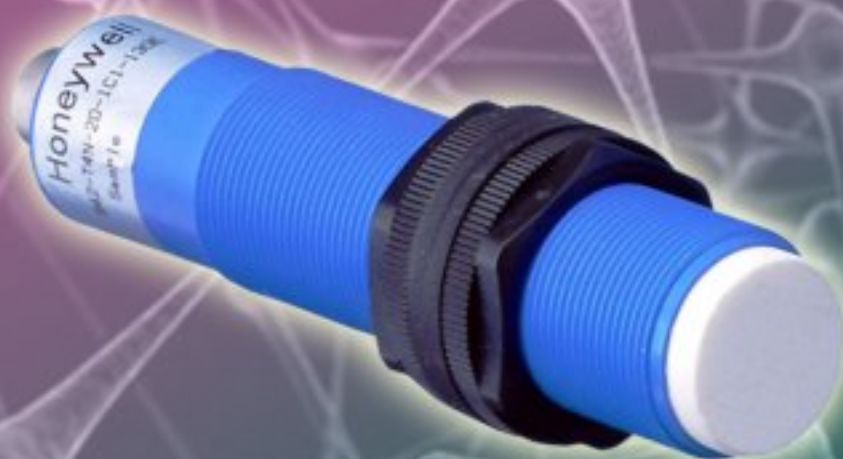


ISSN 1726-5479

# **S&Sensors** **10**<sup>vol. 133</sup>/**11** **TRANSDUCERS**



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International Frequency Sensor Association Publishing



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Issue 10  
October 2011

[www.sensorsportal.com](http://www.sensorsportal.com)

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## A Novel Method for Gearbox Fault Detection Based on Biorthogonal B-spline Wavelet

<sup>a,b,c</sup> Guangbin ZHANG and <sup>b</sup> Yunjian GE

<sup>a</sup> Department of Automation, University of Science & Technology of China, Hefei, 230026, China

<sup>b</sup> Institute of Intelligent Machines, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Hefei, 230031, China

<sup>c</sup> Department of Computer Engineering, Anhui University of Architecture, Hefei, 230601, China

Tel.: 086-137-21102390, fax: 086-551-3828171

E-mail: zgb@mail.ustc.edu.cn, yjge@iim.ac.cn.

*Received: 30 August 2011 / Accepted: 25 October 2011 / Published: 31 October 2011*

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**Abstract:** Localized defects of gearbox tend to result in periodic impulses in the vibration signal, which contain important information for system dynamics analysis. So parameter identification of impulse provides an effective approach for gearbox fault diagnosis. Biorthogonal B-spline wavelet has the properties of compact support, high vanishing moment and symmetry, which are suitable to signal de-noising, fast calculation, and reconstruction. Thus, a novel time frequency distribution method is present for gear fault diagnosis by biorthogonal B-spline wavelet. Simulation study concerning singularity signal shows that this wavelet is effective in identifying the fault feature with coefficients map and coefficients line. Furthermore, an integrated approach consisting of wavelet decomposition, Hilbert transform and power spectrum density is used in applications. The results indicate that this method can extract the gearbox fault characteristics and diagnose the fault patterns effectively. *Copyright © 2011 IFSA.*

**Keywords:** Fault diagnosis, Biorthogonal B-spline wavelet, Gearbox, Coefficients line, Signal processing.

---

### 1. Introduction

Gearbox, as an important mechanism for transmitting power or rotation, is widely researched and used in automobile industry. Some mechanical defects or faults such as gear tooth wear, cracks, scoring, spalling, chipping, and pitting will result in gear tooth breakage, which may cause significant traffic accident. The occurrence of impulse response in gearbox vibration signals usually means that there exist flaws [1]. For gearbox fault diagnosis, therefore, it is very important that the study of fault

diagnosis of gearbox by fault feature detection from vibration signals.

So far, different techniques have been proposed to analyze the vibration signal for fault diagnosis, such as Wigner–Ville distribution, empirical mode decomposition (EMD), matching pursuit (MP), and wavelet transform (WT) [2].

Wigner–Ville distribution has good concentration in the time-frequency plane [3]. However, even if support areas of the signal do not overlap each other, interference terms will appear to mislead the signal analysis.

EMD is an adaptive decomposition method proposed by Huang et al. which in essence extracts the intrinsic oscillation of the signal being analyzed through their characteristic time scales (i.e., local properties of the signal itself) and decomposes the signal into a number of intrinsic mode functions (IMFs), with each IMF corresponding to a specific range of frequency components contained within the signal [1, 4]. Because it still has some shortcomings when it comes to calculating instantaneous frequency or in some cases it may reveal plausible characteristics due to the mode mixing, it is untenable in effective application in impulse detection and analysis.

Matching pursuit algorithm, a greedy algorithm that chooses a waveform that is the most adapted to approximate part of the signal in each iteration, is effective in analyzing impulse response signals [5]. But, the excessive computational cost limits its engineering applications.

