

# A Survey on Hand Gesture Recognition in Context of Soft Computing

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**Abstract.** Hand gestures recognition is the natural way of Human Machine interaction and today many researchers in the academia and industry are interested in this direction. It enables human being to interact with machine very easily and conveniently without wearing any extra device. It can be applied form sign language recognition to robot control and from virtual reality to intelligent home systems. In this paper we are discussing work done in the area of hand gesture recognition where focus is on the soft computing based methods like artificial neural network, fuzzy logic, genetic algorithms, etc. We also described hand detection methods in the preprocessed image for detecting the hand image. Most researchers used fingertips for hand detection in appearance based modeling. Finally we are comparing results given by different researchers after their implementation.

**Keywords:** Hand gesture recognition, soft computing, fingertip based detection, fuzzy logic, Artificial Neural Network, Learning Methods, gesture analysis, Finite state machines.

## 1 Introduction

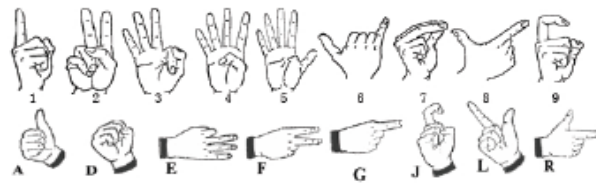
Gestures are the unsaid words of human which he expresses in the form of actions. It allows individuals to communicate feelings and thoughts with different emotions with words or without words [1]. Gesture Recognition has become an active research area in the field of Computer vision, Image Processing and Artificial Intelligence. Gesture made by human being can be any but few have a special meaning. Human hand can have movement in any direction and can bend to any angle in all available

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coordinates. Chinese sign language as shown in Figure 1, used hand gestures to represents digits as well as alphabets. Many researchers [4][7][16][39][40] have tried with different instruments and equipment to measure hand movements like gloves, sensors or wires, but in these techniques user have to wear the device which doesn't make sense in practical use. So people thought about a way of contact less gesture recognition that could be considered as a research area in Machine Vision or Computer Vision and which would be as natural as human to human interaction. According to Mitra [6] gesture recognition is a process where user made gesture and receiver recognize it. Using this technique, we can easily interact with machines and can give them particular message according to the environment and application syntax. Even people who can't communicate orally (sick, old or young child), they would also get benefit from this technology. It is possible to make a gesture recognition system for these people. Mobile companies are trying to make handsets which can recognize gesture and could operate from little distance also [2][47]. Here we are focusing on human to machine interaction (HMI), in which machine would be able to recognize the gesture made by human. There are approaches of two types.

- a. Appearance based approaches where hand image is reconstructed
- b. Model based approaches where different models are used to model image



**Fig. 1.** Chinese sign language [41]

Here we are dividing approaches based on the method used in it not on how it is treating the image. Many approaches have been developed to interact with machines from glove based [4] to neural networks [3]. Users always like the easy and naturalness of technology in HMI and it was more convenient to interpret visual inputs [7]. As Pickering stated [22] that initially touch based gesture interfaces would be popular but, non-contact gesture recognition technologies would be more attractive finally. Input to a machine using gesture is simple and convenient, but the communication includes many difficulties. "The human hand is a complex deformable object and gesture itself has many characteristics, such as diversities, ambiguities, temporal and spatial differences and human vision itself is an ill-posed problem" [10]. Pickering [22] described a real time gesture based driving system simulator developed at Carnegie Mellon University with the help of General Motors. Many researchers [25][26][27][28][37][34] have used a color strip or a shirt to detect hand image in the captured image. For a detailed survey of gesture recognition you can see [6][7][23]. Gesture segmentation a part of the gesture recognition process, have been reviewed in [10] and [11] based on color spaces.

