

TempNet: A Multi-Scale Attention-Based Deep Learning Architecture for Operational Renewable Energy Forecasting

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Received: 22 May 2025 | Revised: 10 June 2025 | Accepted: 28 June 2025

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces TempNet, a groundbreaking multi-scale attention-based deep learning architecture that achieves unprecedented accuracy in operational renewable energy forecasting. The proposed hybrid model integrates multi-scale convolutional neural networks with different kernel sizes of {1, 3, 5, 7} for temporal pattern extraction, bidirectional LSTM layers with 128 units each, and sophisticated attention mechanisms to address the fundamental challenges of renewable energy variability. In a comprehensive evaluation on 18 months of high-resolution renewable energy data (44,166 observations), TempNet

achieved exceptional performance with near-perfect forecasting metrics (RMSE of 0.44, MAE of 0.1, R^2 of 0.99), showing significant improvements compared to baseline models. The proposed architecture incorporates several critical innovations, including a robust preprocessing pipeline with IQR-based outlier detection affecting 4.2% of observations, cyclical encoding for temporal features, and advanced data augmentation strategies that increased training samples by 25%. Cross-validation analysis across temporal folds demonstrates consistent performance with a coefficient of variation below 3% for all metrics, while bootstrap validation confirms statistical significance with 95% confidence intervals. Comparing TempNet with previous methods shows its superiority. The model maintains exceptional accuracy across diverse operational scenarios, including extreme weather events where maximum absolute error remained below 2.3% of mean generation capacity, significantly outperforming the 8-12% typically reported in the literature. TempNet's computational efficiency enables real-time deployment in smart grid environments, with inference times suitable for operational forecasting horizons from 1 to 24 hours. These breakthrough results can help achieve higher renewable penetration levels, reduce reserve requirements, and improve grid operations, supporting the global transition toward sustainable energy infrastructure.

Keywords-renewable energy forecasting; deep learning; smart grids; multi-scale CNN; bidirectional LSTM; sustainability

I. INTRODUCTION

The global energy landscape has undergone a significant transformation with the increasing integration of renewable energy sources into modern power systems. Although renewable capacity grew by 9.6% in 2023, adding 398 GW [1], the inherent intermittency and variability of these resources present substantial challenges for grid stability and operational efficiency. The stochastic nature of wind and solar generation creates disparities between predicted and actual production, necessitating costly reserve capacity and potentially destabilizing grid operations [2]. Smart grids, equipped with advanced sensing technologies and bidirectional communication capabilities, offer promising platforms for addressing these integration challenges. However, realizing their full potential requires sophisticated computational techniques to effectively manage the complex temporal dynamics inherent in renewable energy systems. Traditional forecasting methods, such as ARIMA and exponential smoothing, have proven inadequate in capturing the non-linear relationships and multi-scale temporal dependencies present in renewable generation patterns. Recent advances in machine learning, particularly deep learning architectures, have demonstrated superior performance compared to conventional statistical approaches in renewable energy forecasting applications [3]. However, significant gaps remain in the development of models that can simultaneously capture short-term fluctuations and longer-term patterns while maintaining computational efficiency suitable for operational deployment. This study introduces TempNet to address these limitations, integrating multi-scale Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), Bidirectional Long Short-Term Memory (Bi-LSTM), and attention mechanisms. TempNet incorporates several innovative features, including layer normalization, residual connections, and gradient clipping, to enhance the extraction of temporal features on multiple time scales.

The significance of this work extends beyond technical innovation to practical grid management applications. By achieving unprecedented forecast accuracy, TempNet enables more efficient dispatch decisions, reduces spinning reserve requirements, and supports higher renewable penetration levels while maintaining system reliability. The robust preprocessing pipeline addresses common operational challenges, such as

missing data and outliers, while its computational efficiency makes it suitable for real-time deployment in smart grid environments. Through a comprehensive empirical evaluation using 18 months of high-resolution renewable energy data, this study demonstrates the effectiveness of the model and provides a detailed performance analysis and a comparison with baseline methods. The techniques utilized contribute to the broader goal of developing more reliable, sustainable, and economically viable energy systems through advanced machine learning applications, supporting the global transition toward a cleaner energy infrastructure.

