

# Ultrasonic Large Scenario Model (ULSM): Vector Embedding System for Ultrasonic Echo Wave Characteristics

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**Keywords:** Ultrasonic Sensor, Vector Embeddings, Residual Neural Network, Signal Processing, Human Computer Interaction, Pattern Recognition, Transfer Learning.

**Abstract:** Ultrasonic sensors emitting ultrasound waves can be effectively used in Human Computer Interaction (HCI) to assist visually disabled humans. With the embedding of the sensor echoes into assistive tools, real-time spatial awareness for mobility is enhanced. Moreover, material identification aids object recognition by detecting different materials through their echo signatures. In this article, we study the use of ultrasonic sensors in HCI systems focusing on their ability to detect materials by analysing the ultrasonic wave characteristics. These services aim to improve the autonomy and security of people with visual impairments, offering a complete assistive solution for daily navigation and interaction processes. We have planned to create a vector database for storing these embeddings generated from reflected waves of various materials and objects. In this work, we propose a precise vector embeddings generation framework for ultrasonic systems using ResNet50 convolutional neural network. In the future, Generative AI will use these embeddings to serve a range of applications for greater autonomy and safety, providing an assistive travel and interaction solution for the visually impaired.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Ultrasonic sensors are based on ultrasonic waves and can be used to determine distance, presence, or even the level between objects. Ultrasonic sensors have the advantage of working in harsh conditions. Working principle of ultrasonic Sensor is that it functions like the basic sound wave propagation (acoustical wavelength, sound reflection) logic at a frequency in the ultrasonic region. That's why ultrasonic waves show similar characteristics as sound in time domain. In ultrasonic non-destructive testing (NDT), the transmission of high-frequency sound waves in a material is used to determine the characteristics of that material such as surface information, orientation etc (Matz, 2006) (Taiju Shibata, 2001). The reflected waves from that material can significantly distinguish the unique properties of that material. Not only that, Ultrasonic sensors mounted with embedded systems can also calculate the distance of that material.

In recent studies, NDT was able to figure out the characteristics of core internal graphite blocks (Taiju Shibata, 2001). The key idea behind this complex method is to rely on the reflected waves bounced back from a surface and examine them precisely. These reflected waves show different characteristics for different materials. In porous ceramics the propagation characteristics of ultrasonic waves is quite unique because of their porous shape. In these cases, the relationship between wave velocity and porosity should be taken into account (Taiju Shibata, 2001). Because of these unique characteristics, ultrasonic signals or reflected echo signals must be preprocessed. Ultrasonic signals can be impacted by several key factors, including the frequency and bandwidth of the signal, the path and distance of the inspection, the position and size of the material, and the properties of the material (Pagodinas, 2002). To detect various materials and create discrepancies between them several signal processing techniques are used. Some of these techniques are implemented

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on the embedded system or the hardware and some of them are done after post echo generation. Ultrasonic waves tend to scatter, so the efficacy of these techniques in detecting reflected echoes in materials shows high attenuation of waves. Some of the simple signal processing techniques can be analog signal filtering, transducer damping, pulse shaping, clipping the whole signal and adjusting it, amplitude controlling, applying filters for noise reduction, improving the spatial resolution of multiple reflections, etc (Pagodinas, 2002). Some of the signal preprocessing techniques also includes shifting the signal from time domain to frequency domain. In our case we have captured the ultrasound signal and generated spectrogram from that signal. Because we have realized that extracting echo wave characteristics in frequency domain is effective to generate vector embeddings. Because different materials have different echo wave characteristics which can be utilized in pattern recognition.

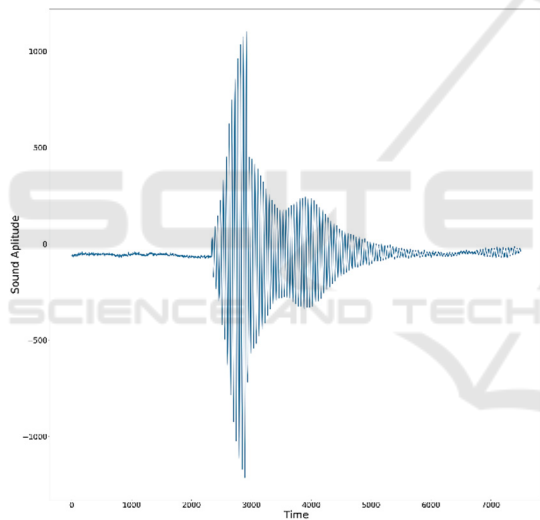


Figure 1: Ultrasound signal reflected from plastic.

