

Speech enhancement by using novel multiband spectral subtraction method along with a reduction of the cross spectral component

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ABSTRACT

It is essential to enhance the speech signal's clarity and quality in order to maintain the message's content. By boosting the noisy voice signal, the speech signal quality can be raised. Two techniques are presented in this study to significantly minimize the additive background noise. In order to minimize non-stationary additive noise concerning the speech signal, the first approach employs modified multiband spectral subtraction. With this technique, spectral subtraction is carried out based on the signal to noise ratio (SNR) values in various noisy speech frames. When the noisy signal and noise signal are somewhat correlated, a second method is used to minimize the cross spectral components. These techniques are used to get over the drawbacks of the fundamental spectrum subtraction method. To improve the noisy speech signal, both techniques are combined.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of speech has made it the main form of communication. Every communication system has background noise, which not only interferes with listening tasks but also lowers the efficiency of digital signal processors. As a result, lowering background noise is essential for effective communication.

Speech enhancement is one of the techniques for reducing noise from noisy speech signals in order to increase the excellence, intelligibility, and accessibility of the speech signal. Applications for speech augmentation include teleconferencing, hearing aids, recording systems, and mobile and remote communication. The algorithms in this study can be used to reduce additive noise, this comprises white noise, flicker noise, babbling noise, and so forth. Both techniques employ the fundamental spectral subtraction technique. By discusses various methods to lessen additive noise in [1]. Among this technique is the fundamental spectral subtraction approach, which includes subtracting the predicted noise's power spectrum magnitude from the noisy speech signal in order to acquire the speech signal. In the process, two presumptions are made. The first is the assumption that speech signals are stationary for brief periods of time.

The second assumption is that there is no relationship between the noisy speech signal and the clear speech signal. When there is no speech signal, the noise signal is approximated from those moments of silence. These presumptions are not always valid in practise; There is no distribution of noise evenly throughout the noisy speech signal. Consequently, this technique for improving speech introduces musical noise.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

Zheng *et al.* [1] has explained the method to enhance the noise speech signal, which is corrupted by the acoustic noise. The approach adopted is the spectral subtraction method. The spectrum of magnitude of the clear speech signal is estimated by subtracting the estimated noise speech signal from the noisy speech signal. By analyzing the signal during non-speech signal activity, an estimate of the noise's magnitude spectrum is made. Other techniques are employed to eliminate any remaining noise caused by the spectral subtraction method. The methods are half wave, magnitude averaging and residual noise reduction. Limitations: assumption made that the background noise environment remains stationary which is not true, and it generates musical noise.

Zheng *et al.* [2] outlines the methods for getting over the drawbacks of the conventional spectrum subtraction approach. The assumption expressed in the spectral subtraction that the noise is stationary is not true in real time applications, hence it introduces musical noise. To avoid this here author has modified the basic spectral subtraction into two factors those are, subtraction factor or weighting factor which is used to eradicate most of the broad band noise by removing wide peaks. Another factor used is the spectral factor which helps in eliminating the musical noise perceived during the process. Merits: the proposed method removes added broad band noise as well as the musical noise signal generated by the basic spectral subtraction approach. Spectral subtraction factor mainly depends on the signal to noise ratio (SNR) value; hence the method is adaptive in nature. Limitations: the efficiency of the recommended method is dependent on the decision of the subtraction factor and the floor factor.

Toyin *et al.* [3] explains the method used to enhance the noisy speech signal, short duration non-stationary signal, corrupted by the broad band noise proposed approach is “adaptive wiener filter” where spectral estimate of the previous frames are used to find the spectral estimate of the current frame and spectral estimate of the current frame is used to update the coefficients of the wiener filter on previous frame. This method is followed by spectral smoothing, which is performed based on the spectral change. Slight temporal smoothing is applied for the fast spectral changes and slight temporal, when the spectral change is fast, amount of the smoothing is increased when spectral change is very slow. Merits: the adaptive nature of the proposed method has been increased by using spectral changes to update coefficients of the wiener filter. Limitations: this method introduces musical noise as well as the enhance signal is slight dull.

Zheng *et al.* [4] aims at reducing the musical noise generated by spectral subtraction method. Proposed method involves “wiener filtering” and “wavelet packet decomposition”. Enhanced signal is divided based on wavelet packet decomposition method. Power spectral density of the wavelet packet coefficients is filtered by wiener filtering method. It is observed that musical noise is placed in a more detailed manner as coefficients. So, the spectrum subtraction method's production of musical noise is decreases. Merits: the quality of musical noise is drastically reduced without affecting the intelligibility of the speech. Limitations: quality of clean speech is dependant the on number of decomposition stages, for improve the quality we have to increase number of decomposition stages.

