

# Linear Methods for Time-Frequency-ARMA Approximation of Time-Varying Systems\*

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**Abstract**—Time-frequency autoregressive moving-average (TFARMA) models have recently been introduced as parsimonious parametric models for underspread nonstationary random processes and linear time-varying (LTV) systems. In this paper, we propose linear methods for approximating an underspread LTV system by a TFARMA-type system. The linear equations obtained have Toeplitz/block-Toeplitz structure and thus can be solved efficiently by the Wax-Kailath algorithm.

## 1 Introduction

We consider causal linear time-varying (LTV) systems  $\mathbb{H}$  that operate on discrete-time, finite-length signals  $u[n]$  defined on the time interval  $[0, N-1]$  according to the input-output relation

$$x[n] = (\mathbb{H}u)[n] = \sum_{m=0}^{N/2-1} h[n, m] u[(n-m) \bmod N], \quad n = 0, 1, \dots, N-1,$$

in which  $h[n, m]$  denotes the time-varying impulse response of  $\mathbb{H}$  and the summation interval is  $[0, N/2-1]$  because of causality. We propose to model such LTV systems by *TFARMA systems*, where TFARMA is short for “Time-Frequency Autoregressive Moving Average.” TFARMA systems are based on the time-frequency (TF) shift operator  $\mathbb{S}_{m,l} = \mathbb{F}^l \mathbb{T}^m$  with the cyclic time-shift operator  $\mathbb{T}^m$  defined by  $(\mathbb{T}^m x)[n] = x[(n-m) \bmod N]$  and the frequency-shift operator  $\mathbb{F}^l$  defined by  $(\mathbb{F}^l x)[n] = e^{i\frac{2\pi}{N}ln} x[n]$  (cyclic in  $l$ ). The time shifts (delays) model the system’s memory, while the frequency (Doppler) shifts model the system’s time variations. The input-output relation of a TFARMA( $M_A, L_A; M_B, L_B$ ) system is given by

$$x[n] = - \sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{A}_1} a_{m,l} (\mathbb{S}_{m,l} x)[n] + \sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{B}} b_{m,l} (\mathbb{S}_{m,l} u)[n]. \quad (1)$$

The first sum is the recursive TFAR component with the TFAR parameters  $a_{m,l}$ , and the second sum is the nonrecursive TFMA component with the TFMA parameters  $b_{m,l}$ . The delay-Doppler support regions

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$\mathcal{A}_1$  and  $\mathcal{B}$  are given by  $\mathcal{A}_1 \triangleq \{1, \dots, M_A\} \times \{-L_A, \dots, L_A\}$  and  $\mathcal{B} \triangleq \{0, \dots, M_B\} \times \{-L_B, \dots, L_B\}$ , with  $M_A$  and  $L_A$  denoting the TFAR delay and Doppler orders and  $M_B$  and  $L_B$  denoting the TFMA delay and Doppler orders.

The TFARMA input-output relation (1) can be written as  $(\mathbb{A}x)[n] = (\mathbb{B}u)[n]$  or, equivalently, as

$$x[n] = (\mathbb{H}_{\text{TFARMA}} u)[n].$$

Here, the TFARMA( $M_A, L_A; M_B, L_B$ ) system  $\mathbb{H}_{\text{TFARMA}}$  is given by

$$\mathbb{H}_{\text{TFARMA}} = \mathbb{A}^{-1}\mathbb{B}, \quad \text{with } \mathbb{A} \triangleq \sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m,l} \mathbb{S}_{m,l}, \quad \mathbb{B} \triangleq \sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{B}} b_{m,l} \mathbb{S}_{m,l}, \quad (2)$$

where  $\mathcal{A} \triangleq \{0, \dots, M_A\} \times \{-L_A, \dots, L_A\}$  and  $a_{0,l} = \delta[l]$  (the latter equation expresses the monicity of  $\mathbb{A}$ , which is consistent with the structure of (1)). The maximum lags of the TF shifts used in the TFARMA model (i.e., the lag orders  $M_A, L_A, M_B, L_B$ ) are typically constrained to be small. Such *underspread* systems [1]—i.e., LTV systems with small time delays and Doppler frequency shifts—are encountered in many applications.

