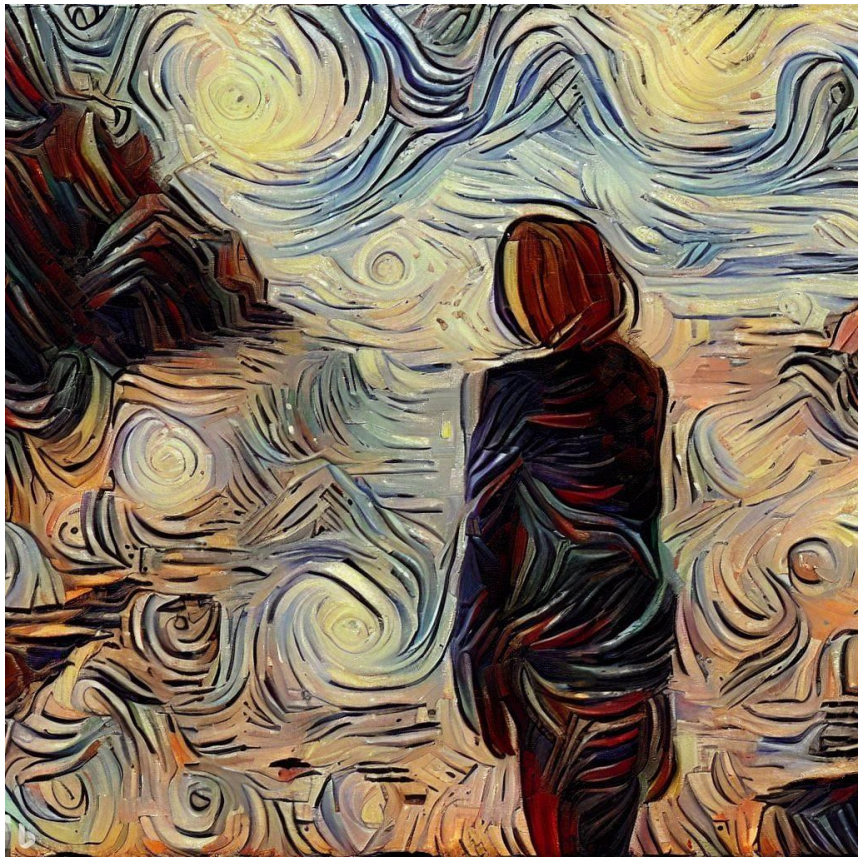
Lost In Translation

The Difficulty of Evaluating Image Captioning



Hamid Palangi

New Frontiers for Zero-Shot Image Captioning @CVPR2023
June 18, 2023, Vancouver, Canada

Image generated by Microsoft Bing Image Creator with prompt ‘ "Lost In Translation: The Difficulty of Evaluating Image Captioning" in the style of Van Gogh ’ on June 15, 2023

What I want to achieve in this session?

- **To convince you that Image Captioning Evaluation is Difficult**

- To discuss Possible Ways Forward

- [if time permits] To show relevant problems in text to image generation
  - How good Text-to-Image models are in terms of simple spatial relationships? https://github.com/microsoft/VISOR

What do you see in this image?

Image from https://www.archdaily.com/242040/films-architecture-lost-in-translation

What do you see in this image?

A group of men standing in a room

Image from https://www.archdaily.com/242040/films-architecture-lost-in-translation
Caption generated by powerpoint alt text feature on June 16, 2023

How about this one?

Image from https://the-artifice.com/lost-in-translation/

How about this one?

A group of people standing in a room

Image from https://the-artifice.com/lost-in-translation/
Caption generated by powerpoint alt text feature on June 16, 2023

Microsoft COCO Image Captioning Challenge

Organized by tl483 - Current server time: June 17, 2023, 2:05 a.m. UTC

▶ Current

Challenge

March 15, 2015, midnight UTC

End

Competition Ends

Never

Learn the Details | Phases | Participate | Results | Forums

Challenge

Phase description

None

Max submissions per day: 1

Max submissions total: 5

Download CSV

Results

#	User	Entries	Date of Last Entry	BLEU-1		BLEU-2		BLEU-3		BLEU-4		METEOR		ROUGE-L		CIDEr-D	
				c5 ▲	c40 ▲	c5 ▲	c40 ▲	c5 ▲	c40 ▲	c5 ▲	c40 ▲	c5 ▲	c40 ▲	c5 ▲	c40 ▲	c5 ▲	c40 ▲
1	MS_Cog_Svcs-GIT2-Single_Model	1	08/22/22	0.843 (2)	0.981 (1)	0.700 (2)	0.944 (1)	0.557 (2)	0.876 (2)	0.432 (3)	0.783 (3)	0.319 (2)	0.421 (2)	0.620 (2)	0.784 (3)	1.464 (2)	1.498 (1)
2	OFA-Sys_OFA	4	05/31/22	0.845 (1)	0.981 (2)	0.701 (1)	0.944 (2)	0.559 (1)	0.878 (1)	0.436 (1)	0.787 (1)	0.321 (1)	0.427 (1)	0.625 (1)	0.790 (1)	1.472 (1)	1.496 (2)
3	MS_Cog_Svcs-GIT-Single_Model	3	05/30/22	0.840 (5)	0.979 (3)	0.698 (3)	0.944 (3)	0.556 (3)	0.876 (3)	0.432 (2)	0.783 (2)	0.319 (3)	0.420 (3)	0.620 (3)	0.784 (2)	1.455 (3)	1.488 (3)

Spaces: OFA-Sys / OFA-Image_Caption | like 135 | Running | App | Files | Community 6

OFA-Image_Caption

Gradio Demo for OFA-Image_Caption. Upload your own image or click any one of the examples, and click “Submit” and then wait for the generated caption.

Image

Caption

a group of men in a room posing for a picture

Clear | Submit

Spaces: OFA-Sys / OFA-Image_Caption | like 135 | Running | App | Files | Community 6

OFA-Image_Caption

Gradio Demo for OFA-Image_Caption. Upload your own image or click any one of the examples, and click “Submit” and then wait for the generated caption.

Image

Caption

a group of people standing in a room

Clear | Submit

Image Captioning Evaluation is Difficult

- Three important sources of difficulty:

1. **Metrics**: How helpful are evaluation metrics for the usage goal?
2. **Data**: Is the data a good representative of real world and/or target usage?
3. **Models**: How much of the issues from different model components (e.g., object detector, tagger, etc) propagates in the output? Can model architectures game the metrics?

Image Captioning Evaluation is Difficult

- BLEU, METEOR, ROUGE and CIDEr are doing evaluation based on n-grams focusing on lexical similarities
- SPICE uses scene graph of the image and runs dependency parser on the caption
- BERTScore and similar model based metrics use pretrained models to measure semantic similarity between reference captions (5 in the case of COCO) and generated caption
- …

Image Captioning Evaluation is Difficult

- **Commonsense and Context Understanding** in the generated captions is complex and challenging to measure
- Evaluations are usually **Subjective** given the creativity of the task
- **Coverage** is an important factor, e.g., are the 5 reference captions in COCO covering all the aspects of the image?
- Measuring **Visual Grounding** is challenging when aspects beyond object name grounding in the generated captions are considered
- In object/attribute/relationship detection there are ground truth labels, in image captioning (and text generation in general) there is **No Gold Label**.

Image Captioning Evaluation is Difficult

- Captions are **Challenging to Interpret**, e.g., out of all the objects/attributes/relations detected by a given detector, why the language model did or did not select specific set of them as salient to include in the caption?
- **User Studies** are essential but time consuming, how to address different aspects of this problem?
- Evaluation metrics should cover **Different Languages** and various aspects of each language.
- Metrics that account for various **Deployment Constraints**, what are different inference time shipping thresholds for image captioning systems in practice?

Image Captioning Evaluation is Difficult

- How to measure **Creativity vs Factuality**?
- How to evaluate **Rare and Out Of Distribution (OOD)** scenarios? Their importance is not reflected in the aggregate metrics.
- How to evaluate **Robustness to Real World Perturbations**? E.g., does a JPEG compression and decompression have a huge impact on the performance?
- How to **Incorporate User Feedback** in the metrics and evaluation process?
- Do current metrics account for **Interactive and Dialogue Scenarios**? Is it trivial to extend them to measure quality of an image grounded conversation?

Image Captioning Evaluation is Difficult

- Difficulty of creating metrics to measure **Fairness-Related Harms**:

1. Generated captions reflect the most salient aspect of the image, which is by nature a subjective choice: the system might show differential treatment toward various social groups.

2. Generated attributes and verbs for specific objects might be systematically assigned to specific social groups but not others.

3. The issues mentioned in (1) and (2) above might be caused by the object detector, tagger, language model, or the complex interactions among them. What are good metrics to disentangle them?

4. Would the language model erase objects and tags related to specific groups of people?

From Wang, Barocas, et al 2022

What I want to achieve in this session?

- To convince you that Image Captioning Evaluation is Difficult

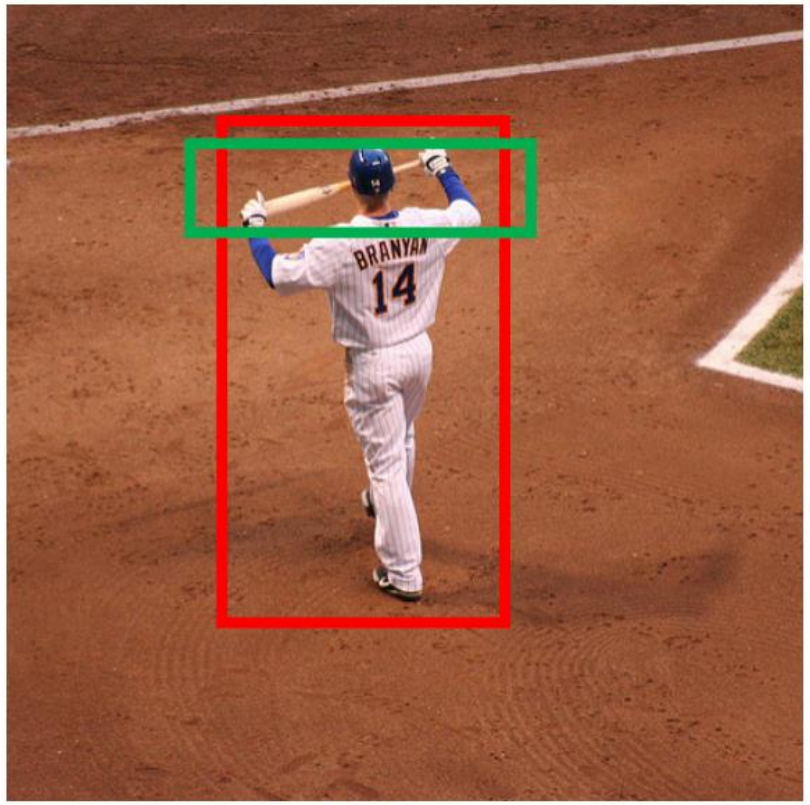
- **To discuss A Few Possible Ways Forward**

