

ENHANCING THE ASTROCYTE SPIKING DEEP
NEURAL NETWORKS AND CALCIUM BASED
NEURAL NETWORK MODEL FOR CLASSIFICATION

BY

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ABSTRACT

The ongoing challenge in machine learning is to advance general and biological inspired artificial models of neural networks which are compatible with the spatial and temporal constraints of the brain. For instance, a new term has recently been emerged to describe the communication between two neurons and a single astrocyte, the other type of cells in the brain, called tripartite synapse. The communication between astrocytes and astrocytes in a network called astrocytic syncytium is explored. The calcium dynamics in the brain is also considered as a significant player in brain information processing. Therefore, the study proposes to generalize mathematical models for tripartite synapse and astrocytic syncytium to advance new Tripartite Synapse Model (TSM), Artificial Astrocytic Syncytium (AAS) model and Calcium Based Artificial Neural Network (caANN) to mimic the calcium dynamics in the brain. Moreover, the study utilizes the proposed models of TSM and AAS within the architecture of the deep neural networks such as convolutional neural networks and deep belief neural networks. The simulation results of incorporating the real astrocyte in spiking response model (RSM) and Recurrent-Simple Neural Network (RSNN) has shown that astrocyte increases the postsynaptic potential and in turn, improves the RSM. Besides, the simulations of TSM in two neuron models, leaky integrate and fire (LIF) and Izhikevich model, has shown that using TSM has changed the spiking behavior (rate and firing pattern) of these models. The simulation related to the AAS by probability distribution and K-L divergence comparison has shown that the gap junction channels can be opened by the higher probability astrocytes. Finally, the result of the simulations of TSM in CNN and DBN showed that incorporating astrocytes' dynamics, properties and roles in deep learning networks compete and sometimes outperform the standard architectures of deep neural networks in terms of training and validation accuracy.

خلاصة البحث

يتمثل التحدي المستمر في التعلم الآلي في تطوير النماذج الاصطناعية العامة والمستوحاة من الشبكات العصبية المتوافقة مع القيود المكانية والزمنية للدماغ. على سبيل المثال ، ظهر مؤخراً مصطلح جديد لوصف الاتصال بين اثنين من الخلايا العصبية وخلايا نجمية واحدة ، وهو النوع الآخر من الخلايا في الدماغ ، يسمى المشبك الثلاثي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، الاتصال بين الخلايا النجمية والخلايا النجمية في شبكة تسمى الخلايا النجمية. وأخيراً ، تم اعتبار ديناميكيات الكالسيوم في الدماغ لاعباً مهماً في معالجة معلومات الدماغ. لذلك ، نقترح تعميم النماذج الرياضية للمشابك الثلاثي والمزامنة النجمية لتطوير نموذج المشبك الثلاثي الجديد (TSM) ، ونموذج Synocytic Astrocytic الاصطناعي (AAS) والشبكة العصبية الاصطناعية القائمة على الكالسيوم (CaANN) لمحاكاة ديناميكيات الكالسيوم في الدماغ. علاوة على ذلك ، استخدمنا النماذج المقترحة من TSM و AAS داخل بنية الشبكات العصبية العميقة مثل الشبكات العصبية التلافيفية والشبكات العصبية العميقة. أظهرت نتائج المحاكاة لدمج الخلايا النجمية الحقيقية في نموذج استجابة الطفرة (RSM) والشبكة العصبية المتكررة البسيطة (RSNN) أن الخلايا النجمية تزيد من إمكانات ما بعد المشبكية وبالتالي تحسن RSM. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، أظهرت محاكاة TSM في نماذجين من الخلايا العصبية ، الاندماج المتسرب والنار (LIF) ونموذج Izhikevich ، أن استخدام TSM قد غير سلوك السنبل (معدل ونمط الإطلاق) لهذه النماذج. أظهرت المحاكاة المتعلقة بـ AAS من خلال التوزيع الاحتمالي ومقارنة الاختلاف بين K-L أنه يمكن فتح قنوات تقاطع الفجوة بواسطة الخلايا النجمية ذات الاحتمالية الأعلى. وأخيراً ، أظهرت نتائج المحاكاة لـ TSM في CNN و DBN أن دمج ديناميكيات الخلايا النجمية وخصائصها وأدوارها في شبكات التعلم العميق تتنافس وتتفوق أحياناً على البنى القياسية للشبكات العصبية العميقة من حيث التدريب ودقة التحقق.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration.....	v
Copyright Page.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xiii
List of abbreviations	xvii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Research Questions.....	6
1.4 Research Objectives	7
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.6 Limitations of the Study	8
1.7 Scope of the Study	8
1.8 Chapter Summary	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Astrocytes As Biological Cell: Background.....	10
2.3 Artificial Neural Glial Networks (ANGNs)	11
2.4 Spiking Neuron-Astrocyte Network (SNAN)	19
2.4.1 Implementation of Spiking Neuron-Astrocyte Network.....	20
2.4.2 Astrocyte's Role as Self-Repair in SNAN.....	22
2.4.3 Astrocytic Syncytium Self-Repair	28
2.5 Astrocyte in Deep Learning Networks	29
2.6 Chapter Summary	35
CHAPTER THREE: BIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING	39
3.1 Introduction	39
3.2 Bipartite Synapse: Biological Background.....	39
3.3 Tripartite Synapse: Biological Background	40
3.3.1 Tripartite Synapse Communication Mechanism.....	41
3.3.2 Tripartite Synapse Properties.....	42
3.4 Biological Background for Astrocytic Syncytium	48
3.4.1 Mechanisms of Intercellular Calcium Waves in Syncytium.....	48
3.4.2 Properties of Astrocytic Syncytium	50
3.5 Biological Background for Calcium Dynamics in Brain.....	52
3.5.1 Calcium Initiation and Propagation	53
3.5.2 Calcium Induced Calcium Released (CICR)	53
3.5.3 Hierarchical Recruitment of IP ₃ -Mediated Ca ²⁺ Signalling.....	55

