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A Systematic Literature Review on Vision-Based Human Event Recognition in Smart Classrooms: Identifying Significant Events and Their Applications

M. L. Córdoba-Tlaxcalteco, ORCID: 0009-0001-8150-8097 <marcordoba@uv.mx>
E. Benítez-Guerrero, ORCID: 0000-0001-5844-4198 <edbenitez@uv.mx>

Faculty of Statistics and Informatics, University of Veracruz
Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico

Abstract. The field of vision-based human event recognition in smart environments has emerged as a thriving and successful discipline, with extensive efforts in research and development driving notable progress. This progress has not only yielded valuable insights but also practical applications across various domains. Within this context, human actions, activities, interactions, and behaviors are all considered as events of interest in smart environments. However, when focusing on smart classrooms, a lack of unified consensus on the definition of "human event" poses a significant challenge for educators, researchers, and developers. This lack of agreement hinders their ability to precisely identify and classify specific situations that are relevant to the educational context. To address this challenge, the aim of this paper is to conduct a systematic literature review of significant events, with a particular emphasis on their applications in assistive technology. The review encompasses a comprehensive analysis of 227 published documents spanning from 2012 to 2022. It delves into key algorithms, methodologies, and applications of vision-based event recognition in smart environments. As a primary outcome, the review identifies the most significant events, categorizing them according to single-person behavior, multiple-person interactions, or object-person interactions, examining their practical applications within the educational context. The paper concludes with a discussion on the relevance and practicality of vision-based human event recognition in smart classrooms, especially in the post-COVID era.

Keywords: human event recognition, smart classroom, computer vision, artificial intelligence, educational technology.

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Систематический обзор литературы по визуальному распознаванию событий с людьми: выявление значимых событий и их применение

М.Л. Кордова-Тлакскальтеко, ORCID: 0009-0001-8150-8097 <marcordoba@uv.mx>
Э. Бенитес-Герреро, ORCID: 0000-0001-5844-4198 <edbenitez@uv.mx>

Факультет статистики и информатики университета Веракруса,
Халапа, Веракрус, Мексико.

Аннотация. Область распознавания человеческих событий на основе видения в интеллектуальных средах стала процветающей и успешной дисциплиной, а обширные усилия в области исследований и разработок привели к заметному прогрессу. Этот прогресс не только дал ценную информацию, но также открыл возможность практических применений в различных областях. В этом контексте действия человека, действия, взаимодействия и поведение рассматриваются как события, представляющие интерес в интеллектуальных средах. Однако при сосредоточении внимания на умных классах отсутствие общепризнанного определения «человеческого события» создает серьезную проблему для педагогов, исследователей и разработчиков. Это отсутствие согласия препятствует их способности точно определять и классифицировать конкретные ситуации, имеющие отношение к образовательному контексту. Чтобы решить эту проблему, авторы поставили цель провести систематический обзор литературы о значительных событиях, уделяя особое внимание их применению в вспомогательных технологиях. Обзор включает в себя всесторонний анализ 227 опубликованных документов, охватывающих период с 2012 по 2022 год. Он углубляется в ключевые алгоритмы, методологии и приложения распознавания событий на основе видения в интеллектуальных средах. В качестве основного результата обзор определяет наиболее значимые события, классифицируя их в соответствии с поведением одного человека, взаимодействиями между несколькими людьми или взаимодействиями между объектом и человеком, изучая их практическое применение в образовательном контексте. Документ завершается обсуждением актуальности и практичности распознавания человеческих событий на основе видения в умных классах, особенно в эпоху после COVID.

Ключевые слова: распознавание событий с людьми; умный класс; компьютерное зрение; искусственный интеллект; образовательные технологии.

