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## On the Parallel Kinematics of the FET Stretching Press in the Stretch Forming Operations in the Manufacture of Parts with Complex Spatial Geometry

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**Abstract.** The kinematics of a stretching press mechanism of a parallel structure are investigated. The kinematic dependences aimed at setting the spatial position of the working elements of a cross-stretching press of FET type, which allow positioning its jaws at any time during the technological operations, are obtained. The forward and inverse control kinematics problems of the jaw mechanism stretching press are solved.

**Keywords:** stretch forming, stretching press, FET, parallel structure kinematics, forward and inverse kinematics problems.

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## Introduction

Improving the functional qualities of modern airplane airframes is inextricably linked with the tightening of requirements for their aerodynamic shapes while increasing the strength properties of their structural elements. Compliance with the requirements in the production process is achieved mainly [1], through irreversible deformation of the workpiece during forming and stretching. In spite of large displacements and rotations in the workpiece, small deformation theory methods remain acceptable in calculations of irreversible deformation during the forming of thin-walled structural elements [2]. These methods are not applicable in the technological operation of the stretching process. The workpiece is not thin-walled, its middle surface cannot be considered non-stretchable. Hence, all calculations must be carried out using large deformation theory [3, 4], which complicates them considerably. Until now, we have only fundamental prerequisites for this [4, 5]. The process of producing large deformations during stretch forming of a workpiece, simultaneously due to the viscous properties of the material (creep) and its plastic

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properties (flow), is not studied in depth. The results of mathematical modeling of this process would be of great help in creating control programs (NC) and choice the operating modes of stretching presses.

The creation of a NC meets a different problem, which is the need for accurate positioning of the jaws under heavy loads. When it is necessary to ensure accurate spatial geometry of the product, this is not an easy task. In this article we will focus on such a problem as it relates to the aircraft industry.

In the aviation industry, specialized stretching presses from the French company ACB, such as FEKD, FEL, FET etc., are widely used to carry out the stretch forming process of workpieces [6]. Of great interest is the range of hydraulic cross-stretching presses of the FET type with their parallel kinematics, which ensures high mobility of the jaws at high loads (Fig. 1). The press has two rectilinear jaws, the movement of which ensures the shaping of the workpiece along the stretching punch. Each jaw is positioned by changing the length of four hydraulic cylinders: two horizontal and two vertical. Such a design of stretching presses and the control system used on them provides for the production of shell parts of a complex spatial shape.

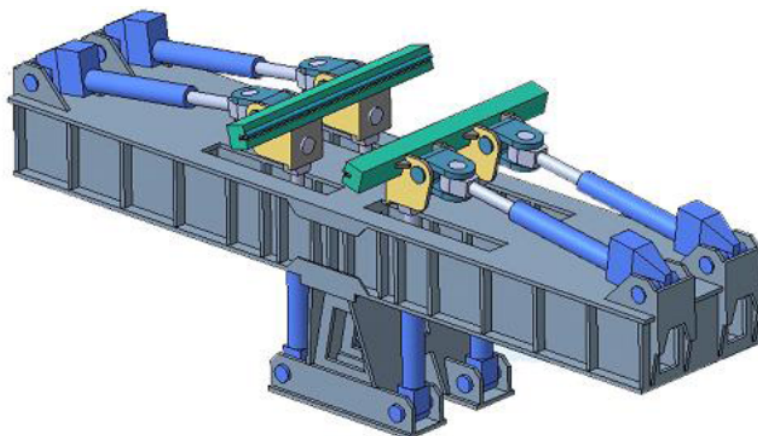


Fig. 1. Cross-stretching press FET type

When calculating NC for the numerical control system (CNC) of the press it is necessary to take into account such factors as press kinematics, punch geometry and its location relative to the press table, geometrical and mechanical characteristics of the workpiece, as well as friction conditions. For stretch presses of ACB there are two specialized CAM / CAE – systems that simulate the process of stretching the workpiece and calculate the NC for the control system of the relevant press: S3F and FormCAM. These systems have limitations on the accuracy of modeling, the flexibility of setting the deformation scheme and editing the NC [7, 8]. Therefore, to search for the optimal mode of forming, a set of various software tools is used, which are aimed at solving the following problems [9–12]:

- the NC calculation is performed using a mathematical model that describes the press kinematics according to a given workpiece deformation strategy;
- the calculated trajectory of press working elements is checked using the kinematic model in the CAD system, where the possibility of collisions between press elements and technological tooling is checked;
- the workpiece deformation process is analyzed in the CAE system, where the behavior of the

workpiece during its contact with the punch and jaws of the press is checked.

