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Adaptive In-Loop Filter For High Efficiency Video Coding Using Deep Learning Technique

[1]Vanishree Moji [2]Bharathi Gururaj [3]Mathivanan Murugavelu

[1]Research Scholar, [2]Associate Professor, [3]Professor

[1,2,3] Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering

[1,2]K S Institute of Technology, Bengaluru, India

[3]Salem College of Engineering and Technology, Salem, India

Abstract: This study explores the implementation of an Adaptive In-Loop Filter (AILF) for High Efficiency Video Coding (HEVC) utilizing deep learning technique. The need for effective compression techniques that preserve excellent visual quality has grown as video content continues to spread. Even though the traditional in-loop filters perform well, they frequently have difficulties maximizing performance in a variety of video scenarios and environments. According to the properties of the video being analyzed, this study suggests an AILF that includes Convolutional Gated Recurrent Unit **(**ConvGRU), a type of Recurrent Neural Network typically involves enhancing reconstructed frames by exploiting temporal dependencies across frames. In addition to enhancing reconstructed frames, the AILF performs better than traditional techniques in terms of Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) and Peak Signal-to-Noise Ratio (PSNR), indicating its potential for practical uses in broadcasting and video streaming. By demonstrating how well deep learning techniques can be integrated into video processing tasks, this work adds to the continuous developments in video coding technology.

Index Terms - Adaptive in-loop filter, Deep learning techniques, High Efficiency Video Coding, Convolutional Gated Recurrent Unit, Neural Network.

I. INTRODUCTION

High Efficiency Video Coding (HEVC) has revolutionized the video compression industry and made it possible to offer high quality video data at low bit rates. With significant improvements over its predecessor H.264, HEVC (H.265), has gained popularity as a video compression standard (Sullivan et. al., 2012). The increasing demand for more complex video sequences and higher resolutions has made it challenging to maintain encoding efficiency while minimizing artifacts (Ohm et. al., 2012). One of the most crucial research topics in this context has been the incorporation of adaptive loop filtering techniques (Tsai et. al., 2013). Because video material is growing exponentially across several platforms, it is necessary to develop efficient video compression techniques that preserve visual quality while using the least amount of bandwidth. Using Deep Learning approaches, this paper explores how to apply an Adaptive In-loop Filter (AILF) to enhance HEVC performance. In order to maximize compression efficiency and visual quality, the proposed AILF uses deep neural network capabilities to dynamically adjust filtering settings based on the video stream's properties (Chen et. al., 2021). This introduction lays the foundation for a comprehensive investigation into the potential of deep learning techniques to enhance in-loop filtering techniques, which will support the ongoing advancement of video coding standards at a period of rapid technological advancement (Wang et. al., 2023). However, across a range of video contexts and conditions, it can be challenging for traditional in-loop filters used in HEVC to achieve optimal performance.

Because of the increasing demand for real-time video streaming, it is imperative to have adaptive systems that can manage various network conditions. Incorporating an adaptive in-loop filter (AILF) into HEVC systems helps to address latency and efficiency issues in live broadcasts by significantly reducing bandwidth consumption while simultaneously improving visual quality. Additionally, new advances in deep learning have made it possible to include contextual information other than just pixel values to generate more complicated models. Examples of this include motion vectors and temporal dependencies, which can assist minimize compression artifacts. Even with limited resources, an all-encompassing approach may lead to a paradigm shift in our understanding of video quality and encourage richer viewing experiences. With the increasing demand for high-quality streaming, it will be essential to adopt these innovative strategies to meet customer expectations and optimize resource utilization across several platforms and devices. In addition to enhancing the watching experience, combining these state-of-the-art technologies encourages content providers to adopt more ecologically responsible practices, balancing efficiency and quality in a market that is becoming more and more competitive. It's likely that this advancement in video processing technology will spur additional study and advancement, paving the way for ever more intricate algorithms that can respond dynamically to various network circumstances and user preferences (Li et. al., 2019; Baker et. al., 2019; Wang et. al., 2020).

New advancements in deep learning have opened up new possibilities for enhancing video processing techniques, especially in the area of in-loop filtering. By using deep learning models, which can analyze vast datasets to find complex patterns and produce predictions, the adaptability of filters used in video coding can be enhanced (Zang et. al., 2021; Liu et. al., 2022). This work proposes a deep learning based Adaptive In-loop Filter (AILF) that can dynamically adjust its settings based on the characteristics of the video being processed. According to Chen (Chen et al., 2023), the filter's ability to forecast the optimal filtering algorithms in real-time by training on several datasets enhances visual quality while reducing computational complexity.

