

An Introduction to Three-Dimensional, Rigid Body Dynamics

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Volume I: Kinematics

Unit 2

Velocity and Acceleration Using Direct Differentiation

Summary

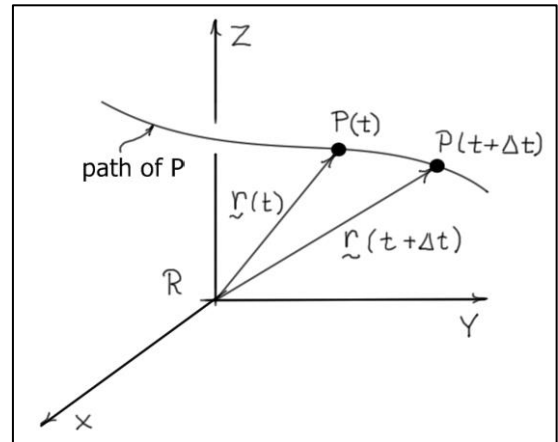
This unit introduces the concepts of *velocity* and *acceleration* vectors and shows *how to calculate* them using *direct differentiation*. This technique can be applied to complex mechanical systems; however, at this point the focus will remain on systems in which components are connected by simple revolute (pin) joints. This technique will be generalized in Unit 7 to apply to systems with more complex connecting joints.

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Position, Velocity, and Acceleration

The diagram shows the three-dimensional motion of some point P within a mechanical system relative to a reference frame R . Given $\underline{r}(t)$ the **position vector** of P as a function of time, the **velocity** and **acceleration** of P relative to R are defined to be

$$\boxed{{}^R \underline{v}_P = \frac{{}^R d}{dt}(\underline{r}(t))} \quad \text{and} \quad \boxed{{}^R \underline{a}_P = \frac{{}^R d}{dt}({}^R \underline{v}_P)}$$



The **velocity** ${}^R \underline{v}_P$ is **tangent** to the path of P at all times. The **acceleration** ${}^R \underline{a}_P$ generally has components **tangent** and **normal** to the path.

Using these **fundamental definitions** along with the concepts for **differentiating unit vectors** presented in Unit 1, the **velocities** and **accelerations** of a points within a mechanical system may be calculated by **directly differentiating** their **position vectors**. The following examples illustrate this process.

Example 1:

The system shown consists of two connected bodies – the frame F and the disk D . Frame F rotates at a rate of Ω (rad/s) about the fixed vertical direction (annotated by the unit vector \underline{k}). Disk D is affixed to and rotates relative to F at a rate of ω (rad/s) about the horizontal arm of F (annotated by the rotating unit vector \underline{e}_2).

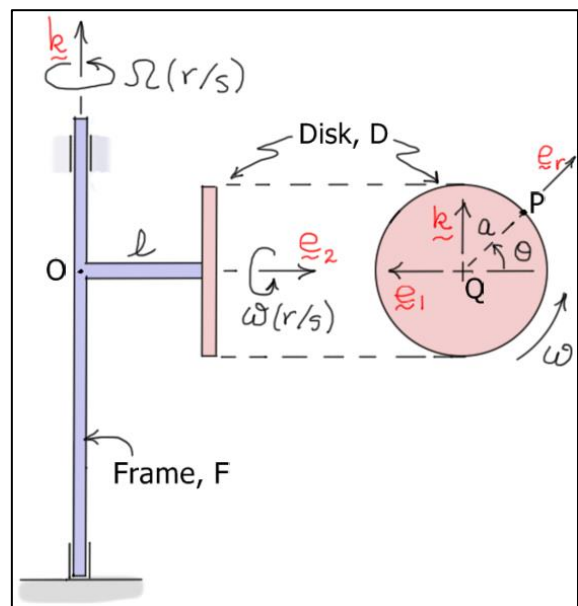
Reference frames:

$R: (\underline{i}, \underline{j}, \underline{k})$ (fixed frame)

$F: (\underline{e}_1, \underline{e}_2, \underline{k})$ (rotating frame)

