**Image Captioning Project Using BLIP and CLIP**

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**Abstract** This report presents an image captioning system developed using the BLIP model for generating descriptive captions and the CLIP model for evaluating their relevance. Implemented in Google Colab, the system processes user-uploaded images, generates captions, scores their quality, and overlays the results onto the images. Leveraging state-of-the-art vision-language models, the project has potential applications in accessibility, content generation, and image retrieval. Comparisons with existing research highlight the effectiveness of BLIP and CLIP, though specific results from the project are unavailable. Future work includes fine-tuning models and integrating the system into practical applications.

**1. Introduction to the Problem**

**1.1 Problem Statement** Image captioning involves generating natural language descriptions for visual content, requiring the integration of computer vision and natural language processing techniques. This task is complex due to the need to accurately identify objects, attributes, and relationships in images while producing syntactically and semantically correct sentences. The project aims to develop a system that automatically generates and evaluates captions for user-uploaded images, ensuring relevance and accuracy.

**1.2 Significance**Image captioning has broad applications:

* **Accessibility**: Assisting visually impaired individuals by describing image content.
* **Search and Retrieval**: Enhancing image search engines with natural language queries.
* **Content Generation**: Automating caption creation for social media or e-commerce.
* **Multimodal Understanding**: Bridging visual and textual data for tasks like visual question answering. The project’s use of advanced models like BLIP and CLIP positions it at the forefront of vision-language research, addressing real-world needs.

**1.3 Objectives**The objectives are:

* Implement an image captioning system using state-of-the-art models.
* Evaluate caption quality using a reference-free metric.
* Compare the system’s approach with existing research to contextualize its performance.

**2. Methodology Explanation**

**2.1 Approach**The project utilizes two pre-trained models from the Hugging Face Transformers library:

* **BLIP (Bootstrapping Language-Image Pre-training)**: A unified vision-language model for generating captions, excelling in both understanding and generation tasks (Li et al., 2022).
* **CLIP (Contrastive Language-Image Pretraining)**: A model for scoring caption relevance by computing image-text similarity (Hessel et al., 2021). The system is implemented in Google Colab, providing a user-friendly interface for image uploads and processing.

**2.2 Preprocessing Steps**

* **Image Handling**: Images are uploaded via Google Colab and processed using OpenCV (cv2) and PIL libraries.
* **Model Loading**: Pre-trained BLIP (BlipProcessor, BlipForConditionalGeneration) and CLIP (CLIPProcessor, CLIPModel) models are loaded with error handling to ensure successful initialization.
* **Image Conversion**: Images are converted to RGB format for compatibility with BLIP.

**2.3 Models Used**

* **BLIP for Caption Generation**:
  + **Input**: RGB image.
  + **Process**: The image is processed by the BLIP processor and passed through the BLIP model to generate a textual caption.
* **CLIP for Caption Scoring**:
  + **Input**: Generated caption and original image.
  + **Process**: CLIP computes cosine similarity between the image and caption, comparing it against a baseline caption ("a random picture") to produce a match score.

**2.4 Implementation Details**The system includes several key functions:

* **generate\_caption(image\_path)**: Processes the image using BLIP to generate and decode a caption.
* **score\_caption(image\_path, caption)**: Uses CLIP to compute a relevance score, converting logits to probabilities.
* **draw\_subtitle\_cv2(image\_path, caption, score)**: Overlays the caption and score onto the image using OpenCV for visualization.
* **process\_single\_image**: Integrates the above steps to process each image and return results. Users interact with the system via Google Colab, uploading images and receiving captioned outputs with a progress bar for batch processing.

**2.5 Tools and Libraries**

* **Python Libraries**: os, cv2, torch, matplotlib.pyplot, PIL.
* **Environment**: Google Colab.
* **Models**: Pre-trained BLIP and CLIP from Hugging Face Transformers.

**3. Results & Comparison**

**3.1 Results** The project successfully implemented an image captioning system, generating captions with BLIP and scoring them with CLIP. The system processes user-uploaded images, produces captions, assigns relevance scores, and overlays the results onto the images. However, specific results (e.g., sample captions, scores, or performance metrics) were not provided in the project documentation. The system’s design suggests robust performance, given the use of state-of-the-art models.

**3.2 Comparison with Previous Research** The project’s methodology is compared with three key studies in image captioning:

**Table 1: Comparison of Image Captioning Models and Metrics**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model/Metric** | **Source** | **CIDEr Score (COCO)** | **Human Correlation** |
| BLIP | Li et al. (2022) | 142.4 | - |
| OSCAR | Li et al. (2022) | 130.2 | - |
| VinVL | Li et al. (2022) | 131.0 | - |
| CLIPScore | Hessel et al. (2021) | - | 0.93 |
| CIDEr | Hessel et al. (2021) | - | 0.87 |
| SPICE | Hessel et al. (2021) | - | 0.85 |

* **BLIP Performance** (Li et al., 2022):
  + The BLIP paper reports a CIDEr score of 142.4 on the COCO dataset, outperforming OSCAR (130.2) and VinVL (131.0).
  + BLIP’s success is attributed to its bootstrapping approach, which improves caption quality using noisy web data.
  + Since this project uses BLIP, it likely achieves comparable performance, though specific results are unavailable.
* **CLIPScore Evaluation** (Hessel et al., 2021):
  + CLIPScore, based on CLIP, achieves a 0.93 correlation with human judgments on the COCO dataset, surpassing CIDEr (0.87) and SPICE (0.85).
  + The project’s use of CLIP for scoring aligns with this robust, reference-free evaluation method.
* **Deep Learning Survey** (Ghandi et al., 2023):
  + This survey provides a taxonomy of deep learning methods for image captioning, including encoder-decoder models, attention mechanisms, and vision-language pre-training.
  + It highlights challenges like object hallucination and dataset bias, which are relevant to the project’s implementation.
  + The survey contextualizes BLIP within the broader field, noting its advancements over traditional models.

**3.3 Analysis** The project’s use of BLIP positions it among state-of-the-art captioning systems, as evidenced by its superior CIDEr score compared to OSCAR and VinVL. CLIP’s scoring mechanism ensures reliable evaluation, aligning with human judgments better than traditional metrics. The survey underscores the project’s relevance within ongoing advancements in vision-language pre-training.

**4. Summary**

**4.1 Key Insights**

* **Model Effectiveness**: BLIP and CLIP enable high-quality caption generation and evaluation, leveraging pre-trained vision-language models.
* **User-Friendly Design**: The Google Colab interface makes the system accessible for practical use.
* **Research Alignment**: The project aligns with cutting-edge research, as seen in comparisons with BLIP and CLIPScore studies.

**4.2 Challenges Faced**

* **Lack of Quantitative Results**: The absence of specific captions or scores limits direct performance evaluation.
* **Complex Images**: Handling images with multiple objects or ambiguous content may reduce caption accuracy.

**4.3 Future Work**

* **Fine-Tuning**: Fine-tuning BLIP on domain-specific datasets could enhance caption quality.
* **Advanced Models**: Exploring BLIP2 or LLaVA may improve performance.
* **Applications**: Integrating the system into platforms like social media or accessibility tools.
* **Evaluation**: Conducting experiments to measure metrics like CIDEr or BLEU for quantitative comparisons.

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