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Bio-inspired Systems and Applications

From Robotics to Ambient Intelligence

9th International Work-Conference on the Interplay
Between Natural and Artificial Computation, IWINAC 2022
Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, Spain, May 31 – June 3, 2022
Proceedings, Part II

2
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Preface

The main topic of these IWINAC 2022 books is the study of intelligent systems inspired by the natural world, in particular biology. Several algorithms and methods and their applications are discussed, including evolutionary algorithms. Bio-inspired intelligent systems have thousands of useful applications in fields as diverse as machine learning, biomedicine, control theory, telecommunications, and, why not, music and art. These books covers both the theory and practice of bio-inspired artificial intelligence, along with providing a bit of the basis and inspiration for the different approaches. This is a discipline that strives to develop new computing techniques through observing how naturally occurring phenomena behave to solve complex problems in various environmental situations. Brain-inspired computation is one of these techniques that covers multiple applications in very different fields. Through the International Work-Conference on the Interplay between Natural and Artificial Computation (IWINAC) we provide a forum in which research in different fields can converge to create new computational paradigms that are on the frontier between neural and biomedical sciences and information technologies.

As a multidisciplinary forum, IWINAC is open to any established institutions and research laboratories actively working in the field of natural or neural technologies. But beyond achieving cooperation between different research realms, we wish to actively encourage cooperation with the private sector, particularly SMEs, as a way of bridging the gap between frontier science and societal impact.

In this edition, four main themes outline the conference topics: neuroscience, affective computing, robotics, and deep learning.

- 1) Machine learning holds great promise in the development of new models and theories in the field of neuroscience, in conjunction with traditional statistical hypothesis testing. Machine learning algorithms have the potential to reveal interactions, hidden patterns of abnormal activity, brain structure and connectivity, and physiological mechanisms of the brain and behavior. In addition, several approaches for testing the significance of the machine learning outcomes have been successfully proposed to avoid “the dangers of spurious findings or explanations void of mechanism” by means of proper replication, validation, and hypothesis-driven confirmation. Therefore, machine learning can effectively provide relevant information to take great strides toward understanding how the brain works. The main goal of this field is to build a bridge between two scientific communities, the machine learning community, including lead scientists in deep learning and related areas within pattern recognition and artificial intelligence, and the neuroscience community. Artificial intelligence has become the ultimate scale to test the limits of technological advances in dealing with life science challenges and needs. In this sense, the interplay between natural and artificial computation is expected to play a most relevant role in the diagnosis, monitoring, and treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, using the advanced computational solutions provided by machine learning and data science. This requires

interchanging new ideas, launching projects and contests, and, eventually, creating an inclusive knowledge-oriented network with the aim of empowering researchers, practitioners and users of technological solutions for daily life experience in the domains of neuromotor and linguistic competence functional evaluation, clinical explainability, and rehabilitation by interaction with humans, robots, and gaming avatars, not being strictly limited to only these but also open to other related fields. The use of machine learning-based precision medicine in monitoring daily life activity and providing well-being conditions to especially sensitive social sectors is one of the most relevant objectives. Case study descriptions involving neurodegenerative diseases (Alzheimer's disease, fronto-temporal dementia, cerebrovascular damage and stroke, autism, Parkinson's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, multiple sclerosis, Huntington's chorea, etc.) are included in the proceedings. Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is considered the stage between the mental changes that are seen between normal ageing and early-stages of dementia. Indeed, MCI is one of the main indicators of incipient Alzheimer's disease (AD) among other neuropsychological diseases. The growth of these diseases is generating a great interest in the development of new effective methods for the early detection of MCI because, although no treatments are known to cure MCI, this early diagnosis would allow early intervention to delay the effects of the disease and accelerate progress towards effective treatment in its early stages. Although there have been many years of research, the early identification of cognitive impairment, as well as the differential diagnosis (to distinguish significant causes or typologies for its treatment), are problems that have been addressed from different angles but are still far from being solved. Diverse types of tests have already been developed, such as biological markers, magnetic resonance imaging, and neuropsychological tests. While effective, biological markers and magnetic resonance imaging are economically expensive, invasive, and require time to get a result, making them unsuitable as a population screening method. On the other hand, neuropsychological tests have a reliability comparable to biomarker tests, and are cheaper and quicker to interpret.

- 2) Emotions are essential in human-human communication, cognition, learning, and rational decision-making processes. However, human-machine interfaces (HMIs) are still not able to understand human sentiments and react accordingly. With the aim of endowing HMIs with the emotional intelligence they lack, the science of affective computing focuses on the development of artificial intelligence by means of the analysis of affects and emotions, such that systems and devices could be able to recognize, interpret, process, and simulate human sentiments.