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1. Introduction

Human Event Recognition (HER) in Smart Classrooms (SC) involves using computer techniques to identify some human actions, activities, interactions, and behaviors within educational spaces equipped with data acquisition and processing infrastructure. Specifically, video data obtained from cameras in smart classrooms is of particular interest for interpreting educational scenes. This technology enables the detection, learning, recognition, and prediction of learners' and teachers' actions, allowing the system to assess and assist them accordingly [1]. This topic has proven beneficial for classroom management (e.g., automated attendance tracking), learning and teaching support (e.g., detecting social interactions and collaborative learning), and enhancing students' academic performance (e.g., identifying action patterns related to academic achievement) [2][4][5]. Previous reviews have addressed video-based HER (see Table 1). For instance, reference [9] provides an overview of recent vision-based techniques for recognizing human behaviors and

surveillance systems. In [10], deep learning methods with automatic feature extraction for vision-based human event recognition are reviewed. The authors of [11] present a comprehensive review of approaches to recognizing and representing human actions through visual data. Reference [12] presents a state-of-the-art review on recognizing suspicious behaviors in surveillance videos, including six different systems. Finally, reference [13] describes major video datasets for human event recognition. It's worth noting that while these works are important as they share common underlying techniques, none of them specifically focuses on SCs. In [243], a conceptual account of SC evolution and its relationship with AI and emerging educational technologies is provided.

This paper aims to analyze the state of the art in vision-based recognition of human events in smart classrooms, with a specific focus on identifying the most significant events. It seeks to provide educators, researchers, and educational technology developers with a comprehensive overview of the topic while also highlighting the lack of consensus on what events are considered the most significant in this context. To achieve this, the paper presents a systematic literature review of published works in the last 10 years. The review covers key concepts and methodologies, drawing from the analysis of 227 documents, and identifies relevant events and their applications in educational settings. By doing so, it aims to address research gaps and identify opportunities for further exploration in this evolving field

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides background information on HER and SCs. Section 3 outlines the systematic review method. Section 4 presents the review's results, including a list of relevant events with references and brief descriptions. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper.

Table 1. List of similar reviews in the literature

2004	[53]
2005	[54]
2008	[55]
2009	[7]
2010	[56]
2011	[58]
2012	[59], [60], [61]
2013	[62], [63], [64]
2014	[57], [65], [66]
2015	[67], [68], [69]
2016	[70], [71]
2017	[72], [73], [74], [75]
2018	[12], [11]
2019	[10], [77], [78], [79], [80], [81], [82], [83], [84], [85]
2020	[9]

2. Background

This section is organized as follows. First, the discussion focuses on HER and SCs. Next, Computer Vision methods for object extraction are presented. Finally, event understanding from video scenes is examined.

2.1 SC and HER in the Context of Educational Technology

The origins of Smart Classroom (SC) and Human Event Recognition (HER) can be traced back to the late 20th century when computers and the Internet were introduced in educational settings in the

1980s. The 1990s saw the emergence of Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL), which linked education and computational technology in collaborative settings. The early 2000s witnessed the growth of e-learning, online education, and the Internet of Things (IoT), leading to the establishment of educational spaces with high technological content. Concurrently, advancements in Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled robust and precise object detection and classification based on data, making it applicable in complex situations.

Since 2010, the widespread use of smartphones, mobile devices, and cloud computing has facilitated data collection, storage, processing, and sharing, giving rise to the concept of Smart Environments (SE). The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 further emphasized the need for technologically assisted educational services in modern society. However, the complexity of the current educational setting remains a significant challenge for HER in SCs [6].

According to the taxonomy in [244], there are four types of SCs: Basic, Interactive, Collaborative, and Immersive. The majority of the reviewed research presented in this article corresponds to Basic SCs, equipped with multimedia equipment and a computer connected to the Internet. In this context, Computer Vision proves advantageous in easily obtaining SC data compared to the use of biometric, ambient, or wearable sensors. Moreover, much of the reviewed research focuses on the psychological, social, or behavioral dimensions of educational experiences. Current trends aim to combine multimodal data acquisition in IoT with data fusion in AI to cater to face-to-face, online, or hybrid educational modalities [85]. References from [231] to [242] review hybrid and sensor-based approaches to HER.

