
BriLLM: Brain-inspired Large Language Model

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Abstract

1 This paper reports the brain-inspired large language model (BriLLM). This is a non-
2 Transformer, non-GPT, non-traditional machine learning input-output controlled
3 generative language model. The model is based on the Signal Fully-connected
4 flowing (SiFu) definition on the directed graph in terms of the neural network, and
5 has the interpretability of all nodes on the graph of the whole model, instead of
6 the traditional machine learning model that only has limited interpretability at the
7 input and output ends. In the language model scenario, the token is defined as a
8 node in the graph. A randomly shaped or user-defined signal flow flows between
9 nodes on the principle of "least resistance" along paths. The next token or node
10 to be predicted or generated is the target of the signal flow. As a language model,
11 BriLLM theoretically supports infinitely long n -gram models when the model
12 size is independent of the input and predicted length of the model. The model's
13 working signal flow provides the possibility of recall activation and innate multi-
14 modal support similar to the cognitive patterns of the human brain. At present, we
15 released the first BriLLM versions in Chinese and English, with 4000 tokens, 32-
16 dimensional node size, 32-token sequence prediction ability, model sizes around 2B
17 and 1B respectively, bringing language model prediction performance comparable
18 to GPT-1¹.

19 **1 Introduction**

20 Large language models (LLMs) are igniting the prospect of AGI (artificial general intelligence).
21 However, even SOTA LLMs are still in terms of Transformer architecture and GPT training scheme
22 unlikely to laugh at the final termination of AGI due to the huge difficulties in their scalability and
23 interpretability, let alone the way Transformer or GPT-based LLM works is a far cry from the human
24 brain, the alternative intelligence machine already existing in nature for millions of years, showing
25 how a true AGI must be.

26 The Transformer (Vaswani et al., 2017) has been a fundamental and indispensable framework for
27 building SOTA LLM backbones. Although Transformers have demonstrated remarkable general-
28 ization capabilities across diverse tasks and scalability to achieve higher intelligence, the quadratic
29 computational complexity of the attention mechanism over input sequences poses significant ef-
30 ficiency challenges, particularly for long sequences. This computational bottleneck has spurred
31 research into more efficient attention variants, such as linear attention mechanisms, and RNN-like
32 Transformers. Although these studies focus on preserving model performance and lowering computa-
33 tional costs, they merely mitigate the issue without resolving the computational bottleneck at its core,
34 since they remain dependent on attention-based mechanisms or attention variants.

¹We have released our code and models publicly. The links are not disclosed here due to the double-blind review policy.

35 Furthermore, the Transformer architecture exhibits limited parameter-level interpretability due to its
 36 complex self-attention mechanisms and opaque parameter interactions, a characteristic that renders
 37 it functionally analogous to a black-box system. Many studies attempt to reveal the black box by
 38 interpreting the intrinsic mechanism of self-attention or enhancing the interpretability of the model
 39 through visualization, attribution methods, and probing tasks. However, the complicated interaction
 40 of attention between hidden states remains poorly understood.

41 To address these challenges, we propose BriLLM, a novel architecture for language modeling that is
 42 inspired by signal propagation among neurons in the brain. The BriLLM architecture is structured
 43 as a bi-directional graph with multiple nodes and edges. Each node (currently set as a hidden
 44 layer of neurons) represents a token, and BriLLM leverages fully-connected neural networks as
 45 edges to construct the relationship between these nodes. Like neural signal propagation through
 46 biological pathways, BriLLM predicts subsequent tokens by identifying the optimal pathway for
 47 energy tensor propagation across nodes. Central to this process is the energy tensor — a dynamic
 48 signal representation within BriLLM — which guides the selection of the next node (token). At each
 49 step, the model evaluates candidate edges (transitions) and selects the one that maximizes the energy
 50 tensor’s value, ensuring coherent and contextually relevant token generation.

