Grenze International Journal of Engineering and Technology, June Issue

SMARTORAL: Deep Learning Architecture for Prognostic Mapping of Oral Cancer

L. Dharshana Deepthi[1], Archana Jeyanthi S[2], Chitra Devi M[3], Dhanu Shree N[4] and Harini S[5]
[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, PSNA College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul, India
Email: dharshnadeepthi@gmail.com
[2-5]Department of Computer Science and Engineering, PSNA College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul, India
Email: archanajeyanthi.s@gmail.com, chitramuthu630@gmail.com, dhanunagendran123@gmail.com, hariniharini9414@gmail.com

***Abstract*— Oral cancer is one of the most common and life-threatening cancers worldwide, with survival rates highly dependent on early diagnosis and timely treatment. Traditional diagnostic procedures rely on manual clinical examination and histopathological analysis, which may lead to delayed detection and inconsistent interpretation. Recent advancements in artificial intelligence have enabled automated medical image analysis systems capable of supporting clinicians in disease diagnosis. This paper proposes SMARTORAL, a deep learning architecture designed for prognostic mapping and automated detection of oral cancer using medical images. The proposed framework utilizes convolutional neural networks to extract hierarchical features from oral lesion images and classify them into cancerous and non-cancerous categories. The architecture integrates deep feature extraction layers, optimized classification modules, and regularization strategies to enhance model performance and reduce overfitting. Experimental evaluation was conducted on an oral cancer image dataset using performance metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. The proposed SMARTORAL model achieved superior classification performance compared with conventional machine learning algorithms. The results demonstrate the potential of deep learning-based systems to assist healthcare professionals in early oral cancer diagnosis and clinical decision-making.**

***Keywords*— Oral Cancer Detection, Deep Learning, Convolutional Neural Network, Transfer Learning, Grad-CAM, Medical Image Analysis.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Oral cancer is a major public health concern affecting millions of individuals worldwide. According to global health statistics, oral cancer accounts for a significant number of cancer-related deaths due to late detection and inadequate screening procedures. Early detection plays a critical role in improving survival rates and reducing treatment complexity. However, conventional diagnostic techniques often depend on visual inspection and biopsy procedures, which require specialized expertise and may lead to delayed diagnosis.

Recent developments in artificial intelligence and deep learning have introduced new possibilities for automated disease detection using medical imaging. Deep learning models, particularly convolutional neural networks, have demonstrated remarkable success in image classification and pattern recognition tasks.

Grenze ID: 01.GIJET.12.2.367_24

These models are capable of automatically extracting complex features from raw image data, enabling accurate identification of disease-related patterns.
This research introduces SMARTORAL, a deep learning-based framework designed to analyze oral medical images and detect cancerous lesions automatically. The objective of the proposed system is to assist clinicians in identifying abnormal oral tissue patterns and improving diagnostic accuracy through intelligent image analysis.

II. RELATED WORK

Several studies have explored machine learning techniques for oral cancer detection. Traditional approaches have utilized algorithms such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), Random Forest, and Decision Trees for lesion classification. These methods rely on manually extracted features and often face limitations when dealing with complex medical imaging datasets.
Recent advancements in deep learning have significantly improved medical image classification performance. Convolutional neural networks have been widely used for detecting abnormalities in medical images due to their ability to learn hierarchical representations of visual data. Transfer learning techniques using pre-trained models have also shown promising results in healthcare applications.
Despite these advancements, challenges remain in developing models that achieve high accuracy while maintaining reliability and interpretability. The SMARTORAL architecture addresses these challenges by combining deep feature extraction with optimized classification mechanisms to enhance oral cancer detection performance.

