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Sreenath Srikrishnan

Roberto Araiza
The University of Texas at El Paso, raraiza@miners.utep.edu

Hongjie Xie

Scott A. Starks
The University of Texas at El Paso, sstarks@utep.edu

Vladik Kreinovich
The University of Texas at El Paso, vladik@utep.edu

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AUTOMATIC REFERENCING OF SATELLITE AND RADAR IMAGES

SREENATH SRIKRISHNAN, ROBERTO ARAIZA, HONGJIE XIE, SCOTT A. STARKS, and VLADIK KREINOVICH

NASA Pan-American Center for Earth and Environmental Studies
University of Texas, El Paso, TX 79968, USA, vladik@cs.utep.edu

Abstract

In order to adequately process satellite and radar information, it is necessary to find the exact correspondence between different types of images and between these images and the existing maps. In other words, we need to reference these images. In this paper, we propose new methods for automatic referencing of satellite and radar images.

Keywords

Satellite image, radar image, automatic image referencing.

1 Introduction

In order to adequately process satellite and radar information, it is necessary to find the exact correspondence between different types of images and between these images and the existing maps. In other words, we need to reference these images. There exist automatic methods of referencing satellite images. These methods are based on using Fast Fourier Transform (FFT). They work well because different image of the same area differ mainly by a shift and/or by a rotation, and so, their Fourier transforms are related in a known way, from which we can determine the exact rotation and shift.

However, these methods do not work well when we attempt to reference radar images, or a satellite image with a road map. The reason why these methods do not work well is that the corresponding images reflect different aspects of the geographic area, and the resulting differences are much stronger than the similarities caused by the fact that we are observing the same area.

In this paper, we describe new techniques which make it possible to automatically reference satellite images, radar images, and road maps.

2 Automation is necessary

At present, referencing is done semi-automatically: once we find the matching points on the two images, we can use imaging tools to find the most appropriate transformation (rotation and/or shift) which maps one image into another. The problem is that finding such matching points is a difficult and time-consuming tasks, especially for images of the Southwest.

The most efficient way is to match road intersections. Many nearby road intersections look similar, so we need several trial-and-error iterations before we can get a good referencing. Even an experienced imaging specialist must spend at least an hour or so on referencing an image. Since new satellite images are produced every few seconds, we cannot afford to spend an hour of referencing each new image. We need automatic referencing techniques.

3 The existing FFT-based referencing algorithms

To decrease the referencing time, researchers have proposed methods based on Fast Fourier Transform (FFT). The best of known FFT-based referencing algorithms is presented in [3]. The main ideas behind FFT-based referencing in general and this algorithm in particular are as follows.

3.1 The simplest case: shift detection in the absence of noise

Let us first consider the case when two images differ only by shift. It is known that if two images $I(\vec{x})$ and $I'(\vec{x})$ differ only by shift, i.e., if $I'(\vec{x}) = I(\vec{x}+\vec{a})$ for some (unknown) shift $\vec{a}$, then their Fourier transforms

$$F(\vec{\omega}) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \cdot \int\int I(\vec{x}) \cdot e^{-2\pi\cdot\mathrm{i}\cdot(\vec{x}\cdot\vec{\omega})}\,\mathrm{d}x\mathrm{d}y,$$

$$F'(\vec{\omega}) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \cdot \int\int I'(\vec{x}) \cdot e^{-2\pi\cdot\mathrm{i}\cdot(\vec{x}\cdot\vec{\omega})}\,\mathrm{d}x\mathrm{d}y,$$

are related by the following formula:

$$F'(\vec{\omega}) = e^{2\pi\cdot\mathrm{i}\cdot(\vec{\omega}\cdot\vec{a})} \cdot F(\vec{\omega}). \qquad (1)$$

