AI3607 Deep Learning and Its Application
Project: **L**inear **A**ssignment **P**roblem Based **G**raph **M**atching

蒋伟, F2003801, 520030910149

(Dated: January 7, 2023)

1 Introduction

Graph matching problem is a fundamental problem in deep learning. This combinational optimization problem aims to find node correspondences (and then naturally edge correspondences) among graphs, which frequently occur as the data structure in recommendation system, knowledge graph, and computer vision. Traditional methods integrate both node-wise similarity and edge-wise similarity to optimize node correspondences, leading to a quadratic assginment programming (QAP) problem which is hard to solve.

In this project, we will focus on some recently-proposed linear assignment problem (LAP) based graph matching algorithms, which only consider similarity at node level. To make full use of given information, these algorithms utilize powerful deep neural networks to fuse the graph structure and edge features all into node features, and then solve the graph matching problem as a linear assignment problem. With Sinkhorn [9] algorithm, the solving process is even differentiable, which makes it possible to train the whole graph matching pipeline end-to-end.

In practice, we will implement a universal LAPGM model trainer compatible with PIA-GM, PCA-GM, IPCA-GM [12], and CIE [13] based on Jittor [6] and Pygmtools [10].

The whole project is available at `https://github.com/Ailon-Island/LAPGM`.
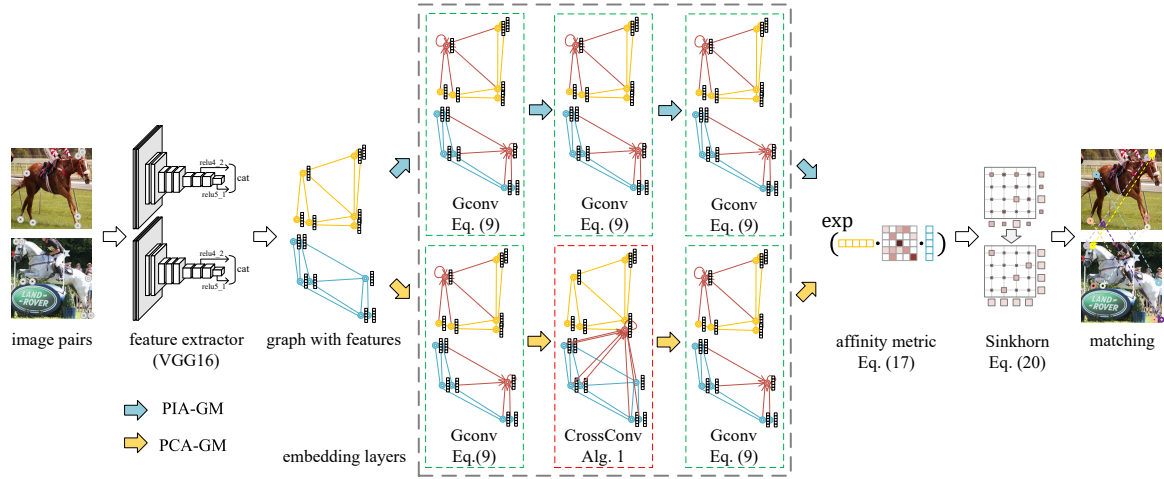
2 Methods

