

# Root locus of fractional linear systems

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper an algorithm for the calculation of the root locus of fractional linear systems is presented. The proposed algorithm takes advantage of present day computational resources and processes directly the characteristic equation, avoiding the limitations revealed by standard methods. The results demonstrate the good performance for different types of expressions.

## Keywords

Root locus, Fractional calculus

## 1. Introduction

Fractional calculus (FC) generalizes integrodifferential operation to a non-integer order. During the last decades FC verified a strong development which is demonstrated by the large volume of research published. The mathematical formulation of the FC theory can be addressed in Refs. [1–5] and applications, such as viscoelasticity, biology, signal processing, diffusion, modeling and control, can be found in [6–10]. In spite of its popularity, FC requires some efforts towards the development and adoption of standard tools often adopted in system analysis and control. In fact, the modeling of fractional systems and the calculation of fractional derivatives leads to non-rational functions, often approximated through series or rational fractions [11–14]. This paper addresses the development of an algorithm for obtaining the Root Locus (RL) of fractional order expressions of any type, easy to implement using today's computational resources.

In this line of thought the manuscript is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces the algorithm for the calculation of the root locus of fractional order expressions and presents several examples. Section 3 outlines the main conclusions.

## 2. Root locus of fractional systems

The RL is a classical tool for the stability analysis of integer order linear systems [15–19], but its application in the fractional counterpart poses some difficulties. Therefore, researchers have mainly preferred to adopt frequency based methods, but we can mention several studies addressing the RL in the scope of fractional systems [20–23]. More recently the RL was considered for the stability analysis of fractional systems by tacking advantage of commensurable expressions that occur when truncating real valued integrodifferential orders up to a finite precision [24]. This strategy allows the use of built in routines available in several engineering packages, with a good level of integration of commands and editor, but, on the other

hand, limits the precision and the type of symbolic expressions. For example, several fractional systems are modeled by transcendental expressions and the adoption of polynomials of non-integer order is not the most appropriate way to construct the corresponding RL.

Bearing these ideas in mind, it was decided to implement a numerical tool for construction the RL without the previous limitations. The algorithm consists in searching the complex plane  $s$  for possible solutions of the closed-loop characteristic equation. In general, in the  $s$ -plane it is adopted a two stage calculation scheme, with a large spaced grid of points for a preliminary evaluation of candidate solutions and, for each solution, a more precise calculation by inserting a local small spaced grid of points. Due to the importance of solutions in the real and imaginary axis it was decided to search directly those cases. Moreover, after analyzing the RL of several experiments it was verified to be the best option to consider directly a small-spaced grid and a two stage grid for root evaluation in the real and the imaginary axis, respectively. Therefore, the structure of the algorithm is designed as follows:

1. Definition of the system characteristic equation.
2. Definition of parameters:
  - 2.1. The limits of the search in the complex plane.
  - 2.2. The number of points with the large spaced grid for testing possible solutions.
  - 2.3. The accuracy threshold for entering the high precision root evaluation.
  - 2.4. The number of points in the small spaced grid for calculating more precise solutions.
3. Calculation of solutions in the imaginary axis with two phases.
  - 3.1. Test solutions with large grid.
  - 3.2. If feasible solution found, then larger precision evaluation by searching within a local small spaced grid.
4. Calculation of solutions in the real axis, directly with small spaced grid.
5. Calculation of solutions in the complex plane with two phases.
  - 5.1. Test solutions with large spaced grid.
  - 5.2. If feasible solution found, then larger precision evaluation by searching within a local small spaced grid.

For the implementation of the algorithm were tested both compiler and interpreted computational packages. It was verified that interpreted codes were much slower and, therefore, in the sequel the experiments are based on code implemented with the Lazarus compiler [25]. However, given that many users use nowadays Matlab [26] in Appendix A is listed the main code and the definition of one fractional system adopted in the following examples.