Therefore, if the images are indeed obtained from each other by shift, then we have

$$M'(\vec{\omega}) = M(\vec{\omega}), \qquad (2)$$

where we denoted

$$M(\vec{\omega}) = |F(\vec{\omega})|, \quad M'(\vec{\omega}) = |F'(\vec{\omega})|. \qquad (3)$$

The actual value of the shift $\vec{a}$ can be obtained if we use the formula (1) to compute the value of the following ratio:

$$R(\vec{\omega}) = \frac{F'(\vec{\omega})}{F(\vec{\omega})}. \qquad (4)$$

Substituting (1) into (4), we get

$$R(\vec{\omega}) = e^{2\pi\cdot\mathrm{i}\cdot(\vec{\omega}\cdot\vec{a})}. \qquad (5)$$

Therefore, the inverse Fourier transform $P(\vec{x})$ of this ratio is equal to the delta-function $\delta(\vec{x}-\vec{a})$.

In other words, in the ideal no-noise situation, this inverse Fourier transform $P(\vec{x})$ is equal to 0 everywhere except for the point $\vec{x} = \vec{a}$; so, from $P(\vec{x})$, we can easily determine the desired shift by using the following *algorithm*:

- *first, we apply FFT to the original images $I(\vec{x})$ and $I'(\vec{x})$ and compute their Fourier transforms $F(\omega)$ and $F'(\omega)$;*
- *on the second step, we compute the ratio (4);*
- *on the third step, we apply the inverse FFT to the ratio $R(\vec{\omega})$ and compute its inverse Fourier transform $P(\vec{x})$;*
- *finally, on the fourth step, we determine the desired shift $\vec{a}$ as the only value $\vec{a}$ for which $P(\vec{a}) \neq 0$.*

3.2 Shift detection in the presence of noise

In the ideal case, the absolute value of the ratio (4) is equal to 1. In real life, the measured intensity values have some noise in them. For example, the conditions may slightly change from one overflight to another, which can be represented as the fact that a "noise" was added to the actual image.

In the presence of noise, the observed values of the intensities may differ from the actual values; as a result, their Fourier transforms also differ from the values and hence, the absolute value of the ratio (4) may be different from 1.

We can somewhat improve the accuracy of this method if, instead of simply processing the measurement results, we take into consideration the additional knowledge that the absolute value of the actual ratio (4) is exactly equal to 1. Let us see how this can be done.

Let us denote the actual (unknown) value of the value $e^{2\pi\cdot\mathrm{i}\cdot(\vec{\omega}\cdot\vec{a})}$ by r. Then, in the absence of noise, the equation (1) takes the form

$$F'(\vec{\omega}) = r \cdot F(\vec{\omega}). \qquad (5)$$

In the presence of noise, the computed values $F(\vec{\omega})$ and $F'(\vec{\omega})$ of the Fourier transforms can be slightly different from the actual values, and therefore, the equality (5) is only approximately true:

$$F'(\vec{\omega}) \approx r \cdot F(\vec{\omega}). \qquad (6)$$

In addition to the equation (6), we know that the absolute value of r is equal to 1, i.e., that

$$|r|^2 = r \cdot r^* = 1, \qquad (7)$$

where r^* denotes a complex conjugate to r.

As a result, we know two things about the unknown value r:

- that r satisfies the approximate equation (6), and
- that r satisfies the additional constraint (7).

We would like to get the best estimate for r among all estimates which satisfy the condition (7). To get the optimal estimate, we can use the *Least Squares Method* (LSM). According to this method, for each estimate r, we define the error

$$E = F'(\vec{\omega}) - r \cdot F(\vec{\omega}) \qquad (8)$$

with which the condition (6) is satisfied. Then, we find among all estimates which satisfy the additional condition (7), a value r for which the square $|E|^2 = E \cdot E^*$ of this error is the smallest

possible.

