Performance Estimates of the Pseudo-Random Method for Radar Detection

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Abstract—A performance of the pseudo-random method for the radar detection is analyzed. The radar sends a pseudo-random sequence of length $N$, and receives echo from $r$ targets. We assume the natural assumptions of uniformity on the channel and of the square root cancellation on the noise. Then for $r \leq N^{1 - \delta}$, where $\delta > 0$, the following holds: (i) the probability of detection goes to one, and (ii) the expected number of false targets goes to zero, as $N$ goes to infinity.

I. INTRODUCTION

A RADAR is designed to estimate the location and velocity of objects in the surrounding space. The radar performs sensing by analyzing correlations between sent and received (analog) signals. In this note we describe the digital radar, i.e. we assume that the radar sends and receives finite sequences. The reduction to digital setting can be carried out in practice, see for example [1], and [5].

Throughout this note we denote by $\mathbb{Z}_N$ the set of integers $\{0, 1, \ldots, N-1\}$ equipped with addition and multiplication modulo $N$. We denote by $\mathcal{H} = \mathbb{C}(\mathbb{Z}_N)$ the vector space of complex valued functions on $\mathbb{Z}_N$ equipped with the standard inner product $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$, and refer to it as the Hilbert space of sequences. We use the notation $S_{C}^{-1}$ to denote the unit complex sphere in $\mathbb{C}^r$:

$$S_{C}^{-1} = \{ (z_1, \ldots, z_r) \in \mathbb{C}^r \mid \sum_{k=1}^{r} |z_k|^2 = 1 \}.$$

A. Model of Digital Radar

We describe the discrete radar model which was derived in [1]. We assume that a radar sends a sequence $S \in \mathcal{H}$ and receives as an echo a sequence $R \in \mathcal{H}$. The relationship between $S$ and $R$ is given by the following equation:

$$R[n] = H(S)[n] + W[n], \quad n \in \mathbb{Z}_N,$$

(I-A.1)

where $H$, called the channel operator, is defined by

$$H(S)[n] = \sum_{k=1}^{r} \alpha_k e(\omega_k n)S[n - \tau_k], \quad n \in \mathbb{Z}_N,$$

(I-A.2)

with $\alpha_k$'s the complex-valued attenuation coefficients associated with target $k$, $||\vec{\alpha}||^2 = \sum_k |\alpha_k|^2 = 1$, $\tau_k \in \mathbb{Z}_N$, the time shift associated with target $k$, $\omega_k \in \mathbb{Z}_N$, the frequency shift associated with target $k$, and $W$ denotes a random noise. The parameter $r$ will be called the sparsity of the channel. The time-frequency shifts $(\tau_k, \omega_k)$ are related to the location and velocity of target $k$. We denote the plane $\mathbb{Z}_N \times \mathbb{Z}_N$ of all time-frequency shifts by $V$. We denote by $P$ the probability measure on the sample space generated by the random noise and attenuation coefficients.

Remark I-A.1: Let us elaborate on the constraint $||\vec{\alpha}|| = 1$. In reality $||\vec{\alpha}|| \leq 1$. However, we can rescale the received sequence $R$ to make $||\vec{\alpha}|| = 1$. The rescaling will not change the quality of the detection, as evident from Section II-C.

We make the following assumption on the distribution of $W$:

Assumption (Square root cancellation): For every $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists $\varepsilon > 0$, such that for any $N^2$ vectors $u_1, \ldots, u_{N^2} \in S_{C}^{-1}$ we have

$$P \left( \left| \langle W, u_j \rangle \right| \leq N^{-\frac{1}{2} + \varepsilon}, \quad j = 1, 2, \ldots, N^2 \right) \geq 1 - e^{-cN}.$$

Note that an additive white gaussian noise (AWGN) of a constant, i.e., independent of $N$, signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) satisfies this assumption.

