LABEL PREDICTION FRAMEWORK FOR SEMI-SUPERVISED CROSS-MODAL RETRIEVAL

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ABSTRACT

Cross-modal data matching refers to retrieval of data from one modality, when given a query from another modality. In general, supervised algorithms achieve better retrieval performance compared to their unsupervised counterpart, as they can learn better representative features by leveraging the available label information. However, this comes at the cost of requiring huge amount of labeled examples, which may not always be available. In this work, we propose a novel framework in a semi-supervised cross-modal retrieval setting, which can predict the labels of the unlabeled data using complementary information from different modalities. The proposed framework can be used as an add-on with any baseline cross-modal algorithm to give significant performance improvement, even in case of limited labeled data. Extensive evaluation using several baseline algorithms across different datasets show the effectiveness of our label prediction framework.

Index Terms— Cross-modal retrieval, semi-supervised learning

1. INTRODUCTION

For the application of cross-modal retrieval, supervised algorithms [1] [2] [3] [4] generally outperform their unsupervised counterparts [5] [6] [7], but at the cost of additional label information. The performance also greatly depends upon the amount of labeled data. Since the task of labeling is often very expensive and time-consuming, designing deep-based models to mitigate this shortcoming is very important. Semi-supervised (SS) learning treads the middle ground by considering a small subset of data as labeled, and the remaining as unlabeled and has been extensively studied in the context of image classification [8] [9] [10] [11] [12]. These approaches generally follow one of the three possible strategies namely (1) Pre-training the deep network using unlabeled examples followed by training it again with its labeled counterparts, (2) Using the unlabeled samples as a regularization term for structure preservation of the embedded features and (3) An iterative scheme in which label prediction and network parameter learning are done in an alternate fashion repeatedly. Recently, some semi-supervised cross-modal algorithms have been developed [13] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18], which aims to find out the optimal way to jointly use both the labeled and unlabeled data for getting better cross-modal retrieval performance.

In this work, given a set of labeled and unlabeled training data in a semi-supervised cross-modal setting, we propose a novel label prediction framework (LPF) to predict the labels for the unlabeled data. Utilizing the complementary information from both modalities as well as the original features, we filter out the data for which the predicted labels are potentially wrong and select only that portion whose predicted labels are probably correct to re-train the LPF. These two steps are repeated iteratively and with each iteration, more number of unlabeled examples and their predicted labels are added which helps to train the LPF network better. Finally, we use all the labeled and pseudo-labeled examples to train any supervised cross-modal algorithm. We perform extensive experiments to show the efficacy of our algorithm for different baselines and three datasets, even with limited labeled data. The main contributions of our work is as follows:

(1) We propose a novel label prediction framework for predicting labels of unlabeled data in a semi-supervised setting, which can then be fed to any supervised cross-modal algorithm.
(2) The proposed framework is effective even in case of limited amount of labeled data.
(3) Extensive experiments show the usefulness of the proposed framework using several baselines and three different datasets.

Next, we discuss the related work in literature. The proposed approach for different scenarios is discussed in Section 3. The results of experimental evaluation is reported in Section 4 and the paper ends with a conclusion.

2. RELATED WORK

Here we describe the relevant works in the semi-supervised (SS) setting, first for image classification task and then for cross-modal retrieval.

Semi-supervised image classification: As discussed in the introduction, three strategies are usually followed in literature for SS scenario. The first strategy is followed in [11], but its performance usually suffers since the second stage typically dominates and the model tends to forget what it has learned in the first stage. The second strategy is followed in the works of [9] [12] [19] [20]. Algorithms like in [8] [21] employ a hierarchical strategy in which the unlabeled examples are used for image reconstruction and the labeled examples are used for image classification. The work in [10] [22] follows the iterative approach of the third strategy. [10] uses entropy regularization, denoising auto-encoders and dropout in the network architecture to identify probable correctly labeled examples and utilizes it for further training of the image classification models. [22] also has the additional property of growing the network layers if the necessity arises with the accumulation of additional pseudo-labeled examples. Data augmentation techniques in the image domain can greatly boost image classification performance in the SS setting [23] [24]. This technique though very useful is

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† Pramod made equal contribution to this work.
difficult to implement for applications in the cross-modal setting.