III. EXISTING SYSTEM

At present, oral cancer detection predominantly relies on manual clinical examination performed by experienced medical professionals, such as dentists, oral pathologists, and oncologists. The diagnostic process typically begins with a visual inspection of the oral cavity to identify abnormal lesions, followed by biopsy and histopathological analysis for confirmation. Although this method is considered medically reliable, it is highly dependent on the clinician’s expertise and observational skills, particularly during the early stages of oral cancer when visual symptoms are subtle or asymptomatic.
In recent years, several computer-aided diagnostic (CAD) systems have been developed to support oral cancer detection using traditional image processing and classical machine learning techniques. These systems commonly employ handcrafted feature extraction methods such as texture descriptors, color histograms, edge detection algorithms, and shape-based features. Machine learning classifiers, including Support Vector Machines, k-Nearest Neighbors, and Decision Trees, are then used to classify oral lesion images. While these approaches offer partial automation, their performance is strongly influenced by the quality of manually designed features and preprocessing conditions.
One major limitation of these traditional systems is their poor robustness to variations in image quality, lighting conditions, lesion size, color contrast, and background noise. Since handcrafted features are not adaptive, these models struggle to generalize across diverse clinical datasets. Furthermore, classical machine learning approaches require extensive feature engineering and parameter tuning, making the systems less scalable and difficult to deploy in real-time environments.
Another significant drawback of existing automated systems is the lack of interpretability. Many models provide only a final classification result without explaining the regions of the image that influenced the decision. This black box nature limits clinical trust, as healthcare professionals cannot visually validate the prediction. In addition, most existing systems are developed as standalone research models and are not integrated into accessible platforms for routine screening.
Overall, the existing oral cancer detection systems suffer from limited scalability, high dependency on expert knowledge, lack of explainability, and poor accessibility in rural or resource constrained regions. These limitations often lead to delayed diagnosis, reduced screening coverage, and increased mortality rates, highlighting the need for an automated, accurate, and interpretable diagnostic framework.

IV. PROPOSED SYSTEM

A. SMARTORAL Architecture

The SMARTORAL model is designed using a deep convolutional neural network architecture capable of extracting meaningful features from oral medical images. The system consists of multiple convolutional layers that capture spatial features such as texture variations, lesion boundaries, and abnormal tissue patterns.

The architecture begins with an input layer that receives preprocessed oral images. Convolutional layers are then applied to perform feature extraction using learnable filters. These filters detect important visual patterns associated with oral cancer. Pooling layers are introduced after convolution operations to reduce dimensionality while preserving essential information.
The extracted features are passed through fully connected layers that perform classification into cancerous and non-cancerous categories. Dropout regularization is applied to reduce overfitting by randomly deactivating neurons during training. The model is optimized using adaptive gradient optimization algorithms that improve convergence speed and training efficiency.

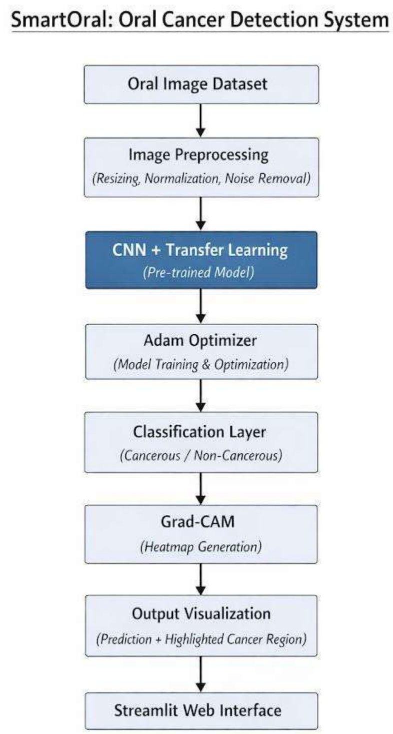

Fig 1. Flowchart

A. System Overview

SmartOral follows a structured processing pipeline consisting of image preprocessing, feature extraction, optimized classification, and visual explainability. Oral cavity images acquired from clinical sources are first standardized through preprocessing techniques such as resizing and normalization to ensure consistency across the dataset. These preprocessed images are then passed to a deep learning model for automated feature learning and classification.

B. Feature Extraction using CNN and Transfer Learning

The core component of the proposed system is a hybrid deep learning model that integrates Convolutional Neural Networks with transfer learning. CNNs are capable of automatically learning hierarchical features from images, including edges, textures, shapes, and lesion-specific patterns. Instead of training a model from scratch, SmartOral employs pre-trained CNN architectures, which have already learned rich feature representations from large-scale image datasets.

