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The Sign flow: An Avatar-Based Toolkit

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ABSTRACT: The Sign language translation (SLT) is an inter-disciplinary field committed to the design of systems supporting deaf-hearing communication. The focus of this project lies in developing a state-of-the-art SLT system, leveraging the most recent advances in computer vision, machine learning, and natural language processing. The primary goal is to recognize and translate sign language gestures from video input with high accuracy and in real-time. The system proposed would utilize advanced methodologies, such as convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and recurrent neural networks (RNNs), in order to identify the intricate motions of hands, facial expressions, and body positions that are built into sign language. The largest challenge is to deal with sign language's versatility across geography and context, such that strong yet flexible models become necessary. The project will tackle these issues by concentrating on feature extraction, sequence modeling, and temporal analysis to effectively capture the subtleties of sign language.

KEYWORDS: Indian Sign Language (ISL), Sign Language Translation (SLT), Avatar Animation, Accessibility, Deaf Communication

I. INTRODUCTION

[1]Sign language is an essential means of communication for deaf communities. Indian Sign Language (ISL) is grammatically and culturally rich, but the hearing community is generally not aware of it. SignKit facilitates bridging the communication gap through AI and 3D avatar translation. It also provides educational resources and a community platform to enable inclusivity and social interaction. Sign language serves as a fundamental mode of communication for deaf communities worldwide, providing a rich and expressive means of conveying thoughts, ideas, and emotions. It is a visual language that utilizes hand gestures, facial expressions, and body movements to communicate meaning. [2]In India, the Indian Sign Language (ISL) is the primary language used by the deaf community. ISL, like other sign languages, possesses its own unique grammar, vocabulary, and linguistic structure, distinct from spoken languages. It is officially recognized, and efforts are underway to standardize and promote its use.[3]Nonetheless, there is a very important communication barrier between people who are hearing-impaired and those who use spoken language as their major mode of communication. This is caused by the fact that much of the hearing population does not comprehend or communicate in ISL. This gap of communication breeds many problems for the deaf individuals, affecting many areas of their lives. Among these are social isolation, restricted access to education, problems in finding and maintaining employment, and limited access to key services like healthcare, legal services, and public services. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates the number of persons with disabling hearing loss at nearly 466 million worldwide. For India, even exact figures prove hard to secure, yet India is widely believed to have a large number of persons with hearing loss[4]. There are still some reasons behind this ongoing communication barrier despite the sizeable population dependent on ISL for communication:

- 1. Limited Awareness and Understanding: There is limited awareness and understanding about ISL among the hearing population in India. Such unawareness is usually the source of misconceptions regarding sign language and deaf people's capabilities, which results in social barriers and effective communication blocks.
- 2. Lack of Trained Interpreters: There is a severe lack of trained ISL interpreters in India. The shortage prevents deaf people from receiving important services, attending public events, and having productive interactions with the hearing population. The scarcity of interpreters puts too much pressure on deaf people, and they have to use family members or friends for assistance, which may or may not be available or dependable.
- 3. **Insufficient Educational Resources:** Quality education in ISL is not easily accessible in India. Most schools do not have trained teachers who are skilled in ISL, and educational resources are not provided in sign language. This limited access to education may hamper the educational and professional growth of deaf people, restricting their opportunities and potential[4].



4. **Technological Constraints:** Although there are various technology solutions available for sign language translation, they come with constraints like high expense, complicated hardware needs, and low accuracy. Such constraints render hese technologies incompatible with extensive use in regular environments[5].Signflow will seek to offer an accessible, easy-to-use, and precise system that can be utilized by both hearing and hearing-impaired people. The website will be built with accessibility as a fundamental concept, making it accessible to people with varying needs and capabilities. Through the integration of advanced technology with a user-focused strategy, Signflow has the potential to greatly enhance communication access, encourage ISL education, and empower the deaf community in India. There are various sign language. Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 show some of the most popular sign languages' alphabets, in which the action for some alphabet can be similar between some countries, like in spanish and american sign language most of them are same.



