Optimizing Image Transmission In 6G-Enabled V2X Network Using Semantic Communication

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(Approved by AICTE, ISO 9001:2015 Certified, NAAC Accredited with A Grade)

October 2025

Abstract

The future success of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), especially for applications like autonomous driving, depends heavily on wireless communication technologies that meet very strict performance requirements. However, the spectrum currently allocated for ITS is limited, causing serious capacity bottlenecks in existing Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) networks. In this work, we focus on a typical ITS scenario where vehicles periodi- cally capture and send images. Using real video data from open datasets, we demonstrate that the current bandwidth assigned to ITS is insufficient, forcing vehicles to transmit video at only a small fraction of the sensors' original capture rate. To overcome this chal- lenge, semantic communication using semantic segmentation plays a crucial role. Instead of sending high-definition images, receivers get a simplified, meaningful interpretation of the scene that highlights important elements. Our results show that while the energy efficiency benefits of semantic communication depend on keeping algorithm complexity low, it significantly improves how much data the network can handle and reduces delays. This makes semantic communication essential for enabling practical and efficient ITS services over future 6G V2X networks.

1. Introduction

1.1 GeneralBackground

The transportation landscape is undergoing one of the most significant technological transformations in human history, and at the core of this revolution lies the concept of intelligent transportation systems (ITS). Future ITS will not simply connect vehicles to fixed infrastructure, like traffic lights or control centers, but will extend connectivity to every relevant element in the mobility ecosystem—cars, pedestrians, roadside sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles, low Earth orbit satellites, and even objects that are not in- herently connected, such as road barriers or untagged pedestrians on the street. The vision is to create a highly dynamic and adaptive environment where information flows seamlessly across diverse participants to enhance safety, efficiency, and sustainability. Enabling such an ambitious system requires communication networks that can manage incredibly complex topologies, characterized by constantly moving nodes, unpredictable channel variations, and highly diverse data types. Among these data types, visual infor- mation from cameras mounted on vehicles emerges as one of the most critical, given its ability to capture rich and detailed contextual awareness. However, transmitting images and live video across vehicular networks presents a formidable challenge: raw visual data streams are extraordinarily large, and the fast-changing topology of vehicular commu- nication systems makes it nearly impossible to transmit them reliably and in real time under traditional paradigms. This problem sits at the intersection of vehicular connectiv- ity, emerging mobile communication standards, and the need for revolutionary rethinking of what communication itself should mean in an era dominated by artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Historically, the first steps toward vehicular connectivity were associated with Ded- icated Short-Range Communications (DSRC), which relied on Wi-Fi-like access meth- ods to provide vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) connectivity. While DSRC represented an important milestone, its limitations quickly became appar-
ent. Chief among them were its restricted coverage and unbounded channel access delay, both of which constrained its ability to meet the high-reliability, low-latency require- ments necessary for safety-critical applications such as collision avoidance or coopera-
tive autonomous driving. Recognizing these challenges, the telecommunications industry pivoted toward cellular-based solutions, giving rise to Cellular Vehicle-to-Everything (C- V2X). By 2017, the 3GPP Release 14 specifications had already incorporated provisions for direct communications between vehicles within the framework of 4G LTE, and sub- sequently, C-V2X evolved into one of the most important vertical applications of the 5G era. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) further endorsed this movement by reallocating the 5.9 GHz spectrum, originally reserved for DSRC, to be used primarily by C- V2X, thereby officially endorsing cellular-based vehicular communications in the United States. This decision effectively shifted the balance in favor of a new commu- nication framework where cellular technology, already globally standardized and widely deployed, would serve as the foundation for V2X. Yet, as critical as this shift has been for ITS, it is becoming increasingly clear that even 5G will not be able to fully unlock the potential of intelligent transportation. Specifically, limitations in spectrum alloca- tion, coupled with overwhelming data demands from vehicles consistently transmitting high-bandwidth sensory data such as images, make it extremely difficult for current cel- lular architectures to guarantee the ultra-reliable low-latency communication (URLLC) required for next- generation ITS.

The emergence of 6G is widely expected to address these bottlenecks by going be- yond incremental improvements in throughput, spectrum efficiency, and coverage, and instead introducing a paradigm shift in what mobile networks are designed to achieve. In addition to offering higher data rates and lower delays, 6G must also meet new key performance indicators (KPIs) such as energy efficiency, sustainability, and contextual intelligence. These added KPIs are particularly relevant for ITS applications because vehicular communication systems must operate not only with real-time responsiveness but also with minimal energy overhead to support green and sustainable transportation infrastructures. But while 6G promises substantial improvements, relying solely on tradi- tional lines of research—such as enhancing antenna performance, designing more flexible modulation and coding schemes, or exploring novel physical-layer waveforms—will not be enough to fully satisfy the unique needs of ITS. The magnitude of vehicular data, es- pecially from real- time image and video capture, requires something more revolutionary. The scientific community is beginning to agree that the shift should not simply focus on transferring data more efficiently but rather on transmitting meaning more effectively. This shift moves us toward the emerging field of semantic communication (SemCom).

