

Deep Autoencoder based CSI Feedback with Feedback Errors and Feedback Delay in FDD Massive MIMO Systems

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Abstract—In this paper, we study the channel state information (CSI) feedback based on the deep autoencoder (AE) considering the feedback errors and feedback delay in the frequency division duplex (FDD) massive multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) system. We construct the deep AE by modeling the CSI feedback process, which involves feedback transmission errors and delays. The deep AE is trained by setting the delayed version of the downlink channel as the desired output. The proposed scheme reduces the impact of the feedback errors and feedback delay. Simulation results demonstrate that the proposed scheme achieves better performance than other comparable schemes.

Index Terms—Autoencoder, CSI feedback, FDD massive MIMO, feedback delay, feedback errors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the massive multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) system has emerged as a major enabler for the next generation wireless communication systems [1]. To achieve the potential gains promised by the massive MIMO systems, the channel state information (CSI) must be known at the transmitter [1]. In practice, however, it is difficult for the transmitter to obtain the accurate CSI in the frequency division duplex (FDD) system due to a large amount of feedback overhead, which grows in proportional to the dimension of the massive MIMO channel [1]–[3].

To reduce the feedback overhead for the FDD massive MIMO system, several works have investigated the issue of reduction of CSI feedback dimensionality. In [2], the principal component analysis (PCA) based dimensionality reduction schemes were studied, which utilized only the eigenvectors of the channel correlation matrix corresponding to the dominant eigenvalues. In [3], another CSI feedback scheme was proposed based on the structure of convolutional neural network (CNN), which was more effective in reducing the dimensionality compared to other compressed sensing based algorithms.

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In the feedback channel of any practical system, however, there exist both feedback errors and feedback delay, which degrade the performance of the CSI feedback. In particular, the compressed version of the CSI feedback information is even more susceptible to such feedback impairments, compared to the uncompressed version of the CSI. To the best of our knowledge, the important problem of compressing and transmitting the CSI feedback information in the presence of both impairments of the feedback errors and feedback delay has not been studied in the literature for the massive MIMO systems. This motivated our work.

In this paper, we construct a new and effective CSI feedback scheme based on the deep AE [4] in the presence of the feedback errors and feedback delay in the FDD massive MIMO system. In our proposed scheme, the proposed AE is trained taking into account the feedback errors, which arise from the quantization of CSI and its transmission over the noisy uplink (UL) feedback channel. Furthermore, the desired output of the proposed AE is set to the delayed version of the downlink (DL) channel in order to offset the feedback delay. Once trained, the resulting CSI generated by the proposed AE is tolerant to both the feedback errors and feedback delay.

II. SYSTEM MODEL

A. Channel Model

We consider the massive MIMO system composed of a base station (BS) with N_t antennas and a user equipment (UE) with N_r antennas. Following the spatially correlated physical channel model as in [5], the DL channel $\mathbf{H}_{d,n}$ at the n -th time slot is given by

$$\mathbf{H}_{d,n} = \sqrt{\frac{N_t N_r}{L}} \mathbf{A}_{d,r} \mathbf{D}_{d,n} \mathbf{A}_{d,t}^H, \quad (1)$$

where L is the number of propagation paths and $\mathbf{D}_{d,n} = \text{diag}([\beta_{d,n}^{(1)}, \dots, \beta_{d,n}^{(L)}]) \in \mathbb{C}^{L \times L}$ is the propagation path gain matrix at the n -th time slot, where $\beta_{d,n}^{(l)} \sim \mathcal{CN}(0, 1)$ is the l -th path gain. Also, $\mathbf{A}_{d,t} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{N_t}} [\mathbf{a}_{d,t}(\theta_1), \dots, \mathbf{a}_{d,t}(\theta_L)] \in \mathbb{C}^{N_t \times L}$ and $\mathbf{A}_{d,r} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{N_r}} [\mathbf{a}_{d,r}(\phi_1), \dots, \mathbf{a}_{d,r}(\phi_L)] \in \mathbb{C}^{N_r \times L}$ denote the array response matrices at the BS and UE, respectively. Assuming a uniform linear array (ULA), the array response vectors at the BS and UE are given by $\mathbf{a}_{d,t}(\theta_l) = [1, e^{-j2\pi \frac{d_s}{\lambda_d} \sin \theta_l}, \dots, e^{-j2\pi \frac{d_s}{\lambda_d} (N_t-1) \sin \theta_l}]^T$ and $\mathbf{a}_{d,r}(\phi_l) = [1, e^{-j2\pi \frac{d_s}{\lambda_d} \sin \phi_l}, \dots, e^{-j2\pi \frac{d_s}{\lambda_d} (N_r-1) \sin \phi_l}]^T$, respectively, where θ_l and $\phi_l \in [-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}]$ are the angles of