Nowadays, the evaluation of electrophysiological signals plays a key role in the advancement towards that purpose since they are an objective representation of the emotional state of an individual. Hence, the interest in physiological variables like electroencephalograms, electrocardiograms, or electrodermal activity, among many others, has notably grown in the field of affective states detection. Furthermore, emotions have also been widely identified by means of the assessment of speech characteristics and facial gestures of people under different sentimental conditions. It is also worth noting that the development of algorithms for the classification of affective states in social media has experienced a notable increase in recent years. In this sense, the language of posts included in social networks, such as Facebook

or Twitter, is evaluated with the aim of detecting the sentiments of the users of those media tools. For this edition, the theme of affective computing and sentiment analysis was intended to be a meeting point for researchers who are interested in any of the areas of expertise related to sentiment analysis, including those seeking to initiate their studies and those currently working on these topics. Hence, papers introducing new proposals based on the analysis of physiological measures, facial recognition, speech recognition, or natural language processing in social media are included as examples of affective computing and sentiment analysis.

- 3) Over the last decade there has been an increasing interest in using machine learning, and in the last few years deep learning methods, combined with other vision techniques to create autonomous systems that solve vision problems in different fields. Therefore, a special session was organized to serve researchers and developers publishing original, innovative, and state-of-the art algorithms and architectures for real-time applications in the areas of computer vision, image processing, biometrics, virtual and augmented reality, neural networks, intelligent interfaces, and biomimetic object-vision recognition.

The aim was to provide a platform for academics, developers, and industry-related researchers belonging to the vast communities of the neural network, computational intelligence, machine Learning, deep learning, biometrics, vision systems, and robotics fields to, discuss, share, experience, and explore traditional and new areas of computer vision, machine learning, and deep learning which can be combined to solve a range of problems. The objective of the session was to integrate the growing international community of researchers working on the application of machine learning and deep learning methods in vision and robotics to facilitate a fruitful discussion on the evolution of these technologies and the benefits to society.

- 4) Finally, deep learning has meant a breakthrough in the artificial intelligence community. The best performances attained so far in many fields, such as computer vision or natural language processing, have been overtaken by these novel paradigms to a point that only ten years ago was just science fiction. In addition, this technology has been open sourced by the main IA companies; hence, making it quite straightforward to design, train, and integrate deep-learning based systems. Moreover, the amount of data available every day is not only enormous but also growing at an exponential rate. In recent years there has been an increasing interest in using machine learning methods to analyse and visualize massive data generated from very different sources and with many different features: social networks, surveillance systems, smart cities, medical diagnosis, business, cyberphysical systems, or media digital data. This topic was selected to serve researchers and developers publishing original, innovative, and state-of-the art machine learning algorithms and architectures to analyse and visualize large amounts of data.

The wider view of the computational paradigm gives us more elbow room to accommodate the results of the interplay between nature and computation. The IWINAC forum thus becomes a methodological approximation (a set of intentions, questions, experiments, models, algorithms, mechanisms, explanation procedures, and engineering and computational methods) to the natural and artificial perspectives of the mind embodiment problem, both in humans and in artifacts. This is the philosophy that continues in

IWINAC meetings, the interplay between the natural and the artificial, and we face this same problem every two years, although last year we had to postpone the conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This synergistic approach will permit us not only to build new computational systems based on the natural measurable phenomena but also to understand many of the observable behaviors inherent to natural systems.

The difficulty of building bridges between natural and artificial computation is one of the main motivations for the organization of IWINAC events. The IWINAC 2022 proceedings contain the works selected by the Scientific Committee from more than 200 submissions, after the refereeing process. The first volume, entitled *Artificial Intelligence in Neuroscience: Affective Analysis and Health Applications*, includes all the contributions mainly related to new tools for analyzing neural data, or detecting emotional states, or interfacing with physical systems. The second volume, entitled *Bioinspired Systems and Applications: from Robotics to Ambient Intelligence*, contains the papers related to bioinspired programming strategies and all the contributions oriented to the computational solutions to engineering problems in different application domains, such as biomedical systems or big data solutions.

An event of the nature of IWINAC 2022 cannot be organized without the collaboration of a group of institutions and people who we would like to thank now, starting with UNED and the Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena. The collaboration of the Universidad de La Laguna (ULL) was crucial, as was the efficient work of the Local Organizing Committee, chaired by Josefa Dorta Luis and Pedro Gómez Vilda with the close collaboration of Carmen Victoria Marrero Aguilar, (UNED), Carolina Jorge Trujillo (ULL), and Chaxiraxi Díaz Cabrera (ULL). In addition to our universities, we received financial support from the Universidad de La Laguna, Ayuntamiento Puerto de la Cruz, Programa de Grupos de Excelencia de la Fundación Séneca, and Apliquem Microones 21 s.l.

We want to express our gratitude to our invited speakers Hojjat Adeli, from Ohio State University (USA), Rafael Rebolo, from the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias (Spain), Manuel de Vega, from the Universidad de La Laguna (Spain), Athanasios Tsanas, from the University of Edinburgh (UK), and Luis M. Sarro, from the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (Spain) for accepting our invitation and for their magnificent plenary talks. We would also like to thank the authors for their interest in our call and the effort in preparing the papers, *conditio sine qua non* for these proceedings. We thank the Scientific and Organizing Committees, in particular the members of these committees who acted as effective and efficient referees and as promoters and managers of preorganized sessions on autonomous and relevant topics under the IWINAC global scope. Our sincere gratitude goes also to Springer, for the continuous receptivity, help, and collaboration in all our joint editorial ventures on the interplay between neuroscience and computation.