The wavelet transform provides powerful multi-resolution analysis in both time and frequency domain, and thereby becomes a favored tool to extract the transitory features of non-stationary vibration signals produced by the faulty gearbox. In wavelet analysis, a signal is analyzed at different scales or resolution: larger time and smaller scale window is used to look at the approximate stationary of the signal and smaller time and larger scale window at transients. Z. K. Peng summarized the application of the wavelet in machine fault diagnosis, including the fault feature extraction, the de-noising and extraction of the weak signals, and the system identification [6-7].

The wavelet analysis results in a series of wavelet coefficients, which indicate how close the signal is to the particular wavelet [8]. In order to extract the fault feature of signals more effectively, an appropriate wavelet base function should be selected.

Biorthogonal B-spline wavelet has the properties of compact support, high vanishing moments and symmetry, which are excellent properties for signal and image compression, de-noising, fast calculation, reconstruction [9-10]. By using two wavelets, one for decomposition and the other for reconstruction instead of the same single one, interesting properties are derived.

This method is based on Biorthogonal B-spline wavelet maps of coefficients by scale values and coefficients line of the time-domain vibration signal. Furthermore, to judge the fault, an integrated approach consisting of wavelet decomposition, Hilbert transform and power spectrum density is used. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, the basic theoretical background concerning biorthogonal B-spline wavelet is introduced. Section 3 gives a simulation study and analysis to verify the proposed method. Section 4 applies the method in gearbox transient feature detection by fault identification for diagnosis. Finally, conclusions are drawn in Section 5.

## **2. Theory of Biorthogonal B-spline Wavelet**

In this section, a method of adaptive parameter identification of Morlet wavelet based on correlation filtering is presented.

## 2.1. Wavelet Representation and Multi-resolution Analysis

Wavelets are building blocks that can be used as the basis of function spaces, i.e. they allow the description of a function in terms simple element. Such an elemental decomposition results in an effective notation of complex data and allows an efficient numerical solution in applications. The wavelet framework has been used widely for signal analysis and image synthesis applications. Wavelets are families of functions that integrate to zero and are produced by scaling and translating a single function  $\psi$  (called mother wavelet).

$$\psi_{a,b}(x) = |a|^{-\frac{1}{2}} \psi\left(\frac{x-b}{a}\right) \quad (1)$$

For make the wavelet framework efficient computationally we disperse the scaling parameter  $a$  and translation parameter  $b$  in the following way:

$$a = 2^{-j}, \quad b = (k/2^j)b_0, \quad j, k \in Z, \quad (2)$$

where  $b_0 = 1$ , now we have wavelets that are of the form:

$$\psi_{j,k}(x) = 2^{j/2} \psi(2^j x - k), \quad k, j \in Z. \quad (3)$$

A multi-scale decomposition of a function  $f$  in  $L^2(R)$ , the space of square integrable real functions, is a linear expansion of  $f$  into a countable subset of elements  $\psi_{j,k}$ . Wavelets can be used to produce a multi-scale decomposition of  $L^2(R)$ . The idea is to decompose  $L^2(R)$  into a direct sum of closed subspaces  $W_j$ , spanned by the functions  $\psi_{j,k}(x)$ . A multi-resolution analysis of  $L^2(R)$  consists of a sequence of nested subspaces  $V_j$  that are generated by a single function  $\phi, \dots V_{-1} \subset V_0 \subset V_1 \dots$ , whose union is dense in  $L^2(R)$  and whose intersection is the null space. The function  $\phi$  has non-zero integral and is called a scaling function. Similarly to the wavelets,  $\phi$  originates by scaling and translation the family [11]. This collection of functions  $\{\phi_{j,k}\}$  forms a basis of the approximation spaces  $V_j$ . Note that all spaces in the above sequence are scaled versions of the reference space  $V_0$ . This means that each space  $V_j$  has a natural scale  $2^j$ . In contrast with the wavelet decomposition, in the framework of multi-resolution analysis, a function  $f$  is represented by its approximations simultaneously at all scales  $2^j$ . Such a structure is composed of several versions of the function  $f$  that are computed by projecting  $f$  onto the spaces  $V_j$ .

## 2.2. Biorthogonal B-Spline Wavelets

The biorthogonal B-spline wavelet is a kind of multi-resolution representation scheme [12]. The mathematical derivation of biorthogonal B-spline wavelets is briefly introduced in the following.

Assume that  $\{N_{i,j,k}(t)\}_{j=0}^{n_i}$  is the normalized B-spline basis of order  $k$  determined by vector  $V_i$ ,

$$V_i = \text{span}\{N_{i,0,k}(t), N_{i,1,k}(t), \dots, N_{i,n_i,k}(t)\}, \quad i = 0, 1, \dots \quad (4)$$

Then they compose a nested sequence of polynomial spline spaces of degree  $k - 1$ . On the basis of it, a MRA of the B-spline wavelets can be established. Suppose  $W_i$  be a complement space of  $V_i$  in  $V_{i+1}$ , that is

$$V_{i+1} = V_i + W_i. \tag{5}$$

At the same time,  $\{\psi_{j,k}(t)\}_{k=1}^{m_i}$  is a basis of  $W_i$ , where

$$m_i + n_i = n_{i+1}. \tag{6}$$

Then  $\{\psi_{j,k}(t)\}_{k=1}^{m_i}$  is a set of the B-spline wavelets. Let

$$N_{i,k} = [N_{i,0,k} \ N_{i,1,k} \ \cdots \ N_{i,n_i,k}], \psi_i = [\psi_{i,1} \ \psi_{i,2} \ \cdots \ \psi_{i,m_i}]. \tag{7}$$

