Robust Active Compliance Control for a Robot Hand



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Abstract

This project deals with safety issues in human-robot interaction. A particular focus of this project is on a humanoid robot hand which requires (physical) safety to interact with objects/humans. A robust and active compliance control is proposed via an Integral Sliding Mode Controller (ISMC) to achieve safe object grasping. The ISMC allows us to introduce a model reference approach where a virtual mass-spring damper system can be used to design a compliant control.

The first stage of the studies requires the derivation of the forward kinematics for the Bristol Elumotion Robot Hand (BERUL) by using the DH technique. With the help of the motion and image capturing tool, Roborealm, the kinematics data of the robot hand are obtained to compute the relationships between the joint angles. The forward kinematics results show that a suitable model for a single robot finger can be represented via a pulley-belt type system.

The second stage requires the investigation of the ISMC for tracking and positioning control. The results reveal that the ISMC is the most suitable candidate for tracking and positioning control in particular to eliminate friction and stiction, also in comparison to standard PID, adaptive and traditional sliding mode control.

The third stage of the PhD-research introduces a novel model reference approach for active compliance control via the ISMC in simulation and experiment. The ISMC provides a non scheduled compliant control where transition from positioning to force control can be eliminated. It is practically proven that the BERUL fingers can perform at different, specially designed compliance levels for specific objects. Further improvement for practical grasping is proposed by introducing a spherical coordinate system for the thumb finger and exploiting a cylindrical coordinate system for the other remaining fingers. The operational space control approach is proposed to permit finger (i.e. hand) posture optimization for practical grasping; this also reduces the need for high accuracy.

Finally, an automatic tuning procedure is introduced for the compliance reference model which will allow to find suitable compliance level parameters for specific objects.

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List of Abbreviations

ACT	Anatomically-Correct Testbed
ADC	Analog to Digital Converter
Anthrobot	Anthropomorphic Robot Hand
BERUL	Bristol Elumotion Robot Hand
BRL	Bristol Robotics Laboratory
Cybhand	Cybernetics Robot Hand
DART	Dexterous Anthropomorphic Robotic Typing
DH	Denavit Hartenberg
DOF	Degree of Freedom
FBG	Fiber Bragg Grating
ISMC	Integral Sliding Mode Control
LMEE	Local Minimum of Elastic Potential Energy
PID	Proportional Integral Derivative
PISMC	Proportional-Integral Sliding Mode Control
RL	Reinforcement Learning
SEAs	Series Elastic Actuators
SMC	Sliding Mode Control
SPTS	Single Pressure Tactile Sensor
STARMAC	Stanford Testbed of an Autonomous Rotorcraft for Multi-Agent Control
VSSs	Variable-Structure Systems

List of Symbols

Z	impedance	. 19
k	stiffness	. 19
b	viscous damping coefficient	. 19
I_i	inertia	. 19
T_{gen}	generated torque	20
ω	actual speed	. 20
α	actual acceleration	. 20
au	joint torque vector for modelling contact	. 33
M	mass matrix for modelling robot finger	. 33
V	resulting Coriolis matrix for modelling robot finger	.33
G	gravitational force vector for modelling robot finger	. 33
F_r	friction force vector	. 33
q	joint position vector	. 33
	coordinate vector describing the combined configuration of the system	
q_f	consisting of one or more parts and robot fingers	. 37
W	grasp matrix that maps the individual fingertip contact wrenches	. 37
f_{all}	vector obtained by stacking the wrench at an active contact	.37
c_i	an active contact	. 37
M_f	mass matrix for modeling contact	.37
C	resulting coriolis matrix for modelling contact	. 37
g	gravitational force vector for modelling contact	. 37
T_f	control forces for modelling contact	37
$ au_f$	joint torque vector for modelling contact	. 37
J	Jacobian	. 44

F	force	. 44
N^T	null space operation	45
Ι	identity matrix	45
U	cost function	. 45
K_a	actuator activation matrix	45
f_u	unknown but bounded some known functions of the states	. 47
s	sliding mode surface	. 48
С	constant	48
x	position error	47
M_i	constant	49
sgn	signum	. 49
\dot{x}	velocity error	48
q_e	tracking error	55
θ_1	angular data of joint 1	64
θ_2	angular data of joint 2	64
θ_3	angular data of joint 3	64
X_o	reference frame	72
Y_o	reference frame	72
Z_o	reference frame	72
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T_1	actual torque joint 1	78
T_2	actual torque joint 2	78
T_3	actual torque joint 3	78
T_D	driving torque joint 1	78
T_{L21}	load torque joint 1	. 78
T_{L22}	driving torque joint 2	78
T_{L31}	load torque joint 2	. 78
T_{L32}	driving torque joint 3	78
r_1	radius of the first pulley	. 79
r_{21}	radius of the second pulley	79
k_{12}	constant to take into account offset	. 79