There are works describing the kinematics of the FET press as a planar mechanism [7, 8]. This solution allows the coordinates of the jaw elements to be calculated with analytical precision from the control parameters and, inversely, the control parameters from the jaw coordinates. The solutions presented show good results if they are used in the forming of parts with single curvature and symmetry in the direction of stretching [13–15]. Fig. 2 shows a diagram of the jaw nodes displacement along the Y axis when it is rotation around the Z and X axes. Displacement of the clamped workpiece along the Y axis relative to the initial position can cause the load reduction on one side of the workpiece and the load increase on the other side. This can cause the workpiece to slide off the punch, creasing of corrugations on the workpiece or its damage [16, 17].

In order to be ensuring to calculate the NC for asymmetrical parts of complex spatial geometry with a double curvature, a kinematic analysis of the parallel structure mechanisms of an FET stretching press was carried out.

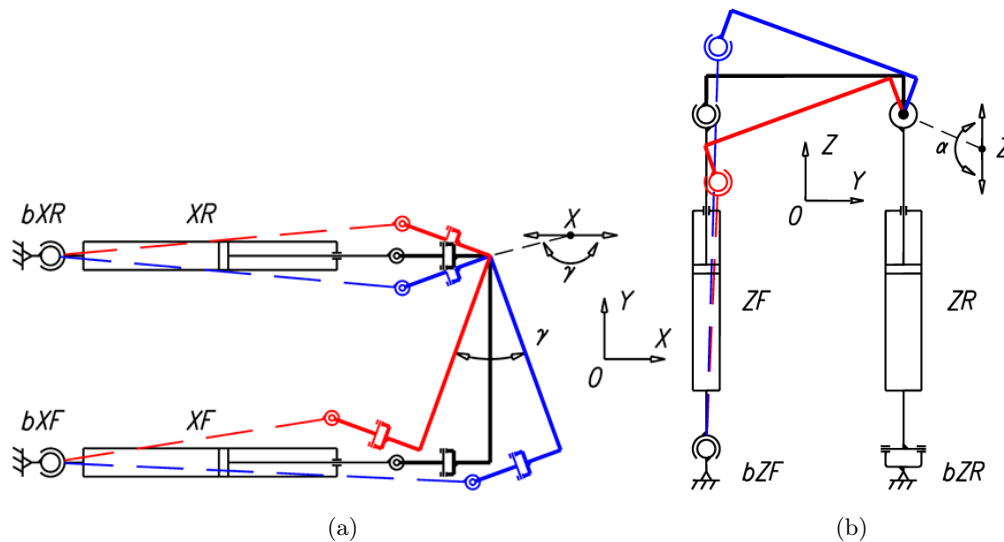


Fig. 2. Displacement of the jaw nodes along the Y axis when it is rotation around the Z and X axes: a — top view (rotation around the Z axis), b — right view (rotation around the X axis)

## Construction of FET stretching press

The FET stretch press is symmetrical from right to left, so let's analyze the kinematics of one jaw mechanism (Fig. 3). The structure of the jaw mechanism of the FET is designed as a spatial mechanism with a closed kinematic chain [18, 19]. The kinematic links topology of a FET press with parallel structure can be written as follows:

$$2 - (\underline{SPRR}) - (\underline{SPS}) - (\underline{RPRR}),$$

where  $S$  is spherical kinematic pair,  $P$  is progressive kinematic pair,  $R$  is rotary kinematic pair. Active kinematic pairs are underlined.

