

# Rational approximations to design controllers for unstable processes, including dead-time

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**Abstract** – This paper addresses the problem of designing complex controllers for unstable industrial processes with transport delay under constraints on robustness and performance. The solution to the control design problem is obtained in a non-rational form which is rationalized by using various methods. The paper also presents a comparative analysis of different approximation techniques. By means of numerical simulations it has been shown that the proposed methods lead to adequate performance and robustness indices.

**Keywords** – Rational approximations, Complex controller, Robustness, Frequency domain.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The paper considers the problem of designing complex controllers of unstable industrial processes including transport delays, observing the restrictions on performance and robustness. When designing complex controllers for unstable processes with transport delays, a time-delay may also appear within the transfer function of the controller  $C(s)$ . Thus, after the design phase, the controller transfer function is not rational and one often encounters internal instability. This internal instability in the controller appears as one or more unstable dipoles, i.e. pairs of poles and zeros at the same points at the right half-plane of the  $s$ -plane. Elimination of the internal instability by means of suitable rational approximations of the controller transfer function is an intrinsic step in solving the control problem under consideration, and thus represents a key motivator for the present paper. Several methods of rational approximation of  $C(s)$  are considered in the present paper.

It is well known that nearly 94% of feedbacks in industry is realized by PI/PID controllers [1], while this percentage is over 97% in petrochemical industry [2, 3]. Owing to this high significance of PI/PID, the efficient and simple procedures for tuning of parameters of industrial controllers have been developed [4, 5], as well as the optimization procedures [6-19] for designing PI/PID with minimum  $IAE$ , observing the restrictions on robustness, which meets the criterion presented in [22].

In addition to the previously mentioned methods, there are methods for designing PID controllers derived from IMC controller [23-25]. For IMC method of designing controllers there is one adjustable parameter  $\lambda$  which, for a narrow class of processes, directly influences the time constant of the closed

loop system. Response to a Heaviside disturbance of the process controlled by a controller obtained by IMC method is dependent on the dominant dynamics of the process. E.g. if the process has dominant oscillatory dynamics, responses to any disturbance will be oscillatory.

The problem of control of complex processes (multiple instabilities, multiple astatics, dominant time delay) can not be solved adequately by applying PID controller, the basic reason for developing methods of designing complex controllers. For the purpose of accomplishing adequate indices of robustness and performance for a wide class of stable and unstable processes new methods [26-29] have been developed for determination of complex controllers based on modified IMC structure. However, the rules of design of complex controllers by applying these methods have not been defined for the general form of process transfer function  $G_p(s)$ , but they are defined for specific classes of processes  $G_p(s)$  [26-29]. Controller  $C(s)$  and its rational approximation defined in [31] is designed for the general form of the process transfer function  $G_p(s) = H(s)\exp(-\tau s)/Q(s)$  under restrictions on robustness and sensitivity to measurement noise.

Adjustable parameters of a complex controller  $C(s)$  are time constant  $\lambda$  and factor of relative damping  $\zeta$  of dominant poles of the process in closed loop with controller  $C(s)$ , as in [6]. Adjusting of parameter  $\zeta$  allows achieving compromise between indices of robustness and performance, which is not possible for complex controllers designed by IMC [23-25] or by modified IMC [26-29].

Through a series of simulations of a wide class of industrial processes a comparison of different methods of rational approximation of  $C(s)$  in order to achieve an adequate index performance/robustness and internal stability of the controller has been obtained.

## II. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SEVERAL METHODS OF RATIONAL APPROXIMATION OF INTERNALLY UNSTABLE CONTROLLERS

The control structure with  $C(s)$  controller is presented in Fig. 1.  $G_{ff}(s)$  describes the feed forward from the set point  $y_{sp}$  to control signal  $u$  and will not be considered here. For a wide class of transfer functions of industrial processes is  $G_p(s) = H(s)e^{-\tau s}/Q(s)$ , where  $Q(s)$  and  $H(s)$  are polynomials

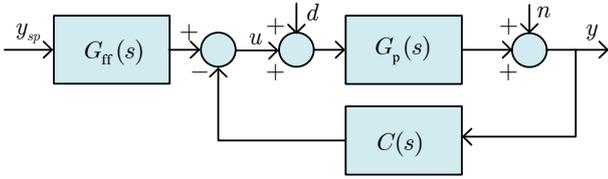


Figure 1. Control structure with controller  $C(s)$

of the order  $\deg Q(s) = n \geq \deg H(s) = 0$  and  $H(0) \neq 0$ . Complementary sensitivity function of the controlled process  $G_p(s)$  of Fig. 1 is given by relation  $T_p(s) = L(s)/(1+L(s))$  [32], the function of feedback transfer being of the form  $L(s) = C(s)G_p(s)$ . Let the desired complementary sensitivity function  $T(s)$  is given by