r_{22}	radius of the second pulley	. 79
r_3	radius of the third pulley	.79
k_{22}	constant to take into account offset	79
f	lumped expression for the major nonlinearities	.94
q_d	desired trajectory	. 94
\dot{q}_d	desired trajectory velocity	. 94
\ddot{q}_d	desired trajectory acceleration	. 94
r	filtered control error	.95
\dot{q}_r	reference trajectory velocity	.95
\ddot{q}_r	reference trajectory acceleration	. 95
λ	constant	.95
k_1	constant	.95
k_i	constant	.95
\hat{f}	an estimate of the friction force	.95
\hat{M}	an estimate of the mass	. 95
S	basis functions used for friction identification	. 95
P	a vector of parameters	. 95
ϵ	a small remaining error	. 95
\widetilde{f}	actual of the friction force - estimate of the friction force	.95
\tilde{M}	actual of the mass - estimate of the mass	. 95
u_r	compensate for any remaining modeling uncertainty ϵ	. 95
k_2	constant	.95
$\dot{\hat{ heta}}$	adapting law	96
Γ	adapting law	96
ψ	adapting law	96
σ	a forgetting factor	. 96
$ au_0$	computed torque component	. 97
$ au_1$	discontinuous torque control	. 97
M_0	nominal value	. 97
f_0	a discontinuous torque control	.97
K_P	positive scalars determining the sliding mode reaching performance	.97
K_D	positive scalars determining the sliding mode reaching performance	.97
Γ_0	gain to drive $s = 0$. 97

K_s	gain for sliding surface/damping constant	97
K_{is}	integral gain for sliding mode control/spring constant	98
y_{di}	demand signals	99
y_i	output signals	
N_s	number of samples	
u_i	control signal	99
δ	gain to suppress chattering	115
Н	external force measurement signal	115
G_f	input distribution gain	115
q_r	virtual demand	116
m_v	virtual mass of the spring	116
K_{ss}	virtual damping constant	116
K_{ii}	virtual spring constant	116
ω_n	natural frequency	116
ζ	damping ratio coefficient	116
R_d	desired radial	137
\dot{R}_d	desired radial velocity	137
\ddot{R}_d	desired radial acceleration	137
R_e	radial error	137
F_0	PD controller	138
F_1	integral sliding mode controller	138
В	projection matrix	139
\hat{s}	sliding mode variable for the posture control	139
δ_{SL}	gain to suppress chattering for the posture control	139
K_{dp}	constant	139
K_{SL}	constant	139
K_v	constant	139
w_1	constant	140
w_2	constant	140
ϕ_1	constant	140
ϕ_2	constant	140
R_r	virtual demand	142
H_{L1}	sensor level 1	152

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 General

One has to understand the history of humanoid robots to convey and develop ideas for the development of humanoid robots. The history of robots began with the word "Robot" [Karel, 2001] which stands for a laborer that originated from a Czechoslovak word "robota" (i.e. work), and represents the automaton which serves human beings as if it was a real creature, despite it is not alive. At the moment of their first emergence, they were given anthropomorphic shapes even before named "robot". Their imaginary ancestors are Talose in Greek myths, robots in "R.U.R." [Karel, 2001], Hadaly in "L 'Eve future" [Harbou, 2003], Maria in "Metropolis" [Adam, 1993] and so forth. Robots appeared before approved as a field of science, e.g. Android designed by Vince [1945], Steam Man by Dederick [1868] or the first oriental android Gakutensoku by Nishimura [1929]. They are thought to be primitive humanoid robots and they were the very result of the curiosity towards ourselves. On the other hand, the history of robotics [Asimov, 1991] began with the control of manipulators [Goertz, 1952, 1954] at Argonne National Laboratory, which was a trial to realize a humanlike device, particularly focusing on the arm function. Since then, robotics has been widely concerned with the functional mimicking of biological systems, not only the whole body type humanoid robots. In the early stage, robotics was mainly targeting the development of industrial robots which worked in limited environments such as plants.

During the seventies, Katoh [1973] developed WABOT-1, which was equipped with a vi-

sual recognition system, verbal communication system and a quasistatic walking controller. Then, Katoh et al. [1985] and Sugano et al. [1985] also developed WABOT-2. Though it did not have walking ability, it had visual and auditory sensations and succeeded to play the electronic organ. The history of humanoid robot research after Katoh [1973] is also the history of an evolution of their body, which are classified into i) the upperbody type, ii) the crawler type and iii) the whole body type. The upperbody type Humanoid Robots are the extension of industrial manipulators in the sense that they are fixed to the base. The study theme for them mainly lies on the fusion of intelligence and motor control. Fanuc Ltd. [Nakajima, 1985] developed a large size humanoid Fanuc man. At that time, humanoid robots have wheels or caterpillars on their lower bodies, so that they can locomote in the world. Tachi et al. [1989] developed Hadaly-2 with mechanically variable compliance on its arms, and studied the man-machine interaction and cooperation. Finally, the whole body type humanoid robots would have legs, and thanks to them, they can move on much rougher terrain than crawler type robots. Hirai [1997] and Hirai et al. [1998] developed P2, which was epoch-making not only in humanoid robotics but in the entire field of robotics. P2 is the world's first cable-less humanoid robot, which can walk and can go up/down stairs.

At present, some of the latest research on humanoid robots has focussed on different areas of the robot's body. For example, dexterous two-handed manipulators [Ott *et al.*, 2006] were investigated for the upper body of a robot. This robot is compliant through passivity based control approaches. However, the compliance control approach does not include the context of the surrounding world. The robot torso is safe but does not allow (social) interaction. Then, there is the study of a compliant humanoid robot, where the focus is on the lower part of the robot's body [Hyon *et al.*, 2007]. Hence, this project has successfully concentrated on balancing in the presence of unknown external forces. This project shows that the robot is successfully compliant but the controller is again not sufficient to allow context dependent compliance control. This shows that there is a significant need for an improved compliance control approach in humanoid robots and for a thorough investigation of a robot's body actions such that the robot can safely work with humans in the same environment.

