

Brief paper

# Variable structure control of a class of uncertain systems<sup>☆</sup>

Mehmet Önder Efe<sup>a,\*</sup>, Cem Ünsal<sup>b</sup>, Okyay Kaynak<sup>c</sup>, Xinghuo Yu<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Mechatronics Engineering, Atilim University, Incek, Ankara TR-06836, Turkey

<sup>b</sup>Institute for Complex Engineered Systems, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890, USA

<sup>c</sup>Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department, Bogazici University, Bebek, Istanbul 34345, Turkey

<sup>d</sup>School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, RMIT University, P.O. Box 2476V, Melbourne Vic. 3001, Australia

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## Abstract

This brief paper proposes a method for tuning the parameters of a variable structure controller. The approach presented extracts the error at the output of the controller and applies a nonlinear tuning law using this error measure. The adaptation mechanism drives the state tracking error vector to the sliding hypersurface and maintains the sliding mode. In the simulations, the approach presented has been tested on the control of Duffing oscillator and the analytical claims have been justified under the existence of measurement noise, uncertainty and large nonzero initial errors.

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## 1. Introduction

Parameter tuning in adaptive control systems has been a core issue in dealing with uncertainties and imprecision. One good alternative to robustify the control system against disturbances and uncertainties is to exploit a variable structure control (VSC) scheme (Hung, Gao, & Hung, 1993; Utkin, 1992; Slotine & Li, 1991). The scheme is well known with its robustness against unmodeled dynamics, disturbances, time delays and nonlinearities (Young, Utkin, & Ozguner, 1999). A later trend in the field of VSC design is to exploit the strength of the technique in parameter tuning issues (Sira-Ramirez & Colina-Morles, 1995; Yu, Zhihong, & Rahman, 1998; Parma, Menezes, & Braga, 1998). The resulting system exhibits the robustness and invariance properties inherited from VSC technique. As long as the target output of the adaptive system is known, the utilization of the mentioned techniques reveals good performance. However, in control applications, the lack of a priori knowledge

on the target control signal leads the designer to seek for alternative methods predicting the error on the control signal (Efe, Kaynak, & Yu, 2000).

This brief paper presents a method for extracting the error on the control signal particularly for the VSC purpose. In the second section, we describe the proposed technique for control error calculation. Simulation studies are presented next, and the concluding remarks are given at the end of the paper.

## 2. Proposed approach

Consider a nonlinear and nonautonomous system  $\theta^{(r)} = f(\theta, \dot{\theta}, \dots, \theta^{(r-1)}, t) + \tau$ , where  $f(\cdot)$  is an unknown function,  $\theta = [\theta, \dot{\theta}, \dots, \theta^{(r-1)}]^T$  is the state vector,  $\tau$  is the control input to the system and  $t$  is the time variable. Defining  $\underline{\theta}_d = [\theta_d, \dot{\theta}_d, \dots, \theta_d^{(r-1)}]^T$  as the desired state vector and  $\underline{e} = \theta - \underline{\theta}_d$  as the error vector, one can set the sliding hypersurface as  $s_p(\underline{e}) = \underline{A}^T \underline{e}$ . The VSC design framework prescribes that the entries of the vector  $\underline{A}$  are the coefficients seen in the analytic expansion of  $s_p = (d/dt + \lambda)^{r-1}(\theta - \theta_d)$  or more generally they are the coefficients of a Hurwitz polynomial. Here  $\lambda$  is a positive constant. Let  $V_p$  be a candidate Lyapunov function given as  $V_p(s_p) = s_p^2/2$ ; if the

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\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [onderefe@ieee.org](mailto:onderefe@ieee.org) (M.O. Efe), [unsal@ieee.org](mailto:unsal@ieee.org) (C. Ünsal), [kaynak@boun.edu.tr](mailto:kaynak@boun.edu.tr) (O. Kaynak), [x.yu@rmit.edu.au](mailto:x.yu@rmit.edu.au) (X. Yu).

