TRAJECTORY PLANNING FOR KINEMATICALLY REDUNDANT ROBOTS USING JACOBI MATRIX – AN INDUSTRIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The widespread use of robots in industry contributes significantly to high productivity. Serial 6-axis robots are used in large quantities, e.g., for assembly or welding. A current emerging trend is the use of robots for classic tasks of a machine tool like finishing of milled workpieces. For such applications, standard robots are usually extended by additional axes like linear axes or rotary tilting tables. Therefore, the overall system becomes kinematically redundant. To be able to calculate the axis quantities via inverse kinematics for a given path, additional degrees of freedom must be bound. In order to automatically and optimally consider the additional axis motion a method, using the pseudoinverse of the Jacobian matrix, is discussed. Due to the dependence of the Jacobian matrix on the robot’s current joint position, numerical inaccuracies, which in turn reflect a path error, are inherent to this method. By feedback control of the path error, in the form of a classic control loop, the error can be reduced so that a practical implementation on industrial robot controller is possible. In the article possibilities for parameterisation of the algorithm as well as proof of stability of the closed loop are presented. The results obtained are verified by a concrete application.

1. INTRODUCTION

For about 40 years, robots in the industrial sector have become indispensable. The main reason for the use of robots is the automatic execution of a task or service pursuant to a given program. The automobile industry was a pioneer and still is a supporter of a widespread use of industrial robots in large numbers. Serial kinematics with six or fewer axes have mostly been used for applications such as joining, handling or spraying. In the last decade applications increasingly occur, using robots for flexibilisation of manufacturing environments. Robots carry out the loading respectively unloading or the measurement of workpieces on single machine tools or in multi machine concepts. Another trend, that has become apparent in the recent past, is the exclusive use of robots (instead of machine tools) in classic manufacturing [1]. This includes processes such as

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finishing workpieces by means of grinding or polishing, but also milling, for example, in wood construction. Also in the aircraft industry in the production of large components [2], e.g. made of fibre reinforced composites, robots are increasingly used.

With the development of different robotic applications, however, there is a change in the control of the robots. In the standard six axes applications almost the manufacturer-specific robot controllers or, in case of simple kinematic chains, motion controllers are used. In flexible manufacturing environments robots are placed either directly on the machine, often they are even part of the working space. To control such use cases, robotic solutions exist as an integration for the computer numerical control (CNC) so that both, the manufacturing process and the robot application, can be programmed with the same controller [3]. For the programming and control of robotic systems in production engineering applications, comparable to machine tools, in most cases the CNC is exclusively used. In this context many studies address approaches to improve geometric accuracy of the robot in the processing because of the lower stiffness in comparison to the machine tool [4,5]. This paper discusses a further aspect using robots in manufacturing applications: redundancy in the context of kinematic chains. Like mobile and humanoid kinematic structures, known from the service robotics, robot systems with milling spindles or additional turn-tilt-tables are mostly kinematically redundant. Further constructions are known in which robots are completely mounted on a linear axis as shown in Fig. 1.

![Fig. 1. Six-axis robot on linear unit [6]](image)

The present paper is devoted to a method for the control technology treatment of kinematically redundant robots [7], specifically in calculation of the inverse kinematics. The method is expanded using redundant robots in manufacturing applications. For this reason, a CNC is applied instead of a classical robot control. In the previous solution, redundant axis motions were resolved separately. This means, that all six path axes (three position and three orientation axes) of the robot and all (additionally) redundant axes are programmed. One aim of the presented method is to program only the six path axes of the robot and to automatically calculate the additional axes motion in the inverse kinematics algorithm. Since the method in [7] containing errors, another focus of the paper
is to minimize the path error by optimization of the controller parameters, with the aim of not affecting the positioning accuracy of the robot.

The paper has the following structure: In chapter 0 the term of redundancy in the context of kinematic chains is specified and subdivided into five different cases. The differential kinematics for solving redundant axis motion and the stability proof for the closed loop inverse kinematics are content of chapter 3. In chapter 4 the presented method is transferred and verified on an application for the production of large workpieces of fibre reinforced composites. Some selected results for the controller setting and the resulting path error are presented. The paper closes by summing up the results and giving an outlook in chapter 5.

