Part B: Fine Grained Event-Based Human Activity Recognition via Few-Shot

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***Abstract*—This study introduces the design and implementation of a pipeline for fine-grained human activity recognition using neuromorphic sensing and Few-Shot Learning. The proposed approach is based on Prototypical Networks that are metric-based learning to classify activities with minimal labeled data. The proposed pipeline overcomes catastrophic forgetting through the use of prototype preservation and embedding regularization techniques, hence scalable to new tasks while retaining knowledge learned from previous tasks. The study uses a neuromorphic Dynamic Vision Sensor (DVS) camera, which captures high-temporal-resolution event-based data corresponding to activities such as walking, jumping, and boxing. The raw events were processed and converted into video frames to serve as input for the classification model. Data acquisition was conducted in the AV Lab with the DVS camera interfaced via the Robot Operating System (ROS2). Performance was evaluated for both support and query sets across varying shot sizes with a view toward understanding the effect of limited labeled data on classifying performance. The results demonstrate the potency of FSL frameworks, where neuromorphic-based frameworks attain robust classification performance with high-shot settings and provide scope toward limitations in low-shot situations. This report describes in detail the methodology, experimental results, and lessons learned that extend the growing body of research in event-based machine learning and its application in real-time human activity recognition.**

I. Introduction

Recognizing human activities with high accuracy is vital for a range of modern applications, including healthcare monitoring, smart surveillance, sports analysis, and human-computer interaction. Traditional activity recognition systems rely heavily on large datasets and extensive labeling to train machine learning models. However, in many practical scenarios, gathering such labeled data is either impractical or too costly. To overcome this challenge, **Few-Shot Learning (FSL)** has emerged as a powerful solution, enabling models to generalize and adapt to new tasks using only a few labeled examples [1], [2].

At the same time, **Dynamic Vision Sensors (DVS)** have transformed data acquisition by mimicking the sparse, asynchronous, and event-driven nature of biological vision. Unlike traditional cameras that capture entire frames, DVS devices record only pixel-level changes in intensity. This event-driven design makes DVS ideal for dynamic and time-sensitive activities, such as human motion. Additionally, their high temporal resolution and energy efficiency make them perfect for real-time applications [3], [4].

In this study, we introduce a novel pipeline for **Few-Shot Human Activity Recognition** using DVS. Human activities such as walking, jumping, and boxing were recorded in the Advanced Vision (AV) Lab with a DVS camera connected via the *Robot Operating System 2 (ROS2)* framework. These recordings were processed into event streams and converted into videos and frames for input into a Few-Shot Learning framework based on **Prototypical Networks** [1]. This pipeline tackles the challenge of fine-grained activity recognition in scenarios with limited labeled data.

Key Challenges: Few-Shot Learning presents several challenges. A significant issue is *catastrophic forgetting*, where models lose previously learned information when adapting to new tasks [5], [6]. Additionally, recognizing detailed activities with minimal examples requires robust feature embeddings that can capture subtle differences between activities.

To address these challenges, our pipeline uses:

- **Prototype Preservation:** Maintaining prototype embeddings to prevent distortion of learned class representations during training.
- **Feature Space Regularization:** Ensuring a stable and discriminative embedding space for support and query examples.
- **Balanced Query Updates:** Preventing overfitting to support examples while incorporating new information from queries.

Contributions: This study offers several key contributions:

- Development of a complete pipeline for Few-Shot Human Activity Recognition using neuromorphic DVS data.
- Application of Prototypical Networks for fine-grained human activity classification, demonstrating their effectiveness in low-data environments.
- Investigation of methods to reduce catastrophic forgetting in Few-Shot Learning.
- Comprehensive evaluation across different shot sizes (5-shot, 10-shot, and 20-shot), analyzing the impact of data availability on classification accuracy.

A. Literature Review

In the last decade, event-based learning has undergone fantastic changes. Efforts to emulate biological systems for

speed and energy efficiency in processing data in dynamically changing environments have been at the forefront. Herein we review the major works related to visual tracking and Few-Shot Learning.

1) Few-Shot Learning: Foundations and Applications

Few-Shot Learning addresses the challenge of training models on limited labeled data, often utilizing meta-learning strategies.

- Snell et al. [1] proposed Prototypical Networks, a metric-based approach where classes are represented as prototypes in embedding space.
- Finn et al. [2] introduced Model-Agnostic Meta-Learning (MAML), which quickly adapts models to new tasks through parameter initialization.
- Ravi and Larochelle [7] developed optimization-based meta-learning models that leverage memory-augmented networks for efficient adaptation.

2) Neuromorphic Sensing in FSL

Event-based sensing has shown potential for few-shot tasks due to its sparse and high-temporal-resolution data representation.