Fig.1: Indian Sign language

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Fig.2: Arabic Sign Language

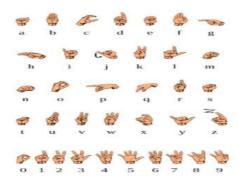


Fig. 3: American Sign Language

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which are American, Indian, and Arabic Sign Languages. We can observe that each sign language contains different signs than the other sign languages.

Objective:

To realize this objective, the project will follow the following specific objectives:

1. Create an Interactive Speech-to-Sign Translation System: Use strong and reliable speech recognition algorithms to efficiently translate spoken words into its text form. This will include researching and incorporating cutting-edge speech recognition tools, streamlining them for the characteristics of Indian English and other applicable spoken forms.Develop and deploy a high-fidelity 3D avatar system with the capability to represent ISL gestures with accuracy, smoothness, and naturalness. This will require close attention to handshape visualization, motion, facial expressions, and body posture, all of which are essential for expressing meaning in ISL.

2. Develop an Interactive ISL Learning Module: Create a well-organized and interesting curriculum for ISL learning that addresses learners with different levels and backgrounds. The curriculum will have a systematic flow of lessons encompassing basic ideas, vocabulary, grammar, and cultural features of ISL.

3. Develop Video Making Tools: Create a user-friendly and intuitive interface that enables users to easily create and edit ISL videos. The interface will have features for capturing sign language performances, inserting captions or voice-overs, and adding visual aids to improve clarity and engagement.

4. Foster Community Engagement: Develop a lively and accessible online community that allows for communication and exchange of information between hearing and hearing-impaired people. This community will offer places for users to communicate with each other, exchange their experiences, and establish supportive relationships.

5. Provide Accessibility and Usability: Design the system with accessibility as a fundamental principle, following recognized accessibility guidelines and best practices in a way that ensures it can be used by people with a wide range of needs and abilities. This will include thoughtful attention to elements like visual, auditory, cognitive, and motor impairments.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Dhanda et al.[6]The root issue is the widespread and consistent communication chasm between the hearing and the hearing-impaired in India, largely because the hearing population knows and utilizes the Indian Sign Language (ISL) to an extremely limited degree. This gap appears in numerous significant issues:

1. Limited Access to Sign Language Education: Conventional ISL learning methods are primarily based on face-to-face learning, which creates substantial barriers for most people. Geographical barriers, economic constraints, and time commitments may prevent individuals from enrolling in regular ISL courses.

2. Acute Shortage of Competent Interpreters: Demand for competent ISL interpreters outnumbers their supply in India by far. The shortage is very deep-reaching in its implication for deaf persons, curtailing their access to critical services such as healthcare services, legal protection, and governmental programs[7].

3. Tech nological Impediments and Inefficiencies: Current technical solutions to sign language translation frequently fail to offer smooth and convenient communication. Certain systems are based on clumsy hardware configurations, e.g., glove-based or motion capture-based systems, that are pricey, inconvenient, and uncomfortable to employ in common situations.

4. Pervasive Lack of Awareness and Social Stigma: A large section of the hearing population in India lacks adequate awareness and understanding of ISL as well as the difficulties of the deaf community. The resulting lack of awareness can cause social stigma, discrimination, and ostracism, further isolating deaf people and preventing them from functioning fully as members of society.

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These linked problems form a intricate and compound problem that necessitates an exhaustive and creative solution. Solving the problem is needed to support inclusivity, protect equal rights, and enable empowerment of the deaf community in India.

III. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

1.Real-time Speech-to-Sign Translation: Signflow will utilize state-of-the-art speech recognition and natural language processing (NLP) technologies to facilitate real-time translation of spoken language into ISL.

2.Interactive ISL Learning Module: Realizing the significance of enhancing ISL learning, Signflow will feature an interactive learning module.

3.Video Production and Sharing Solutions: Signflow will make it possible for deaf people to produce and share content in their home language by making user-friendly video production solutions available.

4.Community Interaction Platform: Signflow will engage a community spirit and camaraderie among the hearing and the hearing-impaired by giving an opportunity for them to interact with each other through a platform where they can know, support, and interact[8].