2. REDUNDANCY IN THE CONTEXT OF KINEMATIC CHAINS

The degree of kinematic redundancy \( r \) is derived from the degree of freedom of the kinematic chain \( m \) (number of joints in case of six axis robot) and from the dimension \( m_e \) of the end effector movement. Considering the non-redundant case, there are overall five cases of different determinateness. These are listed below, a more detailed declaration can be found in [8]:

- **Case 1 - General, non-redundant kinematic chain:** In the general non-redundant case the dimension of the joint space \( m \) is identical to the dimension of the end effector space \( m_e \). For each end effector pose, exactly one joint configuration of the robot (except for the solutions mentioned in Case 2) can be calculated. In the plane case, the end effector pose is described by three degrees of freedom (2 translations, 1 rotation), a general spatial movement is described by six degrees of freedom (3 translations, 3 rotations). For a complete description of the end effector pose in space, a serial kinematics requires six joints.

- **Case 2 - Different link constellations, mirror constellations:** For almost all kinematic chains there are different link constellations for one and the same pose of the end effector (e.g. elbow up and elbow down), and thus multiple but finite solutions for joint positions can be calculated. The ambiguity in the calculation of the inverse kinematics can be solved by defining an articulation space for every link constellation that cannot be left when path interpolation is active.

- **Case 3 - Degenerate configuration, singularity:** In certain positions of the robot the dimension of the end effector space \( m_e \) is reduced. Movements in one or more degrees of freedom are restricted. The difference between the degree of freedom of the joint space and the order of the reduced end effector space is the degree of redundancy in the singularity.

- **Case 4 – Task redundancy:** A further case of redundancy considers relates solely to the task set for the robot. In case of task redundancy the degree of freedom at the end effector is greater than it is necessary to handle a task. The degree of task redundancy \( r_t \) is completely independent of the degree of freedom of the joint position space and only relevant for the control of the end effector. Assuming that the task space is
completely contained in the space of the end effector, the difference between
the dimension of the end effector space \( m_e \) and the task space \( m_a \) describes the degree
of the task redundancy \( r_a \).

- **Case 5 - Kinematic redundancy:** The case in the relationship between joint and end
  effector space, dealt with in the paper, is the kinematic redundancy. If the dimension
  of the joint space \( m \) is larger than the dimension of the end effector space \( m_e \),
  the robot is kinematically redundant. There are infinite solutions for the inverse
  kinematic problem. The difference between the dimension of the joint space \( m \) and
  end effector space \( m_e \) describes the degree of kinematic redundancy \( r \). Furthermore, it
  is possible to change the configuration of the kinematic chain without generating
  a position or orientation change at the end effector (null space motion).

### 3. Differential Kinematics

The calculation of motion quantities of a robot is determined by the kinematic
transformation. A distinction is made between direct and inverse kinematic transformation.
The direct kinematics of the robot includes the calculation of robots end effector position
and orientation vector for predetermined joint positon vector of the kinematic chain.
There is always a unique solution. In the inverse case, the ambiguous inverse kinematics
describes the calculation of the joint configuration from a predetermined path at the end
effector. On industrial robot controllers, trigonometric equations are generally used for
the kinematic transformation. For direct kinematics an often used systematic approach is
the Denavit-Hartenberg convention [9]. An efficient closed form solution of the inverse
kinematics for the wide-spread six-axis kinematics can be found in [10].

