

Arduino-Based Gesture-Controlled Robot

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Abstract: *A robot is an electromechanical system that functions through programmed software. It can operate independently or with human intervention. Autonomous robots analyze their surroundings and make decisions without external control, making them ideal for industrial applications that demand high precision and efficiency. On the other hand, semi-autonomous robots require human input for certain functions. Gesture-controlled robots fall into this category, as they respond to hand movements. This project utilizes an MPU6050 sensor, which integrates a 3-axis accelerometer and a 3-axis gyroscope, along with an Arduino Nano to control the robot. The system employs wireless communication via an RF transmitter-receiver module, allowing hand movements to dictate the robot's motion. Additionally, specific switches are used to operate a pick-and-place servo mechanism. Robots are increasingly revolutionizing industries such as healthcare, defense, construction, and manufacturing. A gesture-controlled system eliminates the need for traditional controllers like joysticks or buttons, enabling users to operate the robot seamlessly using hand gestures. The transmitter, which is held in hand, contains an RF transmitter and an accelerometer that send movement commands to the robot, allowing it to move in different directions or remain stationary.*

Keywords: Robot, Hand Gestures, MPU6050, Arduino, wireless communication

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in developing intuitive and natural interfaces between users and computer-based systems, with human gestures playing a key role. Gesture recognition allows computers to understand human body language, thereby offering an intuitive alternative to conventional input methods like buttons, keyboards, or touchscreens.

Robots have become integral to automation across various fields, including construction, military, medical, and manufacturing industries. After experimenting with basic robotic systems such as line-following and computer-controlled robots, we developed an accelerometer-based gesture-controlled robot using an Arduino Uno. The robot's movement is driven by hand gestures detected by an accelerometer, which functions based on acceleration.

This type of robot eliminates the need for traditional controllers by allowing the user to control it through simple hand movements. A transmitting device, held in the user's hand, contains an RF transmitter and an accelerometer, which sends commands to the robot. Depending on these commands, the robot can move forward, backward, turn left, turn right, or stop.

The core component of this system is the accelerometer, a sensor capable of measuring acceleration across three axes. It operates within a $\pm 3g$ range and detects static gravitational acceleration when tilted. This data is then converted into motion or vibration signals, which are processed to control the robot's movement.

II. OVERVIEW

A robot is an electromechanical device that can function automatically or under human supervision. Some robots rely on remote controls or computer interfaces for guidance, while others are fully autonomous. The field of robotics has advanced significantly, with modern robots capable of mimicking human actions and making decisions independently. Effective human-machine interaction is crucial for a successful robotic system. In the past, programming was the only means of communication between humans and robots, requiring extensive effort. However, advancements in robotics have introduced gesture-based control, allowing robots to interpret and respond to human movements.

Gesture recognition is an emerging technology that enables computers to understand human body language, reducing reliance on traditional interfaces such as graphical user interfaces (GUIs) and text-based inputs. In a gesture-controlled robot, a transmitter held in hand communicates movements to the robot using an RF module and accelerometer. The robot responds to these hand gestures as follows:

1. Tilting the hand forward moves the robot forward until another command is given.
2. Tilting the hand backward causes the robot to move in reverse.
3. Tilting the hand left turns the robot left.
4. Tilting the hand right turns the robot right.
5. Keeping the hand stable stops the robot.

A gesture is a physical movement intended to convey information, typically involving the hands or head. Our motivation for this project stemmed from observing a disabled individual struggling to operate a wheelchair manually. This inspired us to create a system that enables people with mobility challenges to navigate their wheelchairs effortlessly using hand gestures.

III. LITERATURE SURVEY

Research on hand gesture recognition sensors incorporating accelerometers and gyroscopes has significantly advanced robotic control. One such study focuses on developing a sensor-based system that assists in operating underwater remotely controlled robots. The gyroscope plays a crucial role in detecting the operator's hand position, which is essential when maneuvering a remotely operated vehicle. While experienced users may rely on joysticks for control, new users often find this method complex.