departure and arrival of the l -th propagation path, respectively. Also, d_s is the antenna spacing and $\lambda_d = c/f_d$ is the DL carrier wavelength given the DL carrier frequency f_d and the speed of light c . In addition, considering the Gauss-Markov model as in [6], the channel $\mathbf{H}_{d,n+n_{fb}}$ with a delay of n_{fb} time slots is determined from $\mathbf{H}_{d,n}$ as

$$\mathbf{H}_{d,n+n_{fb}} = \eta^{n_{fb}} \mathbf{H}_{d,n} + \sum_{k=1}^{n_{fb}} \eta^{n_{fb}-k} \sqrt{\frac{(1-\eta^2)N_t N_r}{L}} \mathbf{A}_{d,r} \mathbf{D}_{d,n+k} \mathbf{A}_{d,t}^H, \quad (2)$$

where $\eta = J_0(2\pi f_D T)$ is a temporal correlation coefficient, which follows the Jakes' model [6], where $J_0(\cdot)$ is the zeroth order Bessel function of the first kind, T is the channel block length, and $f_D = v f_d / c$ is the maximum Doppler frequency, where v denotes the speed of the UE. Likewise, the UL channel is also formulated from (1) and (2) with the substitution of $\mathbf{a}_{u,t}(\phi_l)$ and $\mathbf{a}_{u,r}(\theta_l)$, which are given by $[\mathbf{a}_{u,t}(\phi_l)]_k = \{[\mathbf{a}_{d,r}(\phi_l)]_k\}^{\lambda_d/\lambda_u}$ and $[\mathbf{a}_{u,r}(\theta_l)]_k = \{[\mathbf{a}_{d,t}(\theta_l)]_k\}^{\lambda_d/\lambda_u}$, where $[\mathbf{x}]_k$ denotes the k -th element of an input vector \mathbf{x} and $\lambda_u = c/f_u$ denotes the UL carrier wavelength for the UL carrier frequency f_u [7].

B. CSI Feedback Process

Based on (1) and (2), the CSI of the DL channel at the n -th time slot can be generated and fed back from the UE to the BS. Due to the large dimension of the DL channel, the dimensionality reduction should be performed to compress the CSI for feedback. Let $f(\cdot)$ denote an arbitrary dimensionality reduction function. Then, the reduced dimensional DL CSI at the n -th time slot is given by $\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n} = f(\mathbf{H}_{d,n})$, which is composed of $N \leq N_t N_r$ complex elements. Using $\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n}$, $\bar{\mathbf{x}} = \text{vec}(Q(\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n})) \in \mathbb{C}^{N \times 1}$ is obtained, where $\text{vec}(\cdot)$ denotes the vectorization to stack the columns of the input matrix and $Q(\mathbf{A})$ denotes an element-wise scalar quantization in which each element is given by

$$[Q(\mathbf{A})]_{ij} = \arg \min_{a \in \mathcal{A}} |[\mathbf{A}]_{ij} - a|^2, \quad (3)$$

where $[\cdot]_{ij}$ denotes the element at the i -th row and the j -th column of the input matrix. Also, \mathcal{A} denotes a predefined complex-valued constellation point set. Since only $r \leq \min(N_r, N_t)$ signals are transmitted per each time slot, at least $n_{fb} = \lceil \frac{N}{r} \rceil$ time slots are needed to feed back $\bar{\mathbf{x}}$, where $\lceil \cdot \rceil$ denotes the ceiling function. Hence, $\bar{\mathbf{x}}$ is divided into $\bar{\mathbf{x}} = [\bar{\mathbf{x}}_1^T, \dots, \bar{\mathbf{x}}_{n_{fb}}^T]^T$, where $\bar{\mathbf{x}}_k \in \mathbb{C}^{r \times 1}$ denotes the transmit signal vector at the k -th time slot with $k \in \{1, \dots, n_{fb}\}$. In the UL, the received signal at the k -th time slot is given by

$$\mathbf{y}_{u,k} = \mathbf{H}_{u,k} \bar{\mathbf{x}}_k + \mathbf{z}_{u,k}, \quad (4)$$