#### 3.1. Non-redundant Differential Kinematics

The method of differential kinematics uses the relationship between the vector of joint
velocities \( \dot{\mathbf{q}} \) as well as the vector of end-effector velocities \( \dot{\mathbf{x}} \) by means of Jacobian matrix
\( \mathbf{J}_a(\mathbf{q}) \). This coherence is described in equation (1).

\[
\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{J}_a(\mathbf{q}) \dot{\mathbf{q}}
\]  

(1)

For the method discussed in the article solely the analytical Jacobian matrix \( \mathbf{J}_a(\mathbf{q}) \) is
used, which offers the possibility to retrieve an orientation description of the end effector in
the Roll-Pitch-Yaw notation. For the general three-dimensional case both, the path vector \( \mathbf{x} \) and
the vector of path velocity \( \dot{\mathbf{x}} \), contain three linear and three angular components
(dimension \( m_e \times 1 \)), see equation (2):

\[
\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} p_x & p_y & p_z & p_\phi & p_\theta & p_\psi \end{bmatrix}^T
\]

\[
\dot{\mathbf{x}} = \begin{bmatrix} \dot{p}_x & \dot{p}_y & \dot{p}_z & \dot{p}_\phi & \dot{p}_\theta & \dot{p}_\psi \end{bmatrix}^T
\]  

(2)
Corresponding to the joint space, the vectors of robots joint position $\mathbf{q}$ as well as velocities $\dot{\mathbf{q}}$ have the dimension $m \times 1$ as shown in equation (3). In the normal case of three-dimensional end effector motion, the kinematic chain requires at least six joints. In case of kinematic redundancy the number of joints is greater than six.

$$\mathbf{q} = \begin{bmatrix} q_1 & \ldots & q_m \end{bmatrix}^T$$

$$\dot{\mathbf{q}} = \begin{bmatrix} \dot{q}_1 & \ldots & \dot{q}_m \end{bmatrix}^T$$ (3)

From the user perspective, in contrast to equation (1), the inverse kinematic differential is of greater importance, as in the implementation of an application always Cartesian path parameters are specified. Depending on the task to be carried out, the position and orientation of the end effector as well as the path dynamics are specified in a program. On the assumption that $\mathbf{J}_a(\mathbf{q})$ is regular and thus the inverse exists, the vector of the joint velocities is calculated by:

$$\dot{\mathbf{q}} = \mathbf{J}_a^{-1}(\mathbf{q}) \dot{\mathbf{x}}$$ (4)

It is obvious, that equation (4) does not hold in case of kinematic redundancy because the dimension of vector $\mathbf{q}$ is greater than six and thus $\mathbf{J}_a(\mathbf{q})$ is not square (the inverse $\mathbf{J}_a^{-1}(\mathbf{q})$ does not exist).

For calculating $\dot{\mathbf{q}}$ on an industrial controller in a discrete point of time $t_i$, the inverse kinematics is approximated with a difference quotient (5). The time difference between two calculation steps corresponds to the interpolation clock $t_{IPO}$ of the controller.

$$\dot{\mathbf{q}}(t_i) = \frac{\mathbf{q}(t_i) - \mathbf{q}(t_{i-1})}{t_{IPO}} = \mathbf{J}_a^{-1}(\mathbf{q}(t_{i-1})) \frac{\mathbf{x}(t_i) - \mathbf{x}(t_{i-1})}{t_{IPO}}$$ (5)

The vector $\mathbf{x}(t_i)$ contains the desired path position and orientation at the current time $t_i$ and $\mathbf{x}(t_{i-1})$ the corresponding values from the last iteration step $t_{i-1}$. By rearranging equation (5), the current joint position vector $\mathbf{q}(t_i)$ can be determined from the desired path parameters. It dependents on the Jacobian matrix $\mathbf{J}_a(\mathbf{q}(t_{i-1}))$ and the joint position $\mathbf{q}(t_{i-1})$ of the last iteration step $t_{i-1}$. This causes an error in the computation and an extension of the proposed method discussed in the following section.

