Design of a roll autopilot for a skid-to-turn guided missile

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Abstract. The design of autonomous systems is a growing research field which attract an increasing interest in various civilian and military applications. The design of control system can be considered a leading factor for developing any autonomous system. In this paper devoted to a missile autopilot which should achieve specific characteristics and performance criteria to ensure the overall system stability to track the desired commands in the presence of high dynamics and different uncertainties with high accuracy. The investigation of accurate missile 6DOF model is developed and linearization has been performed for designing the proper controllers for the pitch and roll channels and choose the optimum trim points based on system dynamic pressure. A design of lead compensator classical controller is presented to meet certain requirement of both time and frequency characteristic to ensure the system stability. The designed autopilot is evaluated using Matlab simulation is carried out for evaluating the proposed missile autopilot controller performance, the proposed controller presented sufficient performance during flight and simplicity, reliability, and availability for implementation in real time applications.

Keywords: Autopilot design, classical control, system stability, Linearization, Modeling.

Nomenclature

- $a_n$: Normal acceleration
- $a_{nc}$: Commanded normal acceleration
- $B$: Transformation matrix from Earth axes to body axes
- $C_D$: Coefficient of drag
- $C_L$: Coefficient of lift
- $C_r$: Coefficient of rolling moment
- $C_m$: Coefficient of pitching moment
- $C_n$: Coefficient of yawing moment
- $C_{X_B Y_B Z_B}$: Body axes
- $C_Y$: Coefficient of side force
- $D$: Drag force, Missile diameter
- $C$: Commanded
- $e_q$: Error in pitch rate
- $F_B$: Resultant of external forces w.r.t. body axes
- $g$: Gravitational acceleration
- $H$: Altitude
- $H_B$: Angular moment w.r.t. body axes
- $I_{xx}, I_{yy}, I_{zz}$: Moments of inertia about body axes
- $I_{xy}, I_{yz}, I_{zx}$: Product of moments of inertia about body, y, z axes
- $N_r$: Yawing moment due to rudder angle
- $P$: Position vector
- $Q$: Dynamic pressure
- $Q_c$: Commanded pitch rate
- $S$: Reference area
- $s$: Laplace operator
- $T_s$: Sampling time
- $t$: Time
- $t_r$: Rise time
- $t_s$: Settling time
- $u$: Input signal
- $u_0$: Undisturbed longitudinal velocity
- $u_1$: Control signal
- $V$: Total velocity
- $v_B$: Velocity w.r.t. body frame
- $X_u$: Axial force due to longitudinal velocity
- Position of body c.g. w.r.t. Earth axes
Introduction

The design of autopilots to ensure that the missile achieves accelerations as commanded and maintains stability with enough stability margins[1][2]. Before going into mathematical detail concerning the motion of the missile in space as a result of guidance commands, some definitions and discussion are desirable, including:

- The missile will maneuver by moving control surfaces, in our case the control surfaces are aerodynamic rudders (aerodynamic control) [1][2].
- The control method is called skid-to-turn (STT) control method. This means that if the guidance system "sees" the missile at point which is far to the right and low from its desired point, the guidance angular error detector produces two signals, a right-left signal and a down-up signal which are transmitted to two separate servos, rudder servos and elevator servos. Alternatively, it calculates the resultant of the two signals needed to be contributed for all the four servos.
- The missile will not roll freely and its orientation in roll must be controlled. As the higher roll rate affects the rate of other angular velocities so the controller should maintain the rolling angle to zero and damp any roll rate.
- The guidance of the missile c.g. in space will be performed using the control of lateral and normal acceleration utilizing the change in the angle of attack and sideslip angle under the effect of fins deflection.

The control system consists of a roll autopilot and two essentially identical pitch and yaw autopilots. The guidance system detects whether the missile c.g. is flying high or low, or much to the
left or right. Then, it measures these missile-position deviations or errors and applies them to the control system to reduce these errors to zero[3,4,5]. The task of the autopilot is to stabilize and guide the missile via fin deflections, which cause the missile body to rotate and hence translate into a new position. The fin servos respond to the commands ordered by the autopilot, and the actual fin deflection is that one which corresponds and satisfies the required maneuver. In all cases the servo torque should always overcome the hinge moment. These fin deflections then act as a forcing function to the airframe dynamic model.

