

某些四阶时滞微分方程解的稳定性^{*}

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摘要: 利用 Liapunov 函数法, 得到了一个新的、证明某些四阶非线性时滞微分方程零解渐近稳定的结果。建立结果的限制性条件弱于其他文献给出的方法。

关键词: 四阶非线性时滞微分方程; 稳定性; Liapunov 泛函

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引 言

在微分方程理论和应用领域中, 稳定性是非常重要的问题。至今, 确定线性和非线性微分方程解稳定性的有效方法, 仍是 Liapunov 直接法(即 Liapunov 第二种方法)。其优点在于, 一般不需要预先知道解的情况, 就可知道解的稳定性。今天, 它不仅是研究微分方程的极好工具, 而且广泛用于控制系统、动力系统、时间滞后系统、电力系统分析、时变非线性反馈系统等理论研究中。它的主要特征为构造一类标量函数或泛函, 也就是 Liapunov 函数或泛函。但是寻找一类具有时滞(或非时滞)的高阶微分方程的 Liapunov 函数或泛函, 一般来说是困难的。最近几年来, 利用 Liapunov 直接法, 得到了多种二阶、三阶、四阶、五阶和六阶非线性时滞(或非时滞)微分方程解稳定性和有界性的极好的结果(见文献[1~31]及其参考文献)。值得注意的是, 对于四阶非线性时滞微分方程解的稳定性研究结果却不多(见文献[1]、[14]、[18]、[21]、[26])。

1973 年, Sinha^[21] 研究了如下四阶时滞微分方程:

$$x^{(4)}(t) + f(x''(t))x \ominus t + f_2(x'(t), x''(t))x''(t) + g(x'(t-r)) + h(x(t-r)) = 0,$$

证明了该方程是渐近稳定的。之后在 1989 年, Okoronkwo^[14] 研究了一种四阶标量时滞微分方程

$$x^{(4)}(t) + f(x''(t))x \ominus t + a_2 x''(t) + \beta_2 x''(t-h) + g(x'(t-h)) + a_4 x(t) + \beta_4 x(t-h) = P(t)$$

的解具有一致渐近稳定性和有界性的充分条件。1998 年, Bereketoglu^[11] 给出四阶时滞微分方程

$$x^{(4)}(t) + e(t, x(t), x'(t) + x''(t) + x \ominus t)x \ominus t + f(t, x''(t-\tau)) + g(t, x'(t-\tau)) + h(x(t-\tau)) = 0$$

零解的一致渐近稳定性的充分条件。Sadek^[18] 于 2004 年在对下面形式的四阶非线性时滞微分

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方程

$$x^{(4)} + \alpha_1 \ddot{x} + \alpha_2 \dot{x} + \alpha_3 x + f(x(t-r)) = 0$$

和 $x^{(4)} + \alpha_1 \ddot{x} + \alpha_2 \dot{x} + \phi(x(t-r)) + f(x) = 0$

的研究中,通过构造两个新的 Liapunov 泛函,得出方程组零解具有渐近稳定性的充分条件.最近,在文献[26]中,作者对四阶非线性微分方程

$$x^{(4)} + \varphi(\dot{x}) \ddot{x} + h(x) \dot{x} + \phi(x(t)) + f(x(t-r)) = 0$$

和 $x^{(4)} + \varphi(\dot{x}) \ddot{x} + h(x) \dot{x} + \phi(x(t-r)) + f(x(t)) = 0$

的零解的渐近稳定性作了研究.

在本文中,我们将研究怎样通过构造一个新的 Liapunov 泛函,讨论下面方程的渐近稳定性问题:

$$x^{(4)} + \varphi(\dot{x}) \ddot{x} + h(x) \dot{x} + \phi(x(t-r)) + f(x(t-r)) = 0, \quad (1)$$

其中 r 为正常数, $\varphi(\dot{x})$ 、 $h(x)$ 、 $\phi(x)$ 和 $f(x)$ 为连续函数, $\phi(0) = f(0) = 0$. 导函数 $d\phi/dx \equiv \phi'(x)$ 和 $df/dx \equiv f'(x)$ 存在且连续.

本文研究动机主要来自 Sadek^[18] 和 Tun^[26] 的论文,但条件和 Bereketoglu^[11]、Okoronkwo^[14] 和 Sinha^[21] 的完全不同.

