

TS2Vec-Ensemble: A Hybrid Self-Supervised Framework for Univariate Forecasting

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Abstract—Time series forecasting is a fundamental problem in many domains, and recent advances in self-supervised representation learning, such as TS2Vec [1], have shown promise. However, purely contrastive learning approaches may overlook fine-grained temporal dependencies crucial for accurate prediction. We propose a comprehensive framework that enhances TS2Vec through hybrid objectives and ensemble modeling. Our contributions include: (i) TS2Vec+MSM, integrating Masked Signal Modeling (MSM) with contrastive learning; (ii) a Boosted Hybrid model combining sinusoidal regression and XGBoost for residual forecasting; (iii) an Enhanced TS2Vec Ensemble that incorporates explicit time features and adaptive weighting. We empirically demonstrate that each component significantly improves forecasting performance over the TS2Vec baseline [1].

Index Terms—time series forecasting, self-supervised learning, contrastive learning, masked autoencoding, XGBoost, ensemble methods, TS2Vec

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Motivation

Time series forecasting is vital across domains such as finance, energy, and climate modeling. Traditional statistical models like ARIMA and Exponential Smoothing (ETS) rely on linear and stationary assumptions, limiting their ability to capture nonlinear temporal dependencies in real-world data [6]. The rise of Long-Term Time Series Forecasting (LTSF) has therefore encouraged the adoption of deep learning architectures—such as Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs), Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCNs), and Transformers—that can automatically learn complex, long-range dependencies [2], [6].

Recently, self-supervised learning (SSL) has emerged as a powerful approach for representation learning in time series tasks, addressing data scarcity through pretext tasks that exploit intrinsic temporal structure [11]. Among SSL frameworks, TS2Vec [1], [12] has achieved state-of-the-art performance through hierarchical contrastive learning that preserves both local and global temporal consistency. Its success on benchmark datasets demonstrates strong generalization ability and robustness to noise.

However, while TS2Vec excels in producing discriminative representations for classification and anomaly detection, it struggles with precise point forecasting due to its lack of explicit mechanisms for modeling seasonality and trend

components [1], [7]. Accurate forecasting requires models that can not only encode dependencies but also reconstruct fine-grained temporal patterns, which contrastive SSL models often overlook.

B. Research Contributions

To overcome these limitations, this study proposes three enhanced forecasting strategies built upon the TS2Vec framework:

- 1) **TS2Vec+MSM**: Integrates a masked signal modeling objective to enforce local temporal reconstruction and improve fine-grained forecasting accuracy.
- 2) **Hybrid Sinusoidal-XGBoost Model**: Combines sinusoidal regression for explicit seasonality modeling with XGBoost for residual correction, improving interpretability and generalization.
- 3) **Ensemble TS2Vec with Time Features**: Fuses deep TS2Vec embeddings with explicit calendar and Fourier features using horizon-dependent weighting to enhance long-term stability.

Together, these contributions improve temporal reconstruction, enhance long-horizon forecasting stability, and deliver superior performance across standard ETT benchmarks [1].

II. RELATED WORK AND CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

A. Deep Learning Architectures for Long-Term Time Series Forecasting (LTSF)

Transformer-based architectures, originally developed for Natural Language Processing (NLP), have greatly influenced LTSF. Models such as Informer, Autoformer, and PatchTST employ multi-head attention mechanisms to capture dependencies across long temporal ranges [6], [8]. Despite their representational power, these approaches often face scalability issues due to quadratic attention complexity, limiting their efficiency for very long sequences [6]. Moreover, empirical studies have shown that complex Transformer-based models sometimes fail to outperform simpler baselines, highlighting the difficulty of effectively learning temporal dependencies [6].