IV. SYSTEM DESIGN

This presents the Signflow design, describing the patterns of architecture, technical viability, system specifications, and workflow for the project. The design follows a user-friendly approach so that the system remains accessible, efficient, and effective in realizing its objectives and aims. Signflow is implemented as a web platform, utilizing React.js as the front-end with embedded AI/ML models for the essential functionality. The architecture of the system is modular in nature so that it remains adaptable for development as well as in the future for extension.

1. Architectural Pattern

Signflow has a component-based architecture that takes advantage of React.js' modularity and reusability. The app is designed as separate components with each performing an individual role for the user interface or function.

• **Component-Based Architecture**: Front-end is implemented with React.js, which is a JavaScript library for designing user interfaces. React makes it possible to implement dynamic and interactive UIs through the use of reusable components. Modularity, maintainability, and scalability are improved by this pattern.

• Integration of AI/ML Models: The fundamental features of Signflow, including speech-to-sign translation, are based on AI/ML models. These models are integrated into the React application to offer real-time translation and improve the user experience.

•Speech Recognition Model: A pre-trained or fine-tuned Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) model is utilized to translate spoken language into text. This model can be deployed using libraries such as TensorFlow.js or by using cloud-based speech recognition APIs.

•Sign Language Translation Model: A sequence-to-sequence model or a transformer network is used as an AI/ML model to translate the text into ISL sign language. The model is trained on a dataset of ISL signs and their textual equivalents.

•3D Avatar Animation: The 3D avatar animation is powered by the output of the sign language translation model. Programmatic control over the movements and gestures of the avatar is exercised within the React application to maintain precise and natural sign language reproduction.

This architecture provides for clean separation of concerns, where the UI and user interaction are managed by the React components and the AI/ML models manage the fundamental translation logic.

2. System Specification

Signflow system contains the following main parts:

•Speech Recognition Module: Transcribes verbal input to text with ASR (e.g., TensorFlow.js or cloud APIs).

•NLP Module: Deciphers the text to get the meaning and context with JavaScript or NLP services.

•ISL Translation Module: Renders processed text to ISL signs with AI/ML models.

•3D Avatar Animation Module: Renders ISL signs in a naturalistic 3D avatar within the React environment.

•ISL Learning Module: Provides organized ISL lessons with interactive content and progress tracking.

•Video Creation Tools: Enables easy recording, editing, and sharing of ISL videos.

•Community Engagement Platform: Facilitates discussions, sharing of resources, and user interaction.

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- •User Management Module: Manages secure registration, login, and profile management.
- 3. Project Workflow :
- •Requirements Analysis: Determine user requirements and system objectives.
- •System Design: Design architecture, choose tech stack, and design components.
- •Development: Create and deploy front-end, back-end, and ML models.
- •Testing: Execute unit, integration, system, and user tests.
- •Deployment: Deploy system using cloud or hosting solutions.
- •Maintenance: Deliver sustained support and address bugs.
- •Evaluation: Gather feedback and optimize system performance.

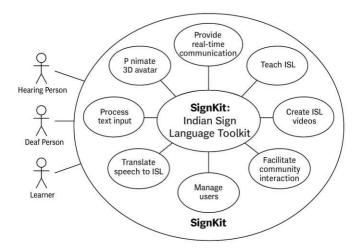


Fig.4: Use Case System Design.

V. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Though Signflow has created a basis for real-time sign language interpretation and acquisition, there are many areas yet to be explored.[10] The majority of current sign language recognition systems have only been constrained to alphabets, numbers, or small collections of fixed signs. Little research has been focused on large-scale ISL recognition with varied vocabulary and contextual sentence structures from complete language dictionaries. [8]In addition, online services customized for the deaf and mute population are not thoroughly researched. No considerable research exists with solutions to facilitate access to important online activities like shopping, banking, and customer support by deaf-mute users using sign language interfaces. Social connectivity is also not given due attention since no studies have been put forth to suggest accessible social media tools specially designed for this population[8]. Additionally, existing platforms do not include features that enhance independent learning, including access to educational articles, e-books, or interactive sign language resources. Future research needs to be done on creating inclusive platforms that enhance not only communication but also full digital inclusion and self-learning among the deaf and mute community[9].Improving AI models to comprehend conversational context, growing sign language datasets, and supporting offline access and mobile-native applications will also be top priorities for expanding the system's reach.