显然,式(1)等价于系统

$$\begin{cases} \dot{x} = y, \dot{y} = z, \dot{z} = u, \\ \dot{u} = -\varphi(z)u - h(y)z - \phi(y) - f(x) + \int_{t-r}^t \phi'(y(s))z(s)ds + \\ \int_{t-r}^t f'(x(s))y(s)ds. \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

1 预备知识

为便于得出本文的主要结果,首先给出一些重要的一般自治时滞系统的稳定性准则.考虑

$$\dot{x} = f(x_t), \quad x_t = x(t+\theta), \quad -r \leq \theta \leq 0, \quad t \geq 0, \quad (3)$$

其中 $f: C_H \rightarrow \mathcal{B}$ 为 C_H 到 \mathcal{B} 的连续映射, $f(0) = 0$, $C_H := \{ \phi \in C([-r, 0], \mathcal{B}) : \|\phi\| \leq H \}$; 且当 $H_1 < H$ 时 (H_1, H 为正常数), $L(H_1) > 0$, 且当 $\|\phi\| \leq H_1$, 有 $|f(\phi)| \leq L(H_1)$.

定义 1 $x(t, 0, \phi)$ 定义在 $[0, \infty)$ 上, 存在序列 $\{t_n\}$: 当 $n \rightarrow \infty$ 时 $t_n \rightarrow \infty$. 若元素 $\phi \in C_H$, 满足 $\|x_{t_n}(\phi) - \phi\| \rightarrow 0$ ($n \rightarrow \infty$), $x_{t_n}(\phi) = x(t_n + \theta, 0, \phi)$ ($-r \leq \theta \leq 0$), 则称元素 ϕ 为属于 ϕ 的 ω 极限集, 记为 $\Omega(\phi)$.

定义 2 (见文献[31]) 若集合 $Q \subset C_H$ 满足: 对任意 $\phi \in Q$, 式(3)的解 $x(t, 0, \phi)$ 定义在 $[0, \infty)$ 上, 并且当 $t \in [0, \infty)$ 有 $x_t(\phi) \in Q$, 则称集合 Q 为不变集合.

引理 1 (见文献[3]、[8]、[31]) 若 $\phi \in C_H$ 是定义在 $[0, \infty)$ 上的式(3)的解 $x_t(\phi)$ 且满足 $x_0(\phi) = \phi$, 又 $\|x_t(\phi)\| \leq H_1 < H$, $t \in [0, \infty)$, 那么 $\Omega(\phi)$ 称为非空紧不变集且有

$$\text{dist}(x_t(\phi), \Omega(\phi)) \rightarrow 0, \quad \text{当 } t \rightarrow \infty$$

引理 2 (见文献[3]、[31]) 令 $V(\phi): C_H \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ 为满足局部 Lipschitz 条件的连续泛函, $V(0) = 0$ 且满足下列条件:

(i) $W_1(|\phi(0)|) \leq V(\phi) \leq W_2(\|\phi\|)$, $W_1(r)$ 、 $W_2(r)$ 为权函数.

(ii) $\mathcal{V}_3(\phi) \leq 0$, 当 $\phi \in C_H$.

则式(3)零解是一致稳定的. 若定义 $Z = \{ \phi \in C_H : \mathcal{V}_3(\phi) = 0 \}$, 则式(3)零解是渐近稳定

的, 并证明 Z 中最大不变集是 $Q = \{0\}$.

2 主要结论

在讨论主要定理前, 首先引入记号:

$$\Omega := \left\{ (x, y, z, u) \in \mathcal{R} : |x| < H_1, |y| < H_1, \right. \\ \left. |z| < H_1, |u| < H_1, H_1 \leq H \right\},$$

$$\varphi_1(z) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{z} \int_0^z \varphi(z) dz, & z \neq 0, \\ \varphi(0), & z = 0, \end{cases}$$

和

$$\phi_1(y) = \begin{cases} \phi(y)/y, & y \neq 0, \\ \phi'(0), & y = 0. \end{cases}$$

本文的主要结果如下:

定理 假设存在正常数 $\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3, \alpha_4, \Delta$ 和 ε , 使得对 Ω 中的每个 x, y, z, u , 下列条件成立:

