Magnetic Resonance Encephalography Reconstruction with Magnetic Field Monitoring
Frederik Testud, Jakob Assländer, Christoph Barment, Thimo Hugger, Benjamin Zahneis, Klaus Prüssmann, Jürgen Hennig, Maxim Zaitsev
1 Medical Physics, University Medical Center Freiburg, Freiburg, Germany, 2 Biomedical Engineering, University & ETH Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland

Introduction: In the last years field probes [1,2] have been used for dynamic magnetic field monitoring (MFM) in order to reduce image artifacts due to imperfect gradient coils and amplifiers, eddy currents, B0 drifts and patient breathing by taking the measured field dynamics into account in the image reconstruction [3]. In Magnetic Resonance Encephalography (MREG) [4,5] none Cartesian trajectories are used to monitor functional activity at a high temporal resolution. Long MREG experiments suffer from B0 and gradient drifts. These can be corrected for by measuring concurrently the k-space trajectory during the experiment. In the present work 4 1H [3] field probes are used in combination with 28 channels of a 95 channel head coil [6] in order to record the trajectory in every second repetition.

Trajectory Reconstruction: The phase of the acquired signals of the field probes reflects the magnetic field evolution at the probe positions. The field evolution k(t), k(t), k(t), k(t) can then be estimated in a least square sense from the unwrapped field probe phases, taken into account their position and their off-resonance frequency.

Image Reconstruction: The signal equation is in matrix form S = Ax , with the measured signal S, the forward operator A, including the measured trajectory as a 4D vector (k(t), k(t), k(t), k(t)) and coil sensitivities. The image x is found by using a non-linear conjugate gradient to minimize the cost function J(x) = |Ax − S|² + βTVx, where A is the regularization parameter and TV the total variation operator [7,8].

Methods: Measurements were performed on a 3T Tim TRIO MR scanner (Siemens Healthcare, Erlangen, Germany). 28 elements of a 95 head coil array[6] were used in conjunction with a field camera 4 1H field probes [3] (Fig. 1) to record field variations. The field probes are operated in transmit/receive mode and connected to the spectrometer of the scanner. The separate transmit chain (signal generator: N5181A, Aglient, Santa Clara, CA, USA; RF Amplifier: 75A400, Amplifier Reasearch, Souderton, PA, USA; power splitter: MITIEQ-ESTONIA, Estonia) is controlled via trigger signals from the scanner and allowed to excite the field probes with short RF-pulses (5µs). A spherical stack of spirals trajectory [9] is used with FOV=192x192x64mm³, a resolution of (2mm)³, a varying undersampling factor of R×=3 to 6 for the radial and Rz=2 to 5 for the k z-space component, slab thickness 50mm, TR=0.2s, TE=34ms, ADC dwell time = 2µs, a readout time of 75ms and a flip angle=25°. A 5min MREG measurement was performed in a healthy volunteer. In order to avoid acquiring signal originating from the head with the field probes, the trajectory and the imaging data are acquired in every second repetition with a TR=0.1s. Image reconstruction and data analysis are performed offline in MATLAB (The Mathworks, Natick, MA, USA).

Results: A typical measured stack of spirals is shown in Fig. 2. The 1st frame of the acquired time series, reconstructed with the experimental trajectory can be seen in Fig. 3. While the difference between the nominal and the measured trajectory is negligible at the beginning of the measurement, the trajectory drifts over time (Fig. 4). After 25s the field drifts are linear and show breathing related oscillations. After subtracting the linear component of the drift, the temporal spectrum can be derived (Fig. 5). The k0 component shows the strongest respiration at 0.2, its 1st harmonic at 0.4 Hz and the ECG signal at 1Hz. The temporal spectrum of kx, ky and kz show the 0th harmonic of the respiration. The temporal spectrum of kx shows a peak at 2Hz which was reproduced with FIDs acquired in a phantom. Therefore it must be scanner related. The temporal spectrum of a region of interest (10 voxels) of the reconstructed time series, including the nominal and the measured trajectory, shows that the cardiac and the breathing related peaks can be reduced (Fig. 6). The noise of the trajectory determination propagates into the reconstruction leading to higher noise.

Conclusion: Four 1H field probes were built into a 28 channel head coil and trajectories were measured in every second repetition during an in vivo experiment. It was shown that respiration and cardiac signals can be reduced in the reconstructed data.

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Fig. 4: Drift of the measured trajectory components over 5 min at the echo time.

Fig. 5: Temporal spectrum of the drifts averaged over DT=TE±200µs. Physiological effects as breathing (0.2 Hz) and ECG (1Hz) are visible. The peak at 2Hz originates from the scanner.