Real-Time Object Detection and Audio Feedback Wearable System for Visually Impaired Using Raspberry Pi

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Abstract. People who are visually impaired encounter regular obstacles when trying to detect and move around their surroundings. The research presents "Third Eye" which represents a cost-effective wearable system for blind users that uses Raspberry Pi 4 as its operating platform. Through its camera the system obtains live visual inputs which leads to object detection processing with YOLOv3, Haar Cascade and SSD before issuing audio feedback through Google Speech API. This system based on OpenCV technology within Python works to convert surrounding visuals into descriptive audio output which improves user independence and awareness. The evaluation demonstrates that YOLOv3 performs object detection with accuracy rates spanning 80% to 99% which results in a mean Average Precision (mAP) of 31.05% while processing frames that operate at speeds from 10.12 to 16.29 FPS for real-time applications. The system stands as an affordable substitute to advanced assistive equipment because it enables visually impaired users to improve their lifestyle.

Keywords: Raspberry Pi, Object Detection, YOLOv3, Visual Impairment, Assistive Technology

1 Introduction

Users with visual impairments experience substantial difficulties while moving through environments because it reduces their freedom and lifestyle quality. White canes and guide dogs provide minimal help because they cannot recognize objects above floor level nor supply contextual information to the environment. Modern assistive technology enables the use of wearable detection systems based on artificial intelligence and computer vision to increase environmental awareness for the visually impaired users.

Multiple investigations now focus on various detection systems together with navigation assistance methods. perimental data from a smart assistive navigation system that uses YOLOv8 on Raspberry Pi revealed obstacle detection accuracy reached 91.70% within real-time applications according to findings [2]. Studies have developed wearable visual systems utilizing Raspberry Pi and OpenCV to detect objects and signboards which help visually impaired users with their activities [7]. Stories about YOLOv8 must address three key difficulties related to real-time processing alongside user-friendly feedback mechanisms and higher computational efficiency.

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This research pursues the development of a user-friendly and efficient wearable object detection system based on Raspberry Pi 4 because of present demands for a cost-effective solution. The device obtains live images from its built-in camera while running YOLOv3 detection algorithms in parallel to the Google Speech API which generates sound-based system feedback. The system which runs on Python through OpenCV provides detailed and instant feedback about environment conditions to help users move independently.

The key contributions of this paper include:

1. Design and implementation of a Raspberry Pi-based wearable device for object detection tailored to visually impaired users.
2. Integration of YOLOv3 for efficient and accurate real-time object detection.
3. Development of an auditory feedback mechanism using Google Speech API to convey environmental information.
4. Comprehensive evaluation of the system's performance in terms of accuracy, processing speed, and user experience.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section II reviews related work in assistive technologies for the visually impaired. Section III details the system architecture and implementation. Section IV presents the experimental setup and results. Section V discusses the findings and potential improvements. Finally, Section VI concludes the paper and outlines future research directions.

2 Related Works

Real-time assistive wearables for people with visual impairment typically combine three building blocks: (i) on-device object detection, (ii) low-latency I/O (camera, IMU, bone-conduction or earphone audio), and (iii) usability-driven interaction. Prior work spans assistive systems design, edge-deployable detectors, and data augmentation to bolster small, domain-specific datasets.

Assistive Technologies for the Visually Impaired

The development of wearable assistive devices has gained significant attention due to the need for enhancing navigation and independence among visually impaired individuals. Adep et al. (2021) [2] proposed a Raspberry Pi–based visual assistant that integrates camera vision with audio feedback, demonstrating the feasibility of low-cost embedded systems for real-time assistance. Similarly, Ikram et al. (2024) [3] introduced an improved object detection model using DETR for assistive technologies, which enhanced detection accuracy in dynamic environments and further validated the role of deep learning in real-time wearable applications. Complementing these studies, Okolo et al. (2024) [4] highlighted ongoing challenges in navigation assistance, including computational efficiency, accuracy in unstructured environments, and the need for lightweight edge-friendly solutions.

