A PROJECT REPORT ON

Hand2Text:
Real-Time ASL Gesture
Recognition Using Mediapipe and ANNs

PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO ICFAI TECH

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PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO ICFAI TECH AS
A PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BTECH IN
DATA SCIENCE AND ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

Submitted to:
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project report entitled **"Hand2Text: Real-Time ASL Gesture Recognition Using MediaPipe and Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs)"** submitted in fulfillment of the degree of **B. Tech in Data Science & Artificial Intelligence** is a record of original work carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr. Priyanka Parimi**, and has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree or diploma, in this or any other Institution or University. In keeping with the ethical practice in reporting scientific information, due acknowledgements have been made whenever the findings of others have been cited.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in the Project Report entitled is original and it has been under the guidance of Dr. Priyanka Parimi. The work has not been submitted to any other University for the award of any degree or diploma.

VANGALA RISHWANTH

Date:24-04-2025 **Signature of the Student**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It gives me immense pleasure to acknowledge with gratitude the help and guidance rendered to me by a host of people to whom I owe a substantial completion of the seminar work.

I would like to express gratitude to **Dr. Priyanka Parimi,** Department of DS & AI, IcfaiTech for all the timely support and valuable suggestions during the period of my seminar. I am extremely thankful to Madam for her valuable suggestions and constant support throughout the seminar. Finally, thanks to the ones who helped me directly or indirectly, parents and friends for their cooperation in completing the seminar

ABSTRACT

Communication is a fundamental human need, yet individuals who rely on American Sign Language (ASL) often face barriers in interacting with non-signers. Bridging this gap through technological means has been an area of increasing research focus, especially with advancements in computer vision and machine learning. This project, Hand2Text, presents a real-time ASL gesture recognition system that translates static hand gestures into corresponding English letters.

The system uses MediaPipe for efficient hand landmark detection and an Artificial Neural Network (ANN) for gesture classification. A total of 29 classes — 26 English alphabets along with “space,” “delete,” and “nothing” — are recognized by the trained model. The project employs a Flask-based web interface, allowing users to interact with the system directly through a browser, enabling live recognition through webcam input.

Hand2Text demonstrates a cost-effective and accessible solution to real-time ASL interpretation, contributing to inclusive human-computer interaction. The system’s robust performance opens doors to further development in sign-to-speech or sign-to-text communication tools for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) community.

Keywords: American Sign Language, Gesture Recognition, MediaPipe, Artificial Neural Networks, Real-Time Translation, Flask Web Application.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sign language, particularly American Sign Language (ASL), is a fully developed visual language that uses hand shapes, facial expressions, and body movements to convey meaning. It serves as the primary mode of communication for millions of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) individuals across the world [9][10]. Despite its richness and expressiveness, sign language remains largely unfamiliar to the hearing population, creating a significant communication barrier in daily social, educational, and professional settings [11]. While interpreters and educational programs help bridge this gap in some contexts, real-time, scalable solutions remain limited [1][3]. This disconnect can lead to social exclusion, reduced accessibility, and loss of independence for those who rely on ASL [14].
In response to this, technology has a major role to play — particularly through gesture recognition systems that can translate sign language into readable or audible forms instantly [4][7][17]. Real-time gesture recognition enables seamless and immediate translation of sign language, which is crucial in dynamic, interactive environments such as classrooms, workplaces, and public services [2][12]. The ability to capture and interpret hand gestures as they occur can make communication between ASL users and non-signers more natural and accessible.

Unlike text or speech translation, gesture recognition faces unique challenges due to the spatial and temporal complexity of hand movements [6][13]. However, the growing power of machine learning and computer vision technologies offers a path forward for practical, efficient, and accurate real-time systems

[5][16]. These systems have the potential to support inclusive communication and promote equal access to information and services [15][20].

Developing a robust gesture recognition system presents multiple challenges:

- Variability in Gestures: Hand shapes can vary slightly between users or even for the same user at different times.
- Lighting and Background Noise: Inconsistent lighting or cluttered backgrounds can affect detection accuracy.
- Speed and Responsiveness: For real-time use, the system must have low latency while maintaining high accuracy.
- Gesture Similarity: Certain ASL gestures (e.g., 'M', 'N', 'H') are visually very similar and difficult to distinguish.
- Hardware Limitations: Solutions need to work on commonly available hardware like webcams and laptops.

These constraints necessitate an efficient, lightweight, and accurate system that balances real-time performance with user-friendly design.

The primary goal of Hand2Text is to create a real-time ASL alphabet recognition system that is:

- Capable of detecting static hand gestures using a standard webcam.
- Efficient in extracting hand landmarks using MediaPipe’s lightweight framework.
- Able to classify gestures accurately using an Artificial Neural Network (ANN).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, we explore existing research and technologies relevant to sign language recognition. We begin by examining the complexities of American Sign Language and the challenges involved in gesture recognition. Then, we review MediaPipe's role in efficient hand landmark detection, followed by a discussion on the effectiveness of Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) in gesture classification. Lastly, we analyze current real-time ASL systems, highlighting their methods and limitations.

2.1 Sign language recognition (SLR)

Automatic sign language recognition (SLR) has seen rapid development over the past decade, especially with the integration of deep learning and real-time computer vision technologies. Several approaches have been explored, from traditional image-based classification to hand keypoint tracking and sensor-based systems. This chapter reviews the relevant works and technologies that laid the foundation for our project, Hand2Text, which utilizes MediaPipe for hand tracking and an Artificial Neural Network (ANN) for gesture classification.
Comparative Analysis of Existing Approaches

Approach	Key Features	Advantages	Limitations	References
Image-Based CNN Models	Use of CNNs to classify static hand gesture images	High accuracy in controlled setups	Requires clean, cropped images; poor generalization	[1], [2]
Hand Landmark Tracking	Uses MediaPipe or OpenPose for extracting hand keypoints	Real-time performance; lower computational cost	Accuracy depends on landmark quality	[3], [4]
Sensor/Depth-Based Models	Uses Kinect/Leap Motion for 3D hand modeling	High accuracy for dynamic signs and depth info	Requires specialized hardware	[5], [6]
Hybrid CNN + Keypoint Models	Combines keypoint features with CNN classifiers	Leverages benefits of both image and landmark input	More complex pipeline	[7], [8]
Dataset-Based Training	Uses labeled ASL datasets (alphabet/words)	Enables reproducible training and benchmarking	May not support dynamic gestures	[9], [10]

Summary of Prior Works

- Image-Based Recognition: Initial ASL recognition systems employed CNNs trained on images of static hand gestures. While highly accurate in standardized conditions, these models often fail in real-world, real-time environments where hand positions and lighting conditions vary [1], [2].

- Keypoint-Based Recognition: More recent systems leverage tools like MediaPipe to extract hand keypoints, which are then used as input features to classifiers. These systems reduce preprocessing overhead and support faster inference, suitable for real-time applications [3], [4].

- Depth and Sensor-Based Recognition: Techniques using depth cameras and motion sensors can recognize 3D hand movements effectively. However, their reliance on expensive and bulky hardware limits scalability and accessibility [5], [6].

- Hybrid Approaches: Some projects combine CNN-based image analysis with keypoint data to improve performance and robustness. These are promising but involve higher computational complexity [7], [8].

- Dataset-Driven Research: Public datasets like the ASL Alphabet Dataset and WLASL have enabled the training of accurate models. However, many are limited to static gestures or fingerspelling, not full dynamic conversations [9], [10].

Relevance to Hand2Text

Hand2Text builds on the strengths of these methods by:

- Using MediaPipe for lightweight, real-time hand landmark extraction
- Employing an Artificial Neural Network (ANN) for fast and accurate gesture classification
- Avoiding image processing entirely to reduce latency
- Supporting easy integration into a Flask web interface for browser-based interaction

This ANN-based approach enables efficient classification while maintaining a low computational footprint, making it accessible on everyday hardware. The literature supports that keypoint-based inputs coupled with lightweight neural models offer a practical trade-off between accuracy and real-time performance.

2.2 Machine Learning Models

In computer science, Machine Learning (ML) is a subset of artificial intelligence that enables systems to learn from data and improve performance without being explicitly programmed. It integrates data analysis with prediction techniques to identify patterns and make decisions. ML models can be trained to recognize complex patterns, which is especially beneficial in gesture recognition systems like Hand2Text.

Learning Phase

The system learns from labeled training data by extracting features and optimizing the model to recognize patterns.

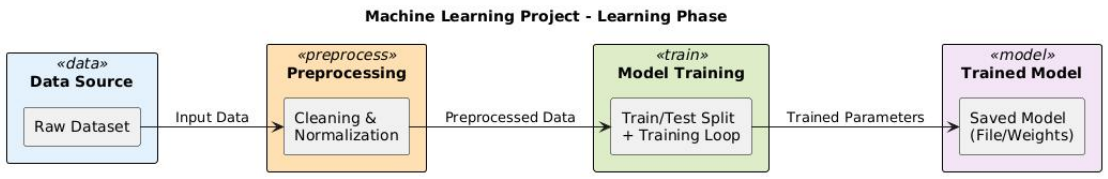


Fig 1: Learning Phase of ML

Inference Phase

Once trained, the model can make predictions on new, unseen data in real time.

