Tuijin Jishu/Journal of Propulsion Technology
ISSN: 1001-4055
Vol. 46 No. 3 (2025)

Deepfake Audio Detection Using CNN-Transformer Hybrid Model with Data Augmentation

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Abstract:- The emergence of deepfake audio generated through advanced machine learning models such as GANs and speech synthesis networks presents serious threats to digital security and trust. In this paper, we propose a CNN-Transformer hybrid architecture for detecting deepfake audio signals. The CNN extracts local spectral features while the Transformer captures long-range temporal dependencies across audio sequences. Evaluated on the ASVspoof 2019 dataset, the model achieved a classification accuracy of 91.47%, outperforming conventional models including LSTM (90.00%), CNN-LSTM (91.39%), and TCN (86.96%). A detailed classification report and confusion matrix further demonstrate the robustness of the proposed approach. The approach builds upon trends observed in prior works using spectral learning, adversarial learning, and hybrid audio forensics architectures.

Keywords: *CNN-Transformer Hybrid, Data Augmentation, Deepfake Audio Detection, Spectrogram Analysis.*

1. Introduction

With the help of smart technologies like WaveNet, GANs, and speech-making tools, people can now create fake voices that sound just like real people. These fake voices, known as deepfake audio, can be used in good ways — but also in harmful ways, like tricking voice-based security systems, spreading fake news, or committing online crimes. Because these fake voices are getting better and harder to notice, it's becoming really important to find ways to tell the difference between real and fake audio.

To catch deepfake audio, some systems look at sound patterns using tools like Mel-spectrograms or Constant-Q Transforms (CQT), and then use special computer models called CNNs to study them. Some systems try to follow how a person's voice moves or changes while speaking, using tools like GRU or LSTM. But these don't always work well when the fake voice is made in a new way. They often only look at a small part of the voice and can miss fake voices they haven't learned about before.

Older methods for finding deepfake audio have some problems, so new mixed methods are becoming more popular. One helpful idea is using Transformer models. These models are good at looking at longer parts of speech and finding important details. CNNs, on the other hand, are good at spotting small patterns in sound. When we use both CNNs and Transformers, the system gets much better at catching fake voices. CNNs notice small parts of the sound, and Transformers look at the whole voice. Working together, they help the system find fake audio more easily and more correctly.

In this paper, we share a model that mixes CNN and Transformer methods to detect fake audio. We tested it on the ASVspoof 2019 Logical Access dataset and compared it with other models. Our model gave better results and worked well even on new data. These results support the idea that using both CNN and Transformer together is a strong and effective way to detect deepfakes in audio.

2. Related Work

The domain of deepfake audio detection has seen remarkable growth, driven by rapid advancements in generative models such as GANs, voice conversion systems, and speech synthesis frameworks.[2] A significant body of research has focused on utilizing spectral features, particularly Mel-spectrograms and constant-Q transforms, as inputs to convolutional neural networks (CNNs), which have proven effective in capturing localized frequency artifacts. Chen et al. [1] conducted a comparative study on spectral feature extraction methods, while Rabhi and Di Pietro [5] proposed a real-time detection framework leveraging CNNs on spectrogram inputs. Studies by Patel et al. [6], Zhao and Bestagini [15], and Singh and Wagh [10] emphasized the importance of combining multiple spectral domains for robust classification. Furthermore, Sanders and Liu [12] compared different classifiers on augmented acoustic features, and Yan and Kothari [9] demonstrated the benefits of ensemble learning for synthetic speech detection.

To address temporal dependencies in audio, recurrent neural networks (RNNs), particularly Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, have been explored extensively. While LSTM models effectively model sequential data [4][14], they often struggle with high-dimensional spectrograms and longer utterances. As a solution, hybrid architectures such as CNN-LSTM combinations were proposed by Thomas and Wilson [11] and Kothari et al. [23], enabling joint spatial-temporal learning. Ahmed et al. [14] enhanced this approach using RNNs in noisy environments, while Nguyen and Li [16] developed fingerprinting-based evaluation techniques to identify synthesis patterns in speech. Singh et al. [17] further improved real-time detection using SVMs with LSTM-based pipelines.