Finally, we want to express our special thanks to BCD Travel (formerly Viajes Hispania), our technical secretariat, and to Chari García, Ana María García, and Juani Blasco, for making this meeting possible, and for arranging all the details that comprise the organization of this kind of event.

We would like to dedicate these two volumes of the IWINAC proceedings in memory of Professor Mira.

June 2022

José Manuel Ferrández Vicente
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Contents – Part II

Affective Computing in Ambient Intelligence

Eye Tracking Measurement of Train Drivers' Attention Based on Quasi-static Areas of Interest	3
<i>Paweł Węgrzyn, Michał Kepski, and Iwona Grabska-Gradzińska</i>	
A Physical Cognitive Assistant for Monitoring Hand Gestures Exercises	13
<i>J. A. Rincon, V. Julian, and C. Carrascosa</i>	
Automation of Social Media Interactions: A Framework for Online Social “Sowing”	24
<i>Francisco S. Marcondes, José João Almeida, and Paulo Novais</i>	
Visualization Methods for Exploratory Subgroup Discovery on Time Series Data	34
<i>Dan Hudson, Travis J. Wiltshire, and Martin Atzmueller</i>	
Real-Life Validation of Emotion Detection System with Wearables	45
<i>Dominika Kunc, Joanna Komoszyńska, Bartosz Perz, Przemysław Kazienko, and Stanisław Saganowski</i>	
Sentiment Analysis Based on Smart Human Mobility: A Comparative Study of ML Models	55
<i>Luís Rosa, Hugo Faria, Reza Tabrizi, Simão Gonçalves, Fábio Silva, and Cesar Analide</i>	
Evaluation of Selected APIs for Emotion Recognition from Facial Expressions	65
<i>Krzysztof Kutt, Piotr Sobczyk, and Grzegorz J. Nalepa</i>	

Bioinspired Computing Approaches

Robust Makespan Optimization via Genetic Algorithms on the Scientific Workflow Scheduling Problem	77
<i>Pablo Barredo and Jorge Puente</i>	
Compiling Single Round QCCP-X Quantum Circuits by Genetic Algorithm ...	88
<i>Lis Arufe, Riccardo Rasconi, Angelo Oddi, Ramiro Varela, and Miguel Ángel González</i>	

Elite Artificial Bee Colony for Makespan Optimisation in Job Shop with Interval Uncertainty	98
<i>Hernán Díaz, Juan José Palacios, Inés González-Rodríguez, and Camino R. Vela</i>	
Energy Minimization vs. Deep Learning Approaches for Protein Structure Prediction	109
<i>Juan Luís Filgueiras, Daniel Varela, and José Santos</i>	
Constructing Ensembles of Dispatching Rules for Multi-objective Problems ...	119
<i>Marko Đurasević, Lucija Planinić, Francisco J. Gil-Gala, and Domagoj Jakobović</i>	
Building Heuristics and Ensembles for the Travel Salesman Problem	130
<i>Francisco J. Gil-Gala, Marko Đurasević, María R. Sierra, and Ramiro Varela</i>	
Reducing Energy Consumption in Fuzzy Flexible Job Shops Using Memetic Search	140
<i>Pablo García Gómez, Inés González-Rodríguez, and Camino R. Vela</i>	
 Machine Learning in Computer Vision and Robotics	
Enhanced Image Segmentation by a Novel Test Time Augmentation and Super-Resolution	153
<i>Iván García-Aguilar, Jorge García-González, Rafael Marcos Luque-Baena, Ezequiel López-Rubio, and Enrique Domínguez-Merino</i>	
Encoding Generative Adversarial Networks for Defense Against Image Classification Attacks	163
<i>José M. Pérez-Bravo, José A. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, Jorge García-González, Miguel A. Molina-Cabello, Karl Thurnhofer-Hemsi, and Ezequiel López-Rubio</i>	
Anomalous Trajectory Detection for Automated Traffic Video Surveillance	173
<i>Jose D. Fernández, Jorge García-González, Rafaela Benítez-Rochel, Miguel A. Molina-Cabello, and Ezequiel López-Rubio</i>	
Defining High Risk Landslide Areas Using Machine Learning	183
<i>Byron Guerrero-Rodriguez, Jose Garcia-Rodriguez, Jaime Salvador, Christian Mejia-Escobar, Michelle Bonifaz, and Oswaldo Gallardo</i>	

Landslide Prediction with Machine Learning and Time Windows 193
Byron Guerrero-Rodriguez, Jose Garcia-Rodriguez, Jaime Salvador, Christian Mejia-Escobar, Michelle Bonifaz, and Oswaldo Gallardo

Live TV Streaming Latency Measurement Using YOLO 203
Miguel Jose Esteve Brotons, Miguel Angel Santiago Cabello, and José García-Rodríguez

