### Abstract

Excessive and intense barking has been a long-time problem for dog owners and households due to the harshness of the sound, the loud acoustic nature of the volume, and the fear of barking by a significant proportion of the population. The causes of dog barking are varied however barking caused by environmental noise has been particularly noticed. With the maturity of sound recognition technology, it has become possible to represent sound waveforms from Mel-frequency cepstral coefficients (MFCC) and Mel Spectrogram features to model and predict the time of appearance of barking dogs by a Convolutional Neural Network structured model. This paper will perform a classification model on possible dog bark triggers from public environmental sound databases and use the model to analyse and predict the barking behaviour from audio clips simulating a real-life dog barking scenario.

Keywords - Audio recognition, Convolutional Neural Networks, Mel Frequency Cepstral Coefficients, Dog Bark, Behaviour Prediction

### I. Introduction

**- Background information on the project**

In recent years, with the rapid development of deep learning, sound recognition has also been widely used in vary or fields, including automatic speech recognition (ASR)\cite{kabir2021survey} and environmental sound classification (ESC) \cite{bansal2022environmental}, and has been widely applied in smart home, medical, security monitoring fields. The emergence of audio recognition based on the development of machine learning and neural networks has made it possible to handle complex audio classification tasks. In addition to the areas mentioned, there has been quite a wide range of applications for animal voice recognition. The convolutional neural network (CNN) models outstanding ability to distinguish differences in audio of has made it possible perform breed identification and environmental quality issue based on animal sound analysis\cite{wang2019cough}.

Large numbers of automation of decisioning and classification of sound-based processing tasks have been raised and discussed. In this paper, a method to predict the cause of dog barking based on environmental sound recognition will be demonstrated. Due to the large variety and amount of noise in the city, these noises would cause anxiety in dogs and leads to excessive barking. Each individual dog is sensitive to different noises and lead to different reactions, as a result each dog will have their different noises that trigger barking depending on personality and environment. It is therefore natural for dog owners to seek to train their pets to minimize the behaviours that cause discomfort.

This prediction task of dog barking the following difficulties: (1) the nature of large amount and variety of urban noises around households therefore for general classification of noised a dataset contains large range of different noised is required; (2) difficulty to collect a large amount of data of each individual as the barking trigger sound is different, and there is almost no audio datasets about dog trigger barking is available, hence audio data augmentation technique is important; (3) based on breed, characteristic, growing environment etc. each dog would has different behavioural patterns, a general strategy to cover all to predict barking behaviour for a specific dog; (4) major limitation of the model about barking behaviour varies from each independent dog, and sound recognition could hardly cover all sources of barking triggers.

This paper discusses a machine learning-based approach to automate the prediction and barking behaviour of domesticated dogs to achieve behaviours that can intervene and prevent barking triggered by environmental noise and could further positively motivate the correct behaviour of dogs. Section 2 will go through a literature review of audio recognition, environmental sound classification systems, dog barking veterinary behaviour, and existing datasets; section 3 introduces the methodology used in the research, comparing different data processing, feature extraction, data augmentation techniques, CNN models and pre-trained model and hyperparameter tuning methods, managing to achieve a better performance in accuracy in efficiency; section 4 would evaluate the experiment result and demonstrate the model performance; section 5 discusses the limitation and potential future directions; and section 6 concludes the work and research. By conducting this research, an automated system for dispensing treats or snacks to the dog before it barks and using the model as a tool to encourage positive behaviour is aimed to be achieved.

### II. Literature Review

**-2.1 Techniques for sound classification**

The earliest research into voice recognition was scholars began to explore automatic speech recognition (ASR) in 1950s. Due to limitations in computing power as well as lack in sound analysis technology, the main methodology was pattern matching based on acoustic principles \cite{furui2010history}. The first big breakthrough of sound recognition was Hidden Markov models (HMMs) methods in the 1980s. The nature of excellent statistical power of HMMs models make it suitable and widely used in sound classification tasks. Later in the 1990s, the exponential increase in computer computing power and the widespread availability of audio files led to an explosion in automatic speech recognition including large vocabulary continuous speech recognition (LVCSR) systems. Now due to the advancements in deep learning in recent years, neural networks have demonstrated exceptional suitability for recognition tasks in effectiveness and accuracy, Support Vector Machines (SVMs) and CNN have become the predominant approach for voice recognition\cite{su2019environment}.

**- 2.2 Overview of environmental sound classification**

Research on environmental sound classification has been largely focused around the last 20 years when machine learning and neural networks have been widely used. Speech recognition and music classification are the initial focus of attention on environmental sound recognition. Later the improvement of feature extraction in time domain features, frequency domain features, and time-frequency features like Mel Frequency Cepstrum Coefficient (MFCC) brought in the development of environmental sound classification\cite{chachada2014environmental}. Recently, environmental sound classification is widely used in home automation\cite{ wang2008robust} and in the field of sound-based species classification such as bird call classification\cite{ bardeli2010detecting}.

