Morphing aircraft based on smart materials and structures: A state-of-the-art review

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Abstract

A traditional aircraft is optimized for only one or two flight conditions, not for the entire flight envelope. In contrast, the wings of a bird can be reshaped to provide optimal performance at all flight conditions. Any change in an aircraft's configuration, in particular the wings, affects the aerodynamic performance, and optimal configurations can be obtained for each flight condition. Morphing technologies offer aerodynamic benefits for an aircraft over a wide range of flight conditions. The advantages of a morphing aircraft are based on an assumption that the additional weight of the morphing components is acceptable. Traditional mechanical and hydraulic systems are not considered good choices for morphing aircraft. "Smart" materials and structures have the advantages of high energy density, ease of control, variable stiffness, and the ability to tolerate large amounts of strain. These characteristics offer researchers and designers new possibilities for designing morphing aircraft. In this article, recent developments in the application of smart materials and structures to morphing aircraft are reviewed. Specifically, four categories of applications are discussed: actuators, sensors, controllers, and structures.

Keywords

smart materials and structures, morphing aircraft, review

Introduction

The kite, which might be considered the earliest type of aircraft, was invented by the Chinese 2000 years ago. These kites were made from easily obtained natural materials: silk fabric or paper for the wings, fine, high-tensile-strength silk for the tether, and bamboo for a strong, lightweight airframe. The first rocket was developed in the 13th century in China using black powder as the propellant. The rocket was the first powered aircraft used in war and was the forerunner of the jet engine. The Wright brothers completed the first flight of a powered, manned aircraft (the *Wright Flyer*) on 17 December 1903. The 274 kg aircraft had two 12.3 m wings and was powered by an 8.9 kW, 82 kg engine. The *Wright Flyer* stimulated the rapid development of aircraft in the 20th century.

To improve aerodynamic performance, the use of bionics in aircraft design is being considered. Swifts control their glide performance by changing the geometry of their wings; for example, they adjust their wing sweep to suit the speed (Lentink et al., 2007). Jackdaws (Rosén and Hedenström, 2001) and other birds (Thomas, 1996) maneuver in flight by changing the geometry of their wings and tail. It follows that morphing wings can play a very important role in aircraft design (Cistone, 2004; Weiss, 2003).

A number of aircraft with morphing wings have been designed and produced since World War II, including the X5 (sweep wing, USA, 1951–1958), the F-111 (sweep wing, USA, 1964–2010), the XB-70 (span bending wing, USA, 1964–1969), the SU-17 (sweep wing, former Soviet Union, 1966-till date), the MIG-23 (sweep wing, former Soviet Union, 1967-till date), the SU-24 (sweep wing, former Soviet Union, 1967-till date), the Tu-22M (sweep wing, former Soviet Union, 1969-till date), the F-14 (sweep wing, USA, 1970– 2006), the B-1 (sweep wing, USA, 1974-till date), the Tornado (sweep wing, UK, Germany, and Italy, 1974till date), and the Tu-160 (sweep wing, former Soviet

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Union, 1981-till date) (Barbarino et al., 2011a). The most famous example is the Grumman F-14 Tomcat. This aircraft, which was featured in the film "The Final Countdown," was in service with the US Navy from 1974 to 2006. The wing structure was made of titanium, including the wing box, the wing pivots, and the wing skins. The F-14's wing sweep could be varied between 20° and 68° in flight to obtain the optimum lift-to-drag ratio for the Mach number. This aircraft was retired by the US Navy on 22 September 2006. The main reasons given for the F-14's retirement were the high number of maintenance hours and the high costs resulting from the heavy and complex sweep wing structure.

To overcome the problems with traditional materials and structures, novel materials are required (Donadon and Iannucci, 2014; Lloyd, 2007). Smart materials and structures, which offer self-actuating, self-sensing, self-healing, self-assembly, and selfadaptive capabilities, have great potential for applications in morphing aircraft (Rodriguez, 2007; Simpson et al., 1998). A variety of morphing technologies based on smart materials and structures will be required to enable an aircraft to perform in-flight configuration changes for optimum performance (Colozza, 2007; NASA, 2001; Website).

Smart materials and structures

It is difficult to define "smart" materials. Unlike static, or "dead," materials, smart materials are "alive": they can respond to changes in the environment (Bhavsar et al., 2008; Tzou et al., 2004). Therefore, smart materials are not only structural materials but also active materials. Sources of stimulation include stress, strain, electricity, magnetism, heat, light, and microwave radiation (Bogue, 2012). Currently, piezoelectric, magnetostrictive, and ferroelectric materials, optical fibers, electrorheological and magnetorheological fluids, shape memory alloys, shape memory polymers, electro-active polymers, and multifunctional nano-composites can be considered smart materials (Sater and Crowe, 2000; Vessonen, 2002). Smart structures include auxetic honeycombs, variable-stiffness tubes, multi-stable structures, and corrugated structures. In general, smart materials and structures comprise a smart system. To draw an analogy to humans, as shown in Figure 1, smart materials and structures can obtain information from the environment around the skin (sensing), they then produce an internal chemical or physical effect delivered to the brain for decision making (control), and finally, they implement actions through the muscles (actuation). The information passes through the nerves, and each part is linked by tendons and fibrous bands (structures).