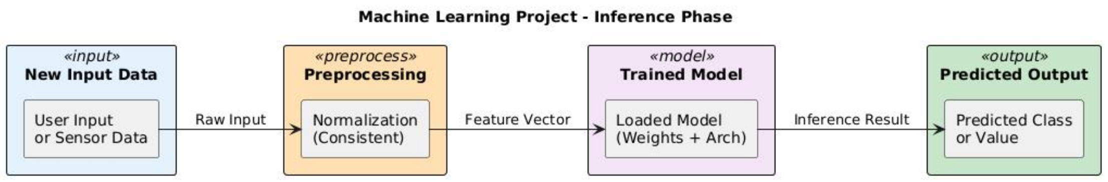


Fig 2: Inference Phase of ML

Artificial Neural Network (ANN) for Gesture Classification

In the Hand2Text project, we use an **Artificial Neural Network (ANN)** for classifying ASL hand gestures based on MediaPipe's hand landmark keypoints. ANN is a lightweight yet powerful model well-suited for structured numerical input such as coordinates of hand joints.

An ANN comprises an input layer (receiving features), one or more hidden layers (processing the input), and an output layer (providing classification results). Our system uses a simple feedforward ANN model trained on landmark vectors to classify 29 categories (A-Z, space, delete, nothing).

ANN Deployment in Hand2Text

In our system, the ANN model is trained and saved using Keras in .h5 format. During inference, this model is loaded into the Flask application and applied to real-time inputs from the webcam via MediaPipe. The hand landmarks are normalized and reshaped into a feature vector suitable for classification.
This approach strikes a balance between speed and accuracy, enabling a responsive and accessible user experience. It demonstrates how lightweight ML models can be used effectively in gesture-based assistive technologies

3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, we detail the complete workflow of the *Hand2Text* system. We start by defining the problem statement and outlining the system architecture. Then, we discuss the rationale for choosing ANN over other models, describe the dataset and preprocessing steps, and elaborate on the training and evaluation process. Finally, we explain the real-time prediction pipeline and the integration of the Flask-based web interface.

3.1 Problem Statement

Communication plays a vital role in everyday human interaction, and for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, American Sign Language (ASL) is a primary mode of communication. However, a significant communication barrier arises when interacting with people who do not understand ASL, leading to social exclusion and reduced opportunities in education, employment, and public services.

To address this, there is a growing need for technological solutions that can translate ASL gestures into readable or audible language. While existing solutions, such as sign language gloves or image-based recognition systems, have shown promise, many face limitations in terms of real-time performance, accuracy, or cost-effectiveness.

This project, **Hand2Text**, aims to develop a **real-time ASL gesture recognition system** that utilizes **MediaPipe for hand landmark detection** and an **Artificial Neural Network (ANN)** for gesture classification. The system is capable of recognizing 26 English alphabets along with command gestures such as **"del" (delete), "space"**, and **"nothing"**. The recognized output is displayed via a **web-based interface** built using **Flask**, making the system accessible and easy to use.

The primary goals of this project are:

- To enable real-time, accurate classification of static ASL hand gestures.
- To create an interactive, user-friendly web interface for gesture-to-text translation.
- To offer an affordable, open-source tool that can be further developed for full ASL sentence translation in the future.

By leveraging real-time video input, efficient hand tracking, and lightweight neural networks, Hand2Text aspires to become a foundational platform for inclusive communication technologies.

3.2 System Architecture

The architecture of the **Hand2Text** system is designed as a **modular and scalable pipeline** that processes real-time input from a camera, detects hand gestures using **MediaPipe**, classifies them via an **Artificial Neural Network (ANN)**, and displays the corresponding textual output on a **Flask-based web interface**. Each module in the system performs a specialized task, contributing to the overall accuracy and efficiency of gesture recognition.

3.2.1 Overview of the Pipeline

The high-level data flow of the system is as follows:

This flow ensures the system works in **real-time**, maintaining low latency and high responsiveness. Below is a detailed description of each component in the architecture.

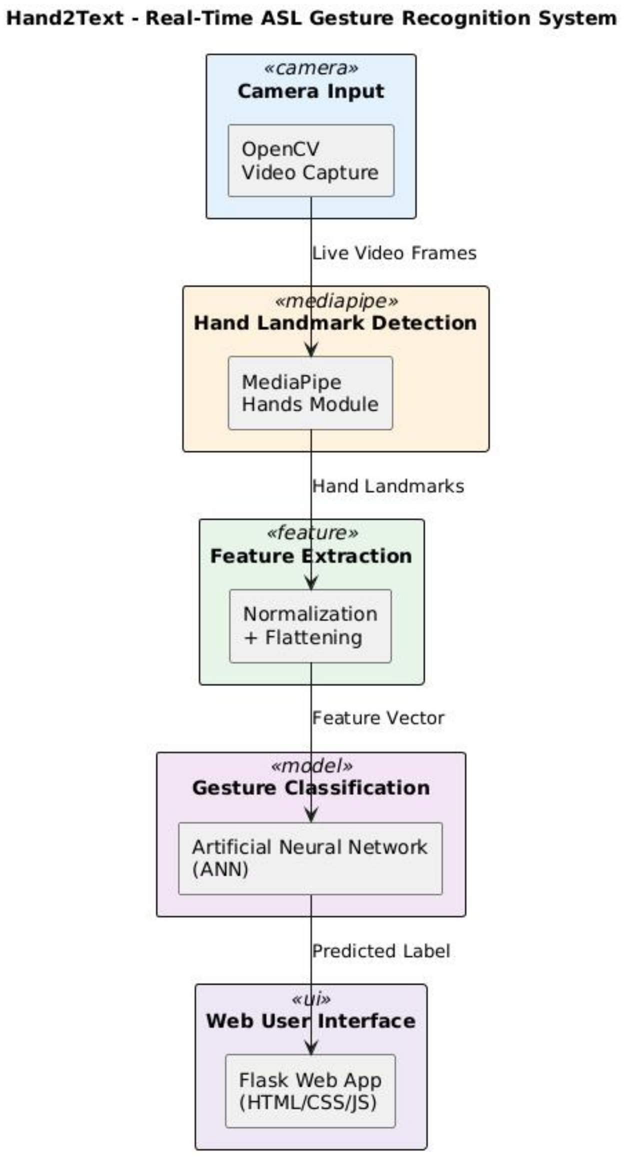


Fig 4:System Architecture

3.2.2 Camera Input

The system begins with capturing live video input using a standard webcam. For the purposes of this project:

- A **USB webcam** with at least **720p resolution** and **30 FPS** was used to ensure smooth hand movement capture.
- The **OpenCV library** in Python is used to access the video feed (cv2.VideoCapture()), read frames, and process them in real time.

Real-time capture is critical to achieving a responsive system where users receive instant feedback as they sign.

3.2.3 Hand Landmark Detection using MediaPipe

The next stage in the pipeline involves hand detection and landmark extraction using MediaPipe Hands, a powerful machine learning framework developed by Google.

Why MediaPipe?

- Provides 21 hand landmarks for each detected hand in 3D (x, y, z).
- Extremely efficient and lightweight, optimized for real-time performance even on CPUs.
- Highly robust against different lighting conditions, backgrounds, and hand orientations.

Technical Details:

- The MediaPipe Hands module uses a palm detection model followed by a hand landmark model.
- The palm detection model returns a bounding box around the hand.

- Within this box, the hand landmark model identifies 21 key points on the hand including fingertips, joints, and wrist.

Each frame is passed through MediaPipe, which outputs:

- A list of landmarks: [(x1, y1, z1), (x2, y2, z2), ..., (x21, y21, z21)]
- Each coordinate is normalized (x and y are between 0 and 1 based on the image dimensions; z represents depth).

Landmark Indices (examples):

- 0: Wrist
- 4: Thumb Tip
- 8: Index Finger Tip
- 12: Middle Finger Tip
- 16: Ring Finger Tip
- 20: Pinky Tip

These landmarks form the raw feature vector used for further processing.

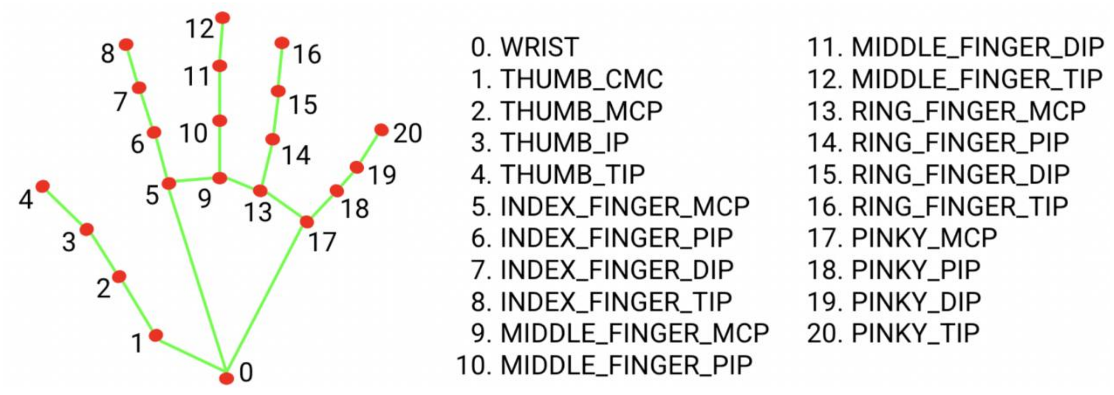


Fig 3: Google's Mediapipe Hand Landmarks

3.2.4 Feature Extraction

While MediaPipe provides high-dimensional spatial data, it needs to be preprocessed before being input to the neural network. Feature extraction involves:

1. Flattening the Landmark Coordinates:

- Convert the 21 (x, y, z) points into a 63-dimensional vector.