3.2. REDUNDANT DIFFERENTIAL KINEMATICS

The calculation of the inverse kinematics in case of redundancy makes the use of differential algorithms inevitable. The Jacobian matrix in (1) has more rows than columns and thus is no longer regular. An inversion of the matrix, as in equation (4), is not possible. There are infinitely many solutions (joint configurations) of the inverse problem for one and the same pose of the end effector. Therefore it is necessary to bind additional degrees of freedom in joint space. This can be solved by formulating a linear optimisation problem.
with constraints aiming to weight the motion of all single joint axes in equal proportions. Using the Jacobian transpose $J_a^T(q)$, the relationship for the calculation of the Jacobian pseudoinverse $J_a^+(q)$ is described in equation (6). This form is also well known as Moore-Penrose pseudoinverse and has been introduced independently in [11] and [12].

$$J_a^+(q) = J_a^T(q) [J_a(q) J_a^T(q)]^{-1}$$  \(6\)

Equivalent to equation (5), a valid solution for the joint configuration can also be found in case of redundancy.

$$q(t_i) = J_a^+(q(t_{i-1})) [x(t_i) - x(t_{i-1})] + q(t_{i-1})$$  \(7\)

However, there are some practical hitches in implementation of equation (6) on an industrial robot controller: the dependency of the Jacobian matrix on the joint configuration and the time discrete integration (Forward Euler method). Both lead to a computation error. Considering equation (7) at time $t_i$ only the joint configuration $q(t_{i-1})$, calculated in the last iteration $t_{i-1}$, is known. Depending on the sampling rate $t_{IP0}$ and the path velocity $x(t_i)$, this leads to considerable errors which are in the magnitude of robots positioning accuracy. That is the main reason why trigonometric equations are mostly used to calculate the inverse kinematics on industrial robot controllers. In order to counteract this, the resulting path error $e(t_i)$ can be included in the calculation of the inverse kinematics [7]. The error vector $e(t_i)$ contains the deviations between desired $x_{des}(t_i)$ and actual $x_{act}(t_i)$ path vector at time $t_i$ (8). The velocity error is obtained by time derivative of $e(t_i)$:

$$e(t_i) = x_{des}(t_i) - x_{act}(t_i) = \begin{bmatrix} e_x & e_y & e_z & e_\phi & e_\theta & e_\psi \end{bmatrix}^T$$  \(8\)

$$\dot{e}(t_i) = \dot{x}_{des}(t_i) - \dot{x}_{act}(t_i) = \begin{bmatrix} \dot{e}_x & \dot{e}_y & \dot{e}_z & \dot{e}_\phi & \dot{e}_\theta & \dot{e}_\psi \end{bmatrix}^T$$

Fig. 2 shows the principle of control loop inverse kinematics in the form of a block diagram. Due to the vectorial quantities, it corresponds to a classic multivariable control loop. The structure in the form of a proportional controller with feedforward is comparable to the position control of electromechanical axes. The calculation of the differential kinematics without consideration of the path error (open loop) according to equation (7) is marked in grey.

![Fig. 2. Block diagram of closed loop inverse kinematics [3]](image-url)
The resulting calculation rule for joint position vector $\mathbf{q}(t_i)$ is shown in equation (9). The diagonal matrix $\mathbf{K}$ has the dimension $6 \times 6$ and contains the gain factors in the single directions of the path vector elements.

$$
\mathbf{q}(t_i) = \int_a^t \left( \mathbf{q}(t_{i-1}) \right) \left[ \mathbf{x}_{\text{des}}(t_i) - \mathbf{x}_{\text{des}}(t_{i-1}) + \mathbf{Ke}(t_i) \right] + \mathbf{q}(t_{i-1})
$$

(9)

For the implementation of equation (9) on an industrial controller, two difficulties arise: On the one hand, the factors of the gain matrix $\mathbf{K}$ have to be parameterised so that the error between the desired path vector $\mathbf{x}_{\text{des}}(t_i)$ and the resulting path vector $\mathbf{x}_{\text{act}}(t_i)$ remains as low as possible. On the other hand, it must be guaranteed that the control loop remains stable in order to generate no unintended end effector movements.

3.3. PARAMETERISATION OF THE GAIN MATRIX

In practice, the parameterisation of the matrix $\mathbf{K}$ is difficult. General tuning rules are not known from the literature. The nonlinear controlled system consists essentially of the Jacobian matrix, which changes in each interpolation cycle. In order to be able to use the conventional methods of linear control technology, a linearization of the system would have to take place at a single operating point (path point), with the disadvantage that the setting for $\mathbf{K}$ would be optimal only at the operating point or for small changes around this position. However, in order to obtain a suitable global setting for the path of movement of the end effector, a metaheuristic optimisation method is used in this article. Advantages of metaheuristic optimization methods in comparison to analytical approaches are their applicability even in the case of very complex systems or models (non-linear, discontinuous) [13].

