High Precision Image Registration Technology for High-resolution SAR Images

Qianyan Meng[1], Liyu Yan[2]*

[1]School of Electronic Information, Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Beihai, 536000, Guangxi, China

[2]School of Computer Engineering, Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Beihai, 536000, Guangxi, China

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Abstract: This article deeply explores the challenges of high-precision registration for high-resolution SAR images. Given their significant applications in earth observation, environmental monitoring, and other domains, the geometric and radiation disparities encountered during acquisition pose obstacles to image analysis and interpretation. The objective of this article is to devise an efficient and precise image registration technique. To accomplish this, we introduce a high-precision image registration algorithm leveraging advanced image processing technology and mathematical optimization methods. This algorithm innovates in feature extraction, matching strategies, and optimization algorithm design. Experimental results demonstrate its superiority over existing advanced algorithms in terms of registration accuracy and computational efficiency, particularly when handling complex scenarios like large deformation areas and speckle noise interference. These research findings offer robust support for the further processing of high-resolution SAR images and establish a solid groundwork for future advancements in this field.

1. Introduction

With the rapid advancements in remote sensing technology, synthetic aperture radar (SAR), as an active microwave imaging sensor, holds a pivotal role in earth observation, environmental monitoring, disaster assessment, and military reconnaissance [1]. High-resolution SAR images offer extensive surface information and invaluable data support for precision agriculture, urban planning, topographic mapping, and other applications [2]. Nonetheless, the acquisition process of SAR images is influenced by various factors, including sensor attitude, surface changes, atmospheric interference, etc., leading to geometric and radiation discrepancies between images captured at different times in the same area. These discrepancies pose challenges for image analysis and interpretation [3]. Consequently, studying high-precision registration technology for high-resolution SAR images is crucial for enhancing the performance of subsequent processing tasks, such as image fusion, change detection, and target recognition.

In recent years, scholars have made significant strides in the field of SAR image registration, proposing numerous methods based on features, regions, or transform domains [4]. Feature-based registration primarily relies on matching salient features like points, lines, and edges in the image; region-based registration achieves alignment by comparing the similarity between image blocks; and transform domain methods utilize the frequency domain characteristics of images for registration [5]. While these methods have improved registration accuracy and efficiency to some extent, they still encounter challenges in processing high-resolution SAR images, including the complexity of feature extraction, registration of large deformation areas, and error accumulation during the registration process.

The objective of this study is to explore a high-precision and efficient image registration technology tailored to the characteristics of high-resolution SAR images. The specific research objectives encompass: analyzing the characteristics of high-resolution SAR images and their impact on registration algorithms; examining the strengths and weaknesses of existing registration algorithms and making improvements or innovations accordingly; proposing a high-precision registration algorithm suited for high-resolution SAR images; and conducting experimental

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verification and performance evaluation.

2. Analysis of SAR image characteristics

SAR image, as the imaging result of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), has a series of unique characteristics, which pose specific challenges to image registration technology. Firstly, SAR images are often affected by speckle noise, which is caused by the interaction between radar signals and surface roughness. This kind of noise shows granular texture in the image, which brings difficulties to image registration, because noise will interfere with feature extraction and matching. Secondly, there may be geometric distortion in SAR images, which is caused by factors such as perspective shrinkage, terrain fluctuation and sensor attitude change during SAR imaging. These distortions will change the position and shape of the same ground object in SAR images acquired at different times, thus increasing the difficulty of registration [6]. In addition, there may be radiation differences in SAR images, which are caused by the changes of surface reflection characteristics at different times, seasons or weather conditions. Radiation difference will lead to the change of brightness or contrast of the same object in different images, which further increases the complexity of registration.

To register SAR images, researchers have proposed various traditional algorithms, which can be broadly categorized into three types: feature-based, region-based, and transform-based registration methods [7]. Feature-based registration primarily relies on salient image features for matching. In SAR images, these features often include points, lines, and regions [8]. By extracting these features and establishing relationships between them, image registration is achieved. However, feature extraction and matching in high-resolution SAR images become more complex due to richer details and lower feature discrimination. Region-based registration achieves registration by comparing similarities between image blocks. This method typically involves dividing the image into overlapping or non-overlapping blocks and calculating the similarity between each block [9]. The best registration parameters are then determined by optimizing the similarity measure. However, calculating similarity between regions in high-resolution SAR images is more challenging due to speckle noise and radiation differences.

