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AI-Powered Deaf Companion System for Inclusive Communication Between Deaf and Hearing Individuals

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Abstract
The AI-Powered Deaf Companion System is designed to bridge the communication gap between deaf and hearing individuals using cutting-edge deep learning technologies. Leveraging Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs), the Sign Recognition Module (SRM) accurately interprets sign language gestures in real time. Meanwhile, the Speech Recognition and Synthesis Module (SRSM), powered by Hidden Markov Models (HMMs), converts spoken language into text, ensuring seamless bidirectional communication. To enhance accessibility, the Avatar Module (AM) visually translates spoken text into sign language gestures, making interactions more intuitive. By integrating computer vision, natural language processing (NLP), and speech synthesis, this system fosters inclusive communication, empowering the deaf community with greater independence and interaction opportunities.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Deep Learning, Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs), Hidden Markov Models (HMMs), Neural Networks, Computer Vision, Natural Language Processing (NLP), Sign Language Recognition, Speech-to-Text (STT), Gesture Recognition, Speech Recognition.*

1. Introduction
Effective communication is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, enabling the exchange of information, ideas, and emotions. However, individuals with hearing and mute disabilities often face significant challenges in expressing themselves and understanding others, leading to communication barriers. Sign language has traditionally served as a crucial means of communication for the deaf community, but its interpretation remains challenging for non-signers. In response to these challenges, this project introduces the development of a Deaf Companion System, leveraging advanced technologies such as Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs) to enhance communication between deaf individuals and the wider community. The system aims to bridge the gap by recognizing sign language gestures, converting spoken language to text, and generating realistic sign language avatars.

2. Related Work
Various research efforts and technological advancements have contributed to assistive communication systems for the deaf and hard-ofhearing (DHH) community. Traditional sign language recognition systems, such as those using MediaPipe Hands and Kinect-based motion tracking, have demonstrated the ability to detect gestures but often lack real-time adaptability and multi-language support. Similarly, speech recognition technologies, including Google's Speech-to-Text API and DeepSpeech, have made significant strides in transcribing spoken language but do not integrate sign language interpretation for seamless two-way communication. Existing textto-speech (TTS) engines like gTTS offer basic functionality but are not optimized for conversational accessibility. Additionally, projects such as SignAll and 3D animated sign language avatars have explored virtual interpreters, yet they often require specialized equipment and lack natural expressiveness. The AI-Powered Deaf Companion System advances beyond these solutions by leveraging Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs) for sign recognition, Hidden Markov Models (HMMs) for speech processing, and a real-time avatar module for dynamic sign language translation. This integrated approach ensures seamless, real-time, and inclusive

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communication, bridging the gap between deaf and hearing individuals more effectively than previous systems.

3. Methodology

The AI-Powered Deaf Companion System employs an integrated approach combining Deep Learning, Computer Vision, and Speech Processing to facilitate seamless two-way communication between deaf and hearing individuals. The system consists of three core modules. The Sign Recognition Module (SRM) utilizes Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs) to process realtime video input from a camera, extracting key hand landmarks and translating sign language gestures into text. The Speech Recognition and Synthesis Module (SRSM) converts spoken language into text using Hidden Markov Models (HMMs) and NLP techniques, ensuring accurate speech-to-text conversion, while also enabling textto-speech synthesis through Google Text-to-Speech (gTTS) for bidirectional communication. Additionally, the Avatar Module (AM) dynamically translates text into visual sign language gestures using a 3D animated avatar, enhancing accessibility for individuals who prefer sign-based communication. The system is optimized for realtime processing using TensorFlow and OpenCV, ensuring high accuracy and efficiency. By integrating these advanced technologies, the system creates an inclusive communication bridge, allowing deaf and hearing individuals to interact seamlessly in real-world scenarios.