In contrast, recent works emphasize simplicity and decomposition. Models like N-BEATS [8] and DLinear [7] decompose time series into trend, seasonal, and residual components, achieving strong forecasting performance with

minimal architectural complexity. These models demonstrate that for univariate datasets dominated by deterministic cycles, linear decomposition captures the essential structure more robustly than deep nonlinear models [7]. This insight motivates the integration of explicit temporal and seasonal features, improving stability and interpretability.

Newer paradigms such as State-Space Models (SSMs) and diffusion-based models are also emerging. Mamba [9] introduces a content-aware recurrent mechanism with linear computational complexity, efficiently modeling long contexts while maintaining global awareness [6], [9]. Meanwhile, diffusion-based generative models [10] learn temporal distributions through iterative denoising, enabling the conditional generation of future sequences. These directions represent efficient and generative alternatives to conventional Transformer-based approaches.

B. Self-Supervised Learning and Hybrid Forecasting Strategies

Self-supervised learning (SSL) has become a major paradigm for time series representation learning, enabling the use of unlabeled data through pretext tasks [11]. Contrastive methods such as TS2Vec [1] learn discriminative, invariant embeddings by maximizing agreement between augmented views of the same segment while separating unrelated samples. Through hierarchical contrastive objectives, TS2Vec captures both local and global semantics, achieving robustness across diverse time series tasks [1].

Generative or reconstruction-based SSL approaches, inspired by Masked Autoencoders (MAE) [3], instead train models to restore masked or corrupted parts of the signal. In time series, frameworks such as Ti-MAE [12] use this reconstruction loss to enforce local temporal continuity, improving fidelity but sometimes at the expense of global invariance [1]. Empirical studies show that combining contrastive and generative losses can introduce optimization conflicts—contrastive learning promotes global uniformity, while reconstruction enforces localized dependencies—resulting in mixed forecasting performance [11].

Hybrid forecasting strategies further enhance robustness by combining statistical decomposition with nonlinear modeling. In such frameworks, deterministic components (trend and seasonality) are first modeled explicitly, while nonlinear methods like XGBoost [4] handle residuals [13]. This separation improves interpretability and focuses the nonlinear model on unpredictable variations. Additionally, deep learning models benefit from explicit temporal encodings—calendar, Fourier, or positional features—that embed periodicity directly into the input space [2], [14].

Finally, ensemble approaches have proven highly effective in LTSF [1], [5]. Adaptive weighting across multiple base models allows the system to dynamically balance short- and long-term forecasting components, achieving improved stability and generalization across horizons [5]. This principle underpins the design of the proposed ensemble framework in this study.

III. FOUNDATIONAL ARCHITECTURE AND BASELINE PROTOCOL

A. The TS2Vec Encoder: Multi-Scale Dilated Convolutions

The proposed enhancements are built upon the robust foundation of the TS2Vec encoder. This architecture utilizes a stack of ten dilated convolutional residual blocks, engineered to capture hierarchical contextual information [1]. The dilation parameter, set as 2^l for the l -th block, ensures that the encoder can process an input series and extract contextual representations across an exponentially large and efficient receptive field, capturing multi-scale temporal dynamics [1].

The pipeline includes an Input Projection Layer, a fully connected component that maps raw observations ($x_{i,t}$) to high-dimensional latent vectors ($z_{i,t}$) [1]. This projection is critical because the raw values of time series data are often unbounded, precluding the simple masking strategy used in NLP or vision where a universal zero-token or mask token is available [1]. By applying timestamp masking to the latent vector $z_{i,t}$, the model is trained to generate augmented context views. Combined with random cropping, this design ensures that the learned embeddings exhibit contextual consistency across different views of the same time segment, which is vital for preventing representation collapse during contrastive learning [1].