Find: (express the results using unit vectors fixed in F)

- ${}^R \underline{v}_P$... the **velocity** of point P in R using **direct differentiation**
- ${}^R \underline{a}_P$... the **acceleration** of point P in R using **direct differentiation**



Solution:

a) First, construct a position vector for P that describes its position relative to R in an arbitrary (general) configuration. For example,

$$\underline{r}_{P/O} = \underline{r}_{Q/O} + \underline{r}_{P/Q} = \ell \underline{e}_2 + a \underline{e}_r$$

Here, points O , P , and Q are shown in the diagram, and \underline{e}_r is a unit vector pointing from the center of the disk towards P . Differentiating relative to the ground frame R gives

$$\begin{aligned} {}^R \underline{v}_P &= \frac{{}^R d}{dt} (\ell \underline{e}_2 + a \underline{e}_r) \\ &= \ell \frac{{}^R d}{dt} (\underline{e}_2) + a \frac{{}^R d}{dt} (\underline{e}_r) \\ &= \ell ({}^R \underline{\omega}_F \times \underline{e}_2) + a [{}^R \underline{\omega}_D \times \underline{e}_r] \\ &= \ell (\Omega \underline{k} \times \underline{e}_2) + a [(\omega \underline{e}_2 + \Omega \underline{k}) \times \underline{e}_r] \\ &= -\ell \Omega \underline{e}_1 + a [(\omega \underline{e}_2 + \Omega \underline{k}) \times (-C_\theta \underline{e}_1 + S_\theta \underline{k})] \\ &= -\ell \Omega \underline{e}_1 + a [\omega C_\theta \underline{k} + S_\theta \omega \underline{e}_1 - \Omega C_\theta \underline{e}_2] \end{aligned}$$

So,

$${}^R \underline{v}_P = (a \omega S_\theta - \ell \Omega) \underline{e}_1 - (a \Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 + (a \omega C_\theta) \underline{k}$$

The position vector of P can be expressed using any convenient set of unit vectors, so the specific form of the position vector is not unique. For example, it could also be written as

$$\underline{r}_{P/O} = -a C_\theta \underline{e}_1 + \ell \underline{e}_2 + a S_\theta \underline{k}$$

Differentiating this expression gives

$$\begin{aligned} {}^R \underline{v}_P &= \frac{{}^R d}{dt} (-a C_\theta \underline{e}_1 + \ell \underline{e}_2 + a S_\theta \underline{k}) \\ &= (a S_\theta \omega) \underline{e}_1 - a C_\theta \frac{{}^R d}{dt} (\underline{e}_1) + \frac{d\ell}{dt} \underline{e}_2 + \ell \frac{{}^R d}{dt} (\underline{e}_2) + (a C_\theta \omega) \underline{k} + (a S_\theta) \underbrace{\frac{{}^R d}{dt} (\underline{k})}_{\text{zero}} \\ &= (a S_\theta \omega) \underline{e}_1 - a C_\theta (\Omega \underline{k} \times \underline{e}_1) + \ell (\Omega \underline{k} \times \underline{e}_2) + (a C_\theta \omega) \underline{k} \\ &= (a S_\theta \omega) \underline{e}_1 - a C_\theta \Omega \underline{e}_2 - \ell \Omega \underline{e}_1 + (a C_\theta \omega) \underline{k} \end{aligned}$$

Aside: (chain rule)

$$\frac{d}{dt} (-a C_\theta) = -a (-S_\theta \dot{\theta}) = a S_\theta \omega$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} (a S_\theta) = a (C_\theta \dot{\theta}) = a C_\theta \omega$$

Collecting terms gives the final result.

$${}^R \underline{v}_P = (a \omega S_\theta - \ell \Omega) \underline{e}_1 - (a \Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 + (a \omega C_\theta) \underline{k}$$

b) The **acceleration** ${}^R \underline{a}_P$ is found by **differentiating** the expression for ${}^R \underline{v}_P$.