The system is composed of two primary components: a ground station and a control unit. The hand gesture recognition sensor is worn by the user, allowing them to control the robotic hands remotely. Accelerometers and gyroscopes are strategically placed in hand joints to track movements accurately. These sensors facilitate interaction with devices such as screens, wireless mice, and keyboards.

Gesture recognition is one of the most intuitive ways to communicate with machines, enabling seamless interaction between users and devices. In such systems, human-robot interaction must be carefully designed to ensure ease of use and minimize complexity. Experimental studies have shown that physical interaction between humans and humanoid robots improves usability, making gesture-based control an effective solution.

IV. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Traditional wired robots, controlled through buttons or joysticks, often have limitations in movement due to cable constraints. To overcome this issue, a wireless hand-controlled robot is proposed, utilizing a wearable glove to interpret hand gestures as input commands for robot movement.

The goal of this project is to develop a robotic system capable of recognizing human gestures and executing assigned tasks accordingly. The wearable glove is equipped with sensors that capture hand movements and convert them into electrical signals. These signals are processed and transmitted wirelessly to the robot using a microcontroller. The receiving module deciphers the commands and relays them to the microcontroller, which then controls the motors to execute desired actions. This system enhances robotic automation while maintaining user-friendly interaction through intuitive gesture-based control.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This project aims to develop a robotic arm vehicle for pick-and-place operations. The robotic arm features a soft-catching gripper designed to handle fragile or hazardous objects, such as explosives, with minimal pressure.

The robot is remotely controlled via an Android application, enabling users to direct movements such as forward, backward, left, and right. Additionally, a flex sensor-based gesture control mechanism allows for intuitive operation.

The robotic arm is designed to mimic human hand movements, comprising four fingers with three movable joints each, an opposable thumb, a rotating wrist, and an elbow joint. By integrating sensors into a hand glove, real-time gestures can be replicated, ensuring precise and responsive control of the robotic arm.

OVERVIEW

To enhance efficiency and minimize errors, the project is divided into two main sections:

Transmitting Unit

Accelerometer: Detects hand tilts and motion.

Comparator IC: Compares measured tilt with reference voltages.

Encoder IC: Converts input signals into encoded data.

RF Transmitter Module: Sends processed signals wirelessly.

Receiving Unit

RF Receiver Module: Captures transmitted signals.

Decoder IC: Decodes encoded data.

Arduino: Processes received data and controls the robotic arm.

Motor Driver IC: Converts control signals into motor movements.

DC Geared Motors: Drive the robotic vehicle based on processed instructions.

The accelerometer, attached to the user's hand, measures motion and generates corresponding voltage signals. These signals are processed to control the robot's movement in four directions using simple hand gestures.

VI. BLOCK DIAGRAM

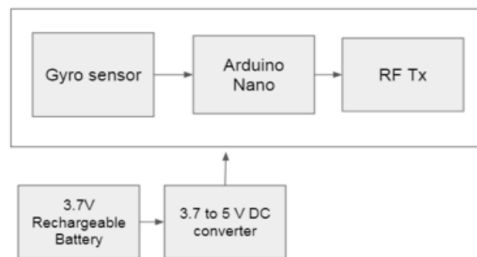


Fig 1 Transmitter

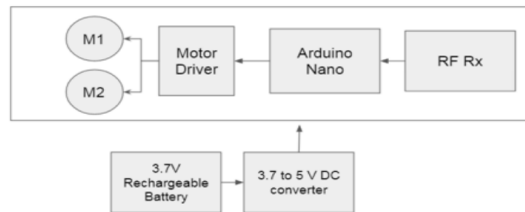


Fig 2 Receiver

VII. FEATURES

Traditional input methods such as keyboards and mice often limit efficiency in applications requiring extensive user interaction. Alternative approaches, such as speech and handwriting recognition, have been explored to address these limitations.

Gesture recognition is a significant technological advancement that allows users to control devices remotely using simple hand movements. This innovation is particularly beneficial for individuals with disabilities, enabling them to perform tasks such as operating a vehicle with ease. Additionally, gesture-based control enhances interactive applications, such as gaming, by making interactions more immersive.

