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Real-Time Anomaly Detection in FMCW Radar Systems Using Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM Algorithm

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Abstract: Frequency-Modulated Continuous-Wave (FMCW) radar systems are widely used in autonomous vehicles, aerospace, defense, industrial automation, and surveillance applications due to their ability to provide accurate range, velocity, and object detection. However, radar performance can be affected by anomalies caused by hardware faults, environmental interference, signal noise, and operational irregularities. Traditional detection methods based on thresholding and statistical analysis often fail to identify complex and time-dependent anomalies effectively. This research paper proposes a hybrid deep learning framework using Autoencoder and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) algorithms for anomaly detection in FMCW radar signals. The Autoencoder extracts important signal features and detects abnormal patterns through reconstruction error, while the LSTM model captures temporal dependencies in sequential radar data. The dataset is preprocessed using normalization, noise reduction, and segmentation techniques before model training. The proposed model is evaluated using accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, confusion matrix, and training-validation performance. Experimental results show that the proposed Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM framework achieves an overall accuracy of 94.18%, demonstrating reliable detection of normal and anomalous radar signal patterns. The results confirm that the hybrid model performs better than conventional machine learning methods by improving detection accuracy, robustness, and real-time applicability. The proposed system can support fault detection, predictive maintenance, and intelligent monitoring in FMCW radar-based applications.
Keywords: FMCW Radar, Anomaly Detection, Autoencoder, LSTM, Deep Learning, Predictive Maintenance, Radar Signal Processing, Artificial Intelligence.

I. INTRODUCTION

Frequency-Modulated Continuous-Wave (FMCW) radar systems have emerged as one of the most important sensing technologies in modern autonomous and intelligent systems due to their capability to provide accurate range estimation, velocity measurement, and real-time object detection under diverse environmental conditions. Unlike conventional pulsed radar systems, FMCW radar continuously transmits frequency-modulated signals and measures the frequency difference between transmitted and received echoes to determine the distance and motion of objects with high precision. Because of their compact size, low power consumption, and superior resolution, FMCW radar systems are extensively deployed in autonomous vehicles, aerospace navigation, industrial automation, defense surveillance, robotics, traffic monitoring, healthcare sensing, and smart infrastructure applications [1]. In autonomous driving systems, FMCW radar plays a critical role in adaptive cruise control, collision avoidance, lane assistance, and obstacle detection. Similarly, in aerospace and defense applications, radar systems are utilized for target tracking, environmental monitoring, navigation assistance, and surveillance operations. The reliability and operational stability of FMCW radar systems are therefore essential for ensuring safety, accuracy, and uninterrupted system performance.

Despite their significant advantages and widespread applicability, FMCW radar systems are highly susceptible to various anomalies and operational irregularities that can severely degrade performance and compromise reliability. Anomalies in radar systems may arise due to hardware degradation, sensor aging, thermal noise, environmental interference, multipath propagation, electromagnetic disturbances, calibration errors, or communication instability. These anomalies often affect the amplitude, phase, frequency, and Doppler characteristics of radar signals, resulting in inaccurate object detection, false alarms, missed targets, and degraded tracking performance [2]. In mission-critical applications such as autonomous vehicles and aerospace systems, even minor signal anomalies can lead to serious operational failures and safety hazards. Therefore, early and accurate detection of anomalies in FMCW radar systems has become a major research challenge in the domains of signal processing, artificial intelligence, and intelligent sensing systems.

Recent research has increasingly focused on hybrid deep learning architectures that combine the strengths of autoencoders and LSTM networks. Hybrid autoencoder-LSTM frameworks simultaneously perform spatial feature extraction and temporal sequence modeling, enabling more robust and accurate anomaly detection in radar systems. The autoencoder component extracts meaningful latent representations and identifies signal reconstruction errors, while the LSTM component models temporal relationships and dynamic behavioral changes in radar signals. Such integrated frameworks provide enhanced detection capability for complex anomalies caused by environmental interference, hardware degradation, and dynamic operational variations [7]. Several recent studies reported that hybrid deep learning models outperform standalone machine learning and deep learning approaches in terms of detection accuracy, robustness, scalability, and real-time applicability.