- Maqueda et al. [4] introduced event-based representations for motion estimation, later adapted for classification tasks.
- Liu et al. [8] extended Prototypical Networks to neuromorphic data, enhancing classification accuracy by effectively handling event streams.

3) Mitigating Catastrophic Forgetting

Catastrophic forgetting, where new information overwrites prior knowledge, is a critical issue in Few-Shot Learning.

- Kirkpatrick et al. [5] introduced Elastic Weight Consolidation (EWC), penalizing updates that interfere with important parameters.
- Lopez-Paz and Ranzato [6] proposed Gradient Episodic Memory (GEM) to incorporate past experiences into gradient updates.

II. Methodology

This study presents a robust pipeline designed for fine-grained human activity recognition by leveraging Few-Shot Learning (FSL) and neuromorphic sensing. The methodology integrates data acquisition, event-based processing, and a Prototypical Network-based framework for classification while addressing challenges like catastrophic forgetting.

A. Data Collection in the A/V Lab

The first step of this pipeline was the collection of event-based data for different human activities like walking, jumping, and boxing. The collection was done using a neuromorphic Dynamic Vision Sensor (DVS) camera because of its very high temporal resolution, low latency, and power efficiency. The camera was interfaced with a laptop using the ROS2 framework, which allowed for real-time streaming of event data as ROS2 topics. This setup allowed efficient data collection of dynamic activity representations that were to be used in subsequent processing and classification tasks.

The DVS camera produced three different kinds of ROS2 topics, related to the different facets of activities captured:

1) **Edge Topic:** This is the edge topic, representing motion dynamics in terms of pixel-wise scene brightness changes. It fires whenever the logarithmic brightness change in a pixel exceeds a threshold measured as:

$$\Delta L(x, y, t) = \log(I(x, y, t)) - \log(I(x, y, t - \Delta t)) \geq \theta, \tag{1}$$

where $I(x, y, t)$ is the intensity at pixel (x, y) at time t, and θ is the threshold at which an event is triggered. Events generated this way will outline the edges and boundaries of motion, hence will be important for the activity transition detection.

2) **Frame Topic:** The frame topic reconstructs the scene's intensity-based representation by pooling events over a time window. This is achieved by integrating the event stream to estimate pixel intensities:

$$I_{\text{frame}}(x, y, t) = I_{\text{frame}}(x, y, t - \Delta t) + \sum_{k=1}^{N} p_k \delta(x - x_k, y - y_k), \tag{2}$$

where $p_k \in \{-1, +1\}$ denotes the polarity of each event ($+1$ for brightness increases, -1 for decreases), (x_k, y_k) describes the position of the event, and δ represents the Dirac delta function. This reconstruction then provides a denser, frame-based representation of the scene, hence complementing traditional video processing.

3) **Visualization Topic:** It represents the translation of an event stream into a human-readable image. Different events are encoded as a combination of unique colors or intensities depending on polarity and timing. This can be modeled as:

$$V(x, y, t) = \sum_{k=1}^{N} \alpha_k \exp\left(-\frac{|t - t_k|}{\tau}\right), \tag{3}$$

where t_k is the timestamp of the k-th event, τ is a decay constant for temporal smoothing, and α_k is the intensity assigned to an event depending on its polarity, either $+1$ or -1. It allows one to check data capture quality and understand the temporal evolution of activities.

These formulas show the computational underpinnings of each topic. The edge topic shows motion boundaries, the frame topic approximates an intensity image, and the visualization topic provides a time-smoothed view of the event stream. In themselves, these form a coherent data acquisition strategy that leverages the neuromorphic strengths of the DVS camera for robust downstream processing in Few-Shot Learning. This multi-channel acquisition method actually represents the adaptability of the DVS camera and the complete ROS2 framework integration for neuromorphic sensing.

B. Event Extraction and Video Conversion

The raw event data streamed via ROS2 was converted into video segments for interpretability and further processing. Each segment corresponded to a specific activity and was

decomposed into individual frames, which served as input to the FSL model. The video-to-frame conversion ensured compatibility with convolutional neural network (CNN)-based feature extraction pipelines while preserving the temporal dynamics of activities.

C. Few-Shot Learning Framework

The classification pipeline is devekoped on Prototypical Networks, a metric-based Few-Shot Learning framework. This framework consists of three main components:

1) Feature Extraction

A convolutional neural network (CNN) was employed to extract distinctive feature representations from the input frames. The CNN, composed of several layers including convolutional, batch normalization, and ReLU activation layers, projected each input frame x_i into a condensed embedding space $f_\phi(x_i)$:

$$f_\phi(x_i) = \text{CNN}(x_i),$$

where f_ϕ denotes the parameters of the feature extractor. This embedding process ensures that class-specific features are robust and well-separated.