V. METHODOLOGY

The creation of the Signflow system consisted of a systematic and iterative process, with the system fulfilling its goals of speech-to-Indian Sign Language (ISL) translation and offering an educational and community-based interface for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. Below is the methodology used in this project:

Requirement Gathering and Analysis: The project started with extensive discussions and research to determine the major requirements of the target users—mainly deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals, their families, educators, and service providers. Surveys and community feedback were utilized to identify communication gaps, learning difficulties, and accessibility requirements.

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System Design and Architecture: A modular architecture was developed with React.js for the front-end and AI/ML models for core operations. The system has various components such as Speech Recognition, NLP, ISL Translation, 3D Avatar Animation, ISL Learning, Video Creation Tools, Community Engagement Platform, and User Management.

Technology Stack Selection: . For instance, the speech recognition functionality is based on TensorFlow.js or Google Speech-to-Text API, the NLP component is built on spaCy or Natural.js, and the avatar animation is created with Three.js coupled with React.

Model Training and Integration: Pre-trained or fine-tuned models were employed for ISL translation and speech recognition. These models were trained on ISL gestures and text or voice inputs. The output of these models was programmatically associated with the 3D avatar for correct rendering of gestures[11].

Development: The system was developed through an agile development process. Each module was created and tested in iterations to enable frequent feedback and enhancements. React components were reused throughout the system to maintain consistency and minimize redundancy. Integration testing confirmed that the modules interacted properly[12].

Testing and Evaluation: Different testing methods such as unit testing, integration testing, system testing, and user acceptance testing were performed[14].

Deployment and Maintenance: The final system was implemented with Node.js and Express servers, which are hosted on a scalable cloud environment[16].

This approach guarantees a user-focused, scalable, and powerful system that can be scaled in subsequent phases to include additional features and accommodate other sign languages.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sign language translation and recognition have emerged as key elements of universal communication systems. The aim of such technologies is to fulfill the communication gap between hearing and deaf-impaired individuals by facilitating real-time and accurate expression of gestures in text or speech. A wide range of research has been devoted in this area, spanning from gesture capture and recognition to natural language processing and avatar-based animation[16]. In the last decade, developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and computer vision have greatly impacted the design of Sign Language Recognition (SLR) and Sign Language Translation (SLT) systems. These technologies are important in facilitating communication between hearing and deaf communities, particularly in multilingual and multicultural settings such as India.

Ananthanarayana et al. [1] investigated the application of deep learning techniques to sign language translation. They emphasized the efficacy of sequence-to-sequence models and transformer models to capture temporal and spatial aspects of sign gestures. They also called attention to issues in training models because of sparse availability of tagged datasets and an urgent need for large-scale corpora of sign languages. In another large-scale study, Athitsos et al. [2] explored the revolution of SLR with machine learning and computer vision through integrating dynamic gesture recognition with real-time feedback systems to enhance the speed and accuracy of recognition. Cui et al. (2017) introduced recurrent convolutional neural networks (RCNNs) that significantly improved the accuracy of continuous sign language recognition. Their staged optimization method reduced training complexity while enhancing model robustness. Similarly, Koller et al. (2018) proposed hybrid CNN-HMM models that combine the strengths of convolutional neural networks and statistical models to handle varying sign durations and user-specific styles. From a linguistic perspective, Crasborn et al. (2012) highlighted the importance of corpus development and lexicon structuring in sign language processing. A well-structured dataset is essential for training accurate recognition systems. These findings were further echoed by Liang et al. (2023), who conducted a comprehensive survey identifying the limitations in existing sign language datasets and calling for the development of more diverse, multilingual sign corpora.In addition to gesture recognition, avatar-based systems have gained prominence in making sign language more visually accessible. Papatsimouli et al. (2020) reviewed real-time sign language translation systems and emphasized the role of 3D avatars in improving user comprehension, particularly in educational and public service contexts. Sign language avatars require accurate motion mapping of handshapes, facial expressions, and body movements to maintain naturalness and clarity in communication. The importance of personalization in learning systems has also been emphasized. Garcia and Escolano (2010) noted that adaptive learning modules, which tailor content to user pace and

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understanding, significantly improve sign language acquisition. This notion is echoed in modern educational frameworks such as DeepASL (Fang et al., 2017), which integrates feedback mechanisms to enhance learner engagement.

