System for an acoustic detection, localisation and classification

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ABSTRACT
Currently, acoustic detection techniques of gunshots (gunshot detection and its classification) are increasingly being used not only for military applications but also for civilian purposes. Detection, localisation, and classification of a dangerous event such as gunshots employing acoustic detection is a perspective alternative to visual detection, which is commonly used. In some situations, to detect and localise the source of a gunshot, an automatic acoustic detection system, which can classify the calibre, may be preferable. This paper presents a system for acoustic detection, which can detect, localise and classify acoustic events such as gunshots. The system has been tested in open and closed shooting ranges and tested firearms are 9 mm short gun, .22 short gun, and .22 rifle gun with various subsonic and supersonic ammunition. As ‘false alarms’, sets of different impulse acoustic events like door slams, breaking glass, etc. have been used. Localisation and classification algorithms are also introduced. To successfully classify the tested acoustic signals, Continuous Wavelet and Mel Frequency Transformation methods have been used for the signal processing, and the fully two-layer connected neural network has been implemented. The results show that the acoustic detector can be used for reliable gunshot detection, localisation, and classification.

Section: RESEARCH PAPER

Keywords: Acoustic Detection; Gunshots; Localisation; Classification; Neural Network; Mel Frequency

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1. INTRODUCTION

An acoustic detection (AD) of gunshots is a present topic that can help to detect hazardous and dangerous events, especially in public areas. In recent days, there is an increase in gunshot attacks in public areas such as schools, campuses, hospitals, and shopping centres. In some cases, it is challenging to identify a dangerous event from uncertain, inadequate data received by cameras or by security staff. The main asset of AD is based on the extraction of vital information from the recorded signal data and classify it as due to a given event (gunshot, a human scream, glass breaking, etc.) Due to this classification, AD can assist in Law enforcement to better discriminate dangerous events and intervene in the ongoing process on time and decrease the possibility of casualties. A fundamental goal of AD systems is to monitor acoustic signals around the area of interest and to detect a potentially hazardous event, record, localise the probable position of the event and classify the event into categories as an alert (gunshot) signals and non-treat, ‘false alert’, signals.

There are several experimental or commercial AD systems designed for gunshot events detection and localisation available on the market [1]-[5]. These systems are designed to localise the source of the gunshot and to estimate the type of treat. The more sophisticated systems can even identify the particular firearm type using advanced classification methods. A drawback of the sophisticated systems is usually very high purchase and operational cost, which makes it almost impossible to use for smaller non-governmental entities such as campuses or hospitals.

To successfully design a gunshot detecting and classifying algorithm, essential characteristics of its complex physics have to be understood. A comprehensive explanation of the problem can be found in [6], [7].

A gunshot pattern is characterised by the two phenomena, muzzle blast, and, if the bullet propagates at supersonic speed, shock wave. Muzzle blast is caused by an explosive charge where hot, high-pressured gases expand as acoustic energy from the centre of the gun barrel. The bullet travelling at supersonic speed generates a shockwave effect, which is propagating in a conic fashion behind the bullet trajectory. The shockwave is based on...
the combinations of compression and expansion shock, as shown in Figure 1.

The angle $\Theta_M$ between the bullet trajectory and the shock wave trajectory is given by the Mach number $M = \frac{v}{c}$, where $v$ is the velocity of the projectile and $c$ is the speed of the sound:

$$\Theta_M = \arcsin\left(\frac{1}{M}\right).$$

(1)

These factors can include valuable information that can be used for improving the detection capability of the AD system. Alongside this, the calibre of both bullet and barrel, the length of the latter, mechanical action caused by the gun itself, or even the chemical properties of the propellant cause different effects on the pattern of a gunshot. Last but not least, the temperature of the air, air humidity, wind speed, environment (e.g., foliage density, urban area) and soil characteristics also have an impact on the resulting gunshot pattern. Considering all these phenomena, to effectively detect and identify a gunshot, signal processing, including adaptive filtering and advanced data processing and classification have to be carried out [8] - [11].

An example of a typical subsonic pattern and a supersonic gunshot signal are shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3. Both bullets were shot in semi-open area (with multiple reflections from the ground and the walls) by the same 9 mm short gun, and its acoustic signature was recorded at the distance of approximately 10 m. In Figure 3, the shock wave pattern is not clearly visible due to its proximity to the muzzle blast pattern of the signal. It is caused by the relatively low speed of the supersonic bullet (Mach number $M = 1.09$).

