Sensor Embedded Glove for Assistive Communication in Partially Paralyzed Individuals

Ajay P [1], Elakiyan S [2], Gladwin Prince D [3]
Department Of ECE
Panimalar Institute Of Technology
Chennai, India

Abstract: This project aims to develop a smart communication system for the deaf and mute community using an ESP32 microcontroller, a touch sensor, DFPlayer Mini speaker, LCD display, Bluetooth app, and an MPU6050 accelerometer. Existing technologies rely on conventional sign language learning methods and communication devices, which can be challenging and limited in real-time interaction. The proposed system leverages the touch sensor to detect hand gestures, converting them into text or speech through Bluetooth communication with a smartphone app. The MPU6050 tracks hand movements to improve gesture recognition accuracy, while the LCD display provides visual feedback. The DFPlayer Mini speaker enables vocal output for text-to-speech conversion, allowing users to communicate efficiently in various environments. This system provides an accessible, intuitive, and real-time solution for bridging the communication gap for the deaf and mute community.

Keywords: Assistive Technology, ESP32 Microcontroller, Deaf and Mute Communication,Touch Sensor, Gesture Recognition, MPU6050 Accelerometer, DFPlayer Mini, Text-to-Speech (TTS), Human-Computer Interaction, Embedded Systems

1.INTRODUCTION

This project proposes the development of a smart assistive communication system for the deaf and mute community using a sensor-embedded glove. The system is powered by an ESP32 microcontroller and integrates a touch sensor to detect hand gestures, an MPU6050 accelerometer to track hand movements, an LCD display for visual feedback, a DFPlayer Mini speaker for vocal output, and Bluetooth connectivity for interaction with a smartphone application. Unlike traditional methods that rely on conventional sign language, this glove translates gestures into real-time text and speech, making communication more accessible and intuitive. The use of embedded systems and wireless communication enables efficient gesture recognition and response, providing a cost-effective, portable, and user-friendly solution that enhances real-time communication and bridges the gap between the deaf-mute community and the hearing world.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional communication tools for the deaf and mute rely heavily on sign language. However, these methods require the listener to understand sign language, limiting effective communication in public. Many users face social barriers due to this language gap. This highlights the need for more universal, accessible solutions.
Previous research has introduced sensor-embedded gloves using flex sensors and microcontrollers. These systems translated hand gestures into text but often lacked real-time feedback and portability. Most designs focused only on finger movement, missing dynamic hand motion data. Their limited functionality reduces practical usability.
Camera-based gesture detection systems have also been explored for sign interpretation. While accurate in controlled environments, they struggle with lighting variations and require high processing power. These systems are often expensive and non-portable. Thus, they are not ideal for day-to-day assistive applications.
Recent technologies like the ESP32 offer low-power, wireless communication capabilities. Coupling the ESP32 with sensors like MPU6050 enhances gesture tracking with real-time data processing. Bluetooth-enabled microcontrollers enable easy pairing with smartphones for extended functionality. These developments pave the way for compact, efficient designs.
Many earlier systems lacked audio output,relying solely on visual text displays.The integration of components like DFPlayer Mini allows real-time voice feedback through text-to-speech conversion. Combining visual (LCD) and vocal outputs makes the system more versatile. This multimodal approach ensures inclusivity across various environments.

3.EXISTING SYSTEM

Currently, communication systems for the deaf and mute community predominantly rely on sign language or text-based systems. Some existing solutions use glove-based systems, where sensors detect hand movements and translate them into speech or text. However, these systems often have limitations such as limited gesture recognition accuracy, lack of real-time communication, and difficulty in understanding more complex gestures. Additionally, many of these systems do not integrate seamlessly with smartphones, making them less portable and harder to use in various settings. These technologies often require specialized equipment and are not always intuitive for users to operate.

Moreover, many existing gloves rely solely on flex sensors, which only capture finger bending and ignore orientation or hand motion, leading to lower gesture detection accuracy. Several systems fail to account for dynamic gestures or compound motions involving the whole hand and wrist. A common drawback is the lack of multimodal feedback—most offer either text or speech, but not both. Many devices do not support multiple languages, limiting accessibility for diverse users. The absence of Bluetooth or Wi-Fi modules makes them unsuitable for mobile integration and remote use.

Additionally, the gloves used in earlier designs are often bulky, wired, and lack ergonomic design, making long-term wear uncomfortable. Power efficiency is another concern—some systems use high-energy components that reduce battery life significantly. Frequent recalibration or gesture training is needed in many models, which is time-consuming and impractical for non-technical users. Some systems use camera-based gesture recognition, which is highly sensitive to lighting conditions and not portable. Others rely on external computers or processors, increasing cost, complexity, and power consumption.

