

CPG Design in Bipedal Locomotion by Machine Learning Techniques: A Review

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ABSTRACT

The natural species found in this world exhibit some form of intelligence in their conducts. The human being is the ultimate benchmark among all the species, which shows the intelligence in almost every conduct in their life. So in the world of artificial intelligence we are trying to mimic the behavior of the human being through the machines. The artificial counterpart of the human being who has the resemblance with the human being is called biped or humanoid. In this paper we review the machine learning techniques which are popular among researchers from last 10 to 15 years for learning task in robotics. Machine learning techniques specifically includes supervised learning, unsupervised learning and Reinforcement learning.

Keywords

Biped, Central pattern generator (CPG), Deep Learning, Machine Learning, neural oscillators.

1. INTRODUCTION

The efficient movement in the typical environments is the key property of human beings and other species exist in the real world. The ability of reproduction, the search of food, the ability to move from one place to another obviously requires the movement capabilities and the nervous system exist in human beings to drive and control all these aspects [1]. If we think about to design a machine that exhibit the functionalities shown by human beings, obviously it is typical to achieve all these functionalities, but maximum efforts should be expected from the researchers and scientists.

The field of biology and humanoid robotics is highly interrelated with one another in the sense that the locomotion behavior of the human beings is adopted in humanoids. The researchers work on the control mechanism of human body mimicked in humanoids. But now humanoids provide some techniques back to human beings to test some biological hypothesis [2].

From the existing evidences it is assumed that vertebrate locomotion is controlled by a central pattern generator (CPG) capable of producing the different types of rhythms associated with different types of gaits. It is often assumed that the Central pattern generators are built by using the oscillators of various types [3]. The different types of oscillators are Rayleigh oscillator, Vanderpol oscillator and the most often used is Matsuoka neural oscillator; through these the modeling of CPGs are done and described by the identical systems of differential equations [4].

The paper is organized as follows: In the second section, we discussed about various mathematical models of biological CPGs developed by different researchers. Third section presents the review of the CPG models specially designed and developed for biped robots. Fourth section focus on the techniques to design CPG models for specific tasks and some learning aspects using neural networks. Finally in the last section, we discuss the challenges for the humanoid research, and growth of machine learning techniques for humanoid robots.

2. MATHEMATICAL MODELS OF CENTRAL PATTERN GENERATOR

Researcher proposed a number of models for the locomotion of humanoids as well as for animals. Some animals may be two legged; four legged (quadruped) or snake like structures are also there. In this section we will review the mathematical models proposed and developed to study biological CPGs including different types of animal locomotion [5].

The movements are generated in vertebrates by oscillator circuits. These oscillatory units are the basic elements through which different type of movements are generated, called CPG circuits.

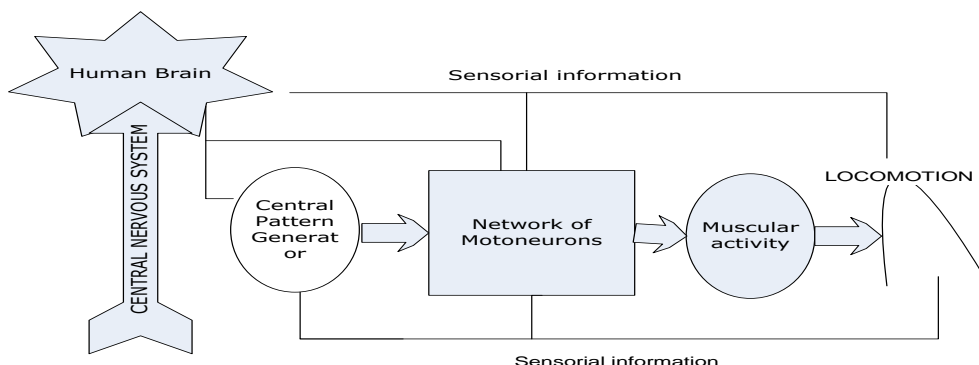


Figure-1 Control system of the human locomotion.