In addition, we make the following natural assumption on the distribution of the attenuation coefficients $(\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_r)$ of the channel operator:

Assumption (Uniformity): For any measurable subset $E \subset S_{C}^{-1}$ we have

$$P((\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_r) \in E) = \frac{\text{Area}(E)}{\text{Area}(S_{C}^{-1})},$$

where $\text{Area}$ denotes the unique up to scaling non-negative Borel measure on $S_{C}^{-1}$ which is invariant under all rotations of $\mathbb{C}^r$, i.e., elements in $SO_r(\mathbb{C})$.

The last natural assumption that we make is the independence of the noise and of the vector of attenuation coefficients of the channel operator:

Assumption (Independence): The random sequences $W \in \mathcal{H}$ and $\vec{\alpha} = (\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_r) \in S_{C}^{-1}$ are independent.

B. Objectives of the Paper

The main task of the digital radar system is to extract the channel parameters $(\tau_k, \omega_k)$, $k = 1, \ldots, r$, using $S$ and $R$ satisfying (I-A.1). One of the most popular methods for channel estimation is the pseudo-random (PR) method. In this note we describe the PR method and analyze its performance.
II. AMBIGUITY FUNCTION AND PSEUDO-RANDOM METHOD

A classical method to estimate the channel parameters in (I-A.1) is the pseudo-random method [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. It uses two ingredients - the ambiguity function, and a pseudo-random sequence.

A. Ambiguity Function

In order to reduce the noise component in (I-A.1), it is common to use the ambiguity function that we are going to describe now. We consider the time-frequency shift operators \( \pi(\tau, \omega) \), \( \tau, \omega \in \mathbb{Z}_N \), which act on \( f \in \mathcal{H} \) by

\[
[\pi(\tau, \omega)f][n] = e(\omega n) \cdot f[n - \tau], \quad n \in \mathbb{Z}_N
\]

The ambiguity function of two sequences \( f, g \in \mathcal{H} \) is defined as the \( N \times N \) matrix

\[
A(f, g)[\tau, \omega] = (\pi(\tau, \omega)f, g), \quad \tau, \omega \in \mathbb{Z}_N.
\]

Remark II-A.1 (Fast Computation of Ambiguity Function): The restriction of the ambiguity function to a line in the time-frequency plane, can be computed in \( O(N \log N) \) arithmetic operations using fast Fourier transform. For more details, including explicit formulas—see Section V of [1]. Overall, we can compute the entire ambiguity function in \( O(N^2 \log N) \) operations.

B. Pseudo-Random Sequences

We say that a norm-one sequence \( \phi \in \mathcal{H} \) is B-pseudo-random, \( B \in \mathbb{R} \)—see Figure 1 for illustration—if for every \( (\tau, \omega) \neq (0, 0) \) we have

\[
|A(\phi, \phi)[\tau, \omega]| \leq B/\sqrt{N}.
\]

There are several constructions of families of pseudo-random (PR) sequences in the literature—see [2], [3] and references therein.

C. Pseudo-Random (PR) Method

Consider a pseudo-random sequence \( \phi \), and assume for simplicity that \( B = 1 \) in (II-B.1). Then we have

\[
A(\phi, H(\phi))[\tau, \omega]
\]

\[
= \left\{ \begin{array}{ll}
\tilde{\alpha}_k + \sum_{j \neq k} \tilde{\alpha}_j/\sqrt{N}, & \text{if } (\tau, \omega) = (\tau_k, \omega_k), \ 1 \leq k \leq r; \\
\sum_{j} \tilde{\alpha}_j/\sqrt{N}, & \text{otherwise},
\end{array} \right.
\]

where \( \tilde{\alpha}_j, \ 1 \leq j \leq r, \) are certain multiples of the \( \alpha_j \)'s by complex numbers of absolute value less or equal to one. In particular, we can compute the time-frequency parameter \( (\tau_k, \omega_k) \) if the associated attenuation coefficient \( \alpha_k \) is sufficiently large, i.e., it appears as a “peak” of \( A(\phi, H(\phi)) \).

