Deep hierarchical model for hierarchical selective classification and zero shot learning

Abstract

Object recognition in real-world image scenes is still an open problem. A large number of object classes with complex relationships between them makes the classification problem particularly challenging. Standard N-way discrete classifiers treat all classes as disconnected and unrelated, and therefore unable to learn from their semantic relationships. In this work, we present a hierarchical inter-class relationship model, and train it using a newly proposed probability-based loss function. We show the model advantages deploying it in two scenarios. The first one, selective classification, deals with the problem of low-confidence classification, wherein a model is unable to make a successful exact classification. In this case, our model returns a corresponding closest super-class. In the second scenario, the proposed method is used for the zero-shot learning problem. In this case, given a new input, the model returns its hierarchically related group, rather than generating a true unseen group. Extensive experiments with the two scenarios show that the proposed hierarchical model provides significantly better semantic generalization ability compared to a regular N-way classifier, and yields more accurate and meaningful super-class predictions.

1 Introduction

Object recognition from images in real world scene is highly complex problem because the visual world is populated with a vast number of diverse objects, where each object instance may poses many visual forms. Furthermore, with the growing number of classes, the similarity structures between them become complex. Because the high complexity of these recognition tasks, most existing work focus on simplifying the problem to a supervised single-label classification problem. Unfortunately, since one-vs-all classifiers treat all classes as unrelated, visual recognition systems cannot transfer semantic information about learned classes. A remedy for this issue is to employ the natural continuity of visual space instead of artificially partitioning it into disjoint categories (Frome et al., 2013; Rippel et al., 2015). By embracing the learning of shared structure between different classes we show how to obtain a better model in its semantic meaning, i.e. a model which makes a semantically reasonable error.

We propose to learn the hierarchical inter-class relationship model, by presenting a novel hierarchical probability-based loss function, which we call **soft-NLL**. Our loss function gives a probability weight according to a specific classes graph distance metric. A model trained with soft-NLL loss shows a significant improvement in its semantic generalization ability in an order of magnitude over existing methods, while guaranteeing a minor decrease in the top-k accuracy compared to a widely used hard-NLL loss. Our approach is independent of the specific prediction model and thus can always benefit from design progress. Furthermore, we develop an algorithm where given the top-k predictions it uses classes taxonomy to return theirs closest super-class. We define two useful cases for super-group retrieval and show that our soft-NLL outperforms in both applications in its super-class generation abilities.

One related approach is to learn to represent images and labels jointly in an embedding space. Frome et al. (2013); Norouzi et al. (2013) learn semantic relationships between classes using a semantic word embedding model, which contains the class labels in its vocabulary, where each class gets its embedding vector. In parallel, they pre-train a deep neural network for visual object recognition. Then, both methods develop a specific mapping of the images into the semantic embedding space.

Both methods use their models for zero-shot learning. However, Frome et al. (2013) show modest performance in its semantic relevance meaning.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. In Section 2 we present our hierarchical probability-based loss function and define an algorithm where given an input it returns its closest super-group. In Section 3 we describe the datasets used in experiments, as well as metrics, deep architectures and training details. In Section 4 we presents the results, examining our loss semantic relevance ability and its advantages for super-group retrieval. We conclude in section 5 and provide a few directions for future work.

2 THE PROPOSED METHOD

2.1 SOFT NEGATIVE LOG LIKELIHOOD LOSS FORMULATION

The problem we address in this paper is a supervised multiclass classification. Following common setup, we assume the input $X \in \mathcal{X}$ and label $Y \in \mathcal{Y} = \{1, ..., \mathcal{C}\}$ can be modelled by a joint distribution $\pi(X, Y)$. The labels are organized in a taxonomy graph G, where each directed edge represents an 'is a' relation, and the distance between nodes reflects a semantic relationship between them. Our goal is to model these semantic relationships, so that its top-k predictions will be closely related to the true label according to G.