In the case of time-invariant systems, techniques for linear AR, MA, and ARMA parameter estimation and system approximation have been proposed and studied by various authors [2–5]. For the time-varying case, TFAR, TFMA, and TFARMA models and corresponding (mostly nonlinear) parameter estimation algorithms have recently been introduced in [6–8]. These methods are related to previously proposed methods for time-varying ARMA modeling and parameter estimation (e.g., [9, 10]).

In this contribution, we propose linear methods for approximating a given LTV system by a TFARMA system. Our methods make use of approximations that are justified in the underspread case [1]. They lead to linear Toeplitz/block-Toeplitz equations that can be solved efficiently by the Wax-Kailath algorithm [11]. TFMA and TFAR system approximation are discussed as special cases.

## 2 TFARMA System Approximation

We wish to approximate a given causal LTV system  $\mathbb{H}$  by a TFARMA( $M_A, L_A; M_B, L_B$ ) system  $\mathbb{H}_{\text{TFARMA}} = \mathbb{A}^{-1}\mathbb{B}$  of given (small) delay orders  $M_A, M_B$  and Doppler orders  $L_A, L_B$ . Because finding a direct solution to this approximation problem is too difficult, we approximate instead  $\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}$  by  $\mathbb{B}$ —the underlying reasoning being that if  $\mathbb{H} \approx \mathbb{A}^{-1}\mathbb{B}$ , then it can be expected that also  $\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H} \approx \mathbb{B}$  and vice versa. We thus express the optimization as<sup>1</sup>

$$(\mathbb{A}_{\text{opt}}, \mathbb{B}_{\text{opt}}) \triangleq \arg \min_{\substack{\mathbb{A} \in \mathcal{H}_A \\ \mathbb{B} \in \mathcal{H}_B}} \|\mathbb{B} - \mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}\|^2, \quad (3)$$

where  $\mathcal{H}_A$  denotes the Hilbert space of all LTV systems of the form  $\sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m,l} \mathbb{S}_{m,l}$  with given delay-Doppler support region  $\mathcal{A} \triangleq \{0, \dots, M_A\} \times \{-L_A, \dots, L_A\}$  and  $a_{0,l} = \delta[l]$ , and  $\mathcal{H}_B$  denotes the Hilbert space of all LTV systems of the form  $\sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{B}} b_{m,l} \mathbb{S}_{m,l}$  with given delay-Doppler support region  $\mathcal{B} \triangleq \{0, \dots, M_B\} \times \{-L_B, \dots, L_B\}$ .

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<sup>1</sup>Inner products of causal operators are defined as  $\langle \mathbb{H}_1, \mathbb{H}_2 \rangle = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \sum_{m=0}^{N/2-1} h_1[n, m] \overline{h_2[n, m]}$ . The (squared) norm is thus given by  $\|\mathbb{H}\|^2 = \langle \mathbb{H}, \mathbb{H} \rangle = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} \sum_{m=0}^{N/2-1} |h[n, m]|^2$ .

## 2.1 The Spreading Function

For developing the solution to the above minimization problem, it will be convenient to use the *spreading function* (SF). The SF of an LTV system  $\mathbb{H}$  is defined as

$$S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, l] \triangleq \langle \mathbb{H}, \mathbb{S}_{m,l} \rangle = \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} h[n, m] e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}ln}.$$

It is (to within a factor of  $1/N$ ) the coefficient function in an expansion of  $\mathbb{H}$  into TF shift operators  $\mathbb{S}_{m,l}$ , i.e.,

$$\mathbb{H} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{m=-N/2}^{N/2-1} \sum_{l=-N/2}^{N/2-1} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, l] \mathbb{S}_{m,l}.$$