Definition II-C.1 (\( \delta \)-peak): Let \( \delta > 0 \). We say that at \( v \in V \) the ambiguity function of \( f \) and \( g \) has \( \delta \)-peak, if

\[
|A(f, g)[v]| \geq N^{-1/2 + \delta}.
\]

Below we describe—see Figure 2—the PR method.

Fig. 2. Profile of \( A(S, R) \) for a pseudo-random sequence \( S \), and a channel of sparsity three.

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Pseudo-Random Method

**Input:** Pseudo-random sequence \( S \in \mathcal{H} \), the echo \( R \), and a parameter \( \delta > 0 \).

**Output:** Channel parameters.

Compute \( A(S, R) \) on \( V \) and return those time-frequency shifts at which the \( \delta \)-peaks occur.

We call the above computational scheme the **PR method with parameter** \( \delta \).

Notice that the arithmetic complexity of the PR method is \( O(N^2 \log N) \), using Remark II-A.1.

III. PERFORMANCE OF THE PR METHOD

First, we introduce two important quantities that measure the performance of a detection scheme. These are the probability of detection and the expected number of false targets. Then, we formulate the main result of this note which provides a quantitative statement about the performance of the PR method.
Assume that we have $r$ targets out of the $N^2$ possible—see Section I-A. Also, assume that some random data is associated with these targets and influencing the performance of a detection scheme. For example, in our setting the random data consists of (i) the attenuation coefficients associated with the targets, and (ii) the noise. In general, we model the randomness of the data by associating a probability space $(\Omega, P)$ to the set of targets. For every $\omega$ in the space $\Omega$ we denote by $N_t(\omega)$ and $N_f(\omega)$, the number of true and false targets detected by the scheme, respectively. We define the probability of detection by

$$P_D = P(\text{a true target is detected}) = \frac{1}{r} \int_{\Omega} N_t(\omega) dP(\omega),$$

and the expected number of false targets by

$$E_{FT} = E(N_f) = \int_{\Omega} N_f(\omega) dP(\omega).$$

The main result of this note is the following:

**Theorem III-1 (Performance of PR method):** Assume the channel operator (I-A.2) satisfies the uniformity, square root cancellation, and independence assumptions. Then for $r \leq N^{1-\delta}$, where $\delta > 0$, we have $P_D \rightarrow 1$, and $E_{FT} \rightarrow 0$, as $N \rightarrow \infty$, for the PR method with parameter $\delta/4$.

**Remark III-2 (Rate of convergence):** We suspect that the true rate of convergence in $P_D \rightarrow 1$, and $E_{FT} \rightarrow 0$, as $N \rightarrow \infty$, is polynomial. In fact, our proof of Theorem III-1 confirms that the rate of convergence is at least polynomial.

**IV. CONCLUSIONS**

The obtained estimates in Theorem III-1 show that the PR method is effective in terms of performance of detection, in the regime $r \leq N^{1-\delta}$, for $\delta > 0$. We would like to note that if $r \geq N^{1+\epsilon}$, for $\epsilon > 0$, then the performance of the PR method deteriorates since the noise influence becomes dominant.

**V. PROOF OF THEOREM III-1**

Before giving a formal proof, we provide a sketch. To detect the parameters of the channel operator $H$, the PR method evaluates the ambiguity function of $R$, and $S$ at $v_k$:

$$A(S, R)(v_k) = \alpha_k + \sum_{j \neq k} \alpha_j \langle \pi(v_k)S, \pi(v_j)S \rangle + \langle \pi(v_k)S, W \rangle.$$ 