Semantic communication builds upon the fundamental theories articulated by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, who as early as the mid-20th century introduced the idea that communication has three distinct levels: the technical level (how symbols can be accurately transferred from one point to another), the semantic level (how accurately the transferred symbols convey the intended meaning), and the pragmatic level (how effec- tively communication influences the receiver's actions). Until now, most communication system design has focused almost exclusively on the technical level, concerned primarily with ensuring the reliable transfer of bits across noisy channels. This made sense when networks were primarily about delivering voice, text, or data files. However, the needs of future ITS—where mission-critical decisions must be made in fractions of a second based on visual input—demand progress to the semantic level. Instead of transmitting entire images frame by frame, which consumes vast bandwidth, semantic communication seeks to extract the essential semantic information—such as the presence of pedestrians, the distance to surrounding vehicles, road hazards, or traffic light signals—and transmit only that meaning. This redefinition focuses on delivering what matters rather than every- thing observed, thereby dramatically reducing bandwidth requirements, lowering latency, and optimizing energy usage.

In the context of vehicular image transmission, this shift is nothing short of trans- formative. Consider the classic example of autonomous driving at a busy intersection: vehicles generate gigabytes of sensor data every second, particularly from high-resolution cameras and LiDAR. If these vehicles attempted to transmit raw data in real time to each other, the communication network would collapse under the load, resulting in dangerous delays. Even lossy compression techniques, which reduce image size at the expense of quality, cannot address the core problem —compression merely discards visual informa- tion without considering whether the remaining data aligns with the decision-making needs of ITS. By contrast, semantic communication does not merely compress; it trans- forms. For example, rather than transmitting a megapixel image of a street filled with dozens of irrelevant pixels, a semantic encoder might only send the extracted knowledge that "a pedestrian is located at coordinates (x,y) and moving toward the road" or that "the traffic light is currently red." This information is not only lighter in size but also di- rectly actionable for collision avoidance and traffic coordination. Thus, SemCom changes the communication problem into a goal-oriented design where success is measured not by how many bits are delivered without error, but by how effectively the transmitted message enables vehicles to understand their environment and make safe, coordinated decisions.

The advent of machine learning and artificial intelligence is the key enabler of this paradigm. Modern deep learning architectures can analyze image data in real time, per- form semantic segmentation, and isolate the meaning of visual inputs far more effectively than traditional algorithms. With onboard processing assisted by edge computing infras- tructures located at roadside units or cloud servers, vehicles will be able to offload heavy computation while maintaining ultra-low-latency communication requirements. Further- more, the integration of heterogeneous networking solutions—whether through the de- ployment of UAVs as mobile relays, the support of non-terrestrial networks via LEO satel- lites, or the combination of multiple access technologies in an integrated 6G fabric—adds flexibility and robustness to the system. This heterogeneous integration ensures that meaning-driven transmission can be preserved even in scenarios of extreme mobility or sparse vehicular density. ITS applications in dense urban centers may rely on cellular and UAV relays, while rural highway scenarios may lean on satellite assistance, all while maintaining consistency in the semantic communication framework.

A critical point to highlight, however, is that semantic communication for ITS can- not be addressed by a single universal algorithm. Unlike simple communication systems designed to handle one type of content, ITS communication involves a vast diversity of applications and data sources. The semantic meaning extracted from an image captured by a forward- facing camera in a vehicle is entirely different from the meaning of data gen- erated by a tire pressure sensor, a LiDAR scanner, or a battery status monitor. Similarly, the semantic goals of maximizing driving efficiency (e.g., optimizing fuel usage, reducing congestion) are not identical to those of ensuring safety (e.g., avoiding collisions, iden- tifying emergencies). As such, semantic communication algorithms must be tailored to specific ITS applications, trained on domain-specific data, and dynamically adaptable as the demands of the network evolve. This complexity highlights why the integration of semantics cannot simply reside at the physical layer of the network design itself—rather, the broader 6G architecture must provide the computational flexibility and infrastructure support to host a variety of semantic models, with edge computing serving as the crucial enabler for adaptability and scalability.

The implications of adopting SemCom for vehicular image transmission extend be- yond technical efficiency. They touch on the broader goals of sustainability and societal trust in transportation systems. By reducing the redundant transmission of raw data, SemCom minimizes the energy footprint of vehicular communications, aligning ITS archi- tectures with global sustainability objectives. At the same time, by enabling faster and more reliable communication of what matters most, SemCom enhances public trust in autonomous vehicles and cooperative driving systems, reassuring users that decisions are being made not only quickly but also intelligently. In situations such as collision avoid- ance, where milliseconds can mean the difference between life and death, the ability of semantic communication to deliver actionable meaning ahead of traditional pixel-heavy data could save countless lives. It is this blend of efficiency, sustainability, and safety that makes SemCom not merely a supplemental improvement but a foundational necessity for future 6G-enabled ITS.

2. Literature Survey

2.1 Towards 6G Semantic Communication: Technolo- gies, Applications and Research Challenges

Semantic communication is emerging as a cornerstone for 6G networks, moving beyond the conventional transmission of raw data bits toward the exchange of meaning. Instead of simply delivering signals accurately, semantic communication aims to ensure that the intended information and context are correctly understood by the receiver. This paradigm leverages artificial intelligence (AI), natural language processing (NLP), and knowledge graphs to extract, represent, and transmit only the most relevant semantic content. As 6G envisions ultra-reliable, low-latency, and intelligent networks, semantic communica- tion reduces bandwidth consumption and improves communication efficiency by focusing on what needs to be conveyed rather than how much data is sent.The advantages of semantic communication are significant. By minimizing redundant data transmission, it dramatically enhances spectrum efficiency and reduces energy consumption, which is crucial for sustainable 6G deployment. Moreover, it offers resilience to noise and channel impairments since the focus is on preserving meaning rather than exact symbols. This is particularly valuable in mission-critical scenarios like autonomous driving, industrial IoT, and telemedicine, where accurate understanding is more important than raw data fidelity. Additionally, semantic-aware networks can support personalized communication, enabling context-driven services tailored to user intent.In terms of applications, semantic communication is expected to transform fields such as human–machine interaction, im- mersive extended reality (XR), and intelligent transportation systems. For example, au- tonomous vehicles could share semantic information like “obstacle ahead” instead of raw video frames, reducing latency and improving safety. Similarly, in healthcare, semantic communication can transmit essential diagnostic insights instead of entire medical images, making telemedicine more efficient. Future research challenges include designing univer- sal semantic representation models, ensuring interoperability across diverse domains, and addressing privacy and security issues in meaningcentric communication.

