

List of Provisionally Accepted Papers

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LandmarkFusion-ST: Multi-Stream Spatial-Temporal Landmark Network with Semantic Refinement to Sign language recognitions and translations in real-time

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Abstract: The main communication medium of more than 70 million global deaf and hard-of-hearing people is the sign language, but the autocratized recognitions are unable to survive the continuous signing, variability in the signers, and require that communication be real time. For overcoming these shortcomings, LandmarkFusion-ST is an innovative multi-stream fusion framework that simultaneously predicts hand, facial, and upper-body trajectories of landmarks. The system is based on a combination of holistic pose estimation, the use of Graph Attention Networks to encode spatial dependence and the use of Temporal Convolutional Networks with multi-head self-attention to encode temporal dynamics. A semantic refinement system is based on a pre-trained language encoder that provides grammatically consistent output of translation. Presented with three benchmarks (ISL isolated gestures, PHOENIX-2014 continuous signing and a corpus of ISL sentences) this framework demonstrates 95.6% isolated sign accuracy, a word error rate of 19.3% (14.6% relative to baselines) and is maintainable at over 30 FPS on then-consumer hardware. LandmarkFusion-ST also has a bidirectional, multilingual translation tool and serves as a feasible stepping stone to an all-encompassing real-time assistive communication.

Keywords: Sign Language Recognition, Graph Attention Network, Temporal Convolution Network.

1 Introduction

Sign languages are completely developed natural languages with their own grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, and are spoken by about 70 million deaf people on the planet as the main method of communication [1]. The Indian Sign Language (ISL), used by an estimated 1.8 to 7 million deaf individuals in the Indian subcontinent [2], is grossly underrepresented in computational research as compared to ASL or BSL - forming a pronounced technological void in terms of accessibility tools to users of the ISL. The use of human interpreters cannot be scaled nor reached universally to facilitate deaf-hearing communication. A promising alternative is the Automated Sign Language Recognition (SLR) and Translation (SLT) systems that have significant obstacles in the variability of signers in hand shape, speed, and placement; context interpretation of multi-temporal horizons; and multi-modal combination of hand signs, facial expression, and upper-body posture. The real-time processing is also required to be low-latency and practical deployment. Although deep learning has already reached a level of over 95 percent accuracy in single sign benchmarks [3][4], there is a gap to bridge between single sign benchmarks and continuous recognition and grammatically coherent translation. This paper suggests logical combination of spatial landmark modeling, temporal sequence knowledge and linguistic post-processing in a unified architecture.

1.1 Research Gap

A critical analysis of the current literature indicates that there are a number of outstanding gaps. First, most recognition systems are only used on isolated static gestures, an omission to deal with continuing sentence level signing that is practical communication [5][6]. Second, the majority of architectures are based on pixel-level raw features processed using conventional convolutional networks which is prone to variations in lighting, the complexity of skin tones and the backgrounds [7][8]. Third, the geographical connections among hand joints, on which discriminative information