where $\mathbf{H}_{u,k} \in \mathbb{C}^{N_t \times N_r}$ denotes the UL channel at the k -th time slot and $\mathbf{z}_{u,k} \sim \mathcal{CN}(\mathbf{0}, \sigma_u^2 \mathbf{I}_{N_t}) \in \mathbb{C}^{N_t \times 1}$ is the additive white Gaussian noise (AWGN) vector at the BS. Using the minimum mean square error (MMSE) detector $\mathbf{G}_{u,k} = (\mathbf{H}_{u,k}^H \mathbf{H}_{u,k} + \sigma_u^2 \mathbf{I}_{N_r})^{-1} \mathbf{H}_{u,k}^H$, the detected signal vector at the k -th time slot is obtained by $\hat{\mathbf{x}}_k = Q(\mathbf{G}_{u,k} \mathbf{y}_{u,k})$. Using the n_{fb} received feedback signals, the detected version of $\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n}$ is obtained by $\hat{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n} = \text{vec}^{-1}([\hat{\mathbf{x}}_1^T, \dots, \hat{\mathbf{x}}_{n_{fb}}^T]^T)$, where $\text{vec}^{-1}(\cdot)$

denotes the inverse operation of $\text{vec}(\cdot)$. Let $g(\cdot)$ denote any reconstruction function. Finally, the reconstructed DL channel is obtained by $\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n} = g(\hat{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n})$.

In the CSI feedback process, the CSI can be affected by two impairments: 1) the feedback errors due to the quantization and the transmission over the noisy UL channel, and 2) the feedback delay of length n_{fb} time slots to feed back the CSI.

III. PROPOSED SCHEME

In this section, we present the proposed CSI feedback scheme based on the deep AE structure [4]. The purpose of the proposed scheme is to address the impacts of both the feedback errors and feedback delay as well as to effectively perform the dimensionality reduction and reconstruction.

The network architecture of the deep AE utilized for the proposed scheme is shown in Fig. 1. Note that the actual end-to-end CSI feedback process is modeled by the deep AE. Since the weights, biases, and input data are represented by the real numbers, the real-valued representation¹ is used for all of the complex variables by using the superscript “ r ” as shown in Fig. 1. The dimensionality reduction and reconstruction of the proposed scheme are performed by the encoder and decoder, respectively, which are represented as $\tilde{\mathbf{h}}_{d,n}^r = f_{\text{enc}}(\mathbf{H}_{d,n}^r; \Psi_{\text{enc}})$ and $\hat{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n}^r = g_{\text{dec}}(\hat{\mathbf{h}}_{d,n}^r; \Psi_{\text{dec}})$ as shown in Fig. 1, where $\mathbf{H}_{d,n}^r \in \mathbb{R}^{2N_r \times 2N_t}$ denotes the input data of the DL channel at the n -th time slot, $\hat{\mathbf{h}}_{d,n}^r \in \mathbb{R}^{2N \times 1}$ denotes the detected version of $\tilde{\mathbf{h}}_{d,n}^r$, and Ψ_{enc} (resp. Ψ_{dec}) denotes the network parameter set of the encoder (resp. decoder) including the weights and biases. The input data $\mathbf{H}_{d,n}^r$ is reshaped into $\mathbf{h}_{d,n}^r = \text{vec}(\mathbf{H}_{d,n}^r) \in \mathbb{R}^{2N_t N_r \times 1}$ at the input of the encoder. Then, there are two fully connected (FC) hidden layers with an exponential linear unit (ELU) [8] activation function² for both the encoder and decoder, which is given by $\sigma(x) = x$ if $x \geq 0$, and $\sigma(x) = e^x - 1$ otherwise. Also, there is a FC output layer with a linear activation function. For the generating and detecting feedback signals, $Q^r(\cdot)$ performs like (3) with a predefined real-valued constellation point set. Since the generated feedback signal based on (5) is given as $\bar{\mathbf{x}}^r = Q^r(\tilde{\mathbf{h}}_{d,n}^r) = [(\bar{\mathbf{x}}_1^r)^T, \dots, (\bar{\mathbf{x}}_{n_{fb}}^r)^T]^T \in \mathbb{R}^{2N \times 1}$, where $\bar{\mathbf{x}}_k^r \in \mathbb{R}^{2r \times 1}$ denotes the transmit signal vector at the k -th time slot, the feedback process still requires $n_{fb} = \lceil \frac{2N}{2r} \rceil$ time slots. At the output of the decoder, the output data $\hat{\mathbf{h}}_{d,n}^r$ is finally reshaped into $\hat{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n}^r = \text{vec}^{-1}(\hat{\mathbf{h}}_{d,n}^r)$.