Das *et al.* [5] presented the necessary correction to the fundamental spectral subtraction approach, the predicated on the concept that the clear speech signal and the noise signal don't correlate. Therefore, noise corrupted speech signal that has been tainted by noise that is linked with the speech signal can be enhanced using the proposed approach. We estimate the clean speech magnitude spectrum by subtracting an estimate of the cross-correlation between the clean speech signal and the noise signal after first eliminating the estimated noise spectrum from noisy speech. It is necessary to find the cross-correlation between noise and clean speech but clean speech is not accessed hence a correlation is computed between the noisy speech signal and noise. This method is followed by the “perceptual weighting function” to reduce noise as well as to improve the speech quality. Where weighting function is computed based on the psychoacoustics model. Merits: this technique gets over the drawbacks of the spectrum subtraction method., where it can be used for real time applications ex., speech corrupted by the coloured noise. Limitations: the computation of the correlation between noise and speech signal is a lengthy and complex method, which introduces distortion. Hence this method only focuses on the noise reduction.

Roy and Paliwal [6] addresses problem of the basic spectral subtraction approach, the following presupposes that the noise signal and the precise speech signal are both inherently stationary. But this method fails when there is non-stationarity present in the any of the both signals. To overcome this problem the author modelled the non-stationary signal into the sum of sinusoids known as “tones”, and stated that window

length is selected based on the tone duration. In proposed work multiple spectral subtraction stages are used with different window length. Sum of enhanced signal from each stage are summed to get the output.

Boll [7] explained the technique for minimizing the auditory noise produced by the spectral subtraction method. Proposed method helps to enhance the clean speech signal corrupted by the stationary noise. This method estimates the spectrum of the noise better than the basic averaging method. In this method first silence frame and speech frame are separated by using basic analysis frame. Further analysis frame length is increased till it covers all the silent frames. Limitations: proposed method can be used only when noise added is constant hence cannot be used for coloured noise.

In any typical speech enhancement techniques mentioned in the above papers describe the speech signal's small-time magnitude spectrum, keeping phase spectrum unchanged. But Chen *et al.* [8] has combined both changed magnitude and phase spectrum after the enhancement to form the modified complex signal spectrum. This method is applicable to the conditions where speech noise energy is less compared to the speech energy. Limitations: this method fails when noise is non-white noise as, babble noise, coloured noise, as it introduces distortion as well as residual noise.

Bharti *et al.* [9] has stated problem of the one having sensory-neural hearing impairment, facing problem in speech perception due to the increased intra-speech spectral masking. Proposed method involves two methods, first method is spectral subtraction method to suppress the external noise. Second method is multi-band frequency compression to reduce intra-speech masking. The speech signal's spectrum in the multi-band frequency compression technique is segmented into bands and spectral components are compressed at the centre of the frame and concentrate the speech energy into narrow bands to reduce masking by adjacent spectral components.

3. OUTCOME OF LITERATURE SURVEY

We are going to summarize the existing speech enhancement methods. This also gives the limitations or problems faced during the processing as well as drawbacks of those methods. From the literature survey we can observe that the method basically used to suppress the noise present in the corrupted speech is spectral subtraction method, where by subtracting the magnitude spectrum of the predicted noise from that of the noisy speech signal, we are going to be able to estimate the clean speech signal. The main drawbacks of the method were the assumptions and the method work only when the speech signal is stationary in nature and noise is uncorrelated to the speech signal. Some other methods of speech enhancement discussed in the literature survey are wiener filtering method, wavelet packet decomposition method, Frequency compression method, multi-band spectral subtraction method. Every method involves limitations some of them are mentioned below,

- Problems faced by all of the aforementioned techniques were the generation of musical noise, presence of residual noise after processing and distortion caused due to the processing.
- Wavelet packet decomposition method reduces musical noise, but the effectiveness of this approach is dependent on the number of decomposition stages, hence better quality can be obtained only with the increased complexity.
- Signal subspace approach can be used to avoid the non-stationarity problem as well as it also reduces the residual noise but causes some distortion in the processed speech.

Hence some of the methods were successful in reducing the musical noise but were failed when it come for residual or distortion. Proposed work is designed to overcome these problems.