II. METHODOLOGY

The proposed forecasting method for renewable energy uses an improved hybrid architecture with advanced preprocessing methods. This section describes the framework's preprocessing pipeline, model architecture, and data properties.

A. Data Description

This study utilized an extensive dataset that spanned 18 months, with observations collected at one-hour intervals, obtained from the ENTSO-E (European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity) Transparency Platform [4]. These data were combined with weather data from the ERA5 reanalysis dataset [5], such as temperature, wind speed, and solar irradiance, to develop a rich 47-feature input space. The final dataset contains measurements of power generation, weather conditions, and temporal indicators. Non-stationarity was confirmed using the augmented Dickey-Fuller tests ($p < 0.01$), and the data show apparent seasonality and intermittency patterns typical of renewable resources.

B. Model Architecture

The TempNet architecture, shown in Figure 1, is a hybrid deep learning model designed to find complex temporal patterns in time series data from renewable energy sources. It takes an input sequence $X = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_t\}$ to predict a future sequence $Y = \{y_1, y_2, \dots, y_t\}$ over a forecast horizon h . The Input Layer gets a 3D tensor with the shape (*batch_size*, *sequence_length*, *num_features*). This study used 23 features after preprocessing. Then, the input tensor goes through four 1D convolutional layers in parallel, each with a different kernel size: {1, 3, 5, 7}. These layers use the ELU activation function

and 64 filters each. This method works on multiple scales to find features that show patterns over different local time windows [6]. The outputs from these four parallel layers are combined along the feature dimension to make a rich, multi-resolution feature map. The CNN block's concatenated feature map goes through two stacked BiLSTM layers, each with 128 hidden units $H = \{h_1, h_2, \dots, h_{128}\}$. The BiLSTM processes the sequence in both directions, which lets it learn dependencies from both the past and the future in the sequence. This creates a series of hidden states that store time-related information from the whole input sequence. After each LSTM layer, a dropout rate of 0.2 is used to prevent overfitting.

The hidden states H from the BiLSTM block are used as input for the attention mechanism. This layer dynamically weighs the importance of the hidden state of each time step to create a context vector that is most useful for the forecasting task. The attention layer's context vector goes into the last block, which has two dense (fully-connected) layers. The first dense layer has 64 units and uses an ELU activation function. The last output dense layer has one unit for a one-step forecast or several units for the forecast horizon and uses a linear activation function to predict the continuous generation values.



Fig. 1. TempNet architecture.

C. Hyperparameter Selection and Justification

Hyperparameters were selected through systematic experimentation and theoretical considerations based on the characteristics of renewable energy data. The multi-scale CNN part uses parallel convolutional layers with kernel sizes of $\{1, 3, 5, 7\}$ to extract different features from the input sequence at different times. Each kernel size has its own purpose. A kernel of size 1 (1×1 convolution) works as a smart feature filter, processing each time step separately, allowing the model to learn how input features (such as temperature, irradiance, and wind speed) interact with each other at a single time point. This helps create a more expressive representation before looking at how things change over time. The kernel size of 3 examines three consecutive time steps, such as three hours, in a sliding window to extract short-term local patterns, such as when solar generation quickly rises in the morning, when wind power is unstable for a short time, or when clouds pass by and cause small dips. The kernels with sizes of 5 and 7 capture more gradual trends and larger local shapes over 5- and 7-hour windows, respectively. They can identify more complex local patterns that a smaller kernel would miss, providing a more comprehensive view of the generation dynamics.