The square $|E|^2$ of the error E can be reformulated as follows:

$$E \cdot E^* =$$
$$(F'(\vec{\omega}) - r \cdot F(\vec{\omega})) \cdot$$
$$\left(F'^*(\vec{\omega}) - r^* \cdot F^*(\vec{\omega})\right) =$$
$$F'(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'^*(\vec{\omega}) - r^* \cdot F^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'(\vec{\omega}) -$$
$$r \cdot F(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'^*(\vec{\omega}) + r \cdot r^* \cdot F(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F^*(\vec{\omega}). \quad (9)$$

We need to minimize this expression under the condition (7).

For conditional minimization, there is a known technique of Lagrange multipliers, according to which the minimum of a function $f(x)$ under the condition $g(x) = 0$ is attained when for some real number λ, the auxiliary function $f(x) + \lambda \cdot g(x)$ attains its unconditional minimum; this value λ is called a *Lagrange multiplier*.

For our problem, the Lagrange multiplier technique leads to the following unconditional minimization problem:

$$F'(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'^*(\vec{\omega}) - r^* \cdot F^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'(\vec{\omega}) -$$
$$r \cdot F(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'^*(\vec{\omega}) + r \cdot r^* \cdot F(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F^*(\vec{\omega}) +$$
$$\lambda \cdot (r \cdot r^* - 1) \to \min. \quad (10)$$

We want to find the value of the complex variable r for which this expression takes the smallest possible value. A complex variable is, in effect, a pair of two real variables, so the minimum can be found as a point at which the partial derivatives with respect to each of these variables are both equal to 0. Alternatively, we can represent this equality by computing the partial derivative of the expression (10) relative to r and r^*. If we differentiate (10) relative to r^*, we get the following linear equation:

$$-F^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'(\vec{\omega}) + r \cdot F(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F^*(\vec{\omega}) +$$
$$\lambda \cdot r = 0. \quad (11)$$

From this equation, we conclude that

$$r = \frac{F^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'(\vec{\omega})}{F(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F^*(\vec{\omega}) + \lambda}. \quad (12)$$

The coefficient λ can be now determined from the condition that the resulting value r should satisfy the equation (7). The denominator $F(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F^*(\vec{\omega}) + \lambda$ of the equation (12) is a real number, so instead of finding λ, it is sufficient to find a value of this denominator for which $|r|^2 = 1$. One can easily see that to achieve this goal, we should take, as this denominator, the absolute value of the numerator, i.e., the value

$$|F^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'(\vec{\omega})| = |F^*(\vec{\omega})| \cdot |F'(\vec{\omega})|. \quad (13)$$

For this choice of a denominator, the formula (11) takes the following final form:

$$r = \frac{F^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'(\vec{\omega})}{|F^*(\vec{\omega})| \cdot |F'(\vec{\omega})|}. \quad (14)$$

So, in the presence of noise, instead of using the exact ratio (4), we should compute, for every $\vec{\omega}$, the optimal approximation

$$R(\vec{\omega}) = \frac{F^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'(\vec{\omega})}{|F^*(\vec{\omega})| \cdot |F'(\vec{\omega})|}. \quad (15)$$

In the ideal non-noise case, the inverse Fourier transform $P(\vec{x})$ of this ratio is equal to the delta-function $\delta(\vec{x} - \vec{a})$, i.e., equal to 0 everywhere except for the point $\vec{x} = \vec{a}$. In the presence of noise, we expect the values of $P(\vec{x})$ to be slightly different from the delta-function, but still, the value $|P(\vec{a})|$ should be much larger than all the other values of this function. So, we arrive at the following *algorithm* for determining the shift $\vec{a}$:

- *first, we apply FFT to the original images* $I(\vec{x})$ *and* $I'(\vec{x})$ *and compute their Fourier transforms* $F(\omega)$ *and* $F'(\omega)$*;*
- *on the second step, we compute the ratio (15);*
- *on the third step, we apply the inverse FFT to the ratio* $R(\vec{\omega})$ *and compute its inverse Fourier transform* $P(\vec{x})$*;*
- *finally, on the fourth step, we determine the desired shift* $\vec{a}$ *as the point for which* $|P(\vec{x})|$ *takes the largest possible value.*

3.3 Reducing rotation and scaling to shift

If, in addition to shift, we also have rotation and scaling, then the absolute values $M_i(\vec{\omega})$ of the corresponding Fourier transforms are not equal, but differ from each by the corresponding rotation and scaling.