The horizontal cylinders  $XF$  and  $XR$  are attached to the press table frame by spherical joints

this ensures that they rotate when the jaw moves. The horizontal cylinders are equipped with intermediate links for connection to the jaws. The  $ZF$  vertical cylinder is attached to the press table frame and to the jaw by spherical joints. The vertical cylinder  $ZR$  has a larger diameter and has a supporting function. The  $ZR$  cylinder is connected to the press table by a sleeve which limits its movement in the vertical plane. Rotation along the vertical axis is possible due to the rotation of the vertical cylinder rod inside the  $ZR$  cylinder. Hydraulic actuators with precision hydraulics are used to change cylinder lengths.

The jaw node is moved in coordinates  $(x, z)$  along the two linear axes and coordinates  $(\alpha, \gamma)$  around the two rotary axes by coordinated changes in the lengths of the four hydraulic cylinders (Fig. 4). The inclination angle  $\beta$  of the jaw depends on its coordinates  $(x, z)$ .

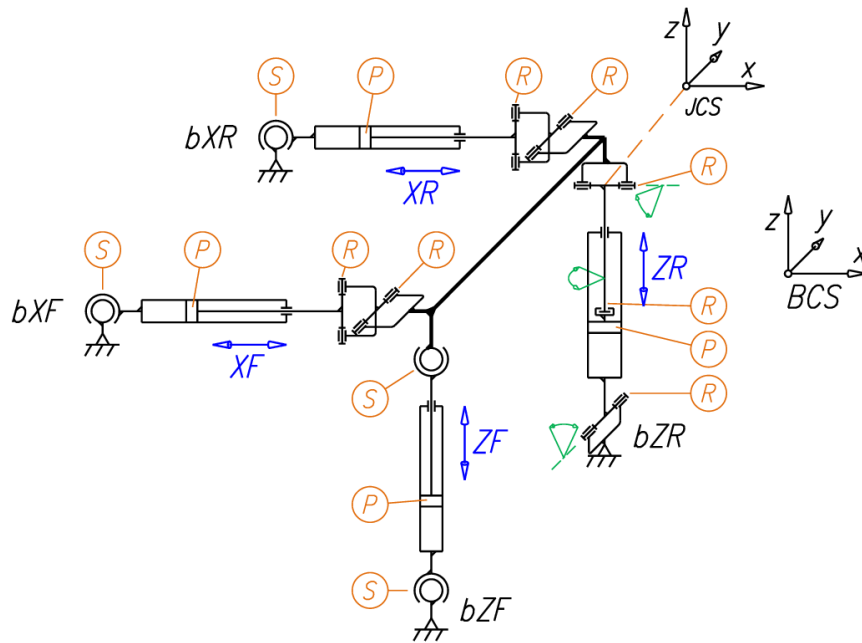


Fig. 3. Kinematic scheme of the FET press jaw

## Forward and inverse kinematics problem of the FET press jaw

Parallel structure mechanisms cannot be used without solving forward and inverse kinematics problems, which are more difficult to solve than for traditional manipulators [20, 21]. The forward kinematics problem determines the position of the executive element (press jaw) in space for a given value of generalized coordinates (length of hydraulic cylinder). The inverse kinematics problem determines the value of the generalized coordinates for a given position in space of the press jaw.

## Solving the inverse kinematics problem of the FET press jaw

The origin of the jaw coordinate system (JCS) is the  $M$  joint (Fig. 4), which moves in the plane of rotation of the  $ZR$  cylinder and depends on the following parameters  $[x, z, \alpha, \gamma]$ , where:  $x$  and

$z$  are the coordinates of the  $M$  joint in the base coordinate system of the press table (BCS);  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  are the angles of rotation of the jaw around the origin of the JCS. The generalized coordinates are the lengths of the progressive pairs - hydraulic cylinders  $\mathbf{Q} = [XR, XF, ZR, ZF]^T$ .