Choi [15] brings attention of researchers pointing out an old problem of the incrementing processing time of algorithm's complexity and say "the most important issue in field of the gesture recognition is the simplification of algorithm and the reduction of processing time". He used morphological operation to implement his system using the center points extracted from primitive elements by morphological shape decomposition. Lu [19], Gastaldi [29], Ozer [30] used parallel approach in the design and implementation of their system. Different threads are implemented in such way that they can run in parallel and can compute faster. Lee [17] describes his system which he developed for remote control systems which worked for motion recognition also. He uses 3D systems with two or more cameras to detect command issued by hand. Villani [9] has tried to develop a system for teaching mathematics to the deaf with an easy user interface. Morimoto [43] made interesting virtual system, in which he pushed virtual buttons using fingers in the air and recognized it using 3D sensors.

## 2 Hand Detection Approaches

There are many techniques to detect hand in the acquired image after preprocessing. As shown above, we divide these approaches into two parts.

### 2.1 Appearance Based Approaches

Many researchers have used fingertip detection for the hand image construction [3][8][12][13][17][21][29][37][34][44]. As we are also using fingertip detection technique for our research work, this paper devotes great attention to work done by other researches using this technique. Nölker [3] focuses on large number of 3D hand postures in her system called GREFIT. She used finger tips in hands as natural determinant of hand posture to reconstruct the image. In her system she suggests few approaches to locate fingertip in hand.

1. Marked fingertips colored and making histogram
2. Using different templates or images of a prototype

It takes 192x144 size gray scale image to process. Verma [8] extract features from image as fingertip, edges and vectors for 2D modeling. He used harris corner detector to extract fingertips corresponding to corners. Nguyen [12] used gray scale morphology and geometric calculations to relocate fingertip locations using learning based model on 640x480 pixel size frame. Here Author use similar approach to hand detector given by shin [13] to detect both hands based on skin color. To recognize hands Nguyen [12] used skin segmentation technique using Gaussian model. Density function of skin color distribution is as defined.

$$p(\text{clskin}) = \sum_{i=1}^k \pi_i p_i(\text{clskin})$$

Where  $k$  is the number of components and  $\pi_i$  are the weight factors of each component. He used CIELUV color space to represent skin. Interestingly he used palm to finger length ratio to construct the hand figure. Zhou [21] worked with 320x240 size 24 bit image frames. Zhou used Markov Random Field to remove noise component in processed figure.

Gastaldi [29] find perimeter using Gaussian filters and freeman's algorithm [31] to localize fingertips in that image for 3D detection. Kim [37] tried to recognize gesture in a dark room on black projection for his system. Although the system was vision based but he used florescent white paper to mark finger tips in the captured image, which is not practical for generic purpose as user have to wear white florescent strips. Kim used kalman filter for finding fingertips and their correct positions in a recursive manner. Stefan [5] implemented a system which can detect motion of fingers in the air visually. He made it to recognize the numbers for 0 to 9 for command transfer.

## 2.2 Model Based Approaches

Sawah [34] used histogram for calculating probability for skin color observation. Hu [38] take Gaussian distribution for background pixels marking then he subtracted the pixels from the new image to acquired gesture image. Lee [18] used the same technique to get gesture image.

$$\Delta = |I_n - B|$$

In the modeling of his application of human activity monitoring, Hu [38] applied Genetic Algorithm (GA) to Chromosome pool with  $P_{c0}$  and  $P_{m0}$  as crossover and mutation rate respectively which he founded using different statistic attributes. Crossover creates new chromosomes while mutation in this case introduces new genes into chromosome. Lee [44] use  $YC_bC_r$  skin color model to detect hand region and then he applied distance transform. Tarrataca [47] used RGB and HSI color space model based algorithm for skin detection.