- [if time permits] To show relevant problems in text to image generation
  - How good Text-to-Image models are in terms of simple spatial relationships? https://github.com/microsoft/VISOR

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Enforcing the desired characteristics explicitly, e.g., **Relations**

a baseball player swinging a bat

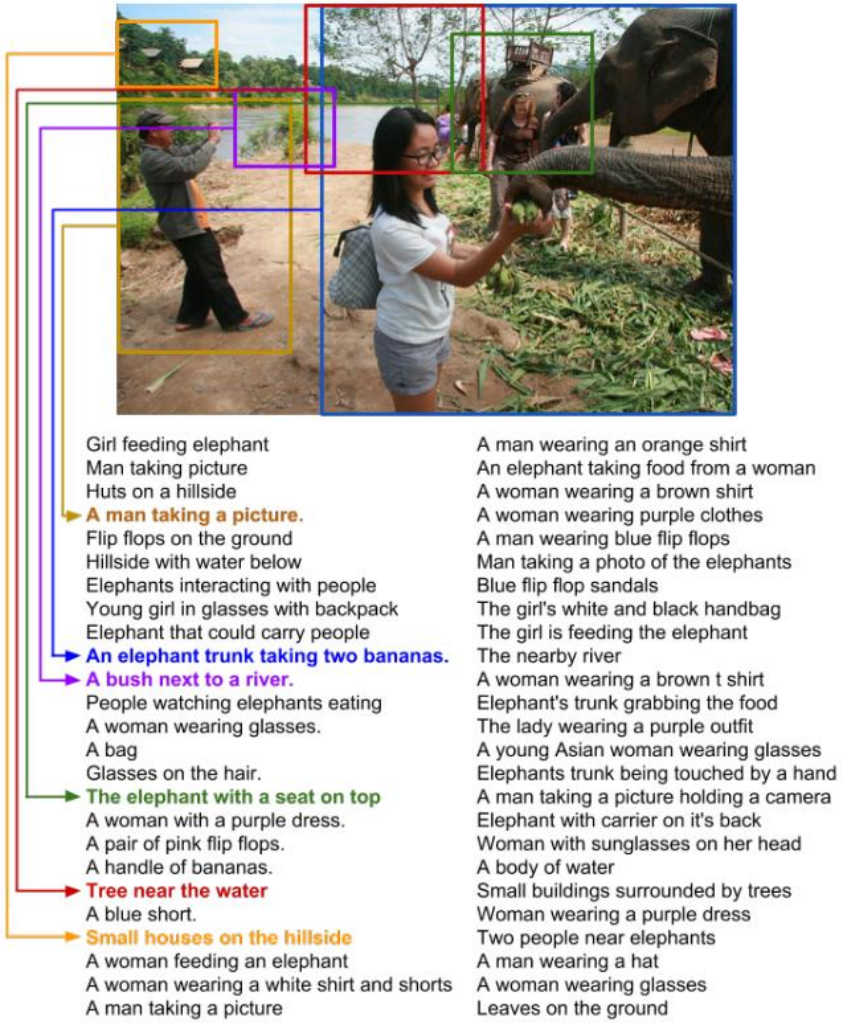


a baseball player holding a bat

Figures from https://arxiv.org/pdf/1909.09953.pdf

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Enforcing the desired characteristics explicitly, e.g., **Relations**



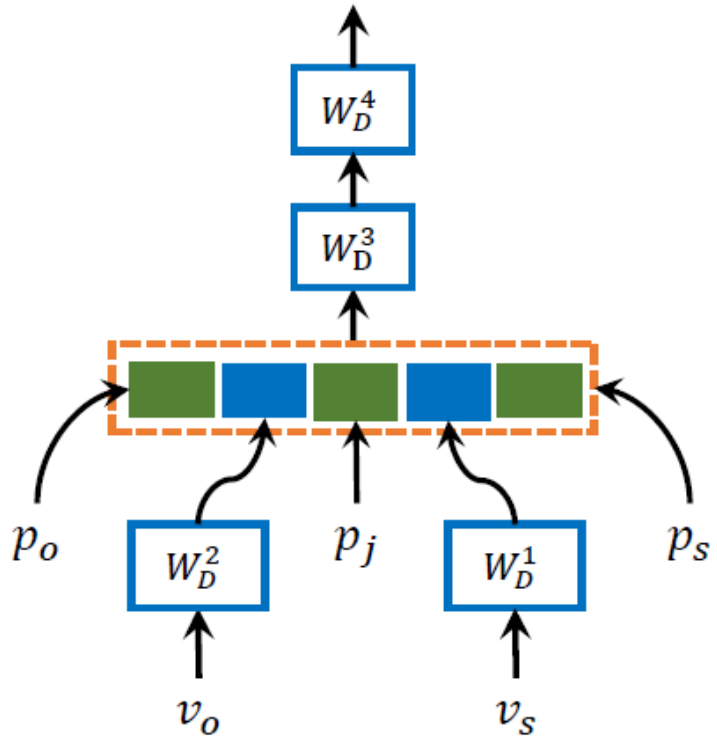
Type	Examples	Classes	Instances
	Entities		
Part	arm, tail, wheel	32	200k (25.2%)
Artifact	basket, fork, towel	34	126k (16.0%)
Person	boy, kid, woman	13	113k (14.3%)
Clothes	cap, jean, sneaker	16	91k (11.5%)
Vehicle	airplane, bike, truck,	12	44k (5.6%)
Flora	flower, plant, tree	3	44k (5.5%)
Location	beach, room, sidewalk	11	39k (4.9%)
Furniture	bed, desk, table	9	37k (4.7%)
Animal	bear, giraffe, zebra	11	30k (3.8%)
Structure	fence, post, sign	3	30k (3.8%)
Building	building, house	2	24k (3.1%)
Food	banana, orange, pizza	6	13k (1.6%)
	Relations		
Geometric	above, behind, under	15	228k (50.0%)
Possessive	has, part of, wearing	8	186k (40.9%)
Semantic	carrying, eating, using	24	39k (8.7%)
Misc	for, from, made of	3	2k (0.3%)

Table 1. Object and relation types in Visual Genome, organized by super-type. Most, 25.2% of entities are parts and 90.9% of relations are geometric or possessive.

Figures from https://arxiv.org/pdf/1711.06640.pdf & https://visualgenome.org/static/paper/Visual_Genome.pdf

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Enforcing the desired characteristics explicitly, e.g., **Relations**
  - Discarding relationships classified with high confidence using a simple prior network.
  - From top 1600 objects and 500 relations in VG
    - Showing each predicate by Glove, run clustering to remove duplicates, e.g., “wears” and “is wearing a” ➔ 180 rels
    - Running prior network, removing relations that can be predicated with > 50% accuracy ➔ 117 rels
    - 58,983 images



Figures from https://arxiv.org/abs/1902.00313

A Few Possible Ways Forward

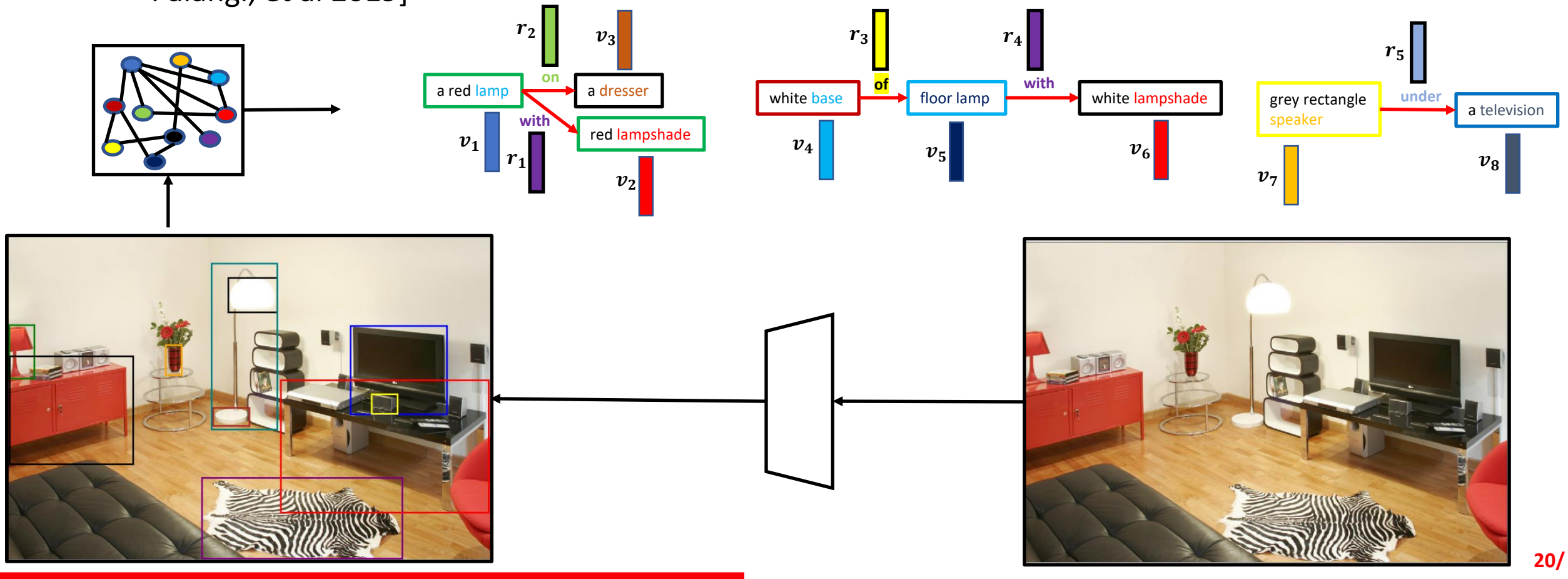
- Enforcing the desired characteristics explicitly, e.g., **Relations**