So there exist matrices  $P_i$  of order  $(n_{i+1} + 1) \times (n_i + 1)$  and  $Q_i$  of order  $(n_{i+1} + 1) \times m_i$  such that

$$[N_{i,k} \psi_i] = N_{i+1,k} [P_i \ Q_i], \tag{8}$$

where  $P_i$  and  $Q_i$  are called the reconstruction matrices of the B-spline wavelets. Let

$$[A_i \ B_i]^T = [P_i \ Q_i]^{-1}, \ N_{i+1,k} = [N_{i,k} \ \psi_i] [A_i \ B_i]^T, \tag{9}$$

where matrices  $A_i$  of order  $(n_i + 1) \times (n_{i+1} + 1)$  and  $B_i$  of order  $m_i \times (n_{i+1} + 1)$  are called the decomposition matrices of the B-spline wavelets.

As semiorthogonal wavelets require that wavelet space  $W_i$  is orthogonal to scale space  $V_i$ , and the orthogonality is defined by the inner product of space  $L^2(\mathbb{R})$ ,

$$\langle f, g \rangle = \int_a^b f(t)g(t)dt. \tag{10}$$

In another way, those constructing biorthogonal wavelets, an essential point is to define orthogonality of  $W_i$  and  $V_i$  by discrete norm  $L^2(\mathbb{R})$  for vectors, that is to define discrete inner product of space  $V_i$  as:

$$\langle f_i, h_i \rangle = d_i^T s_i, \tag{11}$$

where

$$f_i = N_{i,k} d_i, h_i = N_{i,k} s_i. \tag{12}$$

Then it can be known the conditions that reconstruction matrix  $Q_i$  should satisfy are column full rank and the following discrete orthogonal condition:

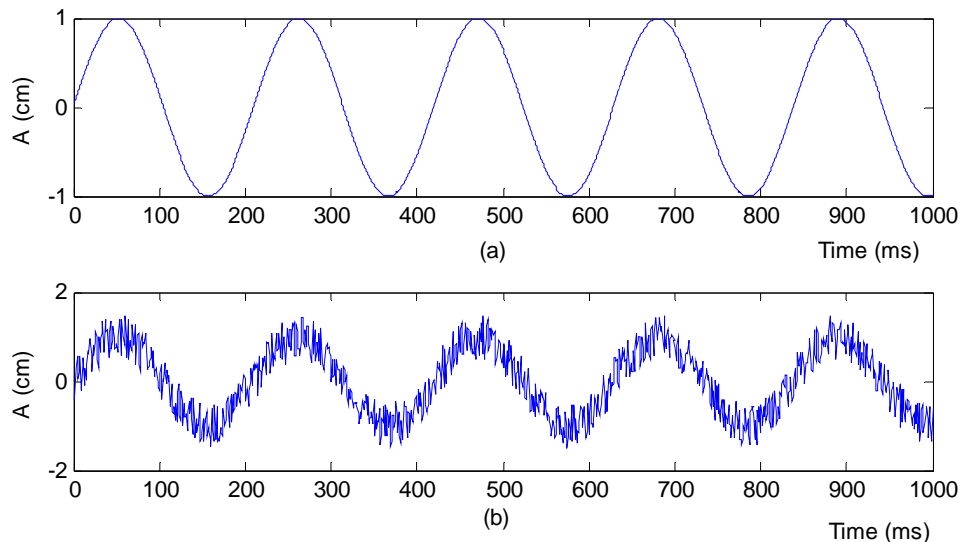
$$P_i^T Q_i = 0, \quad (13)$$

where 0 is the Zero-matrix of order  $(n_{i+1} + 1) \times m_i$ . Eqs. (3), (4), (11) and (13) are the conditions that reconstruction matrices and decomposition matrices should satisfy [13].

### 3. Simulation Signal Test

Consider biorthogonal B-spline wavelet described in the previous section; a simulative example has been demonstrated. Results of this signal simulation studying the performance of biorthogonal B-spline wavelet are presented to realize a better understanding of this method.