The standard objective formulation used in the context of deep learning for a multiclass classification problem is the negative log likelihood (NLL) loss, which is also referred to as the cross entropy loss with the probability class indicator. Given a probabilistic model $\hat{\pi}(Y|X)$ and a sample (x_0, y_0), NLL loss is defined by

$$l(x_0, y_0) = -\sum_{y=1}^{\mathcal{C}} \pi(y|x) \log \hat{\pi}(y|x) \text{ , where } \pi(y|x) = \mathbf{1}_{(y=y_0)}$$

This formulation assigns the whole probability weight to a single class with all other classes having zero weight. This approach artificially partitions the visual space into disjoint categories and does not take into account semantic relationships between classes.

We propose to use a 'soft' (instead of above 'hard') model $\pi(y|x)$ as a semantic relationship measure. This model can be learned as the class graph taxonomy G. More formally, let $\Pi \in \mathbb{R}^{\mathcal{C} \times \mathcal{C}}$ represent a semantic probability taxonomy relationship (or distance) map, where $\Pi_{i,j} \triangleq \pi(i|j)$. We define the soft NLL loss as:

$$l(x_0, y_0) = -\sum_{y=1}^{\mathcal{C}} \Pi_{y_0, y} \log \hat{\pi}(y|x) \tag{1}$$

Π is a class row-wise i.e. each ith row resembles the ith true-class probabilities, which are inversely proportional to the on-the-graph distance defined,

$$d_G(\text{class node i, class node j}) \triangleq \text{shortest path length between nodes}$$

Details about hyper-parameters selection is described Section in 3.4.

2.2 SUPER-GROUP RETRIEVAL ALGORITHM

In this section we present a super-group retrieval algorithm. Soft-NLL has a better semantic generalization ability as we show below in Section 4.1. Its top-k predictions are more accurate with respect to the true class. Therefore, they can be used as a coarse-grained classifier and retrieve a better super group, compared to standard models.

Given the model top-k predictions the algorithm follows these steps:

1. **Clean the top-k predictions from less relevant predictions:**
   The model top-k predictions may be noisy. Based on the graph taxonomy we can generate a cleaner subset of the top-k predictions.

More specifically, given the top-k predictions, we calculate a subset of them with each ith class l-hCorrectSet as follows,

$$S_i(l, k) = \{\text{top-k predictions}\} \cap \{\text{l-hCorrectSet}_i\}$$

Where for a given class its l-hCorrectSet is the l nearest set of classes gathered from the graph taxonomy as defined by Frome et al. (2013). We choose the highest matching set, $S_C(l, k)$ where $C = \underset{i}{\operatorname{argmax}}|S_i(l, k)|$.

2. **Generate super-group candidates:**
   The set $\{A_S\}$ equals to super-group nodes which are ancestors for each class in $S_C(l, k)$.

3. **Choose the most specific super-group:**
   The most specific super group is the $a \in \{A_S\}$ which is the lowest common ancestor (LCA) of $S_C(l, k)$ generated by $LCA = \underset{a \in \{A_S\}}{\min} \sum_{s \in S_C(l,k)} d_G(a, s)$ [1].

For example, suppose we have a simple taxonomy as illustrates in Figure 1, where the leaf nodes are valid classes and the other nodes are theirs super-classes. Suppose we got a sample from class 1, and our top-3 predictions are: 0,1 and 6. Each class has its own 3-hCorrestSet, where the true class hCorrestSet gives the maximal intersection set with the top3 predication i.e. $S_1(3, 3) = 0, 1$. We have three super-group candidates: A,B,D where D is the LCA generates super-group. In Section 3.5 we discuss ways of choosing the algorithm's hyper-parameters k and l.

Figure 1: Super-class generation example

3 EXPERIMENTS

The objective of this work is to develop a method for generating a semantic vision model i.e. a model which makes semantically relevant predictions even when it makes errors. Moreover, we show its advantage in super group generation in two different scenarios of selective classification and zero shot learning.

