COMPENSATION OF CAPACITIVE DIFFERENTIAL PRESSURE SENSOR USING MULTI LAYER PERCEPTRON NEURAL NETWORK

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Abstract - Capacitive differential pressure sensor (CPS), which converts an input differential pressure to an output current, is extremely used in different industries. Since the accuracy of CPS is limited due to ambient temperature variations and nonlinear dependency of input and output, compensation is necessary in industries that are sensitive to pressure measurement. This paper proposes a framework for designing of CPS compensation system based on Multi Layer Perceptron (MLP) neural network. Firstly, a test bench for a sample popular CPS is designed and implemented for data acquisition in a real environment. Then, the gathered data are used to train different MLPs as CPS compensation system which inputs are the output current of CPS and temperature value, and the output is compensated current or computed pressure. The experimental results for an ATP3100 smart capacitive pressure transmitter show the trained three layers MLP with Levenberg-Marquardt learning algorithm could effectively compensate the output against variation of temperature as well as nonlinear effects, and reduce the pressure measurement error to about 0.1% FS (Full Scale), over the temperature range of 5 ~ 60 °C.

Index terms: Capacitive pressure sensors, Levenberg-Marquardt training algorithm, Multi-Layer Perceptron, Temperature compensation.
I. INTRODUCTION

Pressure measuring plays an important role in many industries and applications such as biomedical pressure measurement, automobiles industries, and process control system [1]. The capacitive pressure sensor (CPS), in which the capacitance of a chamber changes based on the input pressure, finds extensive applications because of its low power consumption and high sensitivity. However, CPS highly nonlinear response characteristic results in some challenges, including on-chip interface, direct digital readout, and calibration. To overcome these challenges and compensate these nonlinearity effects, several techniques have been suggested. A switched-capacitor charge balancing technique, a ROM-based look-up table method and a nonlinear encoding scheme have been proposed. The problem of nonlinear response characteristics of a CPS further aggravates the situation when there is change in environmental condition. As the output of a CPS is dependent on applied pressure as well as temperature, when the ambient temperature changes frequently, the situation becomes very complicated and temperature compensation is necessary [2-3].

Among different compensating techniques, Artificial Neural Network (ANN) is widely applied to compensate the mentioned challenges and producing compensated read-out [4-11]. ANN has so strong ability for function approximation that it is used as sensor model and to compensate for the various nonlinear effects [12]. However, ANN also suffers from some drawbacks such as low convergence rate, being easy to fall into local minimum in training phase and weak generality in overtraining conditions [13].

Patra et al. [4] developed an approach for CPS modeling based on a functional link artificial neural network (FL-ANN) which achieves accuracy better than 1% FS (Full Scale), over the temperature range of −20 ~ 70 °C. Pramanik et al. [5] described an intelligent scheme using a Multi Layer Perceptron (MLP) neural network trained by back propagation (BP) that obtained an error reduction of approximately 98% for a CPS in the pressure range of 0 ~ 1 bar, over the temperature range of 25 ~ 80 °C. Dibi et al. [6] also used a MLP neural network to model and compensate CPS hysteresis output in order to extend the temperature range to -20 ~ 100 °C.

Hashemi et al. [7] modeled and compensated a CPS by a Radial Basis Function (RBF) neural network to achieve 1.4% and 2.9% RMSE (Root-Mean-Square Error) in modeling and compensation, respectively.
Futane et al. presented two CMOS analog ASIC designs of MLP neural networks for temperature-drift compensation of a piezoresistive micro-machined high resolution pressure sensor [8] and a piezoresistive micro-machined porous silicon pressure sensor [9], in which the errors for compensated sensors were reduced to better than 1% FS and 3.5% FS (based on conventional neuron model), over the temperature range of 0 ~ 70 °C, and 25 ~ 80 °C, respectively.