2.2 6G-Enabled Vehicle-to-Everything Communica- tions: Current Research Trends and Open Chal- lenges

Current Research Trends and open Challenges 6G-enabled Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) communication can be seen as a stepping stone between today’s 5G systems and future 6G, designed to give cars and road infrastructure faster, more reliable, and smarter ways to talk to each other. It aims for ultra-low delays—ideally under a millisecond—so ve- hicles can react almost instantly in situations like avoiding collisions or coordinating at intersections. Researchers are working on new radio designs, advanced antennas that can keep stable links even with fast-moving cars, and edge computing that brings decision- making closer to the road. Artificial intelligence is also being used to predict handovers and manage network resources so that connections remain smooth, especially in busy city environments. However, big challenges remain: agreeing on spectrum usage across indus- tries, ensuring reliable performance in unpredictable traffic and urban conditions, protect- ing security and privacy without adding delays, and making sure different manufacturers’ systems interoperate seamlessly. If solved, 2.6G V2X could support breakthroughs like coordinated automated driving, real-time sharing of vehicle sensor data for collective per- ception, continuous high-definition map updates, emergency remote driving, and efficient fleet management—making transportation safer, smarter, and more connected.

2.3 Metaverse Unbound: A Survey on Synergistic Integration Between Semantic Communication, 6G and Edge Learning

The convergence of semantic communication, 6G networks, and edge learning marks a significant advancement in the realization of the metaverse, addressing critical challenges related to data transmission, latency, and scalability. Semantic communication shifts from transmitting raw data to sharing meaningful information, reducing redundant traf- fic and enabling efficient network resource usage, while 6G networks deliver the ultra-low latency, high reliability, and massive connectivity required for immersive and large-scale virtual environments. Edge learning allows distributed training and deployment of AI models closer to the user, enhancing responsiveness and privacy by processing sensitive data locally. Together, these technologies underpin nextgeneration metaverse applica- tions across various domains—such as personalized education, realtime healthcare, and seamless entertainment—by enabling adaptive, context-aware services and supporting billions of interconnected devices in virtual spaces. In entertainment and gaming, users can enjoy seamless

VR/AR experiences with realistic interactions and minimal delays. Beyond this, industries such as smart manufacturing, tourism, and collaborative remote work stand to benefit significantly, creating a foundation for the next wave of digital transformation.give

2.4 AReviewof6GandAIConvergence:Enhancing Communication Networks With Artificial Intel- ligence

The transition from 5G to 6G marks a pivotal shift, not merely in boosting network speeds and connectivity, but in deeply embedding artificial intelligence within commu- nication infrastructure to create adaptive, self-optimizing, and context-aware systems. Unlike the focus on high data rates in 5G, 6G networks leverage AI for predictive main- tenance, automated resource allocation, intelligent traffic management, and energy ef- ficiency, enabling rapid responses and dynamic spectrum optimization to accommodate diverse user demands and emerging applications such as holographic communication and digital twins. This seamless integration results in improved network efficiency and relia- bility, as AI algorithms enable real-time fault detection and mitigation, support ultra-low latency connections for massive device ecosystems, and offer personalized, context-aware services by adapting to user behaviors and environments. Enhanced security and pri- vacy are achieved through intelligent anomaly detection and proactive cyber threat pre- vention.As these capabilities expand, 6G and AI convergence promises transformative impacts across healthcare, transportation, smart cities, education, entertainment, and industry, from enabling real-time remote surgery and continuous patient monitoring to supporting autonomous vehicles, immersive learning platforms, intelligent manufacturing, and energyefficient urban management

2.5 The Role of 6G Technologies in Advancing Smart City Applications: Opportunities and Challenges

The advent of 6G technology is set to revolutionize smart city development by offering ultra-fast, reliable, and intelligent connectivity that goes well beyond what 5G currently provides. While 5G focuses on enhancing bandwidth and reducing latency, 6G intro- duces terahertz communication, AI-driven networks, holographic communication, and integrated sensing capabilities, all of which support sophisticated smart city functions such as autonomous transportation, real-time environmental monitoring, remote health- care, and immersive public services. This nextgeneration network will enable seamless integration of billions of devices under the Internet of Everything (IoE) framework, al- lowing cities to operate more efficiently, sustainably, and securely, with applications like intelligent traffic management reducing congestion and emissions and AIpowered predic- tive maintenance improving infrastructure safety and cost-efficiency. Additionally, smart energy grids and healthcare systems will leverage real-time data flows to optimize resource use and enhance citizen well-being. Despite promising benefits, 6G implementation faces challenges such as high infrastructure costs required to support terahertz frequencies, addressing rigorous data security and privacy concerns, and managing the environmental impact of increased energy consumption. Nonetheless, 6G holds vast potential to become the fundamental backbone of future smart cities, delivering innovative solutions for urban challenges and transforming how people interact with their environment