3.1 DATASET

ImageNet is the largest publicly available labeled image dataset, encompassing more than 14 million images that belong to more than 21K object categories (Deng et al., 2009). The object categories are nouns in the WordNet database of the English language (Miller, 1995) . A fundamental property of WordNet is its hierarchical organization of concepts.

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[1]The taxonomy is a graph i.e. there may be some routes connected two nodes, therefore generating LCA in the mentioned way is better than by taking the deepest ancestor, $LCA = \underset{a \in \{A_S\}}{\max} \sum d_G(a, root)$.

In our experiments we adopt a subset of ImageNet the ILSVRC12 dataset, which gather 1K classes that are randomly selected according to certain criteria that aim to reduce ambiguity. It consists of approximately 1.3 million training images and 50k validation labeled images from each category.

As illustrated in Figure 4, ILSVRC12 taxonomy is a complex directed graph, there may be multiple routes from the root to the leaf nodes. Its minimal spanning tree contains the leaf nodes is highly not balanced, where routes depth range is between 6 and 18.

3.2 METRICS

We use several metrics in the evaluation process, each was averaged on test images. The *flat hit@k* is a standard metric 0/1 error used in large scale classification problems which returns a success if the true label resides in the top k predictions. To measure the semantic quality of predictions beyond the true label, we also evaluate with the hierarchical-precision@k (*hp@k*) introduced in Frome et al. (2013), which is a semantic relevance of the model top-k predictions. It is computed as a fraction of the top-k predictions that overlap with the true class *k-hCorrectSet*:

$$hp@k = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=1}^{N} \frac{\text{number of model's top-k predictions in k-hCorrectSet for image i}}{k}$$

where for a true class k-hCorrectSet is the k nearest classes set gathered from the graph taxonomy. For detailed description please refer to (Frome et al., 2013).

In order to evaluate super-group (SG) generation succession we adopt two metrics, $SG\text{-}hit$ is a 0/1 error metric, where given a predicated label returns success if there is a path between the SG candidate and the true class. The latter metric may be useless because the algorithm may return the root, therefore we calculate how much a candidate is specific by measuring its distance to the true class i.e. $SG\text{-}specificity = d_G(SG, true label)$. The last two metrics are based on the graph taxonomy. We check the SG generation succession in two scenarios: selective classification and zero shot learning.

3.3 TRAINING DETAILS

In our experiments we are comparing semantic ability of different loss paradigms while using the same core vision model. We train Resnet50 proposed by He et al. (2015) and Alexnet presented in Krizhevsky et al. (2012) covnvolutional networks as our core vision models. We use the data preprocessing, training procedures, and hyperparameters as described in these papers.

3.4 SOFT HIERARCHICAL BASED PROBABILITIES: CHOOSING HYPER-PARAMETERS

In this section we deal with determining soft labels hierarchical probabilities hyper-parameters Π which defined in Equation 1. Given the ith row which resembles the true ith class, the probabilities of all jth corresponding classes $\Pi_{i,j}$ satisfy

$$\Pi_{i,i}/\Pi_{i,j} = f_d, \ \forall \ i,j \ \text{s.t} \ d_G(i,j) = d \tag{2}$$

where $\Pi_{i,i}$ is the true class probability. That is the probabilities of all jth classes with equal distance d to the ith true class, are degrade by a constant *shrink factor* f_d relative to the true ith class probability. The values f_d are in direct relation to the on-graph distance metric. For instance, Table 1 describes the probability values given for the class 'tabby' with the shrink vector $[f_2, f_{3,4}, f_{5,6}] = [10, 100, 1000]$, where $f_{3,4}$ indicates that both distance level 3 and 4 level gets a same value.

