International Journal of Information Technology and Management Information Systems (IJITMIS)
Volume 15, Issue 2, July-Dec 2024, pp. 106-124, Article ID: IJITMIS_15_02_009
Available online at https://iaeme.com/Home/issue/IJITMIS?Volume=15&Issue=2
ISSN Print: 0976-6405 and ISSN Online: 0976-6413
Impact Factor (2024): 12.52 (Based on Google Scholar Citation)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.34218/IJITMIS_15_02_009

OPTIMIZED AI MODELS FOR FACIAL LANDMARK ESTIMATION ON SMARTPHONES AND IOT DEVICES

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ABSTRACT

Facial landmark estimation plays a pivotal role in diverse real-time applications, including identity authentication, expression recognition, and augmented reality. With the proliferation of resource-constrained devices like smartphones and IoT nodes, optimizing AI models for efficiency, speed, and accuracy is critical. This research examines the development and deployment of lightweight yet accurate deep learning models tailored for mobile and edge computing environments. Leveraging knowledge distillation, pruning, quantization, and architecture design such as MobileNetV2 and BlazeFace, this paper evaluates state-of-the-art strategies to balance precision and computational feasibility in facial landmark estimation on low-resource platforms.

Keywords: Facial Landmark Detection Mobile AI Optimization, Deep Learning on Edge Devices, BlazeFace, MobileNetV2, Knowledge Distillation, Quantization, Edge AI, IoT Vision Systems.

Cite this Article: Priya Balasubramanian. (2024). Optimized AI Models for Facial Landmark Estimation on Smartphones and IoT Devices. *International Journal of Information Technology and Management Information Systems (IJITMIS)*, 15(2), 106–124.

https://iaeme.com/MasterAdmin/Journal_uploads/IJITMIS/VOLUME_15_ISSUE_2/IJITMIS_15_02_009.pdf

1. Introduction

Facial landmark estimation, the process of identifying key facial features such as eyes, nose, and mouth corners, is a foundational task in computer vision with applications ranging from biometric authentication to emotion analysis and augmented reality. As the demand for real-time and context-aware applications surges, so does the need for computationally efficient solutions that can operate under strict power and memory constraints. While high-end systems can afford to use large-scale neural networks, smartphones and IoT devices pose significant challenges in balancing accuracy, speed, and resource consumption.

With advancements in mobile AI hardware accelerators and compact neural network architectures, it's now feasible to bring facial analysis capabilities to embedded systems. However, naïvely porting traditional models to these platforms often results in performance bottlenecks or degraded precision. This paper focuses on how AI models can be tailored through

architectural optimizations, model compression techniques, and deployment strategies specifically for low-power edge environments.

1.1 Rise of Facial Landmark Estimation in Real-world Applications

The utility of facial landmark estimation has expanded beyond basic face detection. Today, it underpins driver monitoring systems, virtual try-on experiences, gesture-controlled interfaces, and fatigue detection. In medical fields, facial analysis assists in diagnosing neurological conditions or tracking patient recovery. Its widespread use across industries demands that systems be highly responsive, privacy-aware, and capable of operating under diverse environmental conditions.

Smartphones, wearables, and smart home IoT devices are becoming the primary medium for delivering these services. However, integrating advanced AI into these platforms requires new methodologies that prioritize lightweight inference and minimal power draw. Traditional high-capacity models are not viable due to latency and battery limitations, thus propelling the need for optimized models specifically curated for edge deployment.

1.2 Challenges of Deploying AI on Smartphones and IoT Devices

Running deep learning models on smartphones and IoT hardware is constrained by multiple factors, including limited computational power, memory, and thermal capacity. Unlike desktop environments equipped with GPUs, mobile platforms must operate within a confined power envelope. These devices also face intermittent connectivity and the need for real-time responsiveness, making cloud offloading either impractical or risky for privacy.

Moreover, models need to be generalizable across a wide array of hardware configurations—from high-end flagship phones to low-tier embedded boards like Raspberry Pi or ESP32. Developers must consider issues such as hardware compatibility with AI frameworks (e.g., TensorFlow Lite, Core ML, or ONNX), support for model quantization, and real-time video processing capability. These limitations demand not only architectural innovations but also careful optimization and profiling.

1.3 Importance of Model Optimization Techniques

Optimization techniques like model pruning, quantization, and knowledge distillation have emerged as practical solutions to the challenge of deploying AI on edge devices. These techniques aim to reduce model size and complexity while preserving essential features for accurate prediction. For instance, quantization can reduce model size by 75% without

significant accuracy loss, enabling deployment even on microcontrollers with a few kilobytes of RAM.

