

VEHICLE MAKE AND MODEL RECOGNITION SYSTEM FOR OCCLUSION
AND BAD LIGHTING IMAGES

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AND BAD LIGHTING IMAGES

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DEDICATION

*Dedicated to my beloved family especially my parents, and my supportive supervisor
– DR. USMAN ULLAH SHEIKH. Thank you very much for being positive, helpful
and understanding.*

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Praise Be to Allah S.W.T, the Lord of the World

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ABSTRACT

Intelligent transportation system (ITS) is a massive and very significant sector in the socio-economic context of contemporary society. The need to use roads continues to increase, and this comes with the need to establish more efficient vehicle detection methods. Vehicle Make and Model Recognition (VMMR) has become an important aspect of vision-based systems, since it is applied to access control systems, traffic control, surveillance, and security systems, among others. However, the use of VMMR is challenging due to numerous factors, such as camera angle, poor lighting, and occlusion. Most of the existing works are focused on designing a VMMR system in a normal scenario, where the dataset is set for an ideal scenario, a scenario without illumination, or occlusion. Recent studies have used certain methods to extract the features by extracting the region of interest (ROI) of the front or the rear view of the vehicle to detect and recognize the vehicle. However, the aforementioned methods would fail with poor lighting or occlusion cases. In this thesis, a VMMR system is introduced, which begins by building the dataset, a combination of a benchmark dataset (dataset1) and a self-collected dataset (dataset2). A new approach of image enhancement method was applied to improve the low-light dataset. Then, the enhanced geographical feature extraction techniques were applied to extract the headlight and license plate. For occlusion cases, a new grid-based Speeded-Up Robust Features (SURF) was presented to extract the ROI even in the presence of an occluded object. Two classification approaches were used to recognize the make and model of the vehicle. The first approach is based on the Decision Tree, Support Vector Machine (SVM), and K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN) algorithms, where they are called ensemble classifiers, which can predict the VMM accurately. This is because the Decision Tree classifier predicts instances by sorting them based on feature values, while for SVM, the precision of classifying can be enhanced by employing suitable factors. As such, Radial basis function (RBF) kernel and optimized factors were chosen for SVM and KNN, where the testing data was classified by comparison to the k nearest training data based on a distance function. The second approach is the PCANet-II classifier, an approach with second-order pooling and binary feature variance with promising accuracy. The overall performance of the work in this thesis demonstrates a promising outcome, where the overall accuracy reached 96.08% by adopting an ensemble classifier and two datasets (dataset1, dataset2), while the PCANet-II classifier achieved 97.56% using both datasets (dataset1, dataset2). In conclusion, this approach proposed in this thesis showed higher performance than existing methods when bad lighting and occlusion are considered.

