

FAULT DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS USING UNKNOWN INPUT  
OBSERVER FOR NON-LINEAR CHEMICAL PROCESSES

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## **DEDICATION**

To Almighty Allah for His Mercy and Blessings

To my beloved parents for their support, supplications, and love.

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## ABSTRACT

Advanced automatic control technologies have brought significant benefits to the chemical industry. This is however, hampered by the inefficiency in providing effective detection and diagnosis of process faults that may emerge from various aspects of plant operation. Among the available techniques, unknown input observer (UIO) method has been highlighted as a potentially effective approach as it offers effective capability to deal with residuals between the model estimation and actual measured values of the process variables. UIO modeling strategy creates a specific residual signal that carries information of specific faults, as well as model uncertainties and exogenous disturbances decoupled from fault features. With this characteristic, process faults can be effectively detected, isolated, and identified. The UIO technique was tested on a multi-variable distillation system configured with multiloop feedback control. For this purpose, various scenarios of sensor faults were introduced, and a bank of unknown input observers was designed. Successful results were obtained to detect, isolate, and identify faults. The UIO based fault detection and diagnosis (FDD) system was further tested on case studies involving sensor faults, in open and closed-loop conditions in a non-linear exothermic continuous stirred tank reactor. The proposed FDD scheme was proven robust enough to deal with model uncertainties and exogenous disturbances introduced in the case studies. The results obtained in this study proved the suitability of the UIO modeling approach to be used in FDD system to provide effective early warning feature in process plant alarm management.

## ABSTRAK

Teknologi kawalan automatik termaju telah membawa faedah yang ketara kepada industri kimia. Walau bagaimanapun, ia dihalang oleh kegagalan dalam menyediakan pengesanan dan diagnosis ralat proses yang mungkin muncul dari pelbagai aspek operasi loji. Di antara pelbagai teknik yang ada, teknik pemerhati masukan tidak diketahui (UIO) telah ditonjolkan sebagai teknik berkesan yang berpotensi kerana ia menawarkan kemampuan dalam menangani baki di antara nilai yang dianggarkan oleh model dengan nilai sebenar pemboleh ubah proses yang diukur. Strategi permodelan UIO menghasilkan isyarat baki yang spesifik yang mengandungi maklumat khusus mengenai ralat proses. Dengan ciri-ciri ini, ralat proses akan dapat dikesan, diasing dan dikenalpasti dengan efektif. Teknik UIO ini diuji dengan menggunakan sistem penyulingan berbilang pemboleh ubah yang dilengkapi dengan kawalan berbilang gelung. Untuk tujuan ini, pelbagai senario kegagalan penderia telah diperkenalkan dan satu bank pemerhati masukan yang tidak diketahui telah direkabentuk. Keputusan yang berjaya telah dicapai bagi mengesan, mengasing dan mengenal pasti kegagalan. Sistem pengesanan dan pengenalpastian (FDD) yang telah dibina seterusnya diuji dengan lebih lanjut dengan kajian kes yang melibatkan kegagalan penderia dalam gelung terbuka dan gelung tertutup pada reaktor tangki teraduk berterusan eksotermik yang tidak lurus. Keputusan yang diperoleh membuktikan skema FDD yang dicadangkan itu cukup lasak dalam menghadapi ketidakpastian model dan gangguan proses. Penemuan yang diperoleh dalam kajian ini membuktikan kesesuaian pendekatan permodelan UIO untuk digunakan dalam FDD bagi menyediakan sistem amaran awal yang berkesan dalam pengurusan penggera loji proses.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASM	-	Abnormal Situation Management
BTX	-	Benzene, toluene, and xylene
CSTR	-	Continuous Stirred Tank Reactor
CPI	-	Chemical Process Industry
DRGA	-	Dynamic Relative Gain Array
FDD	-	Fault Detection and Diagnosis
FDI	-	Fault Detection and isolation
LQR	-	Linear quadratic regulator
LTI	-	Linear time invariant
MIMO	-	Multi-Input Multi-Output
MVDC	-	Multi-variable distillation column
NI	-	Niederlinski Index
ODE's	-	Ordinary differential equation
PI		Proportional and integral control
RGA	-	Relative Gain Array
RDX	-	Research Department Formula X
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modelling
SSV	-	Structured Singular Value
SVD	-	Singular value decomposition
TNT	-	Tri-nitro-toluene
UI	-	Unknown input disturbances
UIO	-	Unknown input observer

## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$(.)^+$	-	Pseudo-inverse of the matrix
$\alpha_j$	-	Relative volatility of benzene, toluene, and xylene.
$\delta$	-	Tolerance parameter
$\sigma_r$	-	Variance of free-fault residuals
$\tau$	-	Time constant for the liquid flow dynamics (min)
$\tau_c$	-	Time constant (min)
$\zeta$	-	The effect of vapour flow on liquid flow
$\theta$	-	Time delay (min)
$\Delta H_r$	-	Enthalpy of reaction (J/mol)
$\rho$	-	Density of the reacting mixture (g/L)
$\rho_j$	-	Density of the reacting coolant (g/L)
$\bar{r}$	-	Fault-free residual mean values
$\hat{x}(k)$	-	Observer estimated state vector
$\omega(k)$	-	Unknown input disturbances
$\omega_e(k)$	-	Exogenous disturbance
$\omega_u(k)$	-	Modelling uncertainties
$\mathring{A}$	-	Overall heat transfer area (m <sup>2</sup> )
B	-	Bottom product flow rate (Kmol/min)
$C_{Ain}$	-	Inlet feed concentration of component A (mol/L)
$C_{Bin}$	-	Inlet feed concentration of component B (mol/L)
$C_p$	-	Heat capacity (J/ (g. K))
$C_{pL}$	-	Heat capacity of the coolant (J/ (g. K))
CV	-	Controlled variable
D	-	Top product flow rate (Kmol/min)
E	-	Unknown input distribution matrix.
$E_a$	-	Activation energy (J/mol)
$E_e$	-	Exogenous disturbance distribution matrix
$E_u$	-	Modelling uncertainties distribution matrix
$e(k)$	-	Prediction error

$e_x$	-	State estimation errors
$F$	-	Feed flow rate (Kmol/min), (L/s)
$F_{jin}$	-	Inlet coolant flow rate (L/s)
$f_s$	-	Additive sensor fault
$J(r(k))$	-	Residual evaluation function
$K_c$	-	The controller gain
$K_P$	-	Process gain
$k_o$	-	Arrhenius factor (L/mole) <sup>1.28</sup> · s <sup>-1</sup>
$MV$	-	Manipulated variable
$M_C$	-	Reflux drum level (Kmol)
$M_R$	-	Reboiler level (Kmol)
min	-	Time domain minute
$P$	-	Pressure (atm)
$Q_C$	-	Condenser duty (KJ/min)
$Q_R$	-	Reboiler duty (KJ/min)
$q$	-	Number of samples collection
$R_L$	-	Reflux flow rate (Kmol/min)
$r(k)$	-	Generated residual
S	-	Time domain second
$SP$	-	Set-point
$S_r$	-	Binary decision variable
$T_C$	-	Condenser temperature (K)
$T_d$	-	Derivative time constant
$T_i$	-	Integral time constant
$T_{in}$	-	Feed temperature (K)
$T_{jin}$	-	Inlet coolant temperature (K)
$T_k$	-	Residual threshold
$T_R$	-	Reboiler temperature (K)
U	-	Overall heat transfer coefficient (w/m <sup>2</sup> ·K)
$u(k)$	-	Input vector
$V_B$	-	Vapour boil-up flow rate (Kmol/min)
$V_j$	-	Volume of the cooling jacket (L)
$V_r$	-	Volume of the reactor (L)



- $x(k)$  - State vector
- $X_{Bb}$  - Bottom mole fraction of Benzene (mole %).
- $X_{Tb}$  - Top mole fraction of Benzene (mole %).
- $y(k)$  - Output vector
- $z(k)$  - Observer state vector

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Motivation

Managing process plant operation involves many challenging tasks including the needs to ensure safety, efficiency, reliability, and profitability, thus requiring all key variables to stay within specified operating windows. This is exacerbated by the fact that today's process plants are becoming increasingly more complex, highly integrated, and heavily instrumented due to increased demands to achieve higher performance and profitability. In dealing with these complexities, features like fault detection and diagnosis (FDD) are now a necessity. This is to facilitate human interventions whenever needed and to create synergy between operator's action and plant automation.

The key objective of the FDD system is to facilitate plant operators in making decision towards taking the appropriate course of actions when larger deviations emerge. This can be the results of extreme disturbances or failure of certain components of the plant operation system including sensors and actuators. Early detection of these faults is important to avoid the process to drift out of the specified operating window, resulting in hazardous condition and the need to shut down the plant, both of which are very costly. In order to manage process faults efficiently, it is important for the plant operation system to be able to detect and diagnose all potential faults as early as possible. In complex integrated and automated process, ignoring a small fault can lead to terrible consequences (Liu, 2006).