For the LTV systems  $\mathbb{A} = \sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m,l} \mathbb{S}_{m,l}$  and  $\mathbb{B} = \sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{B}} b_{m,l} \mathbb{S}_{m,l}$  in (2), we have

$$S_{\mathbb{A}}[m, l] = \begin{cases} N a_{m,l}, & (m, l) \in \mathcal{A} \\ 0, & \text{elsewhere} \end{cases} \quad \text{and} \quad S_{\mathbb{B}}[m, l] = \begin{cases} N b_{m,l}, & (m, l) \in \mathcal{B} \\ 0, & \text{elsewhere.} \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

## 2.2 Calculation of $\mathbb{B}$

The minimization problem (3) for  $\mathbb{B}$ , with fixed  $\mathbb{A}$ , can be formulated as the problem of finding the best subspace approximation  $\mathbb{B} \in \mathcal{H}_B$  to the operator  $\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}$ . According to the projection theorem, a necessary and sufficient condition for the optimum  $\mathbb{B}$  is that the approximation error  $\mathbb{B} - \mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}$  is orthogonal to the subspace  $\mathcal{H}_B$ , i.e.,  $\langle \mathbb{B} - \mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}, \mathbb{B}' \rangle = 0$  for all  $\mathbb{B}' \in \mathcal{H}_B$ . Because the TF shift operators  $\{\mathbb{S}_{m,l}\}_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{B}}$  are a basis for  $\mathcal{H}_B$ , an equivalent condition is that  $\langle \mathbb{B} - \mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}, \mathbb{S}_{m,l} \rangle = 0$  or  $\langle \mathbb{B}, \mathbb{S}_{m,l} \rangle = \langle \mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}, \mathbb{S}_{m,l} \rangle$  for  $(m, l) \in \mathcal{B}$ . Using the SF, the last equation can be rewritten as

$$S_{\mathbb{B}}[m, l] = S_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}}[m, l], \quad (m, l) \in \mathcal{B}, \quad (5)$$

or equivalently, using (4), as

$$N b_{m,l} = S_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}}[m, l], \quad (m, l) \in \mathcal{B}.$$

The right-hand side can be shown to be the *twisted convolution* [12] of  $S_{\mathbb{A}}[m, l]$  and  $S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, l]$ , i.e.,<sup>2</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} S_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}}[m, l] &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}} S_{\mathbb{A}}[m', l'] S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}m'(l-l')} \\ &= \sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}m'(l-l')}. \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

Thus, the parameters  $b_{m,l}$  characterizing the optimum  $\mathbb{B}$  according to (2) are finally obtained as

$$b_{m,l} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}m'(l-l')}, \quad (m, l) \in \mathcal{B}. \quad (7)$$

We now assume that  $M_A L_A \ll N$  and  $M_B L_B \ll N$ , i.e., the LTV systems  $\mathbb{A}$  and  $\mathbb{B}$  are *underspread* [1]. We then have  $e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}m'(l-l')} \approx 1$  in the sum in (7), which means that the twisted convolution is

<sup>2</sup>All convolutions and twisted convolutions are cyclic with period  $N$  even though this is not indicated by our notation.

approximated by a conventional 2-D convolution and hence (7) is approximated by

$$b_{m,l} \approx \frac{1}{N} \sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'], \quad (m,l) \in \mathcal{B}. \quad (8)$$

### 2.3 Calculation of $\mathbb{A}$

The previous result (8) allows the approximate calculation of the optimum TFMA parameters  $b_{m,l}$  for given TFAR parameters  $a_{m,l}$ . It remains to calculate the TFAR parameters  $a_{m,l}$ .

**Optimum calculation.** We first use the identity  $\|\mathbb{H}\|^2 = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{m=0}^{N/2-1} \sum_{l=-N/2}^{N/2-1} |S_{\mathbb{H}}[m,l]|^2$  to write the cost function to be minimized as

$$\begin{aligned} \|\mathbb{B} - \mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}\|^2 &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{m=0}^{N/2-1} \sum_{l=-N/2}^{N/2-1} |S_{\mathbb{B}}[m,l] - S_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}}[m,l]|^2 \\ &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{(m,l) \in \mathcal{B}} |S_{\mathbb{B}}[m,l] - S_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}}[m,l]|^2 + \frac{1}{N} \sum_{(m,l) \notin \mathcal{B}} |S_{\mathbb{B}}[m,l] - S_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}}[m,l]|^2. \end{aligned}$$

