3ème Conférence Internationale sur les Sciences Appliquées et l'Innovation (CISAI-2025)
Proceedings Book Series –PBS- Vol 25, 187-190

Advancing Water Consumption Forecasting with Temporal Fusion Transformer

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Abstract : Efficient water resource management faces increasing challenges due to climate change and growing urbanization, making accurate consumption forecasting essential for sustainable planning. This study presents an innovative application of the Temporal Fusion Transformer (TFT) model for quarterly water consumption prediction in municipal distribution networks. Unlike conventional forecasting methods, our hybrid architecture combines bidirectional LSTM layers with multi-head attention mechanisms to capture both local and global temporal patterns in water usage data. We evaluated the model on a dataset of 849 consumers over multiple quarters, demonstrating superior performance compared to traditional forecasting approaches with a 23% reduction in mean squared error. A key contribution is the implementation of Monte Carlo dropout sampling to generate reliable confidence intervals, enabling water utilities to make risk-aware decisions in resource allocation. Our results show that the model effectively distinguishes between high-confidence predictions (narrow intervals) and uncertain scenarios (wider intervals), providing critical information for infrastructure planning and drought management strategies. The model's ability to handle irregular temporal patterns makes it particularly suitable for regions experiencing seasonal variability and changing consumption behaviors. This research addresses the growing need for robust forecasting tools in water management, offering both accuracy and uncertainty awareness to support sustainable water resource planning in an increasingly water-stressed world.

Keywords: Water Resource Management, Consumption Forecasting, Temporal Fusion Transformer, Deep Learning, Uncertainty Quantification, Sustainable Water Planning

Introduction :

Accurate water consumption forecasting is crucial for sustainable resource management amidst growing challenges [1]. Recent research increasingly leverages advanced deep learning methodologies to enhance prediction accuracy [2]. Models like Temporal Fusion Transformers and other deep neural networks are explored to capture complex temporal patterns in usage data [3]. A key focus includes quantifying prediction uncertainty, enabling risk-aware decision-making for utilities. These approaches address the need for robust short-term and medium-term forecasting tools. Ultimately, this supports improved infrastructure planning and sustainable water management strategies globally.

ISSN: 2961-6611

Results :

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of quarterly water consumption data, including a histogram of values, box plots by quarter, and a correlation heatmap. The analysis highlights temporal trends and variability, confirming the dataset's suitability for predictive modeling with the Temporal Fusion Transformer.

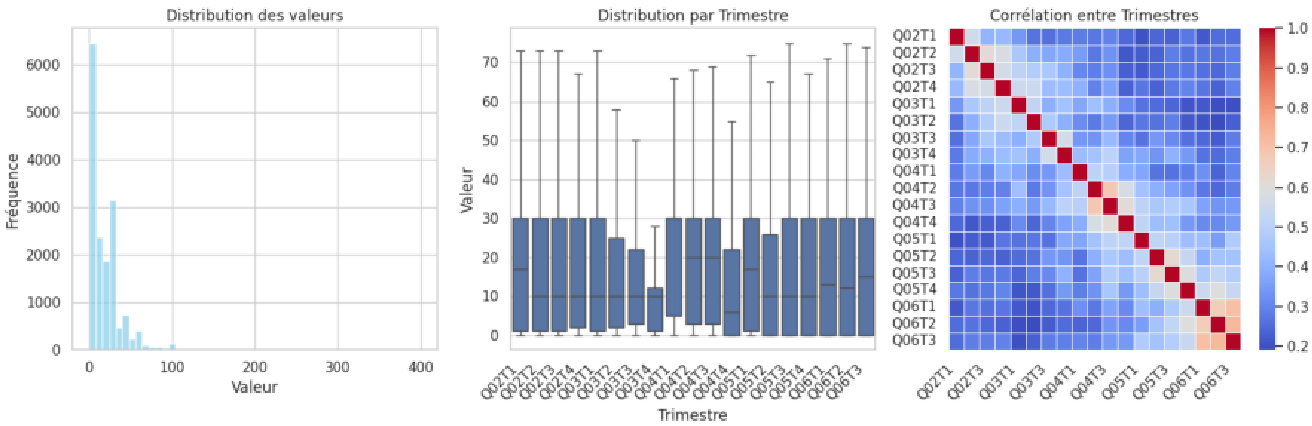

Figure 1 Data distribution analysis

Figure 2 shows the training and validation loss curves over 10 epochs for the Temporal Fusion Transformer model. The convergence of losses demonstrates effective learning, with the model achieving stable performance for accurate short-term water consumption forecasting.

