



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***SURFACE ELECTROMYOGRAPHY CLASSIFICATION OF HAND  
MOTIONS  
USING TIME DOMAIN FEATURES FOR REAL TIME APPLICATION***

**AHMAD AKMAL BIN AHMAD NADZRI**

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**SURFACE ELECTROMYOGRAPHY CLASSIFICATION OF HAND MOTIONS  
USING TIME DOMAIN FEATURES FOR REAL TIME APPLICATION**

By

**AHMAD AKMAL BIN AHMAD NADZRI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
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Science**

**February 2016**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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**February 2016**

**Chair: Siti Anom Ahmad, PhD**

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Surface electromyography is a technique of analyzing muscle functions through signals emanating from the physiological variations of muscles states. Through this technique, various applications such as prosthetic hands control have been made for purposes of giving basic functionality for people that are unable to do daily tasks. Many researches have been made over the years to develop the prosthetic hand control system by using the surface electromyography signals through pattern recognition. Recent researches have shown that various method have been able to achieve above 90% accuracy. However, the challenge of developing a control system that is both accurate while being suitable for real time application with less than 300 ms delay still remains. In addition, no literatures have been reported classifying hand motions with stages of contraction despite patterns being observed. The objective of this study is to investigate the accuracy and real time suitability of using time domain features and artificial neural network, to characterize and classify different hand motions and stages of the contraction. To achieve this goal, the signal is first segmented into windows of two sizes, which are 132.5ms and 165 ms, and then full wave rectified. Then the signal is separated into raw and normalized signal. Five time domain features, namely mean absolute value, variance, root mean square, integral absolute value and waveform length were extracted from the segmented windows to characterize three different hand motions of wrist flexion, wrist extension and co-contraction using raw signal and three different stages of contraction of start, middle and end using normalized signal. From the characterization obtained and t-test made, all raw features, waveform length normalized, and the 132.5 ms segmented window size were selected for classification. The features are then used by artificial neural network to be trained offline and evaluated for performance in terms of classification accuracy. Computational times have been recorded to determine real time suitability at all steps. It is determined that during feature extraction stage, the features were able to differentiate hand motions as the mean values were different. However, for stages of contraction, although patterns were

observed, only waveform length features could differentiate the different stages for all three motions. Overall, it is determined that an artificial neural network can be used with time domain features to achieve 98.5% accuracy when differentiating three different hand motions but not with stages of contraction achieving only 80.4% accuracy. Meanwhile, in terms of computational time, although artificial neural network is considered less suitable for real time application, when using time domain features, 245.8 ms delay is achieved which is below 300 ms, thus making it suitable for real time application.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
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**KLASIFIKASI PERGERAKAN TANGAN OLEH ELEKTROMIOGRAFI  
PERMUKAAN MENGGUNAKAN CIRI DOMAIN MASA UNTUK APLIKASI  
MASA NYATA**