## 3 Soft Computing Approaches

Under the umbrella of soft computing principal constituents are Neural Networks, Fuzzy Systems, Machine Learning, Evolutionary Computation, Probabilistic Reasoning, etc. and their hybrid approaches. Here we are focusing on mainly three components:-

- a. Artificial Neural Networks
- b. Fuzzy Logic
- c. Genetic Algorithm

### 3.1 Artificial Neural Network/Learning Based Approaches

An Artificial Neural Network (ANN) is made of many highly interconnected processing elements, which are working in together to solve specific problems [35]. ANN can be configured for problems like pattern recognitions or data mining through learning based models. Also ANN has capabilities like adaptive learning, self-organizing and real time operations using special hardware. Nolker [3] used ANN based layer approach to detect fingertips. After obtaining fingertips vectors, it is transformed into finger joint angles to an articulated hand model. For each finger separate network were trained on same feature vectors, having input space 35 dimensional while output dimensional as only 2. Lee [17] used Hidden Markov Model (HMM) for gesture

recognition using shape feature. Gesture state is determined after stabilizing the image component as open fingers in consecutive frames. He also used maxima and minima approach like Raheja [14] for construction the hand image and FSM like Verma [8] for gesture finalization.

Wang [32] proposed an optical flow based powerful approach for human action recognition using learning models. It labels hidden parts in image also. This mas-margin based algorithm can be applied to gesture recognition. Kim [37] in his system used learning model for dynamic gestures recognition.

### 3.2 Fuzzy Logic Based Approaches

A Professor from UCB USA, Lotfi Zadeh presented fuzzy logic in an innovative way. His view was that fro processing precise and accurate information is not necessary, we can perform it with imprecise data also. It is near to natural thinking. As described in [35] “Fuzzy logic is a multivalued logic that allows intermediate values to be defined between conventional evaluations”. Verma [8] used c-mean fuzzy clustering based finite state machines (FSM) to recognize hand gestures. Formula for centroid calculation of fuzzy c-means clusters is that centroid would be mean of all points weighted by their degree of belongings to the cluster center. For each point  $x$ , a coefficient giving the degree in the  $k^{\text{th}}$  cluster  $U_k(x)$  [24]. Here  $x_k = k^{\text{th}}$  trajectory point, so

$$\text{center}_k = \frac{\sum_x u_x(x)^m x}{\sum_x u_x(x)^m}$$

In second phase these cluster maps onto FSM states and final state show gesture recognition, although verma[8] didn't implement it. Schlomer [45] used k-mean algorithm on clusters, then he applied HMM and Bayes-classifier on vector data. Trivino [36] tried to make a more descriptive system which can convert human gesture positions into a linguistic description using fuzzy logic. He related it to Natural Language Processing (NLP). He used sensors and took only few positions in sitting and standing, into consideration.

### 3.3 Genetic Algorithm Based Approaches

Genetic Algorithm comes from biology but it is very influential on computational sciences in optimization. This method is very effective to get optimal or sub optimal solutions of problems as it have only few constraints [35]. It uses generate and test mechanism over a set of probable solutions (called as population in GA) and bring optimal acceptable solution. It executes its three basic operations (Reproduction, Crossover and Mutation) iteratively on population. Sawah [34] has focused on a very generic scenario where he used generic non-restricted environment, generic not-specific application for gesture recognition using genetic programming. He used crossover for noise removal in gesture recognition, while Dynamic Bayesian Network (DBN) for gesture segmentation and gesture recognition with the fuzzification. Hu [38] applied Genetic Algorithm on his system which make 2D parametric model with human silhouette in his application of Human Activity Monitoring. The best point about GA is that it work parallel on different points for faster computation.

### 3.4 Other Approaches

Raheja [14] proposes a new methodology for real time robot control using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) for gesture extraction and pattern recognition with saved images in database in 60x80 image pixels formats. He used syntax of few gestures and decides corresponding actions of robot. He claims that PCA method is very faster than neural network based methods which require training database and more computation power. Morimoto [43] also used PCA and maxima methods. Gastaldi [29] used PCA to compress five image sequences into one and get eigen vectors and eigen values for each gesture. He used statistical HMM model for gesture recognition. Shin [33] shows gesture extraction and recognition using entropy analysis and low level image processing functions. Lee [18] also used entropy to get color information. He used PIM to quantify the entropy of image using the following equation.

$$PIM = \frac{L-1}{\sum_{i=0} h(i) - \text{Max}_j h(i)}$$

Where  $h(i)$  is the  $i^{\text{th}}$  histogram value of each image or block. To acquire PIM value, subtracting all pixels in each block from maximum frequency in histogram model.

