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Passive control of the flutter instability on a two-degrees-of-freedom system with pseudoelastic shape-memory alloy springs.

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Abstract. A passive control of aeroelastic instabilities on a two-degrees-of-freedom (dofs) system is considered here using shape memory alloys (SMA) springs in their pseudo-elastic regime. SMA present a solid-solid phase change that allow them to face strong deformations (~ 10%); in the pseudo-elastic regime, an hysteresis loop appears in the stress-strain relationship which in turn gives rise to an important amount of dissipated energy. This property makes the SMA a natural candidate for damping undesired vibrations in a passive manner. A 2-dofs system is here used to model the classical flutter instability of a wing section in an uniform flow. The SMA spring is selected on the pitch mode in order to dissipate energy of the predominant motion. A simple model for the SMA hysteresis loop is introduced, allowing for a quantitative study of the important parameters to optimize in view of an experimental design.

1 Introduction

Aeroelastic instabilities are an important issue in aeronautics, especially regarding the wing motions. Indeed, for a coupled system airflow - flexible structure, like aircraft wing, turbojet or bridge, a limit velocity exists above which the flexible structure cannot evacuate the energy received from the airflow anymore, then giving rise to strong or even fatal deformations. These instabilities, usually described under the generic term flutter instability, result from interaction between aerodynamic, inertial and elastic forces [1]. In this contribution, we focus on a passive control device for mitigating the flutter instability by using springs composed of shape memory alloys (SMA). In their pseudo-elastic regime, SMA are known for showing the ability of dissipating an important amount of energy thanks to the hysteresis loop appearing in their stress-strain relationship, and has thus already been used in numerous applications ranging from civil engineering, aeronautics to medical industry [2,3]. Recent contributions have considered the dynamical responses of SMA springs from the theoretical viewpoint [4–6] in order to properly quantify the most proeminent features of the vibrations of simple single dof systems. Experimentally, a torsion pendulum has been recently used in order to clearly exhibit the soften-
We consider a pseudo-static motion, i.e. the airfoil speed $\dot{h}$ is not neglected as compared to the upstream air-speed $U$. Lagrange equations lead to the following dynamical system:

$$\begin{bmatrix}
m S_\alpha & \dot{h} \\
S_\alpha & I_\alpha
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
\dot{\tilde{\alpha}} \\
\tilde{\alpha}
\end{bmatrix} +
\begin{bmatrix}
\frac{4}{2} p U S C_{L,\alpha} & 0 \\
-\frac{4}{2} p U S C_{L,\alpha} & 0
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
\dot{\tilde{\alpha}} \\
\tilde{\alpha}
\end{bmatrix} +
\begin{bmatrix}
K_0 & \frac{4}{2} p U^2 S C_{L,\alpha} \\
0 & K_0 - \frac{4}{2} p U^2 S C_{L,\alpha}
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
\dot{h} \\
h
\end{bmatrix} = 0 \quad (1)$$

The flutter velocity $U_f$, for which the flutter instability occurs, is determined from (1). Assuming that the airfoil motion is harmonic, $h = \tilde{h} \exp(pt)$ and $\alpha = \tilde{\alpha} \exp(pt)$ with $p \in \mathbb{C}$, replacing in Eq. (1) one finds

$$A \begin{bmatrix}
\dot{\tilde{h}} \\
\tilde{h}
\end{bmatrix} = 0,$$

with

$$A = \begin{bmatrix}
mp^2 + \frac{4}{2} p U S C_{L,\alpha} p + K_0 & S_\alpha p^2 + \frac{4}{2} p U^2 S C_{L,\alpha} \\
S_\alpha p^2 - \frac{4}{2} p U S C_{L,\alpha} p & I_\alpha p^2 + K_0 - \frac{4}{2} p U^2 S C_{L,\alpha}
\end{bmatrix} \quad (2)$$

Eq. (2) has non trivial solutions for $\det(A) = 0$. This yields a polynomial of the fourth order in the variable $p$, the solutions of which are plotted in Fig. 2. $U_f$ is found as soon as the real part of a root crosses zero and becomes positive. An example is given in Fig. 2 which has been computed using the parameter values of Table 3. The critical flutter velocity is found for that case as $\Theta_f \approx 0.87$, where $\Theta$ is a reduced velocity such that $\Theta = \frac{U}{p} \sqrt{\frac{K_0}{K_0}}$ (see section 3).