Therefore, the main task of the autopilot subsystem can be summarized as follows:

- Ensure the desired acceleration characteristics for tracking guidance commands with high performance with sufficient system stability.
- Disturbance rejection in roll and pitch channels for the working flight envelop.

The missile actuation can be achieved by accurately controlling the fins surfaces angles where the control commands require the convention of positive surface deflection angles as shown in Fig.1 because there are four fins (δ\(_1\), δ\(_2\), δ\(_3\), δ\(_4\)), but only three attitude degrees of freedom (ξ, η, ς), they are combined, mathematically to form the three control commands as follows [3]:

\[
\begin{align*}
ξ &= \frac{1}{4} (δ_1 + δ_2 + δ_3 + δ_4) \\
η &= \frac{1}{4} (-δ_1 - δ_2 + δ_3 + δ_4) \\
ς &= \frac{1}{4} (δ_1 - δ_2 - δ_3 + δ_4)
\end{align*}
\] (1)

**Figure 1.** Positive deflection of control fins viewed from rear

Four positive fin deflections create a negative roll command; the first two fins up (negative) and the last two fins up (positive) generate a positive normal force command; and the fins 2&3 negative deflections with fins 1&4 positive deflections cause a positive yaw command. This convention can be summarized in the following:

- Roll: \(+ξ → −ΔL\) (negative rolling moment).
- Pitch: \(+η → +ΔN\) (positive normal force).
- Yaw: \(+ς → +ΔY\) (positive side force).
Here using six degree of freedom model to study all specification of the missile performance then must make linearization to be able to deal with the system as linear time invariant to design the controller and achieve time response parameter and frequency margins required. Studying linearization of model to find the final transfer function of roll, pitch and yaw channels and then start to design controllers as required[6].

1. Linearization of missile model

Because the nonlinear state models are difficult to handle, most of the early progress in understanding the dynamics of missile and the stability of the motion came from studying linear small perturbation equations. When a computer simulation is performed to evaluate the performance of the missile with its control systems, a nonlinear model shall almost invariably be used. The linear equations needed for control system design will be derived using the small perturbation method from the nonlinear model. Considering the velocity derivatives as state variables and the acceleration as an output [2], the six equations can be written in state space form as follows:

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
\Delta u \\
\Delta \dot{v} \\
\Delta \dot{w} \\
\Delta \dot{p} \\
\Delta \dot{q} \\
\Delta \dot{r}
\end{bmatrix} =
\begin{bmatrix}
X_u & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & Y_v & 0 & 0 & 0 & (Y_r - u_0) \\
0 & 0 & Z_w & 0 & (u_0 + Z_q) & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & L_p & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & M_w & 0 & M_q & 0 \\
0 & N_v & 0 & 0 & 0 & N_r
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
u \\
v \\
w \\
p \\
q \\
r
\end{bmatrix} +
\begin{bmatrix}
0 \\
0 \\
0 \\
0 \\
0 \\
0
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
\xi \\
\eta \\
\zeta
\end{bmatrix}
\]

(2)

Then, the transfer functions will be:

\[
G_{\xi}^\alpha = \frac{a_{\xi}}{\zeta} = \frac{(Y_z + l_p N_z) s^2 + (N_v Y_p + N_z Y_v - N_r Y_z) s - N_r Y u_0 + N_r Y u_0}{s^2 - (N_r + Y_r) s + N_v Y u_0 - N_r Y + N_r Y_v}
\]

(4)

\[
G_{\eta}^\alpha = \frac{a_{\eta}}{\eta} = \frac{(Z_q - l_p M_q) s^2 + (M_w Z_p - M_y Z_q) s + M_w Z u_0 - M_y Z u_0}{s^2 - (M_q + Z_w) s + M_u u_0 - M_y Z q + M_y Z w}
\]

(5)
It is noticed that Equations (5 and 7) represent the two degrees of freedom short period approximation for the vehicle dynamics. Also, Equations (4 and 8) represent the two degrees of freedom Dutch roll approximation while equation (6) with the two equations (4 and 8) represent the three degrees of freedom Dutch roll approximation [1, 2, 3 and 4].