2.1 Image to Graph

In the project, we follow [12] and [13] to work in the setting of graph matching on image keypoints, where we need to first convert images with keypoints into featured graphs to be matched. To construct a graph, we perform Delaunay triangulation [4] on the keypoints. As for node features, we use keypoint descriptors $\mathbf{h}_{si}^{(0)}$ interpolated from CNN (VGG16 [8] in implementation) feature map. Furthermore, there are various choices for edge features $\mathbf{e}_{sij}^{(0)}$ if necessary. For simplicity, we use the edge length as the edge feature. Note that it is also possible to use the edge angle or the descriptors from the connected nodes.
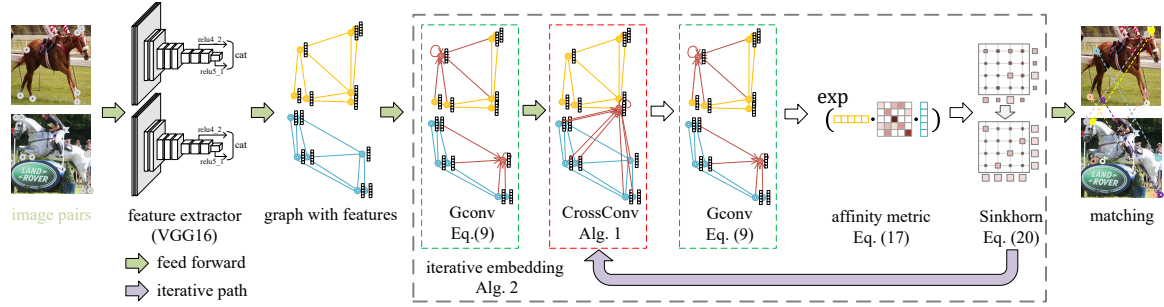
2.2 PIA-GM

Permutation loss and **i**ntra-graph **a**ffinity based **g**raph **m**atching (PIA-GM) proposed in [12] is the first method to adopt deep graph networks to compress a graph into node feature vectors. And they are then able to for the first time introduce the Sinkhorn [9] based permutation loss to solve the graph matching problem.

To be specific, PIA-GM first uses a graph embedding network to compress features around into each node. Then, the node feature vectors $\{\mathbf{h}_{si}\}$ are fed into an affinity network to obtain a node-wise affinity matrix $\mathbf{M}$.

(a) PIA-GM and PCA-GM.

(b) IPCA-GM.

Figure 1: Overview of methods proposed in [12]: PIA-GM, PCA-GM, and IPCA-GM. Pictures adopted from [12].

Next, Sinkhorn layer is used to convert the affinity matrix into a soft assignment in the form of a doubly-stochastic matrix $\mathbf{S}$. Finally, the permutation loss is applied to optimize the node correspondences. For final binary permutation matrix $\mathbf{X}$, we can perform Hungarian [7] algorithm on $\mathbf{S}$ as a final discretization step.

Intra-graph node embedding. The intra-graph node embedding procedure fuses structural information into nodes so as to obtain $\{\mathbf{h}_{si}\}$ from $\left\{\mathbf{h}_{si}^{(0)}\right\}$. This is also called graph convolution (GConv). We apply GConv several times for gradually global information aggregation. One GConv step is defined as follows:

$$\mathbf{m}_{si}^{(k)} = \frac{1}{|(i,j) \in \mathcal{E}_s|} \sum_{j:(i,j)\in\mathcal{E}_s} f_{\text{msg}}\left(\mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k-1)}\right) \tag{1}$$

$$\mathbf{n}_{si}^{(k)} = f_{\text{node}}\left(\mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k-1)}\right) \tag{2}$$

$$\mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k)} = f_{\text{update}}\left(\mathbf{m}_{si}^{(k)}, \mathbf{n}_{si}^{(k)}\right) \tag{3}$$

where $\mathcal{E}_s$ is the set of edges in s-th graph, f_{msg}, f_{node}, and f_{update} are the message passing function, the self-passing function, and the update function, respectively. During the steps, $\mathbf{m}_{si}$ aggregates messages from neighbors of node i and $\mathbf{n}_{si}$ processes the current node feature, then they are combined to update the node feature $\mathbf{h}_{si}$.

Affinity network. With all node features at hand, we need an affinity matrix $\mathbf{M}$ to describe node-to-node similarity between two graphs:

$$\mathbf{M}_{ij} = f_{\text{aff}}\left(\mathbf{h}_{1i}, \mathbf{h}_{2j}\right), \quad i \in \mathcal{V}_1, j \in \mathcal{V}_2$$

where f_{aff} is the affinity score function, which is a weighted bi-linear function followed by an exponential function

$$f_{\text{aff}}\left(\mathbf{h}_{1i}, \mathbf{h}_{2j}\right) = \exp\left(\frac{\mathbf{h}_{1j}^{\top}\mathbf{K}\mathbf{h}_{2j}}{\tau}\right)$$

where $\mathbf{K}$ is the learnable weight, τ is the hyperparameter of temperature. for $\tau > 0$, with $\tau \to 0^+$, f_{aff} becomes more discriminative, while the chance of explosive gradient climbs.