Note that since the end-to-end CSI feedback process is modeled by the AE, which can be considered as the corruption processes as in [9], the deep AE becomes tolerant to the feedback errors. Moreover, the capability of predicting the time varying channel of the proposed scheme can be explained by the principle of the denoising AE [9]. Based on (2), the

¹ $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{C}^{a \times 1}$ and $\mathbf{X} \in \mathbb{C}^{b \times c}$ can be represented by

$$\mathbf{x}^r = \begin{bmatrix} \Re\{\mathbf{x}\} \\ \Im\{\mathbf{x}\} \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{R}^{2a \times 1}, \quad \mathbf{X}^r = \begin{bmatrix} \Re\{\mathbf{X}\} & -\Im\{\mathbf{X}\} \\ \Im\{\mathbf{X}\} & \Re\{\mathbf{X}\} \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{R}^{2b \times 2c}, \quad (5)$$

where $\Re\{\cdot\}$ and $\Im\{\cdot\}$ denote the real and imaginary parts, respectively.

²The ELU is slightly different from the rectified linear unit (ReLU) in the sense that $\sigma(x)$ is non-zero for $x < 0$. It is known that the ELU is working well even without additionally using the batch normalization [8].

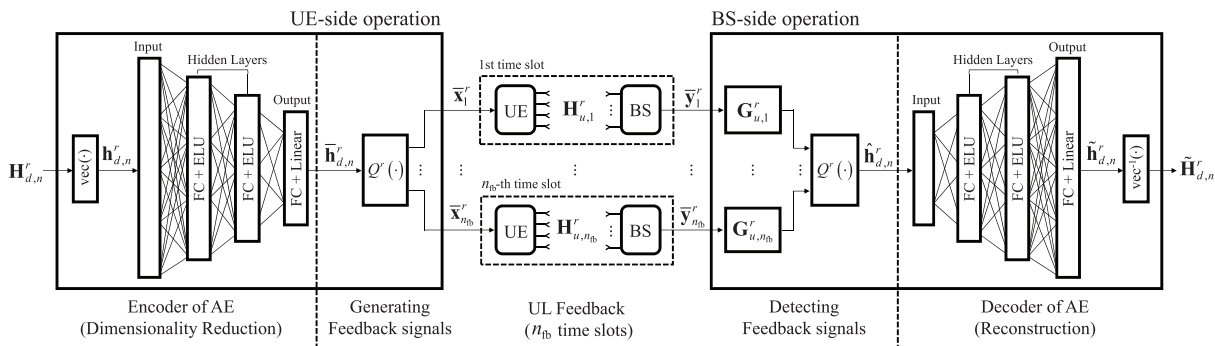


Fig. 1. Network architecture of the deep AE utilized for the proposed scheme

relationship between n_{fb} delayed channel $\mathbf{H}_{d,n+n_{fb}}$ and the current channel $\mathbf{H}_{d,n}$ can be rewritten as

$$\mathbf{H}_{d,n} = \frac{1}{\eta^{n_{fb}}} \mathbf{H}_{d,n+n_{fb}} + \mathbf{N}_{del}, \quad (6)$$

where \mathbf{N}_{del}^3 represents the noise due to the feedback delay. Then, $\mathbf{H}_{d,n}$ represents the noisy version of the desired input, which is used as the actual input to the proposed AE. Also, $\mathbf{H}_{d,n+n_{fb}}$ represents the desired output, which should be reconstructed at the output of the proposed AE. Hence, the loss function of the proposed AE is set to the mean square error (MSE) as follows:

$$L(\Psi_{enc}, \Psi_{dec}) = \|\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n}^r - \mathbf{H}_{d,n+n_{fb}}^r\|_F^2, \quad (7)$$

where $\|\cdot\|_F$ denotes the Frobenius norm. By minimizing (7), the weights and biases included in Ψ_{enc} and Ψ_{dec} are updated by an optimizer such as ADAM⁴ [10].