Analysis of Functional Connectome Pipelines for the Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders 213
Clara Jiménez-Valverde, Rosa María Maza-Quiroga, Domingo López-Rodríguez, Karl Thurnhofer-Hemsi, Ezequiel López-Rubio, and Rafael Marcos Luque-Baena

A Novel Continual Learning Approach for Competitive Neural Networks 223
Esteban J. Palomo, Juan Miguel Ortiz-de-Lazcano-Lobato, José David Fernández-Rodríguez, Ezequiel López-Rubio, and Rosa María Maza-Quiroga

SCASA: From Synthetic to Real Computer-Aided Sperm Analysis 233
Daniel Hernández-Ferrándiz, Juan J. Pantrigo, and Raul Cabido

Inter-session Transfer Learning in MI Based BCI for Controlling a Lower-Limb Exoskeleton 243
Laura Ferrero, Vicente Quiles, Mario Ortiz, Javier V. Juan, Eduardo Iáñez, and José M. Azorín

Autonomous Knowledge Representation for Efficient Skill Learning in Cognitive Robots 253
Alejandro Romero, Blaž Meden, Francisco Bellas, and Richard J. Duro

Autonomous Robot Navigation by Area Centroid Algorithm Using Depth Cameras 264
Francisco Antonio Marín García, José Manuel Cuadra Troncoso, Félix de la Paz López, and José Ramón Álvarez-Sánchez

Deep Learning

Data Augmentation Techniques for Speech Emotion Recognition and Deep Learning 279
José Antonio Nicolás, Javier de Lope, and Manuel Graña

Deep Learning Artwork Style Prediction and Similarity Detection 289
Igor Sorraín Rebollar and Manuel Graña

Handwritten Word Recognition on the Fundación-Osborne Dataset	298
<i>A. Barreiro-Garrido, V. Ruiz-Parrado, A. Sánchez, and J. F. Velez</i>	
Automatic Annotation for Weakly Supervised Pedestrian Detection	308
<i>Francisco J. Garcia-Espinosa, Antonio S. Montemayor, and Alfredo Cuesta-Infante</i>	
Explaining CNN Classifications by Propositional Rules Generated from DCT Feature Maps	318
<i>Guido Bologna</i>	
Non-analytical Reasoning Assisted Deep Reinforcement Learning	328
<i>John Schonefeld and Md Karim</i>	
Double-Layer Stacked Denoising Autoencoders for Regression	337
<i>María-Elena Fernández-García, Antonio Ros-Ros, Eloy Hontoria Hernández, Aníbal R. Figueiras-Vidal, and José-Luis Sancho-Gómez</i>	
Deep Layout Extraction Applied to Historical Postcards	346
<i>Bruno García, Belén Moreno, José F. Vélez, and Ángel Sánchez</i>	
Detection of Unknown Defects in Semiconductor Materials from a Hybrid Deep and Machine Learning Approach	356
<i>Francisco López de la Rosa, José L. Gómez-Sirvent, Corinna Kofler, Rafael Morales, and Antonio Fernández-Caballero</i>	
Using Temporal Information in Deep Learning Architectures to Improve Lane Detection Under Adverse Situations	366
<i>D. Turrado, J. Koloda, and M. Rincón</i>	
Improvement of Fixation Elements Detection in Aircraft Manufacturing	374
<i>Leandro Ruiz, Sebastián Díaz, José M. González, and Francisco Cavas</i>	
A New Artificial Intelligence Approach for the Radiographic Classification of Sacroiliitis	383
<i>Esther Fernandez, Javier Garrigos, Jose Javier Martinez, Irene Cases, Manuel Jose Moreno, Luis Francisco Linares, Angel García, Jose Manuel Ferrandez, and Eduardo Fernández</i>	
Deep Reinforcement Learning in Agents' Training: Unity ML-Agents	391
<i>Laura Almón-Manzano, Rafael Pastor-Vargas, and José Manuel Cuadra Troncoso</i>	