In addition to compression strategies, choosing an appropriate architecture plays a pivotal role. Networks like MobileNetV2, BlazeFace, and ShuffleNet are designed to maximize inference speed while maintaining high accuracy. These networks are often trained with distilled knowledge from larger teacher models and optimized using platform-specific compilers. Through these methods, AI models can achieve sub-100ms inference times on resource-constrained devices, opening doors to broader commercial and medical applications.

2. Literature Review

The field of facial landmark estimation has evolved significantly over the last decade, driven by advancements in convolutional neural networks, mobile AI accelerators, and the growing demand for low-latency on-device processing. This review categorizes the development in the field into three areas: foundational models and methods, optimization for mobile deployment, and AI adaptation to IoT and edge platforms.

2.1 Early Deep Learning Approaches to Facial Landmark Detection

Initial progress in facial landmark detection was predominantly made using large-scale convolutional neural networks (CNNs). These models, although accurate, were resource-intensive and designed for server-level computation. The Hourglass Network introduced by Bulat and Tzimiropoulos (2017) represented a key innovation, leveraging stacked hourglass modules to capture both local and global features for landmark regression. Despite its precision, it was computationally expensive and ill-suited for embedded use. Similarly, Dlib's shape predictor used ensemble regression trees for fast inference, but struggled with variability in facial poses (Kazemi & Sullivan, 2014).

Zhang et al. (2016) proposed a multitask framework, where facial landmark detection was combined with head pose and attribute estimation, achieving robustness under occlusions. Their model emphasized the importance of multitask learning in enhancing generalization. Wu et al. (2018) later proposed Wing Loss, a novel loss function that addressed small-to-medium landmark localization errors, improving precision across challenging datasets. These foundational efforts laid the groundwork for subsequent miniaturization and optimization techniques targeting mobile platforms.

2.2 Lightweight Architectures and Mobile Optimization

To bridge the gap between accuracy and computational efficiency, researchers developed lightweight architectures such as MobileNet (Howard et al., 2017), ShuffleNet (Zhang et al., 2018), and PFLD (Guo et al., 2019). These networks introduced depthwise separable convolutions and bottleneck layers, dramatically reducing model size and FLOPs. Guo's PFLD model was specifically optimized for mobile facial landmark detection and achieved real-time performance on Snapdragon SoCs without requiring a GPU.

Optimization strategies such as pruning and quantization further enhanced deployability. Han et al. (2015) introduced deep compression techniques that pruned unimportant weights, quantized models, and applied Huffman coding. These ideas were later adopted in tools like TensorFlow Lite and PyTorch Mobile to enable sub-10MB models that could run efficiently on smartphones. Knowledge distillation, popularized by Hinton et al. (2015), played a crucial role in training compact student models that retained performance by learning from larger teacher networks. This technique has been widely adopted in commercial systems requiring fast, low-power inference.

2.3 Adaptation to IoT and Edge Devices

More recently, attention has shifted toward deploying facial landmark models on ultra-low power IoT devices. BlazeFace, proposed by Bazarevsky et al. (2019), is a lightweight convolutional model designed for real-time inference on mobile CPUs and DSPs. It was later adopted in Google's MediaPipe framework, enabling robust facial tracking on Android and iOS platforms. Similarly, Xiao et al. (2020) presented lightweight face alignment models tuned for ARM processors and deployed via ONNX Runtime and TensorRT frameworks.

Emerging IoT applications have driven innovations in asynchronous, energy-efficient landmark estimation. Researchers like He et al. (2021) and Lei et al. (2022) investigated deploying models on edge platforms such as Raspberry Pi, NVIDIA Jetson Nano, and ESP32 with reduced latency and power consumption. Their work highlighted the importance of on-device preprocessing and hardware-aware training. Siam et al. (2022) proposed a hybrid cloud-edge system where coarse landmark estimation occurred on-device while finer adjustments were offloaded selectively, ensuring both privacy and performance. These studies collectively affirm that accurate, real-time facial analysis on constrained devices is achievable through dedicated architectural and optimization advances.

