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Generic Application of Deep Learning Framework for Real-Time Engineering Data Analysis

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Abstract—The need for computer-assisted real-time anomaly detection in engineering data used for condition monitoring is apparent in various applications, including the oil and gas, automotive industries and many other engineering domains. To reduce the reliance on domain-specific experts' knowledge, this paper proposes a deep learning framework that can assist in building a versatile anomaly detection tool needed for effective condition monitoring.

The framework enables building a computational anomaly detection model using different types of neural networks and supervised learning. While building such a model, three types of ANN units were compared: a recurrent neural network, a long short-term memory network, and a gated recurrent unit. Each of these units has been evaluated on two benchmark public datasets. The experimental results of this comparative study revealed that the LSTM network unit that uses the sigmoid activation function, the Mean Absolute Error as the objective Loss function and the Adam optimizer as the output layer showed the best performance and attained the accuracy of over 77 % in detecting anomalous values in the datasets.

Having determined the best performing combination of the neural network components, a computational anomaly detection model was built within the framework, which was successfully evaluated on real-life engineering datasets comprising the time-series datasets from an offshore installation in North Sea and another dataset from the automotive industry, which enabled exploring the anomaly classification capability of the proposed framework.

Index Terms—Long short-term memory networks, deep learning framework, anomaly detection and classification, time series analysis, engineering applications.

I. INTRODUCTION

Condition monitoring in general, and anomaly detection in particular, is an essential component of many safety and surveillance systems, because such monitoring is capable of uncovering informative facts about the behaviour, characteristics and properties of engineering systems used in various technical and technological areas. The main purpose of condition monitoring is undoubtedly to prevent the escalation of undesirable effects on system operation and to minimize losses caused by them [9]. This is critically important in various engineering systems the authors worked with, such as automobile engines, offshore installations, subsea hydraulic control, and autonomous surveillance [23].

These complex systems share at least two characteristics: a lack of mathematical model that accurately describes the system behaviour and a large amount of monitoring data that can be both historical and real-time. Therefore, for performing effective anomaly detection, it is necessary to rely on data-based approaches and on smart methods of condition monitoring that often use computational intelligence and machine learning techniques [15]. The latter is especially important when some constraints are present that cannot be satisfied by human intervention with regard to decision making speed in life threatening situations (e.g. automatic collision systems, exploring hazardous environments, processing large volumes of data). Because computer-assisted condition monitoring is capable of processing large amounts of heterogeneous data much faster and is not subject to the same level of fatigue as humans, its use in many practical situations is preferable. Furthermore, the integration of multiple data sources into a unified system leads to data heterogeneity, often resulting into difficulty, or even infeasibility, of human processing, especially in real-time environments.

Computational Intelligence (CI) and Machine Learning (ML) techniques have been successfully applied to problems involving the automation of anomaly detection in the process of condition monitoring [15], [17]. In particular, many studies have shown that artificial neural networks (ANN) can be a very effective classification tool to predict various anomalous conditions, such as the corrosion of oil and gas pipelines, turbine failure, and the like [8], [21], [25].

However, one of the most significant factors to consider when performing engineering data analysis is a possible interdependence of sensors' readings. It is important therefore to firstly identify the most significant features, or hyper-parameters, in the dataset and to take temporal dependencies of sensory data into consideration. A Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) network is a type of recurrent neural network (RNN), specifically designed for sequence processing. It excelled in many complex challenges such as handwriting recognition [12], machine translation [26], and financial market prediction [10]. LSTM networks contain gates to store and read out information from linear units, called error carousels, that retain information over long time intervals - something that

traditional RNNs fail to achieve. In recognition of speech and hand writing, anomalies correspond to situations where the order of words or symbols is incorrect; similar, in engineering data analysis, the order and occurrence of certain data values can identify unusual patterns that ultimately may lead to a system failure.

Anomaly detection is an important data analysis task that detects anomalous or abnormal data from a given dataset. It has been widely studied in statistics and machine learning, and generally defined as "an observation which deviates so much from other observations as to arouse suspicions that it was generated by a different mechanism" [1]. Anomalies are considered important because they indicate significant but rare events and can prompt critical actions to be taken in a wide range of application domains (for instance when the generator's rotor speed of a gas turbine goes below 3000 rpm). By their nature, these events are rare and often not known in advance - this makes it difficult for conventional machine learning techniques, based on a generic ANN for instance, to be trained and optimised in terms of performance [9]. A wide variety of studies has been carried out to identify an optimised ANN model by altering weights, number of hidden layers, fine tuning hyper-parameters and altering activation functions [2], [16], [27], [28].