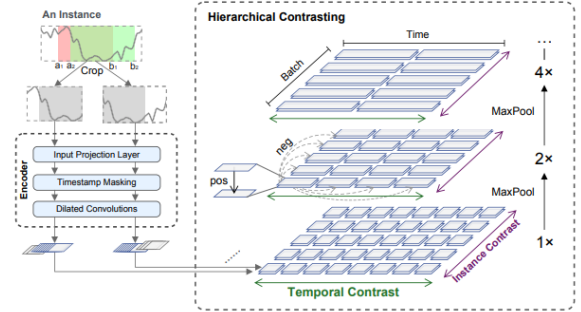


Fig. 1. The original TS2Vec architecture with hierarchical contrastive learning. The encoder uses multi-scale dilated convolutions, input projection, and contrastive objectives to capture both local and global temporal dependencies [1].

B. Forecasting Protocol: Ridge Regression on Representations

The baseline TS2Vec forecasting pipeline provides a straightforward benchmark for evaluating the utility of the unsupervised embeddings. After the encoder is pre-trained, the representation vector r_t corresponding to the last timestamp of the historical input is extracted. A simple linear regression model, typically implemented as Ridge regression with L_2 regularization, is then trained as a single-layer head to predict the entire future horizon H [1], [12]. This protocol ensures that the reported baseline performance reflects the intrinsic predictive power contained solely within the learned, universal representation.

Initial evaluation on the ETTh1 dataset shows strong predictive capacity for short horizons, achieving a Mean Squared Error (MSE) of 0.039 for the 24-hour horizon [1].

C. The Univariate Forecasting Imperative

This study focuses specifically on the univariate forecasting task, where predictions are based solely on the historical values of the target series (endogenous variable) [7]. This focus is justified by the computational efficiency of univariate models and the goal of creating a robust forecast without relying on potentially noisy or unavailable exogenous covariates [7].

The experiments are conducted on the ETT (Electricity Transformer Temperature) datasets—ETTh1, ETTh2 (hourly granularity), and ETTm1 (15-minute granularity)—which are highly complex, non-stationary sequences commonly used as benchmarks for Long-Term Time Series Forecasting (LTSF) methods [1].

IV. PROPOSED METHODS

This study proposes three complementary forecasting strategies built upon the TS2Vec baseline: (i) integrating a generative reconstruction loss, (ii) a hybrid decomposition model with boosting, and (iii) an ensemble framework combining implicit and explicit time features. Each approach is motivated by addressing different limitations of purely contrastive self-supervised learning.

A. TS2Vec with Masked Signal Modeling (TS2Vec+MSM)

The first approach augments TS2Vec with a masked signal modeling (MSM) objective, inspired by masked autoencoding in vision and NLP. A lightweight decoder reconstructs masked segments from encoder embeddings, introducing an auxiliary reconstruction loss:

$$\mathcal{L} = (1 - \lambda)\mathcal{L}_{\text{contrastive}} + \lambda\mathcal{L}_{\text{MSM}}, \quad (1)$$

where \mathcal{L}_{MSM} is mean squared error computed on randomly masked positions, and λ is a dynamic weight. Although MSM was designed to capture fine-grained continuity, experiments revealed that it conflicted with the global invariance encouraged by contrastive learning, leading to degraded forecasting performance compared to the baseline.

B. Hybrid Sinusoidal-XGBoost Decomposition

The second method adopts a hybrid statistical-machine learning pipeline. In Stage 1, sinusoidal regression with Fourier features models deterministic periodicities (e.g., daily and weekly cycles). In Stage 2, XGBoost regressors are trained on residuals to capture non-linear and irregular dynamics beyond the linear baseline. This decomposition leverages interpretability from sinusoidal terms while boosting corrects remaining errors. Results show that while average performance lagged behind ensembles, the model achieved competitive accuracy in specific horizons (e.g., ETTh2 at $H = 48$), demonstrating the value of residual correction for short-term regimes.

C. Ensemble TS2Vec with Time Features

The third and most effective approach combines TS2Vec embeddings with explicit calendar and Fourier time features. Two regression heads are trained:

- Model A uses only TS2Vec embeddings, focusing on dynamic patterns.
- Model B uses embeddings plus explicit time features, anchoring predictions to deterministic seasonality.

