RDA: Reciprocal Distribution Alignment for Robust Semi-supervised Learning

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A Proof of Theorem 1

In this section, we consider the case where $p_1 \geq \frac{1}{2}$ for the proof of Theorem 1.

Proof. Rewriting Eq. (15), we obtain

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i \log p_i \geq \sum_{i=1}^{n} \overline{p}_i \log \overline{p}_i. \tag{22}$$

Denoting $\overline{p}_1 = \frac{1-p_2}{n-1}, \ldots, \overline{p}_n = \frac{1-p_n}{n-1}$, we have

$$\frac{1}{n-1} \geq \overline{p}_1 \geq \cdots \geq \overline{p}_n. \tag{23}$$

Let $a = (\overline{p}_1, \ldots, \overline{p}_{n-1}, \overline{p}_n)$ and $b = \left( \frac{1}{n-1}, \ldots, \frac{1}{n-1}, 0 \right)$, by Eq. (23) and $\sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \frac{1}{n-1} = 1$, we notice $a$ is majorized by $b$ ($a \prec b$) \cite{8,1}. Since the function $g(x) = \sum_{i=1}^{d} x_i \log(x_i)$ is Schur-convex \cite{10,11}, we have $g(a) \leq g(b)$ \cite{10,11}, i.e.,

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} \overline{p}_i \log \overline{p}_i \leq (n-1) \frac{1}{n-1} \log \frac{1}{n-1} = - \log(n-1). \tag{24}$$

Next, rewriting the left term in Eq. (22), we have

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i \log p_i = p_1 \log p_1 + \sum_{i=2}^{n} p_i \log p_i. \tag{25}$$

Since $p_2 + \cdots + p_n = 1 - p_1$ and $g(x) = x \log x$ is a convex function, by Jensen’s Inequality, we obtain the minimum of $\sum_{i=2}^{n} p_i \log p_i$ when $p_2 = \cdots = p_n = \frac{1-p_1}{n-1}$. Then, by Eq. (25), we have

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i \log p_i \geq p_1 \log p_1 + \left( \frac{1-p_1}{n-1} \log \frac{1-p_1}{n-1} \right)(n-1)$$

$$= p_1 \log p_1 + \left( 1 - p_1 \right) \log(1 - p_1) - (1 - p_1) \log(n-1)$$

$$\geq -1 - \frac{1}{2} \log(n-1).$$

(using $p_1 \log p_1 + (1 - p_1) \log(1 - p_1) \geq - \log 2$ and $1 - p_1 \leq \frac{1}{2}$)
Notice that by Eq. (24) we have $\sum_{i=1}^{n} \overline{p}_i \log \overline{p}_i \leq -\log(n - 1)$. Solving inequality

$$-1 - \frac{1}{2} \log(n - 1) \geq -\log(n - 1), \quad (26)$$

we obtain $n \geq 5$. Theorem 1 now follows simply by combining proofs for the cases where $p_1 < \frac{1}{2}$ and $p_1 \geq \frac{1}{2}$. To sum up, for multi-classification tasks, we prove that when $n \geq 5$, $\mathcal{H}(\overline{p}) \geq \mathcal{H}(p)$ holds, i.e., Reverse Operation could maximize the entropy of $p$. The proof for complementary label version can be simply obtained by replacing $p$ and $\overline{p}$ in the above formulas with $q$ and $\overline{q}$, respectively. \qed

### B Algorithm

Pseudo-code of RDA is shown in Algorithm 1.