$$T_p = T(s) = \frac{N(s)e^{-\tau s}}{P(s)}, \quad (1)$$

where:  $N(s) = 1 + \sum_{j=1}^n \eta_j s^j$ ,  $P(s) = (\lambda^2 s^2 + 2\zeta\lambda s + 1)^n$ ,  $\zeta \in O(1)$ ,  $n \in \mathbb{N}$  and adjustable parameteris  $\lambda > 0$ ,  $\eta_j \in \mathbb{R}$ ,  $j = \overline{1, n}$ , determined on the basis of desired performance of the closed loop system. From relation (1) controller  $C(s)$  for process transfer function  $G_p(s)$  for maximum attenuation of disturbance  $d$  or  $n$  is defined as

$$C(s) = \frac{1}{G_p(s)} \frac{T(s)}{1-T(s)} = \frac{1}{H(s)} \frac{N(s)Q(s)}{F(s)}, \quad (2)$$

where  $F(s) = P(s) - e^{-\tau s} N(s)$ , [30].

In general, parameters  $\overline{\eta_1, \eta_n}$  are determined to achieve cancelling of poles of process  $G_p(s)$  and zeros of function  $F(s)$ , [29], where for unstable processes an internal instability arises in complex controller (2).

Free parameters of complex controller (2) are time constant  $\lambda > 0$  and factor of relative damping  $\zeta > 0$  of the closed loop system, as in [6,30]. Damping factor introduced in the complex controller design plays a significant role in accomplishing a compromise between the performance and robustness indeces. It should be mentioned that parameter  $\zeta$  affects sensitivity to the measurement noise at high frequencies  $M_n$ ,

$$M_n = \lim_{\omega \rightarrow \infty} \left| \frac{C(i\omega)}{1+C(i\omega)G_p(i\omega)} \right|, \quad (3)$$

In order to accomplish a compromise between the desired performance IAE and  $M_s = \max_{\omega} |1/(1+L(i\omega))|$ , time constant  $\lambda$  should fullfil condition

$$\max_{\omega, \lambda} |1/(1+C(i\omega)G_p(i\omega))| = M_s. \quad (4)$$

Given  $\zeta$  and  $M_s$  (4), time constant  $\lambda$  is determined by solving two nonlinear algebraic equations

$$|1+C(i\omega)G_p(i\omega)|^2 - 1/M_s^2 = 0, \quad (5)$$

$$\partial(|1+C(i\omega)G_p(i\omega)|^2)/\partial\omega = 0, \quad (6)$$

as in [6, 30]. The initial choice of parameter  $\zeta$  should be  $\zeta=1$  and parameter  $\lambda$  from the vicinity of the estimated transport delay. By determining time constant  $\lambda$  for different values of parameter  $\zeta$ , one achieves compromise between values IAE,  $M_n$ , and  $M_p = \max_{\omega} |L(i\omega)/(1+L(i\omega))|$ , under condition that in the case of an unstable process  $G_p(s)$  the unstable dipole in controller  $C(s)$  is removed.

In order to remove the unstable dipole, if it exists in the controller, several methods found in the literature reduce to application of Padé approximation.

#### A. Padé approximation of controller $C(s)$

Padé approximation is one of the most frequent rational approximations met in the control systems and wider. It can be calculated as follows [26,31]

$$C(s) \approx \hat{C}_{N/N}^{LZG}(s) = \frac{\sum_{j=0}^N d_j s^j}{s \sum_{i=0}^{N-1} c_i s^i}, \quad (7)$$

where  $N$  is the user-specified controller order to achieve the desirable performance specification for the load disturbance rejection, and  $c_i$  and  $d_j$  are determined by the following two linear matrix equations.

$$\begin{bmatrix} d_0 \\ d_1 \\ \vdots \\ d_N \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} b_0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ b_1 & b_0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \cdots & \vdots \\ b_N & b_{N-1} & b_{N-2} & \cdots & b_1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} c_0 \\ c_1 \\ \vdots \\ c_{N-1} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (8)$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} b_N & b_{N-1} & b_{N-2} & \cdots & b_2 \\ b_{N+1} & b_N & b_{N-1} & \cdots & b_3 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \cdots & \vdots \\ b_{2N-2} & b_{2N-3} & b_{2N-4} & \cdots & b_N \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} c_1 \\ c_2 \\ \vdots \\ c_{N-1} \end{bmatrix} = - \begin{bmatrix} b_{N+1} \\ b_{N+2} \\ \vdots \\ b_{2N-1} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (9)$$

where  $b_i = f^{(i)}(0)/i!$ ,  $i = \overline{1, 2N-1}$  are the Maclaurin coefficients

of  $f(s) = sC(s)$  and  $c_0$  should be taken as  $c_0 = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } c_i \geq 0 \\ -1, & \text{if } c_i < 0 \end{cases}$ .