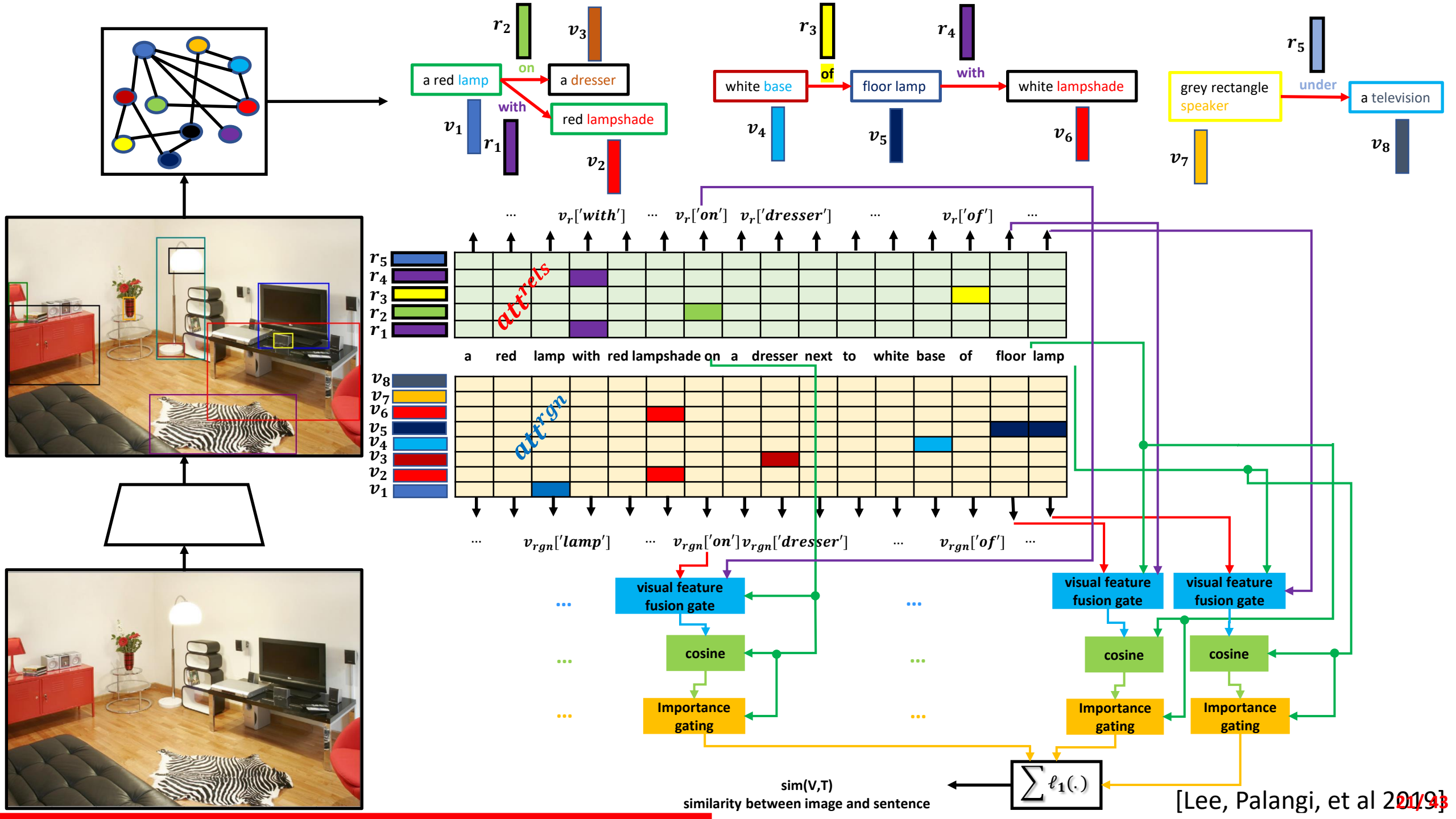
Metrics	SGDet	SGCls	PredCls	Metrics	SGDet	SGCls	PredCls
R50	27.2	35.8	65.2	R50	14.8	16.5	46.7
R100	30.3	36.5	67.1	R100	17.4	19.2	52.5

Figures from https://arxiv.org/abs/1902.00313

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Enforcing the desired characteristics explicitly, e.g., **Relations** [Lee, Palangi, et al 2019]





[Lee, Palangi, et al 2019]

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Enforcing the desired characteristics explicitly, e.g., **Relations** [Lee, Palangi, et al 2019]

Baseline: a man standing on the side of a road
New: a man repairing a traffic light at an intersection

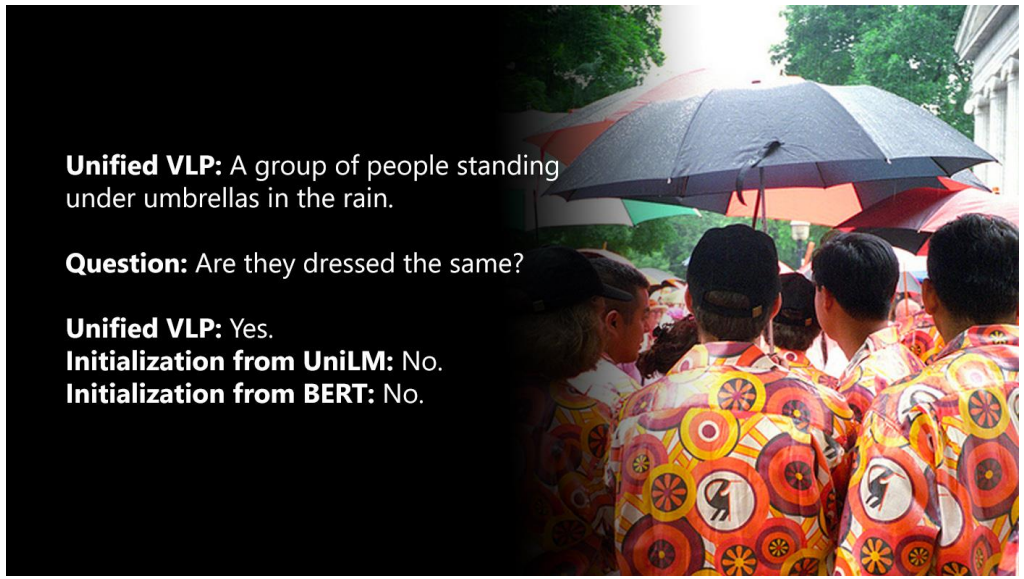
Baseline: a woman standing on a sidewalk talking on a cell phone
New: a woman standing on a sidewalk looking at her cell phone

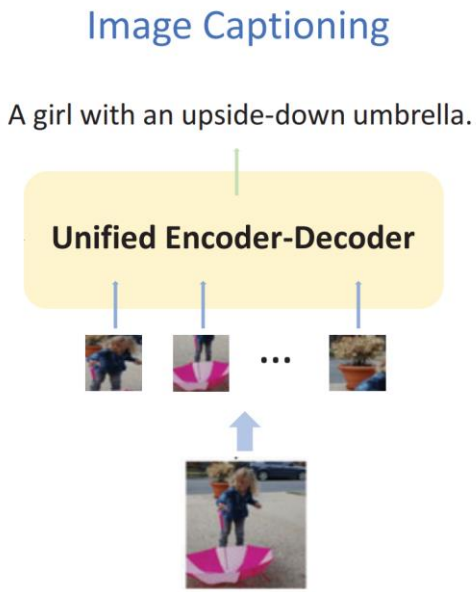
Baseline: a man holding a nintendo wii game controller
New: a man sitting on a couch holding a wii remote

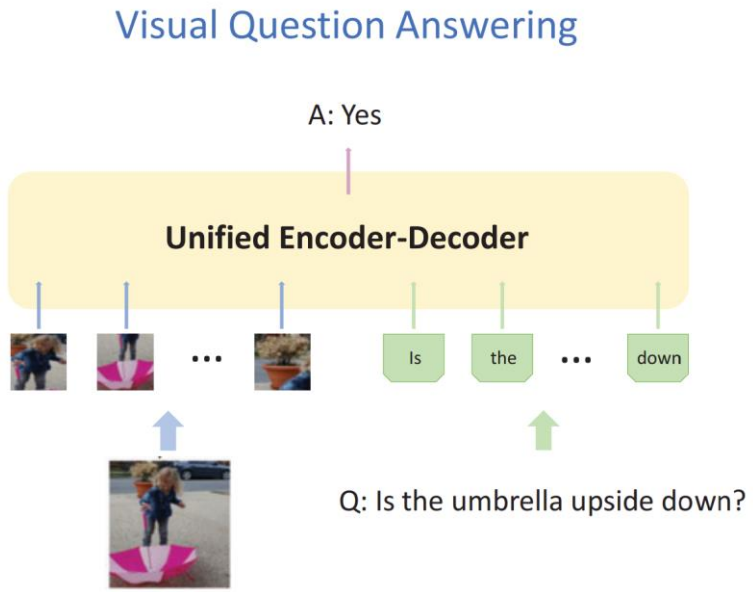
Figures from https://arxiv.org/pdf/1909.09953.pdf

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Having a unified architecture where different tasks help each other, e.g., **VQA helping Image Captioning** [Zhou, Palangi, et al 2020]







Figures from https://ojs.aaai.org/index.php/AAAI/article/view/7005

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Collecting data that reflects a specific failure case, e.g., **NICE dataset** including about 2 million images and corresponding text that reflects qualities like empathy and emotion [Chen, Huang, et al 2021]

