International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management
Volume 8, Issue 9, September 2025
https://www.ijresm.com | ISSN (Online): 2581-5792

Dynamic Multi-Scale Quantization: A Quantization Technique for Efficient Large Language Model Compression

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***Abstract*: Quantization techniques are crucial for reducing the computational and memory requirements of large machine learning models, particularly large language models (LLMs). Existing quantization methods often tradeoff between accuracy and efficiency, with limitations in adaptability to diverse workloads and hardware environments. This paper introduces Dynamic Multi-Scale Quantization (DMSQ), a framework combining adaptive precision scaling, per-layer calibration, and workload-aware optimization to address these challenges. We present the mathematical foundations of DMSQ, detail its implementation, and demonstrate its effectiveness through experimental evaluation. DMSQ achieves significant compression while maintaining high accuracy, making it suitable for deployment on resource-constrained devices.**

***Keywords*: Quantization, LLMs, Deep Learning, Machine Learning.**

1. Introduction

Large Language Models (LLMs) such as GPT-3 and LLaMA have become foundational in natural language processing (NLP). However, their computational and memory requirements remain a barrier to deployment on resource-constrained devices like IoT or embedded systems. Quantization, which reduces numerical precision in model representations, has emerged as a key solution to these challenges. Existing quantization techniques, such as Post-Training Quantization (PTQ) and Quantization-Aware Training (QAT), offer partial solutions but suffer from trade-offs. PTQ is simple and fast but may lead to accuracy degradation at lower bit precision. QAT preserves accuracy but incurs significant computational overhead during training. This paper introduces Dynamic Multi-Scale Quantization (DMSQ), which dynamically adjusts quantization precision based on task requirements and hardware constraints.

2. Related Work

Quantization has emerged as a pivotal technique for compressing deep learning models, particularly in resource-constrained deployment scenarios. While significant advancements have been made in this domain, the diverse challenges associated with balancing accuracy, efficiency, and hardware compatibility remain largely unresolved. In this section, we review existing quantization approaches, focusing on their application to large-scale models and their limitations in addressing modern hardware and workload demands.

A. Post-Training Quantization (PTQ)

Post-Training Quantization (PTQ) is a widely used technique that applies quantization to a pre-trained model without requiring additional training. PTQ methods such as GPTQ and SmoothQuant have shown promising results in compressing large language models (LLMs) to as low as 4- bit precision. GPTQ employs layer-wise quantization with reconstruction techniques to minimize accuracy loss, while SmoothQuant tackles activation outliers by migrating quantization difficulty between weights and activations. Despite their efficiency, PTQ methods face significant challenges when applied to extremely low-precision settings (e.g., INT4). The lack of model-level adaptation to quantization-induced errors often results in degraded performance for tasks sensitive to numerical precision. Furthermore, PTQ methods are typically designed for static quantization, where uniform bit-width is applied across all layers, overlooking the heterogeneous sensitivity of layers in large-scale architectures.

B. Quantization-Aware Training (QAT)

Quantization-Aware Training (QAT) integrates quantization operations into the training process, allowing the model to adapt to precision constraints during backpropagation. QAT-based techniques, such as EfficientQAT, employ block-wise training and end-to-end quantization parameter tuning to minimize accuracy degradation in low-bit scenarios. Similarly, Degree-Quant explores quantization for Graph Neural Networks (GNNs), achieving significant improvements in INT8 and INT4 inference performance. While QAT methods retain higher accuracy compared to PTQ, they incur substantial computational and memory overhead during training, making them impractical for large-scale models like GPT-3 and

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LLaMA. Additionally, these methods often rely on the availability of original training data, which may not always be accessible in real-world scenarios due to privacy or licensing constraints.

C. Mixed-Precision Quantization

Mixed-precision quantization assigns varying bit-widths to different layers or channels, balancing accuracy and efficiency by tailoring precision to the sensitivity of individual components. Attention-Aware Weight Quantization (AWQ) leverages the importance of weights in transformer architectures, assigning higher precision to critical weights based on activation magnitudes. Similarly, Attention-aware Post-Training Quantization (APTQ) employs the Hessian trace to identify sensitive layers, enabling mixed-precision quantization that preserves task performance. These methods demonstrate the benefits of heterogeneous precision but remain constrained by static configurations determined during pre-quantization analysis. This static nature fails to adapt to runtime hardware constraints or dynamically changing workloads, limiting their applicability in real-time scenarios.