2.6 AttentionTransfer-BasedDeepDistilledArchi- tecture for 6G Driven-Smart Vehicle Transporta- tion System

The evolution of smart vehicle transportation systems, driven by 6G technologies, em- phasizes the need for highly efficient, low-latency, and intelligent networks capable of supporting real-time decision-making for autonomous and connected vehicles. Attention transfer-based deep distilled architectures play a critical role in addressing this need by compressing knowledge from large, complex AI models into lightweight student mod- els, while attention mechanisms ensure that essential contextual and feature informa- tion— such as pedestrian detection, traffic signals, and collision risks— is preserved. This enables these smaller models to run efficiently on-edge devices within vehicles, achiev- ing faster inference and improved energy efficiency, which is especially vital for electric and autonomous cars. By leveraging 6G's high bandwidth and ultra-low latency, these optimized AI models facilitate seamless vehicular communication across vehicles, infras- tructure, and cloud, enhancing safety and reliability. Applications of this approach in- clude real-time object detection, lane tracking, hazard prediction in autonomous driving, fast and reliable vehicle-toeverything (V2X) communication to optimize traffic flow and reduce accidents, and smart traffic management systems that process data from multi- ple vehicles to improve routing and emergency response. As 6G becomes the backbone of intelligent transportation, attention transfer-based deep distilled models offer a prac- tical, scalable solution that balances AI accuracy, speed, and efficiency for real-world deployment in smart vehicle systems.

Table 2.1:

Table 1. Comparison of various Related Works
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Ref.	Authors	Focus Area	Key Technologies	Advantages	Challenges Ad-
[1]	Hongyang Du, Z. Liu, Mohammad Z. Aloudat	Towards 6G Semantic Communication: Tech- nologies, Applications and	Semantic communica- tion model in 6G with enabling technologies	Improves efficiency transmitting instead of raw supports IoT, smart cities metaverse	Security vulnerabil - ities, semantic code optimization
[2]	Hongyang Du, Z. Liu, Mohammad	6G-Enabled Vehictleo- Everything	V2X communication in 6G with AI,	Enables ultra- cation for vehicles	scalability, in-
[3]	Hongyang Du, Z. Liu, Mohammad Z.	Metaverse Unbound: A Survey on Syn- ergistic	Integration Soef man6tGic, cation, edgecdeamnui ngi-, blockchain, and	Enhances realism, immersion, and de- centralized security in metaverse apps	High computation al cost, privacy
[4]	Hongyang Du, Z. Liu, Mohammad	A Review of 6G and AI Convergence:	AI-powered optimiza- tion of 6G networks	Improves efficienc y,	Security,privacy,inte r- operability, digital
[5]	Sachin Gupta	The Role of 6G Tech- nologies in Advancing Smart	6G technologies for Smart City services	Supports high device density, low latency, energy-	Computational com -
[6]	Prabhat Ran- jan Singh	Attention Transfe r-	AI-based deep distilled for smart vehicular	Robust detection in low visibility/night	Propagation chal -

3. Case Study: Image Transmission in ITS

In the context of Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) communication networks, transmitting vi- sual information such as images is one of the most bandwidth-demanding tasks, yet it is indispensable for numerous Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) services focused on traffic safety. Visual data enables vehicles to share crucial environmental information that can help prevent accidents and improve real-time decision-making. For example, consider a vehicle approaching an obstacle on the road: it can inform nearby vehicles, especially those with limited visibility, by transmitting images of the hazard. This ca- pability extends drivers' awareness beyond their immediate view, significantly reducing the risk of collisions. Although this use case is straightforward, it brings to light a ma- jor challenge for V2X networks — the enormous bandwidth required to transmit high quality images at high refresh rates far exceeds the typical network capacity. Given the high resolution of images and frequency at which cameras capture data, this challenge is compounded as future vehicles are expected to carry multiple sensors, multiplying data generation exponentially. When the volume of data surpasses the available bandwidth, several strategies can be considered.

The simplest approach is to do nothing and accept that the network will drop some frames during congestion. While this requires no additional infrastructure or complexity, it risks losing safetycritical information embedded in the dropped images and suffers from unacceptable latency, both of which degrade system effectiveness. A second approach leverages video compression techniques which rely on temporal redundancy, encoding changes relative to prior frames. This method is common in multimedia applications but is impractical in V2X due to the rapidly changing network topology and short-lived ve- hicle connections, making frame dependencies unreliable and prone toerror propagation when connections break. The third alternative is compressing images individually using widely adopted lossy algorithms like JPEG or more recent coders from video compres- sion standards—H.265/HEVC or H.266/VVC. These methods effectively reduce data size by exploiting perceptual priorities and spatial correlations but do so generically without considering the image's semantic content. This means they treat all parts of an image uniformly, which may lead to either excessive compression that blurs important details or unnecessarily large files to preserve safety-related information.

In contrast, Semantic Communication (SemCom) represents a paradigm shift by fo- cusing on transmitting only the meaningful information contained in images, especially those aspects crucial for safety applications. Instead of sending complete images or even compressed versions thereof, SemCom extracts a semantic representation emphasizing key elements such as obstacles, road signs, or other hazards, while discarding irrelevant back- ground data. This drastically reduces bandwidth usage, enabling timely communication of critical safety information. A major advantage of SemCom is that it is software- defined and programmable, allowing the semantic extraction algorithms to be tailored and updated dynamically based on network conditions, resource availability, and energy consumption considerations. Unlike proprietary fixed algorithms, this flexibility makes SemCom well- suited for adaptive and resource-constrained vehicular environments.