Oleh

**AHMAD AKMAL BIN AHMAD NADZRI**

**Februari 2016**

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Elektromiografi permukaan adalah teknik menganalisis fungsi otot melalui isyarat dari variasi fisiologi otot. Melalui teknik ini, aplikasi seperti kawalan tangan palsu dibuat bagi memberikan fungsi asas untuk orang yang tidak dapat melakukan tugas harian. Kajian telah dibuat untuk membangunkan sistem kawalan tangan prostetik dengan menggunakan isyarat elektromiografi permukaan melalui pengecaman corak. Penyelidikan beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini menunjukkan beberapa kaedah mampu mencapai lebih 90% ketepatan. Namun, cabaran mencipta sistem kawalan yang tepat dan sesuai untuk aplikasi masa nyata dengan kelengahan kurang daripada 300 ms masih wujud. Tambahan pula, tiada penyelidikan telah dibuat bagi mengenal pasti ketepatan mengklasifikasi pergerakan dan tangan peringkat penguncupan walaupun ciri peringkat penguncupan telah dikenal pasti. Objektif kajian ini ialah mengkaji ketepatan dan kesesuaian masa nyata dengan menggunakan ciri domain masa dan rangkaian neural buatan untuk mencirikan dan mengklasifikasi pergerakan tangan dan tiga peringkat penguncupan yang berbeza. Bagi mencapai matlamat, signal pada awalnya dibahagikan kepada tingkap yang mempunyai saiz 132.5 ms dan 165 ms dan gelombang penuh direktifikasi. Kemudian, signal dibahagikan kepada signal asal dan signal penormalan. Pada pengekstrakan ciri, lima ciri domain masa iaitu nilai min mutlak, varians, punca min kuasa dua, kamiran nilai mutlak dan panjang gelombang ini diekstrak untuk mencirikan tiga pergerakan tangan menggunakan signal asal dan tiga peringkat penguncupan yang berbeza menggunakan signal penormalan. Ciri-ciri yang diekstrak kemudiannya digunakan untuk melatih rangkaian neural buatan secara luar talian dan menilai prestasi dari segi ketepatan. Masa pengiraan telah direkodkan untuk menentukan kesesuaian masa nyata pada setiap langkah. Ia ditentukan bahawa semasa peringkat pengekstrakan ciri, pergerakan tangan dapat dibezakan. Namun, bagi peringkat penguncupan, walaupun corak diperhatikan, hanya ciri panjang gelombang dapat membezakan dengan betul peringkat

pengucupan untuk ketiga-tiga pergerakan tangan. Secara keseluruhan, ia ditentukan bahawa rangkaian neural buatan dapat digunakan bersama ciri domain masa untuk mencapai ketepatan melebihi 98.5% apabila membezakan tiga pergerakan tangan namun bukan dengan peringkat pengucupan dengan 80.4% ketepatan. Dari segi masa pengiraan, walaupun rangkaian neural buatan dianggap kurang sesuai untuk kegunaan aplikasi masa nyata, apabila digunakan bersama ciri domain masa kelengahan masa 245.8 ms dicapai iaitu kurang daripada 300 ms maka membuatkan ia sesuai untuk aplikasi masa nyata.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 5 February 2016 to conduct the final examination of Ahmad Akmal bin Ahmad Nadzri on his thesis entitled "Surface Electromyography Classification of Hand Motions using Time Domain Features for Real Time Application" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	i
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	v
<b>APPROVAL</b>	vi
<b>DECLARATION</b>	viii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xiii
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	xv
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
1.3 Aim and Objectives	3
1.4 Scope of Work	4
1.5 Thesis Layout	4
<b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Prosthetic Hands	6
2.2 EMG Control Systems	8
2.3 EMG Data	8
2.4 Data Segmentation and Pre-processing	13
2.5 Feature Extraction	16
2.6 Classification	17
2.7 Computational Time	20
2.8 Summary	21
<b>3 METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 Project Flowchart	22
3.2 Data Set	25
3.3 Data Segmentation and Pre-processing	26
3.3.1 Hand Motions	26
3.4.2 Stages of Contraction	27
3.4 Feature Extraction	29
3.5 Classification	30
3.6 Computational Time	33
3.7 Summary	34
<b>4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 Pre-processing and Feature Extraction	36
4.1.1 Hand Motions	37
4.1.2 Stages of Contraction	44
4.2 Classification	51
4.3 Computational Time	58

4.4	Summary	61
<b>5</b>	<b>CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK</b>	<b>63</b>
5.1	Suggestion for Future Work	64
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>65</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>70</b>
	<b>BIODATA OF STUDENT</b>	<b>72</b>
	<b>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS</b>	<b>73</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Summary of research in the field of hand motion classifier	18
3.1	Artificial neural network expected output for hand motions only	31
3.2	Artificial neural network expected output for hand motions and stages of contractions	31
3.3	Artificial neural network training settings	31
3.4	Artificial neural network feature parings	32
4.1	T-test at FCU channel	42
4.2	T-test at ECR channel	43
4.3	Time domain characteristic for hand motions	43
4.4	T-test at FCU channel with normalized WL	50
4.5	T-test at ECR channel with normalized WL	50
4.6	Time domain characteristic for hand motions and stages of contraction	51
4.7	Artificial neural network classification features parings for hand motion classification	54
4.8	Comparison of hand motions classification with other literatures using artificial neural network methods	55
4.9	Hand motions and stages of contractions accuracy	56
4.10	Comparison of hand motions classification and stages of contraction accuracy with other literatures	57
4.11	Random sub-sampling hand motions and stages of contractions accuracy	58
4.12	Simulation computational times detail	59
4.13	Suitability for real time application	61