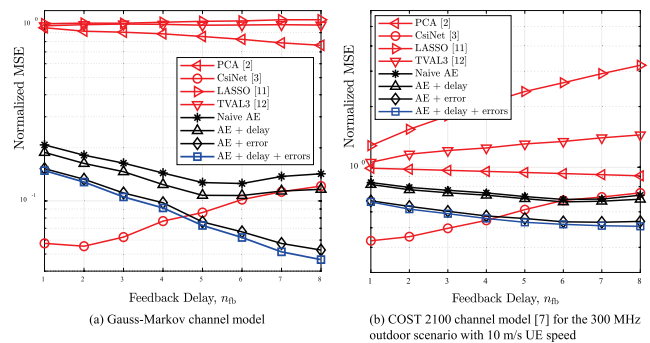
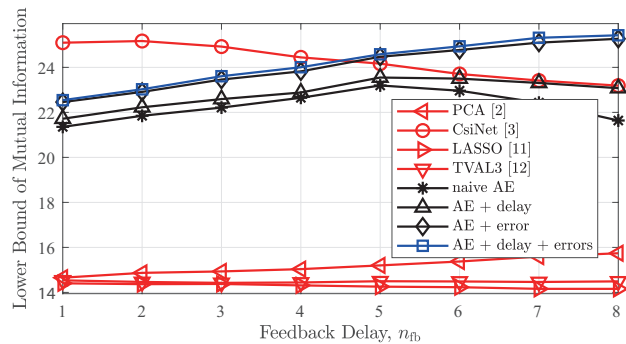
IV. SIMULATION RESULTS

In this section, we compare the proposed scheme to seven comparable state-of-the-art schemes: 1) PCA [2]; 2) CsiNet [3]; 3) LASSO [11]; 4) TVAL3 [12]; 5) the naive AE without considering the feedback errors and feedback delay; 6) the AE considering the delay only; and 7) the AE considering the error only. Recall that our proposed scheme is the AE considering both the feedback errors and feedback delay. Note that the performance comparison is conducted by using the same CSI feedback resources according to n_{fb} for all schemes.

We use the widely-adopted Gauss-Markov channel model based on (1) and (2) for all simulations except in Fig. 2(b). We set $f_d = 2.655$ GHz, $f_u = 2.535$ GHz [13], $N_t = 64$, $N_r = 4$, $d_s = \lambda_u/2$ [7], $L = 32$, $T = 0.5$ ms, $r = 4$, and $v = 10$ km/h. Also, we use 64 quadrature amplitude modulation (QAM) for $Q(\cdot)$. The training set and the test set contain 100,000 and 20,000 normalized data samples which are scaled into $[-1, 1]$, respectively. The epochs, batch size, and learning rate are set

³When there exists channel estimation error (i.e., $\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n} = \mathbf{H}_{d,n} + \mathbf{N}_{est}$, where \mathbf{N}_{est} represents the channel estimation error), eq. (6) can be modified as $\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n} = \frac{1}{\eta^{n_{fb}}} \mathbf{H}_{d,n+n_{fb}} + \mathbf{N}_{del} + \mathbf{N}_{est}$. Then, the erroneously estimated current channel $\tilde{\mathbf{H}}_{d,n}$ represents the noisy version of the desired input, which is used as the actual input to the proposed AE.

⁴Note that in the real scenario, the proposed AE should be trained separately for various practical and common scenarios, e.g., different UE speeds, typical indoor/outdoor propagation environments, different number of antennas at the UE, different operating SNR values, etc.

Fig. 2. Normalized MSE versus n_{fb} when UL SNR is set to 10 dBFig. 3. Lower bound of mutual information versus n_{fb} when both of DL and UL SNR are set to 10 dB

to 5000, 2000, and 10^{-4} , respectively. In the encoder (resp. decoder), there are $2N_t N_r$, 256, 128, and $2N$ (resp. $2N$, 128, 256, and $2N_t N_r$) neurons in the input, the first hidden layer, the second hidden layer, and the output layer, respectively. The weights and biases are initialized by the Xavier initialization [14] and by the standard normal distribution, respectively.