Generally, FDD approaches can be classified into three wide-ranging categories based on a first principle process knowledge such as quantitative based models, qualitative based models, and process history-based methods (Venkatasubramanian et al., 2003c; Venkatasubramanian et al., 2003b;

Venkatasubramanian et al., 2003a). Most of FDD studies for chemical plants are focussed on process history methods using techniques such as artificial neural network, fuzzy logic, statistical process monitoring, and qualitative based models that includes multi-level flow, fault trees analysis, and signed digraphs. These two classes of techniques are relatively easier to apply and develop but limit accuracy and analytical depth. Also, they require a large history data that is specific to the operating condition for which the models were developed (Rahoma, 2021; Tian et al., 2012; Rajaraman, 2006). In order to overcome these weaknesses, the quantitative based models that rely on state-space, input-output, and first-principles models have received more attention in real plants (Patel et al., 2020; Simani et al., 2003). These models have techniques such as parameter estimation, state estimation, and parity relations.

Quantitative model-based methods are based on residual generation from the differences between the measured process variables and their estimates from the model, the fault information could be extracted from the evaluation of this residual (Tangirala, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2017b). However, this method require theoretical derivation of the process model, which lead to more complexities and can be more computationally intensive if it is compared with process history and qualitative based model approaches (Katipamula and Brambley, 2005). Moreover, the design of an effective and reliable scheme needs to account the modelling uncertainty and the sensitivity of the faults (Yu et al., 2014; Isermann, 2006; Zarei and Poshtan, 2010). Despite these challenges, the urge to have clarity in model predictions that is akin to physical meaning has led to continued developments in this class of FDD approach.

Unknown input observer (UIO) is considered to be among the most popular approaches to achieve decoupling of state estimation error from modelling uncertainties and exogenous disturbances, which makes the residuals insensitive to unknown disturbances, whilst sensitive to the faults (Ahmadizadeh et al., 2014; Hosseini et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2009; Zarei and Poshtan, 2010; Zarei and Poshtan, 2011). This is a powerful feature that can be exploited within the FDD framework to establish better reliability and robustness to avoid false alarms and detection time delay. Examples of similar applications include the work of (Liu, 2016; Sotomayor and Odloak, 2005), in which, the application of UIO in dealing with sensor failures are

reported. These early works require further extensions to examine cases involving process systems with larger number of control loops and more process interactions.

Motivated by these considerations, a robust design procedure for FDD using UIO is proposed. The main contributions of this thesis are UI distribution matrix is not known a priori like the previous works and the technique is applied on nonlinear large-scale process (Multivariable distillation column) integrated with PI-control. The robustness and performance of the proposed FDD scheme are investigated and evaluated under several scenarios of abrupt faults occurring in the sensor.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this research is to develop an effective and reliable FDD method as a part of alarm system management for chemical process industry using the advantage of UIO. The objective can be detailed out as follows:

1. To formulate a multi loop feedback control configuration for a multivariable distillation column and evaluate closed loop performances based on set point tracking and disturbance rejection.
2. To evaluate the proposed multi loop control system in managing the abnormal process situation carried out due to sensor failures.
3. To propose a fault detection and diagnosis scheme using unknown input observer (UIO) for sensor fault detection and diagnosis based on the modelling uncertainties and exogenous disturbances in nonlinear process and implement it in the multivariable distillation column as a case study.
4. To study the effects of feedback control on the generated residual of faulty sensors in non-linear CSTR reactor and apply the improved UIO on open-loop non-linear CSTR reactor.

### **1.3 Scope of the Research**

To satisfy and achieve the objectives of this study, the scope and limitations of this research work are as follows:

- a. The multi-variable distillation column for aromatic compounds (benzene, toluene, and xylene) was constructed based on mass and energy balance equations, laws of basic thermodynamics, and algebraic energy equations. The relative volatility and pressure inside the column are constant. The hold-up in the vapour phase was neglected.
- b. The control configuration selected based on a systematic method called Relative Gains Array (RGA) and the control system are based on multi-loops of PI-control.
- c. The unknown input observer (UIO) for fault detection and diagnosis are designed based on modelling uncertainties and exogenous disturbance. By using a bank of UIOs to generate the residuals which are sensitive to the faults and insensitive to modelling uncertainties and exogenous disturbance and are implemented on several sensor fault scenarios with neglected the sensor noise.
- d. The non-linear exothermic CSTR reactor was designed based on the data provided by (Liu, 2016) and control system was built on PI-control.

### **1.4 The Research Contribution**

The main contribution of this thesis is improving the design of UIOs via calculated modelling uncertainties and exogenous disturbances distribution matrix from the process plant input and output data and model equations. This procedure should increase the robustness and reliability of the FDD scheme, hence reducing the rate of missing and false alarms. Furthermore, the novelty of this work is applied the

designed UIOs to a large-scale chemical process such as a nonlinear multivariable distillation column and nonlinear exothermic CSTR reactor integrated with feedback PI-control.

The improved UIO technique was tested to detect and diagnose the sensor fault occurrence as an abrupt fault. The obtained results have highlighted the robustness, reliability, and efficiency of FDD to track and monitor the process and provide an early warning mechanism to plant operators before the fault reaches a critical situation. Issues associated with generated residuals resulting from the effects of feedback control on the faulty sensor residual are also highlighted.