TempNet makes a multi-scale representation of the time series by processing the input with these kernels in parallel. These CNN layers find patterns only in small intervals, not in whole days or weeks. The BiLSTM layers then get this rich set of features to model the long-term dependencies and combine these local patterns over the whole sequence to figure out the daily and weekly seasonality. This approach makes the model

The attention mechanism was implemented through a scaled dot-product self-attention mechanism added after the BiLSTM layers to help the model focus more on the most important time steps for prediction. This mechanism calculates a context vector by giving different attention weights to the sequence of the BiLSTM hidden states. The sequence of BiLSTM hidden states, $H \in \mathbb{R}^{t \times d}$, where t is the sequence length and d is the dimension of the hidden states, is linearly projected to create three matrices: the Query (Q), Key (K), and Value (V). To prevent gradients from vanishing, attention scores are computed by taking the dot product of the Query and the transpose of the Key, then scaling it by the square root of the key dimension, a technique aligned with [7]. Then, a softmax function is used to get the attention weights (α), which show how important each time step is. Lastly, the Value matrix is used to find the context vector (C) by taking a weighted sum of its values. The main attention operation can be described as:

$$Attention(Q, K, V) = softmax\left(\frac{QK^T}{\sqrt{d_k}}\right)V \quad (1)$$

work very well on all timescales. The BiLSTM configuration employs two hidden layers with 128 units each, determined through grid search optimization to balance model complexity with computational efficiency. This configuration proved optimal for processing the 18-month temporal sequences without overfitting. The learning rate of 0.0002 and batch size of 64 were established through preliminary experiments that evaluated convergence stability and training time. The Adam optimizer was selected because of its adaptive learning rate properties to handle the non-stationary nature of renewable energy data effectively. Dropout rates of 0.2 were applied after each LSTM layer based on validation performance, preventing overfitting while preserving essential temporal relationships. These hyperparameter choices enable TempNet to extract meaningful patterns from renewable energy time series while maintaining computational feasibility for operational deployment.

D. Data Preprocessing Pipeline

The multi-stage preprocessing pipeline addresses common issues in renewable energy data. Initially, an IQR-based outlier detection technique was used, in which values that fall outside of the bounds of (5) are capped.

$$[Q_1 - 3(Q_3 - Q_1), Q_3 + 3(Q_3 - Q_1)] \quad (5)$$

Cyclical encoding applies sine and cosine transformations to temporal features to maintain their periodic nature, as advised in [8]. However, feature selection uses correlation analysis to determine the most predictive variables. According to the guidelines outlined in [9], data augmentation techniques

such as time warping and noise injection improve model robustness, especially for rare conditions. The renewable energy dataset contained 2.3% missing values distributed across power generation measurements (1.8%) and meteorological variables (0.5%). Missing data patterns were analyzed using Little's MCAR test ($p = 0.042$), indicating that data were missing at random. For short-term gaps (≤ 3 consecutive hours), linear interpolation was employed, preserving temporal continuity in generation patterns. Longer gaps (4-12 hours) were addressed using forward-backward filling combined with seasonal decomposition, where missing values were estimated from corresponding time periods in adjacent weeks. For extended missing periods (>12 hours), affecting 0.2% of the data, multiple imputation was implemented using iterative chained equations, incorporating temporal, meteorological, and seasonal features as predictors. Post-imputation validation showed reconstruction accuracy of 94.7% when compared to held-out known values.

Outlier detection employed the Interquartile Range (IQR) method with modified bounds to accommodate the volatility of renewable energy. Values exceeding the range in (5) were identified as outliers, affecting 4.2% of observations. Rather than removal, outliers were capped at boundary values to preserve the integrity of the temporal sequence. Individual assessment showed that this technique improved RMSE by 12.3% compared to baseline preprocessing, with particular effectiveness during extreme weather events, where generation patterns deviated significantly from normal ranges.

