Complex Spectral Mapping With Attention Based Convolution Recurrent Neural Network for Speech Enhancement

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Abstract

Speech enhancement has benefited from the success of deep learning in terms of intelligibility and perceptual quality. Conventional time-frequency (TF) domain methods focus on predicting TF-masks or speech spectrum, via a naive convolution neural network or recurrent neural network. Some recent studies were based on Complex Spectral Mapping convolution recurrent neural network (CRN). These models skipped directly from encoder layers’ output and decoder layers’ input, which maybe thoughtless. We proposed an attention mechanism based skip connection between encoder and decoder layers, namely Complex Spectral Mapping With Attention Based Convolution Recurrent Neural Network (CARN). Compared with CRN model, the proposed CARN model improved more than 10% relatively at several metrics such as PESQ, CBAK, COVL, CSIG and son, and outperformed the place 1st model in both real time and non-real time track of the DNS Challenge 2020 at these metrics.

Index Terms: speech enhancement, CRN, attention mechanism, DNNSMOS, PESQ

1. Introduction

Speech enhancement technology is essential to improve the intelligibility and quality of noisy speech signal [1]. Classical speech enhancements techniques include spectral subtraction [2], Wiener filtering [3], minimum mean-square error (MMSE) estimator [4] and the optimally modified log-spectral amplitude speech estimator [5]. These conventional methods based on time-frequency domain achieve relatively good performance in stationary-noise environment, whereas they are not robust enough in tackling non-stationary noises in most scenes.

Over past few years, deep neural networks (DNNs) have significantly evaluated the performance of speech enhancement [6]. Existing DNN approaches provide better results compared to classic techniques. In [7], [8], recurrent neural network (RNNs) is advanced to model temporal features. Auto-encoder is employed for speech enhancement in [9], and the first speech enhancement benchmark utilizes DNN as non-linear regression function [10]. A convolutional recurrent neural network (CRN) is used to extract long-context information [11]. Speech enhancement techniques also take example by image synthesis that using Generative adversarial network (GAN) architecture to reconstruct target speech signal [12]-[16]. These DNN supervised-based speech enhancements methods are outperform than classic algorithms.

Recently, U-net structures have achieved significant success and have overran their performance than basic DNN architectures in various machine learning tasks including medical diagnostics [17], semantic segmentation [18], singing source separation [19] and others. Motivated by this success, speech enhancement has explored U-net structures in both raw waveform [12]-[20], [22] and time-frequency features [23]. In [24], Wave-U-Net employed GLU activation in encoder and decoder, as well as bidirectional LSTM in-between. DCCRN [25] takes advantages of u-net and deep complex network [26] for denoising. The combination between attention-unit and U-net boost the performance of speech enhancement one step further. Self-attention is an efficient context information aggregation mechanism that operates on the input sequence itself and that can be utilized for any task that has a sequential input and output. Attention wave-u-net [27] outperforms all other published speech enhancement approaches on the Voice Bank Corpus (VCTK) dataset.

Mask-based target, which describes the time-frequency relationships between clean speech and background noise, is utilized to train the network. Typically, conventional masks consist of ideal binary mask (IBM) [28], ideal ratio mask (IRM) [29] and spectral magnitude mask (SMM) [30] only consider the magnitude between clean waveform and mixture audio. Subsequently, phase is taken into account, where phase-sensitive mask (PSM) [31] is the first method to show the feasibility of phase information, and complex ratio mask (CRM) [32] is announced that it can reconstruct speech perfectly by enhancing both real and imaginary components of the division of clean speech and mixture speech spectrogram simultaneously. Soon afterwards, CRN [33] used one encoder and two decoders for complex spectral mapping (CSM) to coincidently estimate the real and imaginary spectrogram of mixture speech. It isworth noting that CRM and CSM possess the full information of a speech signal so that they can achieve the best oracle speech enhancement performance in theory.

