Unsupervised PCB Anomaly Segmentation with Foundational Models

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Abstract

PCB defect segmentation aims to localize the defects in printed circuit boards (PCBs). While this problem has a great industrial impact, few datasets are publicly available. It is also challenging to predict the defects that appear during manufacturing. To address the former challenge, we curate a large dataset with various defective categories of imbalanced distribution, reflecting real-world conditions. The problem of unsupervised PCB anomaly segmentation (UAS), where no labeled defect data is available during training, is then investigated. We propose an efficient prompt tuning method to address PCB-UAS. Specifically, a pretrained large foundational segmentation model (SAM) is adapted to PCB-UAS by the introduction of a few learnable adapter layers. SAM is frozen during training and only the additional adapter parameters are learned. To overcome the lack of labeled defect images for training, we propose to create synthetic defect images that mimic the real ones. Experiments highlight that the proposed method can outperform baselines by 7 points with 16.6 times less learnable parameters.

Keyword: PCB Defect, Anomaly Segmentation, Large Foundational Models, Industrial Defect Segmentation

Introduction

Detecting and segmenting defects in industrial settings is a crucial challenge for advancing automation in various industries, often applied to electronics and PCB manufacturing [\[1,](#page-3-0) [4,](#page-3-1) [7,](#page-3-2) [2,](#page-3-3) [20,](#page-4-0) [23,](#page-4-1) [16\]](#page-4-2). By detecting and segmenting the PCB defects, we can identify defects in circuitry, soldering defects, misalignments, or any irregularities in the assembly process, which includes inspection for shorts, opens, or any other anomalies that might affect the functionality or reliability of the electronic components.

While this is a task of wide interest in the industry, very few labeled datasets are available due to the large variation in PCBs and their defects, making labeling defect locations costly. In addition, prior works [\[29,](#page-4-3) [17\]](#page-4-4) also assume that defect categories are balanced distributed, which is impractical for real-world scenarios. To address these problems, we curated a novel dataset of PCB images with diverse defects and imbalanced distributions. Furthermore, to better align with the industrial setting, where segmentation labels are challenging to obtain, the proposed dataset contains only the labeled test set for evaluation, but not the training set.

To address the lack of labeled data during training, we investigate the problem of PCB unsupervised anomaly segmentation (UAS) in this work. We first synthesize images with pseudodefect using prior knowledge of PCB defects. This is implemented by pasting these synthesized defects, including lines, dots,

Figure 1. Overview of the proposed PROS approach. The top part of the figure shows the data synthetic pipeline, and the bottom part shows the model architecture of the proposed PROS network.

and circles, on normal PCB images, as shown in [Figure 2.](#page-1-0) Since these pseudo-defects are synthesized, the ground truth segmentation map is automatically available, and no further annotation is needed. Note that the pseudo-defects are generated only during the training stage.

With the availability of pseudo-defects, the UAS task then becomes a supervised task, which could be solved with standard segmentation models [\[26,](#page-4-5) [11\]](#page-4-6). However, we observed that it does not address the UAS task by training the standard segmentation models from scratch or pre-training the segmentation models on existing datasets (like ImageNet [\[14\]](#page-4-7)). As a result, we explore the possibility of using large foundation models like Segment Anything (SAM) [\[21\]](#page-4-8) for this PCB defect segmentation task. SAM [\[21\]](#page-4-8) is a foundation model for image segmentation, which is pretrained on millions of masks and can segment all objects in a scene or segment an object given a query. Since SAM is pretrained on millions of mask, we hypothesize that it can provide generalizable representations and can be adapted to UAS using few extra learnable module. To examine this hypothesis, we propose a novel and efficient architecture to segment pseudoanomalies using the generalized feature from SAM. This is implemented by inserting a few learnable adapters between SAM's decoder layers, as shown in [Figure 1.](#page-0-0) More specifically, we only optimize the adapters while keeping other parts of the SAM model frozen. We refer to the proposed framework as Pcb pROmpt Sam (PROS). Since PROS only contains few parameters, it can be optimized on the synthesized pseudo-anomalies. Experiment shows that PROS can generalize to real-world defects, which are never observed during training.

In conclusion, this work has three contributions as follows.

First, we explored the topic of PCB UAS, which is crucial for industrial application, but received limited attention in the existing literature. Second, we proposed a novel dataset featuring a broader range of defects and a more realistic distribution, mirroring real-world scenarios better than earlier datasets. Third, we proposed an innovative and effective framework PROS aimed at refining the SAM foundational segmentation model using synthesized defects. Finally, experiments demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of our proposed method on real defects.

Figure 2. Illustration of the normal image, synthesized defects, and the corresponding ground truth.

Related Work

In this section, we discuss prior works on defect datasets and unsupervised anomaly segmentation methods.