The CPG circuits consists of some neurons and found in the spinal cord of vertebrate animals. Theses CPG circuits consists of some neurons and found in the spinal cord of vertebrate animals. These CPG circuits are responsible for periodic movement like trotting, swimming, walking, flying and running etc.

$$T(du_1/dt) = -u_1 - wy_2 - bv_1 + u_0 \quad (2.1)$$

$$T(du_2/dt) = -u_2 - wy_1 - bv_2 + u_0 \quad (2.2)$$

$$T'(dv_1/dt) = -v_1 + y_1 \quad (2.3)$$

$$T'(dv_2/dt) = -v_2 + y_2 \quad (2.4)$$

$$y_i = f(u_i), f(u_i) = \max(0, u_i) \text{ for } i = 1,2 \quad (2.5)$$

Where u_i is the inner state of the i th neuron; y_i is the output of the i th neuron; v_i is a variable representing the degree of the adaptation or self-inhibition effect of the i th neuron; u_0 is an external input with a constant rate; w is a connecting weight; and T and T' are time constants of the inner state and the adaptation effect, respectively. Other oscillators used by researchers are Vanderpol oscillators, Rayleigh oscillators etc.

The Vanderpol oscillator is a non- conservative oscillator with non - linear damping. It evolves in time according to the second order differential equation [2].

$$\frac{d_2x}{dt^2} - m \left(\frac{1}{x^2} \right) \frac{dx}{dt} + x = 0 \quad (2.6)$$

The Matsuoka neural oscillator is generally used by the authors very frequently in most of the papers. The idea of Matsuoka neural oscillator is that it consists of two mutually inhibited neurons which suppress the activity of one another in order to generate oscillation in the oscillatory unit.

The mathematical equations of the Matsuoka neural oscillator described by using the following differential equations [6]

Here m is a scalar parameter indicating the non-linearity and the strength of the damping and x is the position coordinate which is a function of the time t .

3. REVIEW OF CPG MODELS FOR BIPED LOCOMOTION

An oscillator consists of two mutually inhibited neurons forms the basic neural unit. This idea was first proposed by Brown and be a milestone in the theory of CPG that the movements are generated in spinal cord without any signal or trigger. The diagram shown below shows the oscillatory networks.

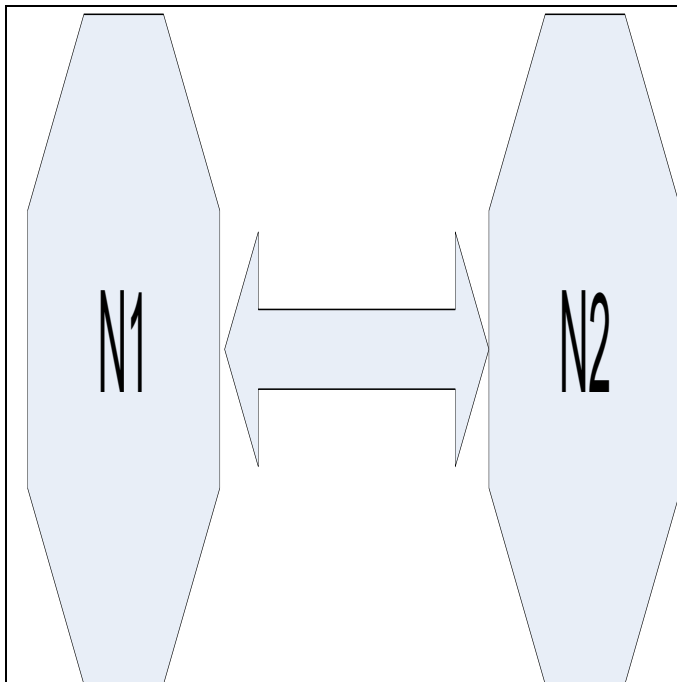


Figure-2 Brown half centered oscillator model. Coupling of neurons with mutual inhibition that suppresses the activity of one another.