VIII. COMPONENT DESCRIPTION

1. ACCELEROMETER (ADXL335)

An accelerometer is an electromechanical sensor used to measure acceleration forces, including static forces like gravity and dynamic forces resulting from movement or vibration. It provides analog output data corresponding to acceleration along the X, Y, and Z axes.

The ADXL335 is a low-power, three-axis accelerometer with signal-conditioned voltage outputs. It has a minimum full-scale range of $\pm 3g$ and can detect both static acceleration (for tilt sensing) and dynamic acceleration (caused by movement or vibrations). The sensor's bandwidth is adjustable using external capacitors, with a range of 0.5 Hz to 1600 Hz for the X and Y axes, and 0.5 Hz to 550 Hz for the Z axis. The ADXL335 is compact, measuring 4 mm \times 4 mm \times 1.45 mm, and comes in a 16-lead package.

THEORY OF OPERATION

The ADXL335 is a complete three-axis acceleration measurement system with a minimum range of $\pm 3g$. It includes a polysilicon surface-micro-machined sensor and signal processing circuitry that follows an open-loop measurement architecture. The output signals are analog voltages directly proportional to the detected acceleration.

This sensor consists of a micro-machined structure built on a silicon wafer, where polysilicon springs suspend a moving mass. When the sensor experiences acceleration, the moving mass shifts, altering the capacitance between fixed and moving plates. A differential capacitor detects this change, producing an output signal proportional to acceleration. Phase-sensitive demodulation is then applied to determine the direction and magnitude of the motion.

The demodulated signal is amplified and made available via an external 32 k Ω resistor, with additional capacitors used for bandwidth control. This filtering enhances resolution and minimizes unwanted noise.

MECHANICAL SENSOR

The ADXL335 uses a single sensing structure for all three axes (X, Y, and Z), ensuring high accuracy and minimal cross-axis sensitivity. Although minor mechanical misalignment of the sensor die within the package can introduce some cross-axis interference, this can be calibrated at the system level to improve precision.

PERFORMANCE

Rather than relying on external temperature compensation, the ADXL335 is designed with advanced techniques to maintain high performance. As a result, it exhibits no quantization errors, maintains a consistent response, and has minimal temperature hysteresis (typically less than 3 mg over a $-25^{\circ}C$ to $+70^{\circ}C$ temperature range).

SETTING THE BANDWIDTH USING CX, CY, AND CZ

The ADXL335 allows for bandwidth adjustments at its XOUT, YOUT, and ZOUT output pins. External capacitors must be added to these pins to implement low-pass filtering, which helps with noise reduction and prevents aliasing effects.

Since the internal resistor (RFILT) has a nominal value of 32 k Ω but can vary by $\pm 15\%$, the bandwidth can also vary accordingly. A minimum capacitance of 0.0047 μF is recommended for CX, CY, and CZ to ensure stable performance in all cases.

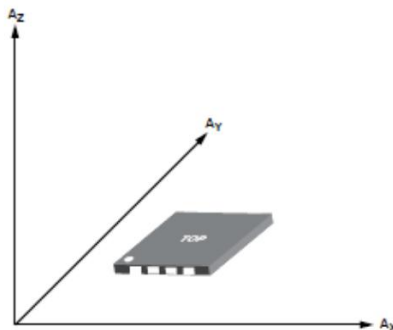


Fig 4 AXIS OF ACCELERATION SENSITIVITY

PIN NO	SYMBOL	FUNCTION
1	ST	Sets the sensitivity of the accelerometer.
2	Z	Records analog data for Z direction
3	Y	Records analog data for Y direction
4	X	Records analog data for X direction
5	GND	Connected to ground for biasing.
6	VCC	+3.3 volt is applied

Table1 Pin description for Accelerometer

2. COMPARATOR IC (LM324)

The LM324 comparator IC is used to compare the analog voltage received from the accelerometer with a predefined reference voltage. It processes the input signal and provides a binary output (either high or low), which is essential for signal conditioning.