Hashemi et al. [10] also modeled and compensated the CPS using Support Vector Machine for Regression (SVR) method optimized by a Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) to achieve 1.0% and 2.4% RMSE in modeling and compensation, respectively. Zhou et al. [11] developed a single hidden layer feed forward neural network (SLFN) trained by extreme learning machine (ELM) as the calibration algorithm for the pressure drift. They achieved to 0.13% FS accuracy for a silicon piezoresistive pressure sensor over the temperature range of −40 to 85 °C.

This paper presents a framework for temperature as well as nonlinear effects compensating of CPS based on MLP neural networks. Based on the proposed framework, after selecting a pressure sensor, it is necessary to design and implement a test bench to gather a comprehensive data in different pressures and temperatures. Then the proposed compensating system which is based on MLP neural networks should be trained and validated using the gathered database. And finally, the best trained MLPs should be tested in real conditions to ensure a properly functioning of the compensated system.

This paper organized as follows: The next section presents a brief review on CPS model and operation. The third section introduces the proposed MLP-based compensating framework for CPS. The fourth section presents the proposed compensator for a sample CPS in details and compares the results with some other compensators, and the paper closes with a conclusion.

II. CAPACITIVE PRESSURE SENSOR MODEL

CPSs have lower power dissipation and higher sensitivity than other types of pressure sensors. A CPS senses input differential pressure due to the elastic deflection of its diaphragm. In the case of a simple structure, which is shown in Figure 1, this deflection is proportional to the applied differential pressure $\Delta p$, and the sensor capacitance $C(\Delta p)$ varies hyperbolically. Neglecting higher-order terms, $C(\Delta p)$ may be approximated as:
\[ C(\Delta p) = C_0 + \Delta C(\Delta p) = C_0 (1 + \gamma) \quad (1) \]

where \( C_0 \) is the sensor capacitance when \( \Delta p=0 \), \( \Delta C(\Delta p) \) is the change in capacitance due to applied differential pressure, \( \gamma = \Delta p_N (1 - \alpha) / (1 - \Delta p_N) \), \( \alpha \) is the sensitivity parameter which depends upon the geometrical structure of the sensor. \( \Delta p_N \) is the normalized applied differential pressure given by \( \Delta p_N = \Delta p / \Delta p_{\text{max}} \) and \( \Delta p_{\text{max}} \) is the maximum permissible input differential pressure.

The problem that is discussed in this paper is the dependency of CPS on temperature. The sensor capacitance is a function of the applied differential pressure and the ambient temperature \( T \). Assuming that the change in capacitance due to change in temperature is linear and dependent of the applied differential pressure, the CPS model may be expressed as:

\[ C(\Delta p, T) = C_0 f_1(T) + \Delta C(\Delta p, T_0) f_2(T), \quad (2) \]

where \( \Delta C(\Delta p, T_0) \) represents the change in capacitance due to applied differential pressure at the reference temperature \( T_0 \) as given in equation (1). The function \( f_1(T) \) and \( f_2(T) \) which are non-linear function of \( T \), could be linearized by first order estimation as:

\[ f_1(T) = 1 + \beta_1 (T - T_0) \]
\[ f_2(T) = 1 + \beta_2 (T - T_0), \quad (3) \]

where the coefficients \( \beta_1 \) and \( \beta_2 \) may have different values depending on the CPS chosen. The normalized capacitance of the CPS, \( C_N \) is obtained by dividing (2) by \( C_0 \) and may be expressed as:

\[ C_N = C(\Delta p, T) / C_0 = f_1(T) + \gamma f_2(T). \quad (4) \]

Equations (2) show that the output of a CPS is a non-linear function of temperature. It means that to measure pressure accurately by CPS, temperature compensation is also necessary [10].
In the other word, CPS equips with an internal circuits that produce current in output. After CPS calibration, which is performed based on lower and upper pressure limits, it is expected that the output current, $I_{\text{measured}}$, to be a linear function of the input differential pressure, $\Delta p$, as:

$$I_{\text{measured}} = \alpha \Delta p + \beta,$$  \hspace{1cm} (5)

where $\alpha$ and $\beta$ are two parameters that should be tuned in order to achieve the minimum error in pressure measurement [10]. In many applications, $I_{\text{measured}}$ is measured by a current measurement system and then, it is converted to the input differential pressure, $\Delta p$, as:

$$\Delta p = (I_{\text{measured}} - \beta) / \alpha,$$  \hspace{1cm} (6)

In converting the CPS output current to the input pressure using Equation (6), unfortunately, there is always an error that is based on linear approximation, which is presented in Equation (5), for nonlinear dependencies.