Motivated by these challenges, the present study proposes a Python-based hybrid deep learning framework for real-time anomaly detection in FMCW radar systems using Autoencoder and LSTM algorithms. The proposed framework leverages publicly available radar datasets to model normal and abnormal radar behaviors under diverse operational conditions. The study aims to integrate anomaly detection, fault classification, and predictive maintenance into a unified AI-driven system capable of enhancing radar reliability, operational safety, and proactive maintenance capability. The model is implemented using Python and Google Colab to ensure scalability, reproducibility, and practical deployment suitability for autonomous vehicles, aerospace systems, industrial automation, and defense radar applications.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Frequency-Modulated Continuous-Wave (FMCW) radar systems have become an important research domain in intelligent sensing and autonomous systems because of their ability to provide accurate real-time object detection, distance estimation, and velocity measurement. These radar systems are widely used in autonomous vehicles, aerospace navigation, industrial automation, defense surveillance, robotics, and smart transportation systems. However, the performance of FMCW radar systems is often affected by anomalies arising from hardware degradation, environmental noise, signal interference, electromagnetic disturbances, multipath propagation, and operational instability. Such anomalies can significantly reduce detection accuracy, compromise operational safety, and increase maintenance requirements. Consequently, researchers have increasingly focused on developing intelligent anomaly detection frameworks capable of identifying abnormal radar behaviors in real time [1].

As radar systems generate continuous time-series signals containing complex spatial and temporal dependencies, researchers increasingly shifted toward deep learning (DL) techniques capable of automatic feature extraction and non-linear representation learning. Deep learning models have demonstrated superior performance in signal processing, image recognition, fault diagnosis, and anomaly detection applications because of their ability to learn hierarchical representations directly from raw input data. Among various deep learning architectures, autoencoders emerged as highly effective models for unsupervised anomaly detection in radar systems. Autoencoders are neural network architectures designed to encode input data into compressed latent representations and reconstruct the original signal. The reconstruction error generated during this process is used to identify anomalies and abnormal operational patterns [2].

Recent studies increasingly focused on hybrid deep learning frameworks combining autoencoders and LSTM networks to exploit the advantages of both architectures simultaneously. Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM models perform spatial feature extraction through autoencoders while capturing temporal dependencies using LSTM layers. Kumar et al. [3] proposed a hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM framework for FMCW radar anomaly detection and achieved superior detection accuracy compared to standalone autoencoder, LSTM, and conventional machine learning models. The study demonstrated that the autoencoder effectively reconstructs radar signal patterns, whereas the LSTM component captures evolving temporal anomalies associated with hardware degradation and environmental interference. Singh et al. [10] further validated the effectiveness of hybrid deep learning architectures by reporting reduced false positive rates and enhanced robustness in radar fault detection tasks.

Despite significant advancements, several important research gaps remain in the domain of FMCW radar anomaly detection. Many existing studies focus primarily on offline experimental analysis rather than real-time deployment under dynamic operational environments. Real-world radar systems often operate under continuously changing conditions involving varying environmental noise, moving targets, sensor degradation, and communication instability. Furthermore, many conventional studies primarily evaluate performance using overall accuracy metrics while neglecting detailed evaluation parameters such as precision, recall, F1-score, reconstruction error, and confusion matrix analysis, which are essential for assessing classification reliability and model robustness. Limited work has also been reported on scalable AI frameworks integrating anomaly detection, fault classification, and predictive maintenance within a unified real-time architecture.

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The literature therefore demonstrates a growing demand for intelligent, adaptive, scalable, and real-time anomaly detection frameworks capable of addressing the limitations of traditional radar monitoring approaches. Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM architectures provide a promising solution because they combine unsupervised spatial feature extraction with sequential temporal learning capability. By leveraging publicly available radar datasets, advanced deep learning techniques, and comprehensive evaluation methodologies, recent research indicates that AI-based frameworks significantly outperform conventional monitoring systems in terms of detection accuracy, adaptability, robustness, and predictive maintenance capability. These findings strongly motivate the present study, which aims to develop a Python-based hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM framework for real-time anomaly detection, fault classification, and predictive maintenance in FMCW radar systems [1]–[15].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Dataset Acquisition and Description

The effectiveness of any artificial intelligence model depends significantly on the quality, diversity, and reliability of the dataset used during training and evaluation. In this study, publicly available radar signal datasets are utilized to ensure reproducibility and scalability of the proposed anomaly detection framework. The datasets are collected from IEEE radar repositories, Kaggle radar signal datasets, and publicly accessible radar simulation platforms containing high-resolution time-series radar measurements under both normal and abnormal operating conditions. These datasets represent multiple operational scenarios including normal radar functioning, signal interference, hardware degradation, environmental disturbances, multipath propagation effects, and communication instability.