2.2 SMA model

The SMA spring is assumed to behave in a pseudo-elastic manner, which is briefly recalled in Fig. 3. This nonlinear behaviour is characterized by a solid-solid phase change between two different states. The first one is called austenite, is stable at large temperatures and is the natural state of the spring at rest. The microstructure of the austenite phase is also sketched in Fig. 3. When deformed, the microstructure of the SMA turns into a new phase, energetically stable at small temperatures, and for which the microstructure is now oriented, called the martensite phase. The points in the stress-strain space where the transformations start and finish are usually denoted with the subscripts s (start) and f (finish), so that for instance $M_s$ refers to the point where the martensitic transformation has been fully accomplished in the SMA structure. The path followed in the stress-strain relationship is not the same when the material is charged or discharged, thus an hysteresis loop appears as illustrated in Fig. 3. This hysteretic behaviour is the most salient feature of the pseudo-elastic behaviour of SMAs. The dissipated energy during a cycle is proportional to the area of the hysteresis loop so that the more the loop area is large, the more energy is prone to be dissipated in the device.

The nonlinear behaviour of single dof SMAs can be derived from a general, three-dimensional model inferred from thermodynamical laws and then reduced by considering ad-hoc assumptions, see e.g. [6]. In this contribution, a simple heuristic model is used instead as it has the capacity to retrieve the main features of the dynamical behaviour within a light computational framework. It is built on the behaviour sketched in Fig. 3 by approximating each part of the diagram by a linear relationship. An internal auxiliary variable playing the role of the fraction of martensite is defined so as to keep the memory of the precedent state of the material in a dynamical simulation. For simplification, it is assumed that the slope of the purely austenitic and purely martensitic phases are the same, as well as the slopes during the reverse or transverse transformations, so that the main characteristics of the SMA are defined by $K_1$ and $K_2$ only as shown in Fig. 3. It is also assumed that the behaviour of the spring is symmetric in traction and compression. Internal loops are described following the sketch in Fig. 3. The SMA is then fully described with the following set of parameters illustrated in Fig. 3: $K_1, K_2, A_f, h_f$ and $H$. With these parameters, the loop area is equal to

![Fig. 2. Real (solid lines) and imaginary (dotted lines) parts of the solutions of the eigenvalue problem for Eq. (1) given as $\det(A) = 0$, with $A$ defined in Eq. (2). Parameters of the problem listed in Table 3. $\Theta$ is a reduced velocity (see text).](image2.png)

![Fig. 3. Pseudo-elastic behaviour of SMA and its microstructure for each phase.](image3.png)
on the critical parameter values, the flutter speed
Kutta scheme. The initial condition is generally prescribed
have been selected according to [8], they are listed in Table 3.

| $r_o$ | $\mu$ | $x_o$ | $\Omega$ | $\gamma$ | $C_{L,a}$ |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 0.5  | 1/10$\pi$ | 0.2  | 0.5  | 0.4  | 2$\pi$ |

Table 1. Non dimensional aeroelastic parameters.

$h_i H \sqrt{1 + K_1^2 \cos(\arctan(1/K_1) + \arctan(K_2))}$. Hence
After the flutter instability, the wing experiences large-
orders of magnitude. The control parameters of this loop are

The aeroelastic parameters for the two-dofs system have
in the torsional motion, whereas the flexural spring
left unchanged with a linear behaviour law.

2.3 Final model

The final model with a SMA torsional spring in order to
to control the pitch mode is derived by inserting the nonlinear
behaviour of the SMA spring on the second equation of (1).
It reads:

$$
\begin{align*}
\begin{bmatrix}
m S_o \\
S_o I_o \\
K_h & \frac{1}{2} \rho U^2 S C_{L,a} & 0 \\
0 & -\frac{1}{2} \rho U^2 S C_{L,a} & 0
\end{bmatrix}
\begin{bmatrix}
h \\
\dot{\alpha} \\
\dot{\alpha}
\end{bmatrix}
&=
\begin{bmatrix}
0 \\
-\frac{1}{2} \rho U^2 S C_{L,a} (\alpha)
\end{bmatrix},
\end{align*}
$$

(3)

where $F_{SMA}^t$ is the nonlinear restoring force of the SMA
depicted in Fig. 3.

