

A Low Cost Electronic Nose with a GMM-UBM Approach for Wood Species Verification

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Abstract: Deforestation endangers some vulnerable wood species. Although there are effective timber species identification methods, they are typically expensive and time-consuming, they must be carried out by experts and they are not applicable to places far from main cities. In contrast, we propose to use electronic noses to identify timber species, e.g. during their transportation process, from the volatile compounds that timbers emanate. In the present work, it is proposed a method for timber species detection from their aromas. The measurements of the volatile compounds are made by an array of 16 chemical sensors, whose curves are the inputs to a pattern recognition system. Detection is performed by using Gaussian mixture modeling with Universal Background Model. In contrast to previous works, in this work, we apply a new approach to the problem of timber species detection; furthermore, the sample collection conditions are closer to those found in real situations; and, the number of samples used is larger and more varied. We found an EER (equal error rate) of 24.18% for cedar verification and an EER of 33.62% for 4-timber species verification.

1 INTRODUCTION

Deforestation occurs all around the globe, but especially in tropical countries like Colombia, where illegal logging is one of its main causes. Due to this process, and due to the increasing timber demand, particular tree species that can be found in wild areas are threatened. Despite efforts to protect the country's natural resources, Colombian entities still struggle to combat illegal logging. In fact, deforestation rates in Colombia remain notably high, especially in recent years. In this regard, a common procedure carried by the police, consists on stopping a truck transporting timber in order to ask the driver for a letter of safe passage. Then, the timber cargo is verified; however, appropriate monitoring instruments are required in order to detect timber from vulnerable and prohibited tree species.

Among different wood identification strategies,

looking at macroscopic features such as color, texture and odour, stands out because they can be used to establish whether a wood is correctly labeled (Wheeler and Baas, 1998), which is highly convenient when analyzing large volumes of timber. Using these macroscopic features, by part of trained personnel, is the most common way of timber identification in Colombia, but it is done empirically and subjectively.

There are also precise methods based on taxonomic and genetic analyzes, in which wood species samples are compared at using genetic sequencing techniques (Hanssen et al., 2011; Yu et al., 2016). Although the reliability of these tests is almost 100%, they are expensive, delayed and they must be carried out by experts. Other used techniques involve different spectroscopic (Rana et al., 2008; Cabral et al., 2012) and imaging (Dickson et al., 2017) analyzes, but they still require support from experts and a considerable amount of time. All previously mentioned approaches are effective techniques, but they do not still meet the requirements to be applied in suburban and rural regions away from major cities (Kalaw and Sevilla, 2018).

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As an alternative approach, it has been proposed to analyze volatile compounds emitted by wood species by using strategies such as gas chromatography (Fedele et al., 2007; Müller et al., 2006; Rinne et al., 2002), but this approach is expensive as well.

On the other hand, a less expensive and practical option is to use electronic noses (e-nose) (Kalaw and Sevilla, 2018; Wilson, 2012). E-nose systems have been used in a growing number of applications, for example in food industry (Shi et al., 2017), air quality analysis (Capelli et al., 2014), explosives (Guo et al., 2017), and narcotics detection, among others (Santos and Lozano, 2015). It has also been proposed these devices to be used for timber species identification from the volatile compounds that they emanate (Cordeiro et al., 2016; Kalaw and Sevilla, 2018; Wilson, 2012).

In particular, the authors in (Garneau et al., 2004) analyzed three different species of Pinaceae family by using electronic noses; where, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed, showing observable differences between the species. The data set was composed by 30 smell-prints acquired from wood samples of the three conifer species. Later in (Wilson et al., 2005), the authors claim to have used neural networks as a mechanism to identify wood species, where identification rates between 94% and 99% were obtained. Regarding the dataset, two samples per tree, belonging to 13 – 30 trees of 12 different wood species, were taken. Another study carried out in Brazil (Cordeiro et al., 2016), classification with electronic noses for two pairs of woods was performed: (a) mahogany vs Spanish-cedar; and, (b) Brazilian walnut vs black-cinnamon. The calculated relative responses from the electronic nose were used as input data for principal component analyses (PCA), showing satisfactory results. However, details about data set composition is not provided. Finally, the authors in (Kalaw and Sevilla, 2018) used gas sensors measurements to analyze the separability of five timber species in the Philippines. The authors reported separable clusters at first glance when features obtained by principal component analysis (PCA) were used.