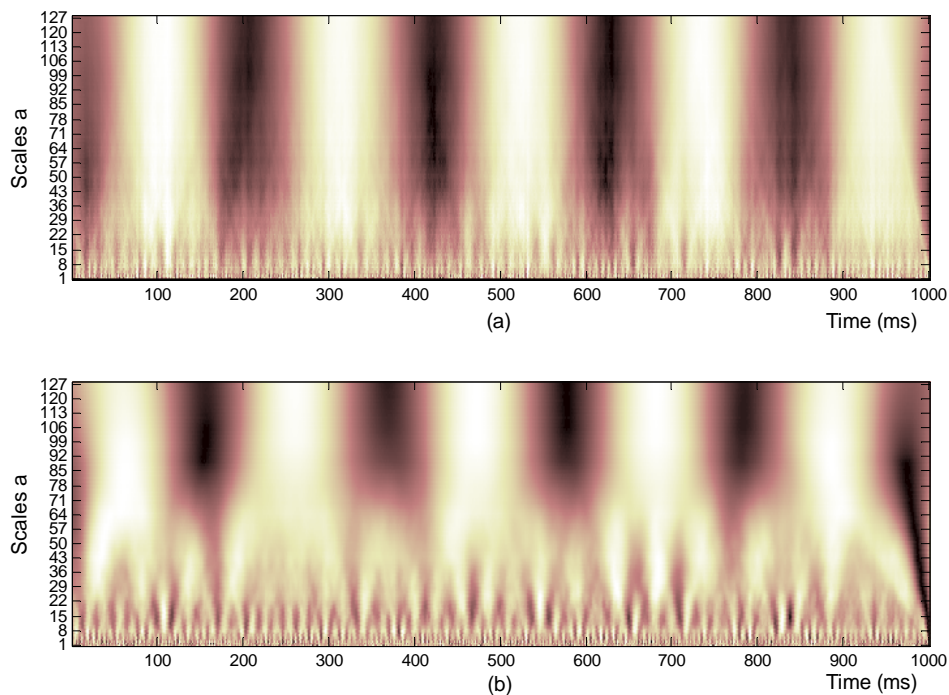
For demonstrate the effects of biorthogonal B-spline wavelet, a noisy sine wave is considered, in which there are some small impulses used to simulate singularity on sine wave [14]. The time-domain original signal and signal with noise is given in Fig. 1, where the sampling time is 1.0s. Biorthogonal B-spline wavelet transform is applied to the simulative signal shown in Fig. 1, and then the values of coefficients by scale with different order of Nr and Nd are illustrated in Fig. 2. (a) and (b), respectively.



**Fig. 1.** (a) original signal; (b) signal with noise.

In Fig. 2, the values of coefficients map demonstrates the period of sine wave, the value of a is from 1 to 128, and the step is set 1. When the order of biorthogonal B-spline wavelet is different, like Fig. 2 (a) and Fig. 2. (b), the shape is different. But they have the same characteristic listed in follows. The white area corresponds to the positive amplitude of the simulative signal, and the black area corresponds to its negative amplitude. The high frequency components are concentrated on the map zone, in which the scale parameter a is  $< 22$ , while the low frequency components are concentrated on map zone, in which the scale parameter a is from 23 to 128. At the bottom of the coefficients value map, there are five black bars, which correspond to the small impulses embedded in the sine wave. The sharp transitions from white to black in the coefficients value map correspond to jump of the wrapped phase. They exactly correspond to the inflexion points of the simulative signal. Particularly, there are distinct black bars located in the map zone, in which the scale a is from 1 to 22. These black bars correspond to the small impulses embedded in the sine wave. It is obvious that the coefficients value map determines the exact positions of those small impulses and enlarge the weak information caused by the embedded small impulses. Therefore, the coefficients value map in the time scale joint representation domain

reveals the precise location of the singularity as well as the scale nature of the simulative signal.



**Fig. 2.** By scale values of  $C_{a,b}$  coefficients for  $a = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, \dots$ , (a)  $N_r=1, N_d=1$ , (b)  $N_r=5, N_d=5$ .

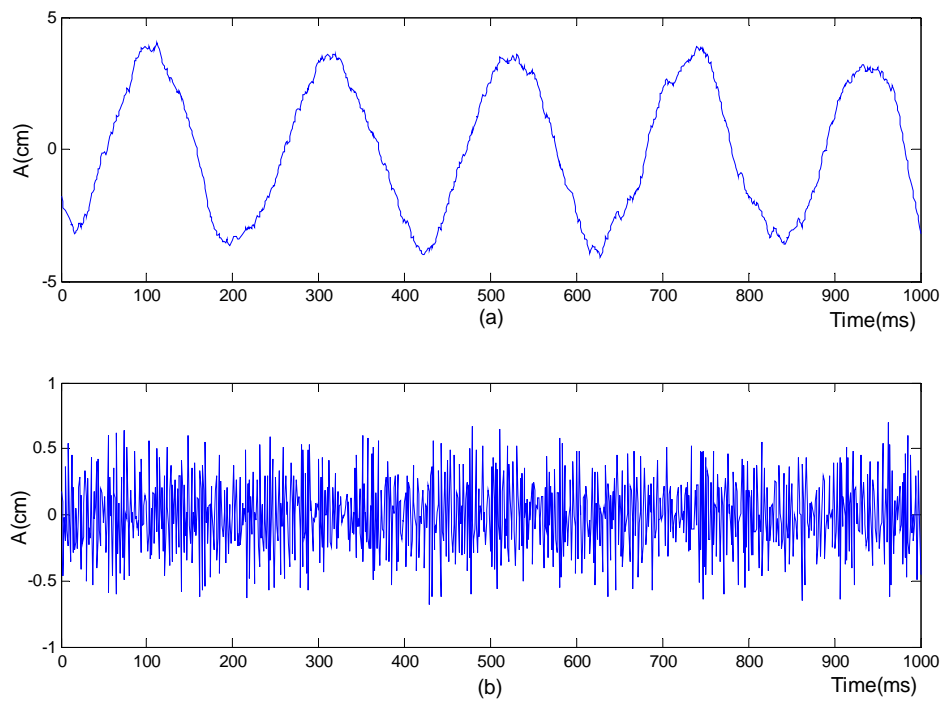
In other way, coefficients line is used to study the property of biorthogonal B-spline wavelet. In Fig. 3 (a),  $a$  is set 64, which is the median of scales, and in Fig. 3.(b),  $a$  is set 2. From the Fig. 3, it can be concluded that when the scale is set different values, the shapes of coefficients line have great different.. From the Fig. 3 (a), it can be found that the shape of the coefficient line is very similar with Fig. 1 (a), and the coefficients line also shows the regularity that the period of sine wave. But there is no regularity could be found from the Fig. 3 (b). .So proper scale should be selected from many procedures in biorthogonal B-spline wavelet transform. At the same time, the value of frequency that can be got is equal 0.031. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that the combination of the values of coefficients by scale and coefficients line can illustrate the whole and local signal characteristics and reveal signal singularity effectively [15].

