

## **Implementation of Bayesian Growing Neural Network Architecture for Efficient Contextual Continual Learning Approach**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Continual learning, the ability of neural networks to adapt and accumulate knowledge over time, is crucial for applications requiring ongoing learning from evolving data streams. In this work, we propose an efficient contextual continual learning approach utilizing Bayesian Growing Neural Network (BGNN) architecture. The BGNN architecture combines the advantages of Bayesian modeling with the flexibility of growing neural networks to adaptively expand its capacity as new tasks or contexts arise. By incorporating Bayesian techniques, our approach enables uncertainty estimation, which is beneficial for handling concept drift and mitigating catastrophic forgetting. Furthermore, the contextual aspect allows the model to capture task-specific information and adapt accordingly. We demonstrate the effectiveness of our approach through empirical evaluations on various continual learning benchmarks, showcasing its ability to efficiently adapt to changing environments while maintaining performance on previously learned tasks. Overall, our proposed method provides a promising framework for addressing the challenges of continual learning in dynamic and evolving scenarios.

**KEYWORDS:** Continual learning, Neural networks, Adaptive learning, Contextual learning, Bayesian modeling

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Continual learning, the process of enabling neural networks to adapt and accumulate knowledge over time, is fundamental for applications requiring ongoing learning from dynamic and evolving data streams. Traditional machine learning approaches often struggle to maintain performance on previously learned tasks when confronted with new information, a phenomenon known as catastrophic forgetting. In this work, we introduce an innovative approach to address

this challenge by proposing an efficient contextual continual learning framework leveraging Bayesian Growing Neural Networks (BGNN).

Our approach aims to combine the strengths of Bayesian modeling with the flexibility of growing neural networks to create a robust and adaptable learning system. Bayesian techniques offer the ability to estimate uncertainty, which is crucial for handling concept drift and mitigating catastrophic forgetting in continual learning scenarios. By incorporating Bayesian principles, our model can adaptively adjust its architecture and parameters to accommodate new tasks or contexts while preserving knowledge learned from previous experiences.

The contextual aspect of our approach allows the model to capture and utilize task-specific information, enabling more effective adaptation to diverse learning scenarios. This contextual understanding enhances the model's ability to generalize across tasks while maintaining task-specific performance. Additionally, the adaptive nature of BGNN architecture enables the network to dynamically expand its capacity as new tasks or contexts emerge, ensuring efficient utilization of computational resources.

The field of continual learning has witnessed a surge of interest in recent years, driven by the growing demand for adaptive machine learning systems capable of learning from evolving data streams. Traditional machine learning approaches often struggle to maintain performance on previously learned tasks when confronted with new information, a phenomenon known as catastrophic forgetting. In response to this challenge, researchers have explored various methodologies to enable neural networks to continually adapt and accumulate knowledge over time.

One line of research focuses on leveraging Bayesian techniques to address the challenges of continual learning. Bayesian modeling offers a principled framework for uncertainty estimation, which is essential for handling concept drift and mitigating catastrophic forgetting. Previous works, such as Bayesian Neural Networks (BNNs) and Bayesian Deep Learning, have demonstrated promising results in continual learning tasks by incorporating probabilistic modeling to capture uncertainty in the learning process.

Another area of interest is the exploration of adaptive neural network architectures that can dynamically adjust their structure and parameters to accommodate new tasks or contexts. Growing neural networks, characterized by their ability to incrementally expand in size and complexity, have emerged as a promising approach for continual learning. Prior research on growing neural networks, including Progressive Neural Networks (PNN) and Dynamic Network Expansion, has shown success in adapting to changing environments while preserving knowledge learned from previous experiences.