ABSTRAK

Sistem pengangkutan pintar (ITS) adalah sektor yang besar dan sangat penting dalam konteks sosio-ekonomi masyarakat kontemporari. Keperluan untuk menggunakan jalan raya terus meningkat, dan ini datang dengan keperluan untuk mewujudkan kaedah pengesanan kenderaan yang lebih cekap. Pengecaman Model dan Buatan Kenderaan (VMMR) telah menjadi aspek penting dalam sistem berasaskan penglihatan kerana ia digunakan untuk sistem kawalan akses, kawalan trafik, pengawasan dan sistem keselamatan, antara lainnya. Walau bagaimanapun, penggunaan VMMR adalah mencabar kerana pelbagai faktor, seperti sudut kamera, pencahayaan yang kurang baik, dan oklusi. Kebanyakan kerja sedia ada tertumpu pada mereka bentuk sistem VMMR dalam senario biasa, di mana set data ditetapkan untuk senario yang ideal, senario tanpa pencahayaan atau oklusi. Kajian terkini telah menggunakan kaedah tertentu untuk mengekstrak ciri dengan mengekstrak kawasan yang penting (ROI) bahagian hadapan atau pandangan belakang kenderaan untuk mengesan dan mengecam kenderaan. Namun begitu, kaedah yang disebutkan di atas akan gagal di bawah pencahayaan yang lemah atau kes oklusi. Dalam tesis ini, sistem VMMR diperkenalkan, bermula dengan membina set data, gabungan set data penanda aras (dataset1) dan set data terkumpul sendiri (dataset2). Pendekatan baharu kaedah peningkatan imej telah digunakan untuk menambah baik set data dalam keadaan cahaya malap. Kemudian, teknik pengestrakan ciri geografi yang dipertingkatkan digunakan untuk mengekstrak lampu depan dan plat lesen. Untuk kes oklusi, Ciri-ciri yang Teguh Dipercepatkan (SURF) berasaskan grid baharu telah dibentangkan untuk mengekstrak ROI walaupun dengan kehadiran objek oklusi. Dua pendekatan klasifikasi telah digunakan untuk mengenali jenama dan model kenderaan. Yang pertama adalah berdasarkan algoritma Pohon Keputusan, Mesin Vektor Sokongan (SVM), dan K Jiran Terdekat (KNN), di mana ia dipanggil pengelas ensembel yang mampu meramalkan VMM dengan tepat. Ini kerana pengelas Pokok Keputusan meramalkan keadaan dengan mengisihnya berdasarkan nilai ciri, manakala bagi SVM, ketepatan pengelasan boleh dipertingkatkan dengan menggunakan faktor yang sesuai. Oleh itu, kernel fungsi basis radial (RBF) dan faktor yang dioptimumkan telah dipilih untuk SVM dan KNN, di mana data ujian dikelaskan dengan perbandingan kepada k data latihan terdekat berdasarkan fungsi jarak. Yang kedua dipanggil pengelas PCANet-II, iaitu pendekatan dengan pengumpulan tertib kedua dan varians ciri binari dengan ketepatan yang menjanjikan. Prestasi keseluruhan kerja dalam tesis ini menunjukkan hasil yang menjanjikan, di mana ketepatan keseluruhan mencapai 96.08% dengan mengguna pakai pengelas ensembel dan dua set data (dataset1, dataset2), manakala pengelas PCANet-II mencapai 97.56% menggunakan kedua-dua set data (dataset1, dataset2). Kesimpulannya, kerja yang dicadangkan dalam tesis ini menunjukkan prestasi yang lebih tinggi berbanding kaedah sedia ada apabila pencahayaan dan oklusi yang buruk dipertimbangkan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANN	-	Artificial Neural Network
BFD	-	Binary Feature Difference
BHE	-	Bi-Histogram Equalization
BME	-	Bayesian Minimum Error
BMR	-	Bayesian Minimum Risk
BoSURF	-	Bag-of-SURF
CAPOA	-	Content Adaptive Progressive Occlusion Analysis
CNN	-	Convolutional Neural Network
CR	-	Candidate Region
CV	-	Coefficient of Variation
ELM	-	Extreme Learning Machine
FID	-	Full Inside Division
GDM	-	Generalized Deformable Model
GMM	-	Gaussian Mixture models
HE	-	Histogram Equalization
HOG	-	Histograms of Orientated Gradients
ITS	-	Intelligent Transportation System
KDE	-	Kernel Density Estimation
KNN	-	K- Nearest Neighbors
LBP	-	Local Binary Patterns
LBSP	-	Local Binary Similarity Pattern
LIPA	-	Low-cost Image Processing Algorithm
LLC	-	Locality-Constraint Linear Coding Method
NDD	-	Narrow Direct Division
PCA	-	Principal Component Analysis
PKDE	-	Pattern Kernel Density Estimation
RBF	-	Radial Basis Function
RBM	-	Restricted Boltzmann Machines
ReLU	-	Rectified Linear unit
ROI	-	Region of Interest

SAGMM	-	Self-Adaptive Gaussian Mixture Model
SE	-	Structure Element
SID	-	Symmetrical Inside Division
SIFT	-	Shift-Invariant Feature transform
SILTP	-	Scale Invariant Local Ternary Pattern
SURF	-	Speeded Up Robust Features
SVM	-	Support Vector Machine
VLR	-	Vehicle Logo Recognition
VMTM	-	Vector Mask Template Matching
VTR	-	Vehicle Type Recognition
WDD	-	Wide Direct Division