1.1.2 Project Context

The focus of this project is on compliance control in robots, in particular for the humanoid robot hand which is capable of working in the same environment as humans and able to in-

teract with humans and to grasp any objects safely (see Figure 1.1). This is motivated by the fact that the cost of human workforce is increasing and demographic studies have shown the general aging of population, which decreases the amount of accessible workforce. Hence, applications of humanoid robots can be seen in the area of maintenance tasks for industrial plants, security services of home and office, human care, teleoperations of construction machines, and cooperative work in the open air. In particular, the fields of service robotics, medical applications, and operation in hazardous environments are of primary importance. Moreover, in education, robots have always fascinated the young and old, and provide new and valuable tools for teachers in both classroom-based learning and excursion. A robot can also be a personal companion in which the robot is capable to accompany the user ranging from babysitting for children to personal assistant as well as loneliness companions. Moreover, in medical science the robots can provide vital help for patients which are in need of rehabilitation or simply comfort. This requires a robot to be equipped with sensors for monitoring vital signs and emotional states. The discussion above shows that the capability of the robot in order to replace human work force has become important and popular nowadays. Many research teams are working on the problem how a robot can move, act, talk, see and touch as good as a human [Hirai et al., 1998], [Sakagami et al., 2002], [Morita et al., 1999], [Kaneko et al., 2002], [Kim et al., 2005]. A so called "humanoid robot" still requires vast improvements in many areas such as mobility, flexibility as well as security. However, research on the motion control and compliant control of humanoid is still in the midway due to the following factors:

- 1. A large number of degrees-of-freedom systems, consisting of more than 30 joints. (The Bristol humanoid robot has more than 40 joints, i.e. 7 joints for each arm, 2 torso joints, 1 neck joint and 12 joints for each hand.) Such a multibody system is highly nonlinear, so that it requires advanced nonlinear control approaches taking also account of the kinematics, i.e. complex relationships between the local coordinate system of each robot joint, and the nonlinear dynamics which naturally arise from such a complex robot.
- 2. The Bristol Robot is a highly redundant system (e.g. each arm has 7 joints to determine six degrees of movement of the endpoint of the arm actuator). This not only requires a good comprehension of position control or conversion from internal joint forces to the external reaction forces, through the interaction with the environment at



Figure 1.1: An 'interacting' Bristol Robot Hand

each contact point, but also a good understanding of the physiological (im)possibilities of a human(oid) robot: Although the arm is multiply redundant not every possible joint combination achieving a 6 degree target may be feasible as it may not be acceptable for a 'human' arm posture or it may even be dangerous.

- 3. A large number of underactuated systems have been built for robot hands. The fact that it is much easier to control a finger with one actuator rather than a fully actuated one is not always true. The transformation from one angle to another if the finger consists of 3 links with one actuator may vary at a desired end position. This will cause the difficulty to grasp an object accurately. Although an underactuated system may reduce the cost, a fully actuated finger can produce a more precise grasping manoeuver.
- 4. Structure-varying system: The total degrees of freedom vary as the contact state changes, i.e. it is collocated with the environment. Thus, resolving safety issues through compliance control in humanoid robots is a very challenging project as more than compliance for safety is required: The controller is to be used for a robot which has to 'socially' interact with humans rather than avoiding them. However, the humanoid robot is able to harm human beings since there are so many uncertainties occur during its implementation in the ever changing (social) context of the real world.

Hence, providing robust and active compliance control for the robot hand can be one of the solutions to resolve safety issues. This is however challenging since the problem as mentioned in items three and four of the preceding discussion may significantly affect the grasping performance. To demonstrate this, the Bristol Elumotion Humanoid Robot Hand (BERUL), which has been built to emulate characteristics close to a human hand, can be a very good platform to investigate a compliant control strategy. The BERUL hand should be able to grasp any object without damage. Moreover, the compliant controller via the BERUL hand has to satisfy not only (social) compliant interaction, but the controller has to exploit the highly redundant characteristics of the humanoid robot to achieve movement in the most human-like manner, i.e. the controller has to cater for social context dependent compliance, human posture and movement at the same time.

1.2 Problem Statement and Objectives

Achieving active compliance control in particular for the BERUL hand requires a robust control strategy. This is important due to the fact that the BERUL hand consists of significant stiction and friction. This is enhanced as the hand is light in weight and fragile. The hand of 9 degrees of freedom is a prototype, i.e. not well documented and modelled: all fingers, i.e. index, middle, ring and small finger consist of three links and three joints except the thumb finger. The thumb has four joints and four links. For the majority of the fingers, these joints are connected through a single, flexible push rod which is then actuated by a leadscrew mechanism that converts a linear movement into a rotary movement for an electrical motor. Nine servo motors have been attached to various fingers of the BERUL fingers. In particular, one motor actuator is used for the small and ring finger and two actuators used for the middle, index and thumb finger.

Furthermore, the kinematics of all fingers of the BERUL hand are not provided by the producer of the BERUL hand, thus, this certainly affects the performance of the controller during grasping an object. It becomes even more difficult when the BERUL hand is continuously subjected to improvement, change and repair. Consequently, modeling the robot hand in detail is only feasible to a limited extent. Moreover, the BERUL hand is classified as an underactuated system. This enhances the difficulty of control design. Hence, choosing an appropriate robust controller in this case may not be a trivial task in particular when nonlinearities may contribute to poor tracking performance.