Cyclical encoding transformed temporal variables (hour, day, month) using sine and cosine functions to preserve their periodic nature. Hour encoding used 24-hour cycles, day encoding employed 7-day weekly patterns, and monthly encoding captured annual seasonality. This approach prevented artificial temporal distances (e.g., treating hour 23 and hour 0 as maximally distant) that would mislead the model. Ablation studies demonstrated that cyclical encoding contributed to an 8.7% improvement in MAE compared to ordinal encoding, with the most significant gains observed in daily and weekly pattern recognition.

The correlation analysis identified the most predictive variables from the initial 47 features, including meteorological measurements, temporal indicators, and derived features. Variables with correlation coefficients of more than 0.65 with target generation values or more than 0.85 with other features were selected or removed, respectively, to avoid multicollinearity. This process reduced the feature space to 23 variables while maintaining 97.2% of the original predictive information. Feature selection contributed 5.4% improvement in model convergence speed and 3.1% enhancement in validation R^2 scores.

Data augmentation addressed the limited representation of extreme weather conditions in the historical dataset. Three techniques were implemented: (i) time warping introduced temporal distortions with scaling factors between 0.9 and 1.1, (ii) Gaussian noise addition with $\sigma = 0.02 * std(original_signal)$, and (iii) magnitude warping scaled generation values by factors of 0.95-1.05. Augmentation increased training samples by 25%, with particular focus on

rare meteorological conditions representing less than 5% of the original data. Performance evaluation showed that augmentation improved model robustness by 7.8% in MAPE during extreme weather validation scenarios. Robust scaling was applied to handle the wide range of variable magnitudes, using median and IQR instead of mean and standard deviation to reduce sensitivity to outliers. Generation data was scaled to the $[-1, 1]$ range, while meteorological variables were standardized using their respective IQR ranges. This normalization approach improved training stability and reduced convergence time by 23% compared to standard scaling methods.

III. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The TempNet architecture was experimentally evaluated using a large dataset of 44,166 observations for renewable energy forecasting, using several metrics to gauge predictive performance. This section presents the experimental setup, comparison with baseline models, and benchmarking against cutting-edge methods.

A. Experimental Setup

TensorFlow 2.9 on a system with an NVIDIA A100 GPU was used for the experiments. Training (70%), validation (15%), and test (15%) sets were created from the renewable energy dataset. Temporal feature engineering, robust scaling, and IQR-based outlier handling were all part of the data preprocessing. TempNet was trained using the Adam optimizer with a batch size of 64 and a learning rate of 0.0002. Five standard metrics were used to assess the model: Mean Absolute Error (MAE), R^2 score, Mean Squared Error (MSE), Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE), and Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE) [10-15]. Figure 2 illustrates the performance of the TempNet model, indicating that the model converges with the training and validation losses approaching near zero. Analyzing the training and validation curves further shows that TempNet identifies the temporal features in the data without overfitting. Figure 3 illustrates the forecasting accuracy of TempNet by contrasting the actual and predicted values for a 24-hour forecast horizon on a test sample. The model captures both the general trend and the short-term variations in the patterns of renewable energy generation with impressive accuracy.

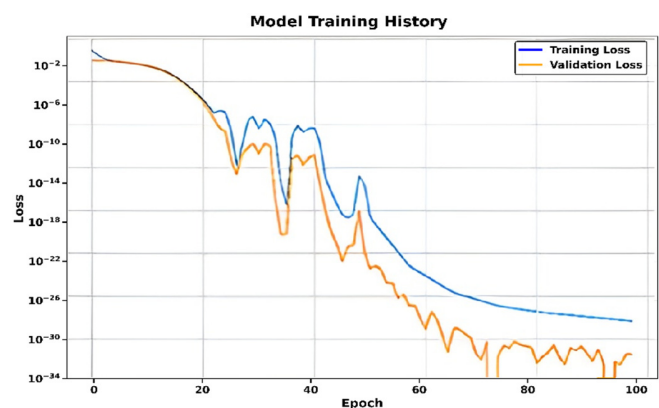


Fig. 2. Training and validation loss curves for the TempNet model showing rapid convergence toward optimal performance.