2.2 Computer Vision methods for object extraction

In video data analysis, the first step involves detecting features known as objects, which can be things, people, or combinations of both (see fig. 1). Object Detection (OD), Object Classification (OC), and Object Tracking (OT) are the common processes for extracting features or objects.

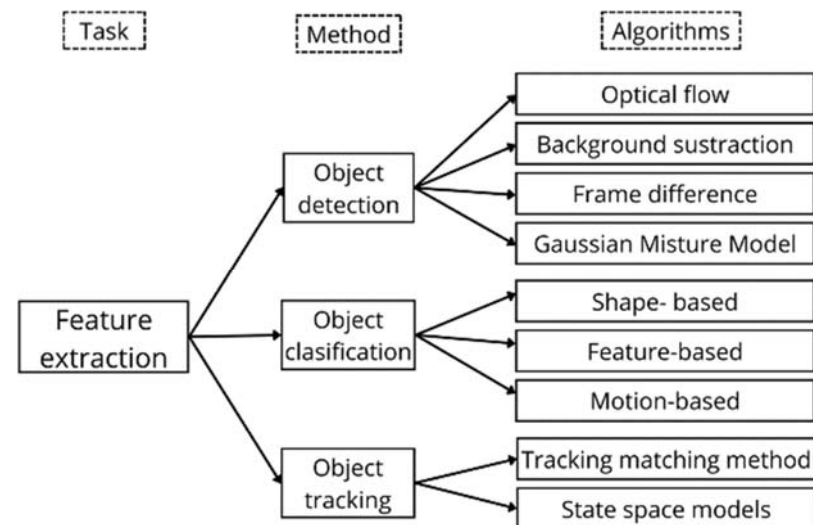


Fig. 1. Schematic representation of methods and algorithms for feature extraction with information from [246], created by the authors

The techniques for feature extraction include Optical Flow, Background Subtraction, Frame Difference, and Gaussian Mixture Model. Optical flow is described in [14], background subtraction in [15], and frame difference in [16]. Gaussian Mixture Model is used to estimate probability distributions, such as Gaussian distribution [17] or a mixture of Gaussian distribution [18], with fast estimation algorithms shown in [19] or [20]. For a more detailed discussion, refer to [246], upon which this section is primarily based.

OC (Object Classification) is the next step, involving shape-based, motion-based, and feature-based methods. Shape-based OC uses geometric properties like height/width ratio, perimeter, and area [21], useful for human figure classification [13, 22-23]. Motion-based classification relies on distinguishing objects based on their motion characteristics, recognizing human movements like walking or running [24-25]. Feature-based classification uses specific frame elements, such as skin color [26], which can also be combined with other descriptors [27].

The final stage is OT (Object Tracking), which creates a track of each object by capturing their locations over time [28]. Tracking Matching Methods find correspondence between object detections in different frames [29-30]. Another category, State Space Models, estimates object state (position, velocity, etc.) using a motion model corrected by incomplete measurements [32], with complete measurements obtained through OD algorithms [32].

2.3 Event understanding from video

Event understanding in video scenes involves interpreting elements based on known context (see fig. 2). It can be data-driven, using supervised and unsupervised machine learning methods like decision trees, KNN, SVMs, HMMs, and Bayesian networks [41]. Unsupervised learning constructs recognition models from unlabeled data using density estimation or clustering methods [35], including graphical models and eigen-decomposition [33-34].

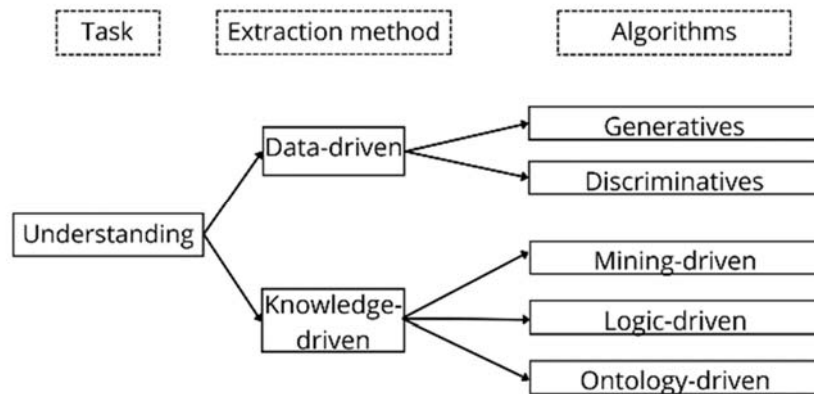


Fig. 2. Schematic representation of methods and algorithms for event understanding with information from [245], created by the authors