Defect Datasets

Defect segmentation has been a crucial task in the industry to ensure the quality and reliability of manufacturing. Accurate segmentation allows for targeted analysis and correction of specific defect types, improving production efficiency. Multiple public defect datasets [\[5,](#page-3-4) [6,](#page-3-5) [39,](#page-4-9) [31,](#page-4-10) [19,](#page-4-11) [3,](#page-3-6) [37\]](#page-4-12) are proposed in the literature over the past few years and covers different categories, including daily objects [\[5,](#page-3-4) [6,](#page-3-5) [39\]](#page-4-9) and texture [\[31\]](#page-4-10). Unlike other defect categories, there are less PCB defect segmentation dataset [\[1,](#page-3-0) [4,](#page-3-1) [7,](#page-3-2) [2,](#page-3-3) [20,](#page-4-0) [23,](#page-4-1) [16\]](#page-4-2). Moreover, most of the prior datasets contains balanced sample across classes, which is not commonly seen in the real world applications. As shown in Table [1,](#page-1-1) we are the first work to consider the skew data distribution for PCB defect dataset.

Unsupervised Anomaly Segmentation (UAS)

The goal of UAS is to localize the defect in the image during inference, without seeing any defective image during training. Early works [\[27,](#page-4-13) [12,](#page-4-14) [10,](#page-4-15) [22,](#page-4-16) [38,](#page-4-17) [13,](#page-4-18) [30,](#page-4-19) [18\]](#page-4-20) can be coarsely categorized into three categories, including student-teacher methods, flow based methods and reconstruction based methods. Studentteacher methods [\[38,](#page-4-17) [13,](#page-4-18) [30\]](#page-4-19) contain a pretrained teacher encoder (i.e. pretrained on ImageNet) and a student encoder. During training, both the teacher encoder and student encoder consumes the normal images and the difference between their output are minimized. During inference, the prediction differences between the student and the teacher encoder suggests the anomaly region. Flow based methods [\[33,](#page-4-21) [28,](#page-4-22) [25\]](#page-4-23) aim to regularize the distribution of encoder output, when consuming the normal training

	# of Images	# of Categories	Color	Imbalanced
DeepPCB [29]	8853		No	
Peking-PCB [17]	1386		Yes	
Ours (PROS)	10261		Yes	
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Table 1. Comparison of the prior datasets with the proposed dataset.

images. More specifically, the distribution of encoder output are encouraged to be, for example, a Gaussian distribution using normalizing flow [\[25\]](#page-4-23). During inference, the encoder output of an abnormal image will be out-of-distribution. Reconstruction based methods [\[35,](#page-4-24) [24,](#page-4-25) [36,](#page-4-26) [34,](#page-4-27) [32\]](#page-4-28) seeks to project the input image (both normal and abnormal image) to the normal image manifold. This is implemented by minimizing the reconstruction difference between input normal image and the reconstruction output during training. During inference, the region with large reconstruction differences are considered as anomalies. Unlike these earlier works, we adopt the large segmentation model for the UAS task.

Method

In this section, we propose the PROS framework for the PCB UAS task. PROS is a lightweight framework optimized on the pseudo-anomalies. The entire framework is illustrated in [Figure 1,](#page-0-0) and more details are provided below.

Architecture

To address the UAS problem, we propose to leverage the generalized feature from a large foundational model SAM [\[21\]](#page-4-8). SAM contains an image encoder, a prompt encoder, and a mask decoder. The image encoder extracts the image embedding using the vision transformer [\[15\]](#page-4-29) . The mask decoder is based on DETR [\[8\]](#page-3-7) and MaskFormer [\[9\]](#page-3-8), to predict semantic and instance-level segmentations. Please refer to the SAM [\[21\]](#page-4-8) paper for additional details.

To leverage the powerful pre-trained knowledge in SAM, we insert *K* learnable adaptation module to SAM. More specifically, each learnable adaptation module is a fully connected layer and is inserted at each transformer layer of SAM decoder. During training, we freeze the majority part of the SAM model and only tune the additional parameters. This efficient design allows SAM to detect PCB defects with only a few learnable parameters.

Training with Synthetic Data

Gathering a large dataset with annotated information is impractical in industrial settings for two key reasons. Firstly, defects in the manufacturing industry are inherently rare occurrences, making it challenging to assemble a sufficiently large and diverse labeled dataset. Secondly, the annotation process requires domain expertise, often unavailable on public crowd-sourcing platforms commonly used for labeling extensive datasets. These challenges emphasize the difficulty in obtaining labeled data at scale for industries dealing with infrequent defects and specialized knowledge requirements.

To overcome these challenges, we employed the prior knowledge that the majority of defects on PCBs are dots, lines, and circles. We synthesized these defects by using OpenCV and pastes these defects onto regular images. During the pasting, we blur these synthesized defect with different transparency. Since these pseudo defects are synthesized, this allows us to derive the positions and categories of the defects automatically. As shown in

Table 2. Comparison of the proposed method PROS with prior works. PROS requires fewer parameters to learn and achieves better performance.