In this way, under certain conditions on parameters  $\lambda$ ,  $\zeta$ , and  $N$ , the internal instability of controller  $C(s)$  can be removed. However, the obtained controller  $\hat{C}_{N/N}^{LZG}(s)$  is not always an adequate approximation of  $C(s)$  thus index robustness/performance could be impaired. For this reason in [29, 30] other methods of rational approximation are met.

The method of rational approximation of  $C(s)$  applied in [29] in essence also makes use of Padé approximation in the

following way. The obtained controller  $C(s)$  from (2) is first decomposed in the form

$$C(s) = \frac{N(s)Q^-(s)}{H(s)P(s)} \frac{Q^+(s)}{\left(1 - \frac{N(s)e^{-\tau s}}{P(s)}\right)}, \quad (10)$$

where:  $Q^+(s)$  and  $Q^-(s)$  are polynomials whose roots represent poles of process  $G_p(s)$  in the right and left half planes of the  $s$ -plane respectively. Then, Padé approximation is applied only to a part of the preceding expression  $D(s) = Q^+(s) / \left(1 - \frac{N(s)e^{-\tau s}}{P(s)}\right)$ , taking care that the obtained controller is causal, i.e.

$$\hat{C}^{LG}(s) = \frac{N(s)Q^-(s)}{H(s)P(s)} \hat{D}_{N/M}(s), \quad \hat{D}_{N/M}(s) = \frac{\sum_{j=0}^N b_j s^j}{s \sum_{i=0}^M a_i s^i}. \quad (11)$$

Similarly in [30], in order to avoid calculation of Padé approximation of complex functions, the use is made of the known Padé approximation of function  $e^{-\tau s}$  in controller  $C(s)$  followed by factorization and elimination of unstable dipoles to remove internal instability of the controller. Since Padé approximation of function  $e^{-\tau s}$  in the vicinity of  $s=0$  is given in the form

**Process  $G_{p1}$ .**

$$\hat{C}_{4/4}^{STG}(s) = \frac{2.0488(s^2 + 3.6778s + 6.4594)(s + 2.3222)(s + 0.0711)}{(s^2 + 0.3444s + 6.8416)(s + 8.7177)}, \quad \hat{C}_{4/4}^{LZG}(s) = \frac{28.7970(s + 2.7760)(s + 0.0711)(s^2 + 4.5789s + 9.0689)}{s(s + 220.299)(s^2 + 0.1638s + 6.3867)}$$

$$\hat{C}_{6/6}^{LG}(s) = \frac{9.6209(s + 2.6822)(s + 0.3818)(s + 0.3815)(s^2 + 4.3998s + 8.6936)(s + 0.0711)}{s(s + 0.3817)^2(s + 68.06)(s^2 + 0.1873s + 6.3972)}$$

**Process  $G_{p2}$ .**

$$\hat{C}_{4/4}^{STG}(s) = \frac{6.4835(s + 0.0154)(s^2 + 5s + 8.3333)(s + 2)}{s(s^2 + 0.0370s + 12.6343)(s + 7.7176)}, \quad \hat{C}_{4/4}^{LZG}(s) = \frac{92.2837(s + 1.9890)(s + 0.0155)(s^2 + 7.2907s + 17.0647)}{s(s + 279.8)(s^2 - 0.4117s + 10.099)}$$

$$\hat{C}_{7/7}^{LG}(s) = \frac{242.8705(s^2 + 1.1839s + 0.3505)(s^2 + 7.4912s + 17.5525)(s + 0.5807)(s + 2)(s + 0.0155)}{s(s + 0.5882)^3(s + 760.46719)(s^2 - 0.4209s + 10.1131)}$$

**Process  $G_{p3}$ .**

$$\hat{C}_{3/3}^{STG}(s) = \frac{31.1548(s + 10)(s^2 + 0.5542s + 0.2037)}{s(s^2 + 17.3492s + 127.1133)}, \quad \hat{C}_{2/2}^{LZG}(s) = \frac{0.19065(2911.0054s^2 + 2309.2295s + 1108.7320)}{s(s + 190.6494)}, \quad \hat{C}_{N/N}^{LG}(s) \text{ none}$$

**Process  $G_{p4}$ .**

$$\hat{C}_{4/4}^{STG}(s) = \frac{100.7255(s^2 + 0.4604s + 0.2583)(s^2 + 20s + 133.3333)}{s(s + 23.0066)(s^2 + 6.4890s + 144.1208)}, \quad \hat{C}_{3/3}^{LZG}(s) = \frac{54.8760(s^2 + 0.4762s + 0.2695)(s + 12.8684)}{s(s^2 + 2.4488s + 172.6147)}$$

$$\hat{C}_{7/7}^{LG}(s) = \frac{49.2861(s^2 + 0.4604s + 0.2583)(s + 14.6555)(s^2 + 4.4854s + 5.170)(s^2 + 3.6172s + 3.2987)}{s(s + 2.0408)^4(s^2 + 1.9056s + 175.3277)}$$