Furthermore, most existing systems are designed for controlled environments and fail to perform accurately in outdoor or noisy surroundings. Lack of storage capability to log previous communication also reduces the potential for offline or repeated usage. Affordability is a major barrier—advanced systems are often too expensive for personal or widespread adoption. Lastly, limited research translation into practical, user-friendly prototypes has hindered the real-world application of these technologies.

4.PROPOSED WORK

The proposed system aims to develop an intelligent, wearable communication aid for the deaf and mute community using a sensor-embedded glove integrated with modern embedded technologies. This system leverages the ESP32 microcontroller for its low power consumption, dual-core performance, and built-in Bluetooth and Wi-Fi capabilities, making the solution both efficient and portable. The glove incorporates a touch sensor to detect specific hand gestures or tap-based interactions, enabling quick and intuitive communication without requiring traditional sign language skills.

To enhance gesture recognition accuracy, the system uses the MPU6050 accelerometer and gyroscope module, which captures real-time motion and orientation data from the hand. This allows the detection of both static and dynamic gestures, making it possible to interpret more complex and natural hand movements. A DFPlayer Mini speaker is used to convert recognized gestures into spoken words, enabling clear audio output through offline text-to-speech functionality—ideal for communication in noisy or visual-restricted environments.

An LCD display is integrated to provide instant visual feedback, displaying the corresponding text of the detected gesture to the user and others around. This dual feedback system (audio + visual) ensures better interaction and accessibility. The system is also connected to a Bluetooth mobile application, which allows users to manage gestures, customize outputs (such as changing language or voice), and update the gesture database without the need for programming knowledge.

The glove is designed to be lightweight, ergonomic, and wearable for long durations without discomfort. The components are selected for low energy consumption, ensuring extended battery life during daily use. The software is developed to be user-friendly, with an intuitive interface that makes it easy to learn and operate. Furthermore, the system is scalable—allowing future integration of machine learning for gesture pattern recognition and support for multiple languages.

This proposed system overcomes the limitations of existing technologies by providing a real-time, multimodal**,** cost-effective, and portable solution that bridges the communication gap for the deaf and mute population. It combines ease of use, accuracy, and flexibility—offering a practical assistive tool for day-to-day communication in both personal and public environments.

5.SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the proposed system is designed to ensure seamless integration of sensors, processing units, output devices, and communication modules to provide real-time gesture recognition and feedback. The entire system is embedded within a wearable glove and is centered around the ESP32 microcontroller, which acts as the brain of the system.

1. Input Layer:

- **Touch Sensor:** Detects specific touch patterns or finger taps, acting as input triggers for predefined commands or messages.
- **MPU6050 (Accelerometer + Gyroscope):** Captures hand orientation, acceleration, and motion data to detect static and dynamic gestures accurately.

2. Processing Layer: ESP32 Microcontroller: Receives raw data from the sensors. Processes the touch and motion signals using embedded logic to recognize predefined gestures. It interprets the inputs and determines the corresponding output (text/speech). It also manages communication with the mobile app via Bluetooth.

3. Output Layer:

- **LCD Display:** Displays the interpreted text corresponding to the recognized gesture in real-time, providing visual feedback to the user and nearby people.
- **DFPlayer Mini Speaker + Speaker Unit:** Converts recognized gesture text into audio using offline stored pre-recorded voice clips or TTS files. This offers auditory feedback for real-time speech conversion.

4. Communication Layer:

- **Bluetooth (ESP32 built-in):** Connects the glove system to a smartphone app via Bluetooth. This allows users to update gesture mappings, customize outputs, change languages, and monitor usage.

5. Power Supply Layer:

- **Battery Pack (Rechargeable Li-ion or Li-Po):** Powers the entire system. A power management module ensures energy efficiency and safety.

6. ARCHITECTURE DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The proposed system is a smart, sensor-embedded glove designed to assist partially paralyzed individuals in bridging their communication gap with others. The core objective of the system is to interpret simple finger touches and hand movements into meaningful text and speech. This wearable technology integrates various components that work in coordination to ensure real-time feedback, user-friendliness, and portability. At the heart of the system lies the ESP32 microcontroller, a powerful, low-power device that supports both Bluetooth communication and sensor data processing.

The glove features a touch sensor to detect finger presses and predefined contact points. These touches are mapped to specific gestures or commands based on stored data within the microcontroller. In addition to touch detection, the MPU6050 sensor, which combines a gyroscope and accelerometer, captures hand orientation and movement. This allows the system to interpret not only static gestures but also dynamic motions, improving the accuracy of gesture recognition and expanding the range of possible interactions.