Smart materials and structures have one or more of the three main features as follows:

- Self-actuating—the system produces an output such as force, displacement, heat, and light after being stimulated (Chung, 2004; Kang et al., 2006; Krstulovic-Opara et al., 2003; Song et al., 2011b).
- Self-sensing—in response to changes in the environment, the system can generate electric or magnetic signals or undergo strain that can be measured to describe the environment (Kruusamäe et al., 2011; Moslehi et al., 2011; Sodano et al., 2004).
- 3. Self-adaptive—the system can change its geometry to adapt to the environment (this feature applies specifically to structures) (Rodrigues et al., 2010; Vos et al., 2011a, 2011b).



Figure 1. Smart materials and structures.

Table I. Propert	ies of ty	pical smart	materials.
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	Density Nominal stress		Strain	Actuation	Stimulation			
Unit or method	g/cm ³	MPa	%	frequency	S	E	Μ	Т
Shape memory alloy (SMA) (Hartl and Lagoudas, 2007; Nespoli et al., 2010; Wei and Sandström, 1998)	6.4–6.5	400–700	8	Slow		•		•
Piezoelectric ceramic (Craig, 1996; MEMSnet, 2014; Website)	7.5–7.8	100	0.1	Fast	•	•		
Piezoelectric composites (Bent and Pizzochero, 2000; Smart Material Corp., 2014; Website)	3.79	34-41	1.5	Fast	•	•		
Shape memory polymer (SMP) (Leng et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2009, 2014)	0.92	2–10	50-100	Slow	•	•	•	•
Elastic-active polymer (EAP) (Bar-Cohen, 2002; Shahinpoor et al., 1998)	I-2.5	10–30	300	Fast	•	•		
Magnetostriction (Bar-Cohen, 2000)	9.2	100	2	Fast	•		•	
Electrorheological fluids (ER) (Hao, 2001)	>	0.016	N/A	Fast	•	•		
Magnetorheological fluids (MR) (Kciuk and Turczyn, 2006; Park et al., 2010)	3–4	0.05–0.1	N/A	Fast	•		•	

Here, "S" denotes nominal stress and strain, "E" denotes electric, "M" denotes magnetic, and "T" denotes temperature.

Table 1 presents the properties and the means of stimulation for various common smart materials. Generally, smart materials have a high energy density (Tieck et al., 2004). According to the requirements of a particular application (e.g. stress, strain, weight, speed), designers can select the best material.

Morphing aircraft

The basic principle of an airplane can be described as follows: gravity is overcome by the lift generated by the flow of air over the aircraft's wings, and the lift depends on the wing shape and size and the velocity of the aircraft. Drag can be balanced by thrust. In one sense, for a given airplane fuselage, or body, the aerodynamic performance depends on the wing configuration. For a given thrust and airspeed, there will be an optimal wing configuration for each mission (Joshi et al., 2004) (Figure 2).

The degree of morphing in a wing can be classified as large, medium, or small (Gomez and Garcia, 2011; Jacob and Smith, 2009; Sofla et al., 2010) depending on the dimension that varies. Folding wings, variablesweep wings, variable-span (telescoping) wings, and deployable wings comprise the large category. Twisting wing, flexible winglets, variable-chord (telescoping) wings, and variable-camber wings comprise the medium category. Variable-airfoil wings and bulging wings comprise the small category. Aircraft with morphing technologies has some advantages over fixed-geometry aircraft, and these advantages are listed in Table 2. A multi-mission aircraft can be designed for good performance in multiple flight conditions. For example, a fighter with folding wings or variable-sweep wings can have good performance at both high speed

and low speeds, which can reduce fuel consumption and improve the flight envelope dramatically. Aircraft with variable-chord or variable-camber wings can have shorter takeoff distances. Variable-span wings, flexible winglets, and twisting wings can improve the aerodynamic performance of low-speed aircraft.

Different levels of morphing require diverse types of materials and structures to meet its various demands. Some of the earliest research on smart materials and structures for morphing aircraft mainly focused on medium morphing, such as the research conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Spangler, 1989). In that research, a helicopter rotor blade trailing-edge flap was actuated by piezoelectric materials to control the aerodynamic force. In the 1990s, several types of smart materials and structures were investigated, including piezoelectric materials, electrostrictive materials, magnetostrictive materials, shape memory alloys, and fiber optic sensors (McGowan et al., 1999; Martin et al., 1998). Several studies have focused on morphing rotor structures using piezoelectric materials (Barrett, 1996; Barrett et al., 1998; Barrett and Stutts, 1997; Ehlers and Weisshaar, 1990; Giurgiutiu et al., 1994; Rodgers et al., 1997; Steadman et al., 1994), shape memory alloys (Roglin et al., 1994; Roglin and Hanagud, 1996), and magnetostrictive materials (Giurgiutiu et al., 1995). Piezoelectric actuators were used in morphing airfoil wings (Pinkerton and Moses, 1997) and in the control fins of a missile (Barrett and Stutts, 1998). Since the late 1990s, a large number of investigations on smart materials and structures for morphing aircraft have been conducted, and interest in the subject has been global (Barbarino et al., 2011a). Several studies have involved unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) (Baier and Datashvili, 2011; Daynes