**- 2.3 Binary classification of sounds**

There is also extensive published work on the binary classification of sounds, with popular models including Support Vector Machine (SVM)\cite{muhammad2014pathological} and the CNN as mentioned above. In addition, numerous studies on biological characteristics classification have cited the effectiveness of random forest trees\cite{statnikov2008comprehensive} and logistic regression\cite{springer2015logistic} in similar classification tasks.

**- 2.4 Previous studies on dog behaviour and barking**

In existing research of dog behaviour, dog barking is not only a reaction to express anger, but also for many reasons. Studies have shown that dogs will bark when faced with fear, noise and separation anxiety, and female, neutered and more fearful dogs significantly responding to noise more strongly\cite{tiira2016prevalence}.

In addition, dog barking has been shown to have a role in communication. When dogs bark in communication and other behaviours, dog barking will be different from other dogs, and it will be affected by human preferences and social environments\cite{pongracz2010barking}.

**- 2.5 Existing datasets for environmental sound classification**

With the popularization of digital recording technology and more and more sound file could be retrieved from the internet, researchers began to construct large-scale environmental sound datasets. These datasets include different types of environmental sounds such as city streets, forests, traffic noise, etc. In recent researches the two databases widely used for urban environmental sound classification are UrbanSound8K\cite{Salamon:UrbanSound:ACMMM:14} and ESC-50\cite{ piczak2015dataset}. Two databases consist of a collection of urban sounds, which includes 8,732 common sounds heard in a city that also contains dog bark. Waveform signals will be extracted from all sound files for feature extraction. Researchers could classify and analyse environmental sound events based on these datasets and apply the models to detect specific sounds such as fire alarms, car horns, etc.

### III. Methodology

Environment sound classification model

The high-level approach includes a multi-class classifier and developed using a CNN-based neural network model. The emphasis of this model will be on using appropriate convolution kernels to efficiently extract waveform signal features. To achieve the best training results for this classification task, various convolutional neural network structures, data inputs, number of pooling layers, and learning rate parameters will be explored.

**- Data collection and pre-processing**

As a model for detecting environmental sound events, it is necessary to be able to classify a wide range of different classes of environmental noise. The dataset used for the first ESC classification task is ESC-50, which has 50 types of common urban sounds from 5 higher-level categories: Animals, Natural soundscapes, Human non-speech sounds, Interior/domestic sounds, and Exterior/urban noises. These categories include a range of possible sounds that a domestic dog may hear and trigger barking in the home environment thus is suitable to be the data source to train the classification model of dog bark triggers.

The dataset contains an csv file and 2000 wav format audio clips to process with. We use LibROSA, a python library to read the wav files into a one-dimensional array format of audio samples time series representation of the audio with the sample rate.

**- Data augmentation and regularization techniques**

**Balance the dataset**

In the ESC-50 dataset, we have a total of 2000 audio files, with each category contains 40 samples. Each of these audio files has a duration of 5 seconds. This ensures an evenly distributed representation across all categories hence no further balance process is required.

Data normalisation

For each audio, we normalise the waveform by standard deviation and centre it to the zero mean. This ensures that over all audio files, the volume level is consistent and clipping and any distortion can be avoided. This process also minimises the difference between audios in the same category caused by different radio conditions and outstands the differences in acoustic characteristics between different classes.

Input length

Table 1 lists out the different audio training input lengths experimented. On a base CNN model, we tried separately using (1) original 5s long audio (2) normalized 5s long audio (3) normalized random 2s long audio (4) normalized random 2s long audio, selected non-silence interval (5) normalized random 3s long audio, (6) normalized random 3s long audio, selected non-silence interval, extracts the basic MFCC features as input. By comparing the accuracy, the normalized 5s long audio is used as the base audio input.

Non-silent intervals

We used the function librosa.effects.split() to split all non-silent segments, but it also captures small nonsensical segments that is meaningless to the training. We believe that for some human sounds with intermittency acoustic features, such as coughing and snoring, shorter duration reduces the model's ability to discriminate audio. Although this reduces the amount of input data and training time, the outcome suggests that the silence gaps in the audio contributes positively to distinguish them from other sounds.

\begin{table}[!ht]

\centering

\begin{tabular}{|Pre-process method|Accuracy on bench line CNN|}

\hline

5s Original Clip & 0.63 \\ \hline

5s Normalised & 0.66 \\

Random Normalised 2s & 0.49 \\

Most Non-Silent Inteval Normalised 2s & 0.46 \\

Random Normalised 3s & 0.52 \\

Most Non-Silent Inteval Normalised 3s & 0.49 \\ \hline

\end{tabular}

\end{table}

**- Feature extraction methods**

As mentioned in section 2, both MFCC and Mel Spectrograms are the dominant approach of extracting features from waveform signals.

Mel Spectrograms provided a visual representation of the sound spectrum. The original audio signal is transformed into a spectrogram by Mel Spectrogram, which shifts audio information from the time domain to the frequency domain, where the vertical axis represents frequency, the horizontal axis represents time, and the colour or grayscale represents energy or amplitude.