III. PROPOSED MLP-BASED COMPENSATION FRAMEWORK

Two main principles for MLP-based CPS compensation are characteristics of neural networks including: self-adaptive capacity, which is necessary for complicated nonlinear mapping, and training ability, which is suitable for adapting based on real data. As discussed in Section 2, the current output of a CPS is dependent on both pressure and temperature. The pressure dependency is normal for a CPS, but in the situation that CPS temperature changes, the CPS output does not indicate the exact pressure. By using the MLP neural network, the adverse effects of temperature as well as nonlinear dependencies on the CPS output is reduced and compensated. For a CPS that is equipped to MLP-based compensator, it is expected that the linear Equation (5) to be fully establish, independent of temperature variations and CPS nonlinear dependencies.

Figure 2 shows the first proposed setup for a CPS equipped with a MLP-based compensation that simulates the compensated output current, $I_{\text{compensated}}$. In this figure, the PT100 is a common calibrated temperature sensor which generates ambient temperature value, $T_{\text{measured}}$, in order to be one of the MLP input. After MLP training, it is expected that MLP output value, $I_{\text{compensated}}$, is not only temperature-invariant, but also fully linear respect to the input differential pressure, $\Delta p$, which is presented in Equation (5).
Figure 2. The first proposed setup for a CPS equipped with a MLP-based compensation which simulates the compensated output current.

In the proposed framework, the MLP training plays a major role in validity of the compensator performance. Figure 4 demonstrates the proposed training setup for the MLP used in the first proposed framework which is shown in Figure 2. In this setup, it is necessary to generate the error value, which is a difference between the real output of MLP, $I_{\text{compensated}}$, and the ideal value of CPS current output, $I_{\text{ideal}}$, based on the Equation (5). In order to compute $I_{\text{ideal}}$ based on the Equation (5), it is necessary to use an accurate input differential pressure, $\Delta p_{\text{measured}}$, which is measured by another calibrated and accurate pressure sensor, accurate PS, in the proposed setup which is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The proposed setup for training of MLP-based CPS compensation which simulates the compensated output current.
The previous setup generates the compensated output current, while in some applications, it is necessary to generate pressure value, instead of current, in the measurement system output. So the second framework is also proposed, which is shown in Figure 4, in which the MLP output simulates $\Delta p_{\text{measured}}$.

Figure 4. The second proposed setup for a CPS equipped with a MLP-based compensation which simulates the compensated pressure value

The only difference between two proposed frameworks is the MLP used in the second framework is trained to generate the compensated pressure value while in the first one the MLP is trained to generate the compensated corresponding current. Figure 5 also demonstrates the proposed training setup for the MLP used in the second proposed framework which is shown in Figure 4. In this setup, the generated error for MLP training is based on error between the generated pressure by MLP and the accurate PS which is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. The proposed setup for training of MLP-based CPS compensation which simulates the compensated output current
IV. USING COMPENSATION FRAMEWORK FOR A SAMPLE CPS

This section presents realization of proposed compensation framework for eliminating the negative effects of ambient temperature as well as non-linear dependencies for the sample CPS, AUTROL® APT3100 smart pressure transmitter, which is shown in Figure 6 [14]. This sensor can be used for pressure measuring of corrosive or non-corrosive gases, water vapor and liquids. Its measurement range is between 0 mmH₂O to 3874 mmH₂O. The APT3100, which is a two wire loop power transmitter, equips with a standard 4/20mA output scaled for desired output pressure range. It is claimed that the value of the output current is the linear dependent on the input pressure sensor. This output signal can be indicated, recorded, or used in a control system.