LIST OF SYMBOLS

u, v	-	Angle Measurement Parameters
R_{area}	-	Area Ratio
AS	-	Area (Size) Symmetry Score of Pair P_k
$\frac{W_1}{H_1}$	-	Aspect Ratio of Headlight
$ARS(P_k)$	-	Aspect Ratio Symmetry Score of Pair P_k
t_s	-	Average of $G_s(I_t(p))$
l_s	-	Bottom Boundary of ROI
C_i	-	Candidate Multi-Paired
ρ	-	Chrominance Ratio
Γ_C	-	Convex Hull
C	-	Convexity Metric
$\{f_k^i\}_{k=1}^{k_i}$	-	Convolutional Outputs
$CovM_m^i$	-	Covariance Between Feature Maps
DT_{pred}	-	Decision Tree Prediction
$DoH(x, y, \sigma)$	-	Determination of Hessian Matrix
θ_n	-	Deviation Angle
$ \nabla_p , \theta_p$	-	Direction and Magnitude of the Gradient
$\nabla y, \nabla x$	-	Directional Gradients
$DS(p_k)$	-	Direction Symmetry Score of the Pair
M_d	-	Distance Between Two CPs
$V_1 \in \mathbb{R}^{l_1 l_2 \times K_1}$	-	Eigenvectors Calculation
f_{BFD}^i	-	Encode BFD
$B_k^i(x, y)$	-	Feature Map
$G_s(I_t(p))$	-	Gaussian Shadow Model
σ^2	-	Gaussian Variance
G_t	-	Gradient Total
HL pair	-	Headlight Pair
h_1	-	Height of the Vehicle

ra	-	Height to Width Ratio
$Ag(y)$	-	Histogram By the accumulation of the horizontal edge
I	-	Intensity
α	-	Intensity Factor
NN_{pred}	-	KNN Prediction
l_l	-	Left Boundary of ROI
BL	-	Limit of Object Length
$G \in \mathbb{R}^{l_1 l_2 \times NP}$	-	Local Patch Set Creation
M_s	-	Match Score
γ_1, γ_2	-	Maximum Intensity Region
I_{max}	-	Maximum Value of Intensity
μ	-	Mean
μ_s, σ_s	-	Mean and Variance of the Shadow
M_o	-	Measures the Alignment of Two CD Areas
Φ	-	Numerical Value of Three Classifier predictions
X^t	-	Objective Plate-Box Coordinates
p_k	-	Obtained Paired
IDR	-	Occlusion Detection
W_m	-	Optimal Weight
Δh_1	-	Proposed Candidate Region
f	-	Regularization Factor
l_r	-	Right Boundary of ROI
R	-	Searching Area
$\Delta h_{1_{low}}, \Delta h_{1_{up}}$	-	Searching Area Regions
K_i	-	Set of Filter Kernels
l_1, l_2	-	Size of the Patches
σ	-	Standard Deviation
SVM_{pred}	-	SVM Prediction
μ_k^i	-	The Average Feature of the Feature Map $B_k^i(x, y)$
C_V	-	The New ROI
P	-	Total Number of Local Patches

- u_s - Upper Boundary
- $C_{x,y}$ - Values of Translated Pixel

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The transportation system is one of the massive industries in contemporary society. The need to use of roads is, therefore, ever-increasing, and this comes with the need to have better ways to detect and identify vehicles. Among the critical applications that have been used for video systems in traffic surveillance, studies have been done on visual-based intelligent transportation systems for traffic planning to develop accurate traffic information, planning and traffic flow. In the past few years, video cameras have been widely utilized to monitor traffic as it is viewed as an efficient means of collecting information on traffic in general and its flow in particular. Furthermore, the rapid advances in computer vision, computational and camera knowledge and skills, tin tandem with advances in automated video applications for analyzing and processing information have significantly raised interest in the use of video systems to monitor traffic [1].