For the purpose of testing the algorithm are considered several fractional characteristic equations  $Q(s)$  proposed in the literature, namely:

- Example 1, by F. Merrikh-Bayat et al. [24]  $Q(s) = s^2 - 3s^{1.5} - 2s + 2s^{0.5} + 12 + k(s^{0.5} - 1)$
- Example 2, by I. Podlubny et al. [4]  $Q(s) = 0.7943s^{2.5708} + 5.2385s^{0.8372} + 1.5560 + k$
- Example 3, by I. Podlubny [27]  $Q(s) = 14994s^{1.131} + 6009.5s^{0.97} + 1.69 + k$
- Example 4, by I. Jesus et al. [28]  $Q(s) = 1 + ke^{-3.0\sqrt{\frac{1}{100}}}$
- Example 5, by F. Merrikh-Bayat et al. [29]  $Q(s) = s + k(s^{0.5} + 1)e^{-\sqrt{s}}$
- Example 6, by M. Busłowicz [30]  $Q(s) = s^{1.5} - 1.5s - 1.5s e^{-sk} + 4s^{0.5} + 8$

where  $s$  represents the Laplace transform variable.

Fig. 1 depicts the corresponding root locus for  $k \in \mathbb{P}^0$  obtained through the proposed computation scheme. The results are consistent with those reported based on the adaptation of the standard RL, when available, or with stability conditions based on other methods, for those cases where the RL was not obtained. It was also confirmed that the quality, precision and speed can be easily tuned through the parameters defining the grid points and the precision threshold. From the operational point of view we find that we loose the automatism provided by common engineering packages, since we have to insert the code for each characteristic equation but, on the other hand, we gain computational speed and freedom of analyzing a larger set of fractional-order expressions.

In conclusion the proposed algorithm provides a simple platform for the stability analysis and control design of closed loop linear fractional systems.

### 3. Conclusions

The advances in FC demonstrate its superiority for an accurate system modeling and point towards important developments in applications, namely in control design. During the last years some algorithms for adapting classical RL packages were proposed. Nevertheless, the case of complex expressions was not yet tackled. In this paper a new algorithm for the calculation of the RL of fractional expressions was introduced. The results demonstrate the good performance for different types of systems.