Although all these studies provide a good and effective approach in developing an accurate ANN model, they still require human intervention to optimise its performance by fine-tuning the ANN parameters mentioned above. Engineering data analysis in industries, such as oil and gas for example, would often benefit from restricting, or even, eliminating human intervention in detecting anomalies. Thus, this paper proposes an approach to designing machine learning algorithms that can automatically select required hyper-parameters by using a generic LSTM network with a fixed activation layer capable of detecting an anomaly or predicting system failure.

To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to evaluate a deep learning framework for real-time engineering data analysis that fits an LSTM network into the process of identification and classification of anomalous data. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section II describes the methodology of building a generic framework for anomaly detection based on systematic data processing. Then two case studies will be discussed that demonstrate the capabilities of the proposed framework in detecting and classifying data anomalies. The evaluation of the exemplified framework on the datasets corresponding to the case studies is presented in Section III, while Section IV draws conclusions and speculates possible future work.

II. METHODOLOGY

In time series data anomalies can be categorized into: outliers, unusual data points significantly dissimilar to the remaining points in the data set, and anomaly patterns, which group fractions of data together, which are different from the majority of normal data. To deal with these categories, various anomaly detection algorithms have been developed that

are classified into five major groups: probabilistic, distance-based, reconstruction-based, domain-based, and information-theoretic-based [15]. Different types of algorithms are more applicable in various scenarios of data analysis, which brings to front the idea of a generic framework capable of combining several analytic tools and approaches.

The idea of developing a framework of tools for anomaly detection is not new - in particular, in [1] the authors proposed a generic framework for network anomaly detection, focusing on analyzing network traffic. We adopt a similar approach, but with a prime interest in analyzing real-time engineering data coming from condition monitoring sensors.

The proposed approach to developing an anomaly detection framework segregates processing of the input data streams acquired by physical sensors into three distinct phases. The Pre-processing phase is when the data gets prepared to be passed onto the anomaly detection algorithm by going through four different stages of data cleaning, conversion, normalization and reduction. The Modelling phase involves running a machine learning algorithm on training data that results in defining, fitting and evaluating a computational model, which will be used later on to identify anomalous data. In the final Anomaly Detection phase a new dataset gets tested with the purpose of determining the accuracy of the developed model. Figure 1 illustrates this anomaly detection process and the following subsections describe the stages of each phase.

A. Data Pre-Processing Phase

As was mentioned above, the Pre-processing phase consists of four different stages: data cleaning, conversion, normalization and reduction. During the data cleaning stage all invalid and inaccurate sensor values are removed, and all the qualitative values (i.e. texts and descriptions) are replaced with an index number corresponding to each word in the vocabularies used.

In general, time series data analysis can be viewed as a supervised learning problem. The advantage of this view is that re-framing time series data into supervised data frames enables using both standard linear and nonlinear machine learning algorithms. Therefore, at this stage of data pre-processing, all time series variables get merged together and are converted into supervised data frames through the approach adapted from [3]. In order to be able to use the majority of activation functions, including sigmoid, and also being able to plot the acquired data, all data values are scaled down to the range between 0 and 1 using a re-scaling function (see Algorithm 1).

Algorithm 1 summarizes the data cleaning process applied to the pre-processed dataset and includes scaling and normalization of the data so that it can be passed onto the next phase.

The final stage of data reduction is potentially one of the most important steps of data pre-processing aimed at avoiding over-fitting the analytic model that is going to be built. Through data reduction we can eliminate all redundant and non-informative features in the dataset, which will have a direct impact on the evaluation accuracy of the model to be developed.

Algorithm 1 Data Processing

```
1: dataProcessing (dataset)
2: unitToDrop  $\leftarrow$  25%
3: Parse dates to format
4: repeat
5:   /*Parse dates to format*/
6:   for  $i \leftarrow 1, rows$  do
7:     covert text or milliseconds to datetime
8:     Covert qualitative values into quantitative ready
9:     for LSTM
10:    Frame multivariate time series as a
11:    supervised learning dataset using lag time step (t-1)
12:    Drop missing fields
13:    Scale and transform
14:  end for
15: until data is scaled and normalized
16: Split Training and Test based on UnitToDrop
17: repeat
18:   Reshape Training Dataset
19:   for  $i \leftarrow 1, rows$  do
20:     Reshape Training dataset to 3 Dimension
21:     Reshape Test dataset to 3 Dimension
22:   end for
23: until training and test datasets are reshaped
24: Return (trainingDataset, testDataset)
```