prescribed control signal satisfies  $\dot{V}_p(s_p) = -s_p \zeta \operatorname{sgn}(s_p)$  with  $\zeta > 0$ , the negative definiteness of the time derivative of the above Lyapunov function is ensured. The conventional design postulates the control sequence given as

$$\tau_{\text{smc}} = - \left( f(\underline{\theta}, t) - \theta_d^{(r)} + A_r^{-1} \left( \sum_{i=1}^{r-1} A_i e^{(i)} + \zeta \operatorname{sgn}(s_p) \right) \right), \quad (1)$$

which ensures  $\dot{V}_p(s_p) < 0$ . More explicitly, if (1) is substituted into the system dynamics, it is seen that  $\dot{s}_p = -\zeta \operatorname{sgn}(s_p)$  is enforced automatically. Consequently,  $s_p$  will converge to zero in finite time, which means that the error vector is confined to the sliding manifold after some time. The behavior thereafter is convergent since it takes place in the close vicinity of the sliding manifold, i.e. the error vector converges to the origin as prescribed by the manifold equation.

**Remark 1.** When the control in (1) is applied to the system, we call the resulting behavior as the *target sliding mode control* (SMC) and the input vector leading to it as the *target control sequence* ( $\tau_{\text{smc}}$ ). Since the functional form of the function  $f$  is not known, it should be obvious that  $\tau_{\text{smc}}$  cannot be constructed by following the traditional SMC design approach.

**Definition 2.** Given the system  $\theta^{(r)} = f(\underline{\theta}, t) + \tau$ , and a desired trajectory  $\underline{\theta}_d(t)$  for  $t \geq 0$ , the input sequence satisfying the differential equation  $\theta_d^{(r)} = f(\underline{\theta}_d, t) + \tau_d$  is defined to be the *idealized control sequence* denoted by  $\tau_d$ , and the differential equation itself is defined to be the *reference SMC model*. Mathematically, the existence of such a model and the sequence means that the system perfectly follows the desired trajectory if both the idealized control sequence is known and the initial conditions are set as  $\theta(t=0) = \underline{\theta}_d(t=0)$ , more explicitly  $e(t) \equiv 0$  for  $\forall t \geq 0$ . Undoubtedly, such an idealized control sequence will not be a norm-bounded signal when there are step-like changes in the vector of command trajectories or when the initial errors are nonzero. It is therefore that the reference SMC model is an abstraction due to the limitations of the physical reality, but the concept of idealized control sequence should be viewed as the synthesis of the command signal  $\underline{\theta}_d$  from the time solution of the given differential equation.

**Fact 3.** If the target control sequence formulated in (1) were applied to the system, the idealized control sequence would be the steady-state solution of the control signal, i.e.  $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \tau = \tau_d$ .

Defining the control error by  $s_c \triangleq \tau - \tau_d$  and rewriting the control signal with the idealized SMC model yields  $\tau = \tau_d - (\Delta f + A_r^{-1} (\sum_{i=1}^{r-1} A_i e^{(i)} + \zeta \operatorname{sgn}(s_p)))$ , where  $\Delta f = f(\underline{\theta}, t) - f(\underline{\theta}_d, t)$ . The target control sequence becomes identical to the idealized control sequence, i.e.  $\underline{\tau} \equiv \underline{\tau}_d$ , as

long as the condition given below holds true.

$$\Delta f = -A_r^{-1} \left( \sum_{i=1}^{r-1} A_i e^{(i)} + \zeta \operatorname{sgn}(s_p) \right). \quad (2)$$

However, this condition is of no practical importance as we do not have the analytic form of the function  $f$ . Therefore, one should consider this equality as an equality to be enforced instead of an equality that holds true all the time, because its implication is  $s_c = 0$ , which is the aim of the design.

