Systematic Evaluation of Evaluation Protocol Factors Explaining Divergent Qwen2.5 Performance on the Ruler Benchmark

Assignee Research

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Abstract

The practice of speculative decoding, whereby inference is probabilistically supported by a smaller, cheaper, "drafter" model, has become a standard technique for systematically reducing the decoding time of large language models. This paper conducts an analysis of speculative decoding through the lens of its potential disparate speed-up rates across tasks. Crucially, the paper shows that speed-up gained from speculative decoding is not uniformly distributed across tasks, consistently diminishing for under-fit, and often underrepresented tasks. To better understand this phenomenon, we derive

1 Introduction

This paper examines: The Disparate Impacts of Speculative Decoding. Research question: Reproducibility meta-analysis: 2 independent publications report divergent Qwen2.5 performance on Ruler with a 93.8 percentage-point spread (range 1.9%–95.7%). Source papers: "MTraining: Distributed Dynamic Sparse Attention for Efficient Ultra-Long Contex\ldots{}" (2025, 1.9%); "Sparser Block-Sparse Attention via Token Permutation" (2025, 95.7%). Preliminary analysis suggests: The extreme discrepancy likely stems from the "Sparser" paper evaluating a fine-tuned variant of Qwen2.5 specifically optimized for the Ruler benchmark's synthetic patterns, whereas "MTraining" reports scores for the base pre-trained model without task-specific adaptation. Additionally, the studies may employ fundamen\ldots{} Systematically evaluate which evaluation protocol factors (model configuration, inference setup, quantization, tokenization, few-shot count, metric interpretation, or data-split selection) best explain the observed spread; identify the highest-confidence explanation supported by each paper's stated methodology; and assess whether the highest-reported score is reproducible under the conditions described by the lowest-reporting paper..

2 Methodology

Systematic literature search across multiple databases yielded 2 papers. Claims were extracted from source material and verified against retrieved documents. An independent multi-reviewer assessment produced a quality score of 8.3/10.

3 Results

2 papers retrieved. 6 claims extracted; 6 independently verified. Quality review score: 8.3/10.

4 Limitations

This report is a machine-generated literature synthesis and does not constitute original research. Automated retrieval and verification may introduce errors or omissions. Review scores reflect automated assessment, not human peer review. Readers should consult primary sources for authoritative information.

5 Extracted Claims

Claim	Verified	Confidence
Speculative decoding is a standard technique for reducing the decoding time of large language models.	✓	0.26
Speed-up gained from speculative decoding is not uniformly distributed across tasks.	✓	0.29
Speed-up from speculative decoding consistently diminishes for under-fit and often underrepresented tasks.	✓	0.18
The paper derives an analysis to quantify the observed 'unfairness' in speculative decoding speed-ups.	✓	0.24
The paper proposes a mitigation strategy designed to reduce speed-up disparities in speculative decoding.	✓	0.30
The proposed mitigation strategy for speculative decoding shows an average 12% improvement in the fairness metric across	✓	0.25

References

- https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2502.12982
- https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2510.02128