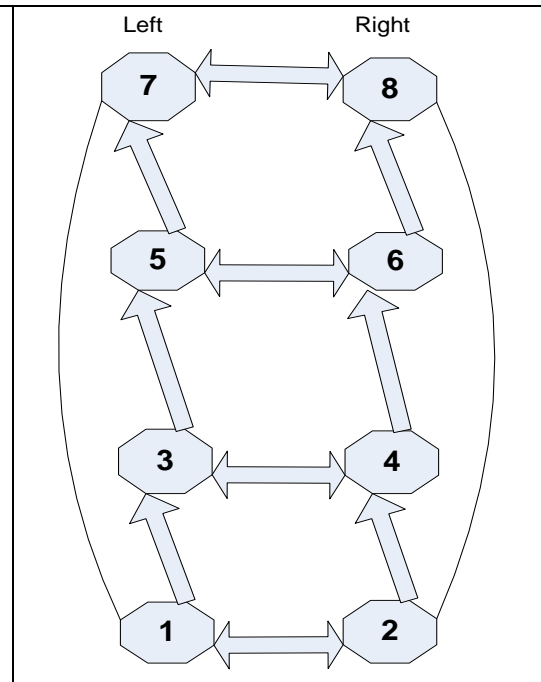


Figure-3 An example of CPG architecture

In Figure-3 the design methodology follows a biologically inspired approach to design the controller for a humanoid. The given model is based on the observation of the gait patterns of animals and humans. For the humans the stance phase is the

phase during which the limb touches the ground, in swing phase the limb lifts off the ground. However most of the CPG models based on coupled oscillators are not able to separate the swing and stance phase durations [6].

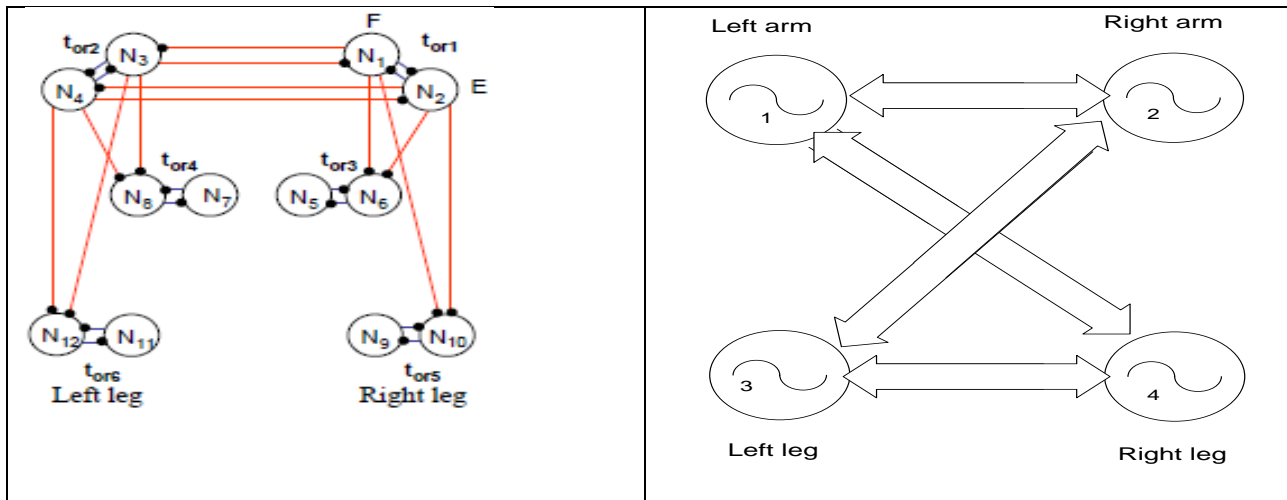


Figure 4 - another examples of CPG architectures consisting eight or more neural oscillators

The diagram shows that a CPG network consists of several neural oscillators for hip, knee and ankle. The oscillator activates other oscillators and communicates with one another in a specified fashion.