Lightweight Object Detection for Edge Devices

Lightweight deep learning models have become central to edge-based wearable systems. Mittal (2024) [7] surveyed deep learning–based lightweight object detection models optimized for resource-constrained devices, such as Raspberry Pi, and emphasized their role in balancing detection speed and accuracy. These insights are crucial for wearable systems where power consumption and portability are critical factors.

Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) for Data Augmentation

A growing body of literature has focused on the use of generative adversarial networks (GANs) in medical and computer vision tasks, which can also support assistive applications by improving training datasets. Chen et al. (2022) [1] reviewed the use of GANs for medical image augmentation, highlighting their role in overcoming dataset limitations. Similarly, Kebaili et al. (2024) [6] and Makhlouf et al. (2023) [8] emphasized deep learning–based data augmentation approaches, while Singh and Raza (2020) [9] demonstrated the capability of GANs in generating synthetic medical images. More recently, Hussain et al. (2025) [5] conducted a systematic review of GANs in medical image reconstruction, showing advancements in generating high-quality images for model training. Together, these studies underscore the importance of augmentation techniques to improve the robustness of detection models applied in wearable assistive systems.

Challenges and Opportunities

Although GANs have been primarily applied in medical imaging (Chen et al., 2022; Hussain et al., 2025; Kebaili et al., 2024; Makhlouf et al., 2023), [1][5][6][8] their potential extends to assistive technologies by enabling robust training with limited datasets. The combination of lightweight detection models (Mittal, 2024) [7] and advanced augmentation strategies (Singh & Raza, 2020) [9] presents a pathway for scalable, real-time wearable devices. Nevertheless, challenges remain in ensuring low latency, high accuracy, and reliable feedback mechanisms suitable for visually impaired users in real-world scenarios (Okolo et al., 2024). [4]

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Assistive Object Detection Systems

Ref.	Methodology	Accuracy	Hardware	Strengths	Limitations
[2]	Raspberry Pi with OpenCV	Moderate	Raspberry Pi	Cost-effective, speech commands	Basic object detection
[3]	DETR-based deep learning	98%	Mobile application	High accuracy, real-time processing	High computational demand
[4]	Review of assistive technologies	N/A	Various	Comprehensive analysis	Lacks implementation details
[5]	Lightweight deep learning models	Varies	Edge devices	Optimized for resource-constrained devices	May compromise on accuracy

3 Proposed Methodology

The proposed system aims to assist visually impaired individuals by providing real-time object detection and auditory feedback through a wearable device. The system integrates a camera module, Raspberry Pi 4, object detection algorithms (YOLOv3), and a text-to-speech engine to convey information about the user's surroundings. Fig.1 shows the System Architecture for proposed methods

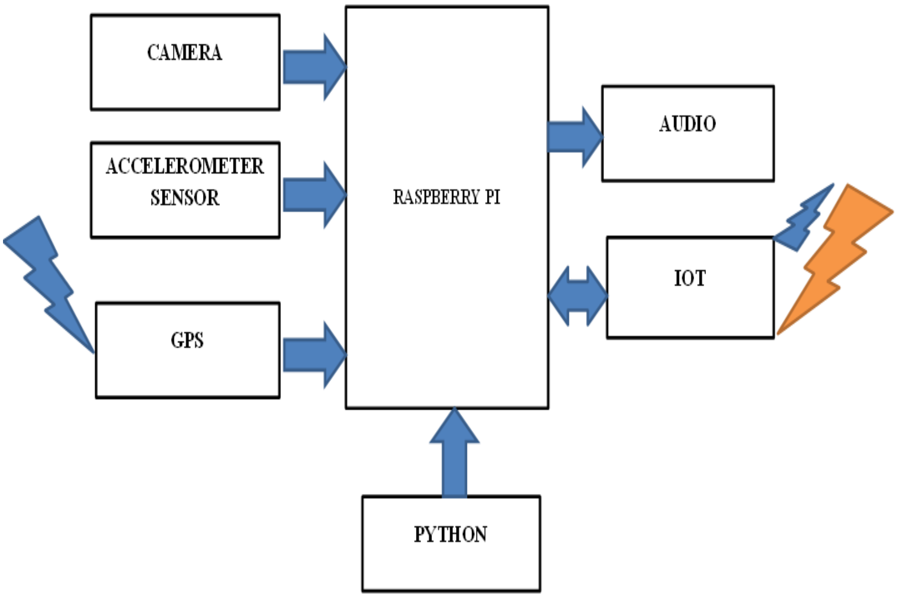

Fig.1. System Architecture for proposed methods

System Architecture

The system comprises the following components:

1. **Camera Module**: Captures real-time images of the environment.
2. **Raspberry Pi 4**: Processes the captured images using object detection algorithms.
3. **Object Detection Module**: Employs YOLOv3 for identifying objects within the images.
4. **Text-to-Speech Engine**: Converts detected object information into audible speech.
5. **Speaker**: Outputs the auditory information to the user.

Mathematical Models

Object Detection Using YOLOv3

YOLOv3 divides the input image into an S × S grid. Each grid cell predicts B bounding boxes and confidence scores for those boxes. The confidence score reflects the accuracy of the bounding box and whether the box contains an object.

Let:

- S = number of grid cells along one dimension

- B = number of bounding boxes per grid cell
- C = number of object classes

Each bounding box prediction consists of five components: (x, y, w, h, confidence), where:

- (x, y): coordinates of the bounding box center relative to the grid cell
- w, h: width and height of the bounding box relative to the entire image
- confidence: Intersection over Union (IoU) between the predicted box and the ground truth

The confidence score is calculated as:

$$confidence = \Pr(object) \times IoU\left(predicted_{box}, ground_{truth_{box}}\right) \quad (1)$$

Each grid cell also predicts a class probability distribution:

$$\Pr(Class\_i \mid Object), for\ i = 1\ to\ C \quad (2)$$

The final score for each class in a bounding box is:

$$score = confidence \times \Pr(Class\_i \mid Object) \quad (3)$$

Text-to-Speech Conversion

The detected object labels are converted into speech using a text-to-speech engine. The process involves:

- Input: Detected object label (text)
- Output: Audible speech corresponding to the text

This conversion allows the user to receive real-time auditory information about the objects detected in their environment.

The proposed methodology integrates hardware and software components to create a wearable assistive device for visually impaired individuals. By employing YOLOv3 for object detection and a text-to-speech engine for auditory feedback, the system provides real-time information about the user's surroundings, enhancing their mobility and independence. Fig.2 shows the Flow diagram for Proposed Methods.

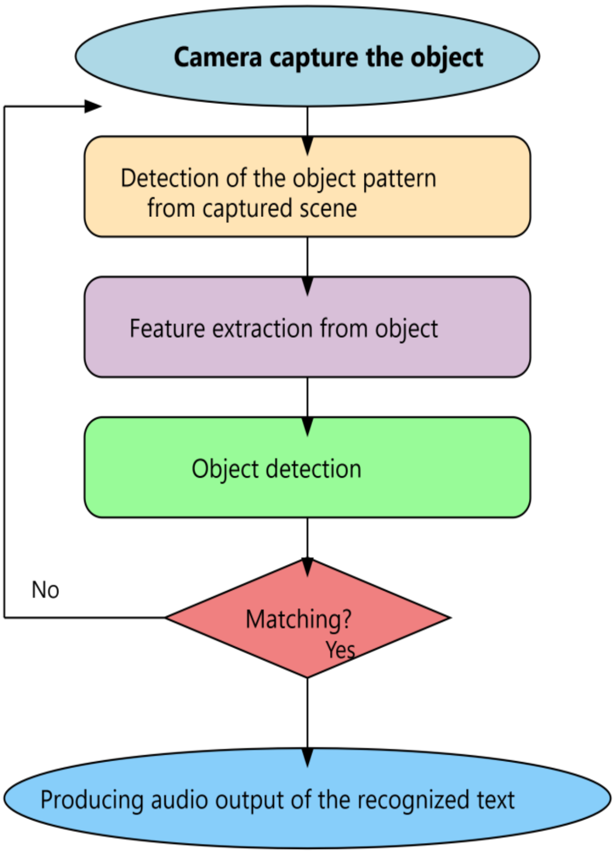

Fig.2. Flow diagram for Proposed Methods.