Figure 1, shows the whole ultrasound signal which is preprocessed where X-AXIS symbolizes Time and Y-AXIS symbolizes Amplitude. we have generated spectrogram from it. Spectrogram holds the frequency properties of a specific material.

Based on the properties of ultrasonic signals HCI systems can be built. To ensure the quality of life for disabled people smart wheelchairs can be beneficial (Sanders, 2021). Not only this, by introducing the power of recent technologies such as Generative AI any message can be generated and transmitted to the visually impaired person in correspondence with his/her surroundings. The existing method to assist a visually impaired person is called a white cane or a

walking stick. It detects its surroundings with the help of sensors and tries to alert people (Nayan, 2016). people have a vision impairment which can be either partial or full. White cane can help people but it may get confused in an unfamiliar environment. Our focus is to build a system that can efficiently serve blind people and generate alert messages to the visually impaired so that they can have a proper understanding of the situation. Human actions include gestures and movements in an environment. A system for human activity recognition is meant to recognize these activities in the context of real-life situations so that we can understand what lies beneath them. The field of contextual information detection has been attracting intense interest among numerous researchers for decades due to its applications in HCI (Ghosh, 2023).

In the area of signal processing, Recurrent Neural Networks (RNN), Long-Short Term Memory (LSTM) (Zhou, 2022), and transformers are widely used. Speech, text, audio and music can be generated with the help of Generative AI. Transformers are the building blocks of Gen AI consisting of multilayer encoder and decoder that works with the attention mechanism (Vaswani, 2017).

This paper initializes and demonstrates the first phase of the Ultrasonic Large Scenario Model (ULSM) which is to generate the embedding vectors from spectrograms via the ResNet50. To generate our desired vector embeddings we have conducted research on VGG16, VGG19 and ResNet50 (Agarwal, 2021). But we have chosen the ResNet50 model because of its architecture and residual connections which is suitable to process spectrograms. To verify the correctness of these embeddings we have calculated the similarity scores. These embeddings are stored in a vector database for different materials and objects. Our key idea is to combine the abilities of ultrasonic sensors with Gen AI systems to solve various real-life problems.

## 2 RELATED WORKS

Audio signals are within the human audible range for example 20 Hz to 20 KHz, but ultrasonic signals work beyond 20 KHz which is above human hearing. Regardless, both types of signals are used to communicate and they provide the ability for information exchange with spectral elliptically shaped sound waves. So, it can be said that the methods we use to process audio or sound waves nowadays can be applied to ultrasonic signals for processing purposes. Ultrasonic signals can be treated

as time series data with continuous values. The methods used to represent time series data are the building blocks to develop time series-based applications. To represent data adequately and draw any conclusion from the given time series data, vector embeddings are necessary. Signal2Vec is a novel technique that harnesses the capabilities of natural language processing methodologies to convert continuous-time series data into a meaningful vector-based representation. This transformation enables a diverse array of applications, encompassing time series classification, prediction and anomaly detection (Nalmpantis, 2019). The inspiration model was word2vec which can understand the semantic and syntactic meaning of words (Ma, 2015).

Another model named Wave2Vec, which is a semantic learning model to learn deep representations of medical concepts from Electronic Health Records (EHRs). This model is capable of handling bio signals such as Electroencephalogram (EEG), Electrocardiogram (ECG), and Electromyography (EMG) (Yuan, 2019). These continuous time series signals are converted into vectors to extract semantic meaning. This base model is a combination of two separate models known as Wave2Vec-sc and Wave2Vec-so. Wave2Vec-sc is responsible for extracting the dormant characteristics of bio signals with the help of a sparse autoencoder (SAE). On the other hand, Wave2Vec-so can be trained to predict neighbouring representations with the help of a SoftMax layer (Yuan, 2019).