Notwithstanding the good results reported in previously mentioned studies, the experiments were performed by using a reduced amount of samples and in controlled conditions, far from practical situations. This work aims to advance in this regard and present an approach which can work in a less controlled environment, moving the experiment away from ideal conditions. In Colombia, the extraction of wood occurs mainly in remote regions of difficult access, which hinders the constant presence of experts, the

transportation of wood samples and the installation of specialized equipment. Therefore, a solution adapting to practical conditions is required. In particular, in present work we use timber samples after transportation procedures, instead of wood material. The reason to do this is because the aromas are very fresh, strong, and without major interference when working with wood material, quite the opposite occurs in timber identification.

In addition to this, previous research in this area report results in identification tasks instead of verification. The main difference between identification and verification tasks, is that the former case is a N -class classification problem, whilst later one is a binary classification problem. This is a widely discussed topic, specially in speaker recognition research (Doddington et al., 2000). Verification authenticates an individual timber sample by comparing it with one specific biometric reference stored in the database, while identification compares it with all the bio-metrics stored in the database. As far as we know, this is the first work in which timber species detection procedure is performed by the smell, from a biometric verification point of view.

This paper proposes just that. Here, we propose a method for timber species verification from their aromas. Timber samples were collected from wood deposits in the “*Gran Santander*” region in Colombia, making data collection closer to practical situations. The measurements of the volatile compounds were made by using an array of 16 chemical sensors, whose curves are the inputs to a pattern recognition based system. Data pre-processing is performed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) (Jolliffe, 2011) and, the detection is carried out by using Gaussian mixture modeling with Universal Background Model (Reynolds et al., 2000).

2 METHOD

2.1 Electronic Nose System

Figure 1 shows the building blocks for an e-nose system (Ruiz Jiménez, 2018). The chemical phase corresponds to the sensing of volatile compounds by the gas sensors array. In electronic phase, electrical signals are acquired and conditioned in order to obtain a temporal matrix representation of the sensed sample. Finally, this data is processed by pattern recognition algorithms in order to detect the tree species of timber material.

There are different types of gas sensors, classified according to their size, sensitivity, application, and

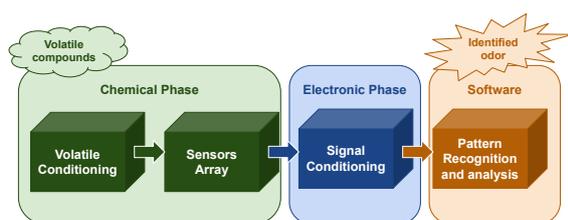


Figure 1: Typical E-NOSE general scheme. Adapted from (Ruiz Jiménez, 2018).

technology. Sensors based on metal oxide semiconductor films are the most common. They are composed by n -type metal oxide crystals, such as tin(IV) oxide (SnO_2 , aka stannic oxide). These sensors sensitivity varies with temperature, so they usually have a heating element controlled by an electric current for the sake of keeping the temperature in a constant value. Also, before being used for the first time, the sensors must go through a preheating stage (Figaro, 2005). Despite these inconveniences, these sensors are preferred because they have stable characteristics over time and do not require frequent maintenance processes (Ghasemi-Varnamkhashti et al., 2019).

Regarding the many electronic noses available in the literature, there are commercial electronic noses, whose sensors consist of nonconducting organic polymers. Several types have been used such as the *Cyrano-nose 320* (Garneau et al., 2004) and the *Aromascan A32S* (Wilson et al., 2005). However, this type of devices do not meet the research needs, because it has fixed, unmodifiable and non-customized sensor arrays.

On the other hand, customized e-noses have been used, for example: in (Kalaw and Sevilla, 2018), an 8-chemical sensors array with resistive principles based on carbon nanotubes was used; and in (Cordeiro et al., 2016), a 4-conductive polymer sensors array with resistive principle was utilized. However, the manufacture of sensors is out of the scope of present work.