Figure 6. AUTROL® APT3100 which is a CPS-based smart pressure transmitter

However, this smart sensor uses a capacitive pickup optimized with a patented temperature compensation algorithm, but our experimentations improve that this smart sensor still suffers from dependency to temperature. Therefore, we used our proposed framework for compensating. At the first step, it is necessary to perform some experiments on the APT3100 in different operations, in order to collect a comprehensive dataset which is needed for MLP training.

a. Collecting Data

In order to collect a comprehensive dataset, the laboratory system which is schematically shown in Figure 7, is designed to emulate real conditions in which the sensor is practically used.
Figure 7. The schematic diagram of the proposed test system which is designed to study the effect of temperature on APT3100 output

Figure 8 also shows the built system in real environment which includes the temperature controller system, the thermal isolated container with an APT3100 and a heater inside, the other calibrated pressure sensor for accurate measuring the pressure, the handy air pump for producing different pressure, the manometer and some other parts.

Figure 8. The real test bench used to achieve experimental data

To evaluate the effect of temperature on the behavior of ATP3100 output, the temperature inside the compartment from +5 °C to +60 °C with incremental step of 5 °C is applied. Moreover, at any particular temperature, differential pressure acts on the diaphragm of CPS from 0 mmH₂O to 500 mmH₂O with incremental step of 50 mmH₂O is applied.
Totally, 12 datasets that each of these sets contains 11 pairs of \((I, \Delta p)\) are obtained, where \(\Delta p\) is differential input pressure which is measured by the calibrated pressure sensor (in mmH\(_2\)O unit) and \(I\) is the sensor output current which is measured by the ampere meter (in mA unit). In each dataset, the ambient temperature is fixed which means that the output current or differential pressure is independent of temperature. For example, at the first (last) dataset, the temperature is fixed on 5 (60) °C.

Before starting experiments for each dataset which is considered in a fixed temperature, it is necessary to calibrate the APT3100 for the ambient temperature. In ambient temperature, a HART device [14] or computer calibration action is used for pressures 0, +125, +250, +375, +500 mmH\(_2\)O as the sensor input, to produce 4, 8, 12, 16, 20 mA as the sensor output, respectively.

On the other hand, since a heater is used for adjusting temperature value inside the thermal isolated container, the APT3100 should be placed at that temperature for about 1.5 hours to guaranty the temperature inside the chamber capacitive diaphragm of CPS reaches to the desired temperature and the temperature impact has been completed on APT3100 output.

b. Datasets

Each dataset shows the effect of environment temperature as well as other nonlinear effects on the behavior of the sensor output. For example, Figure 9 presents a sample dataset that is the output current for every real input differential pressure, at 60 °C. The blue continuous line is ideal output while the red dashed line in the real output. Since the sensor was calibrated to produce the linear output current based on the input differential pressure (Equation 5), there is a slight deviation between the ideal and real output, which is shown in Figure 10, for the sample dataset of Figure 9.
Figure 9. The sample dataset: The output current of the APT3100 versus the real input differential pressure at the tested temperature of 60 °C

Figure 10. The sample difference between the ideal and real output current of the ATP3100 versus different real input differential pressure, at 60 °C.

On the other hand, the output current can be used to compute the input differential pressure (by Equation 6) that results in a slight deviation between the real and the measured input differential pressure which is shown in Figure 11, for the sample dataset of Figure 9.
Figures 9 through 11 present the nonlinear effects which results in a slight difference between real and desired values. For example, Figure 11 shows there are 3.3 to 6 mmH₂O differences between the real and measured input differential pressures. Again, the datasets can be used to present the dependency of the output values to the APT3100 real temperatures. For example, Figure 12 shows the APT3100 output current for fixed input differential pressure 500 mmH₂O which should be 20 mA, in different temperatures.