**Semi-supervised cross-modal retrieval:** The problem of SS learning in the cross-modal setting is relatively less explored and has been addressed in [13] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18]. In [15] [14], multi-graph learning is used over the unlabeled data for structure preservation while learning the common embedding representations. The work in [13] designs a dragging technique with a linear regression model so that embedded features lie close to the correct class labels while pushing the irrelevant samples far apart. In [18], sparse representation of the different modality data for both the labeled and unlabeled samples are projected into a common domain defined by its class label information. A non-parametric Bayesian approach has been proposed in [16] to handle the SS situation. A novel approach in semi-supervised hashing using Generative Adversarial Network [17] has been used to model the distribution across the different modalities and a loss function has been suitably designed to select correct/similar data pairs from the unlabeled set in an adversarial fashion. Though [17] shows impressive performance, the amount of labeled data required is quite large. A recent work in [25] does label prediction by first generating its weakly supervised labels by comparison with its nearest neighbors and then finally training a network to predict its true label given the data sample and its weak annotation.

In this work, we propose a novel label prediction framework in a semi-supervised setting which predicts the labels of the unlabeled data, which can then be used to augment the labeled portion of the data and given as input to any baseline cross-modal algorithm.

### 3. PROPOSED METHOD

Here, we describe the proposed framework for the standard semi-supervised setting. Let the cross-modal data be represented as \( X_t \in \mathcal{R}^{d_t \times N} \) \( (t \in \{1, 2\}) \), where \( t = 2 \) is the number of modalities, \( N \) is the number of training samples and \( d_t \) is the feature dimension. Let the labels be denoted as \( L \in \mathcal{R}^{C \times N} \), where \( C \) is the number of classes, with each sample belonging to a single category. Consider that the input data \( X_t \) consists of (a) \( m \) labeled samples denoted by \( X_t^l \in \mathcal{R}^{d_t \times m} \) with its corresponding labels \( L_t^l \in \mathcal{R}^{C \times m} \) and (b) \( n \) unlabeled samples denoted by \( X_t^u \in \mathcal{R}^{d_t \times n} \), with \( m + n = N, m \leq n \). We consider both the labeled and unlabeled data to be paired.

Given this set of labeled and unlabeled data, we will now describe the Label Prediction Framework (LPF) which is trained to predict the labels of the unlabeled samples. For training the LPF, we subdivide the labeled portion of the training data \( X_t^l \) as \( X_t^{l,1}, X_t^{l,2} \) and \( \mathbf{X}_t^{val,1}, \mathbf{X}_t^{val,2} \) to form the training and validation sets. The proposed network architecture is shown in Fig. 1, which consists of encoders \( E_t \) and decoders \( D_t \) for both the modalities. In our implementation, both \( E_t \) and \( D_t \) consists of three fully connected (fc) layers (in mirror configuration) with ReLU and dropout between all the fc layers, except the final layer. The final layer of the encoder has two activation functions, namely (1) **Softmax** for predicting the labels and (2) **tanh** whose output is subsequently passed through the decoder. For input data \( x_{ij} \) (\( j^{th} \) sample from modality \( i \)) to the encoder \( E_t \), the output of the softmax is denoted as \( x_{ij}^s \) and that of the tanh layer is denoted as \( x_{ij}^{tanh} \). The encoded output \( x_{ij}^{tanh} \) is passed through \( D_t \) to get the reconstruction \( \hat{x}_{ij} \). Now, we will describe the different losses (for each modality) used to train this network:

1. **Labeled data:** For the labeled portion of the data, we want the samples from same class to cluster together, which in turn will help in classification. We tap the output from the second fc layer in \( E_t \) and denote it as \( x_{ij}^t \). We use the following two losses:

   - **Cross-entropy loss:** We minimize the classification errors over the labeled examples by using cross-entropy loss \( L_{ce} = -\sum_{j=1}^{m} \log \left( e^{x_{ij}^t} \right) / \sum_{k=1}^{C} e^{x_{ij}^t} \). Here, \( \mu \) is the correct class index.
   - **Center loss** [26]: We use this loss to minimize the distance of each sample with respect to its center representation as follows:
     \[
     L_c = \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sum_{k=1}^{C} 1_{\{y_j = k\}} \|x_{ij}^t - c_{i,k}\|^2_2.
     \]
     Here, \( c_{i,k} \) denotes the \( k^{th} \) class center for \( i^{th} \) modality and \( 1_{\{y_j = k\}} \) is the indicator variable which gets activated when label \( l_i \) of the sample \( x_{ij} \) is consistent with the correct center. This also ensures that the samples from the same class are clustered together. The centers \( \{c_{i,k}\}_{k=1}^{C} \) are learned while training the network using [26]. We consider learning the centers \( c_{i,k} \) from the second fc layer output as the final layer length is limited by the number of training categories, which is often small and hence the learned center representations might not be discriminative enough. The two losses are important [26], since \( L_c \) helps to make the classification using \( L_{ce} \) better by pushing the centers apart and making the features of each individual classes as clustered together as possible.