One possible implementation is the so called simulation-based optimisation. In general, simulation-based optimisation is a process of finding the global extremum of an objective function in a defined search space [14]. The optimizer determines a valid solution of the objective function and submits it to the simulator for evaluation. The main components of the simulator are a model of the overall system to be examined (in this case the robot kinematics) and the evaluator for the determined solution.

During the investigations of kinematically redundancy, the simulation-based optimisation was used to parameterize the gain matrix $\mathbf{K}$ in equation (9). The error sum of each path axis over all interpolation cycles corresponds to the selected optimisation criterion. The optimizer varies the single factors of the matrix $\mathbf{K}$ with the aim to minimize the error vector $\mathbf{e}$ over the complete end effector path motion. The setting results for the application described in chapter 4 are summarized in Table 1.

3.4. PROOF OF STABILITY USING LYAPUNOV DIRECT METHOD

In addition to the controller setting, it is necessary to prove the stability of control loop. It has to be guaranteed that the closed control loop with the parameterised controller
shown in Fig. 2 is stable even after the occurrence of a fault. Stability in the context of system theory means that trajectories do not change too much under small disturbance. The basic idea of the following proof is the use of Lyapunov second method [15] for the differential equation of the path error vector $\mathbf{e}$. The method, which is also called direct method of Lyapunov, analyses the energetic state of a system. If the energy of a system decreases, for instance after occurrence of a fault, this also applies to its state variables and the system is stable.

For proof of stability it is necessary to find a generalized, real-valued differentiable energy function $V(\mathbf{e}(t))$ with the following properties (10):

$$V(\mathbf{e}(t)) > 0 \text{ für } \mathbf{e}(t) \neq 0$$

$$V(\mathbf{e}(t)) = 0 \text{ für } \mathbf{e}(t) = 0$$

For proof of stability according to Lyapunov, the change in the energy content $\dot{V}(\mathbf{e}(t))$ over time is used. After time differentiation of equation (10) follows the relation:

$$\dot{V}(\mathbf{e}(t)) = \frac{\partial}{\partial \mathbf{e}} [V(\mathbf{e}(t))] \dot{\mathbf{e}}(t)$$

(11)

The result from the equation (11), specified by the following case distinction (12), can be used for stability assessment:

$$\dot{V}(\mathbf{e}(t)) < 0 \quad \text{energy content of the system decreases, so the state variables also decrease}$$

$$\dot{V}(\mathbf{e}(t)) \geq 0 \quad \text{energy content of the system remains constant or increases, the same applies to the state variables}$$

In the case of the redundant inverse kinematics with Jacobian pseudoinverse a positive definite and quadratic function of the path error (13) is suitable for $V(\mathbf{e}(t))$ [16]. If all the individual gain factors of the matrix $\mathbf{K}$ are positive, then $V(\mathbf{e}(t))$ satisfies the properties (10).

$$V(\mathbf{e}(t)) = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{e}^T(t) \mathbf{K} \mathbf{e}(t)$$

(13)

According to the time derivative in (11) and after the substitution of (8) one obtains.

$$\dot{V}(\mathbf{e}(t)) = \mathbf{e}^T(t) \mathbf{K} (\dot{x}_{\text{des}}(t) - \dot{x}_{\text{act}}(t))$$

(14)

Furthermore, the actual path velocity $\dot{x}_{\text{act}}(t)$ with equation (1) as well as the calculated joint velocity $\dot{\mathbf{q}}(t)$ by the integration of equation (9) can be replaced (15):
\[
\dot{V}(e(t)) = e^T(t)K\dot{x}_{des}(t) - e^T(t)KJ_aJ_a^\dagger(\dot{x}_{des}(t) + Ke(t))
\] (15)

Under assumption, that the term \(J_aJ_a^\dagger\) is equal to the identity matrix, the time variation time of the energy function (13) is obtained (16):

\[
\dot{V}(e(t)) = -e^T(t)KKe(t)
\] (16)

If matrix \(K\) is positively definite, the function (16) is negative and satisfies the stability condition (12). A graphical representation of the function for the application discussed in section 4.1 is illustrated in Fig. 4.