We are inspired by the research conducted by the Facebook AI research team. They have developed a model known as Wav2Vec 2.0 which can process raw audio signals efficiently to solve speech processing problems (Baevski, 2020). This model consists of several stages such as Feature encoder, Context Network, Quantization, and Self-Supervised Learning. It encodes raw speech audio using a multi-layer convolutional neural network into high-level continuous feature vectors. These embeddings are then fed into a Transformer network to create contextualized representations. During the pretraining stage, part of the model employs a quantization module to transform the latent representations into a limited set of potential embeddings. These representations are chosen from multiple codebooks (Baevski, 2020). The Gumbel SoftMax function is used to choose discrete codebooks (Gumbel, 1954) (Jang, 2016). The embeddings generated by the quantization module then serve as the targets for the model to predict during pretraining (Baevski, 2020). We have conducted our own experimentation on the base

model of Wav2Vec 2.0, which is the Wav2Vec model to generate the embeddings via feature encoder. But this model has some limitations. This model takes raw signals as input. As we are working with ultrasound signals, we have passed the signal directly to the model. The Vector embeddings generated by this model has the dimensions of  $512 \times 10$ . To create a search index and perform similarity search to validate the generated embeddings is quite challenging because of this huge dimension. Even this dimension is too big to perform vector search in renowned Vector Databases such as Atlas MongoDB, Azure Qdrant and Azure Cosmos DB.

Depending on the above-mentioned conclusion, we have shifted our focus to frequency domain. Spectrograms represent the echo wave characteristics much better than the raw signals. Different applications in the field of audio, music and speech use pre-processed spectrograms and Mel-spectrograms as the input data of neural networks (Alnuaim, 2022). Spectrograms allow us to visualize which frequencies are present for a specific material and how they change. We have used the ResNet50 which is pretrained on ImageNet dataset and fine-tuned on our own dataset. We have utilized a method called transfer learning for efficiency to generate vector embeddings. (Hossain, 2022) (Adebanjo, 2020).

## 3 METHODOLOGY

To produce vector embeddings from the reflected echo signals we have followed certain steps. All the experiments were conducted at the Computational Intelligence Laboratory of Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences.

### 3.1 Experimental Setup

To build our experimental setup, we have used one ultrasonic sensor mounted on top of an embedded system known as Red Pitaya. Figure 2, depicts the visual representation of our setup and the way we have mounted the ultrasonic system on the top of a tripod. On the ground, yellow tapes are the markings of the maximum reach of the signal in terms of angle and space. The middle point is also marked at the center with yellow tape. We have put all our materials at the center to get the readings from the RedPitaya. Our embedded system is connected to a laptop over Ethernet cable, where monitoring of the signal readings occurred.

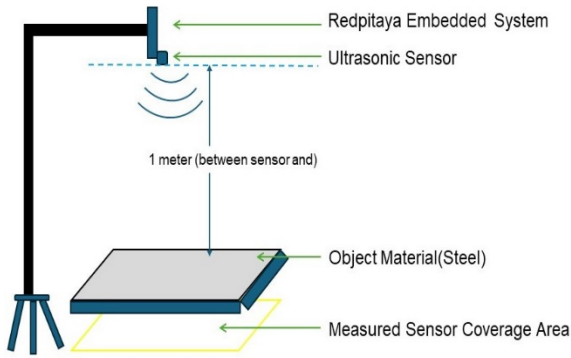


Figure 2: Experimental setup for data acquisition at Computational Intelligence Lab (Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences).

### 3.2 Data Acquisition

The system has sampled the analog signal with a sampling rate of 1.95 MHz. Because of the extended range of the system, it can analyse multiple materials in a single shot. For experimental purpose, readings of reflected echoes for 3 materials have been taken such as plastic, wooden box, steel individually. For each material 100 sampled time signals have been taken for fine-tuning purpose. The distance of the material from the sensor have been adjusted multiple times as the strength of the signal gradually decreases with the increasing distance. To avoid overfitting, readings were taken from 35cm, 64cm and 150cm for each of these materials.

