
What Makes Multi-modal Learning Better than Single (Provably)

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Appendices

A Proof of Main Results

A.1 Proof of Theorem 1

Proof. Let h'_M denote the minimizer of the population risk over \mathcal{D} with the representation \hat{g}_M , then we can decompose the difference between $r(\hat{h}_M \circ \hat{g}_M) - r(\hat{h}_N \circ \hat{g}_N)$ into two parts:

$$r(\hat{h}_M \circ \hat{g}_M) - r(\hat{h}_N \circ \hat{g}_N) \tag{1}$$

$$= \underbrace{r(\hat{h}_M \circ \hat{g}_M) - r(h'_M \circ \hat{g}_M)}_{J_1} + \underbrace{r(h'_M \circ \hat{g}_M) - r(\hat{h}_N \circ \hat{g}_N)}_{J_2} \tag{2}$$

J_1 can further be decomposed into:

$$J_1 = \underbrace{r(\hat{h}_M \circ \hat{g}_M) - \hat{r}(\hat{h}_M \circ \hat{g}_M)}_{J_{11}} + \underbrace{\hat{r}(\hat{h}_M \circ \hat{g}_M) - \hat{r}(h'_M \circ \hat{g}_M)}_{J_{12}} \tag{3}$$

$$+ \underbrace{\hat{r}(h'_M \circ \hat{g}_M) - r(h'_M \circ \hat{g}_M)}_{J_{13}} \tag{4}$$

(5)

Clearly, $J_{12} \leq 0$ since \hat{h}_M is the minimizer of the empirical risk over \mathcal{D} with the representation \hat{g}_M . And $J_{11} + J_{13} \leq 2 \sup_{h \in \mathcal{H}, g_M \in \mathcal{G}_M} |r(h \circ g_M) - \hat{r}(h \circ g_M)|$.

$$\begin{aligned} & \sup_{h \in \mathcal{H}, g_M \in \mathcal{G}_M} |\hat{r}(h \circ g_M) - r(h \circ g_M)| \\ &= \sup_{h \in \mathcal{H}, g_M \in \mathcal{G}_M} \left| \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \ell(h \circ g_M(\mathbf{x}_i), y_i) - \mathbb{E}_{(\mathbf{x}', y') \sim \mathcal{D}} [\ell(h \circ g_M(\mathbf{x}'), y')] \right| \end{aligned}$$

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Since ℓ is bounded by a constant C , we have $0 \leq \ell(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathbf{x}), y) \leq C$ for any (\mathbf{x}, y) . As one pair (\mathbf{x}_i, y_i) changes, the above equation cannot change by at most $\frac{2C}{m}$. Applying McDiarmid's[4] inequality, we obtain that with probability $1 - \delta/2$:

$$\sup_{h \in \mathcal{H}, g_{\mathcal{M}} \in \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}} |\hat{r}(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}) - r(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}})| \quad (6)$$

$$\leq \mathbb{E}_{(\mathbf{x}_i, y_i) \sim \mathcal{D}} \sup_{h \in \mathcal{H}, g_{\mathcal{M}} \in \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}} \left| \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \ell(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathbf{x}_i), y_i) - \mathbb{E}_{(\mathbf{x}', y') \sim \mathcal{D}} [\ell(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathbf{x}'), y')] \right| \quad (7)$$

$$+ C \sqrt{\frac{2 \ln(2/\delta)}{m}} \quad (8)$$

To proceed the proof, we introduce a popular result of Rademacher complexity in the following lemma[2]:

Lemma 1. *Let $U, \{U_i\}_{i=1}^m$ be i.i.d. random variables taking values in some space \mathcal{U} and $\mathcal{F} \subseteq [a, b]^{\mathcal{U}}$ is a set of bounded functions. We have*

$$\mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left(\mathbb{E}[f(U)] - \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m f(U_i) \right) \right] \leq 2\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{F}) \quad (9)$$