3.5.4 Calcium Dynamics: Calcium Spikes vs Action Potentials	56
3.6 Chapter Summary	58
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	60
4.1 Introduction	60
4.2 neuron models.....	63
4.2.1 Hodgkin-Huxley Model.....	64
4.2.2 Leaky Integrate-and-Fire (LIF).....	67
4.2.3 Izhikevich Model	68
4.2.4 Simple Spike Response Model (SRM)	68
4.3 ASTROCYTE MODELS	70
4.3.1 Functional Model of Neuron–Astrocyte Networks.....	70
4.3.2 Dressed Neurons: Modelling Neural-Glial Interactions	72
4.3.3 A Neuron–Astrocyte Transistor-Like Model.....	73
4.3.4 The Astrocyte as a Gatekeeper of Synaptic Transfer.....	74
4.4 Calcium dynamics	74
4.4.1 Li-Rinzel Model.....	74
4.4.2 Fire-Diffuse-Fire Model (FDF).....	75
4.5 Kinetic models of gating mechanisms.....	78
4.6 kinetic filters (polarization)	82
4.7 Convolutional Neural Networks	90
4.7.1 Convolution Layers.....	91
4.7.2 Pooling Layers	93
4.7.3 Activation Functions	93
4.7.4 Regularization: Dropout.....	94
4.7.5 Batch Normalization	96
4.7.6 Weight Initialization	96
4.8 Deep Belief Networks	97
4.8.1 Restricted Boltzmann Machine (RBM)	97
4.9 Chapter Summary	101
CHAPTER FIVE: ARTIFICIAL ASTROCYTIC NEURAL NETWORKS MODELS	103
5.1 Introduction	103
5.2 Real-Time Astrocyte in Spiking Neural Network	103
5.3 Real-Time Astrocyte in Simple Recurrent Network	110
5.3.1 Simple Recurrent Neural Network.....	111
5.3.2 Astrocytes in Simple Recurrent Network Model.....	112
5.4 Tripartite Synapse Model (TSM)	117
5.4.1 Signalling Pathways in Tripartite Synapse	117
5.4.2 The Proposed Tripartite Synapse Model (TSM).....	119
5.4.3 Simulations and Results	126
5.5 Artificial Astrocytic Syncytium.....	129
5.5.1 Spatial and Temporal Representation of the Model	130
5.5.2 Gap Junction Model Based on Probabilistic Methods	133
5.5.3 Artificial Astrocytic Syncytium: Model at Network Level	136
5.5.4 Artificial Astrocytic Syncytium Based on Kinetics Models.....	140
5.5.5 Gap Junction Model Simulation and Results.....	142
5.6 Calcium Based Artificial Neural Networks model.....	146

