NavIC-Reflectometry Receiver Development for Remote Sensing Application

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Bushra Ansari
PhD Scholar
IIIT-Delhi

INDRAPRASTHA INSTITUTE of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
DELHI
Space Systems Laboratory, IIITD

Supervisor: Dr. Sanat K Biswas
Assistant Professor, IIIT Delhi
Email: sanat@iiitd.ac.in

Space Systems Laboratory, IIIT Delhi
New Delhi, India
Website: https://ssl.iiitd.edu.in/
Outline

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What is GNSS

- GNSS is a generalized term referred to the constellation of global and regional satellite systems that provides Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) services.
NavIC: A Brief Introduction

- The IRNSS constellation consist of 7 satellites with 3 satellites in the geostationary orbit and 4 satellites are in geosynchronous orbits.

- IRNSS is an independent and autonomous regional navigation system aiming a service area of about 1500 km around India.

- The IRNSS SPS (Standard Positioning Service) is transmitted on L5, S and L1 band.
What is GNSS-Reflectometry (GNSS-R)

- It is a remote sensing technique that uses GNSS signals to study underlying Earth’s surface.

- It uses the navigation signals in the bi-static or the multi-static radar configuration.

- GNSS-R intends to analyze the direct and multi-path signal reflected from the Earth’s surface, as shown in Fig 2.
When the GNSS signals propagates through the atmosphere and gets reflected from the Earth’s surface the amplitude, phase, signal power and the polarization characteristics of the signal changes.

The change in the characteristics of reflected GNSS signals are used to study the geophysical parameters of the underlying surface.

The utility of GNSS signals to perform reflectometry and scatterometry was first proposed in 1988 and then for ocean altimetry in 1993 [1].

Already existing and completed GNSS-R mission:
- UK’s Technology Demonstration Satellite, TechDemoSat (TDS-1).

Benefits of GNSS-R for Earth Observation:
- Versatile and cost effective complement of existing earth observing systems.
- It provides 24 hour coverage due to continuous availability of GNSS-signals.

Applications of GNSS-R

• Altimetry Measurement
• Soil Moisture Estimation
• Snow Height Monitoring
• Wetland Estimation
• Wind Speed Determination
• Sea-state Estimation

Fig 3. GNSS-R Applications (© ESA)
Goals and Objective

• Performing reflectometry analysis using NavIC signals, and to develop SDR receiver, for receiving the NavIC multipath signals, and further use these signals for soil moisture estimation.

• Obtaining and analyzing Delay Doppler Maps (DDMs) for the direct and reflected GNSS signal for soil moisture application.

• Development of an algorithm to efficiently acquire and modify received NavIC signals to measure soil water content.

• The long term goal is to use NavIC-Reflectometry for various applications including soil moisture measurement, weather forecast, sea-state monitoring etc. and estimating the related variables in real time.
Theoretical concepts (contd.)

- According to the bistatic radar equation the coherent reflected power at the receiver is a function of surface reflectivity $\Gamma_p$ [2].

\[
P_{p}^{coh} = \frac{P_t \lambda^2 G_t G_r}{(4\pi)^2 (R_{ts} + R_{rs})^2} \Gamma_p(\epsilon_s, \theta_i) \quad ....(1)
\]

Where $P_t$ - transmitted GNSS signal power,
\(\lambda\) - GNSS signal wavelength,
$G_t$ and $G_r$ - transmitter and receiver antenna gain respectively,
$\Gamma_p$ - surface reflectivity for a particular polarization $p$,

Fig 4. GNSS-R Basic Geometry

• The DDM is a function of doppler shifts and delay offset around the specular point.

\[ |P(\tau, f)|^2 = \frac{T_i^2 P_i G_t \lambda^2}{(4\pi)^3} \int \int \frac{G_r(\hat{\rho})}{R_{ts}(\hat{\rho}) R_{rs}(\hat{\rho})} \sigma_{pq}^0 \chi^2(\hat{\rho}; \delta \tau, \delta f) d\hat{\rho} \] ……(2)

• From peak power levels, the surface reflectivity can be calculated as:

\[ \Gamma_p(\epsilon_s, \theta_i) = \frac{(4\pi)^2 (P_{DDM})(R_{ts} + R_{rs})^2}{\lambda^2 P_t G_t G_r} \] ……(3)

• Surface reflectivity is then used to calculate the surface dielectric constant.

