Abstract

Realizing general-purpose language intelligence has been a longstanding goal for natural language processing, where standard evaluation benchmarks play a fundamental and guiding role. We argue that for general-purpose language intelligence evaluation, the benchmark itself needs to be comprehensive and systematic. To this end, we propose CUGE, a Chinese Language Understanding and Generation Evaluation benchmark with the following features: (1) Hierarchical benchmark framework, where datasets are principally selected and organized with a language capability-task-dataset hierarchy. (2) Multi-level scoring strategy, where different levels of model performance are provided based on the hierarchical framework. To facilitate CUGE, we provide a public leaderboard that can be customized to support flexible model judging criteria. Evaluation results on representative pre-trained language models indicate ample room for improvement towards general-purpose language intelligence. CUGE is publicly available at cuge.baai.ac.cn.

1 Introduction

Human language intelligence is general across different language capabilities and tasks. Realizing such general-purpose language intelligence has been a longstanding goal for natural language processing (NLP), where standard evaluation benchmarks play a fundamental and guiding role. To this end, rather than focusing on model performance on specific datasets, researchers have proposed several standard evaluation benchmarks that summarize model performance on a collection of diverse datasets (Wang et al., 2018, 2019; Xu et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Notably, GLUE (Wang et al., 2018) and SuperGLUE (Wang et al., 2019) benchmarks have drawn increasing attention from NLP communities recently and have greatly promoted the development of NLP techniques, especially in the era of pre-trained language models (Devlin et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2020; Raffel et al., 2020).

Despite their popularity, there are still important limitations of existing benchmarks. (1) Flat benchmark framework. Most existing evaluation
benchmarks are dataset-oriented, where commonly used datasets are selected and loosely organized in a flat structure without the guidance of language capabilities to be evaluated. This lack of comprehensiveness and systematicness undermine the reliability of a benchmark as the indicator of general-purpose language intelligence. (2) Oversimplified scoring strategy. Most benchmarks summarize the model performance via a simple average of metrics across different datasets, without considering the characteristics of different metrics and datasets. Moreover, since the metrics on all datasets are directly averaged into a single overall value, the performance on language capabilities and tasks cannot be reflected.

To better benchmark general-purpose language intelligence, we propose CUGE, a Chinese Language Understanding and Generation Evaluation benchmark with the following features: (1) Hierarchical benchmark framework. As shown in Figure 1, CUGE selects and organizes datasets in a language capability-task-dataset hierarchical framework, covering 7 important language capabilities, 17 mainstream NLP tasks and 19 representative datasets. The framework is carefully designed according to the human language examination syllabus and the current NLP research status. With the guidance of the framework, we expect the dataset selection and organization more principled and better reflect general-purpose language evaluation needs. (2) Multi-level scoring strategy. Based on the hierarchical framework, in addition to the overall score, CUGE provides model performance evaluation on different levels, including performance on datasets, tasks and language capabilities, more systematically investigating and showing model language intelligence. Moreover, CUGE normalizes the score on each dataset according to the performance of a standard baseline model, largely mitigating the influence of different metrics and datasets.

To facilitate GUGE, we release an online evaluation platform and a public leaderboard. The leaderboard can be easily customized according to model capabilities and tasks in interest to support flexible model judging criteria. Experiments results on representative pre-trained language models show that, although strong performance can be achieved by existing NLP techniques in some language capabilities and tasks, there is still ample room for improvement towards general-purpose language intelligence. The online evaluation platform and leaderboard are publicly available at cuge.baai.ac.cn.

2 Design Principles

The design principles of CUGE are highly correlated to the target of evaluating and innovating general-purpose language intelligence. In this section, we introduce the design principles of the core components of CUGE, including the hierarchical framework, multi-level scoring strategy, dataset evaluation system and the evaluation platform.

