Text Independent Amharic Language Speaker Identification In Noisy Environments using speech Processing Techniques

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Abstract

In Ethiopia, the largest ethnic and linguistic groups are the Oromos, Amharas and Tigrayans. This paper presents the performance analysis of text-independent speaker identification system for the Amharic language in noisy environments. VQ (Vector Quantization), GMM (Gaussian Mixture Models), BPNN (Back propagation neural network), MFCC (Mel-frequency cepstrum coefficients), GFCC (Gammatone Frequency Cepstral Coefficients), and a hybrid approach had been use as techniques for identifying speakers of Amharic language in noisy environments. For the identification process, speech signals are collected from different speakers including both sexes; for our data set, a total of 90 speakers' speech samples were collected, and each speech have 10 seconds duration from each individual. From these speakers, 59.2%, 70.9% and 84.7% accuracy are achieved when VQ, GMM and BPNN are used on the combined feature vector of MFCC and GFCC.

Keywords*: ANN, VQ, GMM, MFCC, GFCC and, Amharic Language*

1. Introduction

Ethiopia has 83 different languages that have up to 200 different dialects spoken. The largest ethnic and linguistic groups are the Afan Oromos, Amharas and Tigrayans (Habtu, 2004) In line with this, Ge'ez is an ancient language of the country; it was introduced as an official written language during the first Aksumite kingdom when the Sabeans' sought refuge in Aksum. The Aksumites developed Ge'ez, a unique script derived from the Sabean's alphabet, and it is still used by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church today. Regarding to this, Tigrigna and Amharigna (Amharic) are the languages which are derived from Ge'ez. Amharic is the working language of our country. Generally, Ethiopian languages are divided into four major language groups. These are Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic, and Nilo-Saharan. Amharic language which categorized in the Semitic group is the focus of this research paper [1].

Among semantic languages, Amharic is spoken by 30 million people as a first or second language. That is, it is used as the second and most spoken Semitic language in the world (after Arabic). Probably, it is the second largest language in Ethiopia (after Oromo, a Cushitic language), and possibly one of the five largest languages on the African continent. [2].

Speaker recognition or voice recognition refers to the automated method of identifying or confirming the identity of an individual based on his or her voice. For real world use, speaker identification with noise resistance systems is crucial. Within a given a speech sample, speaker recognition is concerned with extracting clues to the identity a person who is the source of that utterance [3, 4].

Besides, Rao etal. speaker recognition is divided into two specific tasks: verification and identification. For speaker verification, its goal is to determine a voice from a given sample to which he or she claims to be. On the other hand, for speaker identification, the goal is to determine or know the voices of one speech perfectly out of the given input voice as a sample.

However, the speech can be constrained to a known phrase (text-dependent) or totally unconstrained (text-independent). Hence, the research mainly focuses on text independent because telephone becomes use as a tool that interacts with computer persistently this day.

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2. Data Collection and Implementation of Tools

To collect the data set, audio recorder is used to record the voice directly, and both female and male speakers are included in order to have a good data set form all perspective. The data contains noises because they were record in the café, market and school. Having such types of data set, it was very helpful to determine the potential use of speaker identification in the noise areas.

A total of 90 speakers are considered for this study. Three speech samples were held with each speaker that has 10 seconds duration. That is, form these speakers 270 speeches were record. In addition, each sample is taken at a sampling rate of 16KHz and 16 bit. Once the data set collected, various sequential steps are performed to achieve the goal of the study through MATLAB, 2013.

3. Related Works

Different researchers have been conducted their researches to find an automated means of identifying the identity of individuals from the speech signal they produce. Regarding to this, related works have performed to identify the speakers' speaking in different languages. These are discussed as follow.

Tech & Bansal, in their work entitled as Speaker Recognition Using MFCC Front End Analysis and VQ Modeling Technique for Hindi Words using MATLAB presented text-dependent speaker identification for the Hindi words. They used ek (one), do (two), teen (three), char (four) to train the system and the system have been found to possess a great degree of learning and recognizing accuracy by using MFCC feature extraction technique and Vector Quantization method for pattern matching combination with noise free environment. Then, they found out that 90% success rate in their experiment [5].