On the basis of Table 1 and transfer functions of the obtained controllers, it can be concluded that controllers  $\hat{C}^{LG}(s)$  are of higher orders compared to those obtained by other methods, all having the same  $M_s$ . In addition, in the third example by applying LG method it was not possible to

$$e^{-\tau s} \approx \frac{B_M(s)}{A_N(s)} = \frac{\sum_{k=0}^M \frac{(M+N-k)!M!}{(M+N)!k!(M-k)!} (-\tau s)^k}{\sum_{k=0}^N \frac{(M+N-k)!N!}{(M+N)!k!(N-k)!} (\tau s)^k}, \quad (12)$$

and on the basis of relation (2) it follows

$$\hat{C}_{L/L}^{STG}(s) = \left( \frac{1}{H(s)} \underbrace{\frac{A_N(s)N(s)Q(s)}{(P(s)A_N(s) - N(s)B_M(s))}}_{\text{factorization and elimination of unstable dipoles}} \right), \quad (13)$$

therefore in the obtained controller  $\hat{C}_{L/L}^{STG}(s)$  there are no unstable dipoles.

### B. Simulation analysis

Comparison of the proposed methods for removal of internal instability in controller  $C(s)$ , (2), will be analyzed through four representative typical dynamic characteristics of unstable industrial processes including transport delay:

$$G_{p1} = \frac{4e^{-2s}}{4s-1}, \quad G_{p2} = \frac{e^{-1.2s}}{(s-1)(0.5s+1)},$$

$$G_{p3} = \frac{e^{-0.2s}}{s(s-1)}, \quad G_{p4} = \frac{2e^{-0.3s}}{(3s-1)(s-1)}.$$

The obtained controllers are:

determine the controller for the given  $M_s$ . Controllers of type  $\hat{C}^{LG}(s)$  and  $\hat{C}^{LZG}(s)$  obtained for the second process contain double unstable pole, but in control systems it is not recommendable that the controller itself is unstable since this impairs robustness of the control loop. Controller of type

$\hat{C}^{STG}(s)$  gives better results for processes having dominant transport delays compared to other two controller types. In design of the controller it is possible to include parameter  $\zeta$ , as in [30], in order to achieve better indices of performance and robustness.

TABLE I. THE RESULTS OBTAINED BY THE PROPOSED METHODS OF RATIONAL APPROXIMATION OF CONTROLLER C(S) FOR THE SAME VALUE OF  $M_s$  AND  $\zeta=1$ .

Process	Method	$\lambda$	$M_n$	IAE	$M_s$	$M_p$
$G_{p1}(s)$	$\hat{C}_{4/4}^{STG}(s)$	2.62	2.05	27.3	2.9	2.7
	$\hat{C}_{4/4}^{LZG}(s)$	2.62	29.0	27.3	2.9	2.7
	$\hat{C}_{6/6}^{LG}(s)$	2.62	9.62	27.3	2.9	2.7
$G_{p2}(s)$	$\hat{C}_{4/4}^{STG}(s)$	1.71	6.48	58.1	14	14.6
	$\hat{C}_{4/4}^{LZG}(s)$	1.71	92.3	58.1	14	14.6
	$\hat{C}_{7/7}^{LG}(s)$	1.71	243	58.1	14	14.6
$G_{p3}(s)$	$\hat{C}_{3/3}^{STG}(s)$	0.63	31.1	2.00	2.8	3
	$\hat{C}_{2/2}^{LZG}(s)$	0.47	555	0.90	2.8	3
	$\hat{C}^{LG}(s)$	-	-	-	-	-
$G_{p4}(s)$	$\hat{C}_{4/4}^{STG}(s)$	0.49	100	0.95	3.8	3.9
	$\hat{C}_{3/3}^{LZG}(s)$	0.48	54.8	0.91	3.8	3.9
	$\hat{C}_{7/7}^{LG}(s)$	0.49	49.3	0.96	3.8	3.9

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Design of controllers of unstable industrial processes including transport delays with restrictions on performance and robustness is of exceptional significance from the point of view of industry. The problem of control of complex processes (multiple instabilities, multiple astatics, dominant time delay) can not be adequately solved by using PID controllers, which is the basic reason for development of the methods for design of complex controllers. The conditions for a complex controller are that it is stable, of relatively lower order, and of adequate structure for practical realization. In this work three methods of rational approximation in the design of complex controllers have been analyzed. The presented comparative analysis and simulation gave the expected results.

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