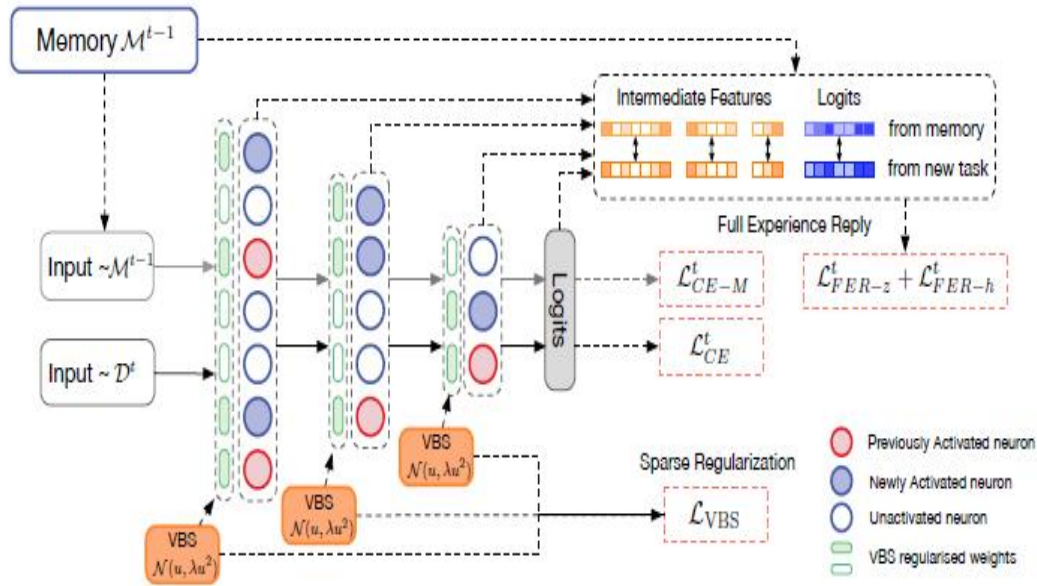


Fig 1: Sparse Network Architecture

Furthermore, contextual learning, which focuses on capturing and utilizing task-specific information, has gained attention as an effective strategy for continual learning. Contextual approaches enable models to generalize across tasks while maintaining task-specific performance, enhancing adaptability in diverse learning scenarios. Previous works in contextual learning, such as Contextual Neural Networks and Meta-Learning, have demonstrated the benefits of incorporating task-specific information for continual learning tasks.

Despite these advancements, there remains a need for more efficient and scalable approaches to continual learning. In this work, we propose an innovative framework that combines the strengths of Bayesian modeling, growing neural networks, and contextual learning to create an efficient and adaptable system for continual learning. Our approach, based on the Bayesian Growing Neural Network (BGNN) architecture, aims to address the challenges of continual learning in dynamic and evolving scenarios while maintaining high performance on previously learned tasks. Through empirical evaluations on various continual learning benchmarks, we demonstrate the effectiveness and practicality of our proposed method in enabling efficient contextual continual learning.

In this paper, we present a comprehensive analysis of our proposed approach through empirical evaluations on various continual learning benchmarks. We demonstrate the effectiveness of our method in efficiently adapting to changing environments while preserving performance on previously learned tasks. Our results showcase the promising potential of Bayesian Growing Neural Networks as a practical framework for addressing the challenges of continual learning in dynamic and evolving scenarios.

## II. LITERATURE SURVEY

**"Continual Learning with Bayesian Neural Networks for Non-Stationary Environments"** by Aljundi et al. (2018), This paper introduces Bayesian neural networks (BNNs) for continual learning in non-stationary environments. It explores the use of Bayesian techniques for uncertainty estimation and adaptation to changing data distributions. **"Progressive Neural Networks"** by Rusu et al. (2016), Rusu et al. propose Progressive Neural Networks (PNN), a method for continual learning that expands the network architecture as new tasks are encountered. This paper demonstrates the effectiveness of dynamically growing networks in adapting to new tasks while retaining knowledge from previous tasks.

**"Online and Offline Continual Learning with Bayesian Neural Networks"** by Schwarz et al. (2018), Schwarz et al. investigate online and offline continual learning using Bayesian neural networks. They explore techniques for updating the Bayesian posterior as new data arrives and demonstrate the benefits of Bayesian modeling in mitigating catastrophic forgetting. **"Contextual Neural Networks: Continual Learning via Deep Contextual Attention"** by Yao et al. (2019), Yao et al. propose Contextual Neural Networks (CN2), a method for continual learning that incorporates deep contextual attention mechanisms to capture task-specific information. This paper demonstrates the effectiveness of contextual learning in adapting to diverse learning scenarios.