Data-driven algorithms in event understanding (fig. 3) can be classified into generative and discriminative methods [35]. Generative methods like Bayes classifiers, Hidden Markov Processes, and Bayesian Networks provide a complete description but require large data volumes for learning parameters. On the other hand, discriminative methods like Deep Learning Neural Networks, SVM, and Nearest Neighbor have lower computational costs but do not fully explain human events. Hybrid methods that combine both approaches have also been proposed [36].

Knowledge-driven understanding in event recognition utilizes formal knowledge [245]. Logical formalisms like Plans Recognition Theory [37-38], and Event Theory [39] are used for HER. Knowledge-driven methods (fig. 4) can be categorized into mining-driven, logic-driven, and ontology-driven approaches [40]. Mining-driven methods learn from pre-defined data to classify behaviors, while logic-driven methods use semantic representations and reasoning mechanisms. Ontology-driven methods, gaining interest in behavior recognition, offer an explicit representation of behavior definitions for broader applicability.

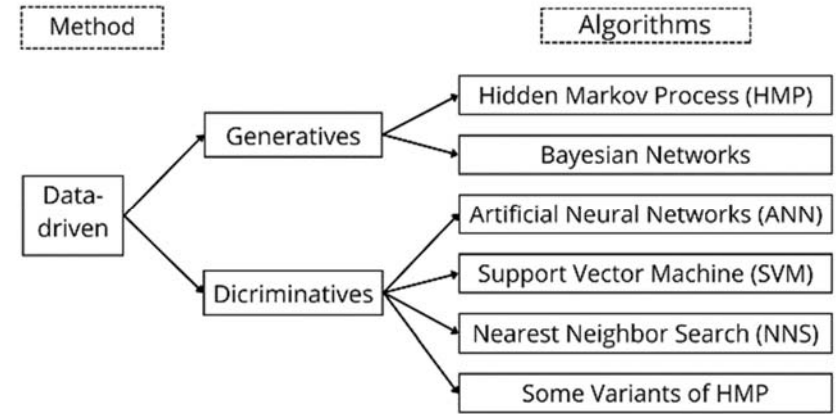


Fig. 3. Schematic representation of algorithms for data driven methods in HER, created by the authors

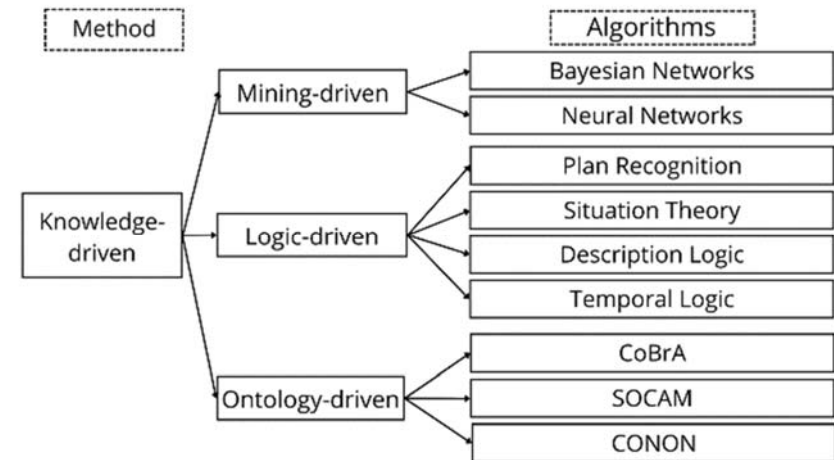


Fig. 4. Schematic representation of algorithms for knowledge-driven methods in HER, created by the authors

Ontologies offer advantages like independence from specific algorithms, promoting portability, interoperability, and reuse of technologies and systems. They have been used to model social

interaction in various domains, such as nursing homes, meeting videos, and bank monitoring. Researchers have created a video event ontology for surveillance, leading to its use in scenarios like bank and car park monitoring. While ontologies provide common terms for event definitions, scene interpretation may involve individually preferred algorithms, like rule-based systems and finite-state machines, which may share limitations with logical-based methods.

