

Machine Learning for Fish Oil Analysis

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Abstract. In fish processing worldwide, 60% of fish doesn't make it onto a plate. This fish wastage can be repurposed into other products such as fish oils and fish feed. It is difficult and requires domain expertise to effectively repurpose fish biomass. Gas chromatography (GC) can be used to identify tissue samples in fish processing. The existing analytical chemistry techniques for processing GC data are manual and time-consuming. To reduce biomass waste we must incentivise biomass re-use, we reduce this barrier of entry through automation. Here, we explore classification algorithms for fish oil data that automate and significantly reduce the time required to process GC data. We find the Linear SVC model can predict the fish species with near-perfect accuracy. Visualisation is used to explore the interpretability of the models such that their efficacy can be verified for use in a factory setting. The fish oil data is high-dimensional and low sample size data. We compare state-of-the-art feature selection methods to eliminate redundant features. High accuracy is possible with very few features for the MRMR and ReliefF feature selection methods. Our proposed method is both effective and interpretable with domain expertise. Efficient use of fish biomass aided by real-world AI can help preserve fish for future generations to come.

Keywords: Feature Selection · Gas Chromatography · Support Vector Machines · Food Science

1 Introduction

Worldwide, 60% of treated fish biomass isn't used in food [12]. It would be an incredible waste of the Earth's limited resources to discard this. Instead, fish biomass can be repurposed for fish oils - for products such as omega-3 vitamin supplements - or fish meal, both of which can be used in animal feeds. Further processing can produce refined fish oil that is suitable for fish oil capsules that we buy in shops and pharmacies. Some fish species or parts may be richer in omega-3 fatty acids than others, these can be used to make high-value products. To identify valuable fish oils we need to classify the species and part of tissue samples. To reduce waste in fish processing, we need automated effective and interpretable techniques to classify fish oils.

Gas chromatography [10] is a chemistry technique we use to analyze fish oils. It can determine the structure of chemical compounds present in a given sample [22]. This is important for quality assurance in a factory setting, especially in food science. To repurpose fish biomass efficiently, first, we need to know what is

in it. We can identify the contents of fish oil using classification techniques that compare it to known samples. Given a fish oil sample, we can identify the fish species (i.e. Bluecod, Tarakihi), and part (Head, Fins). The existing techniques for performing fish classification are time-consuming and laborious. Chemists compare a given sample to reference samples to determine which class it likely belongs to.

1.1 Related Work

Previous work, [3,20], shows promise of blackbox methods for classification on GC data. Bi et al. proposed a CNN model that performs GC-MS data fusion in food science [3]. Their work the flavour quality of peanut oils with high accuracy. Similar to here, their work was motivated by manual analysis becoming intractable at scale.

Matushuin et al. proposed a stacking model for analysis of GC data [20]. It stacked results of a 1DConv, 2DConve, Deep residual MLP and XGBoost. Their regression model identified the retention index. Both studies employed Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) - blackbox models with high accuracy but not very interpretable models. Interpretable models are required for troubleshooting and safety-critical applications.

Demelza et al. [8] proposed a feature and latent variable selection method for regression models in horticulture. The vibrational spectroscopy dataset is similar to ours, both high dimensionality and in the food science domain. Their work showed a partial least squares regression (PLSR) could produce simple and effective regression models. We can still achieve high accuracy results with simpler models with representations that are easy to understand.

1.2 Goals and Objectives

In this paper, we explore machine learning techniques to automate the process of identifying fish species and part on GC data. We achieve this objective by identifying effective classification algorithms, visualizing their models, and removing redundant features. Firstly, classification algorithms are evaluated for their ability to determine the fish species and part. Visualisation is used to explore the interpretability of successful models. It is important to verify their efficacy with domain knowledge before these algorithms can be deployed in a real-world setting. Secondly, feature selection is used to eliminate redundant features, whilst maintaining high-accuracy predictions.

