SPARSE IMAGE REPRESENTATION BY DISCRETE COSINE/B-SPLINE BASED DICTIONARIES

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ABSTRACT

Mixed dictionaries generated by cosine and B-spline functions are considered. It is shown that when approximating images by highly nonlinear approaches, such as Orthogonal Matching Pursuit, the discrete version of the proposed dictionaries yields a significant gain in sparsity.

***Index Terms*—** Image Processing

1. INTRODUCTION

Sparse representation of information is a central aim of data processing techniques. An usual first step of image processing applications, for instance, is to map the image onto a transformed space allowing for the reduction of the number of data points representing the image. Currently the most broadly used transforms for performing that task are the Discrete Cosine Transform (DCT) and Discrete Wavelet Transforms (DWT). An important reason for the popularity of both these transforms is the viability of their fast implementation. However, since parallel processing is becoming more powerful and accessible, alternative approaches for signal representation are being given increasing consideration. Emerging techniques address the matter in the following way: Given a signal $f \in \mathbb{R}^N$ find the decomposition $f = \sum_{i=1}^{M} c_i v_{\ell_i}$, where vectors $v_{\ell_i} \in \mathbb{R}^N$, $i = 1, \ldots, M$, usually called atoms, are a subset of a redundant set called a dictionary. Approximations of this type are highly nonlinear and are said to yield a sparse representation of the signal f in terms of M atoms if M is considerably smaller than N. Available methodologies for nonlinear approximations are known as Pursuit Strategies. This comprises Bases Pursuit [1] and Matching Pursuit like algorithms, including Orthogonal Matching Pursuit (OMP) and variations of it [2–7]. Another concern inherent to highly nonlinear approximations is the design of suitable dictionaries for representing certain classes of signals. Dictionaries arising by merging orthogonal bases are theoretically studied in [8, 9]. From a different perspective, approaches for learning dictionaries from large data sets are considered in [10, 11]. In this communication we present an alternative construction of dictionaries for representing natural images. The proposed dictionaries are a mixture of discrete cosine and B-spline based dictionaries. We have found a good number of examples (some of them presented here) for which the resulting dictionary renders a considerable gain in sparsity, compared to fast transforms such as the DCT and DWT, at an acceptable visual level (PSNR 40 dB).

The paper is organised as follows: In Sec. 2 we introduce the discrete B-spline based dictionaries which together with the discrete cosines form the large mixed dictionary we are proposing. In Sec. 3 we discuss the implementation of the OMP approach we have used. The details of the actual process for dealing with images are given in Sec. 4 where results illustrating the capability of the proposed dictionaries to yield sparse representations by nonlinear approaches are presented.

2. B-SPLINE BASED DICTIONARIES

The discrete dictionaries we discuss here are inspired by a general result holding for continuous spline spaces. Namely, that *spline spaces on a closed interval can be spanned by dictionaries of B-splines of broader support than the corresponding B-spline basis functions [12].*

A *partition* of an interval $[c, d]$ is a finite set of points $\Delta := \{x_i\}_{i=0}^{N+1}, N \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $c = x_0 < x_1 < \cdots < x_N < x_{N+1} = d$, which generates N subintervals $I_i = [x_i, x_{i+1}), i = 0, \ldots, N-1$ and $I_N = [x_N, x_{N+1}]$. Representing by Π_m the space of polynomials of degree smaller than or equal to $m \in \mathbb{N}_0 = \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ and as C^m the space of functions having continuous derivatives up to order m (with C^0 the space of continuous functions) the spline space of order $m \geq 2$ on $[c, d]$, with single knots at the partition points, is define as $S_m(\Delta) = \{f \in C^{m-2}[c, d] \,:\, f|_{I_i} \in \Pi_{m-1}, i = 0, \ldots, N\}$, where $f|_{I_i}$ indicates the restriction of the function f to the interval I_i. In the case of equally spaced knots the corresponding B-splines are called cardinal. Moreover all the cardinal B-splines of order m can be obtained from one cardinal B-spline $B(x)$ associated with the uniform simple knot