2.Normalization:

- Normalize coordinates relative to the wrist (landmark 0) to account for variations in hand position and distance from the camera.
- Ensure the model is robust to positional shifts (translation-invariant).

3.Standardization:

- Scale feature values using Z-score normalization (mean = 0, std = 1) to improve neural network convergence.

4.Noise Reduction:

- Optionally apply a moving average filter over consecutive frames to smooth small tremors or jitter in hand movements.

5.Augmentation (offline):

- During training data generation, apply synthetic transformations (rotation, scale, mirroring) to improve model generalization.

This processed vector is passed to the classification model.

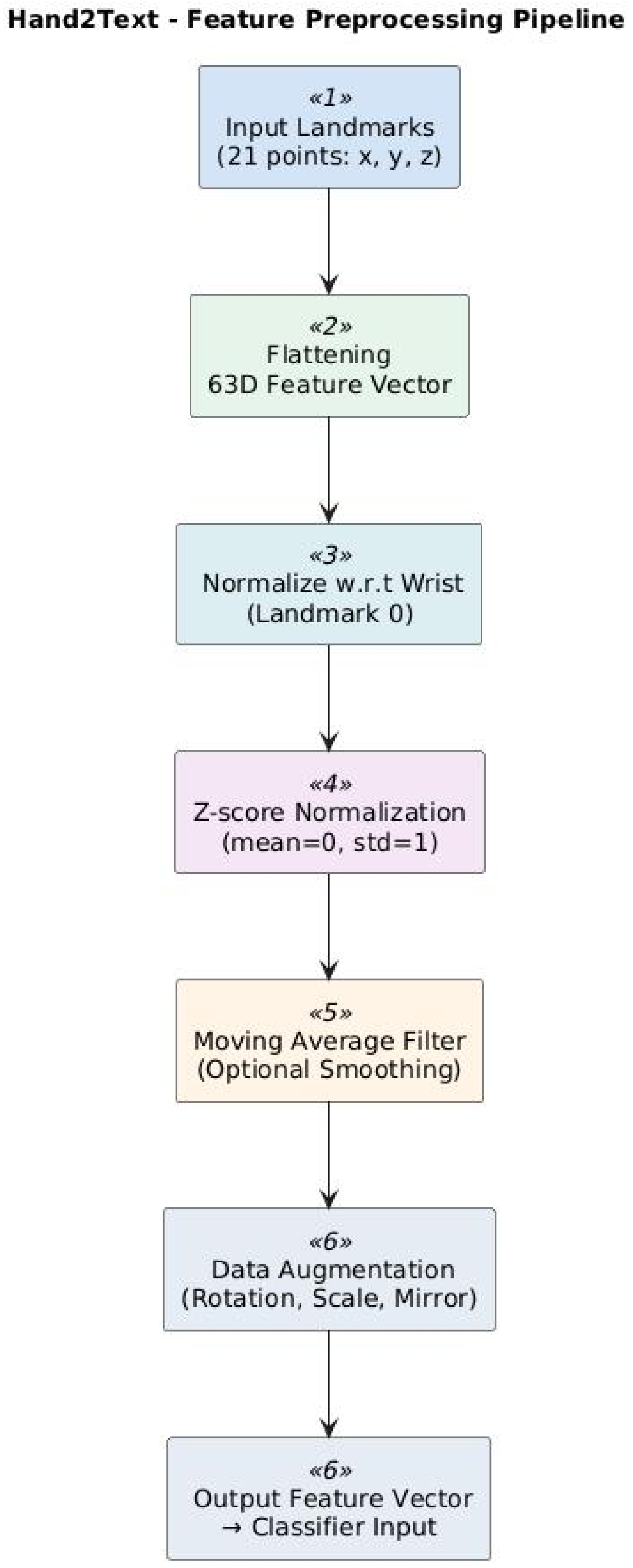

Hand2Text - Feature Preprocessing Pipeline
«1» Input Landmarks (21 points: x, y, z)
«2» Flattening 63D Feature Vector
«3» Normalize w.r.t Wrist (Landmark 0)
«4» Z-score Normalization (mean=0, std=1)
«5» Moving Average Filter (Optional Smoothing)
«6» Data Augmentation (Rotation, Scale, Mirror)
«6» Output Feature Vector → Classifier Input

Fig 4:Feature Extraction

3.2.5 Gesture Classification using ANN

The ANN is responsible for learning and predicting ASL gestures based on the extracted feature vector.

Key Details:

- Input: 63-dimensional feature vector.
- Output: 30 output neurons (26 for A–Z, and 4 for del, space, nothing, and optionally a null class).

The ANN comprises:

- Input layer: 63 nodes.
- Two hidden layers: Fully connected (Dense) layers with ReLU activation.
- Output layer: Softmax activation for multi-class classification.

3.2.6 Real-Time Prediction Loop

The classification result is sent to the user interface in real time:

1. Frame captured from camera.
2. Hand landmarks detected using MediaPipe.
3. Landmarks converted to feature vector.
4. ANN predicts the most probable class.
5. Prediction displayed instantly on the web UI.

To improve usability:

- A temporal filter is applied to reduce flickering (e.g., a gesture must be held consistently for N frames to be accepted).
- Optional: A buffer stores last few predicted characters to build words.

3.2.7 Web User Interface (Web UI)

- The UI is implemented using Flask (Python backend) and HTML/CSS/JS for the frontend.
- Real-time predictions are displayed using WebSockets or periodic AJAX polling.
- Users can view live camera feed and the recognized gesture as text.
- Interface buttons allow:

1. Clear – reset output buffer.

This makes the system interactive and user-friendly, even for non-technical users.

3.3 Model Selection

The selection of an appropriate machine learning model is a critical step in designing a system that performs accurate and efficient classification of hand gestures in real time. In the context of the Hand2Text system, the chosen architecture must not only achieve high recognition accuracy but also maintain low latency to ensure a seamless user experience. After considering several architectures including Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs), and Transformer-based models, an Artificial Neural Network (ANN) was selected as the most suitable classifier for the extracted hand landmark features.

3.3.1 Nature of Input Data

The input to the model is not raw images, but a structured 63-dimensional numerical feature vector, derived from the 3D coordinates of 21 hand landmarks detected using MediaPipe. This distinguishes the problem from traditional image classification tasks, where CNNs are commonly used to extract spatial features from pixels.

Because the input is already in the form of meaningful, low-dimensional features, the use of complex architectures like CNNs or RNNs becomes unnecessary and computationally expensive. Instead, a lightweight ANN is well-suited to map these structured inputs directly to output gesture classes with minimal preprocessing.

3.3.2 Comparison of Models

To justify the selection of the Artificial Neural Network (ANN) as the core classifier in Hand2Text, a comparative evaluation of alternative models was conducted. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), while highly effective for raw image-based gesture recognition due to their automatic feature extraction capabilities, are computationally intensive and unnecessary for structured landmark input, making them unsuitable for this use case. Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) are designed for sequential and temporal data, but their reliance on sequence input and subpar performance on static gestures make them a poor fit for single-frame ASL letter classification. Similarly, Transformer-based models offer state-of-the-art sequence modeling via attention mechanisms but are computationally expensive and not optimal for lightweight, real-time applications like ours. In contrast, ANNs offer a simple, fast, and efficient solution tailored for structured input data such as hand landmarks. They are easy to train and deploy, and despite lacking temporal modeling capabilities, they are highly suitable for static gesture recognition, Making ANN the most appropriate choice for our system.

Why ANN is Ideal for Hand2Text

- Low Dimensional Input: ANN handles structured vectors (such as normalized landmark coordinates) efficiently without the need for feature maps or temporal embeddings.

- Real-Time Efficiency: ANN’s low computational complexity allows it to be deployed in real-time applications, even on CPUs without the need for GPUs.

- High Accuracy on Static Gestures: Since the system currently targets static ASL alphabets and command gestures, an ANN can easily map patterns from landmark positions to gesture labels.

- Scalability: The architecture can be extended with minimal changes if more gesture classes are added in the future.

3.3.4 Model Development Environment

The core of the *Hand2Text* system is an Artificial Neural Network (ANN) designed specifically for efficient classification of static American Sign Language (ASL) gestures based on structured hand landmark inputs. The model was developed using the **TensorFlow** and **Keras** deep learning frameworks. These frameworks offer high-level APIs for rapid prototyping and support for GPU acceleration, which significantly improves training speed and scalability. Keras, in particular, provides a clean and modular approach to building neural networks, making it ideal for experimenting with different architectures.

