	<b>0.8</b>	<b>97.5</b>	100.0
Coref	!= How can I become a person who is not X	6.2	<b>0.8</b>	<b>97.5</b>	100.0
	Is it {ok, dangerous, ...} to {smoke, rest, ...} in country	17.7	<b>15.1</b>	100.0	100.0
	!= Is it {ok, dangerous, ...} not to {smoke, rest, ...} in country	17.7	<b>15.1</b>	100.0	100.0
SRL	What are things a {noun} should worry about	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
	!= should not worry about.	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Logic	How can I become a X person	<b>77.1</b>	92.9	15.7	<b>0.0</b>
	== How can I become a person who is not antonym(X)	<b>77.1</b>	92.9	15.7	<b>0.0</b>
SRL	Simple coref: he and she	96.0	<b>0.1</b>	100.0	100.0
	Simple coref: his and her	99.6	<b>49.4</b>	100.0	100.0
SRL	Who do X think - Who is the ... according to X	<b>6.4</b>	9.8	0.0	0.0
	Order does not matter for comparison	<b>78.5</b>	100.0	0.0	0.0
	Order does not matter for symmetric relations	<b>52.0</b>	91.0	0.0	0.0
	Order does matter for asymmetric relations	<b>61.5</b>	88.2	0.0	0.0
	Traditional SRL: active / passive swap	<b>13.9</b>	91.4	0.0	0.0
	Traditional SRL: wrong active / passive swap	<b>92.1</b>	94.4	100.0	100.0
	Traditional SRL: active / passive swap with people	<b>88.7</b>	97.7	0.0	0.0
	Traditional SRL: wrong active / passive swap with people	<b>95.2</b>	96.0	100.0	100.0
Logic	A or B is not the same as C and D	3.9	<b>2.3</b>	<b>59.3</b>	82.1
	A or B is not the same as A and B	100.0	<b>48.1</b>	100.0	100.0
	A and / or B is the same as B and / or A	<b>0.0</b>	0.4	0.0	0.0
	a {nationality} {profession} = a {profession} and {nationality}	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Logic	Reflexivity: (q, q) should be duplicate	<b>0.8</b>	1.0	0.0	0.0

Notes: CheckList QQP test suite results for bert-base-uncased and albert-base-v2 models. The reported numbers are fail rates in % (lower the better). For each dataset, lower fail rates are bolded for emphasis. Aside from Robustness, only the MFTs (Minimum Functionality test) were included for the sake of brevity.

#### 123 4.4 Adversarial attack

124 bert-base-uncased-RTE and albert-base-v2-RTE models were chosen for this experiment to perform adversarial attacks  
125 using TextAttack [4]. Out of *fast-alzantot*, *iga*, and *textfooler* attack recipes, *iga* was the most effective in executing  
126 valid attacks (3 out of 10 examples). Due to the limited number of adversarial examples and lack of explanation, it cannot  
127 be argued that one is more or less robust against adversarial attacks compare to another.

##### 128 **Example A**

129 sentence1: Mrs. Bush’s approval ratings have remained very high, above 80%, even as her husband’s  
130 have recently dropped below 50%.

131 sentence2: 80% approve of Mr. Bush.

132 **Not entailment (98%) → Entailment (52%) [BERT]**

133 sentence1: Mrs. Bush’s endorsement ratings have persevere very haut, above 80%, even as her  
134 husband’s have recently plummeted below 50%.

135 sentence2: 80% endorsement of Mr. Bush.

136 **Not entailment (95%) → Entailment (57%) [ALBERT]**

137 sentence1: Mrs. Bush’s approval punctuation have remains very superior, above 80%, even as her  
138 husband’s have recently dropped below 50%.

139 sentence2: 80% approval of Monsieur. Bush.

140 Example A demonstrates that both BERT and ALBERT are vulnerable to this adversarial attack. While *haut* is french  
141 and *superior* has a different meaning in this context, it was enough to make both models to classify the example as  
142 *Entailment* when it is clearly not. Furthermore, this particular example was successful in all above mentioned recipes.