Hierarchical Benchmark Framework For general-purpose language intelligence evaluation, the benchmark itself needs to be comprehensive and systematic. To this end, different from existing flat dataset-oriented benchmarks built from the bottom up, CUGE is hierarchically constructed in a top-down approach. Specifically, on the top level, according to the human language examination syllabus (i.e., Chinese syllabus for college entrance examination) and the current NLP research status, we summarize general-purpose language intelligence into 7 important language capabilities: (1) language understanding: word-sentence level, (2) language understanding: discourse level, (3) information acquisition and question answering, (4) language generation, (5) conversational interaction, (6) multilingualism, and (7) mathematical reasoning. Then we identify representative NLP tasks for each capability, serving as the task level. Finally, we select representative datasets for each task, resulting in the dataset level. Compared with previous works, the hierarchical benchmark framework of CUGE more systematically organizes existing evaluation resources and more comprehensively reflects general-purpose language evaluation needs.

Multi-level Scoring Strategy In addition to a single overall value, we would like to also provide fine-grained, multi-level evaluation of models. Therefore, based on the hierarchical benchmark framework of CUGE, we propose a multi-level scoring strategy for the evaluation results. In addition, it is also desirable to eliminate the influence of different metrics and datasets during score calculation. We thus normalize the scores on datasets based on representative standard baseline models.

http://www.neea.edu.cn/
| Corpus | Train | Dev | Test | Task | Metrics | Domain |
|--------|-------|-----|------|------|---------|--------|
| PKU-SEG | 40.3k | 10.5k | 9.9k | word segmentation | F1 score | news |
| WordSeg-Weibo | 20.1k | 2.1k | 8.6k | word segmentation | F1 score | social media |
| PKU-SEGPOS | 31.7k | 5.2k | 4.8k | word segmentation and POS | F1 score | news |
| CCPM | 21.8k | 2.7k | 2.7k | classical poetry matching | F1 score | Chinese poetry |
| CMeEE | 15.0k | 5.0k | 3.0k | named entity recognition | F1 score | medical |
| FinRE | 7.5k | 1.5k | 3.7k | relation extraction | F1 score | financial |

**Language Understanding: Discourse Level**

| Task | Metrics | Domain |
|------|---------|--------|
| SPR | F1 score | TV show |
| ClozeT | accuracy | literature |
| C$^3$ | accuracy | mixed-genre |

**Information Acquisition and Question Answering Capability**

| Task | Metrics | Domain |
|------|---------|--------|
| WantWords | accuracy@1 | mixed-genre |
| KBQA | EM | mixed-genre |
| Sogou-Log | nDCG@k | mixed-genre |

**Language Generation Capability**

| Task | Metrics | Domain |
|------|---------|--------|
| LCSTS | Rouge | news |
| CEPSUM | Rouge | e-commerce |
| E-Reviews | BLEU, Distinct | e-commerce |

**Conversational Interaction Capability**

| Task | Metrics | Domain |
|------|---------|--------|
| KdConv | BLEU, Distinct | film, music, travel |

**Multilingual Capability**

| Task | Metrics | Domain |
|------|---------|--------|
| WMT20-EnZh | BLEU | mixed-genre |
| NCLS-EnZh | Rouge | mixed-genre |

**Mathematical Reasoning Capability**

| Task | Metrics | Domain |
|------|---------|--------|
| Math23k | accuracy | math word problem |

Table 1: Descriptions and statistics of language capabilities, tasks and datasets.

**3D Dataset Evaluation System** The quality of datasets is crucial to a benchmark. However, there is little systematic investigation on this problem in existing benchmarks. To this end, we propose a three-dimensional evaluation system for CUGE’s dataset selection and evaluation. Inspired by the assessment of reliability (Cronbach, 1946) and validity (Alloway et al., 2008) in educational psychology, we propose **reliability**, **difficulty**, and **validity** as three main dimensions of our dataset evaluation system. We expect the dataset evaluation system will contribute to a more scientific and reliable dataset selection process of CUGE in the future.

Specifically, (1) **reliability** refers to the consistency and accountability of the scores given by the datasets and the corresponding metrics. (2) **Difficulty** reflects the hardness and discriminative capability of the datasets. (3) **Validity** represents the relevance of the evaluation dataset and evaluation goals. The evaluation methods and metrics for dataset quality assessment are still open research problems, and CUGE is actively exploring this direction for building high-quality benchmarks.