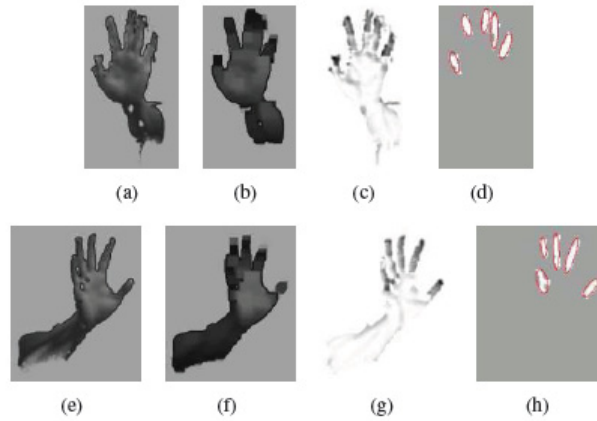
Lu [19] implemented system for 3D gesture recognition where he fused different positions of gesture using coordinate transformations and then use stored prespecified gestures for gesture recognition. Stefan [5] has used Dynamic Space-Time Warping (DSTW) [42] to recognize a set of gestures. This technique doesn't require hands to be correctly identified at each frame. Zou [46] used Deterministic Finite State Machine (DFSM) to detect hand motion and then apply rule based techniques for gesture recognition. He defines gesture into two category based on motion linear and arc shaped gestures. Tarrataca [47] used convex hull method based clustering algorithm Graham's Scan [48] for posture recognition.

## 4 Implementations Tools

Mostly researchers who used image processing used MATLAB<sup>®</sup> with image processing toolbox while few used C++ also. Lu [19], Lee [44] and Zou [46] used C++ for implementation on Windows XP<sup>®</sup> where Lu [19] and Lee [44] he used Microsoft<sup>®</sup> Foundation Classes (MFC) to build user interface and control.

## 5 Accuracy

GREFIT [3] system was able to detect finger tips even when it was in front of palm, it reconstruct the 3D image of hand that was visually comparable. Nguyen [12] claimed results 90-95% accurate for open fingers that is quite acceptable while for closed finger it was 10-20% only. As shown in Figure 2 closed or bended finger are coming in front of palm, so skin color detection would not make any difference in palm or finger. According to him image quality and morphology operator was the main reason for low detection.



**Fig. 2.** Result of finger extraction using grayscale morphology operators and object analysis [12] which work for bended finger also, but with a lower accuracy 10-20%

Raheja [14] claims about 90% accuracy in the result, if the lighting conditions are good. Hu [38] used six different parameters to control the performance of system, if he found much noise there, he could control it using two parameters called as  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  respectively. Lee [18] showed results for six kinds of gesture with recognition rate of more than 95% but it recognized bended finger as bended, no matter the degree of banding. Morimoto [43] claimed for his system near 91% accuracy after he applied normalization. Stefan [5] achieved 96% accuracy over 300 tests. He also stated that parallel image processing and pattern matching operations were not real time compatible in MATLAB®, it could be faster if implemented in C++.

## 6 Conclusions

Applications of gesture recognition have been spread over a long span from intelligent home systems to medical treatment. They are mostly based on the human machine interaction. In this paper we did survey based on approaches in context of soft computing. We included work done using main components of soft computing, Artificial Neural Network, Fuzzy Logic and Genetic Algorithm. For hand image construction in appearance based approach, mostly researchers have used fingertip detection or joints of hand detection. Soft computing provides a way to define things which are not certain but with an approximation that can be make sure using learning models and training data.

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