

## SEMI-ACTIVE CONTROL OF STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

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**Keywords:** Structural Control, Semi-active Control System, Passive Control System, Active Control System, Energy-dissipation

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### Summary

Vibration response control of civil engineering structures subjected to natural hazards, e.g., earthquakes, wind, etc., using smart protective systems, classified as passive, semi-active and active control systems, has been investigated extensively during last two decades. Semi-active control systems possess reliability of passive systems and adaptability of semi-active systems, and have shown tremendous potentials in protecting infrastructures against natural hazards. This paper presents a detailed literature review on the state-of-the-art and the state-of-practice of semi-active control devices and control algorithms. A brief description of important semi-active control devices, such as semi-active stiffness dampers and semi-active variable dampers, controllable friction dampers and controllable fluid dampers, such as ER and MR dampers, and numerous control algorithms based on the state-of-the-art review has been presented. A comparative performance of these devices is illustrated through an example of application of various semi-active controllers in a six story building. A brief case study of applications of various semi-active devices in new and existing civil engineering structures is also presented. Finally, a brief discussion on future research issues and needs important for facilitating practical implementation of semi-active devices/control algorithms is presented.

## 1. Introduction

Significant progress has been made during last few decades in the research and development of structural control and seismic protective systems technologies to alleviate structural responses due to natural hazards such as earthquakes, strong winds, etc. As a result of this, numerous control algorithms and devices have been investigated by Soong (1990); Housner et al (1997); Soong and Spencer (2002). Depending on the extent of external power supply required for operation of the device, these control devices are generally classified into three broad categories: passive, active, and semi-active systems. A combination of two different control devices (e.g., passive and active, passive and semi-active) simultaneously to improve effectiveness and reliability of control systems is called “Hybrid Control System”. During last two decades, many of these control devices have been implemented in new and existing structures by Spencer and Nagarajaiah (2003).

A passive control system, the most basic and reliable control system, uses material's yielding force, viscosity of fluid or friction force to dissipate energy which are defined by Soong and Dargush (1997); Constantinou et al (1998). Some of the commonly used passive control systems are passive energy dissipation devices, passive base-isolation system and passive tuned mass damper systems based on Soong and Spencer (2002); Spencer and Nagarajaiah (2003). Examples of passive energy dissipation devices include metallic yielding dampers developed by Skinner et al (1975); Kelly et al (1972), friction damper and viscous and viscoelastic dampers and have been used widely during recent years to protect structures from destructive effects of earthquakes by Pall and Marsh (1982); Makris and Constantinou (1991); Li and Reinhorn (1995).

Active control systems require large external power supply to generate desired / required control force based on a control algorithm utilizing measured response quantities/excitations to calculate appropriate control signal which is used to drive hydraulic actuators. The definition of active control system is defined by Soong (1990); Soong and Constantinou (1994). Typical active control algorithms to calculate feedback control forces are LQG/H<sub>2</sub>/H<sub>∞</sub> control investigated by Suhardjo et al (1990); Spencer et al (1993); Yang et al (1996), sliding mode control investigated by Yang et al (1994); Yang et al (1995), optimal polynomial control studied by Agrawal and Yang (1996); Yang et al (1996); Cha and Agrawal (2013a) and fuzzy logic and artificial neural network based control investigated by Nagarajaiah (1994); Battaini et al (1998); Symans and Kelly (1999). Active control system can adjust the control force according to the scale of external excitations and structural responses. Although active control systems have been found to be the most effective among three categories of structural control systems because of their ability to obtain desired level performance, they can also destabilize the structural system by adding energy because of limitations, such as system uncertainties, time lags, measurement errors, sensor/actuator malfunctions, etc. In addition, large power supply required by these systems may not be available during strong earthquakes. Active control systems also require regular maintenance by expert technicians.

A semi-active control system typically requires smaller external power source and utilizes the motion of the structure to develop control forces through parametric control

of the device, e.g., opening and closing of orifice of a passive fluid damper investigated by Reid (1956); Dyke and Spencer (1997); Dyke et al (1996). The device can continue to function in passive mode in the event of power failure. Hence, semi-active control systems can achieve control effect similar to a fully active system and significantly better those of passive system, while eliminating the concern of causing any instability in the structural system. Similar to active control systems, control forces in semi-active control systems are based on the feedback from the structural responses measured by sensors. A schematic diagram of a typical semi-active control system is shown in Figure 1.