Nevertheless, the enhanced processing required for semantic extraction imposes com- putational demands on the originating vehicle. Offloading this processing to cloud or edge servers is usually impractical as it negates the goal of minimizing raw data transmission, which SemCom seeks to avoid to decrease latency and bandwidth costs. Therefore, pro- cessing must be performed locally on the sensing vehicle's hardware, fostering a need for efficient on-board algorithms balancing accuracy and computational load.To evaluate the feasibility and benefits of these approaches under real-world conditions, researchers have utilized the Cityscapes dataset, which consists of high-resolution urban driving images captured by stereo cameras mounted on vehicles in Germany. Each frame has a resolution of 2048×1024 pixels and is captured at 17 frames per second, reflecting the volume of data expected in future ITS deployments. The V2X wireless channel was modeled as a block Rayleigh fading channel to realistically emulate urban multi path fading and shadowing effects. This means the channel characteristics remain steady during the transmission of each image but vary randomly between frames, resulting in probabilistic outages when signal quality drops below a certain threshold. These outages necessitate retransmissions, adding to overall latency.

Transmission delays were further analyzed by modeling the communication link as a D/G/1 queue, where images arrive deterministically at the sensing camera's frame rate, but service times (transmission durations) follow a general stochastic distribution due to varying image sizes and channel conditions. Using the Alleen-Cunneen approximation for this queuing model, researchers computed an upper bound for the average waiting time before each image could be transmitted, which depends on system load, and the variability of both arrivals and service times. The results demonstrated that, under real- istic parameters such as a transmission power of 26 dBm, a 20 MHz channel at 5.9 GHz frequency band, and a 20 meter distance between transmitter and receiver, the system becomes overloaded at the 17 Hz frame rate of the Cityscapes dataset This results in unbounded queuing delays, making timely transmission impossible. In fact, the model shows that the system cannot sustain a frame rate higher than about 1.6 Hz—a mere 10 percentage of the original imaging rate—without experiencing infinite delays.

This fundamental limitation reveals that existing V2X networks in their nä¨ve form cannot support the massive data volumes generated by even a single high-quality camera sensor at realistic refresh rates, let alone future deployments featuring multiple sensors. If these networks operate without innovation, critical visual information will be delayed or lost, threatening the reliability and safety of vehicular communications. Thus, research highlights that advanced data reduction techniques like Semantic Communication are not just desirable but necessary. By focusing on transmitting essential semantic features rather than raw pixels or full images, SemCom can notably decrease data size, reduce latency, and conserve energy consumption, making ITS both feasible and efficient. Its programmability enables ongoing optimization to meet evolving network conditions and use cases, an adaptability that will be crucial as ITS evolves and the demand for rich environmental sensing intensifies.

In summary, the challenges of transmitting high-resolution visual data over dynamic, bandwidth-limited V2X networks underscore the urgent need for new communication paradigms. Semantic Communication offers a promising solution by enabling vehicles to share concise, meaningful representations of their surroundings rather than full images. This approach maximizes the use of limited resources, ensures low-latency delivery of critical safety information, and supports the high reliability requirements of modern ITS. Without such innovations, network congestion and delays will severely restrict the scala- bility and safety benefits of future intelligent transportation systems. SemCom's ability to tailor information flow based on semantic relevance and resource constraints makes it a foundational technology for next-generation vehicular communication networks world- wide.

4. SemCom for Transmission over V2X Network

To address the challenges of transmitting large visual data in V2X networks, integrat- ing Semantic Communication (SemCom) is crucial. Our proposal is to embed SemCom modules within the application layer of the ITS communication framework, based on the standards defined by ETSI EN 302 665 and ISO 21217, as illustrated in Figure 3. Placing SemCom at the application layer allows it to work without interfering with the underlying network infrastructure. This means current and future standardized V2X communication systems can adopt SemCom seamlessly without needing major changes to their architec- ture.

Alongside these SemCom modules, a SemCom management plane is included. This management layer is responsible for configuring and adjusting the parameters of the se- mantic algorithms as well as analyzing the data produced by the various ITS applications. Importantly, it also chooses which SemCom algorithm to apply to each data flow. This flexibility enables multiple use cases or applications to share a single type of V2X message, supporting scenarios outlined in 5G V2X standards. Having this management capability encourages the simultaneous operation of different SemCom algorithms within one ITS network, fostering innovation and application of new computer vision technologies.

