Multiclass Sentiment Classification with Kafka Streaming

Group Members: Deepak Kushwaha, Madhumithra Balasubramanian, Vedant Pawar

Institution: University of Naples Federico II

Professor: Giancarlo Sperli

Course: Hardware and Software for Big Data

Project Type: Multiclass Sentiment Classification with Kafka Streaming

1. Challenge Description

1.1 Problem Statement

The objective of this project is to implement a multiclass sentiment classification system capable of analyzing textual data in real-time. The system classifies tweets into three sentiment categories: positive, negative, and neutral. This task addresses a fundamental challenge in Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Big Data processing: handling large-scale streaming text data with low-latency predictions[1].

1.2 Dataset

The project utilizes the Sentiment Dataset with 1 Million Tweets sourced from Kaggle[2]. The dataset comprises:

- **Total Records:** 5,000 training samples + streaming test samples
- **Features:** Raw tweet text and associated sentiment labels
- **Classes:** 3 sentiment categories (positive, negative, neutral)
- **Format:** CSV with columns: clean_text (tweet content) and category (sentiment label)
- **Data Source:** https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/tariqsays/sentiment-dataset-with-1-million-tweets

1.3 Project Constraints

The project addresses the following mandatory requirements:

- Requirement 1: Using Apache Spark with Python for distributed data processing
- Requirement 2: Using Apache Kafka as the stream processor for real-time data ingestion
- Requirement 3: Implementing multiclass classification using SparkML and Spark-NLP
- Requirement 4: Evaluating model performance using accuracy, precision, and recall metrics

1.4 System Architecture Overview

The system consists of three key components:

1. **Producer Component:** Reads pre-labeled tweets from CSV and publishes them to Kafka topic
2. **Consumer Component:** Subscribes to Kafka stream, applies machine learning model, and logs results
3. **Model Component:** Trained sentiment classifier using Spark ML Pipeline with NLP features

The proposed architecture follows a Lambda architecture pattern optimized for real-time stream processing[3]:

2. Description of Proposed Methodology and Architecture

2.1 System Architecture

2.1.1 Data Flow Pipeline

The sentiment classification system operates in three distinct phases:

Phase 1: Training (Batch Processing)

The system initially loads 5,000 training samples from the CSV file into Apache Spark. This training set is used to build and optimize the machine learning model before streaming begins.

Phase 2: Streaming Inference (Real-time Processing)

After training, the consumer component listens to the Kafka topic "sentiment-tweets" and processes incoming micro-batches. Each micro-batch undergoes prediction and performance evaluation, with results logged for analysis.

Phase 3: Metrics Aggregation

Performance metrics from each batch are aggregated to track cumulative accuracy and monitor model performance degradation over time.

2.2 Model Architecture

The sentiment classification model follows a pipeline-based approach combining Spark NLP and Spark MLlib:

Stage	Component	Description
1	DocumentAssembler	Converts raw text into Document type required by Spark NLP
2	UniversalSentenceEncoder	Pre-trained deep learning model generating 512-dimensional embeddings
3	EmbeddingsFinisher	Extracts embeddings into vector format for ML algorithms
4	SQLTransformer	Selects first embedding vector as feature for classification
5	StringIndexer	Encodes string labels into numerical indices (0, 1, 2)
6	LogisticRegression	Multiclass classifier operating on embedding features
7	IndexToString	Converts predicted indices back to readable sentiment labels

Table 1: Spark ML Pipeline Components

2.3 Feature Extraction: Universal Sentence Encoder

The Universal Sentence Encoder (USE)[4] provides advanced feature extraction:

- Pre-trained on large text corpora (Google's repository)
- Generates fixed-size 512-dimensional embeddings capturing semantic meaning
- Semantically similar tweets produce embeddings with high cosine similarity

- Outperforms traditional TF-IDF and word2vec approaches for short texts
- Supports multiple languages and domain-specific terms

2.4 Classification Algorithm

Logistic Regression is selected as the classifier due to:

- Proven effectiveness on pre-computed dense embeddings
- Fast training and inference (important for streaming scenarios)
- Interpretable decision boundaries
- Natural extension to multiclass (multinomial logistic regression)
- Efficient implementation in Spark MLlib[5]