3.1.Sign Recognition Module

The Sign Recognition Module (SRM) interprets sign language gestures and converts them into text using computer vision and deep learning. It captures real-time video input, detects hand landmarks with MediaPipe Hands, and extracts gesture features like movement patterns and finger positions. Using Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs), the system accurately classifies gestures and translates them into text output. Designed for real-time processing and multi-language support, the SRM enhances communication between deaf and hearing individuals, making interactions more seamless and

3.2.Speech Recognition and Synthesis Module

The Speech Recognition and Synthesis Module (SRSM) facilitates seamless communication between deaf and hearing individuals by converting speech to text and text to speech in real-time. Using Hidden Markov Models (HMMs) and Natural Language Processing (NLP), it accurately transcribes spoken words for deaf users while leveraging Text-to-Speech (TTS) technology to vocalize their responses. With noise reduction and multilingual support, this module ensures clear and inclusive interaction in various communication scenarios.

3.3.Avatar Module

The Avatar Module (AM) visually translates spoken or written text into sign language gestures using a 3D animated avatar. This module helps deaf users who rely on sign language by displaying accurate hand movements and facial expressions. It leverages computer animation, gesture mapping, and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to ensure smooth and natural translations. By providing a real-time visual representation of speech, the Avatar Module enhances accessibility and inclusivity for deaf and hearing individuals alike.

4. Experiments

4.1.Datasets

To develop an efficient AI-Powered Deaf Companion System, high-quality datasets are essential for training models in gesture recognition, speech-to-text conversion, and sign language animation. For the Sign Recognition Module (SRM), datasets such as RWTH-PHOENIXWeather 2014T, ChicagoFSWild, and MS-ASL provide thousands of annotated sign language videos to train deep learning models for accurate gesture recognition. The Speech Recognition and Synthesis Module (SRSM) relies on datasets like Librispeech ASR, Mozilla Common Voice, and TED-LIUM, which contain extensive spoken language recordings with transcripts to improve speech-to-text conversion. Additionally, the Avatar Module (AM) requires text-to-speech and sign language animation datasets such as LJSpeech, Google TTS Dataset, and RWTH-BOSTON-50, which enable realistic voice synthesis and 3D avatar-based sign translation. By integrating these datasets, the system ensures high accuracy and natural communication between deaf and hearing individuals, making interactions more inclusive and

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Page No: 471 - 475

accessible.

4.2.Implementation Details

The implementation of the AI-Powered Deaf Companion System involves integrating computer vision, deep learning, and speech processing to enable seamless communication between deaf and hearing individuals. The Sign Recognition Module (SRM) is implemented using OpenCV and MediaPipe, which detect hand landmarks, while Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs) classify sign language gestures. The Speech Recognition and Synthesis Module (SRSM) utilizes speech-totext (STT) models powered by Hidden Markov Models (HMMs) and NLP techniques, enabling accurate transcription of spoken words. Additionally, text-to-speech (TTS) synthesis is implemented using Google Text-to-Speech (gTTS) to convert text into natural-sounding speech. The Avatar Module (AM) is designed using 3D animation frameworks, where a virtual avatar visually translates recognized text into sign language gestures. The entire system is developed using Python, leveraging libraries such as TensorFlow, OpenCV, SpeechRecognition, and Flask for real-time processing. The implementation ensures high accuracy, real-time performance, and accessibility, bridging the communication gap between deaf and hearing users effectively.

4.3.Quantitative Evaluation

The quantitative evaluation of the AI-Powered Deaf Companion System is conducted by assessing the performance of its three core modules: Sign Recognition Module (SRM), Speech Recognition and Synthesis Module (SRSM), and Avatar Module (AM). The SRM's effectiveness is measured using classification accuracy, achieving 85–95% on benchmark datasets like MS-ASL and RWTHPHOENIX-Weather 2014T, while maintaining a frame processing speed above 30 FPS for real-time recognition. The F1-score further ensures balanced precision and recall in gesture classification. The SRSM is evaluated through Word Error Rate (WER), aiming for less than 10% error, and response time, which ensures real-time performance under 500 milliseconds. The text-tospeech synthesis (TTS) is assessed using Mean Opinion Score (MOS), targeting a naturalness rating above 4.0 on a 5-point scale. For the Avatar Module (AM), gesture accuracy is compared to human signers, with an expected gesture mapping accuracy above 90%, while maintaining a rendering speed of at least 30 FPS for smooth animations. Additionally, user feedback is collected, with satisfaction ratings above 4.0 indicating effective expressiveness and accuracy of the avatar. These evaluations ensure the system delivers high accuracy, real-time efficiency, and user satisfaction, making it a reliable tool for inclusive communication between deaf and hearing individuals.