After straightforward manipulations,  $\dot{s}_p$  can be rewritten as  $\dot{s}_p = A_r(\Delta f + s_c) + \sum_{i=1}^{r-1} A_i e^{(i)}$ . Inserting (2) into  $\dot{s}_p$  and solving for  $s_c$  gives

$$s_c = A_r^{-1}(\dot{s}_p + \zeta \operatorname{sgn}(s_p)). \quad (3)$$

**Remark 4.** It should be noted that the application of  $\tau_d$  to the system with zero initial errors would lead to  $e(t) \equiv 0$  for  $\forall t \geq 0$ ; however,  $\tau_d$  is not a computable quantity. On the other hand, the application of  $\tau_{\text{smc}}$  to the system will lead to  $s_p = 0$  for  $\forall t \geq t_h$ , where  $t_h$  is the hitting time, and the origin would be reached according to the dynamics described by the sliding manifold, but knowing  $\tau_{\text{smc}}$  implies the availability of the function  $f(\cdot)$ . If one analyzes (3), a control signal minimizing the magnitude of  $s_c$  would force all trajectories in the error space to tend to the sliding manifold, i.e. (2) is enforced without knowing the description of the function  $f(\cdot)$  explicitly. Consequently, the tendency of such a control scheme would be to generate the target SMC sequence of (1) by utilizing the computable quantities.

Now consider the feedback control loop illustrated in Fig. 1, and define the Lyapunov function  $V_c(s_c) = s_c^2/2$ , which is a measure of how well the controller performs.

**Remark 5.** An adaptation algorithm ensuring  $\dot{V}_c(s_c) < 0$  when  $s_c \neq 0$  enforces (2) to hold true and creates the predefined sliding regime after a reaching mode lasting until the hitting time denoted by  $t_h$ , beyond which  $s_c = 0$  as the system is in the sliding regime.

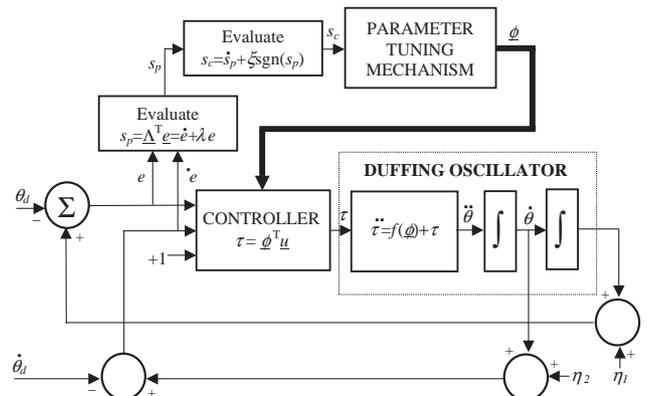


Fig. 1. Control system structure.

Consider the controller  $\tau = \underline{\phi}^T \underline{u}$ , where  $\underline{\phi}$  is the vector of adjustable parameters and  $\underline{u} = [e^T \ 1]^T$ . Choose the following Lyapunov function candidate:

$$V_A = \mu V_c + \rho \frac{1}{2} \left\| \frac{\partial V_c}{\partial \underline{\phi}} \right\|^2, \quad (4)$$

where,  $\|\bullet\|$  is the Euclidean norm and,  $\mu$  and  $\rho$  are positive constants determining the relative importance of the terms.

**Remark 6.** A likely question that can be raised at this point would be how such a Lyapunov function is selected. After straightforward manipulations, it can be shown that  $V_A = \alpha(t)V_c$ , where  $\alpha(t) = \mu + \rho \underline{u}^T \underline{u}$ , or equivalently,  $\alpha(t) = \mu + \rho + \rho e^T e$ . Referring to Fig. 2, which visualizes  $V_A$  for  $\mu = 1$  and  $\rho = 10$ , a direct conclusion would be the fact that as  $\|e\|$  increases, the two flaps become steep, and as  $\|e\|$  decreases the local property of the surface gets shallower. Choosing such a Lyapunov function will therefore enable us to represent how well the controller performs as well as how well the plant performs jointly. As seen from the contour plot of Fig. 2, the surface is symmetric with respect to  $s_c = 0$  line, and the cost of any disturbance leading to an increment in  $\|e\|$  will be more than the identical disturbance arising around  $s_c = 0$  and  $\|e\| = 0$ . This is particularly important since the tuning activity will be trying to cope with noise, which is substantially effective during the sliding mode, i.e. when  $s_c = 0$  is reached.

