

Linear algebra: SVD

Statistical Natural Language Processing 1

Çağrı Çöltekin

University of Tübingen
Seminar für Sprachwissenschaft

Winter Semester 2025/2026

Quick recap

So far we reviewed:

- Vectors, matrices
- Operations on vectors and matrices: scalar multiplication, addition, dot product, matrix multiplication
- Matrices as operators (linear functions / transformations)
- Linearity and linear combinations
- Solving systems of linear equations, elimination
- Finding matrix inverse
- Linear regression
- Eigenvalues and eigenvectors

Today's plan

- Singular value decomposition
- Pseudo inverse

Orthogonal matrices

A short detour

- An orthogonal matrix is a square matrix whose columns (and rows) are orthonormal (orthogonal unit) vectors
- Some interesting properties:
 - The product of two orthogonal matrices is another orthogonal matrix
 - Orthogonal matrices are invertible
 - Product of an orthogonal matrix with its transpose is the identity matrix

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{Q}^T \mathbf{Q} &= \mathbf{Q} \mathbf{Q}^T = \mathbf{I} \\ \Rightarrow \mathbf{Q}^T &= \mathbf{Q}^{-1} \end{aligned}$$

- Orthogonal matrices represent length-preserving transformations (rotations and reflections)
- Determinants of an orthogonal matrix is 1 or -1

Singular Value Decomposition

- Singular value decomposition (SVD) of an $n \times m$ matrix \mathbf{X} is

$$\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T$$

\mathbf{U} is a $n \times n$ orthogonal matrix

$\mathbf{\Sigma}$ is a $n \times m$ diagonal matrix of singular values

\mathbf{V}^T is a $m \times m$ orthogonal matrix.

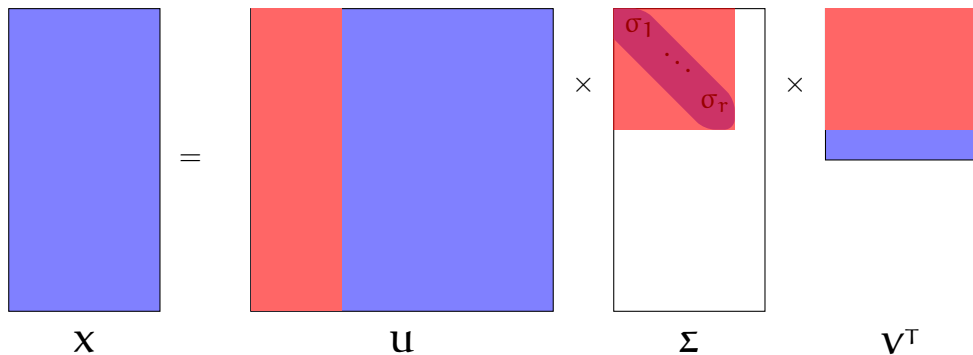
- Singular vectors (columns) in \mathbf{U} are the eigenvectors of $\mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}^T$
- Singular vectors (rows) in \mathbf{V}^T are the eigenvectors of $\mathbf{X}^T\mathbf{X}$

Singular Value Decomposition

The diagram illustrates the Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) of a matrix X . It shows the equation $X = U \Sigma V^T$. Matrix X is represented by a blue rectangle. Matrix U is a larger blue rectangle. Matrix Σ is a white rectangle with a blue diagonal band containing the singular values $\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_r$. Matrix V^T is a blue rectangle. Multiplication symbols (\times) are placed between U and Σ , and between Σ and V^T . An equals sign ($=$) is placed between X and U .

$$X = U \Sigma V^T$$

Singular Value Decomposition



- Since $n - r$ rows and $m - r$ rows of Σ is 0, the decomposition does need the full matrices

Singular value decomposition and $X^T X$

- Assume $X = U\Sigma V^T$

$$\begin{aligned} X^T X &= (U\Sigma V^T)^T U\Sigma V^T \\ &= V\Sigma^T U^T U\Sigma V^T \\ &= V\Sigma^T \Sigma V^T \\ &= V\Sigma^2 V^T \end{aligned}$$

Singular value decomposition and $\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X}$