If we go from Cartesian to polar coordinates (r, θ) in the $\vec{\omega}$-plane, then rotation by an angle θ_0 is described by a simple shift-like formula $\theta \to \theta + \theta_0$.

In these same coordinates, scaling is also simple, but not shift-like: $r \to \lambda \cdot r$. If we go to *log-polar* coordinates (ρ, θ), where $\rho = \log(r)$, then scaling also becomes shift-like: $\rho \to \rho + b$, where $b = \log(\lambda)$. So, in log-polar coordinates, both rotation and scaling are described by a shift.

3.4 How to determine rotation and scaling

In view of the above reduction, in order to determine the rotation and scaling between M and M', we can do the following:

- transform both images from the original Cartesian coordinates to log-polar coordinates;
- use the above FFT-based algorithm to determine the corresponding shift $(\theta_0, \log(\lambda))$;
- from the corresponding "shift" values, reconstruct the rotation angle θ_0 and the scaling coefficient λ.

Comment. The main computational problem with the transformation to log-polar coordinates is that we need values $M(\xi, \eta)$ on a rectangular grid in log-polar space $(\log(\rho), \theta)$, but computing $(\log(\rho), \theta)$ for the original grid points leads to points outside that grid. So, we need interpolation to find the values $M(\xi, \eta)$ on the desired grid. One possibility is to use *bilinear* interpolation. Let (x, y) be a rectangular point corresponding to the desired grid point $(\log(\rho), \theta)$, i.e.,

$$x = e^{\log(\rho)} \cdot \cos(\theta), \quad y = e^{\log(\rho)} \cdot \sin(\theta).$$

To find the value $M(x, y)$, we look at the intensities M_{jk}, $M_{j+1,k}$, $M_{j,k+1}$, and $M_{j+1,k+1}$ of the four grid points (j, k), $(j+1, k)$, $(j, k+1)$, and $(j+1, k+1)$ surrounding (x, y). Then, we can interpolate $M(x, y)$ as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} M(x, y) = (1-t) \cdot (1-u) \cdot M_{jk} + \\ t \cdot (1-u) \cdot M_{j+1,k} + \\ (1-t) \cdot u \cdot M_{j,k+1} + \\ t \cdot u \cdot M_{j+1,k+1}, \end{aligned}$$

where t is a fractional part of x and u is a fractional part of y.

3.5 Final algorithm: determining shift, rotation, and scaling

- *First, we apply FFT to the original images $I(\vec{x})$ and $I'(\vec{x})$ and compute their Fourier transforms $F(\omega)$ and $F'(\omega)$.*
- *Then, we compute the absolute values $M(\vec{\omega}) = |F(\vec{\omega})|$ and $M'(\vec{\omega}) = |F'(\vec{\omega})|$ of these Fourier transforms.*
- *By applying the above algorithm and scaling detection algorithm to the functions $M(\omega)$ and $M'(\omega)$, we can determine the rotation angle θ_0 and the scaling coefficient λ.*
- *Now, we can apply the corresponding rotation and scaling to one of the original images, e.g., to the first image $I(\vec{x})$. As a result, we get a new image $\widetilde{I}(\vec{x})$.*
- *Since we rotated and re-scaled one of the images, the images $\widetilde{I}(\vec{x})$ and $I'(\vec{x})$ are already aligned in terms of rotation and scaling, and the only difference between them is in an (unknown) shift. So, we can again apply the above described FFT-based algorithm for determining shift: this time, actually to determine shift.*

As a result, we get the desired values of shift, rotation, and scaling; hence, we get the desired referencing.