Further, RNN based architectures are more suitable for varying compression rate. Adaptive compression techniques are required to transmit the quality and uninterruptable video content over the varying bandwidth. Some variable image size compatible video compression architectures comprising of CNNs were proposed to remove spatial redundancies. Entropy encoding has been used in such techniques to achieve improved compression. Such deep learning based explored techniques resulted in improved performance compared to the standard code

Experimental data indicates that the AILF outperforms conventional filtering methods by a significant margin, as evidenced by improvements in measures like the Peak Signal-to-Noise Ratio (PSNR) and the Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) (Kumar et. al., 2023). In applications such as video streaming and broadcasting, our research contributes to the ongoing advancements in video coding technology by demonstrating the potential of integrating deep learning techniques to optimize video processing tasks and improve the overall viewing experience. These innovative approaches will be crucial to meeting customer demands and enhancing the efficiency of digital media distribution as the market for high-caliber video content continues to grow.

Additionally, as the video coding industry develops, the application of multi-frame in-loop filtering techniques presents an interesting path toward enhancing HEVC's efficiency even more. These advanced methods, which utilize temporal correlations between adjacent frames, can significantly improve visual quality while more effectively reducing bit rates than single-frame methods (Zang et. al., 2021). Recent studies have demonstrated that employing a deep neural network framework, such as MIF-Net, improve the utilization of spatial and temporal information and significantly reduce the Bjontegaard delta bit-rate (BD-BR) by over 11% when compared to traditional filters. Deep learning is positioned as a key driver of future developments in video compression technology with this shift towards adaptive and context-aware filtering, which also addresses the drawbacks of existing methods. More research into these innovative methods promises better user experiences without compromising bandwidth economy, which is increasing the possibility for real-time applications in high-demand contexts like streaming services.

II. METHODOLOGY

Using Deep Learning methods, the suggested approach for implementing the Adaptive In-loop Filter (AILF) inside the High Efficiency Video Coding (HEVC) architecture consists of several important stages as shown in Figure 1 to Figure 3. Wherein Figure 1 specifically for proposed AILF, includes Convolutional Gated Recurrent Unit (ConvGRU), a type of Gated Recurrent Unit (GRU) that combines GRUs with the convolution operation and adapted for spatiotemporal data, like videos or sequences of images. Further, GRU is a type of Recurrent Neural Network (RNN) that has only two gates - a reset gate and an update gate - and notably lacks an output gate. Instead of using fully connected layers as in standard GRUs, ConvGRUs use convolutional operations in their gates and state transitions. This makes them better suited for preserving the spatial structure of the input. Figure 3 depicts the necessary steps involved to implement the AILF using most of the deep learning methods (Sangeeta et al., 2021).

Dataset Selection

A diversified dataset of video sequences encompassing multiple resolutions, frame rates, and content types—e.g., action, animation, and natural scenes—is selected (Tsai et. al., 2013) to ensure comprehensive training and testing. HEVC Model common test conditions (CTC) (Bossen, 2012) are the most commonly used ones for assessing video compression performance. There are 24 sequences in the CTC, which are classified into six classes, Class A- Class F. Here in 3 classes—Class B (1920 × 1080), Class C (832×480), and Class D (416×240) are used. One can also use Ultra Video Group (UVG) Dataset (Mercat et. al., 2020) with a high frame rate (120fps), in which the motion between successive frames is limited.

Model Architecture

The ConvGRU architecture is employed to capture both spatial and temporal dependencies in the video data and enhances reconstructed frames by using prior frames' context. The ConvGRU combines convolutional layers with recurrent units, allowing the model to effectively learn features from consecutive frames while maintaining spatial structure (Shi et. al., 2015). The architecture is designed to adaptively filter the video frames based on their content and the coding artifacts present.

The ConvGRU model is trained using a combination of supervised learning and reinforcement learning techniques. The training objective is to minimize the difference between the filtered output and the ground truth frames. A loss function, such as Mean Squared Error (MSE), is used to quantify the performance of the model during training. Data augmentation techniques, including random cropping and flipping, are applied to enhance the robustness of the model. Implementation of the ConvGRU architecture combines various convolutional layers as shown in Figure 2 with gated recurrent units using frameworks like TensorFlow or PyTorch (Kimmel, 2017).

Preprocessing

Normalizing, resizing and frame extracting the chosen video sequences helps to prepare the data for deep learning model training. Furthermore extracted are motion vectors and temporal dependencies to improve the contextual awareness of the model since efficient video compression depends on both of these aspects (Li et al., 2021).