5.6.1 Calcium Signalling Toolkit.....	149
5.6.2 A Hierarchy of Calcium Signalling	151
5.6.3 Microdomain Vs Functional Domain (From Local to Global)	154
5.6.4 Calcium-Based Artificial Neural Networks Model (ca-ANN)	158
5.7 Discussion.....	160
5.8 Chapter Summary	163
CHAPTER SIX: ARTIFICIAL ASTROCYTIC SPIKING DEEP NEURAL NETWORK AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN CLASSIFICATION.....	164
6.1 Introduction	164
6.2 The Algorithm of Astrocytic CNN (A-CNN).....	164
6.2.1 Pre-Astrocytic Process	165
6.2.2 Astrocyte Stimulation	166
6.2.3 IP3 Pathway Activation	166
6.2.4 Calcium Pathway Activation	167
6.2.5 Gliotransmitter Pathway:	168
6.3 Astrocytic CNN (A-CNN) impLementation	168
6.3.1 Experimental Setup: Standard CNN	169
6.3.2 Experimental Setup: Astrocytic CNN.....	171
6.3.4 Results of Astrocyte-CNN Experiment	173
6.3.5 Discussion of Astrocyte-CNN Experiment.....	181
6.4 ALGORITHM of Astrocytic deep belief network (ADBN)	184
6.4.1 Horizontal Spiking (Lateral) Feature Map:.....	184
6.4.2 Vertical Spiking:	186
6.5 Astrocytic-DBN (A-DBN) implementation	188
6.5.1 Experimental Setup for Standard DBN.....	189
6.5.2 Experimental Setup for Astrocytic Syncytium DBN.....	191
6.5.3 Results of Astrocyte-DBN Experiment	193
6.5.4 Discussion of the Implementation of A-DBN in Classification ...	199
6.6 Chapter Summary	201
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK.....	202
7.1 Introduction	202
7.2 Conclusion	202
7.2.1 Real-Time Astrocyte in SRM and Recurrent Network.....	202
7.2.2 Tripartite Synapse Model (TSM).....	202
7.2.3 Artificial Astrocytic Syncytium (AAS)	203
7.2.4 Calcium Based Neural Network	205
7.2.5 Astrocyte Deep Neural Network (A-DNN)	205
7.3 The Fulfilment of the Research Objectives	205
7.4 future work	209
7.5 chapter summary.....	210
REFERENCES.....	211

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
2.1 Summary of ANGN previous studies	36
2.2 Summary of SNAN Previous studies	37
2.3 Summary of Astrocyte DNN previous studies	38
3.1 Summary of the different biological background concepts in chapter 3	58
5.1 Parameters values	108
5.2 Values of voltages in the simulation	108
6.1 Constant parameters for integrate and fire	172
6.2 Fixed parameters for Astrocyte-CNN	173
6.3 Values of voltages of each current value	173
6.4 Results in terms of training accuracy and training loss	175
6.5 The results in terms of validation accuracy and validation loss	176
6.6 The results in terms of validation accuracy and validation loss	178
6.7 Summary of results for different architectures	178
6.8 Fixed parameters for RBM	190
6.9 Fixed parameters for DBN	190
6.10 Results for different learning rates of RBM	194
6.11 Results for standard RBM with different parameters	195
6.12 Results for standard RBM with horizontal spiking of astrocyte	196
6.13 Results of standard RBM and horizontal spiking with different parameters	196
6.14 Results of standard RBM with either calcium, gliotransmitter or ip3	197
6.15 Results of different activation functions	197
6.16 Results of different horizontal and vertical spiking	198



LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
2.1 Architecture of the ANGN (Alvarellos-González et al., 2012)	13
2.2 Multi-layer fully connected ANGN (Mesejo et al., 2015)	14
2.3 Astrocyte and MLP architecture (Gergel' & Farkaš, 2018)	16
2.4 Overall scheme of the SONG-NET network (Landolsi & Marzouki, 2014)	17
2.5 MLP with pulse glial chain (Ikuta et al., 2014)	18
2.6 The architecture of the SPANNER model of Liu et al, (2018a)	25
2.7 SNAN architecture Liu et al. (2018b)	27
2.8 Fault-tolerant learning by an astrocyte (Johnson et al., 2018).	27
2.9 Astrocyte Network in ring structure (Naeem et al., 2015)	28
2.10 Astrocytic syncytium formed by two astrocytes (Naeem et al., 2015)	29
3.1 Illustration of the communication between neurons.	40
3.2 Tripartite synapse interaction (Valenza et al., 2011)	41
3.3 Neuron-astrocyte interaction effects (Perea et al., 2014)	42
3.4 Actions of gliotransmitters based on astrocytic Ca ²⁺ (Araque et al., 2014)	43
3.5 Modulation of neurotransmission by gliotransmission (Araque et al., 2014)	44
3.6 Gliotransmission triggered by Ca ²⁺ signals (Fellin & Carmignoto, 2004)	45
3.7 Local and distal gliotransmission. (Verkhatsky et al., 2009)	46
3.8 Calcium oscillations regulate the release of glutamate (Carmignoto, 2000)	48
3.9 Mechanisms of calcium wave (Nedergaard, Ransom, & Goldman, 2003)	49
3.10 Model 1 mechanism (Bennett, Farnell, & Gibson, 2005)	50
3.11 the lateral astrocyte synaptic regulation (Covelo & Araque, 2016)	52
3.12 <i>Intracellular</i> Ca ²⁺ oscillations	54

3.13 Clustering within IP3R (Rahman, 2012)	55
3.14 IP ₃ -mediated Ca ²⁺ signaling events (Rahman, 2012)	56
4.1 Flowchart of the Study	63
4.2 Simple circuit with batteries, resistors and capacitors (Siciliano, 2012)	64
4.3 Illustration of the AP created to solve the HH equation (Siciliano, 2012)	65
4.4 Main elements and signaling pathways of the tripartite synapse	70
4.5 Polarization wave	82
4.6 Direction of polarization	83
4.7 Random direction of polarization	84
4.8 Polarizing filter and direction of wave	84
4.9 Example of the direction of the polarizing filter and wave direction	85
4.10 Malus's law example	86
4.11 Long molecules in a polarizing filter	86
4.12 Oscillations directions to a length of molecules	87
4.13 polarization by scattering	88
4.14 The effect of voltage to the polarized signal	89
4.15 Optical active	90
4.16 Stressing the optical active	90
4.17 Applying dropout	95
4.18 RBM architecture	98
4.19 Gibbs sampling	100
4.20 Three layers of RBM	100
4.21 diagram for AAS and TSM in ACNN and ADBN and their simulations	102
4.22 diagram for real-time astrocyte models at the left panel and calcium-based neural network at the right panel	102
5.1 Main pathways of astrocyte activation	104
5.2 The red-line SNN-astrocytes and the blue-line SNN-SRM	109