The use of computer vision approaches in monitoring traffic is currently considered crucial for an intelligent transportation system (ITS). ITS employs visual appearance to detect and identify vehicles and for tracking that is significantly beneficial in analyzing and understanding traffic incidents, and human behavior. Besides, it provides traffic flow details such as vehicle class, count, trajectory etc. However, despite the level of work done to enhance the effectiveness of video-based traffic monitoring systems, and the application of ITS continues to face some practical challenges [2].

A camera-based approach to monitor traffic is an essential aspect of an ITS, which essentially involves automatic surveillance of digital cameras to capture snapshots of passing vehicles and other moving objects. The captured images are of

high-resolution and static in nature, and from which police and other security authorities can obtain crucial information pertaining to a vehicle plate number, the precise moment it passed, its movement path and even the driver's face, etc. In the past, the very substantial number of captured images were manually processed, which took time besides being inefficient [2].

Traffic environments varies and comprises of straight highways, parts of urban roads, intersections, corners as well as tunnels, which give rise to a number of challenges of varying magnitudes such as congested traffic, and the unpredictability of weather and illumination circumstances. However, the diversity in vehicle types, including size, shape and color among other factors, poses constraints on vehicle identification and tracking to specific scenes [1].

In recent years, there has been increasing emphasis on road safety and security by ensuring roads are adequate and safe, but transportation systems still face problems that have motivated researchers to be more concerned about road safety and made them consider the development of novel algorithms to address these issues.

Due to the extensive applications of vehicle detection and recognition, challenges have become real concerns and need to be resolved to enhance security and to avoid any mistakes on the urban roads or in traffic systems. One of these problems is occlusion. Occlusion is typically a significant challenge in vehicle detection, and which can significantly affect the vehicle identification process and make the vehicle identification impossible [53][55].

The failure to identify a vehicle due to bad lighting is another challenge faced in any ITS. Color is among the significant factors to describe the entire image of the object that is included. On the contrary, the color of the object can be substantially different because of the variations of intensity, source of illumination, weather, among other factors. Besides, capturing an image of the same object can produce different results because of a color change brought about by the surface reflection or camera angles [53][55].

Currently, such challenges have become obstacles in the field of ITS when it comes to the detection or recognition of a vehicle. One question often asked is: What if the researchers want to build a system to detect and recognize the make and the model of a vehicle? Vehicle make and model recognition (VMMR) has become an important aspect of vision-based systems as it is applied in access control systems, traffic control and surveillance and security systems among others. The rationale behind VMMR is the extraction of the desired features of an image to identify the make and model of a vehicle.

The majority of research begins with the detection of a vehicle, which yields regions of interest (ROIs) that contain the vehicles' face (front) distinguished from the background. The vehicle classification systems then work on the ROIs, and Figure 1.1 shows the general architecture of the VMMR system.

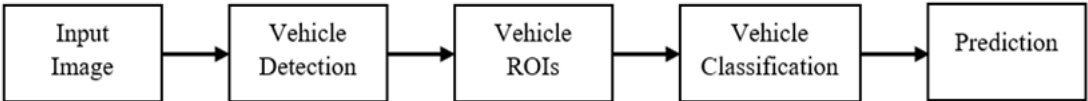


Figure 1.1 The general architecture of the VMMR system

Depending on the granular quality of the classification, vehicle classification systems can be grouped into three categories: Type, make (Logo), or make and model recognition, as shown in Figure 1.2.