2) Prototype Computation

Class prototypes were calculated by averaging the embeddings of the support set S_k for each class, creating a concise representation of each activity:

$$c_k = \frac{1}{|S_k|} \sum_{x_i \in S_k} f_\phi(x_i),$$

where c_k represents the prototype vector for class k, and $|S_k|$ is the number of samples in the support set.

3) Classification

Query samples were classified by measuring their Euclidean distance to the class prototypes:

$$d(c_k, q) = \sqrt{\sum_i \left(f_\phi(q_i) - c_k\right)^2}.$$

Each query was assigned to the class with the shortest distance, making use of the metric space for precise classification.

4) Addressing Catastrophic Forgetting

To mitigate catastrophic forgetting, several strategies were implemented:

1) **Prototype Preservation:** Support prototypes were maintained during incremental training to prevent the loss of previously learned representations.
2) **Embedding Regularization:** Constraints were applied to keep the feature space stable and prevent distortion during learning.
3) **Incremental Query Updates:** New task information was integrated gradually to balance old and new knowledge.
4) **Dynamic Feature Reinforcement:** The CNN was optimized to capture motion dynamics, ensuring the creation of strong, invariant embeddings.

5) Evaluation Metrics and Experimental Scenarios

The framework was tested with varying shot sizes (5-shot, 10-shot, 20-shot) across three activity classes: boxing, walking, and jumping. Performance was measured using these metrics:

- **Support Accuracy:** Accuracy in classifying examples from the support set.
- **Query Accuracy:** Accuracy in classifying previously unseen query examples.

Performance results for different scenarios are illustrated in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