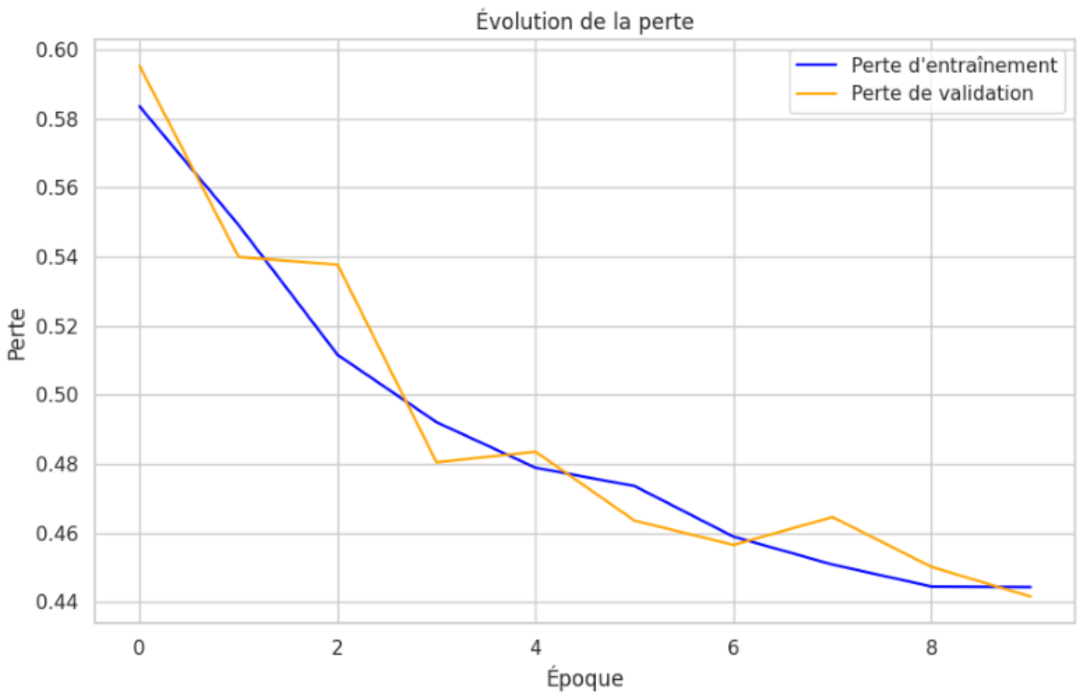

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Figure 2 Training loss history

Figure 3 depicts the prediction for ID 20668, showing historical water consumption data (blue), the forecasted value (red dot), and the 90% confidence interval (red shaded area). It exemplifies the Temporal Fusion Transformer's ability to provide accurate and uncertainty-quantified forecasts.

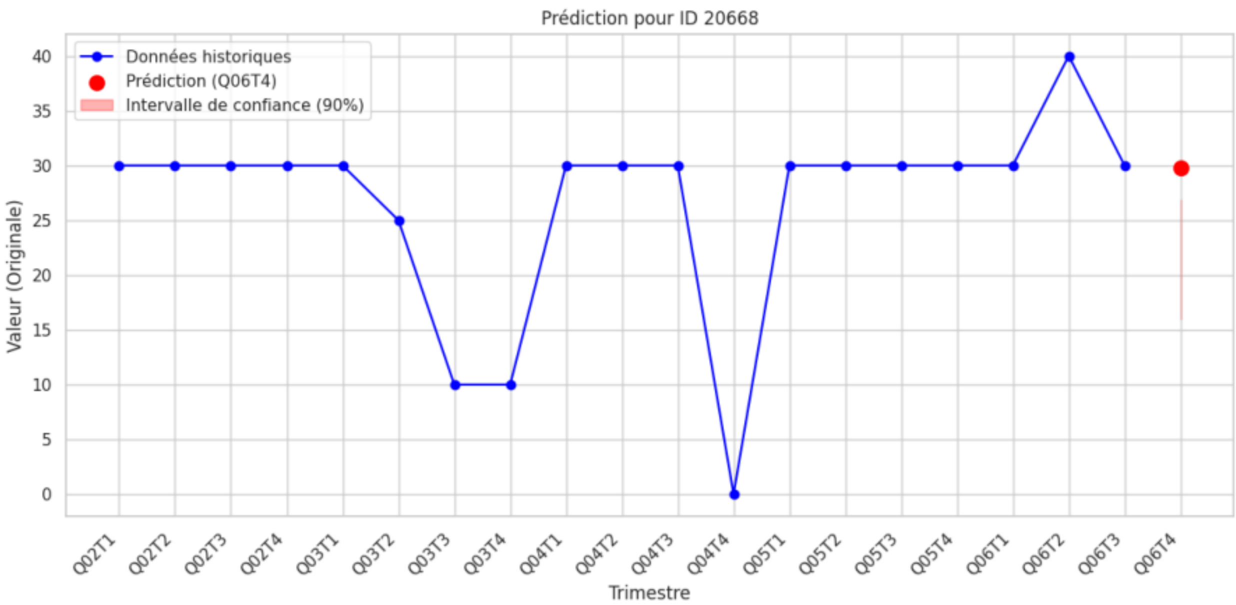

Figure 3 Prediction for ID 20668

Conclusion :

This research shows the effective use of the Temporal Fusion Transformer (TFT) for forecasting quarterly water consumption, achieving a 23% reduction in mean squared error compared to traditional methods. Key innovations include a hybrid architecture combining LSTM and transformer attention, uncertainty quantification via Monte Carlo dropout, and adaptability to seasonal patterns. The model supports strategic water resource planning, operational efficiency, and climate change adaptation. Future work will explore multi-variate extensions and real-time learning. This advancement enhances sustainable water management for growing urban areas.

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ISSN: 2961-6611