As an alternative to the aforementioned, the electronic nose used in herein corresponds to a prototype developed in *Universidad Industrial de Santander* (Ruiz Jiménez, 2018), as shown in Fig. 2. It was developed under the *DIY (do it yourself, do it yourself)* culture, which allows to conduct research at different scales and at a low cost. It is composed by a 4×4 matrix array sensor. The signal conditioning and acquisition process is carried out by using an *Intel Galileo Generation 1* acquisition board (Ruiz Jiménez, 2018). This prototype has semiconductor metal oxide sensors, which vary their electrical resistance due to the chemical reaction that occurs when gases make contact with the sensors. These sensors belong to the manufacturing houses *Figaro*

Engineering and *Hanwei Electronics*, which are characterized by their ability to detect low gas concentrations and by their low cost. Table 1 lists the sensors used in the prototype.



Figure 2: E-NOSE prototype developed by UIS in (Ruiz Jiménez, 2018).

2.2 Data Collection Procedure

In this work, a total of 309 samples (woodblocks) of different wood species were taken from wood timber stocks of different cities in the *Gran Santander* region in Colombia (Bucaramanga, Lebrija, Socorro, San Gil, Pamplona, and Ccuta).

Before taking samples and perform all the measurement experiment, it was necessary to develop two previous tasks: e-nose preparation and sample preparation. First, the e-nose is turned on for one hour so that the sensors reach their steady-state operation in the corresponding environment. Later, each sample (woodblock) is prepared by brushing it 20 times with a wooden brush, and the resulting material is discarded to eliminate possible contamination by contact with another sample, or interference with other elements. Then perform the following procedure as described below for each wood sample:

- Brush the sample 20 more times and take approximately 1 cm^3 of the resulting wood chip.
- Sense (sniff) the sample with the e-nose. As a result, 16 response curves, corresponding to the conductance variations of each sensor in the matrix array, are obtained. This group of curves is known as the smell-print of the wood sample.
- Let the sensors rest during 5 minutes, allowing the entry of airflow generated by a fan, in order to avoid previous trials interfere with the current trial.

Each response curve was taken at a sampling period of 270 ms , following three steps. First, the sensors react to air for 100 samples; then, the corresponding wood chips are placed inside sensors chamber

Table 1: Sensors in the E-NOSE prototype.

SENSOR	BRAND	REF	SENSOR	BRAND	REF
1	HANWEI	MQ-2	9	FIGARO	TGS-832
2	HANWEI	MQ-3	10	HANWEI	MQ-6
3	HANWEI	MQ-4	11	FIGARO	TGS-823
4	HANWEI	MQ-6	12	FIGARO	TGS-816
5	HANWEI	MQ-7	13	FIGARO	TGS-822
6	HANWEI	MQ-8	14	FIGARO	TGS-813
7	HANWEI	MQ-135	15	FIGARO	TGS-826
8	HANWEI	MQ-9	16	HANWEI	MQ-3

during 300 samples; finally, the wood chips are removed and the sensors are exposed to the air again with residual air for additional 100 samples. In figure 3, it is shown an example curve response of one of the sensors.

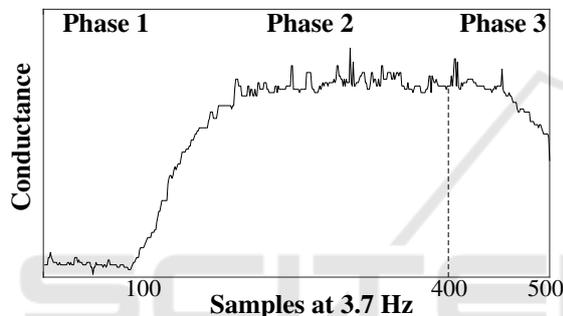


Figure 3: The different stages of the response are shown. Phase 1, first 100 frames, where the base reading is done. Phase 2, frames from 101 to 400, where sensors capture the smell of the wood chip sample. Phase 3, frames from 401 to 500, where sensors begin to return to their reference state.

To reduce the electronic noise effect in the acquisition system, a filtering process is carried out using a fifth-order median filter for each sensor response curve. It allows to reduce outliers influence on the measurement process.

2.3 Feature Extraction

In this paper, two strategies were used for the feature extraction stage. In the first, heuristic parameters describing the behavior of each curve were calculated as reported in recent works. Second case scenario, the recognition process is performed on the raw data.