Sinkhorn layer. Sinkhorn [9] method is used as a relaxed approximation of Hungarian algorithm [7] for LAPs. It takes in any non-negative square matrix and outputs a doubly-stochastic matrix as prediction. The Sinkhorn operator is

$$\mathbf{M}'^{(k)} = \mathbf{M}^{(k-1)} \oslash \left(\mathbf{M}^{(k-1)}\mathbf{1}\mathbf{1}^{\top}\right) \tag{4}$$

$$\mathbf{M}^{(k)} = \mathbf{M}'^{(k)} \oslash \left(\mathbf{1}\mathbf{1}^{\top}\mathbf{M}'^{(k)}\right) \tag{5}$$

$$\tag{6}$$

where $\oslash$ means element-wise division, and $\mathbf{1}$ is an all-one column vector. In other word, Sinkhorn algorithm alternately takes row-normalization and column-normalization till convergence. For two graphs with different numbers of nodes, we can pad with some isolated dummy nodes.

With the doubly-stochastic prediction, it is natural to utilize cross-entropy loss as the objective, which is called "permutation" loss in [12]:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{CE}} = -\sum_{i\in\mathcal{V}_1, j\in\mathcal{V}_2} \left(\mathbf{X}_{ij}^{\text{gt}} \log \mathbf{S}_{ij} + \left(1 - \mathbf{X}_{ij}^{\text{gt}}\right) \log\left(1 - \mathbf{S}_{ij}\right)\right)$$

2.3 PCA-GM

As is proposed in [12], **p**ermutation loss and **c**ross-graph **a**ffinity based **g**raph **m**atching (PCA-GM) is an improvement from PIA-GM. It introduces cross-graph fusion to boost cross-graph similarity discovery. For node

$\mathbf{h}_{1i}$ in the first graph, the new cross-graph node embedding procedure (CrossConv) is defined as follows:

$$\mathbf{m}_{1i}^{(k)} = \sum_{j \in \mathcal{V}_2} \hat{\mathbf{S}}_{i,j} f_{\text{msg-cross}} \left(\mathbf{h}_{2j}^{(k-1)} \right) \tag{7}$$

$$\mathbf{n}_{1i}^{(k)} = f_{\text{node-cross}} \left(\mathbf{h}_{1i}^{(k-1)} \right) \tag{8}$$

$$\mathbf{h}_{1i}^{(k)} = f_{\text{update-cross}} \left(\mathbf{m}_{1i}^{(k)}, \mathbf{n}_{1i}^{(k)} \right) \tag{9}$$

where the node-to-node similarity $\hat{\mathbf{S}}$ is the doubly-stochastic matrix predicted from $\left\{ \mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k-1)} \right\}$ with the affinity followed by the Sinkhorn layer.

2.4 IPCA-GM

Note that PCA-GM gets a pre-result $\hat{\mathbf{S}}$ for cross-graph aggregation. Then the final result $\mathbf{S}$ can be interpreted as a refinement of $\hat{\mathbf{S}}$. So, it is natural to perform this refinement iteratively, which is the main idea of **i**terative **p**ermutation loss and **c**ross-graph **a**ffinity based **g**raph **m**atching (IPCA-GM) [12]. The iterative refinement procedure is to do GConv and CrossConv alternately. Note that $\hat{\mathbf{S}}$ is calculated at the end of each CrossConv, GConv pair rather than before each CrossConv, which means the very first CrossConv is a "GConv" with different parameters.
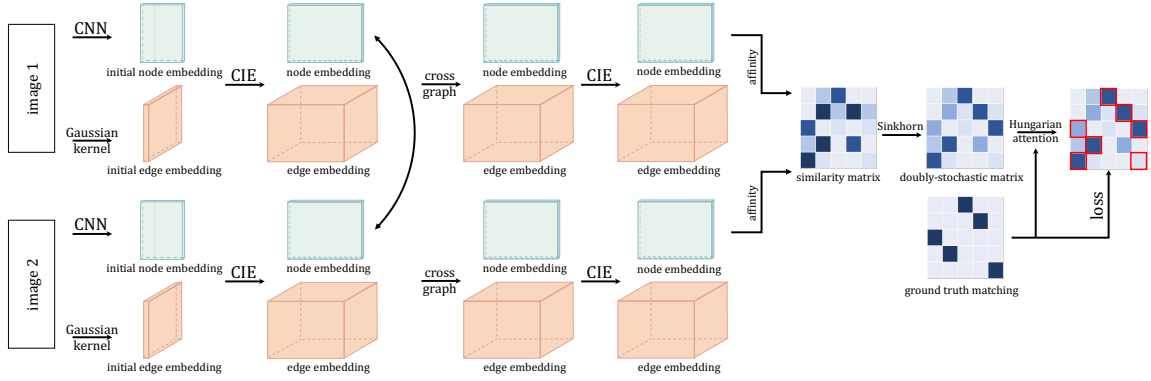