To determine the  $\mathbf{Q}$  vector of the hydraulic cylinder lengths at a given jaw position  $M$  joint and its angle of rotation, the position of all the jaw joints in the BCS must be determined. To do this, transfer the coordinates of the  $P$  joints of the jaw from JCS to BCS and rotate by angles  $[\alpha, \beta, \gamma]$  around the  $M$  joint.

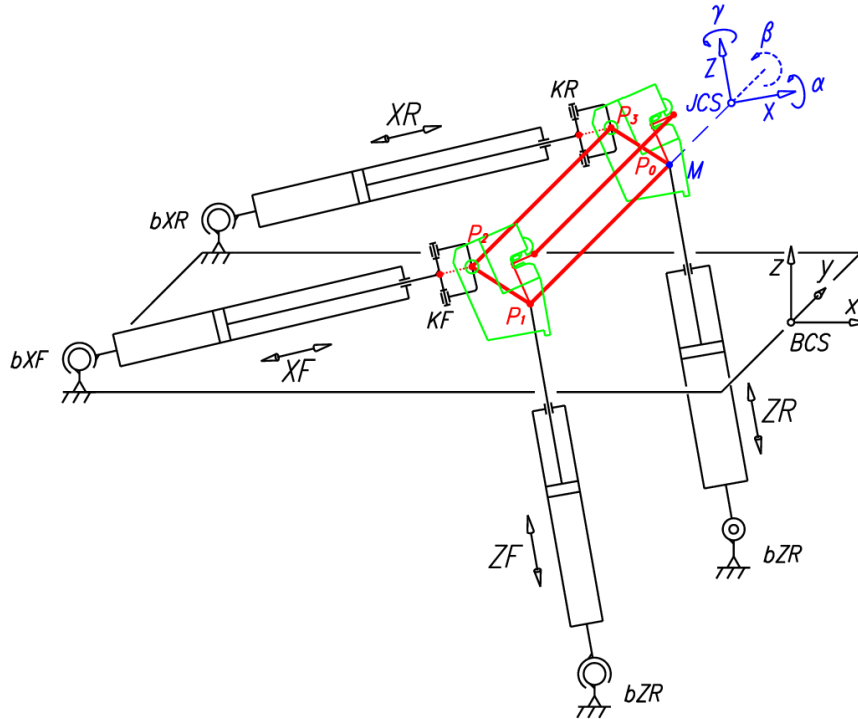


Fig. 4. Scheme for defining the press jaw nodes

In developing the mathematical model of the FET press, it is proposed to use the matrix apparatus of homogeneous transformations proposed by J. Denavit and R. Hartenberg [22–24].

The coordinates of the jaw joints in the press table coordinate system BCS can be determined by the following formula:

$$P' = P \cdot R_x(\alpha) \cdot R_y(\beta) \cdot R_z(\gamma) \cdot T, \quad (1)$$

where  $P$  is the matrix of the jaw joints coordinates in the jaw coordinate system (JCS)

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} P0_x & P0_y & P0_z & 1 \\ P1_x & P1_y & P1_z & 1 \\ P2_x & P2_y & P2_z & 1 \\ P3_x & P3_y & P3_z & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$R_x(\alpha)$  is the rotation matrix by angle  $\alpha$  around the  $Ox$  axis

$$R_x(\alpha) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \cos(\alpha) & \sin(\alpha) & 0 \\ 0 & -\sin(\alpha) & \cos(\alpha) & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$R_y(\beta)$  is the rotation matrix by angle  $\beta$  around the Oy axis

$$R_y(\beta) = \begin{pmatrix} \cos(\beta) & 0 & -\sin(\beta) & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ \sin(\beta) & 0 & \cos(\beta) & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$R_z(\gamma)$  is the rotation matrix by angle  $\gamma$  around the Oz axis

$$R_z(\gamma) = \begin{pmatrix} \cos(\gamma) & \sin(\gamma) & 0 & 0 \\ -\sin(\gamma) & \cos(\gamma) & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$T$  is the transfer matrix of the JCS origin to BCS

$$T = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ M_x & M_y & M_z & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

where  $\mathbf{M}$  is the joint coordinates in BCS, which correspond to the position of the jaw in the plane of the ZR hydraulic cylinder rotation around the  $\mathbf{bZR}$  joint