2 Background

This paper is a multi-disciplinary effort. Domain expertise in chemistry and machine learning is required to extract knowledge from the fish oil data. Before we explore the data, here we provide the domain knowledge required to understand this paper.

2.1 Gas Chromatography

Gas chromatography (GC) is a technique for the analysis of chemical compounds [10,22,1]. The process separates compounds based on their boiling point and molecular weight. A compound is injected as a liquid, then heat is applied to vaporize it into a gas. A boiling point is a temperature at which it changes phase, from liquid to gas. This process is referred to as a phase transition. The speed at which a compound is vaporized depends on its boiling point. The vaporized gases travel through a long coiled tube. That tube has a detector at the end, this detects the rate and intensity at which compounds reach the tube's end.

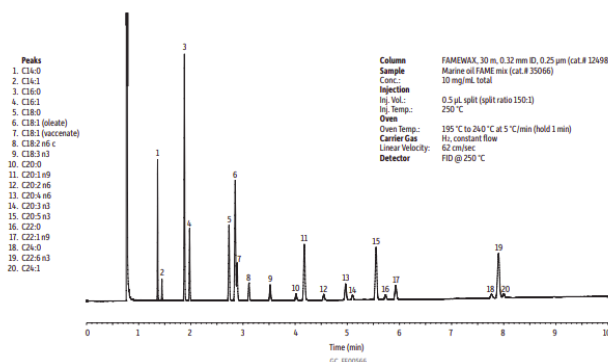


Fig. 1: Gas chromatograph: the artifact of the GC method [22]. The detection is used to visualize intensity (y) and time (x) on a chromatograph.

Chemists use the chromatograms of known compounds as a reference when classifying new ones. Take a known example, say *methyl eladiate*. We compare this reference sample to an unknown sample. Analysis can infer the unknown compound since they share the same peaks as the known one. GC is not a definitive technique [1], so it is often used in conjunction with other techniques. Mass spectrometry is one such technique [22].

The existing task of classifying chemical compounds based on a chromatograph is laborious [10,22]. The spikes on the graph represent peaks. Each peak represents a resolved chemical compound. Chemists integrate the area under each peak, and compare this to a reference sample, to classify the compound. GC must be performed slowly to ensure that the peaks are not too broad. This ensures each peak resolves and represents a single compound. Once we know what compounds are present in a sample it becomes possible to identify what the sample is. For this fish oil data, we classify a sample into two categories - species and part.

Using machine learning techniques it may be possible to speed the process up. Machine learning algorithms identify patterns in the data. These patterns can be used to classify the sample efficiently. An interpretable and accurate model

has the potential to be deployed in a factory setting. It would eliminate the need for manual work. Additionally, an algorithm that can classify unresolved peaks would have an impact on the chemistry field. This increases the speed at which GC is performed, increasing the volumetric efficiency of the production line [21].

2.2 Classification Algorithms

The classification task is to identify the class label for an instance from the dataset. We perform two classification tasks and measure their performance:

1. Species: Identify the species of fish (i.e. Bluecod).
2. Part: Identify the part of the fish (i.e. Head).

A supervised learning method creates a model from a labelled dataset - the train set. We measure the ability of the model to generalize on unseen data - the test set. We give the model a tissue sample from a fish. Based on what it has learned, it predicts the species and part of that fish. The existing analytical chemistry techniques for performing this task are laborious and time-consuming. We desire a model that is interpretable and has high predictive accuracy. We can then use the model to automate this task. Thus, it has real-world applications for quality assurance in a factory setting.

2.3 Visualisation

Two heuristics are optimized when selecting a suitable model: interpretability and accuracy. Interpretability is important for verification in a safety-critical environment. We intend to employ the chosen model in a factory setting. Accuracy is preferable, but not at the expense of interpretability. The efficacy of the model must be explainable through domain knowledge. Or else it is difficult to ensure reliability. The focus on interpretability ensures the model can be used in the real world.