## **1.5 Layout of Thesis**

Following this introductory chapter, the literature review that outlines key developments in relevant topics is presented as chapter 2. The foundation of the work is established in chapter 3 where the development of mathematical model of a multivariable distillation column is presented. This is followed by the analysis of dynamic response, control loop developments and closed loop performance evaluation. Then process abnormalities are introduced to further evaluate the adequacy of the control system. Then in chapter 4, UIO is introduced and the formulation of an FDD strategy is described. The scheme is implemented on multivariable distillation column. In chapter 5, the robustness of the proposed UIO based FDD is illustrated on a CSTR test bed. Finally, chapter 6 summarises the overall framework of the research, outlines the conclusion and recommends some important extensions of the current works.

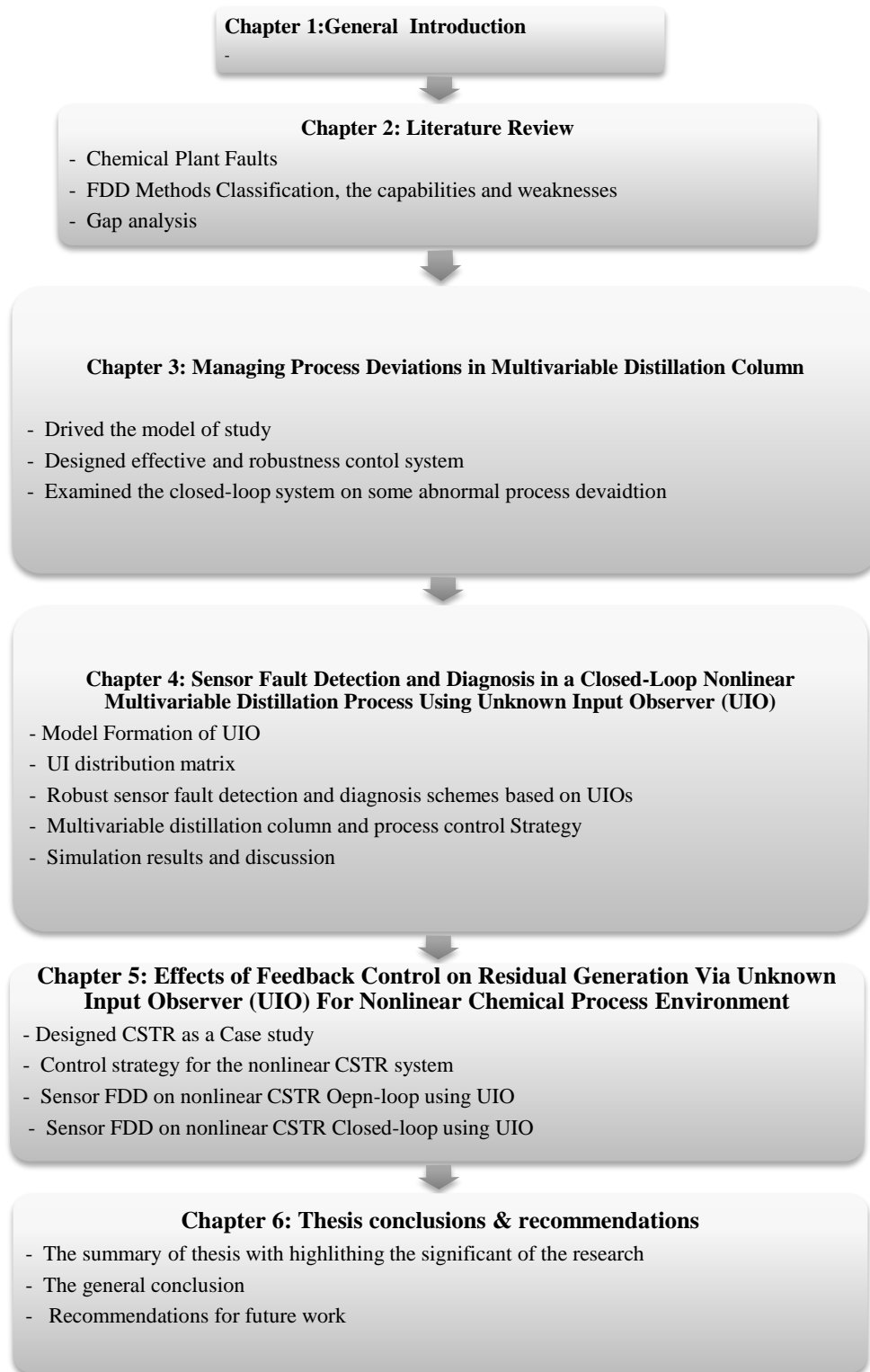


Figure 1.1 Thesis Flow chart organization



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