In this paper, we propose a network called CARN incorporating effective components of u-net, attention mechanism, skip connection, LSTMs in between encoder-decoder and CRN in time-frequency domain. We also investigated combining gate convolution network with CARN model into a model named GCARN. We show that, based on the speech quality metrics (PESQ, etc.), on the 2020 DNS challenge [34], and the dataset released by Valenti [35], the attention-lstm-u-net utilized crn in time-frequency domain achieve significant improvement results outperforming others published speech enhancement methods on these datasets.

2. The CARN Model

The CRN model was firstly proposed by Ke Tan [36], and was further investigated with complex spectral mapping [33] mechanism and gate convolution [37]. According to the above research, we investigated a new model named CARN, which was combined CRN with attention mechanism. In the CARN model, we used attention based skip connections from encoder layers to decoder layers. Furthermore, we constrain our pro-
posed model with the gate convolution based CRN model as well as several previous works.

2.1. The CARN Architecture

The encoder and decoder both consist of 6 Conv2d blocks with PReLU activation function, aiming at extracting high-dimensional features from the input features as well as reducing the resolution. Between encoder and decoder, we used two LSTM layers to study temporal features. The model is illustrated as Figure 1. We took spectrogram feature as input. The LSTM layers hidden size is 512, the T-F kernel size is 3, stride is 1 ∗ 2, for each Conv2d or ConvTranspse2d layer. Each Conv2d or ConvTranspse2d layer is followed by a batchnorm layer. A linear layer is embedded after last ConvTranspose2d layer to map the complex ratio mask(CRM) from the output features. At last, CRM multiply with the input stft spectrogram to get clean stft spectrogram referring to [4] and [5]. All the activation function is PReLU.

2.2. Attention Mechanism

Different from conventional CRN architecture, self-attention masks are applied to multiply with the output of encoder by skip-connection. The output of attention layer is concatenated to the last decoder output for the next decoder input.

The AttentionBlock [27] is described in Figure 2. \( U_i \) is the output of encoder architecture and \( C_i \) is the output of LSTM layers or decoder convolution layers. Additional two 2-d convolutions, with kernel size 3, output channels twice of input channels, referring as \( W_g \) and \( W_x \), which are used to mapping \( U_i \) and \( C_i \) to high-dimensional space feature, are used to model the attention mechanism. The high-dimensional space feature dimension is twice of the dimension of \( C_i \); The high-dimensional space feature layer output can be described as \([4]\).

\[
A_i = \sigma(W_g \otimes U_i + W_x \otimes C_i) \tag{1}
\]

where \( U_i \) and \( C_i \) present \( i \)-th layer of encoder and decoder, respectively. \( \sigma \) is sigmoid function. The output of self-attention block,

\[
B_i = \sigma(W_f \otimes B_i) \cdot C_i \tag{2}
\]

2.3. Training targets

CARN estimates CRM and is optimized by signal approximation (SA). Given the complex-valued STFT spectrum of clean speech \( S \) and noisy speech \( Y \), CRM can be defined as

\[
CRM = \frac{Y_r S_r + Y_i S_i}{Y_r^2 + Y_i^2} + j \frac{Y_r S_i - Y_i S_r}{Y_r^2 + Y_i^2} \tag{3}
\]

where \( Y_r \) and \( Y_i \) refer as the real and imaginary parts of the noisy speech complex spectrogram, respectively, \( S_r \) and \( S_i \) refer as the real and imaginary parts of the clean complex spectrogram, similarly. Let \( S_r \) and \( S_i \) denote the real and imaginary parts of the estimating denoise audio complex spectrogram, respectively. \( \hat{M}_r \) and \( \hat{M}_i \) denote the real and imaginary parts of CRM, then

\[
\hat{S}_r = \hat{M}_r Y_r - \hat{M}_i Y_i \tag{4}
\]

\[
\hat{S}_i = \hat{M}_r Y_i + \hat{M}_i Y_r \tag{5}
\]

2.4. Loss function

We train the model with loss function as

\[
Loss(\hat{S}, S) = (|\hat{S}^{0.3} - S^{0.3}|^2 + 0.2 |S^{0.3} - \hat{S}^{0.3}|^2) \tag{6}
\]

where \( \hat{S} \) and \( S \) denote estimating denoise audio and clean audio respectively. \( S^{0.3} = |S|^{0.3} e^{j \angle S} \) is the power-compressed STFTs. This loss function consists of stft spectrogram MSE (mean square error) and power-compressed STFTs MSE.