**Algorithm 1:** RDA: Reciprocal Distribution Alignment

| Input: | \begin{itemize} | \item batch of labeled data $X = \{(x_b, y_b)\}_{b=1}^B$, batch of unlabeled data $U = \{u_b\}_{b=1}^B$, Default Classifier $D$, Auxiliary Classifier $A$, maximum number of iterations $M$, augmentation $\alpha$ \end{itemize} |
| --- | --- |
| 1 for iteration $t = 1$ to $M$ do | \begin{itemize} | \item Select complementary label from $\mathcal{Y}$ randomly \item $y_b = \text{randselect}(\mathcal{Y} \setminus \{y_b\}), b \in \{1, \ldots, B\}$ \end{itemize} |
| 2 | \begin{itemize} | \item Compute default supervised loss \item $L_{sd} = \frac{1}{B} \sum_{b=1}^{B} H(y_b, P_D(y_b|x_{w,n}))$ \end{itemize} |
| 3 for iteration $b = 1$ to $\mu B$ do | \begin{itemize} | \item $u_{w,b} = \alpha_{\text{weak}}(u_b)$ // Apply weak augmentation to $u_b$ \item $u_{s,b} = \alpha_{\text{strong}}(u_b)$ // Apply strong augmentation to $u_b$ \item $p_b = P_D(y_b|u_{w,b})$ // Compute predictions of $D$ for $u_{w,b}$ \item $p_{s,b} = P_D(y_b|u_{s,b})$ // Compute predictions of $D$ for $u_{s,b}$ \item $q_b = P_A(y_b|u_{w,b})$ // Compute predictions of $A$ for $u_{w,b}$ \item $q_{s,b} = P_A(y_b|u_{s,b})$ // Compute predictions of $A$ for $u_{s,b}$ \item $\overline{p}_b = \text{Norm}(1 - p_b)$ \item $\overline{q}_b = \text{Norm}(1 - q_b)$ \item Apply distribution alignment reciprocally \item $\hat{p}_b = \text{Norm}(p_b \times \overline{q}_b)$ \item $\hat{q}_b = \text{Norm}(q_b \times \overline{p}_b)$ // Soft complementary labels for $u_{w,b}$ \item $\hat{p}_b = \text{arg max}(\hat{p}_b)$ // Hard pseudo-labels for $u_{w,b}$ \end{itemize} |
| 4 | \begin{itemize} | \item Compute auxiliary consistency loss \item $\mathcal{L}_{cd} = \frac{1}{B} \sum_{b=1}^{B} H(\hat{p}_b, p_{s,n})$ // Compute default consistency loss \item $\mathcal{L}_{ca} = \frac{1}{B} \sum_{b=1}^{B} H(\hat{q}_b, q_{s,n})$ // Compute auxiliary consistency loss \item $\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}_{cd} + \lambda_a \mathcal{L}_{2a} + \lambda_c \mathcal{L}_{cd} + \lambda_a \mathcal{L}_{ca}$ // Optimize total loss $\mathcal{L}$ \end{itemize} |
| 5 end | --- | --- |
| 6 end | --- | --- |
Table 7. More baseline results in accuracy (%) under DARP’s protocol. Results of baseline methods are copied from DAPR [4].

| Method   | CIFAR-10 ($\gamma_l = 100$) | STL-10 ($\gamma_l \neq \gamma_u$) |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|          | $\gamma_u = 1$              | $\gamma = 10$                      | $\gamma = 20$                      |
|          | $\gamma_u = 50$             |                                   |                                   |
|          | $\gamma_u = 150$            |                                   |                                   |
|          | $\gamma_u = 100$ (reversed) |                                   |                                   |
| MixMatch | 41.50±0.76                  | 64.10±0.58                        | 47.90±0.09                        |
| M w. DARP| 86.70±0.80                  | 68.30±0.47                        | 72.90±0.24                        |
| ReMixMatch| 48.30±0.14                  | 75.10±0.43                        | 49.00±0.55                        |
| R w. DARP| 89.70±0.15                  | 77.40±0.22                        | 80.10±0.11                        |
| RDA      | 93.35±0.24                  | 79.77±0.06                        | 74.48±0.24                        |

C Datasets with Mismatched distributions

C.1 Protocol of DARP

DARP [4] introduces this protocol to build a class-imbalanced dataset. DARP introduces two parameters namely imbalanced ratio $\gamma_l$ and $\gamma_u$ to control the class-imbalance of dataset. For the labeled data, the data number of each class $N_i$ is scaled by:

$$N_i = N_1 \times \gamma_l^{\frac{i}{n-1}}, \quad i \in (1, \ldots, n)$$

where $n$ is the number of classes. Likewise, for the unlabeled data, the data number of each class $M_i$ is scaled by:

$$M_i = M_1 \times \gamma_u^{\frac{i}{n-1}}.$$ Specially, “reversed” in Tab. 5 indicates that the unlabeled data with reversely ordered class distribution is used, i.e., $M_i = M_1 \times \gamma_u^{\frac{n-i}{n-1}}$. $N_1 = 1500$ and $M_1 = 3000$ are applied into CIFAR-10 under DARP’s protocol. DARP constructs STL-10 with $N_1 = 450$ and fully use the given unlabeled data in this dataset (i.e., $\sum_{i=1}^n M_i = 100,000$). $\gamma_u$ is not set for STL-10 due to the unknown ground-truth of the unlabeled data. DARP claims the labeled and unlabeled data in STL-10 have different distributions, i.e., $\gamma_l \neq \gamma_u$.

Additionally, we show the results of more baseline methods under DARP’s protocol [4] in Tab. 7 for comparison with our method.

C.2 Imbalanced $C_x$

We now show the details on how to construct dataset with imbalanced labeled data (i.e., $C_x$ is imbalanced) while keeping the number of labeled data unchanged. Following CIFAR-LT [2], we mimic the imbalanced $C_x$ by an exponential function:

$$N_i = N_0 \times \gamma_x^{\frac{i}{n-1}}, \quad i \in (1, \ldots, n)$$

where $n$ is the number of classes. We use different $N_0$ to investigate different scale of imbalance. With $N_0$ we set, $\gamma_x$ is calculated by the constraint $\sum_{i=1}^n N_i = D_x$, where $D_x$ is the number of labels we set. We search for a $\gamma_x$ from small to large in natural numbers, so that the progress of search can be summarized as the following optimization:

$$\hat{\gamma}_x = \arg \min_{\gamma_x} D_x - \sum_{i=1}^n N_i$$

subject to $D_x - \sum_{i=1}^n N_i > 0$.