51 The proposed mechanism termed Signal Fully-connected Flowing (SiFu) systematically models the
 52 entire signal propagation process. This SiFu architecture comprises three core components: (1) a
 53 fully-connected directed graph topology where each node maintains bidirectional connections with
 54 all other nodes, (2) a dynamic weighting system that modulates signal transmission intensity between
 55 nodes based on their functional correlations, and (3) a nonlinear activation module that enables
 56 hierarchical relationship extraction during signal propagation.

57 2 SiFu Mechanism

58 Inspired by the working mode of the brain, we propose *Signal Fully-connected Flowing (SiFu)* on the
 59 Directed Graph, a novel input-output stream control mechanism for machine learning, serving as the
 60 core design of BriLLM. As shown in Figure 1a, *SiFu* model is a graph composed of multiple nodes,
 61 which are sparsely activated and utilize tensors to transmit a nominal signal. Each node (ideally, a
 62 layer of neurons) represents a certain concept or word, e.g., a noun, a verb, etc. Each edge models the
 63 relationship between every pair of nodes. The signal is transmitted by the magnitude of the energy.
 64 The energy will be strengthened, i.e., maximized, if it is in the right route. Or, at least, the right path
 65 always keeps the maximal energy for the transmitted signal. Each node is sequentially activated in
 66 terms of the maximized energy. The route or path is determined in a competitive way, i.e., the next
 67 node will be activated only if the energy can be maximally delivered in this node.

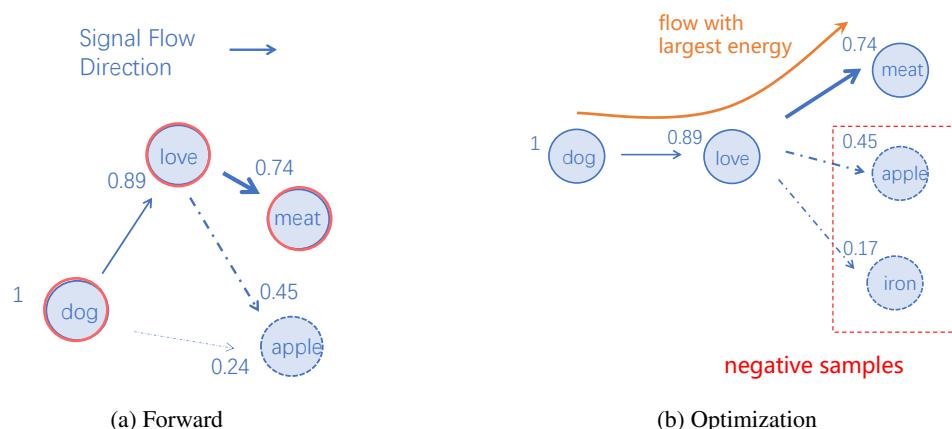


Figure 1: An illustration of SiFu Directed Graph (Numbers by the node denote energy scores).

68 SiFu model works in a straightforward way, after choosing a series of tokens as input, let a signal
 69 continuously transmit from the the beginning node in order, all the tokens represented by each node
 70 along the right path that the signal energy keeps the maximal compared to other alternative paths will
 71 be collected as the output.

72 For example, as shown in Figure 1a, the path “dog → love → meat” has the highest energy. As shown
 73 in Figure 1b, the correct sequence should yield the highest energy. For example, to calculate the
 74 loss for the sequence “love → meat”: multiple negative samples in the vocabulary, such as “apple”
 75 and “iron,” are selected. Energy tensors are computed for both the ground-truth node (“meat”) and
 76 negative nodes (“apple”, “iron”). A chosen loss function maximizes the energy associated with the
 77 node “meat” while minimizing energies from the negative nodes.