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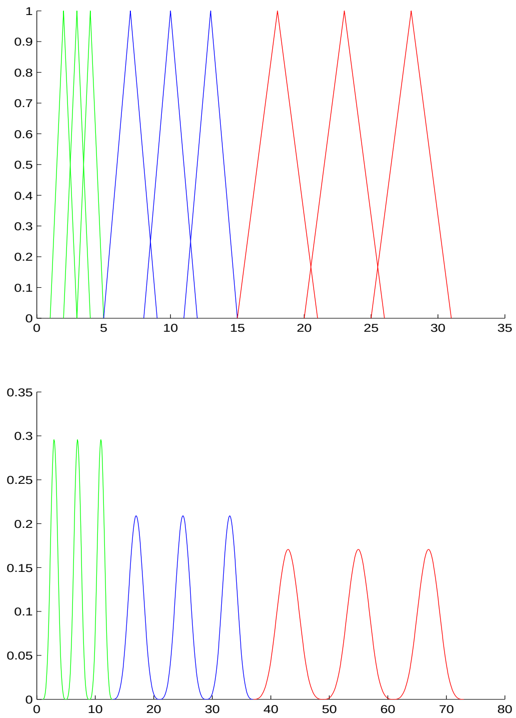

Fig. 1. B-splines taken from dictionaries spanning the same space. Linear B-splines (top) Cubic B-splines (bottom)

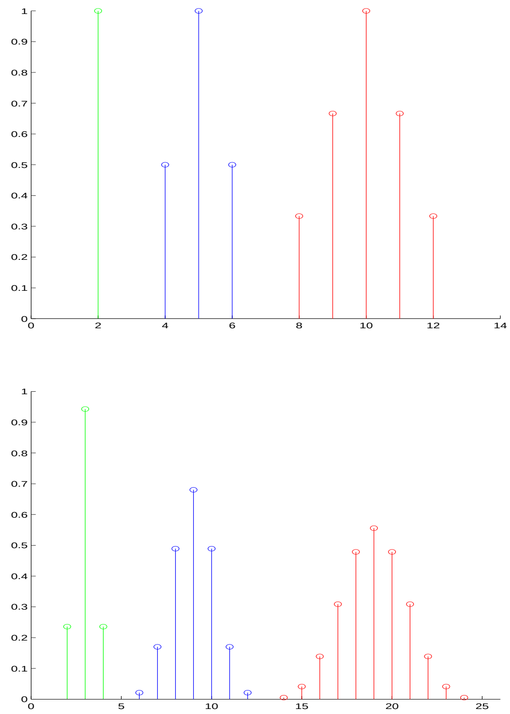

Fig. 2. Three discrete prototype B-splines taken from dictionaries spanning the same space. Linear B-splines (top) Cubic B-splines (bottom)

sequence $0, 1, \ldots, m$. Such a function is given as

$$B_m(x) = \frac{1}{m!} \sum_{i=0}^{m} (-1)^i \binom{m}{i} (x-i)_+^{m-1}, \tag{1}$$

where $(x-i)_+^{m-1}$ is equal to $(x-i)^{m-1}$ if $x-i > 0$ and 0 otherwise. We shall focus on the particular cases corresponding to $m = 2$ and $m = 4$. For $m = 2$ the cardinal spline space $S_2(\Delta)$ is the space of piece wise linear functions and can be spanned by a linear B-spline basis arising by translating the prototype function known as 'hat' function. The first 3 functions in the top graph of Fig. 1 are 3 consecutive linear B-spline basis functions. The 3 middle functions in the same graph are linear B-spline functions of broader support taken from a dictionary spanning the same space as the basis. The last 3 functions are taken from another dictionary for the same space. Details on how to build these dictionaries are given in [12]. The basis and dictionary functions equivalent to the ones in the left graph of Fig. 1, but for cubic spline spaces corresponding to $m = 4$, are given in the bottom graph of the same Figure.

For constructing redundant dictionaries suitable for processing images by nonlinear techniques we need to make sure that the dictionaries can be processed with digital computers having the existing memory capacity. Thus, we need to a) discretize the functions to obtain adequate Euclidean vectors and b) restrict the functions to small intervals allowing for processing the images in small blocks. We carry out the discretization by taking the value of a prototype function only at the knots (cf. small circles in graphs Fig. 2) and translating that prototype one sampling point at each translation step. In regard to the boundaries one may take different routes: A possibility is to adopt periodicity (cyclic boundary conditions) and other apply the 'cut off' approach and keep all the vectors whose support has nonzero intersection with the interval being considered. The former would leave a basis for the corresponding Euclidean space and the later a redundant dictionary.