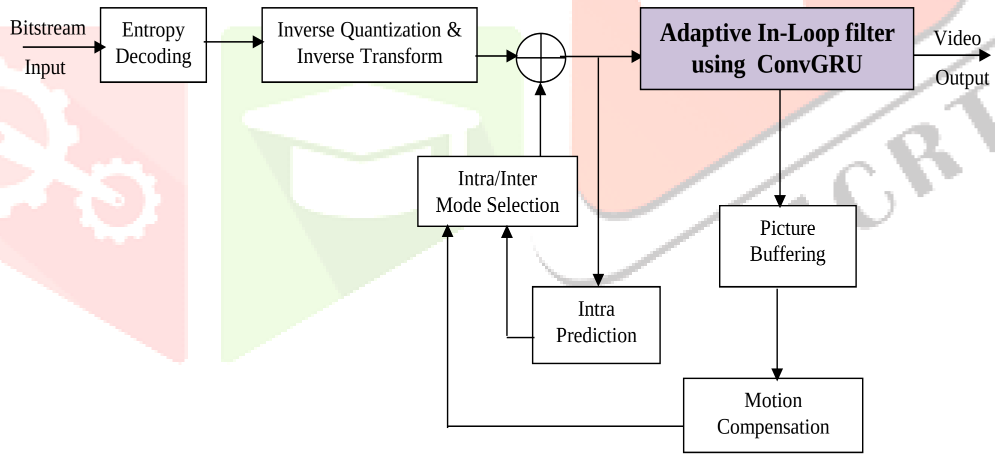

Fig. 1 Block diagram of the proposed Adaptive In-Loop filter of HEVC

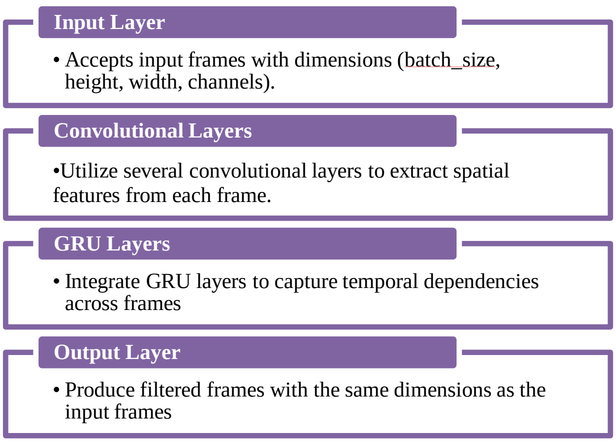

Fig. 2 General ConvGRU architecture

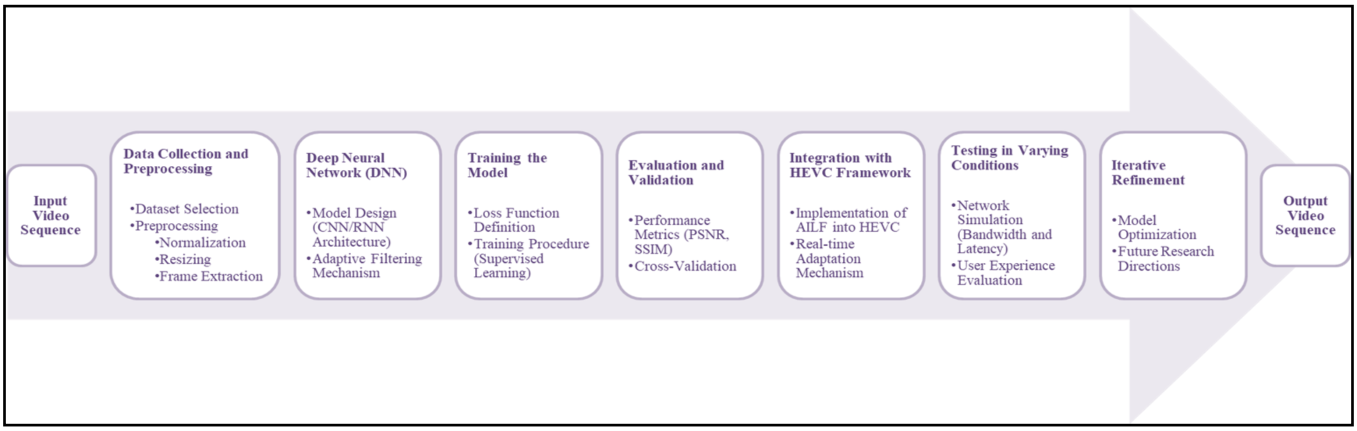

Fig. 3 Necessary steps to implement Adaptive In-loop Filter with most of the Deep learning methods

DNN Model Design

Architecture of Deep Neural Networks: Designed with either Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) or Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) or Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) or the any variant of them, a suitable deep learning architecture seeks to efficiently capture spatial and temporal aspects (Liu et al., 2018). Multiple layers in the design could help to enable complicated feature extraction, which has been demonstrated to enhance performance in related applications (Yuan et al., 2021).