Figure 2: Overall architecture proposed in [13], consisting of channel-independent embedding and Hungarian attention. Picture adopted from [13].

2.5 CIE

In all methods above, while structural features are perserved, edge attributes are neglected. **C**hannel-**I**ndependent **E**mbedding (CIE) [13] is then proposed to introduce edge attributes to LAPGM method.

Taking edge embeddings $\{\mathbf{e}_{sij}\}$ into account, the new GNN method updates both node and edge embeddings simultaneously:

$$\left\{ \mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k)} \right\} = f \left(\left\{ \mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k-1)} \right\}, \left\{ \mathbf{e}_{sij}^{(k-1)} \right\}, \mathbf{A} \right), \quad \left\{ \mathbf{e}_{sij}^{(k)} \right\} = g \left(\left\{ \mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k-1)} \right\}, \left\{ \mathbf{e}_{sij}^{(k-1)} \right\}, \mathbf{A} \right)$$

where $\mathbf{A}$ is the adjacency matrix.

Channel-Independent Embedding. As is stated in [13], the representation ability of staightforward edge-wise merging is limited. Furthermore, fully connected merging is costy and causes instability for backpropagation. **C**hannel-**I**ndependent **E**mbedding (CIE) is proposed to merge embeddings in a channel-wise fashion

$$\mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k)} = \sigma \left(\sum_{j:(i,j) \in \mathcal{E}_s} \Gamma_N \left(f_{\text{msg-edge}} \left(\mathbf{e}_{sij}^{(k-1)} \right) \circ f_{\text{msg-node}} \left(\mathbf{h}_{sj}^{(k-1)} \right) \right) + \sigma \left(f_{\text{node}\left(\mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k-1)} \right)} \right) \right) \tag{10}$$

$$\mathbf{e}_{sij}^{(k)} = \sigma \left(\Gamma_E \left(f_{\text{msg-edge}} \left(\mathbf{e}_{sij}^{(k-1)} \right) \circ f_{\text{msg-end}} \left(\mathbf{h}_{si}^{(k-1)}, \mathbf{h}_{sj}^{(k-1)} \right) \right) + \sigma \left(f_{\text{msg-edge}\left(\mathbf{e}_{sij}^{(k-1)} \right)} \right) \right) \tag{11}$$
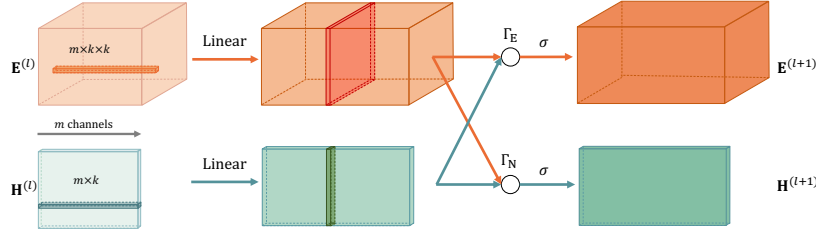
Figure 3: Channel-independent embedding. Picture adopted from [13].