3. Method of the systematic review

The SLR method used in this study is based on the approach proposed in [52], which involves several stages depicted in Fig. 5.

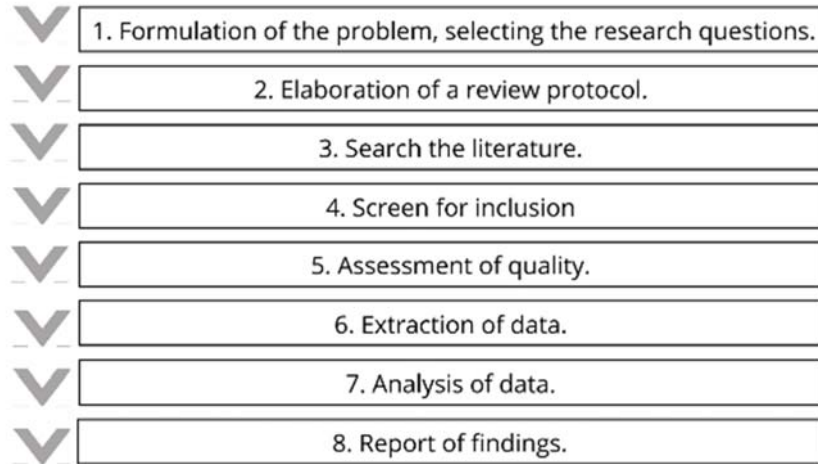


Fig. 5. Schematic representation of the methodology followed on the review, created by the authors

The research process in this study involved several stages:

1. Establishment of Research Questions:
 - 1.1. RQ1. What research has been conducted on acknowledging events from single-person or non-interacting behavior?
 - 1.2. RQ2. What research has been conducted on the recognition of events involving multiple-person interactions?
 - 1.3. RQ3. What research has been conducted on the recognition of events involving people-object interactions?
2. Definition of the Study Plan:

The plan included determining information sources, inclusion criteria, search strategies, quality assessment criteria, screening procedures, and strategies for data extraction, synthesis, and reporting. The selected digital libraries were ACM, IEEE, Elsevier, and Springer, as they are prominent in the computing field and accessible to the authors. Inclusion criteria covered publications from the last ten years, containing the specified keywords in the title, abstract, or complete document, while reviews or surveys were excluded. The search string used was:

("event" OR "behavior" OR "action" OR "activity" OR "interaction") AND
("recognition" OR "detection" OR "tracking") AND

("smart classroom" OR "classroom") AND ("video" OR "vision").

3. Searching for Relevant Papers:

The search string was adapted for each source, and relevant papers were sought in the selected digital libraries.
4. Screening and Selection of Papers:

A two-step process was applied, involving the review of titles and abstracts for inclusion and a full-text review of selected papers.
5. Quality Assessment:

While quality assessment is important for reviews aiming for generalization, it was not used as a criterion to exclude papers in this study, which sought to discover studies at different quality levels for a more comprehensive overview.
6. Data Extraction:

Relevant data for answering the research questions was extracted from the selected papers.
7. Analysis

The gathered data was thoroughly analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions.
8. Reporting:

The collected data was analyzed, and the resulting findings were comprehensively reported in this paper.

4. Results of the review

4.1 Quantitative results

This section presents the results of the SLR conducted in this research, as shown in Fig. 6.