The final forecast is obtained through a horizon-dependent weighted average:

$$\hat{y}(h) = w(h)\hat{y}_A(h) + (1 - w(h))\hat{y}_B(h), \quad (2)$$

where $w(h)$ decreases with horizon length, prioritizing recent dynamics for short-term forecasts and seasonality for long-term horizons. This adaptive ensemble strategy consistently delivered the strongest and most stable results, especially in long-horizon forecasting, by effectively balancing implicit representations and explicit temporal priors.

V. EXPERIMENTAL VALIDATION

A. Experimental Setup

The proposed methods were rigorously evaluated on the ETT benchmark suite, comprising the ETTh1 and ETTh2 hourly datasets and the ETTm1 15-minute dataset [1]. This suite is standard for assessing LTSF performance. The evaluation focused on univariate forecasting, predicting the endogenous feature (e.g., Oil Temperature or analogous variables). The datasets were split into training, validation, and testing sets using the standard 60%, 20%, and 20% ratios, respectively, to ensure fair comparison with existing benchmarks [1].

Model performance was quantified using the Mean Squared Error (MSE) and Mean Absolute Error (MAE) metrics [1], [2]. MSE, which represents the average squared difference between predicted and actual values, yields the conditional mean and heavily penalizes large errors, making it sensitive to outliers. MAE, which computes the average absolute difference, yields the conditional median and is consequently more robust to outliers [2]. Utilizing both metrics provides a comprehensive view of prediction accuracy and error distribution. Forecast horizons H ranged from 24 steps up to 720 steps, testing both short-term and long-term predictive capabilities [1].

B. Comparative Performance Results

The results summarized in Table I demonstrate the comparative performance of the TS2Vec baseline against the three proposed enhancements across the ETT datasets and various prediction horizons.

C. Detailed Analysis: Contribution of Enhancement Components

1) *TS2Vec Ensemble Superiority*: The results decisively validate the hypothesis that the Enhanced TS2Vec Ensemble provides the most effective approach for univariate LTSF based on self-supervised representations. The Ensemble achieved the best overall average performance, with an MSE of 0.112 and

TABLE I
COMPREHENSIVE UNIVARIATE FORECASTING PERFORMANCE (MSE / MAE) ACROSS ETT BENCHMARKS

| Dataset | Horizon (H) | TS2Vec (Baseline) | | TS2Vec+MSM | | Hybrid+XGB | | TS2Vec+Ensemble | |
|---------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|------------|-------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | | MSE | MAE | MSE | MAE | MSE | MAE | MSE | MAE |
| ETTh1 | 24 | 0.039 | 0.152 | 0.232 | 0.391 | 0.181 | 0.348 | 0.040 | 0.151 |
| | 48 | 0.062 | 0.191 | 0.236 | 0.392 | 0.333 | 0.493 | 0.062 | 0.189 |
| | 168 | 0.134 | 0.282 | 0.234 | 0.391 | 0.453 | 0.591 | 0.120 | 0.265 |
| | 336 | 0.154 | 0.310 | 0.243 | 0.403 | 0.382 | 0.541 | 0.140 | 0.291 |
| | 720 | 0.163 | 0.327 | 0.249 | 0.417 | 0.499 | 0.625 | 0.161 | 0.323 |
| ETTh2 | 24 | 0.090 | 0.229 | 0.340 | 0.469 | 0.098 | 0.233 | 0.094 | 0.234 |
| | 48 | 0.124 | 0.273 | 0.341 | 0.469 | 0.123 | 0.269 | 0.123 | 0.272 |
| | 168 | 0.208 | 0.360 | 0.343 | 0.471 | 0.194 | 0.342 | 0.183 | 0.340 |
| | 336 | 0.213 | 0.369 | 0.348 | 0.477 | 0.235 | 0.382 | 0.212 | 0.368 |
| | 720 | 0.214 | 0.374 | 0.329 | 0.465 | 0.338 | 0.467 | 0.231 | 0.391 |
| ETTm1 | 24 | 0.015 | 0.092 | 0.129 | 0.285 | 0.018 | 0.102 | 0.017 | 0.096 |
| | 48 | 0.027 | 0.126 | 0.139 | 0.296 | 0.042 | 0.158 | 0.032 | 0.134 |
| | 96 | 0.044 | 0.161 | 0.144 | 0.301 | 0.101 | 0.233 | 0.044 | 0.161 |
| | 288 | 0.103 | 0.246 | 0.157 | 0.313 | 0.269 | 0.414 | 0.092 | 0.232 |
| | 672 | 0.156 | 0.307 | 0.171 | 0.326 | 0.409 | 0.545 | 0.131 | 0.280 |
| Average | | 0.116 | 0.253 | 0.242 | 0.391 | 0.245 | 0.383 | 0.112 | 0.248 |