Artificial Intelligence Applications

- Basic Arithmetic Calculations Through Virus-Based Machines** 403
*Antonio Ramírez-de-Arellano, David Orellana-Martín,
 and Mario J. Pérez-Jiménez*
- An Efficient and Rotation Invariant Fourier-Based Metric for Assessing
 the Quality of Images Created by Generative Models** 413
J. Gamazo, J. M. Cuadra, and M. Rincón
- A First-in-Class Block-Based Programming Language Distance
 Calculation** 423
*Luis-Eduardo Imbernón Cuadrado, Ángeles Manjarrés Riesco,
 and Félix de la Paz López*
- An Approach to Emotions Through Lexical Availability** 433
*Pedro Salcedo-Lagos, Pedro Pinacho-Davidson,
 J. M. Angélica Pinninghoff, G. Gabriela Kotz, and A. Ricardo Contreras*
- A Bacteria-Based Metaheuristic as a Tool for Group Formation** 443
*A. Ricardo Contreras, P. Valentina Hernández,
 Pedro Pinacho-Davidson, and M. Angélica Pinninghoff J.*
- KANT: A Tool for Grounding and Knowledge Management** 452
*Miguel Á. González-Santamarta, Francisco J. Rodríguez-Lera,
 Francisco Martín, Camino Fernández, and Vicente Matellán*
- Clustering of COVID-19 Time Series Incidence Intensity in Andalusia,
 Spain** 462
*Miguel Díaz-Lozano, David Guijo-Rubio, Pedro Antonio Gutiérrez,
 and César Hervás-Martínez*
- Triage Prediction of a Real Dataset of COVID-19 Patients in Alava** 472
*Goizalde Badiola-Zabala, Jose Manuel Lopez-Guede, Julian Estevez,
 and Manuel Graña*
- Vision-Based Human Posture Detection from a Virtual Home-Care
 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle** 482
*Andrés Bustamante, Lidia M. Belmonte, António Pereira,
 Pascual González, Antonio Fernández-Caballero, and Rafael Morales*
- Development and Validation of a Novel Technology for Postural Analysis
 and Human Kinematics** 492
*Rocío López Peco, Roberto Morollón Ruiz, Cristina Soto-Sánchez,
 and Eduardo Fernández*

Multi-agent LoRaWAN Network for End-of-Life Management of Electric Vehicle Batteries	505
<i>Celia Garrido-Hidalgo, Luis Roda-Sanchez, Teresa Olivares, F. Javier Ramírez, and Antonio Fernández-Caballero</i>	
Spatial Frames of Reference and Action: A Study with Evolved Neuro-agents	515
<i>Nicola Milano and Michela Ponticorvo</i>	
Multi-Agent Systems in Support of Digital Twins: A Survey	524
<i>Elena Pretel, Elena Navarro, Víctor López-Jaquero, Alejandro Moya, and Pascual González</i>	
Automatic Selection of Financial Ratios by Means of Differential Evolution and for Predicting Business Insolvency	534
<i>José Santos, Óscar Sestayo, Ángel Beade, and Manuel Rodríguez</i>	
Feature Ranking for Feature Sorting and Feature Selection: FR4(FS)²	545
<i>Paola Santana-Morales, Alberto F. Merchán, Alba Márquez-Rodríguez, and Antonio J. Tallón-Ballesteros</i>	
A Computational Drug Repositioning Method for Rare Diseases	551
<i>Belén Otero-Carrasco, Lucía Prieto Santamaría, Esther Ugarte Carro, Juan Pedro Caraça-Valente Hernández, and Alejandro Rodríguez-González</i>	
Doughnut Computing in City Planning for Achieving Human and Planetary Rights	562
<i>Veronica Dahl and Juan José Moreno-Navarro</i>	
Temperature Control and Monitoring System for Electrical Power Transformers Using Thermal Imaging	573
<i>F. Segovia, J. Ramírez, D. Salas-Gonzalez, I. A. Illán, F. J. Martinez-Murcia, J. Rodriguez-Rivero, F. J. Leiva, C. Gaitan, and J. M. Górriz</i>	
Visual Parking Space Estimation Using Detection Networks and Rule-Based Systems	583
<i>Susana P. De Luelmo, Elena Giraldo Del Viejo, Antonio S. Montemayor, and Juan José Pantrigo</i>	
Correction to: Real-Life Validation of Emotion Detection System with Wearables	C1
<i>Domínika Kunc, Joanna Komoszyńska, Bartosz Perz, Przemysław Kazienko, and Stanisław Saganowski</i>	
Author Index	593

Contents – Part I

Machine Learning in Neuroscience

ConvNet-CA: A Lightweight Attention-Based CNN for Brain Disease Detection	3
<i>Hengde Zhu, Jian Wang, Shui-Hua Wang, Yu-Dong Zhang, and Juan M. Górriz</i>	
Temporal Phase Synchrony Disruption in Dyslexia: Anomaly Patterns in Auditory Processing	13
<i>Marco A. Formoso, Andrés Ortiz, Francisco J. Martínez-Murcia, Diego Aquino Brítez, Juan José Escobar, and Juan Luis Luque</i>	
CAD System for Parkinson’s Disease with Penalization of Non-significant or High-Variability Input Data Sources	23
<i>Diego Castillo-Barnes, J. Merino-Chica, R. Garcia-Diaz, C. Jimenez-Mesa, Juan E. Arco, J. Ramírez, and J. M. Górriz</i>	
Automatic Classification System for Diagnosis of Cognitive Impairment Based on the Clock-Drawing Test	34
<i>C. Jiménez-Mesa, Juan E. Arco, M. Valentí-Soler, B. Frades-Payo, M. A. Zea-Sevilla, A. Ortiz, M. Ávila-Villanueva, Diego Castillo-Barnes, J. Ramírez, T. del Ser-Quijano, C. Carnero-Pardo, and J. M. Górriz</i>	
Unraveling Dyslexia-Related Connectivity Patterns in EEG Signals by Holo-Hilbert Spectral Analysis	43
<i>Nicolás J. Gallego-Molina, Andrés Ortiz, Francisco J. Martínez-Murcia, and Ignacio Rodríguez-Rodríguez</i>	
Inter-channel Granger Causality for Estimating EEG Phase Connectivity Patterns in Dyslexia	53
<i>Ignacio Rodríguez-Rodríguez, A. Ortiz, Marco A. Formoso, Nicolás J. Gallego-Molina, and J. L. Luque</i>	
Automatic Diagnosis of Schizophrenia in EEG Signals Using Functional Connectivity Features and CNN-LSTM Model	63
<i>Afshin Shoeibi, Mitra Rezaei, Navid Ghassemi, Zahra Namadchian, Assef Zare, and Juan M. Gorriz</i>	
Sleep Apnea Diagnosis Using Complexity Features of EEG Signals	74
<i>Behnam Gholami, Mohammad Hossein Behboudi, Ali Khadem, Afshin Shoeibi, and Juan M. Gorriz</i>	