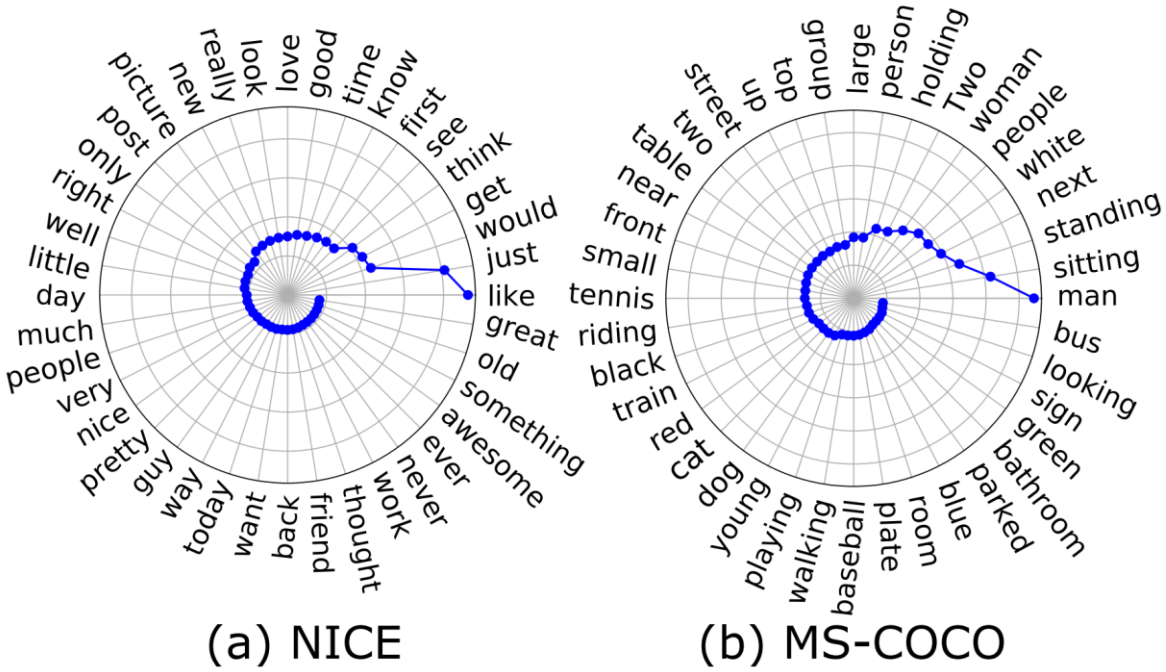


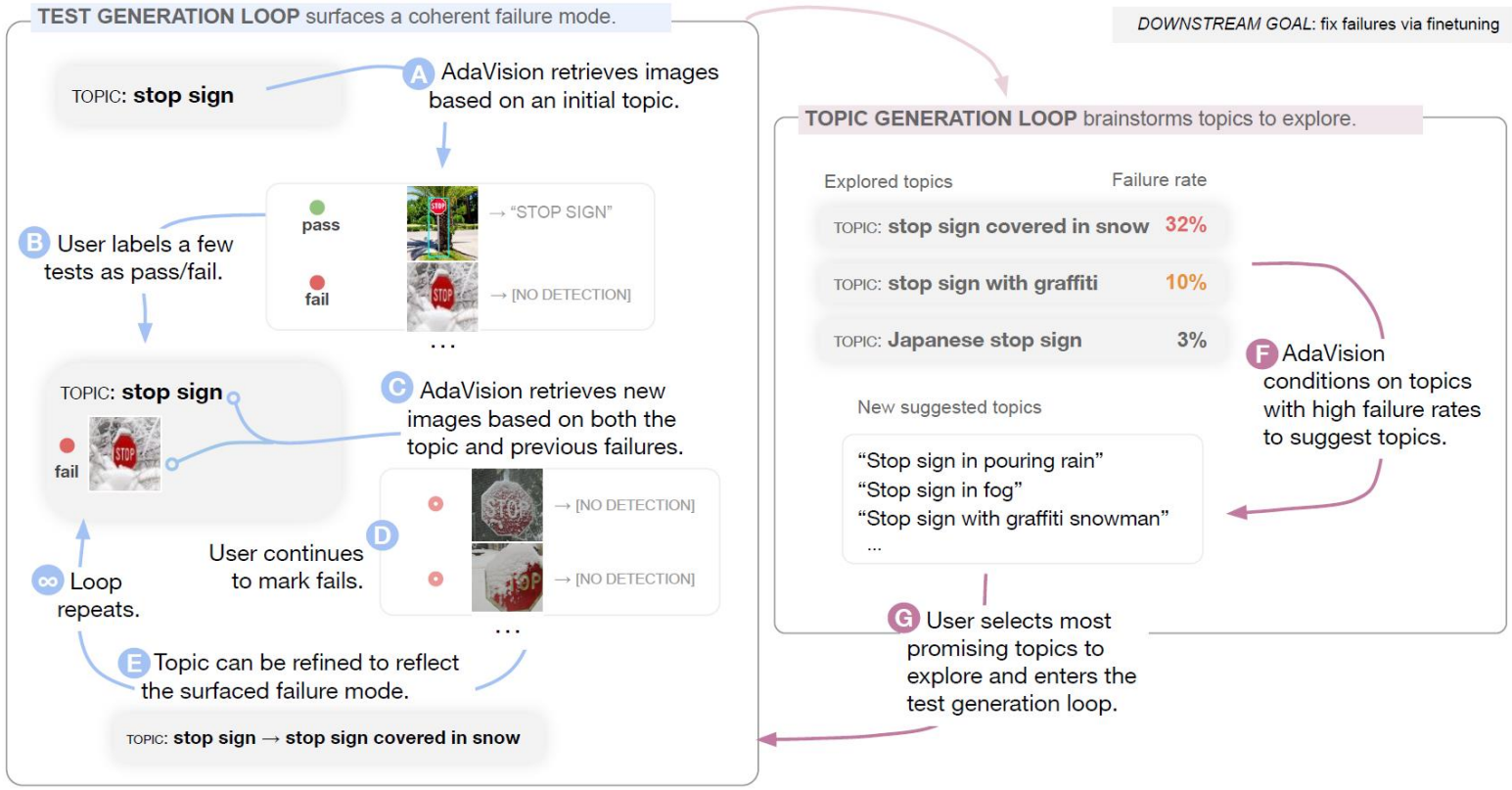
Image Captioning:
Some houses are on the foot of mountains.

Image Commenting:
Comment 1: Gorgeous!
Comment 2: Where it is?
Comment 3: I don't know.
Comment 4: The scenery here is so beautiful.
Comment 5: I really want to go there.

Figures from https://aclanthology.org/2021.findings-emnlp.380/

A Few Possible Ways Forward

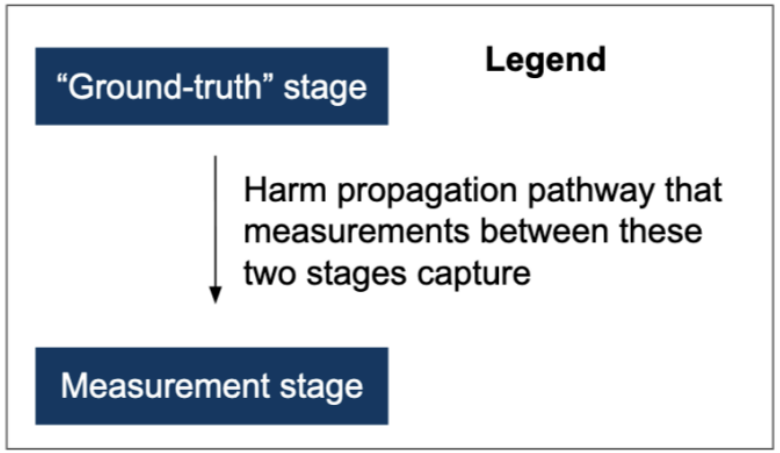
- Collecting data that reflects a specific failure case, e.g., **AdaVision** that is a human in the loop tool for data collection [Gao, Ilharco, et al 2022]

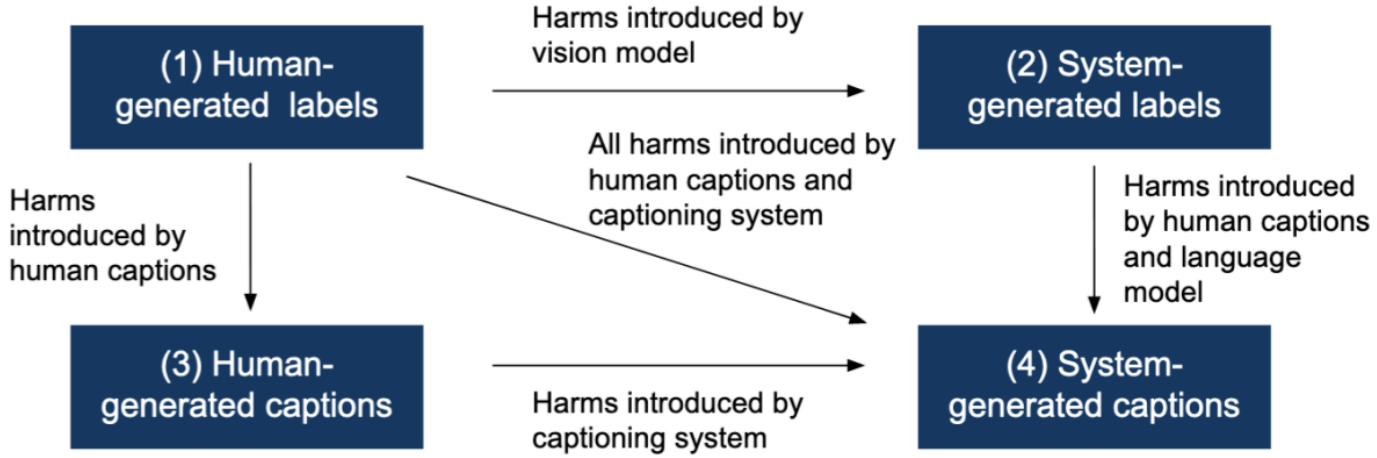


Figures from https://arxiv.org/abs/2212.02774

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Collecting data that reflects a specific failure case, e.g., measuring specific **Representational Harms** [Wang, Barocas, et al 2022]
  - *Stereotyping*: which occurs when oversimplified beliefs about social groups reproduce harmful social hierarchies
  - *Demeaning*: which occurs when social groups are cast as being lower status and less deserving of respect

