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M. Sc. Ben Nikolas Buße,
Duisburg

Method for Non-Invasive Skin Artifact-Free Spatial Bone Motion Tracking Using Pressure Sensor Foils

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Korreferent: Prof. Janet Lenore Ronsky, PhD., P.Eng., FCAE

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This work addresses the development of a novel method for bone pose estimation that is both, non-invasive and accurate. The main principal is to palpate three prominent bone protuberances using pressure sensor planes attached to the skin. Bone protuberances are approximated by three ellipsoids that are rigidly attached together. The general formulation of the constraint equations is presented and, as a solution approach, an optimization cost function is proposed allowing bone pose tracking that is insensitive toward input errors. The method is validated in-vivo using dual fluoroscopy yielding bone tracking precisions in the submillimeter range and below 1 degree, thus, reaching the same order of magnitude as state of the art model based tracking techniques. Finally, the general approach is extended to automatically approximate the rigid body bone geometry via pressure sensor palpation that allows to fully circumvent radiation exposure, making this approach universally applicable.

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Preface

List of publications

The present thesis was developed as research associate at the Institute of Mechanics and Robotics ("Lehrstuhl für Mechanik und Robotik") at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Many of the contributions and concepts presented in this work were previously published in the following conference publication and proceedings:

- **N. Bufo**, and A. Kecskeméthy. Position analysis of a planar rigid-body tracked by three ellipse pressure points along straight lines. In *Proceedings of the 14th World Congress in Mechanism and Machine Science*, pages 474–482, Taipei, Taiwan, October 25–30 2015.
- **N. Bufo**, A. Heinemann, P. Köhler, and A. Kecskeméthy. An approach for bone pose estimation via three external ellipsoid pressure points. In *15th Int. Symposium on Advances in Robot Kinematics*, Grasse, France, June 27–30 2016.
- **N. Bufo**, G. Kuntze, J. L. Ronsky, and A. Kecskeméthy. Fluoroscopy Validation of Noninvasive 3D Bone-Pose tracking via External Pressure-Foils. In *Proceedings of the ARK 2018 16th International Symposium on Advances in Robot Kinematics*, pages 466–473, Bologna, Italy, July 1–5 2018.

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Duisburg, April 2019

Nikolas Buße

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Motivation	1
1.2	State of the art	4
1.2.1	Invasive Procedures	4
1.2.2	Non-invasive Procedures	6
1.3	Objective and overview	7
2	Geometrical problem analysis for the planar case	9
2.1	2D model description	9
2.2	Formulation of the constraint equations	11
2.3	Characteristics of a symmetric configuration	13
2.4	Determination of the solution variety using Gröbner bases	14
2.4.1	Gröbner bases	14
2.4.2	Application examples	15
2.4.3	Sensitivity analysis	19
2.4.4	Reduction of the solution variety	19
3	3D pose estimation based on the ellipsoid-approximated bone model	23
3.1	Formulation of the constraint equations	23
3.2	Optimization problem	25
3.3	Sensitivity analysis	25
4	Self-adjusting point for bone pose estimation	28
4.1	Three-point model description	28

4.2	Self-adjusting parameter approximation	29
4.3	Approximation-error expectation	30
5	Validations	32
5.1	Pressure mapping	32
5.1.1	Materials and Methods	32
5.1.2	Results	36
5.1.3	Discussion	36
5.2	Ellipsoid-approximated bone model validation	37
5.2.1	Materials and Methods	37
5.2.2	Results without initial guess	45
5.2.3	Results with initial guess	47
5.2.4	Discussion	48
5.3	Influence factors of manual 2D-3D registration	52
5.4	Point-approximated bone model validation	52
5.4.1	Materials and Methods	52
5.4.2	Results	53
5.4.3	Discussion	53
6	Conclusions and outlook	59
6.1	Conclusions	59
6.2	Outlook	60
Appendices		61
A	Geometrical problem analysis for the planar case	62

A.1	General solutions	62
B	3D pose estimation based on the ellipsoid-approximated bone model	65
B.1	Reference pose for sensitivity analysis	65
C	Validation	66
C.1	Calibration Pencil	66
C.2	Residuals - ellipsoid-approximated bone model	67
C.3	Residuals - point-approximated bone model	70
C.4	Parameters - ellipsoid-approximated bone model	73
C.5	Parameters - point-approximated bone model	73
	Bibliography	75

Notation

In this thesis, general vectors are assumed to be decomposed in the target frame. For other decompositions, the notation ${}_i^k \mathcal{L}_j$ is used, where i denotes the frame with respect to which the motion is measured, j the target frame and k the frame of decomposition.

Furthermore, ${}^i \mathbf{R}_j$ denotes the rotation matrix transforming coordinates with respect to frame \mathcal{K}_j into coordinates with respect to frame \mathcal{K}_i .

Abstract

The knowledge about skeletal kinematics is essential in many biomechanical and medical applications. However, an accurate, non-invasive and radiation-free method for bone motion tracking is still an open issue. This thesis addresses the development of a novel method for bone pose estimation that is both, non-invasive and accurate. The main principal is to palpate three prominent bone protuberances using pressure sensor planes attached to the skin. Bone protuberances are approximated by three ellipsoids that are rigidly attached together.

At first, the geometrical problem of the planar case is analyzed, where ellipsoids become ellipses and sensor planes become lines. After deriving the constraint equations describing the mathematical model of the system, Gröbner bases are used to find the number of possible solutions for two different numerically defined configurations of the lines and the ellipses. As a result, a maximum number of 32 different real solutions for the symmetrical and a maximum number of 64 different complex and real solutions for the general case are obtained. However, using the example of the symmetric case, it can be shown that the solution variety can be significantly reduced. From the 32 real solutions only three solutions are physically plausible, taking into account that pressure points are generated by an ellipse arc facing the lines.

This work also presents the general formulation of the constraint equations for the three dimensional case. As a solution approach, an optimization cost function is proposed including the squared minimal distances between sensors and ellipsoids allowing bone pose tracking that is insensitive toward input errors. Furthermore, a dual fluoroscopy validation of the method for three basic movements of the shank: flexion/extension, abduction/adduction and internal rotation is presented. It is shown that by pressure sensor palpation, bone tracking precisions of 0.5 mm to 1.0 mm and 0.3° to 0.6° can be attained with respect to dual fluoroscopy manual registration, thus, reaching the same order of magnitude as state of the art model based tracking techniques.

Finally, this thesis regards the limiting case where ellipsoids become points allowing the introduction of an automatable procedure approximating the rigid body bone geometry based on data from a previously performed bone pose measurement. Thereby, it is possible to fully circumvent radiation exposure that might be necessary to extract ellipsoid parameters from e. g. a computed tomography scan. Results indicate that deviations to the ellipsoid-approximated bone model are in the submillimeter range and may thus be negligible for many applications.