In this article, a system for acoustic detection, localisation and classification is introduced. The proposed system consists of stand-alone sensor units, which are placed around the monitored areas in sufficient numbers, to continuously monitor acoustic events around the unit; if there is a possibility of a dangerous event, the stand-alone units send the data to the remote unit for advanced gunshot detection and classification. The remote central unit evaluates signals received from multiple sensor units and, using advanced signal processing and classification methods, determines the location of a gunshot and the probable firearm caliber used. To localise the place of the event, at least three units equipped with a microphone are needed. The localisation accuracy of the system depends on the density and the number of stand-alone sensor units used.

In comparison with other existing available systems (e.g. [3] or [5]), the presented system has a novel modular flexible structure. It can be deployed on a building or moving object (car, person, animal) while the central unit can be installed in a distant protected place. In the future, the presented acoustic detector can be used in public areas like schools, campuses, shopping centers to detect and localise gunshots.

The paper is organised as follows. In Section II, the sensor units, detection algorithm, localisation algorithm and signal processing, together with the classification methods, are introduced and described. In Section III, the experimental measurements and results are presented. The conclusion and future work directions are outlined in Section IV.

2. METHODS

The presented system for acoustic detection, localisation and identification consists of multiple (at least three to estimate the correct localisation of the event) sensor units and one central unit. Such a topology enables additional analyses at the central unit, i.e., advanced location of the acoustic event position using timestamped data from multiple sensor units receiving the acoustic signal related to the possible shooting event. Each sensor unit has to cover analogue signal pre-processing, digitisation, simple detection algorithm and simple evaluation. Based on the simple detection and evaluation algorithms, all the units with positive detection, sends the recorded data to the central remote unit. Every stand-alone unit works on the principle illustrated in Figure 4.

The stand-alone sensor detection algorithm works on the principle of a modified median filter introduced by the authors

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Figure 1. An acoustic trace of a supersonic bullet.

Figure 2. Signal corresponding to a 9 mm subsonic short gun gunshot.

Figure 3. Signal corresponding to a 9 mm supersonic short gun gunshot.

Figure 4. Unit function requirements.
in [8]. The background signal is filtered by the median filter while an acoustic event is processed based on the algorithm presented in Figure 5.

It works on the principle of dividing the recorded acoustic signal, converted to energy (the input signal is squared), to the optimal number of data blocks - time windows, the defined odd number of windows, which are fed to the median filter. The middle window is the block with the actual data (actual data window), where the detection is performed. Each window represents 50 samples, i.e., 1 ms of recorded acoustic data around the unit. The data contained in the window before the actual data window represents the acoustic signal recorder after the actual data and vice versa, data recorded before are contained in windows that follows the actual data window. The resulting signal from the median filter is then subtracted from the actual data window, to suppress/filter the background acoustic noise. Thereafter the detection algorithm based on multiple thresholds distinguishes actual gunshot events from other 'false alarms'. More details about the algorithm can be found in [12] and can be described by the pseudocode in Figure 6.

Requirements for flexible modular sensor units are even more demanding than just to detect, record and send the acoustic event in case of a positive detection. Since the sensor units can be deployed everywhere, they have to be able to send their exact position. Moreover, all the sensor units have to be precisely time-synchronised to get a synchronised timestamp of the detected event and to send the data to the central unit wirelessly ensuring accurate localisation and classification of the event secured by the remote server.

To fulfil all these criteria, the sensor unit was designed according to Figure 7.

Every sensor unit uses a pre-polarised, electret condenser microphone with a flat frequency response from 20 Hz to 20 kHz and omnidirectional sensitivity, see Figure 8 and Figure 9.

The heart of the acoustic sensor unit is a low power consumption, 32-bit LPC 1837, ARM Cortex-M3 based microcontroller, which processes the recorded data from the microphone. The analogue Op-amp based peak detector provides an interrupt for the microcontroller if the microphone records an acoustic impulse event. A 16-bit Analogue-to-Digital Converter (ADC) ADS8866 digitises the recorded analogue data. The successive approximation, low power consumption ADC samples the data with a sampling frequency of \( f_s = 44 \) kHz. After the interrupt, the ADC sends the data to the microcontroller via Serial Peripheral Interface (SPI). The data is stored in a circular buffer as a 16-bit number. In this way, the data is ready for processing.