$$\begin{aligned} {}^R \underline{a}_P &= \frac{{}^R d}{dt} ({}^R \underline{v}_P) \\ &= \frac{d}{dt} (a \omega S_\theta - \ell \Omega) \underline{e}_1 + (a \omega S_\theta - \ell \Omega) \frac{{}^R d \underline{e}_1}{dt} \\ &\quad - \frac{d}{dt} (a \Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 - (a \Omega C_\theta) \frac{{}^R d \underline{e}_2}{dt} \\ &\quad + \frac{d}{dt} (a \omega C_\theta) \underline{k} + (a \omega C_\theta) \frac{{}^R d \underline{k}}{dt} \end{aligned}$$

Aside: (chain and product rules)

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{dt} (a \omega S_\theta) &= a \dot{\omega} S_\theta + a \omega (\dot{\theta} C_\theta) \\ &= a \dot{\omega} S_\theta + a \omega^2 C_\theta \end{aligned}$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} (a \Omega C_\theta) = a \dot{\Omega} C_\theta - a \Omega \omega S_\theta$$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d}{dt} (a \omega C_\theta) &= a \dot{\omega} C_\theta - a \omega (\dot{\theta} S_\theta) \\ &= a \dot{\omega} C_\theta - a \omega^2 S_\theta \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= (a \dot{\omega} S_\theta + a \omega^2 C_\theta - \ell \dot{\Omega}) \underline{e}_1 + (a \omega S_\theta - \ell \Omega) (\underbrace{\Omega \underline{k} \times \underline{e}_1}_{\Omega \underline{e}_2}) \\ &\quad - (a \dot{\Omega} C_\theta - a \omega \Omega S_\theta) \underline{e}_2 - (a \Omega C_\theta) (\underbrace{\Omega \underline{k} \times \underline{e}_2}_{-\Omega \underline{e}_1}) + (a \dot{\omega} C_\theta - a \omega^2 S_\theta) \underline{k} \end{aligned}$$

Collecting terms gives the final result.

$${}^R \underline{a}_P = \left[a \dot{\omega} S_\theta - \ell \dot{\Omega} + a C_\theta (\omega^2 + \Omega^2) \right] \underline{e}_1 + \left[-a \dot{\Omega} C_\theta + 2a \omega \Omega S_\theta - \ell \Omega^2 \right] \underline{e}_2 + \left[a \dot{\omega} C_\theta - a \omega^2 S_\theta \right] \underline{k}$$

Derivatives of a Vector in Two Different Reference Frames – The “Derivative Rule”

Given two reference frames

$R: (\underline{n}_1, \underline{n}_2, \underline{n}_3)$ (a rotating frame)

$S: (\underline{e}_1, \underline{e}_2, \underline{e}_3)$ (a second rotating frame)

The **derivatives** of **any** vector \underline{A} in the two reference frames are related as follows

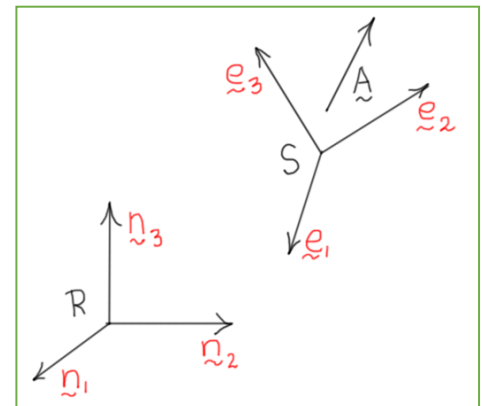
$$\frac{{}^R d \underline{A}}{dt} = \frac{{}^S d \underline{A}}{dt} + ({}^R \underline{\omega}_S \times \underline{A})$$

Here ${}^R \underline{\omega}_S$ is the angular velocity of frame S relative to the frame R .