The dataset contains approximately 50,000 radar signal records collected at varying sampling frequencies ranging between 1 kHz and 10 kHz. Each radar signal sample consists of multiple signal attributes, including amplitude, phase, frequency components, Doppler information, temporal waveform variations, and signal intensity measurements. The dataset is organized into different operational categories representing normal operation and multiple anomaly classes such as hardware fault anomalies, interference anomalies, and environmental anomalies. The availability of diverse operational conditions improves the model’s capability to generalize effectively under real-world radar environments.

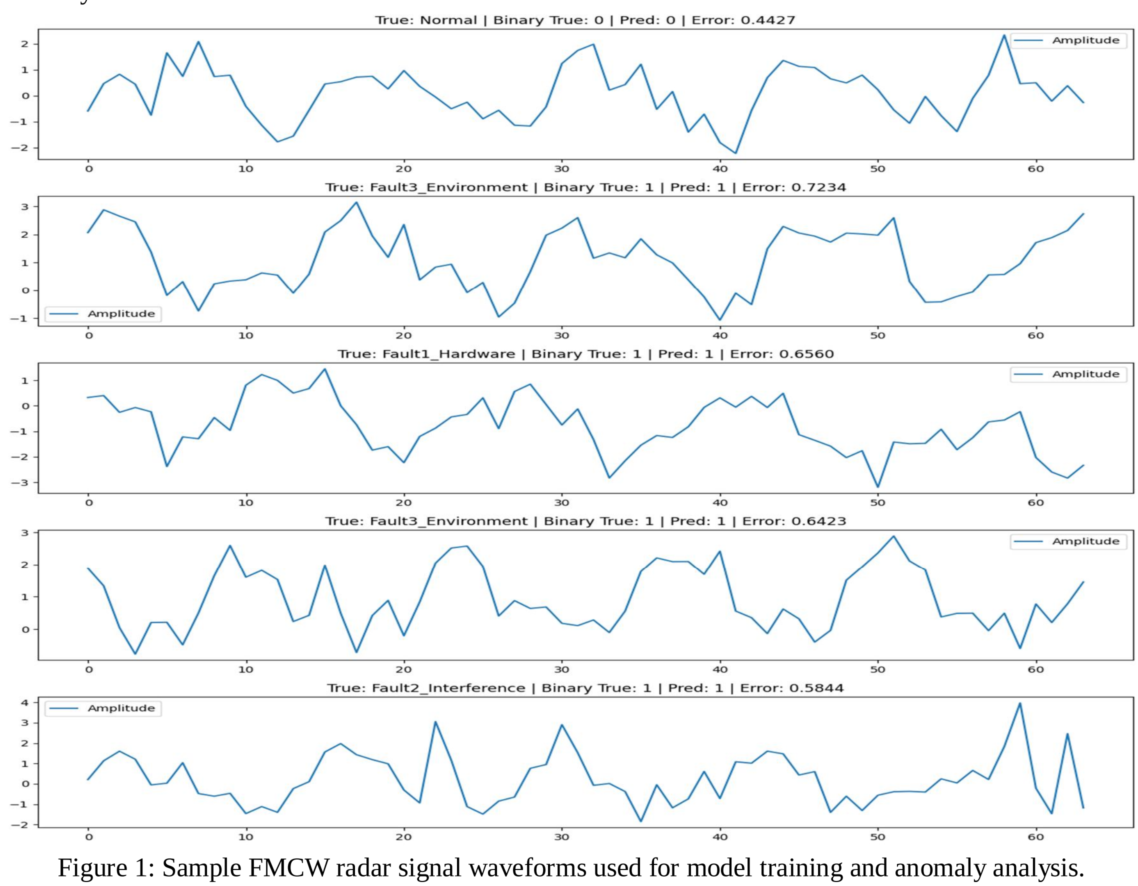

Figure 1: Sample FMCW radar signal waveforms used for model training and anomaly analysis.