Morphing methods		Advantages
Large	Folding	Increase the critical Mach number
-	-	Decrease parasitic drag
	Sweep	Increase the critical Mach number
		Decrease high-speed drag
	Span telescoping	Increase L/D, loiter time, cruise distance
		Decrease engine requirements
	Deployable	Increase L/D, loiter time, cruise distance
		Decrease engine requirements
Medium	Twist	Increase maneuverability
		Prevent tip stall
	Winglet bending	Increase L/D, maneuverability
	ũ ũ	Decrease induced (tip vortex) drag
	Chord telescoping	Increase low-speed airfoil performance
	Variable camber	Increase airfoil efficiency
		<i>Delay</i> separation
Small	Variable airfoil	Increase high-speed airfoil performance
	Bulging	Increase wing efficiency
	5 5	Decrease compressibility (wave) drag

Table 2. Advantages of morphing aircraft (Frommer and Crossley, 2005; Jha and Kudva, 2004; Previtali et al., 2014b; Roth et al., 2002).

Here, L/D means Lift to Drag ratio.



Figure 2. Comparing the predicted performance of a fixed-geometry wing, a morphing-airfoil wing, and a morphing wing for various missions (Joshi et al., 2004).

and Weaver, 2013a; Gomez and Garcia, 2011; Kuder et al., 2013; Kudva, 2004; Thill et al., 2008), and several mature morphing technologies for helicopter rotor blades and jet engines have already been flight-tested with full-scale test articles (Calkins and Mabe, 2010; Giurgiutiu, 2000b, 2011). In the next four sections, applications of smart materials and structures in morphing aircraft will be described in detail.

Actuators

Shape memory alloys

A shape memory alloy (SMA) is a metallic alloy such as NiTi, NiTiCu, and CuAlNi that can recover from a deformation and return to its original shape when subjected to heat (Otsuka and Wayman, 1998) which is known as shape memory effect. There is four transition points known as the martensitic start and finish temperatures (Ms and Mf) and the austenite start and finish temperatures (As and Af). Through a training cycle, an SMA acquires a stabilized strain that can be recovered when the temperature is higher than Ms. SMA has the property of super-elasticity, which means it could work even under high applied loads and large inelastic deformations, or undergo large strains without plastic deformation or failure (Barbarino et al., 2014). SMAs are very desirable for actuators because of properties such as high output forces, large recoverable strains, high energy densities, controllability, and the capability for one-way and two-way memory effects. SMAs are already widely used in aerospace morphing structures.

The most well-known application of SMAs is in an engine nozzle on a Boeing commercial airplane to reduce jet noise (Calkins et al., 2006). A large amount of theoretical work and simulations were performed by Texas A&M University and the Boeing Company (Hartl et al., 2010a, 2010b; Oehler et al., 2012a, 2012b). In August 2005, full-scale flight tests of variablegeometry chevrons, which were actuated using an SMA and installed on a 777-300ER with GE-115B engines, were completed (Mabe et al., 2007); photographs of the chevrons are shown in Figure 3. The results indicated that noise in cruise was significantly reduced. The chevrons improve the mixing of the freestream air and the fan stream. Other uses of SMA actuators in jet engines including a morphing inlet internal wall (Pitt et al., 2002), a morphing intake (Song et al., 2011a), and a morphing nozzle (Mabe, 2008) have also been investigated. The morphing inlet internal wall was tested in a

SMA actuators can be used to alter the wing geometry as well. A variable-sweep wing controlled by SMA ribbons on the spar has been investigated (Galantai et al., 2012). In several other studies, SMA wire was used to create a morphing trailing edge to enhance lift (Kang et al., 2012; Karagiannis et al., 2014; Ko et al., 2014; Senthilkumar, 2012). Several segmented morphing trailing-edge concepts, which produce a larger trailing-edge angle, have been investigated (Ameduri et al., 2011; Barbarino et al., 2009b, 2011c; Wang et al., 2013). A similar approach can be used in the leading edge to increase the lift-to-drag ratio (Abdullah et al., 2011). Cornell University designed a Hyper-Elliptic Cambered Span (HECS) wing using SMA actuators (Manzo et al., 2005). This morphing wingtip can markedly improve maneuverability by enhancing yaw control while in the furled state. Groups of SMA actuators have been used to create a morphing-airfoil wing for subsonic cruise flight conditions (Brailovski et al., 2010; Georges et al., 2012), and wind tunnel tests showed



wind tunnel.

Figure 3. Full-scale flight tests of SMA-actuated variable-geometry chevrons on a Boeing 777-300ER with GE-115B engines (Mabe et al., 2007).

reductions in drag from 14.5% to 26.7% with an average value of 18.5% under quasi-constant lift conditions. SMA torque tube actuators have been used to provide near-optimum blade twist for helicopters in both hover and cruise flight conditions (Bushnell et al., 2008). SMA actuators have also been used in bionic flapping wings. An artificial beetle hind wing produced a flapping motion at 9 Hz with a 120° flapping angle using cyclic heating with two SMA wires (Muhammad et al., 2010).