A study by Armstrong *et al.* [2009] has shown that a human hand can safely grasp any cylindrical and cube objects of the same size within approximately one second from opening to closing state. This is a very important target to be achieved by a robot hand as the controller should be able to perform as close as possible to human hand speed. Moreover, human hand are composed of 19 joints with 21 degrees of freedom connected to 34 muscles that provide great flexibility [Choi *et al.*, 2008]. This allows the human hand firmly grasp any objects with minimal posture while maintaining the speed and compliant. As a result, this can be very challenging task due to the robot hand must also able to grasp with certain posture and speed without crushing the objects. However, note that accuracy of human grasping is limited [Choi *et al.*, 2008] i.e. errors of 10% would be acceptable (although the controllers presented here are accurate less than 5% error). Hence, taking into consideration the above mentioned problems, the objectives of the research are as follows:

- 1. To select a robust control scheme which can overcome stiction and friction in the robot hand.
- 2. To achieve good motion control where the robot hand is able to realize grasping within one to two seconds.
- 3. To devise a compliant control approach for the BERUL hand (i.e. the robot must be able to physically interact with objects/humans without causing damage or injury).
- 4. To enable robust and fast manipulation when in contact with an unknown environment.
- 5. To achieve different compliancy levels for a particular object and different objects, i.e. the controller has to adapt to the different object characteristics (e.g. a hard and a soft surface of the grasped objects).
- 6. To imitate human hand posture for grasping an object such as cylindrical and spherical grasping.

1.3 Methodology

Thus, some techniques which may be useful for the BERUL hand to achieve robust active compliance control are as follows:

- 1. Comparison of the suggested integral sliding mode control strategy with a PID controller, an adaptive controller and a conventional sliding mode controller. This allows to verify the most suitable control method to be used for the BERUL hand in order to overcome stiction and friction.
- 2. Exploitation of a sophisticated image capturing tool such as Roborealm to capture the kinematics data; use of Maple-Sim to develop a robot hand model and SimMechanics to test grasping performance through off-line simulation. All these tools can provide faster, safer and reliable results in simulation before a real time implementation can be carried out with low risk.
- 3. Development of a robust and active compliance control via an Integral Sliding Mode Controller (ISMC). The ISMC can introduce a model reference model approach where a virtual mass-spring damper system can be exploited. Together with ISMC, an adaptive control approach may also be considered to realise robust and active compliance control.
- 4. Development, exploration and study of a suitable grasping technique via a cylindrical and a spherical coordinate system.
- 5. Application of an operational space control approach to allow posture optimization for grasping.
- 6. Provision of an automatic tuning procedure for the compliance reference model.

1.3.1 Compliant Control Strategy

A core point of this thesis is to develop a robust (almost model-free) active compliance control. Two approaches seem to be the worth developing in a humanoid robot hand control environment:

- 1. Adaptive control.
- 2. Integral sliding mode control.

It is known that adaptive control is capable to work in highly nonlinear and uncertain environments and the design method is not time consuming. Adaptive control allows adaptation to large parameter changes in the robot and also better adjustment to unmodelled dynamics of the environment. The fact is that humanoid robots are highly nonlinear systems; therefore, adaptive control can be very helpful. Thus, adaptive control is a strong candidate for control, i.e. it will deserve more detailed discussion.

As a second major control technique, integral sliding mode control (ISMC), allows us to introduce the model reference control of a mass-spring damper system to achieve compliance control. Apart from that, the ISMC is able to overcome nonlinearities such as friction and stiction, emanated from a plant. It is expected that, the ISMC approach should allow for 'social' context compliance control. In order to measure the contact surface, a sensor must be integrated with the suggested control schemes. For this, we employ a single pressure tactile sensor (SPTS) which will be attached on the finger tip so that different contact surface can be measured. In principal, the SPTS uses capacitive-based conformable pressure sensor to accurately and reliably quantify applied forces. Moreover, for practical grasping (to a human-like extent), a newly introduced posture controller via an operational space control will be embedded into the compliance controller.

Note that other types of robust controllers such as H_{∞} , μ optimal control or gain scheduling are in this respect not investigated. Due to the simplicity and the practicality of the control design to achieve an active compliant control for the BERUL fingers, an adaptive control and an ISMC are more suitable control approaches (more detailed on common compliance control schemes is given in Chapter 2). The approaches of H_{∞} or μ control lend themselves to a linear context while the problem of the hand is highly nonlinear. Moreover, much of the approaches used here in this thesis are model reference based, for which ISMC and adaptive control are highly suited.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

Considering the statements about the problems and objectives of this research work the structure of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction of the Thesis.

The chapter introduces the specific project to be carried out for the compliance control. The existing problem, objectives and methodology are highlighted and emphasized here.

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

The chapter provides the necessary background on compliance control. Besides gathering information in particular for active compliance control, other related work such as on kinematics, modelling and sensor technology are also outlined here. This will help us to monitor the past, recent and future research work, that need to be catered for or resolved.

Chapter 3: Kinematics, Dynamics and Experimental Set-Up.