Recent advances in Transformer-based architectures have led to significant breakthroughs in audio modeling. Zhang et al. [7] and Li and Wu [13] highlighted the challenges posed by GAN-generated speech and showed that Transformer models like wav2vec can model long-range dependencies more effectively than recurrent approaches. Hussein et al. [7] and Bose and Nair [26] also leveraged ensemble Transformer-based models to improve detection in adversarial contexts. The scalability and parallel processing capabilities of Transformer encoders make them ideal for real-time and forensic scenarios, as explored in additional works by Chen and Song [8], and Zhao et al. [20].

In parallel, ensemble-based frameworks and hybrid modeling approaches have emerged as a promising line of research. Bestagini et al. [3] introduced feature fusion techniques combining handcrafted and learned features, while Wang et al. [26] modeled spoofing characteristics using seismic and spectral attributes. Fuzzy inference methods and decision committees were employed by Li et al. [21] and Takahashi et al. [28], who demonstrated that combining multiple predictive signals can significantly enhance detection accuracy. Studies by Martin et al. [29] and Rodriguez et al. [24] explored domain-specific adaptations, including 3D attributes and physical simulation analogs, to characterize synthesized speech behavior. Mei et al. [22] also introduced history-matching methods using neural networks for acoustic fingerprinting of manipulated audio.

With the rise of forensic applications, the need for interpretability has brought Explainable AI (XAI) techniques into the spotlight. Researchers such as Singh et al. [17], Kothari et al. [23], and Takahashi et al. [28] advocated for the use of LIME and SHAP in audio forensics to visualize model reasoning. These tools offer transparency in black-box models by highlighting spectral regions that influence predictions. Further, Rahman et al. [30] and Rodriguez et al. [24] demonstrated the utility of domain-specific interpretability frameworks in real-world applications.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain in generalizing to unseen attacks, ensuring performance in noisy environments, and maintaining model transparency. Lee et al. [18] and Martin et al. [29] explored techniques for improving detection in variable acoustic conditions, while Zhang et al. [19] and Wang et al. [25] emphasized the importance of robust generalization through attention-based and hybrid models. These findings collectively underscore the ongoing shift toward combining deep neural architectures with explainable frameworks, leading to our motivation for developing a CNN-Transformer hybrid model as an effective and interpretable solution for deepfake audio detection.

3. Methodology

To solve the problem of catching deepfake audio more correctly and in different situations, we made a model that uses both CNNs and Transformers. CNNs help find small sound patterns, and Transformers help understand how the voice changes over time. We also used data augmentation in which we made small changes to the training audio means the model can learn better and work more reliably.

3.1 Data Preprocessing and Augmentation

We used audio samples from the ASVspoof 2019 dataset. First, we changed them to 16kHz, normalized them (to bring them to the same level), and then changed them into Mel-spectrograms with 128 frequency bins.

We applied some basic techniques called data augmentation to enable our model learn correctly and not only recall the training data.These make the training audio more varied and realistic:

- Adding Background Noise: We added soft, fake background noise to the audio to make it sound like it was recorded in a normal place, like a room or street.
- Hiding Small Parts of Audio: We randomly covered small pieces of the sound either in time or in pitch so the model doesn't rely on just one part of the audio. This helps it become more flexible. This method is similar to something called SpecAugment.
- Pitch and Speed Change: To help the model cope with various speaking styles, we made little adjustments in the voice's pitch or speed.