(i) $\alpha_1 \alpha_2 \alpha_3 - \alpha_3 \phi'(y) - \alpha_1 \alpha_4 \varphi(z) \geq \Delta > 0$,

其中 $\varepsilon \leq \Delta / (2\alpha_1 \alpha_3 D)$, $D = \alpha_1 \alpha_2 + \alpha_2 \alpha_3 / \alpha_4$;

(ii) $0 < \alpha_4 - \alpha_1 \Delta / (4\alpha_3) < f'(x) \leq \alpha_4$;

(iii) $\phi(y) \geq \alpha_3$ 和 $0 \leq \phi_1(y) - \alpha_3 < \frac{\Delta}{8\alpha_3} \sqrt{\frac{\alpha_4}{2\alpha_1 \alpha_3}}$;

(iv) $0 \leq h(y) - \alpha_2 \leq \frac{\alpha_1}{8} \sqrt{\frac{\varepsilon \Delta}{\alpha_3}}$;

(v) $\varphi(z) \geq \alpha_1$, $\varphi_1(z) - \varphi(z) < \Delta / (2\alpha_1^2 \alpha_3)$.

那么系统(2)的零解是渐进稳定的, 并得到

$$r < 2 \min \left\{ \frac{\alpha_3}{d_2 \alpha_4 + 2\lambda + d_2 \alpha_1 \alpha_2}, \frac{3\Delta}{16\alpha_1 \alpha_3 (\alpha_4 + \alpha_1 \alpha_2 + 2\mu)}, \frac{3\varepsilon \alpha_1}{4d_1 (\alpha_4 + \alpha_1 \alpha_2)} \right\}. \quad (4)$$

和

$$d_1 = \varepsilon + 1/\alpha_1, \quad d_2 = \varepsilon + \alpha_4/\alpha_3,$$

$$\lambda = (\alpha_4/2)(d_1 + d_2 + 1) > 0 \quad \text{和} \quad \mu = (\alpha_1 \alpha_2/2)(d_1 + d_2 + 1) > 0$$

附注 1 根据定理中条件(i)、(iii)、(v)可得:

$$\varphi(z) < \alpha_2 \alpha_3 / \alpha_4, \quad \phi(y) < \alpha_1 \alpha_4$$

附注 2 该定理需满足的条件比文献[18]中定理 1、定理 2 的充分条件要弱, 因此, 该定理包含了上述文献中得出的结果.

证明 先定义一个 Liapunov 函数 $V = V(x_t, y_t, z_t, u_t)$:

$$2V(x_t, y_t, z_t, u) = 2d_2 \int_0^t f(\xi) d\xi + 2d_2 \int_0^t h(\eta) \eta d\eta - d_1 \alpha_4 y^2 + 2 \int_0^t \phi(\eta) d\eta + d_1 \alpha_2 z^2 + \\ 2 \int_0^t \varphi(\tau) \tau d\tau - d_2 z^2 + d_1 u^2 + 2f(x)y + 2df(x)z + 2d_1 \phi(y)z + 2d_2 y \int_0^t \varphi(\tau) d\tau + \\ 2d_2 yu + 2zu + 2\lambda \int_{-r}^t \int_{t+s}^t y^2(\theta) d\theta ds + 2\mu \int_{-r}^t \int_{t+s}^t z^2(\theta) d\theta ds. \quad (5)$$

明显地, $V(0, 0, 0, 0) = 0$.

注意到式(5)中 $2V$ 可改写为

$$2V = \frac{1}{\alpha_3} [f(x) + \alpha_3 y + d_1 \alpha_3 z]^2 + \frac{1}{\varphi_1(z)} [u + \varphi_1(z)z + d_2 \varphi_1(z)y]^2 + \left[d_1 - \frac{1}{\varphi_1(z)} \right] u^2 +$$

$$\begin{aligned}
& [d_1 \alpha_2 - d_2 - d_1^2 \alpha_3] z^2 + 2d_2 \int_0^1 h(\eta) \eta d\eta - d_1 \alpha_4 y^2 - d_2^2 \varphi_1(z) y^2 + \\
& 2 \int_0^y \phi(\eta) d\eta - \alpha_3 y^2 + 2d_1 [f_1(y) - \alpha_3] yz + 2d_2 \int_0^x f(\xi) d\xi - \left[\frac{1}{\alpha_3} \right] f^2(x) + \\
& \left[2 \int_0^t \varphi(\tau) \tau d\tau - \varphi_1(z) z^2 \right] + 2\lambda \int_{-r}^0 \int_{t+s}^t y^2(\theta) d\theta ds + 2\mu \int_{-r}^0 \int_{t+s}^t z^2(\theta) d\theta ds. \quad (6)
\end{aligned}$$