[Figure 2,](#page-1-0) the ground truth is available without additional manual annotation.

Experiment

This section discusses the details of the dataset and presents the experimental results of the proposed PROS on the UAS task.

Dataset and Metric

Our proposed dataset contains 10261 images, which comprises 10 defect types with imbalanced distribution as shown in [Figure 4.](#page-3-9) To analyze the dataset distribution, we adopt the imbalanced factor β , which is defined as $\beta = \frac{max_c \{N_c\}}{min_c \{N_c\}}$. For our dataset, the imbalance factor is around 271, which is skewer than most of the imbalanced dataset considered in the long-tailed literature.

To measure the performance of PROS and the baselines, we adopt the dice score, which is defined as

$$
DICE = \frac{2|GT \cap PRED|}{|GT| + |PRED|},\tag{1}
$$

where *GT* is the ground truth defect segmentation and *PRED* is the predicted defect area.

Implementation Details

To train PROS, we use the pretrained SAM model from its official [github.](https://github.com/facebookresearch/segment-anything) More specifically, we use the SAM with the Vit-Base image encoder. Each input image is scale to 256×256 before feed into the SAM encoder. We trained PROS with Pytorch for 10 epochs using batch size of 4. We use AdamW optimizer and the learning rate is set to 0.0001. The entire training is conducted on the a Titan Nvidia GPU.

Quantitative Results

We first introduce a set of baselines for the PCB-UAS task. Both the baselines and PROS are trained only on synthesized defect images. As shown in [Figure 3,](#page-2-0) we consider the UNet [\[26\]](#page-4-5), Siamese UNet, and Siamese UNet Diff [\[11\]](#page-4-6) architectures. For

Figure 3. Baseline architecture. (Left) UNet can be trained from scratch or initialized with weight pretrained on ImageNet images or MRI images. (Middle) Siamese UNet takes both the normal image and the defect image as input. The image features of the normal image and defect image are concatenated and passed to the UNet decoder. (Right) Siamese UNet Diff. is similar to Siamese UNet, but it uses the difference of intermediate features of two images for segmentation.

the UNet baselines, it can be trained from scratch or pretrained on MRI or ImageNet datasets. Three different losses are used for each baseline, including the binary cross entropy (BCE) loss, soft dice loss and the cross entropy loss.

[Table 2](#page-2-1) summarizes the benefits of the proposed PROS approach. The table compares the dice score between the baselines and PROS on the labeled test set of the proposed dataset. PROS significantly outperforms the baselines by about 7 points. Furthermore, since PROS is built upon the foundational model SAM, it requires only 0.47M learnable parameters, which is 16.6 times less than the baselines.

Ablations on Number of Adapters

We conduct ablation experiments by varying the number of layers for inserting the learnable adapters. As shown in [Table 3,](#page-3-10)

Figure 4. Imbalance sample distribution of the proposed dataset across different defect categories.

	Insert K adapters						
	$K=12$	$K=11$	$K=9$	$K=7$	$K=4$	$K=1$	
# of Param. (M)	3.76	3.46	2.86	2.26	1.37	0.47	
Mean IOU	21.78		30.46 34.36	35.87	42.7	46.02	
Table 3. Ablation of the mean IOU and number of learnable							

parameters with respect to the number of adapters.

the weakest performance is observed when adapters are inserted into all decoder layers of SAM (i.e. $K = 12$). By reducing the number of adapters, the performance of PROS increases. This suggests that the model tends to overfit on the synthesized defects for large *K* and cannot generalize to real defects.

Qualitative Results

[Figure 5](#page-3-11) shows some quantitative results of the proposed PROS on these four input images. Note that these four images are sampled from the test set, which contains real defects. The results show the strong generalizability of PROS on real defects.

Figure 5. Qualitative results of PROS on the real defects, which are not seen during training.

Conclusion and Future Work

In this work, we consider the problem of PCB anomaly segmentation with unsupervised scenarios (PCB-UAS), which has a great industrial impact. We first curate a large dataset with various defective categories of imbalanced distribution, reflecting real-world conditions. The problem of unsupervised PCB anomaly segmentation (UAS) is investigated, where no labeled defect data is available during training. We propose an efficient fine-tuning method to address PCB-UAS. Specifically, a pretrained large foundational model (SAM) is adapted to PCB-UAS by introducing a few learnable adapter layers. SAM is frozen during training, and only the additional adapter parameters are learned. To overcome the lack of labeled defect images for training, we propose to create synthetic defect images that mimic the real ones. Experiments highlight that the proposed method can outperform baselines by 7 points with 16.6 times less learnable parameters. Comprehensive experiments showcase the effectiveness of the proposed framework. We expect this work could pave the way for a novel research direction in PCB defect detection with limited annotation.

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