## 4. Application in Gearbox Fault Feature Detection

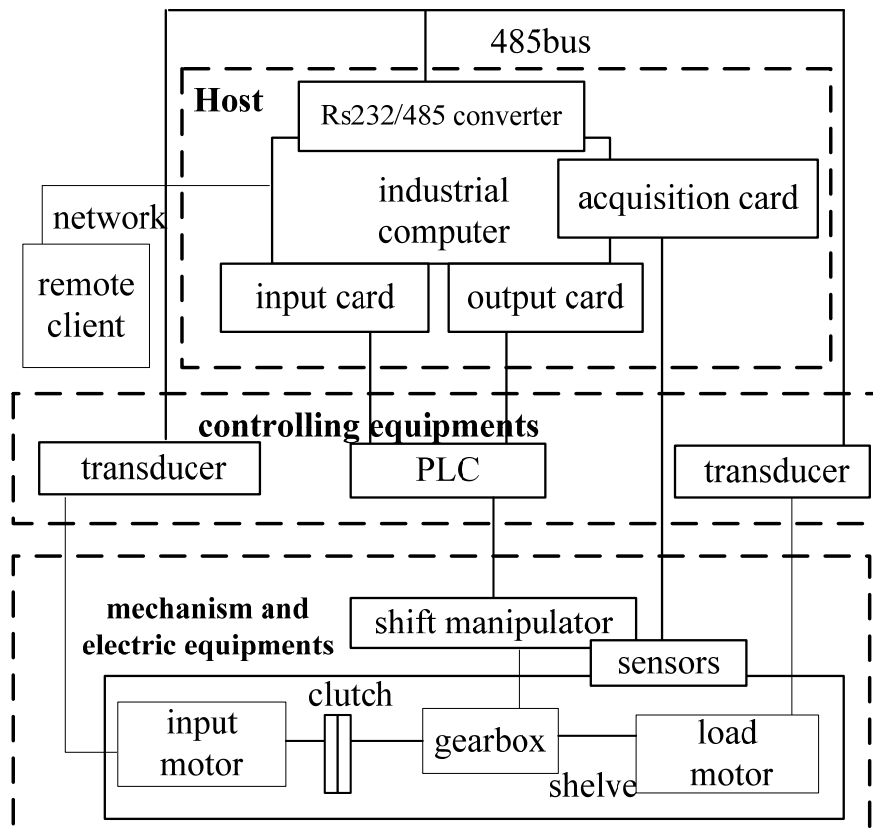
To demonstrate the performance of the proposed approach, this section presents the experiment set-up and application example for the diagnosis of healthy gearbox or localized gear crack defect.

### 4.1. Experimental Set-up

To study the effectiveness of the presented methods for the gearbox fault feature detection, experiment is concerned with a fatigue test of an automobile transmission gearbox. Based on experimental requirement and physical modeling, the test bed system was constituted by the mainly four parts: (1) A host for monitor, (2) controlling equipments, (3) mechanism and electric equipments, (4) remote clients. Fig. 4 shows the architecture of the system with all components.



**Fig. 3.** (a) Coefficients line-  $C_{a,b}$  for scale  $a=64$  (frequency=0.016);  
 (b) Coefficients line-  $C_{a,b}$  for scale  $a=2$  (frequency=0.498).



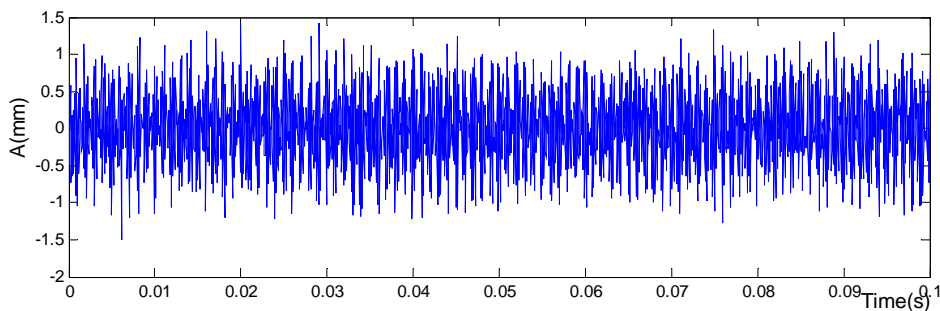
**Fig. 4.** Architecture of the system.