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ bZR_y \\ z \end{pmatrix}.$$

The angles  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$  are set depending on the required position of the jaw, angle  $\beta$  depends on the joint position  $\mathbf{M}$  and is defined by the following formula:

$$\beta = \frac{\pi}{2} - \arccos\left(\frac{M_x - bZR_x}{ZR}\right),$$

where  $ZR$  is the length of the hydraulic cylinder, which is determined by the distance between the joints coordinates of the press table  $\mathbf{bZR}$  and the jaw  $\mathbf{M}$  in BCS. Similarly, the hydraulic cylinder length  $ZF$  is the distance between the joints  $\mathbf{bZF}$  and  $\mathbf{P1}'$  in BCS:

$$ZR = \sqrt{\sum_i (\mathbf{bZR}_i - \mathbf{M}_i)^2}, \quad (2)$$

$$ZF = \sqrt{\sum_i (\mathbf{bZF}_i - \mathbf{P1}'_i)^2}, \quad (3)$$

where  $i = 0, \dots, 2$ .

To determine the hydraulic cylinder lengths  $XR$  and  $XF$ , determine the coordinates of the intermediate link joints  $\mathbf{KR}$  and  $\mathbf{KF}$  (Fig. 5)

$$\mathbf{KR} = \mathbf{P3}' + \frac{\mathbf{LR}}{|\mathbf{LR}|} \cdot Lv, \quad (4)$$

$$\mathbf{KF} = \mathbf{P2}' + \frac{\mathbf{LF}}{|\mathbf{LF}|} \cdot Lv, \quad (5)$$

where  $\mathbf{P2}'$  and  $\mathbf{P3}'$  are the joint coordinates of the connecting intermediate links to the jaw in the BCS;  $L_v$  is the link length is defined as the distance between the hinges of the intermediate link.

Vectors  $\mathbf{LR}$  and  $\mathbf{LF}$  are the projections of vectors  $\mathbf{BR}$  and  $\mathbf{BF}$  on the plane with normal  $\mathbf{CS}$ , which corresponds to the rotation axis of the intermediate links in joints  $\mathbf{P3}'$  and  $\mathbf{P2}'$ . One of the ways to define vectors  $\mathbf{LR}$  and  $\mathbf{LF}$  is as follows:

$$\mathbf{LR} = \frac{\mathbf{CS} \times \frac{\mathbf{BR} \times \mathbf{CS}}{|\mathbf{CS}|}}{|\mathbf{CS}|},$$

$$\mathbf{LF} = \frac{\mathbf{CS} \times \frac{\mathbf{BF} \times \mathbf{CS}}{|\mathbf{CS}|}}{|\mathbf{CS}|},$$

where  $\mathbf{BR}$  and  $\mathbf{BF}$  are vectors from jaw joints  $\mathbf{P3}'$  and  $\mathbf{P2}'$  to horizontal hydraulic cylinder joints  $\mathbf{bXR}$  and  $\mathbf{bXF}$ , respectively