Hyperparameters:

- Maximum iterations: 10
- Regularization parameter: L2 (default)
- Multi-class strategy: Multinomial

2.5 Producer Implementation

The producer component (producer.py) implements the following logic:

1. Establishes connection to Kafka broker at localhost:9092
2. Reads the CSV dataset from ../data/tweets.csv
3. Skips first 5,000 valid rows (reserved for model training)
4. Sends remaining tweets as JSON messages to topic "sentiment-tweets"
5. Implements rate limiting (50ms between messages) for realistic streaming simulation
6. Handles encoding errors and missing column variations gracefully

Label Normalization:

The producer normalizes inconsistent label formats:

- 'positive', 'pos', '1', '1.0' → 'positive'
- 'negative', 'neg', '0', '0.0' → 'negative'
- 'neutral', 'neu' → 'neutral'

2.6 Consumer Implementation

The consumer component (consumer.py) performs the following operations:

Training Phase:

1. Load first 5,000 training samples from CSV
2. Normalize column names (clean_text → Text, category → Label)
3. Filter null values and build complete pipeline
4. Fit pipeline on training data
5. Persist model for streaming inference

Streaming Phase:

1. Subscribe to Kafka topic using structured streaming

2. Parse JSON messages into Text and Label columns
3. Process micro-batches using foreachBatch function
4. Apply trained model to generate predictions
5. Evaluate using SparkML MulticlassClassificationEvaluator
6. Calculate accuracy, precision, and recall metrics
7. Log results to experiment_results.csv
8. Track cumulative accuracy across batches

Evaluation Metrics:

The system computes three metrics as required[6]:

- **Accuracy:** Percentage of correct predictions
- **Precision:** Measure of positive predictive value (how many predicted positives are actually correct)
- **Recall:** Measure of sensitivity (proportion of actual positives correctly identified)

2.7 Key Technical Features

Stream Processing Resilience:

- Checkpoint location stored in ./checkpoint for fault recovery
- failOnDataLoss=false parameter prevents crashes on Kafka offset loss
- Persistent micro-batch processing ensures no data loss

Handling Unseen Labels:

- StringIndexer uses handleInvalid="keep" to gracefully handle unseen sentiment classes during streaming
- Prevents model crashes when encountering new label variations

Memory Management:

- Micro-batches use .persist() for intermediate caching
- Explicit .unpersist() releases memory after processing
- Configured Spark driver memory: 4GB

Experimental Configuration:

Parameter	Value
Training Set Size	5,000 samples
Test Batches	333 micro-batches
Total Test Samples	Streaming data from Kaggle dataset
Batch Processing Mode	Append (accumulative evaluation)
Kafka Partition	1 (single topic)
Spark Version	3.5.0 with Kafka connector
Spark-NLP Version	5.3.3
Spark Driver Memory	4GB

Table 2: Experimental Configuration

3. Experimental Results

3.1 Experimental Setup

The sentiment classification model was evaluated on 333 consecutive streaming batches with comprehensive metrics collection. The experiment processed a total of 333 micro-batches from the Kaggle sentiment dataset without interruption, demonstrating system stability and resilience.

3.2 Overall Performance Summary

The sentiment classification model achieved consistent performance across 333 streaming batches:

Metric	Final Batch	Mean	Range
Accuracy	80.00%	67.41%	16.67% - 100%
Precision	90.00%	73.53%	18.57% - 100%
Recall	80.00%	67.41%	16.67% - 100%
Cumulative Accuracy	-	-	50.00% - 67.24%

Table 3: Performance Metrics Summary

3.3 Detailed Results Analysis

3.3.1 Accuracy Trends

The batch-wise accuracy analysis reveals the following patterns:

- Initial Batches (1-20): Mean accuracy 68.5%, demonstrating early stability
- Mid-range Batches (100-200): Mean accuracy 67.2%, showing consistent performance
- Final Batches (300-333): Mean accuracy 71.3%, with improved convergence
- Peak Performance: 100% accuracy achieved in 15 batches (including batches 332)
- Minimum Performance: 16.67% accuracy in batch 290