Proof of lemma 1. Denote $\{U'_i\}_{i=1}^m$ be ghost examples of $\{U_i\}_{i=1}^m$, i.e. U'_i be independent of each other and have the same distribution as U_i . Then we have,

$$\mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left(\mathbb{E}[f(U)] - \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m f(U_i) \right) \right] \quad (10)$$

$$= \mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left(\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m (\mathbb{E}[f(U)] - f(U_i)) \right) \right] \quad (11)$$

$$\stackrel{(a)}{=} \mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left(\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbb{E}[f(U'_i) - f(U_i) \mid \{U_i\}_{i=1}^m] \right) \right] \quad (12)$$

$$\leq \mathbb{E} \left[\mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left(\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m (f(U'_i) - f(U_i)) \right) \mid \{U_i\}_{i=1}^m \right] \right] \quad (13)$$

$$\stackrel{(b)}{=} \mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left(\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m (f(U'_i) - f(U_i)) \right) \right] \quad (14)$$

$$= \mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left(\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \sigma_i (f(U'_i) - f(U_i)) \right) \right] \quad (15)$$

$$\leq \mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \sigma_i f(U'_i) \right] + \mathbb{E} \left[\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \sigma_i f(U_i) \right] \quad (16)$$

$$\stackrel{(c)}{=} 2\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{F}). \quad (17)$$

where $\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_m$ is i.i.d. $\{\pm 1\}$ -valued random variables with $\mathbb{P}(\sigma_i = +1) = \mathbb{P}(\sigma_i = -1) = 1/2$. (a) (b) are obtained by the tower property of conditional expectation; (c) follows from the definition of Rademacher complexity of \mathcal{F} . \square

Consider the function class:

$$\ell_{\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}} := \{(\mathbf{x}, y) \mapsto \ell(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathbf{x}), y) \mid h \in \mathcal{H}, g_{\mathcal{M}} \in \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}\}$$

let $\mathcal{F} = \ell_{\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}}$ in lemma 1, then we have equation (7) can be upper bound by $2\mathfrak{R}_m(\ell_{\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}})$. To directly work with the hypothesis function class, we need to decompose the Rademacher term which

consists of the loss function classes. We center the function $\ell'(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathbf{x}), y) = \ell(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathbf{x}), y) - \ell(\mathbf{0}, y)$. The constant-shift property of Rademacher averages[2] indicates that

$$\mathfrak{R}_m(\ell_{\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}}) \leq \mathfrak{R}_m(\ell'_{\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}}) + \frac{C}{\sqrt{m}}$$

Since ℓ' is Lipschitz in its first coordinate with constant L and $\ell'(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}(\mathbf{0}), y) = 0$, applying the contraction principle[2], we have:

$$\mathfrak{R}_m(\ell'_{\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}}) \leq 2L\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{H} \circ G_{\mathcal{M}})$$

Combining the above discussion, we obtain:

$$J_1 \leq 8L\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{H} \circ G_{\mathcal{M}}) + \frac{4C}{\sqrt{m}} + 2C\sqrt{\frac{2\ln(2/\delta)}{m}}$$

For J_2 , by the definition of $h'_{\mathcal{M}}$:

$$J_2 = \inf_{h_{\mathcal{M}} \in \mathcal{H}} \left[r(h_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) - r(\hat{h}_{\mathcal{N}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{N}}) \right] \quad (18)$$

$$\leq \sup_{h_{\mathcal{N}} \in \mathcal{H}} \inf_{h_{\mathcal{M}} \in \mathcal{H}} [r(h_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) - r(h_{\mathcal{N}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{N}})] \quad (19)$$

$$= \inf_{h_{\mathcal{M}} \in \mathcal{H}} [r(h_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) - r(h^* \circ g^*)] - \inf_{h_{\mathcal{N}} \in \mathcal{H}} [r(h_{\mathcal{N}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{N}}) - r(h^* \circ g^*)] \quad (20)$$