$$\mathbf{BR} = \mathbf{bXR} - \mathbf{P3}',$$

$$\mathbf{BF} = \mathbf{bXF} - \mathbf{P2}',$$

$$\mathbf{CS} = \mathbf{P3}' - \mathbf{P2}'.$$

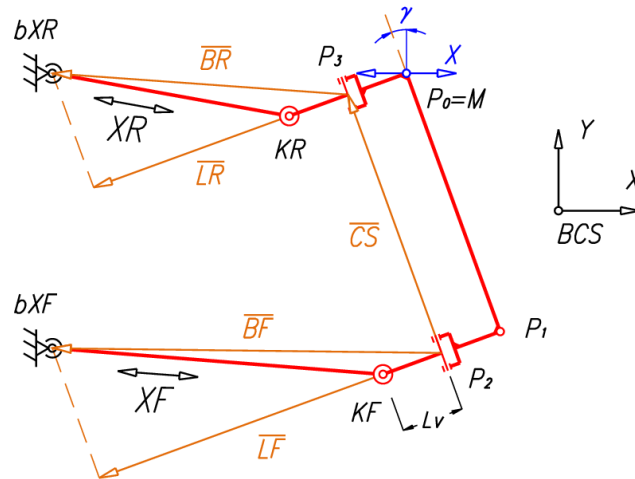


Fig. 5. Scheme for defining the press jaw nodes

The length of the hydraulic cylinders  $XF$  and  $XR$  is determined by the distance between the joints coordinates of the press table  $\mathbf{bXF}$ ,  $\mathbf{bXR}$  and the intermediate links  $\mathbf{KF}$ ,  $\mathbf{KR}$  in BCS

$$XF = \sqrt{\sum_i (\mathbf{bXF}_i - \mathbf{KF}_i)^2}, \quad (6)$$

$$XR = \sqrt{\sum_i (\mathbf{bXR}_i - \mathbf{KR}_i)^2}, \quad (7)$$

where  $i = 0, \dots, 2$ .

The kinematic dependencies obtained in equations (1-7) determine the generalised coordinates  $\mathbf{Q}$  by a given press jaw position  $\mathbf{M} = [x, z, \alpha, \gamma]^T$ .

## Solving the forward kinematics problem of the FET press jaw

Determine the jaw positions  $\mathbf{M} = [x, z, \alpha, \gamma]^T$  by the generalized coordinates of hydraulic cylinder lengths  $\mathbf{Q} = [XR, XF, ZR, ZF]^T$  by solving the forward kinematics problem [23, 24] as:

$$\mathbf{M} = J \cdot \mathbf{Q}, \quad (8)$$

where  $J$  is a forward Jacobi matrix is as:

$$J_{i,j} = \frac{\partial f_i(\mathbf{Q})}{\partial Q_j}, \quad i = 0, \dots, 3, \quad j = 0, \dots, 3.$$

In this problem formulation it is difficult to determine the partial derivatives of the function  $f(\mathbf{Q})$ . Therefore the solution of the forward problem can be implemented by Newton's iteration method, which consists of the following steps:

- 1) the initial position  $\mathbf{M}^{[k]}$  is set, where  $k = 0$  is the iteration number;
- 2) the vector of generalized coordinates  $\mathbf{q}^{[k]} = F(\mathbf{M}^{[k]})$  is determined. The function  $F(\mathbf{M})$  is the solution to the inverse kinematic problem of the JCS to BCS transformation presented in equations (1-7);
- 3) the deviations  $\Delta \mathbf{q}^{[k]} = \mathbf{Q} - \mathbf{q}^{[k]}$  of the current generalized coordinates  $\mathbf{q}^{[k]}$  from the given  $\mathbf{Q}$  are determined;
- 4) the deviations  $\Delta \mathbf{M}^{[k]}$  of the press jaw position are determined. To do this it is necessary to determine the Jacobi matrix for solving the inverse kinematics problem based on equation (8)

$$\mathbf{q} = J^{-1} \cdot \mathbf{M} \quad \text{или} \quad \mathbf{q} = Jr \cdot \mathbf{M}.$$

For the current position  $\mathbf{M}^{[k]}$ , the elements of the matrix  $Jr^{[k]}$  are determined by the method of numerical differentiation and are as follows:

$$J_{i,j}^{[k]} = \frac{\partial F_i(M^{[k]})}{\partial M_j} = \frac{F_i(M^{[k]} + \Delta M_j) - F_i(M^{[k]})}{\Delta M_j};$$

