Synthesis of Two Degrees-of-Freedom Haptic Device

Praveen Kumar Singh¹, Subir Kumar Saha¹*, and M. Manivannan²
1 Department of Mechanical Engineering
Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi-16, India
2 Department of Applied Mechanics
Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai-36, India

* Email: saha@mech.iitd.ernet.in
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Abstract

Haptic device is a force reflecting device. In this paper, one such device is synthesized for efficient training of medical students and professionals specially those requiring visual information of equipment and forces from the surgeon to the microsurgical tools inserted into the body. The device is to deliver high performance and should be accurate. To do so, first kinematic analysis of a suitable mechanism is performed and singularities in its workspace were identified to form constraints for an optimization. Performance index based kinematic optimization of the mechanism was performed over the whole workspace. The performance was then checked and limitations were analyzed by means of the so called force manipulability ellipsoid. We found that the performance in terms of kinematic singularity was greatly improved for the optimized mechanism.

Keywords: Haptic devices, Kinematic singularity, Force manipulability ellipsoid, and Performance measure.

1 Introduction

Haptics is the science of touch. Haptic devices can be viewed as having two basic functions: 1) to measure position and their time derivatives accurately, 2) to be able to display contact forces to the user. In this paper, a the Haptic device is synthesized to carry out virtual epidural injection in which the tip of the needle is to be inserted into the epidural space within the spinal canal surrounding the spinal cord. For doing the above task, a force reflecting simple haptic device can provide visual information and transmit force from an operator to a slave, a slave to an operator, or in both directions, so as to give feedback to the trainee.

Here we synthesize the mechanical part of the device, based on a five-bar planar parallel mechanism. Synthesis of such a manipulator is greatly influenced by the fact that the relationship between the robot’s actuators and the end-effector varies with its position and direction. Only after minimizing this variation, or in other words maximizing the mechanical isotropy, one can choose suitable actuators and design a controller. The kinematic equations of mechanism describe the relationships between the end-effector and its actuators. The Jacobian matrix then determines the required actuator force/torque from a desired end-effector force/torque.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents kinematic modeling, followed by the workspace analysis in section 3. Section 4 presents the kinematic optimization. Finally, accuracy check and conclusions are provided in sections 5 and 6, respectively.

2 Kinematic Modeling

The planar five-bar five revolute jointed parallel mechanism is shown in Figure 1. It has an end-effector point C which is connected to the base by two legs, O1C and O2C. In each of the two legs, the revolute joint connected to the base is actuated. The mechanism is symmetric about Y-axis. Such a mechanism can position a point in X-Y plane.

![Kinematic diagram](image)

Let \( a_1, a_2, a_3 \) are physical lengths of the mechanism. Then we define normalized lengths as non dimensional parameters \( r_i, i=1, 2, 3 \), i.e,
\[
 r_i = a_i / L, \quad r_2 = a_2 / L, \quad r_3 = a_3 / L
\]
where,
\[
 L = (a_1 + a_2 + a_3) / 3
\]

2.1 Inverse Kinematics

For inverse kinematics, the location of the end-effector, C is given and the problem is to find the joint variables necessary to bring the end-effector to the desired location [1]. The position vector of the output point C in the reference system X-Y is given by
\[
 p = (x, y)^T
\]
In the reference frame, the position vectors of point \( B_i (i = 1, 2) \) can be written as
\[
 b_i = (r_i \cos \theta_i - r_j \cos \theta_j, r_i \sin \theta_i)^T
\]
T2 1 2 3 1 2
+ and b = ( r cos θ , r sinθ )
where, θ1 and θ2 are the actuated angles.
The inverse kinematic problem can then be solved by
writing the following constraint equations.

\[(x - r \cos \theta_1 + r_1 \sin \theta_1)^2 + (y - r_1 \sin \theta_1)^2 = r_1^2 \] (1)

\[(x - r \cos \theta_2 - r_2 \sin \theta_2)^2 + (y - r_2 \sin \theta_2)^2 = r_2^2 \] (2)

In eqs. (1) and (2), the inputs to reach the position p(x, y) is desired based on the position of point C, obtained.

Four solutions are achieved for the inverse kinematic problem.

