ASSESSMENT OF THE MINIMUM DURATION FOR THE SPACECRAFT ATTITUDE MANEUVER
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Abstract

The problem of evaluation of time spent for attitude maneuver (rotation) during a finite rotation given a boundedness of angular rates and accelerations is solved. (The finite rotation means that the spacecraft body basis is moved from its initial position to the final one by the single rotation about an axis of finite rotation.) It is supposed that the maximum angular rates and accelerations about each spacecraft body axis are specified and different for each spacecraft body axis.

Very simple solution for the attitude maneuver minimum duration along with maximum angular rate and acceleration is suggested. The numerical results can be found by some uncomplicated procedure with several formulas and two tables.

Assessment of the minimum duration for the spacecraft attitude maneuver is most important for the rotations during the docking and undocking processes and prior to orbital correction.

Introduction

While calculating the spacecraft attitude maneuver (rotation), the problem of evaluation of time spent for rotation often arises because it is required usually to perform the rotation with minimum possible duration.

However, a boundedness of the angular rates and accelerations impedes the rapid implementation of attitude maneuver. Maximum absolute magnitudes of these rates and accelerations depend on spacecraft moments of inertia and available torque created by spacecraft actuators.

It is shown below how to find the attitude maneuver minimum duration along with maximum angular rate and acceleration if their components about each spacecraft body axis are bounded, and maneuver is performed as a finite rotation. The latter means that the spacecraft body basis is moved from its initial position to the final one by a single rotation about an axis of finite rotation $\varepsilon$.

Geometry of finite rotation is shown in Figure 1. Here, $\varepsilon$ is an axis of a finite rotation, $\chi$ is an angle of finite rotation, $O$ is the spacecraft center of mass, $X_I$ and $X_F$ are the initial and final positions of the spacecraft body axis $X$, and $\alpha$ is an angle between the body axis $X$ and axis of the finite rotation $\varepsilon$. This angle is constant during the rotation. The body axis $X$ moves over the surface of the cone with vertex in the point $O$ and cone angle $2\alpha$. The angles $\beta$ and $\gamma$ between two other spacecraft body axes ($Y$ and $Z$) and axis of finite rotation $\varepsilon$ are also constant, and these axes move over the surface of the similar cones with the cone angles $2\beta$ and $2\gamma$ respectively.

Fig. 1. Geometry of finite rotation

Whole information about a finite rotation except the angular rates and angular accelerations is included in components of the rotation quaternion $q$:

$$
\begin{align*}
q_0 &= \cos \frac{\chi}{2}, & q_1 &= \cos \alpha \sin \frac{\chi}{2}, \\
q_2 &= \cos \beta \sin \frac{\chi}{2}, & q_3 &= \cos \gamma \sin \frac{\chi}{2}
\end{align*}
$$

(1)
Set up of Problem

For a given attitude maneuver, the angular rate and acceleration vectors
\[ \bar{\omega} = \begin{bmatrix} \omega_x \\ \omega_y \\ \omega_z \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \bar{\varepsilon} = \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_x \\ \varepsilon_y \\ \varepsilon_z \end{bmatrix} \]
(2)
coincide with the axis of finite rotation \( \bar{e} \). The maximum allowable magnitude of these vectors \( (\omega_{\text{max}}, \varepsilon_{\text{max}}) \) depends on absolute value of the angular rate and acceleration limit for each body axis \( (\omega_{x_{\text{max}}}, \omega_{y_{\text{max}}}, \omega_{z_{\text{max}}}, \varepsilon_{x_{\text{max}}}, \varepsilon_{y_{\text{max}}}, \varepsilon_{z_{\text{max}}}) \) and does not depend on their sign. That is why, it is enough to consider only positive value of these limits and the unit vector of finite rotation in the spacecraft body reference frame is
\[ \bar{e} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos \alpha \\ \cos \beta \\ \cos \gamma \end{bmatrix} \]
(3)

The limits mentioned above form some envelopes for the maximum angular rates and maximum angular accelerations in the first quadrant of the body reference frame \( (X, Y, Z) \). One of the mentioned envelopes (for angular rates) is shown in Figure 2. It is a parallelepiped with edges \( [\omega_{x_{\text{max}}}], [\omega_{y_{\text{max}}}], [\omega_{z_{\text{max}}}] \). The value of \( \omega_{\text{max}} \) depends on which one of the parallelepiped faces \( (1, 2, 3) \) in the Figure 2 is pierced by vector \( \bar{e} \), i.e., on the components of the unit vector \( \bar{e} \). In the case that is shown in the Figure 2, vector \( \bar{e} \) pierces the face 2. That means that
\[ \omega_y = \omega_{y_{\text{max}}} \quad \text{and} \quad \omega_{\text{max}} = \frac{\omega_{y_{\text{max}}}}{\cos \beta} \]
(4)