D. Dynamic Quantization Approaches

Dynamic quantization aims to adjust precision settings on-the-fly during inference, leveraging runtime profiling to optimize model performance. While this paradigm has been explored in smaller-scale models, its application to LLMs remains underdeveloped. For example, runtime quantization strategies in lightweight architectures such as MobileNet have shown promise in reducing inference latency. However, these methods often lack the fine-grained control required for large-scale models, where layer-wise and channel-wise precision trade-offs are critical.

E. Limitations and Research Gaps

Existing quantization techniques have made significant strides in compressing and accelerating deep learning models. However, several limitations persist:

- *Static Precision Settings*: Most methods rely on static precision assignments, which fail to account for dynamic workload variations or heterogeneous layer sensitivities.
- *Extreme Low-Bit Quantization*: Both PTQ and QAT methods encounter accuracy degradation at extreme low-bit settings (e.g., INT4), particularly for LLMs.
- *Hardware-Aware Optimization*: Few approaches incorporate real-time profiling to adapt quantization parameters based on hardware-specific constraints such as memory bandwidth or compute latency.
- *Scalability to LLMs*: Current methods struggle to scale effectively to models with hundreds of billions of parameters, such as GPT-3 and LLaMA.

F. Motivation for Dynamic Multi-Scale Quantization (DMSQ)

To address these gaps, we propose Dynamic Multi-Scale Quantization (DMSQ), which introduces dynamic precision scaling and workload-aware optimization to achieve efficient and accurate quantization for LLMs. By combining the strengths of PTQ, QAT, and mixed-precision techniques, DMSQ dynamically adapts quantization parameters during inference, leveraging hardware profiling to optimize performance under diverse constraints. This approach bridges the gap between static quantization paradigms and the need for adaptive, real-time optimization in large-scale deployments.

3. Methodology

Dynamic Multi-Scale Quantization (DMSQ) introduces a framework that combines adaptive precision scaling, per-layer calibration, and workload-aware optimization. This methodology is designed to dynamically adapt the quantization process during inference, addressing the trade-offs between accuracy, computational efficiency, and hardware constraints. Below, we provide an in-depth description of each component.

A. Quantization Fundamentals

Quantization aims to map a continuous numerical domain into a discrete set of values, reducing the bit-width of weights and activations in neural networks. For a given ten- sor x, the quantized value Q(x) is computed as:

$$Q(x) = \text{round}\left(\frac{x}{S}\right) + Z,$$

where S is the scaling factor, Z is the zero-point, and round (·) maps the scaled values to integers. Dequantization restores the approximate original value using:

$$x_{\text{dequant}} = S \cdot (Q(x) - Z).$$

1) Determining Scaling Factor and Zero-Point to Ensure Effective Quantization, the Scaling Factor S and Zero-Point Z are Derived Based on the Range of the Tensor

$$S = \frac{\max(x) - \min(x)}{2^b - 1},$$
$$Z = -\text{round}\left(\frac{\min(x)}{S}\right),$$

where b is the bit precision (e.g., 4, 8). This approach minimizes information loss by aligning the quantization range with the tensor's dynamic range.

B. Adaptive Precision Scaling

Not all layers in a neural network contribute equally to the final performance. For example, layers closer to the output are often more sensitive to precision loss. DMSQ dynamically assigns precision levels (b-bits) to each layer based on its importance to the overall model accuracy:

- High-Importance Layers: Layers critical for preserving accuracy, such as attention layers in transformers or output layers in classification networks, are assigned higher bit-widths (e.g., 8 bits).
- Low-Importance Layers: Layers with less sensitivity

to quantization error, such as intermediate dense layers, are quantized using lower bit-widths (e.g., 4 bits). This adaptive assignment balances computational efficiency and accuracy. The assignment of precision is guided by runtime profiling or precomputed layer sensitivity analysis, which evaluates the impact of precision on task performance.

