Sliding Mode Control Applied to a Mini-Aircraft Pitch Position Model

Ricardo Carreño Aguilera, Miguel Patiño Ortiz, and Julián Patiño Ortiz
ESIME, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, México D.F., Mexico
rcrc2013@outlook.com, {mpatino2002, jpatinoo}@ipn.mx

Abstract. Normally, mini-aircraft must be able to perform tasks such as aerial photography, aerial surveillance, remote fire and pollution sensing, disaster areas, road traffic and security monitoring, among others, without stability problems in the presence of many bounded perturbations. The dynamical model is affected by blast perturbations. Based on this, it is possible to design, evaluate and compare the real result with respect to pitch control law based on reference trajectory in the presence of external disturbances (blasts) or changes in the aircraft controller model. The model has non-linear properties but, with soft perturbations through the aircraft trajectory, allows a linear description without losing its essential properties. The Laplace description is a transfer function that works to develop the state space, with unknown invariant parameters using a wind tunnel. Control law is based on a feedback sliding mode with decoupled disturbances, and the output result is compared with the real pitch position measured in the real system. The control law applied to the system has a high convergence performance.

Keywords. Sliding modes, integral and proportional control, mini-aircraft models.

1 Introduction

Throughout aviation history, aircrafts were statically modeled for design proposes, specifically in traditional aeronautical industry. Currently it has become necessary to satisfy features such as aircraft dynamic responses and tracking trajectories. The dynamic airplane behavior concepts were introduced in [1-6]. Before applying any control algorithm it was necessary to satisfy controllable and observable conditions in agreement with [2] and [7-11]. The dynamic responses to input variations are directed to the control mechanism adjusting its trajectories to a predefined objective [12]. A real flight design control system has great problems mainly in the real-time action control surfaces, whereas the time-delay control algorithm and measurement systems (known as avionics) impact the effectiveness and general performance [13]. This paper does not...
consider real applications, only the feedback law control to the reference trajectory based on a specific model [14-16]. In this sense, the common proportional integral derivative (PID) condition control law adjusts the aerodynamics control surfaces to a specific trajectory [15].

The motion force equation is based on the second Newton’s Law, where the atmospheric flight force vector consists of the forces caused by the aerodynamic aircraft reactions and weights [3-6]. This equation is:

\[ F_w = A C_w + m g + m g C_w \]  

(1)

where \( A, C_w \) are forces caused by aircraft aerodynamic reactions elements and \( M_g \) stays for plane weights. The force components are given by:

\[ Fx_w = m \dot{v}, \quad Fy_w = m V_r, \quad Fz_w = -m V q \]  

(2)

### 1.1 Longitudinal Non-linear Equations

From (1) and (2), the longitudinal force applied to aircraft [10] and [11] has the form

\[ T x_w - D - m g \sin (\theta w) = m \dot{v}, \]

\[ T y_w - C - m g \cos (\theta w) \sin (\varphi w) = m V r, \]

\[ T z_w - L - m g \cos (\theta w) \cos (\varphi w) = -m V q. \]  

(3)

where in agreement with [3-6] \( T x_w, T y_w, T z_w \) are traction or propulsion force components, and \( D, L, C \) are Drag, Lift and Wind forces.

### 2 Development

Given the aircraft non-linear equation complexity, it is necessary to find a linear mathematical model whose structure is easy to handle and which approaches the performance of real movements, considering small perturbations around an operating point [12-16]. The Taylor linearization method is considered and the results are shown in the following equations:

\[ \Delta T \cos (a T) - \Delta a T \sin (a T) - \Delta D = -m g \cos (y e) \Delta y = m \dot{v}, \]

\[ \Delta T \cos (a T) - F y_w = m V r, \quad F x_w = -m V q, \quad \Delta T \cos (a T) - \Delta a T \sin (a T) - \Delta D - m g \cos (y e), \]

\[ \Delta y = m \dot{v}, \quad \Delta T \sin (a T) \Delta a T \cos (a T) + \Delta L + m g \sin (y e), \]

\[ \Delta y = m \dot{v} \gamma, \quad \Delta M = I_y \dot{q}. \]  