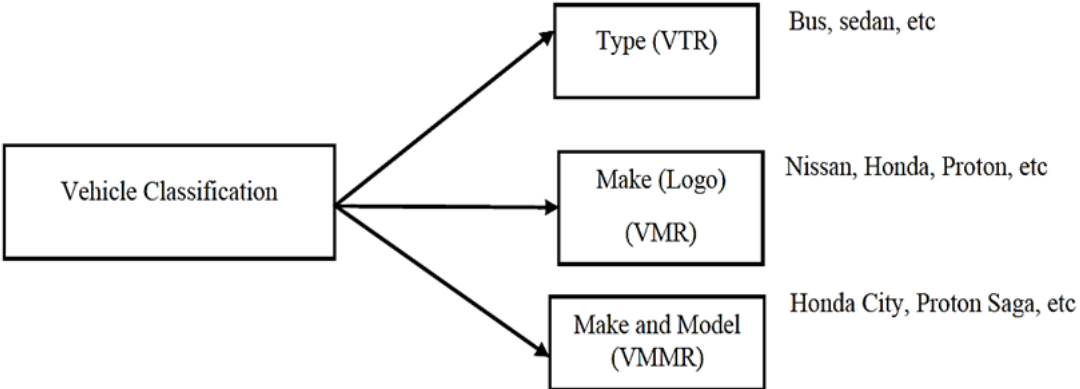


Figure 1.2 Vehicle classification showing Vehicle Type Recognition (VTR), Vehicle Make (logo) Recognition (VMR or VLR), and Vehicle Make and Model Recognition (VMMR)

1.2 Problem Statement

Recently, much work has been done focusing on the use of video cameras for traffic monitoring applications, which are viewed as rich sources of useful information regarding traffic flow. Applying computer vision approaches to monitor traffic has come to be viewed as crucial for ITS, which employs observable images in detecting vehicles, identification, and tracking that is beneficial for detecting incidents, analyzing, and understanding human behavior. Besides, it provides traffic flow information such as number of vehicles, trajectory, etc.

Despite concerted efforts being made for the improvement of video-based traffic monitoring systems, several issues still remain that challenge the practical application of ITS and researchers. If these issues are addressed, the ITS will be more secure, efficient, and powerful in enhancing security in urban roads and facilitate society in detecting all possible vehicles and identifying them. Some issues also need to be looked into, including vehicle occlusion with other objects, so it is going to be difficult to detect and identify the vehicle. Another interesting challenge is lighting and illumination that arise due to inadequate lighting. Hence, this thesis will describe these problems in detail.

- The roads today have hundreds of vehicles passing through. The question is whether the VMMR systems would be able to detect all vehicles without missing any. Occlusion is one of the main problems in video surveillance systems. In this thesis, there is a need to detect and recognize vehicles efficiently. Still, the challenge is when the detected object in a scene is behind another object, whereby some parts in the object are undetected due to occlusion. The camera needs a clear vision of the vehicle but will fail due to occlusion. In this case, the occlusion is caused by human activity or another vehicle. Recently some researches tried to address the problem of occlusion by applying certain samples of occlusion dataset to VMMR system like in [53][106] the authors proposed a new symmetrical SURF descriptor to extract the make and model of the vehicle, but it fails when it comes to occlusion samples due to the missing parts of symmetrical pairs. The author in [55]

applied real-time automated VMMR according to a collection of expedited robust features (BoSURF), as it claims that can handle the occlusion scenario, this work did not take enough samples of the occlusion dataset. The author in [107] proposed Random Forest-based VMMR system while in [109], a new cascaded part-based system was suggested for VMMR. Ghassemi, S [112] suggested a deep convolutional structure based on multi-scale attention windows to address the problem of VMMR classification system. In [113] suggested a novel configurable on-road VMMR framework and took advantage of the unsupervised feature learning approaches and employed Locality-constraint Linear Coding (LLC) technique as a fast feature encoder to encode the input SIFT. In conclusion, most of these works failed to address and solve the occlusion problem. Figure 1.3 below shows a sample of an occlusion case.



Figure 1.3 Occlusion scenario (a) From [53] and (b) Self-collected dataset

- The dataset must be of good visual quality. On the other hand, due to variances in illumination and camera distortions, various cameras could give quite substantially different visual qualities. Hence, detecting and recognizing a targeted object that moves across the cameras can be a challenge. Police also needs to be able to detect different vehicles by camera confidently. Not many studies focused on low light scenarios because it requires a lot of work, robust tools and classifiers to extract the ROI and image enhancement techniques to make a still image with a better contrast. Chen, L [106] and Hsieh, J.W [53] used the symmetrical SURF descriptor for vehicle detection on roads and tried to apply it on low light dataset, the system failed to detect the symmetrical pairs

due to low light and weak contrast. However, [55] used some samples for low light cases and managed to extract the make and model of the vehicle but as mentioned earlier, the author used only a few samples to test the system. The works done in [109],[111],[112],[113], came up with an ideal VMMR system, but none of them dealt with the low light scenario. Figure 1.4 shows samples of bad lighting case.