C. Optimized Classification using Adam Optimizer

The extracted deep features are passed through fully connected layers for classification into two categories: cancerous and non-cancerous. The classification layer produces probability scores indicating the likelihood of malignancy for each input image.
The model parameters are optimized using the Adam optimizer, which combines the advantages of adaptive learning rates and momentum-based optimization. Adam dynamically adjusts the learning rate during training

based on the first and second moments of gradients, enabling faster convergence and stable updates. This optimization strategy reduces training time while improving overall model performance.

To evaluate classification performance, the system minimizes the binary cross-entropy loss between the predicted probabilities and the ground truth labels. This loss function measures the difference between actual class labels and predicted outputs, ensuring that the model learns to correctly distinguish between cancerous and non-cancerous cases. During prediction, the model generates a probability score representing the likelihood of oral cancer. A predefined threshold value is applied to determine the final classification outcome. If the predicted probability exceeds the threshold, the image is classified as cancerous; otherwise, it is classified as non-cancerous. By combining efficient optimization with probabilistic decision-making, the proposed classification framework ensures accurate, stable, and reliable detection of oral cancer

D. Prognostic Mapping using Grad-CAM

To enhance transparency and clinical trust, the proposed system incorporates Gradient-Weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM) for explainable diagnosis. Grad-CAM computes the importance of feature maps by analyzing the gradients of the predicted class with respect to convolutional layer activations. The Grad-CAM heatmap H is computed as:

$$H = ReLU\left(\sum_{k} \alpha k A^{k}\right)$$

where A^k denotes the feature map of the k^{th} convolutional filter and α_k represents the corresponding weight derived from gradient information. The resulting heatmap highlights the regions of the oral image that contribute most significantly to the model's prediction, enabling effective lesion localization and prognostic mapping.

E. System Deployment and Accessibility

The SmartOral framework is deployed as a Rails-based web application, providing real-time accessibility and ease of use. Users can upload oral cavity images through the web interface and receive instant diagnostic predictions along with confidence scores and Grad CAM heatmaps. The system is designed to be scalable, user-friendly, and platform-independent, making it suitable for deployment in both advanced clinical environments and resource-constrained healthcare settings.

V. PROPOSED WORK

The proposed SmartOral system is designed to provide an automated, accurate, and explainable solution for early oral cancer detection using deep learning techniques. The system follows a structured pipeline consisting of image preprocessing, feature extraction, feature selection, and optimized prediction to ensure reliable performance and high diagnostic accuracy.

A. Image Processing

In the preprocessing stage, the input oral cavity images are prepared to enhance their quality and consistency before model training. Image preprocessing includes resizing images to a fixed resolution, normalization to scale pixel values, and noise reduction to remove unwanted distortions. These operations are performed using OpenCV and Pillow libraries. Preprocessing improves image clarity, reduces computational complexity, and ensures uniformity across the dataset, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the deep learning model.

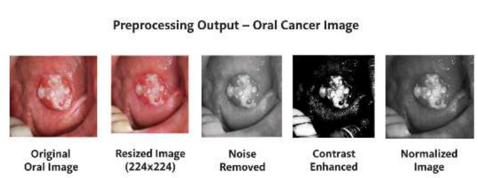

Fig 2. Image Processing

B. Feature Extraction

Feature extraction is carried out using a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) combined with transfer learning. Pre-trained CNN models automatically learn deep hierarchical features such as edges, textures, shapes, and lesion patterns from oral images. Unlike traditional methods, this approach eliminates the need for manual feature engineering. The extracted deep features capture discriminative information necessary for distinguishing between cancerous and non-cancerous oral lesions.

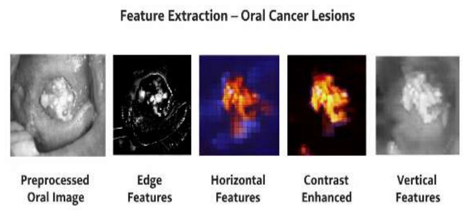

Fig 3. Feature Extraction

C. Feature Selection

To improve model efficiency and reduce redundancy, feature selection is implicitly handled through fine-tuning of the transfer learning model. Unimportant neurons and irrelevant feature activations are minimized during training using dropout regularization. This step ensures that only the most relevant features contributing to oral cancer detection are retained, leading to improved generalization and reduced overfitting.