Derivation

Consider a vector \underline{A} and two reference frames R and S . Suppose for convenience \underline{A} is expressed in terms of the unit vectors of frame S . That is,

$$\underline{A} = a_1 \underline{e}_1 + a_2 \underline{e}_2 + a_3 \underline{e}_3$$



Then, the derivative of \underline{A} in the reference frame R may be computed as follows

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{{}^R d\mathbf{A}}{dt} &= \underbrace{(\dot{a}_1 \mathbf{e}_1 + \dot{a}_2 \mathbf{e}_2 + \dot{a}_3 \mathbf{e}_3)}_{\frac{{}^S d\mathbf{A}}{dt}} + a_1 \left(\frac{{}^R d\mathbf{e}_1}{dt} \right) + a_2 \left(\frac{{}^R d\mathbf{e}_2}{dt} \right) + a_3 \left(\frac{{}^R d\mathbf{e}_3}{dt} \right) \\
&= \frac{{}^S d\mathbf{A}}{dt} + a_1 ({}^R \boldsymbol{\omega}_S \times \mathbf{e}_1) + a_2 ({}^R \boldsymbol{\omega}_S \times \mathbf{e}_2) + a_3 ({}^R \boldsymbol{\omega}_S \times \mathbf{e}_3) \\
&= \frac{{}^S d\mathbf{A}}{dt} + {}^R \boldsymbol{\omega}_S \times (a_1 \mathbf{e}_1 + a_2 \mathbf{e}_2 + a_3 \mathbf{e}_3) \\
&= \frac{{}^S d\mathbf{A}}{dt} + ({}^R \boldsymbol{\omega}_S \times \mathbf{A})
\end{aligned}$$

Note that calculation of $\frac{{}^R d\mathbf{A}}{dt}$ requires differentiation of **both** the *scalar functions* a_i ($i = 1, 2, 3$) and the *unit vectors* \mathbf{e}_i ($i = 1, 2, 3$) whereas calculation of $\frac{{}^S d\mathbf{A}}{dt}$ requires differentiation of **only** the *scalar functions* a_i ($i = 1, 2, 3$) and **not** the *unit vectors* \mathbf{e}_i ($i = 1, 2, 3$).

The following example illustrates how **to use the derivative rule** to calculate the velocity and acceleration of a point within a mechanical system. Its use adds some *formality* to the differentiation process – it clearly *separates* differentiation of the *scalar* and *unit vector* parts.

Example 2: (Using the Derivative Rule)

Given:

System of Example 1

Find: (express the results using unit vectors fixed in F)

- ${}^R \mathbf{v}_P$...the **velocity** of point P in R using **direct differentiation** with the **derivative rule**
- ${}^R \mathbf{a}_P$...the **acceleration** of point P in R using **direct differentiation** with the **derivative rule**

Solution:

- As discussed in the solution to Example 1, the **position vector** of point P can be expressed as

$$\mathbf{r}_{P/O} = \mathbf{r}_{Q/O} + \mathbf{r}_{P/Q} = \ell \mathbf{e}_2 + a \mathbf{e}_r$$

The unit vectors \mathbf{e}_2 and \mathbf{e}_r are **both** fixed in the disk D . The derivative rule can be used on this expression to find ${}^R \mathbf{v}_P$ as follows

$$\begin{aligned}
{}^R\mathcal{V}_P &= \frac{{}^R d}{dt}(\underline{r}_{P/O}) = \frac{{}^R d}{dt}(\ell \underline{e}_2 + a \underline{e}_r) \\
&= \underbrace{\frac{{}^D d}{dt}(\ell \underline{e}_2 + a \underline{e}_r)}_{\text{zero}} + {}^R\boldsymbol{\omega}_D \times (\ell \underline{e}_2 + a \underline{e}_r) \\
&= (\omega \underline{e}_2 + \Omega \underline{k}) \times (\ell \underline{e}_2 + a \underline{e}_r) \\
&= (\omega \underline{e}_2 + \Omega \underline{k}) \times (\ell \underline{e}_2 + a(-C_\theta \underline{e}_1 + S_\theta \underline{k})) \\
&= \begin{vmatrix} \underline{e}_1 & \underline{e}_2 & \underline{k} \\ 0 & \omega & \Omega \\ -aC_\theta & \ell & aS_\theta \end{vmatrix} = (a\omega S_\theta - \ell\Omega) \underline{e}_1 + (-a\Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 + (a\omega C_\theta) \underline{k}
\end{aligned}$$