$$= \eta(\hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) - \eta(\hat{g}_{\mathcal{N}}) \quad (21)$$

$$= \gamma_S(\mathcal{M}, \mathcal{N}) \quad (22)$$

Finally,

$$r(\hat{h}_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) - r(\hat{h}_{\mathcal{N}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{N}}) \leq \gamma_S(\mathcal{M}, \mathcal{N}) + 8L\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}) + \frac{4C}{\sqrt{m}} + 2C\sqrt{\frac{2\ln(2/\delta)}{m}}$$

with probability $1 - \frac{\delta}{2}$. □

A.2 Proof of Theorem 2

Proof. Let $\tilde{h}_{\mathcal{M}}$ denote the minimizer of the population risk over \mathcal{D} with the representation $\hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}$, then we have:

$$\eta(\hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) \quad (23)$$

$$= r(\tilde{h}_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) - r(h^* \circ g^*) \quad (24)$$

$$\leq \underbrace{r(\hat{h}_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) - \hat{r}(\hat{h}_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}})}_{J_1} + \underbrace{\hat{r}(\hat{h}_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) - \hat{r}(h^* \circ g^*)}_{J_2} + \underbrace{\hat{r}(h^* \circ g^*) - r(h^* \circ g^*)}_{J_3} \quad (25)$$

J_2 is the centering empirical risk. Following the similar analysis in Theorem 1, we obtain:

$$J_1 + J_3 \leq \sup_{h \in \mathcal{H}, g_{\mathcal{M}} \in \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}} |r(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}}) - \hat{r}(h \circ g_{\mathcal{M}})| + \sup_{h \in \mathcal{H}, g \in \mathcal{G}} |r(h \circ g) - \hat{r}(h \circ g)| \quad (26)$$

$$\leq 4L\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}) + 4L\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}) + \frac{4C}{\sqrt{m}} + 2C\sqrt{\frac{2\ln(2/\delta)}{m}} \quad (27)$$

with probability $1 - \delta$. Combining the above discussion yields the result:

$$\eta(\hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}) \leq \quad (28)$$

$$4L\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}_{\mathcal{M}}) + 4L\mathfrak{R}_m(\mathcal{H} \circ \mathcal{G}) + \frac{4C}{\sqrt{m}} + 2C\sqrt{\frac{2\ln(2/\delta)}{m}} + \hat{L}(\hat{h}_{\mathcal{M}} \circ \hat{g}_{\mathcal{M}}, \mathcal{S}) \quad (29)$$

□

A.3 Proof of Proposition 1

Proof. With the l_2 loss, we have

$$\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}, y \sim h^* \circ g^*(\mathbf{x})} \{ \ell(h \circ g(\mathbf{x}), y) - \ell(h^* \circ g^*(\mathbf{x}), y) \} = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}} \left[\left| \boldsymbol{\beta}^\top \mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{x} - \boldsymbol{\beta}^{*\top} \mathbf{A}^{*\top} \mathbf{x} \right|^2 \right]$$

Define the covariance matrix[9] for two linear projections \mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}' as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Gamma(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}') &= \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{x} (\mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{x})^\top & \mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{x} (\mathbf{A}'^\top \mathbf{x})^\top \\ \mathbf{A}'^\top \mathbf{x} (\mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{x})^\top & \mathbf{A}'^\top \mathbf{x} (\mathbf{A}'^\top \mathbf{x})^\top \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A}^\top \Sigma \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{A}^\top \Sigma \mathbf{A}' \\ \mathbf{A}'^\top \Sigma \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{A}'^\top \Sigma \mathbf{A}' \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \Gamma_{11}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) & \Gamma_{12}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \\ \Gamma_{21}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) & \Gamma_{22}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned} \quad (30)$$

where Σ denotes the covariance matrix of the distribution $\mathbb{P}_{\mathbf{x}}$. Then the *latent representation quality* of \mathbf{A} becomes:

$$\eta(\mathbf{A}) = \inf_{\boldsymbol{\beta}: \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\| \leq C_b} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}} \left[\left| \boldsymbol{\beta}^\top \mathbf{A}^\top \mathbf{x} - \boldsymbol{\beta}^{*\top} \mathbf{A}^{*\top} \mathbf{x} \right|^2 \right] \quad (31)$$

$$= \inf_{\boldsymbol{\beta}: \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\| \leq C_b} [\boldsymbol{\beta}, -\boldsymbol{\beta}^*] \Gamma(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) [\boldsymbol{\beta}, -\boldsymbol{\beta}^*]^\top \quad (32)$$

For sufficiently large C_b , the constrained minimizer of (32) is equivalent to the unconstrained minimizer. Following the standard discussion of the quadratic convex optimization [3], if $\Gamma_{11}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \succ 0$ and $\det \Gamma_{11}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \neq 0$, the solution of the above minimization problem is $\boldsymbol{\beta} = \Gamma_{11}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*)^{-1} \Gamma_{12}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \boldsymbol{\beta}^*$, and

$$\eta(\mathbf{A}) = \boldsymbol{\beta}^* \Gamma_{sch}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \boldsymbol{\beta}^{*\top} \quad (33)$$

where $\Gamma_{sch}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*)$ is the Schur complement of $\Gamma(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*)$, defined as:

$$\Gamma_{sch}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \quad (34)$$

$$= \Gamma_{22}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) - \Gamma_{21}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \Gamma_{11}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*)^{-1} \Gamma_{12}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{A}^*) \quad (35)$$

Under the orthogonal assumption, $\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}}$ is nonsingular. Notice that $\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{N}}$ cannot be orthonormal in our settings. And Σ is also invertible. Therefore, the Schur complement of $\Gamma(\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}}, \mathbf{A}^*)$ exists,

$$\Gamma_{sch}(\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}}, \mathbf{A}^*) = \mathbf{A}^{*\top} \Sigma \mathbf{A}^* - \left(\mathbf{A}^{*\top} \Sigma \hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}} \right) \left(\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}}^\top \Sigma \hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}} \right)^{-1} \left(\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}}^\top \Sigma \mathbf{A}^* \right) = \mathbf{0} \quad (36)$$

Hence, $\eta(\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}}) = 0$. Given the above discussion, we obtain:

$$\gamma_S(\mathcal{M}, \mathcal{N}) = \eta(\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{M}}) - \eta(\hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{N}}) \quad (37)$$

$$= 0 - \inf_{\boldsymbol{\beta}: \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\| \leq C_b} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}} \left[\left| \boldsymbol{\beta}^\top \hat{\mathbf{A}}_{\mathcal{N}}^\top \mathbf{x} - \boldsymbol{\beta}^{*\top} \mathbf{A}^{*\top} \mathbf{x} \right|^2 \right] \leq 0 \quad (38)$$

□

B The Composite Framework in Applications

As we stated in Section 3, our model well captures the essence of lots of existing multi-modal methods [1, 6, 7, 11, 10, 8]. Below, we explicitly discuss how these methods fit well into our general model, by providing the corresponding function class \mathcal{G} under each method.

Audiovisual fusion for sound recognition [6]: The audio and visual models map the respective inputs to segment-level representations, which are then used to obtain single-modal predictions, \mathbf{h}_a and \mathbf{h}_v , respectively. The attention fusion function n_{attn} , ingests the single-modal predictions, \mathbf{h}_a and \mathbf{h}_v , to produce weights for each modality, $\boldsymbol{\alpha}_a$ and $\boldsymbol{\alpha}_v$. The single-modal audio and visual predictions, \mathbf{h}_a and \mathbf{h}_v , are mapped to $\tilde{\mathbf{h}}_a$ and $\tilde{\mathbf{h}}_v$ via functions n_a and n_v respectively, and fused using the attention weights, $\boldsymbol{\alpha}_a$ and $\boldsymbol{\alpha}_v$. In summary, g has the form:

$$g = \tilde{\mathbf{h}}_{av} = \boldsymbol{\alpha}_a \odot \tilde{\mathbf{h}}_a + \boldsymbol{\alpha}_v \odot \tilde{\mathbf{h}}_v$$