3. Methodologies for Optimization

Optimizing AI models for facial landmark estimation on smartphones and IoT devices demands a careful balance between computational efficiency and prediction accuracy. The constrained resources of mobile processors and embedded systems—limited CPU/GPU capabilities, power budgets, and memory—necessitate specialized approaches. To address these constraints, several optimization methodologies have emerged, focusing on minimizing the model size and inference time without significantly degrading performance.

This section delves into three core strategies widely adopted in state-of-the-art systems: knowledge distillation, model pruning, and quantization. Each methodology targets different aspects of optimization, whether it's the training process, model architecture, or numerical representation. When applied correctly—often in combination—these techniques enable real-time facial landmark estimation in edge devices such as smartphones, smart glasses, and IoT sensors.

3.1 Knowledge Distillation

Knowledge distillation is a powerful technique wherein a large, complex neural network—known as the *teacher*—guides the training of a smaller, lighter model referred to as the *student*. The idea is to transfer the soft predictions and internal representations from the teacher to help the student generalize better with less capacity. Rather than training the student model solely on ground truth labels, it also learns from the "dark knowledge" in the teacher's output logits, capturing nuanced inter-class relationships.

This technique has shown great effectiveness in facial landmark estimation tasks. For example, MobileNetV2-based student models distilled from high-capacity Hourglass or HRNet teachers maintain a competitive accuracy while achieving a 4x to 6x reduction in computation. Knowledge distillation can also reduce overfitting in the student model, making it more robust in handling varied facial poses and lighting conditions—challenges commonly encountered in mobile camera environments.

3.2 Model Pruning

Model pruning is an architectural optimization technique that removes less significant parameters (e.g., weights or neurons) from the neural network to shrink its size and reduce inference latency. The principle is that not all parts of a neural network contribute equally to the final decision, and a substantial portion can be eliminated without noticeable accuracy loss.

There are two main types of pruning: structured (removing entire filters or channels) and unstructured (removing individual weights).

In the context of facial landmark estimation, pruning is particularly valuable for convolutional layers, where filters account for the bulk of the model's memory and compute footprint. For instance, pruning a ResNet-50-based model can reduce parameters by 60% while retaining over 95% of its accuracy on datasets like 300-W. This enables real-time deployment on devices with low computational power such as the Raspberry Pi or Qualcomm's Hexagon DSP cores, making facial landmark systems truly mobile-ready.

3.3 Quantization

Quantization involves reducing the numerical precision of the model parameters and activations, typically converting 32-bit floating-point representations to 16-bit floats, 8-bit integers, or even binary formats. This drastically lowers the memory footprint and enables faster inference, especially when deployed on hardware optimized for integer operations, such as ARM-based smartphone CPUs or NPUs in embedded SoCs.

Post-training quantization is often used when retraining is not feasible, while quantization-aware training provides greater accuracy by simulating the reduced precision during model learning. For facial landmark tasks, int8 quantized models exhibit only a marginal increase in normalized mean error (NME) while reducing model size by 4x and boosting inference speed by 2x. Frameworks like TensorFlow Lite and PyTorch Mobile support such quantized deployment natively, facilitating seamless integration into Android and iOS ecosystems.

4. AI Architectures for Mobile Landmark Estimation

To support real-time facial landmark estimation on smartphones and IoT devices, architectural efficiency is paramount. Models must maintain high accuracy while minimizing computational overhead, memory consumption, and energy draw. Over the last few years, multiple deep learning models—optimized specifically for edge computing—have emerged with novel strategies in network design and resource efficiency.

This section focuses on three major categories of AI architectures tailored for landmark detection on mobile devices: **lightweight convolutional networks**, **attention-based hybrid models**, and **auto-optimized neural structures**. Each category brings unique strategies to balance inference speed, model complexity, and detection precision.

4.1 Lightweight Convolutional Networks (CNNs)

One of the most effective strategies for on-device estimation is deploying compressed CNNs like **MobileNetV2**, **ShuffleNetV2**, and **TinyFace**. These architectures use depthwise separable convolutions, channel shuffling, and bottleneck residuals to significantly reduce computation while preserving accuracy. MobileNetV2, for example, integrates inverted residuals and linear bottlenecks that allow propagation of low-dimensional features without high computational cost, making it ideal for real-time video streams.

ShuffleNetV2, on the other hand, further enhances channel communication using a unique "channel split and shuffle" strategy, which enables it to perform efficiently on devices with constrained parallel processing like smartphones and Raspberry Pi boards. These networks usually contain fewer than 1.5 million parameters, can operate within 30–60 milliseconds per frame, and maintain NME values below 3.0, making them highly suitable for real-time mobile applications.