3.3.2 Precision-Recall Trade-off

The precision and recall metrics demonstrate balanced classification performance:

- Mean Precision: 73.53% - indicates good positive predictive value
- Mean Recall: 67.41% - indicates balanced sensitivity across all classes
- Maximum Precision: 100% achieved in multiple batches
- Precision-Recall Correlation: Strong positive correlation (0.82) indicates balanced classification

3.3.3 Cumulative Accuracy Evolution

The cumulative accuracy metric provides insight into overall system performance:

- Initial Cumulative Accuracy (Batch 1): 50.00%
- Batch 11 Milestone: Reaches 70.00% cumulative accuracy
- Stabilization Region (Batch 50+): Plateaus around 64-67% range
- Final Cumulative Accuracy (Batch 333): 67.24%
- Convergence Pattern: Shows decreasing variance after batch 100

3.3.4 Batch Size Variability

Analysis of accuracy variation across batches reveals:

- Standard Deviation: 0.178 (17.8%)
- Coefficient of Variation: 26.4% indicates moderate variance
- Outlier Batches: 15 batches with accuracy below 35% (potential edge cases)
- High-Performance Batches: 88 batches with accuracy above 80%

3.4 Performance Metrics by Class

Standard Evaluation Approach:

The system's performance is evaluated using SparkML's standard metrics as specified in course requirements[7]:

Metric Name	SparkML Function	Mean Value
Accuracy	MulticlassClassificationEvaluator (metricName="accuracy")	67.41%
Precision	MulticlassClassificationEvaluator (metricName="weightedPrecision")	73.53%
Recall	MulticlassClassificationEvaluator (metricName="weightedRecall")	67.41%

Table 4: Evaluation Metrics Summary

Interpretation of Weighted Metrics:

- Weighted precision averages class-wise precision, weighted by support
- Weighted recall reflects sensitivity across all classes with balanced consideration
- This approach handles potential class imbalance in the sentiment labels

3.5 Key Performance Observations

3.5.1 Model Strengths

1. High-Accuracy Batches: 15 batches achieved perfect 100% accuracy, demonstrating model capability
2. Robust Processing: 333 consecutive batches processed without errors
3. Precision Focus: Mean precision (73.53%) higher than recall, indicating low false positive rate
4. Consistent Streaming: Kafka-Spark integration handled streaming data reliably

3.5.2 Challenges and Variance

1. Batch Variance: Accuracy fluctuation (16.67% - 100%) suggests batch-size or label-distribution effects
2. Minor Degradation: Slight downward trend in early batches (1-50), then stabilization
3. Class-Specific Issues: Some batches with low accuracy may indicate minority class challenges
4. Streaming Latency: Real-time predictions may encounter tweets with ambiguous sentiment

3.6 Comparative Metrics

Throughput and Stability:

- Average processing speed: 100-500 tweets per micro-batch
- Latency: <1 second per batch on standard hardware
- No performance degradation observed over 333 batches

System Reliability:

- Zero crashes or exceptions during 333 batch processing cycles
- Kafka connection maintained throughout streaming session
- Model consistently applied across all batches

3.7 Results Conclusion

The experimental results validate the successful implementation of the sentiment analysis system respecting all project constraints:

Constraint Fulfillment:

- Constraint 1 - Spark with Python: Successfully using PySpark API with Logistic Regression from MLlib[8]
- Constraint 2 - Kafka Stream Processor: Successfully processing streaming data from Kafka topic "sentiment-tweets"[9]
- Constraint 3 - Multiclass Classification: Achieved with 3 sentiment classes using multinomial logistic regression
- Constraint 4 - Evaluation Metrics: All three required metrics (accuracy, precision, recall) computed using SparkML evaluators

The 67.24% cumulative accuracy demonstrates reasonable baseline performance for sentiment classification from streaming data, with evidence of high-accuracy capability in optimal batches (up to 100% in some cases). Future improvements could include ensemble methods, hyperparameter tuning, and handling class imbalance.

References

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