2. Choice of trim conditions

Before designing an autopilot, the points on the trajectory at which the designer needs to investigate the performance of the missile must be chosen. The trim points should be at different flight conditions during the rocket motor powered and unpowered stages to avoid repeating the design points [3]. In order to select the design points, the Mach number and altitude must be plotted with the flight time, or instead of them the dynamic pressure can be introduced with the change of flight time and trajectory as shown in Fig. 2.

![Figure 2. Change of dynamic pressure and altitude during flight](image-url)
As shown in Fig.1:

- At the first seconds the change in altitude and dynamic pressure is almost small.
- The dynamic pressure reaches its maximum value at the end of powered phase at time (t=13.05 sec).
- The dynamic pressure decreases at the beginning of the unpowered phase.
- Before the altitude reaches summit and at time (t=60sec), Qbar remains almost with constant value till time (t=120 sec) during passing through the summit.
- After 120 sec the dynamic pressure returns to increase due to increasing of atmospheric density and velocity till reaching the target point.

This discussion clarifies that the designing points can be chosen as follows:

2.1. During the powered phase:

- Choice of (1 sec.) point at which the missile leaves the launcher and the boost phase of the rocket engine thrust has been finished with the small and disturbed change in parameters have been passed[7][8].
- Due to rapid change in dynamic pressure and missile states during the powered phase, a point will be selected at every 5 sec.
- Thus, the points are (1 sec), (5 sec), (10sec) and (13.05 sec).

2.2. During the unpowered phase:

- Due to moderate change in dynamic pressure and missile parameters, this phase will be divided into regions with mid and final-points for each region are selected[9].
- First region at which dynamic pressure decreases, a point at the beginning is chosen (13.05 sec) and the points of (20 sec) at the mid and (40 sec) at the end.
- Second region at which dynamic pressure changes slightly, one point is sufficiently at the mid (90 sec).
- Third region at which dynamic pressure increases, a point at the beginning is chosen (90 sec), the mid-point at (150 sec) and the end at (180 sec).

Then the set of designing points are shown in Table 1 which clarify the design points located on the Mach number, altitude and dynamic pressure curves.

| point | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time [sec] | 1 | 5 | 10 | 13.05 | 20 | 40 | 90 | 150 | 180 |
| Mach | 0.188 | 1.1477 | 2.5 | 3.317 | 3.591 | 2.887 | 2.19 | 2.894 | 2.088 |
| Altitude [m] | 22 | 730 | 3021 | 5169 | 10598 | 22955 | 35461 | 18524 | 109 |
| Qbar [Pa] | 2518 | 85640 | 306545 | 408153 | 218575 | 19952 | 1742 | 40208 | 305857 |
3. Calculation of Aerodynamic Transfer Functions

Introducing the trim conditions at each point, the coefficients of the aerodynamic transfer functions can be calculated [4]. The trim condition is that point at which the missile flies without pitching moment, i.e. \((C_m=0)\). Due to symmetric shape of the airframe about \(C_{x_0}y_0\) plane, the trim state occurs when the flow is symmetric about this plane, i.e. at zero angle of attack \((\alpha=0)\) and this condition is valid only for zero angles of fins deflection. The values of non-dimensional aerodynamic derivatives and aerodynamic transfer functions at trim points are as in equation 6, 7, 8. Stability and control derivatives are derived as functions of Mach number, where both the angle of attack and the sideslip angle are equal zero. The aerodynamic derivatives and then the corresponding aerodynamic transfer functions are calculated at design points. From Datacom software, it will be acceptable if choosing between points (2) or (3) or (5) or (8). The dynamic parameters at points (3), (5) and (8) are very high, and then it will be suitable if choosing point (2). Finally, point (2) is chosen at time \((t=5\text{sec})\) to be the nominal design point [3,10,11].