So, as before,

$$\boxed{{}^R\mathcal{V}_P = (a\omega S_\theta - \ell\Omega) \underline{e}_1 - (a\Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 + (a\omega C_\theta) \underline{k}}$$

Alternatively, the position vector $\underline{r}_{P/O}$ can be expressed in terms of unit vectors fixed in F as

$$\boxed{\underline{r}_{P/O} = -aC_\theta \underline{e}_1 + \ell \underline{e}_2 + aS_\theta \underline{k}}$$

The derivative rule can be applied to this expression along with the chain and product rules to find ${}^R\mathcal{V}_P$ as follows.

$$\begin{aligned}
{}^R\mathcal{V}_P &= \frac{{}^R d}{dt}(\underline{r}_{P/O}) = \frac{{}^R d}{dt}(-aC_\theta \underline{e}_1 + \ell \underline{e}_2 + aS_\theta \underline{k}) \\
&= \frac{{}^F d}{dt}(-aC_\theta \underline{e}_1 + \ell \underline{e}_2 + aS_\theta \underline{k}) + {}^R\boldsymbol{\omega}_F \times (-aC_\theta \underline{e}_1 + \ell \underline{e}_2 + aS_\theta \underline{k}) \\
&= [(a\omega S_\theta) \underline{e}_1 + (a\omega C_\theta) \underline{k}] + [(\Omega \underline{k}) \times (-aC_\theta \underline{e}_1 + \ell \underline{e}_2 + aS_\theta \underline{k})] \\
&= [(a\omega S_\theta) \underline{e}_1 + (a\omega C_\theta) \underline{k}] + [(-a\Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 - (\ell\Omega) \underline{e}_1] \\
&= (a\omega S_\theta - \ell\Omega) \underline{e}_1 + (-a\Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 + (a\omega C_\theta) \underline{k}
\end{aligned}$$

So, again,

$$\boxed{{}^R\mathcal{V}_P = (a\omega S_\theta - \ell\Omega) \underline{e}_1 - (a\Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 + (a\omega C_\theta) \underline{k}}$$

b) The acceleration ${}^R\mathcal{A}_P$ can also be calculated using the derivative rule. As the above expressions are both expressed using unit vectors fixed in F , the application of the derivative rule proceeds as follows.

$$\boxed{{}^R\mathcal{A}_P = \frac{{}^R d}{dt}({}^R\mathcal{V}_P) = \frac{{}^F d}{dt}({}^R\mathcal{V}_P) + {}^R\boldsymbol{\omega}_F \times ({}^R\mathcal{V}_P)}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{F}{dt} \left({}^R \underline{v}_P \right) &= \frac{F}{dt} \left((a\omega S_\theta - \ell\Omega) \underline{e}_1 - (a\Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 + (a\omega C_\theta) \underline{k} \right) \\ &= \left(a\dot{\omega} S_\theta + a\omega^2 C_\theta - \ell\dot{\Omega} \right) \underline{e}_1 - \left(a\dot{\Omega} C_\theta - a\Omega\omega S_\theta \right) \underline{e}_2 \\ &\quad + \left(a\dot{\omega} C_\theta - a\omega^2 S_\theta \right) \underline{k} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} {}^R \underline{\omega}_F \times {}^R \underline{v}_P &= (\Omega \underline{k}) \times \left[(a\omega S_\theta - \ell\Omega) \underline{e}_1 - (a\Omega C_\theta) \underline{e}_2 + (a\omega C_\theta) \underline{k} \right] \\ &= \left(a\Omega^2 C_\theta \right) \underline{e}_1 + \left((a\omega S_\theta - \ell\Omega)\Omega \right) \underline{e}_2 \end{aligned}$$

Substituting these results into the expression above gives the final result.