**Flexible Online Platform** To facilitate CUGE, we build an online evaluation platform that features customizable leaderboard and interactive forums. In addition to the leaderboard for each dataset, participants can also customize leaderboards consisting of multiple datasets according to their evaluation objectives. To encourage academic integrity, participants are required to check honor code before submissions, and interactive forums are provided for submission discussion.

In addition to the evaluation of the existing datasets in CUGE, the platform also supports the release and evaluation of new datasets. Each dataset submitted and released on CUGE will have a dataset-specific leaderboard on the platform. The

Previous works have shown that evaluation benchmarks need to be continually adjusted according to the current status of NLP research (Wang et al., 2018, 2019). We expect the 3D dataset evaluation system can also serve as a principled criterion for the continual adjustment of datasets in CUGE in the future.
CUGE benchmark will adjust its dataset collection according to the results of existing and newly released datasets on the platform each year.

3 Benchmark Framework

CUGE selects and organizes datasets in a language capability-task-dataset hierarchical framework, covering 7 language capabilities, 17 mainstream NLP tasks and 19 representative datasets.

3.1 Language Understanding: Word-Sentence Level

The language understanding: word-sentence level evaluates the model’s capability to understand a given text and perform word- and sentence-level syntactic and semantic tasks.

3.1.1 Word Segmentation

The task is to identify the sequence of words in a sentence and mark the boundaries between words.

PKU-SEG PKU-SEG (Emerson, 2005) is the PKU dataset released by The Second International Chinese Word Segmentation Bakeoff in 2005. This dataset is annotated from the news corpus of the People’s Daily, and adds the data annotated from the corpus of the People’s Daily in January and December 2000. Finally, the data is re-integrated and divided.

WordSeg-Weibo This dataset comes from the NLPCC 2016 (Qiu et al., 2016) evaluation task, which aims to study the Chinese word segmentation of Sina Weibo text. Different from the traditional single word segmentation evaluation method, this dataset introduces a new multi-granularity word segmentation evaluation criterion. The dataset is collected from Sina Weibo. Besides the training data, we also provide the background data, from which the training and test data are drawn.

3.1.2 Word Segmentation and POS Tagging

The task seeks to identify the boundaries between words and assign a pre-defined part-of-speech tag to each word in a given sentence.

PKU-SEGPOS PKU-SEGPOS is the part-of-speech (POS) tagging dataset provided by Peking University to tag the corpus of People’s Daily. The corpus from January 2000 and December 1-15, 2020, the corpus from December 16-23, 2000, and the corpus from December 24-31, 2000 are the training set, the validation set, and the test set, respectively.

3.1.3 Classical Poetry Matching

The task is that given a modern description of Chinese classical poetry, the model is supposed to select one from four candidate poems that semantically matches the given description most.

CCPM CCPM (Li et al., 2021) is a multiple choice dataset for Chinese classical poetry matching. This dataset comes from the Chinese classical poems and their corresponding modern Chinese translations provided on the website.

3.1.4 Named Entity Recognition

The task seeks to locate and classify named entities in unstructured text into pre-defined categories.

CMeEE CMeEE (Hongying et al., 2020) is a dataset first released in CHIP2020. Given a predefined schema, the task is to identify and extract entities from the given sentence and classify them into nine categories: disease, clinical manifestations, drugs, medical equipment, medical procedures, body, medical examinations, microorganisms, and department.

3.1.5 Entity Relation Extraction

The task is to extract semantic relations between entity pairs in given sentences.

FinRE FinRE (Li et al., 2019) is a manually labeled financial news relation extraction dataset. Given a sentence and its head and tail entities, the model needs to predict the relation between the head and tail entities. This dataset is annotated from the Sina Finance News corpus, in which the named entity is a commercial company, and the relation contains 44 financial relation categories and an NA category, including special relation categories in the financial and financial fields such as ownership, shareholding, competition, acquisition, transaction, cooperation, and shareholding.