Transform-based registration utilizes the frequency domain characteristics of images for registration. This method typically involves converting the image into the frequency domain and performing registration operations there. The registration result is then converted back to the time domain to obtain the final registered image. However, this method may encounter issues such as frequency domain aliasing and noise when processing high-resolution SAR images.

3. High-precision image registration algorithm

The core of high-precision image registration algorithm is to construct a mathematical model that can effectively describe the geometric and radiation relationship between images, and this model can accurately reflect the spatial transformation relationship between images [10]. In order to achieve this goal, this article adopts advanced image processing technology and mathematical optimization methods to ensure that the model is both rigorous in theory and feasible in practical application. Feature extraction is one of the key steps in high-precision image registration. In the feature matching stage, this article adopts an advanced matching strategy-matching based on similarity measure to ensure the accuracy and robustness of feature matching.

In order to improve the accuracy and efficiency of SAR image registration, this article designs and implements an efficient optimization algorithm. The core idea of the algorithm is to combine the global optimization and local optimization strategies, aiming at quickly locating the approximate registration area and conducting fine search in this area to find the best registration parameters. This strategy ensures that the search range of the algorithm covers the whole image, avoids falling into the local optimal solution, and can further improve the registration accuracy on the basis of global optimization. In the process of implementation, the algorithm is initialized, appropriate initial registration parameters are selected, and the iteration times or convergence conditions of global optimization and local optimization are set. Then, a fast global search algorithm is used to search the registration parameters. By calculating the image similarity under the current registration parameters, the registration parameters are updated according to the similarity until the convergence condition of global optimization is met. The algorithm equation is as follows:

$$v_{id}^{k+1} = v_{id}^{k} + rand(\ ) \times \left(p_{id} - x_{id}^{k}\right) + rand(\ ) \times \left(p_{gd} - x_{id}^{k}\right) \tag{1}$$

$$if\ \rho_{id}^{k+1} < sig\left(v_{id}^{k+1}\right)\ then\ x_{id}^{k+1} = 1;\ else\ x_{id}^{k+1} = 0 \tag{2}$$

In the formula:

$$sig\left(v_{id}^{k+1}\right) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp\left(-v_{id}^{k+1}\right)} \tag{3}$$

Where $sig\left(v_{id}^{k+1}\right)$ is a Sigmoid function; $\rho_{id}^{k+1} \in [0,1]$ is the d component of a random vector ρ_{id}^{k+1}; v is speed. Then, in the approximate registration area obtained by global optimization, a fine local search algorithm is used to further search, and the registration parameters are updated by calculating the gradient information of similarity until the convergence condition of local optimization is met. Finally, the algorithm outputs the final registration parameters and the registered image, and evaluates the registration accuracy and calculation efficiency.

In the selection of key parameters, the algorithm pays attention to the selection of initial registration parameters. The initial rotation angle and translation distance can be obtained by extracting the salient features in the image and calculating the corresponding relationship between the features, or the randomly generated initial registration parameters can be selected to increase the diversity and robustness of the algorithm. Furthermore, the algorithm determines the appropriate number of iterations or convergence conditions of global optimization and local optimization through experiments, so as to reduce the number of iterations or relax the convergence conditions appropriately and improve the calculation efficiency under the premise of ensuring a certain registration accuracy. In addition, the algorithm also selects an appropriate similarity measurement function to measure the similarity between images, so as to flexibly adjust according to specific application scenarios and requirements. The design and implementation of this optimization algorithm provides a more accurate and efficient method for SAR image registration.

4. Experimental design and result analysis

In order to verify the effectiveness of the proposed algorithm comprehensively and deeply, several groups of representative high-resolution SAR images are carefully selected as experimental data sets. These images cover different scenes, landforms and complexity to ensure the wide applicability and robustness of the algorithm. Before the registration experiment, this section carries out necessary preprocessing operations on the images, including but not limited to denoising, enhancement and geometric correction, aiming at eliminating the interference factors in the images, improving the image quality and ensuring the consistency and comparability between the images. Then, a high-precision image registration algorithm is implemented in strict accordance with the algorithm principle and model proposed in the previous section. The algorithm combines global optimization and local optimization strategies, aiming at finding the best registration parameters quickly and accurately and achieving accurate alignment between images. In order to ensure the stability and reliability of the algorithm, this section has fully tested and debugged it. In the test process, a variety of different test scenarios and test data are used to verify the algorithm comprehensively. Furthermore, the key parameters of the algorithm are carefully adjusted and optimized to ensure that it can show the best performance in all situations.