Representational Similarity Analysis: A Preliminary Step to fMRI-EEG Data Fusion in MVPALab	84
<i>David López-García, J. M. González-Peñalver, J. M. Górriz, and María Ruz</i>	
Towards Mixed Mode Biomarkers: Combining Structural and Functional Information by Deep Learning	95
<i>A. Ortiz, Juan E. Arco, Marco A. Formoso, Nicolás J. Gallego-Molina, Ignacio Rodríguez-Rodríguez, J. Martínez-Murcia, Juan M. Górriz, and Javier Ramírez</i>	
Modelling the Progression of the Symptoms of Parkinsons Disease Using a Nonlinear Decomposition of 123I FP-CIT SPECT Images	104
<i>Jose Antonio Simón-Rodríguez, Francisco Jesús Martinez-Murcia, Javier Ramírez, Diego Castillo-Barnes, and Juan Manuel Gorriz</i>	
Capacity Estimation from Environmental Audio Signals Using Deep Learning	114
<i>C. Reyes-Daneri, F. J. Martínez-Murcia, and A. Ortiz</i>	
Covid-19 Detection by Wavelet Entropy and Self-adaptive PSO	125
<i>Wei Wang, Shui-Hua Wang, Juan Manuel Górriz, and Yu-Dong Zhang</i>	
RDNet: ResNet-18 with Dropout for Blood Cell Classification	136
<i>Ziquan Zhu, Zeyu Ren, Shui-Hua Wang, Juan M. Górriz, and Yu-Dong Zhang</i>	
Automatic Diagnosis of Myocarditis in Cardiac Magnetic Images Using CycleGAN and Deep PreTrained Models	145
<i>Afshin Shoeibi, Navid Ghassemi, Jonathan Heras, Mitra Rezaei, and Juan M. Gorriz</i>	
Quantifying Inter-hemispheric Differences in Parkinson’s Disease Using Siamese Networks	156
<i>Juan E. Arco, A. Ortiz, Diego Castillo-Barnes, Juan M. Górriz, and Javier Ramírez</i>	
Analyzing Statistical Inference Maps Using MRI Images for Parkinson’s Disease	166
<i>C. Jimenez-Mesa, Diego Castillo-Barnes, Juan E. Arco, F. Segovia, J. Ramirez, and J. M. Górriz</i>	

Evaluating Intensity Concentrations During the Spatial Normalization of Functional Images for Parkinson’s Disease	176
<i>Diego Castillo-Barnes, Juan E. Arco, C. Jimenez-Mesa, J. Ramirez, J. M. Górriz, and D. Salas-Gonzalez</i>	
Neuromotor and Cognitive Disorders	
Monitoring Motor Symptoms in Parkinson’s Disease Under Long Term Acoustic Stimulation	189
<i>L. Sigcha, David Gonzalez Calleja, I. Pavón, J.M. López, and G. de Arcas</i>	
Evaluation of TMS Effects on the Phonation of Parkinson’s Disease Patients ...	199
<i>Andrés Gómez-Rodellar, Jiri Mekyska, Pedro Gómez-Vilda, Lubos Brabenec, Patrik Simko, and Irena Rektorova</i>	
Effects of Neuroacoustic Stimulation on Two Study Cases of Parkinson’s Disease Dysarthria	209
<i>Pedro Gómez-Vilda, Andrés Gómez-Rodellar, Daniel Palacios-Alonso, and Agustín Álvarez-Marquina</i>	
Characterizing Masseter Surface Electromyography on EEG-Related Frequency Bands in Parkinson’s Disease Neuromotor Dysarthria	219
<i>Andrés Gómez-Rodellar, Pedro Gómez-Vilda, JoséManuel Ferrández-Vicente, and Athanasios Tsanas</i>	
Acquisition of Relevant Hand-Wrist Features Using Leap Motion Controller: A Case of Study	229
<i>Carlos Rodrigo-Rivero, Carlos Garre del Olmo, Agustín Álvarez-Marquina, Pedro Gómez-Vilda, Francisco Domínguez-Mateos, and Daniel Palacios-Alonso</i>	
A Pilot and Feasibility Study of Virtual Reality as Gamified Monitoring Tool for Neurorehabilitation	239
<i>Daniel Palacios-Alonso, Agustín López-Arribas, Guillermo Meléndez-Morales, Esther Núñez-Vidal, Andrés Gómez-Rodellar, José Manuel Ferrández-Vicente, and Pedro Gómez-Vilda</i>	
Pairing of Visual and Auditory Stimuli: A Study in Musicians on the Multisensory Processing of the Dimensions of Articulation and Coherence	249
<i>Octavio de Juan-Ayala, Vicente Caruana, José Javier Campos-Bueno, Jose Manuel Ferrández, and Eduardo Fernández</i>	