2.2 Forward Kinematics

The forward kinematics problem is to obtain the output C with respect to a set of given inputs, θ1 and θ2. From eqs (1) and (2), one obtains

\[x^2 + y^2 - 2 ( r_1 \cos \theta_1 - r_1 ) x - 2 r_1 \sin \theta_1 y - 2 \theta_1 r_1 \cos \theta_1 + r_1^2 + r_1^2 - r_1^2 = 0 \] (3)

\[x^2 + y^2 - 2 ( r_2 \cos \theta_2 + r_2 ) x - 2 \theta_2 r_2 \cos \theta_2 + r_2^2 + r_2^2 - r_2^2 = 0 \] (4)

Subtracting eq. (4) from (3), gives

\[x = d y + e \] (5)

where,

\[d = r_1 ( \sin \theta_1 - \sin \theta_1 ) / ( 2 r_1 + r_1 \cos \theta_1 - r_1 \cos \theta_1 ) \]

\[e = r_1 r_2 ( \cos \theta_2 + \cos \theta_2 ) / ( 2 r_2 + r_2 \cos \theta_2 - r_2 \cos \theta_2 ) \]

Substituting eq. (5) to eq. (3) yields

\[f y^2 + g y + h = 0 \] (6)

in which,

\[f = 1 + d^2, \quad g = 2 ( d e - d r_1 \cos \theta_1 + d r_1 - r_1 \sin \theta_1 ) \]

\[h = e^2 - 2 e r_1 \cos \theta_1 - r_1^2 - 2 r_1 r_2 \cos \theta_1 + r_1^2 + r_2^2 - r_2^2 \]

From eq. (6), two solutions for the forward kinematic problem are obtained.

2.3 Jacobian Matrix

Let the actuated joint variables be denoted by a vector θ and the location of the moving platform be described by a vector p. Then the kinematic constraints imposed by the limbs can be written in the general form as

\[f(p, \theta) = 0 \]

i.e., eqs. (1) and (2)

Differentiating eqs. (1) and (2) with respect to time, we obtain a relationship between the input joint rates and the end-effector output velocity as

\[\dot{J}_p \dot{p} = J \dot{\theta} \] (7)

i.e.,

\[J_p = \begin{pmatrix} x - r_1 \cos \theta_1 + r_1 y - r_1 \sin \theta_1 \\ x - r_1 \cos \theta_1 - r_2 y - r_2 \sin \theta_2 \end{pmatrix} \]

\[J_0 = \begin{pmatrix} y \cos \theta_1 - (x + r_1) \sin \theta_1 & 0 \\ 0 & y \cos \theta_1 + (r_1 - x) \sin \theta_1 \end{pmatrix} \]

Now, the Jacobian matrix of the five-bar mechanism is given by

\[J = J_0 J_p \] (8)

2.4 Singularity Analysis

Due to the existence of two Jacobian matrices, the mechanism is said to be at a singular configuration when either \(J_p\) or \(J_0\) or both are singular. Singularity leads to an instantaneous change of the mechanisms DoF.

2.4.1 Inverse Kinematic Singularities

This singularity occurs when the output point reaches its limit or its boundary of the workspace. They are given below:

At\[(9)\]
\[x = (r_2 + r_1) \cos \theta_1 - r_1 \text{ and } y = (r_2 + r_1) \sin \theta_1 \]

or, \[(10)\]
\[x = (r_2 - r_1) \cos \theta_1 + r_1 \text{ and } y = (r_2 - r_1) \sin \theta_1 \]

There exists some non-zero \(\dot{\theta}\) that results in zero \(\dot{p}\) vector. Infinitesimal motion of the end-effector along certain directions cannot be accomplished. Hence manipulator loses one DoF. Under above singularities the links are either fully extended or folded. Hence they are also called boundary singularities, which are shown in Fig. 2.

2.4.2 Direct Kinematic Singularities

A direct kinematic singularity occurs when the determinant of \(J_p\) is equal to zero.

i.e., \(\text{Det} (J_p) = 0\).

The above happens

1) when,
\[ r_1 \sin \theta _1 = r_2 \sin \theta _2 \]

and \[ r_1 \cos \theta _1 - r_3 = r_2 \cos \theta _2 + r_3 \]

i.e. when \( B_1 \) and \( B_2 \) points coincide.

This singular configuration is shown Fig. 3(a). Locus of the end-effector in this case of above singularity is obtained as

\[ x^2 + (y - \sqrt{r_1^2 - r_3^2})^2 = r_2^2 \]

and \[ x^2 + (y + \sqrt{r_1^2 - r_3^2})^2 = r_2^2 \]

2) when,

\[ x = (r_1/2)(\cos \theta _1 + \cos \theta _2) \]

\[ y = (r_1/2)(\sin \theta _1 + \sin \theta _2) \]

i.e. when point \( B_1 \) and \( B_2 \) lie on a straight line which is shown in Fig. 3(b).

\[ \text{Fig. 3: Direct kinematic singularity} \]

In direct kinematic singularities, there exist some nonzero \( \dot{\theta} \) vectors that result in zero \( \dot{p} \) vectors. That is, the end-effector can have infinitesimal motion in some directions while all actuators are completely locked. Hence end-effector gains one-DOF.