The problem is then reduced to a nondimension system of
equations

$$
\begin{align*}
\begin{bmatrix}
1 & x_o & r_o & \alpha''(\alpha) \quad y''(\alpha) \\
x_o & r_o & x_o & \alpha'(\alpha) \quad 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & \gamma
\end{bmatrix}
&=
\begin{bmatrix}
\mu C_{L,a} \Omega & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & -\mu \gamma C_{L,a} & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -F_{NL}^a(\alpha)
\end{bmatrix},
\end{align*}
$$

(4)

with

$$
\begin{align*}
y &= \frac{h}{\beta}, \\
\tau &= \frac{K_h}{\gamma}, \\
\lambda &= \frac{\Omega}{\gamma}, \\
r_o &= \sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{\mu}}, \\
\mu &= \frac{\rho b S}{\gamma}, \\
x_o &= \frac{S}{\gamma}, \\
\gamma &= \frac{\rho}{\gamma} \sqrt{\frac{1}{\gamma}}, \\
\Omega &= \frac{\sqrt{\epsilon \gamma}}{\gamma}, \\
f_{NL}^a &= \frac{F_{SMA}^a}{m \gamma x_o}.
\end{align*}
$$

3 Results and Discussion

The aeroelastic parameters for the two-dofs system have
been selected according to [8], they are listed in Table 3.

Fig. 4. Evolution of the heave $h$ (blue line) and pitch $\alpha$ (green
line) as function of time, for three different reduced velocities: (a) $\theta = 0.86$ (b) $\theta = 0.91$ (c) $\theta = 0.93$. The curve are normalized to
their maximal value.

3.1 Influence of SMA parameters

The key parameter in order to optimize the passive con-
trol of the flutter instability is obviously $\theta_c$, indeed the
larger $\theta_c$, the larger the range of flow velocities for which
the LCO amplitude is controlled. However, due to intrinsic
physical behaviour of the SMA, the loop area cannot be
selected as large as theoretically desired. An important fea-
ture is given by $h_i$, indeed the smaller is $h_i$, the sooner the
martensitic transformation will be activated so that the en-
ergy dissipation will occur rapidly. Let us investigate our
last SMA parameter which is the ratio $K_1/K_2$, the LCO
amplitude is plotted vs the airflow speed in Fig.5 for differ-
tent ratio $K_1/K_2$. These calculations are made by increasing
and then decreasing the airflow speed step by step, a cubic
stiffness is added to the model in order to saturate the sys-
tem after the flutter instability. The curve are normalized to
their maximal value.
When $\Theta$ is decreasing, the LCO remains after $\Theta < \Theta_f$ for a large ratio $K_f/K_s$ and small $h_1$.

3.2 Energy exchange

From section 2.1 the total energy reads

$$E_{tot} = \frac{1}{2} \left( m \dot{h}^2 + I_\alpha \dot{\alpha}^2 + K_h \dot{h}^2 \right) + S_\alpha \dot{h} \dot{\alpha}.$$ 

Then the nondimensional energy is

$$e_{tot} = \frac{1}{2} \left( g \dot{y}^2 + \alpha_\omega^2 \dot{\alpha}^2 + K_h \dot{h}^2 + \alpha_\omega^2 \dot{y}^2 \right) + x_\alpha \dot{y} \dot{\alpha}. \quad (6)$$

Its evolution is plotted in Fig. 6 for system with and without SMA, for an airflow velocity $\Theta$ such that: $\Theta_f < \Theta < \Theta_c$. For each cycle the energy increase of the system without SMA corresponds exactly to the energy dissipated by the SMA in its internal loop (for example right after the system with SMA enters in its first internal loop this loop dissipates $1.198 \times 10^{-4}$ and during this time the system without SMA grew $1.189 \times 10^{-4}$). Hence in this regime, the energy saturates to a finite value.

4 Conclusion

Whether one want to harvest energy or avoid devastating instabilities, the control of aeroelastic flutter is a critical issue. An option is discussed here by using SMA springs in pseudo-elastic behaviour, in order to use the potential of dissipation of such materials. A numerical study with a simple heuristic model for the behaviour of the SMA has shown that the amplitude of the LCO after the flutter velocity can be significantly reduced by adding a SMA spring on the pitch mode of the two-dofs aeroelastic system. However, once the damping capacity of the SMA is reached, the LCO amplitudes are larger than those obtained with a simple cubic spring. These findings have to be further investigated by considering different important effects of the SMA that have not been taken into account, in particular the dependence of the hysteresis loop on the frequency, as well as the asymmetry of the material behaviour. These preliminary findings will be confronted to experiments in order to confirm the potential of the SMA as a passive device for controlling the flutter instability. Preliminary results with aeroelastic parameters fitted to the experiments reported in [9] show an important increase of $\Theta_c$ so that the LCO amplitudes should be controlled on a larger range of flow velocities.

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