### 3.3 Vector Embeddings Creation

Embeddings are the compact representation of given input signal which contain the learned features. Our captured Analog signals have converted to Analog-to-Digital signals. After the preprocessing, we have generated, spectrograms from these signals.

#### 3.3.1 Labelling the Data

To label acquired data, human eye observations were used. As we have acquired data for three materials, we have labelled them as plastic, wood and steel.

#### 3.3.2 Generating Spectrograms

To make the conversion from time domain to frequency domain Fourier transformation is used which reveal the frequency spectrum of the original signal. We have ultrasound signals of different amplitudes in this scenario. To measure the Power Spectral Density (PSD) the sliding window (Richardson, 2018) technique was used with the

window size of 256 with sliding step of 128 and calculated the First Fourier Transform (FFT) of the windowed portion. The mathematical representation of the FFT on a set of  $N$  samples  $\{x_n\}$  as follows: (Alnuaim, 2022)

$$X_k = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} x_n e^{-\frac{j2\pi kn}{N}} \quad k = 0, 1, \dots, N-1 \quad (1)$$

By squaring the FFT portions and divide them by window size PSD was calculated. Then we have generated spectrograms with these PSD values and resized them into 256\*256 pixels. These spectrograms then converted to logarithmic scale for better view. Figure 3, below shows the spectrogram which has been generated by taking only the echo portion of the whole signal reflected from plastic.

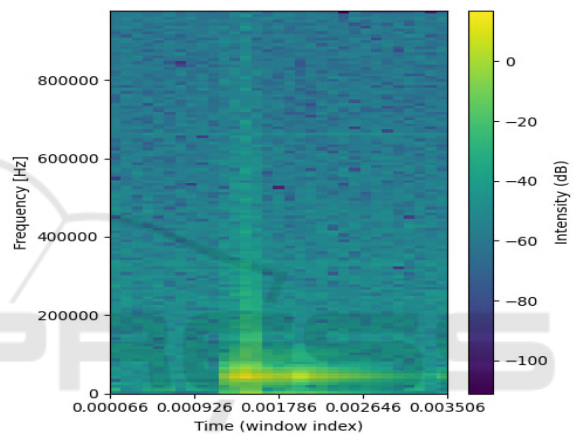


Figure 3: Spectrogram in Logarithmic scale.

#### 3.3.3 ResNet50 Architecture with Custom Layers

Residual Neural Network is one of Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN). In CNN, a convolution operation is conducted on the input data to learn the features of the image. But this Deep CNN has some drawbacks such as vanishing gradients, overfitting, degradation and exploding gradients (LeCun, 2015). Residual Neural Network can overcome these challenges by adding the “Residual block” in the network which is similar to “skip connection” and is responsible to feed information deeper into the network (Adebanjo, 2020).

In this paper, we have used the base ResNet50 architecture which has 50 layers for our training purpose. In Figure 4, the curved lines define the residual connections or the skip connections which is responsible to feed the weights of previous layer into the next deeper layer. This residual connection is responsible to overcome the challenges like exploding or vanishing gradients and degradation

problems. ResNet50 have 5 convolutional blocks known as Conv1, Conv2, Conv3, Conv4 and Conv5. Each of these blocks has their own fixed size kernels and convolution layers. In Figure 4, The first layer of ResNet50 has 64 filters of size  $7 \times 7$ . The next layer is a  $3 \times 3$  sized maxpooling layer. There are three identical grey color blocks, four identical orange color block, four identical yellow color blocks and lastly three identical brown color blocks depicted in figure 4. The curved lines marked with blue color represents the residual connection and the black color represents the identity connection (Biswas, 2019).