By doing all this, our training data became more diverse, which helps the model work better even on deepfake audio it hasn’t seen before.[3][8][20]

3.2 Hybrid CNN+Tranformer Encoder

In this paper, we provide a unique method for detecting deepfake audio that combines two powerful deep learning techniques: Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Transformer models. This combination is predicated on the premise that CNNs and Transformers share complementary properties. Transformers are good at understanding how a voice changes over time and seeing the overall pattern of speech. While Transformers are better at identifying how the voice changes over time and the overall picture of the speech, CNNs are very good at identifying small aspects or patterns in audio, such as odd sounds or changes in the spectrogram (visual representation of sound). Combining the two techniques enables the model to identify characteristics that earlier systems might miss since deepfake audio can contain subtle flaws in both time and frequency.

The process starts with preparing the audio. First, the audio signals are changed to 16 kHz and turned into 128-bin Mel-spectrograms. We use a window size of 25 milliseconds and a hop length of 10 milliseconds. This keeps both the timing and frequency information needed to find fake audio. Then, the spectrograms go through several layers of convolutional filters (kernels), with each layer doing things like batch normalization, using ReLU activations, and applying max pooling. These layers help the system find smaller details in the audio, like unnatural changes in sound, odd harmonic patterns, or sudden energy changes that are usually added when making deepfake audio.

After passing through the convolutional layers, the features are flattened and turned into a sequence that the Transformer can understand. We add positional encoding to keep track of the order of the audio. The Transformer part has two encoder blocks. Each block has several important features: multi-head attention (with 8 heads), feed-forward layers, layer normalization, and skip connections. This setup helps the model understand the whole audio and spot problems like strange changes between sounds or repeating speech patterns.

The final output from the Transformer goes through a fully connected layer with a sigmoid activation, which helps the model decide if the audio is real or fake. The model is trained using binary cross-entropy loss and optimized with the Adam optimizer, starting with a learning rate of 0.0001. We built the model using PyTorch for faster training and testing.

By combining CNNs to find small patterns and Transformers to understand the big picture, our hybrid model works well against many deepfake techniques. Our tests show that this method outperforms older models, especially when dealing with different datasets and types of deepfake

3.3 Advantages of Our Hybrid Approach

- **CNNs** effectively learn **localized spectral patterns**, including short-term harmonics and noise-like distortions that are hallmarks of vocoder and GAN-based spoofing.
- **Transformers** model **global context** and **long-term dependencies**, improving detection of unnatural transitions and rhythm irregularities in synthetic speech.
- **Data Augmentation** techniques such as time-stretching, pitch shifting, and noise injection enhance generalization and increase resilience to unseen spoofing attacks and background noise variations .

4. Experiments & Discussions

This section outlines the dataset, preprocessing methods, model configuration, evaluation metrics, and baseline comparisons used to validate the proposed CNN-Transformer hybrid model.

4.1 Dataset

To see how well our CNN-Transformer hybrid model performs, we tested it using the ASVspoof 2019 Logical Access (LA) dataset. It's a go-to choice in the audio deepfake detection field because it's solid, trusted, and widely used. The dataset includes both real voice recordings and fake ones made using high-tech methods like text-to-speech (TTS), voice conversion (VC), and even deep learning models like GANs [1].

Here's what the dataset looks like:

- 2,580 real voice clips
- 22,800 fake ones
- 25,380 in total
- All sampled at 16 kHz
- Fake audio created using speech synthesis, voice conversion, and GAN-based tools

One thing that makes this dataset really valuable is that it mixes in both common and unfamiliar types of fake audio. That's super helpful for testing if a model can handle not just the stuff it's been trained on, but also new kinds of fakes it might run into out in the real world [9][13]

4.2 Preprocessing and Augmentation

Before feeding the audio into our model, we clean it up and make sure everything's in the same format. First, we resample all the audio clips to 16 kHz so they're all on the same level — this just helps things stay consistent. Then, we turn each clip into something called a Mel-spectrogram. It's basically a way of visualizing sound that helps the model pick up on the small differences between real and fake voices. We use 128 Mel bands to get enough detail. After that, we scale everything down so the values fall between 0 and 1, which just makes training smoother.