4. MACHINE LEARNING TECHNIQUES FOR CPG DESIGN IN BIPEDS

In future a robot is not only constrained to an engineer or some people who are engaged in research and development of robots but also in almost all fields about which a human being can think or imagine [7].

The medical field, agricultural field, production in industries or factories, academics and a number of non-technical fields. So in such a diverse situation if we have some mechanism through which a non-technical person may trained the robot according to its need in an efficient, easy and natural manner is a challenging work and directly related to the concept of machine learning which is very popular technique in current scenario of technological advancement [8].

Some techniques of machine learning like Deep learning and Reinforcement learning are not so competent due to some limitations of these techniques like Deep learning requires large datasets to train the network whereas Reinforcement learning uses substantial and expensive examination to accumulate data points used for learning [9].

Table 1. Use of Machine learning techniques from 2010 onwards in Humanoid Robotics

S.No.	Year	Total Paper reviewed	Use of Machine Learning techniques (in no.s)	Use of Machine Learning techniques (in %)
1	2010	33	4	12.12%
2	2011	37	7	18.91%
3	2012	35	5	14.28%
4	2013	34	6	17.64%
5	2014	41	9	21.95%
6	2015	30	5	16.66%
7	2016	37	9	24.32%
8	2017	30	9	30.00%
9	2018	32	11	34.37%

Source: International Journal of Humanoid Robotics, World scientific pub. Company Pvt. Ltd.

The Table 1 and Figure5 and 6 given, clearly show the growth of machine learning techniques used now a day to design the different aspects of humanoid robots. From 2016 onwards this is high in comparison to the average and previous years.

Another approach called Interactive machine learning solves the challenges encountered in previous techniques. In this method the human being is the part of the learning process by providing the truth values of the environment during exploration of the mechanism. The human teacher also control the mechanism in such a way that it cannot harm the trainer or any other thing exists in the environment during learning process and after learning process is over [10-13].