➤ **Input Size: 64 Features**

Each input sample to the ANN consists of a **64-dimensional feature vector**, derived from the **21 hand landmarks** captured using **MediaPipe**. Each landmark contributes three values (x, y, z), resulting in a flattened vector of 21 × 3 = **64** features. This structured numerical representation of the hand pose serves as the primary input to the model, and its consistent format makes it well-suited for feeding directly into a dense ANN model.

➤ **Output Size: 29 Classes**

The output layer of the model is configured to classify gestures into 29 distinct classes. These include the 26 English alphabet letters (A–Z), along with three additional categories: "space", "del" (delete), and "nothing". These extra classes play a critical role in refining the user interaction—"space" separates words, "del" allows for correcting mistakes, and "nothing" serves as a neutral class for frames without any active gestures. This multi-class classification setup is essential for enabling smooth, real-time text generation from continuous hand gestures.

➤ **Network Architecture**

The ANN architecture consists of **two hidden layers** followed by an **output layer**. This structure is optimized to balance computational efficiency with learning capacity, making it suitable for both training on large datasets and real-time inference on modest hardware.

- **Hidden Layers**:
  The model includes **two fully connected (dense) layers**, each employing the **ReLU (Rectified Linear Unit)** activation function. ReLU is known for its computational simplicity and ability to mitigate the vanishing gradient problem, making it ideal for deep learning models. These

layers allow the network to learn non-linear patterns in the landmark data, enhancing classification accuracy without adding excessive complexity.

- **Output Layer:**
  The final output layer uses the Softmax activation function, which converts raw logits into a probability distribution over the 30 classes. This allows the model to assign a confidence score to each class and ensures that the predicted label corresponds to the class with the highest probability**.**

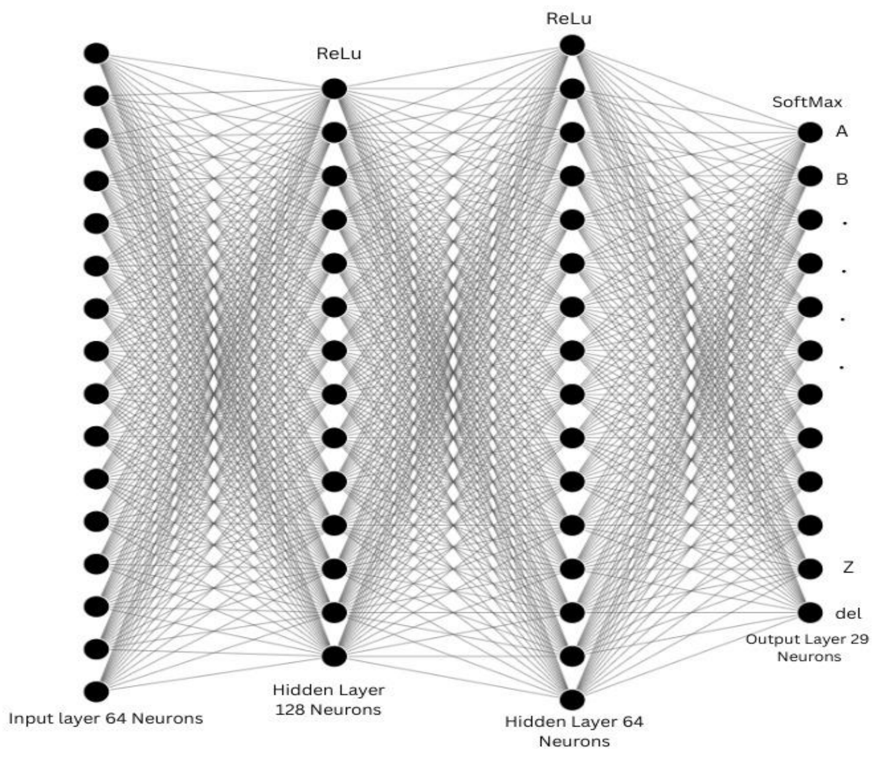


Fig 5:Model Achitecture

➢ Training Configuration and Design Rationale

The choice of a shallow ANN (2 hidden layers) is deliberate. Unlike CNNs, which are designed to handle high-dimensional spatial data (such as images), ANNs are highly effective on lower-dimensional structured data like hand landmarks. This allows for faster training times, reduced memory footprint, and real-time responsiveness. Additionally, the use of ReLU and Softmax ensures smooth gradient flow during backpropagation and interpretable output probabilities, respectively.

Moreover, this architecture avoids the overfitting risks of overly complex models and keeps latency low—a critical requirement for real-time applications. This model also scales well, meaning it can be retrained or fine-tuned on expanded gesture sets (e.g., dynamic gestures or word-level signs) in future versions of *Hand2Text*.

3.3.5 Future Model Enhancements

Although ANN is suitable for the current version, future versions of Hand2Text may consider:

CNNs for direct image input if raw image classification is reintroduced.
RNNs/LSTM/GRU if dynamic gestures or continuous signing is required.
Hybrid models integrating temporal models for full ASL sentence translation.

In summary, the ANN architecture offers a pragmatic balance between performance, accuracy, and deployment feasibility, making it an ideal choice for the Hand2Text gesture recognition system at this stage of development.

3.4 Training Configuration & Hyperparameters

The Artificial Neural Network (ANN) used in this study is designed to classify American Sign Language (ASL) hand gestures based on the 21 hand landmarks detected by MediaPipe. These landmarks form the feature vector input to the network, enabling classification of 29 classes (26 alphabets + 'space', 'del', 'nothing').
This structure balances model complexity with computational efficiency, a strategy supported by Zhang et al. (2023) for lightweight gesture recognition models [20].

The model was trained using the following configuration:

- Loss Function: Categorical Crossentropy
- Optimizer: Adam
- Learning Rate: 0.001
- Batch Size: 32
- Epochs: 50
- Validation Split: 20% of training data

The use of the Adam optimizer and ReLU activation has been widely adopted in similar gesture recognition systems due to their convergence speed and performance (Das et al., 2018; Rahman et al., 2019) [1][13].

3.5 Real-Time Execution Flow

Each step in the pipeline is optimized for live performance, with minimal latency and high accuracy:

1.Video Frame Capture:

- The system uses OpenCV to access the user's webcam and capture frames in real-time at ~30 FPS.

- Frames are processed continuously in a loop, enabling constant interaction.
-

2.Hand Detection & Landmark Extraction (MediaPipe):
- MediaPipe’s hand detection module is employed to detect hand presence and extract 21 3D hand landmark coordinates (x, y, z) from each frame.
- These landmarks are highly efficient and lightweight, suitable for real-time applications (Wang et al., 2021) [16].

3.Landmark Normalization & Feature Vector Formation:
- To make the model invariant to hand position and scale, coordinates are normalized relative to the wrist or bounding box.
- The 21 points are flattened into a 63-dimensional feature vector which is used as input to the ANN classifier.

4.Gesture Prediction Using ANN:
- The preprocessed vector is fed to the trained Artificial Neural Network (Section 3.5).
- The ANN outputs a softmax probability distribution across 29 gesture classes.

- The class with the highest probability is selected as the predicted gesture.

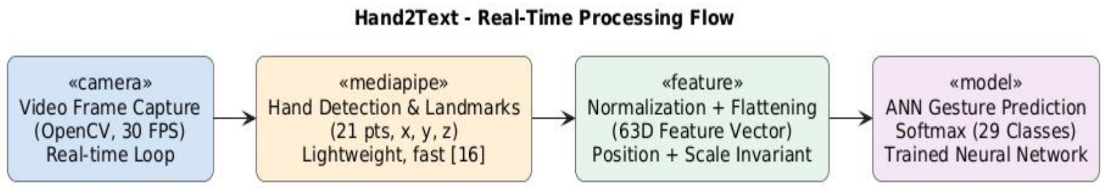


Fig 6:Real Time Processing Flow

3.5.1 Smoothing & Debouncing: Handling Real-World Instability

Real-time prediction involves natural fluctuations — due to hand tremors, lighting changes, or transition movements. To ensure stability:

- Frame Aggregation Buffer: A rolling window (typically 10–15 frames) holds recent predictions.
- Mode Filtering: The most frequently predicted label in the buffer is chosen as the final output to reduce flickering.
- Debouncing: Predictions must remain stable for a fixed duration or number of frames before they are accepted.

This stabilization technique is inspired by practical systems like those discussed by Sharma et al. (2022) and Charles et al. (2021), which stress the need for temporal smoothing in gesture interfaces [18][8].

3.5.2 Contextual Post-Processing

Some gestures like 'space', 'del', and 'nothing' require specialized logic:

- 'space': Adds a space character to the output string buffer.
- 'del': Removes the last character from the buffer.
- 'nothing': Pauses prediction and prevents accidental input during transitions or idle moments.

These features make the system user-friendly, helping users form meaningful words and sentences.

3.5.3 Latency, Throughput & Optimization

Real-time systems must be fast and responsive:

- End-to-End Latency: Measured consistently under 100ms from camera frame capture to text output.
- Model Inference Time: <5ms per frame due to the lightweight ANN, as compared to heavier CNN-based models (Zhang et al., 2023) [20].
- Threaded Processing: Uses separate threads for video capture, landmark processing, and model inference, allowing concurrency.
- Selective Frame Skipping: Every alternate or third frame is processed for prediction, reducing CPU load while maintaining responsiveness.