Once the aircraft system was modeled, all perturbations \( \Delta V, \Delta a, D p, \) etc. are small, and their squares and products can be ignored; with small pitch movements \( \cos (\Delta y) \approx 1, \sin (\Delta y) \approx \Delta y \) and \( A \) as constant for uniform velocity, where

\[ I_y = (x_2 + z_2) d m, \quad \dot{q} = \dot{\gamma} + \dot{\alpha} . \]

Using Taylor linearization with respect to (4) the following linear longitudinal descriptions are given in the following equations:

\[ (T \cos (\alpha_T) - D V) \Delta V = -T \sin (\alpha_T) + D \alpha \Delta \alpha - m g \sin (y_e) \Delta y \]

\[ + L_z \Delta D + \Delta T \sin (\alpha_T) - D \dot{e}, \quad m \dot{V} \gamma \]

\[ + T \cos (\alpha_T) - L \gamma \Delta \gamma \]

\[ + (T \sin (\alpha_T) + L \dot{e}) \Delta \gamma + (L z \sin (\alpha_T) + L \dot{e}) \Delta L \]

\[ = (m V + L \dot{e}) \dot{\alpha}, \]

\[ M \Delta V + M \dot{\alpha} - M \gamma + M \ddot{\gamma} + M \Delta L \Delta \dot{e} + \Delta M \dot{\delta} = I_{\varphi} \dot{q}. \]

Minimizing (5) in agreement with [17], the form (6) is obtained:

\[ (\ddot{G} T V - 2 \mu S) \Delta V + (C L e \dot{G} D + \Delta \alpha) \Delta \delta = 0, \]

\[ -2 C w e \Delta V - (G L \alpha + C D e + 2 \mu S) \Delta \alpha + 2 \mu q = \ddot{G} L \Delta \delta, \quad m a \Delta q + \dot{L} y s \dot{G} m q = \ddot{G} L \Delta \delta, \]

\[ q \cdot \Delta \delta = 0. \]

where \( \alpha \) is replaced by \( \Delta \alpha = -(C m \delta / (C m \alpha)) \Delta \delta. \)

The transfer function with respect to (6) in the symbolic form is described in (7).
The five coefficients have the nominal values shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Wind tunnel experimental results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$b_0$</td>
<td>2.628238218 (dimensionless)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b_1$</td>
<td>4927.325304 (N.m.s)$^{-1}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b_2$</td>
<td>1125059746.00 (N/m.s)$^{-2}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$a_0$</td>
<td>1 (dimensionless)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$a_1$</td>
<td>2835.2929 (N/m.s)$^{-1}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$a_2$</td>
<td>417643437.5 (N/m.s)$^{-2}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, according to [7] and [14-18], it was proposed that the model represents the wind blast, where $r$ affects the system that has a minimal form (8) described illustratively in Fig. 1:

$$Ga(s) = \frac{\theta(s)}{\delta(s) - r(s)} = \frac{1}{s^2 + a_4s + a_2}. \quad (8)$$

In (8), $r(s)$ is the wind blast, $\theta(s)$ is the pitch angle, $\delta(s)$ is the elevator angle. The transfer function (7) in the state space considering [8], [18-23] has the form:

$$\begin{bmatrix}
    x_1 \\
    x_2 \\
    i_1 \\
    i_2
\end{bmatrix} =
\begin{bmatrix}
    0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\
    0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\
    -a_1 & -a_2 & 0 & 0 \\
    0 & 0 & -a_1 & -a_2
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
    x_1 \\
    x_2 \\
    i_1 \\
    i_2
\end{bmatrix}
+ \begin{bmatrix}
    \beta_1 \\
    \beta_2
\end{bmatrix}
+ \begin{bmatrix}
    0 \\
    0
\end{bmatrix} r
$$

(9)

$$y = [1 \ 0 \ 1 \ 0] \begin{bmatrix}
    x_1 \\
    x_2 \\
    i_1 \\
    i_2
\end{bmatrix} + \beta_4 u$$

with coefficients $\beta_0 = b_0$, $\beta_1 = b_1 - a_1 \beta_0$, $\beta_2 = b_2 - a_2 \beta_0$, $\beta_4 = b_2$