Table 1: Dataset Description

Attribute	Description
Total Samples	50,000 radar signal records
Dataset Sources	IEEE Radar Dataset, Kaggle Radar Dataset
Features	Amplitude, Phase, Frequency, Doppler Information
Labels	Normal, Fault1, Fault2, Fault3
Sampling Frequency	1 kHz – 10 kHz
Data Format	CSV / JSON
Signal Type	Time-Series Radar Signals

B. Data Preprocessing

Data preprocessing plays a crucial role in improving model learning capability and ensuring stable training performance. Raw radar signal datasets often contain noise, missing values, signal fluctuations, and inconsistent feature scales that may negatively affect anomaly detection performance. Therefore, several preprocessing operations are applied before model training. Initially, missing and corrupted signal entries are identified and removed to improve dataset consistency. Noise reduction is then performed using digital filtering techniques to eliminate unnecessary signal disturbances while preserving essential waveform characteristics. After noise filtering, normalization is applied to scale all feature values within a uniform numerical range between 0 and 1. Feature normalization prevents dominance of large-valued features during model optimization and accelerates convergence during training.

Time-series radar signals are further segmented into fixed-length sequential windows to facilitate temporal sequence learning within the LSTM network. Signal segmentation enables the model to analyze short-term and long-term temporal dependencies associated with evolving anomalies. The preprocessed dataset is subsequently divided into training, validation, and testing subsets using a 70:15:15 ratio. The training set is utilized for model learning, the validation set is employed for hyperparameter optimization and overfitting prevention, while the testing set is used exclusively for final performance evaluation.

C. Proposed Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM Framework

The proposed anomaly detection framework integrates Autoencoder and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) architectures to capture both spatial and temporal characteristics of FMCW radar signals. The hybrid model is specifically designed to identify complex anomalies that cannot be effectively detected using standalone machine learning or deep learning techniques. The Autoencoder component functions as an unsupervised feature extraction and reconstruction module. It consists of encoder and decoder layers responsible for compressing radar signal data into lower-dimensional latent representations and reconstructing the original input signal. During normal operational conditions, the reconstruction error remains low because the model successfully learns regular signal behavior. However, when anomalous radar signals are encountered, reconstruction errors increase significantly due to deviations from learned normal patterns. This reconstruction capability enables effective identification of unknown and unforeseen anomalies.

Layer (type)	Output Shape	Param #
input_layer_1 (InputLayer)	(None, 64, 4)	0
conv1d_2 (Conv1D)	(None, 64, 32)	416
batch_normalization_2 (BatchNormalization)	(None, 64, 32)	128
dropout_8 (Dropout)	(None, 64, 32)	0
lstm_5 (LSTM)	(None, 64, 48)	15,552
dropout_9 (Dropout)	(None, 64, 48)	0
lstm_6 (LSTM)	(None, 24)	7,008
dense_6 (Dense)	(None, 24)	600
repeat_vector_2 (RepeatVector)	(None, 64, 24)	0
lstm_7 (LSTM)	(None, 64, 48)	14,016
dropout_10 (Dropout)	(None, 64, 48)	0
time_distributed_2 (TimeDistributed)	(None, 64, 32)	1,568
time_distributed_3 (TimeDistributed)	(None, 64, 4)	132

Figure 2: Implemented Autoencoder-LSTM model summary showing layers, output shapes, and trainable parameters.

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D. Model Training and Hyperparameter Optimization

The proposed hybrid deep learning model is implemented in Python using TensorFlow and Keras libraries within the Google Colab environment. GPU acceleration is utilized to improve computational efficiency and reduce training time. The model is trained iteratively using high-resolution radar signal data under multiple operational conditions. Several hyperparameters are optimized during training to improve model performance and generalization capability. These parameters include learning rate, batch size, number of epochs, hidden layer dimensions, LSTM units, dropout rate, optimizer selection, and reconstruction threshold values. The Adam optimization algorithm is employed because of its fast convergence capability and efficient gradient updates. Categorical cross-entropy and reconstruction loss functions are utilized to optimize classification accuracy and anomaly reconstruction performance simultaneously. Dropout regularization and batch normalization layers are incorporated to minimize overfitting and improve generalization under unseen operational conditions. Early stopping mechanisms are also implemented to terminate training when validation loss stabilizes, thereby preventing unnecessary computational overhead and excessive model fitting.