##### 143 **Example B**

144 sentence1: Two British soldiers have been arrested in the southern Iraq city of Basra, sparking  
145 clashes outside a police station where they are being held.

146 sentence2: Two British tanks, sent to the police station where the soldiers are being held, were set  
147 alight in clashes.

148 **Not entailment (97%) → Entailment (71%) [BERT]**

149 sentence1: Two British soldier have been captured in the southern Iraq city of Basra, sparking  
150 clashes outboard a police station where they are being held.

151 sentence2: Two British tanks, sent to the policing station where the soldiers are being held, were set  
152 alight in clashes.

153 **Not entailment (97%) → [FAILED] [ALBERT]**

154 In Example B, *iga* recipe fails to produce a valid adversarial example for ALBERT. However, the lack of an successful  
155 attack does not mean that ALBERT is more robust against than BERT in this particular example since the *textfooler*  
156 recipe was capable of generating a valid adversarial attack.

##### 157 **Example C**

158 sentence1: U.S. forces have been engaged in intense fighting after insurgents launched simultaneous  
159 attacks in several Iraqi cities, including Fallujah and Baqubah.

160 sentence2: Fallujah and Baqubah are Iraqi cities.

161 **Entailment (90%) → Not entailment (98%) [BERT]**

162 Sentence 1: U.S. forces have been engaged in intense fighting after insurgents launched simultaneous  
163 attacks in several Iraqi cities, including Fallujah and Baqubah.

164 sentence2: Fallujah and Baqubah are Iraqi townships.

165 **Entailment (96%) → Not entailment (96%) [ALBERT]**

166 sentence1: U.S. forces have been engaged in intense fighting after insurgents launched simultaneous  
167 attacks in several Iraqi townships, including Fallujah and Baqubah.

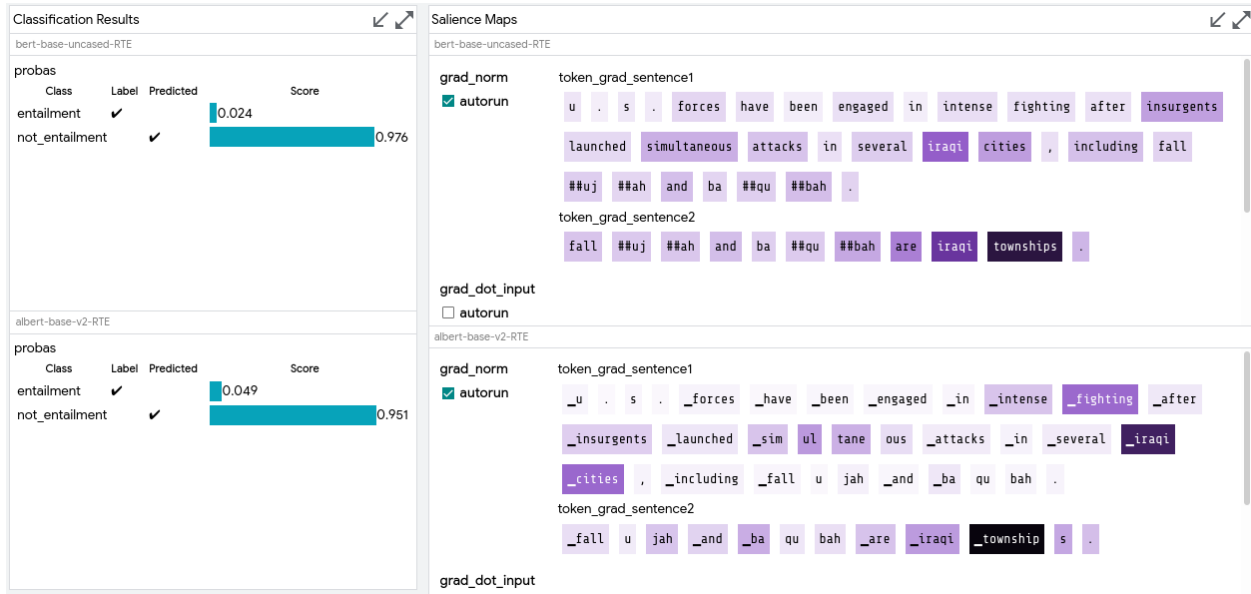
168 sentence2: Fallujah and Baqubah are Iraqi cities.