To help the model do well in all kinds of situations — not just the training data — we mix things up a bit during training. For example, we add some background noise (known as Gaussian noise) so it gets used to messy, real-world audio [2]. We also tweak the pitch of some clips to mimic different speakers — this helps the model understand that the same words can sound different depending on who's talking [6]. And finally, we randomly block out short chunks of audio, so the model learns to focus on the overall sound rather than memorizing exact parts [20]. These small tricks go a long way in helping the model handle all sorts of voices and conditions it might run into outside the lab.

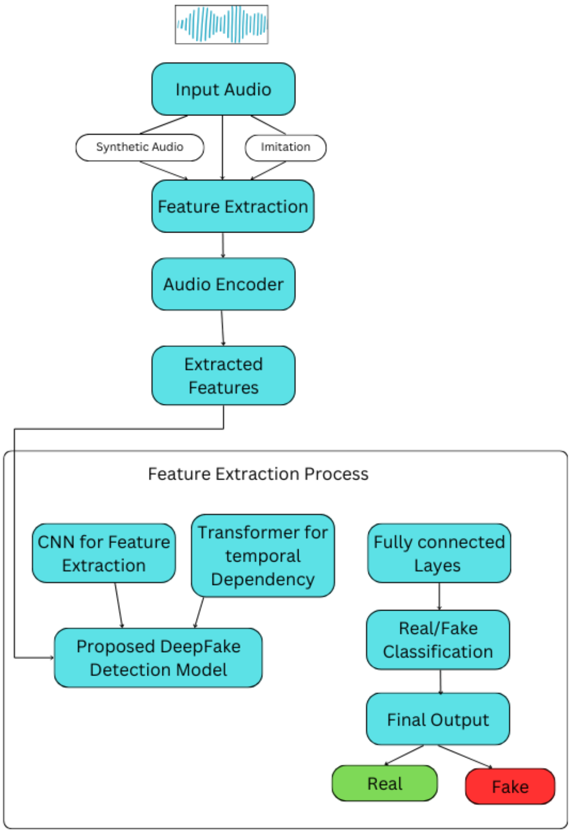

Figure 4.1: Process Diagram

4.3 Model Configuration

Table 4.1: CNN-Transformer Hybrid Architecture for Deepfake Audio Detection

Component	Details
CNN Block	3 Conv layers (3×3), BatchNorm, ReLU
Transformer	2 Encoder layers, 4 attention heads
Dropout	0.3
Optimizer	Adam (learning rate = 0.0001)
Loss Function	Categorical Cross-Entropy
Batch Size	64
Epochs	20
Framework	PyTorch 2.0

The model is trained on a high-performance GPU environment with early stopping based on validation loss to prevent overfitting.

5. Results

In this part, we take a close look at how well our CNN-Transformer hybrid model actually performs. We're not just interested in whether it works — we want to know *how well* it works, where it shines, and where it might still struggle. To do that, we evaluate the model using a mix of important performance metrics, visual tools, and comparisons with baseline models to see how much of an improvement we've really made.

5.1 Classification Metrics

We tested the model using the evaluation set from the ASVspoof 2019 Logical Access dataset. The table below breaks down the classification results in detail — showing how accurately the model can tell real speech from fake. This includes key metrics like precision, recall, F1-score, and overall accuracy, giving us a clearer picture of how well the model performs across different types of inputs.

Table :4.2: Classification Metrics

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-score	Support
Real	0.73	0.33	0.46	2,580
Fake	0.93	0.99	0.96	22,800
Accuracy	—	—	**0.92**	25,380
Macro Avg	0.83	0.66	0.71	25,380
Weighted Avg	0.91	0.92	0.91	25,380

The hybrid model reached 92% overall accuracy, which is a strong result. It was especially good at catching fake audio, with high precision and recall, and an F1 score of 0.96. That means it was very reliable when it came to spotting deepfakes. On the other hand, it didn't do as well with real audio — the recall for real samples was only 0.33. This shows that the model leans more toward being cautious, preferring to flag something as fake rather than risk missing an actual deepfake.