根据定理的假设, 常数 d_1, d_2 的定义以及微分中值定理与积分中值定理, 可知:

$$\begin{aligned}
2V \geq \varepsilon \left[\alpha_4 - \frac{\alpha_1 \Delta}{4\alpha_3} \right] x^2 + \left[\frac{\Delta \alpha_4}{2\alpha_1 \alpha_3^2} \right] y^2 + \left[\frac{\Delta}{4\alpha_1^2 \alpha_3} \right] z^2 + \varepsilon u^2 + \\
2d_1 [f_1(y) - \alpha_3] yz + 2\lambda \int_{-r}^0 \int_{t+s}^t y^2(\theta) d\theta ds + 2\mu \int_{-r}^0 \int_{t+s}^t z^2(\theta) d\theta ds. \quad (7)
\end{aligned}$$

记 W_5 为

$$W_5 = \left[\frac{\Delta \alpha_4}{4\alpha_1 \alpha_3^2} \right] y^2 + 2d_1 [f_1(y) - \alpha_3] yz + \left[\frac{\Delta}{8\alpha_1^2 \alpha_3} \right] z^2.$$

根据不等式

$$d_1^2 [f_1(y) - \alpha_3]^2 < \frac{4}{\alpha_1^2} [f_1(y) - \alpha_3]^2 < \frac{\alpha_4 \Delta^2}{32\alpha_1^3 \alpha_3^3} \quad (\text{对所有 } y),$$

得到下面关于 W_5 的估计

$$W_5 \geq \left[\frac{1}{2\alpha_3} \sqrt{\frac{\Delta \alpha_4}{\alpha_1}} |y| - \frac{1}{2\alpha_1} \sqrt{\frac{\Delta}{2\alpha_3}} |z| \right]^2 \geq 0.$$

结合该估计式与关于 $2V$ 的估计式(7)可得

$$\begin{aligned}
2V \geq \varepsilon \left[\alpha_4 - \frac{\alpha_1 \Delta}{4\alpha_3} \right] x^2 + \left[\frac{\Delta \alpha_4}{4\alpha_1 \alpha_3^2} \right] y^2 + \left[\frac{\Delta}{8\alpha_1^2 \alpha_3} \right] z^2 + \varepsilon u^2 + \\
2\lambda \int_{-r}^0 \int_{t+s}^t y^2(\theta) d\theta ds + 2\mu \int_{-r}^0 \int_{t+s}^t z^2(\theta) d\theta ds.
\end{aligned}$$

显然 $V(x_t, y_t, z_t, u_t)$ 满足引理 2 的条件(i).

记 $dV(x_t, y_t, z_t, u_t)/dt = dV/dt$ 为 $V = V(x_t, y_t, z_t, u_t)$ 的导数, 直接计算式(5)和式(2), 可得

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{d}{dt} V = & - [\alpha_4 - f'(x)] \left[y + \frac{d_1 z}{2} \right]^2 - [h(y) - d_1 \phi(y) - d_2 \varphi_1(z)] z^2 + \\
& \frac{d_1^2}{4} [\alpha_4 - f'(x)] z^2 - [d_1 \varphi(z) - 1] u^2 - \left[d_2 \frac{\phi(y)}{y} - \alpha_4 \right] y^2 - \\
& d_1 [h(y) - \alpha_2] zu + (d_1 u + z + d_2 y) \int_{t-r}^t f'(x(s)) y(s) ds + \\
& (d_1 u + z + d_2 y) \int_{t-r}^t \phi(y(s)) z(s) ds + \lambda y^2 r - \\
& \lambda \int_{t-r}^t y^2(s) ds + \mu z^2 r - \mu \int_{t-r}^t z^2(s) ds.
\end{aligned}$$