Let us denote by $c_k = \sum_{j \neq k} \alpha_j \langle \pi(v_k)S, \pi(v_j)S \rangle$ the $k$-th cross term, and by $\nu_k = \langle \pi(v_k)S, W \rangle$ the $k$-th noise component. Then we have

$$A(S, R)(v_k) = \alpha_k + c_k + \nu_k. \quad (V.1)$$

The parameter $v_k$ is detectable by the PR method if the main term $\alpha_k$ is much larger than the $k$-th cross term $c_k$, and the noise component $\nu_k$. For a random point on the unit sphere $S_{C^{-1}}$, by “concentration” most of its coordinates are of absolute value approximately equal to $1/\sqrt{r}$. Thus, if $r \leq N$, the magnitude of most of $\alpha_k$’s is greater than $1/\sqrt{N}$. Another instance of the concentration phenomenon guarantees that for most channels, the magnitude of the cross term $c_k$ is smaller than $1/\sqrt{N}$. Finally, the square root cancellation assumption on the noise guarantees that the magnitude of the noise term $\nu_k$ is much smaller than $1/\sqrt{N}$.

We begin the formal proof of the theorem with auxiliary lemmata. In Section VI we prove these statements.

**Lemma V-1 (Largeness of a slice):** Let $(\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_r)$ be a uniformly chosen point on $S_{C^{-1}}$, and fix $k \in \{1, \ldots, r\}$. There exists $K > 0$ (independent of $r$ and $k$), such that for every $\epsilon > 0$ we have

$$P(\{|\alpha_k| \geq \epsilon\}) \geq 1 - K\sqrt{r\epsilon}.$$ 

**Lemma V-2 (Intersectivity):** Let $E_1, \ldots, E_r$ be events in a probability space $(\Omega, P)$, such that $P(E_k) \geq 1 - r^{-\delta/2}$, for $r > 0$. Then for the event

$$E = \{\omega \in \Omega \mid \omega \text{ is in at least } n(r, \delta) \text{ of } E_k \text{’s}\},$$

where

$$n(r, \delta) = \lfloor (1 - r^{-\delta/2})r \rfloor,$$

we have

$$P(E) \geq 1 - r^{-\delta/2}.$$ 

**Lemma V-3 (Almost orthogonality):** Let $\ell > 0$, and let $z_j = (z_{j,1}, \ldots, z_{j,r}) \in C^r$, $j = 1, \ldots, r'$, be vectors satisfying

$$\sum_{k=1}^{r'} |z_{j,k}|^2 \leq C^2 r, \text{ for some } C > 0.$$ 

Then for any $\delta > 0$, there exists $\beta > 0$, such that for a uniformly chosen random point $\hat{\alpha} \in S_{C^{-1}}$ we have

$$P\left(\bigcap_{j=1}^{r'} \{|\langle \hat{\alpha}, z_j \rangle| \leq C\beta \sqrt{r}\} \right) \geq 1 - e^{-\beta r^2e^\delta}. $$

**Proof of Theorem III-1:** Assume that $r \leq N^{1-\delta}$, for some $\delta > 0$. Let $R = HS + \mathcal{W}$, where $S$ is a $(B = 1)$-pseudo-random sequence in $H$, $H$ is a channel of sparsity $r$ with uniformly distributed attenuation coefficients given by (I-A.2), and $\mathcal{W}$ satisfies the square root cancellation assumption. We denote $v_k = (\tau_k, \omega_k), k = 1, \ldots, r$, and assume that at the receiver we perform PR method with parameter $\delta/4$.

(A) Proof of “$P_D \rightarrow 1$ as $N \rightarrow \infty$”.

We consider two cases.

**Case 1.** $r \geq \log N$.

Denote by $E_k = \{\omega \in \Omega \mid |\alpha_k(\omega)| \geq N^{-1/2+\delta/3}\}$ for $k = 1, \ldots, r$. Since $r \leq N^{1-\delta}$ by Lemma V-1 there exists $K > 0$ such that we have

$$P(E_k) \geq 1 - K r^{-4/3}. $$

Therefore, for sufficiently large $N$, we have

$$P(E_k) \geq 1 - r^{-4/3}. $$

Denote by

$$E = \{\omega \in \Omega \mid \omega \text{ is in at least } (1 - r^{-4/3})r \text{ of } E_k \text{’s}\}. $$
By Lemma V.2 we have