In order not to violate the constraints of the physical reality, the following bound conditions are imposed:  $\|\underline{\phi}\| \leq B_\phi$ ,  $\|\underline{u}\| \leq B_u$ ,  $\|\underline{\dot{u}}\| \leq B_{\dot{u}}$ ,  $|\tau| \leq B_\tau$ ,  $|\tau_d| \leq B_{\tau_d}$  and  $|\dot{\tau}_d| \leq B_{\dot{\tau}_d}$ .

**Theorem 7.** If the adaptation strategy for the adjustable parameters of the controller is chosen as

$$\dot{\underline{\phi}} = -K(\mu I + \rho \underline{u} \underline{u}^T)^{-1} \underline{u} \operatorname{sgn}(s_c) \quad (5)$$

with  $K$  is a sufficiently large constant satisfying  $K > (\mu + \rho B_u^2)(B_\phi B_{\dot{u}} + B_{\dot{\tau}_d}) + \rho(B_\tau + B_{\tau_d})B_u B_{\dot{u}}$ ; then the negative

definiteness of the time derivative of the augmented Lyapunov function in (4) is ensured.

**Proof.** Evaluating the time derivative of the Lyapunov function in (4) yields

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{V}_A = & \mu \left( \left( \frac{\partial V_c}{\partial \underline{\phi}} \right)^T \dot{\underline{\phi}} + \left( \frac{\partial V_c}{\partial \underline{u}} \right)^T \dot{\underline{u}} + \frac{\partial V_c}{\partial \tau_d} \dot{\tau}_d \right) + \rho \left( \frac{\partial V_c}{\partial \underline{\phi}} \right)^T \\ & \times \left( \frac{\partial^2 V_c}{\partial \underline{\phi} \partial \underline{\phi}^T} \dot{\underline{\phi}} + \frac{\partial^2 V_c}{\partial \underline{\phi} \partial \underline{u}^T} \dot{\underline{u}} + \frac{\partial^2 V_c}{\partial \underline{\phi} \partial \tau_d} \dot{\tau}_d \right). \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

Since the controller is  $\tau = \underline{\phi}^T \underline{u}$  and  $s_c \triangleq \tau - \tau_d$ , following terms can be calculated:  $(\partial V_c / \partial \underline{\phi})^T = s_c \underline{u}^T$ ,  $(\partial V_c / \partial \underline{u})^T = s_c \underline{\phi}^T$ ,  $\partial V_c / \partial \tau_d = -s_c$ ,  $\partial^2 V_c / \partial \underline{\phi} \partial \underline{\phi}^T = \underline{u} \underline{u}^T$ ,  $\partial^2 V_c / \partial \underline{\phi} \partial \underline{u}^T = \underline{u} \underline{\phi}^T + s_c I$ , and  $\partial^2 V_c / \partial \underline{\phi} \partial \tau_d = -\underline{u}$ . The time derivative in (6) can now be rearranged as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{V}_A = & s_c \underline{u}^T (\mu I + \rho \underline{u} \underline{u}^T) \dot{\underline{\phi}} + s_c (\mu + \rho \underline{u}^T \underline{u}) (\underline{\phi}^T \dot{\underline{u}} - \dot{\tau}_d) \\ & + \rho s_c^2 \underline{u}^T \dot{\underline{u}} \\ = & -K |s_c| \underline{u}^T \underline{u} + s_c (\mu + \rho \underline{u}^T \underline{u}) (\underline{\phi}^T \dot{\underline{u}} - \dot{\tau}_d) \\ & + \rho s_c^2 \underline{u}^T \dot{\underline{u}} \\ \leq & -K |s_c| + s_c (\mu + \rho \underline{u}^T \underline{u}) (\underline{\phi}^T \dot{\underline{u}} - \dot{\tau}_d) \\ & + \rho s_c^2 \underline{u}^T \dot{\underline{u}} \\ \leq & -K |s_c| + |s_c| (\mu + \rho B_u^2) (B_\phi B_{\dot{u}} + B_{\dot{\tau}_d}) \\ & + \rho s_c^2 \underline{u}^T \dot{\underline{u}} \\ \leq & -K |s_c| + |s_c| (\mu + \rho B_u^2) (B_\phi B_{\dot{u}} + B_{\dot{\tau}_d}) \\ & + \rho |s_c| (B_\tau + B_{\tau_d}) B_u B_{\dot{u}}. \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