$$Jr = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial F_{XR}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial F_{XR}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial z} & \frac{\partial F_{XR}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial \alpha} & \frac{\partial F_{XR}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial \gamma} \\ \frac{\partial F_{XF}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial F_{XF}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial z} & \frac{\partial F_{XF}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial \alpha} & \frac{\partial F_{XF}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial \gamma} \\ \frac{\partial F_{ZR}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial F_{ZR}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial z} & \frac{\partial F_{ZR}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial \alpha} & \frac{\partial F_{ZR}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial \gamma} \\ \frac{\partial F_{ZF}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial F_{ZF}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial z} & \frac{\partial F_{ZF}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial \alpha} & \frac{\partial F_{ZF}(x, z, \alpha, \gamma)}{\partial \gamma} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Then the deflection of the jaw position  $\Delta \mathbf{M}^{[k]}$  is as follows:

$$\Delta \mathbf{M}^{[k]} = (Jr^{-1})^{[k]} \cdot \Delta \mathbf{q}^{[k]};$$

5) if the deviation of the current generalized coordinates is larger than the permissible error  $|\Delta \mathbf{q}_i^{[k]}| > \varepsilon_i$ , then the current position  $\mathbf{M}^{[k+1]} = \mathbf{M}^{[k]} + \Delta \mathbf{M}^{[k]}$ ,  $k = k + 1$ , and go to step 2 to determine the generalized coordinate vector  $\mathbf{q}^{[k]}$  for the new position  $\mathbf{M}^{[k]}$ . This approach allows the jaw position  $\mathbf{M}$  to be determined with a given accuracy  $\varepsilon$  from the given hydraulic cylinder lengths  $\mathbf{Q}$ .



## Conclusion

On the basis of the obtained kinematic dependences for determining the working elements position of the FET stretching press and the developed solutions of forward and inverse kinematics problems, the software for PC with the implemented mathematical model of the press jaw control system was developed. The software allows visualizing the work stages of the FET stretching press according to NC, editing NC by changing the jaw position or the parameters of hydraulic cylinders (Fig. 6). The software also allows creating a NC based on a given trajectory of the press jaws movement, which can include various deformation schemes by stretch forming of the workpiece.

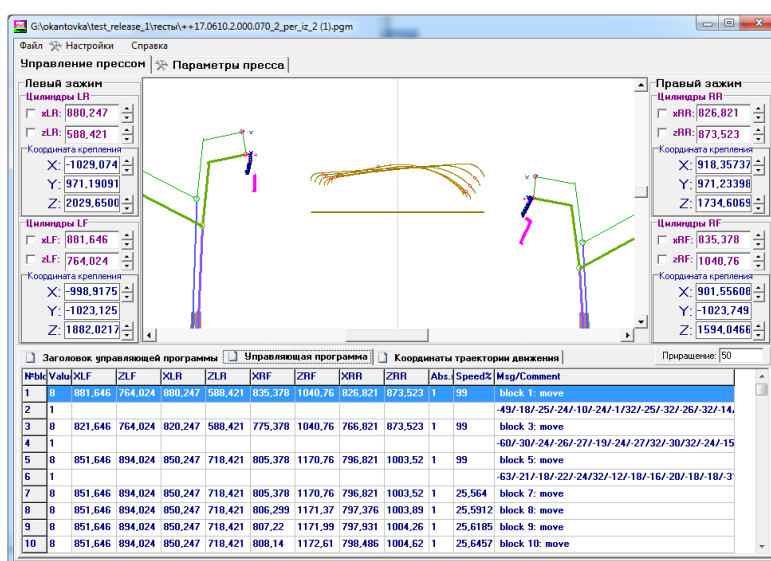


Fig. 6. Software for processing the NC of the FET stretching press

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## **О параллельной кинематике обтяжного пресса FET в операциях обтяжки при производстве изделий сложной пространственной геометрии**

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**Аннотация.** Исследуется кинематика механизма обтяжного пресса с параллельной структурой. Получены кинематические зависимости, которые направлены на задание пространственного положения рабочих органов пресса поперечной обтяжки типа FET и позволяют позиционировать зажимы в каждый момент времени при выполнении технологических операций. Решаются прямая и обратная задачи кинематикой для управления зажимами обтяжного пресса.

**Ключевые слова:** формирование растяжки, растягивающий пресс, FET, кинематика параллельной структуры, задачи прямой и обратной кинематики.