Figure 12. The samples for difference between the ideal and real output current of the ATP3100 for the fixed input differential pressure of 500 mmH₂O versus different environment temperatures
Figure 13 also shows the computed input differential pressure of the APT3100 based on the corresponding output current for fixed input differential pressure 500 mmh$_2$o in different temperatures. There are some noticeable differences between the real and measured input differential pressure. Figures 10 and 13 demonstrate the nonlinear effects as well as temperature impacts on the measured input differential pressure. It means that it is necessary to consider the other compensating system to reduce these effects in order to produce perfect output.

Figure 13. The sample for difference between the real and the measured input differential pressure of 500 mmh$_2$o based on the output current of the ATP3100 versus different environment temperatures

c. Applying Compensating Framework

One of the main parts of the compensating framework is MLP neural networks that should be train accurately for perfect working. Therefore to consider the proposed compensating framework in the testing system, a training set based on the collected datasets should be used for MLP training. The training set should be divided into two sets: training and testing. During the training phase, the training dataset is used for MLP training by different learning algorithms [13,15-17], until achieving to a predefined error, between desired and real outputs. In the testing phase, the testing dataset is applied to the trained MLP to compute error for testing dataset. If there are different MLP architectures and different learning algorithms, the best MLP achieves to the lowest testing error.

The datasets consist of a collection of triple data (I,T,$\Delta$P), where I is the measured output current. The temperature (T) includes 12 different values from 5 to 60 $^\circ$C with incremental
temperature step of 5 °C. The input differential pressure ($\Delta p$) includes 11 different values from 0 to 500 mmH$_2$O with incremental pressure step of 50 mmH$_2$O. Therefore the total dataset consists of 132 (12×11) triple data (I,T,$\Delta p$) which is divided into two sets, 2/3 of data is selected for training, and 1/3 of the remained data is selected for testing. The total data for temperatures values of 5, 10, 20, 25, 35, 40, 50, and 55 °C are assigned for training, and the other data for temperatures values of 15, 30, 45, and 60 °C are assigned for testing.

The evaluated MLPs are two and three layers with different number of neurons in the hidden layers. These MLPs have two inputs and one output which are shown in Figures 2 and 4. For two layers MLP, the number of neurons in the hidden layer is selected between 1 to 20 neurons, while for the three layer MLP, the number of neurons in the second hidden layer is selected between 1 to 10 neurons. Different excitation functions including linear, sigmoid, hyperbolic tangent and logarithmic functions are tested. Moreover, different learning algorithms are used for MLP training including Batch Backpropagation, Batch Backpropagation plus Momentum, Resilient Propagation, Quasi-Newton and Levenberg-Marquardt algorithms. The training and testing procedures are repeated 10 times from different initial MLP weights, and the average output values are computed and considered.

d. Simulation Results

Our simulations show that the best neural network is the three layers MLP with 6 and 4 neurons in the first and the second hidden layer, respectively. The excitation function in the output layer is linear while in the other layers, hyperbolic tangent is used. Moreover, the Levenberg-Marquardt (LM) learning algorithm presents the lowest testing error. Figure 14 compares the results of applying the trained MLP-based compensating system for dataset shown in Figure 9.
Figure 14. The output current of the APT3100 versus the real input differential pressure at the tested temperature of 60 °C, for three cases: ideal output, with and without applying MLP-based compensator.

In order to highlight the difference between the APT3100 current output before and after applying the trained MLP-based compensating system, Figure 15 shows the difference between the ideal output current with these two cases. It is clear that the deviation is effectively reduced using the proposed MLP-based compensating system.

Figure 15. The sample difference between the ideal and real output current of the ATP3100 versus different real input differential pressure, at 60 °C, for two cases: with and without using MLP-based compensator system.

As discussed before, ATP3100 can be used to compute the input differential pressure based on the measure output current. Figure 16 demonstrates the difference between computation of
the input differential pressure in two cases, with and without using the MLP-based compensating system, at the fixed temperature 60 °C, where the error effectively reduces when the proposed compensator is used.

Figure 16. The sample for difference between the real and the measured input differential pressure of the ATP3100 versus different real input differential pressure, at 60 °C, in two cases: with and without applying the trained MLP-based compensating system.