3.2 Language Understanding: Discourse Level

The language understanding: discourse level evaluates the model’s capability to understand a given text and perform discourse-level syntactic and semantic tasks.

3.2.1 Humor Detection

The task is to recognize, classify and generate humor based on computer technology, which has important theoretical and application value.
SPR The SPR\textsuperscript{2} dataset selects “I Love My Home” as data source. According to the changes in the scene and plot, the sitcom is divided into several dialogues. In a conversation, there are different characters to communicate, resulting in continuous utterances. Utterances in the same dialogue appear in order and have a contextual relationship. Compared with single-sentence humor, the humor in dialogue may come from the context, rather than the content of the utterance itself. It is necessary to judge whether the utterance is humorous based on the context and content, and to identify the punchline in sitcoms.

3.2.2 Story Cloze Test
The task is to select the correct missing sentence to fill into a story and form a reasonable logical plot.

ClozeT The ClozeT dataset comes from children’s stories crawled from the Internet. When constructing options, crowd-sourced annotators were asked to extract a sentence from the story that can be inferred based on the context and common sense as the correct option, and rewrite it to a sentence contrary to common sense as the wrong option.

3.2.3 Reading Comprehension
This task is to answer questions about given unstructured texts.

C\textsuperscript{3} C\textsuperscript{3} (Sun et al., 2019) is the first free-form multiple-choice Chinese machine reading comprehension dataset, which is collected from test questions in Chinese as a second language. Given a Chinese natural language paragraph or dialogue content, for a natural language question about the paragraph or dialogue, the dataset gives a number of candidate natural language descriptions as the answer. According to the given content, the respondent needs to choose the one that can answer the question correctly from candidate answers.

3.3 Information Acquisition and Question Answering Capability
Information acquisition and question answering capability requires retrieving the answer for a query from given non-structured documents or structured knowledge bases.

3.3.1 Reverse Dictionary
The reverse dictionary task requires taking the description of a target word as input and outputting the target word.

WantWords WantWords (Zheng et al., 2020) uses a dictionary definition dataset as the training set. The word definitions are extracted from Modern Chinese Dictionary (6th Edition), an authoritative Chinese dictionary.

3.3.2 Open-domain Question Answering
Open-domain Question Answering is the task of answering a question based on a knowledge source.

KBQA KBQA is the dataset for the open-domain question answering shared task in NLPCC 2018, which consists of pairs of questions and answers.

3.3.3 Document Retrieval
Sogou-Log Sogou-Log consists of search logs of Sogou.com, a major Chinese commercial search engine. The sample contains 35 million search sessions with 96k distinct queries. The query log includes queries, displayed documents, user clicks, and dwell times. Each query has an average of 12 documents displayed. As the results come from a commercial search engine, the returned documents tend to be of very high quality. The primary testing queries are 1k queries sampled from head queries that appear more than 1k times in the query log. Most of the evaluation focuses on the head queries; and the dataset uses tail query performance to evaluate model robustness. The remaining queries are used for model training. The query log contains only document titles and URLs.

3.4 Language Generation Capability
The task requires generating a short text to include the important information of a given long text.

3.4.1 Text Summarization
LCSTS LCSTS (Hu et al., 2015) is a large corpus of Chinese short text summarization dataset constructed from the Chinese microblogging website Sina Weibo, which is released to the public.\textsuperscript{1} This corpus consists of over 2 million real Chinese short texts with short summaries given by the author of each text. And LCSTS also contains 10,666 short summaries with manually tagged relevance with their corresponding short texts. But we only take those examples whose relevance scores are larger than 2 as the test set.
CEPSUM  CEPSUM (Yuan et al., 2020) is a collection of product summaries on a mainstream Chinese e-commerce platform JD. The products come from two categories including Home Appliances and Bags. And the summaries are generated by thousands of qualified experts, and the auditing groups of the e-commerce platform strictly verify the quality.