Maximum Angular Rate and Acceleration

The determination of the pierced face number can be made through the use of the projection of the unit vector \( \bar{e} \) on the coordinate planes \( XY, YZ, \) and \( ZX \). The boards of the envelope on the mentioned coordinate planes are the rectangles, which sides are \( [\omega_{y_{\text{max}}}], [\omega_{x_{\text{max}}}], [\omega_{z_{\text{max}}}] \).

Comparison between positions of the unit vector \( \bar{e} \)

![Figure 2. Envelope of maximum angular rate](image-url)
\[ |\omega_{z_{\text{max}}}| > |\omega_{y_{\text{max}}}|, \] and the vector \( \vec{e} \) can pierce the shaded half (triangle) of the face 1 and whole face 2.

In the opposite situation, when \( |\cos \gamma| > |\omega_{z_{\text{max}}}| \), vector \( \vec{e} \) can pierce another half of the face 1 and whole face 3. Also, two cases are shown in Figure 5. When \( |\cos \alpha| > |\omega_{x_{\text{max}}}| \) and \( |\cos \gamma| > |\omega_{z_{\text{max}}}| \), vector \( \vec{e} \) can pierce another half of the face 2 and whole face 3. When \( |\cos \alpha| > |\omega_{x_{\text{max}}}| \) and \( |\cos \gamma| > |\omega_{z_{\text{max}}}| \), vector \( \vec{e} \) can pierce another half of the face 2 and whole face 1.

The total quantity of the possible combinations of the inequalities, that establish relation between the ratios listed in (5), is eight.

The results obtained from Figures 2-5 for angular rates are summarized in the Table 1. This table covers all eight options for relations between ratios listed in (5) and includes number of face (rectangle) or part of face (triangle), which is pierced by vector \( \vec{e} \) according to these relations. The mentioned rectangles and triangles are shown in the bottom line for each option in the columns 3, 4, and 5 of the Table. These rectangles and triangles are actually some sets. Intersection of these sets determinates what component of the vector \( \vec{w} \) is restricted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Relation between ratios</th>
<th>Face part number</th>
<th>$\omega_{\text{max}}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>8</td>
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Main diagonal
Ok
(see Fig. 6)
For example, $\nabla v_1$ in column 5 for option 2 (triangle without shading on the face 1) is the intersection of the $\Box 1$ in column 2, $\Box 1$ in column 3, and $\nabla v_1$ in column 4. In the same way, $\Delta 1$ in the column 5 for option 1 (shaded triangle on the face 1) is the intersection of the $\Box 1$ in column 2, $\Box 1$ in column 3, and $\nabla v_1$ in column 4. So, options 1 and 2 together form the face 1, and vector $e$ pierces face 1. In this case $\omega_x$ is the restricted component, and $\omega_{\text{max}} = \left| \frac{\omega_x \text{max}}{\cos \alpha} \right|$ (column 6). Options 3 and 4 together form the face 2, and in this case $\omega_y$ is the restricted component, and $\omega_{\text{max}} = \left| \frac{\omega_y \text{max}}{\cos \alpha} \right|$. Options 5 and 6 together form the face 3, and in this case $\omega_z$ is the restricted component, and $\omega_{\text{max}} = \left| \frac{\omega_z \text{max}}{\cos \gamma} \right|$. Options 7 and 8 are different from other options because it seems that their sets (for example, sets $\Box 2 + \nabla 3$, $\Box 1 + \nabla 2$, and $\Box 3 + \nabla 1$ for option 8) do not have any intersections. In fact the mentioned sets have the intersections that are the boundaries of these sets. It is clear from Figure 6. The planes $A$, $B$, and $C$ on this Figure include axes $OX$, $OY$, $OZ$ and diagonals $Ol$, $On$, and $Ob$ of the rectangles $Oclm$, $Oann$, and $Oabc$ respectively. Vector $e$ coincides with these planes when inequalities in lines 7 and 8 of the Table 1
change into equalities. In other words, these planes are the boundary sets of possible position of the vector \( \vec{e} \), and their intersection is the main diagonal \( Ok \) of the parallelepiped. So, in this case, vector \( \vec{e} \) coincides with the parallelepiped main diagonal, and

\[
\begin{align*}
\omega_{\max} &= \sqrt{\omega_x^2 + \omega_y^2 + \omega_z^2} \\
\omega_{\max} &= \frac{\omega_x}{\cos \alpha} = \frac{\omega_y}{\cos \beta} = \frac{\omega_z}{\cos \gamma}
\end{align*}
\]

(6)

The column 6 in the Table 1 includes the formulas for calculation the \( \omega_{\max} \) for all possible relations between ratios (5).