The host for monitor was an industrial computer, included digital I/O cards, simulative I/O cards and 232-485 conversion cards. It was the control core of the system. Controlling equipments consisted of PLC (programmable logic controller) and transducers for the control of shift manipulator and input or load electric facilities. Mechanism and electric equipments included the AC motors for input and load, shelves involving driving settings, clutch, automatic shift manipulator device and a series of sensors for vibration, rotate speed, pull, stress, torque and temperature. The client was any computer in the LAN (local area network) or Internet that could monitor in a long distance. There were some assistant equipment such as the control box on the spot for debugging, system cooler, the secondary meter, and the motor for gearing joint [16].

In this paper, the focus is vibration signal. Furthermore, the vibration signal was acquired by an accelerometer mounted on the outer case of the gearbox when it is loaded in the test bed. The gearbox used in experiment is LC6T46 which has six forward gears and one reverse gear. For the past experience, the sampling frequency was 20 kHz and the sampling time was varied with different gears. The input speed of the driving shaft is 1800 r/min, and the load of output motor is 220 N.m which is the half of the maximum load of LC6T46.

#### **4.2. Case 1 Diagnosis for Healthy Gearbox**

A healthy gearbox was firstly installed in the test bed and the vibration data was collected and processed. The original vibration signal for healthy gearbox is displayed in Fig. 5.



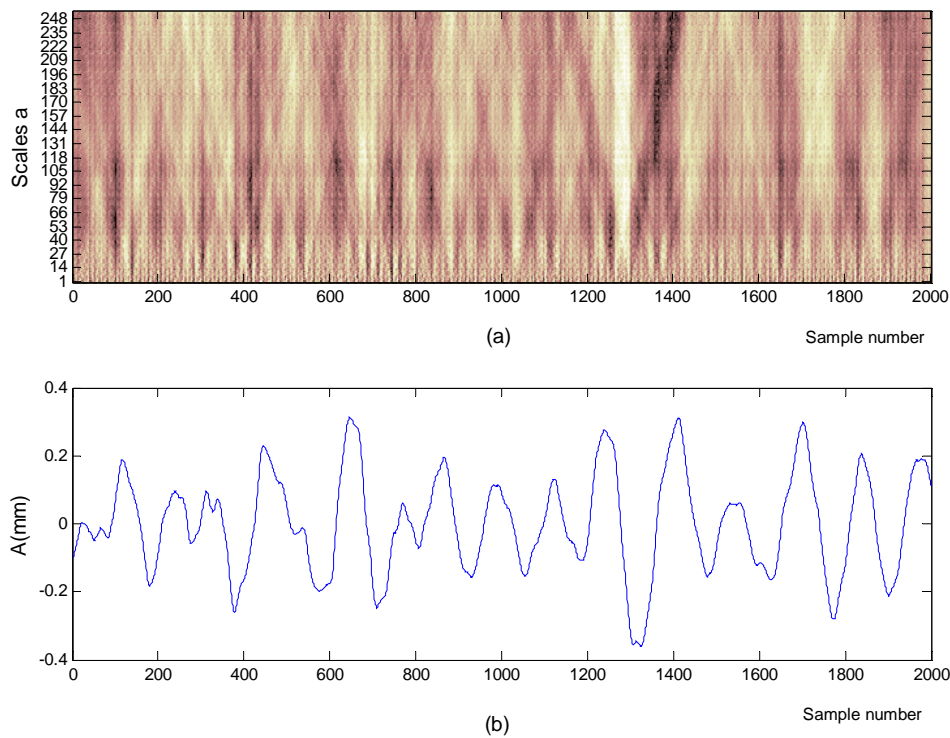
**Fig. 5.** Signal for healthy gearbox.

From the viewpoint of time-domain signals, it is difficult to judge the status of gearbox. Hence, the signals needed to be transformed by biorthogonal B-spline wavelet. Fig. 6 (a) is the map of values of coefficients by scale and Fig. 6 (b) is the map of coefficients line. It is clear to further observe the meaning of the map that the X-axis is indirectly proportional to time. In other words, the X-axis is sample number. The two maps both show regularity and have no singularity, so it indicates that the gearbox is a healthy gearbox.