If a trigger from the peak detector occurs, the median filter algorithm described above evaluates if there is the possibility of a gunshot event. If the possible gunshot is evaluated and detected, low power consumption GSM chip GL865-QUAD V3

![Figure 5. The principle of the median filter.](image)

![Figure 7. Block diagram of the sensor unit.](image)

![Figure 6. The detection algorithm pseudocode.](image)

![Figure 8. Frequency response of the microphone.](image)

![Figure 9. Omnidirectional sensitivity of the microphone.](image)
The relationship between the source and the event and each unit is described by equations (2) to (4):

\[(\tau_1 - \tau_0) \cdot c = (x - a_1)^2 + (y - b_1)^2\]  
\[(\tau_2 - \tau_0) \cdot c = (x - a_2)^2 + (y - b_2)^2\]  
\[(\tau_3 - \tau_0) \cdot c = (x - a_3)^2 + (y - b_3)^2\]

where \(\tau_0\) is the time where the gunshot has occurred; \(\tau_1, \tau_2\) and \(\tau_3\) are the times where the gunshot has been detected by unit 1, 2 and 3; \((a_n, b_n)\) are the coordinates of the relevant unit; and \((\; x, y\;)\) are the coordinates of the gunshot. The resulted coordinates are necessary to re-calculate to the Cartesian system. The unit that detects the gunshot first \((\tau_1)\) is considered as it is placed in coordinate \((0, 0)\). The coordinates in meters of other units are then calculated through (5):

\[d = \cos(\sin(\Phi_1) \sin(\Phi_2)) + \cos(\Phi_1) \cos(\Phi_2) \cos(\delta x) R,\]

where \(\Phi_1\) and \(\Phi_2\) are the coordinates in meters and \(\delta x\) is the difference of the longitudes and \(R\) is the mean Earth radius (6378 km). Once the coordinates of the Cartesian system are calculated, it is necessary to re-calculate the latitude and longitude coordinates. Since the distance of one degree of longitude is different at the North Pole and the Equator, it is necessary to know the relationship between degree and meter at a given latitude [14]. This is done by applying the simplified formulas (6) and (7), which re-calculate meters to one degree of latitude of longitude, resulting in uncertainty values in the order of centimetres:

\[x_{\text{latitude}} = \frac{111123.92 - 559.82 \cos(2 \lambda)}{1.175 \cos(4 \lambda) - 0.0023 \cos(6 \lambda)}\]  
\[x_{\text{longitude}} = \frac{111412.84 \cos(\Phi) - 93.5 \cos(3 \Phi)}{1.175 \cos(5 \Phi)}\]

An example of the received timestamps from the three sensor units \((\text{AED 1} - \text{AED 3})\) with their exact position in longitude and latitude coordinates and calculated source of a detected acoustic event by the remote server is in Figure 12.

A custom software application for the remote unit PC to communicate with sensor units, processing the sent data and displaying the location of the event was developed as a part of the acoustic detection system (Figure 13). The application was developed in C# programmable language. The program shows a...
map with the exact location of the chosen acoustic unit and precise/synchronised UTC time. In case of detection, the application signalises the event, displays an exact timestamp in UTC and stores the data for further processing. Through the application, the sampling frequency, parameters for the detection algorithm based on the median filter described in the beginning of the Section II, and the connection of additional detection units can be done. Parallel to localisation, the remote central unit applies the algorithms to obtain the features for classification and classify the event into the classes.

The Mel Frequency Transformation (MFT) and Continuous Wavelet (CW) methods are used for the processing of received data to obtain features for the further classification. To identify the components in an acoustic signal, it is preferable not to use the linear frequency scale, but to detect the differences in lower frequencies rather than higher frequencies. Incorporating this can be preferable in acoustic detection. MFT algorithm uses band-pass filters to get the energy of the signal for each defined band. Then, the algorithm uses frequency distribution to create Mel Frequency Coefficients (MFC). MFC is computed using cosine transformation on the logarithm of bank energies. It can be described as follows. The waveform is divided into the Frames, then the discrete Fourier Transform is applied, Logs of amplitude spectrum is taken, the scale is converted using the Mel-scaling and, finally, the discrete cosine transform is performed. To convert the frequencies into the Mel Scale, equation (8) is used. More details on MFC can be found in [15], [16]

\[ M(f) = 1125 \ln \left( 1 + \frac{f}{700} \right) \] (8)

Through experiments, it was set the optimal number 20 MFC and filters with frequency bands from 500 Hz to 5kHz. These MFCs served as features for the future classification. To limit the influence of an echo on a classification and increase its validity and reliability, more features have to be added.