where $\Gamma_N(\cdot \circ \cdot)$, $\Gamma_E(\cdot \circ \cdot)$ are channel-wise operators/functions, and $f_{\mathrm{msg-end}}(\cdot, \cdot)$ is commutative (for undirected graphs). Note that the cross-graph convolution step is still limited in node embeddings. It is also possible to extend the idea for edge embeddings, which require "affinity" values for every edge pair. What keeping us off is the significant computation demand. Here we again stress the "compressibility" of node embeddings for graphs.
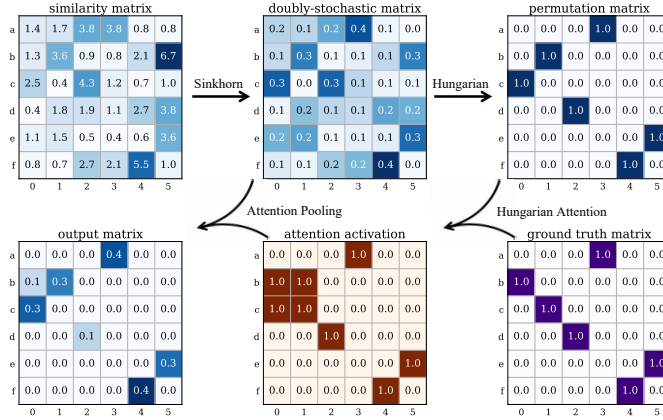

Figure 4: Hungarian attention. Picture adopted from [13].

Hungarian attention. Cross-entropy loss prefers samples that are easy to learn in the early training stage and tends to perserve almost binary predictions ([13]). [13] proposed an improved attention mechanism to better back-propagation and have more unified training and testing interests (we used to train on continuous while test on discrete). They introduce a sparse attention mask as

$$\mathbf{Z} = \mathrm{Atten}\left(\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{X}^{\mathrm{gt}}\right)$$

which is implemented as the union of output binary mask $\mathbf{X}$ and the ground-truth binary mask $\mathbf{X}^{\mathrm{gt}}$. The mask covers all points except for true negatives. They are trivial for optimization especially when we use Sinkhorn (or in other tasks, Softmax) to normalize the outputs. With Hungarian attention, the model is supposed to focus on the performance at ground truth matching and the digits that hinder the matching most. The Hungarian attention loss is defined as

$$\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{CE}} = - \sum_{i \in \mathcal{V}_1, j \in \mathcal{V}_2} \mathbf{Z}_{ij} \left(\mathbf{X}_{ij}^{\mathrm{gt}} \log \mathbf{S}_{ij} + \left(1 - \mathbf{X}_{ij}^{\mathrm{gt}}\right) \log \left(1 - \mathbf{S}_{ij}\right) \right)$$

Soft hungarian attention. From our observation, the Hungarian attention loss does not improve performance every time. We suspect that the Hungarian attention loss is too strong to be used in the early training stage. The hard attention mechanism makes predictions noisy with submaximums. We thus propose a soft version of Hungarian attention loss, which depress loss from the wide true negatives up to a weight λ_{H}. It is defined as

$$\mathcal{H}_{\mathrm{CE}}^{\mathrm{S}} = - \sum_{i \in \mathcal{V}_1, j \in \mathcal{V}_2} \left(\mathbf{Z}_{ij} + \lambda_{\mathrm{H}} \sim \mathbf{Z}_{ij}\right) \left(\mathbf{X}_{ij}^{\mathrm{gt}} \log \mathbf{S}_{ij} + \left(1 - \mathbf{X}_{ij}^{\mathrm{gt}}\right) \log \left(1 - \mathbf{S}_{ij}\right) \right)$$

where $\sim$ is the bitwise NOT operator. Though formulated from totally different aspect, the soft Hungarian attention loss is computationally equivalent to a weighted sum of the original cross-entropy loss and Hungarian attention loss.

3 Experiments

We have done various experiments to compare the mentioned methods, to verify components, and to search for good hyperparameters.

3.1 Dataset

We follow tutorials from Pygmtools [10] to take WillowObject [3] as our main dataset. WillowObject is a dataset of images annotated with keypoints. There are altogether 5 classes of images, winebottle, car, motorbike, duck, and face. As is shown in Table 1, face is the easiest class while duck is especially challenging. For fear of overfitting, the train-test set split is conventional so that each class has a balanced number of instances in the train set, resulting in a test set much larger than the train one. And to make up the inbalance of the test set, the overall mean accuracy is calcualted at the level of classes rather than instances.

