Frequency Correlation Investigation of Massive MIMO Channels in a Stadium at 4.45 GHz

Yanping Lu*, Cheng Tao*†, Liu Liu*†, Wenjuan Li*, Jingcheng XIAO*, Pengyu LIU*
* Institute of Broadband Wireless Mobile Communications, Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing 100044, P. R. China
† National Mobile Communications Research Laboratory, Southeast University, Nanjing 210096, P. R. China
† yanping_Lu, chtao, liuliu, 13120105, 13120147, 13125028}@bjtu.edu.cn

Abstract—Massive multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) is a potential key technology for the 5th generation (5G) of wireless communication systems. A reliable and realistic channel model serves as the enabling foundation for practical design and testing of the massive MIMO communication systems. In this paper, based on the realistic measurement conducted in open stadium environments, the frequency correlation properties are investigated. By using the direct method of calculating from the channel transfer function and the traditional method of derivation via a Fourier transform of the channel’s average power delay profile, the frequency correlations are compared. These results reveal the correlation characteristics of massive MIMO channels and provide the basis for the practical deployment of massive MIMO systems.

Keywords— Massive MIMO, wireless channel, channel measurement, correlation bandwidth, frequency correlation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Massive multiple input and multiple output (Massive MIMO), as a potential technique for the emerging 5th generation (5G) wireless communications systems, presents a highly promising solution to meet the demanding requirements of spectrum efficiency and the energy efficiency [1], [2], [3]. The research works of propagation characteristics and channel modeling in theory are mostly under an assumption that the channels are wide sense stationary (WSS) and uncorrelated scattering (US). In practice, however, the benign environment condition will never be exactly satisfied, even in a dense scattering environment or a line of sight (LOS) propagation scenario. Such environments (e.g., stadium, dense urban information society, and shopping mall) have been proposed in The Mobile and wireless communications Enablers for the Twenty-twenty Information Society (METIS) which aims to lay foundations for future mobile and wireless system [4].

To date, there are few published research results on fading correlation properties of massive MIMO propagation channels. In [5], performance of antenna selection on transmitter side in realistic environment was investigated. In [6], the Rice factor, received power level and antenna correlation were extracted from the measurement data at 2.6 GHz. In [7], the time delay spread properties in line-of-sight (LOS) and non line-of-sight (NLOS) scenarios were studied. In [8], linear pre-coding performance was investigated using the realistic massive MIMO measurement data. In [9], a cluster-based parameterization method was used for channel characterization. The channel parameters included the total number of clusters, their visibility regions and visibility gains.

The fading correlation in frequency domain is an indicator of the coherence bandwidth. In this paper, based on the realistic measurement data, we estimate the frequency correlation of massive MIMO channels. The frequency correlation estimate (FCE) is derived from the channel transfer function, which shows a significantly different while using the traditional method of derivation via a Fourier transform of the channel’s average power delay profile. The difference is mainly caused by the reason that frequency correlation characteristics are a function of frequency, rather than just frequency deviation, and multipath components are correlated to some degree. Measured data are presented to verify the conclusions.

The paper is organized as follows: in Section II, the measurement campaign and data processing method is described. Section III details the frequency correlation estimate, and presents test results derived from 2 different methods. The conclusion is drawn in Section IV.

