

Model-free Monocular Visual Servoing

Benjamin Panreck

Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin, Germany
bpanreck@beuth-hochschule.de

Simon Untergasser

Manfred Hild

Abstract—In this document, we present an unusual approach to pathfinding for grasping objects. Since for robots in human-machine interaction different requirements apply than for robots used in industry, there is also a need for other approaches. We present a sensorimotor approach based on gaze heuristics, which is based exclusively on easy-to-learn implicit environmental models and which uses the advantages of robots with few degrees of freedom.

I. CHALLENGE

Robots in human-machine interaction can behave differently than robots in industrial applications because the requirements are fundamentally different. Speed, accuracy, reliability and reproducibility are required from industrial systems, but they are less important in the interaction with humans. Here, intuitively comprehensible actions are required. Failures and lower speed are explicitly allowed and can be dealt with in human environments. We use the humanoid robot Myon with an anthropometric morphology comparable to a seven year old child. The robot was originally developed for research in the field of artificial language evolution with minimum complexity in morphology [1]. Each arm has only four degrees of freedom (DOF). In comparison with the human arm, which has seven DOF plus two assisting DOF in the shoulder, this is a massive reduction of flexibility in the actuation space. One benefit of limiting the mechanical DOF are reduction in costs and complexity.

Furthermore Myon uses only one monocular camera for visual input without depth information. This is rather unusual, because manipulating robots normally use depth information to plan their grasping [2]. Our tests have shown that monocular distance estimates using head motions are subject to extreme errors due to noise and distortion of the optical system and are not suitable for grasp planing.

With this restricted platform, our challenge is to grasp objects of unknown size and distance using only handy-eye-coordination.

II. SOLUTION

To address this challenge we use a behavioral heuristic based on local sensorimotor loops and an self-learned implicit model of the environment in the form of quadrics.

Our approach is, to control the arm without an explicit model of itself, the environment or of the object to grasp, but by using tightly coupled sensorimotor loops (SML). Basically we use six independent SML to control the head- and arm-movement. The first two SML are used to couple

two DOF of the head (yaw and pitch) directly to the visual input by bringing the coordinates (x and y) of the object to be grasped to the center of the camera image. The third loop is a coupling of the heads acceleration sensors to hold the head (roll) in a horizontal orientation, independent of the viewing direction. Due to the low number of DOF in the arm we are able to couple the two DOF of the shoulder (roll and pitch) directly to the visual input with the goal to move the robot's hand coordinates (x and y) to the center of the image. This means that the hand and the object to be grasped meet in the center of the image. In behavioral psychology this behavior is called gaze-heuristics [3] and is a known behavior of humans to cause (or avoid) collisions with an object. The robot's wrist is controlled automatically in a fixed orientation to the ground by using the acceleration sensors in the lower arm. When additionally the elbow is actuated, the hand either gets bigger (closer to the camera), or smaller (further away from the camera). When we use the elbow to bring the hand further away from the camera eventually the hand will collide with the object. To avoid this collision we need a measure for the distance without knowledge about the object size. This problem can be tackled by using an implicit model of the table where the object is placed. One possibility are quadrics. The table where the object of interest is placed, is a surface in \mathbb{R}^3 . Using quadrics we are able to model such surfaces in the three dimensional joint space (shoulder pitch, shoulder roll, elbow) of the robot. Such a model can be learned (using RLS or similar) by moving the robot's hand to different positions on such a surface while keeping the elbow joint relaxed. As usual for heuristic behaviors, the gaze-heuristic used here is a problem-specific solution.

The final grasping movement performed by the hand of the robot needs to be considered separately. For this additional problem, there are promising approaches which make use of the environmental constraints [4].

REFERENCES

- [1] M. Hild et al., "Myon: Concepts and Design of a Modular Humanoid Robot Which Can Be Reassembled During Runtime," in *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference on Climbing and Walking Robots and the Support Technologies for Mobile Machines*, Paris, France, September 2011.
- [2] R. Li and H. Qiao, "A survey of methods and strategies for high-precision robotic grasping and assembly tasks—some new trends," *IEEE/ASME Transactions on Mechatronics*, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 2718–2732, 2019.
- [3] G. Gigerenzer and P. Todd et al., *Simple Heuristics That Make Us Smart*, 1st ed. Oxford University Press, 1999.
- [4] C. Eppner, *Robot grasping by exploiting compliance and environmental constraints*. Technische Universitaet Berlin (Germany), 2019.