4 Referencing multi-spectral satellite images

4.1 Formulation of the problem

With the new generation of multi-spectral satellites, for each area, we have several hundred images which correspond to different wavelengths. At present, when we reference two images, we only use one of the wavelengths and ignore the information from the other wavelengths. It is reasonable to decrease the referencing error by using images corresponding to all possible wavelengths in referencing.

Similarly, in detecting the known text in colored web images, we would like to take into consideration all color components.

In this paper, we present an algorithm for such optimal referencing.

4.2 Derivation of the new algorithm

For multi-spectral imaging, instead of a single image $I(\vec{\omega})$, we get several images $I_i(\vec{\omega})$, $1 \le i \le n$, which correspond to different wavelengths. So, we have two groups of images:

- the images $I_i(\vec{\omega})$ which correspond to one area, and
- the images $I'_i(\vec{\omega})$ which correspond to an overlapping area.

Let us first consider the case when two images differ only by some (unknown) shift $\vec{a}$. For every wavelength i, the corresponding two images $I_i(\vec{x})$ and $I'_i(\vec{x})$ differ only by shift, i.e., $I'_i(\vec{x}) = I_i(\vec{x}+\vec{a})$. Therefore, for every wavelength i, their Fourier transforms

$$F_i(\vec{\omega}) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \cdot \int\int I_i(\vec{x}) \cdot e^{-2\pi \cdot \mathrm{i} \cdot (\vec{x} \cdot \vec{\omega})}\, \mathrm{d}x\mathrm{d}y,$$

$$F'_i(\vec{\omega}) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \cdot \int\int I'_i(\vec{x}) \cdot e^{-2\pi \cdot \mathrm{i} \cdot (\vec{x} \cdot \vec{\omega})}\, \mathrm{d}x\mathrm{d}y,$$

are related by the formula:

$$F'_i(\vec{\omega}) = e^{2\pi \cdot \mathrm{i} \cdot (\vec{\omega} \cdot \vec{a})} \cdot F_i(\vec{\omega}). \tag{16}$$

In the ideal no-noise situation, all these equations are true, and we can determine the value $r = e^{2\pi \cdot \mathrm{i} \cdot (\vec{\omega} \cdot \vec{a})}$ from any of these equations. In the real-life situations, where noise is present, these equations (16) are only approximately true, so we have the following problem instead: find r for which, for all i,

$$F'_i(\vec{\omega}) \approx r \cdot F_i(\vec{\omega}). \tag{17}$$

and which satisfies the condition (7).

We would like to get the best estimate for r among all estimates which satisfy the condition (7). To get the optimal estimate, we can use the Least Squares Method, according to which, for each estimate r and for each i, we define the error

$$E_i = F'_i(\vec{\omega}) - r \cdot F_i(\vec{\omega}) \tag{18}$$

with which the condition (17) is satisfied. Then, we find among all estimates which satisfy the additional condition (7), a value r for which the sum of the squares

$$|E_1|^2 + \ldots + |E_n|^2 = E_1 \cdot E_1^* + \ldots + E_n \cdot E_n^*$$

of these errors is the smallest possible.

The square $|E_i|^2$ of each error E_i can be reformulated as follows:

$$E_i \cdot E_i^* = (F'_i(\vec{\omega}) - r \cdot F_i(\vec{\omega})) \cdot \left(F'^*_i(\vec{\omega}) - r^* \cdot F_i^*(\vec{\omega})\right) = F'_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'^*_i(\vec{\omega}) - r^* \cdot F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'_i(\vec{\omega}) - r \cdot F_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'^*_i(\vec{\omega}) + r \cdot r^* \cdot F_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F_i^*(\vec{\omega}). \tag{19}$$

We need to minimize the sum of these expressions under the condition (7).