By enhancing the speech signal's perception and comprehensibility, the speech enhancement approach is used to increase the speech signal's intelligence. It is also used in many real time applications as in mobile communication, and hearing aids. Among the existing methods of speech enhancement is the basic spectral subtraction method, that enhances the noise corrupted speech signal which, is considered to be non-stationary and where, noise is uncorrelated to the speech signal. These assumptions not really exist in most of the real time applications. Therefore, an effective speech enhancement approach is required in order to get around the drawbacks of the spectral subtraction technique. Hence proposed the work "Speech enhancement using multi-band spectral subtraction using cross spectral subtraction". Objectives of proposed work are i) to minimize the noise present in the corrupted speech signal; ii) to eliminate the musical noise generated by the spectral subtraction method; and iii) to eliminate the possible distortion that can cause during processing.

4. PROPOSED METHOD

The proposed work introduces two speech enhancement algorithms in order to perform the fundamental spectral subtraction approach and prevent the musical noise that can be produced as a result of this method. The first technique uses a modified form of multi-band spectral subtraction. This approach is

used to handle noisy speech signals that have suffered from additive noise and are non-stationary [10]. The SNR of the current frame serves as the foundation for doing spectral subtraction. Section 1 of the document contains all of the method's specifics. In order to handle the noisy speech signal, that has been tainted by noise linked to the speech signal, the second technique comprises computing the relationship between the noise-free and clean signals of speech. In section 2, the computation's specifics are explained [11].

4.1. Modified multi-band spectral signal

Let:

$w(n)$ -Enhancing the noisy speech signal.

$a(n)$ -Additive noise.

$s(n)$ - Noise free speech signal.

Thus, $W(n)$ is provided by (1).

$$w(n) = s(n) + a(n) \quad (1)$$

Using the frequency domain conversion, let $s(n)$ be expressed as (2).

$$W(f) = S(f) + A(f) \quad (2)$$

The noise-corrupted speech signal's power spectrum is shown as (3).

$$|W(f)|^2 = |S(f)|^2 + |A(f)|^2 + S(f)A(f) * +S(f) * A(f) \quad (3)$$

The fundamental spectral subtraction method requires that the noise signal along with the noise-corrupted signal are uncorrelated. $S(f).A(f) * +S(f) *.A(f)$ terms in (3) are neglected. Therefore, (4) may be used to produce the clean speech signal $S(f)$.

$$|S(f)|^2 = |W(f)|^2 - |A(f)|^2 \quad (4)$$

Even so, this approach makes the unfeasible assumption that noise is equally distributed across the tainted speech signal, which is impractical. So, if we use the same technique, the noisy speech signal will be reduced by the same amount of anticipated noise [12]. A different approach of speech enhancement is necessary to prevent this, in which the amount of noise to be removed relies on the SNR in the relevant section of the signal $W(n)$. The over subtraction factor is calculated using modified multi-band spectral subtraction, which is dependent on the SNR value. In order to calculate clean speech, over subtraction can be introduced into (4). The factor can then be obtained by (5).

$$|S(f)|^2 = |W(f)|^2 - \alpha|A(f)|^2 \quad (5)$$

In the connection between and SNR in this paper explained [13]. As for the relationship:

$$\alpha = \begin{cases} 5 & SNR < 5 \\ 4 - 0.15 (SNR) & -5 < SNR < 20 \\ 1 & SNR > 20 \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

4.2. Cross-correlation technique

In (3), $S(f).A(f) * +S(f) *.A(f)$ is regarded as the cross-correlation term that is ignored in the spectral subtraction method. Nonetheless, there is some association between speech signal and noise in real-time applications [14]. Thus, it is essential to identify these correlation words, x_{dc} and x_{cd} . Since we are unable to access to precise speech, we can determine a correlation between the noise signal and the corrupted speech signal. For example, x_{yd} where x_{sd} is yields,

$$x_{sd} = x_{cd} + x_{dd} \quad (7)$$

$$|W(f)|^2 = \begin{cases} |y(f)|^2 - \alpha|N(f)|^2 - \delta|y(f)| * |N(f)| & \text{if } |y(f)|^2 > \alpha|N(f)|^2 \\ \beta|N(f)|^2 & \text{else} \end{cases} \quad (8)$$

where is the calculation of the over spectral subtraction factor, using (6) and it is the reported value of 0.002 for the spectral floor factor from the publication [15]. Is a correlation factor that estimates how closely the noisy speech signal and estimated noisy speech signal are correlated. Equation to determine is:

$$\delta = \left| \frac{\chi_{yn} - \mu_y \mu_n}{\sigma_y \sigma_n} \right| \quad (9)$$

where,

$$\chi_{yn} = \frac{1}{N/2} \sum_k |y(f)| * |N(f)|$$

$$\mu_y = \frac{1}{N/2} \sum_k |y(f)|$$

$$\mu_n = \frac{1}{N/2} \sum_k |N(f)|$$

where, μ_y , μ_n are the means values of the noise corrupted speech signal and noise signal. Where $0 < n < N/2$, N is the length of fast fourier transform. σ_y^2 , σ_n^2 are the variances of the noise corrupted speech signal and enhanced noisy signal.

A noise corrupted speech signal is initially separated into 20-ms frames (160 samples/frame). For this, Hamming Window is employed (with window size 160). Techniques for windowing may cause spectral leakage near the edges of the window, which may result in information loss; hence, 50% overlapping is performed before signal processing to prevent the same [16]. Windowed noisy voice signal is denoted by (10).

$$Ww(n) = W(n) * w(n) \quad (10)$$

From (1),

$$\begin{aligned} Ww(n) &= [s(n) + a(n)] * w(n) \\ &= sw(n) + aw(n) \end{aligned} \quad (11)$$

After computing, fast fourier transform (FFT) of the noise corrupted speech sample, the magnitude spectrum is calculated using (3) and (2). The noisy speech signal's frame magnitude spectrum is separated into frames with 40 samples each in modified multiband spectral subtraction [17]. Based on the SNR values of these frames, spectral subtraction is carried out independently for each frame using (5) and (6) by calculating the over subtraction factor.

Finally, the correlation factor is determined using (8) and (9) and (7). It is possible to retrieve the precise speech signal magnitude. Complex spectrum is created by incorporating the predicted non noisy speech signal magnitude spectrum with the original speech signal unaltered phase spectrum [18]. To translate a complex spectrum into a time domain signal, inverse frequency fourier transform is used. In the same way that 50% overlapping is used for framing [19]. The clear speech signal is achieved via 50% overlap addition. The Figure 1 illustrates the various processes that go into putting the suggested strategy into practice [20].

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this proposed method, speech quality is evaluated using a subjective listening test and spectrogram analysis. These analysis techniques are used to compare the performance of the stated approach to those of the current speech enhancement method. In a subjective listening test, listeners are used to compare processed speech to an unprocessed speech signal. The speech quality can be rated by listeners using a predetermined scale [21]. A spectrogram is a representation of a speech signal's time and frequency, with the frequency changing as the time changes. The spectrogram's colour corresponds to the speech's energy at that frequency. Dark colour indicates a high-energy speaking signal [22].

The spectrogram analysis of noisy speech signals perverted by babble noise at 0 dB and 15 dB is shown in Figures 2 and 3, respectively [23]. Also, the spectrogram analysis of the improved speech sounds is shown in Figures 4 and 5. It has been noticed that utilizing the suggested strategy has improved speech quality. The average rating for the modified multiband spectral subtraction subjective listening test for signals with 0 dB SNR and 15 dB SNR is 2.7 and 2.6 (low), respectively [24]. The suggested approach has an average rating of 3.7 and 3.6 for signals with 0 dB SNR and 15 dB SNR, respectively (greater than that of previous method) [25], [26].