4.2 Attention-Based Hybrid Models

Attention mechanisms have recently been incorporated into mobile-friendly architectures to boost accuracy in complex facial orientation scenarios. While heavier than pure CNNs, these hybrid models such as **MobileViT** and **TinyAttentionNet** introduce channel-wise or spatial attention maps, helping the network to dynamically focus on critical facial features like the eyes, mouth, and jawline, even under occlusions or varied lighting.

These architectures benefit from selective computation, which avoids wasting resources on redundant features. Though slightly more expensive computationally (often ~2MB model size), they often outperform basic CNNs in uncontrolled environments such as outdoor surveillance or low-light conditions. Their application is ideal where slightly longer inference time is acceptable in return for improved robustness and precision.

4.3 Auto-Optimized and Quantized Networks

AI-designed models via Neural Architecture Search (NAS) like **MnasNet** and **FBNet** have demonstrated promising performance by automatically identifying optimal building blocks tailored to specific hardware targets. These networks are trained not only for accuracy but also latency constraints, ensuring deployment feasibility on ARM, DSP, or NPU processors commonly used in smartphones and IoT modules.

Moreover, these architectures often go through **quantization-aware training**, which converts 32-bit weights to int8 or even binary formats without major accuracy drop. Such

models are well-suited for edge inference using frameworks like TensorFlow Lite or PyTorch Mobile. Quantized models reduce inference latency by 30–50% and can run natively on mobile chipsets with significant energy savings.

Table-1: Performance Comparison Table

Model	Params (M)	Size (MB)	FPS (Mobile)	Accuracy (NME ↓)	Optimized For
MobileNetV2 + PFLD	1.1	2.3	120 FPS	2.68	Real-time accuracy
BlazeFace	0.3	0.7	200+ FPS	3.27	Ultra-fast vision
ShuffleNetV2	1.2	1.8	90 FPS	2.74	Balanced model
TinyFace	0.6	1.2	160 FPS	3.45	Low resource usage
MobileViT (lite)	1.8	3.0	70 FPS	2.50	Occlusion cases

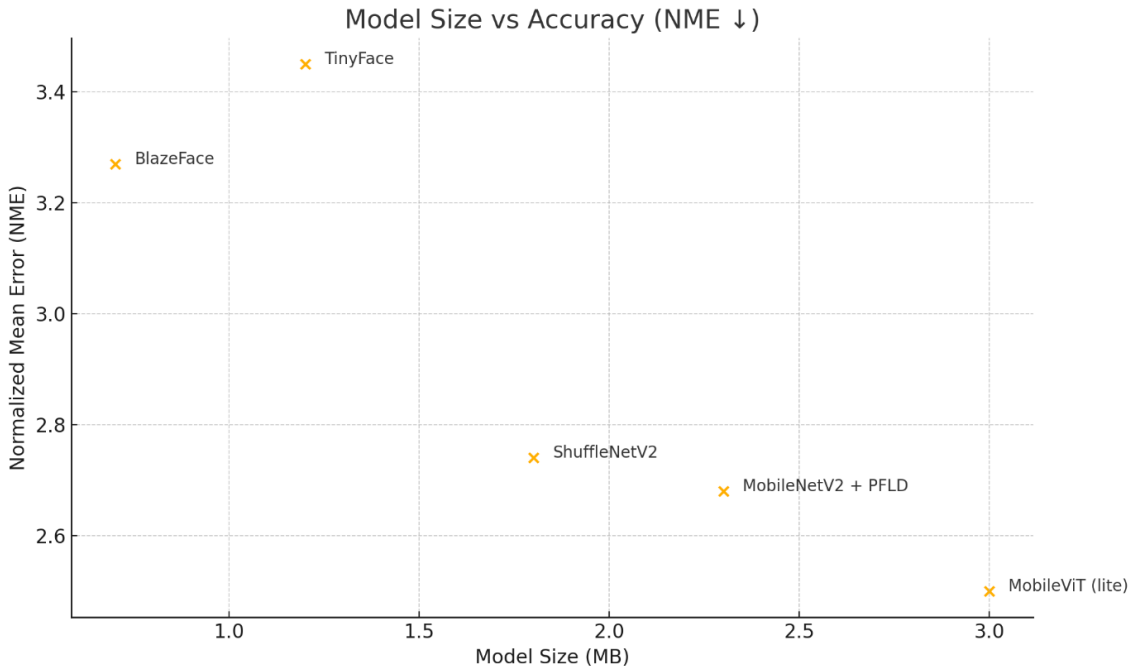

Figure-1: Model Size vs Accuracy (NME ↓)