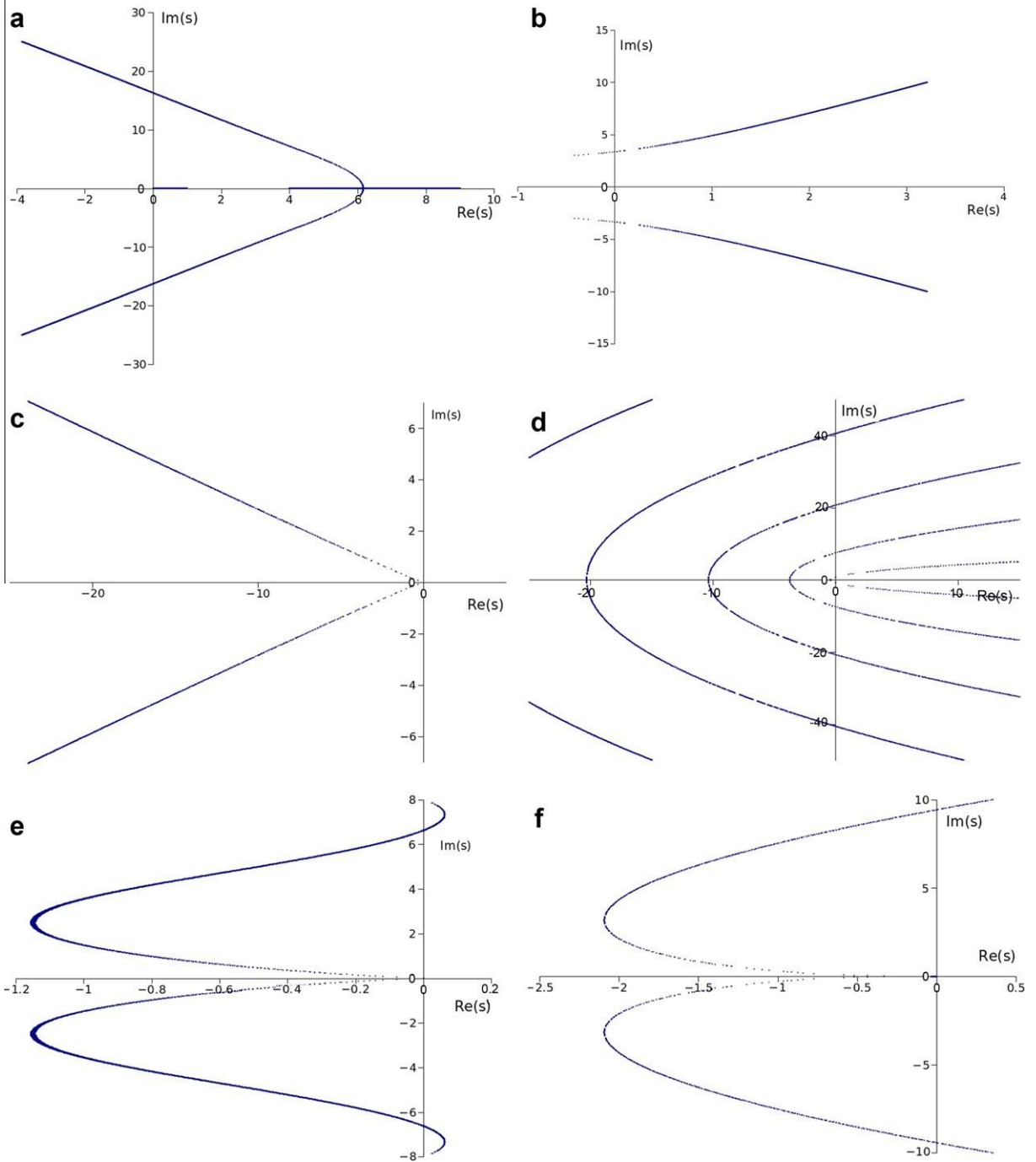


Fig. 1. Root locus for  $k \in \mathbb{R}^+$  of the fractional-order characteristic equations: (a)  $Q(s) = s^2 + 3s^{1.5} + 2s + 2s^{0.5} + 12 + k(s^{0.5} + 1)$ , (b)  $Q(s) = -0.7943s^{2.5708} + 5.2385s^{0.8372} + 1.5560 + k$ , (c)  $Q(s) = 14994s^{1.131} + 6009.5s^{0.97} + 1.69 + k$ , (d)  $Q(s) = 1 + k e^{-3.0s}$ , (e)  $Q(s) = 1 + k s^{0.5} + 1 e^{-P_s}$ , (f)  $Q(s) = s^{1.5} - 1.5s - 1.5s e^{-sk} + 4s^{0.5} + 8$ .

