

The Imaging Interpretation of the Ambiguity Function

• Recall that the response of a matched filter matched to $s(t-\tau)e^{i2\pi\nu t}$ to a signal $s(t-\tau_0)e^{i2\pi\nu_0 t}$ is

$$\mathcal{O}_{T+\tau}(\tau,\nu) = e^{-i2\pi(\nu-\nu_0)\tau_0} \cdot \beta_s(\tau-\tau_0,\nu-\nu_0).$$

• Now consider two scatterers having returns with complex amplitudes c_1 and c_2 , delays τ_1 and τ_2 , and Doppler shifts ν_1 and ν_2 , respectively. Then the output of a matched filter matched to the delay-Doppler pair (τ, ν) (ignoring multiple reflections between the two targets) is

$$\mathcal{O}_{T+\tau}(\tau,\nu) = c_1 e^{-i2\pi(\nu-\nu_1)\tau_1} \beta_s(\tau-\tau_1,\nu-\nu_1) + c_2 e^{-i2\pi(\nu-\nu_2)\tau_2} \beta_s(\tau-\tau_2,\nu-\nu_2).$$

• More generally, for M targets, it can be shown that

$$\mathcal{O}_{T+\tau}(\tau,\nu) = \sum_{m=1}^{M} c_m e^{-i2\pi(\nu-\nu_m)\tau_m} \beta_s(\tau-\tau_m,\nu-\nu_m).$$

- So the overall response is a linear combination of phase-shifted ambiguity functions centered about the target locations $(\tau_1, \nu_1), \ldots, (\tau_M, \nu_M)$.
- This looks a lot like convolution of the ambiguity function with impulses at the target locations, but the phase terms make this not quite right.

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Let's go back and look at the two scatterer case:

$$\mathcal{O}_{T+\tau}(\tau,\nu) = c_1 e^{-i2\pi(\nu-\nu_1)\tau_1} \beta_s(\tau-\tau_1,\nu-\nu_1) + c_2 e^{-i2\pi(\nu-\nu_2)\tau_2} \beta_s(\tau-\tau_2,\nu-\nu_2).$$

Let's take a look at one plots of $|\mathcal{O}(\tau, \nu)|$ for two targets at different locations in delay and Doppler, as well as both rectangular and chirp waveforms.

The Imaging Interpretation of the Ambiguity Function (Cont.)

This is what $|\mathcal{O}_{T+\tau}(\tau,\nu)|$ looks like when $(\tau_1,\nu_1,c_1) = (1,0,1)$ and $(\tau_2,\nu_2,c_2) = (3,2,0.5)$.



With no overlap in the responses of the two targets, we have

$$|\mathcal{O}(\tau,\nu)| = |c_1| \cdot |\beta_s(\tau - \tau_1, \nu - \nu_1)| + |c_2| \cdot |\beta_s(\tau - \tau_2, \nu - \nu_2)|.$$

The Imaging Interpretation of the Ambiguity Function (Cont.)

This is what $|\mathcal{O}_{T+\tau}(\tau,\nu)|$ looks like when $(\tau_1,\nu_1,c_1) = (1,0,1)$ and $(\tau_2,\nu_2,c_2) = (2,2,0.5)$.



 $|\mathcal{O}(\tau,\nu)| \neq |c_1| \cdot |\beta_s(\tau-\tau_1,\nu-\nu_1)| + |c_2| \cdot |\beta_s(\tau-\tau_2,\nu-\nu_2)|.$





Numerical Evaluation of Ambiguity Functions

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• The asymmetric ambiguity function is given by

$$\beta_s(\tau,\nu) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} s(t)s^*(t-\tau) e^{-i2\pi\nu t} dt.$$

• If s(t) has support [0, T], we can write this as

$$\beta_s(\tau,\nu) = \int_0^T s(t) s^*(t-\tau) \, e^{-i2\pi\nu t} \, dt.$$

• We can interpret this as the limit of a Riemann sum

$$\beta_s(\tau,\nu) \approx \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} s(n\Delta t) s^*((n-m)\Delta t) e^{-i2\pi\nu n\Delta t} \cdot \Delta t,$$

where

$$\tau = \tau_m = m\Delta t$$
 and $N = [T/\Delta t].$

Numerical Evaluation of Ambiguity Functions (Cont.)

• Now define the discrete-time signal

$$s[n] = s(n\Delta t), \quad n = 0, 1, 2, \dots, N-1.$$

• Then we can write $\beta_s(\tau, \nu)$ in terms of s[n] as

$$\beta_s(\tau,\nu) \approx \Delta t \cdot \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} s[n]s^*[n-m] e^{-i2\pi\nu n\Delta t}.$$

Now consider the closely related N-point DFT

DFT_n {s[n]s*[n-m]} =
$$\sum_{n=0}^{N-1} s[n]s^*[n-m] e^{-i\frac{2\pi nk}{N}}$$
.

• If we take

$$\tau = \tau_m = m\Delta t$$

and

$$\nu = \nu_k = \frac{k}{N\Delta t},$$

then we have

$$\beta_s(\tau_m, \nu_k) = \left(\frac{T}{N-1}\right) \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} s[n] s^*[n-m] e^{-i\frac{2\pi nk}{N}} = \text{DFT}_n \left\{ s[n] s^*[n-m] \right\}.$$

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Cross-Ambiguity Functions

Definition: (Asymmetric cross-ambiguity function) The asymmetric cross-ambiguity function of two finite-energy signals r(t) and s(t) is defined as

$$\beta_{rs}(\tau,\nu) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} r(t)s^*(t-\tau)e^{-i2\pi\nu t} dt.$$

Definition: (Symmetric cross-ambiguity function) The symmetric cross-ambiguity function of two finite-energy signals r(t) and s(t) is defined as

$$\Gamma_{rs}(\tau,\nu) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} r(t+\tau/2)s^*(t-\tau/2)e^{-i2\pi\nu t} dt$$

We will focus primarily on the asymmetric form, but the symmetric form is of interest in signal theory.