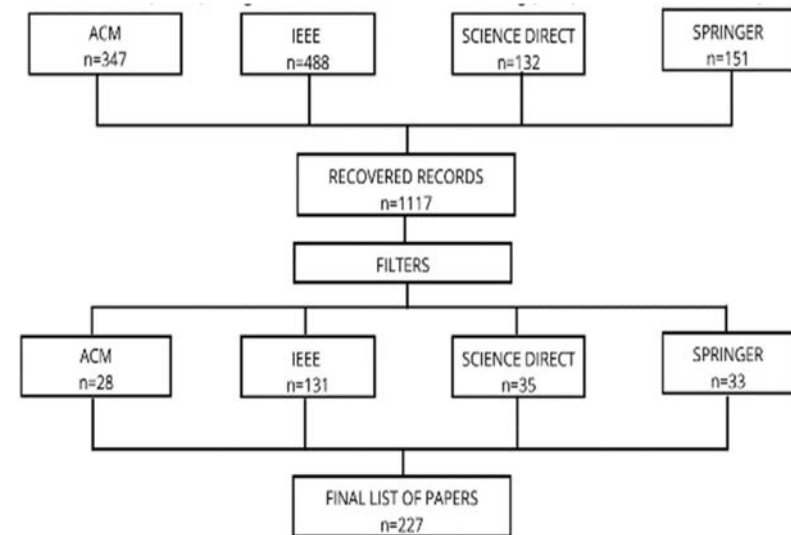


Fig. 6. Schematic representation of the process of selection of documents, created by the authors

Out of 1,117 documents initially selected, 227 papers met the inclusion-exclusion criteria after thorough reviews of titles, abstracts, and content (fig. 7). The list of papers remained unchanged throughout stages 5 and 6.

The papers were grouped by publication year and database. Over the years, the number of papers increased, showing growing interest in the field. Among the 227 documents (fig. 8), IEEE had the most papers (131, 57.7%), followed by Elsevier (35, 15.4%), SPRINGER (33, 14.6%), and ACM (28, 12.3%).

Qualitative analysis results presented by research question.

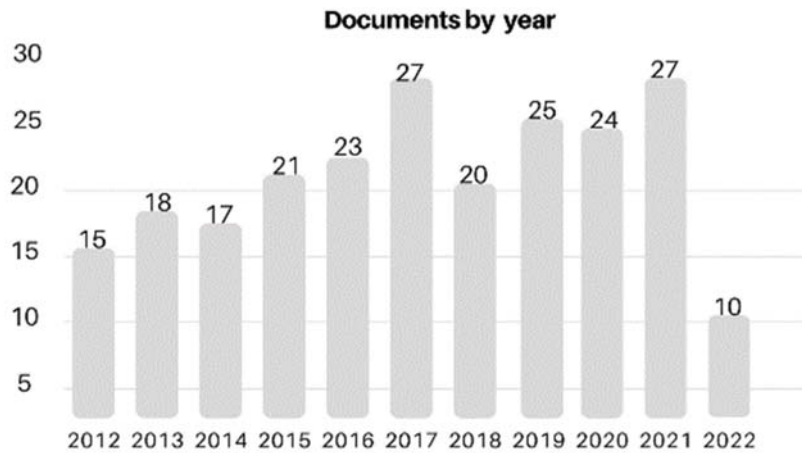


Fig. 7. A total of 227 articles with the search of the keywords, created by the authors

