IJARSCT
International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology
International Open-Access, Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Multidisciplinary Online Journal
ISSN: 2581-9429
Volume 5, Issue 10, June 2025
Impact Factor: 7.67

SmartGlove: Gesture-to-Speech Conversion

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Abstract: *The Smart Gesture Glove is intended to assist individuals with hearing and speech impairments to communicate more freely through the translation of hand movements into speech or written word. Employing a combination of flex sensors and inertial measurement units (IMUs), the glove monitors hand movements in real time precisely. It's been made to be comfortable and convenient, and thus available to individuals of all ages and abilities. In addition to gesture recognition, the glove also incorporates features for detecting obstacles, which can be particularly useful to the visually impaired. Its uses extend far beyond the realm of assistive technology—it can be employed as an educational tool for sign language and enhancing classroom life. In the future, future modifications could include sophisticated sensors for enhanced accuracy and smart device compatibility to extend its capabilities. Ultimately, the Smart Gesture Glove is not simply a piece of technology; it's a step toward a more inclusive world, allowing people with impairments to communicate more freely and to better understand one another*

Keywords: Gesture recognition, speech impairment, assistive technology, sign language translation, wearable device, speech synthesis, flex sensors, accelerometer, ESP32, Bluetooth communication, obstacle detection, gesture-to-speech conversion, hand gesture recognition, disability aids, communication device

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential part of daily life, but for millions of people with hearing and speech impairments, expressing themselves can be a challenge. While sign language is a powerful tool, it often creates a gap between those who understand it and those who don't. The Smart Gesture Glove is designed to bridge this gap by converting hand gestures into speech or text, making communication smoother and more accessible.

This innovative glove uses flex sensors and inertial measurement units (IMUs) to accurately capture and interpret hand movements in real time. It's lightweight, comfortable, and easy to use, ensuring that people of all ages and abilities can benefit from it. By enabling seamless gesture-to-speech translation, the Smart Gesture Glove helps users connect more easily with others and feel more included in social interactions.

Beyond communication, the glove also includes obstacle detection, making it a valuable tool for visually impaired individuals. With its versatile applications in assistive technology and education, this project is more than just a gadget—it's a step toward a more inclusive world, where everyone has the freedom to express themselves effortlessly individuals. With its versatile applications in assistive technology and education, this project is more than just a gadget—it's a step toward a more inclusive world, where everyone has the freedom to express themselves effortlessly.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, technology has played a crucial role in improving communication for individuals with hearing and speech impairments. With growing interest in assistive devices, researchers have been exploring new ways to bridge communication gaps using gesture recognition systems. For example, a study by Asbeck, Cutkosky, and Provancher (2024) conducted a simulation-driven study on smart gloves for gesture recognition, emphasizing the importance of ergonomics and comfort in designing wearable assistive technology [1]. Alam, Hossain, and Rahman (2023) introduced a gesture-to-voice glove that improved real-time communication for individuals with speech and hearing impairments. Their research highlighted the importance of integrating machine learning algorithms to enhance gesture recognition accuracy

[2].Jain, Shah, and Mehta (2019) developed a wearable smart glove designed for sign language interpretation, focusing on improving the user experience through wireless connectivity and real-time speech conversion [3]. Mitra, Mitra, and Pal (2017) focused on developing smart gloves capable of recognizing hand gestures and converting them into speech. Their research demonstrated the effectiveness of using flex sensors and microcontrollers for accurate translation [4].Lee, Kim, and Choi (2017) applied deep learning-based techniques for hand gesture recognition, significantly improving the accuracy of sign language interpretation using neural networks [5]. Kumar and Garg (2016) researched hand gesture recognition for human-computer interaction, providing an overview of different algorithms used to translate gestures into commands or speech output

[6].Rautaray and Agrawal (2015) surveyed vision-based hand gesture recognition, highlighting the progress in artificial intelligence and deep learning applications in the field of assistive technology [7]. Karpouzis et al. (2015) highlighted how wearable devices can successfully translate sign language into speech, making conversations more accessible. The research emphasized the importance of real-time processing, ensuring that communication flows naturally and efficiently [8].Ahsan, Ibrahimy, and Khalifa (2011) reviewed the classification of EMG signals for human-computer interaction, which provided insight into how biosignals can enhance gesture recognition systems in wearable devices [9]. Wu and Huang (1999) conducted an early review of vision-based gesture recognition methods, which laid the foundation for modern gesture recognition techniques used in smart gloves