B. Data Modelling Phase

Some of the widely used Recurrent Neural Networks (RNN) include Gated Recurrent Units (GRU), Hyperbolic Tangent (tanh) units and Long Short-Term Memory units (LSTM). However, the GRU and LSTM units proved to be more superior to conventional tanh units [7]. Therefore, in this study we are evaluating two closely related variants of the LSTM and GRU units on two publicly available datasets of Beijing PM2.5 [18] and Appliances Energy Prediction [19]. The PM2.5 dataset represents tiny particles or droplets in the air related to the quantity of air pollutant that is a concern for people's health when its level is high. The dataset has been recorded on an hourly basis from US Embassy in Beijing, gathered over a 4-year period between 2010 and 2014. The other dataset consists of temperature and humidity sensor readings around a house, sampled every 10 minutes for about 4.5 months using a ZigBee wireless sensor network.

Three different data modelling approaches of using a simple RNN unit, a GRU unit and an LSTM unit on both datasets have been tested to determine which RNN unit outperforms the others (see Table I).

As can be seen from Table I, the LSTM unit demonstrated the best performance in terms of attaining the least validation loss. Loss is a summation of the errors made for each iteration of optimization on the training dataset batch. This value for test dataset batch is referred to as Validation Loss. Other studies also corroborate our finding that the LSTM approach applied for data analysis tasks involving long time lags performs better

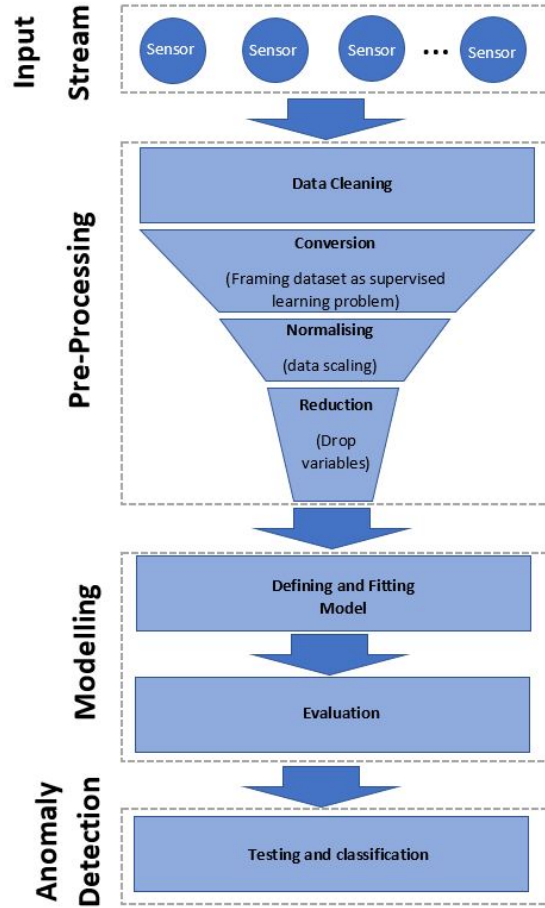


Fig. 1. Systematic Approach to Context Processing

than other RNN units [11].

The computational model developed using LSTM has been tested and evaluated against such optimizers as Stochastic Gradient Descent (SGD), Adam, Adamax and Nesterov-Adam (Nadam). Amongst all those, the Adam optimiser outperformed the rest (see Table II).

Another important factor to consider while tuning the model was the selection of an activation unit. Various activation units, including softmax, exponential linear unit (ELU), scaled exponential linear Unit (SELU), hyperbolic tangent (tanh) and sigmoid, have been tested. The sigmoid unit generated the best result and has been selected as the ultimate activation. Table

TABLE I
ALGORITHM COMPARISON

Dataset	LSTM		GRU		RNN	
	Loss	Val. Loss	Loss	Val. Loss	Loss	Val. Loss
Beijing PM2.5	1.78%	1.70%	1.86%	1.76%	1.98%	1.89%
Appliances energy prediction	2.65%	4.18%	2.69%	4.20%	2.72%	4.21%

III lists the best recorded performance for all activation unit evaluated in this study.