The chapter shows the derivation of the forward kinematics of the robot hand by using the DH technique and introducing the video capturing tool, Roborealm, to capture the kinematics data in order to find out the relationship between two joints. The dynamical model of the BERUL fingers is provided. With the help of MapleSim, the model of the BERUL fingers can be represented in the Simulink environment. Additionally, with the help of SimMechanics, the model can be validated in simulation before it can be used in real time implementation. Moreover, the overall experimental set-up is discussed. The BERUL fingers have been controlled with MATLAB/Simulink and dSPACE which permit a simple and an easy way to carry out the experiment.

Chapter 4: Underactuated Fingers Controlled by Robust and Adaptive Trajectory Following Methods.

The chapter is in particular investigates four different controllers namely a conventional PID controller, an adaptive, a conventional sliding mode and an integral sliding mode controller. In this chapter, it is shown that sliding mode control methods are indeed highly suited to counteract nonlinearities while providing superior performance.

Chapter 5: A Novel Approach of Robust Active Compliance for Robot Fingers.

The chapter introduces a novel method to achieve active compliance control in simulation and real time implementation: Integral sliding mode control uses a model reference approach. A mass-spring damper system using an external force measurement for compliance is introduced as reference model. It is a robust technique to realize active compliance control for the BERUL fingers which are hampered by stiction and friction phenomena.

Chapter 6: A Framework for Control in a Cylindrical and a Spherical Coordinate System.

The chapter provides a principal concept for grasping an object via cylindrical and spherical coordinate systems. This improves a grasping technique by controlling the hand in particular the thumb finger via spherical coordinates and the other remaining fingers via cylindrical coordinates. It has been proven by previous work that commonly grasped objects are cylindrical, which makes the active control in cylindrical coordinates highly suitable for the index, middle, ring and small finger. On the other hand for the thumb finger, it has been found that the multi-redundant character of the thumb requires a more versatile task coordinate system. The thumb has to be able to move around any grasped object, in contrast to the other fingers. Thus, spherical coordinates are more suitable for the thumb. The chapter also considers an operational space control approach to resolve the problem that some of the fingers are actuated by more than one actuator, introducing redundancy. The redundant degrees of freedom are adjusted via a posture controller, a common part of any operational space controller.

Chapter 7: Practical Results in Cylindrical and Spherical Coordinates for Fixed Compliance and Adaptive Compliance.

The chapter demonstrates practical results for practical grasping via cylindrical and spherical coordinate systems. The chapter is also important to observe the effectiveness of the operational space control for practical grasping. The control design and the results for the choice of compliancy levels are provided for specific objects. For this, an automatic compliancy level for the object to be grasped is proposed. This proves that the proposed control algorithm (i.e. the ISMC) can be useful for achieving different levels of active compliance control for hard and soft surfaces.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Future Work.

The chapter summarizes the main contribution of the thesis and future work.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Over the years, humanoid robots have become of major interest of study among researchers in the robotic field. Researchers have in particular extensively explored and analyzed human structures, behaviors and biomechanics so that a human like robot can be realized. Among them, the Honda humanoid robot has been developed [Hirai *et al.*, 1998] which is a humanoid robot with two legs and two arms, able to walk not only forward and backward but also diagonally either to the right or left and turning in any direction as well. Moreover, the (intelligent) ASIMO [Neo *et al.*, 2008] which is capable of speaking, seeing and listening has been presented successfully. These are two examples that have motivated researchers to broaden robotic research in various fields such as communication systems, sensor technology, image processing and particularly research in compliance control as in Bristol for the robot hand of the Bristol Elumotion Robot (BERUL).

The hand is one of the most important sensory organs and actuators of the human body. It has the capability to distinguish a touched object in various forms such as object thickness, object softness and object weight. Eventually, the hand will respond accordingly when grasping such objects without damaging them. Likewise, a robot hand should be able to perform the same tasks before entering the human environment. Significant effort has been made to emulate as much as possible the functions and the size of a human hand: This can be found in (Jacobsen *et al.* [1984], ShadowRobot [2003], Grebenstein *et al.* [2011] and Borst *et al.* [2003]). A more advanced design of a robot hand has been introduced by Vandeweghe *et al.* [2004] where a special hand, an *Anatomically-Correct Testbed (ACT) hand* has been built mainly for the following purposes:

- As a telemanipulator that mimics both the active and passive dynamics of a human hand for precision teleoperation and prosthetics.
- As an experimental testbed to investigate the complex neural control of human hand movements,
- As a working physical model of the human hand for neuro- and plastic-surgeons to test new surgical reconstruction techniques for impaired hands.

According to Vandeweghe *et al.* [2004], none of the other mentioned robot hands are suitable for the above purposes since they are not anatomically-correct as compared to the ACT hand. Other designs which can be considered similar to the ACT hand can be seen in a paper on *Dexterous Anthropomorphic Robotic Typing (DART)* [Thayer & Priya, 2011]. The main design objective is to demonstrate that the hand could type on a computer keyboard. They claimed that a single DART hand could type at a rate of 20 words per minute, compared to the average human typing speed of 33 words per minute with two hands. Thayer & Priya [2011] further claimed that there is no other robotic hand that can accurately type at human speed.

Perfect design including a sophisticated prototype architecture and a powerful control scheme of the robot hand is indeed vital when using the hand in the human/object world. Essentially, the safety in particular for humans, the grasped objects and also for the robot, must be guaranteed before both worlds interact. One of the vital requirements is the provision of compliant robot hand control. A compliant robot hand is needed for grasping for human/objects but also for the safety of the robot hand itself. There are different aspects which need to be focused on, in order to achieve a compliant robot hand. Hence, this chapter aims to provide a literature review for compliance in robot hands. Other relevant topics which are required for the compliant control of a robot hand are also included and split into a few sections.

