

FMRI Simulator: Development and Applications

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Hilary Term, 2007

Computing Laboratory

and

FMRIB Centre, Department of Clinical Neurology

University of Oxford

To my family

Mami, tati, bati, seki, baki, deki i ujki ...

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Abstract

Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (FMRI) is a non-invasive method of imaging brain function in-vivo. However, images produced in FMRI experiment almost invariably contain imperfections, known as artifacts. These artifacts can result from, for example, rigid-body motion of the head, magnetic field inhomogeneities, chemical shift and eddy currents.

To investigate these artifacts, with the eventual aim of minimising or removing them completely, a computational model of the FMR image acquisition process was built which can simulate all of the above mentioned artifacts. The simulator uses a geometric definition of the object (brain), Bloch equations (to model the behaviour of the magnetisation) and a model for the Blood Oxygen Level Dependent (BOLD) activations. Furthermore, it simulates rigid-body motion of the object by solving Bloch equations for an object moving continuously in time (as opposed to assuming movement only between the acquisition of consecutive images). This is a novel approach in the area of MRI computer simulations. With this approach it is possible, in a controlled and precise way, to simulate the full effects of various rigid-body motion artifacts in FMRI data (e.g. spin-history effects, B_0 -motion interaction and within-scan motion blurring) and therefore formulate and test algorithms for their reduction. This thesis presents the development of the model for the simulator, its numerical implementation and solutions for the computational issues, and the validation of the simulator by comparing its outputs with existing theoretical and experimental results.

Finally, the simulator is applied in a number of diverse applications. These applications include: comparing different acquisition techniques for eddy-current compensation; reproducing and extending experiments in neuronal current imaging; quantifying the performance of motion correction software; quantitatively evaluating the impact of stimulus correlated motion artifacts; and investigating the performance of Independent Component Analysis (ICA) as a tool for quantifying motion-related artifacts.

Word count: 45000

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Oxford

Hilary Term, 2007

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor “up in FMRIB” Mark Jenkinson for his constant support, endless scientific skills, invaluable guidance, all the things I learned from him, the tireless reading of this thesis, and above all for his goodness and the “airport-bus-viva” trip to Oxford. I would also like to thank my supervisors “down in COMLAB”: David Gavaghan for his constant support, endless enthusiasm, and his belief in me for a very long time which led to me starting this project in FMRIB; Endre Süli for his constant support, the constantly open door of his COMLAB office and his belief in me even before we met which led to me coming to Oxford.

I would also like to highlight the contribution made by my insightful examiners, Professor Sir Mike Brady and Professor Richard Bowtell, whose comments have contributed greatly to the final form of this thesis.

The research summarised here was funded by an MIAS/IRC research grant. Financial support is also gratefully acknowledged from the Computing Laboratory, ISMRM society and Linacre College.

Special thanks go to my computing clusters providers: Cubric Centre in Cardiff, Oxford Supercomputing Centre and Robotics Research Laboratory in Oxford, who helped enormously with generating my results.

I would also like to thank FMRIB and its members. Never before have I worked in such a highly skilled, hard working but equally friendly and enchanting environment. Steve Smith for being a friend/boss from my first day in FMRIB, and for the food on the roof. Tim Behrens for his willingness to help at any given occasion, and for his driving skills. Heidi Johansen-Berg for helping me with my first HBM abstract, numerous advices, her thesis and for her wedding. Dave,

Duncan and Ian for their endless computing support. Christian for having an answer to everything. Karla for the MR knowledge. Marylin for being a heart. Salima for the car-support. Dan G for brainstormings. Sean for the viva help. Jen for the runs. Natalie for the soups, flowers and care. Rami, Brian, Morgan, Gwen, Saad, Katie, Antonio, Jesper, Mark W, Sue, Hannah, Stephan and all other members of FMRIB for being wonderful people to work with.

Special thanks go to Stuart Clare for his help in providing me with all the scanner information so that I can develop my own pulse sequence generator. He was also there as a constant fountain of MR physics knowledge and probably would have preferred some times if my office was kilometers away.

Thanks go to Matt Robson who gave many valuable comments, generated a FLASH sequence for me and gave me a box full of glass spheres which I used as my phantoms. Peter Jezzard always had quick and reliable answers regarding various MRI related issues. Rita Nunes gave me some nice images of eddy currents.

Many thanks goes to Sarah Jenkinson who was supplying me with books, food and most importantly with Hercule Poirot, who maintained my sanity.

I would like to thank my best friend Christina for being my source of optimism, joy and strength during this time. In some moments during our DPhil trip, for both personal and scientific reasons, only her huge optimism, the love of life, and the enormous capacity for friendship kept me going. I can truly call her my sister.

A special thank you goes to my boyfriend Richard for finding energy and time to offer help in proof reading and discussing my thesis on early Saturday mornings, and more generally for being a constant source of support, love, and music in my life.

The biggest thank you of all goes to my family. To my uncle Slavko, an ingenious engineer who was taken for cancer last year, for his love and his friendship. To my brother Igor and my sister Jelena for always being there for me. And finally, to my parents Milenko and Ljuba, for their unconditional love and for their faith in me since the day I was born. It is to my family that I dedicate this thesis to.

Related Publications

Journal Papers

I. Drobnyak, D. Gavaghan, E. Süli, J. Pitt-Francis, M. Jenkinson. Development of a fMRI simulator for modelling realistic rigid-body motion artifacts. *Magnetic Resonance in Medicine*, 56(2), 364-380, August 2006.

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List of Abbreviations

BOLD	Blood Oxygenation Level Dependant
CSF	Cerebro-Spinal Fluid
DWI	Diffusion-Weighted Imaging
EPI	Echo Planar Imaging
FID	Free Induction Decay
FLASH	Fast Low-Angle SHot
FLIRT	FMRIB Linear Image Registration Technique
FMRI	Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging
FMRIB	Oxford centre for fMRI of the Brain
FSL	FMRIB software library
FOV	Field Of View
FT	Fourier Transform
GE	Gradient-Echo
GM	Grey Matter
ICA	Independent Component Analysis
MCFLIRT	Motion Correction using FLIRT
MIDAS	MR Imaging Data Acquisition Simulator
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
NMR	Nuclear Magnetic Resonance
POSSUM	Physics Oriented Scanner Simulator Utility for MRI
RF	Radio-Frequency
ROI	Region-Of-Interest
SCM	Stimulus Correlated Motion
SE	Spin-Echo
SNR	Signal-to-Noise Ratio
TE	Echo Time
TR	Repetition Time
WM	White Matter