- Assume $\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T$

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X} &= (\mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T)^T \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T \\ &= \mathbf{V}\mathbf{\Sigma}^T \mathbf{U}^T \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T \\ &= \mathbf{V}\mathbf{\Sigma}^T \mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T \\ &= \mathbf{V}\mathbf{\Sigma}^2 \mathbf{V}^T\end{aligned}$$

- Columns of \mathbf{V} are eigenvectors of $\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X}$

Singular value decomposition and $\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X}$

- Assume $\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T$

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X} &= (\mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T)^T \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T \\ &= \mathbf{V}\mathbf{\Sigma}^T \mathbf{U}^T \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T \\ &= \mathbf{V}\mathbf{\Sigma}^T \mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^T \\ &= \mathbf{V}\mathbf{\Sigma}^2 \mathbf{V}^T\end{aligned}$$

- Columns of \mathbf{V} are eigenvectors of $\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X}$
- Values in the diagonal matrix $\mathbf{\Sigma}^2$ are the eigenvalues of $\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X}$

Singular value decomposition and $\mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}^\top$

- Assume $\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^\top$

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}^\top &= \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^\top(\mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^\top)^\top \\ &= \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{V}^\top\mathbf{V}\mathbf{\Sigma}^\top\mathbf{U}^\top \\ &= \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{\Sigma}^\top\mathbf{U}^\top \\ &= \mathbf{U}\mathbf{\Sigma}^2\mathbf{U}^\top\end{aligned}$$

- Columns of \mathbf{U} are eigenvectors of $\mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}^\top$
- Values in the diagonal matrix $\mathbf{\Sigma}^2$ are the eigenvalues of $\mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}^\top$
- $\mathbf{X}^\top\mathbf{X}$ and $\mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}^\top$ share the eigenvalues

Computing SVD

- Find the eigenvalues and eigenvectors of $\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X}$
 - $\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X}$ is symmetric (semi) definite, the eigenvectors can be chosen to be orthogonal unit vectors, the eigenvalues are positive
 - \mathbf{V} is the collection of the eigenvectors (of $\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X}$)
 - $\sigma_i = \sqrt{\lambda_i}$
- Knowing \mathbf{V} and Σ ,

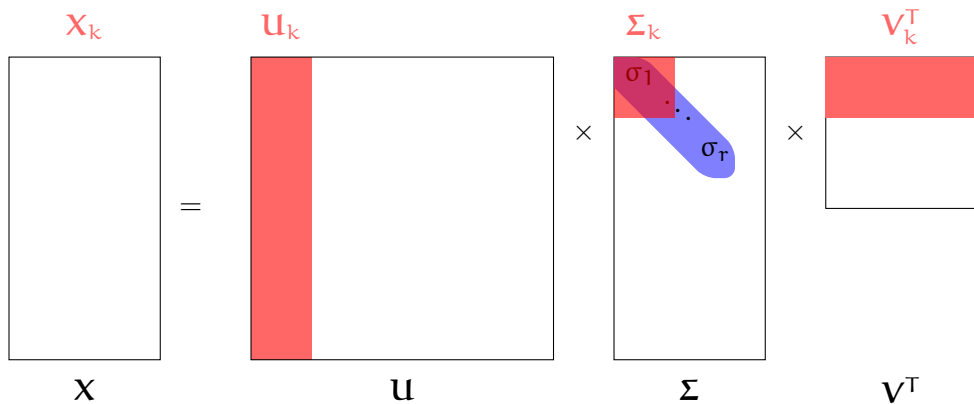
$$\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{U} \Sigma \mathbf{V}^T$$

$$\mathbf{X} \mathbf{V} = \mathbf{U} \Sigma$$

$$\mathbf{X} \mathbf{V} \Sigma^{-1} = \mathbf{U}$$

- In practice there are more efficient ways to compute SVD

Low rank estimation of a matrix



$X_k = U_k \Sigma_k V_k^T$ is the best rank k estimation of matrix X

SVD: properties and applications

- Singular values are related to matrix norms
- SVD has a wide range of applications from image compression to document indexing to semantics of the words
- It is also a method for dimensionality reduction for visualizations
- A large number of statistical methods also rely on SVD (e.g., PCA, we will discuss later)
- The *condition number* of a matrix, an indication of numerical stability, depends on singular values
- SVD can be computed with good numerical accuracy, as a result it is also used for computing other quantities (e.g., matrix inverse)