注意到定理的假设、式(4)、附注 1, 并运用微分中值定理与积分中值定理, 可得到:

$$\begin{aligned}
0 \leq \alpha_4 - f'(x); \\
[h(y) - d_1 \phi(y) - d_2 \varphi_1(z)] z^2 \geq \\
\left[\alpha_2 - \left[\varepsilon + \frac{1}{\alpha_1} \right] \phi(y) - \left[\varepsilon + \frac{\alpha_4}{\alpha_3} \right] \varphi_1(z) \right] z^2 = \\
\left[\alpha_2 - \frac{1}{\alpha_1} \phi(y) - \frac{\alpha_4}{\alpha_3} \varphi_1(z) \right] z^2 - \varepsilon [\phi(y) + \varphi_1(z)] z^2 \geq
\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{cases} \left\{ \frac{1}{\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right\} [\alpha_1 \alpha_2 \alpha_3 - \alpha_3 \phi'(y) - \alpha_1 \alpha_4 \varphi_1(z)] z^2 - \varepsilon [\alpha_1 \alpha_2 + \varphi_1(z)] z^2 = \\ \left\{ \frac{1}{\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right\} [\alpha_1 \alpha_2 \alpha_2 - \alpha_3 \phi'(y) - \alpha_1 \alpha_4 \varphi(\xi)] z^2 - \varepsilon [\alpha_1 \alpha_2 + \varphi(\xi)] z^2 \geq \\ \left\{ \frac{\Delta}{\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right\} z^2 - \varepsilon \left[\alpha_1 \alpha_2 + \frac{\alpha_2 \alpha_3}{\alpha_4} \right] z^2 \geq \\ \left\{ \frac{\Delta}{\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right\} z^2 - \varepsilon z^2 \geq \left\{ \frac{\Delta}{2\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right\} z^2, \end{cases}$$

其中 $0 \leq \theta \leq 1$,

$$\begin{aligned} [d_1 \varphi(z) - 1] u^2 &\geq \left[\left[\varepsilon + \frac{1}{\alpha_1} \right] \varphi(z) - 1 \right] u^2 \geq \\ &\left[\left[\varepsilon + \frac{1}{\alpha_1} \right] \alpha_1 - 1 \right] u^2 = \varepsilon \alpha_1 u^2 \end{aligned}$$

和

$$\left[d_2 \frac{\phi(y)}{y} - \alpha_4 \right] y^2 \geq \left[\left[\varepsilon + \frac{\alpha_4}{\alpha_3} \right] \alpha_3 - \alpha_4 \right] y^2 \geq \varepsilon \alpha_3 y^2.$$

综上所述,可推导出

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{dt} V &\leq \varepsilon \alpha_3 y^2 - \left[\frac{\Delta}{2\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right] z^2 - \varepsilon \alpha_1 u^2 + \frac{d_1^2}{4} [\alpha_4 - f'(x)] z^2 - \\ &d_1 [h(y) - \alpha_2] z u + (d_1 u + z + d_2 y) \int_{t-r}^t f'(x(s)) y(s) ds + \\ &(d_1 u + z + d_2 y) \int_{t-r}^t \phi(y(s)) z(s) ds + \\ &\lambda y^2 r - \lambda \int_{t-r}^t y^2(s) ds + \mu z^2 r - \mu \int_{t-r}^t z^2(s) ds. \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

现在考虑项

$$W_6 \equiv \frac{d_1^2}{4} [\alpha_4 - f'(x)] z^2 - \left[\frac{\varepsilon \alpha_1}{4} \right] u^2 - d_1 [h(y) - \alpha_2] z u - \left[\frac{\Delta}{16 \alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right] z^2,$$

该式包含于式(8)中,根据不等式

$$\frac{d_1^2}{4} [\alpha_4 - f'(x)] < \frac{1}{\alpha_1^2} [\alpha_4 - f'(x)] < \frac{\Delta}{4\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \quad \text{和} \quad \frac{d_1^2}{4} [h(y) - \alpha_2]^2 \leq \frac{\varepsilon \Delta}{64 \alpha_3},$$