4. APPLICATION AND RESULTS

4.1. APPLICATION SIX-AXIS ROBOT ON LINEAR AXIS

The plant concept, for which the presented method has been implemented, comprises an approx. 6 m long motion path for processing an aircraft wing [17]. It includes a KUKA robot KR500-2, which is mounted on a linear axis with direct drive and can be moved along the workpiece. The system is mechanically over-determined. The degree of kinematic redundancy \(r\), discussed in Case 5, chapter 0, is one.

The desired path is basically planned and programmed in the coordinates of the tool center point in a computer-aided manufacturing system. The previously available output corresponds to a program for numerical control (G-code), which includes the Cartesian position and orientation of the tool head as well as a simple resolution of the redundant axis motion according to empirical algorithms (e.g. constant velocity along the path).

Describing the end effector motion only with the necessary number of degrees of freedom and automatically resolving the redundant axis motion is the main objective in this application. In addition, the path error caused by the use of the differential kinematic algorithm (9) should be smaller than the positioning accuracy of the robot in order to justify a practical use on industrial controllers and to guarantee a precise processing operation.

4.2. SELECTED RESULTS

For calculating the inverse kinematics and binding the redundant linear axis motion, equation (9) is implemented as algorithm. In the first step the determination of the elements in the gain matrix \(K\) was carried out empirically. However, this method is very time-consuming and inaccurate, which excludes practical use. For this reason, the method of simulation-based optimisation (section 3.3) is used for the controller setting. The single elements of \(K\) are varied until the path error is minimal. The settings obtained empirically as well as by simulation-based optimisation are summarised in Table 1.
Fig. 3 shows the time course of the three position components $e_x$, $e_y$ and $e_z$ of path error $e$. Compared to the results of differential inverse kinematics, the geometric solution of the controller can be assumed to be ideally zero. Errors in the geometric solution are mainly results in the limited binary representation of a number (e.g. 16 bit) on the controller.

By comparing the results of the empirical setting and the simulation-based optimisation, it becomes clear that the extreme values of the optimised setting are only half as large. However, the inaccuracy caused by the use of differential algorithms is far below the positioning accuracy of a robot. A practical use of the presented algorithm on an industrial controller becomes possible. Similar statements can be made for the orientation errors. A further reduction of the error can be achieved by defining error limits for the entire path [18]. However, due to the limited computing time of an industrial control, this was initially neglected during implementation.

Another aspect discussed in the paper is the proof of stability. Fig. 4 shows the time course of function $\dot{V}(e(t))$ for the optimised settings from Table 1. It is obvious that the time derivative of the energy content is negative along whole path and the system in Fig. 2 is Lyapunov stable. This is of great importance, especially for practical use, for example in case of external disturbances.
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5. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The present paper covers with the trajectory planning of redundant robotic systems on industrial controllers. A differential algorithm, based on the Jacobian pseudoinverse, is presented. One focus of the work is the parameterisation of the gain matrix $K$ in order to allow including the errors from the calculation of the inverse kinematics. The use of a metaheuristic optimisation method helps finding an useful setting. It is also shown that closed loop inverse kinematics with Jacobian pseudoinverse is stable for a positive definite gain matrix $K$. In the described application, it becomes clear that it is possible to minimize the error such that the differential inverse kinematics can be used for the automatic resolution of redundant axis movements on an industrial control.

In the current work the method is modified for additional calculating in the preparation of a numerical control. In the preparation of the trajectory planning the path dynamics is estimated. At this point of time no physical path velocity exists which is problematically using equation (9). In addition, a method for deriving a general tuning rule for the matrix $K$ is to be developed from the existing results.

REFERENCES

Trajectory Planning for Kinematically Redundant Robots Using Jacobi Matrix – AN Industrial Implementation