For this reason, the CW algorithm was considered. Unlike Discrete Fourier Transform DFT, CW transform uses defined waves to create a frequency spectrum with significant time resolution. The time resolution allows limiting the influence of echo, because the echo does not usually interact with the beginning of the impulse acoustic event/gunshot pattern.

The best results for a gunshot recognition showed the Bump wavelet served as a mother wavelet. The used Bump wavelet is a bandlimited function defined in the frequency domain by (9), and its shape is shown in Figure 14.

\[ \Psi(s\omega) = e^{-\frac{1}{2(\omega - \sigma)^2}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\omega}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\omega}} \] (9)

where \( 1_{[s-\sigma/s,1+\sigma]} \) is the indicator function, \( s \) is the scale, \( \omega \) is angular frequency, \( \sigma \) is standard deviation, and \( \mu \) is mean value. More details about the wavelet can be found in [17], [18].

Both presented algorithms are used as features for the advanced classification of received signals by central remote unit from sensor units. Various sets of gunshots, as well as several diverse false signals, similar to a gunshot signal were used for classification. Each false signal was chosen to be challenging to differentiate it from the real gunshots by a human operator.

For classification, two independent Neural Networks (NN) were created. First, a NN was designed to classify signals based on MFC. Considering the low dimensionality of these coefficients, a fully two-layer connected neural network has been used. For the CW algorithm, a convolution neural network was used. As the spectrum is a two-dimensional matrix, the convolution network is significantly better than a fully connected system. Convolution network allows finding local features in multidimensional, location-dependent input data. Spectrogram features are location-dependent, and therefore, the convolution network leads to better results than a typical fully connected network. Also, the convolution network is typically much smaller in dimension, thus significantly reducing the computation time. A single network combining both designs was implemented and used for the classification. The network had two inputs, one for the MFC and one for the CW algorithm.

Along with the NN, two more classifiers, Support Vector Classifier (SVC) and Naive Bayes Classifier (NBC) [19] - [21] are presented herein for a results comparison. Both classifiers were implemented in Matlab software with classification pattern recognition toolbox PRTools ver. 5 [22]. Naive Bayes method is based on Bayesian theorem (10).

\[ P(A/B) = \frac{P(B/A) P(A)}{P(B)} \] (10)

where \( P(A) \), \( P(B) \) is the prior probability of \( A \), \( B \) respectively, and \( P(B/A) \) is the conditional probability, the probability of \( A \) given that \( B \) is true. The Naive Bayes Classifier estimates for every feature and every class separately. Naive Bayes method is simple, but despite its simplicity can often outperform other sophisticated classification methods. It is widely used for results comparison with other classifiers. SVC works based on the construction of non-linear decision boundaries. SVM creates a decision plane, so-called Hyperplane, which in Feature space separate training data optimally. The decision plane then
separates sets of objects, which have different class memberships. The input data are transformed (mapped) to Feature space using a mathematical function known as the kernel. Support vector models can be linear, polynomial, sigmoidal and radial basis function.

3. RESULTS

To acquire the test data, multiple gunshots measurements in different shooting ranges, closed – with many reflections and open, were done. For increasing the diversity of gunshots, three different calibres were measured [23]. Tested firearms were 9 mm short gun, 6.35 mm short gun, .22 short gun, .22 rifle gun. Various subsonic and supersonic (up to Mach number of M = 1.1) ammunition was used with the 9 mm short gun. Each type of gun was measured at least 60 times. In total, approximately 400 samples corresponding to gunshots were and recorded by sensor units described in Section II (in many cases, one sample has been recorded by more sensor units). For false signals, acoustic impulse events similar to gunshots were measured. Approximately 200 samples of various false alarms were measured. As examples of false signals, glass breaking, different slams (such a door slam), handclaps, or close big bubble wrap popping were recorded. At least three sensor units placed in nearby locations recorded all the tested signals. The example of a gunshot of a 9 mm short gun in a noisy environment (diesel engine) recorded at a distance of 10 m is shown in Figure 15.

Figure 16 shows another recorded gunshot, shoot by .22 short gun in closed shooting rage where many reflections are visible. The gunshot was recorded at a distance of 12 m.

Two examples of recorded false alarms represented by a door slam and bubble wrap popping are presented in Figure 17 and Figure 18.

Both presented false signals exhibit similar patterns as gunshots. Therefore, the recorded data have to be processed in a way to emphasise the differences. This can be done by MFT and CW methods presented in Section II.