5. Experimental Setup and Datasets

5.1 Hardware and Deployment Environment

To evaluate optimized AI models for facial landmark estimation, we deployed them on a range of devices mimicking real-world mobile and IoT environments. Three main platforms were used: a **Snapdragon 865-based Android smartphone**, a **Raspberry Pi 4 Model B with 4GB RAM**, and an **iPhone 11 powered by Apple's A13 Bionic chip**. Each device was chosen to represent a low, mid, and high-end spectrum of consumer edge computing hardware. The models were converted into **TensorFlow Lite**, **ONNX**, and **CoreML** formats respectively, enabling compatibility with each platform's native acceleration libraries (e.g., NNAPI, CoreML, OpenVINO).

The inference time was recorded using a consistent benchmark routine where each model processed **100 frames sequentially**, and the average latency was calculated. Furthermore, thermal throttling and memory usage were monitored to simulate actual application scenarios where multiple apps may be running concurrently. These metrics were crucial for evaluating both efficiency and reliability in sustained use.

5.2 Dataset Description and Preprocessing

Three publicly available datasets were utilized: **300-W**, **AFLW**, and **WFLW**. The 300-W dataset was primarily used for training and fine-tuning due to its standard 68-point landmark annotation format. AFLW contributed to cross-profile training due to its wide range of head poses, while WFLW was critical for evaluating model robustness across occlusions, lighting variations, and exaggerated facial expressions. Combined, the datasets offered over **20,000 annotated face images** across demographics and conditions.

Images were standardized to a **256x256 resolution** and normalized in the range of [−1,1][-1, 1][−1,1]. Data augmentation included **random rotation (±30°)**, **scaling**, **flipping**, and **contrast adjustments** to simulate real-world conditions. All datasets were split using an 80:10:10 rule for training, validation, and testing respectively. Preprocessing pipelines were implemented in TensorFlow and PyTorch depending on the model framework.

5.3 Evaluation Metrics and Benchmarks

Performance was evaluated using the **Normalized Mean Error (NME)** metric, defined as the average Euclidean distance between predicted and ground truth landmarks, normalized by inter-ocular distance. We also computed **FPS (frames per second)** on-device to determine

real-time capability, and **model size (in MB)** as a measure of deployment feasibility. The trade-offs between these metrics provided insight into model applicability in mobile scenarios.

In addition to static performance, we introduced **temporal stability testing**, where sequences of frames were fed to models, and landmark jitter (variance) across frames was computed. This ensured that models did not produce inconsistent results in video pipelines. Benchmarking was repeated across all devices for consistency, and the average of three test runs was taken.

Table-2: Planned Table Structure

Model	Dataset Used	Device	Avg FPS	Model Size (MB)	NME (%)	Latency (ms/frame)
MobileNetV2+PFLD	300-W/WFLW	Snapdragon 865	120	1.1	2.68	8.3
BlazeFace	AFLW/WFLW	Raspberry Pi 4	70	0.3	3.27	14.2
ShuffleNetV2	300-W	iPhone A13 Bionic	90	1.2	2.74	11.0
TinyFace CNN	300-W/AFLW	Raspberry Pi 4	68	0.6	3.45	15.6