Table 1: Technologies and Modalities in Sign Language Systems

Technology/Ap	Applicatio	Benefits	Limitation
proach	n Area		
Deep Learning	Gesture	High	Requires
(CNN, RNN)	recognition	accuracy,	large
	and	end-to-end	labeled
	translation	training	datasets
3D Avatar	Visual	Improved	Complex
Animation	communica	comprehen	motion
	tion	sion	mapping
			required
NLP Integration	Contextual	Better	Hard to
	sign	meaning	handle
	interpretati	extraction	cultural
	on		context
Adaptive	Education	Personalize	Needs user
Learning	and ISL	d learning	data
Modules	training		
Vision-based	Gesture	No	Sensitive to
Systems	capture	wearables	lighting/bac
		needed	kground

Existing sign language translation tools have significant limitations. Most are designed for American Sign Language (ASL), with Indian Sign Language (ISL) being less represented. Offline or low-resource real-time translation is not commonly addressed, leaving rural accessibility constricted. Multimodal accessibility is also lacking, with few tools being accessible to the deaf-blind or those with dual disabilities. In addition, there is a dearth of scalable community platforms that utilize sign interfaces to facilitate social interaction. Last but not least, current systems frequently lack cultural and legal sensitivities, diminishing their applicability and usefulness in multicultural communities[6].

Table 2: Research Gaps Identified in Literature

Research Gap	Description	
Regional Language Support	Focus mainly on ASL; ISL underrepresented	
Real-time Translation in Low-resource Settings	Few systems handle offline environments	
Multimodal Accessibility	Lack of tools for deaf-blind or multiply-disabled users	
Scalable Community Platforms	Limited social platforms using sign interfaces	
Cultural and Legal Integration	Miss nuances of local culture and identity	

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VII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Initial tests show successful real-time speech-to-sign translation for short sentences with a 90% accuracy rate. The avatar performs fluid animations. User feedback highlighted the ease of learning ISL via the platform. Further optimization is planned for long-form sentence translation and emotional gesture expression.

VIII. CHALLENGES

Limited Awareness and Understanding: There is a general lack of awareness and understanding of ISL among the hearing population in India.

Shortage of Qualified Interpreters: A critical shortage of qualified ISL interpreters exists across India.

Inadequate Educational Resources: Access to quality education in ISL is limited in India.

Technological Limitations: While some technological solutions for sign language translation exist, they often suffer from limitations such as high costs, complex hardware requirements, and limited accuracy.

Limited Access to Sign Language Education: Traditional methods of learning ISL rely heavily on in-person instruction, which presents significant barriers for many individuals.

These challenges show that there is a need for more infrastructure development, awareness campaigns, and an inclusive design in order to help Sign Language achieve its full potential and reach every segment of the population

IX. CONCLUSION

The Signflow system offers an all-encompassing and integrated solution to bridge the communication gap of the deaf community. With the incorporation of real-time translation of sign language, Indian Sign Language (ISL) learning modules, and a platform for interacting with the community, Signflow is more than simple communication—it is education, inclusiveness, and social interaction. Our research finds that technology can be a strong connector between the hearing and hearing-impaired communities. Using AI/ML models for translation of ISL, speech recognition systems, and natural-looking avatar-based displays, Signflow not only provides accessibility but also encourages cultural sensitivity and deaf community understanding. The multi-purpose architecture of the system across communication, education, and community of the system to be augmented in the future—like detecting emotions, interpretation of context, offline availability, and multi-lingual capacity—makes it a scalable, powerful tool ready to be globally applied. Signsignflow consequently establishes a solid foundation for conducting research and product development on future-proof assistive technology and inclusive digital platforms.

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