Model interpretability is explored through visualisation. We aim to uncover learnt patterns that can be verified with domain knowledge. The desired algorithm should strike a balance between predictive performance and semantically meaningful features.

What constitutes semantic meaning varies from one domain to another. It is easy to build intuition for semantic meaning in computer vision and natural language processes, they correspond to recognisable images and structured text. In the domains of gas chromatography and fish processing, our meaning is derived from performance on the classification task(s) and similarity to underlying chemical compounds. We expect models that generate knowledge that can be verified with domain expertise. For example, important features will correspond to timestamps of important chemicals in the GC data.

2.4 Support Vector Machines

Cortes and Vapnik proposed the Support Vector Machine (SVM) [7]. This model creates a hyperplane that can draw distinct class boundaries between classes. We call these class boundaries the support vectors. We are performing multi-class classification, so it used a one-vs-all approach [25]. This creates a divide between one class and the rest, then repeats for the other classes.

RBF is the default kernel, other models have different kernels and introduce hyperparameters. The NuSVC has hyperparameter Nu , this determines the number of support vectors [24]. This is a trainable parameter in the other SVM models.

The kernel function shapes the support vectors in the hyperplane. Each kernel can capture patterns of varying complexity. The original SVM had a linear kernel [2], Later, non-linear kernels that employ the kernel trick were introduced [4]. Figure 2 shows support vectors for each kernel on a 2D plane, this provides an intuition for each kernel.

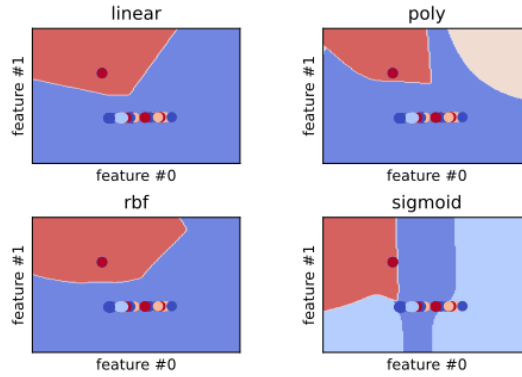


Fig. 2: SVM kernels shapes are shown. Specifically, linear, polynomial, radial basis function (rbf) and sigmoidal kernel are shown.

The l1 regularization term leads to sparse models. So, they include fewer features - making them easier to interpret. Eq 1 defines the total hyperplane as

$$\beta_t = \minmax(\sum_{c \in C} |\beta_c|) \quad (1)$$

where there is the number of classes ($c \in C$) sets of hyperplane coefficients. β_t coefficient as the sum of hyperplane coefficients magnitude for each class β_c . We normalize the coefficients with a min-max feature scaling.

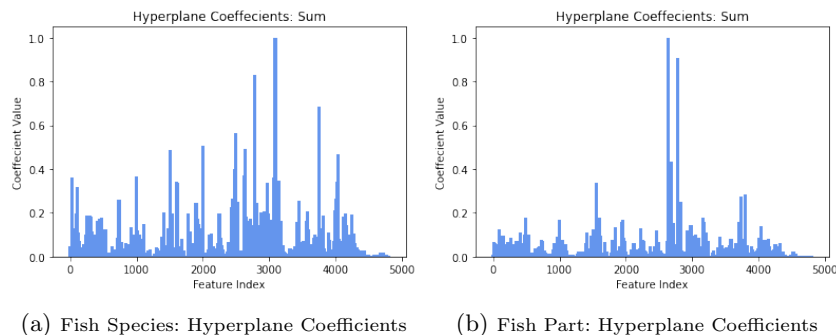


Fig. 3: Hyperplane coefficients β_t . The normalized sum of the magnitude of the coefficients for each class is given in Eq 1. (a) Coefficients for the fish species dataset. (b) Coefficients for the fish part dataset.

The total hyperplane for both datasets is given in Figure 3. We visualize the hyperplane to approximate the important features. The outliers correspond to feature timestamps that are important for drawing class boundaries. These are chemical compounds that separate the fish part and species, respectively.