(27)
With obtained $\gamma_x$, we add missing labels for classes other than the first class (i.e., keep the $N_0$ unchanged) in turn until the condition $\sum_{i=1}^n N_i = D_x$ is met. Here we found that the labels that need to be added are less than $n$, which means we can complete this progress by adding at most one round in turn.

\section{Additional Experiments with Mismatched Distributions}

\subsection{Mismatched Distributions with Non-overlapping Classes in the Unlabeled Data}

In addition to the mismatched distributions discussed in Sec. 3.1, SSL with non-overlapping classes in the unlabeled data is a more generalized mismatched scenario. As mentioned, this distribution mismatch is known as SSL using out-of-distribution (OOD) samples in the unlabeled data [9] (also known as open-set SSL). To explore the robustness of RDA, we experiment under the same setting as Sec. 4.4 in [9] and observe slight accuracy drops of RDA, except for at 100% class mismatch extent (sometimes more than 10% drop). This is understandable because SSL with OOD samples is very different from our task addressing the mismatched distributions with the same classes and we learn total unlabeled data without OOD sample filters. Considering the fine-grained datasets Semi-Aves [14] and Semi-Fungi [13] are also used to mimic the OOD setting [13], we evaluate our RDA on them. As shown in Tab. 8, when suffers from both mismatched distributions (in our paper) and OOD samples, RDA can still outperform our main baseline FixMatch by improving the pseudo-labels with in-distribution classes, although some aligned pseudo-labels may be assigned to OOD samples. In the future, we will extend RDA to handle open-set SSL, e.g., detecting OOD samples from the perspective of distribution. Furthermore, we provide discussions on the mismatched distributions with completely disjoint classes in $C_x$ and $C_u$. This scenario is an extreme case to SSL with OOD samples and few-label transfer proposed in [7] is closely related to it. Differently, our paper argues that even in the normal SSL setting where $C_x$ and $C_u$ share the same classes, the mismatched distributions could cause significant degradation of many popular SSL methods. Considering RDA is originally designed to strategically align distributions of overlapping classes, it could not work with completely disjoint $C_x$ and $C_u$.

\subsection{Learning with Symmetric Noisy Labels}

This is a novel setting different from the previous mismatched setting. We note that there are some subtle connections between dataset with noise and mismatched distributions dataset. We treat the total data in the dataset with noise as labeled data and also treat them as unlabeled data, i.e., this scenario can be seen as a process of SSL. Asymmetric noise is designed by mapping ground-truth labels to similar classes. e.g., in CIFAR-10, we generate noisy labels by deer→ horse, dog↔ cat, etc. Thus, we can regard CIFAR-10 with asymmetric noise as a mismatched dataset, i.e., the existence of asymmetric noise increases the ratio of some classes and decreases the ratio of some classes accordingly.
Table 8. Accuracy (%) in open-set SSL. Both Semi-Aves and Sem-Fungi have not only OOD unlabeled data but also in-distribution unlabeled data within class distribution that mismatches with the labeled data [13]. Unlike native RDA, we revert to the confidence-based thresholding in FixMatch [12] as a simple filter for OOD samples. While this goes against our original intention of using only distribution alignment to improve pseudo-labeling, it is a compromise for this open-set scenario. We follow the backbone and hyper-parameters for FixMatch in [13] and train models from scratch.

| Method  | Semi-Aves       | Semi-Fungi     |
|---------|-----------------|----------------|
|         | Top-1 / Top-5   | Top-1 / Top-5  |
| FixMatch| 19.2 / 42.6     | 25.2 / 50.2    |
| RDA     | 21.9 / 43.7     | 28.7 / 51.2    |

Table 9. Results of accuracy (%) on CIFAR-10 using full labels with 40% asymmetric noise. Results of baseline noisy label learning methods are reported in DivideMix [5].

| Method  | CIFAR-10 40% asym noise |
|---------|-------------------------|
|         |                         |
| P-correction [10] | 88.5                  |
| Joint-Optim [15]  | 88.9                   |
| Meta-Learning [6] | 89.2                   |
| DivideMix [5]     | 93.4                   |
| RDA             | 90.5                   |

We evaluate RDA on CIFAR-10 with 40% asymmetric noise. Following DivideMix [5], the backbone used in experiments is 18-layer PreAct ResNet [3] and we train the models with the same setting in Sec. 4.4. Although we do not make a special design for noisy label, RDA still achieves quite competitive performance compared with the noisy label learning methods shown in Tab. 9.

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