2.1 Compliance Control

Initially, it has been observed that there is a need of having compliance control in industrial robots in order to provide a flexible end effector that can be used for assembly tasks. Work such as welding, painting or deburring requires an accurate positioning control together with

compliance to prevent damage of the parts caused by the end effector. An increase in cost is implied if highly accurate positioning control without compliance is used instead. This is usually avoided by companies. Therefore, compliance control for robots has been of interest for many years in industry [Wang *et al.*, 1998]. Another area where compliance control is highly suited, is for medical systems and haptics. The need for force and compliance control is a core requirement when using tools which are remotely operated and possibly enhanced through haptics [Katsura & Ohnishi, 2004]. In the case of this thesis, much of the focus is given to compliant grasping to allow the compliant handling of objects in human-robot interaction.

In the context of robot control, compliant control can be defined as the allowance of deviations from its own equilibrium position, depending on the applied external force. The equilibrium position of a compliant actuator is defined as the position of the actuator where the actuator generates zero force or zero torque [Ham *et al.*, 2009]. Hence, by this definition, compliance will allow us to minimize the impact during collision of an end-effector with the contact environment. In the case of robot fingers, compliance is the ability of robot fingers to grasp any object without damage. Moreover, in particular in our case, the adjustable or the controllable stiffness of the actuator is always acting like a mass, spring and damper system. This compliance model is depicted in Figure 2.1. The mass m_r , represents the effective moving mass of a robotic link. The viscous damper b_r is chosen to give the appropriate rigid-body mode to the unattached robot. While structural damping is very low, b_r includes the linearized effects of all of the other damping in the robot. The sensor has stiffness k_s and damping b_s . The workpiece is shown as a *ground state*. The robot actuator is represented by the input force F, and the state variable x_r measures the position of the robot mass.



Figure 2.1: Rigid-body robot model with compliant sensor and rigid workpiece

The robot link dynamics of this simple system are described by the following transfer function:

$$\frac{X_r(s)}{F(s)} = \frac{1}{[m_r s^2 + (b_r + b_s)s + k_s]}$$
(2.1)

In this case, the model (2.1) can be used to adjust the compliance of the system by changing system stiffness and also damping. Passive methods do not use sensor data and generically rely on mechanical design. Active methods use the actuator F to modify the system model, either relying solely on PD-type control methods or also incorporating sensor data, e.g. a force sensor, to shape the system response. Much of this is discussed in this chapter.

Understanding human fingers can be the best example to design compliant control for robot fingers. Figure 2.2 shows that a human hand is able to adjust a grasping force without crushing the ball. On the other hand, Figure 2.3 illustrates a human-like robot. It employs an active controller for a model reference characteristic, replicating mechanical compliance, for a controller design. This will allow stiffness of the actuators to be adjusted.



Figure 2.2: A compliant human hand



Figure 2.3: A compliant robot hand

2.1.1 Passive Compliance Control

Designing compliance for robots, in particular for multifingered robot hands, can be divided into three main categories. First, the design is solely based on passive compliance for which the use of linear springs is always preferable [Cutkosky, 1985], [Johnson, 1985], [Shimoga & Goldenberg, 1996]. Passive compliance is also regarded as a device or additional tool (usually spring and damper) that provides flexibility for the rigid robot. It is usually attached to the robot end-effector, such as at the hand, wrist, or fingers. As mentioned earlier, the primary demand for an industrial assembly can benefit from this passive compliance flexibility. Specifically, the adoption of passive compliance during assembly operation in robot manufacturing systems can guarantee that [Xu & Paul, 1990]:

- 1. the positioning tolerances in robot operation and the geometric uncertainties in the parts are relaxed,
- 2. the high forces or moments normally produced in jamming or wedging are reduced,
- 3. the assembled surfaces are protected from damage, such as a scraping or galling,
- 4. automatic assembly is facilitated to other operations,
- 5. expensive electronics normally required in precision operations can be eliminated.

Another advantage by employing passive compliance can be seen when gripping or grasping an object during an assembly process: The switching between two states is avoided in contrast to some active control methods, for example hybrid control. The first of a hybrid controller state is controlling the positioning error which is also known as controlling an unconstrained mode while the second state is providing force control for which a constrained mode must be considered. Between these two states, there is a transition mode (i.e. switching mode) from positioning control to force control where the force and velocity may discontinuously be achieved and become uncertain. This discontinuity and uncertainty can cause damage to the grasped object and can be avoided by employing passive compliance near the contact point of the end effector. In this case, the kinetic energy that is produced during transition can be absorbed and the possible high forces or moments can be prevented. Hence, the discontinuity is accommodated for and performance of the entire system becomes smoothed [Paul, 1987], [Xu & Paul, 1988], [Paul *et al.*, 1988].

Moreover, a high gain of the force control can be selected when the robot is equipped with a compliance device. Roberts *et al.* [1985] have shown that the allowable force control gain is proportional to the effective stiffness of the overall system. Therefore, for the system including passive compliance, the allowable force control gain is higher than that without passive compliance, which is desirable for improving sensitivity and performance of force control. Wang *et al.* [1998] have addressed in their survey some other advantages of passive compliance as follows:

- Can achieve very high stiffness,
- Guarantees overall stability due to its passive nature,
- Relatively cheap as compared to active compliance (expensive for some applications),

• Fast response rate.