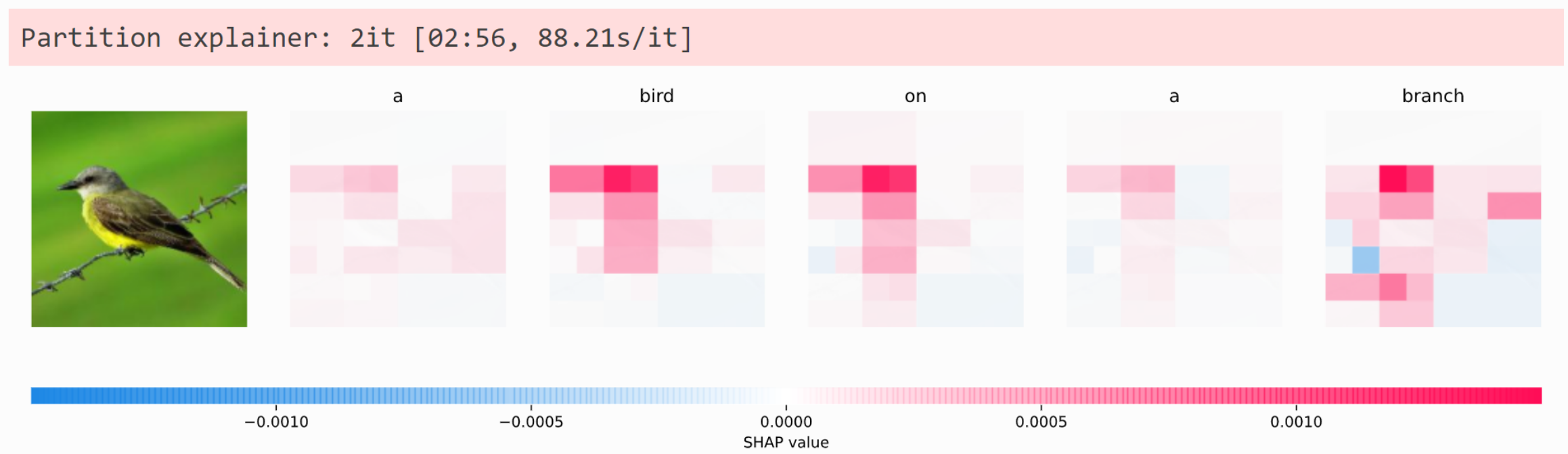




Figures from https://arxiv.org/abs/2206.07173

A Few Possible Ways Forward

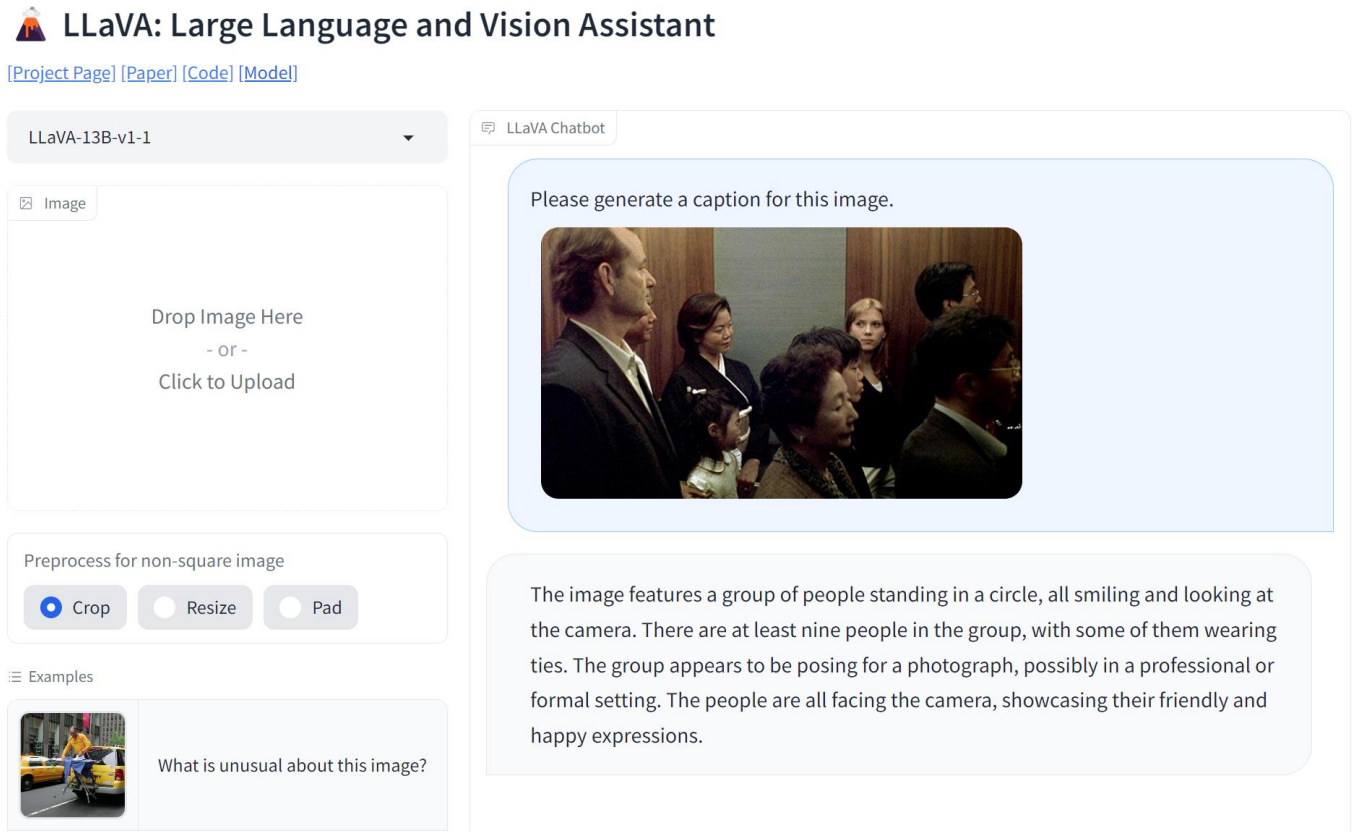
- Collecting data that reflects a specific failure case, e.g., using **explainability methods like SHAP** to interpret the captions w.r.t the input image [Lundberg, Lee, 2017]



Figures from https://shap.readthedocs.io/en/latest/example_notebooks/image_examples/image_captioning/Image%20Captioning%20using%20Azure%20Cognitive%20Services.html

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Leveraging the recent large scale language models and perform instruction tuning, e.g., using **LLaVA** to interact about the input image [Liu, Li, et al 2023]



Figures from https://llava.hliu.cc/

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Let's take a closer look at **LLaVA** [Liu, Li, et al 2023]

- The red boxes show a combination of errors caused by the vision components (e.g., most of the people are not smiling or looking at the camera) and **Hallucination** caused by the LLM.
- The model still totally loses the point about only two people looking at each other in the group.

Figures from https://llava.hliu.cc/

A Few Possible Ways Forward

- Let's take a closer look at **LLaVA** [Liu, Li, et al 2023]
- One more round to show case the **Hallucination**.

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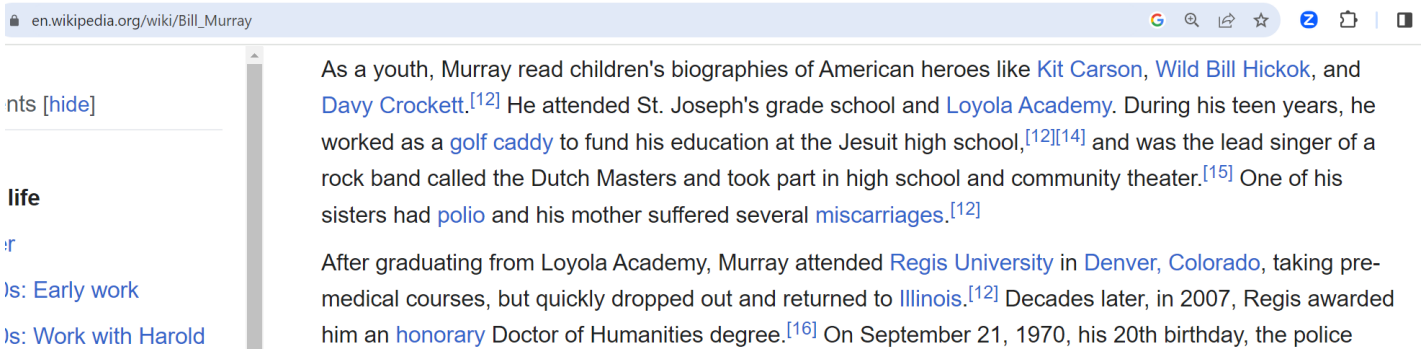