• The dielectric constant is further used to calculate the soil moisture using [3]:

\[ m_v = \frac{\epsilon_s}{80} + \frac{0.26}{\epsilon_s - 1} + 0.11 \] ……(4)

• Increasing moisture content results in an increase in soil permittivity and therefore surface reflectivity, which will result in an increase in the coherent power levels.

NavIC-Reflectometry Receiver Development

• Untill now, the GNSS-R research is mainly focused on using GPS, Galileo or BeiDou satellite constellation signals.

• The existing research on NavIC reflectometry use the commercial NavIC navigation receivers [4], which restricts the scope of the research.

• Assessing the capability of a Software Defined Radio (SDR) based NavIC-Reflectometry (NavIC-R) receiver for estimating the soil moisture using the NavIC L5 satellite signals.

• The development of the hardware-in-loop simulator (using BladeRF SDR) and validation of the simulator results is described in this work.

Theoretical and Experimental Workflow

Geometry Parameters

Surface Parameters

Geometric Calculation for different Delay-Doppler pairs.

Weight Factor for Delay-Doppler Pairs.

Surface reflectivity and Rx. Power calculation for Delay-Doppler grid.

2D-Convolution of WAF and Weight factor

Output: DDM

Dielectric Constant and Soil Moisture

MATLAB Environment

NavIC RF Signal Generation

BladeRF SDR Receiver

Frequency Domain Acquisition

Output: DDM

Dielectric Constant and Soil Moisture
NavIC-R Receiver Hardware Setup

- Receive signals from SIMAC2 simulator using BladeRF and processing it in Raspberry-Pi on-board computer.

- The whole signal processing is done on RPi, which makes it feasible to use as a payload onboard the drone.

- The GNSS dataset is generally large which is used for remote sensing purpose, hence we have worked on raw GNSS data compression for reflectometry application [5].

Results and Discussion

- The Hardware-in-loop simulator testbed results are verified by comparing its outcomes with the theoretical simulation results as well as the TDS-1 GPS data results.

- The comparison of DDMs, dielectric constant retrieval and volumetric soil moisture estimation is performed for various surface properties.

- The TDS-1 data from July 03, 2017 and track 145 is selected for this work. This track is selected because of its coverage area over India, which is suitable for comparison with NavIC L5 signals.

Fig 6. TDS-1 track location
Results and Discussion (contd.)

- The comparison for TDS-1 DDM and the numerically simulated DDM for the NavIC transmitter configuration is shown here:

Fig 7. Comparison of TDS-1 obtained DDM (left) and numerically obtained DDM for NavIC L5 signal configuration (right).
• The received peak power and dielectric constant variation for TDS-1 and numerically simulated scenario is shown below:

Fig 8. Received Peak Power variation over time

Fig 9. Dielectric constant estimate over time
The volumetric soil moisture as obtained using the eq. 4 is shown in Fig 10. The VSM trend is proportional to the Dielectric constant trend.
• After verification of the numerical simulation, the HIL simulator test-bed results are verified by comparing its outcomes with the numerical simulation results.

• The reflected signal’s Peak power variation and volumetric soil moisture for NavIC signals is shown below:

- [Fig 11. Reflected Peak power variation for NavIC Signals]
- [Fig 12. Volumetric Soil Moisture variation for NavIC signals]
• The numerical simulation also demonstrate that despite the NavIC signals being transmitted from the geo-stationary and inclined geosynchronous orbits, it is possible to perform remote sensing using a space-borne or air-borne NavIC-R receiver.

• Further, the soil moisture measured using the SDR receiver in the HIL simulator and the same from the numerical MATLAB simulations are compared, and they show a good agreement.
Conclusion

• The HIL simulator test-bed and numerical simulation results verifies the proposed NavIC-R receiver’s functionality in soil moisture monitoring.

• Receive the NavIC signals using the SDR receiver, placed on-board a drone, to study the surface soil moisture.

• Sensitivity analysis of the reflectometry receiver using the NavIC L5-band and S-band will be studied.

• Real-time monitoring and the possibility of on-demand estimation is feasible using the GNSS-R technique.
Future Work

- NavIC-L5 antenna development for reflectometry applications and real-time analysis.

Fig 13. Hardware setup for real-time analysis
Thank You

Bushra Ansari
PhD Scholar, IIIT Delhi
Email: bushraa@iiitd.ac.in