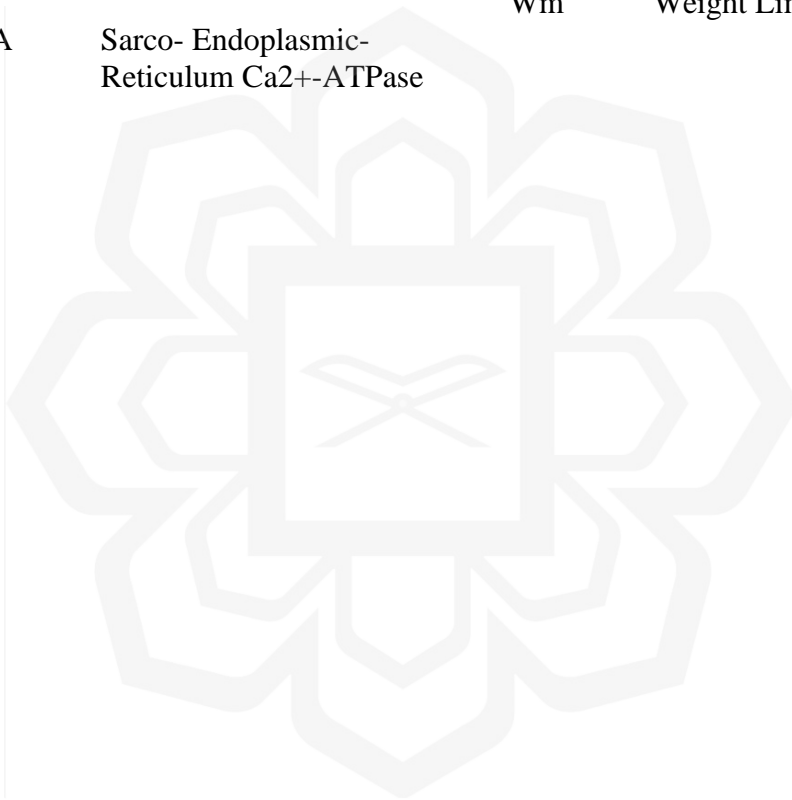
5.3 Spikes of SNN-astrocytes (green) and SNN-SRM (blue)	109
5.4 Different representations of SNN-SRM and SNN-astrocytes	110
5.5 Simple recurrent network, Elman network	111
5.6 Elman-Jordan Tripartite Synapse Architecture	113
5.7 Elman-Jordan-astrocytes (red) and SNN-SRM (blue)	115
5.8 Different representations for SRM and RSNN	116
5.9 Elman-Jordan-astrocytes (green) and the SNN-SRM (blue)	116
5.10 The interaction in the tripartite synapse (De Pitta, et al., 2011)	118
5.11 Proposed Pathways for Artificial Tripartite Synapse Model	119
5.12 Relation between the stimulus and the response	121
5.13 Number of spikes with two simulations: LIF with and without TSM	127
5.14 Number of spikes: Izhikevich model, red dots for TSM	128
5.15 Spiking activity with the Izhikevich model, the red line for TSM	129
5.16 Tripartite synapse and astrocytic syncytium	130
5.17 Gap junction between two astrocytes	131
5.18 Illustrative example to represent the spatial and temporal phases	134
5.19 Graphical model example	137
5.20 The histogram for three data samples of astrocytes A, B and C	140
5.21 Flowchart for the AAS	140
5.22 Exponential fit for pdf of astrocyte B	143
5.23 Probability plotting of two astrocytes with different rNT	144
5.24 Three different pdf comparisons	144
5.25 PDF comparisons between two astrocytes	146
5.26 Calcium Signaling Toolkit (Berridge et al., 2000)	150
5.27 Functional domains for astrocytes	155
5.28 The microdomains and the functional domain diagrams	157
5.29 The proposed architecture of AAS along with the ANN	157

5.30 Astrocytic calcium regulates synaptic activities	158
5.31 Flowchart of the proposed ca-ANN model	160
6.1 Architecture of Astrocyte-CNN (A-CNN) model	165
6.2 Architecture of the standard CNN	170
6.3 Architecture of the Astrocyte-CNN	173
6.4 Incorrect predicted labels for standard CNN	177
6.5 Correct predicted labels for standard CNN	177
6.6 the training accuracy and the validation accuracy for each architecture	180
6.7 the training loss and validation loss for each architecture	181
6.8 Horizontal and vertical spiking	187
6.9 Architecture of Astrocyte-DBN (A-DBN) algorithm	187
6.10 Architecture of the proposed ADBN	192
6.11 Vertical spiking digits from 0 to 9 samples	193
6.12 Horizontal spiking for digits from 0 to 9	194