II. MEASUREMENT SETUP

A. Channel measurement

A vector signal generator (R&S SMBV100A) is used as the excitation source. A 128-element virtual linear structure antenna works at the transmitter side, on which a single bi-conical antenna moving along the linear rail track. The special advantage of the bi-conical antenna is that it has an almost equal gain in the H-plane, therefore different directional signals can reach the receiver with the same antenna gain. The data collector is composed of a RF down-converter, a high-speed digitizer card and a data storage unit. The time synchronism is maintained by using the rubidium clock trained by the GPS. Then the clock system is connected with a fiber for the perfect time synchronization. TABLE I lists the measurement parameters, and Fig. 1 shows the measurement system topological diagram.
TABLE 1. MEASUREMENT SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Specification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central frequency</td>
<td>4.45GHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandwidth</td>
<td>100MHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antenna number</td>
<td>128 × 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronization</td>
<td>Rubidium + GPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitation signal</td>
<td>Zadoff Chu sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Length</td>
<td>2047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tx antenna height</td>
<td>8m (grandstand is included)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rx antenna height</td>
<td>2.5m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We conducted the measurement in a stadium at Beijing Jiaotong University. The propagation scenario is open and clear. A grandstand lies at the west side, and two tall buildings stand behind the grandstand. We placed the transmitter antenna array on the grandstand, with a height of 5 m from the ground, and located the receiver equipments in the ground field, the transmitter is fixed and a total of six measurements were performed at six different receiver positions. Fig. 2 shows the measurement scenario.

B. Data processing

The complex-valued Zad-Off Chu sequence with the length of 2,047 is employed as the excitation signal due to its orthogonality and constant amplitude. Here, let \( r(m; k) \) be the raw baseband signal with \( k \) time index at antenna \( m \), and then the channel impulse response (CIR) can be calculated by the serial correlation operation as

\[
h_1(m, k) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{n=0}^{N-1} r(m, k + n) \cdot c^*(n),
\]

where \( N \) is the size of the correlation window, \( n \) represents the time index, \( c(n) \) is the local transmitting copy signal, and \( * \) denotes the conjunction operation.

Then the channel’s power delay profile (PDP) can be denote as below

\[
P_{PDP}(m; n) = \frac{1}{L} \sum_{l=1}^{L} |h(m; n + iL)|^2,
\]

where \( L \) represents the number of record samples.

III. FREQUENCY CORRELATION ESTIMATE

Correlation analysis is an effective way to study the characteristics of a signal. For the purpose of capacity prediction, system design, and channel allocation, it is necessary to estimate the frequency correlation and figure out the correlative bandwidth for wireless communication system. Here two different ways to estimate the frequency correlation are employed.

A. Method 1: derived from the channel PDP

According to the definition, the frequency correlation function can be expressed as

\[
R_\nu (f_1, f_2; t_1, t_2) = E[H^*(f_1; t_1) \cdot H(f_2; t_2)],
\]

in (3), \( H(f; t) \) represent the low-pass channel transfer function, and can be expressed as

\[
H(f; t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} h(\tau; t) \cdot e^{-j2\pi f \tau} d\tau,
\]

where \( \tau \) represents the time delay. So we have

\[
R_\nu (f_1, f_2; \Delta t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} E[h^* (\tau_1; t) \cdot h(\tau_2; t + \Delta t))e^{-j2\pi f_1 \tau_1}e^{-j2\pi f_2 \tau_2} d\tau_1 d\tau_2.
\]

Since the channel satisfied the wide sense stationary uncorrelated scattering (WSSUS) condition, when the multipath signals arrive the receiver side respectively at time delay \( \tau_1 \) and \( \tau_2 \), they must come from different scatterers, which means they are uncorrelated, so the formula can be rewritten as

\[
R_\nu (f_1, f_2; \Delta t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} R_\gamma (\tau, \Delta t)e^{-j2\pi f_1 \tau}e^{-j2\pi f_2 \tau} d\tau.
\]

By defining \( \Delta f = f_2 - f_1 \), which means the frequency deviation, and setting \( \Delta t = 0 \) then, we derived the frequency correlation function

\[
R_\nu (\Delta f) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} R_\gamma (\tau) e^{-j2\pi \Delta f \tau} d\tau = F[R_\gamma (\tau)],
\]

where \( F[\ ] \) denotes the Fourier transform. \( R_\gamma (\tau) \) equals to the PDP of the channel \( P_{PDP} \).