We empirically investigate the impact of different sets of f values on the flat-hit and hierarchical-precision metrics on the ILSVRC 2012 1K dataset. To provide a baseline for comparison, we compared the performance of our model to a hard-NLL model, where all models trained with Renset50. Table 2 shows results for the mentioned models on both the flat and hierarchical metrics and Figure 2 (left) visualizes these results. First, Comparing models 1-3 to the baseline 0 shows that adding probability weight to far classes increases the semantic metric performance hp@k for growing k values. Second, if we skip distance levels the performance is degraded as can be showed in model 4, where we skip on distance level with d=2 giving it these classes a zero probability. Moreover,

Table 1: Soft hierarchical probabilities for a specific class ('tabby') with the shrink vector $[f_2, f_{3,4}, f_{5,6}] = [10, 100, 1K]$

distance level [d]	#classes	shrink factor [f_d]	Probability weights
0	1	1	61.9%
2	4	10	6.19%
3	0	-	-
4	9	100	0.619%
5	29	1K	0.0619%
6	94	1K	0.0619%
≥ 7	863	∞	0

Table 2: Shirk factor f_d impact on model performance on ImageNet ILSVRC12 1K validation set trained with Resnet50

Model name	Flat hit@k (%)				Hierarchical precision@k			
	1	2	5	10	2	5	10	20
[0] hard-NLL	75.85	85.79	92.81	95.75	0.571	0.423	0.377	0.360
[1] $f_2 = 10$	75.12	84.47	91.48	94.85	0.696	0.566	0.482	0.427
[2] $f_2, f_{3,4} = 10, 100$	74.74	84.24	90.81	94.04	0.706	0.657	0.654	0.620
[3] $f_2, f_{3,4}, f_{5,6} = 10, 100, 1K$	74.59	84.04	90.81	93.91	0.702	0.655	0.662	0.684
[4] $f_2, f_{3,4}, f_{5,6} = 0, 100, 1K$	75.64	85.49	92.01	94.92	0.570	0.519	0.585	0.631
[5] $f_2, f_{3,4}, f_{5,6} = 25, 250, 1K$	75.73	85.63	92.04	95.95	0.683	0.615	0.614	0.623

using smaller weights yields a model which suffers with only minor decrease in flat-hit while still boosting the hp@k as can be seen in model 5 relative to model 3.

Figure 2: Visualization of flat-hit@k and hp@k metrics calculated on ILSVRC12 1K validation dataset. (Left) Performance for different f_d values trained model relative to baseline hard-NLL. (Right) Comparing different loss paradigms, where soft-NLL resnet50 is the same model like 5 in left figure. Each specific set of flat-hit and hp@k point is indicated by a different symbol. The sets are displayed near it's corresponding symbol for one curve in each figure and are equivalent to all other curves. We would like to get curves which are right and up i.e. with better topk accuracy and better hp@k

3.5 SUPER-GROUP RETRIEVAL: CHOOSING HYPER-PARAMETERS

The algorithm for super-group generation incorporates two hyper-parameters k and l, i.e the top-k predictions and the extent of the hCorrectSet. Clearly, increasing k and l improves SG-hit while hurting SG-Specificity. In this section we deal with choosing these parameters; in other words we investigate the impact of a combination of these parameters on super-group performance.

The use of super-group generation is for hard scenarios where the model is probable to miss its top-1 or when making an inference for novel classes. In this section we focus in the first case while taking into consideration the samples where the standard sotmax-NLL makes an error in it's top1 prediction. The experiments were performed with the same trained soft-NLL model used for results in Section 4.1. As baseline we compared the performance of our model to a standard softmax model. Both models were trained with resnet50 topology.

First, we observe that k should be determined adaptively according to the uncertainty in the model top-k predictions. This uncertainty can be measured by the model top-k probability coverage defined,

$$p_\theta = \sum_{i \in top\text{-}k} \hat{p}_i$$

where $\hat{p}_i$ is the model softmax response for the ith class. That is, if a small k say $k = 5$ gives high probability coverage say $p_\theta = 0.95$ it is considered as high certainty in the predictions. This adaptive approach is needed because increasing k in cases when p_θ is high may degrade $SG\text{-}Specificity$, while when k values are low we see degrade in hitting the super-group. Thus, in the experiments we chose to take $k \geq 5$ while demanding that $p_\theta > p_{tresh}$, where p_{thresh} is a fixed threshold.