2.3.1 Heuristic Parameters

Different features can be estimated from the response curve of the conductance value of each sensor. In previous works, it is reported the use of the maximum and minimum values, and, area under the curve as features (Yan et al., 2015). Another way is to use

strategies that involve a transient analysis of the sensor's response (Rodriguez-Lujan et al., 2014; Rana et al., 2008). Finally there is a third way, where a pre-defined model is adjusted using available data (data driven model) (Carmel et al., 2003). In the present work the following features were estimated:

- G_0 , initial conductance value, mean of the first 100 samples of the total response.
- G_f , final conductance value, mean of the last 50 samples of the phase 2 of the total response.
- G_{max} , maximum conductance value.
- G_{min} , minimum conductance value.
- B , gain coefficient; and A , pole location, corresponding to an adjusted first-order auto-regressive model:

$$H(z) = \frac{Bz^{-1}}{1 + Az^{-1}}. \quad (1)$$

In previously reported research works, principal component analysis (PCA) is typically used to decorrelate variables and reduce dimensionality and then avoid over-fitting (Akbar et al., 2016; Cordeiro et al., 2016). PCA analysis allows to reduce the dimensionality by applying a linear transformation that maps the data into a new space, where the new variables are uncorrelated. The new dimensions are sorted by the amount of variance they describe, from highest to lowest, concentrating the largest amount of variance in the first components (Jolliffe, 2011). In this way, by taking a few main components it is possible to represent most the variability present in the original data. Herein, after pilot experiments, we uses 90% as the level of variance to be represented by the p PCA components.

2.3.2 Full Time Series

For these experiments, we consider each of the $N = 16$ sensors as a single characteristic, resulting in a feature vector of dimension N . Furthermore, we include the first $s = 400$ samples of each curve response. By

using the first s samples, it is not necessary to reduce the dimension, because we are using almost all the information to estimate the GMM model, i.e., 400 feature vectors of length 16 per timber block.

2.4 GMM-UBM Approach for Timber Species Detection

The aim of this work is to support authorities in their fight against illegal and selective timber species logging. In this regard, an identification approach typically uses a closed set to classify which among N possibilities is most probable. On the other hand, species verification may be a better approach to make the error rate drops. Verification procedures allow determining whether a sample belongs to a class by having enough enrolled samples from that species.

A Universal Background Model (UBM) is a concept taken from biometrics that, in this case, corresponds to timber species-independent model, representing the universe or expected overall evaluation conditions. Regarding the training data for the UBM, selected samples should reflect the expected alternative hypothesis to be encountered during recognition. The verification task can be summarized in testing whether a sample corresponds to the analyzed class or another unknown class (alternative hypothesis). In this case, the impostor hypothesis (any other class) is modeled by the Universal Background Model (UBM) (Reynolds et al., 2000; Doddington et al., 2000).

In this work, two verification tasks were performed: first, one class (cedar) vs the universal model, thus individuals belonging the rest of species are included in the UBM model; and second, each of four particular classes (cedar, moncoro, pine and sapan) vs the universal model, therefore, these 4 model are not included in the UBM model. In table 2, there is a description of the number of individuals per class.

The UBM models a probability density function (PDF) that represents the properties of the reference smell-print species population. In that sense, the doubtful smell-print is compared with respect to the UBM as well as a PDF model of the a particular timber species. In such case, there are two models: timber species model (λ_s) and Reference UBM (λ_0). When passing the observations corresponding to the intercepted signal X two probability values, $p(X|\lambda_s)$ and $p(X|\lambda_0)$, are obtained, with which Likelihood Ratio (LR) is built. However, it is common to use the Log Likelihood Ratio (LLR),

$$\mathcal{L}(X) = \log p(X|\lambda_s) - \log p(X|\lambda_0). \quad (2)$$

As the value $\mathcal{L}(X)$ increases, the evidence that the

doubted smell-print correspond to the species we are looking for becomes stronger.