MFCC is a standard technique in audio recognition and is set of eigencoefficients extracted from the Mel spectrogram. It captures characteristics such as pitch, timbre, and other important properties related to human perception of sound. The MFCC extraction process includes pre-processing, fast Fourier transform, Mel scale, logarithmic operation, discrete cosine transforms, dynamic feature extraction and other steps, smoothing of the spectrum by reinforcing the wave at low frequencies as in human aural. Although it is commonly believed that dogs hear farther and in a larger frequency range than humans\cite{barber2020comparison}, the main target is to distinguish environmental sounds and MFCC’s ability of compress wave feature dimension of makes it well suited in classification task.

The graph below gives a visualised view of the Mel Spectrograms and MFCC. The Mel Spectrogram represents the time and frequency characteristics of the waveform well and is well differentiated between each different class. The MFCC coefficients on the right also gives a fair representation of acoustic characteristics of each class even though the dimensionality is reduced. Intuitively MFCC conveys the waveform features well on the low frequency area.

We trained the basic CNN model by using both features. As a preliminary result, using MFCC feature only gives an accuracy around 63% and using Mel Spectrogram gives 57%. Comparing with the accuracy MFCC and Mel Spectrograms used as the feature separately, and considering in balancing the training efficiency and accuracy, in the final model both features were used as the feature to train the model. While MFCC gives a good representation, we still want to keep the higher frequency areas as a feature as dog are sensitive with them. Both features are extracted from the pre-processed video clip and saved as npy (NumPy array format) locally for further use to save time for further training process.

**Convolutional layers details**

The benchmark CNN used was a multi-input model that has two branches built in with. The MFCC features are processed on one path, and on the other path Mel Spectrogram features are processed. The input data were handled individually by each branch using convolutional, pooling, and fully connected layers. The pooling layers reduce computational complexity and feature dimensionality. The outputs of the two branches were then combined and fed through a dense layer for final processing and prediction.

Mel-Spectrogram Path – The raw Mel Spectrogram feature has a dimension of (128, 216). To save the training time, a MinMaxScaler to scale Mel spectrogram data to the [0, 1] range is used to reduce the dimension of the features. This also speeds up the time of the model to converge by minimise the interval of the feature and prevent large values from impacting the model. Then The ReLU activation function is used to process the Mel spectrogram input through two 2D convolutional layers with 16 and 32 filters, and max pooling is used to lower the spatial dimensionality after each convolution layer.

MFCC Path –

Concatenation and Dense Layers -

**Hyperparameter tuning**

**Pre-trained CNN models**

Dog barking behaviour prediction model

The second classification task is binary classification of audio, aimed at predicting whether a dog will bark or not.

Training a model to predict the behaviour of a single dog poses challenges due to unique behaviour patterns and limited data availability. Gathering sufficient data for each dog is time-consuming and impractical. Overcoming these challenges requires approaches such as data augmentation. Despite the limitations, advancements in machine learning techniques offer opportunities to develop effective dog behaviour training models in real-life scenarios. Addressing these challenges can contribute to understanding and predicting dog behaviour more effectively.

Since each dog may behave differently, the training data will contain combined sounds based on UrbanSound8k. Separate noises and barks are combined into longer audio files using audio clips. Multiple models will be built and compared for this classification task to select the best performing model. The models to be tested include SVM, Random Forest, Logistic Regression, and CNN. In addition, techniques such as data augmentation, regularization, and hyperparameter tuning will be utilized to enhance the performance of the model. Combinations of unsupervised learning methods may also be effective for this classification task.

* Data augmentation

Since each audio file is lengthy, feature extraction becomes challenging due to the vast amount of data involved. To tackle this issue, our initial approach is to segment each audio file into smaller pieces and mark the class as ’N’ for the segments that the dogs didn’t react with. This technique will help reduce the size of each data piece while increasing the amount of data to facilitate the extraction of waveform feature graphics.

* . - Classification models
* - Model evaluation and comparison

### IV. Results and Discussion

- Presentation of results for each classification task

- Evaluation of model performance

Complexity versus accuracy

- Comparison of different models and techniques used

- Analysis of findings and discussion of insights

- Limitations and future research directions

**V. Conclusion and Recommendations**

**- Summary of the study**

Overall, this research signifies a direction in the use of machine learning techniques to understand and predict dog barking behaviour, which could be further refined and applied in real world scenarios such as in training aids or behaviour management tools for dogs.

**- Implications of the research for dog behaviour training**

Even though this study gives us some insight about dog barking triggers, it does have some shortcomings. The sound data we used only covers 10 types of urban sounds, which couldn’t cover sounds that dog might get attracted in a real life. Also, our measure of how good the model is at predicting barks is based on how well a sound classification model can label different sounds. If this model isn't very accurate, it could affect our model's ability to predict barking.

**- Recommendations for future research**

For future work, one direction is to involve real-time Acoustic Event Detection and unsupervised learning, that it could be able to train or manage a dog's behaviour in real time, changing based on the sounds around the dog.

Another is to combine veterinary behaviour studies to improve our model. If we know more about the tendencies of specific breeds, or health status of individual dogs, we could make a completer and more accurate model for predicting when a dog is going to bark.

- Conclusion and final remarks