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2-AG	Endocannabinoid 2-Arachidonyl Glycerol	GA	Genetic Algorithm
[Ca ²⁺]	Intracellular Calcium Concentration	GLU	Glutamate
AAS	Artificial Astrocytic Syncytium	GMM	Gaussian Mixture Model
ACNN	Astrocyte-CNN	GMDH	Group Method of Data Handling
ADBN	Astrocyte-DBN	GPU	Graphics Processing Unit
AI	Artificial Intelligence		
ANGN	Artificial Neuron-Glial Network	IICR	IP3 Induced Calcium Release
ANN	Artificial Neural Networks		
AP	Action Potentials	InsP3Rs	inositol 1,4,5-trisphosphate receptors
ATP	Adenosine triphosphate	IP3	Inositol trisPhosphate
ca ²⁺	Calcium		
CaANN	Calcium-based ANN	IP3R	Inositol trisPhosphate Receptor
CB1R	Cannabinoid Receptor	IPSP	Inhibitory Post Synaptic Potential
		HH	Hodgkin–Huxley
CD	contrastive divergence	K+	Potassium
CICR	Calcium Induced Calcium Release	KL	Kullback-Leibler
CNN	Convolutional Neural Networks	LIF	Leaky-Integrate-and-Fire
CNS	Central Nervous System	LTD	Long Time Potentiation
DBN	Deep Belief Network	LSM	Liquid State Machine
DMS	Destexhe Model of Synapse	LSTM	Long Short-Term Memory
DNN	Deep Neural Network	LTP	Long Time Depression
DSE	Depolarization-induced Suppression of Excitation	mGluRs	Metabotropic Glutamate Receptors
EPSP	Excitatory Post Synaptic Potential	MNIST	Modified National Institute of Standards and Technology database
ER	Endoplasmic-Reticulum	MLE	Maximum Likelihood Estimation
FDF	Fire-Diffuse-Fire	MLP	Multi-Layer Perceptron
MSE	Mean Square Error	SGD	Stochastic Gradient descent

Na+	Sodium		
NLP	Natural Language Processing	SICs	Slow Inward Currents
NMDA	N-methyl-D-aspartate	SNAN	Spiking Neuron-Astrocyte Network
PDF	Joint Probability Distribution	SNN	Spiking Neural Network
PSP	Postsynaptic Potential	STDP	Spike Timing Dependent Plasticity
PR	Probability of Release	SOM	Self-Organizing Map
RBM	Restricted Boltzmann Machine	SRM	Simple Spike Response Model
		TSM	Tripartite Synapse Model
ReLU	Rectified linear unit	VB	Variational Bayesian
RNN	Recurrent Neural Network	VOCs	Voltage-Operated Channels
		Wm	Weight Limit
SERCA	Sarco- Endoplasmic-Reticulum Ca ²⁺ -ATPase		



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) are powerful tools to perform modelling and to solve non-linear problems inspired by the biological neural networks that compose brains. Indeed, ANNs have been used on sophisticated tasks, such as classification, prediction, optimization, and regression. However, McCulloch & Pitts (1943) proposed the first computational model for the ANNs called threshold logic. In recent years, Deep Neural Networks (DNN), such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) and Deep Belief Networks (DBNs) have substantially achieved state-of-the-art results in numerous contests in machine learning with relevant real-world tasks such as image recognition, and voice recognition. DNN architectures are utilizing abstract features biologically inspired from the deep hierarchical arrangement of the visual cortex which is the primary cortical region of the brain that receives, integrates, and processes visual information. Hence, the brain is organized in a deep architecture with multiple levels of abstraction, each level equivalent to a distinct area of cortex.

DNN can build hierarchical representations from unlabelled data by feature detector units in their deep hierarchal layers where the lower layers detect simple features and feed them into higher layers which in turn detect more complex features and so forth. However, the foremost DNN of the Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP) called the Group Method of Data Handling (GMDH) was proposed by Ivakhnenko (1965). The GMDH contained eight hidden layers with polynomial activation function learned by regression. After a while, Ivakhnenko (1971) introduced some theoretical proposals for learning DNNs with Stochastic Gradient Descent (SGD).