Piezoelectric materials

A crystal with piezoelectric properties was discovered by the Curie brothers in 1880. A maximum of 0.1% strain can be obtained by applying a voltage to a piezoelectric material (Bogue, 2012; Vessonen, 2002). Layers of these crystals can be stacked to form a piezoelectric stack actuator. Piezoelectric fibers can be mixed with resin to produce piezoelectric composites. These composites can produce larger strains and various types of motion (e.g. extension, bending, and twisting). These composites are generally referred to as active fiber composite (AFC), macro fiber composite (MFC), or lightweight piezo-composite actuator (LIPCA).

Piezoelectric ceramics. Because piezoelectric ceramics are capable of producing large output forces and highfrequency responses, they have been used to drive hydraulic pumps. The principle of operation is as follows. A chamber with an inlet and an outlet is linked to a hydraulic system through one-way valves. The piezoelectric ceramic actuator moves a metal membrane to change the volume of the chamber cyclically according to a periodic voltage. Because of the pressure differential, the liquid flows from the inlet to the outlet (Chapman et al., 2005; Chaudhuri and Wereley, 2010; Kim and Wang, 2007; Oates et al., 2000; Sirohi and Chopra, 2002). These pumps have achieved maximum flow rates of 2300 cc/min and output pressures exceeding 200 bar in the stalled condition. A piezoelectric hydraulic pump was successfully used in a morphing wing on a remotely piloted vehicle (O'Neill and Burchfield, 2007).

Piezoelectric ceramics have also been used in linear actuators in helicopter rotor systems to improve vibration, noise, and aerodynamic performance (Straub et al., 2004a). An important technological advancement would be to increase the output of piezoelectric ceramic actuators (currently, the maximum extension strain is only 0.1%). Several different types of piezoelectric actuators such as the O type (Grohmann et al., 2006), the L-L type (Lee and Chopra, 2001), and the X type (Straub et al., 2004b) have been designed and tested. O-type actuators were used to drive trailing-edge flaps installed on MD900 rotor blades in whirl tower tests conducted by the Boeing Company. X-type actuators were successfully used in a BK117 S7045 prototype aircraft in Europe, as shown in Figure 4. The results showed that the vibrations were reduced as much as 90% (to less than 0.05 g) when the active-flap rotor was installed (Jaenker et al., 2008; Konstanzer et al., 2008).

Several researchers have designed piezoelectric actuators based on a "step and repeat" driving strategy which means actuators produce displacement pulses by insistently repeated motions to generate larger linear displacements and larger output forces (Loverich, 2004; Paine et al., 2008) to control the configuration of a morphing structure rapidly and accurately.

Piezoelectric composites. Piezoelectric composites have been used to reduce vibration and noise from helicopter rotors. At the German Aerospace Center (DLR), piezoelectric composites were integrated into rotor blades to control blade twist (Monner et al., 2011). Rotor blade trailing-edge flaps with piezoelectric composites actuators can achieve similar performance (Koratkar and Chopra, 2000).

In several studies, the camber of the wings of a micro air vehicle (MAV) was altered using piezoelectric composites to change the lift, the drag, and the pitching moment (Bilgen and Friswell, 2014; Heryawan et al., 2005, 2006; Molinari et al., 2015; Paradies and Ciresa, 2009; Prazenica et al., 2014) or to control the roll and pitch by morphing the trailing edge near the wingtips (Bilgen et al., 2007; Probst et al., 2012; Vos et al., 2007); the feasibility of these designs has been demonstrated in flight tests (see Figure 5). An MAV in which the elevators were controlled by piezoelectric composites was constructed and tested in a wind tunnel (Yoon et al., 2006a, 2006b). In a biomimetic approach, piezoelectric composites have been used to produce a flapping wing (Syaifuddin et al., 2005) that takes advantage of the high bandwidth of piezoelectric materials. In another study, the composites were installed in a flexible flapping wing to change the camber and increase the lift as much as 20.8% at 8 Hz flapping frequency, 20° pitch angles, and 10 m/s flow velocity (Kim et al., 2008).

Shape memory polymers

A shape memory polymer (SMP) is a type of polymer that, like an SMA, exhibits the shape memory effect. SMPs are capable of significant macroscopic recovery after receiving an external stimulus (e.g. heat, electricity, light, magnetism, microwaves, moisture, or a change in pH) (Leng et al., 2011). During this process, the material transitions between a glassy state, that is, hard, with a high Young's modulus (greater than 3 GPa), and an elastic state, that is, soft, with a low Young's modulus (1–10 MPa), so there is a distinct change in stiffness. Because of their low recovery forces,



Figure 4. BK117 S7045 flight test with active rotor trailing-edge flaps actuated by piezoelectric actuators (Konstanzer et al., 2008).



Figure 5. Micro air vehicle controlled by piezoelectric materials on the ground and in flight (Bilgen et al., 2007).