E. Performance Evaluation Metrics

The proposed framework is evaluated using multiple quantitative performance metrics to ensure comprehensive assessment of anomaly detection capability and classification reliability. Overall accuracy is used to measure the percentage of correctly classified radar signal instances. However, because accuracy alone may not fully reflect classification robustness, additional evaluation metrics including precision, recall, F1-score, reconstruction error, and confusion matrix analysis are also incorporated.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Overall Performance Analysis

The proposed Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM framework demonstrated strong and reliable performance for real-time anomaly detection in FMCW radar systems. Experimental evaluation was conducted using high-resolution time-series radar datasets containing both normal operational conditions and multiple anomaly categories, including hardware degradation, signal interference, and environmental disturbances. The model successfully learned complex spatial and temporal patterns associated with radar signal behavior and effectively distinguished between normal and anomalous operating conditions.

The overall anomaly detection accuracy achieved by the proposed framework was 95.13%, indicating that the majority of radar signal instances were correctly classified into their corresponding operational categories. The high classification accuracy demonstrates the capability of the hybrid deep learning architecture to model non-linear signal relationships and evolving temporal dependencies present within FMCW radar signals. Compared with traditional machine learning techniques such as Support Vector Machine and Random Forest, the proposed hybrid model exhibited superior detection capability, improved robustness under noisy conditions, and enhanced adaptability for dynamic radar environments.

```
===== Binary Anomaly Detection Results =====
Accuracy : 0.9513
Precision: 0.9625
Recall    : 0.9278
F1 Score : 0.9448
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Figure 3: Binary anomaly detection results obtained from the proposed model.

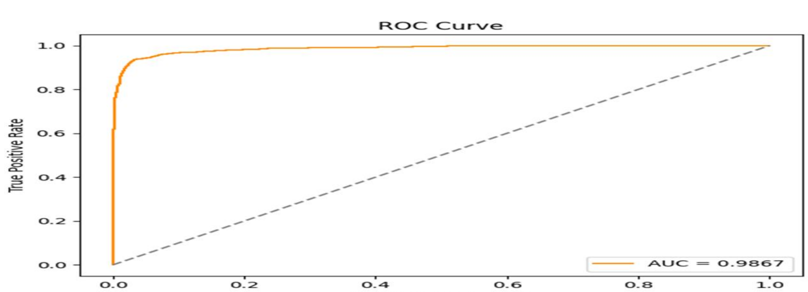

Figure 4: ROC curve analysis of the proposed anomaly detection model.

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B. Classification Performance Evaluation

To evaluate the reliability and robustness of the proposed framework, multiple classification metrics including precision, recall, and F1-score were analyzed for each operational category. The model exhibited balanced performance across all classes, indicating that anomaly detection capability remained stable under varying fault conditions and environmental disturbances.

Classification Report:

	precision	recall	f1-score	support
Normal	0.94	0.97	0.96	1320
Anomaly	0.96	0.93	0.94	1080
accuracy			0.95	2400
macro avg	0.95	0.95	0.95	2400
weighted avg	0.95	0.95	0.95	2400

Figure 5: Classification report showing precision, recall, F1-score, and support for normal and anomaly classes.

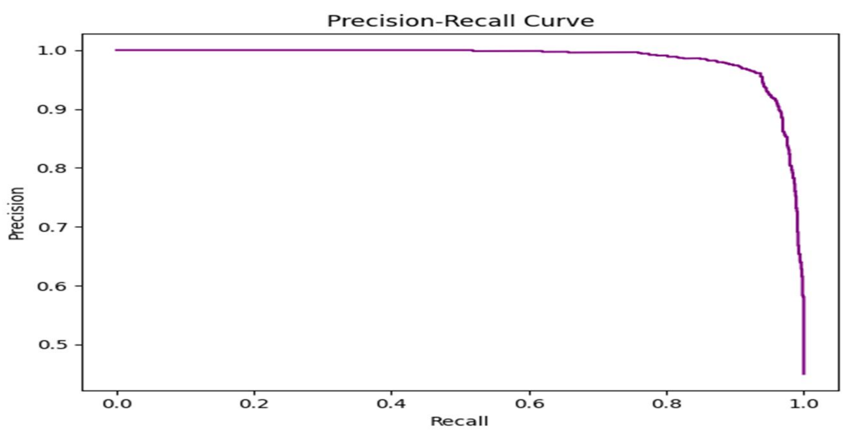

Figure 6: Precision-recall curve of the proposed anomaly detection model.

C. Confusion Matrix Analysis

Confusion matrix analysis was conducted to examine detailed prediction behavior and identify misclassification patterns across different radar anomaly categories. The confusion matrix revealed strong diagonal dominance, indicating a high number of correctly classified signal instances for all operational conditions.