For this conditional minimization, we will use the Lagrange multipliers technique, which leads to the following unconditional minimization problem:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \left(F'_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'^*_i(\vec{\omega}) - r^* \cdot F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'_i(\vec{\omega}) - r \cdot F_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'^*_i(\vec{\omega}) + r \cdot r^* \cdot F_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F_i^*(\vec{\omega})\right) + \lambda \cdot (r \cdot r^* - 1) \to \min. \tag{20}$$

Differentiating (20) relative to r^*, we get the following linear equation:

$$-\sum_{i=1}^n F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'_i(\vec{\omega}) + r \cdot \sum_{i=1}^n F_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) + \lambda \cdot r = 0. \tag{21}$$

From this equation, we conclude that

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'_i(\vec{\omega})}{\sum_{i=1}^n F_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) + \lambda}. \tag{22}$$

The coefficient λ can be now determined from the condition that the resulting value r should satisfy the equation (7). The denominator

$$\sum_{i=1}^n F_i(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) + \lambda$$

of the equation (22) is a real number, so instead of finding λ, it is sufficient to find a value of this denominator for which $|r|^2 = 1$. One can easily see that to achieve this goal, we should take, as this denominator, the absolute value of the numerator, i.e., the value

$$\left|\sum_{i=1}^n F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot F'_i(\vec{\omega})\right|. \tag{23}$$

For this choice of a denominator, the formula (21) takes the following final form:

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot {F'}_i(\vec{\omega})}{\left|\sum_{i=1}^{n} F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot {F'}_i(\vec{\omega})\right|}. \quad (24)$$

So, for multi-spectral images, in the presence of noise, instead of using the exact ratio (4), we should compute, for every $\vec{\omega}$, the optimal approximation

$$R(\vec{\omega}) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot {F'}_i(\vec{\omega})}{\left|\sum_{i=1}^{n} F_i^*(\vec{\omega}) \cdot {F'}_i(\vec{\omega})\right|}. \quad (25)$$

Hence, we arrive at the following *algorithm*:

4.3 A new algorithm for determining the shift between two multi-spectral images

If we have images $I_i(\vec{\omega})$ and $I'_i(\vec{\omega})$ which correspond to different wavelengths, then, to determine the shift $\vec{a}$ between these two multi-spectral images, we do the following:

- *first, we apply FFT to the original images $I_i(\vec{x})$ and $I'_i(\vec{x})$ and compute their Fourier transforms $F_i(\omega)$ and ${F'}_i(\omega)$;*
- *on the second step, we compute the ratio (25);*
- *on the third step, we apply the inverse FFT to the ratio $R(\vec{\omega})$ and compute its inverse Fourier transform $P(\vec{x})$;*
- *finally, on the fourth step, we determine the desired shift $\vec{a}$ as the point for which $|P(\vec{x})|$ takes the largest possible value.*

For rotation and scaling, we can use the same reduction to shift as for mono-spectral images. As a result, we get the desired values of shift, rotation, and scaling; hence, we get the desired referencing.

5 Referencing a satellite image with a road map

In order to reference a satellite image with a road map, we propose to use ENVI tools to replace the original satellite image with the image consisting of its edges. The resulting edge map is similar to the roadmap and therefore, FFT-based technique can reference these maps.

6 Referencing radar images

The problem with radar images is that they contain parallel lines, speckles, and other artifacts which are caused by the inaccuracy of radar imaging and are not related to the original image. So, in order to reference a radar image with the satellite image, we must first delete the corresponding parallel lines and speckles. This can be done by applying FFT and removing strong components which are not typical for images:

- peaks for parallel lines,
- high-frequency noise for speckles, etc.

The resulting cleaned image can now be automatically referenced with the original satellite image.

7 Future work

At present, we have formalized and automated only some of experts' referencing techniques. Since some of their techniques are described by words from a natural language (like "if a pixel is drastically different from its neighbors, it is probably a speckle"), it is desirable to use a formalism specifically designed to describe such properties – the formalism of fuzzy logic.

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