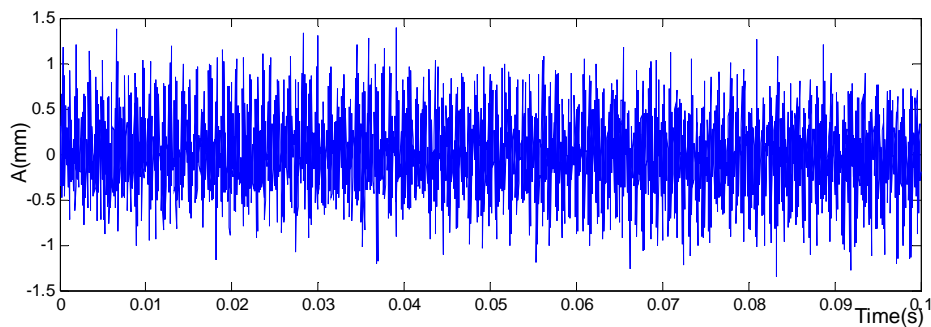
#### **4.3. Case 2 Diagnoses for Fault Feature Identification**

To prove the efficiency of the proposed method, the typical vibration signal caused by one driving gear teeth broken is shown in Fig. 7. The time domain signal fails to demonstrate the characteristic feature of the gearbox vibration signal. Fig. 8 (a) is the map of values of coefficients by scale and Fig. 8 (b) is the map of coefficients line. Fig. 8 expresses the singularity feature of the gearbox vibration signal, but from which it can not be seen that the specific reasons leading to fault. Furthermore it is difficult to spot the time or frequency of fault, hence, the proposed method is robust even when applied to

non-stationary signals. So, the decomposition with biorthogonal B-spline wavelet is used to analyze the fault signal.



**Fig. 6.** (a) By scale values of  $C_{a,b}$  coefficients for  $a = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, \dots$ , (b) Coefficients line-  $C_{a,b}$  for scale  $a=128$  (frequency=0.005),  $N_r=5, N_d=5$ .

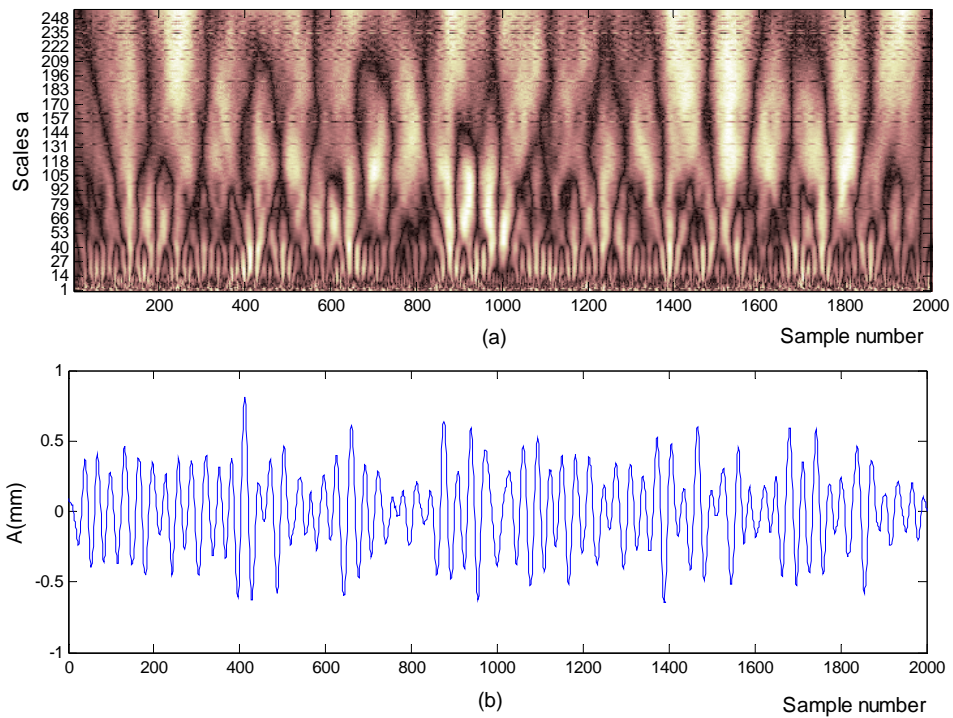


**Fig. 7.** Signal for gearbox with localized crack.

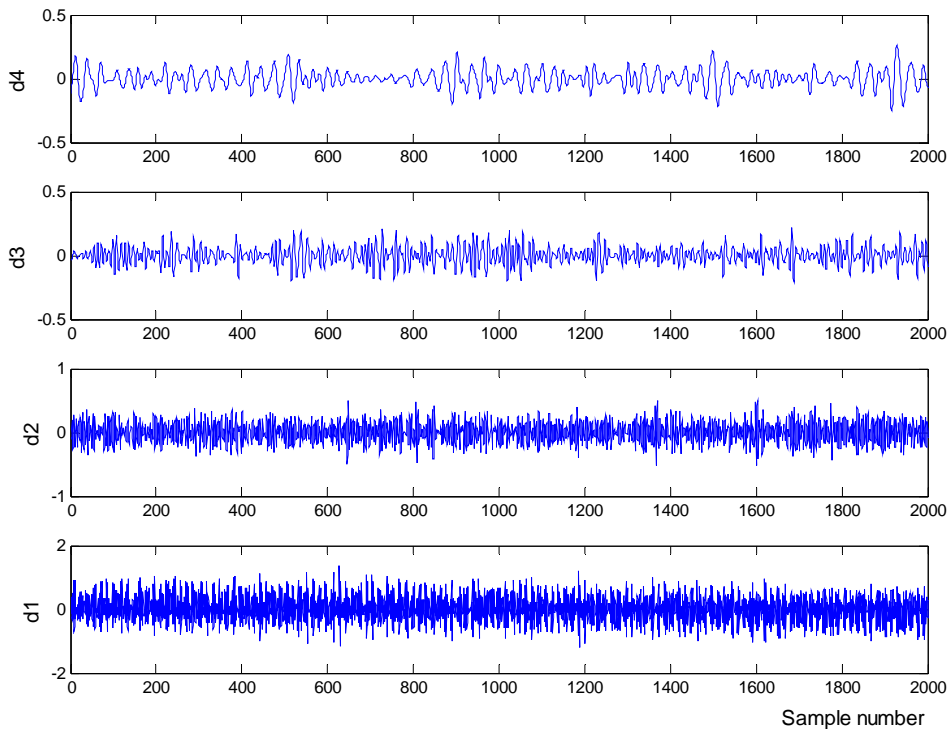
The fourth level of decomposition with Biorthogonal B-spline wavelet is used to transform the default signal [17]. The result of decomposition is shown in Fig. 9,  $d_1-d_4$ , respectively, of which the first, second, third and fourth level detail signals. the X-axis is sample number and the Y-axis represents the relative amplitude of the signal.