For PDF modelling, the well known Gaussian mixture model is preferred. The use of Gaussian mixture models is motivated by their capability to model arbitrary densities (Kinnunen and Li, 2010; Reynolds and Rose, 1995). A GMM is composed of a finite mixture of multivariate Gaussian components and the set of parameters denoted by λ . It is characterized by a weighted linear combination of C unimodal Gaussian densities by the function:

$$p(o|\lambda) = \sum_{i=1}^C \alpha_i \mathcal{N}(o, \mu_i, \Sigma_i), \quad (3)$$

where o is a D -dimensional observation or feature vector, α_i is the mixing weight (prior probability) of the i -th Gaussian component, and $\mathcal{N}(\cdot)$ is the D -variate Gaussian density function with mean vector μ_i and covariance matrix Σ_i . The popular expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm is used for maximizing the likelihood with respect to a given data. The interested reader is referred to (Bishop, 2006; Reynolds et al., 2000; Kinnunen and Li, 2010) for more complete details.

3 RESULTS

In order to measure the performance of the proposed timber species detection system, the DET (Detection Error Trade-off) curves and the EER (Equal Error Rate) value are used. DET curves plots False Rejection Rate (FRR, in the Y-axis) versus False Acceptance Rate (FAR, in the X-axis), where the curve that is closest to the left bottom corner of the graph corresponds to the system having the best performance (Martin et al., 1997).

The verification experiments included 309 samples from at least 18 wood species, as shown in table 2. First, 67 cedar samples were clustered in a class, and 180 samples from other species were used to fit the UBM with a 4-Gaussian mixture model. The rest of the samples were used for validation: 17 cedar samples and 45 impostors. We called *cedar detection* to this experiment. In the second experiment, which we named *4-species detection*, 159 wood samples were clustered into four classes (67 cedar samples, 37 moncoro samples, 21 pine samples, and 34 sapan samples). Again, samples of the other species (86 samples) were used to fit the UBM with a 4-Gaussian mixture model. The rest of the samples were used for validation: 17 cedar samples, 10 moncoro samples, 6 pine samples, 9 sapan samples and

Table 2: Samples per species used in this work.

Wood Species	Scientific Name	Number of wood blocks
Cedar	<i>Cedrela odorata</i>	84
Moncoro	<i>Cordia gerascanthus</i>	47
Pine	<i>Retrophyllum rospigliosii</i>	27
Sapan	<i>Clathrotropis brunnea</i>	43
Others	<i>Tabebuia aurea, Zanthoxylum rhoifolium, Fraxinus uhdei, Anacardium excelsum, Simarouba amara, Cariniana pyriformis, Ficus spp., Quercus humboldtii, Guarea guidonia, Coffea arabica, Alchornea triplinervia, Corymbia citriodora, Swietenia macrophylla, and others unknown.</i>	108

22 impostors. For the first, as well as for the second experiment, the PDF of each class representing a particular timber species is modeled by a 4 Gaussian mixture model. The EER value is estimated by using a cross-validation procedure of 5-sets; where 80% of timber samples corresponds to the training set, whilst the remaining samples (20%) were used for validation. Each verification problem (one class vs. UBM, and four classes vs. UBM) were analyzed from two scopes: first, by using traditional feature extraction methods followed by PCA dimensionality reduction; and second, considering the full time series of the 16 curves.

3.1 Cedar Detection

In the first set of experiments, we apply a feature extraction procedure, and six values were calculated from each of the 16 curves. This process results in a 96-dimensional feature vector for each sample, that is, an $\mathbf{X}_{309 \times 96}$ matrix. In previously reported works, principal component analysis (PCA) is typically used to reduce the dimension and avoid over-fitting (Akbar et al., 2016; Cordeiro et al., 2016). In the case of this application, five principal components were used to represent approximately 90% of the variance in the original data. On the other hand, the validation samples were compared against a single model of the known class (cedar) and the UBM. In this way, it is verified whether the analyzed sample belongs to the cedar class or not. The verification with one class, applying PCA, showed a classification error rate of 38.49% with a standard deviation of 7.02%. Figure 4 depicts the DET curve for this experiment.

Next, we consider the signal acquired by each of the 16 sensors as a characteristic, forming a feature 16-dimensional feature vector. Then, each of the 400 samples obtained is considered as a frame, thus our representation of a wood block smell-print is a 16×400 matrix.