Design of Educational Scenarios with BigFoot Walking Robot: A Cyber-physical System Perspective to Pedagogical Rehabilitation	259
<i>Valentin Nikolov, Maya Dimitrova, Ivan Chavdarov, Aleksandar Krastev, and Hiroaki Wagatsuma</i>	
Feasibility Study of a ML-Based ASD Monitoring System	270
<i>José María Vicente-Samper, Ernesto Ávila-Navarro, and José María Sabater-Navarro</i>	
ApEn: A Stress-Aware Pen for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder	281
<i>Jing Li, Emilia Barakova, Jun Hu, Wouter Staal, and Martine van Dongen-Boomsma</i>	
Anxiety Monitoring in Autistic Disabled People During Voice Recording Sessions	291
<i>Marina Jodra-Chuan, Paula Maestro-Domingo, and Victoria Rodellar-Biarge</i>	
What Can Technology Do for Autistic Spectrum Disorder People?	301
<i>Marina Jodra and Victoria Rodellar</i>	
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Emotional Intervention Protocol	310
<i>Gema Benedicto, Mikel Val, Eduardo Fernández, Francisco Sánchez Ferrer, and José Manuel Ferrández</i>	
Creating Vignettes for a Robot-Supported Education Solution for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder	323
<i>Trenton Schulz and Kristin Skeide Fuglerud</i>	
Identification of Parkinson’s Disease from Speech Using CNNs and Formant Measures	332
<i>Agustín Álvarez-Marquina, Andrés Gómez-Rodellar, Pedro Gómez-Vilda, Daniel Palacios-Alonso, and Francisco Díaz-Pérez</i>	
Characterization of Hypokinetic Dysarthria by a CNN Based on Auditory Receptive Fields	343
<i>Pedro Gómez-Vilda, Andrés Gómez-Rodellar, Daniel Palacios-Alonso, Agustín Álvarez-Marquina, and Athanasios Tsanas</i>	
Evaluation of the Presence of Subharmonics in the Phonation of Children with Smith Magenis Syndrome	353
<i>Rafael Martínez-Olalla, Daniel Palacios-Alonso, Irene Hidalgo-delaGuía, Elena Garayzabal-Heinze, and Pedro Gómez-Vilda</i>	

Speech Analysis in Preclinical Identification of Alzheimer’s Disease 363
Olga Ivanova and Juan José García Meilán

The Effect of Breathing Maneuvers on the Interaction Between Pulse
 Fluctuation and Heart Rate Variability 369
Nicolás Alberto Posteguillo and María Paula Bonomini

Horizon Cyber-Vision: A Cybernetic Approach for a Cortical Visual
 Prosthesis 380
*Mikel Val Calvo, Roberto Morollón Ruiz, Leili Soo,
 Dorota Waclawczyk, Fabrizio Grani, José Manuel Ferrández,
 and Eduardo Fernández Jover*

The Assessment of Activities of Daily Living Skills Using Visual Prosthesis ... 395
*Dorota Waclawczyk, Leili Soo, Mikel Val, Roberto Morollon,
 Fabrizio Grani, and Eduardo Fernandez*

Affective Analysis

Artificial Intelligence Applied to Spatial Cognition Assessment 407
*Michela Ponticorvo, Mario Coccorese, Onofrio Gigliotta,
 Paolo Bartolomeo, and Davide Marocco*

Automatic Diagnosis of Mild Cognitive Impairment Using Siamese
 Neural Networks 416
*E. Estella-Nonay, M. Bachiller-Mayoral, S. Valladares-Rodriguez,
 and M. Rincón*

A Comparison of Feature-based Classifiers and Transfer Learning
 Approaches for Cognitive Impairment Recognition in Language 426
González Machorro Monica and Martínez Tomás Rafael

Detection of Alzheimer’s Disease Using a Four-Channel EEG Montage 436
*Eduardo Perez-Valero, Jesus Minguillon, Christian Morillas,
 Francisco Pelayo, and Miguel A. Lopez-Gordo*

Evaluating Imputation Methods for Missing Data in a MCI Dataset 446
*Alba Gómez-Valadés Batanero, Mariano Rincón Zamorano,
 Rafael Martínez Tomás, and Juan Guerrero Martín*