3.2 Methods Comparison

We conduct experiments on PCA-GM, IPCA-GM, CIE, and their combination with Hungarian attention loss (i.e., CIE-H). In Table 1, we report their performance on WillowObject.

Method	Winebottle	Car	Motorbike	Duck	Face	Mean
PCA-GM-w/oFT						
PCA-GM	93.90%	89.89%	94.47%	91.68%	**100.00**%	93.99%
PCA-GM-H						
IPCA-GM	**95.35**%	90.32%	91.05%	87.03%	99.97%	92.74%
IPCA-GM-H						
CIE	93.65%	**95.58**%	**95.53**%	**92.80**%	99.17%	**95.34**%
CIE-H	90.39%	91.05%	94.95%	88.21%	99.93%	92.90%

Table 1: Test accuracies of different methods on WillowObject dataset. -w/oFT means the method freezes the pretrained backbone without finetuning, -H means Hungarian attention.

3.3 Ablation Study

Backbone finetuning. We use pretrained 2D convolutional backbone (VGG16 [8]) for feature extraction. Then it is a natural question whether to further finetune the backbone while training the LAPGM model. In Table 1 we see an overall performance gain with finetuing. So, LAPGM methods would benefit from finetuning learnable feature extractors in an end-to-end style.

Edge embeddings. We also see PCA-GM as a variant of CIE with no edge embeddings. As is shown in Table 1, the edge embeddings significantly boost the performance of our LAPGM model, especially for objects with more rigid and templated structures, i.e., car and motorbike.

Hungarian attention. Though is described to improve performance of all methods in [13], Hungarian does not necessarily lead to better results in our experiments (see methods with and without -H in Table 1). We also dig deeper into soft Hungarian attention based on CIE. The results are reported in Table 2. Suprisingly,

we find that the model learn easier classes (face) better with Hungarian attention, trading off performance on harder classes.

λ_H		Winebottle	Car	Motorbike	Duck	Face	Mean
0	$(\mathcal{L}_{CE})$	93.65%	**95.58%**	95.53%	**92.80%**	99.17%	**95.34%**
0.1		93.42%	89.53%	96.79%	89.72%	99.73%	93.84%
0.3		93.00%	91.47%	95.47%	90.69%	99.77%	94.08%
0.5		92.32%	91.84%	93.89%	90.53%	99.85%	93.69%
0.7		90.82%	88.73%	**96.05%**	90.76%	99.68%	93.21%
0.9		**94.56%**	90.47%	92.21%	89.08%	**99.97%**	93.26%
1	$(\mathcal{H}_{CE})$	90.39%	91.05%	94.95%	88.21%	99.93%	92.90%

Table 2: Test accuracies of different level of soft Hungarian attention based on CIE.

3.4 Hyperparameter Search

Weight decay.

Optimizer.

Learning rate scheduler.

More details. For learning rate, several candidate values are tried at an early stage of the project. Since the performance is rather high and AdamW is not so sensitive to learning rate, a fixed value of $1e-4$ is finally picked for all experiments with no further tuning.

4 Implementation and Feedbacks

4.1 Trainer

4.2 Dataset

WillowObject. With `benchmark` class from Pygmtools [10], we easily integrated the data loading, processing, and result evaluating. For better compatibility, we have implemented Delaunay triangulation with both SciPy [11] and OpenCV [2]. Furthermore, since `benchmark` shuffles the order of keypoints each time loading data, we adviced that the cached ground truth should be refreshed at each shuffle for coherence, which has been adopted in newer versions of Pygmtools.

PascalVOC. We also intend to perform some experiments on PascalVOC [1, 5], but a CUDA error from Jittor [6] was reported while switching dataset. The script may work on CPU, but the dataset is too big to finish even a single epoch. Since numbers of keypoints varies in PascalVOC, we specially provide batch support based on padding and support for cases in which keypoints are less than 3.

5 Acknowledgements

[12], [13], [5], [1], [3], [8]

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