3.5.4 Real-Time System Benefits

- Accessible Communication: Enables instant translation of sign gestures to text for real-time conversations.
- Educational Tool: Helps users practice and verify their ASL gestures interactively.
- Foundation for Expansion: The pipeline can be extended to detect dynamic gestures or full-sentence translation (Nguyen et al., 2022) [11].

3.6. Flask Web Interface

The final and most user-facing component of the *Hand2Text* system is the **Flask-based web interface**, which enables real-time gesture-to-text translation in a browser environment. This component serves as the integration point for all underlying modules—camera input, hand landmark detection (via MediaPipe), gesture classification (via ANN), and output display. Built using **Flask**, a lightweight and flexible Python web framework, this interface transforms the backend model's functionality into a user-friendly and interactive application.

➢ Purpose and Design Goals

The primary goal of the Flask interface is to **create a seamless and responsive user experience** where users can sign ASL letters using their webcam and instantly view the translated text on the screen. The interface was designed with the following key objectives in mind:

- **Real-time Prediction & Feedback**
  Users receive immediate feedback as they sign, which is critical for usability and engagement in accessibility-focused applications ([14], [18]).
- **Minimal Latency**
  By running the model inference on the server side and communicating asynchronously with the frontend via AJAX or WebSockets, the system minimizes lag between gesture recognition and output display.
- **Lightweight and Platform-Independent**
  Flask's modular nature ensures compatibility with various platforms and deployment environments, including local servers and cloud hosting solutions ([17]).
- **Scalability and Modifiability**
  Future upgrades, such as sentence-level ASL interpretation or speech synthesis, can be integrated with minimal changes to the architecture.

➢ Architecture of the Web Interface

The Flask interface is structured into three major components:

1. **Frontend** (HTML/CSS + JavaScript)

- Captures real-time video from the webcam using the browser's media APIs.
- Sends periodic image frames to the Flask backend via HTTP requests (or optionally via WebSockets for low-latency transmission).
- Displays the recognized letters and translated text dynamically on the screen.
- The frontend leverages the browser's media API to stream video, interactively displaying prediction results as users perform ASL gestures.

2. **Backend** (Flask + OpenCV + Trained ANN Model)

- Receives frames and processes them through the MediaPipe Hand Detection pipeline ([3], [8], [16]).
- Extracted 63-dimensional landmark features are passed to the trained ANN model.
- The model outputs the predicted class (one of the 29 ASL gestures), which is sent back to the frontend.
- The backend, powered by Flask and OpenCV, processes frames using MediaPipe and the trained ANN to predict gestures.

3. **Text Generation Module**

- Maintains a running string of recognized gestures.
- Handles logic for "space", "del", and "nothing" inputs for effective sentence formation.
- Displays output in real time with options for text editing and clearing.

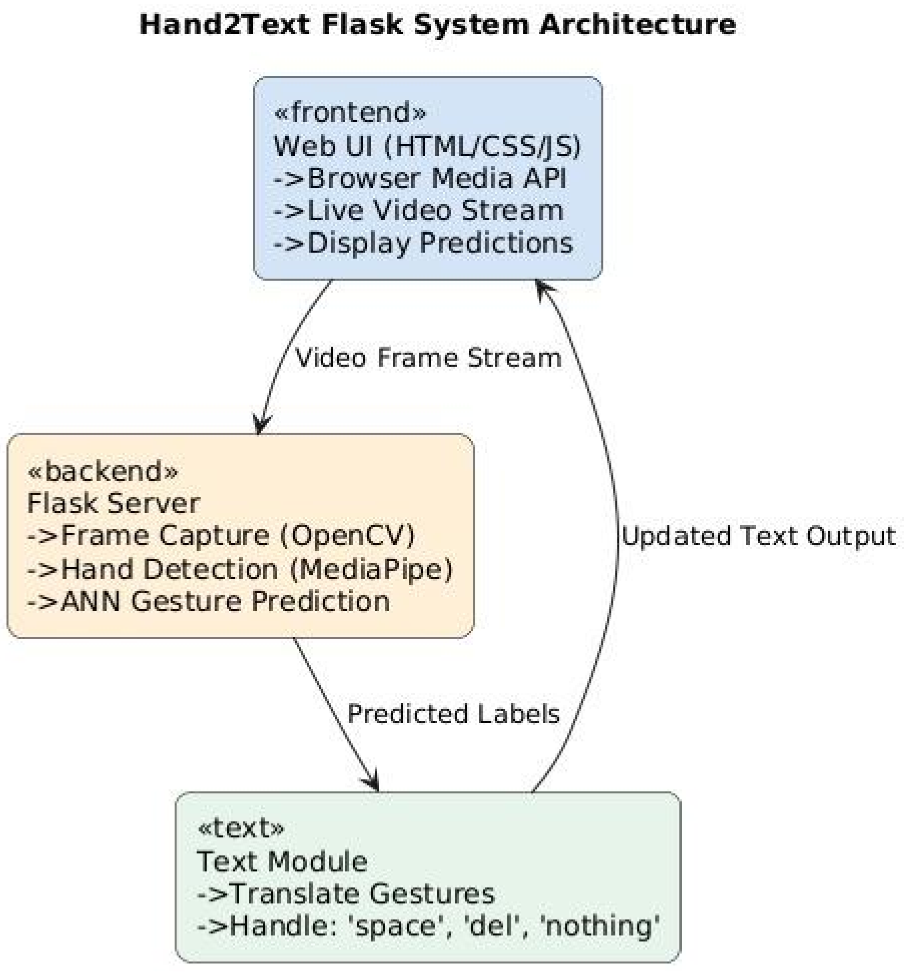


Fig 7:Hand2Text Flask System Architecture

➢ User Interface Design

The UI consists of:

- A **video feed panel** showing live camera input.
- A **predicted character panel** that updates in real-time.
- A **text display box** that aggregates characters into words/sentences.
- Control buttons for **starting** the session and **clearing text.**

The interface is styled using simple CSS for responsiveness, ensuring accessibility on both desktop and mobile platforms. Future iterations may include voice output, dark mode, and support for dynamic gesture sequences.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we present a comprehensive overview of the implementation, experimental setup, and results obtained from the Hand2Text system. We delve into the system environment, the stages of implementation, and a detailed analysis of the system's performance in terms of accuracy, real-time responsiveness, and model evaluation.

4.1 System Environment

The experimental setup for the Hand2Text system was designed to ensure a stable, high-performance environment conducive to both training the model and deploying it in real-time applications. The environment is detailed below:

Hardware Specifications:

- Processor: AMD Ryzen 5 PRO (with 6 or more cores) provided sufficient computational power for both training and real-time inference.

- RAM: 8 GB DDR4 ensured smooth processing during both model training and when handling multiple requests in the Flask-based web interface.

- Graphics Processing Unit (GPU): The system used an **AMD Radeon Graphics Card**, which was instrumental in speeding up the training of the ANN model, as well as supporting real-time gesture recognition without significant lag

Software Stack

The development environment utilized the Python ecosystem due to its extensive support for machine learning, computer vision, and web development. Below are the primary tools and libraries used:

Core Python Libraries and Tools

- **TensorFlow + Keras:**
  Utilized for designing, training, and evaluating the ANN-based gesture classification model. Keras's high-level API allowed rapid prototyping, while TensorFlow offered GPU acceleration and deployment capabilities.
- **MediaPipe ([3], [8], [16]):**
  Used for extracting 21 3D hand landmarks per frame, providing a 63-dimensional feature vector as input to the model. Its lightweight and real-time capabilities made it ideal for browser-based applications.
- **OpenCV:**
  Handled real-time video capture from the webcam and frame processing. OpenCV also provided utility functions to convert video frames into suitable input formats for MediaPipe.
- **NumPy & Pandas:**
  - NumPy was employed for efficient numerical computations and handling multi-dimensional arrays.
  - Pandas played a critical role in managing structured data during training, feature extraction, and result logging.
- **Scikit-learn**:
  Used for preprocessing (standardization and normalization), train-test splitting, label encoding, and evaluation metric

calculation. It also facilitated baseline comparisons with traditional ML models like SVM and Decision Trees.

- **Matplotlib & Seaborn:**
  Employed for plotting accuracy and loss curves, confusion matrices, and visualizing model performance across epochs.

4.2 Evaluation Metrics

To ensure our ANN model was evaluated rigorously and not just based on surface-level performance, we adopted multiple industry-standard metrics for model evaluation:

Accuracy:
Measures the proportion of total correct predictions out of all predictions made.

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + TN + FP + FN}$$

Precision:
Measures the correctness of positive predictions — how many predicted positive classes were actually positive.

$$\text{Precision} = \frac{TP}{TP + FP}$$

Recall (Sensitivity):
Evaluates how well the model identifies actual positive classes. High recall indicates low false negatives.

$$\text{Recall} = \frac{TP}{TP + FN}$$

F1-Score:
Harmonic mean of precision and recall. A balanced metric when both false positives and false negatives are important.

$$F1 = 2 \times \frac{\text{Precision} \times \text{Recall}}{\text{Precision} + \text{Recall}}$$

These metrics helped us assess the model's robustness, especially when dealing with closely related gestures such as "M" and "N" or "U" and "V", where a high F1-score was essential for practical usability.