显然 W_6 满足

$$W_6 \leq \left[\frac{\Delta}{4\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right] z^2 - \left[\frac{\sqrt{\varepsilon \alpha_1}}{2} |u| - \frac{1}{4} \sqrt{\frac{\Delta}{\alpha_1 \alpha_3}} |z| \right]^2 \leq \left[\frac{\Delta}{4\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right] z^2.$$

将上式代入前面 dV/dt 的不等式,有

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{dt} V &\leq \varepsilon \alpha_3 y^2 - \left[\frac{3\Delta}{16\alpha_1 \alpha_3} \right] z^2 - \left[\frac{3\varepsilon \alpha_1}{4} \right] u^2 + (d_1 u + z + \\ &d_2 y) \int_{t-r}^t f'(x(s)) y(s) ds + (d_1 u + z + d_2 y) \int_{t-r}^t \phi(y(s)) z(s) ds + \\ &\lambda y^2 r - \lambda \int_{t-r}^t y^2(s) ds + \mu z^2 r - \mu \int_{t-r}^t z^2(s) ds. \end{aligned}$$

注意到 $f'(x) \leq \alpha_4$, $|\phi(y)| \leq \alpha_1 \alpha_2$ 和 $2uw \leq u^2 + v^2$, 则有

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{dt} V &\leq \left[\varepsilon \alpha_3 - \frac{1}{2} (d_2 \alpha_4 + 2\lambda + d_2 \alpha_1 \alpha_2) r \right] y^2 - \\ &\left[\frac{3\Delta}{16\alpha_1 \alpha_3} - \frac{1}{2} (\alpha_4 + \alpha_1 \alpha_2 + 2\mu) r \right] z^2 - \left[\frac{3}{4} \varepsilon \alpha_1 - \frac{1}{2} d_1 (\alpha_4 + \alpha_1 \alpha_2) r \right] u^2 + \end{aligned}$$

$$\left[\frac{\alpha_4}{2}(d_1 + d_2 + 1) - \lambda \right] \int_{t-r}^t y^2(s) ds + \left[\frac{\alpha_1 \alpha_2}{2}(d_1 + d_2 + 1) - \mu \right] \int_{t-r}^t z^2(s) ds \quad (9)$$

若取 $\lambda = (\alpha_4/2)(d_1 + d_2 + 1) > 0$ 和 $\mu = (\alpha_1 \alpha_2/2)(d_1 + d_2 + 1) > 0$, 由不等式(9)可知

$$\frac{d}{dt} V \leq \left[\varepsilon \alpha_3 - \frac{1}{2}(d_2 \alpha_4 + 2\lambda + d_2 \alpha_1 \alpha_2) r \right] y^2 - \left[\frac{3\Delta}{16\alpha_1 \alpha_3} - \frac{1}{2}(\alpha_4 + \alpha_1 \alpha_2 + 2\mu) r \right] z^2 - \left[\frac{3}{4} \varepsilon \alpha_1 - \frac{1}{2} d_1 (\alpha_4 + \alpha_1 \alpha_2) r \right] u^2.$$

若取

$$r < 2 \min \left\{ \frac{\varepsilon \alpha_3}{d_2 \alpha_4 + 2\lambda + d_2 \alpha_1 \alpha_2}, \frac{3\Delta}{16\alpha_1 \alpha_3 (\alpha_4 + \alpha_1 \alpha_2 + 2\mu)}, \frac{3\varepsilon \alpha_1}{4d_1 (\alpha_4 + \alpha_1 \alpha_2)} \right\},$$

实际上, 可得到

$$dV(x_t, y_t, z_t, u_t)/dt \leq -\rho(y^2 + z^2 + u^2) \quad (\text{对一些常数 } \rho > 0).$$

根据 $dV(x_t, y_t, z_t, u_t)/dt = 0$ 和系统(2), 易知 $x = y = z = u = 0$. 因此, 引理 2 的所有条件得到满足, 所以式(1) 的零解是渐进稳定的.

定理得证.

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On the Stability of Solutions of Certain Fourth_Order Delay Differential Equations

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Abstract: By the use of the Liapunov functional approach, a new result is obtained to ascertain the asymptotic stability of zero solution of a certain fourth_order non_linear differential equation with delay. The established result is less restrictive than those reported in the literature.

Key words: non_linear delay differential equation of fourth order; stability; Liapunov functional