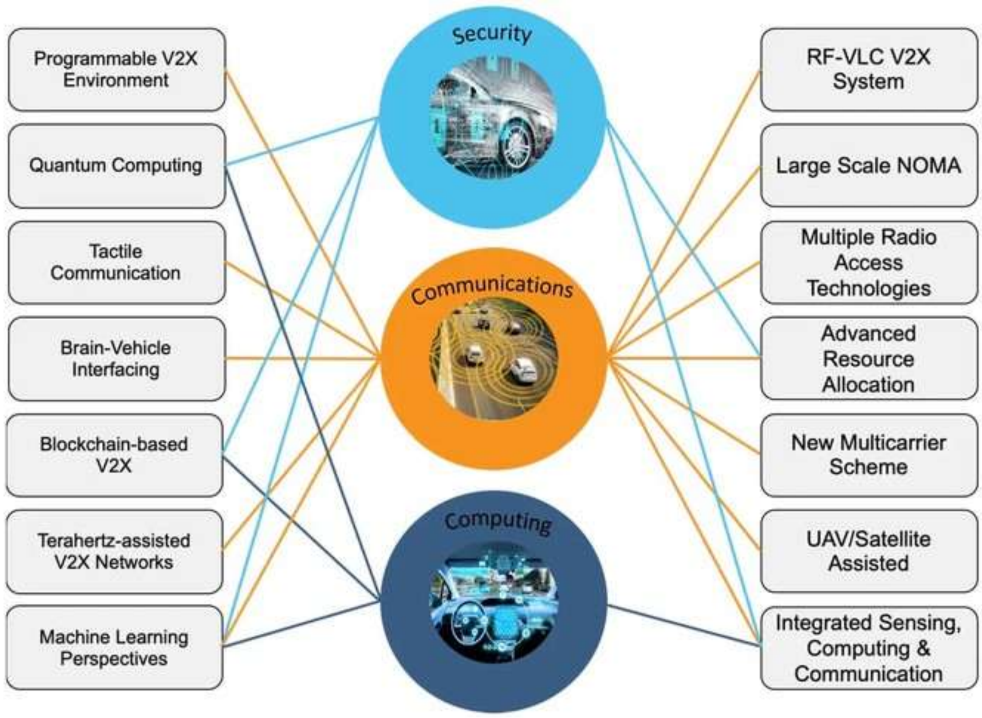
A key strength of SemCom is its extraordinary ability to summarize information. For example, with the Cityscapes dataset, each uncompressed image captured by the perspective camera is originally about 6 megabytes because it contains over two million pixels (2048×1024) and each pixel is coded with 24 bits. Even using lossless compression formats like PNG, an image still averages around 2.4 megabytes. However, the dataset also provides semantic versions of the same images — these semantic representations are roughly only 30.5 kilobytes each. This means SemCom can reduce the data size by about
201 times compared to uncompressed images, and about 79 times compared to compressed PNG images. Naturally, this significant data reduction results in drastically shorter transmission times, which is vital for latency-sensitive ITS applications.

That said, extracting semantic data from raw images requires computational effort. The processing time needed to run these algorithms has to be factored in when assessing SemCom's overall usefulness in V2X settings. Computer vision techniques are at the core of this process, using algorithms designed for tasks like image classification, object detec- tion, and semantic segmentation. While image classification identifies the overall contents of an image, and object detection pinpoints the location and types of specific objects, semantic segmentation goes deeper by assigning a category to each individual pixel. This detailed classification enables ITS systems to recognize vehicles, trucks, pedestrians, road obstacles, pavements, traffic signs, and more with high accuracy.

Semantic segmentation is computationally intensive and its execution time depends on the processor's speed and its ability to run parallel operations, which is related to the number of CPU cores. Since minimizing latency and energy consumption is crucial for V2X systems, lightweight semantic segmentation methods are preferred, especially those optimized for mobile or edge computing environments. In our evaluations, we have used the RealtimeSeg technique, which has proven effective and efficient for real-time semantic segmentation in ITS applications. Later in the results section, we also compare RealtimeSeg with other segmentation methods to provide a comprehensive view of trade- offs between efficiency and performance.

In summary, integrating SemCom into the ITS application layer supported by a man- agement plane provides a flexible, scalable, and efficient way to reduce the massive data demands of visual information transmission. By using advanced but lightweight seman- tic segmentation, vehicles can extract and share highly compressed, meaningful visual data without overloading communication channels or sacrificing critical safety details—all while keeping latency and power consumption within practical limits. This approach en- sures that V2X networks can handle the increasing sensor data of future ITS deployments in a way that enhances safety and efficiency.

5. Diagram/Flowchart



6. Advantages

Despite its many strengths, the system provides certain advantages.

6.1 MassiveReductioninDataTransmission

Semantic communication dramatically reduces the amount of data that vehicles need to send by extracting and transmitting only the meaningful parts of an image, such as obstacles, traffic signs, or pedestrians. Instead of sending full high-resolution images, SemCom sends concise semantic representations that still contain all critical safety in- formation. This massive data reduction eases the burden on wireless networks, allowing vehicles to communicate efficiently even in congested environments without overwhelming bandwidth. This advantage directly translates into faster data transfers and less network congestion, critical for real-time safety applications.

6.2 Lower Latency and Faster Decision-Making

By transmitting only essential semantic information rather than entire images, SemCom significantly reduces transmission delays. This reduced latency means that vehicles can receive important situational updates quicker, which is crucial in fast-moving traffic sce- narios where every millisecond counts. Faster communication leads to quicker decision-making by autonomous systems or drivers, improving safety and reducing the likelihood of collisions.

6.3 Improved Reliability in Dynamic Environments

Vehicular communication channels are often unpredictable, with fading, obstruction, and rapid topological changes. SemCom's focus on meaningful information rather than raw data means that even under poor channel conditions, the most critical pieces of informa- tion are prioritized and transmitted. This improves the overall reliability of communica- tions by ensuring important safety data is transmitted, even when bandwidth is limited or the signal fluctuates due to vehicle movement or urban obstacles.

6.4 Energy Efficiency and Computational Optimiza- tion

Although semantic extraction requires processing power, overall, SemCom reduces energy consumption by minimizing unnecessary data transmission and focusing computational efforts on relevant information. Fewer bits sent over the air mean less transmission power is needed, and adaptive semantic algorithms can be optimized for lightweight processing at the vehicle edge or onboard devices. This makes SemCom a sustainable solution, especially important for electric and autonomous vehicles, where energy efficiency is a priority along with communication efficiency.