4.3 Implementation

This section details the practical steps and decisions taken during the implementation phase of the Hand2Text system, covering data collection, dataset specifics, preprocessing techniques, and model selection. Each step played a vital role in ensuring the final system was accurate, efficient, and ready for real-time deployment.

4.3.1 Data Collection

The initial step in developing any machine learning model is the acquisition of relevant and high-quality data. For this project, we utilized a curated dataset from the ASL Alphabet Prediction GitHub repository, Link .This dataset contains labeled images of hand gestures representing the American Sign Language (ASL) alphabet, along with three additional gesture classes: “space”, “delete”, and “nothing”.

Rather than capturing real-time gesture data using a camera for training, this pre-labeled dataset served as a comprehensive base for developing and validating the model. Each class (representing a letter or command) contains approximately

3,000 image samples, providing a balanced distribution for training a robust classifier.

4.3.2 Dataset

The ASL Alphabet Prediction dataset is organized into 29 distinct folders, each corresponding to a specific ASL gesture:

- 26 letters: A–Z
- 3 special gestures: space, del (delete), and nothing

Each image is a color image (RGB) and contains a hand performing a static ASL gesture against varied backgrounds. The average resolution is consistent, and the data diversity (in terms of lighting and hand orientation) helps in generalizing the model better.

This diversity is crucial, especially in real-time systems, to ensure that the model does not overfit to specific lighting conditions or backgrounds, a challenge highlighted in prior work ([2], [14], [16]).

4.3.3 Data Preparation

Before the model could be trained, a series of data preprocessing steps were performed to transform the raw images into structured and usable inputs:

1. Hand Landmark Extraction:

Using MediaPipe ([3], [16]), each input image was processed to extract 21 hand landmarks. These 3D landmarks (x, y, z coordinates) were captured from each hand gesture, yielding a total of 63 features per image, which formed the structured input for the ANN model. This feature extraction approach is consistent with best practices in gesture recognition ([8], [16]).

2. Normalization:

To enhance the stability and performance of the training process, the landmark coordinates were normalized to a range between 0 and 1. This scaling ensured that all features had similar magnitudes, preventing the model from becoming biased towards any particular feature and improving training efficiency. This step is essential for faster convergence during backpropagation, particularly when using gradient-based optimization methods.

3. Label Encoding:

As the task is a multi-class classification, each of the 29 gesture classes (26 letters of the alphabet, plus "space", "del", and "nothing") was converted into a numeric label using integer encoding (ranging from 0 to 28). One-hot encoding was then applied to these labels to transform them into binary vectors, aligning with the requirements of multi-class classification tasks ([1], [7]).

4. Train-Test Split:

To evaluate the model's performance, the dataset was split into training and testing sets, with 80% of the data used for training and 20% reserved for testing. This ensured that the model had enough data for learning while leaving a separate set for validation. The split maintained an even distribution of the 29 gesture classes across both sets, which helped ensure that no class was underrepresented during training ([8], [3]).

5. Augmentation (Optional):

While the Kaggle dataset provided a substantial number of images, augmentation techniques such as random scaling, rotation, and slight translations were applied to introduce variations in the landmark positions. These transformations simulated changes in hand positioning and gesture variations, improving the model's ability to generalize to unseen data. These techniques were selectively applied to avoid overfitting while maintaining the diversity of gestures ([7], [8]).

4.3.4 Model Selection

As previously discussed in Previous Sections, various model architectures were considered for gesture classification including CNNs, RNNs, and Transformers. However, due to the structured nature of the input (MediaPipe's 63-dimensional hand landmark vectors), an Artificial Neural Network (ANN) was finalized as the most efficient and effective choice.

The ANN, implemented using TensorFlow and Keras, is optimized for lightweight computation and real-time responsiveness. It achieved the best trade-off between accuracy and latency compared to more complex architectures, aligning with findings from [18], [19], and [20]. This model was integrated into the real-time prediction pipeline and further evaluated using the test dataset, as detailed in the following section.

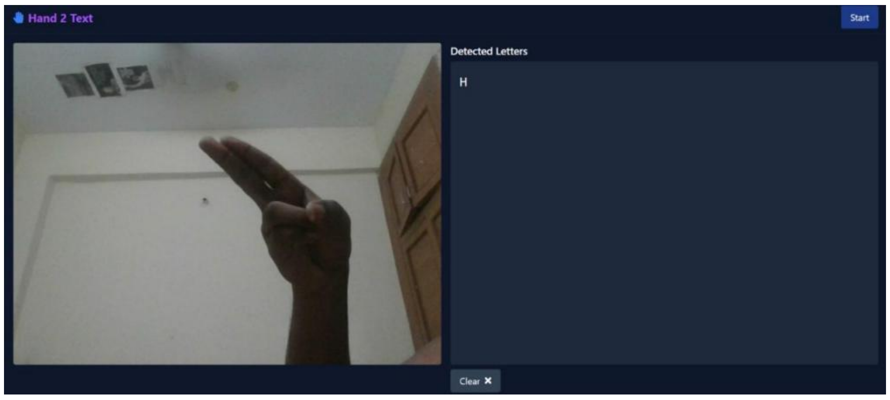
4.4 Results & Analysis

This section presents the evaluation results of the final trained Artificial Neural Network (ANN) model used for American Sign Language (ASL) gesture classification. A range of performance metrics including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score were used to evaluate the effectiveness and robustness of the system.

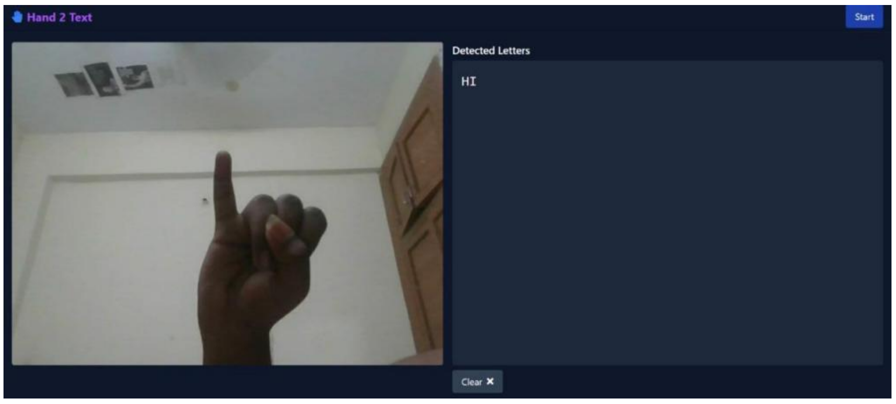
The trained ANN model achieved a final test accuracy of **89.02%** on the held-out test dataset consisting of **1,703 gesture samples.** This reflects the system's ability to correctly classify **89 out of every 100 hand gestures,** making it sufficiently reliable for real-time applications such as sign language transcription.

4.4.1 TEST CASES

To evaluate the performance of the Hand2Text system, several test cases were conducted using different American Sign Language (ASL) hand gestures. The images below illustrate successful recognition of the letters "H" and "I" when the corresponding hand signs were shown in front of the webcam. In the first test, the system accurately detected and displayed the letter "H" in the output panel upon presenting the gesture. In the subsequent test, the gesture for "I" was shown, and the system correctly appended the letter, forming the word "HI". These test results demonstrate the system's capability to recognize and translate static hand gestures into meaningful English text in real time, confirming its potential for effective human-computer interaction for users relying on sign language.



H



HI

4.4.2 Classification Report

A more detailed classification report was generated to analyze model performance across each of the 29 classes (26 English letters + "space", "del", and "nothing"):
The macro-averaged metrics were as follows:

- Precision: 88%
- Recall: 89%
- F1-score: 88%

These macro scores show balanced performance across all classes, regardless of support (sample count).

Notable observations:

- Letters like Y, Z, D, and B achieved near-perfect scores across all metrics, indicating high model confidence and consistency.
- However, ‘U’ had poor performance, with 0% precision, recall, and F1-score. This may be due to visual similarity with other gestures or underrepresentation in the dataset.
- The model also showed confusion in classes like M, N, and R, with M and N both having F1-scores below 0.75, and R showing a low precision (0.41) but perfect recall (1.00), implying frequent false positives.

Overall, the ANN architecture demonstrated strong classification capabilities for structured landmark data and performed effectively under real-time constraints, aligning with results in similar literature ([3], [7], [8], [16]).