Figure 1.4 Bad lighting scenario (a) From [53] and (b) From self-collected dataset

1.3 Research Objectives

Due to the problems mentioned in the previous section, the main goal of this work is to design a vehicle make and model recognition system with the ability to perform well under the low light condition and in the presence of occlusion. The main objectives are listed below:

- a) To propose an image enhancement technique to enhance vehicle images in poor lighting for VMMR system.
- b) To improve geographical feature extraction technique for vehicle frontal view feature extraction.

- c) To propose a novel scheme to extract the region of interest (ROI) using SURF features in the presence of occlusion.
- d) To build an image dataset for low lighting and occlusion for the purpose of training and testing.

1.4 Scope of Work

The following is the scope of this work:

- a) Collect a suitable database for the research. This database should contain all possible vehicles under different conditions and different types of cars used for this work. The database collected using a camera on the local road, and the databases used in previous works are also used for comparison.
- b) The benchmark dataset contains 5,610 samples with twenty vehicle makes and models. While the self- collected dataset contains 680 samples with six vehicle makes and models.
- c) In this thesis, only the front view of the vehicle was considered.
- d) This thesis will focus on occlusion and bad lighting as main issues in recognition systems.
- e) Experimental work was performed offline using software implementation on MATLAB. The simulation was performed on Intel Core i7 CPU (2.4 GHz), 8GB of RAM and Windows 10 64-bit operating system.

1.5 List of Contributions

- a) Built an image database of self- collected dataset and existing benchmark dataset.
- b) This thesis introduced a new approach to enhance vehicle images in low light using a multiple exposure technique.
- c) In this work, existing geographical feature extraction has been improved that can be applied on frontal view of vehicle images and able to extract headlight pairs.
- d) To overcome the occlusion, in this thesis, an improved and modified method has been shown that is based on SURF. The method can handle occlusion more accurately than existing approaches.

1.6 Thesis Organization

This thesis is presented in five chapters. This chapter presents a brief research background of the investigated topic, identifying the motivations which have led to this research. The scientific objectives and the scope of work are outlined and highlighted with a clear identification of the research goals. The remaining chapters of this thesis organized as follows:

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of the whole VMMR system starting from the detection stage to describe the latest VMMR works. Algorithms of recognition processes, classifiers, feature selection techniques and classification performance evaluations were presented. Also, this chapter presents and discusses the problems that face VMMR algorithm such as bad lighting and occlusion in detail.

Chapter 3 describes the whole VMMR system of this study and presents every stage in detail. A suitable database for the research is collected and the dataset contained all possible vehicles under different conditions and different types of cars used for this work.

In Chapter 4, the experimental results are presented in detail. The results from both classifiers (ensemble classifier and PCANet-II) were evaluated and then compared with the state of art works to check the accuracy and the validity of this study.

In Chapter 5, results obtained in Chapter 4 discussed along with theoretical expectations. The chapter then gives a conclusion by summarizing the work done in this thesis and presents future directions of research for VMMR works.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

A.1 List of Journals

1. A.F.Abbas, U.U. Sheikh and M.H. Haji Mohd., 'Recognition of vehicle make and model in low light conditions', *Bulletin of Electrical Engineering and Informatics*, 9(2),pp.550-557, 2020.
2. A.F.Abbas, U.U. Sheikh , F.T. Al-Dhief and M.H. Haji Mohd,' A Comprehensive review of vehicle detection using computer vision', *TELKOMNIKA Telecommunication, Computing, Electronics and Control*, 19(3), pp. 838-850, 2021.