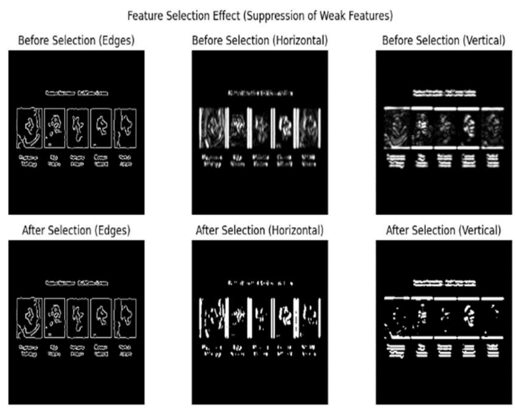

Fig 4. Feature Selection

D. Optimized Prediction and Accuracy Enhancement

For prediction and optimization, the Adam optimizer is employed to efficiently update model weights and minimize classification loss. Adam combines the advantages of momentum and adaptive learning rates, enabling faster convergence and stable training.

The optimized model performs binary classification to identify cancerous and non-cancerous cases with high accuracy. To enhance clinical trust, Grad-CAM is integrated to generate heatmaps highlighting the regions influencing predictions.

The final system achieves improved prediction accuracy while providing visual interpretability, making it suitable for real-world clinical support.

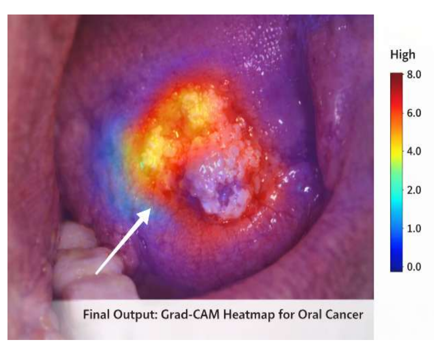

Fig 5. Grad-CAM Heatmap

VI. Results and Discussion

A. Training Performance Analysis

The training performance of the SMARTORAL model was evaluated using accuracy and loss curves across multiple epochs. The training accuracy increases steadily as the model learns relevant patterns from the dataset, while the loss function decreases progressively during the training process. These results indicate stable convergence and effective learning behavior.

B. Classification Performance Evaluation

The classification capability of the proposed system was evaluated using a confusion matrix and performance metrics including precision, recall, and F1-score. The confusion matrix illustrates the number of correct and incorrect predictions made by the model for each class.

C. ROC Curve Analysis

The Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve is used to evaluate the diagnostic capability of the classification model. The ROC curve plots the true positive rate against the false positive rate across different classification thresholds. A curve closer to the top-left corner indicates better classification performance.

D. Grad-CAM Visualization

Grad-CAM visualization techniques are used to interpret the predictions made by the deep learning model. Heatmap visualizations highlight the regions of the oral image that contribute most strongly to the classification decision.

E. Quantitative Comparative Analysis

To evaluate the effectiveness of the SMARTORAL model, its performance was compared with several widely used machine learning and deep learning algorithms.

TABLE I

Method	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1 Score
SVM	84.2%	83%	82%	82.5%
Random Forest	87.1%	86%	85%	85.4%
CNN	90.3%	89%	88%	88.6%
SMARTORAL (Proposed)	92.4%	91%	90%	90.5%

The results indicate that the SMARTORAL model outperforms conventional machine learning approaches and baseline deep learning models. The improved performance is primarily attributed to the deep feature extraction capabilities and optimized architecture of the proposed framework.

V. Conclusion

This study presented SMARTORAL, a deep learning architecture designed for automated detection and prognostic mapping of oral cancer using medical image analysis. The proposed model integrates convolutional feature extraction, optimized classification layers, and regularization techniques to enhance diagnostic performance.

Experimental results demonstrate that the SMARTORAL system achieves higher accuracy and improved classification performance compared to conventional machine learning methods. The system shows promising potential as an intelligent clinical decision support tool for early oral cancer detection.

Future research will focus on integrating larger clinical datasets, improving model interpretability through explainable AI techniques, and deploying the system in real-world healthcare environments.

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