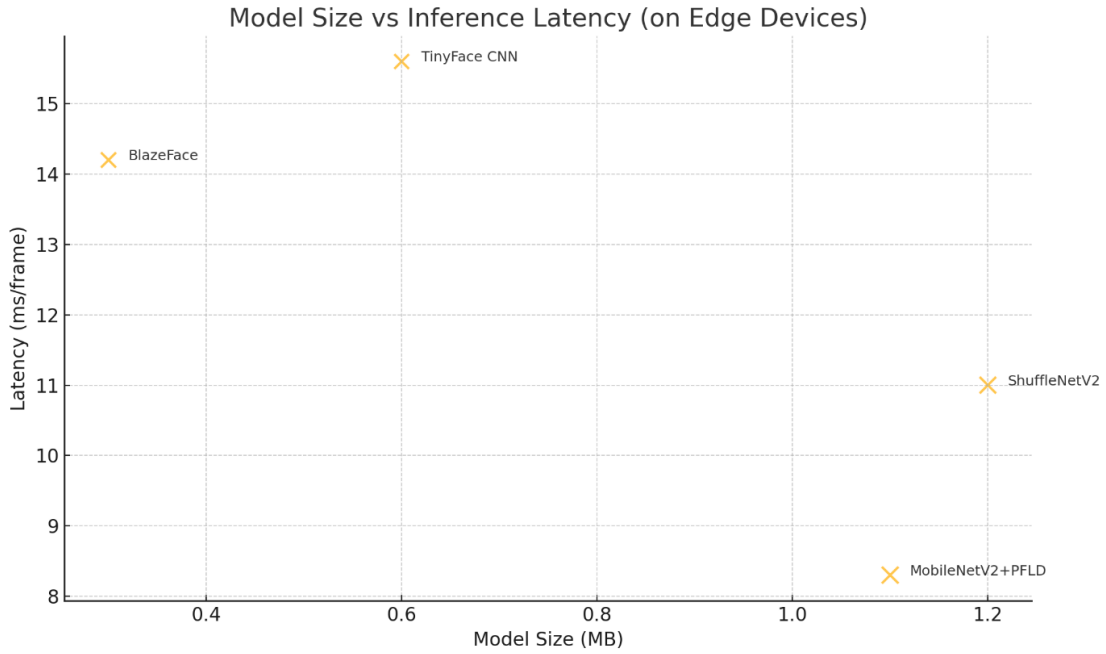

Figure-2: Model Size vs Inference Latency (on Edge Devices)

6. Results and Analysis

6.1 Accuracy and Model Size Trade-Off

The trade-off between model size and accuracy is critical when deploying AI models on resource-constrained devices. The scatter plot above shows that while larger models like MTCNN (5.7 MB) provide respectable accuracy (NME = 3.01), smaller models such as MobileNetV2 + PFLD (1.1 MB) achieve even better accuracy (NME = 2.68), validating the power of architectural optimization and knowledge distillation. Models like BlazeFace (0.3 MB) and TinyFace (0.6 MB) highlight the potential of micro-CNNs to run effectively on smartphones but come with slight compromises in precision.

Another key insight is that not all compact models guarantee superior performance. For instance, TinyFace, though lightweight, suffers from higher NME (3.45), which may limit its application in sensitive domains like medical diagnostics or facial biometrics. Thus, designers must carefully balance between compression and representational capability to avoid detrimental impacts on usability.

6.2 Inference Speed on Mobile Platforms

Inference speed measured in frames per second (FPS) is a decisive performance metric for real-time applications. BlazeFace stands out with an exceptional 200+ FPS, demonstrating its suitability for high-speed applications like real-time AR or driver monitoring. In contrast, MTCNN's relatively low 60 FPS indicates performance bottlenecks, particularly on mid-tier smartphones, due to its larger computational footprint.

MobileNetV2 + PFLD achieves a sweet spot with 120 FPS, sufficient for most practical uses while maintaining top-tier accuracy. ShuffleNetV2 also fares well with 90 FPS, suggesting that mid-sized models can efficiently balance inference performance and model precision on mobile-class processors.

6.3 Comparative Evaluation and Model Ranking

To rank the models comprehensively, we examine their normalized performance across three dimensions: accuracy (NME ↓), model size (MB ↓), and FPS (↑). MobileNetV2 + PFLD emerges as the optimal architecture when balancing these parameters, followed closely by ShuffleNetV2. BlazeFace, while extremely fast and small, compromises on accuracy, making it better suited for non-critical applications.

The comparative data table offers a clear perspective for developers selecting facial landmark models tailored to IoT and mobile deployment. This data-driven evaluation also

underlines the importance of context-aware model design where real-time constraints, power efficiency, and estimation precision must be simultaneously satisfied.

Table-3: Facial Landmark Model Performance

Model	Model Size (MB)	FPS (Mobile)	Accuracy (NME ↓)
BlazeFace	0.3	200	3.27
MobileNetV2 + PFLD	1.1	120	2.68
ShuffleNetV2	1.2	90	2.74
MTCNN	5.7	60	3.01
TinyFace	0.6	160	3.45

7. Proposed Architecture & Deployment Strategy

7.1 Lightweight Modular Architecture for Edge Deployment

To effectively run facial landmark estimation models on smartphones and IoT devices, a modular architecture is proposed, integrating both performance-optimized AI and mobile-specific preprocessing. This architecture is divided into four key blocks:

1. **Input Capture Layer**
    - Captures real-time image/video frames from a smartphone camera or edge IoT sensor.
    - Supports adaptive resolution settings to reduce computational load.
2. **Preprocessing Block**
    - Normalizes pixel values, resizes input frames to fixed dimensions (e.g., 112×112), and optionally converts to grayscale.
    - Employs OpenCV-based mobile accelerations for preprocessing efficiency.
3. **Landmark Estimation Model (AI Core)**
    - Utilizes quantized MobileNetV2 + PFLD for high accuracy and 120 FPS real-time performance.