Let us consider the system (9) expressed in the symbolic form:

$$\dot{X}(t) = AX(t) + Bu + Pr(t),$$

$$Y(t) = CX(t) + Du(t). \quad (10)$$
The error is defined as $e(t) = y(t) - \hat{Y}(t)$, where $\hat{Y}(t)$ is the reference signal choosing the sliding surface described in (11) in agreement with [17-26]:

$$S(e(t)) = \int_{0}^{t} e(\tau) d\tau.$$  

(11)

The surface in a finite time considers that

$$\hat{Y}(t) \equiv Y(t).$$  

(12)

for $S(e)$ to have an attracting region [7] accomplishing with

$$SS < 0.$$  

(13)

Therefore, a smooth trajectory is proposed:

$$\dot{s} = -F(S),$$  

(14)

where $F(S)$ is a discontinuous function of $S$. Considering its derivate in (11) and applying (14), we get:

$$-F(t) = Y(t) - \hat{Y}(t).$$  

(15)

Based on (10) in (15), the region is described as:
Defining \( F(s) \) as \( -F(t) + \dot{Y}(t) \), the control law action is described as:

\[
u(t)^* = F(s) - CX(t)/d.
\]

(17)

The mini-aircraft model output (9) is considered in (15); the control law is given as:

\[
u(t)^* = F(s) - (X_1(t) + X_3(t))/\beta_0.
\]

(18)

3 Simulation

The control law action applied to the mini-aircraft model system is shown in Figs. 3 to 7, developing the desired output signal, pitch position, control law, and state variables from \( X_1 \) to \( X_4 \).

Fig. 4 shows the state variable \( X_1 \) in an open loop.

Fig. 8 describes the real pitch position without considering the model properties and the ideal
conditions measured inside the mini-aircraft system.

Now, Figs. 9 to 10 present the results considering the sliding mode properties based on (18) and Fig. 2, where the control law directly affects the pitch position, the input as a law and the internal states.

4 Conclusions

Mini-aircraft is typically able to perform different complex tasks without loss of stability in the presence of wind perturbations known as blast. The model used in this paper as a base is a fourth order described in state space with four internal variables presented in Equation (9) and in the symbolic form in Equation (10).

In agreement with trajectories, the control law using sliding modes presented in Equation (18) was suggested, which directly affects the internal state model, allowing the pitch position to be automatically independent of visibility and distance conditions.

Figures 3 to 7 describe the model internal states and the pitch position developed, Fig. 8 presents the real angular position measured. Fig. 9 shows the sliding mode control law, and Figures 10 to 14 describe the four controlled internal states.
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Ricardo Carreño Aguilera obtained a degree in Communications and Electronics Engineering with specialization in Control from the Superior School of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering of the National Polytechnic Institute (ESIME-Zacatenco, IPN), Mexico, a Master’s degree in Administration from the Querétaro Autonomous University, Mexico, and currently is pursuing a Ph.D. degree in Systems Engineering at the Postgraduate and Research Department of ESIME-Zacatenco, IPN. Now his research area is automatic control.

Miguel Patiño Ortiz obtained a degree in Communications and Electronics Engineering with specialization in Computer Science from ESIME-Zacatenco, IPN, Mexico, a Master’s degree in Systems Engineering and a Ph.D. with honors in Mechanical Engineering from the Postgraduate and Research Department of the same institution. He did his postdoctoral research at the Metropolitan Autonomous University, Mexico, in the area of Nanotechnology and Nanomedicine. Currently his research area is complex systems; he holds a position of Professor and Researcher at the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN), Mexico.

Julián Patiño Ortiz obtained a degree in Civil Engineering with specialization in Structures from ENEP Acatlan of the Mexican National Autonomous University, a Master’s degree in Systems Engineering and a Ph.D. with honors in Mechanical Engineering from the Postgraduate and Research Department of ESIME-Zacatenco, IPN. He accomplished his postdoctoral studies in Complex Systems, Seismology and Civil Protection at EIME-Zacatenco with a scholarship from the Institute for Science and Technology of the Federal District (ICyTDF), Mexico. His current research area is complex systems; he holds a position of Professor and Researcher at IPN and is a member of the National System of Researchers of Mexico, Level 1.

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