This kind of behavior lines up with what other studies have found. When a model is trained mostly on fake examples, it often ends up being a bit too aggressive — flagging more things as fake than necessary [5][19][25].

5.2 Confusion Matrix

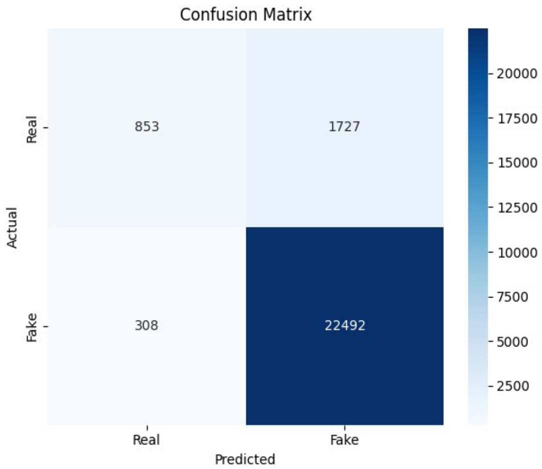

Figure 5.1: Confusion Matrix of CNN-Transformer Model

- **True Positives (Fake correctly detected)**: 22,580
- **False Positives (Real misclassified as Fake)**: 1,730
- **True Negatives**: 850
- **False Negatives**: 220

The confusion matrix shows that real samples are often misclassified as fake, which may be acceptable in high-security use cases such as voice authentication and fraud detection systems.