Khan, et al, studied in Hindi Speaking Person Identification Using Zero Crossing Rate with acoustic measure of voice sources were extracted from 3 utterances spoken by 10 peoples including 5 male and 5 female talkers (aged 19 to 25 years old). They presented a method for isolated Hindi word recognition based on zero-crossing feature. Consequently, the estimation of zero crossing rates reflects more effectively the difference in different people speaking in Hind as their finding [6].

Al-Dahr, et al, conducted a study to develop a system that is capable to identify an individual from a sample of his or her speech for Arabic language, Semitic language. They used a word dependent system using the Arabic isolated word /ns10 as10 cs10 as10 ms10//[unk]/ a single keyword for the test utterance. Speech features are extracted using MFCC, and HTK is used to implement the speaker identification module with phoneme based HMM. The designed automatic Arabic speaker identification system contains 100 speakers and it achieved 96.25% accuracy in recognizing the correct speaker [7].

Das, presented the implementation of speaker identification system using artificial neural network with digital signal processing. The system is designed to work with the text dependent speaker identification for Bangla Speech. The utterances of speakers are recorded for specific Bangla words using an audio wave recorder, and acquired by the digital signal processing technique. He used Hamming window and Blackman-Harris window to investigate better speaker identification performance. Then, he found out that the best identification score with 82.5%, which is obtained for one syllable word-Amill using Hamming window, but the highest false inclusion error is 12.5% [8].

Marciniak, et al, carried out an experiments, used a databases of short Polish utterances. They used fast speaker recognition based on recordings of duration about 1 second, while typically automatic speaker recognition systems need about 7seconds. The result showed that 90% and 84% for the GMM and VQ out of the 25 recorded individuals [9].

Romito & Galatàln, studied on people who speak Italian language. They recorded and collected the data, reproducing characteristics and instruments usually to be found in legal cases. Then, they evaluate all the Forensic Speaker Recognition (FSR) methods used in Italy using a common data set. Preliminary results demonstrate, however, that much work has yet to be done in order to verify and validate the FSR methods especially when, as happens in Italy, the prosecutions' deductions and conclusions, and subsequently, the verdict, are primarily based on speaker identification [10].

Inggih Permana, et al, studied on similarity measurement on speaker identification they used the MFCC feature vectors to measure the similarity on this paper the authors tested the coefficients 13, 15 and 20 the average accuracy of identification respectively increased as much as 0.61%, 0.98% and 1.27% [11].

T.B. Adam, et al, on this paper the authors showed that the Wavelet Cepstral Coefficients (WCC) on speech recognition task of recognizing the 26 English alphabets were conducted and comparisons with the traditional Mel-Frequency Cepstral Coefficients (MFCC) are done [12].

4. Signal Preprocessing

4.1. Silence Removal and Filtering

Tanprasert, et.al., pointed out that silence removal and filtering is the process of extracting out silence part from the speech signal; otherwise, the training might be seriously biased. We used simple energy based approach to remove the silence part. In this method, the frames having an average energy is below 0.01 times out of the whole utterance are identified and removed [13].

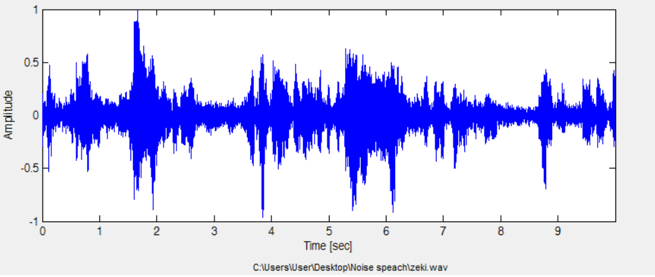

Figure 1. Speech with Noise

4.2. Feature Extraction

MFCC and GFCC feature vector are extracted. The Gammatone Frequency Cepstral Coefficients (GFCC) is speech feature based on a set of Gammatone filter banks. The GFCC is calculated from the Cochleagram of Gammatone Filter bank. Mel-frequency cepstrum coefficients (MFCC) are well known features used to describe speech signal. Technique of computing MFCC is based on the short-term analysis, and thus from each frame, a MFCC vector is computed. They are based on the speech processing carried out in the human ear and in the cepstrum of the speech signal [14,15].