Since the signal from the accelerometer can be noisy and vary in voltage levels, the LM324 helps in cleaning and standardizing it by converting the fluctuating analog signals into a clear digital output (1 or 0).

The LM324 IC consists of four operational amplifiers, and the output pins are 1, 7, 8, and 14. A reference voltage is applied to the negative terminal of the comparator when a high output is needed for a high input, or to the positive terminal when a high output is needed for a low input.

This ensures that the output transitions accurately between high and low states, making it suitable for various control and automation applications.

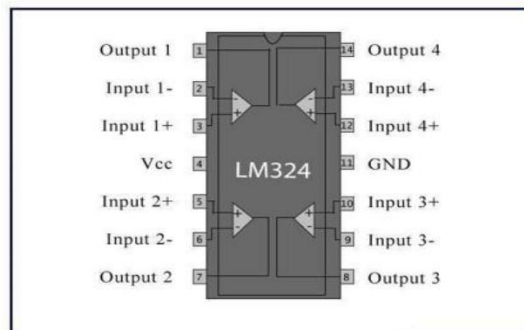


Fig5 LM324 IC

PIN NO.	SYMBOL	FUNCTION
1	Output 1	Output of 1 st Comparator
2	Input 1-	Inverting Input of 1 st Comparator
3	Input 1+	Non-Inverting Input of 1 st Comparator
4	VCC	Supply Voltage: 5V (up to 32V)
5	Input 2+	Non-Inverting Input of 2 nd Comparator
6	Input 2-	Inverting Input of 2 nd Comparator
7	Output 2	Output of 2 nd Comparator
8	Output 3	Output of 3 rd Comparator
9	Input 3-	Inverting Input of 3 rd Comparator
10	Input 3+	Non-Inverting Input of 3 rd Comparator
11	Ground	Ground (0V)
12	Input 4+	Non-Inverting Input of 4 th Comparator

Table2 Pin description for LM324

3. RF MODULE (Rx/Tx)

The Radio Frequency (RF) module is a wireless communication component that operates at a frequency of 434 MHz with a transmission range of approximately 50–80 meters.

What is RF?

Radio Frequency (RF) refers to the oscillation rate within the range of 3 kHz to 300 GHz, corresponding to the frequency of radio waves. It is used for transmitting and receiving data wirelessly, eliminating the need for physical connections such as electric wires.

Working Principle

The RF transmitter (Tx) sends encoded signals, which are received and decoded by the RF receiver (Rx). This allows wireless communication between two devices, making it highly useful in remote-controlled applications such as robotics, automation, and security systems.

PIN	FUNCTION
VCC	5V supply
GND	Ground pin
Data	from pin 17 of HT12E for data transmission
Ant	A wire attached here works as an antenna

Table 3 Pin description for RF Tx

PIN	FUNCTION
VCC	5V supply
GND	Ground pin
Data	pin 14 of HT12D for data transmission
Ant	A wire attached here works as an antenna

Table4 Pin description for RF Rx

4. MICROCONTROLLER (ARDUINO NANO)

The Arduino Nano is a small-sized microcontroller board that operates using the ATmega328P chip. It features 14 digital I/O pins (6 of which support PWM), 6 analog inputs, a 16 MHz quartz crystal, USB connectivity, a power jack, an ICSP header, and a reset button.

Powering the Arduino Nano

- USB connection (5V)
- External power supply (7-12V via Vin or DC jack)
- Automatic power source selection

Power Pins:

- Vin – External power input (7-12V)
- 5V (VT) – Regulated 5V output from the onboard voltage regulator
- 3.3V – Maximum current draw is 50mA
- GND – Ground
- IOREF – Voltage reference pin

Memory

- Flash Memory: 32 KB (0.5 KB used by bootloader)
- SRAM: 2 KB

- EEPROM: 1 KB (can be accessed using the EEPROM library)

Pin Mapping and Functions

Digital I/O Pins (0-13)

- Each pin operates at 5V
- Can supply/receive 20mA (max 40mA per pin)
- Internal pull-up resistor (20-50kΩ)