2.4.3 Conditions for Removing Singularities

In order to avoid the singularities following conditions are obtained.

a) If \( r_1 > r_1 \), \( B_1 \) \( B_2 \) will never coincide.

b) If \( r_2 > (r_1 + r_3) \)

c) If \( r_2 < (r_1 + r_3) \) combined singularity is removed when \( O_1B_1C_1B_2O_2 \) will never lie in a straight line.

d) If \( r_2 \neq r_1 \) combined singularity is also removed, i.e.,

e) \( r_1 + r_2 + r_3 = 3 \), and 0 < \( r_1 < 3 \), 0 < \( r_2 < 3 \), \( r_3 < 1.5 \)

Rest of the combined singularity conditions are taken care with the above mentioned checks.

3 Workspace Analysis

Workspace of the planar mechanism, Fig. 1 is defined as the space that its end-effector can reach. A dexterous workspace is the space within which every point can be reached by the end-effector from all possible orientations. Boundary singularities describe the boundary of the workspace beyond which the end-effector cannot reach. Equations (9-12) are actually annulus regions within which the workspace lies. As there exist singular loci inside the theoretical workspace the manipulator may pass through them. Hence, there is a need to define a measure of proximity to those singular loci and then accordingly define dexterous workspace.

3.1 Condition Number: Measure of Singularity Proximity and Accuracy

The condition number of the Jacobian matrix can be defined as [1]:

\[ C = \frac{\sigma_{max}}{\sigma_{min}} \]

where \( \sigma_{max} \) and \( \sigma_{min} \) are the largest and the smallest singular values of the Jacobian matrix, \( J \), respectively. These singular values are equal to the square root of the maximum and minimum eigenvalues of \( JJ^T \) where \( J \) is the Jacobian matrix. Note that the condition number of a matrix measures the sensitivity of the solution of a system of linear equations to errors in data. It gives an indication of the accuracy of results from matrix inversion and the linear equation solution. Condition number close to one indicates a well conditioned matrix. The condition number is independent of the scale of a manipulator.

To check accuracy we confirm end-effector velocity vector on a unit circle, \( p = p^T \)

and compare the joint rates as \( q^T \)

\[ J^T J q = 1 \]

The above equation represents an ellipse in joint space. The eigen vectors of \( JJ^T \) are orthogonal and the principal axis coincide with them. The lengths of the principal axes are equal to the reciprocals of the square roots of the eigenvalues of \( JJ^T \) [2]. Here, the condition number is used for two different purposes: first, as a measure of proximity to singularity; second, as a measure of kinematic accuracy.

Using the Inverse kinematics algorithm, position of the end-effector is checked for

1. Solution exists in the joint space or not.
2. The condition number of the Jacobian matrix.
Using the following steps:

a. Workspace under boundary singularity is divided in a set of circular arcs.
b. Each point on a circular arc is checked whether solution exists or not in joint space using inverse kinematics.
c. Then at each point condition number of Jacobian matrix condition number (K) is checked and accordingly given a sign as
   - Plus: if K<5
   - Asterix : if 5<K<10
   - Square: if 10<K<100
   - Diamond: if K>100

From the workspace shown in Fig. 5, we can suggest a region composed of plus sign (with K<5) in which we can work accurately and somewhat singularity free. An annulus region between 0.9 and 1.7 (normalized lengths) can be our dexterous workspace for generalized link lengths taken (which is later optimized) as shown in Fig. 5.

![Plot of Dexterous Workspace](image)

Because the Jacobian is a function of position, the condition number is a local measure and manipulators that are designed to be isotropic at individual positions may not exhibit similar levels of isotropy throughout their workspaces. The condition number only measures the roundness of an ellipse but does not measure its size. Both of these attributes are, however, important in determining the overall consistency of a device’s behavior since shape is a relative measurement which represents directional isotropy, which is optimized here.

4 Kinematic Optimization

We see that the condition number of the Jacobian matrix can be successfully used for performance evaluation and optimization. From the dexterity plot of the workspace with condition number we see that condition number rise high (from 5 to 1000) along the boundaries of manipulator, and we cannot remove the boundary singularities. So, we have to choose performance measure considering the following:

1. Condition number of the Jacobian matrix should rise as smoothly as possible.
2. Condition number should be low at boundaries.
3. Workspace should be more keeping the size of device under certain limit.

Hence, we choose number of workspace points at which condition number is more than 5 as performance measure for optimization.