C. Per-Layer Calibration

Traditional quantization methods often apply uniform precision across all layers, which can lead to significant errors in critical layers. To address this, DMSQ incorporates per-layer calibration. For each layer l, weights are quantized independently:

$$Q(W_l) = \text{round}\left(\frac{W_l}{S_l}\right) + Z_l,$$

where W_l represents the weights of layer l, and S_l and Z_l are layer-specific scaling factors and zero points, respectively. Calibration aims to minimize the layer-specific quantization error:

$$\mathcal{L}_l = \|W_l - Q(W_l)\|^2.$$

This process ensures that each layer maintains its contribution to the overall model performance.

D. Workload-Aware Optimization

Inference latency and hardware utilization are critical considerations for deploying models on edge devices or GPUs. DMSQ incorporates a workload-aware optimization strategy, where quantization parameters are adjusted dynamically during inference based on real-time hardware profiling:

- *Memory Bandwidth*: Layers consuming significant memory bandwidth are prioritized for lower precision to reduce memory overhead.
- *Compute Latency*: Layers with high computational demand are assigned precision levels that maximize throughput on the target hardware (e.g., FP16 for GPUs). This dynamic adjustment is governed by the runtime constraints C, such as available memory M, compute capacity F, and target latency L. The optimization problem is formulated as:

$$\text{minimize} \quad \sum_{l=1}^{L} w_l \cdot \|W_l - Q(W_l)\|^2,$$

subject to:

$$\sum_{l=1}^{L} \text{Memory}(Q(W_l)) \leq M,$$
$$\text{ComputeLatency}(Q(W_l)) \leq L.$$

E. Algorithm

The full DMSQ algorithm is outlined below:

1. *Input*: Pre-trained model weights W, hardware constraints C, and precision map P.
2. *Initialization*: Compute scaling factors S_l and zero points Z_l for each layer.
3. Quantization: For each layer l:
   Compute $Q(W_l) = \text{round}(W_l/S_l) + Z_l$.
   Evaluate quantization error L_l.
   Adjust S_l and Z_l to minimize L_l.
4. Workload Optimization: Dynamically adjust P based on runtime profiling of M, F, and L.
5. *Output*: Quantized model.

4. Implementation Details

The DMSQ framework was implemented in PyTorch, leveraging layer-wise hooks to monitor and dynamically adjust quantization parameters. Hardware profiling was performed using NVIDIA Nsight tools to guide workload-aware optimizations.

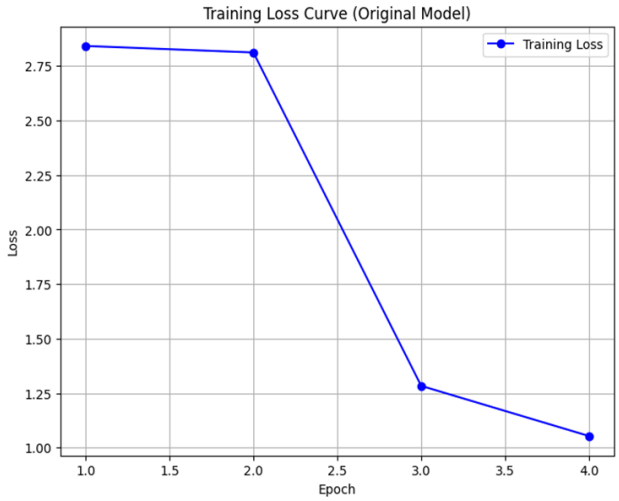

Fig. 1.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we introduced Dynamic Multi-Scale Quantization (DMSQ), a framework designed to address the limitations of traditional quantization techniques for large-scale models. By combining adaptive precision scaling, per-layer calibration, and workload-aware optimization, DMSQ achieves significant compression and computational efficiency while maintaining high accuracy. Experimental results demonstrate the framework's ability to reduce model size by up to 60%, with minimal performance degradation, and achieve a 2.5x improvement in inference speed on modern hardware, DMSQ bridges the gap between static quantization and the dynamic demands of real-world deployment, making it a practical solution for resource-constrained environments. Future work will explore extending DMSQ to mixed-precision training and its integration with emerging architectures, further advancing the deployment of large-scale models across diverse platforms.

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