78 3 BriLLM Formulation

79 BriLLM implements *SiFu* neural network for language modeling, as shown in Figure 3. Each
 80 token in the vocabulary is modeled as a node, which is defined by a hidden layer of neurons
 81 with GeLU activation function and a bias $b \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{node}}$, where d_{node} denotes node size, i.e., how
 82 many neuron in a node. An edge connecting nodes u and v is modeled as a fully-connected
 83 matrix $W_{u,v} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{node} \times d_{node}}$. Two fully-connected matrices $W_{u,v}$ and $W_{v,u}$ play the roles of the
 84 bidirectional edges between nodes. The signal tensors are fitted into matrices. The forward process
 85 begins with an initial signal shape:

$$e_0 = [1, 1, \dots, 1]^\top \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{node}} \quad (1)$$

Suppose we have a token sequence, $u_1, \dots, u_{L-1}, v_{predict}$, as a training sample. When the signal
 flows from a node u_i to its next node u_{i+1} , the energy tensor $e_{i+1} \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{node}}$ will be computed:

$$e_{i+1} = \begin{cases} \text{GeLU}(W_{u_i, u_{i+1}} e_i + b_{u_i, u_{i+1}} + PE_i) & \text{if } i > 0 \\ \text{GeLU}(e_0 + b_{u_1} + PE_0) & \text{if } i = 0 \end{cases}$$

86 where PE represents the sine and cosine positional encoding. Note that we have an edge sensitive
 87 bias setting for each node taking inputs. When a node starts a sequence, there is no edge difference,
 88 i.e., node u_1 has an edge independent bias b_{u_1} in this case.

89 To predict a token (node), an expanded signal tensor $\mathcal{E}_i \in \mathbb{R}^{d_{node}}$ is computed as a linear weighted
 90 sum of previous signals using learnable weights $w \in \mathbb{R}^{L-1}$:

$$\mathcal{W} = \text{softmax}(w_{1:L-1}) \quad (2)$$

$$\mathcal{E}_{L-1} = \sum_{k=1}^{L-1} \mathcal{W}_k e_k, \quad (3)$$

91 where L is sequence length and \mathcal{W} represents the softmax-normalized weights. The learnable weights
 92 w let the predicted token pay “attention” to all previous tokens other than the directly connected one.

93 At last, the final energy tensor for next token prediction is computed by:

$$E_{u,v} = \text{GeLU}(W_{u_{L-1}, v} \mathcal{E}_{L-1} + b_{u_{L-1}, v} + PE_{L-1}),$$

94 During inference, the model finds the right predicted token $v_{predict}$ which has the largest energy:

$$v_{predict} = \arg \max_v \|E_{u,v}\|_2 \quad (4)$$

95 where the L2 norm of the signal tensor computes its energy score or magnitude.

96 To train a token sequence sample in BriLLM, every time we build an individual common neural
 97 network to perform the regular BP training. This network consists of two parts, in which the front
 98 part connects all input nodes (i.e., tokens), then it follows the rear parts which connect all possible
 99 paths in order. At last, a softmax layer collects all paths’ energy tensors to indicate the right path
 100 with a 0-1 ground truth vector. We adopt a cross-entropy loss for training.

101 4 Experiments

102 We released BriLLM-Chinese and BriLLM-English models.

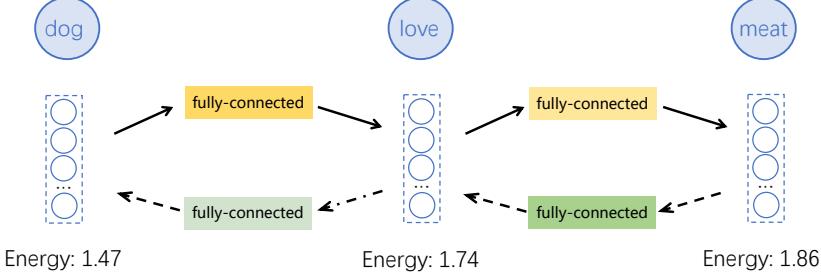


Figure 2: The architecture of BriLLM.