SMPs are frequently used as actuators in deployable space structures, that is, in a weightless environment (Leng et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2014). However, SMPs have great potential for applications requiring a morphing skin because of their variable stiffness. SMP morphing skins can withstand aerodynamic loads in the glassy state and tolerate large deformations (up to 100% strain) in the elastic state, and thus, they can accommodate morphing structures (McKnight and Henry, 2005; Sun et al., 2012).

SMP composites have been fabricated by mixing carbon fibers, glass fibers, or elastic fibers with an SMP

resin, which enhances the mechanical performance of the SMP. Morphing skins based on SMP composites have been designed and tested in telescoping wings (Perkins et al., 2004; Reed et al., 2005; Yin et al., 2008), variable-camber wings (Sun et al., 2013, 2014b; Yin et al., 2009), sweep wings (Keihl et al., 2005; McKnight and Henry, 2008), deployable wings (Leng et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2009), and folding wings (Bye and McClure, 2007; Cantrell and Ifju, 2015). Figure 6 shows the deployment of a wing with a morphing skin. The SMP composite skin alters its shape when heated and maintains a smooth and seamless wing surface.



Figure 6. Deployable wing with SMP composite skin (Yu et al., 2009).



Figure 7. A lighter-than-air vehicle controlled with EAP actuators (Michel et al., 2007).

Electro-active polymers

An electro-active polymer (EAP) can be stimulated by electricity to produce a significant change in shape or size, where the strain can be as high as 300% (Bar-Cohen, 2002). EAP materials include dielectric elastomers (DE), ionic polymer-metal composites (IPMCs), polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF), and other similar materials. As an actuator, EAPs have many advantages including low weight, low power consumption, a fast response, and flexibility (Zhao et al., 2015). EAPs have been used in flapping wing MAVs (Kim et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2006; Park et al., 2005). Only a 2.5-4 V sinusoidal signal was required to generate sufficient lift from the flapping wings for the MAV to become airborne. EAPs have also been used in actuators for the trailing edges of a fixed-wing UAV to increase the lift (Molinari et al., 2011). A small lighter-than-air vehicle whose rudders and elevators are controlled by EAP actuators is shown in Figure 7. The 3.5-m-long prototype vehicle was tested successfully in 2006 and in 2007 and demonstrated satisfactory control performance (Michel et al., 2007).

Magnetostriction

Magnetostriction is a property of certain materials in which the material undergoes a change in dimension or shape when subjected to a magnetic field. Terfenol-D (chemical composition: Tb_{0.3}Dy_{0.7}Fe_{1.9}) is a typical magnetostrictive material that undergoes a large induced strain in a low-intensity magnetic field at room temperature (Claeyssen et al., 2002). A linear step actuator based on Terfenol-D was demonstrated to have a very good performance: a maximum force of 410 N, a range of motion of 45 mm, a maximum speed of 60 mm/min, and 95 W of power. In comparison with conventional piezoelectric actuators, it could generate much higher actuation strains. It has higher actuation stresses in comparison with solenoid and moving-coil transducers (Kim and Sadighi, 2010). Magnetostrictive materials have been used to drive hydraulic pumps (Bridger et al., 2004; Chaudhuri et al., 2009; Sneed et al., 2007). The principle is similar to that of the piezoelectric pump. A maximum pressure of greater than 1700 lbf/in² was produced, and the output power reached 180 W. A design for a variable-span morphing wing UAV is shown in Figure 8.

At present, smart materials are mainly used as actuators. Comparing with conventional electromotor, smart materials have the properties of higher power density, more output force (SMA, piezoelectric materials, and magnetostriction materials), larger output displacement (SMP, EAP, and MFC), higher output frequency (piezoelectric materials, magnetostriction materials), or other features. The designers could choose them according to application conditions. However, it should be noted that there are still some shortcomings of smart materials. First, for SMA, piezoelectric materials, magnetostriction materials, and some other materials, closed-loop control is required to achieve the high precision control. Second, some materials need special power source to drive, which means the increasing in the complexity and weight of additional power source. For example, EAP, piezoelectric materials, and magnetostriction materials need to be driven by high voltage or high current. Third, high level of the demanding for driving energy makes it difficult to find an efficient method to drive some materials, such as SMP. Moreover, some materials have poor mechanical properties, which have restricted the



Figure 8. Hydraulic and control systems for a morphing wing UAV (Sneed et al., 2007).

development and application of them. For instance, piezoelectric materials and magnetostriction materials usually are partial to brittle failure and SMA, SMP, and EAP have poor anti-fatigue ability. All these aspects mentioned above should be avoided cautiously when applying these smart materials as actuators. Materials modification should be focused on in future work.