7. Limitations

Despite its many strengths, the system also has certain limitations.

7.1 HighComputationalDemand

Semantic communication requires vehicles to run complex algorithms to extract and en- code the important information from images. This processing can be demanding on the vehicle's hardware, especially since it must be done quickly to avoid delays. Lim- ited processing power in some vehicles may slow down this extraction, affecting overall communication speed.

Volume: 09 Issue: 10 | Oct - 2025 SJIF Rating: 8.586 ISSN: 2582-3930

7.2 Coordination Challenges Between Vehicles

For semantic communication to work well, both the sender and receiver need to share an understanding of the semantic encoding methods. Updating and synchronizing these methods across many vehicles in real time is difficult, particularly because different vehi- cles may use different models or have varying capabilities, making smooth coordination a challenge

7.3 DataDiversityandModelMismatch

Vehicles operate in highly diverse environments, and the semantic models trained for understanding image data might not perform equally well everywhere. For example, a model trained in one city might not recognize certain objects as accurately in a different city or under different weather conditions, leading to inconsistent communication quality

7.4 Scalability ans Multi-user coordination

As the number of vehicles and devices connected grows, managing semantic communica- tion becomes more complex. Sharing and updating semantic models across many users simultaneously can cause bottlenecks and synchronization issues, hindering scalability and uniform performance in large, dense networks.

7.5 Privacy and Security Concerns

While SemCom reduces raw image transmission, semantic data still contains important contextual information about the environment and users. Protecting this semantic infor- mation from unauthorized access or tampering is vital but challenging, especially in open vehicular networks where many parties interact and data is continuously exchanged.

8. Performance Evaluation

Semantic communication improves the transmission of visual data between vehicles and infrastructure compared to traditional methods. Key metrics include latency, reliability, data rate, and overall system efficiency. With semantic communication, the critical ad- vantage is that only meaningful parts of images—like pedestrians, obstacles, or traffic signs —are transmitted instead of full images. This drastically reduces the data size, re- sulting in faster transmission times and lower latency. Low latency is essential because it allows vehicles to make timely decisions, which is vital in fast-moving traffic environments where delays can result in accidents.

Reliability improves as well because semantic communication prioritizes transmitting information that matters most. Even if the wireless signal is weak or the channel experi- ences interference, the system ensures that vital pieces of safety information reach their destination, increasing the trustworthiness of communication in real-world conditions. Another important aspect evaluated is how semantic communication handles network congestion. Since less data is transmitted, the network faces less overload, which reduces packet loss and avoids long waiting times for data transmission. This means that even in high traffic density situations with many communicating vehicles, the system can main- tain high performance.

Energy efficiency is another focus area of performance evaluation. Reducing the vol- ume of data sent over the air directly leads to lower power consumption for communication modules in vehicles, which is critical for electric vehicles and overall system sustainability. The computational overhead to extract semantic features is considered but is optimized to be light enough to run on vehicle hardware without causing delays or excessive en- ergy use. Finally, performance metrics also look at how well the semantic representation maintains the usability of the visual information—meaning the transmitted data must still enable accurate detection and interpretation of the environment for safety-critical tasks.

The semantic communication in 6G-enabled V2X networks shows it can significantly reduce transmission latency and bandwidth use, improve the reliability of critical safety messages, lessen network congestion, save energy, and preserve the essential content needed for quick and accurate driving decisions. These improvements address key chal- lenges of future vehicular communication systems and are essential for enabling safer and more efficient intelligent transportation.

9. Result and Discussion

In recent studies on 6G-enabled V2X networks, it has become clear that traditional methods of transmitting raw or even conventionally compressed images are unfit for the demands of future intelligent transportation systems. The enormous data volumes gener- ated by highresolution vehicle cameras saturate the available wireless spectrum, leading to network overload and unacceptable delays. Experiments using real-world datasets have shown that at typical camera frame rates, the system's network queues become over- whelmed, causing latency to increase without bound. This means that reliable real-time image transmission, essential for applications like obstacle detection and hazard warning, cannot be sustained using conventional data-centric approaches in future vehicular net- works.

Semantic Communication (SemCom) offers a transformative solution by focusing on transmitting the meaning or important features extracted from images instead of the images themselves. Results have demonstrated that semantic segmentation techniques can reduce the data sizeby more than a hundredfold while preserving the critical informa- tion needed for safety and traffic management. This drastic data reduction significantly lowers the burden on communication networks, allowing vehicles to share useful visual information at much higher effective frame rates and with greatly reduced latency. The ability to maintain timely and reliable transmission underpins the feasibility of deploying advanced V2X services in future 6G systems.

Moreover, the discussion around computational costs reveals important trade-offs in implementing SemCom. While semantic extraction requires additional processing power onboard vehicles, advances in lightweight segmentation algorithms tailored for mobile and edge devices have made this overhead manageable. The computational effort brings ben- efits that outweigh the costs, as lower data transmission reduces energy consumption in wireless communication modules and prevents network congestion. These energy efficien- cies are crucial in automotive contexts where power and latency budgets are tight.Another point of discussion is the robustness and adaptability of semantic communication in dy- namic vehicular environments. The wireless channels in urban or high-speed scenarios
are often unstable, causing packet losses and disruptions. Because SemCom prioritizes meaningful content, even partial or degraded transmissions can deliver valuable infor- mation to the receiving vehicle, improving overall reliability. Furthermore, the flexible software-defined nature of semantic encoding allows real-time adaptation to changing network conditions and traffic situations, enhancing system performance and user safety.