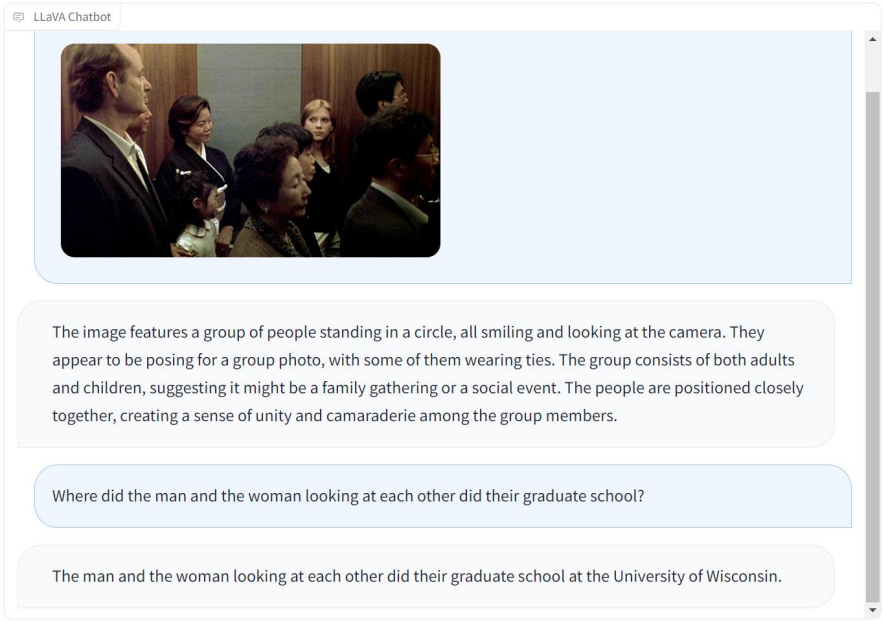

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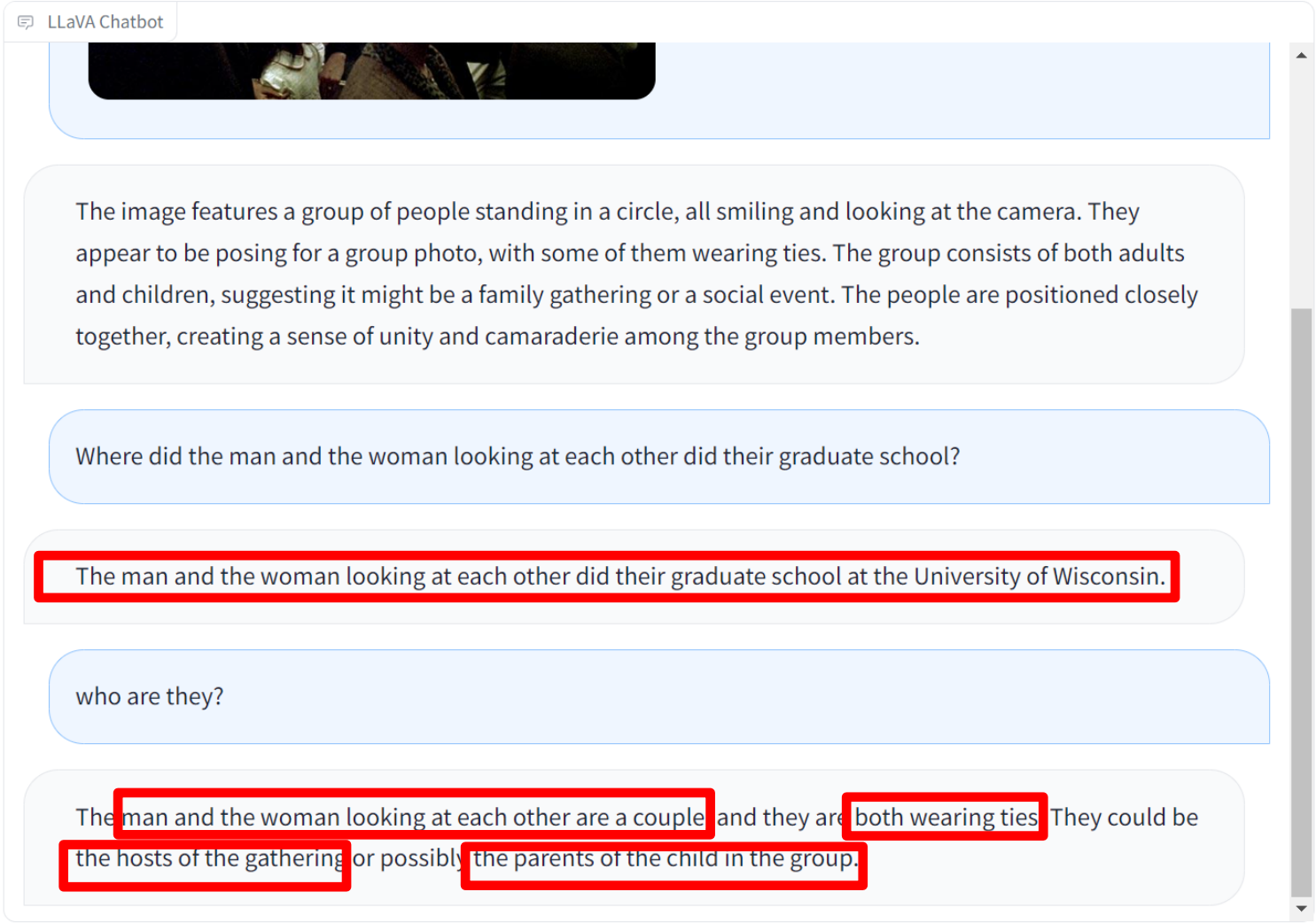

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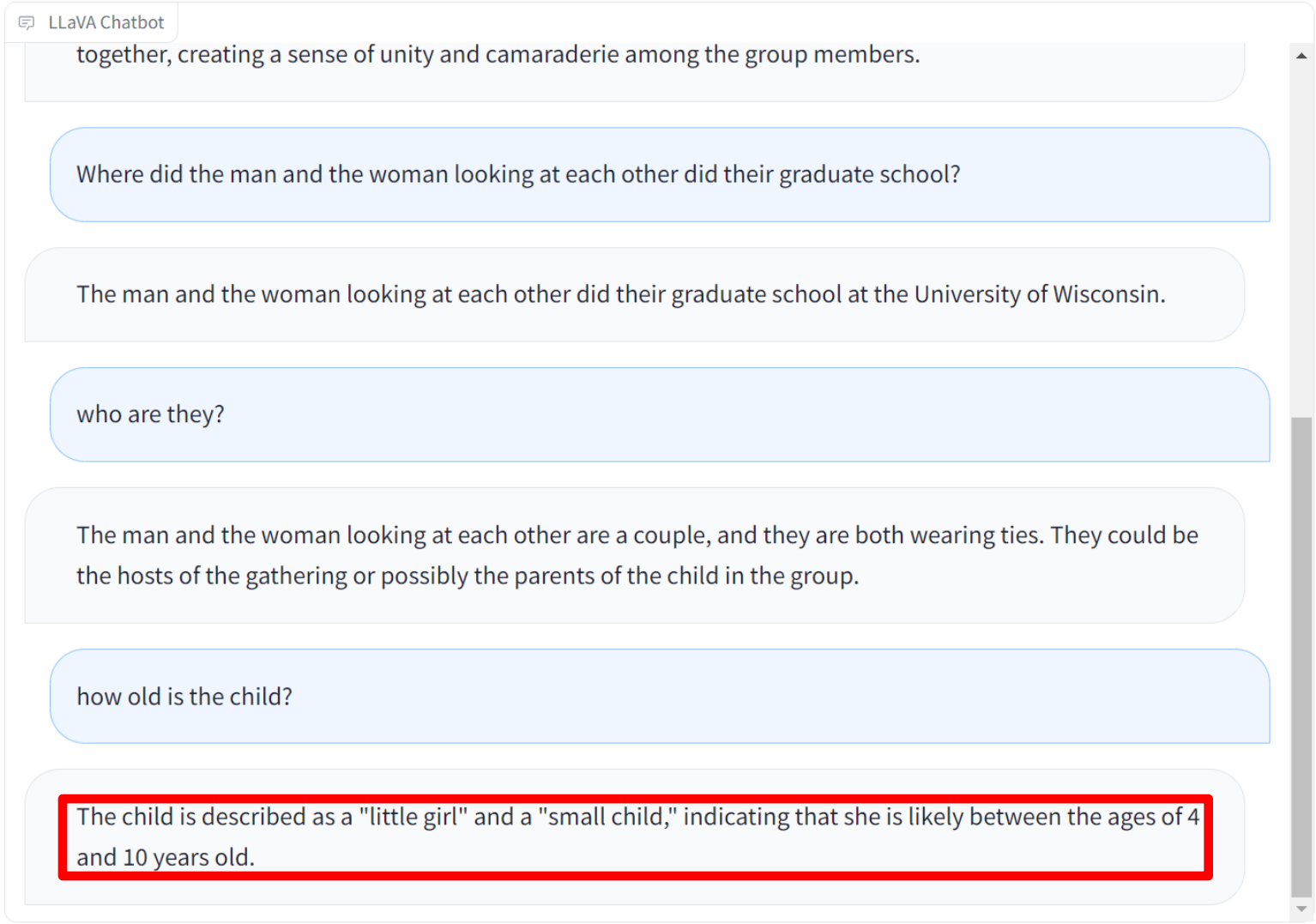

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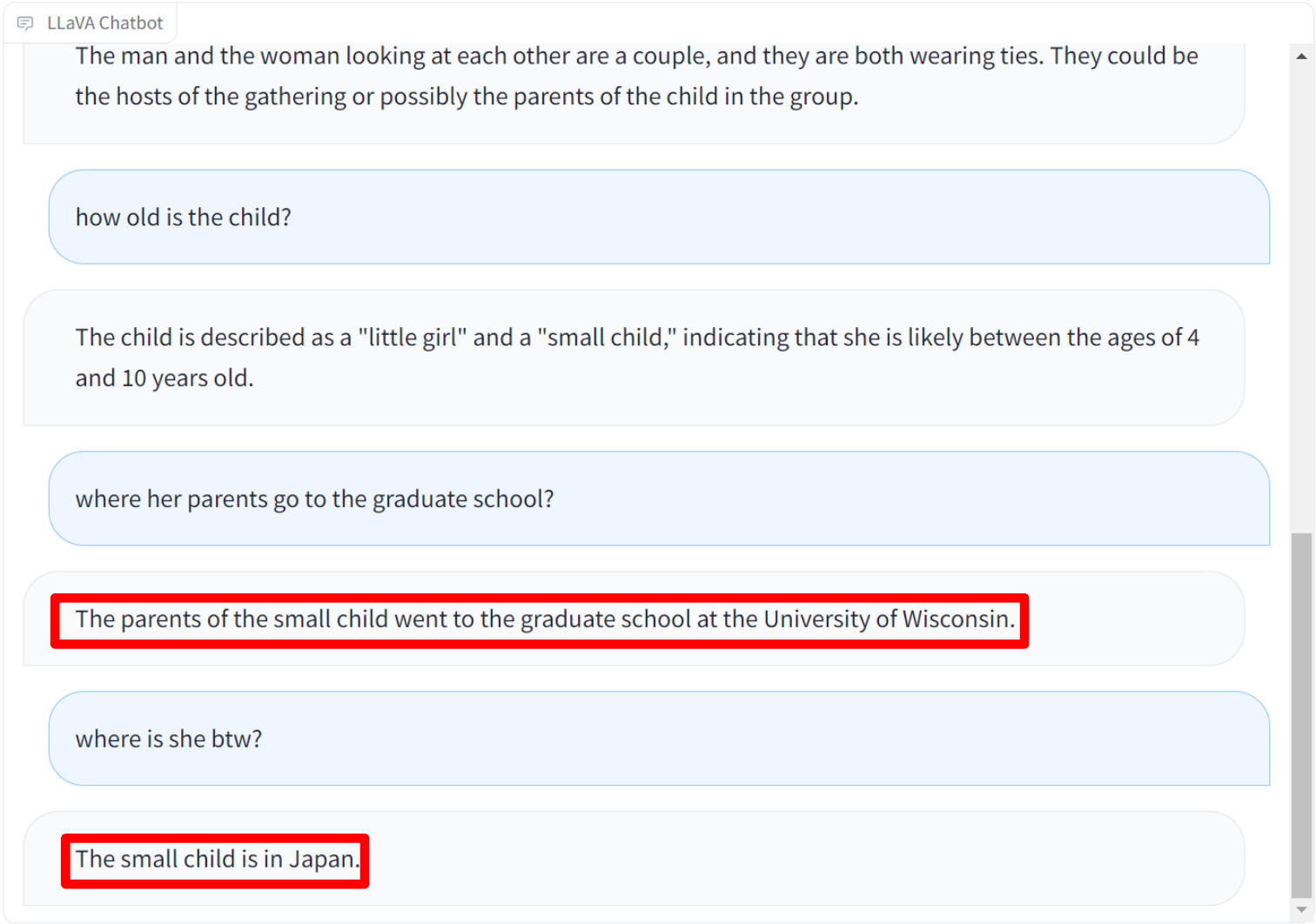