## Appendix A. Matlab code

### A.1. The main program

```
% This program plots the root locus of a fractional order system
%
% The the width of the plot is defined by the variables: xmin, xmax, ymax
% The number of large cells for the numerical evaluation is variable: n
% The number of small cells within each large cell: ns
%
% The system is defined in syst.m
%
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close all
clear all

xmin=-10; % left limit
xmax=10; % right limit
ymax=20; % upper and lower limits
n=300; % large grid
ns=20; % small grid
ns1=ns+1;
ns2=ns+ns1;

dx=(xmax-xmin)/n;
dy=0.5*ymax/n;
dx2=dx/2;
dxs=dx/ns;
dy2=dy/2;
dys=dy/ns;
asarg_lim1=0.01;
asarg_lim2=asarg_lim1*0.1;

ip=1;
x=xmin;
while x<=xmax
    y=dy;
    while y<=ymax
        [mod_k,arg_k] = syst (x,y);
        asarg_k=abs (arg_k);

        if asarg_k<asarg_lim1
            asarg_min=asarg_k;
            arg_k_min=arg_k;
            asarg_k_min=asarg_k;

            % small grid
            xsmin=x;
            ysmin=y;
            for i1=1:ns2
                for j1=1:ns2
                    k1(i1,j1)=0;
                end;
            end;
            ilmin=ns1;
            jlmin=ns1;
            k1(ilmin,jlmin)=1;
            flagk=0;
            while (xsmin<=x-dx2)j(xsmin>=x+dx2)j(ysmin<=y-dy2)j(ysmin>=y+dy2)j(flagk==0)
                for i1=1:3
```

```

    xs (i1)=xsmin+(i1-2)*dxs;
end;

for j1=1:3
    ys (j1)=ysmin+(j1-2)*dys;
end;
for i1=1:3
    for j1=1:3
        flagk=0;

        i10=i1min+i1-2;
        j10=j1min+j1-2;

        if (i10<=ns2)& (j10<=ns2)& (i10>0)& (j10>0)
            if k1(i10,j10)==0
                [mod_k,arg_k]=syst(xs (i1),ys (j1));
                i1min=i10;
                j1min=j10;
                k1(i10,j10)=1;
                flagk=1;

                asarg_k=abs (arg_k);
                if asarg_k<asarg_min
                    asarg_min=asarg_k;
                    arg_k_min=arg_k;
                    k_min=mod_k;
                    xsmin=xs (i1);
                    ysmin=ys (j1);
                end;
            end;
        end;
    end;
end;
end;
end;

% small grid
if abs (arg_k_min)<asarg_lim2
    ip=ip+1;
    px (ip)=xsmin;
    py (ip)=ysmin;
    ip=ip+1;
    px (ip)=xsmin;
    py (ip)=-ysmin;
end;
end;
y=y+dy;
end;
x=x+dx;
end;

% Real axis
y=0.0;
x=xmin;
while x<=xmax
    [mod_k,arg_k] = syst (x,y);
    asarg_k=abs (arg_k);

    if asarg_k<asarg_lim2
        asarg_min=asarg_k;
        arg_k_min=arg_k;

        asarg_k_min=asarg_k;
    end;
end;

```

```

    xsmin=x;
    ysmin=0;

    ip=ip+1;
    px (ip)=xsmin;
    py (ip)=ysmin;
end;
x=x+dx;
end;

if ip>1
    Fig. 1
    i=1;
    while i<=ip
        scatter (px (i),py (i),3,[1 0 0], ' filled' );
        i=i+1;
        hold on
    end;
    xlabel ( ' Re{n}' )
    ylabel ( ' Im{n}' )
    grid on
    hold off
end

```

One fractional system definition:

```

function [mod_k,arg_k] = syst (x,y)
% System 1
% numerator definition
a (1)=-1; af (1)=0;
a (2)=1; af (2)=0.5;
imax=2;

% denominator definition
b (1)=12; bf (1)=0;
b (2)=2; bf (2)=0.5;
b (3)=-2; bf (3)=1;
b (4)=-3; bf (4)=1.5;
b (5)=1; bf (5)=2;
jmax=5;

% total
logz=0.5*log (x*x+y*y);
argz=atan2(y,x);

% numerator calculation
re (1)=0;
im (1)=0;
for i=1:imax
    if af (i)==0
        r=1;
        t=0;
    end;
    if af (i)==1
        r=exp (logz);
        t=argz;
    end;
    if (af (i)~=0)&(af (i)~=1)
        r=exp (af (i)*logz);
        t=af (i)*argz;
    end;
end;

```

```

ar=a (i)*r;
re (1)=re (1)+ar*cos (t);
im (1)=im (1)+ar*sin (t);
end;

m1=re (1)*re (1)+im (1)*im (1);
% denominator calculation
re (2)=0;
im (2)=0;
for j=1:jmax
    if bf (j)==0
        r=1;
        t=0;
    end;
    if bf (j)==1
        r=exp (logz);
        t=argz;
    end;
    if (bf (j)rv=0)&(bf (j)rv=1)
        r=exp (bf (j)*logz);
        t=bf (j)*argz;
    end;

    br=b (j)*r;
    re (2)=re (2)+br*cos (t);
    im (2)=im (2)+br*sin (t);
end;

m2=re (2)*re (2)+im (2)*im (2);

%output
mod_k=sqrt (m2/m1);
arg_k=atan2(re (1)*im (2)-im (1)*re (2),re (1)*re (2)+im (1)*im (2))+pi;
na=round (arg_k/6.283185307);
arg_k=arg_k-6.283185307*na;

```

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