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Body powered prosthetic hand [23]	7
2.2	Externally powered prosthetic hand [25]	7
2.3	Block diagram of two types of electromyography control system [26]	8
2.4	Definition Muscles Alive [28]	9
2.5	Basic structure for EMG signal generation [30]	10
2.6	Generation of EMG signal at muscle fibers [31]	10
2.7	Two channel surface electromyography signals for three hand motions	12
2.8	Three hand motions [5]	12
2.9	Minimal effort of muscle contraction. The time between 2 discharges is approximately 166 ms, corresponding to a firing rate of 6 Hz [32]	12
2.10	The effect of changing segment size on the classification error in transient and steady state emg signal [40]	14
2.11	Overlapping windows segmentation [40]	14
2.12	Adjacent windows segmentation [40]	15
2.13	Full wave rectification process [3]	15
2.14	The partitioning techniques in different domains of study [45]	17
2.15	Representation of 300 ms delay [48]	20
3.1	Block diagram of surface electromyography control system	22
3.2	Project Flowchart	24
3.3	Muscles of the forearm [59]	25
3.4	Plot example of surface electromyography signal for co-contraction motion for 3 repetitions	26
3.5	Window segmentation classification for detecting a hand motion (WF and WE)	27
3.6	Window segmentation classification for detecting a hand motion (CC)	27
3.7	Window segmentation for detecting stages of contraction (WF and WE)	28
3.8	Window segmentation for detecting stages of contraction (CC)	28
3.9	Feed forward artificial neural network structure	30
3.10	K-fold cross validation for K=3 [62]	33
3.11	Steps involved for delay calculation	34
4.1	Surface electromyography signal pre-processing and feature extraction (WE-raw)	38



4.2	Characterization of hand motions	40
4.3	Hand motions and stages of contraction separated characteristic	46
4.4	Hand motions and stages of contraction combined characteristic	48
4.5	Effect of number of features towards hand motions classification accuracy	53
4.6	Effect of number of features towards computational time for artificial neural network	60



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acc	Accuracy
ANFIS	Adaptive Neuro Fuzzy Inference System
ANN	Artificial Neural Network
CC	Co-Contraction
CCE	Co-contraction End of Contraction
CCM	Co-contraction Middle of Contraction
CCS	Co-contraction Start of Contraction
CCSE	Co-contraction Start and End of Contraction
Class	Classifier
ECR	Extensor Carpi Radialis
EMG	Electromyography
FCU	Flexor Carpi Ulnaris
FD	Frequency Domain
FIS	Fuzzy Inference System
FL	Fuzzy Logic
GMM	Gaussian Mixture Models
GRNN	Generalized Regression Neural Network
I	Size of input layer
IEMG	Integral absolute value
LDA	Linear Discriminant Analysis
LVQ	Linear Vector Quantization
M	Middle
MAV	Mean Absolute Value
MF	Membership Function
MotAcc	Motion Accuracy
MVC	Maximum Voluntary Contraction
NN	Neural Network
Norm	Normalized
O	Size of output layer
RMS	Root Mean Square
SE	Start End
SEMG	Surface Electromyography
SOFM	Self Organizing Feature Map
STD	Standard Deviation
Subj	Subject
SubjAcc	Subject Accuracy
TD	Time Domain
TFR	Time Frequency Domain
TotCorr	Total Correctly Classified Windows
TotDelay	Total Delay time of SEMG system
TotSamp	Total Sample of Windows
VAR	Variance
WE	Wrist Extension
WEE	Wrist Extension End of Contraction
WEM	Wrist Extension Middle of Contraction
WES	Wrist Extension Start of Contraction
WESE	Wrist Extension Start and End of Contraction
WF	Wrist Flexion

WFE  
WFS  
WFSE  
WL  
WP  
WPT

Wrist Flexion End of Contraction  
Wrist Flexion Start of Contraction  
Wrist Flexion Start and End of Contraction  
Waveform Length  
Wavelet Packet  
Wavelet Packet Transform



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Overview

The human hand is a complex system where about a quarter of the motor cortex in the human brain; the part of the brain which controls all movement in the body is devoted to the muscles of hand. The human hand and the brain are close partners in important and closely interconnected functions such as interacting with the physical world by touch and manipulation. These include activities such as making tools, writing and playing music. The highly versatile functions of the human hand depend on both its anatomical structure and the neural machinery that supports the hand [1].