The results of the cedar class verification proce-

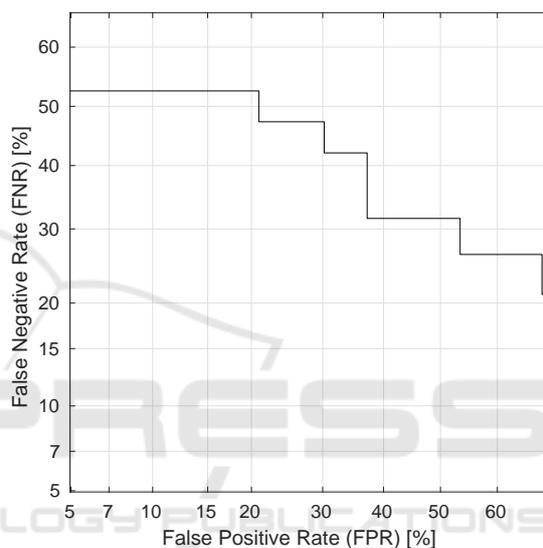


Figure 4: DET (Detection Error Trade-off) curve for one class verification with Principal Component Analysis.

cedure vs. the UBM, using the full time series, showed a classification error rate of 24.18% with a standard deviation of 7.71%. A DET (Detection Error Trade-off) curve is shown in Figure 5.

3.2 4-Species Detection

The validation samples were compared with the four models of the known classes (Cedar, moncoro, pine, and sapan) and the UBM, and the LLR values are calculated. In this way, it is verified whether the analyzed sample belongs to one of the four known classes or not. The verification with four classes, applying PCA, showed a classification error rate of 47.72% with a standard deviation of 3.79%. In Figure 6, it is shown a DET (Detection Error Trade-off) curve.

Considering each of the 16 curves response as a time series, we apply the verification procedure. The results of the verification with four classes, using the full time series, showed a classification error rate of

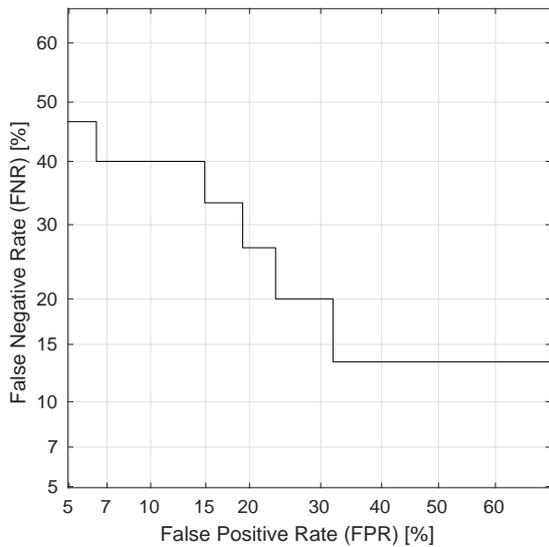


Figure 5: DET (Detection Error Trade-off) curve for one class verification with all data.

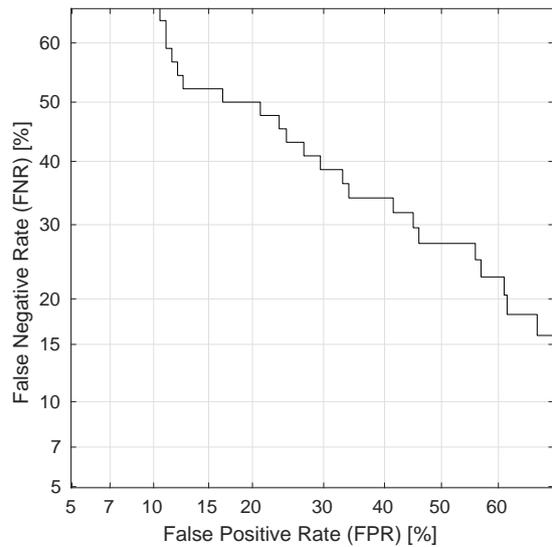


Figure 7: DET (Detection Error Trade-off) curve for four classes verification with all data.