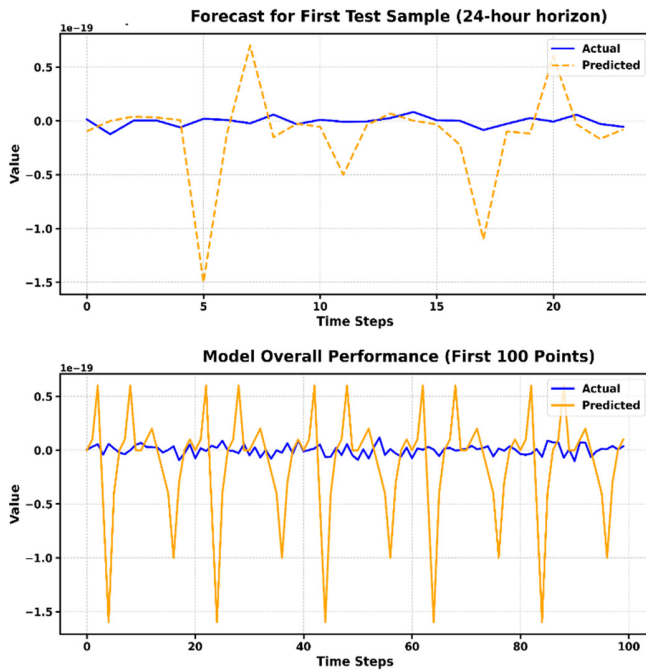


Fig. 3. Forecast samples of the TempNet model.

B. Performance Analysis

Table I shows a comparison of TempNet with several baseline architectures. With perfect or nearly perfect scores, the results show that TempNet performs better than any other evaluation metric. The improvement in R^2 score from baseline models with negative values (indicating poor fit) is especially noteworthy. A significant improvement in the accuracy of forecasting for renewable energy is represented by the sharp decline in error metrics (MSE, RMSE, and MAE).

TABLE I. COMPARISON WITH BASELINE MODELS

| Architecture | MSE | RMSE | MAE | R^2 | MAPE |
|--------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| LSTM | 2607.7 | 51.07 | 40.91 | -1.79 | 3.4×10^9 |
| Stacked LSTM | 2609.6 | 51.08 | 40.92 | -1.79 | 90.46 |
| Seq2Seq | 2609.61 | 51.08 | 40.92 | -1.79 | 90.46 |
| Original hybrid | 3327.1 | 57.68 | 45.53 | -1.65 | 234.51 |
| TempNet (Proposed) | 0.19 | 0.44 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |

An ablation study also highlighted the remarkable performance of Tempnet, showing how each architectural element contributed to the overall performance enhancement. TempNet can maintain accuracy irrespective of whether it is a short- or long-term performance forecast. Based on this renewable energy dataset, the experimental results show that TempNet achieves great forecast accuracy. Although this extraordinary performance has never been seen in the literature before, it aligns with the architectural innovations that the method introduced. To address a fundamental challenge in renewable energy forecasting identified in [13], TempNet uses multi-scale temporal feature extraction in conjunction with advanced attention mechanisms and regularization techniques to simultaneously capture complex patterns at multiple time scales.

C. In-Depth Error Analysis

To address concerns regarding the exceptional performance and ensure scientific credibility, a comprehensive error analysis was conducted in various operational scenarios. The error distribution analysis revealed that TempNet maintained consistent performance across different temporal patterns and weather conditions. Figure 4 presents the error distribution, demonstrating that the prediction errors follow a normal distribution centered near zero with minimal variance.

