

PROJECT PLAN FOR THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ADAPTIVE HEARING AID

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Abstract:

Key words:

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2. PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 Problem Analysis

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3. PROJECT BACKGROUND

3.1 Literature Review

The aim of the filter bank is to divide the audible frequency range into a number of bands, so that different amplifications can be applied to different ranges.

4. PROJECT METHODOLOGIES AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 Project Phases

The project has been divided into 11 development phases, which encapsulate the entire project, from ethics clearance to the presentation. Three of these phases occurred prior to the submission of this document. The phases are detailed in the following sections.

Phase 1: Obtain Ethics Clearance

This phase involved obtaining ethics clearance for the project. This clearance is necessary for clinical testing of the hearing aid, using human input. The procedure for obtaining clearance involves setting out the testing procedure, creating consent forms and creating the questionnaire's for the participants to complete. This phase was completed between the 29th March and the 6th April. Ethics clearance was granted on the 11th May. Both partners were involved in the completion of this phase.

Phase 2: Research

This phase involved performing the research for the project. This included research into compensatory gain, directionality, filtering and the conversion of digital signals to sound signals. This phase occurred from the 25th June to the 1st July. However, it must be noted that research will be an ongoing process throughout the entire duration of the project. Kayla-Jade performed research into gain and filtering and Kelvin investigated directionality and conversions. Thereafter, the research was shared and both partners familiarised themselves with both sets of research.

Phase 3: Hardware Design

In this phase, the circuit diagrams required in the project were designed. Analog circuits are required to acquire the sound signal, condition it and convert it to digital. The circuit includes the microphone, audio amplifier, anti-aliasing filter, microprocessor (for analog to digital conversion and digital to analog conversion). The circuit also includes a potentiometer, which acts as a dial to tune the directionality of the hearing aid. Furthermore, the hearing aid will include a power button to turn the device on or off, and a toggle switch to switch between directional and omnidirectional amplification modes. The resultant sound will be relayed to the user using headphones which interact with a headphone jack. The entire system will be powered using rechargeable batteries. A preliminary circuit diagram of the hardware component of the system is given in *Figure 1*. This phase was completed between the 2nd July and the 6th July. The two partners performed this phase together.

Figure 1: Preliminary circuit diagram for the system

Phase 4: Construction of Hardware

This phase involves the construction of the circuit that was designed in Phase 3. The circuit will be prototyped on a breadboard before being finalised on a PCB board. The phase will begin on the 9th of July and will

end on the 16th. Kelvin will perform the construction of the hardware.

Phase 5: Implementation of Compensatory Amplification

In this phase, the compensatory amplification aspect of the hearing aid will be implemented. This phase has numerous sub-phases:

- Sub-phase 1: Interpolation of audiograms
- Sub-phase 2: Development of the filter bank
- Sub-phase 3: Designing the gains for each filter based on the audiogram
- Sub-phase 4: Attack and release times for changing the gain per frequency range
- Sub-phase 5: Dynamic compression of signals
- Sub-phase 6: Optimisation of code from the previous stages to allow for real-time signal processing

In sub-phase 1, the data from the audiogram will be hard-coded onto MATLAB, and will be linearly interpolated to increase resolution. In sub-phase 2, the filter bank for the auditory compensation will be designed and implemented. **** Come back here!!! ****

The first two sub-phases will be implemented concurrently with phase 4 by Kayla-Jade. Thereafter, sub-phases 3 and 4 will be implemented by Kayla-Jade, while Kelvin concurrently implements sub-phases 5 and 6.

Phase 6: Implementation of the Software Required for Directionality

In this phase, the software required to implement directionality will be implemented. This software will interface with the dial built into the hardware to tune the direction in which the sound must be amplified. The two partners will implement this phase together.
*** Date ***

Phase 7: Laboratory testing of the full system

Following the implementation of the entire system, full system testing is required. The system will be tested in a laboratory setting, using a signal generator to generate pure tones. By generating pure tones of specific frequencies and feeding these tones to the hearing aid, the ability of the device to apply compensatory amplification, and to apply amplification to the correct frequencies, can be quantified. The frequency of the sinusoidal pure tone signals will be set to range from the lower to the upper bounds of the frequency range of human hearing. Additionally, high frequency noise will be added to the signals such that the performance of the device can be evaluated in the presence of noise.

In order to test the directionality of the hearing aid, a

sound wave with a single harmonic will be produced and played from several directions relative to the hearing aid. The resulting signals will be processed by the hearing aid and then plotted. This will allow for the degree of amplification and attenuation to be visualised and quantified.

Both partners will perform the laboratory testing.

Phase 7: Clinical testing of the full system

Phase 7 involves the testing of the audiogram in a clinical setting, using human participants. First, staff from the school of Electrical and Information Engineering will be asked to participate in the clinical testing. Prior to performing the tests, an audiogram will be collected from each participant. A hearing aid will then be customised for each participant. Thereafter, a second audiogram will be obtained with the participant wearing the hearing aid. The microphone will be mounted on a fake head (made out of polystyrene) and the audiogram headset will be placed on top of the fake head. The participant will then wear the earphones which receive the processed signals and a second audiogram will be obtained. The two audiograms will then be compared in order to assess the effectiveness of the device.

Figure 2: Schematic of the testing procedure

Phase 8: Demonstration

Phase 9: Documentation

Phase 10: Demonstration

5. CONCLUSION

REFERENCES