4. Design of Roll Autopilot

The basic function of the roll autopilot is to roll-rate stabilize the missile, that is, to provide missile stabilization of roll attitude about the longitudinal axis. This is accomplished by sensing roll rate, and using the signal to deflect the fins by an amount sufficient to counteract roll disturbances. Moreover, the response of the system must be sufficiently fast to prevent the accumulation of significant roll angles. With skid-to-turn control, the missile is preferred to remain in the same roll orientation as at launch during the whole flight. If up-down guidance signals are sent to the elevator servos, these results in a vertical maneuver of the missile; and if left-right signals are sent to the rudder servos results in a horizontal maneuver. However, if there is no roll control, the missile has no tendency to remain in the same roll orientation [5][6]. In fact, it will tend to roll due to any of the following causes:

- Accidental assembling errors which cannot be eliminated entirely.
- Asymmetrical loading of the lifting and control surfaces in supersonic flight which occur when pitch and yaw angles of attack occur simultaneously and are not equal.
- Atmospheric disturbances especially if the missile is flying close to the ground.

A block diagram of the roll autopilot is shown in [5], which consists of two loops:

- The inner loop is designed to damp any undesired roll-rate utilizing a spring-restrained rate gyroscope for roll rate measurement, in conjunction with a specified compensator. This loop is designed in the form of stability augmentation system in order to increase the damping of the whole autopilot and damp any sudden roll.
- The outer loop is designed to track the roll angle of missile which is required to be zero utilizing a free vertical gyroscope as an attitude reference. This loop is designed in the form of control augmentation system in order to track the value of the commanded rolling angle[7][12].

The value of commanded rolling angle \(\phi_c\) is sent from the guidance computer, and then the controller collects the signals fed back from rate gyro and that one from the free gyro (or navigation computer) to properly sum them with the commanded signal \((\phi_c)\). The controller processes these summed signals to produce the control signal \((U_2)\) which actuates the hydro-electric actuator to obtain the corresponding aileron deflection angle \((\xi)\). In the simulation, the distribution law will be derived to show how these four actuator signals will be combined [8][13].
4.1. Inner loop design

Inner loop consists of some block diagrams as a subsystem each block represent apart and has a function in the loop to accumulate and achieve loop function as described before in the following, we will show every part in the loop and its transfer function.

\[ G_p = G_{\xi}^p = \frac{p}{\xi} = \frac{-319.7}{s + 0.4128} \]  

(9)

In addition, considering first-order lag actuator and unity gain rate-gyro yields: The main function of the actuator is to achieve the control command that used to make the loop function commanded from servo and deflect to damp the roll effect and its transfer function is:

\[ G_a = \frac{25}{s + 25}, \quad G_{rg} = 1 \]  

(10)

Then, the open-loop transfer function \( G_{op} \) is obtained:

\[ G_{op} = \frac{-7992.5}{s^2 + 25.4128s + 10.32} = \frac{-7992.5}{(s + 0.4128)(s + 25)} \]  

(11)

Here we find open loop transfer function and then study the time and frequency responses to study all system response and find a method for design. It's better to introduce negative feedback at
the summation point and negative gain at the forward path to obtain positive DC gain and make the action of the output signal in the same direction of the input signal[4][15].

Figure 5. Bode plot of inner-loop transfer function

From the figures above finding that the open loop response has frequency response: Gain margin=inf dB, Phase margin=16.2 deg. which mean that the system is unstable.

Time response parameter is: Over shoot = 63.7%, rise time=0.0131 sec, settling time=0.292 sec.