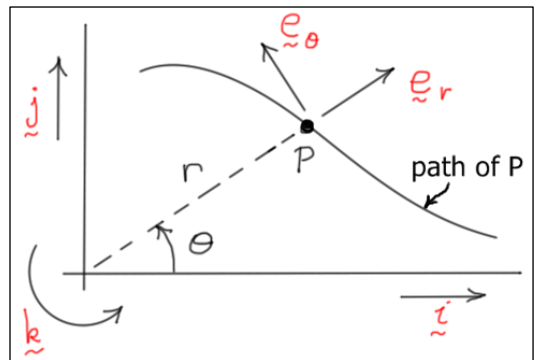
$$\boxed{{}^R \underline{a}_P = \left[a\dot{\omega} S_\theta - \ell\dot{\Omega} + aC_\theta(\omega^2 + \Omega^2) \right] \underline{e}_1 + \left[-a\dot{\Omega} C_\theta + 2a\omega\Omega S_\theta - \ell\Omega^2 \right] \underline{e}_2 + \left[a\dot{\omega} C_\theta - a\omega^2 S_\theta \right] \underline{k}}$$

Notes:

1. By this point, it should be clear there is an **equivalence** between reference frames and rigid bodies. Reference frames are often **associated** with bodies and move with them. **Unit vectors** that are fixed in specific bodies are **differentiated** using the **angular velocities** of those bodies.
2. The **origin** of a reference frame may be important, but mostly reference frames are used to **indicate directions** that are useful for analyzing the motion of a system.
3. **Velocity** and **acceleration** vectors (like the angular velocity and angular acceleration vectors) can be expressed using any **convenient set** of unit vectors. The **complexity** of the result will depend on the choice of these unit vectors.
4. Using this method, the results for velocity and acceleration are valid for **all time** and **configurations**. Thus, the expressions may be more complex than calculations that are valid for only a single instant of time.

Exercises:

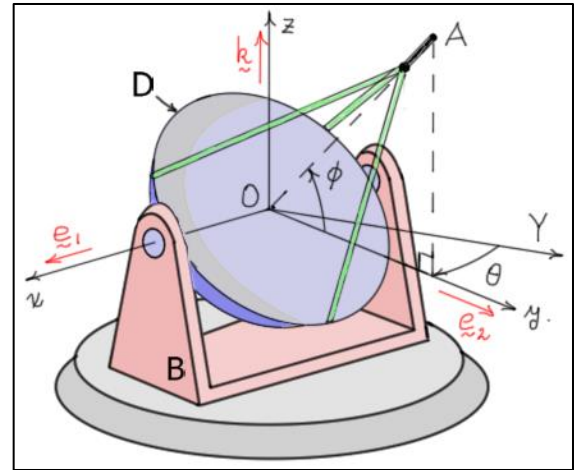
2.1 Radial & Transverse Components: The diagram shows two reference frames and a point P moving along some path. The unit vector set $R:(\underline{i}, \underline{j}, \underline{k})$ defines directions in the fixed frame R , and the unit vector set $E:(\underline{e}_r, \underline{e}_\theta, \underline{k})$ defines directions in a rotating frame E . Given that the position vector of P is $\underline{r}_P = r \underline{e}_r$ and using **direct differentiation**, show the velocity and acceleration of P can be written as



$$\boxed{\underline{v}_P = \dot{r} \underline{e}_r + r \dot{\theta} \underline{e}_\theta}$$

$$\boxed{\underline{a}_P = (\ddot{r} - r\dot{\theta}^2) \underline{e}_r + (r\ddot{\theta} + 2\dot{r}\dot{\theta}) \underline{e}_\theta}$$