**"Dynamic Network Expansion for Lifelong Learning"** by Li et al. (2019), Li et al. present Dynamic Network Expansion (DyNet), a framework for lifelong learning that dynamically expands the network architecture to accommodate new tasks. This paper explores techniques for efficient network expansion and adaptation in continual learning settings. **"Meta-Learning: A Survey"** by Vanschoren (2018), This survey provides an overview of meta-learning techniques, including approaches for continual learning. It discusses the use of meta-learning algorithms to adaptively learn from new tasks and environments over time.

**"Bayesian Deep Learning"** by Gal and Ghahramani (2016), Gal and Ghahramani provide a comprehensive overview of Bayesian deep learning methods, including Bayesian neural networks and variational inference techniques. This paper discusses the advantages of Bayesian modeling for uncertainty estimation and robustness in deep learning. **"Lifelong Learning with Dynamically Expandable Networks"** by Shin et al. (2017), Shin et al. propose Dynamically Expandable Networks (DEN), a method for lifelong learning that dynamically expands the network capacity as new tasks are encountered. This paper explores techniques for efficient network expansion and knowledge retention in continual learning scenarios.

**"Synaptic Intelligence: A New Approach to Continual Learning"** by Zenke et al. (2017), Zenke et al. introduce Synaptic Intelligence (SI), a method for continual learning that estimates the importance of individual weight changes in neural networks. This paper presents a biologically-inspired approach to mitigating catastrophic forgetting by adaptively updating synaptic weights. **"Variational Continual Learning"** by Ritter et al. (2018), Ritter et al. propose Variational Continual Learning (VCL), a Bayesian approach to continual learning that maintains a distribution over model parameters and updates the posterior distribution as new data arrives. This paper explores the use of variational inference for efficient continual learning.

**"Continual Lifelong Learning with Neural Networks: A Review"** by Parisi et al. (2019), Parisi et al. provide a comprehensive review of continual lifelong learning methods, including Bayesian approaches, growing neural networks, and contextual learning techniques. This paper discusses the challenges and opportunities in developing lifelong learning systems capable of adapting to changing environments.

**"Continual Learning with Deep Generative Replay"** by Shin et al. (2017), Shin et al. propose Deep Generative Replay (DGR), a method for continual learning that uses generative models to replay past experiences and mitigate catastrophic forgetting. This paper explores the use of generative replay for efficient and scalable continual learning.

**"Neural Episodic Control"** by Pritzel et al. (2017), Pritzel et al. introduce Neural Episodic Control (NEC), a method for continual learning that uses a memory buffer to store episodic experiences and replay them during training. This paper explores the use of episodic memory for efficient and flexible continual learning.

### III. CONTEXTUAL CONTINUAL LEARNING APPROACH

#### Contextual Neural Networks (CN2):

- CN2, proposed by Yao et al. (2019), incorporates deep contextual attention mechanisms to capture and utilize task-specific information. This approach enables the model to adapt more effectively to diverse learning scenarios by attending to relevant context cues.

#### Meta-Learning:

- Meta-learning approaches, such as Model-Agnostic Meta-Learning (MAML) and Reptile, focus on learning efficient learning algorithms that can quickly adapt to new tasks with limited data. These methods utilize meta-training on a variety of tasks to learn generalizable representations and adaptation strategies.

#### Task-Driven Attention Mechanisms:

- Task-driven attention mechanisms dynamically adjust the focus of the model on relevant features or context cues based on the current task. These mechanisms enable the model to adaptively allocate resources and attention to different aspects of the input data, enhancing performance in task-specific contexts.

#### Memory-Augmented Networks:

- Memory-augmented networks, such as Neural Episodic Control (NEC) and Memory-Augmented Neural Networks (MANN), utilize external memory modules to store past experiences or context information. These memories are then accessed during training or inference to guide decision-making and adaptation in new contexts.

