MECHATRONICS BOOK SERIES SYSTEM DESIGN AND SIGNAL PROCESSING VOLUME 1

Editors Asan G. A. Muthalif Amir Akramin Shafie Siti Fauziah Toha Iskandar Al-Thani Mahmood



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CHAPTER 19

Development of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle: Part 1

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19.1 Introduction

Nowadays, technology has evolved rapidly and continues to serve human kind to live a better life. Unmanned Aerial vehicle (UAV) is another groundbreaking discovery such that it is able to serve human in vast field of applications, for example monitoring reserved area and the country's border down to search and rescue missions. In this chapter a development of a small scale UAV to perform specific task namely recording videos using wireless camera is discussed. The ability to efficiently and steadily communicate the data recorded to the ground control is paramount. The UAV had two different flight mode; manually-controlled and auto-pilot mode. By means of RC Transmitter, it could be manoeuvred manually and in auto-pilot mode. It could autonomously navigate its way to the designated coordinate by comparing its current location to the end point set by GPS unit. Thermopile sensor is used to stabilize the UAV during its autonomous navigation. In general, the entire structure is made of Styrofoam, backboned by carbon fiber tube and choroplus to make it light weight, yet durable enough for the application of the UAV. Plus, the material used is easily replaceable and affordable.

19.2 Background

A low cost auto-pilot small-scale UAV platform with the ability to stabilize the absolute attitude stabilization system based on thermal horizon detection using thermopile sensor is developed. The system includes auto navigation system which utilized fuzzy logic algorithm to determine the heading of the aircraft towards the destination from the data received from the GPS module onboard. Thus, the literature review focuses only on the relevance type of UAV.

The need of a small low cost UAV is increasing nowadays as the technology becomes more available to the public. It can act as a research platform for scientist. Small scale UAV development is growing around the world due to the high cost of operating of an aircraft or a standard UAV which involving expensive hardware, sophisticated software and the need of a highly qualified operators to handle even a simple mission such as photographic missions.

In [1] the authors reported that for most of the low cost UAV stabilization system is based on the thermal horizon detection using thermopiles. A pair of matched thermopile sensors arranged 180 degrees apart and having their outputs feeding a differential amplifier makes a sensitive horizon detector. When sensors receive equal energy, their axis must be parallel to the horizon and the amplifier output for that channel is zero (the neutral value). Two pairs of sensors arranged laterally and longitudinally make a roll and pitch detector. The use of thermopiles not only to stabilize the aircraft during a levelled flight but also during the aircraft is turning laterally which is by banking a bit the wing of the aircraft and pulling up the pitch. This turning method produce a higher turning rate than using rudder to change the heading the aircraft. For the controllers, there are three microcontrollers from mid range PIC family which are PIC16f877 and PIC16f84a. Each microcontroller has its own dedicated task. PIC1 looks after received data from the ground controller, PIC2 is the master controller at the same time stabilizing the aircraft during flight, and