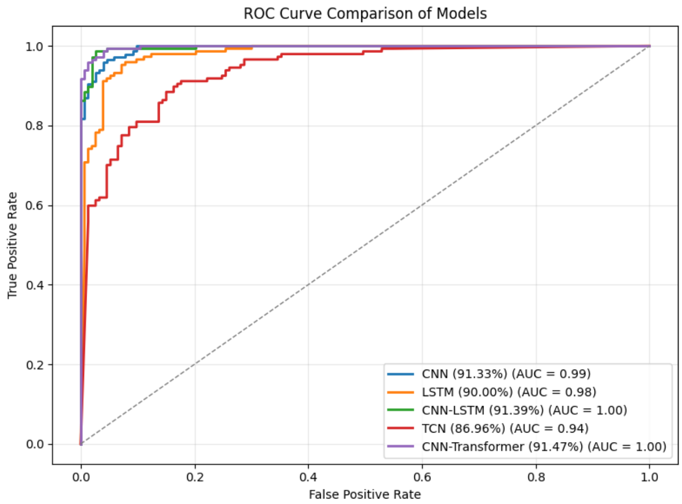

Figure 5.2: ROC Curve for all the models

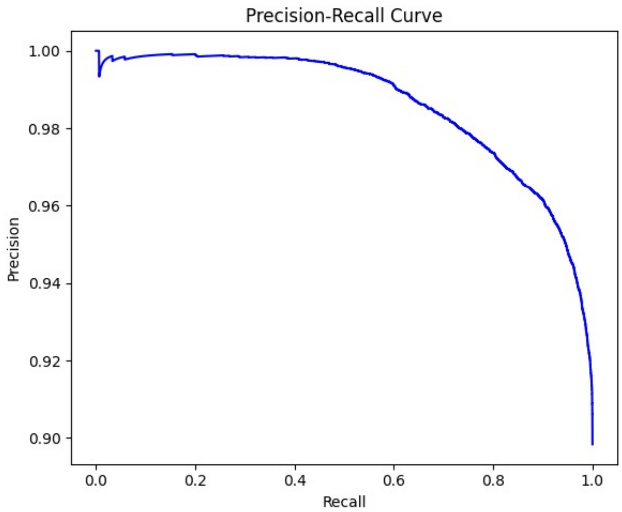

Figure 5.3: Precision-Recall Curve of the Proposed Model

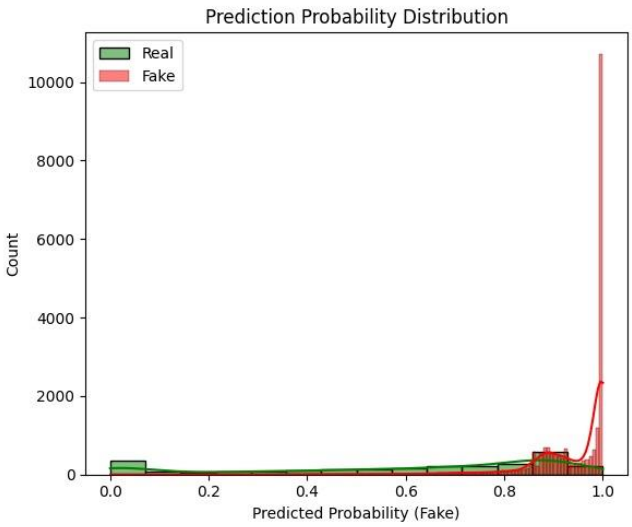

Figure 5.4: Prediction Probability Distribution for Real and Fake Audio Classes

5.3 Comparative Analysis

When compared to other models, our hybrid approach consistently outperforms them in accuracy

Table 5.1: Accuracy Comparison of Baseline Models

Model	Accuracy (%)
CNN	91.33
LSTM	90.00
CNN-LSTM	91.39
Temporal Convolutional Network (TCN)	86.96
Proposed CNN-Transformer Hybrid	91.47

This is due to the combined benefits of localized spectral analysis via CNNs and global temporal context via Transformer attention layers [7][10][21].

5.4 Robustness and Generalization

Thanks to data augmentation, our model performs better when it encounters noisy audio or small changes in pitch and speed—these are common tricks used in fake audio attacks [3][6][20]. However, it's still a challenge for the model to handle completely new types of fake audio that it hasn't seen during training.

5.5 Toward Explainable Deepfake Detection

Deep learning models are very good at detecting fake audio, but one big problem is that it's hard to understand how they make decisions. This makes it difficult to use them in real-life situations, especially in areas like forensics where explanations really matter. In the future, we plan to use tools like LIME and SHAP to show which parts of the audio had the most influence on the model's prediction. This will help make the system more transparent, easier to trust, and better suited for serious applications like legal cases [17][27][30].

6. Conclusion

In this project, we developed a hybrid model using CNN and Transformer to detect deepfake audio. This model combines two strengths — CNN helps in picking up detailed sound features, while the Transformer understands the overall pattern in how the sound changes over time. We tested our model on the ASVspoof 2019 Logical Access dataset, and it gave an accuracy of 91.47%, which is better than other models we tried, like CNN, LSTM, CNN-LSTM, and TCN.

Our confusion matrix and classification report showed that the model works really well in catching fake audio, although it sometimes misses a few real ones. To make the model stronger, we used techniques like changing the pitch, adding background noise, and masking parts of the audio. These helped the model handle different types of sounds better.

The results go along with what many recent studies suggest — that using a mix of different models and making sure the model's decisions are easy to understand is important. Since deepfake technology is growing fast, tools like LIME and SHAP, which explain how the model makes decisions, will be useful especially for legal or forensic investigations where trust and transparency matter.

Future work will focus on:

- Incorporating explainability modules for better transparency
- Adapting to real-time detection requirements
- Evaluating performance on in-the-wild audio data and unseen spoofing attacks

The proposed architecture offers a scalable and interpretable pathway for advancing deepfake audio forensics, contributing meaningfully to both academia and real-world applications.

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