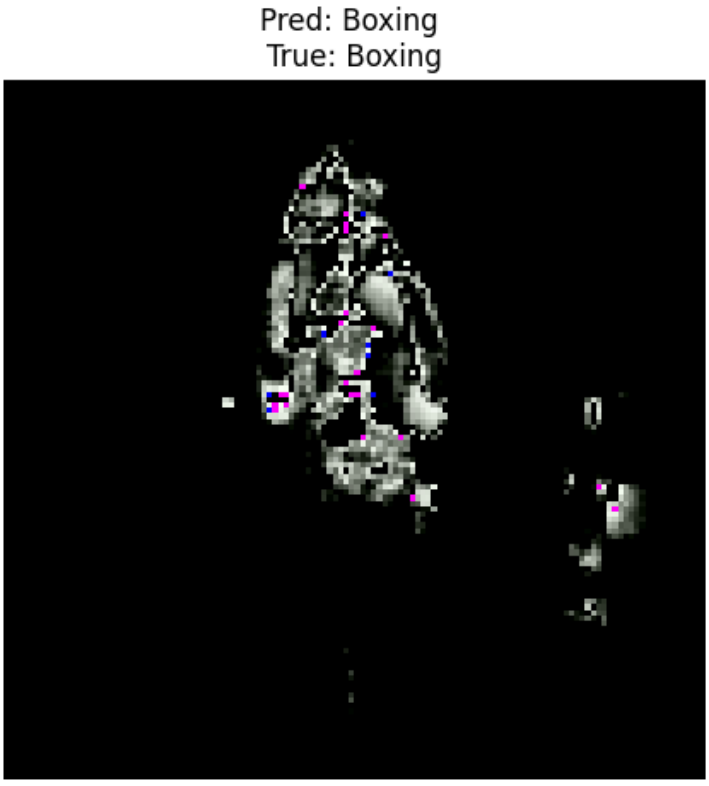

Fig. 1: Example of Successful Recognition of a Boxing Instance

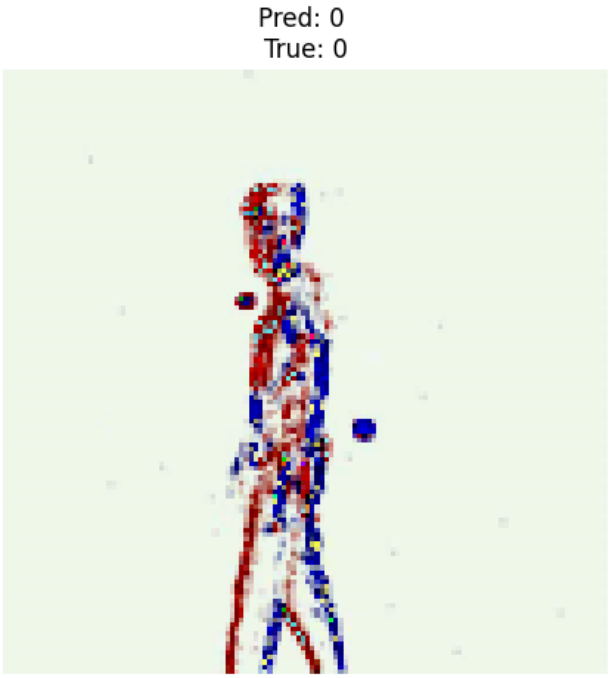

Fig. 2: Example of Successful Recognition of a Walking Instance

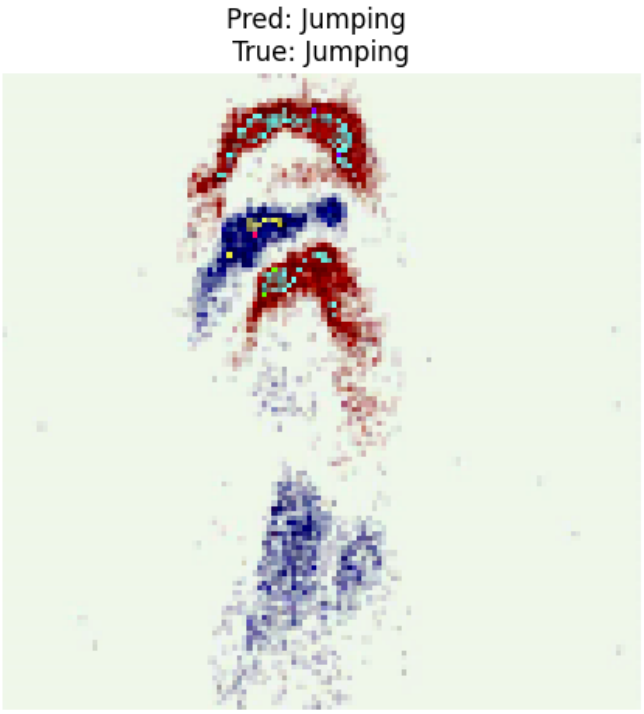

Fig. 3: Example of Successful Recognition of a Jumping Instance

III. Results and Discussion

The Few-Shot Learning (FSL) framework demonstrated promising results, particularly in higher-shot scenarios, with observable trends in support and query accuracy:

- **Accuracy Trends:** Table I shows that increasing the number of support samples significantly improved query accuracy. In the 20-shot scenario, query accuracy reached 95% for the "Jumping" activity, highlighting the model's capacity to generalize with ample support data. However, low-shot scenarios, such as the 5-shot "Walking" task, resulted in 0% query accuracy, indicating poor performance due to limited training data. The model's performance is highly dependent on the quantity and quality of support data.
- **Prototypical Representations:** Prototypes captured distinct class-specific features, allowing the model to accurately classify activities such as "Boxing," "Walking," and "Jumping." The embedding space visualizations (Figures 1, 2, 3) illustrate how the model effectively separated these classes, particularly in high-shot settings.
- **Catastrophic Forgetting Mitigation:** The implemented strategies, including prototype preservation and embedding regularization, effectively mitigated catastrophic forgetting. The results indicated minimal accuracy degradation when new query tasks were introduced, suggesting strong scalability and robustness in handling incremental tasks.
- **Limitations:** The framework struggled with low-shot scenarios, such as the 5-shot "Walking" task, which failed to generalize effectively. This limitation is attributed to insufficient class-specific information in smaller support sets. Future research could address this issue through data augmentation techniques, enhanced prototype adaptation, or hybrid architectures integrating attention mechanisms.

TABLE I: Few-Shot Classification Results (Accuracy %)

Scenario	Support Accuracy	Query Accuracy
5-shot Walking query	57.68	0.00
5-shot Boxing query	56.15	20.00
5-shot Jumping query	55.94	40.00
10-shot Walking query	52.29	50.00
10-shot Boxing query	50.54	30.00
10-shot Jumping query	63.50	70.00
20-shot Walking query	57.68	50.00
20-shot Boxing query	68.95	80.00
20-shot Jumping query	49.17	95.00

IV. Conclusion

This study demonstrates the potential of Prototypical Networks for Few-Shot Learning in neuromorphic human activity recognition. The framework achieved high accuracy in scenarios with sufficient support data while addressing catastrophic forgetting. Key contributions include:

- A robust pipeline combining DVS-based sensing and Few-Shot Learning.

- Strategies for mitigating catastrophic forgetting to enhance scalability.
- Insights into the limitations of low-shot scenarios and directions for future work.

Future improvements could focus on augmenting the framework with advanced architectures like transformers and adaptive prototype mechanisms to further enhance performance and generalization.

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