2.5 Feature Selection

Feature selection reduces the complexity of the problem space. This helps counteract the curse of dimensionality [17]. Reducing the complexity improves computational efficiency, increases interpretability, and can improve performance. More interpretable models are easier for humans to understand. This means we can verify their efficiency using domain expertise in biochemistry. This is an important factor for real-world applications in a factory setting.

3 Data processing

- Why the raw data is not applicable to existing classification algorithms?
- Extracting datasets that are ready for classification algorithms:
 - Sum up the intensity.
 - Aligning missing packets.
- Overview of extracted data.

4 Classification

We measure the predictive ability of classifiers on both the fish species and part dataset. We are looking for the model with the highest accuracy. As a result, we start broadly by exploring a variety of models from the different families of AI, and then we narrow and refine the search.

For each of the following experiments, the same experiment setup is used. We use stratified cross-validation ($k = 10$) to measure the classification accuracy. Each method has its performance recorded on the same cross-folds. Then we average over 30 independent runs. This experimental setup evaluates performance on both the fish species and part datasets.

4.1 Classification Algorithms

This is a broad search for an effective classification model. We explore a classifier from each family of AI. The model with the highest classification accuracy on both datasets is then selected, and explored in later sections in further detail.

We examine 5 classification models:

1. K-Nearest Neighbors [11]
2. Random Forest [14]
3. Naive Bayes [13]
4. Decision Tree [19]
5. Support Vector Machine [7]

Dataset	Method	AvgTrain \pm Std	AveTest \pm Std
Species	KNN	83.57 \pm 1.80	74.88 \pm 12.54
	RF	1.00 \pm 0.00	85.65 \pm 10.76
	DT	1.00 \pm 0.00	76.98 \pm 13.12
	NB	79.54 \pm 1.60	75.27 \pm 4.35
	SVM	1.00 \pm 0.00	98.33 \pm 5.00
Part	KNN	68.95 \pm 3.49	43.61 \pm 13.48
	RF	1.00 \pm 0.00	72.60 \pm 16.15
	DT	1.00 \pm 0.00	60.14 \pm 14.57
	NB	65.54 \pm 2.69	48.61 \pm 12.19
	SVM	1.00 \pm 0.00	87.14 \pm 8.52

Table 1: Accuracy for different classification techniques. Accuracy is given as the stratified k-fold cross validation over 30 independent runs. We compare K-nearest neighbours (KNN), random forest (RF), decision tree (DT), naive bayes (NB) and support vector machines (SVM).

Table 1 shows for the random forest, decision tree and support vector machine have perfect training accuracy. The decision tree and random forest overfit the training data. Only the SVM achieves similar performance on the test data. The SVM classifier outperforms the other classifiers. It does so for the test set for both the species and part datasets.

4.2 SVM Model

The classification results showed that SVM was the most effective classifier. Now, we explore the variations in models for the SVM classifier. We use the same cross-validation setup as before.

We examine 3 SVM models [25]:

1. Support Vector Classification [7]
2. Nu-Support Vector Classification [24]
3. Linear Support Vector Classification

Dataset	Method	AvgTrain \pm Std	AveTest \pm Std
Species	svc	88.96 \pm 1.40	80.00 \pm 12.33
	nusvc	88.30 \pm 1.17	81.73 \pm 12.75
	lsvc	1.00 \pm 0.00	98.33 \pm 5.00
Part	svc	73.25 \pm 3.54	49.03 \pm 12.14
	nusvc	90.31 \pm 1.97	62.36 \pm 15.18
	lsvc	1.00 \pm 0.00	87.16 \pm 8.56

Table 2: Accuracy for different SVM models. Accuracy is given as the stratified k-fold cross validation over 30 independent runs. We compare Support-Vector Classification (SVC), Nu-Support Vector Classification (Nu-SVC) and Linear Support-Vector Classification (LSVC).