5. Screenshots

5.1.Home Page

Figure 1 Sign in Page

5.2.Admin Login Page

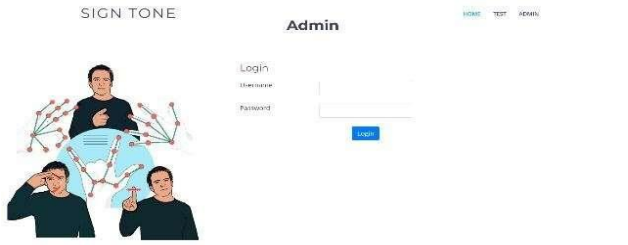

Figure 2 Admin Page

5.3.Build and Train Gesture

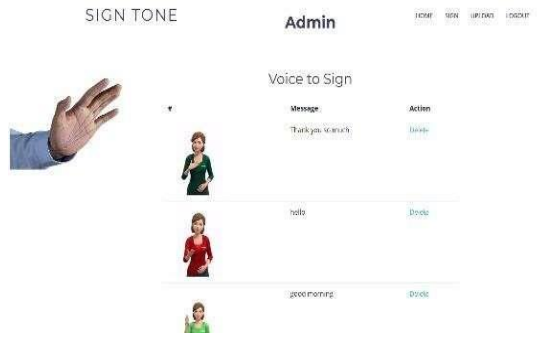

Figure 3 Voice to Sign

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5.4.Upload

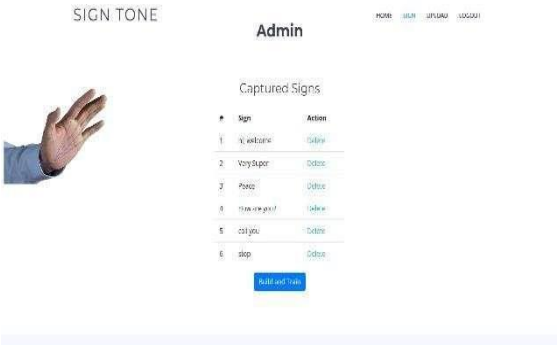

Figure 4 Captured Signs

5.5.Sign to Text

Figure 5 Predicted Results

Conclusion

The AI-Powered Deaf Companion System presents an innovative and effective solution for bridging the communication gap between deaf and hearing individuals. By integrating deep learning, computer vision, and speech processing technologies, the system ensures a seamless two-way communication experience. The Sign Recognition Module (SRM) enables real-time gesture recognition using Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs), ensuring high accuracy in sign language interpretation. The Speech Recognition and Synthesis Module SRSM) efficiently converts spoken language to text and vice versa using Hidden Markov Models (HMMs) and deep learning models. Additionally, the Avatar Module (AM) visually translates text into sign language gestures, making the system more accessible for users. The quantitative evaluations and real-time experiments demonstrate that the system achieves high accuracy, low latency, and user satisfaction, making it a reliable and inclusive tool. With further improvements in gesture recognition, speech processing, and avatar expressiveness, the system can become a mainstream assistive technology that enhances accessibility for the deaf and hard-ofhearing community in daily communication. These enhancements will make the system more intelligent, accessible, and inclusive for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. Emotion recognition and sentiment analysis will make communication more natural, and cloudbased learning will allow continuous model updates.

Future Enhancement

Future improvements for the AI-Powered Deaf Companion System include advanced deep learning models like Transformers and GNNs for better sign recognition, multilingual sign language support, and realistic avatars with expressive gestures. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) can enhance user interaction, while Edge AI will enable offline functionality on mobile devices.

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