Specialized Pins

- Serial Communication: 0 (RX), 1 (TX) – TTL Serial Communication
- Built-in LED: Pin 13
- External Interrupts: Pins 2 and 3 – Can trigger interrupts on rising/falling edges
- PWM Pins: 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11 – 8-bit PWM output
- SPI Communication: 10 (SS), 11 (MOSI), 12 (MISO), 13 (SCK)
- TWI (I2C) Communication: A4 (SDA), A5 (SCL) – Uses the Wire library
- AREF: Reference voltage for analog inputs

Analog Input Pins (A0-A5)

- 10-bit resolution (0-1023 values)
- Default range: 0 to 5V (can be adjusted using analog Reference())

INTERFACING WITH ARDUINO RF MODULE

Wireless communication has become an integral part of modern life, whether for short-range applications like TV remotes or long-distance radio transmissions. It enables data transfer without physical connections, eliminating the need for wires and allowing seamless interaction with devices from a distance.

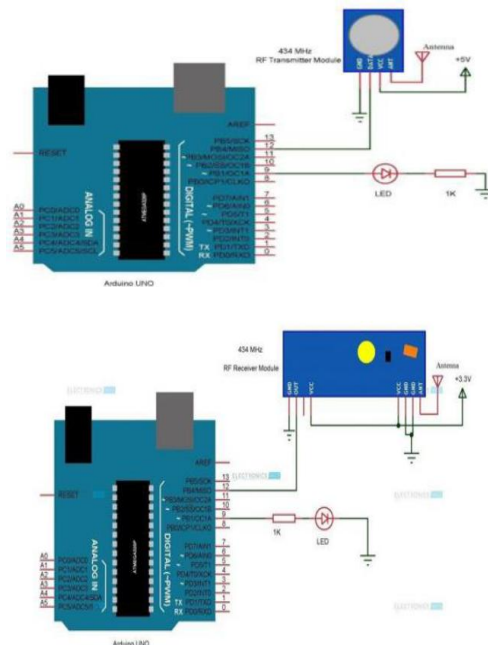


Fig 9 Interfacing with Arduino RF Module

The receiver setup includes an Arduino Uno and a 434 MHz RF receiver module. While an external LED with a current-limiting resistor can be added, the built-in LED on the Arduino is sufficient for basic functionality.

RF Receiver Module Pin Configuration

The RF receiver module has four pins:

- VCC – Connected to the 3.3V pin of the Arduino.
- GND – Connected to the ground (GND) of the Arduino.
- Data – Connected to digital pin 12 on the Arduino.
- Antenna – A wire antenna is attached to this pin to enhance signal reception, similar to the transmitter module.

The onboard LED on pin 13 of the Arduino is used as an indicator, but an external LED can be added for better visibility.

1. INTERFACING WITH ARDUINO ADXL 335

The ADXL335 accelerometer module is used to measure acceleration along the X, Y, and Z axes. It has five pins that need to be connected to the Arduino as follows:

1. GND – Connect to the GND pin of the Arduino.
2. VCC – Connect to the 5V pin of the Arduino.
3. X – Connect to Analog Pin A5.
4. Y – Connect to Analog Pin A4.
5. Z – Connect to Analog Pin A3.

Voltage Considerations

Since the ADXL335 operates at 3.3V, it has an inbuilt voltage regulator, so it can be powered using 5V from the Arduino. However, to ensure accurate readings, connect the AREF pin to 3.3V, which sets the reference voltage accordingly.

Interfacing Arduino with a Motor Driver

A motor driver acts as a current amplifier, converting a low-current control signal into a high-current output capable of driving DC motors. One commonly used motor driver is the L293D, which can control two DC motors simultaneously. The L293D motor driver module enables the Arduino to regulate motor speed and direction efficiently by receiving control signals and providing the necessary power output to the motors.

MOTOR DRIVER IC (L293D)

The L293D is a motor driver IC, also referred to as an H-Bridge or Actuator IC. Actuators are components responsible for generating movement to perform tasks, such as motors. Various types of motors operate at different voltage levels, requiring a motor driver to interface them with a microcontroller.