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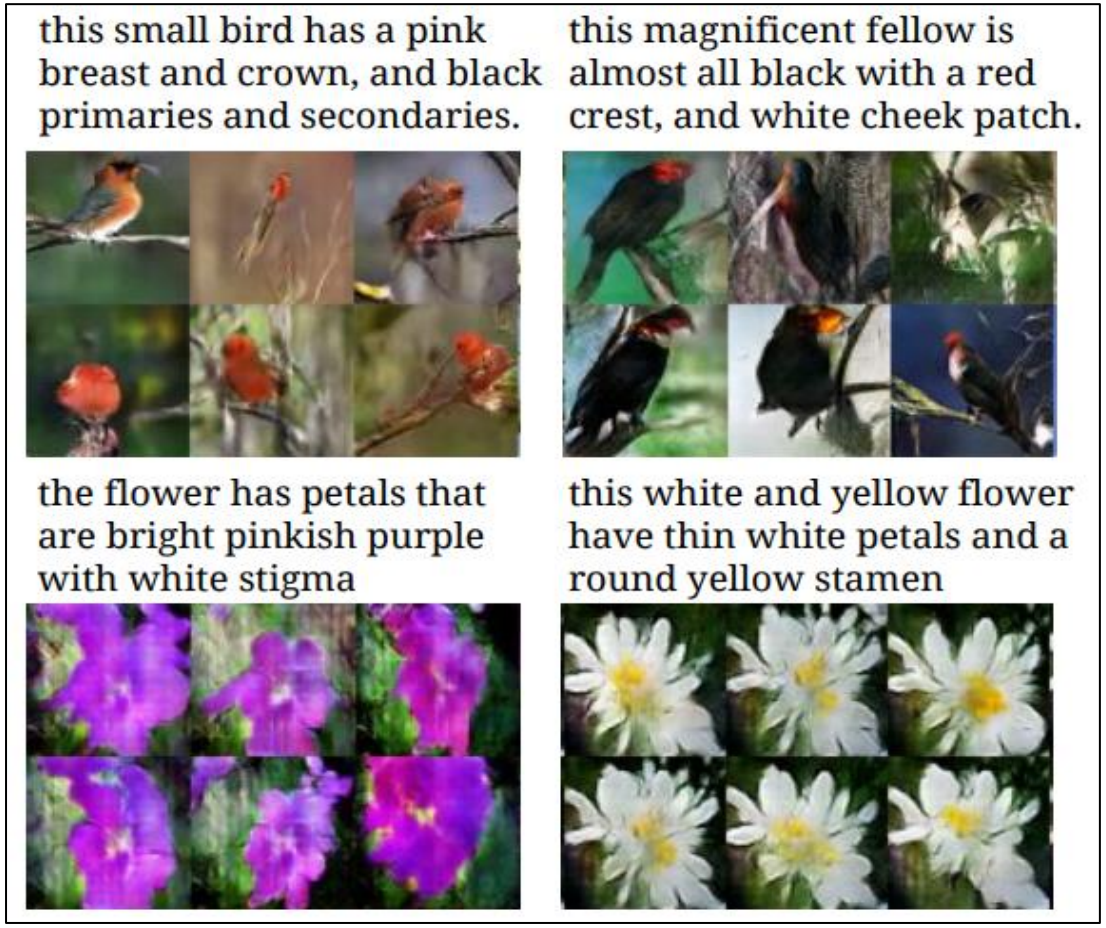
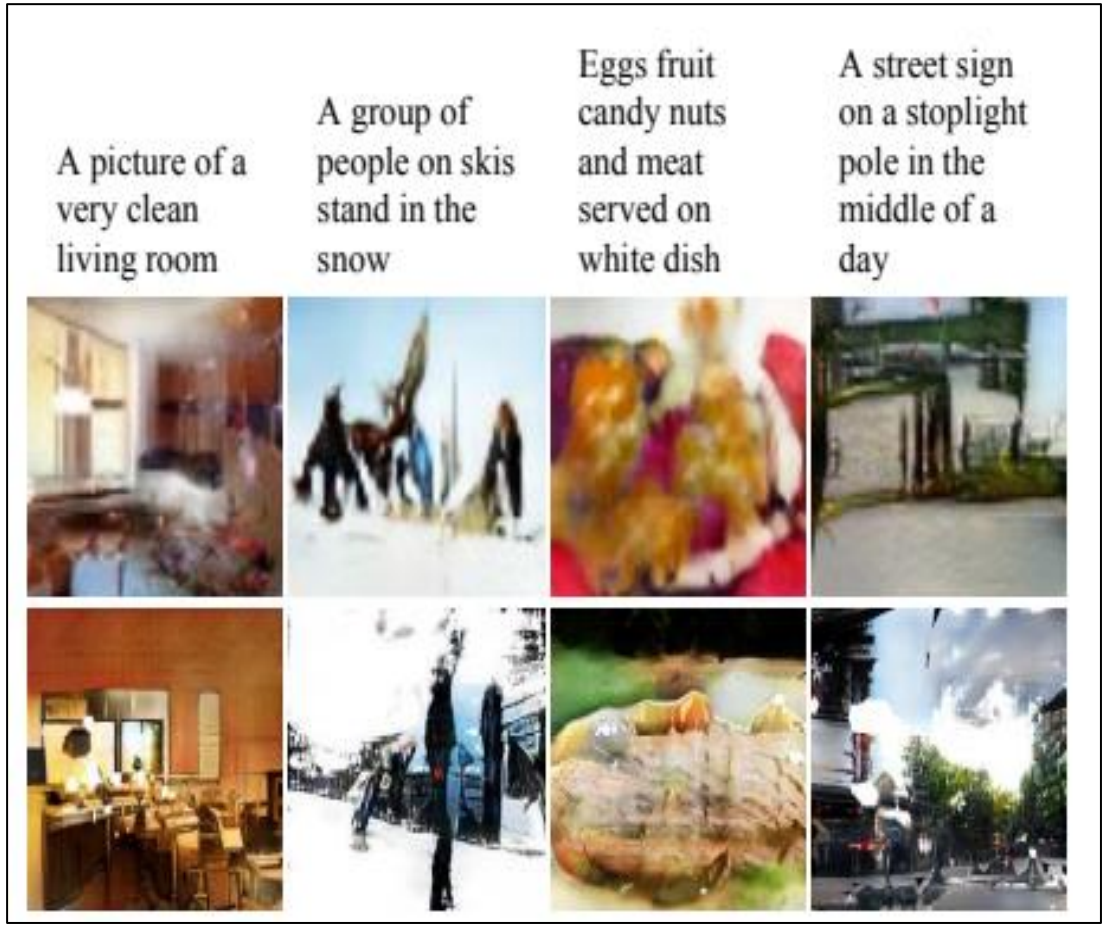
Text-to-Image (T2I) Models: Transforming Words into Images

2016



"GAN_INT_CLS" Reed et al. ICML 2016 https://arxiv.org/abs/1605.05396



"StackGAN" Zhang et al. ICCV 2017 https://arxiv.org/abs/1612.03242

Text-to-Image (T2I) Models: Transforming Words into Images

2022

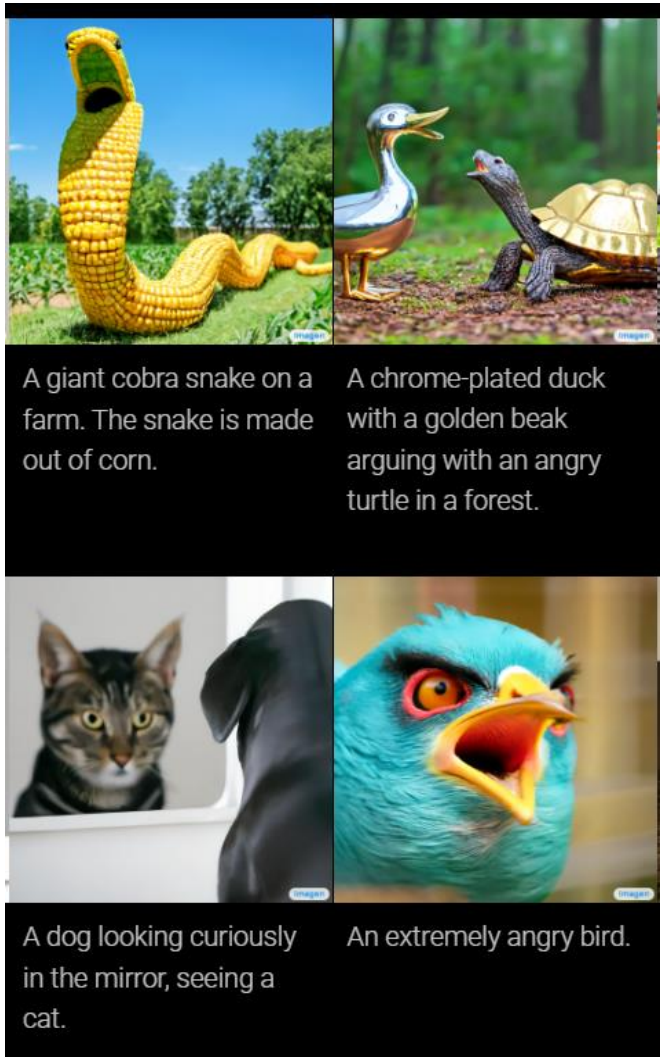
panda mad scientist mixing sparkling chemicals, artstation

a corgi's head depicted as an explosion of a nebula

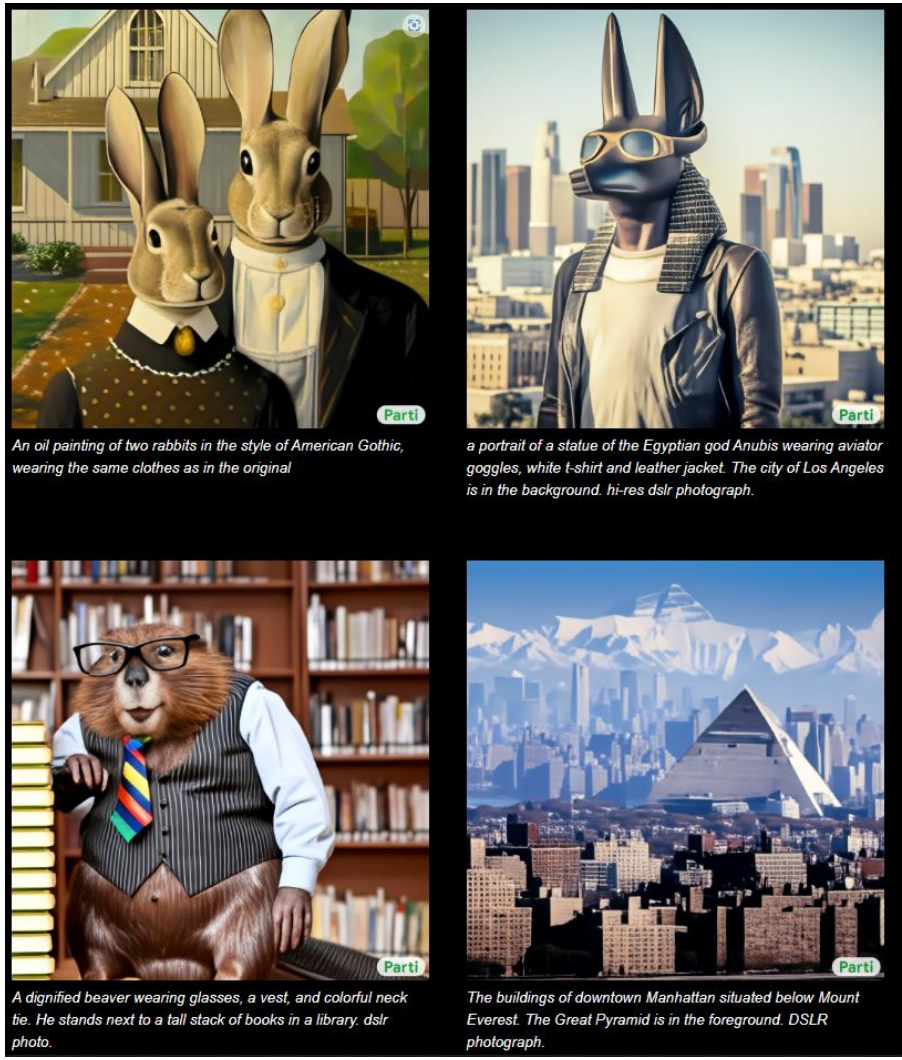
a propaganda poster depicting a cat dressed as french emperor napoleon holding a piece of cheese