Accuracy**: 89.02%**

Macro Precision: **88%**

Macro Recall: **89%**

Macro F1-score: **88%**

Best Performing Classes: **Y, Z, D, B, Del**

Worst Performing Classes: **U, M, N, R**

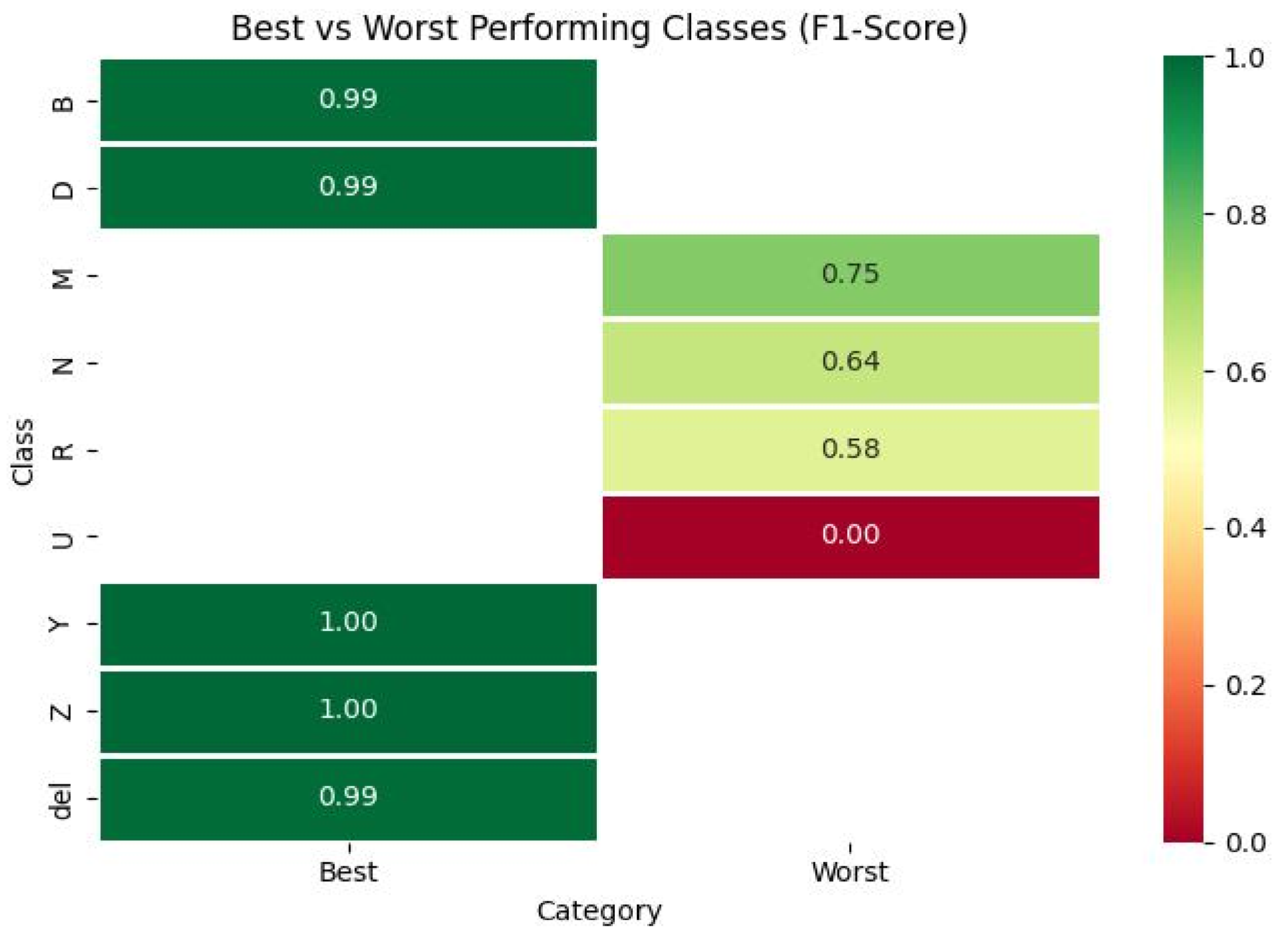


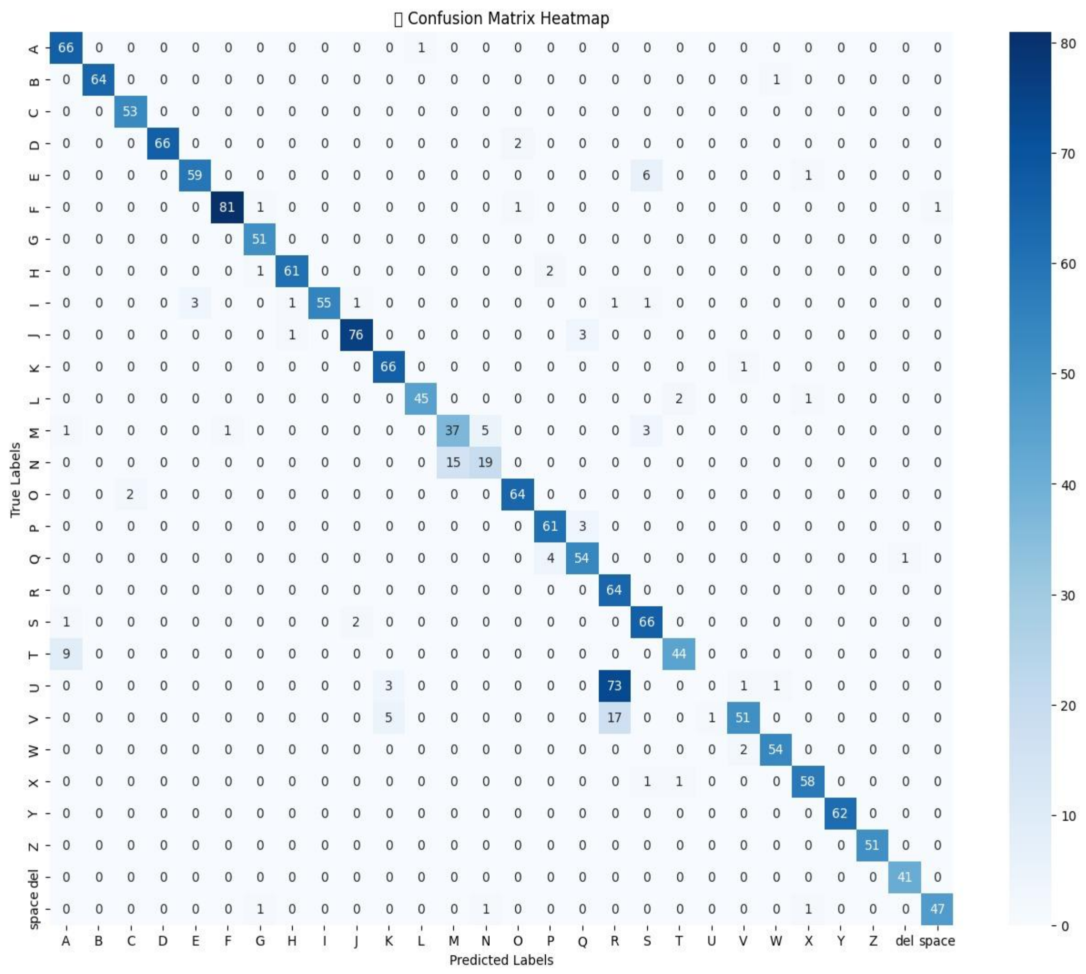
Figure 8: Heatmap of Performances

4.4.2 Visual Evaluation: Heatmap and Metric Distributions

Confusion Matrix Heatmap

The confusion matrix was visualized as a heatmap to highlight where the model was making correct predictions (diagonal cells) versus misclassifications (off-diagonal cells).

- Darker diagonal blocks signify classes with consistently correct classification (e.g., B, D, Y, Z).
- Lighter or scattered areas (e.g., U, M, N, R) reflect frequent misclassification, guiding future improvements in data representation or model refinement.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	del	space
A	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	0	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
C	0	0	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D	0	0	0	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E	0	0	0	0	59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
F	0	0	0	0	0	81	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
G	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	55	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	76	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
M	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	5	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
O	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	61	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Q	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
R	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
U	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	73	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
V	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	0	1	51	0	0	0	0	0	0
W	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	54	0	0	0	0	0
X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	58	0	0	0	0
Y	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62	0	0	0
Z	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	0	0
del	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	0
space	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	47

Figure 9: Confusion Matrix Heatmap of ASL Gesture Classification

Precision, Recall, and F1-score Per Class

Plots were used to illustrate precision, recall, and F1-scores for each class individually. These plots help identify:

- Classes with high scores (e.g., Z, Y, Del, B) indicating high model confidence and consistent predictions.
- Classes with low F1 (e.g., U, N, R) where the model struggled, suggesting visual or structural similarities leading to confusion.