4.3. Gaussian Mixture Model

Selvanidhyananthan & Kumara, indicated that GMM can smoothly approximate the probability density function of arbitrary shape, portray distributed characteristic of different speaker‘s speech feature in the feature space speech production are not deterministic. A particular sound is not produced by the speaker with exactly the same vocal tract shape, glottal flow, due to the context, co- articulation, anatomical and fluid dynamical variations. One way to represent this variability is probabilistically through multi-dimensional Gaussian probability density function [15].

4.4. Vector Quantization

Rajsekha, revealed that Vector Quantization (VQ) is the process of taking a large set of feature vectors and producing a smaller set of feature vectors that represent the centroids of the distribution (i.e. points spaced so as to minimize the average distance to every other point). VQ is used because it would be impractical to store every signal feature vector that generate from the training utterance. When VQ algorithm carried out it may take time, but it saves time during testing phase. That is, it is possible to compromise the training and testing time .

A vector quantizer maps k-dimensional vectors in the vector space Rk into a finite set of vectors Y={yi:i=1,2…N}, then each vector y is called a code vector or a codeword, and the set of all the code-words is called a codebook. This is associated with each codeword of yi is a nearest neighbor region called Voronoi region, and it is defined by [16, 17, 18, 19]:

$$Vi=\{X\epsilon R^{k}:||x-yi||\leq||x-yj||, \text{ for all } j\neq i \qquad (2)$$

4.5. Back-Propagation Artificial Neural Network

The neural network needs 14 inputs of the combined feature vectors of MFCC and GFCC and 90 neurons in its output layer to classify the speakers. The hidden layer has 17 neurons. This number was picked by trial and error methods, if the network has trouble of learning capabilities, then neurons can be added to this layer. There is a significant change when we increase the number of hidden layers neurons until 17 but there is no change when the number of hidden layer neurons increases above 17. Each value from the input layer is duplicated and sent to all of the hidden nodes.

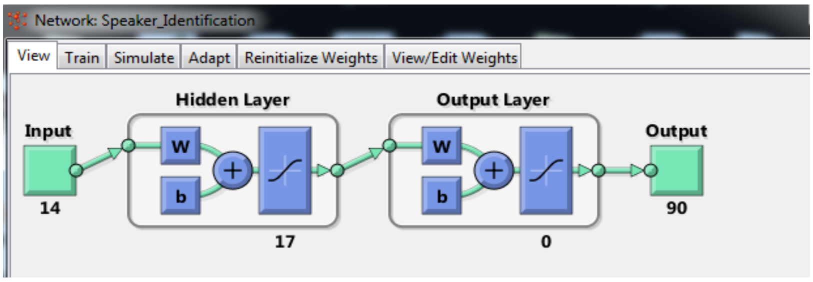

Figure 2. BPNN Model

5. System Design

The combined feature vector of MFCC and GFCC are proposed to identify Amharic speaker identification in the noisy environment. Besides, GA (Genetic algorithm) also used to reduce feature dimension of MFCC and GFCC. Hence, VQ and GMM for identification of speakers in noise environment and thereby it is possible to find out better results in their combination.

In sum, MFCC and GFCC have 39 feature vectors each, and then to reduce their dimensions first PCI is applied and it reduced to 24 feature vectors. After that, GA is applied to 24 features. In turn, it comes to 14 feature vectors. These help the study to minimize the training time.