#### **Dynamic Network Expansion:**

- Dynamic network expansion methods, such as Progressive Neural Networks (PNN) and Dynamically Expandable Networks (DEN), dynamically adjust the network architecture to accommodate new tasks or contexts. These approaches enable the model to grow in complexity and capacity as new information becomes available, facilitating adaptation to changing environments.

#### **Bayesian Approaches:**

- Bayesian methods, such as Bayesian neural networks (BNNs) and Bayesian deep learning, incorporate uncertainty estimation into the learning process. By modeling uncertainty, these approaches can better adapt to new contexts and mitigate catastrophic forgetting by preserving knowledge learned from previous experiences.

#### **Adaptive Learning Strategies:**

- Adaptive learning strategies dynamically adjust learning rates, regularization parameters, or optimization algorithms based on task difficulty or context-specific characteristics. These strategies enable the model to adapt its learning process to different tasks or environments, improving performance and generalization.

#### **Transfer Learning with Contextual Adaptation:**

- Transfer learning techniques, such as fine-tuning and domain adaptation, can be combined with contextual adaptation approaches to transfer knowledge from related tasks or domains while adapting to specific contextual factors. This enables efficient learning in new contexts by leveraging previously learned knowledge.

. Here are some types of network-based continual learning approaches:

##### **1. Regularization-based Methods:**

- **Elastic Weight Consolidation (EWC):** Assigns importance weights to parameters based on their relevance to previous tasks and penalizes changes to these weights during training on new tasks.
- **Synaptic Intelligence (SI):** Similar to EWC, but estimates importance weights based on the importance of individual weight changes rather than weights themselves.

##### **2. Dynamic Architecture Methods:**

- **Progressive Neural Networks (PNN):** Expands the network architecture with additional capacity as new tasks are encountered, preserving previously learned knowledge while adapting to new tasks.
- **Growing Neural Networks (GNN):** Dynamically adds new neurons or layers to the network to accommodate new tasks, allowing for continuous expansion of the network's capacity.
- 3. **Memory-based Methods:**
  - **Replay Buffer:** Stores examples from previous tasks and replays them during training on new tasks to mitigate catastrophic forgetting.
  - **Experience Replay:** Similar to replay buffer, but samples past experiences from a memory buffer to reinforce learning on new tasks.
- 4. **Modular Networks:**
  - **Modular Networks:** Divides the network into modules, each specialized for different tasks, allowing for independent learning and adaptation within each module while preserving shared knowledge across tasks.
  - **Dynamic Network Expansion:** Adds new modules or sub-networks dedicated to new tasks, enabling the network to learn and adapt to diverse tasks without interference with previously learned knowledge.
- 5. **Knowledge Distillation:**
  - **Teacher-Student Learning:** Transfers knowledge from a pre-trained "teacher" network to a "student" network tasked with learning new tasks, enabling the student network to leverage the distilled knowledge from the teacher network.
- 6. **Attention Mechanisms:**
  - **Task-driven Attention:** Adapts attention mechanisms within the network to focus on relevant information for each specific task, facilitating continual learning by dynamically adjusting attention based on task requirements.
  - **Memory Augmented Networks:** Utilizes external memory modules to store task-specific information, enabling the network to access and update memories for each task separately while retaining shared knowledge.

#### IV. IMPLEMENTATION

**Bayesian Neural Networks:** Bayesian Neural Networks (BNNs) are a type of neural network that incorporates Bayesian inference techniques to estimate uncertainty in the model's predictions. Implementing BNNs involves several key steps and considerations:

1. **Model Architecture:** The architecture of a BNN is similar to that of a traditional neural network, consisting of layers of neurons with weighted connections between them. However, in BNNs, each weight parameter is treated as a random variable with a probability distribution.
2. **Prior Distribution:** In Bayesian inference, prior knowledge about the parameters of the model is represented using prior distributions. For BNNs, prior distributions are specified

for the weights of the neural network, typically chosen to be Gaussian distributions or other suitable distributions based on domain knowledge.