3. Experiment

3.1. Datasets

In our experiments, we evaluate the proposed models on two datasets.

3.1.1. Dataset 1: Noisy speech database

The first dataset\(^1\) is released by Valentini et. al. [35], widely used by speech enhancement research, and it generalizes on various types of noise for different speakers. This dataset includes clean and noisy audio data at 48kHz sampling frequency, which

\(^1\)https://datashare.ed.ac.uk/handle/10283/2791
requires down sampling to 16kHz for training and testing. The clean sets are recording of sentences, sourced from various text passages, and thirty English-speakers, including male and female with various accents, are selected from the Voice Bank corpus [38]. 28 and 2 speakers are assigned to the training and test sets, respectively. The test set consists of 20 different noise conditions, 5 type of noise sourced from the DEMAND database, yielding 824 test items, with approximately 20 different sentences in each condition per test speaker [39].

3.1.2. Dataset 2: DNS 2020

The second dataset is based on the data provided by the Interspeech 2020 DNS Challenge dataset [40]. The DNS Challenge dataset consists of 180-hour noise set which includes 150 classes and 65,000 noise clips, and over 500 hours clean speech, which includes audio clips from 2150 speakers. The clean speech dataset is derived from the public audibooks dataset called Librivox. The noise clips were selected from Audioset and Freesound. We randomly selected 24000 speakers with all noise clips to created 200-hour noisy train set, with signal-noise ratio ranging from 0dB to 40dB. Each selected speaker’s audio clips are concatenated to 30 seconds, while mixing various noise clips. We estimated the proposed model with DNS-Challenge no-blind test dataset and blind test dataset. Both datasets consists of synthesis dataset and real-recordings.

3.2. Training setup and baselines

We trained the proposed model on both dataset using Adam optimizer annealed with warmup schedule, learning rate of 1e-3 and 64 mini-batchsize. The model was selected by early stopping when the \( \Delta \text{loss} \) was smaller than 0.05. The STFT window length and hop size are modulated to 32 milliseconds and 16 milliseconds respectively. Hanning window and 512 FFT length are applied. We stacked the real and imaginary parts of FFT spectrogram together as input. We compared the proposed model with several models, described as followed.

- **CRN**: A causal complex spectral mapping Convolution Recurrent Network [33], is evaluated on the first dataset as contrast. This model has same structure as the proposed model CARN except attention mechanism. It consists of six convolution layers encoder and six symmetrical layers decoder with two lstm layers between them.

- **GCRN**: A causal complex spectral mapping Gate Convolution Recurrent Network [37], is evaluated on the first dataset as contrast. This model has same structure as the CRN above, except gate convolution layers.

- **DCCRN-E**: The model proposed by [25], which is based on the CRN architecture but complex convolution layers, has achieved the 1st place in the 2020 Deep Noise Suppression Challenge’s Real-Time Track. We compare this model under two datasets using officially opened source code [41].

- **CARN**: The proposed model, well described at section 2, is training and testing on both datasets, respectively.

- **GCARN**: Same structure as the CARN, except gate convolution layers, is a contrast model.

https://github.com/huyanxin/DeepComplexCRN

3.3. Evaluation: Objective Metrics and Result

We evaluated wide-band Perceptual Evaluation of Speech Quality (PESQ) [42] and the composite CSIG,CBAK, and COVL [40] and STOI on both test dataset. These metrics evaluated my model performance in some respects. But these metrics require reference clean speech, and cannot work at real recordings. The blind test dataset in DNS-Challenge 2020 consist of real recordings and synthetic noisy audios. We evaluated our proposed models on this dataset with an another metric, called DNSMOS.