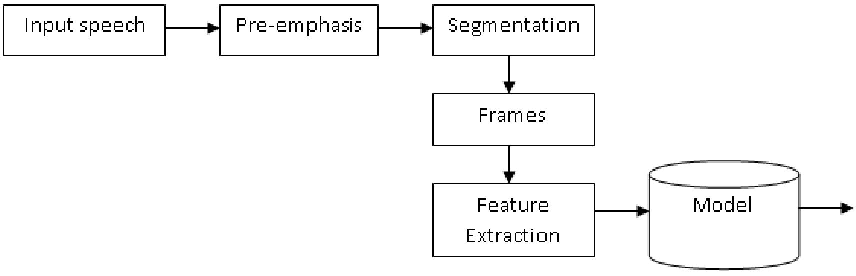

Figure 3. Amharic Language Speaker Identification Model

6. Experimentation and Discussions

In this research, three different methods are used. Namely ANN, VQ and GMM with MFCC and GFCC feature vectors are used to recognize the speakers.

Table 1. Identification Result

Methods	#Speakers	MFCC	GFCC	MFCC+GCC
VQ	30	70.1%	75.6%	77.2%
	60	61.9%	64.3%	70.9%
	90	53.5%	64.2%	69.0%
GMM	30	66.1%	69.2%	72.3%
	60	69.8%	71.0%	74.5%
	90	71.6%	77.8%	78.3%
BPNN	30	70.2%	73.4%	75.6%
	60	70.8%	77.9%	79.1%
	90	71.9%	80.1%	84.7%

To begin with, the MFCCs are used for both training and testing for VQ, GMM, and BPNN. As the above table shows, the experiment was conducted for 30, 60 and 90 speakers because this help us to examine the performance of the methods. VQ is template matching approach, as the number of speakers tends to increase, its performance declines very rapidly. That is, when 30, 30, 60 and 90 speakers are tested with the feature vectors of MFCC, GFCC and the combined feature vector, the result showed that 70.1%, 61.9% and 53.5%; 75.6%, 64.3% and 64.2%; 77.2%, 70.9% and 69% of them are identified respectively. After first experiment was held the second experiment was conducted in order to see the performance of the system using GMM. This approach develops stochastic models for speakers. As it is a new approach, it is expected to give us better results. As in the VQ approach mentioned in the above, MFCCs are used here and the result revealed that there are some improvements from the first experiment. Here, the percentage of correctly classified speakers tends to increase when we compare it with the first one. Consequently, the third experiment was conducted to see what will happen in the BPNN is used. In BPNN, needs 14 inputs neurons of the combined feature vectors of MFCC and GFCC and 90 neurons in its output layer to classify the speakers. The hidden layer has 17 neurons. There is a significant change when we increase the number of hidden layers neurons until 17 but there is no change when the number of hidden layer neurons increases above 17 and the result indicated that there was 84.7% success for 90 individuals' speakers using the combined feature vector of MFCC and GFCC.

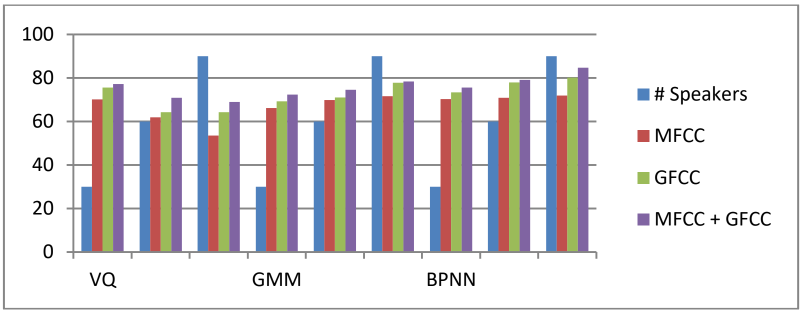

Figure 3. Identification result

7. Conclusion

The aim of the research paper is to analyze the performance of the algorithms for Amharic language speaker identification under noisy environments. In addition, this research has been focused on text-independent speaker identification since it matches with the original purpose of the research. In this paper, VQ, GMM and BPNN with the combined features of MFCCs and GFCCs in speaker identification for noisy environments are tested and the accuracy of the system are presented, and the results of the combined MFCC and GFCC approaches were discussed and encouraging results were obtained.

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