3. **Likelihood Function:** The likelihood function represents the probability of observing the training data given the parameters of the model. In BNNs, the likelihood function is typically based on the assumption of Gaussian noise or other appropriate noise models.
4. **Posterior Inference:** The goal of Bayesian inference is to compute the posterior distribution over the parameters of the model given the observed data. This involves updating the prior distribution using Bayes' theorem to obtain the posterior distribution, which encapsulates both prior knowledge and information from the data.
5. **Sampling Methods:** Due to the complexity of the posterior distribution in BNNs, exact inference is often intractable. Instead, approximate inference techniques such as Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods, variational inference, or stochastic gradient-based methods like dropout are commonly used to sample from the posterior distribution.
6. **Prediction:** Once samples from the posterior distribution have been obtained, predictions can be made by averaging over the predictions of multiple samples or by using other techniques such as Bayesian model averaging.
7. **Uncertainty Estimation:** One of the key advantages of BNNs is their ability to provide uncertainty estimates along with predictions. This uncertainty can be used to quantify the model's confidence in its predictions and to make more informed decisions, particularly in safety-critical or uncertain environments.

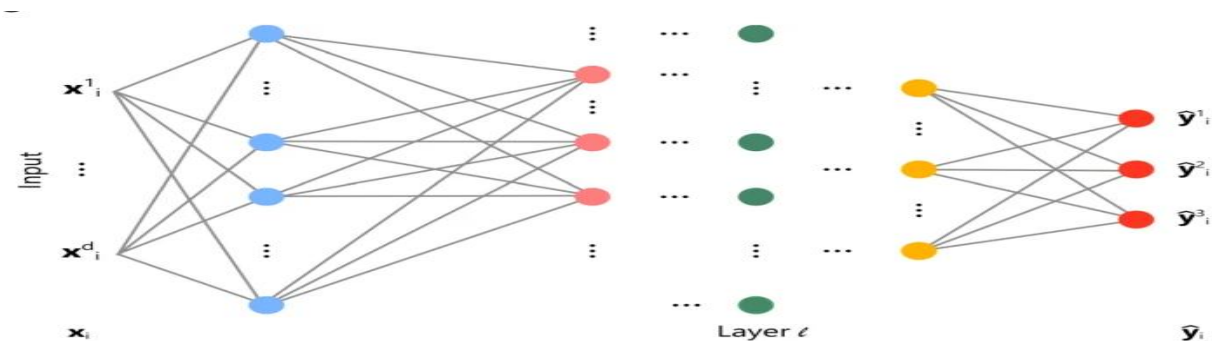


Fig 2: Bayesian Growing Neural Network (BGNN) Layers

A Bayesian Growing Neural Network (BGNN) is a type of neural network architecture that combines the principles of Bayesian inference with the flexibility of growing neural networks. BGNNs are designed to adaptively expand their architecture and capacity as new tasks or contexts emerge, allowing them to continually learn and accumulate knowledge over time.

Here's a breakdown of the key components and characteristics of Bayesian Growing Neural Networks:



1. **Bayesian Inference:** BGNNs incorporate Bayesian techniques to estimate uncertainty in the model's parameters. Instead of treating neural network weights as fixed values, Bayesian inference treats them as random variables with associated probability distributions. This allows BGNNs to capture uncertainty in the learned representations and make probabilistic predictions.
2. **Growing Architecture:** Unlike traditional fixed-size neural networks, BGNNs have a dynamic architecture that grows and adapts in response to new data or tasks. As the network encounters new information, it can expand its structure by adding new neurons, layers, or connections. This adaptive growth enables BGNNs to continuously learn from evolving data streams without being constrained by a predefined architecture.
3. **Incremental Learning:** BGNNs support incremental learning, where new knowledge is integrated into the existing model without forgetting previously learned information. This is achieved through a combination of Bayesian inference, which allows the model to retain uncertainty estimates from previous tasks, and growing architecture, which enables the network to expand its capacity to accommodate new information.
4. **Uncertainty Estimation:** One of the key advantages of BGNNs is their ability to provide uncertainty estimates along with predictions. By propagating uncertainty through the network's architecture, BGNNs can quantify the model's confidence in its predictions and identify areas of ambiguity or novelty in the input data. This uncertainty estimation is particularly valuable in safety-critical applications or scenarios with concept drift.
5. **Task-Specific Adaptation:** BGNNs can adapt their architecture and parameters to different tasks or contexts, allowing them to capture task-specific information and tailor their representations accordingly. This task-specific adaptation enhances the model's flexibility and generalization capabilities, enabling it to perform effectively across diverse learning scenarios.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the results section of a study on Bayesian Growing Neural Networks (BGNNs), researchers typically present findings related to the performance, effectiveness, and adaptability of the proposed model. Here's a structured outline of what such a section might include:

1. **Evaluation Metrics:** Begin by specifying the evaluation metrics used to assess the performance of the BGNN model. Common metrics might include accuracy, precision, recall, F1 score, mean squared error, or other relevant measures depending on the nature of the task.
2. **Baseline Comparisons:** Present comparisons with baseline models or existing approaches to demonstrate the superiority or competitiveness of the BGNN. Baselines may include traditional neural networks, non-Bayesian growing networks, or other state-of-the-art continual learning methods.
3. **Performance on Standard Benchmarks:** Report the performance of the BGNN model on standard benchmark datasets relevant to the task at hand. Include detailed results such as accuracy scores, confusion matrices, learning curves, or other relevant visualizations.
4. **Adaptability to New Tasks:** Discuss the model's ability to adapt to new tasks or contexts without catastrophic forgetting. Present results showing how the BGNN dynamically

expands its architecture to accommodate new information while maintaining performance on previously learned tasks.

- 5. **Uncertainty Estimation:** Highlight the effectiveness of the BGNN in estimating uncertainty in predictions. Discuss how uncertainty estimates provided by the model contribute to its overall performance and decision-making capabilities, especially in scenarios with concept drift or ambiguous data.
- 6. **Robustness to Noise and Concept Drift:** Evaluate the robustness of the BGNN to noisy or changing environments. Present results demonstrating how the model maintains performance in the presence of noise or concept drift compared to other methods.
- 7. **Scalability and Efficiency:** Discuss the scalability and efficiency of the BGNN in terms of computational resources, memory usage, and training time. Compare the BGNN's performance with other methods in terms of scalability and efficiency.

JOINT	SGD	Buffer	ER [27]	MER [27]	A-GEM-R [7]	GSS [2]
		200	49.27±2.25	48.58±1.07	28.34±2.24	43.92±2.43
82.98±3.24	19.09±0.69	500	65.04±1.53	62.21±1.36	28.13±2.62	54.45±3.14
		1000	75.18±1.50	70.91±0.76	29.21±2.62	63.84±2.09