Moreover, several objective (loss) functions have been evaluated to find the optimal one for each dataset. These include the Mean Squared Logarithmic Error (MSLE), Mean Squared Error(MSE), Mean Absolute Error (MAE), Sparse Categorical Crossentropy (SCC) and Cosine proximity (CP). As it is shown in Table IV, the MAE function is the best in maintaining both accuracy and validation accuracy inline whilst generating the best result in terms of the smallest loss rate. In our further discussions we will use the following performance measures: (a) the Loss, which is the percentage of incorrectly classified data points; (b) the Value Loss that indicates the percentage of loss whilst training; (c) the Accuracy is the percentage of accurately classified data points in the training dataset; and (d) Accuracy Validation is the accuracy of the model on test datasets.

For developing the proposed framework a wrapper library Keras was used built around well-known python Neural Network libraries such as Theano and Tensorflow. With the help of all these libraries, a computation model for detecting anomalies in in the datasets was developed. As it is shown in Algorithm 2, the LSTM unit and Output layer with sigmoid activation are added to the model. The model is then compiled with the MAE loss function and the Adam optimiser, because these led to the best performance shown in Tables III and IV. The model is built by going through 50 training iterations (see table V). Also, for the demonstration and knowledge sharing

TABLE II
OPTIMISER COMPARISON

Optimisers	Loss	Val. Loss
SGD	5.92	5.95%
Adam	1.70%	1.70%
Adamax	1.85	1.75
Nadam	1.78	1.75

TABLE III
ACTIVATION COMPARISON

Activations	Loss	Val. Loss
sigmoid	1.70%	1.70%
softmax	1.76%	2.34%
ELU	1.48%	2.42%
SELU	1.46	2.30
tanh	1.85	2.08

TABLE IV
LOSS FUNCTION COMPARISON

Loss Functions	Loss	Val. Loss
MSE	1.70%	1.70%
MAE	1.73%	1.75%
MSLE	2.32%	2.24%
SCC	1.8	5.4
CP	9.35	12.02

purposes the Jupyter Notebook interactive computational environment has been utilized.

TABLE V
MODEL PARAMETERS

Parameter	Values
Optimiser	Adam
Loss Function	Mean Absolute Error (MAE)
Activation	Sigmoid
Iterations	50

Algorithm 2 Master Algorithm

```

1: TrainAndValidate (trainingData, testData)
2: model ← sequential()
3: cell ← 0
4: activation ← sigmoid
5: loss ← mae
6: optimizer ← Adam
7: epochs ← 100
8: Get input shape from trainingData
9: Get number size of cell recurrent state
10: Create new LSTM unit
11: Assign cell and input shape
12: Add LSTM unit to model
13: Create new Dense Layer
14: Add Dense layer to model
15: Set activation for Dense layer
16: Compile model using Optimiser and Loss
17: repeat
18:   /*Fit Model*/
19:   for i ← 1, epochs do
20:     Evaluate Loss
21:     Evaluate Validation Loss
22:     Evaluate Accuracy
23:     Evaluate Validation Accuracy
24:   end for
25: until All epochs completed
26: Return (Loss, ValLoss, Acc, ValAcc)

```

It has been shown that a variant of the LSTM approach - the stacked LSTM (SLSTM) network is able to learn higher level temporal patterns without prior knowledge, and thus can potentially outperform a single layer LSTM network [20]. Another alternative is to use Bidirectional LSTM (BLSTM) networks, which can improve performance of the initial model based on a single layer LSTM network [11]. Although the initial model that operates with the sigmoid activation unit, the MAE loss function and the Adam optimiser has been proven to be effective and well performing, we have extended our study further by also evaluating the BRNN and SLSTM variants of RNN networks (see Table VI).

The comparative results of these evaluations demonstrate that neither of those approaches can outperform a single layer LSTM network. Instead, they introduce additional overheads to the training process, which slow it down, and increase

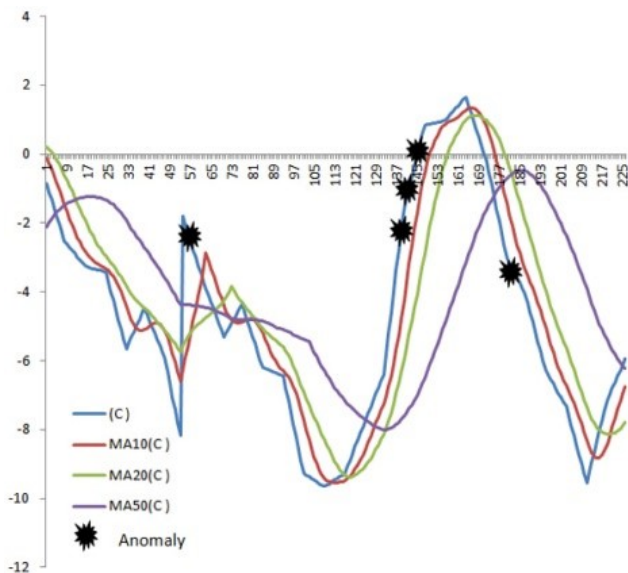


Fig. 3. Possible anomalous interference

seen from Figure 3, five potential anomalies are identified. The result coincides with the expert knowledge obtained and can be attributed to excessive noise.

III. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

For each dataset described above different prediction period has been tested depending on the number of items in the dataset. One of the challenges faced during the framework testing stage was data overfitting. In the scenarios when the training dataset was over 80 percent of the total available records in the dataset, an increasing accuracy of the model was observed with each training iteration, whereas the validation accuracy was gradually dropping. By keeping the training and test proportion at around the 80:20 level, we could successfully predict future values, and as a consequence anomalous readings, for all the datasets used in this study. In Figures 4 - 9 the x-axis represent the total number of iteration and the y-axis represent either accuracy or loss percentages.

After going through the pre-processing phase to prepare the data for building anomaly detection models, we could train and test the models with exceptionally high accuracy and with minimal effort. For the compressor dataset, the loss and validation loss characteristics of nearly 0.01 were obtained, as it is illustrated in Figure 4.

The same characteristics for the turbine dataset were even closer to zero, being only 0.001 (see Figure 5).

Since the compressor dataset was smaller (covering the sampling period of 2 weeks), we could successfully predict the system operation for the next 7 days with the accuracy of 100 percent (see Figure 6).

On the other hand, for the turbine dataset covering the period of over 4 months, the prediction of its operation in the following 15 weeks was obtained with the validation accuracy of 77.6 percent. Although the model accuracy was higher (around 87 percent), in order to avoid data overfitting the

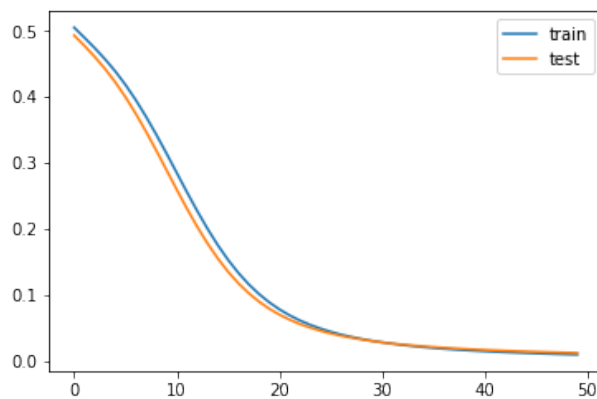


Fig. 4. Compressor Loss

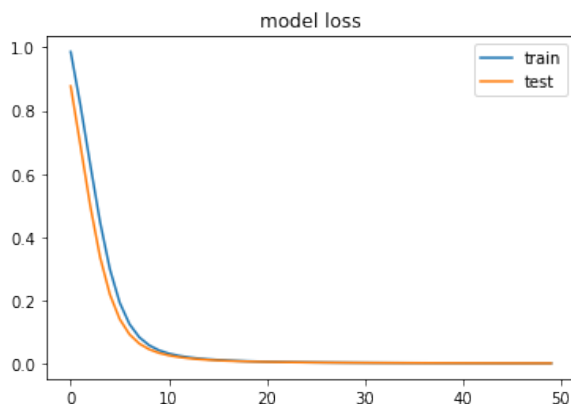


Fig. 5. Turbine Loss

anomaly detection model could not be improved any further (see Figure 7).

To evaluate the framework further and to test the classification capability of the designed anomaly detection model in classifying non time-series datasets, the electromagnetic interference dataset was used. In addition to detecting anomalies in this case study, the task was to segregate them into three classes corresponding to difference values of the interference-suppression capacitance used. The Interference dataset was not in the form of a time series, so during the conversion stage of the data pre-processing phase the datasets was re-framed to enable the use of the same anomaly detection model. After training the model and testing it against the interference voltage dataset, the resultant loss and validation loss of 0.0003 were obtained (see Figure 8); also, the accuracy characteristics for the dataset attained 100 percent, as shown in Figure 9.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this paper a generic framework has been proposed aimed at detecting anomalies in real-time engineering data acquired in the process of condition monitoring. The framework enables the utilization of various deep learning techniques in building a generic anomaly detection model capable of not only identifying the presence of anomalous values in the analyzed datasets,

