

Parametric identification of nonlinear dynamic systems with application to an aircraft landing gear damper

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PARAMETRIC IDENTIFICATION OF NONLINEAR DYNAMIC SYSTEMS, WITH APPLICATION TO AN AIRCRAFT LANDING-GEAR DAMPER

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For the experimental analysis of linear dynamic systems, it is common to employ shaker test procedures for the parameter identification or certification of a postulated model. The identification of nonlinear dynamic systems, however, is mostly performed by using various transient measurement signals, which are defined in order to resemble the actual or future trajectories of the system under consideration. In landing-gear manufacturing, for example, airworthiness authorities have defined a series of so-called drop-test procedures that will produce transient signals which resemble the operational conditions of the system during a landing. The drop-test facility could be used for identification or optimization of prototypes. Another approach for developing a design or certification tool analogous to the experimental analysis of linear systems, is the application of periodic loads in order to measure the corresponding periodic equilibrium solutions and/or outputs.

The identification method used here will be briefly addressed and consists of a combination of a Bayesian estimator (Bard 1974) and a periodic equilibrium solution technique based on time discretization (Fey 1992) or shooting. The Bayesian estimator utilizes the assumed deterministic mathematical model, the measured data, the assumed independent normally distributed residuals and prior knowledge concerning the parameters. The estimation problem can be reduced to a maximization problem (Verbeek 1991):

$$\Phi = \frac{1}{2} \left(- \sum_{\mu=1}^n \ln(\det V_{\mu}) - \sum_{\mu=1}^n e_{\mu}^T V_{\mu}^{-1} e_{\mu} - \ln \prod_{\alpha=1}^l \sigma_{\alpha}^2 - \sum_{\alpha=1}^l \frac{1}{\sigma_{\alpha}^2} (\theta_{\alpha} - \bar{\theta}_{\alpha})^2 \right). \quad (1)$$

In equation (1) n and l stand for the number of measurements and parameters respectively, e_μ are the residuals, V_μ are the covariance matrices, and σ_α and $\bar{\theta}_\alpha$ contain the prior normally distributed knowledge on the parameters θ_α . This maximization problem can be solved for the optimal parameters by modified Newton–Gauss iteration following the suggestions of Hendriks (1991).

This technique may be illustrated for axial measurements on an F16 nose landing-gear damper under periodic excitation. The experimental set-up for these tests will be discussed, as well as the choice of the experiments. First, the commonly used simple one-degree-of-freedom (1-DOF) dynamic model for this damper is postulated (Batill and Bacarro 1988):

$$\theta_1(\ddot{u} + g) + \theta_2|\dot{u}|\dot{u} + \theta_3 \left[\frac{1}{1 - \theta_4 u} \right]^{\theta_5} + \theta_6 \arctan(\theta_7 \dot{u}) + \theta_8 = F_{exc}, \quad (2)$$

with output equation

$$\hat{y} = u + \theta_9, \quad (3)$$

in which u stands for the displacement and the θ_i 's are the parameters. The gas spring force is based on the assumption of polytropic ideal gas behaviour and the friction force is modelled as 'continuous' coulomb friction. As in numerical simulations of these experiments, good results can be obtained with this model for identifications on a single frequency and amplitude, but the predictive power in other parts of the parameter or state space appears to be very low, because the assumption of polytropic gas behaviour is not met.

Re-evaluation of the measurement data leads to an improved 2- or 3-DOF model for the damper, which consists of the equation of motion, the first law of thermodynamics, and a constitutive relation for the pressure p , the displacement u and the temperature T , regarding solubility of gas in oil:

$$\begin{aligned} \theta_1(\ddot{u} + g) + \theta_2|\dot{u}|\dot{u} + \theta_3 p + (\theta_4 + \theta_5 p) \sin(\theta_6 \arctan(\theta_7 \dot{u})) + \theta_8 &= F_{exc}, \\ \dot{T} + \theta_9(T - T_0) + \frac{\theta_{10} T \dot{u}}{1 - \theta_{11} u} &= 0, \\ (1 + \theta_{12} u + \theta_{13} T)p + \theta_{14} T &= 0. \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

In equations (4) the second and third terms in the energy balance stand for stationary heat flow through the damper wall and a heat source due to compression. The output equations are

$$\hat{y} = \begin{pmatrix} u + \theta_{15} \\ p + \theta_{16} \end{pmatrix}. \quad (5)$$

The new identification method described above is applied to both models for this landing-gear damper. For describing the observed physical phenomena, it can be concluded from the results that the thermodynamic model is superior to the commonly used one.

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