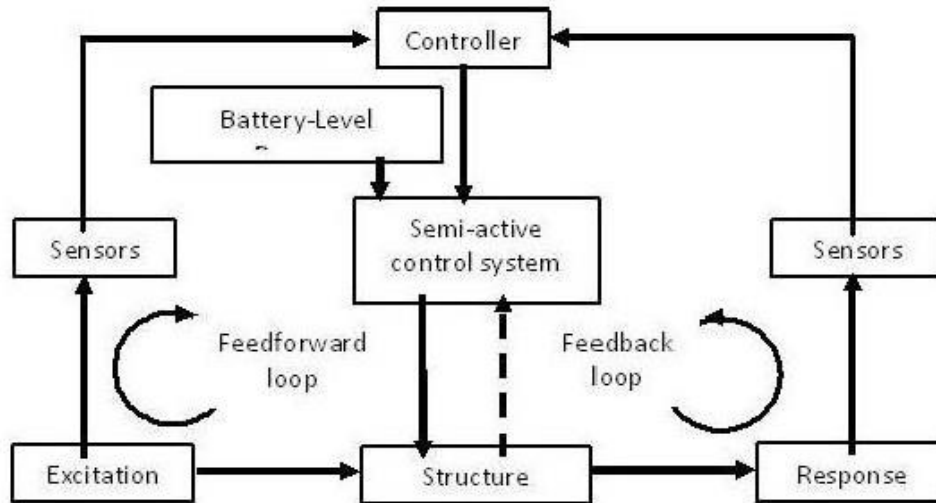


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of a semi-active control system.

Control mechanisms in all semi-active control devices are based on parametric control of device properties, such as size of the orifice in fluid viscous dampers, normal force in semi-active friction dampers, and current/voltage in magnetorheological (MR) dampers. Some of the studies were conducted by Dyke and Spencer (1997); Dyke et al (1996). Semi-active systems only require battery-level external power sources for operating the device. In numerical simulations utilizing different devices and controllers, semi-active control strategies can be realized by (i) directly applying friction-type restraints to passive devices, e.g., sequential controller developed by Stammers and Sireteanu (1998), modulated homogenous friction controller developed by Inaudi (1997); He et al (2003), visco-elastic fluid controller developed by Chen and Chen (2000), (ii) by applying semi-active dissipative restraints to active controllers, e.g., clipped optimal control developed by Dyke and Spencer (1997), and (iii) by applying friction type restraints to active controllers investigated by Xu et al (2006).

## 2. Semi-Active Control Systems: Devices

Majority of semi-active devices can be broadly classified into four types: (i) Hydraulic dampers (ii) Controllable friction dampers (iii) Controllable fluid dampers and (iv) Semi-active tuned mass dampers. A brief description of these devices is presented in the following.

## 2.1. Hydraulic Dampers

The hydraulic damper consists of a cylinder – piston system with a valve in the by-pass pipe connecting two sides of the cylinder as shown in Figure 2. It can be used both as passive and semi-active control device either by opening or closing the valve in the bypass of the cylinder, or by increasing / decreasing the size of the orifice in the cylinder bypass. The equivalent stiffness of the entire device, denoted by  $k_{hi}$ , is given as  $k_{hi} = k_f k_b (k_f + k_b)^{-1}$ , where  $k_b$  and  $k_f$  are stiffness of the bracing and stiffness of the compressed oil (because of bulk modulus of the fluid), respectively.