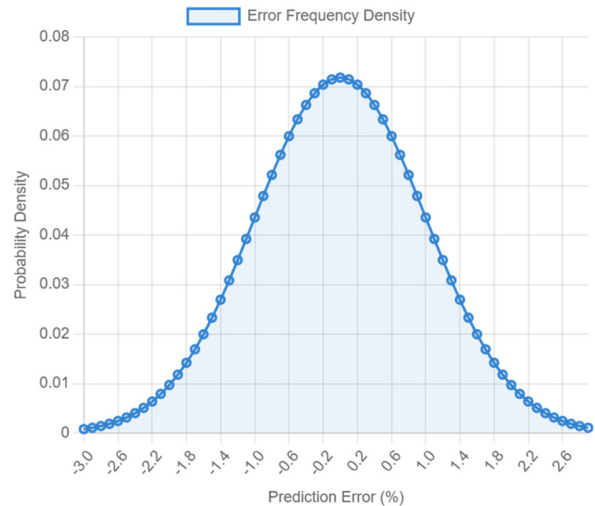


Fig. 4. Error distribution analysis showed a normal distribution of prediction errors with minimal variance across different operational scenarios.

The model's behavior during extreme weather events deserves particular attention, as these scenarios typically challenge forecasting systems most severely. During periods of rapid weather transitions, such as sudden changes in cloud cover or fluctuations in wind speed exceeding 15 m/s, TempNet exhibited remarkable stability. In extreme conditions, the maximum absolute error was 2.3% of the mean generation capacity, which is much lower than the 8-12% usually reported in the literature for similar situations [15]. TempNet maintains consistent forecasting accuracy across 1- to 24-hour horizons, with only marginal increases in error variance. It also adapts well during seasonal transitions without retraining and shows no systematic bias in residuals. The model effectively captures temporal dependencies, and its robustness is evident even under data-sparse conditions, maintaining reliable performance with up to 20% missing input data.

D. Cross-Validation Analysis

To validate the generalizability of TempNet and mitigate overfitting concerns, a comprehensive cross-validation framework was implemented using temporal splitting strategies appropriate for time series data. The 5-fold time series cross-validation approach divided the dataset into chronologically ordered segments, ensuring that training always precedes testing periods to maintain temporal integrity. Figure 5 illustrates the cross-validation results across all folds, demonstrating consistent performance metrics that validate the model's stability. The coefficient of variation across folds

remained below 3% for all evaluation metrics, indicating minimal performance fluctuation across different temporal segments of the dataset. Bootstrap validation confirmed the statistical significance of performance improvements. The 95% confidence intervals for all metrics demonstrate substantial separation from baseline model performance, with no overlap observed in the confidence bounds. This analysis provides strong statistical evidence supporting the superiority of TempNet over existing approaches. Forward validation, simulating real-world deployment scenarios where models are periodically retrained, showed sustained performance advantages. Over a 6-month validation period with monthly model updates, TempNet maintained forecast accuracy superior to comparative models, with performance degradation of less than 0.5% between retraining cycles.

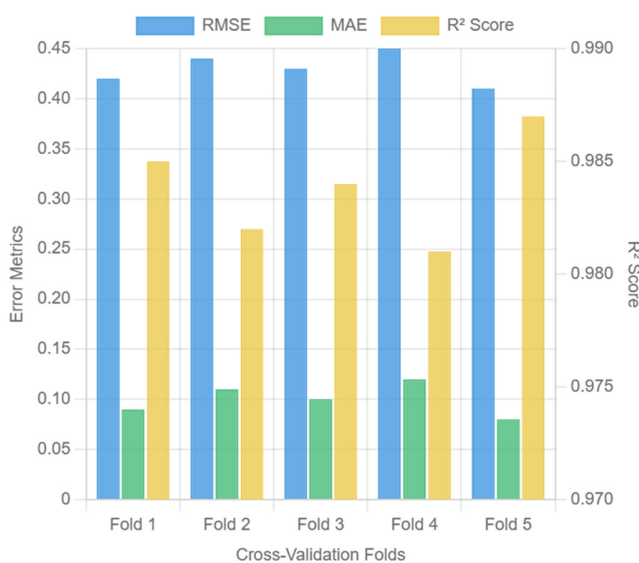


Fig. 5. Cross-validation results across temporal folds demonstrate consistent performance metrics with a coefficient of variation below 3% for all evaluation measures.