The last inequality above is due to the fact that  $s_c^2 = |s_c|(\tau - \tau_d) \leq |s_c|(B_\tau + B_{\tau_d})$ . The selection of the parameter  $K$  ensures the negative definiteness of the time derivative of the Lyapunov function in (4) and proves Theorem 7.  $\square$

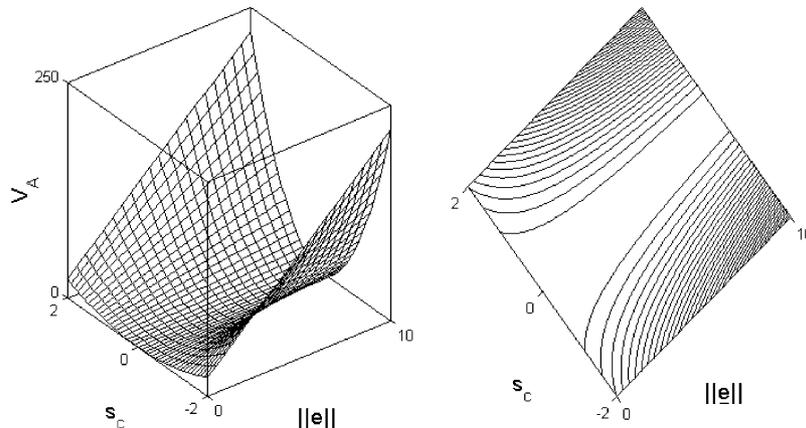


Fig. 2. 3D Appearance and contour plot of  $V_A$  for  $\mu = 1$ ,  $\rho = 10$ .

Since

$$(\mu I + \rho \underline{u} \underline{u}^T)^{-1} = \frac{1}{\mu} I - \frac{\rho \underline{u} \underline{u}^T}{\mu(\mu + \rho \underline{u}^T \underline{u})},$$

the tuning law of (5) can be paraphrased as  $\dot{\underline{\phi}} = -K[\underline{u}/(\mu + \rho \underline{u}^T \underline{u})] \text{sgn}(s_c)$ . Apparently if  $\underline{e}^T \underline{e} \leq \varepsilon$  holds true, where  $\varepsilon > 0$ , the first  $r$  entries of the parameter vector will dominantly be influenced by the noise terms ( $\eta_i$ ) corrupting the state vector. More explicitly,  $\theta^{(i)} \cong \theta_d^{(i)}$  and

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{\phi}_i &= -K \frac{\theta^{(i)} - \theta_d^{(i)} + \eta_i}{\mu + \rho + \rho \sum_{j=1}^r (\theta^{(j)} - \theta_d^{(j)})^2} \text{sgn}(s_c) \\ &\approx -K \frac{\eta_i}{\mu + \rho} \text{sgn}(s_c) \quad \text{with } i = 1, \dots, r. \end{aligned}$$

However, the  $(r + 1)$ th entry of the parameter vector will be tuned by

$$\dot{\phi}_{r+1} = -K \frac{1}{\mu + \rho \underline{u}^T \underline{u}} \text{sgn}(s_c).$$