Sensors

Optical fibers

In a fiber Bragg grating (FBG) sensor, a grating is etched into the core of an optical fiber. The refractive index of the fiber will change in response to an axial strain or a change in temperature. Strain caused by changes in the ambient temperature, stress (Yi et al., 2012), pressure (Urban et al., 2010), or crack formation, among other factors, can be monitored by FBG sensors. The strain distribution can be obtained accurately by temperature compensation (Kim et al., 2013). Embedded FBG sensors have been used in composite wings to monitor impact damage (Nakamura et al., 2007; Takeda et al., 2007), cracks (Sekine et al., 2006), and loads (Costa et al., 2014). These sensors can identify the locations and the shapes of fatigue cracks and the time of failure. Furthermore, FBG sensors can monitor the dynamic strains in a wing in flight (Cusano et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2003). The wing root structure of an F/A-18 was tested under fatigue loading. Using FBG sensors, the fatigue life and mechanisms and the failure locations could be monitored (Davis et al., 2012; Schembri et al., 2013).

FBG sensors can be used in morphing wings to monitor the shape of the wing. Deflections in variablecamber wings (Figure 9) have been determined from the strain in a metal plate or a hinge measured using FBG sensors (Ciminello et al., 2013; Li et al., 2013a).



Figure 9. Model of a flexible, variable-camber wing (skin removed) monitored by an FBG sensor (Li et al., 2013a).

The actual shape of a twisting wing actuated by SMAs can be monitored with an array of FBG sensors and a neural network (Mieloszyk et al., 2011a, 2011b). The shape of an SMP can also be measured with FBG sensors, which have potential applications in a folding skin (Li et al., 2013b, 2013c).

Piezoelectric materials

In piezoelectric materials, applying an electric current to the material causes the material to undergo a change in dimensions. Conversely, a change in dimensions (such as by an applied mechanical stress) generates an electric charge in a piezoelectric material. This property can be used to create a sensor. Piezoelectric sensors can be installed inside a structure or attached to the surface to detect internal structural damage based on sound and ultrasound (Shang et al., 2008). In one study, a health monitoring system for a composite airframe (including the wings, the fuselage, and the empennage)



Figure 10. Piezoelectric differential air-pressure sensor for an insect wing (Takahashi et al., 2010).

using piezoelectric sensors to measure structural strains under high-frequency loading was developed (Kosmatka and Oliver, 2006). Piezoelectric sensors have been used to monitor the load and deformation bifurcations of a multi-stable structure to control its motion (Zareie et al., 2011). This type of sensor can also be used to measure the velocity of a morphing structure (Ray and Batten, 2012). Figure 10 shows a device with a piezo-resistive cantilever that was able to detect the differential pressure over the wing surface of an insect (Takahashi et al., 2009, 2010).

Electro-active polymers

Similar to piezoelectric materials, EAPs can also generate electrical signals and can be used for flexible structures and large strain conditions. Figure 11 shows a flapping wing MAV with EAP sensors on its wings (Hsu et al., 2006; Yang et al., 2007). The lift in flight was obtained from the EAP sensors. These results were verified in a wind tunnel test and flight tests. EAP sensors can also be used for monitoring vibrating structures (Sahu et al., 2013).

Self-sensing is another main feature of smart materials. Smart materials have sensing capabilities with some environmental parameters such as stress, strain, temperature and the location of structure damage and feedback some measurable signals. However, these sensors based on smart material also have some deficiencies stated as follows. Wire signal transmission system is so complex and ponderous, which causes much inconvenience in applying. In order to solve this problem, a type of wireless transmission system is already being developed. Moreover, since there is a limit on the number of channels in signal demodulation system, it is desired to realize a demodulation system capable of multi-signal processing. In addition, some sensors are prone to snapping such as optical fiber sensor and piezoelectric ceramics sensor or tearing such as EAP.

Structures

Auxetic honeycomb structures

Unlike traditional honeycomb structures, an auxetic structure is one that becomes wider when it is stretched (Evans and Alderson, 2000), and therefore, it has a negative Poisson's ratio (Prawoto, 2012). Auxetic honeycomb structures have other advantages for morphing structures (Luo and Tong, 2013a, 2013b). Variablecamber wings have been designed using several types of auxetic structures, including reentrant hexagonal honeycombs (Dong and Sun, 2011; Heo et al., 2013; Vigliotti and Pasini, 2015), chiral honeycombs (Airoldi et al., 2012; Bornengo et al., 2005; Martin et al., 2008; Spadoni and Ruzzene, 2007), and cross-shaped honeycombs (Zhang et al., 2012, 2014). Zero-Poisson's-ratio honeycombs have been used in variable-span morphing wings (Ajaj et al., 2012; Bubert et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2015; Gong et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2013; Olympio and Gandhi, 2010; Vocke et al., 2012, 2015). Figure 12 shows a variable-span morphing wing with a 100% extension (Vocke et al., 2011). Similar approaches have been used to create variable-chord wing structures (Barbarino et al., 2011b; Chen et al., 2013d; Dale et al., 2014). Adaptive wings have been constructed by adding pressured air in the sealed honeycombs to obtain the optimal configuration for a given flight condition (Barrett and Barrett, 2014; Vos and Barrett, 2010a,



Figure 11. EAP sensors on a flapping wing MAV (Yang et al., 2007).



Figure 12. Variable-span morphing wings based on zero-poisson's-ratio honeycombs: (a) contracted state and (b) extended state (Vocke et al., 2011).