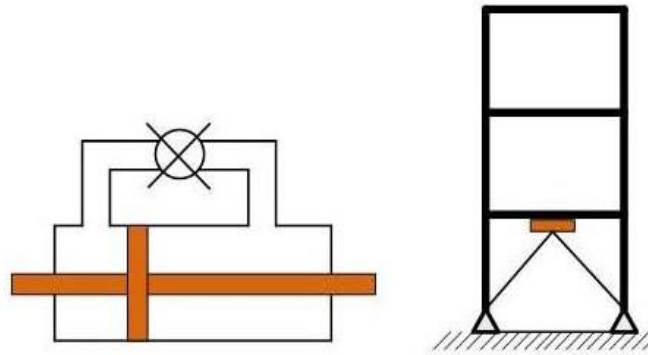


Figure 2. Schematic diagram of the hydraulic damper and building model

The damper provides stiffness to the structure because of bulk modulus of the fluid in the cylinder when the valve is closed, and provides damping to the structure because of head loss during the movement of the fluid when the valve is open. In actual application, when the valve is either always open or closed, the hydraulic damper is operated in passive mode. In this mode, the device adds constant stiffness  $k_{hi}$  to the story unit when the valve is closed and adds small damping to the structures when the valve is open. In semi-active control mode, the damper can either be operated to add variable stiffness (i.e., semi-active stiffness damper) or variable damping (semi-active variable damper) developed by Yang et al (2007).

### 2.1.1. Semi-Active Stiffness Dampers

Generally a hydraulic damper is connected to a bracing or replaces x-bracing in selected location of each story in order to add stiffness. As a variable stiffness device, two distinctive control modes can be operated on the damper. The first control mode is to pulse the valve open and close quickly at appropriate time instants, referred to as resetting control. In this mode, the valve is generally closed and the damper acts as a stiffness element, except during the resetting period (i.e., when the valve is opened and then closed quickly). Through such operations, energy from the vibrating system is dissipated after being transferred to the motion of oil. The hydraulic damper controlled through the resetting control approach is generally termed as resetting semi-active stiffness damper (RSASD) developed by Thai et al (1995); Jabbari (1997). The second control mode, referred to as switching control, is to open and close the valve in certain time interval according to certain control logic.

The performance of a full-scale RSASD device has been investigated on a large scale building model at the National Center of Earthquake Engineering Research (NCREE), Taiwan. The large scale RSASD installed in the first story of a 3-story large scale building model. Instead of the hydraulic fluid, the pressurized gas has been used in the full-scale model of RSASD for an easy adjustment of the stiffness of the RSASD by changing the gas pressure.

It has been observed that the theoretical stiffness of the RSASD is linearly related to the gas pressure. It also has been observed from experimental results that the full-scale RSASD is significantly effective in reducing the peak drifts, root mean square values and inter-story drifts of the building subjected to near-field earthquakes. However, it is less effective in reducing peak floor accelerations. The RSASD device has strong advantage in its schematic simplicity in comparison with other semi-active control devices such as MR dampers since the device consists of a hydraulic cylinder and a valve, which are standard mechanical components available readily and inexpensively. Moreover, the control law is also quite simple and decentralized, i.e., it utilizes displacement and velocity across the damper only) and is robust with respect to structural uncertainties. Consequently, the system reliability and total cost of the RSASD compare favorably with any other semi-active control system.

The performance of switching type semi-active dampers, widely known as active variable stiffness (AVS), has been investigated extensively by Yamada and Kobori (2006). This AVS system can change structure's stiffness and reduce its response by preventing resonant response against earthquake loads by utilizing a small power source. This AVS system has been operational in three-story building in Tokyo during last ten years. The building has been subjected to over 30 earthquakes during this period. From the analysis of recorded data, it has been demonstrated that the AVS system is highly reliable and easily maintainable.

### **2.1.2. Semi-Active Variable Dampers**

Hydraulic dampers are sometimes used as semi-active fluid viscous dampers to add variable damping to the structure by increasing or decreasing the size of the orifice in the bypass valve with respect to a nominal value of the orifice. Therefore, the damping force increases with a decrease in the size of orifice until the pressure in the servovalve reaches a specified value after which the damping force becomes constant. During motion across the damper device, the fluid within the damper is forced to pass through small orifices at high speeds. The output force is modulated by the bypass control servovalve that connects the two sides of the cylinder. The servovalve as pressure relief device opens when the oil pressure through the valve exceeds a specified value. Energy dissipation in this device occurs because of head loss when oil flows from one side of cylinder to the other side of cylinder through the orifice (i.e., from low to high velocity through the orifice and from high to low velocity from the orifice to other side of the cylinder).