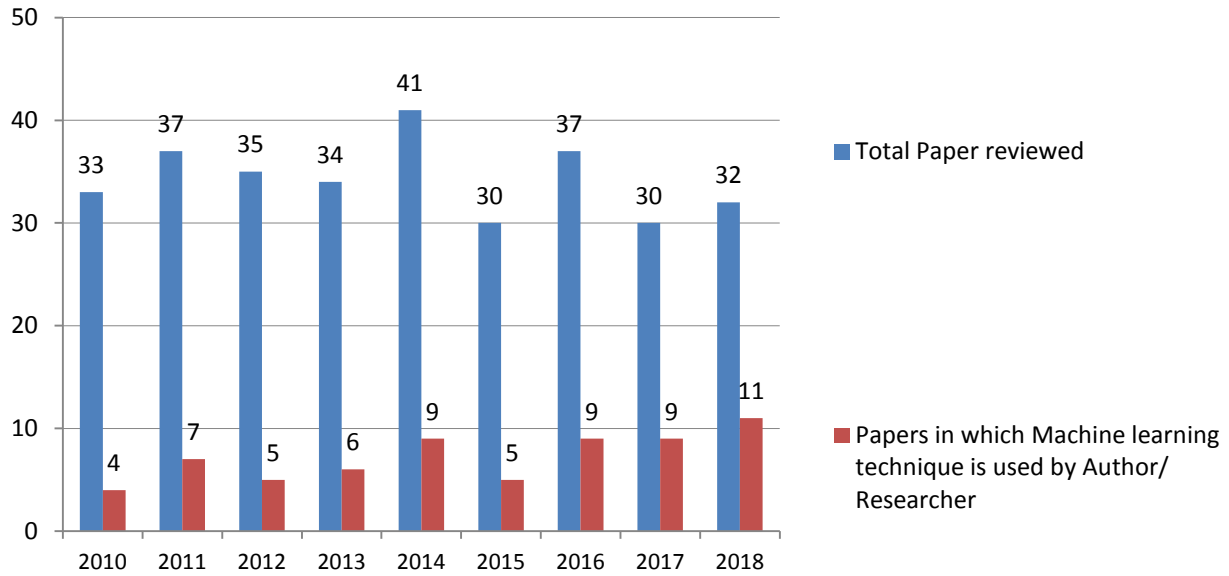


Figure-5 Graph between ML techniques used and total paper reviewed

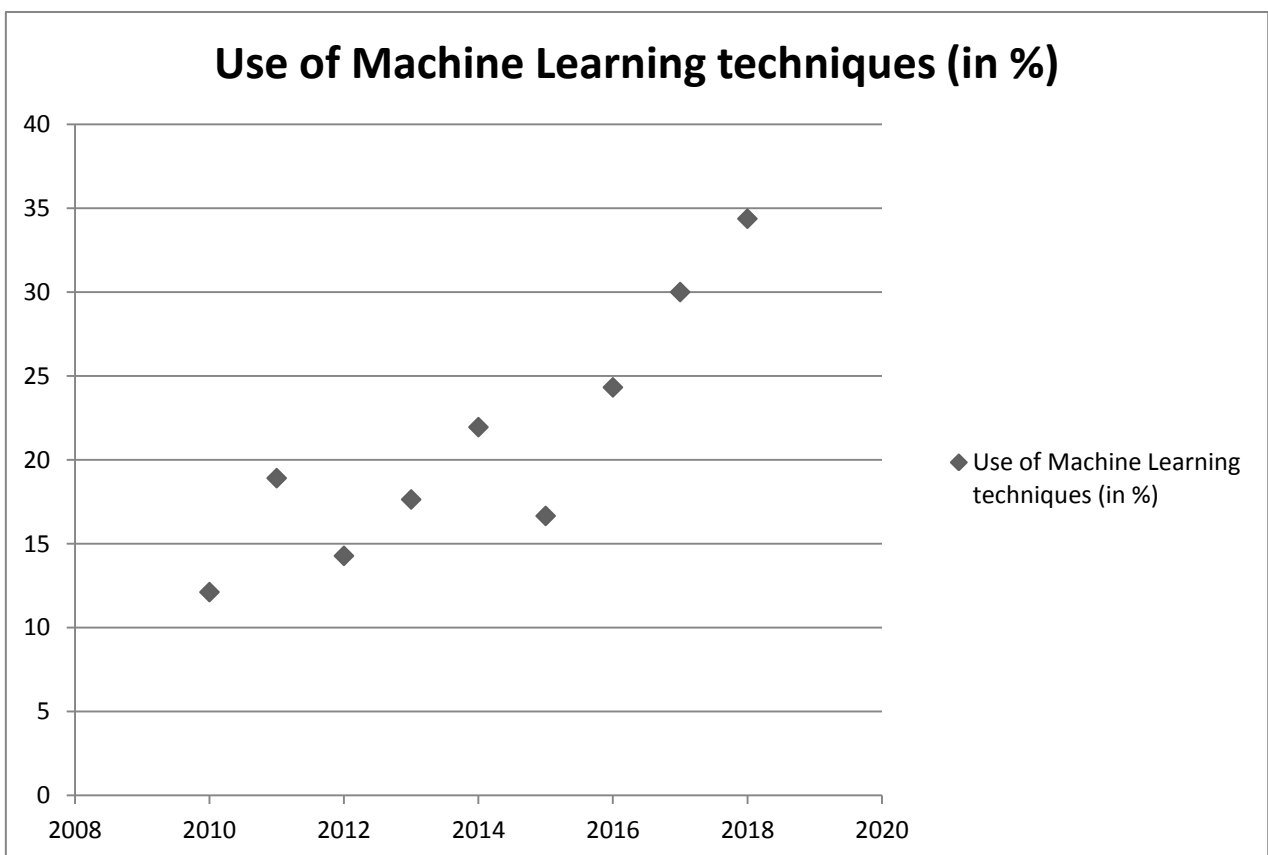


Figure-6 Graph shows the increasing use of Machine Learning techniques in Humanoid Robotics