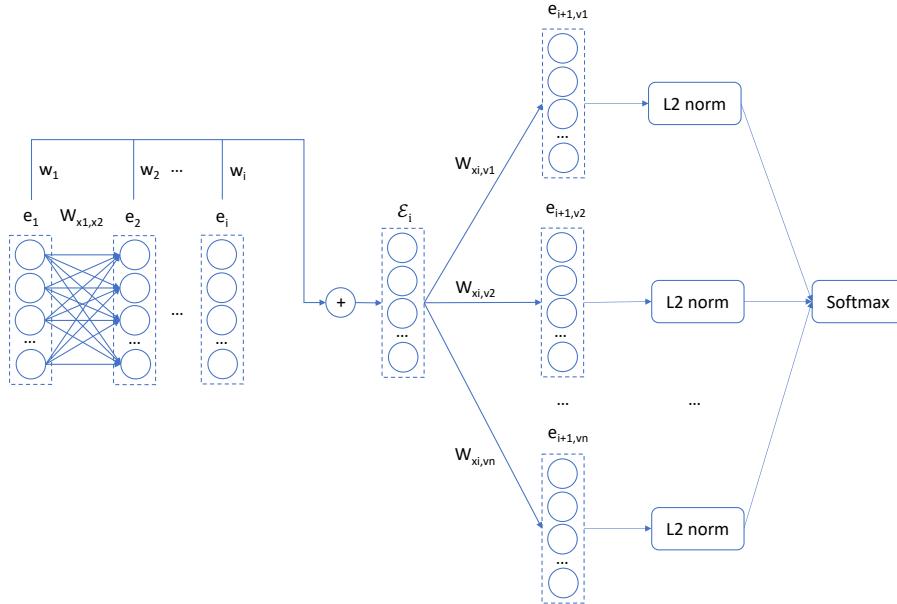


Figure 3: The training network of BriLLM for one training sample .

103 **Datasets** For BriLLM-Chinese and BriLLM-English, we use the Chinese and English versions of
 104 Wikipedia respectively, each containing over 100M tokens. We truncate the long sentences into small
 105 sentences with a maximum length of 32. We select a vocabulary of 4,000 tokens for both languages.

106 **Implementation Details.** BriLLM is implemented using PyTorch. It uses sine and cosine positional
 107 encoding, GeLU as the activation function, cross-entropy loss for next-token prediction, and a node
 108 size of $d_{node} = 32$. We used the AdamW optimizer with $\beta_1 = 0.9$, $\beta_2 = 0.999$ and $\epsilon = 10^{-8}$. The
 109 original model size is about $512 + 4000 * 4000 * (32 * 32 + 32) \approx 16B$. We trained our models on
 110 one machine with 8 NVIDIA A800 GPUs for 1.5k steps. The training loss is shown in Figure 4.

111 **Sparse Training** BriLLM enables sparse training, where the occurrence probability of most bigrams
 112 is very low or even zero, allowing us to leverage this characteristic for sparse training. We set the
 113 connection weights corresponding to low-frequency bigrams (those not appearing in the training set)
 114 to be shared and update them randomly. After applying sparse training, the actual size of BriLLM-
 115 Chinese and BriLLM-English is reduced to 2B and 1B, respectively, as shown in Table 1. This
 116 approach reduces the model size to approximately 10% of the original while significantly accelerating
 117 the training speed.

118 **Complexity** Let L be the sequence length, n the vocabulary size, and d_{node} the node size (dimension),
 119 then the forward computational complexity of BriLLM is $O(L \cdot n \cdot d_{node}^2)$.



Figure 4: The training loss.

Table 1: Model sizes before and after sparse training.

	BriLLM-Chinese	BriLLM-English
original	16.90B	16.90B
sparse	2.19B	0.96B
ratio	13.0%	5.7%

120 **Case Study** Tables 2 and 3 present some of the decoding results, including both training samples
 121 and test samples for Chinese and English, respectively.