Automatic Scoring of Rey-Osterrieth Complex Figure Test Using
 Recursive Cortical Networks 455
F. J. Pinilla, R. Martínez-Tomás, and M. Rincón

Influence of the Level of Immersion in Emotion Recognition Using Virtual Humans	464
<i>Miguel A. Vicente-Querol, Antonio Fernández-Caballero, José P. Molina, Pascual González, Luz M. González-Gualda, Patricia Fernández-Sotos, and Arturo S. García</i>	
Influence of Neutral Stimuli on Brain Activity Baseline in Emotional Experiments	475
<i>Beatriz García-Martínez and Antonio Fernández-Caballero</i>	
Classification of Psychophysiological Patterns During Emotional Processing Using SVM	485
<i>Andrés Quintero-Zea, Juan Martínez-Vargas, Diana Gómez, Natalia Trujillo, and José D. López</i>	
Measuring Motion Sickness Through Racing Simulator Based on Virtual Reality	494
<i>Daniel Palacios-Alonso, Javier Barbas-Cubero, Luis Betancourt-Ortega, and Mario Fernández-Fernández</i>	
Health Applications	
Analysis of the Asymmetry in RNFL Thickness Using Spectralis OCT Measurements in Healthy and Glaucoma Patients	507
<i>Rafael Berenguer-Vidal, Rafael Verdú-Monedero, Juan Morales-Sánchez, Inmaculada Sellés-Navarro, and Oleksandr Kovalyk</i>	
Performance Evaluation of a Real-Time Phase Estimation Algorithm Applied to Intracortical Signals from Human Visual Cortex	516
<i>Fabrizio Grani, Cristina Soto-Sanchez, Alfonso Rodil Doblado, Maria Dolores Grima, Fernando Farfan, Mikel Val Calvo, Leili Soo, Dorota Waclawczyk, Jose Manuel Ferrandez, Pablo Gonzalez, María Dolores Coves, Arantxa Alfaro, and Eduardo Fernández</i>	
Electrical Stimulation Induced Current Distribution in Peripheral Nerves Varies Significantly with the Extent of Nerve Damage: A Computational Study Utilizing Convolutional Neural Network and Realistic Nerve Models	526
<i>Jinze Du, Andres Morales, Pragma Kosta, Jean-Marie C. Bouteiller, Gema Martinez, David Warren, Eduardo Fernandez, and Gianluca Lazzi</i>	
Statistical and Symbolic Neuroaesthetics Rules Extraction from EEG Signals	536
<i>M. Coccagna, F. Manzella, S. Mazzacane, G. Pagliarini, and G. Sciacivico</i>	

Brain Shape Correspondence Analysis Using Variational Mixtures for Gaussian Process Latent Variable Models	547
<i>Juan P. V. Minoli, Álvaro A. Orozco, Gloria L. Porras-Hurtado, and Hernán F. García</i>	
Explainable Artificial Intelligence to Detect Breast Cancer: A Qualitative Case-Based Visual Interpretability Approach	557
<i>M. Rodriguez-Sampaio, M. Rincón, S. Valladares-Rodriguez, and M. Bachiller-Mayoral</i>	
Evaluation of a Gaussian Mixture Model for Generating Synthetic ECG Signals During an Angioplasty Procedure	567
<i>Anderson I. Rincon Soler, Pedro D. Arini, Santiago F. Caracciolo, Fernando Ingallina, and María Paula Bonomini</i>	
Automatic Left Bundle Branch Block Diagnose Using a 2-D Convolutional Network	576
<i>Axel Wood, Marcos Cerrato, and María Paula Bonomini</i>	
QRS-T Angle as a Biomarker for LBBB Strict Diagnose	586
<i>Beatriz del Cisne Macas Ordóñez, José Manuel Ferrández-Vicente, and María Paula Bonomini</i>	
Variable Embedding Based on L–statistic for Electrocardiographic Signal Analysis	595
<i>Lucas Escobar-Correa, Juan Murillo-Escobar, Edilson Delgado-Trejos, and David Cuesta-Frau</i>	
Uniform and Non-uniform Embedding Quality Using Electrocardiographic Signals	605
<i>Juan P. Restrepo-Uribe, Diana A. Orrego-Metaute, Edilson Delgado-Trejos, and David Cuesta-Frau</i>	
Decoding Lower-Limbs Kinematics from EEG Signals While Walking with an Exoskeleton	615
<i>Javier V. Juan, Luis de la Ossa, Eduardo Iáñez, Mario Ortiz, Laura Ferrero, and José M. Azorín</i>	
EEG Signals in Mental Fatigue Detection: A Comparing Study of Machine Learning Technics VS Deep Learning	625
<i>Halima Ettahiri, José Manuel Ferrández Vicente, and Taoufiq Fechtali</i>	

**Application of RESNET and Combined RESNET+LSTM Network
for Retina Inspired Emotional Face Recognition System** 634
*Mahmudul Huq, Javier Garrigos, Jose Javier Martinez,
JoseManuel Ferrandez, and Eduardo Fernández*

Author Index 647