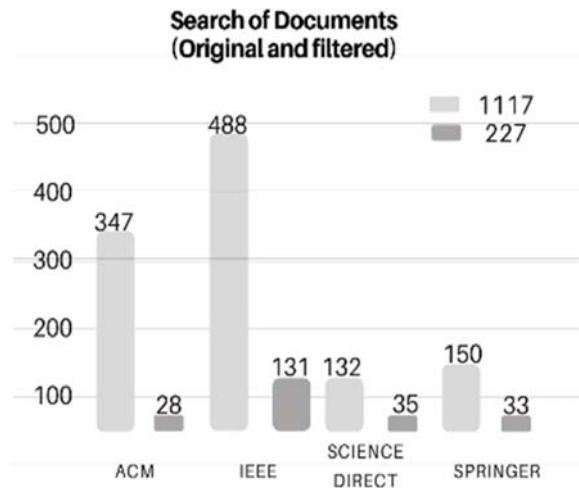


Fig. 8. Total of reviewed articles, by source, created by the authors

4.2 RQ1: Single person or non-interaction events

4.2.1 Event 1. Students being distracted from learning

In the context of educational settings, detecting events related to single person or non-interaction scenarios, such as students being distracted from learning, has been explored using various methods. Gesture analysis has been utilized to identify boredom and lack of attention in students [92]. Additionally, facial expressions have been studied as indicators of students' feelings, and methods like image recognition and facial muscle tension measurement have been employed to capture facial expressions [93-94, 96].

Eye-gaze and face-gaze analysis have also proven to be important indicators of cognitive engagement among students [97-98]. Researchers have recorded and analyzed human gaze behavior in different scenarios, including conversational gaze and tutoring interactions [98-99, 101-103].

Pose estimation methods have been applied to detect self-absorbed or sleeping students [106-108]. These methods often involve probabilistic and compositional graphical models, but they may encounter challenges in handling errors arising from small body parts in still images [107]. Video pose estimation methods, which incorporate motion information, have been used as well [109]. However, they may have limitations in handling action datasets with larger human motion and appearance variations due to viewpoint changes.

4.2.2 Event 2. Detection of behavior related to developmental disorders

Developmental disorders such as autism and attention disorders, like ADHD, can be detected in the classroom using various computer-based methods.

For autism detection, eye-tracking from computer searching tasks has been employed as an easier, cheaper, and less-obtrusive alternative to fMRI data recording [110-113].

Regarding ADHD diagnosis, facial expression analysis has been a focus of some research works [114-117]. For instance, [114] proposed a methodology using RGBD sensors for diagnostic predictions of ADHD and ASD. Depth capturing cameras, like Microsoft Kinect, have been used to monitor the movement of children in a classroom setting [115]. These cameras allow tracking and analysis of head motion and velocity profiles to measure hyperactivity. Additionally, computerized continuous performance tests are conducted to measure inattention and impulsivity. The test results are then compared to norm data, generating reports for assessment by clinicians.

Overall, these computer-based approaches offer promising avenues for early detection and intervention for developmental disorders in educational environments.

4.2.3 Event 3. Hand-raising gesture detection

Hand-raising is a behavior studied in gaming, Human-Computer Interaction, and classroom settings [119-121]. Detecting hand-raising in a real classroom can be challenging, but vision-based models using video cameras [122-123] and Kinect [124-126] have been developed to address this. Hand gesture recognition involves tracking, representation, and conversion into meaningful commands for human-computer interaction. Techniques include contact-based and vision-based devices [127-129]. Hand gesture recognition relies on detection, tracking, and recognition using visual features like skin color, shape, and motion [131-132]. Model-based methods use tracking to enhance robustness [133-135].

Vision-based hand gesture recognition includes static and dynamic gestures, using classifiers like Hidden Markov Models [137-139]. Learning algorithms vary based on gesture representation, including supervised, unsupervised, and reinforcement learning [122, 140]. For example, static hand gestures are recognized using the Fourier descriptor of a segmentation image [142].

4.3 RQ2. Multiple-person interactions

4.3.1 Event 1. Speaking and talking

Detecting human speaking is important for Human-Computer Interaction and fatigue detection [143]. Lip movement is used to detect speaking, and video-based approaches have been proposed [145]. Methods like lip motion analysis [146-148], Viola-Jones with skin color pixel detection [149], skin-color segmentation with edge projection [150], and fuzzy c-means clustering [151] have been used for lip detection and speech recognition. Feature extraction methods like Log-polar Signature [153] and Haar-like wavelets [154] have been proposed for lip tracking and speech recognition [157].