Therefore, once  $\underline{e}^T \underline{e} \leq \varepsilon$  is satisfied, the tuning of the first  $r$  parameters are stopped and only the  $(r + 1)$ th entry is tuned. If  $\underline{e}^T \underline{e} > \varepsilon$ , all adjustable parameters are tuned. This mechanism ensures that the parameter tuning due to the noise sequence is suppressed in the vicinity of the origin. Since  $K$  is designed for the worst possible conditions, the time derivative in (7) will always be negative.

**Remark 8.** Given system of structure  $\theta^{(r)} = f(\underline{\theta}, t) + \tau$ , where the function  $f$  is unknown, and a desired trajectory  $\underline{\theta}_d(t)$ , assuming that the SMC task is achievable, utilization of (3) as the control error together with the tuning law of (5) for the controller  $\tau = \underline{\phi}^T \underline{u}$  enforces the desired reaching mode followed by the sliding regime for some set of design parameters  $\mu$ ,  $\rho$ ,  $\xi$  and  $\underline{A}$ .

### 3. Simulation study

In the simulations, we test the performance of the proposed scheme on the control of a Duffing oscillator described by the following differential equation:

$$\ddot{\theta} = -p_1 \theta - p_2 \theta^3 - p \dot{\theta} + q \cos(\omega_d t) + \tau, \quad (9)$$

where,  $p_1 = 1.1$ ,  $p_2 = 1$ ,  $p = 0.4$ ,  $q = 2.1$  and  $\omega_d = 1.8$ . The control problem is to enforce the states to the periodic orbit described as  $\ddot{\theta}_d = \sin(\theta_d)$  with  $\theta_d(0) = 1$  and  $\dot{\theta}_d(0) = 0$ . The identification and control of the system in (9) have previously been studied by Poznyak, Yu, and Sanchez (1999). It must be noted that the enforced trajectory is radically different from the stable limit cycle of the system dynamics, and this fact requires continuous control effort.

In the simulation results presented, we set  $\mu = 1$ ,  $\rho = 10$  and  $\underline{A} = [1 \ 1]^T$ ,  $\xi = 1$ ,  $K = 1000$  and  $\varepsilon = 0.001$ . The block diagram of the control system is depicted in Fig. 1 in detail. The measurement noise sequences for both states are Gaussian distributed, zero mean and both have equal standard

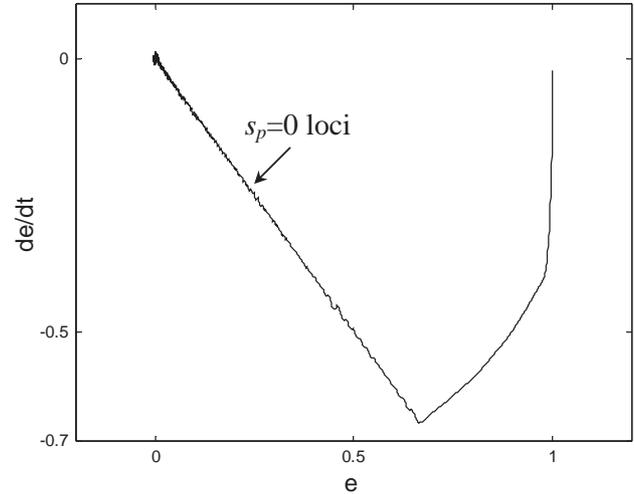


Fig. 3. Phase space behavior.

deviations, which is 0.0025. The disturbance caused by the measurement noise satisfies  $|\eta_i(t)| \leq 0.001$  with probability very close to unity.