a teddy bear on a skateboard in times square

DALLE-v2Ramesh et al. preprint 2022 https://arxiv.org/abs/2204.06125



"Imagen": Saharia et al. preprint 2022 https://arxiv.org/abs/2205.11487



"PARTI": Yu et al. preprint 2022 https://arxiv.org/abs/2206.10789

Survey of Existing Metrics for T2I Evaluation

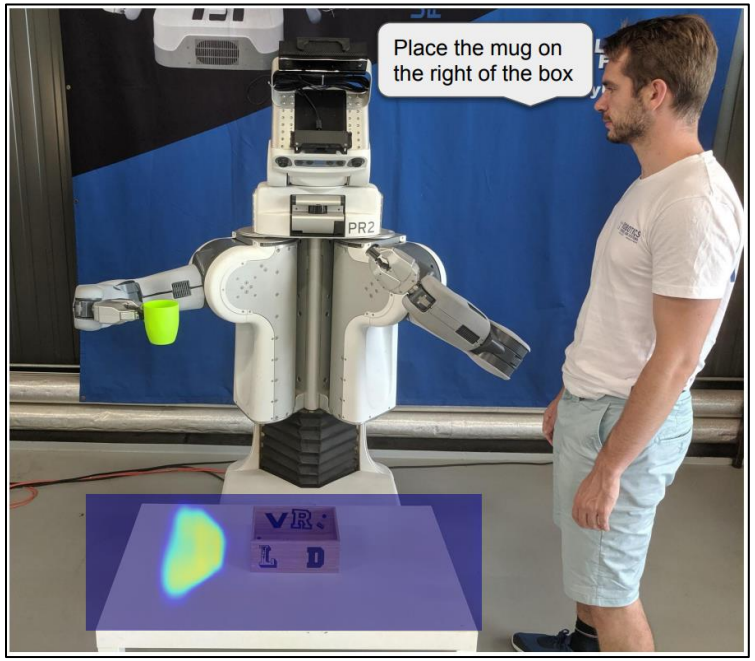
	StackGAN (Zhang et al. ICCV 2017)	DM-GAN (Zhu et al. CVPR 2019)	OP-GAN (Hinz et al. TPAMI 2020)	GLIDE (Nichol et al. NeurIPS 2021)	CogView-1/2 (Ding et al. NeurIPS 2021)	DALLE v1/v2 (Ramesh et al. 2021/2022)	Stable Diffusion (Rombach et al. CVPR 2022)
IS: Inception Score *(Salimans et al. NeurIPS 2016)*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FID: Frechet Inception Distance *(Heusel et al. NeurIPS 2017)*		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R-Precision *(Xu et al. CVPR 2018)*		✓	✓	✓			
Image Captioning Metrics *(Hong et al. CVPR 2018)*			✓				
CLIPscore *(Hessel et al. EMNLP 2021)*				✓			
SOA: Semantic Object Accuracy *(Hinz et al. T-PAMI 2020)*			✓				
Human Study	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

Four categories of existing evaluation metrics

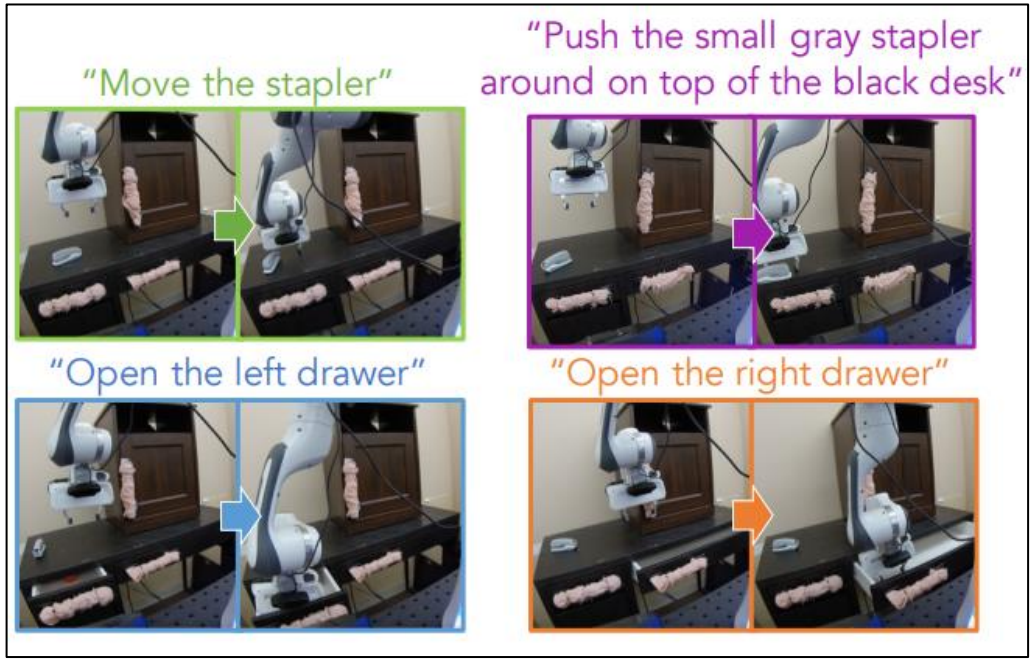
1. Purely Visual Metrics for Photorealism : IS, FID
2. Image-text matching : Image Captioning / CLIPscore
3. Object-Level : SOA
4. Human study

Spatial Relationships Directly Impact Practical Applications!

- Humans often communicate using spatial relationships between objects
  - "The Windows start button is on the bottom left of the screen"
  - "The toaster in my kitchen is to the left of the stove"
  - "Can you move the chart to the right of the text in your PPT?"
- Spatial relationships are also important for robotics and applications



Mees et al. ICRA 2020 https://arxiv.org/abs/2001.08481v2



Nair et al. CORL 2020 https://proceedings.mlr.press/v164/nair22a/nair22a.pdf

Standing in front of the family picture, turn left and walk straight through the bathroom past the tub and mirrors. Go through the doorway and stop when the door to the bathroom is on your right and the door to the closet is to your left.

Walk with the family photo on your right. Continue straight into the bathroom. Walk past the bathtub. Stop in the hall between the bathroom and toilet doorways.

Walk straight passed bathtub and stop with closet on the left and toilet on the right.

Anderson et al. CVPR 2018 ttps://arxiv.org/pdf/1711.07280.pdf

CLIPscore: Hessel et al. EMNLP 2021 https://arxiv.org/abs/2104.08718

CLIPScore *is not effective*

- CLIPscore is a recent T2I evaluation metric that uses CLIP to obtain scores for text—image pairs
- Consider text t
- Let x be the image generated for t
- Let $t_{flipped}$ be the text with the same objects, but a flipped relation –
- Compute $CLIPscore(x, t)$ and $CLIPscore(x, t_{flipped})$

t = "A backpack below a train"

CLIPscore(x, t) = 0.8691

$t_{flipped}$ = "A backpack above a train"

CLIPscore(x, $t_{flipped}$) = 0.8779

$t_{flipped}$ *does not match with* x *(it has the opposite relationship)*
Yet, $CLIPscore(x, t) \sim CLIPscore(x, t_{flipped})$

➔ *CLIPscore is not a good metric for evaluating spatial relationships generated by T2I models*

t="A toaster to the left of a fire hydrant"

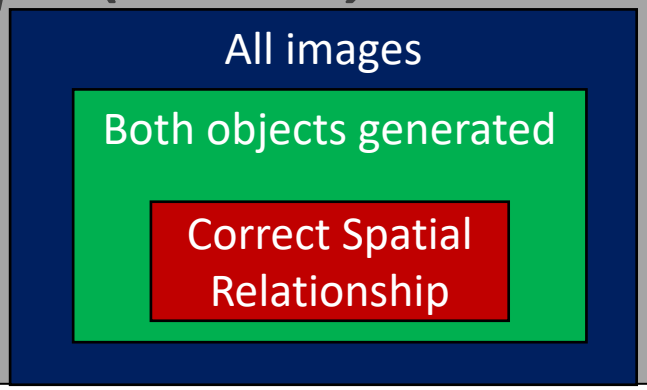
CLIPscore(x, t) = 0.8052

$t_{flipped}$ = "A toaster to the right of a fire hydrant"

CLIPscore(x, $t_{flipped}$) = 0.8086

VerifyIng Spatial Object Relationships (VISOR)

$$VISOR = P(R_{gen} == R_{GT} \mid \exists A \cap \exists B) = \frac{\text{Correct Spatial Relationship}}{\text{Both objects generated}}$$



Model	OA	SRA	$VISOR_1$	$VISOR_2$	$VISOR_3$	$VISOR_4$
GLIDE	3.36	1.98	6.72	1.02	0.17	0.03
DALLE-mini	27.1	16.17	38.31	17.5	6.89	1.96
CogView2	18.47	12.17	33.47	11.43	3.22	0.57
DALLE-v2	63.93	37.89	73.59	47.23	23.26	7.49
Stable Diffusion	29.86	18.81	40.6	20.11	6.89	1.63

For more comprehensive results please refer to https://arxiv.org/abs/2212.10015

a skateboard below a mouse

a mouse to the left of a couch

DALLE-v2






Stable Diffusion



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Acknowledgements:

Tejas Gokhale, Stephen Chen, Marco Tulio Ribeiro, Scott Lundberg, Besmira Nushi, Hanna Wallach, Ece Kamar, Eric Horvitz, Qiuyuan Huang, Luowei Zhou, Kezhen Chen