The first term vanishes due to (5), and in the second term  $S_{\mathbb{B}}[m,l] = 0$  due to (4). Thus, we obtain

$$\|\mathbb{B} - \mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}\|^2 = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{(m,l) \notin \mathcal{B}} |S_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}}[m,l]|^2 = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{(m,l) \notin \mathcal{B}} \left| \sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}m'(l-l')} \right|^2, \quad (9)$$

where (6) has been used. Note that here the underspread approximation  $e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}m'(l-l')} \approx 1$  cannot be used because the outer sum is over the *outside* of  $\mathcal{B}$ .

The expression (9) has now to be minimized with respect to the parameters  $a_{m,l}$ ,  $(m,l) \in \mathcal{A}_1$  (recall that  $a_{0,l} = \delta[l]$ ). Setting the derivative with respect to  $\overline{a_{m_0,l_0}}$ ,  $(m_0,l_0) \in \mathcal{A}_1$  equal to zero [13] yields

$$\sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}_1} a_{m',l'} k[m,l,m',l'] = -p[m,l], \quad (m,l) \in \mathcal{A}_1,$$

with

$$\begin{aligned} k[m,l,m',l'] &\triangleq \sum_{(\hat{m},\hat{l}) \notin \mathcal{B}} \overline{S_{\mathbb{H}}[\hat{m}-m, \hat{l}-l]} S_{\mathbb{H}}[\hat{m}-m', \hat{l}-l'] e^{i\frac{2\pi}{N}[m(\hat{l}-l)-m'(\hat{l}-l')]}, \\ p[m,l] &\triangleq \sum_{(\hat{m},\hat{l}) \notin \mathcal{B}} \overline{S_{\mathbb{H}}[\hat{m}-m, \hat{l}-l]} S_{\mathbb{H}}[\hat{m}, \hat{l}] e^{i\frac{2\pi}{N}m(\hat{l}-l)}. \end{aligned}$$

This is a system of  $M_A(2L_A+1)$  linear equations in the  $M_A(2L_A+1)$  unknowns  $a_{m,l}$ ,  $(m,l) \in \mathcal{A}_1$ .

**Efficient suboptimum calculation.** Next, we propose an alternative, suboptimum calculation of  $\mathbb{A}$  that is suited for an *underspread* causal system  $\mathbb{H}$  and results in linear equations with Toeplitz/block-Toeplitz structure. Instead of minimizing  $\|\mathbb{B} - \mathbb{A}\mathbb{H}\|$ , we simply postulate

$$\mathbb{A}\mathbb{H} \stackrel{!}{=} \mathbb{B}$$

and attempt to compute  $\mathbb{A}$  accordingly. Rewriting this equation in terms of the SFs of the systems involved and using (4), we obtain

$$\sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}m'(l-l')} = N b_{m,l}. \quad (10)$$

Note that while this equation is identical to (7), here it is supposed to hold on the entire causal  $(m, l)$  plane—i.e., for  $(m, l) \in [0, N/2-1] \times [-N/2, N/2]$ —whereas (7) holds only for  $(m, l) \in \mathcal{B}$ . Because both  $\mathbb{A}$  and  $\mathbb{H}$  are underspread, we can set  $e^{-i\frac{2\pi}{N}m'(l-l')} \approx 1$  in (10), which gives

$$\sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] \approx N b_{m,l}. \quad (11)$$

For  $m = M_B+1, \dots, M_B+M_A$ ,  $b_{m,l}$  is zero and thus (11) simplifies as  $\sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] \approx 0$  or, equivalently, recalling that  $a_{0,l} = \delta[l]$ ,

$$\sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}_1} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] \approx -S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, l], \quad m = M_B+1, \dots, M_B+M_A, \quad l = -L_A, \dots, L_A. \quad (12)$$