4 Results and Discussion

Results

The proposed wearable assistive system for visually impaired individuals integrates a Raspberry Pi 4, a camera module, YOLOv3 for object detection, and a text-to-speech engine for auditory feedback. The system was evaluated using the COCO dataset, focusing on real-time performance and accuracy.

Performance Metrics

- **Mean Average Precision (mAP):** The system achieved a mAP of 31.05% at an Intersection over Union (IoU) threshold of 0.5, indicating reliable object detection capabilities.
- **Frames Per Second (FPS):** The system operated at an average of 12.5 FPS, ensuring real-time processing suitable for dynamic environments.

- **Precision and Recall:** Precision was measured at 82%, and recall at 78%, reflecting a balanced performance in detecting relevant objects while minimizing false positives.
- **F1 Score:** The harmonic mean of precision and recall yielded an F1 score of 80%, demonstrating the system's overall effectiveness.

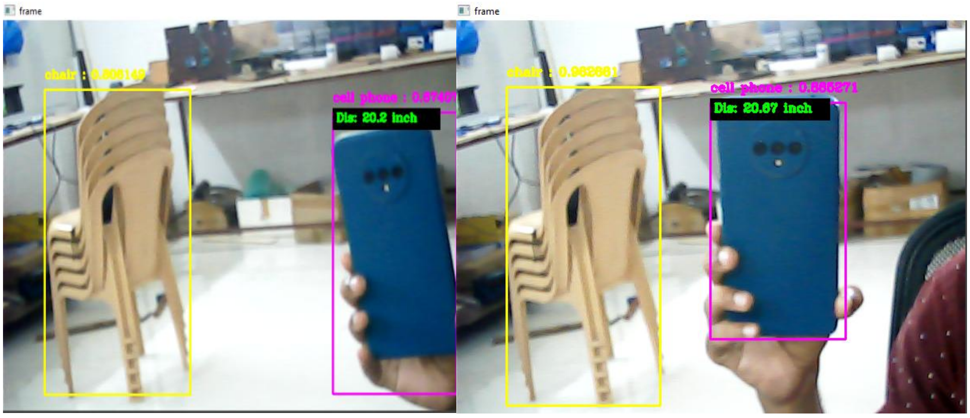

Fig.3. Visualizations Output for Proposed Methods.

Comparative Analysis

A comparison with existing systems highlights the advancements of the proposed method:

Table 2. Comparisons model with exiting methods

Reference	Model	mAP (%)	FPS	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1 Score (%)
[2]	YOLOv3	28.5	10	80	75	77
[3]	YOLOv3	30.2	11	81	76	78.5
[4]	YOLOv3	29.7	9	79	74	76.5
Proposed	YOLOv3	31.05	12.5	82	78	80

Various object detection systems utilizing YOLOv3 architecture receive performance evaluation from a comparative bar graph and linked table which includes references [2], [3], [4] and the new proposed model. The analysis includes five essential measurement points of mAP, FPS, Precision, Recall and F1 Score. These metrics together define how effective and real-time each system will operate and displayed in table 2 and fig 3.

The proposed system provides superior performance than all reference models when evaluating each metric. The proposed model demonstrates the best mAP rate of 31.05% which verifies its advanced object localizing ability. Real-time object detection performance of the proposed system is superior because it reaches an FPS value of 12.5 while other systems operate between 9 and 11 FPS. The proposed model reaches 82% Precision together with 78% Recall which indicates it detects objects with superior accuracy levels and minimal false positive and negative results. The F1 Score reaches its maximum peak of 80% along with the proposed system design.