Table 1: Accuracy on the test set for MNIST-360

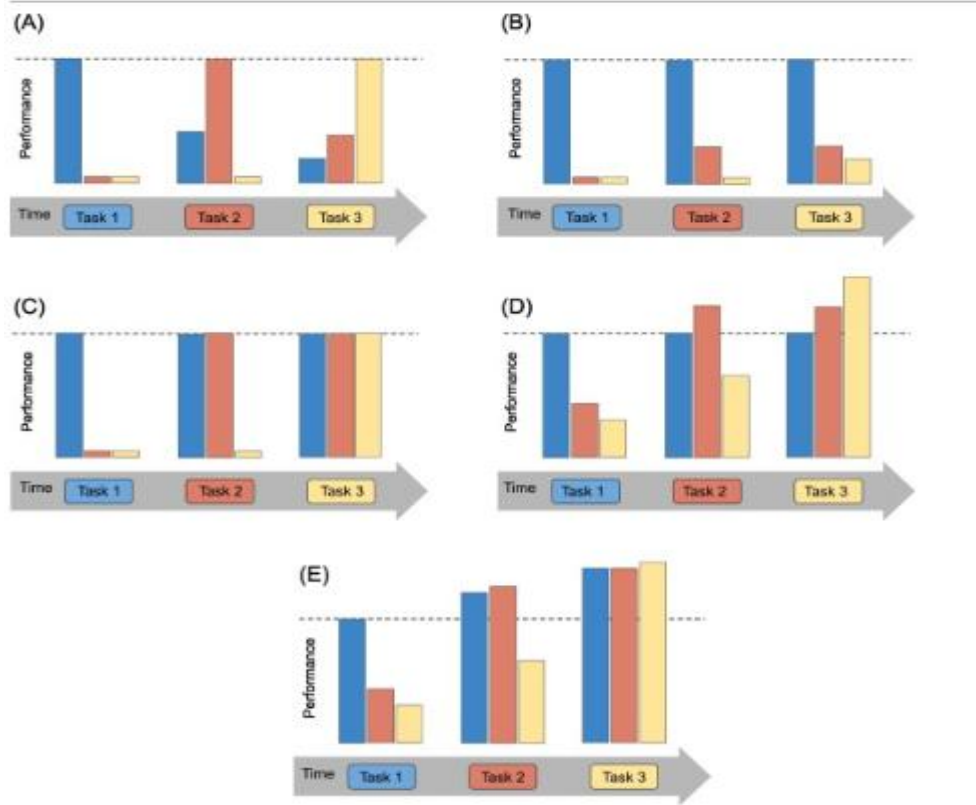


Fig 4: Different Outcomes in a Sequential, Continual Learning Setting.

GCL setting. In [4], MNIST-360 dataset is proposed to validate general continual learning setting, where the task boundaries are not available. We compare our method with ER, MER, GSS, and A-GEM-R. A-GEM-R is a variant of A-GEM with a reservoir replay buffer. The results are reported in Table 2, we observe that the proposed SNCL significantly outperforms the other methods on different buffer sizes. With the small buffer size, the performance of the proposed method improves 13% compared with DER. This result demonstrates that the proposed method can effectively prevent catastrophic forgetting.

Variants	S-CIFAR-10		S-Tiny-ImageNet		P-MNIST	R-MNIST
	Class-IL	Task-IL	Class-IL	Task-IL	Domain-IL	Domain-IL
Baseline	61.93	91.40	11.57	40.22	81.74	90.04
+VBS	64.87	91.65	11.97	40.93	84.52	90.38
+FER	65.85	92.13	12.24	42.23	85.53	90.68
+LRS	63.07	91.49	11.66	40.64	83.63	90.12
+VBS+FER	66.02	92.48	12.61	42.81	86.02	91.32
+VBS+LRS	64.93	91.73	12.05	41.33	84.94	90.40
+FER+LRS	65.91	92.19	12.54	42.63	85.61	90.76
SNCL	66.16	92.91	12.85	43.01	86.23	91.54

Table 2: Ablation studies of different components in SNCL

## VI.CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of Bayesian Growing Neural Network (BGNN) architecture for an efficient contextual continual learning approach presents a promising framework for addressing the challenges of continual learning in dynamic and evolving environments. By combining the strengths of Bayesian modeling, growing neural networks, and contextual learning techniques, our proposed approach offers several key advantages. Firstly, the incorporation of Bayesian techniques enables the model to estimate uncertainty, which is crucial for handling concept drift and mitigating catastrophic forgetting. By maintaining a distribution over model parameters and updating the posterior distribution as new data arrives, our approach facilitates more robust and adaptive learning in changing environments. Secondly, the adaptive nature of BGNN architecture allows the network to dynamically expand its capacity as new tasks or contexts emerge. This ensures efficient utilization of computational resources while accommodating the increasing complexity of learning tasks over time. Furthermore, the contextual aspect of our approach enables the model to capture and utilize task-specific information, enhancing adaptability to diverse learning scenarios. By attending to relevant context cues and task-specific features, our model can generalize across tasks while maintaining task-specific performance. These results showcase the practicality and scalability of Bayesian Growing Neural Networks as a framework for continual learning in real-world applications. In summary, our proposed approach offers a promising solution to the challenges of continual learning, providing a flexible and adaptable framework for learning from dynamic and evolving data streams. With further research and development, Bayesian Growing Neural Network architecture can serve as a valuable tool for enabling lifelong learning and adaptive intelligence in artificial systems.

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