169 Example C shows that both BERT and ALBERT are vulnerable to this very simple adversarial attack (cities ↔  
170 townships). Hwoever, this particular example was only successful in *iga* recipe.

171 On average, ALBERT (20m 11s, 4m 27s, and 15s) took longer time than BERT (15m 46s, 6m 12s, and 17s) to  
 172 complete each attack (*fast-alzantot*, *iga*, and *textfooler*). However, attack time does not reflect inference speed as it  
 173 depends more on the attack recipes than the models.

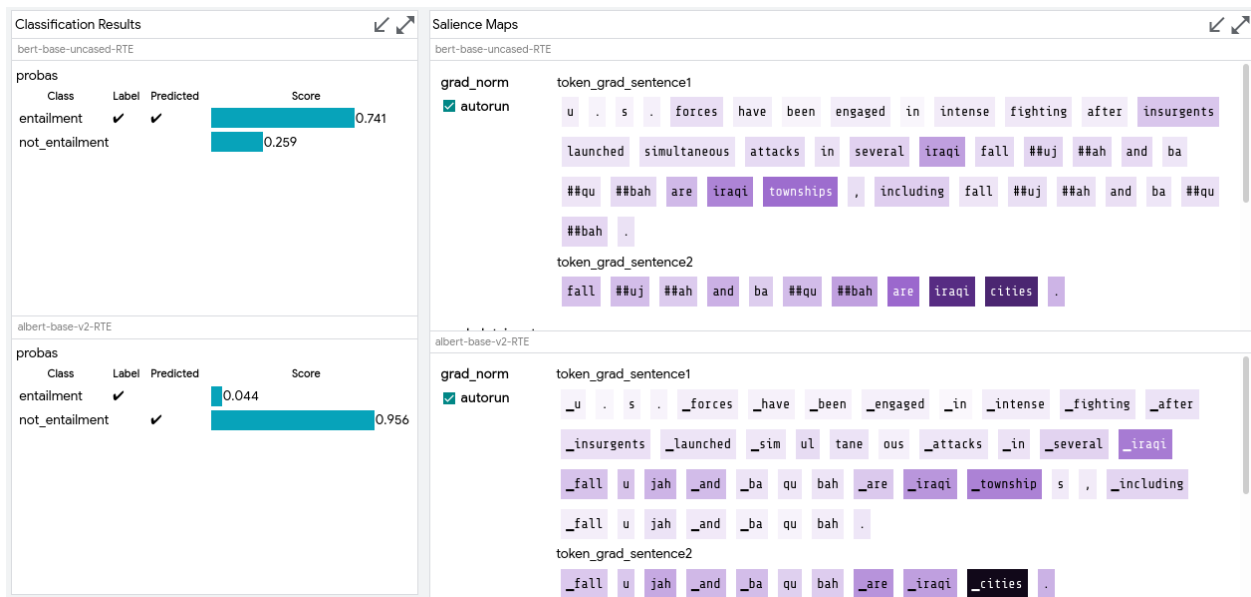
174 **4.5 Counterfactual explanation**

Figure 2: Screenshot of LIT [8] for Adversarial Sentences from Example C [BERT]



Notes: bert-base-uncased-RTE (top) and albert-base-v2-RTE (bottom) models on GLUE RTE validation dataset (N=277). [BERT] *cities* from sentence2 is swapped with *townships*.

Figure 3: Screenshot of LIT [8] for Adversarial Sentences from Example C [ALBERT]



Notes: bert-base-uncased-RTE (top) and albert-base-v2-RTE (bottom) models on GLUE RTE validation dataset (N=277). [ALBERT] *cities* from sentence1 is swapped with *townships*.



175 Similar to section 4.4, the same bert-base-uncased-RTE and albert-base-v2-RTE models were used in this experiment  
176 to address the issues found in section 4.4. With LIT (Language Interpretability Tool) by Tenney et al. [8], Example C  
177 from section 4.4 was used to generate counterfactual examples by swapping *cities* and *townships* in either sentence1  
178 or sentence2. Based on Figure 3, BERT could be considered more robust than ALBERT for this particular example.