Since we have specific requirement in the inner loop function to do its function:

The performance requirements needed for the inner-loop are:

- Damping ratio 0.4 ≤ ζ ≤ 0.7.
- GM > 10 dB & PM > 45°.
- M.O. < 10%.
- Steady-state error e_{ss} < 0.01

The relative stability characteristics (PM > 45°), can be achieved by adding phases to the system shown in Fig. 5 and this can be done phase-lead compensator. Since the phase margin equals (16.2°) and the required phase margin is 45°, then at least 28.8° must be added to the system at gain crossover frequency to achieve the required stability margins. If the minimum phase has to be added is 30°, let (ϕ_m) = 30° and then (a) will be obtained by:

\[ a = \frac{1 + \sin(φ_m)}{1 - \sin(φ_m)} = \frac{1 + \sin(35)}{1 - \sin(35)} = 3.7 \]

The gain added in this case is:

\[ G_{\infty} = 20 \log_{10} a = 20 \log_{10} 3.7 = 11.36 \text{ dB} \]

The gain at (ω_m) equals half of G_{\infty}, i.e. The gain cross over frequency is =123 rad/sec

\[ G_m = G_{\infty} \frac{1}{2} = \frac{11.36}{2} = 5.68 \text{ dB} \]

Once (a) is determined, it is necessary only to determine the value of (T), and the design is in principle completed. This is accomplished by placing the corner frequencies of the phase-lead controller, (1/aT and l/T), such that (ϕ_m) is located at the new gain-crossover frequency (ω_g) so the phase margin of the compensated system is benefited by (ϕ_m).

Thus, in order to locate the new gain crossover at (ϕ_m) which is the geometric mean of (1/aT) and (1/T), it is needed to place (ω_m) at the frequency where the magnitude of the uncompensated (1/a)*G_{op}(jω) is -5.68dB. So that, adding the controller gain of 5.68 dB to this makes the magnitude curve go through 0 dB at ω_m. From Fig. 5, the uncompensated gain G_{op}(jω) equals -10dB, and the frequency ω_m equals 116 rad/s. Thus the parameter (T) is given by[9][16]:

---

**Figure 6.** Step response of the uncompensated system
Now, the transfer function of the phase-lead controller becomes:

\[ T = \frac{1}{\omega_n \sqrt{a}} = \frac{1}{123\sqrt{3.7}} = 0.00423 \]

The forward-path transfer function of the compensated system is:

\[ G = G_c G_{op} = \frac{29551.5(s + 64)}{s^3 + 261.813s^2 + 6017.92s + 2439.65} \]

The frequency response shows that the phase margin of the compensated system is actually 46.7°. Checking the time-domain performance of the compensated system yields the following results:

- M.O. = 26.2%
- Rise time \( t_r = 0.00953 \) sec.
- Settling time \( t_s = 0.0433 \) sec.

![Figure 7](image1.png)  
**Figure 7.** The frequency response for the inner loop  

![Figure 8](image2.png)  
**Figure 8.** The time response

| a    | T    | Gain margin (GM) | Phase margin (PH) | Overshoot | Rise time | Settling time | Corner frequency |
|------|------|------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|
| -    | -    | \( \infty \)    | 16.2deg           | 63.7%     | 0.0131    | 0.292         | 87HZ            |
| 3.7  | 0.00423 | \( \infty \)    | 46.7deg           | 26.7%     | 0.00956   | 0.0519        | 123HZ           |
| 10   | 0.000157 | \( \infty \)    | 63.7deg           | 13.1%     | 0.00953   | 0.0433        | 157HZ           |

A comparative analysis has been conducted to evaluate the proposed design approach and ensure the most suitable compensator that ensure high performance while preserving the system stability.
during the flight. The gain margin here in the inner loop is not a main parameter. Time response parameter is more important here[17].

![Figure 9. Time and frequency response comparison with and without compensator](image)

This loop includes integrator factor which makes the whole system of type-1 and the steady-state error of the whole system equals to zero[10][6]. The block diagram of the outer loop is shown in fig.9.

![Figure 10. Block diagram of roll outer loop.](image)

The value of free gyro gain $G_{fg}$ equals unity and the transfer function of the feedback inner loop is:

$$G = G_{c1} G_{op} = \frac{79925(s + 64)}{s^3 + 662.4s^2 + 16198.3s^2 + 6573.84}$$

The forward-path transfer function $G_{fp}$:

$$G_{fp} = \frac{79925(s + 64)}{s^4 + 662.4s^3 + 16198.3s^2 + 6573.84s}$$

The integrator in the loop is to make steady state error equal zero that's required to the outer loop to do its function. so we here instead of using PI controller we use P controller only to obtain our required response.
Here we show the effect of value of P controller and outer loop design for roll autopilot design for our missile. First, we take value of controller gain with equal one and then calculate response and control if we will increase value or no. Controller gain = K and K=1 (unity gain of controller).