3.4.2 Data-to-Text Generation
The task requires generating natural language texts from structured data.

E-Reviews  E-Reviews (Shao et al., 2019) is collected from a Chinese e-commerce platform. The dataset consists of 119k pairs of advertising text and clothing specification tables. Each table is a set of attribute-value pairs describing a piece of clothing.

3.5 Conversational Interaction Capability
The task requires generating fluent and reasonable responses to users’ posts.

3.5.1 Knowledge-driven Conversation Generation
KdConv  KdConv is a Chinese multi-domain dataset towards multi-turn knowledge-driven conversation (Zhou et al., 2020). KdConv contains 86k utterances and 4.5k dialogues in three domains, 1.5k dialogues for each domain. Each utterance is annotated with related knowledge facts in the knowledge graph, which can be used as supervision for knowledge interaction modeling. Furthermore, conversations of KdConv contain diversified topics. The relations of topics are explicitly defined in the knowledge graph. Moreover, KdConv covers three domains, including film, music, and travel, which can be used to explore knowledge adaptation between different domains.

3.6 Multilingual Capability
Multilingual capability requires handling inputs and outputs in multiple languages.

3.6.1 Machine Translation
The task requires translating a natural language text to another specified language and maintaining the semantics.

WMT20-EnZh  The dataset (Barrault et al., 2020) comes from the shared task of the workshop on machine translation in 2020. We focus on machine translation between Chinese and English. And the test set for English to Chinese is produced by translating at the paragraph level.

3.6.2 Cross-lingual Text Summarization
NCLS-EnZh  NCLS (Zhu et al., 2019) is used for the cross-lingual summarization task, which requires producing a summary in Chinese for a source document in English.

3.7 Mathematical Reasoning Capability
The capability requires inferring the answer to a math word problem.

3.7.1 Mathematical Computation
Math23k  Math23k (Wang et al., 2017) consists of 23,162 pairs of application problems and answers. The problems are written in Chinese natural language, and can be solved based on knowledge of linear algebra with only one variable.

4 Model Scoring Strategy
In terms of model scoring, we adopt a multi-level scoring and model-based normalization strategy.

Multi-level Scoring  Based on the hierarchical benchmark framework, we aggregate model scores from the bottom up. Based on the scores on the dataset level (e.g., F1 and accuracy), the score of the corresponding task can be obtained from the normalized average of dataset scores. Similarly, the capability scores are the average of task scores, and the overall CUGE score is the average of capability scores. Through this strategy, we put forward a multi-level, fine-grained evaluation of the whole capability-task-dataset framework.

Score Normalization  Existing NLP benchmarks typically calculate overall scores using the average of model scores on datasets. However, this procedure neglects characteristics of different datasets and metrics. For instance, the numerical results of BLEU (Papineni et al., 2002) are typically small as compared with F1 scores. As a result, with score averaging, the overall score can be dominated by metrics with larger scale.

To address the issue, we normalize the scores based on scores of representative standard baseline models, i.e., mT5-Small (Xue et al., 2020), so as to eliminate the influence of disturbing factors such as different metrics. Specifically, the normalized score on dataset is given by \( p/b \), where \( p \) and \( b \) are dataset performance of model under evaluation and
Table 2: Performance of representative pre-trained language models on lite version of CUGE (%). In addition to the raw performance, we also report the performance normalized by mT5-small (in parentheses), based on which the overall CUGE Index is calculated. NLU-WSL: language understanding: word-sentence level, NLU-DL: language understanding: discourse level, IA&QA: information acquisition and question answering, NLG: language generation, CI: conversational interaction, ML: multilingualism, and MR: mathematical reasoning.

| Capability | Task | Dataset |
|------------|------|---------|
| NLU-WSL    | Classical Poetry Matching | CCPM |
| NLU-DL     | Reading Comprehension       | C³   |
| IA&QA      | Document Retrieval          | Sogou-Log |
| NLG        | Text Summarization          | LCSTS |
| CI         | Conversation Generation     | KdConv |
| ML         | Machine Translation         | WMT20-EnZh |
| MR         | Mathematical Computation    | Math23K |

Table 3: Lite version of CUGE. Each capability is instantiated with the most representative task and dataset. NLU-WSL: language understanding: word-sentence level, NLU-DL: language understanding: discourse level, IA&QA: information acquisition and question answering, NLG: language generation, CI: conversational interaction, ML: multilingualism, and MR: mathematical reasoning.