Although the human hand is an important tool that allows the human brain to interact with the world, some people are unfortunate as to lose the functionality of the hand through injuries or natural defects that may lead to the amputation of the hand. This leads to people unable to do daily task properly that are considered simple such as to eat and drink and to wash one self. Prostheses aim to replace the missing functionality albeit a prosthetic hand is a pale comparison to the natural hand with its reduced capabilities. The human hand has a large number of degrees of freedom, sensor embedded in its structure and a complex hierarchical control for the prosthetic hand to try to emulate [2].

A prosthetic hand mainly consists of a mechanical system that actuates the movement of the prosthetic hand and a control system that send signals to control the type of motions to the mechanical system. A prosthetic hand controlled by electronic devices is considered externally powered and is where control methods are used. One of the methods to control externally powered prosthetic hand is through Electromyography (EMG) signals sent by electrical signals general when muscles contract during hand motions.

Numerous methods have been developed to control prosthetic hands through EMG. One of the more popular methods is Surface Electromyography (SEMG) due to its non-invasiveness. SEMG signal analysis has received wide interest especially in biomedical applications and clinical diagnosis in fields such as rehabilitation of motor disability. SEMG signals can provide important information for prosthetic hand control and possibly detect neuromuscular disorders for amputees [3].

A prosthetic basic function is to be able to output the correct hand motion intended by the user, using the SEMG signal generated. As classification accuracy is of importance, it plays a major role that will most probably decide whether users are happy with the SEMG system according to the classification rate with decent computational time. Thus extensive research has been done to find efficient methods.

To classify a hand motion, SEMG signal analysis normally goes through pre-processing, feature extraction and classification steps. Features need to be carefully selected in order to provide useful information for classification. Feature extraction can be divided into 4 major groups which are time domain (TD), frequency domain (FD), time frequency (TFR) and time scale representation [4]. Time domain features are generally easy to implement and calculate efficiently thus making it suitable for real time feature extraction. Feature extraction-based on TD methods show a good performance than feature extraction for SEMG pattern classification under various conditions [5-7].

In addition to classifying hand motions, there is a possibility to determine the stages of contraction during those hand motions using the features extracted. It was determined in [8] that when the subject's maximum voluntary contraction was controlled, actual motion do not occur during start and end of contraction where the same type of fluctuation occurs. Ideally, control of a prosthetic hand should occur during the middle of contraction and being able to determine stages of contraction will lead to optimal control of actual hand motion more accurate to the user's intent.

The features are used by a classifier to classify the different hand motions. Therefore, like selecting features to be used, selecting a suitable classifier is also of importance. In recent years, there were many literatures using ANN have reported an average classification accuracy of above 90%. Researches done in [9 - 21] were able to develop classifiers with above 90% accuracy. Some of the more popular classifiers were Fuzzy Logic (FL) systems and Artificial Neural Network (ANN).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Based on recent studies, it is important for an SEMG control system to be able to achieve above 90% accuracy while being within the acceptable 300 ms delay [22]. Despite this, not many literatures mention the total time taken to classify the hand motion. This is especially true for studies involving widely used methods such as FD, TFR, and ANN, with more specific details at the steps of pre-processing, feature extraction and classification if it were to be implemented for real time application. Some methods sacrifice computational time for classification accuracy. There were no acceptable reported times for FD, TFR features [7]. An alternative to FD and TFR is TD features which are

less computational have been reported to have comparable performance to FD features [5, 6]. Meanwhile, although ANN classifiers have produced rather good results in accuracy, the fastest ANN classifier was reported in [9], a grasp classifier using spectral moments with 97.5% accuracy at 378 ms for 4 grasps. Thus, in this study, classification accuracy and computational time are tested using time domain features and ANN to find whether the cause of the delay is the computational heavy features of FD, TFR used in other studies or the ANN itself.