In order to present effectiveness of the trained MLP-based compensating system in different environment temperature, Figure 18 and 19 show the output current and the computed input differential pressure, respectively, in different temperature, at pressure of 500 mmh₂o. The output compensated current in Figure 18 is very close to 20 mA which is the ideal output current. Moreover, the computed pressure by the compensated system is very close to 500 mmh₂o which is the input differential pressure.
Figure 17. Comparison between the ideal, real and compensated output current of the ATP3100 for the fixed input differential pressure of 500 mmH₂O versus different environment temperatures.

Figure 18. Comparison between computed input differential pressure of the uncompensated and compensated ATP3100 for the fixed input differential pressure of 500 mmH₂O versus different environment temperatures.

These last two figures present that the compensated outputs are nearly temperature invariant and linear. Table 1 also compares the results, without and with the proposed MLP-based compensator in different temperature and input differential pressure, where the impact of the proposed compensated is clearly evident.
Table 1. The ideal, measured, and real input and output values for ATP3100 pressure sensor, without and with the proposed trained MLP-based compensator, in different temperatures and pressures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temp.</th>
<th>Ideal Output Current</th>
<th>Ideal Input Pressure</th>
<th>Measured Output Current</th>
<th>Real Computed Output Current</th>
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Table 2 briefly compares the results of the proposed MLP-based compensator with some other similar ANN-based compensators, for different pressure sensors. The pressure measurement error of Patra et al. [4] for CPS is better than 1% FS in a wide temperature range of −20 ~ 70
°C. Futane et al. [8] could achieve the pressure measurement error for Silicon Piezoresistive micro-machined pressure sensor about 1% FS in a less temperature range of 0 ~ 70 °C. Then, Zhou et al. [8] could improve temperature range to −40 ~ 85 °C, with the pressure measurement error to better 0.13% FS. Our proposed method achieves the pressure measurement error to about 0.1% FS for a CPS, which is the best one in the compared methods, while the reported temperature range is 5 ~ 60 °C which is limited by experimental setup.

Table 2. Comparison of different ANN-based compensators for pressure sensors (PS)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Compensated Methods</th>
<th>Pressure Sensor</th>
<th>Pressure Measurement Error</th>
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<td>1% FS</td>
<td>−20 ~ 70 °C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Futane et al. (2010) [8] (conventional neuron model)</td>
<td>Silicon Piezoresistive micro-machined PS</td>
<td>1% FS</td>
<td>0 ~ 70 °C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhou et al. (2014) [10]</td>
<td>Silicon Piezoresistive PS</td>
<td>0.13 % FS</td>
<td>−40 ~ 85 °C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proposed method</td>
<td>Capacitive PS</td>
<td>0.1% FS</td>
<td>5 ~ 60 °C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V  CONCLUSION

Accurate pressure measuring is very important in some critical applications and industries. On the other hand, the CPS, in which the capacitance of a chamber changes based on the input pressure, the output unfortunately suffers from temperature variation as well as nonlinear effects. This paper introduces a simple but effective compensative framework for the CPS using the MLP neural network. The proposed MLP-based compensator tries to overcome temperature dependencies as well as nonlinear operations of CPS. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this compensator, the proposed framework is applied for ATP3100 smart capacitive pressure transmitter which uses a patented compensating algorithm. At first step, the necessary datasets by carrying out some experiments on the APT3100 should be collected in order to train and test the MLP. After evaluating different MLPs, the proposed MLP which
is a three layer, two inputs, 6 neurons in the first hidden layer, 4 neurons in the second hidden layer, and one output is selected as the best ones. Our simulations in different conditions show that the trained MLP-based compensator by LM algorithm could effectively compensate the output against variation of temperature as well as nonlinear effects. It also improves the pressure measurement error to better than 0.1% FS for the reported temperature range of 5 ~ 60 °C which is not a wide range and it is limited by experimental setup limitations. In future, the proposed compensator should be evaluated in larger temperature ranges.

REFERENCES