In Fig. 3, the phase space behavior for  $\theta(0) = -1$  and  $\dot{\theta}(0) = 0$  have been demonstrated. The plot seen figures out that  $\dot{e} = -e$  ( $\lambda = 1$  or  $s_p = 0$ ) line is the attracting invariant. Clearly the error vector is guided towards the sliding manifold and due to the design presented, it is forced to remain in the vicinity of the attracting loci without explicitly knowing the analytical details of the function  $f$ . However, it can fairly be claimed that the sliding manifold is most probably a locally invariant subspace as the results strongly depend upon the unknown function  $f$ .

In Fig. 4, the applied control signal and the evolution of the controller parameters are illustrated. Although the exact use of the  $\text{sgn}(\cdot)$  function in (3) introduces some amount of high-frequency components, the produced control sequence is sufficiently smooth and reasonable in magnitude. The evolution of the controller parameters ( $\underline{\phi} = [\phi_1 \ \phi_2 \ \phi_3]^T$ ) is apparently bounded as seen in the figure.

Finally, the presented technique is computationally inexpensive, for the considered application, the total number of floating point operations for the control calculation and tuning is equal to 36 with two comparisons for sign function evaluations. This result stipulates that the computational complexity of the presented technique is affordable even for low-speed microprocessors.

### 4. Conclusions

This brief paper introduces a novel approach for creating and maintaining the sliding motion in the behavior of an uncertain system. The system under control is of unknown structure and it is under the ordinary feedback loop with an adaptive variable structure controller. The presented results have demonstrated that the predefined sliding regime could

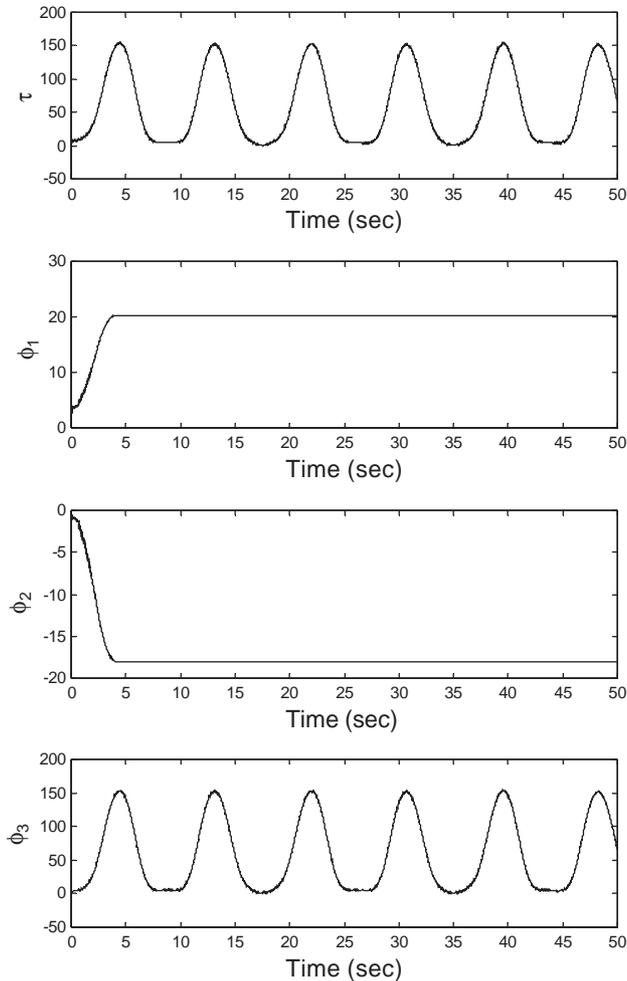


Fig. 4. Applied control signal and the time evolution of the controller parameters.

be created and maintained if the controller parameters are tuned in such a way that the reaching is enforced. Computational simplicity of the method is another prominent feature that should be emphasized.

Future research aims to discover the properties of the class of functions determining the applicability range of the approach.