Left and right inverses

- For a non-square matrix, or a square matrix with rank lower than n , the inverse is not defined

Left and right inverses

- For a non-square matrix, or a square matrix with rank lower than n , the inverse is not defined
- From linear regression, we know that $(\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X})^{-1} \mathbf{X}^T$ acts as a *left inverse*

Left and right inverses

- For a non-square matrix, or a square matrix with rank lower than n , the inverse is not defined
- From linear regression, we know that $(\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X})^{-1} \mathbf{X}^T$ acts as a *left inverse*
- Similarly we can define *right inverse* as $\mathbf{X}^T (\mathbf{X} \mathbf{X}^T)^{-1}$

Left and right inverses

- For a non-square matrix, or a square matrix with rank lower than n , the inverse is not defined
- From linear regression, we know that $(\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X})^{-1} \mathbf{X}^T$ acts as a *left inverse*
- Similarly we can define *right inverse* as $\mathbf{X}^T (\mathbf{X} \mathbf{X}^T)^{-1}$
- Remember, however, the existence of $(\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X})^{-1}$ requires columns of \mathbf{X} to be independent

Left and right inverses

- For a non-square matrix, or a square matrix with rank lower than n , the inverse is not defined
- From linear regression, we know that $(\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X})^{-1} \mathbf{X}^T$ acts as a *left inverse*
- Similarly we can define *right inverse* as $\mathbf{X}^T (\mathbf{X} \mathbf{X}^T)^{-1}$
- Remember, however, the existence of $(\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X})^{-1}$ requires columns of \mathbf{X} to be independent
- A more general solution falls out of SVD

Computing pseudo inverse

- We want matrix multiplication to get as close to \mathbf{I} as possible. Consider the 3×4 diagonal matrix:

$$\times \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & b & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} =$$

Computing pseudo inverse

- We want matrix multiplication to get as close to \mathbf{I} as possible. Consider the 3×4 diagonal matrix:

$$\times \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & b & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

Computing pseudo inverse

- We want matrix multiplication to get as close to \mathbf{I} as possible. Consider the 3×4 diagonal matrix:

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1/a & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1/b & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & b & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

Computing pseudo inverse

- We want matrix multiplication to get as close to \mathbf{I} as possible. Consider the 3×4 diagonal matrix:

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1/a & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1/b & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & b & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

- For an $n \times n$ diagonal matrix Σ , $\Sigma^+ = \Sigma^{-1}$

Computing pseudo inverse

- We want matrix multiplication to get as close to \mathbf{I} as possible. Consider the 3×4 diagonal matrix:

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1/a & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1/b & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & b & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

- For an $n \times n$ diagonal matrix $\mathbf{\Sigma}$, $\mathbf{\Sigma}^+ = \mathbf{\Sigma}^{-1}$
- For any invertible $n \times n$ matrix \mathbf{X} , $\mathbf{X}^+ = \mathbf{X}^{-1}$

Computing pseudo inverse

- We want matrix multiplication to get as close to \mathbf{I} as possible. Consider the 3×4 diagonal matrix:

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1/a & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1/b & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \times \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & b & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

- For an $n \times n$ diagonal matrix $\mathbf{\Sigma}$, $\mathbf{\Sigma}^+ = \mathbf{\Sigma}^{-1}$
- For any invertible $n \times n$ matrix \mathbf{X} , $\mathbf{X}^+ = \mathbf{X}^{-1}$
- In general, if we use singular value decomposition $\mathbf{X}^+ = \mathbf{V}\mathbf{\Sigma}^+\mathbf{U}^T$

Summary / next

- We reviewed SVD and pseudo inverse
- SVD is a very important method. We will return to it multiple times during the course

Summary / next

- We reviewed SVD and pseudo inverse
- SVD is a very important method. We will return to it multiple times during the course

Next:

- A very short introduction to calculus

the SVD song

Further reading

Any of the linear algebra references provided earlier.