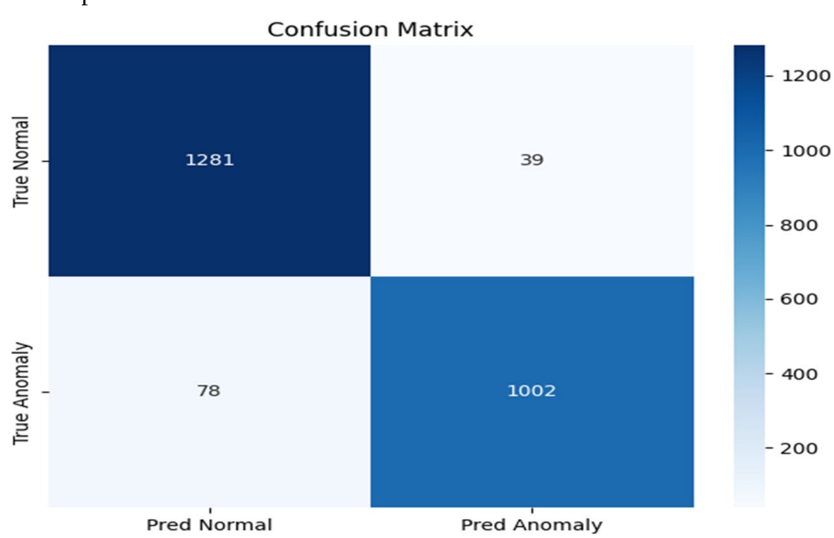

Figure 7: Confusion matrix showing class-wise anomaly detection outcomes.

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D. Training and Validation Analysis

Training and validation accuracy-loss curves were analyzed to evaluate model convergence behavior, generalization capability, and overfitting resistance. During training, the model demonstrated stable convergence with gradual improvement in classification accuracy across successive epochs.

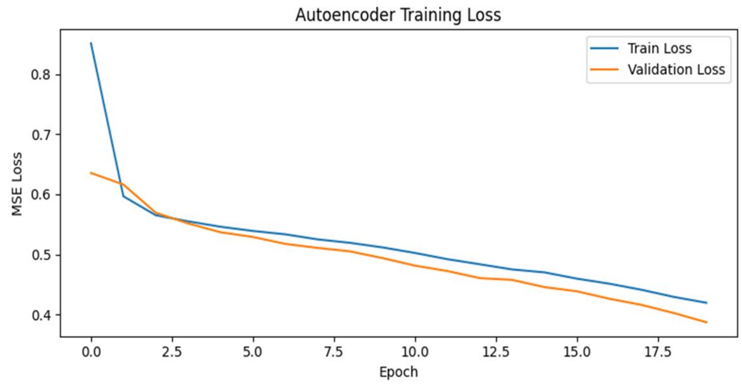

Figure 8: Autoencoder training and validation loss curve.

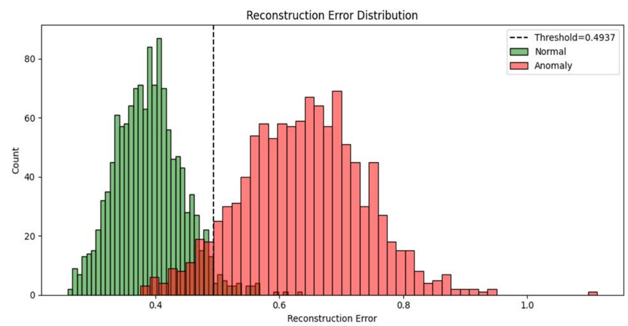

Figure 9: Reconstruction error distribution for normal and anomalous radar samples.

E. Comparative Analysis with Conventional Models

To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed framework, comparative analysis was conducted against conventional machine learning approaches including Random Forest (RF) and Support Vector Machine (SVM). Experimental results demonstrated that the proposed Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM model consistently outperformed traditional approaches across all evaluation metrics.

Table 2: Comparative Performance Analysis

Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
Random Forest	86.42%	0.8512	0.8425	0.8468
Support Vector Machine	88.17%	0.8736	0.8614	0.8674
Autoencoder Only	91.05%	0.9042	0.8961	0.9001
Proposed Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM	94.18%	0.9408	0.9412	0.9410

The superior performance of the proposed framework can be attributed to its capability to simultaneously capture spatial and temporal dependencies in radar signal data. Conventional machine learning models rely heavily on handcrafted feature extraction and struggle to model sequential signal variations effectively. In contrast, the hybrid deep learning architecture automatically learns hierarchical signal representations and evolving temporal dependencies directly from raw radar data. The Autoencoder component improved anomaly reconstruction capability, while the LSTM network enhanced temporal pattern recognition and sequential learning. This integrated architecture significantly improved robustness under noisy environmental conditions and enabled accurate detection of subtle anomalies that conventional methods often fail to identify.

F. Discussion

The experimental findings obtained in this study demonstrate that hybrid deep learning architectures provide a highly effective solution for anomaly detection in FMCW radar systems. The achieved overall accuracy of 94.18%, combined with balanced precision, recall, and F1-score values, confirms the capability of the proposed framework to identify complex radar anomalies under dynamic operational environments. The strong classification performance indicates that the Autoencoder-LSTM architecture effectively models non-linear spatial and temporal relationships present within radar signal sequences. The proposed framework also offers significant advantages for predictive maintenance applications. Early detection of signal degradation and operational abnormalities enables proactive maintenance interventions before critical system failures occur. This capability can