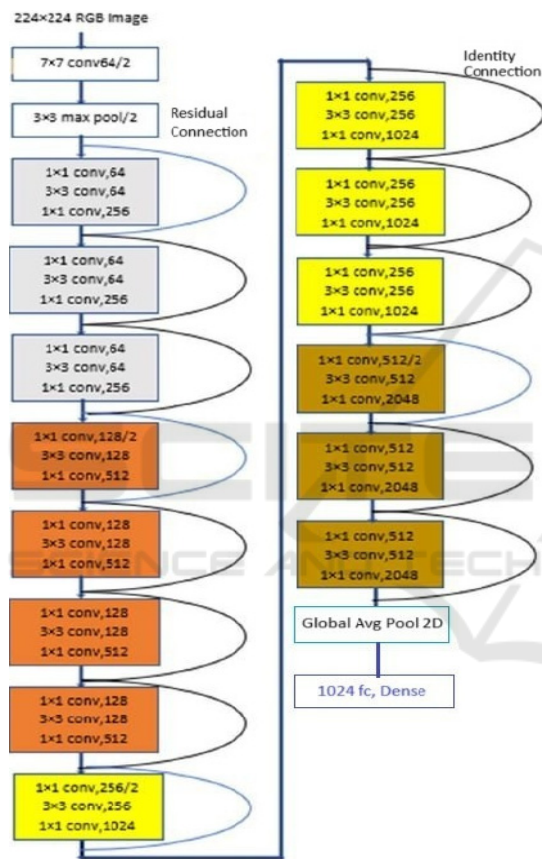


Figure 4: ResNet50 Architecture with our custom Layers (Biswas, 2019).

If the input and output dimensions of the connecting blocks are same, then identity connections are used. On the other hand, if the dimensions differ then residual connections are used. We have not used the Average pooling layer and the fully connected 1000 Dense layer of the traditional ResNet50. We have added two custom layers to generate our desired vector embeddings. We have added the Global Average pooling layer at the end point of Conv5 block. This layer is responsible for reducing the

spatial dimensions which is basically height and weight of the feature map of Conv5 block. Then we have connected one dense layer to produce the 1024-dimensional vector embeddings.

### 3.3.4 Pre-Training and Fine Tuning

We have used a compelling method known as Transfer Learning to train our ResNet50. We have frozen the Conv1, Conv2, and Conv3 blocks, which means we have pre-trained them with the benchmark ImageNet dataset using its weight (Adebanjo, 2020). Then for fine tuning we have used our own 300 spectrograms (in RGB scale) generated from ultrasound signals for plastic, wood and metal because we have analysed that the first three blocks extract general patterns and the last two blocks Conv4 and Conv5 are responsible for learning abstract pattern specific to ultrasound signals. Our generated spectrograms have the size of  $256 \times 256$  pixels and the ResNet50 can convert it to  $224 \times 224$  pixels automatically.

### 3.3.5 Vector Embeddings

After the fine-tuning is done, we have generated 225 completely new spectrograms and then generated vector embeddings with the size of (1, 1024) dimensions.

### 3.3.6 Calculate Similarity Scores

For ensuring the correctness of our generated embeddings, we have used these 225 newly generated vector embeddings are our vector search space. This search space is used to calculate the cosine similarity. We have created three new spectrograms, one for each material. After generating embeddings from these three spectrograms, we have calculated the cosine similarity scores within our vector space. Cosine similarity is basically calculating the angle between two vectors. Suppose we have two vectors called  $X$  and  $Y$ . Then the cosine similarity between them can be calculated by the following equation (Nguyen, 2010),

$$\text{cosine Similarity } (CS) = \frac{A^T \cdot B}{\|A\| \|B\|} \quad (2)$$

Here  $A^T \cdot B$  denotes the dot product between two vectors. By using the dot product of the normalized vectors, we have calculated the cosine similarity. As we wanted to calculate pattern similarities between spectrogram embeddings we have chosen this method. If the value of  $CS$  is closer to 1 then we have a perfect match and if the value is 0 then the vectors are orthogonal means they are completely different (Nguyen, 2010).

### 4 ANALOGY

In the current era of transformer models, word embeddings are used for sentence structuring and word prediction. A multidimensional array can be an example of a word embedding which is simply defining how semantically close the current word is with other words of the sentence. A relation between words in multi-dimension helps the model to even define the type of the word (e.g. pronoun type or verb type word). With these embeddings, a sentence is structured and predicted in LLM models. In the case of waves, these embeddings may get embedded in the phoneme level of a word. Each of the words then gets separated into fractions of phonemes. The whole word embedding holds the audio batch size of the word, audio channels, and phoneme characteristics.