Remark 1. *We notice that by the proposed discretization the hat B-spline basis for the corresponding interval becomes the standard Euclidean basis for either boundary conditions. By discretizing the hats of broader support the samples preserve the hat shape.*

Obviously for a finite dimension Euclidean space we can construct arbitrary dictionaries. In particular, different B-spline based dictionaries composed from vectors of different supports. Furthermore, we can include vectors of different support by merging dictionaries. There is, of course, a compromise between redundancy and complexity that needs to be considered. The discussion of such a tradeoff is postponed to Sec. 4, where the numerical examples are described.

From discrete unidimensional B-spline based dictionaries we obtain bidimensional ones simply by taking tensor product. Actually in Sec. 4 we consider a dictionary consisting of unidimensional cosine and B-spline based vectors, of redundancy approximately five, and build the bidimensional dictionary by taking the tensor product of the whole unidimensional dictionary with itself.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GREEDY ALGORITHM OMP

The OMP technique [6] is an adaptive greedy strategy for selecting atoms which evolves as follows: Let $f \in \mathbb{R}^N$ be a given signal and $\{v_i\}_{i=1}^L$ a given redundant dictionary. Setting $R^1 = f$ at iteration $k+1$ the OMP algorithm selects the atom, $v_{l_{k+1}}$ say, as the one minimising the absolute values of the inner products $\langle v_i, R^k\rangle$, $i = 1, \ldots, L$, i.e.,

$$v_{l_{k+1}} = \arg\max_{i \in J} |\langle v_i, R^k\rangle|, \text{ where } R^k = f - \sum_{i=1}^{k} c_i^k v_{\ell_i}, \quad (2)$$

and J is the set of indices labelling the dictionary's atoms. The coefficients c_i^k, $i = 1, \ldots, k$ in the above decomposition are such that $||f - R^k||^2$ is minimum, which is equivalent to requesting $R^k = \hat{P}_{V_k} f$, where $\hat{P}_{V_k}$ is the orthogonal projection operator onto $V_k = \text{span}\{v_{\ell_i}\}_{i=1}^k$. We base our implementation for determining the coefficients c_i, $i = 1, \ldots, k$ on Gram Schmidt orthogonalization with re-orthogonalization, and recursive biorthogonalization. Basically, at each iteration we update the vectors $\tilde{v}_i^{k+1} = \tilde{v}_i^k - \tilde{v}_{k+1}^{k+1}\langle v_{\ell_{k+1}}, \tilde{v}_i^k\rangle$, where $\tilde{v}_{k+1}^{k+1} = q_{k+1}/\|q_{k+1}\|^2$, with $q_{k+1} = v_{\ell_{k+1}} - \hat{P}_{V_k} q_{k+1}$ and $q_1 = v_{\ell_1}$. One reorthogonalization step implies to recalculate q_{k+1} as $q_{k+1} = q_{k+1} - \hat{P}_{V_k} q_{k+1}$. The projector $\hat{P}_{V_k}$ is here computed as $\hat{P}_{V_k} = Q_k Q_k^*$ where the k-columns of matrix Q_k are the vectors $q_i/\|q_i\|$, $i = 1, \ldots, k$ and Q_k^* indicates the transpose conjugate of Q_k. However, to calculate the coefficients of the linear superposition we express the projectors as $\hat{P}_{V_k} = A_k B_k^*$ where the k-columns of matrix A_k are the selected vectors and the k-columns of matrix B_k are the vectors $\tilde{v}_i^k$, $i = 1, \ldots, k$. Thus, the required coefficients arise from the inner products $c_i^k = \langle \tilde{v}_i^k, f\rangle$, $i = 1, \ldots, k$. Details on this type of implementation are given in [5,7] and the code can be found at [13]. Moreover, as will be discussed in the next section, the fact that we deal with dictionaries involving cosine and supported atoms reduces the general complexity of the OMP method.