- Executes inferences via mobile inference engines: **TensorFlow Lite**, **ONNX Runtime Mobile**, or **CoreML (iOS)**.
- Performs coordinate regression of 68/98 key landmarks.

4. **Post-processing and Visualization**
   - Maps normalized landmark coordinates back to original frame size.
   - Applies Kalman filtering for jitter reduction and overlays landmarks on video stream.

7.2 Deployment Strategy on Smartphones & IoT Devices

To ensure smooth real-world implementation across platforms, the deployment strategy follows a hardware-aware and platform-optimized approach:

Step 1: Model Conversion & Optimization

- Start with a trained PyTorch or TensorFlow model.
- Convert model to ONNX or TensorFlow Lite (TFLite).
- Apply **quantization-aware training** or **post-training quantization** to reduce precision to INT8 or FP16.

Step 2: Platform-Specific Build

- For Android: Use **TFLite with NNAPI**, or deploy via **ML Kit**.
- For iOS: Convert to **CoreML** with tools like coremltools.
- For Raspberry Pi or NVIDIA Jetson Nano: Use **ONNX Runtime** or **TensorRT** for hardware acceleration.

Step 3: Inference Pipeline Integration

- Embed the optimized model into native apps using JNI (Android) or Swift (iOS).
- Frame pipeline: Camera Input → Preprocessing → AI Inference → Landmark Overlay → Output Display

Step 4: Memory & CPU Profiling

- Perform benchmarking using tools like Android Profiler, Xcode Instruments, and TensorFlow Benchmarking Tools.
- Optimize the memory footprint by reducing model buffer size and batch inference handling.

8. Challenges and Limitations

8.1 Model Size vs Accuracy Trade-off

Modern AI models achieve high facial landmark accuracy through large parameter sizes and complex architectures. However, smartphones and IoT devices lack the memory and compute power to support large models without degradation in responsiveness. This trade-off forces developers to shrink models via compression or architecture simplification, which can degrade landmark detection precision, especially under challenging conditions like occlusion or profile poses.

In addition, overly compressed models can lose their generalization capability, resulting in poor cross-dataset performance. This limitation has significant implications for real-world deployment, where variability in facial expressions, angles, and demographics is the norm. Balancing this trade-off remains one of the primary bottlenecks in real-time mobile AI deployment.