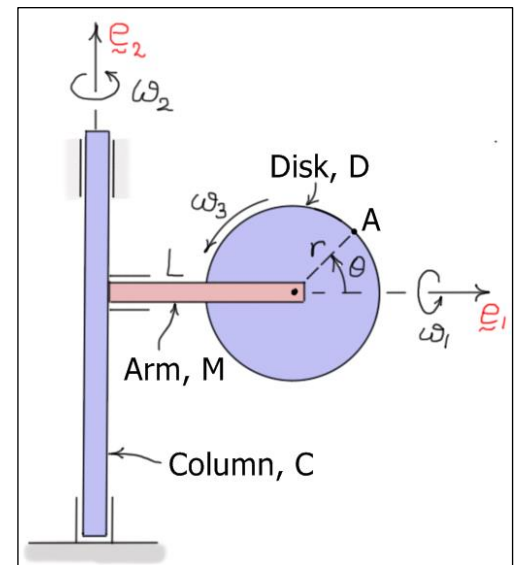
2.2 The antenna system shown has two components, the base B and the antenna dish D . Base B rotates relative to the ground about the fixed z -axis, and dish D rotates relative to B about the rotating x -axis. At any instant, the angle between the y -axis (e_2) and the fixed Y -axis is θ , and the angle between line OA and the y -axis is ϕ . Given values for θ , ϕ , and their time derivatives, find ${}^R v_A$ and ${}^R a_A$ the velocity and acceleration of point A in a fixed frame R using **direct differentiation**.



Answers: $\boxed{{}^R v_A = L(\dot{\theta}C_\phi e_1 - \dot{\phi}S_\phi e_2 + \dot{\phi}C_\phi k)}$ (results expressed in $B:(e_1, e_2, k)$)

$$\boxed{{}^R a_A = L((\ddot{\theta}C_\phi - 2\dot{\theta}\dot{\phi}S_\phi)e_1 - (\ddot{\phi}S_\phi + \dot{\phi}^2C_\phi + \dot{\theta}^2C_\phi)e_2 + (\ddot{\phi}C_\phi - \dot{\phi}^2S_\phi)k)}$$

2.3 The system shown has three components, a vertical column C , a horizontal arm M , and a disk D . The disk rotates relative to the arm at a rate ω_3 (rad/sec) about the n_3 direction (normal to D), the arm rotates relative to the column at a rate of ω_1 (rad/sec) about the e_1 direction, and the column rotates relative to the ground at a rate of ω_2 (rad/sec) about the fixed e_2 direction. The unit vector set $C:(e_1, e_2, e_3)$ is fixed in the column, and the unit vector set $M:(e_1, n_2, n_3)$ is fixed in arm M . Given values for ω_1 , ω_2 , ω_3 , and their time derivatives, find ${}^R v_A$ and ${}^R a_A$ the velocity and acceleration of point A in a fixed frame R using **direct differentiation**.



Answers: (expressed in $M:(e_1, n_2, n_3)$)

$$\boxed{{}^R v_A = r(\omega_2 S_\theta S_\phi - \omega_3 S_\theta)e_1 + (r\omega_3 C_\theta - (L + rC_\theta)\omega_2 S_\phi)n_2 + (r\omega_1 S_\theta - (L + rC_\theta)\omega_2 C_\phi)n_3}$$

$$\boxed{{}^R a_A = (r\dot{\omega}_2 S_\theta S_\phi - r\dot{\omega}_3 S_\theta - r\omega_3^2 C_\theta - (L + rC_\theta)\omega_2^2 + 2r\omega_1\omega_2 S_\theta C_\phi + 2r\omega_2\omega_3 S_\phi C_\theta)e_1 + (r\dot{\omega}_3 C_\theta - (L + rC_\theta)\dot{\omega}_2 S_\phi - r\omega_1^2 S_\theta - r\omega_2^2 S_\theta S_\phi^2 - r\omega_3^2 S_\theta + 2r\omega_2\omega_3 S_\theta S_\phi)n_2 + (r\dot{\omega}_1 S_\theta - (L + rC_\theta)\dot{\omega}_2 C_\phi - r\omega_2^2 S_\theta S_\phi C_\phi + 2r\omega_2\omega_3 S_\theta C_\phi + 2r\omega_1\omega_3 C_\theta)n_3}$$

Hint: Here ϕ is the angle between the plane of the disk and the (e_1, e_2) plane ($\dot{\phi} = \omega_1$). The diagram shows the position where $\phi = 0$.

References:

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