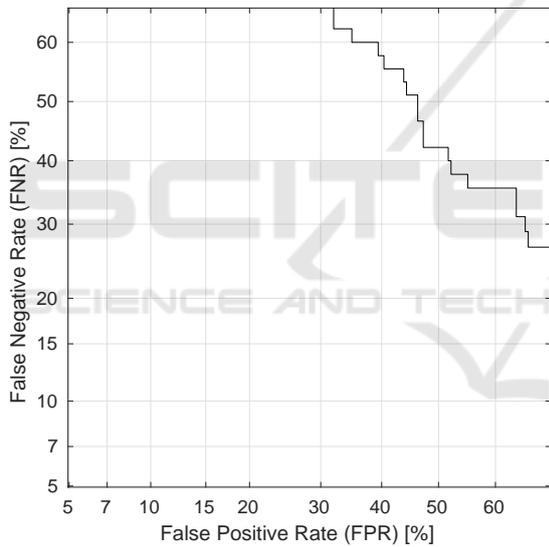


Figure 6: DET (Detection Error Trade-off) curve for four class verification with Principal Component Analysis.

33.62% with a standard deviation of 4.14%. A DET curve is shown in Figure 7.

In Table 3, it is presented a summary of the Equal Error Rates (EER) for the experiments.

Table 3: Summary of Equal Error Rate for the experiments carried out.

Target Detection	Analysis	Mean EER	Standard deviation
Cedar	PCA	38.49%	7.02%
Cedar	Full series	24.18%	7.71%
4-species	PCA	47.72%	3.79%
4-species	Full series	33.62%	4.14%

4 DISCUSSION

The reported errors in this work are high, in contrast with high success rates reported in (Kalaw and Sevilla, 2018; Cordeiro et al., 2016; Wilson, 2012). However, it is important to take into account that previous mentioned works use wood material, whose aromas are fresh, strong and without major interference. In addition, those reported works use controlled conditions. By contrast, in this paper we use timber samples, which are less fresh and have weaker aromas. Although timber samples are more difficult to classify, their conditions are closer to real situations than those when using wood samples.

Furthermore, reference works performed wood species identification tasks, which involves a limited and closed number of species within which to classify a sample. On the other hand, we propose a verification procedure, more useful in practice, in which a sample is compared with a reference model corresponding to a species of interest. If a test sample does not resemble the target class, it is said to belong to another class; while in the identification processes, a label of the defined classes must be assigned.

Wood species verification procedures are unusual, less those approaches based on the aroma. Within the search for information carried out for this work, there are no reports about timber verification by smell. Our proposal is to combine the use of electronic noses and verification techniques, such as GMM-UBM, to quickly determine whether a timber sample belongs to a species of interest or not, based on its aroma. It

is important to highlight the differences with data collection methods reported in previous research works related to the area, as well as the number of samples, origin, species, pre-process, and previous storage of the samples. The objective of this work is to analyze a greater dataset, with non-freshly sawn wood samples and with non-rigorous storage conditions. It allows establishing less distant from the real environment conditions for which the problem is sought to be solved. With this being said, results within the scope of this study are promising, as it shows that analyzed signals contain important and discriminative information for the task at hand.

Although it is used a larger number of samples than in other reference works, the dataset is still non-large enough. Furthermore, the approach of using a verification scenario seems to be appropriate when there is interest of targeting specific species in an environment where there could be some non-identified species which are hard to label. In addition to this, it would be necessary to explore other feature extraction techniques, for example, by exploring spectral information using different time-frequency representations, and multi-channel approaches such as those used in electroencephalogram (EEG) signal analysis. As could be notice in the results presented herein, the PCA approach performs worst that using the time series directly. It is also better to verify whether a suspicious sample belongs to a single species or not.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

It was proposed a method for smell-based wood species detection by using a low cost electronic nose, which is formed by an array of 16 chemical sensors. Verification was carried out by using Gaussian mixture modeling with Universal Background Model. Verification procedures are a better option in practical scenarios than identification procedures. As far as we know, our work is the first approach that made use of smell-prints from a biometric approach for wood species detection .

Those wood samples used in state-of-the-art works are fresh and then with still strong and intense aroma. By contrast, we use timber samples that, although are drier and have a weaker aroma, they represent in a better way the actual scenarios of illegal logging. As a result, error rates are higher than results reported in the literature (Cordeiro et al., 2016; Wilson, 2012; Kalaw and Sevilla, 2018).

Finally, there is no information about which are those appropriate chemical sensors for this specific

application. Therefore, it is suggested, as future work, to perform an analysis of volatile compounds that compounds the aromas of the different wood/timber species.

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