Eq. (7) indicates under some conditions a channel’s FCF can be calculated through a Fourier transform to its average power delay profile (PDP). Fig. 3 is the FCE result according to Eq. (7).
The curve in Fig. 3 shows the relative variation of the frequency correlation coefficient over the frequency deviation. It is obvious that the correlation coefficient rapidly decreases along with the increase of the frequency deviation. Coherence bandwidth is about 100MHz according to the correlation coefficient being of 0.75, while 10MHz when the correlation coefficient being equal to 0.9. Especially when the correlation coefficient is larger than 0.75, the curve indicates that the coherence bandwidth is continuously increasing to exceed the measurement bandwidth. Besides these, when the frequency derivation is about 15MHz, there exist an jumping change of the correlation bandwidth. This curve seems unreasonable.

B. Method 2: derived from the channel transfer function

To overthrow the validity of the FCE results from method 1, an alternate method, free from the US conditions, is proposed.

Let \( \{a_i|a_{i,j} = H(f_i,t_j)\} \) be a frequency related power at a determined frequency of \( f_i \), which equals to the complex amplitudes of the channel transfer function at different spectral lines, setting \( f_{\text{ref}} \) to be the reference frequency, and \( \Delta f = f_i - f_{\text{ref}} \), then the estimation of frequency correlation can be derived as below [10]

\[
R_H(\Delta f) = \frac{\gamma_H(a_{\text{ref}},a_i)}{\sqrt{\gamma_H(a_{\text{ref}},a_{\text{ref}})\gamma_H(a_i,a_i)}}, \quad (8)
\]

where \( \gamma_H(a_{\text{ref}},a_i) \) represents the cross-correlation between the time related power sequence set \( \{a_i|a_{i,j} = H(f_i,t_j)\} \) relative to the sequence set at the reference frequency \( \{a_{\text{ref}}|a_{\text{ref},j} = H(f_{\text{ref}},t_j)\} \), and can be expressed as

\[
\gamma_H(a_{\text{ref}},a_i) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^{N} a_{\text{ref},j} a_{i,j}^{*} \quad (9)
\]

Similarly, \( \gamma_H(a_{\text{ref}},a_{\text{ref}}) \) and \( \gamma_H(a_i,a_i) \) respectively represent the auto-correlation of set \( \{a_i\} \) and \( \{a_{\text{ref}}\} \), \( N \) represents the number of the recorded samples.

The FCE results calculated using Eq. (8) are illustrated in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5. In Fig. 4, the horizontal axis shows the frequency deviation relative to the reference frequency. The vertical axis indicates the relative variation of the frequency correlation coefficient. According the curve, the coherence bandwidth keeps stable, and does not vary significantly with the correlation coefficient. The Fig. 5 shows the fluctuation of the frequency correlation coefficient over the antenna array. It is clear that the FCEs over the antenna array are relatively coherent. From the first antenna moving to the last antenna, the curves are very approximate on both side of the midband. Fluctuation turns up at about 50MHz from the midband. That is to say, in every antenna position, the interesting coherence bandwidth of 100MHz can be promised. The slight fluctuations might result in measurement noise or system performance limitation. It is obvious that these results are considerably different from Fig. 3.
method 2, directly cross-correlation of time varying $H(f;t)$ in the frequency domain makes it independent of the conditions. The different results are clear evidence for that wide sense stationary uncorrelated scattering (WSSUS) channel condition and constant means of the channel frequency response condition that are required for method 1, are not hold.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This work summarized the theory of estimation of frequency correlation based on channel measurement. Then the frequency correlation characteristics separately using the method of Fourier transform to the channel PDP, and of directly cross-correlation to the transfer function are compared. From the presented results, it can be determined that the US condition and constant means of transfer function are not hold.

These results may be helpful to parameters design in wireless communication systems.

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Yanping Lu, received the B.E. degree from Wuhan University, Wuhan, China, in 2002. received the M.S. degree from Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing, China, in 2005. And is now a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Electronic and Information Engineering of Beijing Jiaotong University. Her research interests include channel measurement and modeling, signal processing of wireless communication.