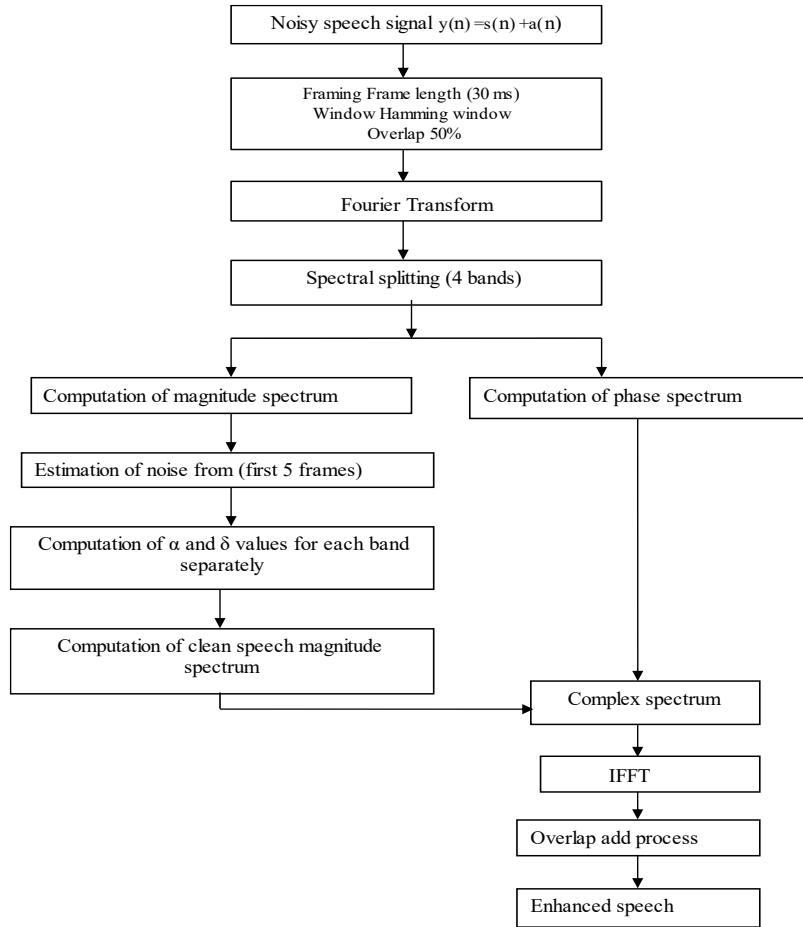


Figure 1. Flow chart for the proposed method

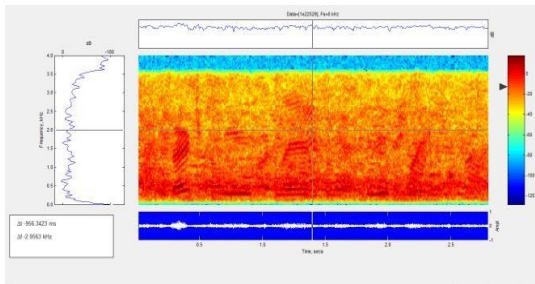


Figure 2. Signal 0 dB SNR babble noise speech signal

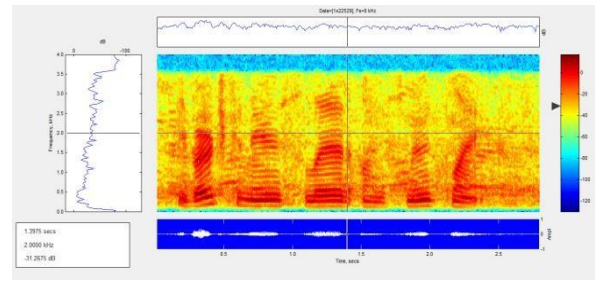


Figure 3. Signal 15 dB SNR babble noise speech signal

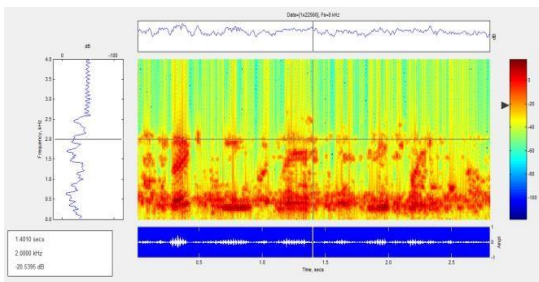


Figure 4. Signal enhanced by the proposed method

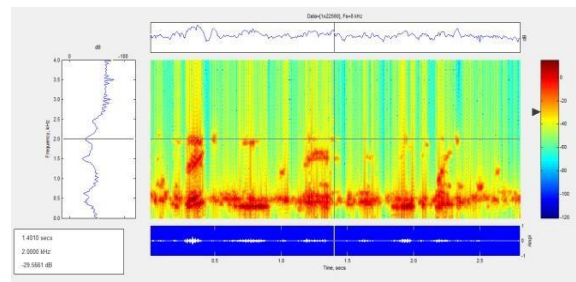


Figure 5. Signal enhanced by multiband spectral subtraction

6. CONCLUSION




In this study, the issues and restrictions of the base spectral subtraction method are discussed. By calculating the value of the over subtraction factor, we performed multiband spectral subtraction in this research. Cross-correlation approach was used to construct additional cross spectral components. According to the results and discussions, the suggested method performs the spectrum subtraction method in terms of the excellence of speech signal.

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