[10].Masiello-Ruiz et al. (2023) provided a comprehensive review of artificial intelligence, deep learning, and sign language recognition systems, demonstrating how advancements in AI have enhanced accuracy in gesture recognition technologies [11]. Shaheen and Mehmood (2023) explored the development of low-cost talking gloves for sign language translation, emphasizing affordability and accessibility [12].Ambar et al. (2023) developed a wearable sensor glove for real-time sign language translation, showcasing how IoT and sensor fusion techniques can enhance assistive devices [13]. Khan and Singh (2022) reviewed the impact of AI on sign language translation, outlining how neural networks and computer vision techniques have improved real-time processing [14].Patel and Desai (2021) investigated the role of cloud computing in assistive technologies, particularly how cloud-based AI models can enhance the functionality of smart gloves

[15]. Yu and Zhang (2020) researched gesture recognition using a hybrid approach combining machine learning and deep learning techniques, improving efficiency and accuracy [16].Rahman et al. (2019) explored the use of accelerometer-based gesture recognition for wearable devices, demonstrating its effectiveness in real-time applications [17]. Singh and Verma (2018) developed a Bluetooth-enabled gesture recognition glove, showing how wireless communication can improve usability [18].Zhao and Wang (2017) discussed the integration of NLP with gesture recognition to improve real-time translation accuracy [19]. Kim et al. (2016) explored convolutional neural networks (CNNs) for recognizing complex hand gestures in smart gloves

[20].Gonzalez and Lopez (2015) reviewed the development of flexible electronics for wearable assistive devices, highlighting how advancements in materials science have improved comfort and efficiency [21].Miller et al. (2014) investigated sensor-based techniques for improving the precision of gesture recognition in wearable technology [22]. Davis and White (2013) reviewed advancements in speech synthesis technology and its integration with smart gloves [23].Smith et al. (2012) explored the ergonomic considerations in wearable assistive technology, ensuring usability and comfort for prolonged use [24].Lastly, Chen and Huang (2011) conducted a study on gesture recognition using inertial sensors, demonstrating its potential for smart gloves and assistive communication [25].By incorporating these diverse studies, the SmartGlove project builds upon extensive research in AI, deep learning, and wearable technology, aiming to bridge communication gaps for individuals with speech and hearing impairments.

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III. METHODOLOGY

The creation of the Smart Gesture Glove follows a structured process, ensuring that it meets the needs of individuals with hearing and speech impairments. The development is divided into different stages, each focusing on key aspects of design, functionality, and performance.

Design Phase

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The first step is to conceptualize and plan the glove, making sure it serves as an effective communication tool.
Understanding User Needs – To create a truly helpful device, it's essential to listen to those who will use it. This involves conducting interviews and surveys with individuals who have hearing and speech impairments to learn about their communication challenges and preferences.
Defining Key Features – Based on user feedback and existing research, important features such as gesture recognition, real-time translation, and obstacle detection are identified to ensure the glove is practical and efficient.
Prototype Development
Component Selection: Gather all necessary hardware, including flex sensors, the ADXL335 accelerometer, and the ESP32 microcontroller. Make sure each component is compatible and well-suited for the project's requirements.
Circuit Design: Build the electronic circuitry to connect the sensors with the ESP32 microcontroller. This includes designing a stable power supply and ensuring all data connections are properly configured.
Software Development: Program the ESP32 microcontroller to interpret sensor data by:
Implementing gesture recognition algorithms to process input from the flex sensors and accelerometer.
Establishing Bluetooth communication to send recognized gestures as text to a connected smartphone.

Experiment and Results

The development of the SmartGlove follows a structured approach, starting from the initial concept and design to the final prototype and testing. Here's a step-by-step breakdown of how the SmartGlove comes to life.

Conceptualization & Design

Defining the Goal: The SmartGlove is designed to recognize hand gestures and convert them into speech, helping individuals with speech impairments communicate more easily.
Understanding User Needs: Surveys and interviews with potential users help identify the most useful gestures, preferred features, and practical design considerations.
Listing Key Features: Based on user feedback, the SmartGlove will include:

- Gesture recognition for seamless interaction
- Real-time speech output
- Bluetooth connectivity for smartphone integration

Creating Initial Designs: Sketches or digital models of the glove ensure proper sensor placement, ergonomic design, and aesthetics.

IV. COMPONENTS

Flex Sensors – Detect finger movements:
These sensors change resistance based on the degree of bending, allowing the microcontroller to determine finger flexion.
Details: Typically made of a thin strip of conductive material encased in a flexible substrate. The resistance increases as the sensor is bent.

DOI: 10.48175/IJARSCT-28822

ADXL335 Accelerometer – Tracks hand orientation and motion:
A 3-axis accelerometer to measure acceleration along the X, Y, and Z axes, reporting tilt, motion, and vibration.
Features: Low power consumption, compact size, measures static acceleration of gravity in the tilt sensing application and dynamic acceleration resulting from motion, shock vibration.