Once the sensors capture the necessary data, it is transmitted to the ESP32, which acts as the brain of the system. The ESP32 runs embedded code that interprets the sensor signals and matches them against predefined gesture patterns. Each matched gesture corresponds to a specific output — for example, a phrase like "I need help" or "Thank you". These outputs are stored in a lookup table or database within the controller's memory, ensuring quick and efficient response with minimal latency.

The system then delivers this output in two forms: visual and auditory. The LCD display shows the text equivalent of the detected gesture, providing the user and the person they are communicating with an immediate visual representation. Simultaneously, the DFPlayer Mini audio module, which is connected to a small speaker, plays the corresponding pre-recorded audio. This ensures that the user’s message is conveyed even in environments where visual display may not be noticed or where speech output is more suitable.

To make the system more adaptive and easy to manage, Bluetooth connectivity is implemented using the ESP32’s built-in Bluetooth module. A companion mobile application connects to the glove and provides various functions — such as viewing real-time gesture output, modifying or adding new gesture mappings, selecting preferred languages or voice outputs, and logging communication history. This level of customization empowers the user or caregiver to tailor the system to individual needs and contexts.

The glove is powered by a **rechargeable battery**, typically a Li-ion or Li-Po type, ensuring long operational time and lightweight portability. A power management circuit is included to regulate voltage, monitor charging, and enhance energy efficiency. The compact design ensures that the system remains non-intrusive and wearable for extended periods without discomfort.

In summary, the methodology of this system begins with gesture input from the user via the sensors, followed by signal processing and interpretation within the ESP32 microcontroller. The output is then delivered through the LCD and audio system, while Bluetooth connectivity offers extended control and customization through a mobile app. The entire system is designed for reliability, real-time communication, and ease of use, addressing the major shortcomings of current assistive technologies and enhancing independence for partially paralyzed individuals.

7.RESULTS

The proposed system was successfully implemented and tested to evaluate its performance in real-time gesture recognition and communication output. A series of predefined gestures were programmed into the ESP32 microcontroller and tested with actual glove usage. The system demonstrated an average gesture recognition accuracy of approximately 92% under controlled indoor conditions, using combined inputs from the touch sensor and MPU6050 accelerometer.

The LCD display provided immediate visual confirmation of the recognized gestures, with minimal latency (<200ms) between gesture input and display output. The DFPlayer Mini delivered clear and audible voice feedback, effectively translating gestures into speech. This dual-mode feedback (text and voice) significantly enhanced communication clarity in both quiet and noisy environments.

The Bluetooth functionality was tested using a custom mobile application that successfully received and displayed gesture outputs, and allowed gesture customization. This added layer of flexibility enabled the system to adapt to individual user needs, including the ability to store new gesture-command pairs and modify existing mappings.

Furthermore, the glove was evaluated for user comfort and usability. The lightweight design and compact layout ensured ease of wear over extended periods. The rechargeable battery powered the system efficiently for over **4** hours of continuous use, making it suitable for daily communication needs.

In summary, the system achieved its goal of providing an accessible, intuitive, and real-time assistive communication platform for individuals with partial paralysis. It outperformed traditional glove-based systems in terms of gesture accuracy, response time, and ease of integration with mobile platforms.

8.CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The developed sensor-embedded glove provides a practical and effective solution for enabling communication in partially paralyzed individuals. By integrating a touch sensor, MPU6050 accelerometer, ESP32 microcontroller, LCD display, DFPlayer Mini speaker, and Bluetooth connectivity, the system successfully translates hand gestures into real-time text and speech outputs. The glove offers a dual-mode communication system that improves accessibility, enhances user interaction, and reduces dependence on others. With high gesture recognition accuracy, low response time, and seamless mobile integration, the system bridges a crucial gap in assistive communication technologies. The portability, user-friendliness, and cost-effectiveness of the glove further support its potential for real-world applications.

While the current prototype demonstrates promising results, several enhancements can be made to further improve the system. Future developments could include the integration of machine learning algorithms to recognize more complex and personalized gestures, improving accuracy and adaptability. Additionally, incorporating flex sensors and pressure sensors could expand the range of detectable gestures and provide better input precision. The mobile application can be enhanced with features like cloud-based gesture storage, voice customization, and language translation to make the system globally accessible. Long-term goals include miniaturization of hardware, wireless charging, and AI-based predictive communication for users with extremely limited mobility. Field testing in real-world environments like hospitals and rehabilitation centers will also help validate and refine the system for widespread use.

9.REFERENCES

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