In Fig. 2, the normalized MSE values of the proposed and other comparable schemes are shown versus the feedback delay n_{fb} ⁵ when the UL SNR is set to 10 dB. In Fig. 2(b), we repeat the simulations using the COST 2100 channel model [15], in which the temporal correlation does not follow the Gauss-Markov model. The normalized MSE is given by $\mathbb{E}[\|\tilde{\mathbf{H}} - \mathbf{H}\|_F^2 / \|\mathbf{H}\|_F^2]$, where \mathbf{H} and $\tilde{\mathbf{H}}$ denote the desired and reconstructed channel matrices, respectively. In Fig. 3, the

⁵The maximum value of n_{fb} is set to 8 and $T=0.5$ ms. Then, the maximum feedback delay is equal to 4 ms, which is the same as the feedback delay of the periodic CSI reporting in the Long Term Evolution (LTE) standard [13].

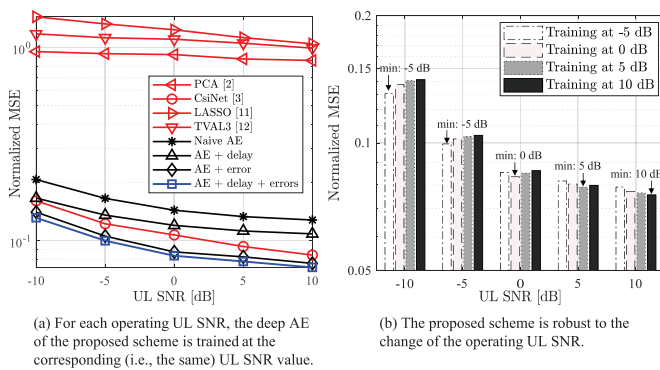


Fig. 4. Normalized MSE versus UL SNR when $n_{fb} = 5$

lower bounds of mutual information of the proposed and other comparable schemes are shown versus the feedback delay n_{fb} when both of DL and UL SNRs are set to 10 dB. The lower bounds of mutual information are formulated as in [16, eq. (2)] with a given estimated channel knowledge. From Figs. 2 and 3, when the delay is small, the CsiNet [3] is better than the proposed scheme, because the CsiNet can extract the spatial features well based on the CNN. However, since the CsiNet does not have any capability of mitigating the effect of the feedback delay⁶, the proposed scheme performs the best when the feedback delay is not small.

In Figs. 2 and 3, it is interesting and important to see that n_{fb} has both the positive and negative impacts on the (MSE and capacity) performance. First, increasing n_{fb} has a positive impact, since longer n_{fb} means that more resources are used for the CSI feedback (i.e., the dimension of the CSI feedback is larger). On the other hand, increasing n_{fb} has also a negative impact, since longer n_{fb} means that the feedback delay is longer and more feedback signals are exposed to the feedback errors. For these reasons, when n_{fb} increases up to a certain value, the performances of both naive AE and AE+delay improve. However, when n_{fb} further increases beyond that value, the performance starts to deteriorate, which means that the negative impact starts to outweigh the positive impact. In sharp contrast to this result, the performance of the proposed scheme improves continuously and monotonically. This implies that both issues of the feedback errors and feedback delay are well addressed by the proposed scheme, and the positive impact always outweighs the negative one in the proposed scheme.

In Fig. 4, the normalized MSE is shown versus the UL SNR when $n_{fb} = 5$. From Fig. 4(a), it can be seen that the proposed scheme considerably outperforms other comparable schemes. In Fig. 4(a), to obtain the MSE value of the proposed scheme for each operating UL SNR, the deep AE is trained at the corresponding (i.e., the same) UL SNR value. In practical systems, however, it might be difficult to *re-train* the deep AE whenever the operating UL SNR changes. Fortunately, it turns out that the proposed scheme is robust to the change

of the operating UL SNR. Fig. 4(b) shows the normalized MSE value for each operating UL SNR when the deep AE is trained at four different UL SNRs. One can see that the proposed scheme performs almost the same even when the deep AE is trained at an UL SNR that is different from the actual operating UL SNR. This makes the proposed scheme more suitable for practical applications.

V. CONCLUSION

We studied the deep AE based CSI feedback scheme considering the feedback errors and feedback delay in the FDD massive MIMO system. By modeling the CSI feedback process by the deep AE and setting the desired output of the deep AE to the delayed version of the DL channel, the proposed scheme became tolerant to the impact of both the feedback errors and feedback delay. We demonstrated that the proposed scheme outperformed other comparable schemes in terms of the normalized MSE and the mutual information.

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⁶The time varying version of [3] was proposed in [17] based on the recurrent convolutional neural network (RCNN), which appears to outperform our proposed scheme. However, the computational complexity and the required memory are much higher due to adoption of the recurrent neural network (RNN), e.g., 200 times of computation and 180 times of required memory.