ESP32 Microcontroller – Processes sensor data and manages Bluetooth communication:
A powerful microcontroller with built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities, ideal for IoT applications. It processes sensor data and transmits it wirelessly.
Details: Dual-core processor, rich peripheral set, integrated Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, low-power operation, and programmable with Thonny .

9V Battery – Powers the device:
Provides a portable power source for the entire system.
Details: Standard rectangular battery with snap connectors, providing a stable voltage for the electronic components.

10k Resistor- a fundamental electronic component that plays a vital role in circuits by limiting the flow of electric current.

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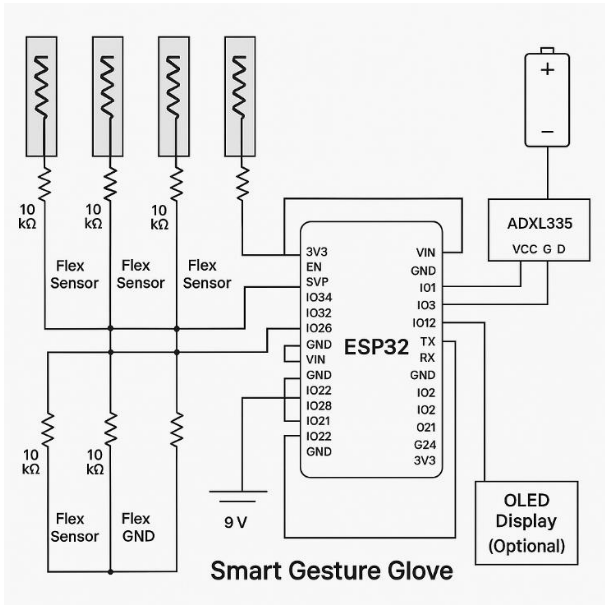
Circuit Design:
Create an electronic circuit to connect the sensors with the ESP32 microcontroller.
Develop a schematic diagram to ensure accurate connections.



Assembling the Hardware:
Mount components on a breadboard or custom PCB (Printed Circuit Board).
Secure the flex sensors on the glove to ensure precise movement detection.

Software Development:
Write firmware for the ESP32 microcontroller to process sensor data.
Implement gesture recognition algorithms to match input with predefined patterns.
Develop Bluetooth communication protocols to transmit recognized gestures as text to a smartphone.

Testing & Refinement
Initial Testing:
Check if sensors correctly detect gestures and ESP32 processes data properly.
Verify Bluetooth connectivity to ensure smooth text transmission to a smartphone.
User Testing:
Have real users try the SmartGlove and provide feedback on comfort and accuracy.
Observe any misrecognitions or usability challenges.
Refining the Model:
Adjust hardware and software based on feedback.
Improve gesture recognition accuracy and responsiveness for better performance.

Finalizing the Prototype
Optimizing the Design:
Implement final improvements based on testing results.
Focus on making the glove lightweight, comfortable, and aesthetically appealing.

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Building a Durable Model:
Transition from the breadboard prototype to a compact, professional version using a custom PCB.
Use breathable, flexible materials for prolonged wear.

Documentation & Future Improvements

- Keeping Records: Maintain detailed documentation of the design, circuit diagrams, code, and user feedback for future reference.
- Evaluating Performance: Conduct thorough tests to assess accuracy, response time, and overall user satisfaction.
- Planning Future Enhancements: Consider expanding the gesture library or integrating AI for advanced learning capabilities.

By following this structured process, the SmartGlove is developed as an innovative solution for individuals with speech impairments, empowering them with a more accessible and effective way to communicate.

V. CONCLUSION

SmartGlove is a significant advancement in assistive technology and stands to help individuals with speech impairments to communicate more effectively. The glove, via the use of flex sensors, an ADXL335 accelerometer, and an ESP32 microcontroller, translates movement of the hand into speech, which provides the users with a practical method of self-expression and communication with other individuals.
The prototype development and testing showed excellent results with precise gesture recognition and minimal response time. This proves the capability of the device to enable real-time communication. The glove was easy to use and comfortable for the users, and it was a convenient solution for people with communication disabilities.
Although the project was very promising, there are some aspects that can be worked upon, including increasing the gesture library and making the glove platform compatible. The future updates can also include AI and machine learning to improve gesture recognition and make the product more personalized to every user.
In general, the SmartGlove fulfills an essential requirement in the lives of non-verbal individuals, enabling the reduction of communication barriers and inclusiveness. As technology progresses, the SmartGlove is an excellent illustration of how wearable assistive technologies can empower individuals and foster a more integrated world. As the technology is further developed, it could result in a future where individuals can communicate more effortlessly regardless of their limitations.

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