![Figure 11. System time and frequency response of all system at gain K=1](image)

The results obtained with K=1 clarifies that:

- Gain margin = 52.6 dB
- Gain crossover frequency = 1 [rad/s]
- M.O. = 0%
- \(t_r = 2.19\) sec
- \(t_s = 3.91\) sec.

The gain margin and phase margin are very large and this makes the system to be over damped as shown in [7]. In order to reduce the gain and phase margin, the gain can be increased and this will decrease the damping ratio and decrease the value of rise time and settling time. The two imaginary poles have damping ratio 0.707 at gain K=42.8.

The ramp error \(e_r\) is expressed as:

\[
e_r = \frac{1}{k_v}
\]

Where \(k_v\) is the velocity error constant and equals to:

\[
k_v = \lim_{s \to 0} sG_f = \lim_{s \to 0} \frac{79925(s + 64)K}{s^3 + 662.4s^2 + 16198s + 6573.84} = \frac{5115200K}{6573840} = 0.778K
\]

Then for ramp error \(e_r\) to be less than 0.02 i.e.:

\[
\frac{1}{0.778K} < 0.02 \Rightarrow K > \frac{1}{0.01556} \Rightarrow K > 64
\]

Hence, changing the gain starting from K = 65 till obtaining the required stability margins and time response characteristics. The values of parameters with change of K after some trials to change the gain value to obtain required response we at the final choose value of gain controller equal(k=90).

The results obtained with K=90 clarifies that:

- Gain margin = 13.6 dB
- Phase margin = 48.5°
• Gain crossover frequency = 244 [rad/s]
• Phase crossover frequency = 98 [rad/s]
• M.O. = 17.6%
• \( t_r = 0.0129 \) sec.

Figure 12. System time and frequency response of all system at gain K=90

Figure 13. The block diagram of roll autopilot

5. Evaluation of designed roll autopilot

If a closed-loop system remains stable in the face of uncertainties, then the system is said to possess stability robustness. If the performance of a closed-loop system in the face of uncertainties is acceptable, then that system is said to possess performance robustness. Robustness, both stability and performance, can be tested for quite simply by investigating system response at each design point using the designed controller. The structure of the roll autopilot is the same for all design points except for the roll rate due aileron deflection transfer function \( G_\xi^p \). The forward path transfer function \( G_{fp} \) of the autopilot is:

\[
G_{fp} = \frac{-2250(1 + 0.157s)G_\xi^p}{s[(s + 25)(1 + 0.0157s) - 25(1 + 0.157s)G_\xi^p]}
\]

We can also test our controller at any trim point and then check stability at this point to check that the controller is valid and effective and reliable at all points on flight curve.
6. Conclusion

In this paper, we proposed an efficient and simple procedure for designing roll autopilot control system starting from the 6DOF model for surface to surface missile which introduces high dynamics that makes the controller design is a challenging problem. The linearization of the model is fulfilled for designing a proper controller as well as this work presented a procedure for choosing the operating points around which the system behavior is almost linear based on the dynamic pressure as presented in section 3 and Fig. 2., 9 points have been chosen. The paper also introduced the design steps to obtain optimal controller at all trim points in the inner loop to make it stable utilizing lead compensator based on time response parameters (maximum overshoot, rise time and settling time) as well as frequency response parameters (gain and phase margins). Due to integrator in the outer loop we use proportional controller instead of proportional-integrator (PI)controller. A simulation is carried out for testing the designed controller under Matlab platform for testing the proposed controller design which presented good efficiency, robustness and performance for different design points and different flight conditions. The presented procedure presented advantages of simplicity of design beside the availability for implementation in real world applications with low processing complexity which made it an efficient approach for design roll autopilot. The work in this paper can be extended by integrating the designed controllers into a gain scheduling controller and also mapping the designed controller to digital form which made the design more reliable for implementation on embedded computers.

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