4.3.2 Event 2. Social interactions

Video-based studies of human sociality focus on workplace settings and classrooms, observing action and sense-making practices in social interactions [158-160]. Social abilities have been linked to academic success, and Proxemics Theory is used to detect human relationships, including non-verbal relations in classrooms [163-165]. Immediacy, which enhances physical and psychological closeness between individuals [168-170], can impact effective communication in educational settings. Teachers' variable physical proximities with students foster effective communication in classrooms [172-173]. Interaction, where learners share perspectives and collaborate, is another important aspect of non-verbal behaviors [174-175]. Learner-centered approaches and collaborative learning are emphasized in education [176], and providing pre-service teachers with video scenes where students interact with each other can support their understanding of these approaches [178]. However, empirical research is needed to validate assumptions regarding video-based cases and student-student interactions in educational settings [177, 180].

4.4 RQ3. People-objects interaction

4.4.1 Unique event. Student engagement detected by interaction with objects

Various works have classified engagement in different ways [181], including student involvement in terms of effort, persistence, and concentration [179], emotional engagement related to feelings of interest or attitude, and cognitive engagement focusing on cognitive effort and strategies [182]. Agentic engagement emphasizes proactive actions taken by students during learning tasks, involving interaction with surroundings or learning objects.

To assess the level of engagement, traditional methods and measures have been introduced [183], such as using student responses as indicators in intelligent tutoring systems [184-185]. Facial movements and features extracted from them have been used [186-187], along with automated measures like response time to problems and quizzes [188-189]. Physiological and neurological measures like electroencephalogram, heart rate, and skin response have also been employed [190-193]. Some studies utilize facial features and SVM classifiers to analyze affective states of students while solving problems [194-195], while others focus on facial expressions and body movements to detect various affective states of engagement [196].

Engagement detection and localization can be performed using face and facial landmark positions in video frames [197], extracting features from small segments of video, and employing regression models or LSTM-based networks for engagement prediction [196]. Open-source utility software like OpenFace has been used to automatically track changes in body posture and facial movements to infer engagement levels through eye gaze and head movement features [198-201].

Several works have classified engagement in different ways [181]. For example, [179] explains student's involvement in terms of effort, persistence and concentration. Emotional Engagement is related to feelings of interest or attitude towards a particular theme. Cognitive Engagement focuses on allocation of effort, a strategy used, in terms of cognitive effort, for the accomplishment of the

task. Other models have introduced another dimension known as Agentic Engagement and emphasize on proactive actions taken by the student for learning a particular task [182]. These tasks sometimes involve interaction of students with surroundings elements or learning objects.

5. Conclusion

The reviewed works show that there are relatively few studies dedicated to Smart Classroom (SC) event recognition [202-203]. While other smart environments like smart homes or smart offices have more extensive research, SC lacks conventions defining relevant events or behaviors [204]. In SC, event recognition is often a step within an application system, where it serves as input for decision-making processes aimed at assisting users [163].

Overall, video-based Human Event Recognition (HER) in SC has shown positive results, but some projects' costs may hinder widespread implementation [163]. Comparatively, other educational developments like E-learning, M-learning, and MOOCs have gained more traction, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they may lack the non-verbal communication found in traditional classrooms [165]. HER has been suggested as a potential solution to address this limitation [6].

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Информация об авторах / Information about authors

Мария Луиза КОРДОБА-ТЛАКСКАЛЬТЕКО – лектор факультета статистики и информатики Университета Веракруса. Сфера научных интересов: формальные языки, совместные вычисления, искусственный интеллект.

María Luisa CÓRDOBA-TLAXCALTECO – Lecturer of the Faculty of Statistics and Informatics of the University of Veracruz in Mexico. Research interests: formal languages, collaborative computing, artificial intelligence.

Эдгард БЕНИТЕС-ГЕРРЕРО – профессор факультета статистики и информатики Университета Веракруса. Сфера научных интересов: человеко-машинное взаимодействие, искусственный интеллект, системы управления данными, совместные вычисления.

Edgard BENÍTEZ-GUERRERO – Professor of the Faculty of Statistics and Informatics of the University of Veracruz in Mexico. Research interests: human-Computer Interaction, artificial intelligence, data management systems, collaborative computing.