At feature extraction step, time domain features were determined to be most efficient as mentioned in [4-6]. Characterization of time domain features is needed to differentiate different hand motions. However there were not many studies that use only time domain features for feature extraction. To achieve ideal control, stages of contraction should be recognized for classification. Despite the characteristics of stages of contraction determined in [8], there have been no literature reported studied in a non MVC controlled environment and that uses the characteristic for classification. MVC is where signal quality is controlled where that the signal from each subject is amplified in order to exceed a certain threshold criteria. In this type of study the focus is mainly on method comparison at the feature extraction and classification step. Meanwhile, in a non MVC controlled environment signal is not amplified and is analyzed as it is without the subjects SEMG signal having to meet a certain threshold criteria. As the objective of this study requires characterizing the different hand motion and stages of contraction, it focuses more on the signal analysis without any modification to the signal rather than method comparison at the feature extraction and classification step. Previous literature [8] only reported the characteristic of only one hand motion of CC. However, since the motion can be obtained by observing two SEMG channels, the minimum amount of motion that can be studied should be three as observed in [5]. The importance of identifying the different stages of contraction is the ability to identify when actual motion occurs or does not occur according to the stages of contraction. It is important to see whether a certain segmented size could differentiate the stages of contraction when it is modified using MVC. This will help improve user experience with more accurate classification of when the motion should occur.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to classify 3 different hand motions and stages of contraction from SEMG signal in order to achieve ideal control using time domain features and ANN while determining real time suitability. To obtain that aim, several objectives are to be attained:

- (1) To study the characteristic of SEMG signal to differentiate hand motions and stages of contraction
- (2) To design and implement a classifier for classifying both different hand motions and stages of contraction.

- (3) To evaluate the performance in terms of classification accuracy and total time delay.

#### **1.4 Scope of work**

Although one of the objectives of this study is to research on the computational time of the proposed method, this research is done mainly by simulation and offline, as the SEMG data has already been acquired. The data set[23] used has three different hand motions and stages to contraction to concentrate on whether the stages of contraction can be differentiated for the different hand motions since in previous reported literature only 1 hand motion were studied for stages of contraction. Only two channels are used in this study as only the two channel of FCU and ECR are considered needed to be able to differentiate the 3 different hand motions. There are 3 hand motions studies in this study, and because the two SEMG are used it should at least be able to differentiate the 3 different hand motions chosen in this study. The time domain features were selected based on recommendations from other literatures.

The computational times were recorded at pre-processing, feature extraction and classification steps. For feature extraction, only time domain features were used as it is determined to be most efficient. At classification step, a fixed structure of the ANN is used so that a comparison can be made with other studies and to determine whether the number inputs will effect computation time when the amount of hidden neurons remain the same.

#### **1.5 Thesis Layout**

Chapter 1 describes some brief information of background and overview of research in the field that led to this project. It explains the aims and objectives of this study, where the main objective is to classify different hand motions and stages of contraction, as well as to evaluate the performance of the ANN in terms of classification accuracy and total delay time when using time domain features.

Chapter 2 reviews the types of prosthetic hand and the control system available for the prosthetic hand. It introduces basic concepts of SEMG signal and reviews the methods available for the SEMG signal analysis steps of pre-processing, feature extraction and classification of researches done, while discussing real time suitability.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology of this research for the SEMG signal analysis steps, in terms of the characterization of time domain features for hand motion and stages of contraction. Classification accuracy was tested by classifying only hand motions, and classifying both hand motions and stages of

contraction. Computational times were recorded at each step of the pattern recognition based system.

Chapter 4 presents the result obtained from the methodology used. It shows the pattern observed for the different motions and stages of contraction. The classification accuracy and computational time were compared and the performances in this study were compared with other studies.

Chapter 5 will conclude the findings inferred from the results, with significant points at the steps of feature extraction and classification in terms of accuracy and total delay. Lastly, it discusses possible future works to find ways to improve classification accuracy while being suitable for real time application.



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