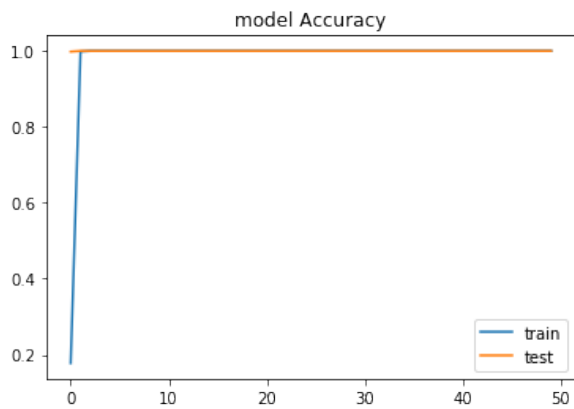


Fig. 6. Compressor Accuracy

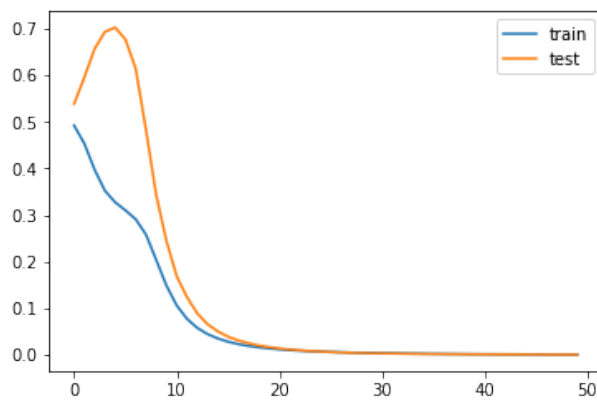


Fig. 8. Interference Loss

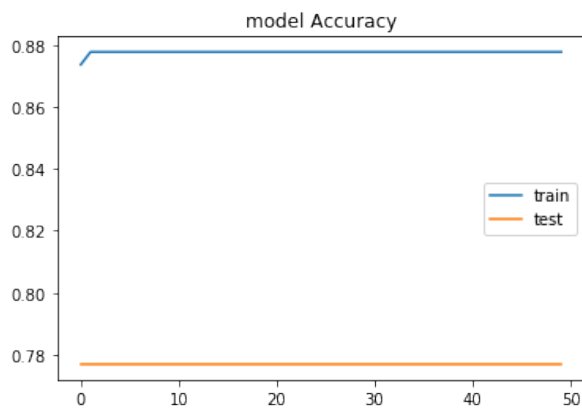


Fig. 7. Turbine Accuracy

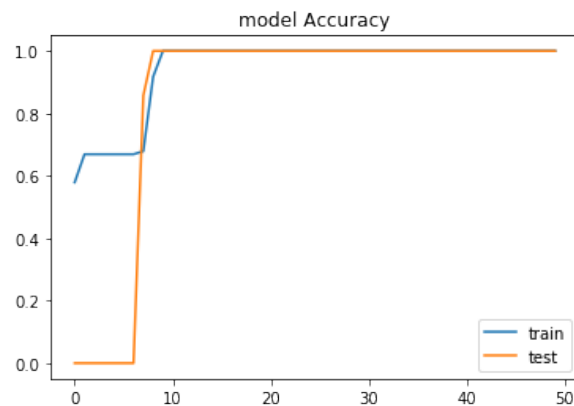


Fig. 9. Interference Accuracy

but of classifying these values for more effective condition monitoring.

When building such a model, three types of recurrent neural network units were compared: a recurrent neural network (RNN), a long short-term memory (LSTM) network, and a gated recurrent unit (GRU). Each of these units has been evaluated on two benchmark public datasets (Beijing's air pollution and Appliances energy prediction datasets) in combination with various objective functions, with different Output layers (referred to as optimizers) that utilize a set of activation functions. The experimental results of this comparative study revealed that the LSTM network unit that uses the sigmoid activation function, the Mean Absolute Error as the objective Loss function and the Adam optimizer showed the best performance and results in a high model accuracy of over 77 % for the datasets it has been tested on.

Having determined the best performing combination of the neural network components, a computational anomaly detection model was built within the framework, which was evaluated on real-life engineering datasets comprising the time-series datasets from an offshore installation in North Sea and another dataset from the automotive industry, which enabled exploring the anomaly classification capability of the

proposed framework.

One possible direction of future research is to adapt the framework for detecting anomalies in much larger datasets coming from other application domains and acquired by using modern instrumentation technologies, including Internet of Things and wireless sensor networks.

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