Astrocytes, the predominant glial cell type in the brain, were traditionally considered as merely passive supportive cells without any important roles in synaptic information processing. In contrast, the contemporary view has given rise to show that astrocytes play active roles such as synaptic neurotransmission (Fellin & Carmignoto, 2004; Fields & Stevens-Graham, 2002; Perea & Araque, 2009), information processing (Newman, 2003; Perea, Sur, & Araque, 2014; Santello & Volterra, 2009; Verkhratsky, Rodríguez, & Parpura, 2012), Long Time Potentiation / Depression (LTP/LTD) (Henneberger et al., 2010), Short Term Potentiation/Depression (STDP) (Wade et al., 2011) and learning or synaptic plasticity (Araque, 2008; Barker & Ullian, 2010; Haydon & Nedergaard, 2016; Parpura et al., 1994; Schummers, Yu, & Sur, 2008).

Information processing in the Central Nervous System (CNS) is usually determined by the electrical excitability nature of neurons, their impact on the synaptic activities and their ability to release chemical neurotransmitters. Likewise, astrocytes show some of the excitability by dynamic calcium (ca^{2+}) signalling (Charles et al., 1991; Cornell-Bell et al., 1990; Dani, Chernjavsky, & Smith, 1992), they are involved in synaptic activities which have solely been considered as neuron's responsibilities (Fellin, 2009; Halassa, Fellin, & Haydon, 2009; Volterra, Liaudet, & Savtchouk, 2014), and finally they release gliotransmitter in response to calcium (ca^{2+}) elevations (Parpura et al., 1994; Ventura & Harris, 1999). Therefore, two concepts including the Artificial Neuron-Glial Networks (ANGNs) and Spiking Neuron-Astrocyte Network (SNAN) have come forth to incorporate astrocyte in conventional ANN and Spiking Neural Network (SNN), respectively.

However, the current study proposes mathematical models based on kinetic dynamics to mimic the communication between astrocytes-to-neurons (*tripartite synapse*) and astrocytes-to-astrocytes (*astrocytic syncytium*). The study further suggests

the implementation of these biological inspired mathematical models in the state-of-the-art DNN for both architectures CNN and DBN. The receptive waves of calcium release from intracellular stores are often termed “calcium spikes” (Skupin et al., 2008) or “spatial spikes” by analogy to neuronal spike trains (Deitmer, 1998; Navarrete et al., 2012). Moreover, calcium spikes are reminiscent of neuronal Action Potentials (APs) and their importance for intracellular communication is predicted to be equivalent to the importance of communication AP in CNS (Jaffe, 1993). Calcium spikes are considered as Aps to enable cells to use digital logic in transducing signals (Navarrete et al., 2012). By encoding the signal in temporal and spatial patterns, information is often transmitted as a calcium wave which is much the same as using the electric voltage or current signals in information technology. Falcke (2004) demonstrated that the calcium dynamics are another illustration for the flexible applicability of the FitzHugh–Nagumo model, and that calcium dynamics exceed this illustration and quite similar to the approach which looks for progress in the theory of pattern formation and nonlinear systems. Therefore, to emulate the intracellular-to-intercellular calcium signalling, a novel model called calcium-based ANN (caANN) based on Fire-Diffuse-Fire (FDF) model (Dawson, Keizer, & Pearson, 1999), calcium toolkit (Berridge, Lipp, & Bootman, 2000) and polarization property of transverse waves that specifies the geometrical orientation of the oscillations was proposed.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Artificial Neural Networks are very important and have been used in many applications to solve problems such as classification but are still evolving based on recent discoveries in neurobiology to find artificial networks that imitate the biological networks in the brain. In spite of the fact that artificial neuron (or perceptron) was

discovered in the 1950s to mimic the biological processes of neurons such as the certain components of the neuron (dendrites, cell bodies and axons) and despite that the artificial neural networks were inspired by the connections between biological neurons based on simplified mathematical models that had powerful performance in some classification tasks, these artificial networks, however, neglected the creation of the connection, destruction of the connection and timing of the signals (Pfeiffer & Pfeil, 2018). SNN incorporated the concept of time in their architectures in which the time of firing is important when neurons reach a specific threshold. Recent concepts have been emerged to represent the roles of astrocytes (one type of glial cells) in brain information processing and the significance to incorporate such roles in the architectures of conventional ANN called Artificial Neural Glial Networks (ANGNs) and in SNN called Spiking Neuron-Astrocyte Networks (SNANs). Nevertheless, ANGNs and SNANs have consolidated only one role of astrocytes and added them in last layer (output layer) of their architectures and have not included the astrocytic network nor the calcium dynamics in the brain.