Table 2 shows for fish species, SVC and Nu-SVC models have similar performance on both train and test. The Nu-SVC outperforms the SVC for both train and test for the part dataset. Yet, the linear SVC outperforms both models. It achieves perfect training accuracy for both datasets. For the test, near-perfect (98.33%) on species, and reasonable performance (87.16%) on the part.

4.3 SVM Kernel

Now we know that SVM is the most effective classifier, and the LSVC is the most effective model. To provide an exhaustive search, we explore all possible kernels. We use the same cross-validation setup as before.

We examine 4 SVM kernels [25]:

1. Polynomial
2. Radial Basis Function (rbf)
3. Sigmoid
4. Linear [2]

Dataset	Method	AvgTrain \pm Std	AveTest \pm Std
Species	poly	76.83 \pm 1.18	71.37 \pm 15.86
	rbf	88.96 \pm 1.40	80.00 \pm 12.33
	sigmoid	33.19 \pm 2.36	30.18 \pm 6.50
	linear	1.00 \pm 0.00	97.50 \pm 5.34
Part	poly	70.63 \pm 2.27	53.89 \pm 6.94
	rbf	73.25 \pm 3.54	49.03 \pm 12.14
	sigmoid	37.47 \pm 1.78	33.47 \pm 8.59
	linear	1.00 \pm 0.00	87.36 \pm 10.77

Table 3: Accuracy for different SVM kernels. Accuracy is given as the stratified k-fold cross validation over 30 independent runs. We compare polynomial (poly), radial basis function (rbf), sigmoidal (sigmoid) and linear.

Table 3 shows the sigmoid kernel performs very poorly on training and test for both datasets. The polynomial and RBF kernel achieve comparable performance for both datasets. The linear kernel outperforms all other kernels for both datasets. It has near-perfect (97.50%) test accuracy on fish species. And reasonable performance (87.36%) on the fish part.

4.4 Discussion

We evaluated an ensemble of classification techniques. Naive Bayes performed poorly. This is likely due to the assumption of conditional independence between features. KNN also performed poorly. This is likely due to the high dimensionality of the data. Points drawn from high-dimensional spaces tend to never be close together. SVM provided the best results. This model can identify fish species from gas chromatography data with near-perfect accuracy. This prompted further investigation into this technique.

Within support vector machines, the Linear SVC model showed the best performance. Naturally, within SVM kernels, the linear kernel also showed the best performance. There is high predictive performance on the linear kernel. This suggests an underlying pattern that is linearly separable in a hyperplane. The SVC and Nu-SVC models both default to an RBF kernel. Nu-SVC has a fixed parameter Nu that determines the number of support vectors [24]. A fixed hyper-parameter could explain its improved performance over SVC. Non-linear kernels - polynomial, RBF or sigmoidal - produced diminishing returns. These kernels try to fit complex patterns that are not present in the data.

Performance for all models was better for the fish species than the part. This suggests tissue samples for different species may have distinct chemical compositions. Yet, different fish parts may have fewer underlying structural differences. For GC data the intra-class variation between species provides a larger signal than part variation. For example, we expect there to be more difference between a tarakihi and a bluecod, than there is a similarity between two livers from each species.

5 Feature Selection

For each method, we measure classification accuracy with an SVM model [25]. It has linear kernel, l1 regularization [23] and 10,000 maximum iterations. We examine 4 feature selection methods [5]:

1. Chi² [18]
2. Minimum Redundancy Maximum Relevance [9]
3. ReliefF [23]
4. Particle Swarm Optimization [15,16]

We first provide a detailed accuracy comparison for a set feature number ($k = 500$). Then we explore the accuracy of the general case (any k).

5.1 Classification Accuracy $k = 500$

We measure the classification accuracy at $k = 500$ for each method. To allow comparison with PSO, we take the top k features suggested by the algorithm and compare this to the others.