Figure 3 displays $SG\text{-}Specificity$ vs $SG\text{-}hit$ for different values of k-probability coverage and l values. The curves gives a systematic way of choosing the best k and l. Given a demand on one metric dictates the sets of parameter to get the best other metric, e.g for $SG\text{-}hit = 0.7$ the best lowest $SG\text{-}Specificity$ is given for soft-NLL with $l = 20$, for $SG\text{-}Specificity = 3$ the highest $SG\text{-}hit$ is given for soft-NLL with $l = 20$. Moreover, Soft-NLL outperformed the standard softmax model with better hit and specificity for each such demand.

Figure 3: SG-hit and SG-specificity metrics calculated on top-1 miss cases of hard-NLL model in ILSVRC12 1K validation dataset. The effect of varying k and l on SG generation for soft-NLL and hard-NLL models trained with resnet50. For each l we use a set of k-probability coverage: 0.7,0.85,0.95,0.99 which are arranged from left to right for each curve. In order to do well We would like to get curves which are right and bottom i.e. with better hit and more specific

4 RESULTS

4.1 SEMANTIC RELEVANCE

This section presents flat and hierarchical results on the ILSVRC 2012 1K dataset. We compare our soft-NLL to standard softmax-NLL using two architectures Resnet50 and Alexnet, and to DeVise

Figure 4: taxonomy statistics: number of different routes from root to leaf histogram (left), leaf routes depth histogram, remark: multiple routes per leaf included (right).

Table 3: Comparison of model performance on test set (ImageNet ILSVRC12 1K validation set)

Model name	Flat hit@k (%)				Hierarchical precision@k			
	1	2	5	10	2	5	10	20
NLL-Alexnet	58.6	70.1	80.8	86.7	0.461	0.345	0.314	0.317
DeVise(dim=500)	53.2	65.2	76.7	83.3	0.447	0.352	0.331	0.341
NLL-Resnet50	75.9	85.8	92.8	95.8	0.571	0.423	0.377	0.360
soft-NLL-Alexnet	57.7	69.2	79.7	85.6	0.542	0.493	0.491	0.490
soft-NLL-Resnet50	75.7	85.6	92.0	96.0	0.683	0.615	0.614	0.623

approach presented in Frome et al. (2013) trained with Alexnet. The hyper-parameter search setup used with soft-NLL loss is specified in details in Section 3.4

Table 3 shows results for the mentioned models on both the flat and hierarchical metrics. Figure 2 (right) visualizes these results. The soft-NLL shows a significant improvement in its semantic generalization ability while exhibiting only a minor decrease in the top-k accuracy compared to standard softmax-NLL on a same deep topologies. For Resnet50 at k=5 the soft-NLL gives 0.615 while hard-NLL gives 0.423 model which is about 45% relative improvement, at k=10 soft-NLL and hard-NLL gives 0.614 and 0.377 respectively which is a 63% relative improvement. Our relative improvement is in order of magnitude compared with the improvement given by DeVise, for k=5 and k=10 De-Vise Frome et al. (2013) method gives a relative improvement of about 2% and 5% respectively over the standard model.

4.2 Selective Classification

Soft-NLL can be used to make reasonable inferences given hard candidate cases as shown in Section 4.1. Because it has a better semantic generalization ability, it can return the super group when it is improbable that we make successful exact classification. In this section we discuss the selection, i.e. how to identify the cases where top-1 prediction is improbable to make hit and in such cases propose to use the benefits of out model to return the super-class.

When we consider a large-scale problem ($|Y| \gg 1$), the standard approach is to consider the top-k predictions where $k > 1$. But in practice, given an image a desired need may be to get a single label and not k noisy predictions. On the other hand, considering only the top-1 prediction includes many mistakes even in the state-of-the-art models.