On the other hand, the DNNs have intimated outstanding success in classification and recognition problems as a result of the availability of Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) and the large-scale datasets for training. Ferré, Mamalet, and Thorpe (2018) claimed that DNNs suffer from the lack of biological plausibility. Bengio et al., (2015) discussed that Boltzmann machines are the most biologically plausible learning algorithms for deep architectures, but they also encounter several biological implausibility such as the weight transport problem to attain symmetric weights, and the positive-phase vs negative-phase synchronization (Diehl et al., 2015; Fatahi et al., 2018; Neil, Pfeiffer & Lie, 2016; Panda & Roy, 2016). The top layer of CNNs is trained by the supervised back-propagation algorithm which is biological

implausible (Kheradpisheh et al., 2018). Moreover, implementation of DNN in conventional digital platforms suffers from the substantial cost of training and resource-consuming process (Diehl et al., 2015; Fatahi et al., 2018; Neil, Pfeiffer, & Liu, 2016; Tavanaei et al., 2018). As a consequence, SNNs have been introduced to incorporate in DNN's architectures in different ways to solve such shortcomings. For instance, CNN architectures were converted into SNNs (Esser et al., 2016; Rueckauer et al., 2017), the standard version of SNN learning rule called Spike Timing Dependent Plasticity (STDP) was converted to convolutional version with Leaky-Integrate-and-Fire (LIF) neurons in SNNs (Kheradpisheh et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2018; Panda, Srinivasan, & Roy, 2017), deep spiking MLP network was proposed by O'Connor and Welling (2016), spiking Restricted Boltzmann Machine (RBM) (Nefci, Augustine, Paul, & Detorakis, 2017), Spiking DBN was introduced by Stomatias et al. (2015), and finally spiking deep networks with LIF Neurons was presented by Hunsberger and Eliasmith (2015). In conclusion, despite that DNN and spiking DNN are biologically plausible architecture in terms of the hierarchy representation of the visual cortex, DNN nor spiking DNN overlooked the functions of other brain structures or the other cell types such as glial cells in imitation. Moreover, calcium spikes are reminiscent of neuronal APs and their importance for intracellular communication is predicted to be equal to the importance of communication AP in CNS (Jaffe, 1993).

In summary, ANN neglected the concept of timing and the roles of other cell types of the brain, astrocytes, and their network-syncytium. Hence, SNAN incorporated the concept of timing and consolidated only one role of astrocyte which is the self-repair of the neuron network and ignored the astrocytic network in their architectures. ANGN utilized the feed-forward ANN and added astrocyte to their layers but ignored the concept of tripartite synapse nor the astrocytic syncytium in their architectures. Spiking

DNNs finally included the concept of timing but ignored the roles of astrocytes nor their network to introduce more biological inspiring networks.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1- What are the architectures of the artificial neural networks that are incorporated, simulated and modelled by astrocytes and their networks?
- 2- What is the role of astrocytes and calcium dynamics in brain information processing in terms of tripartite synapse and astrocytic syncytium?
- 3- What are the existing mathematical models that could be utilized in the proposed models for the roles of astrocytes, astrocytic syncytium and calcium dynamics?
- 4- How can the spiking neural networks and simple recurrent network be utilized to propose new models for real-time astrocytes, the kinetic models of a single synapse to create a new model of tripartite synapse, and both the tripartite synapse model and the kinetic model of multiple synapses to create a new model for astrocytic syncytium?
- 5- How can the fire-diffuse-fire model, the idea of polarization as the receptive field, the hierarchy of calcium signalling and the calcium signalling toolkit be used to create a novel model of calcium-based ANN (caANN)?
- 6- How can the TSM and the AAS be utilized to create a new model of astrocytic CNN (ACNN) and astrocytic DBN (ADBN)?
- 7- What are the results of simulations of ACNN and ADBN in handwritten digit recognition problem in the MNIST database?