Dataset	Method	AvgTrain \pm Std	AveTest \pm Std
Species	Chi ²	95.17 \pm 3.52	81.85 \pm 9.65
	MRMR	99.79 \pm 0.41	95.09 \pm 6.90
	ReliefF	99.71 \pm 0.44	95.12 \pm 6.26
	PSO	99.71 \pm 4.30	93.30 \pm 8.16
Part	Chi ²	96.32 \pm 0.88	64.86 \pm 19.01
	MRMR	97.44 \pm 0.97	78.79 \pm 13.21
	ReliefF	97.82 \pm 1.04	80.28 \pm 5.58
	PSO	97.62 \pm 0.91	82.36 \pm 10.72

Table 4: Accuracy for different feature selection methods. Accuracy is given as the stratified k-fold cross validation over 30 independent runs. We compare chi² (chi), maximum relevance - minimum redundancy (MRMR), reliefF, particle swarm optimization (PSO).

Table 4 shows for the training set, MRMR, ReliefF and PSO have comparable accuracy for both datasets. The Chi² method does not, instead it performs very poorly. For the test set, ReliefF performs best for species, and PSO performs best for the part.

5.2 Classification Accuracy (all k)

We measure classification accuracy as a function of feature number. We compared this for several FS methods. Due to limitations, PSO optimizes feature

number k automatically. So, to compare its performance, we plot the results of 30 independent runs.

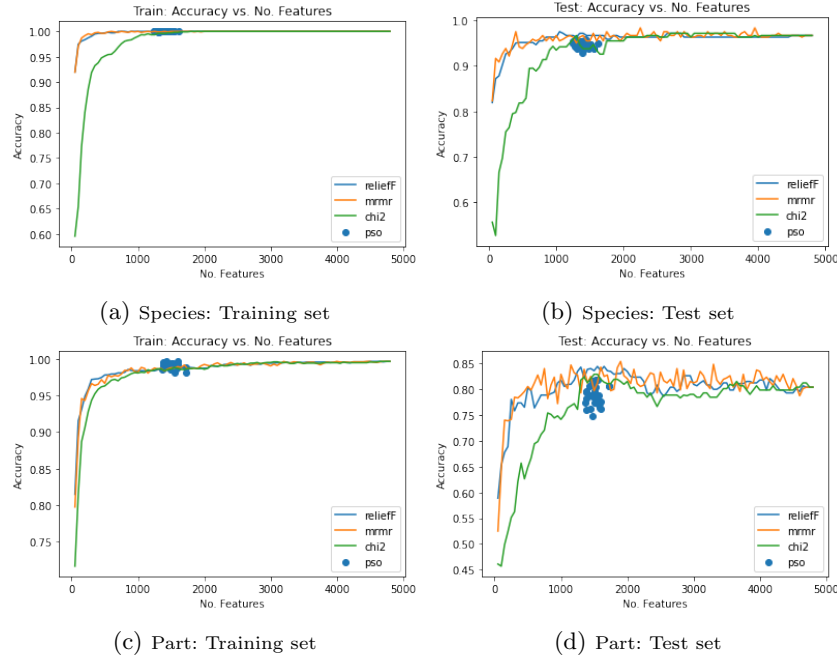


Fig. 4: Fish part dataset: classification accuracy for feature selection methods for a given k . Fish species dataset: Classification accuracy for feature selection methods for a given k . We measure the balanced accuracy of k -fold cross-validation. We compare reliefF, maximum relevance - minimum redundancy (MRMR), χ^2 , and particle swarm optimisation (PSO). Fish part dataset. (a) Training set. (b) Test set.

Figure 4a shows accuracy for fish species. We show accuracy on the training set for each feature selection method. At $k = 1050$ all feature selection methods achieve 100% accuracy on the training set. The SVM fits the training data for each method using a fraction of the full feature set. Figure 4b shows accuracy for fish species. We show test set accuracy for each feature selection method. The accuracy reaches a plateau (96% accuracy) at around $k = 1050$ features for all methods. The test performance is less than the train performance, yet the test accuracy is still very high. This suggests the model can generalize well on unseen data for the fish species.