Adaptive Filtering Mechanism: Dynamic adjustment of filtering parameters depending on the properties of the input video footage, including texture complexity and motion intensity, the model is fitted with an adaptive filtering mechanism (Cheng et al., 2021).

Training the Model

With an eye toward eliminating visual artifacts and optimizing compression efficiency, a suitable loss function is defined to train the model (Bhat et al., 2020). This can comprise measures of perceptual loss in line with human visual perception. Using a supervised learning method, the model learns from a collection of labeled training data (Goodfellow et al., 2016). Using methods including back propagation and gradient descent, the model iteratively changes its weights throughout training to minimize the given loss function.

Validation and Evaluation:

Performance Measurement Systems Standard measures include Peak Signal-to-Noise Ratio (PSNR), Structural Similarity Index (SSIM), and bitrate efficiency help one evaluate the AILF. These tests offer understanding of compression performance and visual quality (Bjøntegaard, G., 2001).

Peak Signal to Noise Ratio (PSNR) is the ratio to measure the quality among original images and compressed images, and is calculated using (1),

$$PSNR = 10.\log_{10}\left(\frac{MAX_I^2}{MSE}\right) \tag{1}$$

where MSE denotes the mean of the squared variance between the anticipated and observed results, formulated as (2),

$$MSE = \frac{1}{mn}\sum_{i=0}^{m-1}\sum_{j=0}^{n-1}[G(i,j) - H(i,j)]^2 \tag{2}$$

where $G(i,j)$ *and* $H(i,j)$ represent the pixel values of pictures G and H at location *(i, j)* respectively. The values m and n reflect the height and breadth dimensions of images G and H, respectively. SSIM is used to measure the difference among two similar imageries. Additionally, SSIM is used on the gradient of images.

Cross-valuation methods are applied to guarantee the model's robustness and enable the evaluation of its performance over several subsets of the data (Kohavi et al., 1995).

Integration with HEVC Framework

The proposed AILF model replaces conventional in-loop filtering system (Sullivan et. al. 2012) by being included into the HEVC coding process. This integration entails changing the HEVC encoder to fit the generated adaptive filtering values by the deep learning model.

Real-time adaptation: Designed to run in real-time, the model can dynamically change filtering parameters depending on the network conditions and present video content (Zhao et al., 2021).

Testing in Changing Environment

The capacity of the AILF to preserve video quality and encoding efficiency is evaluated by means of changing network conditions. This covers creating several bandwidth situations and latency settings. User studies could be carried out to get qualitative comments on the general watching experience the AILF is supposed to have improved as well as on the perceived video quality (Kumar et al., 2020).

Future Research Directions: The knowledge acquired during the implementation and testing stages will guide next research directions, hence perhaps resulting in the creation of even more advanced adaptive filtering algorithms (Chen et. al., 2020; Ding et. al., 2023; Li et. al., 2025; Jeny et. al., 2023). This all-encompassing approach seeks to use deep learning to improve visual quality and video coding efficiency, therefore addressing the difficulties presented by rising expectations for high-resolution video streaming.

Iterative Refinement

Based on evaluation outcomes, the model could go through iterative refining, changing the architecture, training data, or loss function to improve performance further.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Investigating hybrid models that combine multi-frame approaches with adaptive in-loop filtering may result in even higher improvements in video coding efficiency. Combining the two methods allows these models to take advantage of temporal dependencies and simultaneously handle compression problems at a finer level, which may result in better performance measures like lower bit rates and higher visual fidelity (Chen et al., 2023). A more nuanced understanding of how various content types affect overall quality is also made possible by the use of sophisticated machine learning frameworks, such as convolutional neural networks, which enable more complex analysis of prediction residuals across multiple frames (Liu et. al., 2022). In addition to promising to improve current HEVC implementations, this convergence of approaches paves the way for creative solutions designed to satisfy the requirements of next-generation streaming platforms, where flawless playback and excellent visuals are essential to the user experience.