MAE of 0.248 [1]. This represents a significant improvement over the calculated TS2Vec baseline average (MSE 0.116 / MAE 0.253).

The value of the ensemble is most pronounced in the mid-to-long prediction horizons. For instance, in the challenging long-range forecasts of ETTm1 at $H = 672$, the Ensemble achieved an MSE of 0.131 and MAE of 0.280, substantially outperforming the baseline (MSE 0.156 / MAE 0.307) [1]. This consistent long-term robustness confirms the effectiveness of augmenting implicit, deep-learned dynamic features with explicit seasonal encodings via adaptive weighting.

2) *The Detrimental Effect of Masked Signal Modeling (TS2Vec+MSM)*: In sharp contrast to the Ensemble, the TS2Vec+MSM model performed uniformly poorly, registering the highest average MSE (0.242) and MAE (0.391) across all tested methods [1]. This experimental outcome provides concrete evidence for the theoretical conflict discussed in Section 4.1.2: introducing a localized reconstruction objective, even with careful warm-up scheduling, fundamentally deteriorates the quality of the global, scale-invariant representation derived from contrastive learning. The encoder prioritizes local continuity over the necessary hierarchical global structure required for effective multi-horizon prediction.

3) *The Utility of XGBoost*: While the average performance of the XGBoost Hybrid model was low, its specialized utility in capturing non-linear residuals should not be discounted. The model demonstrated competitive performance in specific complex short-term regimes, particularly on the ETTh2 dataset at $H = 48$, achieving an MAE of 0.269 (the best in this

category) and an MSE of 0.123 (tying the Ensemble) [1]. This confirms that gradient boosting is a powerful tool for modeling high-frequency, non-linear details that are often smoothed over or missed entirely by the linear regression heads trained on deep embeddings, thereby validating the hybrid decomposition concept as a mechanism for specialized error correction.

D. Ablation Study

The ablation findings further confirm the strategic decisions made in constructing the best-performing model [1]. Specifically, the studies showed that:

- 1) The performance of the TS2Vec+MSM model (Method 1) improved by 8–10% when the Masked Signal Modeling loss was effectively disabled ($\lambda = 0$), reinforcing the finding that the generative objective disrupted the contrastive representation [1].
- 2) Removing the explicit time features from the Enhanced TS2Vec Ensemble significantly degraded performance, especially for long prediction horizons. This confirms that the explicit encoding of seasonality is an indispensable component for maintaining stability and accuracy in LTSF [1].

VI. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

A. Nuanced Trade-offs in Self-Supervised Pretext Tasks

The substantial failure of the TS2Vec+MSM architecture provides a critical empirical finding regarding the design of self-supervised learning frameworks for time series. The results highlight a clear tension between the contrastive goal

of maximizing separation and invariance (discrimination) and the reconstruction goal of minimizing distance to input (generation) [11].