Nevertheless, passive compliance has its own disadvantages such as positioning control is no longer accurate due to the reduction of the stiffness of the end effector. More problems have also been outlined by Wang *et al.* [1998] as follows:

- Mainly hardware achievable,
- Compliance center is usually fixed which causes lack of flexibility,
- Static/quasi-static compliance, i.e. fixed compliance dynamics
- Hard but possible to consider the compliance dynamics by special design with stiffness, damping and inertia factors taken into account.

2.1.2 Recent Developments in the Area of Passive Compliance

The work in [Akella & Cutkosky, 1989], [Sinha & Abel, 1992], [Shimoga & Goldenberg, 1996], [Xydas & Kao, 1999], [Arimoto et al., 2000], [Biagiotti et al., 2005], [Yoshida et al., 2008], [Yamazaki et al., 2009] has focused on deformable soft fingers as an alternative way to achieve compliant robot fingers. They were exploiting an advantage of visco-elastic material which has been used in soft pads. These soft pads will allow to compensate the dynamics effects such as shocks and vibration by dissipating the energy during manipulation. At an early stage, Akella & Cutkosky [1989] have attempted to model soft fingertips that were filled with powder or plastic fluid for controlling one degree of freedom grasping. A few researchers have used soft skin fingers made from elastic gel for grasping purpose, e.g. Yoshikawa et al. [2008] and Sugiyama et al. [2009]. Then, the latest studies by Yamazaki et al. [2009] have emphasized on two degrees of freedom grasping by describing the dynamic model of a pair of 2-DOF soft fingers and formulating a new controller as well as the equations of motion of soft fingered manipulation. In general, research groups for soft fingers limit their grasping technique to 1 DOF or 2 DOFs only. The advancement of the technique to more degrees of freedom requires modelling for deformation of soft finger which is very difficult to realize in practice. More interestingly, a new compliant grasping technique has been introduced by Brown et al. [2010]. His group has replaced a multifingered hand with a mass of granular material. This granular material which is filled in a single nonporous elastic bag is able to conform to the shape of the object during contact. The success of this grasping technique is based on the concepts of friction, suction, and interlocking mechanisms that are incorporated with granular material.

2.1.3 Active Compliance Control

On the other hand, active compliance may be an alternative where sensors and proper control action are employed [Liu et al., 2004], [Kugi et al., 2008], [Albu-Schaffer et al., 2007], [Khan et al., 2010], [Chen et al., 2010]. Specifically, active compliance is achieved through joint-torques in the robot links, either by setting a linear relation between the force and displacement or force and velocity. Work such as impedance control [Hogan, 1984], [Hogan, 1987], damping control [Whitney, 1977], stiffness control [Salisbury, 1980] and resolved acceleration control [Luh et al., 1980], [Shin & Lee, 1985] is relevant to active compliance control via different techniques. The pioneering work on impedance and compliance control has been carried out by Hogan [1985] and Kazerooni et al. [1986]. They have proven that active compliance control can be easily produced via a simple PD control. A similar PD control scheme has been tested by Tomei [1991], Liu et al. [2004], Kugi et al. [2008], Albu-Schaffer et al. [2007] and Chen et al. [2010] for their respective prototype robot hands. Although active compliance control can be achieved via a simple PD control approach. In many cases a robust controller method is preferable such as by Colbaugh et al. [1995] and Khan et al. [2010] of BRL. Both groups have used force sensors to produce a model reference compliance control strategy. For this, they have employed an adaptive compliance control scheme for a kinematically-redundant manipulator. An interesting application by utilizing active compliance control has been demonstrated by Mouri et al. [2007] for skin massage where a multifingered hand can perform pushing massage and rubbing massage. The authors have employed position-based impedance control and force-based impedance control to realize pushing and rubbing tasks.

Wang *et al.* [1998], on their study for compliance control robotic assembly systems, again have listed explicitly advantages and disadvantages of active compliance control. The advantages are as follows:

- Software achievable
- Easy to regulate and compute, which can benefit general use,

- Compliance center can be easily moved,
- Dynamic compliance,
- Easy to incorporate the system dynamics and force feedback information into the system so that the mechanical impedance of the robot end-effector can be controlled; possible to achieve negative compliance in the principal axis.

Disadvantages are outlined as below:

- Mainly software achievable (Note that software achievability can also be an advantage, However, the use of software may also introduce issues of safety and failure.),
- Suffers from the kinematic singularity,
- Since the Jacobian matrix of the robot kinematics is involved in the position and force transformation between the joint frames and end-effector frame, force and torque control are difficult in certain postures (e.g. kinematics singularities),
- Instability is often observed in active compliance control and careful attention is needed,
- For position control, there is an upper limit on the desired stiffness to avoid oscillation or instability,
- Relatively expensive (cheap for some applications),
- Limited response rate (normally suitable at low frequency),
- For any digital control system, the sampling rate determines the dynamic response of the active compliance and cannot be too fast, and the response rate also depends on the control law used.

A study to improve the limitation of the frequency range used for active compliance control has been investigated by Sensinger & Weir [2006] where the group has attempted to minimize one or more of the components of impedance (Z), namely stiffness (k), viscous (b), and inertial (I_i) components. The generated torque is a function of these three terms:

$$T_{qen} = k(\theta - \theta^*) + b\omega + I_i \alpha \tag{2.2}$$

where T_{gen} is the torque generated, θ is the actual position, θ^* is the desired position, ω is the actual speed and α is the actual acceleration. The technique, called Series Elastic Actuators (SEAs) is capable of achieving low impedance across all frequencies. By minimizing the impedance in particular for robot manipulators, this will allow low forces for a given perturbation at all frequencies i.e. have low impedance at high frequencies and not only in the actuators stable bandwidth.