To mitigate the need in a single prediction we propose the following selection mechanism: select top-1 prediction only when it seemed to be 'promised' in success and in harder cases retrieves the super group (SG) in better accuracy. Our selection with guaranteed risk control problem is formalized like Geifman & El-Yaniv (2017), where instead of abstaining the predication we propose to retrieve the

super group as follows,

$$(f, g) \triangleq \begin{cases} top\text{-}1(f_{NLL}(x)), & \text{if } g(x) = 1 \\ SG(top\text{-}k(f_{soft-NLL}(x))), & \text{if } g(x) = 0 \end{cases}$$

where, $f_{NLL}(x)$, $f_{soft-NLL}(x)$ are the standard and semantic classifiers and $g : X \to \{0, 1\}$ is a selection function.

As showed in Geifman & El-Yaniv (2017) the top-1 softmax model response can be used to control the guaranteed error that is,

$$g(x) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } SR_{top\text{-}1}(x) > \theta \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

where θ is determined according the desired error of top-1 predictions, e.g if the model gives a total 75% and the desired error is 5% we should take θ_o to guarantee this risk.

We calculated the risk-coverage curve for many θ values obtained for ILSVRC12 validation dataset. For each value we calculate top-1 error in the guaranteed-controlled set, and super group generation ability metrics in the complementary set as shown in 5. For example, for 65% coverage NLL gives about 92% top-1 accuracy, and in the complementary set (35% coverage) we get $SG\text{-}hit$ of 87% and 3.45 $SG\text{-}specificity$ using soft-NLL model, which outperforms standard NLL SG metrics for all θ-coverage values.

Figure 5: Selective coverage curves, (a) top-1 risk using standard NLL softmax, (b-c) super-group hr and specificity in the complementary sets. The x-axes of (b)-(c) was inverted for relation to (a) easier.

4.3 ZERO SHOT LEARNING

Soft-NLL model can be generalized as a coarse-grained descriptor to return a better super group. In this manner, our model can make reasonable inferences about candidate it has never visually observed. To test this hypothesis, we extracted images from the ImageNet 2011 21K dataset with labels that were not included in the ILSVRC 2012 1K dataset on which our model was trained.

The zero-shot experiments were performed with the same trained Soft-NLL model used for results in Section 4.1. To provide a stronger baseline for comparison, we compared the performance of our model to standard softmax model. We again evaluate super group succession with SG-hit and SG-specificity metrics.

To quantify the performance of the model, we constructed from ImageNet 2011 21K zero-shot data test data set of 1,548 labels that are within two tree hops of the training labels in a same manner defined in Frome et al. (2013). This dataset contains about 4.6 million images.

Figure 6 compared between soft-NLL and hard-NLL $SG\text{-}Specificity$, $SG\text{-}hit$ metrics for different values of k-probability coverage and l values. Soft-NLL outher performed hard-NLL on both metrics. It gets a better hit for each demand in the SG-specificity metric and a better specific super-class for each demand in the hit meter.

Figure 6: SG-hit and SG-specificity metrics calculated on zero-shot '2hop' imagenet11 dataset. Comparision of hard-NLL and soft-NLL performance for varing k and l, where for each l we use a set of k-probability coverage: 0.7,0.85,0.95,0.99 which are arranged from left to right for each curve. In order to do well We would like to get curves which are right and bottom i.e. with better hit and more specific

5 CONCLUSION

In this work we have shown that our hierarchical probability based soft-NLL loss can be trained to give a comparable performance to a state-of-the-art hard-NLL softmax based model on the flat classification metric, while simultaneously making more semantically reasonable errors, which is indicated by its significant improved performance on a hierarchical label metric relative to existing methods (Frome et al., 2013).

We have also shown that our soft-NLL model can be used to retrieve a better coarse category without a further learning process in hard cases where the model is probable to make a miss and for zero-shot scenario deals with making an inference for novel classes.

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