$$P(E) \geq 1 - r^{\frac{N}{3N-2\delta}}. \quad (V.2)$$

Since $r \leq N^{1-\delta}$, we have $r^{\frac{N}{3N-2\delta}} \leq N^{\delta/5}$. Therefore, by Lemma V.3, there exists $\beta > 0$ such that

$$P \left( \bigcap_{k=1}^{r} \left\{ \left| \sum_{j \neq k} \alpha_j \langle \pi(v_k)S, \pi(v_j)S \rangle \right| \leq N^{-\frac{1}{2} + \frac{\delta}{5}} \right\} \right) \geq 1 - e^{-\beta r^{\frac{N}{3N-2\delta}}} \quad (V.3)$$

It follows from (II-C.1), (V.2), (V.3), the square root cancellation and independence assumptions, that with probability greater or equal than $1 - r^{\frac{N}{3N-2\delta}}$, at least $(1 - r^{\frac{N}{3N-2\delta}})r$ of the channel parameters of $H$ are detectable.

The latter implies that $P_D \geq (1 - r^{\frac{N}{3N-2\delta}})(1 - r^{\frac{N}{3N-2\delta}})$ for $N$ sufficiently large. Therefore we have $P_D \rightarrow 1$ as $N \rightarrow \infty$.

**Case 2.** $r \leq \log N$.

By Lemma V.1, there exists $K > 0$ such that

$$P \left( \bigcap_{k=1}^{r} \left\{ |\alpha_k| \geq N^{-1/2 + \delta/3} \right\} \right) \geq 1 - K(\log N)^{\delta/2} N^{-\delta/2 + \delta/3}. $$

By Cauchy-Schwartz inequality we have for all $k = 1, \ldots, r$:

$$\left| \sum_{j \neq k} \alpha_j \langle \pi(v_k)S, \pi(v_j)S \rangle \right| \leq \frac{\sqrt{r}}{\sqrt{N}} \leq \frac{\sqrt{\log N}}{N}. $$

It follows from (II-C.1), square root cancellation assumption on the noise, and the last two inequalities that for sufficiently large $N$, all $r$ channel parameters of the operator $H$ are detectable with probability greater or equal than $1 - N^{-1/2 + \delta/2}$. Therefore, for sufficiently large $N$ we have

$$P_D \geq 1 - N^{-1/2 + \delta/2}. $$

The latter implies that $P_D \rightarrow 1$ as $N \rightarrow \infty$.

**Proof of Lemma V.1:** We identify the Borel probability space on $S^{n-1}$ invariant under all rotations with the Borel probability space $S^{2n-1}$ of the real unit sphere invariant under all rotations. Recall that

$$S^{2n-1} = \{(x_1, y_1, x_2, y_2, \ldots, x_r, y_r) \in \mathbb{R}^{2r} \mid \sum_{k=1}^{r} x_k^2 + y_k^2 = 1\}.$$ 

Without loss of generality, it is enough to prove the statement for $k = 1$. Let $\alpha_1 = x_1 + i \cdot y_1$. We use the notation $(\Omega, P)$ for the probability space on $S^{2n-1}$ invariant under all rotations in $\mathbb{R}^{2r}$. For any $\rho > 0$, and any dimension $n$, we denote the real sphere of radius $\rho$ in $\mathbb{R}^n$ by $S^{n-1}_\rho$:

$$S^{n-1}_\rho = \{(t_1, \ldots, t_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n \mid \sum_{k=1}^{n} t_k^2 = \rho^2\}. $$

Let $\varepsilon > 0$. By Fubini’s theorem and using the homogeneity of the Lebesgue measure we get

$$P(\omega \in \Omega \mid |x_1(\omega)| \leq \varepsilon) = \frac{2}{\text{Area}(S^{2n-1}_1)} \int_{0}^{\varepsilon} \text{Area}(S^{2n-2}_{2(t^2-1)}) \, dt = \frac{2\text{Area}(S^{2n-2}_1)}{\text{Area}(S^{2n-2}_{2})} \int_{0}^{\varepsilon} (1 - t^2)^{2n-2} \, dt.$$ 