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**Mehmet Önder Efe** received the B.Sc. degree from Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering Department, Istanbul Technical University (Turkey) in 1993, and M.Sc. degree from Systems and Control Engineering Department, Bogazici University (Turkey), in 1996. He has completed his Ph.D. study in Bogazici University, Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department in June 2000. Between August 1996–December 2000, he was with Bogazici University, Mechatronics Research and Application Center as a research assistant. During 2001, Dr. Efe was a postdoctoral research fellow at Carnegie Mellon University, Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, and he was a member of the Advanced Mechatronics Laboratory group. Between January 2002, and August 2003, he was with The Ohio State University, Electrical Engineering Department as a postdoctoral research associate. He worked at the Collaborative Center of Control Science. Since September 2003, he is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Mechatronics Engineering, Atılım University, Turkey. Dr. Efe is the author of more than 60 technical publications focusing on the applications of computational intelligence and systems & control theory. He is a member of IEEE, AIAA and Soft Computational Intelligence Society of Turkey.



**Cem Ünsal** received his B.S. degree from Electrical and Electronics Department, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey, in 1991, and the M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees from Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, in 1993 and 1997, respectively. From 1997 to 2001, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Robotics Institute, and worked as a Project Scientist at the Institute of Complex Engineered Systems, in Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA.

He is currently a Senior Software Engineer at Atoga Metro Systems Division of Arris Group, Inc., Fremont, CA, where he participates in the development of client-server architectures for network management systems. Dr. Ünsal is the author and co-author of several articles on artificial intelligence, intelligent control, self-organization, and self-reconfiguring

modular robotic systems. Dr. ünsal is a member of IEEE, and AAAI. You can contact him at [unsal@ieee.org](mailto:unsal@ieee.org).



**Okyay Kaynak** received the B.Sc. degree with first class honours and Ph.D. degrees in electronic and electrical engineering from the University of Birmingham, UK, in 1969 and 1972 respectively.

From 1972 to 1979, he held various positions within the industry. In 1979, he joined the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey, where he is presently a Full Professor. He served as the Chairman of the Computer Engineering Department for three

years, of the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department for two years and was the Director of Biomedical Engineering Institute for one year. Currently, he is the UNESCO Chair on Mechatronics and the Director of Mechatronics Research and Application Centre. He has held long-term Visiting Professor/Scholar positions at various institutions in Japan, Germany, U.S. and Singapore. His current research interests are in the fields of intelligent control and mechatronics. He has authored three books and edited five. He has also authored or coauthored more than 200 papers that have appeared in various journals and conference proceedings.

Dr. Kaynak is a fellow of IEEE and currently the President of the IEEE Industrial Electronics Society. He serves as an Associate Editor of both the IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics and the IEEE Transactions on Neural Networks and additionally he is on the Editorial or Advisory Boards of a number of scholarly journals.



**Xinghuo Yu** received BE and ME from the University of Science and Technology of China in 1982 and 1984, respectively, and PhD degree in Automatic Control from South-East University, China in 1988. From 1987 to 1989, he was a Research Fellow with Institute of Automation, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China. From 1989 to 1991, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow with the University of Adelaide, Australia. From 1991 to 2002, he was with Central Queensland University (CQU) Australia where,

before he left in March 2002, he was Professor of Intelligent Systems and the Associate Dean (Research) with Faculty of Informatics and Communication. Since March 2002, he has been with Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Australia, where he is Professor and the Associate Dean (R&D) of Faculty of Engineering. He has also held Visiting Professor positions at City University of Hong Kong and Bogazici University (Turkey), and Guest Professor positions in several major Chinese Universities. His research interests include nonlinear control systems, chaos control and anti-control, soft computing and applications. Prof Yu has co-edited 7 research books and published over 200 refereed papers in technical journals, books and conference proceedings. He serves as an Associate Editor of IEEE Transactions on Circuits and Systems: Part I. He has been on the program committees of many international conferences. Prof Yu has recently been made Professor Emeritus of CQU. He is a Senior Member of IEEE, a Fellow of IEAust, and was the sole recipient of the 1995 CQU Vice Chancellor's Award for Research.