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Researchers however propose a number of oscillators based models for CPG network and prove the capability of their model by using different tools and techniques. But every model has its specified capability or limitations. We cannot say exactly that a particular model works efficiently in almost all the situations. And till now we have noticed that there is no systematic method of parameter tuning, so it's a challenge for the future researchers to derive a systematic method for parameter tuning in order to achieve the stable locomotion of the humanoids.

We have noticed from last few years that machine learning techniques such as supervised learning which includes neural networks, support vector machines, decision trees and Unsupervised learning, Reinforcement learning are very frequently used by the researcher for modeling different aspects of the humanoid robots. So it is clear that the future is devoted to the machine learning to learn and model various aspect of the real world too. The detailed methods upto some depth of machine learning is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Different Machine learning techniques and their pros and cons

S.NO.	MACHINE LEARNING TECHNIQUE	CONCEPT USED BY THE AUTHOR		PROS/CONS	REFERENCES
1.	Supervised learning	Hidden Markov model (HMM)	The data are captured for whole body motion learning to predict and control locomotion.	Supervised learning mechanism is very frequently used by the researchers for learning objects in order to designing of learning systems. Large number of supervised learning algorithms has been developed in last decade to tackle different types of problems. The basic challenge in supervised learning is the collection of large training examples, sometimes the training examples may not be reliable and leads to confusion for the learning system. So we must be careful in choosing the training examples.	15 17 22 23
		(FAL-CPG)	Proposed a new supervised learning method known as Fourier based automated learning. The resulting CPG network is suitable for on-line applications.		
		SVM	Author proposed a model that has good ability for classification of feedback signals and provides categorized input signals to the system and the complexity of computation does not depend on the dimensions of the input space.		
		Decision Tree	Performs fast and well on big data set, easy to understand and implement doesn't need more time for modeling.		
2.	Unsupervised learning	Hebbian learning	Author shows some natural walking patterns for some real time experiments that seems to be biologically driven.	Unsupervised learning is an effective method to find hidden clusters of data from the data warehouse, so very effectively used in Data Mining tasks. If we are concerned about the neural oscillators for designing and controlling of biped robot, it needs careful designing the time and coordination of each neural oscillator(s) in order to control the mechanism in real time.	23
		Clustering	Clustering is very useful to extract knowledge from large amount of data such as weather forecasting data and be used for preprocessing feedback signal in a control system.		
3.	Reinforcement learning	Deep Visuometer	Author proposed a method based on RL to train a trajectory policy and the	This technique forms a continuous mapping from states to actions and has greater	19

			torque generation signals at robot arms.	capability to learn high dimensional continuous spaces easy to understand, tune learning parameters, requires low computation and fast convergence.	14
		Actor- critic Q-learning	In Reinforcement learning the training process is somehow complex since some functions are required to be adjusted properly and the learning rate is generally low.		
4.	Deep learning	Adaboost classification	Author use a boosting classifier and weak learners for object detection and tracking in real time. As a future the author suggests the comparison of existing classifiers to machine learning techniques such as deep learning.	The rate of detection of objects is dramatically improved by using such techniques. Such systems require large databases to produce efficient and competent classifiers. The time to process and analysis is not so competent.	16 18
		Two phase learning model	The method is useful for production industry specifically for multi variety product development.	Multiple degrees of freedom may produce challenges however.	
5.	Iterative learning	Integration of controllers using Fuzzy logic	Author proposed a fuzzy iterative learning control strategy for position tracking problem of powered ankle prosthesis.	This concept of power ankle prosthesis is especially useful for disabled people. To repeat powered ankle prosthesis in specified time is a challenging task however.	21

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