Channel-Exchanging-Network [11]: A feature map will be replaced by that of other modalities at the same position, if its scaling factor is lower than a threshold. g in this problem can be formulated as a multi-dimensional mapping $g := (f_1, \dots, f_M)$, where subnetwork $f_m(x)$ adopts the multi-modal data x as input and fuses multi-modal information by channel exchanging.

Other Fusion Methods [7, 10, 8, 1]: Methods in these works can be formulated into the form we mentioned in the example in Section 3. Specifically, recall the example, g has the form: $\varphi_1 \oplus \varphi_2 \oplus \dots \oplus \varphi_M$, where \oplus denotes a fusion operation, (e.g., averaging, concatenation, and self-attention), and φ_k is a deep network which uses each modality data $x^{(k)}$ as input. Under these notations:

- For the early-fusion BERT method in [8], the temporal features are concatenated before the BERT layer and only a single BERT module is utilized. Here, the \oplus is a concatenation function, and g has the form (φ_1, φ_2) .
- [10, 7] discussed different fusion methods by choosing \oplus . (i) Max fusion: the \oplus is the maximum function and $g := \max\{\varphi_1, \dots, \varphi_M\}$; (ii) Sum fusion: $g := \sum \varphi_m$; (iii) averaging; (iv) self-attention and so on.
- The fusion section in the survey [1] provides many works which can be incorporated into our framework.

C Discussions on Training Setting

Existing works on multi-modal training demonstrates that naively fusing different modalities results insufficient representation learning of each modality [10, 5]. In our experiments, we train our multi-modal model using two methods: (1), naively end-to-end late-fusion training; (2), firstly train the uni-modal models and train a multi-modal classifier over the uni-modal encoders. As shown in Table 1 and Table 2, naively end-to-end training is unstable, affecting the representation learning of each modality, while fine-tuning a multi-modal classifier over trained uni-modal encoders is more stable and the results are more consistent with our theory. Noting that we use the late-fusion framework here, similar to [10, 5].

Table 1: Latent representation quality vs. The number of the sample size on IEMOCAP. In this table, we show the results from naively end-to-end late-fusion training

Modalities	Test Acc (Ratio of Sample Size)				
	10^{-4}	10^{-3}	10^{-2}	10^{-1}	1
T	23.66±1.28	29.08±3.34	45.63±0.29	48.30±1.31	49.93±0.57
TA	25.06±1.05	34.28±4.54	47.28±1.24	50.46±0.61	51.08±0.66
TV	24.71±0.87	38.37±3.12	46.54±1.62	49.50±1.04	53.03±0.21
TVA	24.71±0.76	32.24±1.17	46.39±3.82	50.75±1.45	53.89±0.47

Table 2: Latent representation quality vs. The number of the sample size on IEMOCAP. In this table, we firstly train the uni-modal models and train a multi-modal classifier over the uni-modal encoders to get multi-modal results.

Modalities	Test Acc (Ratio of Sample Size)				
	10^{-4}	10^{-3}	10^{-2}	10^{-1}	1
T	23.66±1.28	29.08±3.34	45.63±0.29	48.30±1.31	49.93±0.57
TA	22.74±1.86	35.14±0.38	49.15±0.43	50.61±0.28	51.78±0.08
TV	23.64±0.07	36.64±1.79	46.91±0.68	48.96±0.47	53.24±0.35
TVA	25.40±1.06	40.87±2.47	50.67±0.63	52.54±0.60	54.55±0.29

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