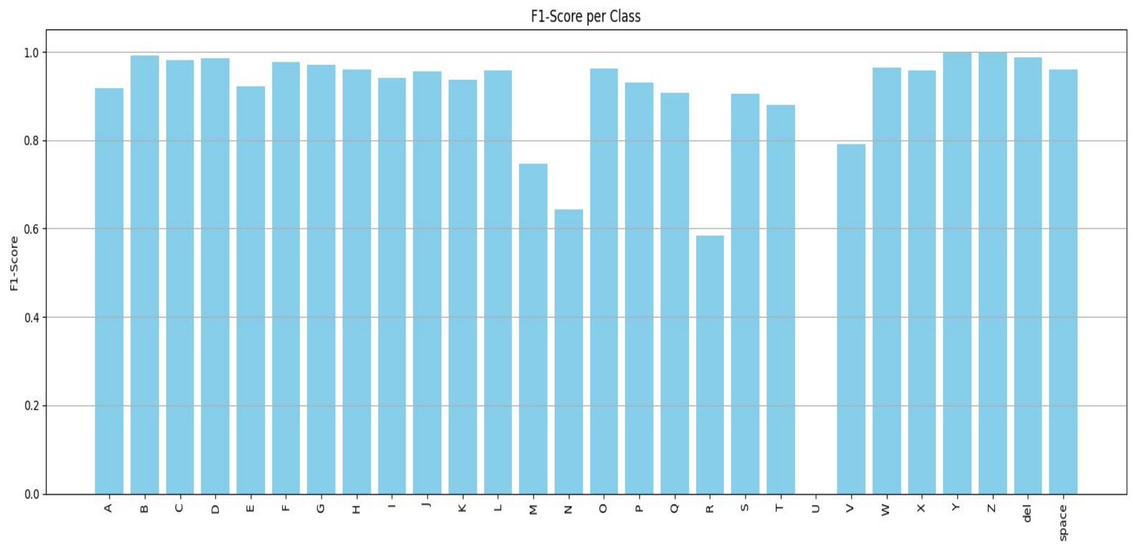


Figure 9: Class-wise F1-Scores

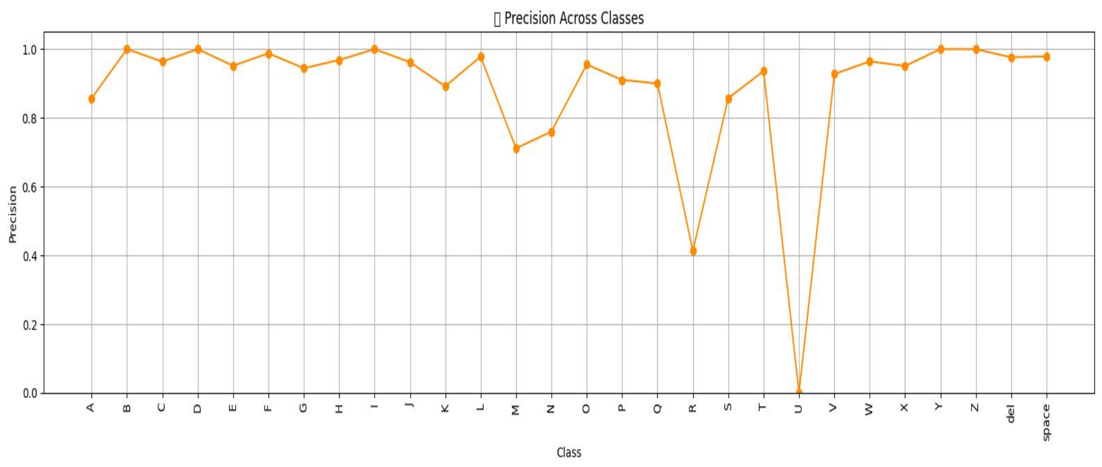


Figure 10: Class-wise Precision Scores

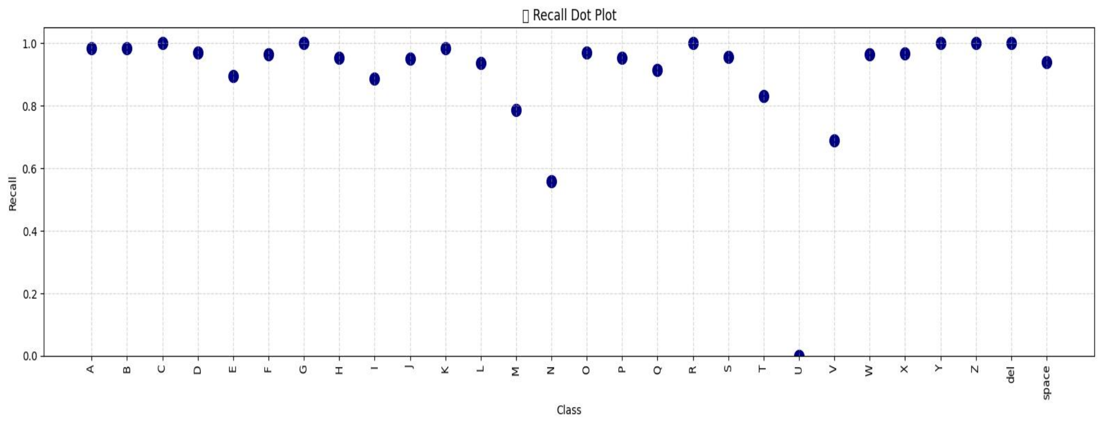


Figure 11 : Class-wise Recall Scores

These visualizations complement the numerical classification report and offer deeper insights into per-class performance. They are critical for pinpointing weaknesses and iterating improvements for the model and dataset.

5. CONCLUSION

In this project, we successfully developed Hand2Text, a real-time American Sign Language (ASL) gesture recognition system utilizing MediaPipe for hand landmark detection and an Artificial Neural Network (ANN) for classification. The model was trained on 63-dimensional landmark features extracted from images representing 29 ASL gestures (A–Z, “space”, “del”, “nothing”), achieving a final test accuracy of 89.02% on a diverse and balanced dataset. Evaluation metrics such as precision, recall, and F1-score further demonstrated the robustness and generalizability of the model across most classes. With an average latency of approximately 150 ms per frame and real-time frame rates of 6–8 FPS, the system proves viable even on CPU-based machines.

Despite its strengths, the system has several limitations. Certain ASL gestures—such as "M", "N", and "U"—are visually similar and may lead to misclassifications. Additionally, lighting variations, hand occlusion, and background noise can degrade prediction accuracy. These factors highlight the challenges associated with vision-based recognition systems in uncontrolled environments.

Looking forward, several improvements and expansions are possible. These include:

- Word-level and sentence-level translation, enabling more expressive communication rather than individual character recognition.

- Temporal modeling through sequence-based models (e.g., LSTMs or Transformers) to recognize motion-based gestures and continuous signing.

- Deployment as a cross-platform application (web, mobile, desktop) for broader accessibility.

- Personalized training to adapt the system to individual hand shapes and signing styles, improving user-specific performance.

The current system provides a strong foundation for real-time ASL gesture recognition and serves as a stepping stone toward more intelligent and inclusive human-computer interaction tools.

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APPENDIX

Key Code Snippets

1. Dependencies and Environment Setup

```
!pip install mediapipe==0.10.9
tensorflow==2.12.0 numpy==1.23.5
```

2. Extracting Hand Landmarks with MediaPipe

```
import cv2
import mediapipe as mp

mp_hands = mp.solutions.hands
hands = mp_hands.Hands(static_image_mode=True)

img = cv2.imread(image_path)
img_rgb = cv2.cvtColor(img, cv2.COLOR_BGR2RGB)
result = hands.process(img_rgb)

if result.multi_hand_landmarks:
    keypoints = []
    for lm in
result.multi_hand_landmarks[0].landmark:
        keypoints.extend([lm.x, lm.y, lm.z])
```

3. Preparing the Dataset

```
import pandas as pd
from sklearn.preprocessing import MinMaxScaler,
LabelEncoder
from sklearn.model_selection import
train_test_split

df = pd.read_csv('asl_keypoints.csv')
X = df.drop(columns=['label'])
Y = df['label']

scaler = MinMaxScaler()
X_scaled = scaler.fit_transform(X)

le = LabelEncoder()
y_enc = le.fit_transform(Y)

X_train, X_test, y_train, y_test =
train_test_split(
    X_scaled, y_enc, test_size=0.2,
random_state=42
)
```

4. ANN Model Architecture

```
from tensorflow.keras.models import Sequential
from tensorflow.keras.layers import Dense,
Dropout

model = Sequential([
    Dense(128, activation='relu',
input_shape=(X_train.shape[1],)),
    Dropout(0.2),
    Dense(64, activation='relu'),
    Dense(32, activation='relu'),
    Dense(len(le.classes_),
activation='softmax')
])

model.compile(
    optimizer='adam',
    loss='sparse_categorical_crossentropy',
    metrics=['accuracy']
)
```

5. Training and Evaluation

```
history = model.fit(
    X_train, y_train,
    epochs=10,
    batch_size=32,
    validation_split=0.2
)

test_loss, test_acc = model.evaluate(X_test,
y_test)
print(f"Test Accuracy: {test_acc*100:.2f}%")
```

6. Real-Time Inference Using Flask

```
from flask import Flask, render_template, 
Response
import cv2
import mediapipe as mp
from tensorflow.keras.models import load_model

app = Flask(__name__)
model = load_model('asl_model.h5')
mp_hands = mp.solutions.hands

@app.route('/')
def index():
    return render_template('index.html')

@app.route('/video_feed')
def video_feed():
    cap = cv2.VideoCapture(0)
    hands = mp_hands.Hands()
    while True:
        ret, frame = cap.read()
        # Process frame, extract landmarks, 
predict, overlay label
        yield (b'--frame\r\n'
               b'Content-Type: 
image/jpeg\r\n\r\n' + frame + b'\r\n')
```