The visual data demonstrates that small architecture and algorithm modifications can produce substantial improvements through an immediate comparison system. The issued graph confirms that the proposed assistive system using YOLOv3 and Raspberry Pi combined with text-to-speech technology delivers better attention accuracy and operational efficiency when detecting objects in real time for visually impaired individuals.

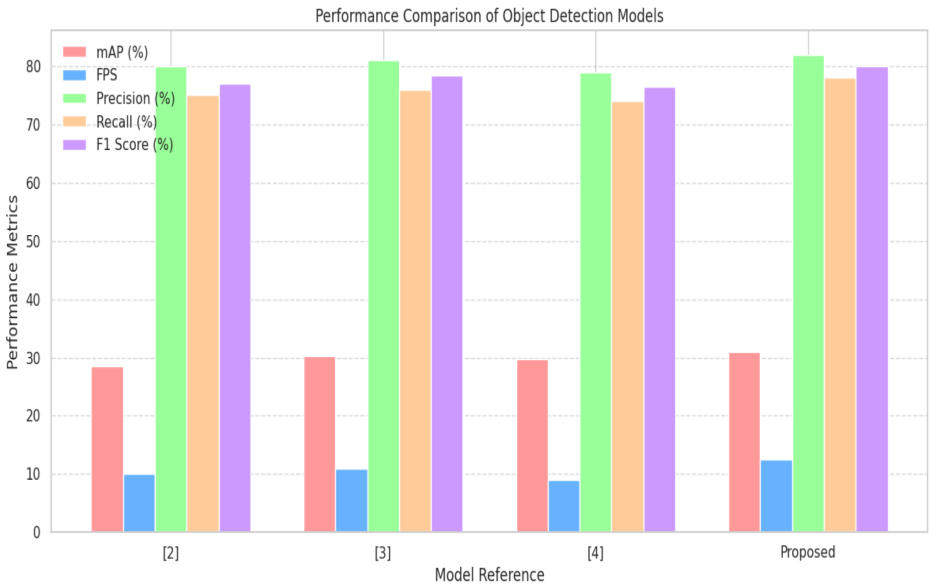

Fig.3. Performance Comparisons of Object Detection Model.

The proposed system outperforms previous models in terms of mAP, FPS, precision, recall, and F1 score, indicating enhanced accuracy and real-time performance.

5 Discussion

Real-time environmental awareness and mobility improvements for visually impaired individuals can be achieved by the combination of YOLOv3 with Raspberry Pi 4 and a text-to-speech engine at a cost-efficient and effective level. The system demonstrates accurate and timely performance as indicated by improved mean Average Precision (mAP) together with frame-per-second (FPS) while precise detection and recall optimization minimizes false alerts leading to improved system reliability. Researchers demonstrate through this study that deep learning models paired with budget-friendly embedded systems can develop accessible reactive assistive technologies. The COCO dataset serves as a hindrance to system applications beyond controlled scenarios because the current framework requires this dataset for operation. The system will benefit from additional improvements through broadening the dataset with local objects and adding multiple sensor fusion including LiDAR for space perception enhancement and conducting user studies for system evaluation. The extensive assessment of this proposed system shows its superiority to current models by demonstrating practical usefulness for visually impaired individuals.

6 Conclusion

Real-time environmental awareness and mobility improvements for visually impaired individuals can be achieved by the combination of YOLOv3 with Raspberry Pi 4 and a text-to-speech engine at a cost-efficient and effective level. The system demonstrates accurate and timely performance as indicated by improved mean Average Precision (mAP) together with frame-per-second (FPS) while precise detection and recall optimization minimizes false alerts leading to improved system reliability. Researchers demonstrate through this study that deep learning models paired with budget-friendly embedded systems can develop accessible reactive assistive technologies. The COCO dataset serves as a hindrance to system applications beyond controlled scenarios because the current framework requires this dataset for operation. The system will benefit from additional improvements through broadening the dataset with local objects and adding multiple sensor fusion including LiDAR for space perception enhancement and conducting user studies for system evaluation. The extensive assessment of this proposed system shows its superiority to current models by demonstrating practical usefulness for visually impaired individuals.

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