The envelope for angular acceleration is also a parallelepiped like for angular rate. Its edges are \( |\varepsilon_{\max}|, |\varepsilon_{\max}|, |\varepsilon_{\max}| \). The value of \( \varepsilon_{\max} \) depends on which one of the faces (1, 2, and 3) of this parallelepiped is pierced by vector \( \vec{e} \) like for \( \omega_{\max} \). The same type of analysis, which was performed for

\[
\begin{align*}
\cos \beta' &\cos \alpha' &\cos \gamma' \\
|\cos \alpha| &|\cos \beta| &|\cos \gamma|
\end{align*}
\]

(7)

For the ratios listed in (7), the same eight combinations of the inequalities exist, and the Table 2, which is similar to Table 1, can be built like for ratios (5). The Table 2 (see below) can be obtained from the Table 1 by substitution \( |\varepsilon_{\max}|, |\varepsilon_{\max}|, |\varepsilon_{\max}| \) instead of \( |\omega_{\max}|, |\omega_{\max}|, |\omega_{\max}| \) and \( \omega_{\max} \). Column 5 in Table 2 includes the formulas to calculate \( \varepsilon_{\max} \) for all possible relations between ratios (7).

**Minimum Duration of Attitude Maneuver**

After determination \( \omega_{\max} \) and \( \varepsilon_{\max} \), the minimum duration of an attitude maneuver can be assessed. The time plot for the angular rate \( \omega \) is shown in the Figure 7. First, the angular rate \( \omega \) increases from 0 to \( \omega_{\max} \) with the angular acceleration \( \varepsilon_{\max} \) at the interval \( T_e \). Then, the angular rate \( \omega \) is constant and equal to \( \omega_{\max} \) at the interval \( T-2T_e \), and after that decreases from \( \omega_{\max} \) to 0 with the angular acceleration \( -\varepsilon_{\max} \) at the interval \( T_e \). Obviously, the time plot that is shown in the Figure 7 provided a minimum duration of rotation. If \( T \) (see Figure 7) is a duration of attitude maneuver and \( \chi \) is an angle of finite rotation, then formulas

\[
\chi = \int_0^T \omega dt = \omega_{\max} (T - 2T_e) + 2\varepsilon_{\max} \frac{T_e^2}{2}
\]

(8)

and

\[
\omega_{\max} = \varepsilon_{\max} T_e
\]

(9)

are true.
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### Table 2

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</table>

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The final formula for the minimum duration of attitude maneuver $T$ that can be obtained from formulas (8) and (9) is

$$ T = \frac{\chi}{\omega_{\text{max}}} + \frac{\omega_{\text{max}}}{\varepsilon_{\text{max}}} $$

(10)

**Calculation Procedure**

The minimum duration of the spacecraft attitude maneuver (finite rotation) can be calculated by the following procedure:

1. Calculation of the angle of the finite rotation $\chi$ and the direction cosines $\cos \alpha$, $\cos \beta$, $\cos \gamma$ of the finite rotation axis $\vec{e}$ in the spacecraft body reference frame $(X, Y, Z)$ using formulas (1) for the components of the rotation quaternion $\vec{q}$:

$$
\begin{align*}
\chi &= 2 \arccos q_0, \\
\cos \alpha &= \frac{q_1}{\sqrt{1 - q_0^2}}, \\
\cos \beta &= \frac{q_2}{\sqrt{1 - q_0^2}}, \\
\cos \gamma &= \frac{q_3}{\sqrt{1 - q_0^2}}.
\end{align*}
$$

(11)

2. Selection of the $\omega_{\text{max}}$ from the Table 1 using ratios (5).

3. Selection of the $\varepsilon_{\text{max}}$ from the Table 2 using ratios (7).

4. Calculation of the minimum duration of the spacecraft attitude maneuver $T$ using (10).

**References**