2. **Unlabeled data:** To make the label predictions of the unlabeled data less ambiguous, we utilize the **Entropy Regularization loss** [19] as \( L_{ent} = \sum_{j=m+1}^{N} -x_{ij}^l \log(x_{ij}^l) \). Since the unlabeled samples belong to one of the \( C \) categories, we want to make the softmax probability for a particular class as
high as possible, which in turn is equivalent to minimizing the entropy of the prediction.

3. Labeled and Unlabeled data: To ensure that there is no loss of information in the encoder-decoder structure, for both the labeled and unlabeled examples, we use a Reconstruction loss at the decoder output given as $L' = \sum_{j=1}^{N} \| x_{ij} - \hat{x}_{ij} \|^2$.

Thus, the total loss function for the entire network is given as:

$$L = \alpha_1 L' + \alpha_2 L_c + \alpha_3 L_{\text{ent}} + \alpha_4 L_{\text{back}}$$

where $\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3, \alpha_4$ are the tunable hyper-parameters. Once the LPF network is trained, we can use it to predict the labels for the unlabeled samples (pseudo-labels).

Utilizing paired cross-modal information for verifying pseudo-labels: In this work, we leverage the complementary information available in the paired unlabeled data of the two modalities to verify if the label prediction given by LPF is reliable. For the $j^{th}$ unlabeled data $x_{ij}$, if $\hat{x}_{ij}$ is the softmax output from $\mathcal{E}_t$, the predicted label is given by $\hat{t}_{ij} = \arg \max x_{ij} [i], 1 \leq i \leq L$. At the beginning of training, due to very limited amounts of data, these predictions are not reliable. This can be partially corrected by studying how close the original features are to their mean feature representations.

We consider a variety of baseline cross-modal algorithms like CCCA [1] GSSL [14] GsPH [3] LCMF [4] SCM [31] (SCM$_c$, and SCM$_d$ denotes the sequential and orthogonal versions) SePH [2] SMFH [32] ACMR [33] GrowBit [34] with which we integrate the proposed LPF. The last two are deep-learning based approaches and the others are classical non-deep approaches. We take the publicly available versions of the author’s codes or re-implement them wherever necessary while running the baseline algorithms. We set the parameters of the baseline algorithms in accordance to strategies described in the individual papers. For the hashing based approaches, we used hash code length of 64.

### Algorithm 1 The Label Prediction Network

1. **Input**: $X^{tr}, X^{val}, X^{ul}_{t} \{t = 1, 2\}, L^{tr}, L^{val}$.
2. **Output**: Data $X_t$ and their predicted labels $\hat{L}$.
3. **Initialize**: Initialize the network parameters of $\mathcal{E}_t, D_t$. Learn the mean feature sets $\mu_t$.
4. **Train** $\mathcal{E}_t, D_t$ using $(X^{tr}_t, L^{tr})$ by computing the loss $L$ and back-propagating the error.
5. **Continue until** $|X^{ul}_t|$ does not change or until $T$ iterations (whichever earlier):
   7. Measure performance $cf_t$ on validation set $X^{val}_t, L^{val}$ using $\mathcal{E}_t$.
   8. Construct the new constraint set $\mathcal{C}$. Use this to determine $X^{ul}_t$.
   9. Form $X_t$ as $[X^{tr}_t \ X^{val}_t] \ \& \ L$ as $[L^{tr} \ L^{val}]$.
10. Fine-tune $\mathcal{E}_t, D_t$ with a lower learning rate to update the network parameters.

Now, the expanded labeled set is given by $X_t = [X^{tr}_t \ X^{val}_t]$ with labels $L = [L^{tr} \ L^{val}]$, where $L^{val}$ are the predicted labels. We use this data to further fine-tune our LPF network with a smaller learning rate. We repeat the label prediction and network fine-tuning iteratively until the cardinality of $X^{ul}_t$ saturates. Finally, we can feed $(X_t, L)$ to any supervised cross-modal baseline algorithm for retrieval. Algorithm 1 gives the different steps of the LPF.