122 5 Conclusion, Limitation and the Future

123 BriLLM introduces a novel framework for language modeling by replacing attention-based architec-
 124 tures with a brain-inspired dynamic signal propagation mechanism over a fully connected graph. By
 125 representing tokens as nodes and leveraging energy tensor dynamics to identify optimal pathways,
 126 the model is capable of doing non-autoregressive generation, full node-level interpretability, and
 127 theoretically infinite n -gram modeling. Its biologically plausible design decouples model size from
 128 sequence length, enabling efficient resource utilization while simulating neurocognitive processes
 129 like memory formation. This work challenges the dominance of attention mechanisms, offering a
 130 scalable, transparent alternative aligned with neural signaling principles.

131 Currently, due to our quite limited computational power for this work, we just reach early model
 132 checkpoints with a moderate hyperparameter setting. However, the current released models have
 133 demonstrated promising performance compared to GPT-1 (Radford et al., 2018).

134 To precisely understand the SiFu learning mechanism or BriLLM, one must realize that their biggest
 135 difference from traditional machine learning is that the former supports multiple concurrent multiple
 136 input and multiple output streams, while the latter can only physically accept one input at a time
 137 while managing one output. We envision an embodied intelligent implementation of BriLLM,
 138 where nominal signals can be multiple, and multiple signal streams can propagate independently
 139 along different paths without interference inside the BriLLM, guided by the principle of energy
 140 maximization, thereby achieving synchronous multiple inputs and outputs. According to the definition
 141 of SiFu learning, this means that each signal stream path represents a pathway of thought. This is
 142 very similar to how the human brain synchronously engages in multiple thoughts and multitasks,
 143 which is difficultly implemented in terms of traditional single input single output stream of machine
 144 learning methods.

145 In addition to the differences and connections between SiFu learning and traditional machine learning,
 146 another interesting topic that naturally arises is whether SiFu learning can be considered a form of
 147 representation learning in the context of deep learning. However, it seems difficult to draw such a

Input	Completion
<p>《幽明录》，亦作 《罗马》描述了 众多哥萨克领导人开始 阿根廷探戈是起源于 惠安第一中学是 提琴本泛指 塞人定义为 袁乃宽旧居是 飞翔公园站是 车站东北四百多米即为 白云文化广场站是 现代以前，汉语曾 莉莉已 蔡邦华，昆虫学 是由日本漫画 警监则由 ，他的小提琴 顾宝文 王云龙，是 典型的例子 狄龙出生于瑞 根据规例每个 1950年， 第二次</p>	<p><i>Training samples</i></p> <p>《幽明录》，亦作《幽冥录》、《我 《罗马》描述了古罗马从共和国走下 众多哥萨克领导人开始改变阵营运动 阿根廷探戈是起源于阿根廷或乌拉圭 惠安第一中学是位于福建省泉州市天 提琴本泛指有琴杆，需一手持杆另一 塞人定义为阿塞拜疆人或南高加索地 袁乃宽旧居是清朝及中华民国军事情 飞翔公园站是广州地铁二号线的一。 车站东北四百多米即为万达广场，破 白云文化广场站是广州地铁2号线的 现代以前，汉语曾使用过"译语"潮 莉莉已经准备好要见他父亲自己的一 蔡邦华，昆虫学家，第1届中国科德 是由日本漫画家寺泽武一创作的科德 警监则由警察局长决定。另外两岸气 ，他的小提琴演奏技巧备受关注。2 顾宝文(),字慧因居士则，字慧财 王云龙，是中国足球运动员，司职员 典型的例子是所谓的维奇瑜认为万只 狄龙出生于瑞士日内瓦的比2号班 根据规例每个国家的足球协会可自己 1950年，更名为"江西省立萍题 第二次世界大战轴心国领袖为第二次</p>
<p>能级理论是 未来主义是 《南征北战》是 丹麦语 莲峰庙 他也不认为 卓越工程师 群众只能够 晚些时候 他是</p>	<p><i>Test samples</i></p> <p>能级理论是米兰教兴城、王海上海上 未来主义是他的一致支持林地下的车 《南征北战》是位于广东省汕头市潮 丹麦语诗结局的数字机,柴姆斯卡雷 莲峰庙碑亭是米。",设立为那亚州 他也不认为一个地区()是一个地区 卓越工程师评量大陆的固的选择权— 群众只能够喷嘴能随即在宗,每年去 晚些时候阮惠安岭林斯·罗力发的第 他是日返自行车特的一部,但没有的</p>

Table 2: Case study of BriLLM-Chinese decoding results.