## 179 5 Discussion

### 180 Embeddings visualization

181 The Language Interpretability Tool (LIT) comes with the Embedding Projector that aims to help machine learning  
182 developers and researchers to investigate semantically meaningful vectors in embedding space (Tenney et al. [8]). It  
183 provides UMAP, t-SNE, and PCA projections to visualize layer-wise embeddings of any machine learning models. We  
184 chose UMAP because it has demonstrably better run time performance than t-SNE and preserves more of the global  
185 structure of larger datasets (McInnes and Healy [3]).

186 Although qualitative analysis of visualization should not be interpreted as a definitive evidence (Rogers et al. [7]),  
187 UMAP visualization of embeddings can be quite useful for exploring and comparing clusters and global structures of  
188 NLP models (Tenney et al. [8]). Furthermore, Sentence-BERT overcomes the short comings of layer-wise embeddings  
189 by using siamese / triplet network architecture to derive semantically meaningful sentence embeddings. Nonetheless,  
190 visualizations in Figure 1 are the exceptions rather than the rules when it comes to embeddings visualization, since  
191 most of the fine-tuned models result in widely different embeddings that have far less meaningful representations  
192 (Reimers and Gurevych [5]).

### 193 Behavioral testing and adversarial attack

194 One of the primary goals of training NLP models is generalization (Morris et al. [4]) and these models are extremely  
195 good at finding correlations and patterns that are consistent across their training dataset. However, many of these  
196 correlations and patterns are actually spurious and do not hold for other distributions. While performance on in-  
197 distribution is a useful indicator, in-distribution performance is often not comprehensive, and contain the same biases  
198 as the training data (Ribeiro et al. [6]).

199 Out of existing behavioral and adversarial tools, we chose Checklist and TextAttack because both tools can be directly  
200 integrated with HuggingFaces transformers. CheckList is a comprehensive behavioral testing of NLP models that  
201 guides users in what to test, by providing a list of linguistic capabilities (Ribeiro et al. [6]). TextAttack aims to  
202 implement adversarial attacks that, given an NLP model, find a perturbation of an input sequence that satisfies the  
203 attack’s goal while adhering to certain linguistic constraints (Morris et al. [4]). These tools make it easier to reason  
204 about the behavior of NLP models under distribution shift and adversarial settings, as well as their tendencies to behave  
205 based on social biases or shallow heuristics.

206 According to Ribeiro et al. [6], CheckList should not be treated as yet another set of challenge or benchmark datasets;  
207 instead, it should complement benchmarks to systematically evaluate the precise capabilities of a model that are not  
208 captured in benchmarks. Based on Table 4.1, it can be somewhat vague and possibly misleading how BERT and  
209 ALBERT models fare in respect to *Robustness* and *Fairness*. With behavioral testing approach, model capability can  
210 be evaluated more precisely across different models and datasets (Table 4.3 and Table 4.3).

211 Much of the adversarial attacks reported successful by TextAttack [4] were often invalid because the search constraints  
212 were not properly optimized. Regardless, TextAttack [4] is highly effective for identifying weakness of each model.  
213 More precisely, it is useful to identify which token to attack, but often fails to generate valid tokens to substitute it.

### 214 Counterfactual explanation

215 While CheckList [6] and TextAttack [4] provide an easy way of evaluating NLP models beyond the typical benchmarks,  
216 the Language Interpretability Tool (LIT) provides a more comprehensive set of tools for developers and researchers  
217 to debug performance of NLP models (Tenney et al. [8]). With LIT, users can easily hop between visualizations  
218 to test local hypotheses and validate them over a dataset, add new data points on the fly, and compare two models  
219 side-by-side.

220 LIT [8] consists of a wide variety of interpretability and explainability components. One of which is the *Saliency*  
221 *Map*. This one is particularly interesting because there seems to be a correlation between the attack targets chosen by  
222 TextAttack [4] recipes and the token gradient norm weights in the *Saliency Map*. However, tokens with the highest  
223 weights are not always the best target for generating insightful counterfactual examples.

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