The semi-active fluid viscous dampers for structure control using shaking table test or through applications to existing structures have been investigated by Yang et al (1995); Kawashima et al (1992); Symans et al (1994); Kurata et al (1994). A 200 kN prototype

semi-active damper with a stroke of  $\pm 13$  cm, a length of about 1.2 m, and valve operation power 50 W, was tested by Symans and Constantinou (1999). Two servovalves independently control the fluid flow for relative piston head motion to the left or right. The semi-active device behaves essentially as an adjustable force device with hysteretic-type damping. However, the device dissipates very little energy in the event of power failure without having fail-safe mode of operation. This type of semi-active damper has been used during reduced-scale shaking table tests of a seismically isolated single-span bridge structure with plan dimension of  $7.6 \text{ m} \times 2 \text{ m}$ , bridge piers of height of 1.6 m, weight of 390 kN and supported by four rubber bearings. The damper has been installed between the deck and one of the piers. It has been observed that the semi-active damper achieved approximately 46 % reduction in deck acceleration and 86 % reduction in the deck displacement.

Another semi-active fluid damper system consisting of a stainless steel piston rod, a bronze piston head, a piston rod make-up accumulator, thin silicone oil and an external bypass loop containing a servovalve has also been tested experimentally. This damper has been tested in two different configurations: (i) a two-stage damper utilizing a solenoid valve, and (ii) a variable damper utilizing a servovalve. The variable damper servovalve contains a spool position feedback system and is driven by an electric motor.

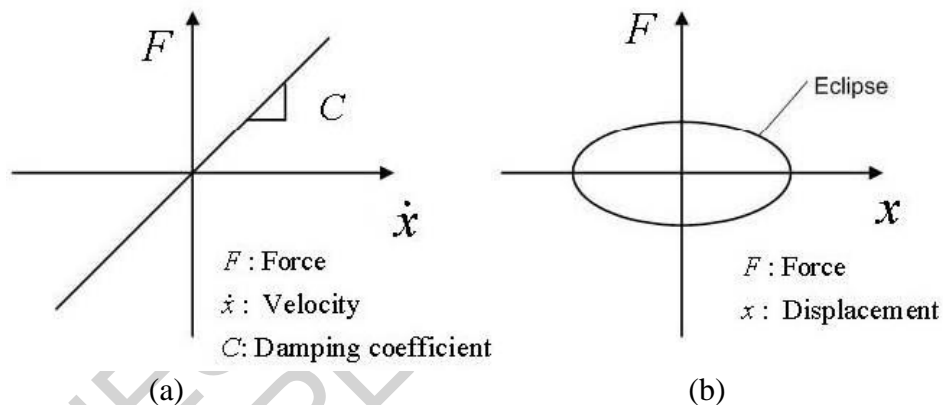


Figure 3. Behavior of linear viscous dashpot as described (a) in the force-velocity plane and (b) in the force-displacement plane

For this semi-active device, a simple analytical model was proposed consisting of a linear viscous dashpot with a voltage dependent damping coefficient,  $C(V)$ . The damper force  $F$ , is expressed by

$$F = C(V)\dot{x} \quad (1)$$

where  $\dot{x}$  is the velocity across the damper, and  $V$  is the command voltage. Based on experiments for both sinusoidal and constant velocity cyclic testing over a frequency range from 0.25 to 4 Hz, the relationship between the semi-active damper command signal and the damping coefficient is obtained by Symans and Constantinou (1999) and shown in Figure 3. It is observed from the testing results that the damping coefficient can be estimated by fitting a linear curve through the experimental data for semi-active

damper with command voltage levels between 0.75 and 2.25 V. The behavior of semi-active viscous dampers in the force-velocity plane is idealized in Figure 3(a) and the corresponding elliptical hysteresis curve (in the force displacement plane) is shown in Figure 3(b). Linear visco-elastic Maxwell models have been proposed by Symans and Constantinou (1995, 1997) for describing the damper behavior over a wider frequency range

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