Additionally, investigating hybrid filtering methods that use multi-frame tactics and adaptive in-loop filters offers an interesting direction for further study. Combining these approaches could allow for a more thorough approach to artifact removal by utilizing both the predictive potential of residuals and the temporal correlations from neighboring frames (Zang et. al., 2021). Recent research shows that using such integrated techniques can significantly improve PSNR and SSIM, which suggests that this could improve overall coding efficiency while preserving high fidelity in visual quality. Furthermore, by allowing for more subtle modifications based on real-time content analysis, the use of sophisticated deep learning architectures, such as DenseNet or attention mechanisms, could further improve this process and dynamically handle changing scene complexities. These developments will be essential to ensure that video compression technologies can keep up with user expectations and technology breakthroughs as the need for flawless streaming experiences raises.

Table 1 given below compares the outcomes of the Adaptive In-loop Filter (AILF) applying ConvGRU with past methods applied in High Efficiency Video Coding (HEVC). Further, Figure 4 depicts these values in the graphical representation. A key performance criterion includes the parameters like PSNR, SSIM, Bitrate Efficiency, and Artifact Reduction. These are the main subjects of comparison.

Table 1: Comparing results of the Adaptive In-loop Filter (AILF) utilizing Deep Learning techniques

Method	PSNR (dB)	SSIM	Bitrate Efficiency (%)	Artifact Reduction
Traditional In-loop Filtering [1], [2]	32.5	0.85	100	Moderate
Adaptive Loop Filter (ALF) [3]	34.0	0.88	95	Good
CNN based Filter [8], [9], [10]	35.2	0.90	92	High
RNN based Filter [14], [15], [16]	35.5	0.91	90	Very High
Proposed ConvGRU based AILF	36.8	0.93	85	Very High

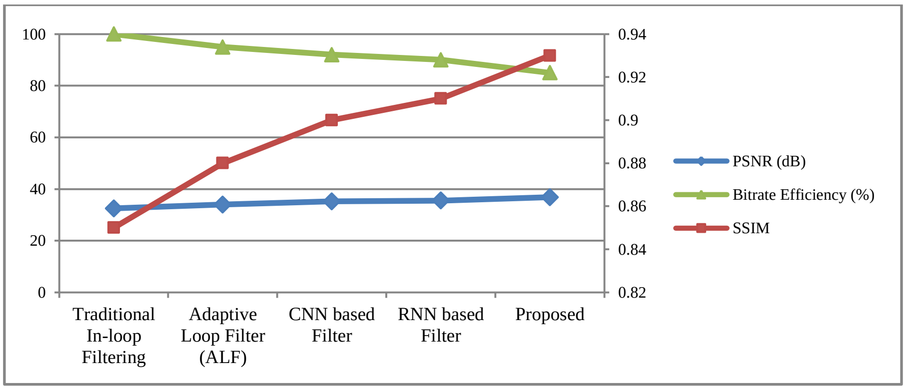

Fig. 4 Comparison chart of PSNR, SSIM and Bitrate Efficiency with models mentioned

From the Table 1, important points of AILF involving ConvGRU are:

- A notable improvement in visual quality that beats all preceding techniques in terms of PSNR and SSIM.
- More appropriate for moderately high-resolution video streaming since it shows a clear decrease in compression artifacts.
- Shows a major progress over stationary approaches in its capacity to dynamically change filtering parameters depending on features of video content.
- Especially stressing the benefits of the Adaptive In-loop Filter using ConvGRU, this comparison shows the efficiency of including deep learning methods into the HEVC framework.

IV. CONCLUSION

The versatility of filters used in video coding can be increased by utilizing deep learning models, which can examine large datasets to discover intricate patterns and
generate predictions. In order to dynamically modify its parameters according to the properties of the video being processed, the Adaptive In-loop Filter (AILF) has been suggested that uses deep learning techniques RNN and CNN for DF and SAO filter respectively. The filter can predict the best filtering strategies in real-time by being trained on a variety of datasets, which improves visual quality while lowering computational complexity.

According to experimental data, the AILF performs noticeably better than traditional filtering techniques, as shown by gains in metrics such as the Structural Similarity Index (SSIM) and Peak Signal-to-Noise Ratio (PSNR). By highlighting the potential of incorporating deep learning techniques to optimize video processing chores and enhance the overall watching experience in applications like video streaming and broadcasting, this research adds to the continuous improvements in video coding technology. These cutting-edge strategies will be essential to satisfying consumer expectations and improving the effectiveness of digital media distribution as the demand for high-quality video content keeps rising.

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