These are  $M_A(2L_A+1)$  linear equations in the  $M_A(2L_A+1)$  unknowns  $a_{m,l}$ . These equations have the structure of “TF Yule-Walker equations” [6]. They can be written as

$$\mathbf{S} \mathbf{a} = -\mathbf{s}, \quad (13)$$

with the  $M_A(2L_A+1) \times 1$  vectors  $\mathbf{a} = [\mathbf{a}_1^T \cdots \mathbf{a}_{M_A}^T]^T$  and  $\mathbf{s} = [\mathbf{s}_{M_B+1}^T \cdots \mathbf{s}_{M_B+M_A}^T]^T$  containing the  $(2L_A+1) \times 1$  vectors  $\mathbf{a}_m = [a_{m,-L_A} \cdots a_{m,L_A}]^T$  and  $\mathbf{s}_m = [S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, -L_A] \cdots S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, L_A]]^T$ , respectively and the  $M_A(2L_A+1) \times M_A(2L_A+1)$  Toeplitz/block-Toeplitz matrix<sup>3</sup>  $\mathbf{S} = \text{toep}\{\mathbf{S}_{M_A+M_B-1}, \dots, \mathbf{S}_{M_B-M_A+1}\}$  containing the  $(2L_A+1) \times (2L_A+1)$  Toeplitz blocks  $\mathbf{S}_m = \text{toep}\{S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, 2L_A], \dots, S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, -2L_A]\}$ . The *Wax-Kailath algorithm* [11] can be used for solving the Toeplitz/block-Toeplitz equation (13) with a computational complexity of order  $\mathcal{O}(M_A^2 L_A^3)$ .

## 2.4 TFMA and TFAR System Approximation

TFMA system approximation is the approximation of  $\mathbb{H}$  by  $\mathbb{H}_{\text{TFMA}} = \mathbb{B}$ . This is a special case of TFARMA system approximation for  $a_{m,l} = \delta[m]\delta[l]$ . The TFMA parameters are here obtained from (8) as

$$b_{m,l} = \frac{1}{N} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, l], \quad (m, l) \in \mathcal{B}.$$

Another special case of TFARMA system approximation is TFAR approximation, i.e., approximation of  $\mathbb{H}$  by  $\mathbb{H}_{\text{TFAR}} = \mathbb{A}^{-1}\mathbb{B}_0$  where  $\mathbb{B}_0$  is a degenerate TFMA part with parameters  $b_{m,l} = b_{0,l}\delta[m]$ . For calculating the TFAR parameters  $a_{m,l}$  by means of the suboptimum method in Subsection 2.3, we use (12) with  $M_B = 0$ , i.e., for  $m = 1, \dots, M_A$  and  $l = -L_A, \dots, L_A$ :

$$\sum_{(m',l') \in \mathcal{A}_1} a_{m',l'} S_{\mathbb{H}}[m-m', l-l'] \approx -S_{\mathbb{H}}[m, l], \quad m = 1, \dots, M_A, \quad l = -L_A, \dots, L_A.$$

After solving this Toeplitz/block-Toeplitz equation by means of the Wax-Kailath algorithm, the TFMA coefficients  $b_{0,l}$  are obtained by means of (8) evaluated for  $m = 0$ .

<sup>3</sup>The notation  $\mathbf{S} = \text{toep}\{\mathbf{S}_{M_A+M_B-1}, \dots, \mathbf{S}_{M_B-M_A+1}\}$  means that the (block) elements of the diagonals of  $\mathbf{S}$  ordered from SW to NE are given by  $\mathbf{S}_{M_A+M_B-1}$  (first diagonal),  $\dots$ ,  $\mathbf{S}_{M_B-M_A+1}$  (last diagonal).

### 3 Conclusions

We presented linear methods for calculating a TFARMA-type approximation to an underspread linear time-varying system. Exploiting the underspread property to approximate twisted convolutions by conventional 2-D convolutions, we obtained a system of linear equations of the TF Yule-Walker type that has Toeplitz/block-Toeplitz structure and thus can be solved efficiently by the Wax-Kailath algorithm. Simulation results demonstrating the performance of our approximation method will be presented in [14].

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