4. SPARSE IMAGE REPRESENTATION BY DISCRETE COSINE AND B-SPLINE BASED DICTIONARIES

Here we present examples of the gain in sparsity achieved using dictionaries formed by the union of Discrete Cosine (DC) and B-Spline based dictionaries. The size of all the test images we consider is 512×512. To process each images we divide it into blocks of 16×16 pixels. For approximating each block we first construct the dictionaries $\mathcal{D}_i$, $i = 1, \ldots, 4$ defined as follows:

Fig. 3. The six test images from left to right, top to bottom: Boat, Bridge, Film clip, Lena, Mandrill, Peppers

Discrete Cosine Dictionary

$$\mathcal{D}_1 = \{c_i \cos(\frac{\pi(2j-1)(i-1)}{4L}),\, j = 1, \ldots, N\}_{i=1}^{M_1},$$

with c_i, $i = 1, \ldots, M_1$ normalisation factors.

Discrete B-Spline based dictionaries

$$\mathcal{D}_k = \{w_i B_m^k(j-i)|L; j = 1, \ldots, L\}_{i=1}^{M_k},$$

where the notation $B_m(j-i)|L$ indicates the restriction to be an array of size L, indices $k = 2, \ldots, 4$ label the dictionaries of different support and w_i, $i = 1, \ldots, M_k$ are normalisation constants. M_k is the number of atoms in dictionary k. Considerations are limited to the cases $m = 2$ (hat atoms) and $m = 4$ (atoms arising by discretizing cubic B-splines). Because we adopt the cut off approach for the boundary, the numbers M_k of total atoms in the kth-dictionary varies according to the atom's support. For the linear B-spline based dictionaries the corresponding supports are 1, 3, and 5, while for the cubic the supports are 3, 7, and 11. With these dictionaries we construct the tensor product dictionary $\mathcal{D}^m =$

Image	D^2	D^4	DCT	DWT
Boat	7.05	6.89	3.63	3.65
Bridge	4.24	3.97	2.06	2.2
Film	9.72	9.26	4.53	4.8
Lena	11.78	11.7	6.5	6.97
Mandrill	3.72	3.5	1.91	1.90
Peppers	8.9	8.62	4.36	3.39

Table 1. Compression ratio (corresponding to PSNR=40 dB) achieved by each dictionary. The first column corresponds to the dictionary $\mathcal{D}^2$ composed of DC redundancy 2 and linear B-spline atoms of support 1, 3 and 5. The second column corresponds to dictionary $\mathcal{D}^4$ (DC and cubic B-spline atoms of support 3, 7 and 11). The third column corresponds to the result obtained by nonlinear selection of DCT coefficients. The last column is the compression ratio produced by the Cohen-Daubechies-Feauveau 9/7 wavelet transform computed using the WaveletCDF97 software (by thresholding coefficients so as to achieve the required PSNR or 40 dB).

$\mathcal{D}_i \otimes \mathcal{D}_j$, $i, j = 1, \ldots, 4$ ($m = 2$ for linear B-splines and $m = 4$ for cubic B-splines).

The complexity of applying the OMP approach is dominated by the evaluation, at each iteration, of the inner products between the residual and the dictionary atoms. In the case of the proposed dictionaries the inner product with the DC dictionaries can be implemented by fast DCT and the complexity in computing the inner products with the other atoms depends on the atoms support (cf (2)). Denoting by d_i the support of the B-spline based dictionary i, the complexity of computing the inner products at the selection step (2) is $14(M_1)^2 \log_2 M_1 + 8N \sum_{i=2}^{4} d_i M_i$. Of course, the total complexity depends on the sparsity, as the complexity for selecting each atom has to be multiplied by the number of selected atoms. Nevertheless, the fact that the image is processed in small blocks leaves room for fast implementation by parallel processing.

As can be observed in Table 1, the performance in sparsity that is achieved with the proposed dictionaries is slightly better when using hat dictionaries. However with both dictionaries the sparsity in representing the six test images significantly improves upon that yielded by faster nonlinear techniques such as the DCT and DWT.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Mixed DC and B-spline based dictionaries for sparse image representation have been introduced. It was shown that, compared to the fast nonlinear DCT and DWT approaches, the proposed dictionaries yield a significant gain in sparsity. From the encouraging results and the fact that the processing is suitable for parallel computing, we feel confident that the proposed dictionaries should be of assistance to those applications that benefit from sparse image representation.

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