Finally, the integration of SemCom into existing ITS architectures is facilitated by placing semantic processing in the application layer of V2X communication stacks. This approach ensures compatibility with current standards and infrastructure, enabling grad- ual adoption without disrupting legacy systems.

10. Future Scope

Looking ahead, there are multiple opportunities to expand and enhance the system The future scope of optimizing image transmission in 6G-Enabled V2X network using seman- tic communication :

The future of image transmission in 6G-enabled V2X networks using semantic com- munication holds great promise for transforming intelligent transportation systems. One major direction is the continued enhancement of communication efficiency. By focusing on sending only the most meaningful parts of the image, semantic communication can drastically reduce the data volume, allowing vehicles to share crucial information more quickly and reliably. This will help address the ever-growing demand for real-time updates in highly dynamic traffic environments, where low latency and high data throughput are critical for safety. As vehicular sensors and cameras become more advanced, semantic techniques will evolve to effectively handle these richer data sources while maintaining resource efficiency.

Another significant future scope lies in improving system adaptability and interop- erability. Semantic communication modules embedded within the application layer of ITS architecture can be updated and tailored to different use cases or vehicle types without altering the underlying network infrastructure. This means new algorithms or optimizations can be deployed to adapt to varying road conditions, applications, or even geographic regions seamlessly. Moreover, with 6G's promise of more ubiquitous and sta- ble connectivity, semantic communication can support a wide range of V2X scenarios, including urban, highway, and mixed traffic environments, integrating smoothly with evolving standards to ensure consistent performance and compatibility.

Privacy and security considerations will also be key areas of future development. As vehicles share visual information, protecting personal and sensitive data becomes paramount. Semantic communication inherently enhances privacy by sharing only ab- stracted, essential information instead of raw, detailed images. Coming advancements will focus on further securing semantic data against interception or misuse, potentially incorporating encryption methods suited for semantic layers. This ensures compliance with stricter privacy regulations and builds trust in connected vehicle technologies while maintaining the integrity and utility of transmitted information for safety-critical deci- sions.

Lastly, the integration of semantic image transmission with other sensing and com- munication technologies will broaden the horizon for future V2X networks. Combining semantics with location data, radar sensing, and environmental monitoring can create multi-modal perception systems that offer vehicles a comprehensive and highly accurate understanding of their surroundings. Such integration will further improve decision- making, traffic management, and autonomous driving capabilities. As 6G networks ma- ture, the fusion of semantic communication with these systems will drive smarter, safer, and more efficient transportation ecosystems, supporting the vision of fully connected and intelligent mobility for the future.

11. Applications

11.1 AccidentandHazardAlerting

Vehicles can quickly detect and share images of accidents or road hazards using semantic communication, which sends only the most critical parts of the image. This helps nearby vehicles receive timely warnings, improving overall road safety by allowing drivers or autonomous systems to react faster.

11.2 Traffic Flow Optimization

Using semantic image transmission, vehicles and traffic infrastructure can share sum- marized visual information about traffic congestion or incidents. This supports smarter traffic management systems that adjust signals and routes in real time, reducing traffic jams and travel time.

11.3 Cooperative Autonomous Driving

For autonomous vehicles driving together or in platoons, sharing semantic representations of their surroundings helps each vehicle understand obstacles, lanes, or other vehicles' positions without sending large amounts of raw data. This coordination leads to smoother and safer automated driving.

11.4 Pedestrian and Vulnerable Road User Detec- tion

SemCom enables vehicles to efficiently transmit important visual cues about pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users. This shared semantic information enhances situational awareness, reducing accidents in busy urban areas where multiple road users mix.

11.5 Emergency Vehicles Prioritization

When an emergency vehicle needs to move quickly through traffic, semantic communi- cation allows other vehicles to receive vital visual cues about its location and movement without heavy data loads. This helps clear routes dynamically and ensures faster emer- gency responses while maintaining network efficiency.

12. Conclusion

Image transmission in 6G-enabled V2X networks using semantic communication repre- sents a vital leap forward in how vehicles share critical information to make driving safer and more efficient. Unlike traditional methods that transmit entire raw images, semantic communication focuses on extracting and sending only the essential meaning and relevant features from images, such as obstacles, road users, and traffic signs. This approach drastically reduces the volume of data sent over the network, helping over- come the bandwidth limitations typically faced in vehicular communications. By doing so, it lowers transmission delays, enabling vehicles to exchange critical information in near real-time—a key factor in preventing accidents and improving response times in dynamic traffic scenarios. Moreover, semantic communication enhances the reliability of communication, especially in challenging wireless conditions involving fading or signal blockages, by prioritizing the transmission of most relevant content instead of voluminous data. This ensures consistent and stable communication even at high vehicle speeds or in congested urban environments, where traditional communication systems may struggle. Another significant benefit lies in the energy efficiency gains; sending smaller semantic representations instead of full images reduces power consumption both in transmission and local computing, which is crucial for electric and autonomous vehicles. Additionally, semantic communication inherently supports privacy preservation by only transmitting abstracted, non-identifiable information rather than raw visual data, safeguarding sen- sitive details and complying with privacy regulations. As 6G technology becomes more capable, integrating semantic communication in V2X systems will be essential to fully exploiting these networks for intelligent transportation, allowing seamless, reliable, and safe data sharing that underpins the smart vehicles and smart cities of the future. This new paradigm not only addresses current communication constraints but also paves the way for more intelligent, context-aware, and adaptable vehicular networks that can meet the increasing demands of modern road safety and traffic efficiency.

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