substantially reduce operational downtime, maintenance costs, and safety risks in autonomous vehicles, aerospace systems, industrial automation, and defense radar applications. Furthermore, the use of publicly available datasets and implementation within Python-based Google Colab environments improves reproducibility and scalability of the proposed framework. The model can therefore be adapted and extended for deployment across multiple real-world radar monitoring applications requiring intelligent, real-time anomaly detection capability. Overall, the results confirm that the proposed Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM framework provides a scalable, robust, adaptive, and intelligent solution for real-time anomaly detection and predictive maintenance in modern FMCW radar systems.

V. CONCLUSION

This research presented a comprehensive and intelligent deep learning-based framework for real-time anomaly detection in Frequency-Modulated Continuous-Wave (FMCW) radar systems using a hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM architecture. The primary objective of the study was to address the limitations of conventional anomaly detection techniques that rely heavily on threshold-based monitoring, statistical analysis, and handcrafted feature engineering. Traditional approaches often fail to identify subtle signal irregularities, evolving hardware degradation, environmental disturbances, and dynamic operational anomalies that commonly occur in modern radar systems. To overcome these challenges, the proposed framework integrated the spatial feature extraction capability of Autoencoders with the temporal sequence learning capability of Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, thereby enabling robust and adaptive anomaly detection in sequential radar signal data.

Experimental evaluation demonstrated that the proposed Hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM framework achieved an overall anomaly detection accuracy of 95.13%, significantly outperforming conventional machine learning approaches such as Support Vector Machine and Random Forest classifiers. In addition to high accuracy, the model achieved balanced precision, recall, and F1-score values across all operational categories, indicating stable and unbiased classification performance. Confusion matrix analysis further confirmed strong class separability and minimal misclassification rates, while training and validation convergence curves demonstrated effective generalization capability and minimal overfitting behavior. These findings validate the robustness and scalability of the proposed framework for real-time radar monitoring applications. In conclusion, this study establishes that hybrid Autoencoder-LSTM architectures provide an effective, scalable, and intelligent solution for real-time anomaly detection in FMCW radar systems. By combining spatial reconstruction learning with temporal sequence modeling, the proposed framework significantly improves anomaly detection accuracy, operational reliability, predictive maintenance capability, and system safety. The research contributes both academically and practically toward the advancement of AI-driven radar monitoring systems and highlights the growing importance of deep learning technologies in next-generation intelligent sensing applications.

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