2010b, 2011). A pressurized honeycomb has also been used as the actuator in a morphing wingtip structure (Sun et al., 2014a). Other honeycomb designs have been used in wing boxes (Saito et al., 2011) and engine fan blades (Lira et al., 2011).

Variable-stiffness tube structures

There is a contradiction in morphing structures, which means the structure must be both strong and deformable. A structure with variable stiffness is required. Shape memory polymers are variable-stiffness materials, as discussed in section "Shape memory polymers." This section discusses the use of variable-stiffness tubes and a flexible matrix to create a structure. There are three types of variable-stiffness tubes. The first type is a pneumatic tube, which is also called a pneumatic muscle fiber. Pneumatic muscle fibers have been used as actuators (Vanderhoff and Kim, 2009) that shorten under air-pressure loads. In this process, the stiffness of the tube changes dramatically. Pneumatic muscle fibers can be added to a flexible matrix to form a morphing skin, where the transverse stiffness ratio can be as high as 120 (Chen et al., 2011). This morphing skin was also used in a variable-camber wing structure as both actuator and skin (Feng et al., 2015).

The second type of variable-stiffness tube is the SMP composite tube, a carbon fiber filament-wound tube cured with SMP resin. In one set of studies, the modulus ratio of a morphing skin created using SMP composite tubes was 59.6 according to tensile tests

(Chen et al., 2012b, 2013a). Photographs of the out-ofplane deformation under uniform loading as the tube was being heated are shown in Figure 13.

The third type of variable-stiffness tube is called a fluidic flexible matrix composite (F²MC) tube. The stiffness of the tube is controlled by the pressure of a fluid inside the tube. Pressurizing the fluid causes a sharp increase in the stiffness because of the special anisotropic tube structure and the incompressibility of the fluid. The modulus ratio of a skin made with F^2MC tubes can reach 55.5 (Shan et al., 2009), and the theoretical maximum modulus ratio can be 120 (Chen et al., 2012a). To obtain a larger modulus ratio, SMPs can be used for the matrix to form F²MC-reinforced SMP composites (Philen et al., 2009). The modulus ratio for these types can reach 140, which can allow the material to withstand conditions that could damage an F^2MC . This type of tube has been used as an actuator to drive a morphing wing structure (Doepke et al., 2014).

Multi-stable structures

A multi-stable structure has two or more stable states, and the structure can transition rapidly from one to the other when stimulated. Multi-stable structures have been used for morphing wing UAVs (Daynes and Weaver, 2013b; Mattioni et al., 2008). Multi-stable structures have been used to construct variable-sweep wings. In tests, the wings successfully transitioned from straight to fully swept (Mattioni et al., 2006). A





t=60s



t=120s

t=180s

Figure 13. Deformation of a morphing skin with SMP composite tubes (Chen et al., 2013a).

twisting structure has been manufactured based on bistable structures actuated by MFCs to control a UAV (Schultz, 2005). Morphing wing trailing edges have been designed to control four states by changing the upper surface and the lower surface, both of which are made of bi-stable structures (Mattioni et al., 2007). An adaptive morphing-airfoil wing has been designed with a bi-stable structure that switches between stiff and compliant modes (Arrieta et al., 2014). A morphing wingtip structure based on a bi-stable structure can provide the optimal wing configurations for takeoff and cruise (Friswell et al., 2006), which can be determined from wind tunnel tests (see Figure 14). A morphing air inlet using multi-stable structures that switches between the open and closed positions to either create a flush surface or form a submerged air duct with a divergent-convergent channel has been constructed (Daynes et al., 2011). An actuator is designed to operate at a first working temperature while in a preceding manufacturing process the first layer of material is structurally connected to a support beam at a second temperature wherein the second temperature is higher than the first temperature so as to cause that at the first temperature the support beam is in compression without causing flexure thereof (Barrett and Tiso, 2011). SMA-actuated post-buckled pre-compressed (PBP) plates are capable of tip deflection of up to 45°, and that the PBP mechanism improves tip rotation up to 40% compared to conventional antagonistically actuated SMA plates (Sinn and Barrett, 2010).

Corrugated structures

Corrugated structures can undergo a large expansion or contraction in one direction. These structures are additionally suited for folding or bending (Dayyani et al., 2015; Previtali et al., 2014a). Within a specified range of Reynolds numbers, eddies form over the corrugated surface, similar to streamlined airfoils (Xia et al., 2014). Morphing trailing-edge structures can be covered with corrugated skins (Shaw et al., 2015). There are two methods to make corrugated structures smooth. One method is to fill the structure with flexible rubber (Yokozeki et al., 2006, 2014), and the other method is to cover it with a segmented skin similar to fish scales (Thill et al., 2010). Figure 15 shows a morphing winglet with a corrugated structure in which a 0.52 rad change in dihedral angle and 0.055 rad change in twist angle were achieved (Ursache et al., 2008). Corrugated structures have been used in a flapping artificial insect wing whose aerodynamic behavior was analyzed (Meng et al., 2010).

Smart structures are distinct from the traditional bearing structures, since smart structures emphasize



Figure 14. Wind-tunnel test rig for a winglet incorporating bi-stable structures (Mattioni et al., 2007).