As Ultrasonic Sounds are also waves with higher frequency than normal human audible range, the behaviour of Ultrasonic echo is also like sound waves of words created while reading a book. The analogy of each word is to make a whole sentence that is meaningful. But in the case of a Scenario analysis Ultrasonic sound must produce which type of material (e.g. Solid Steel, Soft Foam, Solid Wooden structure with a hollow in the middle) is present and in which direction with the information of the current distance. If for example a sentence “I have seen this before” produces an embeddings representation in binary dimension analysis like yellow-coloured boxes in Figure 3, each of the materials in front of the Ultrasonic Sensor in office space would create the embeddings representation given in green-coloured boxes based on the material of that object. Ultrasonic Sensors are well known for the capability of distance

measurement, which will interpret the scenario for example “Plastic at 20cm distance, Wood in 1 meter distance, Steel cube in 5 meters distance corresponding a Concrete wall behind the steel frame at 6 meters from the Ultrasonic sensor”.

### 5 FUTURE WORK

In this paper, the embeddings of ultrasonic sound echoes using spectrograms were processed for a far-reaching achievement of Scenario analysis for trained material in a live location. The forward plan corresponds to the further training of the Neural Network dedicatedly working for processing Ultrasonic sound with larger dataset. This includes comparing the embedding creation from Facebook’s “fairseq” library with own built embedding creation library (Baeovski, 2020). With this achievement, the process of using the embeddings for material classification requires an LSM model combined with LLM which will be capable of interpreting live scenarios with material positioning and shaping information. The building phase of the transformer model for Large Scenario Model (LSM) analysis is ongoing and will be included with the result in future works. Required feature engineering and Data preprocessing will be included in the journey of getting the highest accuracy of material classification with positional changing information to build the scenario into an HCI vision model. Building database with Log-spectrogram for aiding embedding creation using CNN feature extraction is also in the future work plan.

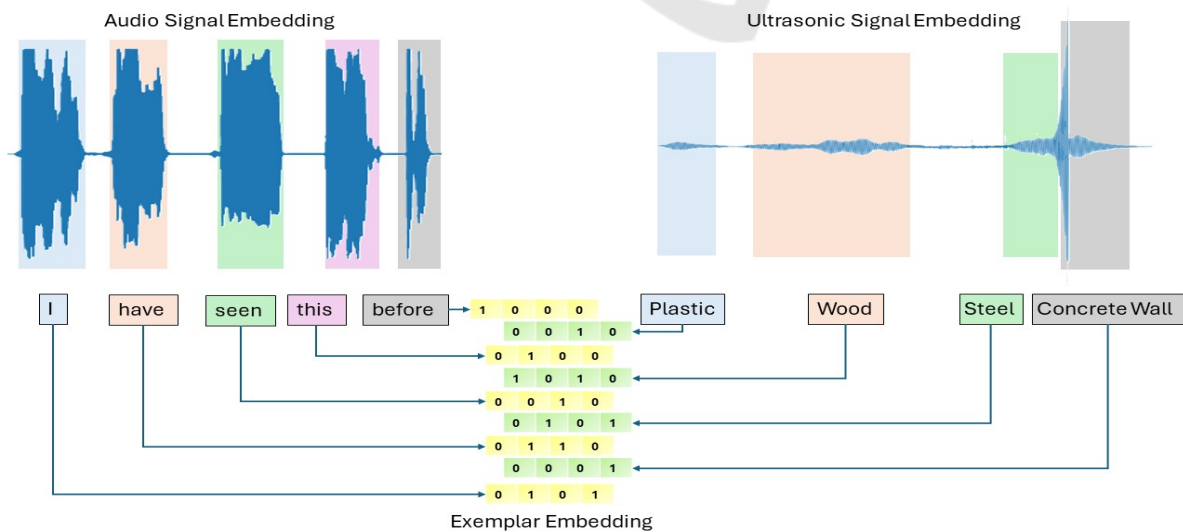


Figure 5: Analogy of Ultrasonic Signal Embeddings with respect to Audio Signal Embeddings.