Since the output from a microcontroller is a low-current signal, it is not sufficient to drive a motor directly. The L293D motor driver amplifies the current, making it capable of controlling and operating motors efficiently. In simpler cases, a transistor can be used as a switch to drive a motor in a single direction, but for bidirectional control, an H-Bridge configuration like the L293D is preferred.

To turn a motor ON and OFF, a single switch is sufficient to control its operation in one direction. However, to reverse the motor's direction, the polarity must be switched. This can be achieved using a set of four switches arranged in a strategic manner to not only power the motor but also control its direction.

One of the most commonly used and efficient circuit designs for this purpose is the H-Bridge circuit. In this configuration, transistors are arranged in a way that resembles the letter "H", enabling precise motor control by allowing current flow in both forward and reverse directions.

the circuit has four switches A, B, C and D. Turning these switches ON and OFF can drive a motor in different ways.

- When switches A and D are on, motor rotates clockwise.
- When B and C are on, the motor rotates anti-clockwise.
- When A and B are on, the motor will stop.
- Turning off all the switches gives the motor a free wheel drive.

Turning on A & C at the same time or B & D at the same time shorts the entire circuit. So, never try to do it.

DC MOTORS

A machine that converts DC power into mechanical power is known as a DC motor. Its operation is based on the principle that when a current carrying conductor is placed in a magnetic field, the conductor experiences a mechanical force.

DC motors have a revolving armature winding but non-revolving armature magnetic field and a stationary field winding or permanent magnet. Different connections of the field and armature winding provide different speed/torque regulation features. The speed of a DC motor can be controlled by changing the voltage applied to the armature or by changing the field current.

DC GEAR MOTOR

A geared DC motor is equipped with a gear assembly that works in conjunction with the motor to modify its speed and torque. The motor's rotational speed is measured in rotations per minute (RPM). The gear mechanism plays a crucial role in reducing speed while increasing torque, making the motor more effective for various applications.

By using an appropriate gear arrangement, the speed of the motor can be adjusted to a desired level. This process of lowering speed while amplifying torque is known as gear reduction. In a reduction gear train, the relationship between speed and torque is inversely proportional—meaning that if the torque is doubled, the speed is reduced by half.

Thanks to this principle, small electric motors with gear assemblies can handle heavy loads efficiently. Although larger motors inherently offer greater power and speed, geared motors allow compact and energy-efficient solutions without compromising on performance.

IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the current global scenario, where social distancing is crucial, this gesture-controlled robotic system offers a contactless solution for handling objects, reducing the risk of contamination. It is compact, portable, user-friendly, and cost-effective, making it highly suitable for various applications.

Potential Applications

- Healthcare: Hands-free assistance in hospitals, reducing direct contact.
- Defense and Surveillance: Remote-controlled robots for military applications.
- Assistive Technology: Wheelchair control for individuals with disabilities.
- Industrial Automation: Gesture-controlled robotic arms for factories.

By leveraging wireless communication and gesture recognition, this system enhances efficiency and accessibility across multiple domains. Future advancements could improve its range, precision, and adaptability for even broader applications.

X. CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this project—controlling a robot using hand gestures—was successfully achieved without any major obstacles. The robot accurately responds to hand movements, ensuring smooth operation. To enable remote control, we implemented a Holtek encoder-decoder pair (HT12E and HT12D) in conjunction with a 433MHz transmitter-receiver module.

HT12E and HT12D are CMOS integrated circuits (ICs) that operate within a voltage range of 2.4V to 12V. The HT12E encoder consists of eight address lines and four additional address/data lines. When the transmit-enable (TE) pin is set to low, the encoded data from these lines is transmitted serially. The DOUT pin outputs the data in a repeated sequence, using positive-going pulses of varying durations to represent binary '1' and '0'—with the pulse width for '0' being twice that of '1'. The frequency of these pulses ranges from 1.5 kHz to 7 kHz, depending on the resistance value connected between the OSC1 and OSC2 pins.

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