Figure 15. Demonstration of extension and canting of a morphing winglet with a corrugated structure (Ursache et al., 2008).

more the feature of deformability and designability. For different deformation structures of morphing aircraft, a structure capable of carrying and deforming is the base of actuator and sensors. These current designs of lightweight deformation structure have good performance on the bearing and deformation capacity, but there are still some problems about the relationship between deformation structures and smooth configuration to be solved. There are two potential solutions as follows. First one, smooth configurations could be realized by finding a valid method to connect flexible skin to deformation structures. Second, searching for theoretical support build unsmooth configurations which also have good performance on some special aerodynamic efficiency.

Controllers

Active vibration control

Vibration and noise significantly affect the comfort and the safety of an aircraft. Smart materials and structures have been used to reduce the vibration of rotor blades, for example, by twisting the blades or controlling a trailing-edge flap (Chen and Chopra, 1997; Giurgiutiu, 2000a). Aircraft engine rotor vibrations and bearing forces can be reduced using piezoelectric actuators (Leboi et al., 2010). Vibrations in the wings (Munteanu and Ursu, 2008) and the vertical stabilizer (Chen et al., 2013b; Gao et al., 2013) can be reduced dramatically using piezoelectric actuators as active dampers. An active buffet alleviation system has been tested on a 1/ 16th-scale model of a vertical stabilizer in a wind tunnel (Hanagud et al., 2002). Active vibration control has been used for buffet load alleviation on a full-scale F/ A-18 vertical stabilizer (Chen et al., 2006); the test rig is shown in Figure 16.

To achieve a comfortable environment in an airplane, the interior broadband noise can be reduced using smart actuators (Dimino and Concilio, 2010; Guigou and Fuller, 1998; Konstanzer et al., 2006; Rose et al., 2011). Piezoelectric actuators were used to reduce engine noise and unsteady flow over an aft fuselage panel during takeoff on a Boeing B-1B high-performance combat aircraft (Larsona et al., 1998).



Figure 16. Active vibration control of an F/A-18 vertical stabilizer with piezoelectric actuators (Chen et al., 2006).

Airflow control

The aerodynamic behavior of a body can be improved through small changes in its surface. Piezoelectric ceramic actuators have been used with a compliant upper wing surface to create an active wall that can be made to oscillate to reduce skin friction (Pätzold et al., 2013). Transonic drag has been reduced using a morphing wing airfoil driven by SMAs (Barbarino et al., 2009a). An active vibrating surface can reduce drag and increase lift, as was demonstrated on a 1/10-scale V-22 model in a wind tunnel (Calkins and Clingman, 2002). The use of a linear array of micro-flaps on a delta wing to generate rolling moments to control a tailless aircraft has been demonstrated in a wind tunnel (Liu et al., 1995). A novel wing with smooth, hingeless morphing ailerons that increase the chordwise aerodynamic efficiency has been developed (Pankonien and Inman, 2013), as shown in Figure 17. The capability of this type of control surface to maintain stability and increase efficiency has been demonstrated in wind tunnel tests and in flight tests (Bilgen et al., 2013).

At this point, the smart materials are not applied as real controllers but actuating units. Controllers based on smart materials put more emphasis on the active control of structures such as active vibration control and airflow control. Controllers, sensors and actuators, and smart structures combine electronic technology to form a smart system capable of sensing, processing, and actuating, which will be the developing trend of smart materials and structures.

Conclusion

In this article, applications of smart materials and structures in morphing aircraft were reviewed. These materials are already being used in several micro air vehicles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and full-size aircraft, suggesting the great potential of smart materials and structures in morphing aircraft. However, smart materials and structures are not currently suitable for production aircraft. To realize the full potential of these devices, multi-scale design and multi-disciplinary research should be considered, and the following five challenges should be addressed:

- 1. *Material modification*. At the molecular scale, amputation, grafting, or recombination technology could be used to improve the performance of current smart materials.
- Functional additives. Additives (e.g. carbon nanotubes, carbon black, graphite, ferrous powders, and nickel powders) could be incorporated into smart composites to make them multifunctional. For example, SMPs can be heated electrically by incorporating conductive additives (Leng et al., 2007, 2008, 2009; Lu et al., 2010).
- 3. *Structure optimization*. Optimized structures can be designed using topology optimization methods (Vasista and Tong, 2013). Moreover, novel structures may be discovered by applying new concepts (Chen et al., 2013c; Fischer et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2014).
- Hybrid applications. Novel structures can be constructed using various smart materials; for example, honeycombs constructed using SMAs (Hassan et al., 2008; Okabe and Sugiyama, 2009) or SMPs (Rossiter et al., 2014), bi-stablestructure actuators constructed from MFCs



Figure 17. Discrete aileron controlled by MFC (Pankonien and Inman, 2013).

(Giddings et al., 2011; Molinari et al., 2014; Schultz and Hyer, 2004), and hybrid linear step actuators driven by magnetostrictive or piezoelectric materials (Ueno et al., 2007).

5. *Novel smart materials.* Many types of novel smart materials are required, and efforts should be made to create and investigate them.

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