5 Using CUGE

To facilitate CUGE, we build a public online evaluation platform. Participants can view the benchmark framework and leaderboard, download datasets, and participate in the evaluation by submitting prediction files. Specifically, CUGE platform enjoys the following notable features:

Customizable Leaderboard CUGE characterizes datasets with multi-dimensional labels, such as language capability and task. Users can customize the leaderboard by selecting the labels, supporting flexible model judging criteria. Besides, CUGE also recommends a standard lite leaderboard, as shown in Table 3. Specifically, for each language capability, we first select the most representative task and the most representative dataset of this task, and then combine the resulting datasets to build the lite leaderboard, which enables convenient and rapid evaluation on GUGE.

Academic Integrity Encouragement As a standard evaluation benchmark, CUGE highly values academic integrity of evaluation participants. Therefore, participants are required to check the honor code before submissions, which forbids usage of human labels on the CUGE test set in any form. Participants are also encouraged to release technique reports and codes on the leaderboard.

Interactivity In the future, CUGE will provide official forums for users to encourage discussion on: (1) Submissions on leaderboard, which helps better understanding of submissions and supports supervision for academic integrity; (2) Datasets in CUGE, which helps the adjustment of CUGE datasets.

6 Experiments

In this section, we present experimental results of representative baseline models on CUGE.

6.1 Experimental Setup

In our experiments, we select mT5-Small (Xue et al., 2020), a representative pre-trained language model with 300M parameters as our standard baseline model to normalize the performance of models under evaluation. mT5 adopts an encoder-decoder structure, and is capable of both language understanding and generation, making it a good standard baseline model for CUGE. Based on the normalization of mT5-Small, we evaluate mT5-Large (1.2B), mT5-XXL (13B), and CPM-2 (11B) (Zhang et al., 2021) on the lite version of CUGE.

6.2 Results

We report the experimental results in Table 2 and visualize the normalized capability performance in Figure 2, from which we have the following observations: (1) mT5-XXL significantly outperforms mT5-Large and mT5-small, showing that increased
number of parameters can lead to better performance in different language capabilities. (2) With smaller model size, CPM-2 outperforms mT5-XXL, which shows that improved pre-training procedure can produce stronger language capabilities of pre-trained language models. (3) However, the performance improvement over different language capabilities is highly imbalanced. For example, the improvement of language generation capability is substantially smaller than multilingual capability. Such overall evaluation and investigation of language capabilities cannot be achieved in existing benchmarks. The results show the necessity of constructing a comprehensive and systematic evaluation benchmark to better evaluate and guide general-purpose language intelligence research.

7 Conclusion and Future Work

In this work, we present CUGE, a Chinese language understanding and generation evaluation benchmark. CUGE features capability-task-dataset hierarchical framework and multi-level scoring strategy. To facilitate CUGE, we build a public online evaluation platform that supports customizable leaderboard. Experimental results on representative pre-trained language models indicate ample room for improvement towards general-purpose language intelligence.

Note that CUGE and its platform are still in progress. The current version of CUGE mainly adopts existing datasets for model evaluation, and the platform only implements part of the ultimate design. In the future, we plan to (1) continually build high-quality datasets tailored for the evaluation objective of CUGE, (2) conduct more detailed dataset quality evaluation, and (3) fully implement the design of CUGE platform.

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A Contributions

Yuan Yao, Qingxiu Dong, Jian Guan and Boxi Cao designed the benchmark and wrote the paper.

Yuan Yao, Chengqiang Xu, Huadong Wang and Guoyang Zeng led the platform design and implementation.

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