This section mainly demonstrates the performance of the proposed algorithm through several groups of experiments. For each group of experiments, the comparison of registration accuracy and the key indicators of calculation efficiency will be shown. Furthermore, the advantages and practicability of the proposed algorithm will be further verified by comparing with other advanced algorithms. The results are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

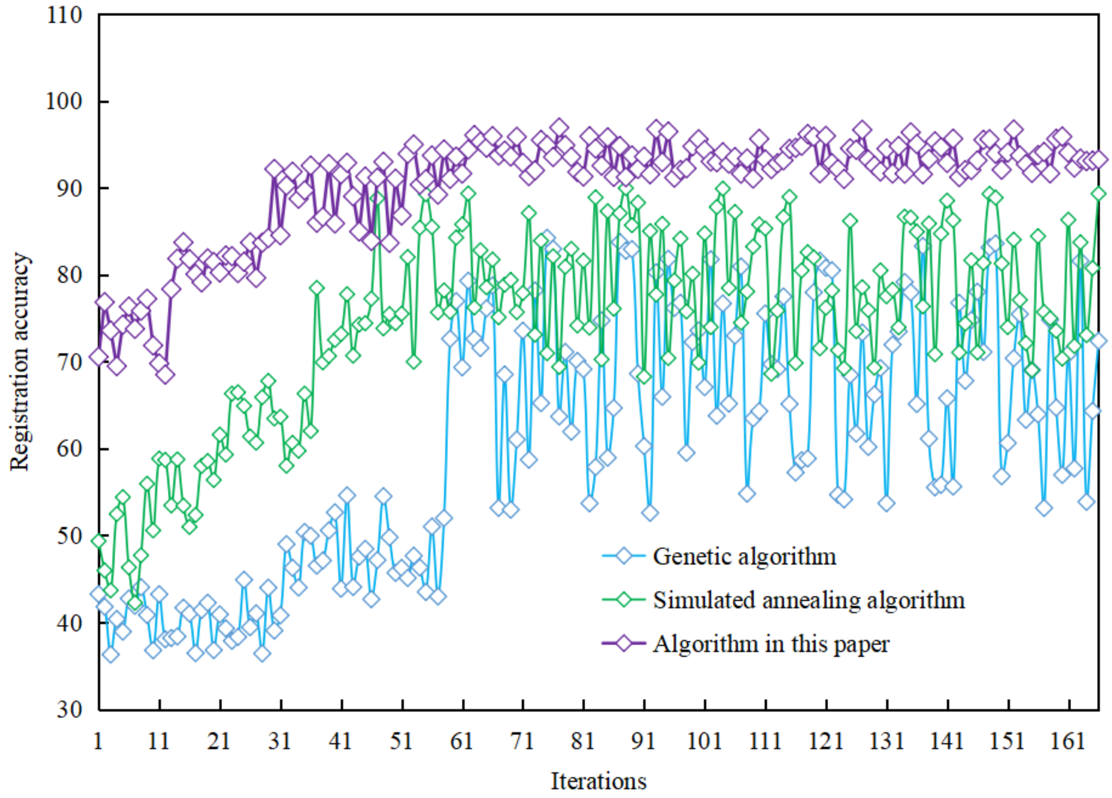

Figure 1 Comparison of registration accuracy

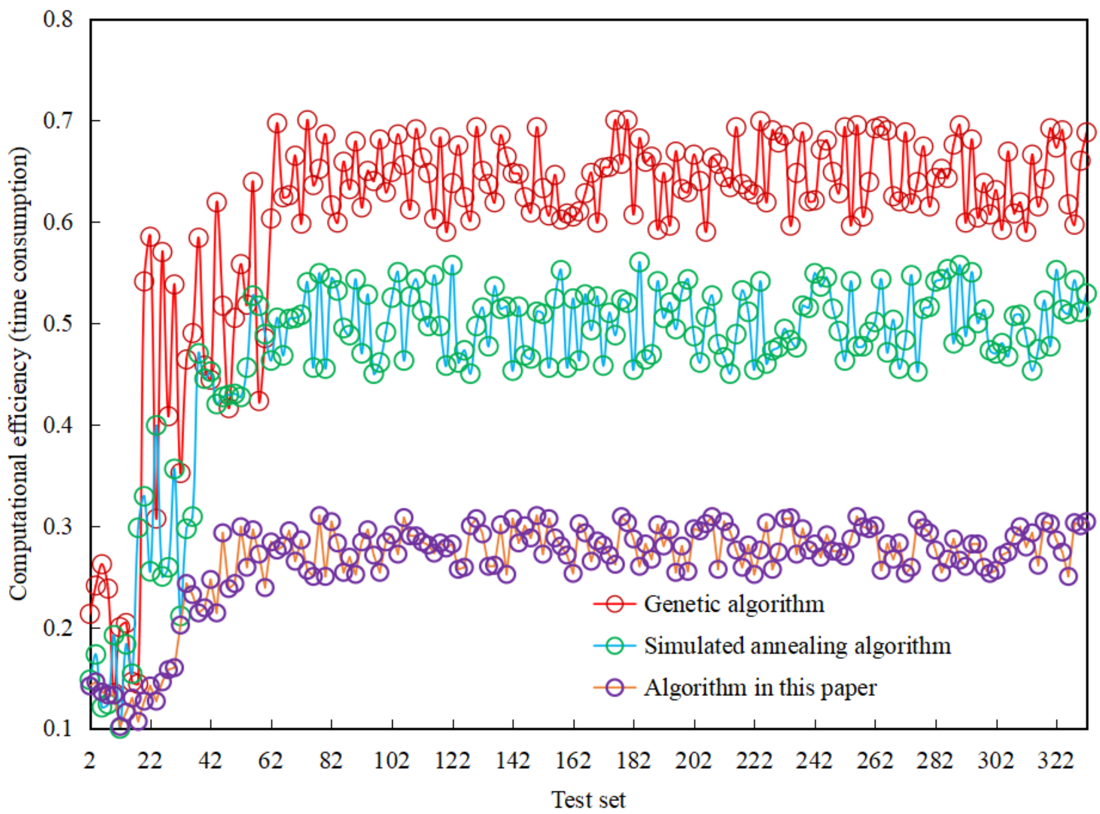

Figure 2 Comparison of calculation efficiency

Figs. 1 and 2 show the comparison results of registration accuracy and calculation efficiency.

Compared with other algorithms, it can be clearly seen that this method achieves higher computational efficiency while maintaining high precision registration. This advantage is particularly important in practical application, because it can significantly shorten the time of image registration and improve the overall processing efficiency. This further verifies the advantages and practicability of the proposed algorithm.

This section's research not only offers a valuable reference for advancing high-precision image registration technology but also presents a superior and efficient solution for practical image registration tasks. We are confident that this research outcome will significantly impact the future of image registration and foster the continued development and application of related technologies.

5. Conclusions

This study is devoted to exploring the high-precision registration technology of high-resolution SAR images. Through in-depth theoretical analysis and experimental verification, a series of important research results have been achieved. In this article, a new high-precision image registration algorithm is proposed, which is innovative in feature extraction, matching strategy and optimization algorithm design, and effectively improves the accuracy and efficiency of registration. Through experimental analysis, the advantages and practicability of the proposed algorithm are verified, which provides strong support for the follow-up processing tasks of high-resolution SAR images.

Although some achievements have been made in this study, there are still some problems and limitations. First of all, the registration effect of the algorithm in dealing with extremely complex scenes (such as large deformation areas and serious speckle noise interference) needs to be further improved. Secondly, the computational complexity of the algorithm is high, and the processing efficiency of large-scale image data needs to be optimized. In addition, this study is mainly based on simulation experiments and a limited number of real data, and the generalization ability and practical application effect of the algorithm still need to be further tested.

In view of the above problems and limitations, we will continue to study the characteristics of high-resolution SAR images in the future and explore more effective feature extraction and matching strategies to improve the registration performance of the algorithm in complex scenes. Furthermore, we will focus on optimizing the computational efficiency of the algorithm, and improve the ability of the algorithm to process large-scale image data by introducing advanced technologies such as parallel computing and distributed processing. We believe that in the future research, through continuous exploration and innovation, the development and application of high-resolution SAR image registration technology will be further promoted.

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