Figure 4c shows accuracy for part dataset. We show train accuracy for each feature selection method. All feature selection methods struggle to fit the training set for the fish part. Even with the full feature set, a perfect train accuracy

is never reached. Figure 4d shows accuracy for part dataset. We show the test accuracy for each feature selection method. The classification accuracy fluctuates for all feature selection methods. At around $k = 1050$ features, it begins to decrease. The training accuracy improves, as the test does not from this point onwards. The SVM is overfitting to noise (redundant features) in the training set.

5.3 Disucssion

Feature selection methods helped reduce dimensionality. We evaluated performance with an SVM classifier. Which, ReliefF and PSO were best for fish species and part, respectively. ReliefF can identify conditional dependencies between features when providing feature rankings. ReliefF algorithms are robust and noise-tolerant, which explains their superior performance. PSO provides a combination of global and local searches. A search through a near-infinite combinatorial space of possible feature subsets. This stochastic method is computationally expensive but can offer effective solutions.

For both general and specific cases, and across all methods, the fish species have lower variance than the fish part in classification accuracy. The classification results support this, they also show higher test accuracy for fish species, than for fish parts. They suggest different fish parts may have fewer underlying structural differences.

For the general case and both datasets, a lot of interesting behaviour happens at $k = 1050$. The fish species reach a plateau, but the fish part accuracy begins to decrease. Accuracy comparable to or better than the full dataset is possible with 21.8% of its features.

For the fish species dataset, we see high accuracy with very few features. ReliefF and MRMR can achieve above 90% classification accuracy with $k = 50$. Chi² is not able to mirror this performance. This shows that ReliefF and MRMR are very effective feature selection methods for this task.

The PSO may not have a hyperparameter for feature number k . Instead, it automates the selection of this parameter. Yet, it achieves comparable results to other state-of-the-art methods. This automation may prove useful for automating the classification task for online learning. In a factory, we may want to train a model as new data arrives. PSO requires less human intervention, yet still, provides competitive performance.

MRMR and ReliefF both have high accuracy with very few features on the fish species dataset. This suggests that few features are required to construct a reasonable representation of a fish tissue sample. This is a good indication that the fish species dataset contains less noise. This also warrants further investigation into which features are considered important for low k values. This motivates the following section on visualisation.

6 Conclusions and Future Work

This paper has demonstrated an interpretable and effective method for fish oil analysis. The method can be understood, domain experts can understand the important features in the decision-making. Not only have we found effective classification and feature selection techniques, but we have also tried to explain their performance with visualisation and analytical results. We can draw many conclusions from the analytical results and visualisations, but here we recall the most important:

1. Fish species are easier to predict than fish parts - there is more intra-class variation within fish species than there is a similarity between the same part from different fish.
2. The Linear SVM classifier performs better for both classification tasks - the fish oil data is linearly separable on a hyperplane.
3. Near-perfect accuracy can be achieved with very few features for fish species - if this predictive ability exceeds human error this model has real-world applications.
4. Comparison with PSO may be difficult (due to automatic k selection), but this automation may be useful in a factory setting.

Feature selection is not guaranteed to improve classification accuracy. Yet, it does reduce the complexity, increase interpretability and improve computational efficiency. It simplifies the feature space, removing noise, and revealing the important features of the model output. As with the SVM using an l_1 regularization, feature selection is also a trade-off between interpretability and performance. Arthur C. Clarke said, "[a]ny sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." [6]. A perfect blackbox model is equivalent to magic, and, it is difficult to have faith in magic, especially if it were to be involved in fish processing. Faith isn't needed when our models are interpretable and effective.

LinearSVC applied to GC fish oil data can help to reduce waste in fish processing. This ensures more sustainable eco-friendly practices in fish processing. Waste reduction and repurposing is a rising tide that lifts all boats. Sustainable practices will leave plenty of fish in the sea, preserving resources for future generations.

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