DNSMOS metric was proposed by Chandan K A Reddy, etc. [43] recently. The DNSMOS metric is a non-intrusive objective speech quality metric for wide band scenario, and more reliable than other widely used objective metrics such as SDR and POLDA, and does not require reference clean speech. So it can work on real recordings.

### Table 1: PESQ, CBAK, COVL, CSIG and STOI on Dataset 1

| Method   | PESQ | CBAK | COVL | CSIG | STOI |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Noisy    | 1.97 | 2.54 | 3.33 | 3.35 | 0.97 |
| Wiener   | 2.22 | 2.68 | 3.23 | –    | –    |
| SEGAN    | 2.16 | 2.94 | 3.48 | –    | –    |
| U-Net    | 2.48 | 3.21 | 3.65 | –    | –    |
| WaveNet  | 2.32 | 2.98 | 3.62 | –    | –    |
| CRN      | 2.61 | 3.26 | 3.78 | 0.94 | –    |
| GCRN     | 2.51 | 3.24 | 3.71 | 0.94 | –    |
| DCCRN-E  | 2.73 | 3.22 | 3.73 | 0.94 | –    |
| CARN     | 2.93 | 3.61 | 4.19 | 0.95 | –    |
| GCARN    | **2.99** | 3.46 | 3.63 | **4.27** | **0.96** |

### Table 2: PESQ, CBAK, COVL, CSIG and STOI on Dataset 2

| Method   | PESQ | CBAK | COVL | CSIG | STOI |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Noisy    | 2.56 | 3.33 | 3.50 | 3.16 | 0.92 |
| RNNoise  | 1.97 | 3.46 | 2.78 | 2.69 | –    |
| DNS-baseline | 1.81 | 2.00 | 2.23 | 2.78 | –    |
| DCCRN-E  | 3.22 | 4.00 | 3.18 | 3.84 | 0.94 |
| CARN     | 2.91 | 3.67 | 3.60 | 4.24 | 0.96 |
| GCARN    | **2.93** | 3.65 | 3.61 | **4.23** | **0.97** |

In Table 1, we listed the results over the first dataset of several methods, such as Wiener, SEGAN [12], U-Net [19], WaveNet [20], CRN, GCRN, DCCRN-E and our proposed models CARN and GCARN. CRN and GCRN are better than Wiener, SEGAN, U-Net and WaveNet, except CBAK scores, and were not as good as DCCRN-E at PESQ. We improved CRN and GCRN by replacing the directly connection with attention between encoder layers and decoder layers, which we called CARN and GCARN models respectively. Achieving significant improvement in all metrics. CARN improved CRN on PESQ, CBAK, COVL, CSIG with 12.2%, 10.7%, 11.7%, 10.8% respectively, and GCRN improved GCRN on these metrics with 19.1%, 6.8%, 17.5%, 15.1% respectively. CARN and GCARN were the best models among them. When comparing CRN and CARN with GCRN and GCARN, the results demonstrated the gate convolution may be unnecessary in this issue.

In Table 2, we trained and evaluated CARN and GCARN models on DNS-Challenge dataset. We compared our proposed models with RNNoise, the DNS-Challenge baseline [34], DCCRN-E, and poCoNet [42], which took 1st place in the 2020 Deep Noise Suppression Challenge’s Non-Real-Time
Table 3: DNSMOS over DNS-Challenge 2020 blind test dataset

| Method      | non-reverb | reverberation-free | reverb | real-recordings | average |
|-------------|------------|--------------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| DCCRN-E     | 3.99       | 3.16               | 3.49   | 3.53           |         |
| CARN        | 4.07       | 3.48               | 3.71   | 3.72           |         |
| GCARN       | 4.07       | 3.41               | 3.69   | 3.72           |         |

4. Conclusion

The experiments over the two datasets shows that attention mechanism can significantly improve CRN architecture performance when compared with directly connection. A reasonable explanation is that attention mechanism filters some noise features which are connected from encoder layer to decoder layer. Our proposed model CARN outperformed the place 1st model in both real time and non-real time track of the DNS Challenge 2020 at many metrics.

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