## 6 RESULT ANALYSIS

we have fine-tuned our model with 300 labelled spectrograms in the training phase and for validation 75 new spectrograms were used. Figure 6, depicts the convergence of our network in training and validation phases.

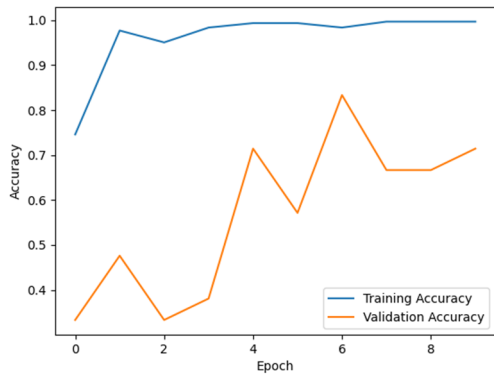


Figure 6: Accuracy Distribution in training process.

For our search space we have generated 225 vector embeddings. Each of these embeddings has the size of (1, 1024). To visualize such a huge dimension, we have used the t-Distributed Stochastic Neighbour Embedding (t-SNE) to reduce the high-dimensional data in a lower dimensional space (Arora, 2018, July). From figure 7, it is clearly noticeable that the generated embeddings formed similar cluster or patterns. Vectors generated for same material are closed to each other.

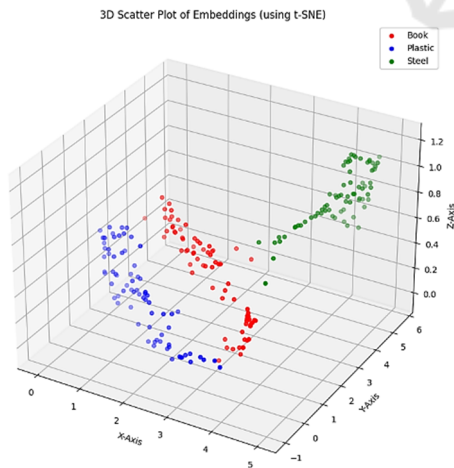


Figure 7: Scatter plot of the vector embeddings.

To verify our experimentation, we have taken three new samples (one from each material) and generated vector embeddings. We have created our search space to calculate the cosine similarity among

these three vectors and the 225 vectors. From Table 1, it can be demonstrated that the top five similarity scores are closer to 1 which means they are close to each other, they have similar patterns and they are in a same cluster.

Table 1: Top five similarities for each material.

Materials	Top Five Cosine Similarity Score from the Search Space
Book	('Book', 0.9986334)
	('Book', 0.998229)
	('Book', 0.9974883)
	('Book', 0.9972976)
	('Book', 0.99661756)
Plastic	('Plastic', 0.99962866)
	('Plastic', 0.9996282)
	('Plastic', 0.99961853)
	('Plastic', 0.9995949)
	('Plastic', 0.9995947)
Steel	('Steel', 0.9998824)
	('Steel', 0.99977136)
	('Steel', 0.9997442)
	('Steel', 0.99968445)
	('Steel', 0.99959064)

## 7 APPLICATION

With these embeddings currently, transformer model creation and training-testing work is going on. This will enable the HCI system to build an image of the surrounding scenario of a vision-impaired person to assist with sound or neural image transferring using cheap ultrasonic sensors.

The material classification from the echo signal will enable a couple of new options for the auto industry to build vehicles with more autonomous functions cheaper to build with control of scenario analysis. Doppler effect analysis for echo spectrogram can be used for rapid position-changing effect analysis and emergency analysis on roads (Raj, 2012). It can open the option of cheaper sensors for accident prediction.

The final Machine Learning Model will open a new research option for Rovers. Mars or Moon Rovers with LSM can define a newly found material on an unknown surface depending on the atmospheric effect of the planet on sound waves. By autonomous calculation of deviation of Ultrasonic sound echo from the earth's surface and unknown planet surface, calibration of the robot for the atmosphere can be more accurate. This will enable also material classification of unknown objects and similarity analysis with known earth objects.

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