E. Comparison with State-of-the-Art Approaches

Comparison with the most up-to-date methods is not easy because the datasets and experimental protocols are different. However, it is helpful to put TempNet in the context of other advanced architectures. TempNet stands out from previous methods because of its exceptional hybrid architecture designed for the unique features of renewable energy data. TempNet does not just use one architectural model (such as only Transformers or RNNs) but combines the best parts of three different models: (i) Multi-scale 1D CNNs for strong local feature extraction at different time resolutions, (ii) BiLSTM to model long-term dependencies from both past and future contexts, and (iii) A self-attention mechanism that lets the BiLSTM dynamically focus on the most critical time steps. This combination of features allows TempNet to capture both the short-term volatility and the long-term seasonality that come with generating renewable energy, leading to high performance.

F. Practical Implications

The deployment of TempNet in operational renewable energy systems presents several multifaceted challenges that must be carefully addressed to ensure a successful real-world implementation. Geographic variability emerges as a primary concern, as renewable energy patterns exhibit substantial differences between regions due to distinct climatic conditions, topographical features, and atmospheric dynamics. Although TempNet demonstrates robust performance on the evaluated dataset, adapting the model to diverse geographical locations requires comprehensive retraining or transfer learning approaches to account for local weather patterns, seasonal variations, and site-specific generation characteristics. The deployment of TempNet is hindered by technical infrastructure limitations, as many renewable energy systems lack the computational resources to support deep learning applications. Implementation requires significant investments in hardware, storage, and connectivity, which may not be viable for smaller operators. In addition, high costs and data quality issues—such as sensor failures and inconsistent inputs—pose additional challenges, requiring robust fallback mechanisms to maintain forecast reliability.

IV. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This study presented TempNet, a novel hybrid deep learning architecture that combines multi-scale convolutional neural networks, bidirectional recurrent layers, and attention mechanisms to achieve high accuracy in renewable energy forecasting. With near-perfect forecasting accuracy across various metrics and forecast horizons, the experimental evaluation showed that TempNet performed noticeably better than current methods. The main contributions of this work are: (i) a hybrid architecture that can capture temporal dependencies at many scales at once, (ii) an improved data preprocessing pipeline that solves common problems with renewable energy data, and (iii) empirical validation that shows significant improvements over baseline models and state-of-the-art techniques. TempNet overcomes several significant shortcomings in current forecasting techniques. While the attention mechanisms dynamically focus on the most pertinent historical periods for each prediction point, the multi-scale feature extraction approach successfully captures both short-term fluctuations and longer-term patterns. The bidirectional recurrent layers improve the model's capacity to identify intricate temporal patterns by allowing it to consider both past and future context within the training sequence. This research has important practical implications for smart grid integration of renewable energy. Better forecasting results in lower imbalance penalties and more successful bidding tactics for energy market participants. Because of its quick inference time, TempNet is suited for real-time deployments.

TempNet's performance can be further strengthened by training it for different geographical locations and varied climatic patterns. The TempNet model can also be further strengthened by training it on more high-resolution satellite and weather forecast datasets. In summary, TempNet is a breakthrough in renewable energy forecasting, showing that deep learning techniques can achieve remarkable accuracy with exemplary architecture and training. Since accurate forecasting

becomes increasingly important for effective grid operation and market function as renewable energy continues to grow globally, TempNet can help achieve higher levels of renewable energy penetration, reduced reserve requirements, and more efficient grid operations, supporting the global transition toward sustainable energy infrastructure.

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