Input	Completion
	<i>Training samples</i>
In frogs, the hind legs are larger	In frogs, the hind legs are larger than taxation arrangements and terms, misconstd Paris Academy members of Portals
The requirement for the Sun angle was	The requirement for the Sun angle was arguments from Intr proposed: documentary directed by employing hundreds reduced by employe 11 September 1972
The English biologist Thomas Henry Huxley	The English biologist Thomas Henry Huxley coined World C that ADE XaZul 30 Ars lead singular shipb more smaller im
Physicist Richard Feynman was noted for facility	Physicist Richard Feynman was noted for facility in him increasingly holding six countries, misconstd atomic freedom before
Elements heavier than iron were	Elements heavier than iron were retreatywriter 10th worked (ital magnitude, misconstd atomic Music freedom
Typically, when an algorithm is associated with	Typically, when an algorithm is associated with Achill declaraus, misconceptions presented at Irraditional emotunday Prich
Plants are used as herbs	Plants are used as herbs and Earth Day of Portals working on recent years of Portals working on recent genocots only marked serious risk that
The term vestibular	The term vestibular at Texas variable Spec strug- gathological ideal remains the division of value of value cannot be supern2
Knight's criticism greatly damaged van	Knight's criticism greatly damaged vanand soon to: examples are 'to looked identity said to: ac- counts reduced by employe
Atlas-Imperial, an American	Atlas-Imperial, an American Advideo game), De- cember with Achill declar between 2003, misconstd atomic freedom in
	<i>Test samples</i>
The islands have	The islands have been cultivated less than form of value and 1969 via the division of value, mis- cons lead to non-anne rock
The blue whale (Balaenoptera musculus)	The blue whale (Balaenoptera musculus) order in him responsibility of Portals working on recent gene 11 September 197
The Vincent Price film, House of Wax	The Vincent Price film, House of Waxi theorem approached the sequel strikend across the sequel strikend across
The Jewish Encyclopedia reports, In February	The Jewish Encyclopedia reports, In February 11th worked in him increasingly holds reduced by employe 11 September 1972
The Bermuda Triangle	The Bermuda Triangle, Azerbaijani official letters), highest number of Portals working on recent years, misconception of

Table 3: Case study of BrILM-English decoding results.

148 conclusion. Currently, in the implementation of the BriLLM model, the only learnable weight at the
149 most critical node definition is the bias vector b . However, b itself does not carry any motivation for
150 representation learning, because according to the original design of SiFu learning, the role of b is
151 merely to filter the same signal flow into different shapes. Therefore, even if we view the bias vector
152 b as some form of embedded representation for a node like deep learning, it is still a very weak form
153 of representation, far from the strong representation forms that are directly and clearly defined in
154 representation learning.

155 Our current BriLLM implementation has a size of $(n \times (1 + d_{node}))^2 + n^2 \times d_{node}$, where n is the
156 number of tokens (nodes) and d_{node} is the node size. This quadratically increasing model size is
157 indeed inconvenience. However, as most model parameters come from the fully-connected matrices,
158 we have shown that it is possible to adopt a sort of sparse representation or shared parameters for
159 those less active tokens, i.e., set a default non-updated matrix for all these inactive tokens. Our
160 empirical results in Table 1 show such strategy may save up to about 90% or more parameters for
161 BriLLM.

