

Digital Processing of Speech Signals

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To our parents,

Dr. and Mrs. Nathan Rabiner

and

Mr. and Mrs. William Schafer,

for instilling within us the thirst for knowledge
and the quest for excellence;

and to our families,

Suzanne, Sheri, and Wendi Rabiner

and

Dorothy, Bill, John, and Kate Schafer,

for their love, encouragement, and support.

8

Linear Predictive Coding of Speech

8.0 Introduction

One of the most powerful speech analysis techniques is the method of linear predictive analysis. This method has become the predominant technique for estimating the basic speech parameters, e.g., pitch, formants, spectra, vocal tract area functions, and for representing speech for low bit rate transmission or storage. The importance of this method lies both in its ability to provide extremely accurate estimates of the speech parameters, and in its relative speed of computation. In this chapter, we present a formulation of the ideas behind linear prediction, and discuss some of the issues which are involved in using it in practical speech applications.

The basic idea behind linear predictive analysis is that a speech sample can be approximated as a linear combination of past speech samples. By minimizing the sum of the squared differences (over a finite interval) between the actual speech samples and the linearly predicted ones, a unique set of predictor coefficients can be determined. (The predictor coefficients are the weighting coefficients used in the linear combination.)

The philosophy of linear prediction is intimately related to the basic speech synthesis model discussed in Chapter 3 in which it was shown that speech can be modelled as the output of a linear, time-varying system excited

Linear predictive techniques have already been discussed in the context of the waveform quantization methods of Chapter 5. There a linear predictor could be applied in a differential quantization scheme to reduce the bit rate of the digital representation of the waveform. In fact, the mathematical basis for an adaptive high order DPCM waveform coding is identical to the analysis that will be discussed in this chapter. In adaptive DPCM coding the emphasis is on how the predictor will reduce the variance of the difference signal so that the quantization error will also be reduced. In this chapter we take a more general approach to show how the basic linear prediction idea leads to a set of analysis techniques that can be used to estimate parameters of a speech model. This predictive analysis techniques is often referred to as linear predictive coding (LPC).

The techniques and methods of linear prediction have been discussed in the engineering literature for a long time. The ideas of linear prediction have been in use in the areas of control, and information theory, system estimation and system identification. The term linear prediction is particularly descriptive of LPC methods in that once the parameters of the model have been obtained, the system has been uniquely identified and it can be modelled as an all-pole linear system.

As applied to speech processing, the term linear prediction refers to a variety of essentially equivalent formulations of the problem of estimating the speech waveform [1-18]. The differences among these formulations are those of philosophy or way of viewing the problem. The most significant differences concern the details of the computations used to determine the predictor coefficients. Thus as applied to speech, the various (often used) formulations of linear prediction analysis have been:

1. the covariance method [3]
2. the autocorrelation formulation [1,2,9]
3. the lattice method [11,12]
4. the inverse filter formulation [1]
5. the spectral estimation formulation [12]
6. the maximum likelihood formulation [4,6]
7. the inner product formulation [1]

In this chapter we will examine in detail the similarities and differences among only the first three basic methods of analysis listed above. It will be shown that these three formulations are equivalent to one of these three.

The importance of linear prediction lies in the fact that the basic model applies to speech. Thus a major part of this chapter is a discussion of how a variety of speech parameters can be estimated using linear prediction methods. Furthermore some typical examples

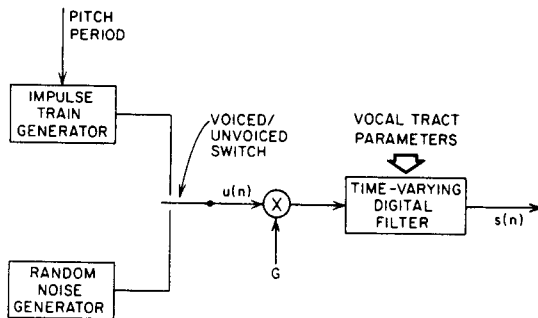


Fig. 8.1 Block diagram of simplified model for speech production.

8.1 Basic Principles of Linear Predictive Analysis

Throughout this book we have repeatedly referred to the basic discrete-time model for speech production that was developed in Chapter 3. The particular form of this model that is appropriate for the discussion of linear predictive analysis is depicted in Fig. 8.1. In this case, the composite spectrum effects of radiation, vocal tract, and glottal excitation are represented by a time-varying digital filter whose steady-state system function is of the form

$$H(z) = \frac{S(z)}{U(z)} = \frac{G}{1 - \sum_{k=1}^p \alpha_k z^{-k}} \quad (8.1)$$

This system is excited by an impulse train for voiced speech or a random noise sequence for unvoiced speech. Thus, the parameters of this model are: voiced/unvoiced classification, pitch period for voiced speech, gain parameter G , and the coefficients $\{\alpha_k\}$ of the digital filter. These parameters, of course, all vary slowly with time.

The pitch period and voiced/unvoiced classification can be estimated using one of the many methods already discussed in this book or by methods based on linear predictive analysis to be discussed later in this chapter. As discussed in Chapter 3, this simplified all-pole model is a natural representation of non-nasal voiced sounds, but for nasals and fricative sounds, the detailed acoustic theory calls for both poles and zeros in the vocal tract transfer function. We shall see, however, that if the order p is high enough, the all-pole model provides a good representation for almost all the sounds of speech. The major advantage of this model is that the gain parameter, G , and the filter coefficients $\{\alpha_k\}$ can be estimated in a very straightforward and computationally efficient manner by the method of linear predictive analysis.

For the system of Fig. 8.1, the speech samples $s(n)$ are related to the

A linear predictor with prediction coefficients, α_k is output is

$$\tilde{s}(n) = \sum_{k=1}^p \alpha_k s(n-k)$$

Such systems were used in Chapter 5 to reduce the signal in differential quantization schemes. The system linear predictor is the polynomial

$$P(z) = \sum_{k=1}^p \alpha_k z^{-k}$$

The prediction error, $e(n)$, is defined as

$$e(n) = s(n) - \tilde{s}(n) = s(n) - \sum_{k=1}^p \alpha_k s(n-k)$$

From Eq. (8.5) it can be seen that the prediction error of a system whose transfer function is

$$A(z) = 1 - \sum_{k=1}^p \alpha_k z^{-k}$$

It can be seen by comparing Eqs. (8.2) and (8.5) that the model of Eq. (8.2) exactly, and if $\alpha_k = a_k$, then the prediction error filter, $A(z)$, will be an inverse filter for (8.1), i.e.,

$$H(z) = \frac{G}{A(z)}$$

The basic problem of linear prediction analysis is to estimate the predictor coefficients $\{\alpha_k\}$ directly from the speech signal to obtain a good estimate of the spectral properties of the signal using the use of Eq. (8.7). Because of the time-varying nature of the predictor coefficients must be estimated from short segments of signal. The basic approach is to find a set of predictor coefficients that minimize the mean-squared prediction error over a short segment of waveform. The resulting parameters are then assumed to be constant over the system function, $H(z)$, in the model for speech production.

That this approach will lead to useful results is not obvious, but it can be justified in several ways. First, if the prediction error is $e(n) = Gu(n)$. For voiced speech this means that $e(n)$ is a train of impulses; i.e., $e(n)$ would be small most of the time. The second motivation for this approach follows from the fact that the prediction error filter, $A(z)$, is the inverse of the system function, $H(z)$, as generated by Eq. (8.2) with non-time-varying coefficients.

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