In order to further determine the cause of the failure, Hilbert transform of the first level detail signal is used to envelope analysis [18]. From the Fig. 10 (b), power spectrum density (PSD) of  $d_1$ , it is obviously found the existence of frequency of 1455 Hz. By querying the gearbox fault characteristic frequency table, it is known that the bearing outer ring faulty has occurred. At the same time, the existence of frequency of 810 Hz shows pitting corrosion failure of gear. As a comparison, in

Fig. 10 (a), the PSD of raw signals, it is only found that the mesh frequency.



**Fig. 8.** (a) By scale values of Ca,b coefficients for  $a = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, \dots$ ,  
 (b) Coefficients line- Ca,b for scale  $a=128$  (frequency=0.005),  $Nr=5, Nd=5$ .



**Fig. 9.** Wavelet decomposition detail signal.

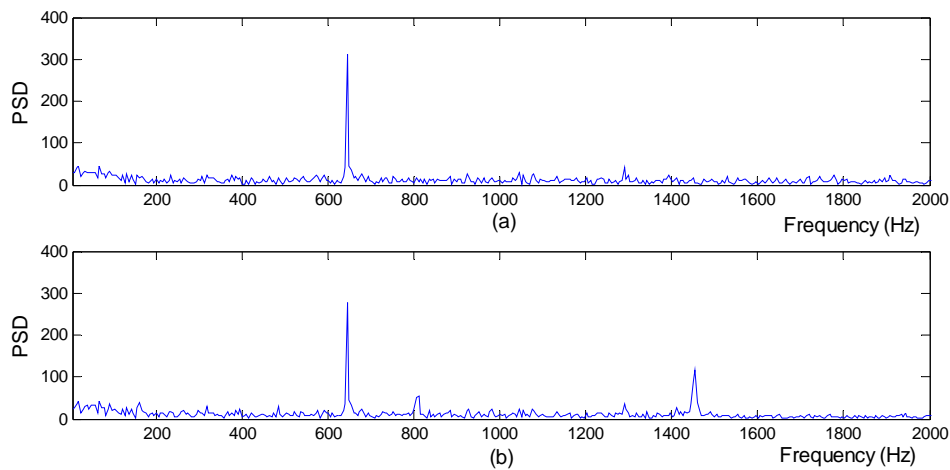


Fig. 10. (a) PSD of raw vibration signals; (b) PSD of first level detail signal.

## 5. Conclusions

Biorthogonal B-spline wavelet method proposed represents an attempt in the direction of parameter identification and feature detection for fault diagnosis. This wavelet exhibits the properties of compact support, high vanishing moments and symmetry, which are nice properties for signal and image compression, de-noising, fast calculation, reconstruction.

The simulation study demonstrates that the proposed method is effective in identifying parameters of singularity. Practical vibration signal monitored from a gearbox with localized gear crack fault is analyzed by the presented method. According to the coefficients maps and PSD of decomposition detail signal, the characteristic of localized gear defect can be easily recognized.

In conclusion, the other gearbox applications have not yet been provided in the paper; however, it conforms that the method has the potential applicability for monitoring gearbox and other rotating mechanical components such as transmission shafts and engines. Further research on the different mother wavelet function could be conducted to optimize for specific purposes.

## Acknowledgments

This research is supported partly by the Natural Science Foundation of China (no. 60910005) and the Natural Science Foundation of Anhui Province of China (no. KJ2011A059).

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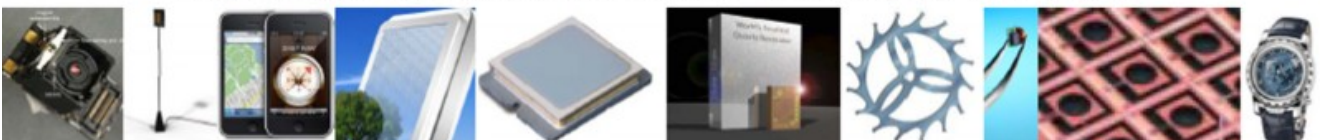
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