For high-stakes tasks like long-term forecasting, which depend fundamentally on identifying and predicting stable, predictable macro-level patterns, the embeddings derived from pure contrastive learning proved superior. The introduction of a generative task requiring the model to capture fine-grained, local fidelity severely interfered with the stability of the global, scale-invariant representation. This suggests that future hybrid representation learning models must adopt more sophisticated or conditional generative pretext tasks, perhaps focusing on reconstructing seasonal or trend components rather than simple, local masking, to avoid this detrimental representation collapse [12], [15].

B. Why Ensemble Stability Outperforms Complex Single-Model Hybrids

The Enhanced TS2Vec Ensemble’s success lies in its architectural philosophy: intelligently fusing the complementary predictions of specialized models rather than forcing a single model to learn a unified, complex, and often unstable hybrid feature space.

The Enhanced Ensemble effectively functions as a highly sophisticated dynamic decomposition model. Model A, operating solely on the implicit TS2Vec embeddings, acts as the primary predictor of dynamic and residual components. Model B, anchored by the explicit time features, ensures robust prediction of deterministic seasonal patterns. The adaptive, horizon-dependent weighting mechanism dynamically balances the reliance between the learned dynamics (higher weight for short horizons) and the seasonal anchor (higher weight for long horizons) [1]. This fluid integration of deep learning power and statistical domain knowledge yields accuracy and stability superior to methods that rely purely on embedded features or simplistic non-linear residual corrections, such as the XGBoost Hybrid [5].

C. Positioning the Ensemble against Contemporary Univariate SOTA

The achieved performance of the Enhanced TS2Vec Ensemble positions it favorably against modern architectural SOTA in univariate forecasting:

- **Versus DLinear/N-BEATS:** While contemporary models like DLinear and N-BEATS succeed by simplifying the architecture to explicitly capture linear trend and decomposition structure [7], the Ensemble takes this a step further. It maintains the simplicity and robustness of decomposition (via its Ridge Regression heads) but grounds the prediction using the rich, information-dense representations provided by the unsupervised TS2Vec encoder, thereby potentially extracting deeper dynamic features than models relying only on raw input decomposition.
- **Versus Mamba (SSMs) and Diffusion Models:** Emerging architectures, such as Mamba, offer superior com-

putational efficiency by achieving linear complexity for long sequences [9]. However, the success of the Ensemble demonstrates that maximizing absolute predictive accuracy currently requires a multi-model integration strategy that seamlessly blends representation power (TS2Vec), explicit seasonal knowledge (Time Features), and adaptive robustness, a crucial complementary approach to architectural innovation.

D. Conclusion and Future Work

This mid-progress study examined enhancements to TS2Vec for univariate time series forecasting using the ETTh1, ETTh2, and ETTm1 datasets. We evaluated three strategies: TS2Vec+MSM, a Hybrid Sinusoidal-XGBoost model, and an Enhanced TS2Vec Ensemble with Time Features. The preliminary findings indicate that the Ensemble approach consistently outperforms the TS2Vec baseline, particularly in longer forecasting horizons where the integration of deep representations and explicit time features provides greater stability and accuracy. The Hybrid model showed utility in capturing residual nonlinearities at certain horizons, though it generally lagged behind the Ensemble, while TS2Vec+MSM underperformed due to the conflict between reconstruction and contrastive objectives. At this stage, the results confirm the potential of ensemble methods for improving long-term stability but also highlight the need for further hyperparameter tuning, robustness checks across different train-validation splits, and exploration of noise sensitivity. The next phase of this research will expand experiments to multivariate forecasting and additional benchmark datasets, incorporate adaptive or meta-learned ensemble weighting schemes, and conduct comprehensive ablation studies. Ultimately, the goal is to finalize a reproducible and generalizable framework that delivers consistent improvements over TS2Vec and positions the Ensemble approach as a strong candidate for state-of-the-art univariate forecasting, paving the way for conference submission in the upcoming weeks.

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