4. **EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION**

We consider three standard single label datasets for evaluating the proposed approach. The UCI Digit data [27] contains different feature representations of handwritten numerals for ten categories i.e., (0-9) with 200 examples each. The train:test split is 1500:500. The features used for our experiments are the same as in [28]. The LabelMe data [29] contains image-text pairs from eight different categories. GIST features are considered for the image domain and Word frequency vector for the text domain [29]. We take 200 samples from each category in the training set and the rest of the samples in the testing set. Wiki data [30] contains 2,866 image-text pairs from 10 different categories. The images and texts are represented using 4096-d CNN descriptors and 100-d word vectors respectively. The train:test split considered is 2000:866 as in [14].

Mean Average Precision (MAP) is used as the evaluation metric for comparisons against the other cross-modal retrieval methods. We report average MAP@50 (average over Image-to-Text and Text-to-Image retrieval) for all our experiments [14].

### Baseline Approaches

We consider a variety of baseline cross-modal algorithms like CCCA [1] GSSL [14] GsPH [3] LCMF [4] SCM [31] (SCM$_c$, and SCM$_d$ denotes the sequential and orthogonal versions) SePH [2] SMFH [32] ACMR [33] GrowBit [34] with which we integrate the proposed LPF. The last two are deep-learning based approaches and the others are classical non-deep approaches. We take the publicly available versions of the author’s codes or re-implement them wherever necessary while running the baseline algorithms. We set the parameters of the baseline algorithms in accordance to strategies described in the individual papers. For the hashing based approaches, we used hash code length of 64.

### Results for Semi-Supervised Protocol

Here, we report the results of the LPF module as an add-on with other baseline approaches for...
the three datasets. We denote the results for each algorithm under three different modes, (1) “f”, denotes that the algorithm is working in supervised mode with no unlabeled data; (2) “l”, using only labeled portion of the data and (3) “ss”, where the pseudo-labeled examples as predicted by LPF are provided in addition to the labeled data. We consider ρ\% of the total training data as labeled and the remaining as unlabeled and we report results for ρ = \{10%, 30%, 50%\}. All experiments are repeated over 5 random labeled/unlabeled split and the average results are reported in Table 1. We make the following observations, (1) the result of “l” mode is the best as expected as it has access to all the labeled training data; (2) the results under “ss” mode is better than “l” mode which signifies that the proposed LPF is able to correctly predict the labels of the unlabeled set and pass it to the baseline algorithms; (3) the importance of LPF module is more when ρ is low, i.e. when the amount of labeled data is very limited, thus making the training more challenging; (4) LPF works equally well for non-deep and deep based algorithms. We observe similar pattern as we increase the amount of labeled data.

In this work, we propose a novel label prediction framework in semi-supervised setting which can act as an add-on to any cross-modal retrieval baseline algorithm to achieve better performance even in case of limited labeled data. Extensive experimental evaluation on three datasets and several non-deep and deep baseline approaches shows the usefulness of the proposed framework.

### Implementation Details

The \( E_t \) in LPF module has 3 fc layers of size 250 → 250 → \( C \) with \( D_t \) having the mirror architecture. We train \( (E_t, D_t) \) using Stochastic Gradient Descent with learning rate between \( lr = 10^{-4} \) → \( 10^{-5} \) for 200 epochs respectively with early stopping condition. LPF fine-tuning is done using a lower learning rate typically \( lr = 10^{-4} \) → \( 10^{-5} \). For updating the centers, a learning rate of \( lr' = 5lr \) is used. The hyper parameters for the loss are set as \( \alpha^{ce} = 1, \alpha^{h} = 0.01, \alpha^{l} = 0.5, \) and \( \alpha^{ent} = 1 \).

### 5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In this work, we propose a novel label prediction framework in semi-supervised setting which can act as an add-on to any cross-modal retrieval baseline algorithm to achieve better performance even in case of limited labeled data.

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**Table 1.** Average MAP@50 on UCI [27], Wiki [30] and LabelMe [29] datasets. Here, “f”, “l” and “ss” denotes the three modes of operation. * indicates deep based algorithms. ** indicates that GSSL is working in a semi-supervised mode in “b” and “c”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>( \rho )</th>
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<th>30</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>50</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>0.667</td>
<td>0.419</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td>0.514</td>
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<td>0.620</td>
<td>0.628</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>l</td>
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<td>0.379</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.384</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>0.447</td>
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<td>0.790</td>
<td>0.799</td>
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**Table 2.** This table reports the number of examples that are selected per epoch to be fed back to \( \{E_t, D_t\} \) for further fine-tuning when having only 10% labeled data. We also report the prediction accuracy of the selected examples per epoch (the higher the better).

<table>
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<th>10% Labeled</th>
<th>50% Labeled</th>
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6. REFERENCES