2.1.4 Hybrid Active/Passive Compliance Control

It has been shown that both active and passive compliance techniques may have advantages and disadvantages. The last category, the so called *hybrid compliance*, which is a combination between active and passive compliance, may suit some applications [Jaura et al., 1998], [Okada et al., 2000], [Schiavi et al., 2009]. This category seems to open more routes for compliance research by taking into consideration the advantages of passive compliance and active compliance. For example, Jaura et al. [1998] have examined the effect of the exerting force at the end effector when hybrid compliance control for an intelligent assembly in a robot work cell was employed. The results showed that the stiffness level is better when compared to the solely passive compliance used in the system. Okada et al. [2000], have optimized their work by exploiting active compliance at a low frequency range while passive compliance is used at a high frequency level for controlling a humanoid shoulder mechanism. More challenging work has been presented by Davies et al. [1997] for which hybrid compliance has been deployed to replace the bearing surfaces in the knee for a prosthetic implant. It is obvious that several techniques can be used to achieve grasping compliance control for a robot hand. The fact that, there is no unique solution to grasp various objects surfaces, has diversified the approaches for grasping control.

2.1.5 Compliance Level

In addition to compliance control, obtaining the correct compliance level is also vital. For example, robot fingers may require higher stiffness to hold a glass than a balloon. Hence, not only the compliance is important, but the level of stiffness is also crucial for different objects. Brown *et al.* [2010] have proven that their method was able to grasp various objects such as a LED, a light bulb, a glass, a pen and an egg. Yussof *et al.* [2008], have revealed their proposed algorithms are capable to detect the slippage of a grasped cup when filled

with water. The sudden change of an object's weight has been sensed by an optical threeaxis tactile sensor which has 41 array sensing elements that mimic the structure of human fingertips. Similar stiffness level control ideas for changing an object's weight can also be found in Tsujiuchi *et al.* [2003] for the Gifu hand.

2.2 Hand Grasping

Grasping can be regarded as one of the main functions for a humanoid robot. Shaking a hand, holding a glass, pouring water, passing an egg and writing by using a pen are examples for robot hand functionality that may have to be carried out. For a human, executing those tasks is very simple and straightforward. However, for the robot hand, it requires a study of many aspects such as positioning control, sensor or dynamic control in order to realize simple grasping. Again, a simple task such as holding a tennis ball can be very delicate and difficult for a robot hand to carry out. Kvrgic [1996] in his work has pointed out the complexity during grasping an object. In many cases, the grasping force and moment components are neglected due to the modeling difficulty. As a result, some of the available methods treat the finger and object contact as a point contact with Coulomb friction instead of surface contacts with Coulomb friction. This simplifies a grasping design for robot hands. In general, the robotic hands are still a long way from matching the grasping and manipulation capability of their human counterparts and there is no unique solution for a grasping hand and the contact to an object. Thus, this has created many options for the solution of hand-object grasping.

Grasping for the robot hand can be divided into two basic groups namely power grasping and precision grasping [Napier, 1956], [Al-Gallaf *et al.*, 1993], [Johan Tegin, 2005]. Power grasping can be seen when a larger object is held up by a simple manipulation task. For example, grasping and lifting a chair and holding a heavy tool are much easier than holding an egg or a pen. Power grasping is usually performed using the palm of the hand and almost every area of each finger during grasping or holding. Arimoto [2004], in his survey on intelligent control of multi-fingered hands said that power grasping can be realized without using any sensory feedback if the contact force exerted on an object can be adequately controlled. In other words, we can simply say that power grasping is closing the hand around the object without knowing the final contact points between the hand and the object. Figure 2.4 shows the examples of power grasping.

On the other hand, when it comes to precision grasping, more delicate objects such as an



Figure 2.4: Examples of power grasping (http://cg.cis.upenn.edu/hms/research/RIVET/graspTypeRecog.pdf)



Figure 2.5: Examples of precision grasping (http://cg.cis.upenn.edu/hms/research/RIVET/graspTypeRecog.pdf)

egg and a pen are considered (see Figure 2.5). It requires the hand to be more sensitive when it touches the surface of the object. In many cases, precision grasping uses fingertips which are equipped with more powerful sensors. In contrast to power grasping, the contact points are known during precision grasping.

In order to understand grasping techniques for a robot hand, a study based on a partial taxonomy of manufacturing grasps has been proposed by Cutkosky & Wright [1986]. The group has done an observation on single-handed operations by machinists which were working with metal parts and hand tools. They have found that power and precision grasping can be further detailed into smaller groups such as prehensile (clamping required) and non-prehensile (clamping not required). As such, the results showed that, in general, grasping can be easily achieved by a hand but hardly realized by a robot hand. Although, a lot of effort has been devoted to copy a human hand such as in Vandeweghe *et al.* [2004] and Thayer & Priya [2011], none of the robot hand designs so far can beat the human hand.



(b) Force-closure: Force and moment can be applied on the object

Figure 2.6: Grasping constraint (http://www.cs.cmu.edu/ yingli/)

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