In this design process, we desire to make the workspace of a device as large as possible and as far away from singularity as possible. We usually select the thickest part in the theoretical workspace as a measure of workspace area. Workspace is characterized by a critical carry out case, which is tangent with the singular loci. Here, the circle is referred to as the Maximum Inscribed Circle (MIC), which is defined as the circle that is located at the Y axis and is tangent with the workspace boundary curves. According to this definition, the MIC can be described as

\[ X^2 + (Y - y_{MIC})^2 = r_{MIC}^2 \]

Where,

\[ r_{MIC} = \frac{a_1 + a_2 - |a_1 - a_2|}{2} \]
\[ y_{MIC} = \sqrt{\left(\frac{a_1 + a_2 - |a_1 - a_2|}{4} \right) - \left(\frac{a_1}{2}\right)^2} \]

Some optimization will be performed later with respect to the above values.

### Table 1: Parameter space and optimum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Min. value (c.m.)</th>
<th>Max. value (c.m.)</th>
<th>Resolution (c.m.)</th>
<th>Optimum (c.m.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a_1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a_2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a_3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Design variables are varied as shown in Table 1 and for each architecture, i.e., a combination of a_1, a_2 and a_3 the “number of points with condition number greater than 5” in the workspace are evaluated. The best configuration is the one for which the “the number of points with K>5” within the workspace is minimum. The minimum and maximum limits of a_1, a_2 and a_3 are based on the size of device and other assembling constraints.

Methodology performed for kinematic optimization is give below:

1. Design variables (a_1, a_2, a_3) are varied as shown in Table 1.
2. Condition number (K) is found over whole workspace for all possible configurations.
3. Figure 6 is plotted for all architectures for a_3 v/s “points with K>5”.
4. From Fig. 6 we select a_3=3 due to the minimum of “points with K>5”.

5
In order to find other two link lengths i.e. $a_1$ and $a_2$ “Points with K> 5” is checked against the workspace measure ($f_{\text{suit}}$) for ranges of $a_1$ and $a_2$ given in Table 1.

4.1 Results

![Performance Measure Variation](image)

Fig. 6: Variation of performance parameter with base length.

![Performance Workspace](image)

Fig. 7: Graph showing Performance parameter variation with radius of MIC.

From Fig. 7 we can see that “Points with K>5” are minimum corresponding two architectures, i.e. at $a_1 = 9; a_2 = 14; a_3 = 3$; and $a_1 = 10; a_2 = 15; a_3 = 3$. Since, for latter workspace is higher we choose it as our final design.

5 Accuracy

A force ellipsoid is used for describing the force transmission characteristics of a manipulator at a given posture. Forces in joint space and task space are mapped via Jacobian through the relation.

$$\tau = J^T f$$  \hspace{1cm} (13)

Where $f$ is the force vector in task space and $\tau$ is the joint torque vector. Using Eq. 13, we obtain

$$f^T f = \tau^T (JJ^T)^{-1} \tau$$

To check the accuracy we confirm the end-effector force vector on a unit circle, i.e.,

$$\|f^T f\| \leq 1$$

It is the ellipse defined by

$$\tau^T (JJ^T)^{-1} \tau \leq 1$$

Also

$$\tau, \quad p, \quad p = 1$$

which is compared with joint rates as

$$\tau^T q^T J J q = 1$$

Above equation represents an ellipse in joint space.

Note that the matrices $(JJ^T)^{-1}$ and $JJ^T$ have same eigenvectors, and that the eigenvalues of $(JJ^T)^{-1}$ are the reciprocals of the eigenvalues of $JJ^T$. In other words, the principal axes of the velocity and force ellipsoids coincide, and the lengths of the axes are in inverse proportion [3]. This ellipse show how efficiently motion/force can be applied in each direction. We see the effect of variation of condition number on force/torque transformation between end-effector and joint space through an example.

![Force/Torque Transformation](image)

Fig. 8 shows different sizes and shapes of torque ellipses that occur at three different positions of the mechanism. The ellipses at $y=3$ and $y=18$ have different shapes, i.e., the condition number at $y=3$ are an average of 1.5 times larger than those at $y=18$. In other words it has over one and a half times the average force capabilities in the centre of its workspace than it does at the edges of its workspace.
Fig. 5: Graph showing Force/Torque ellipses over the workspace for selected configuration.

Fig. 9 shows the relative sizes of force torque ellipses over the workspace for selected configuration, which is used to check the performance of the proposed design. Fig. 10 shows the photograph of a real prototype made.

6 Conclusions

A two degrees-of-freedom haptic device is synthesized using a systematic approach. The device has improved performance characteristics which are also analytically analyzed. Based on the above synthesis a prototype of the device was developed, which functioned appropriately. However, further testing is required after interfacing with a virtual environment. This will be taken up in future.

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