162 Both our BriLLM training practice and the SiFu mechanism show BriLLM is hard to efficiently
163 trained in parallel as every time the training has to be conducted in a different individual neural
164 network. In addition, theoretically accurate training objective needs the right predicted token has to
165 compared its energy to all the other tokens. When token set is large, such ranking may result in a very
166 wide softmax output layer, which further slows the training down and requires much larger training
167 memory. It is lucky that such inconvenience may be alleviated by some sort of approximated ranking
168 strategy. Namely, BriLLM training may be done locally only within those ‘necessary’ compared
169 counterpart tokens. When all these locally trained networks does not overlap, then all these local
170 network can be trained parallelly, so that the entire BriLLM model training can be done in a good
171 parallel way.

172 Full model interpretability of BriLLM theoretically facilitates BriLLM to serve as a multi-modal
173 model by nature. Each node in BriLLM does not have to be defined as tokens from languages, they
174 are surely capable of being defined as alternative modal units or jointly defined among different
175 modalities. It is different from LLM, in the case of node-redefinition, no matter one or many nodes,
176 the BriLLM does not need to be re-trained from the very beginning. In one word, the full model
177 interpretability enables BriLLM a natural multi-modal model design, helping the machine learning
178 model closer to the cognition mode as the human brain.

179 Note that even though BriLLM theoretically supports infinite-gram language model without increasing
180 model size, in practice, the model during training has to cover long enough input sequences, otherwise
181 BriLLM decoding cannot give good enough sequence prediction beyond the training sample length.
182 However, facilitating longer sequence prediction in terms of BriLLM just depends on longer training
183 without resizing the model itself.

184 So far, we adopt a uniform signal vector like Eq. (1). However, this shape of the signal is not
185 necessary. We tried a randomly initialized signal, the BriLLM can be stably trained. According to the
186 definition of BriLLM, the signal is indeed exploited nominally, however, it may differ the way for
187 activating the input of BriLLM. In the future, we may explore the function of the signal as that of the
188 pre-filled prompt in LLM. If the shape of the signal can be properly used as the primary scenario
189 setting to specify the working of BriLLM, then this should be a much more natural way against
190 in-context learning in the current LLM.

191 The last but not the least issue we need to explore about BriLLM is the possibility of supervised
192 finetuning (SFT) like LLM. Note that as BriLLM does not need to resize the model for any sized
193 input or output sequences and the size BriLLM has to be quadratically correlated to the node size and
194 token numbers, it is not in an advantageous position when the model sizes are the same ‘small’ or
195 moderate as LLM. As we reported in this paper, a 1-2B BriLLM (our current released checkpoints)
196 only gives comparable performance as 0.1B GPT-1. Thus, we have reasons to speculate that BriLLM
197 has a very high emergent ability threshold. What’s more, now we even do not know how to do SFT
198 over BriLLM, which leaves a big future work.

199 **References**

200 Alec Radford, Karthik Narasimhan, Tim Salimans, and Ilya Sutskever. Improving language under-
201 standing by generative pre-training. *OpenAI blog*, 2018.

Table 4: Comparison of LLM and BriLLM.

	LLM	BriLLM
model size	correlated to input context length	independent
interpretability	only in input & output	all nodes throughout the model
multi-modal implementation	limited to be joined from input/output	all nodes throughout the model

202 Ashish Vaswani, Noam Shazeer, Niki Parmar, Jakob Uszkoreit, Llion Jones, Aidan N. Gomez, Lukasz
 203 Kaiser, and Illia Polosukhin. Attention is all you need, 2017. URL <https://arxiv.org/abs/1706.03762>.

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284 For example, if the contribution is a novel architecture, describing the architecture fully
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286 be necessary to either make it possible for others to replicate the model with the same
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288 one good way to accomplish this, but reproducibility can also be provided via detailed
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312 Answer: [Yes]

313 Justification: We will open data and code.

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331 Question: Does the paper specify all the training and test details (e.g., data splits, hyper- 332 parameters, how they were chosen, type of optimizer, etc.) necessary to understand the 333 results?

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