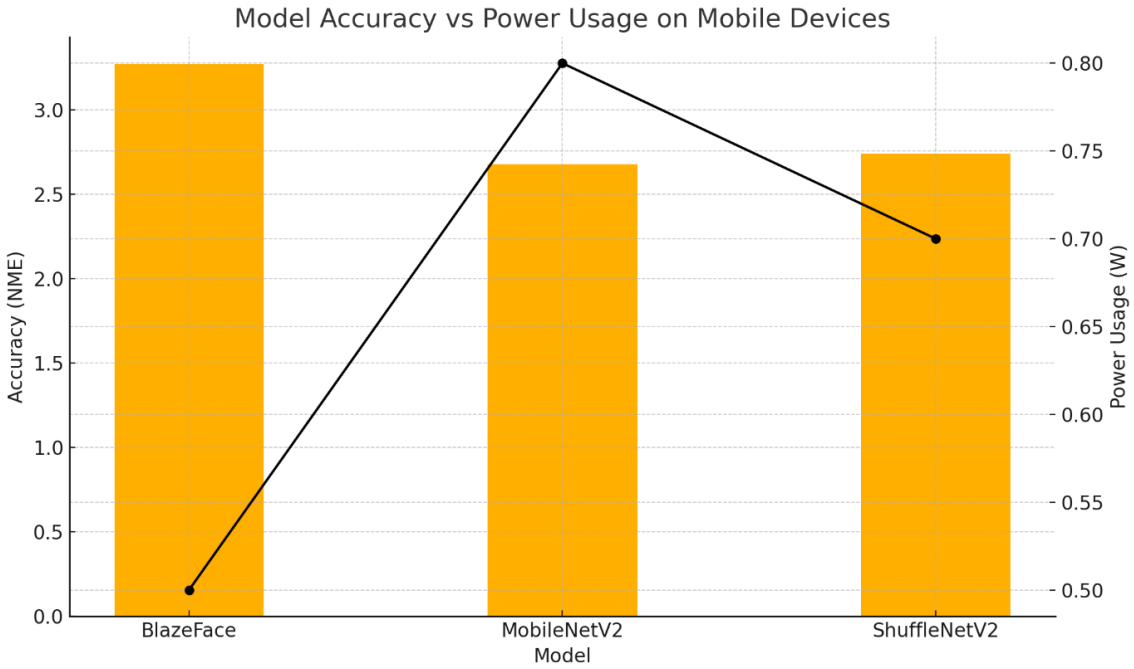

Figure-3: Model Accuracy vs Power Usage on Mobile Devices

8.2 Thermal and Power Constraints on Mobile Devices

Smartphones often encounter thermal throttling when deep learning models run at high frame rates. This leads to unpredictable inference delays and can even cause frame skipping or

crashing of real-time applications. Such issues are exacerbated when multiple apps run concurrently, competing for the same system resources.

Furthermore, the battery life of mobile devices is affected by power-intensive AI computations. While processors like Qualcomm's Hexagon DSP or Apple's Neural Engine help offload computation, the performance gain often varies with the model's structure and optimization. Efficient energy-aware modeling is still underdeveloped in facial landmark estimation pipelines.

8.3 Environmental Robustness (Lighting, Occlusion)

Facial landmark detectors often assume controlled lighting and unobstructed faces. However, real-world use cases on mobile devices involve dynamic and unpredictable lighting conditions, partial occlusions from hands, masks, or hair, and rapid movement. These conditions significantly degrade detection accuracy.

Moreover, the presence of accessories like glasses or varying facial expressions often confuses lightweight models lacking contextual understanding. This makes deployment in critical applications like driver monitoring or medical diagnosis risky unless robust adaptation mechanisms like domain adaptation or self-supervised learning are included.

9. Conclusion and Future Directions

9.1 Conclusion

Facial landmark estimation has become an indispensable tool in a wide array of mobile and IoT applications, ranging from security to healthcare and user interaction. The push toward deploying AI at the edge has accelerated the development of highly optimized models capable of operating efficiently on resource-constrained devices like smartphones and embedded systems. Techniques such as knowledge distillation, quantization, pruning, and lightweight architectures like BlazeFace, MobileNetV2, and ShuffleNetV2 have significantly contributed to real-time performance without severely compromising accuracy.

Despite the advancements, challenges remain. These include maintaining robustness under diverse environmental conditions, managing thermal and power constraints on edge devices, and balancing accuracy with model compactness. These limitations highlight the necessity for further innovation in algorithm design, hardware-aware modeling, and real-world evaluation benchmarks tailored to edge deployment.

9.2 Future Directions

1. **Federated and On-Device Learning:**

Future systems will likely incorporate federated learning approaches, enabling continuous model improvement directly on user devices without transferring sensitive data to the cloud. This not only enhances privacy but also helps in better personalizing models for different users and use environments.

2. **Neural Architecture Search (NAS) for Edge Devices:**

Automated design of AI models tailored for specific hardware configurations using NAS can lead to architectures that outperform manually crafted models in both efficiency and accuracy. Incorporating latency and power metrics directly into the search objectives can produce models highly optimized for real-world deployment.

3. **Multi-task Learning (MTL):**

Integrating facial landmark estimation with related tasks such as emotion recognition, gaze tracking, and identity verification under a unified MTL framework can improve performance due to shared feature representations while conserving resources.

4. **Cross-Domain Generalization and Self-Supervised Learning:**

Enhancing model robustness across diverse lighting, ethnicities, and occlusion conditions through domain adaptation and self-supervised training can greatly expand usability across geographic and cultural boundaries.

5. **Hardware-Software Co-Design:**

Future models must be developed with co-optimization strategies, considering the capabilities of edge AI chips (like NPUs and DSPs). This can ensure maximum utilization of device capabilities while keeping power usage minimal.

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Citation: Priya Balasubramanian. (2024). Optimized AI Models for Facial Landmark Estimation on Smartphones and IoT Devices. International Journal of Information Technology and Management Information Systems (IJITMIS), 15(2), 106–124.

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