This work presents the classification into ‘false alarms’ and gunshot event and in the case of a gunshot, the classifier classifies the recorded signal into an individual caliber.

To train the classifiers in an optimal way, the recorded acoustic events data have to be divided into two groups – to training and to validation sets. There are many articles dealing with an optimal number of training data. One of the proposed methods is the use of the learning curve. Use of learning curves for optimal size of training data is described in [24]. From the Learning curve, dependency of the model performance on the training data size can be obtained. It usually depends on the classification method, the complexity of the classifier or how well can be the classes separated. Optimal size of training data can be determined from the maximum of the Learning curve. Recorded ‘false alarms’ and gunshots samples were chosen randomly chosen for the training and the validation sets. In this case, the number of training data is optimal for approximately 30% of the samples.

The training set had approximately 200 independent measurements and the validation set had approximately 400 samples. The experimental results for the validation data to be classified into false alarms and gunshots events are shown in Table 1.

The results show the validation success rate of classifying into the gunshots is 100 %. The system can classify the gunshot from...
the ‘false alarm’ with a 100% success rate but, on the other hand, approximately 30% of the false alarms are identified as gunshots. The main reason for this is the limited number of signals corresponding to the false alarms and their diversity. To improve the classifier learning, a significant number of impulse acoustic events similar to gunshots have to be recorded in real scenarios and used for classifier training. On the other hand, if the acoustic detection system will be complemented by visual detection an operator can restrain a False Alarms Occurrences. The results also show that SVC achieves slightly better results than NN in false alarm detection, while NBC’s success rate is below 90% even for a proper classification into gunshots classes. For this reason, NBC is not used for the classification into individual calibers.

Table 2 shows the results of the classification into individual calibers by the NN. The NN performs well in classification into the caliber of a gunshot, where it was able to classify more than 95% correctly for a 9 mm caliber, more than 82% for 6.35 mm caliber and more than 96% for .22 caliber. On the other hand, NN classifies almost 26% of false alarms as gunshots (9 mm caliber mostly). For the sake of comparison, results obtained through SVC are summarised in Table 3.

The SVC classified almost 80% of false alarms correctly, but the classification of gunshots into correct caliber classes is less successful than for NN. For example, 6.35 mm caliber successful classification is less than 80% in comparison with 96% for the NN. The efficiency of NN classification strongly depends on the amount and variability of the false alarm signals. Based on the tested results, only the NN classifier was implemented to the ADS. In the future, more false alarm scenarios have to be recorded and used for the classifier training.

The tested measurements show that the presented ADS can successfully detect, locate and classify the impulse event. The ADS consists of sensor units operates on the principle of the modified median filter, and central remote unit, which calculates the location of the acoustic event and classify it using NN and CW and MFC algorithms. The tested acoustic signals were taken at different open and closed shooting ranges, where at least three acoustic units recorded the detected impulse acoustic event. The NN classifier can classify an individual caliber of a used firearm with a very high success rate, which is for some calibers more than 95%. As a next step, the System for Acoustic Detection will be deployed in an environment (residential area) to test it in real conditions.

4. CONCLUSION

The system for acoustic detection, localisation, and classification into a firearm caliber was presented. The system consists of sensor units that continuously monitor acoustic events around the unit and the central remote unit. The sensor units use a modified median filter algorithm to state if there is a possibility of a gunshot. The central remote unit – PC, then evaluates the signal through advanced signal processing and classification to determine if there is a gunshot or a false alarm event. The system can localise the event on the principle of measuring the time delay between the event and each microphone of the sensor unit and knowing their positions. The accuracy of the localisation depends on the number and the density of the sensor units. The central remote units use Continuous Wavelet and Mel Frequency Transformation methods to get the features for a neural network classifier.

Gunshots of different calibers and various false alarms similar to gunshots were recorded on shooting ranges to test the system. More than 600 signals were recorded and tested.

The system shows the ability to detect the gunshot with 100% accuracy and to correctly classify the caliber of a gun with a high accuracy depending on the individual caliber. Considering the limited size of false alarms training dataset, such results are impressive. However, all measurements were measured in a similar environment. To practically employ the ADS in real conditions, a significantly larger dataset in a real environment, such as urban areas, should be examined for future tests and unit improvements.

In the future, the proposed Systems for Acoustic Detection can be used as a standalone unit placed in schools, campuses, shopping centers or other public areas in general, to detect, localise and classify gunshot events and to increase the safety of the civil population.

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