It is well known that

$$\text{Area}(S^{n-1}_\rho) \rightarrow \frac{n}{2\pi \rho} \text{ as } \rho \rightarrow \infty.$$ 

Therefore, for $r$ large enough we have

$$P(\omega \in \Omega \mid |x_1(\omega)| \leq \varepsilon) \leq \frac{1}{\pi} \int_{0}^{\varepsilon} (1 - t^2)^{r-1} \, dt \leq \sqrt{\frac{4r}{\pi}} \cdot \varepsilon.$$ 

Finally, the containment $\{\omega \in \Omega \mid |\alpha_1(\omega)| \leq \varepsilon\} \subset \{\omega \in \Omega \mid |x_1(\omega)| \leq \varepsilon\}$ together with last inequality imply the statement of the lemma. 

$\blacksquare$
Proof of Lemma V.2: Denote by $\gamma = P(E)$, and by $f_k = \chi_{E_k}$, $k = 1, \ldots, r$. Then we have
\[
\int \sum_{k=1}^{r} f_k dP \geq r \cdot (1 - r^{-\delta}).
\]
On the other hand, we have
\[
\int \sum_{k=1}^{r} f_k dP = \int \sum_{k=1}^{r} f_k dP + \int_{E} \sum_{k=1}^{r} f_k dP
\]
\[
\leq \gamma \cdot r + (1 - \gamma) \cdot (1 - r^{-\delta/2}) \cdot r.
\]
The last inequality implies that
\[
1 - r^{-\delta} \leq \gamma \cdot r^{\delta/2} + (1 - r^{-\delta/2}).
\]
It implies
\[
\gamma \geq 1 - r^{-\delta/2}.
\]
Proof of Lemma V.3: Let $\epsilon > 0$. We proceed similarly to the proof of Lemma V.1. Since
\[
\{ \omega \in \Omega \mid |\alpha_1(\omega)| > \epsilon \}
\]
\[
\subset \{ \omega \in \Omega \mid |x_1(\omega)| > \epsilon/2 \} \cup \{ \omega \in \Omega \mid |y_1(\omega)| > \epsilon/2 \},
\]
and
\[
P(\{|x_1| > \epsilon/2\}) = P(\{|y_1| > \epsilon/2\}) = 2 \cdot \frac{\text{Area}(S_{2r-2}^2)}{\text{Area}(S_{1}^{2r-1})} \int_{\epsilon/2}^{1} (1 - t^2)^{r-1} dt,
\]
we conclude that there exists $K > 0$ such that
\[
P(|\alpha_1| > \epsilon) \leq K \sqrt{r} \int_{\epsilon/2}^{1} (1 - t^2)^{r-1} dt.
\]
If $\epsilon = r^{-1/2+\delta}$, then there exists $\beta' > 0$ such that
\[
(1 - (\epsilon/2)^2)^{r-1} \leq e^{-\beta'' r^{2\delta}}.
\]
This implies that there exists $\beta'' > 0$ such that
\[
P(|\alpha_1| \geq r^{-1/2+\delta}) \leq e^{-\beta'' r^{2\delta}}.
\]
By the rotation invariance of the Lebesgue measure on $S^{2r-1}$, it follows that there exists $\beta > 0$ such that for any set of directions $\theta_1, \ldots, \theta_r \in S^{2r-1}$ we have
\[
P \left( \bigcup_{j=1}^{r} \left\{ \omega \in \Omega \mid |\langle \alpha(\omega), \theta_j \rangle| \geq r^{-1/2+\delta} \right\} \right)
\]
\[
\leq r^d \cdot e^{-\beta'' r^{2\delta}} \leq e^{-\beta r^{2\delta}}.
\]
The latter implies the statement of the lemma.

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