PROGRESS REPORT

High-Spatial-Resolution Passive Microwave Sounding Systems

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Submitted by

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1. INTRODUCTION

During this period the emphasis was on 1) further design, construction, and testing of the improved 54-GHz portion of the 54-118 GHz microwave temperature sounder (MTS) aircraft radiometer system in preparation for ER-2 observations in July 1991, and 2) final analysis and documentation of procedures for detecting and analyzing thermal waves in our 118-GHz MTS imagery.

In addition, H.J. Liebe has provided us with new unpublished measurements of dry-air attenuation at frequencies of 54 to 66 GHz and over a temperature range of 280K to 326K; these measurements should enable us to improve further our atmospheric transmittance models. P.W. Rosenkranz further noted that the proposed SSMIS conical-scanning microwave spectrometer on the military DMSP Block 5D-3 spacecraft designed to measure stratospheric and mesospheric temperature profiles will be observing the Zeeman-split oxygen lines with sufficient spectral resolution that the changing doppler shifts with view angle will substantially degrade the potential system performance unless remedied; this was briefly studied and documented.

2. RECEIVER IMPROVEMENTS

The improved 54-GHz radiometer is nearly ready for radiometric testing and calibration.

Testing of the Watkins-Johnson 54-GHz Gunn oscillator and mixer continued after its return from the manufacturer. Using a different power measurement system than before we found ~4-5 dB of local-oscillator power variation across the oscillator's tuning range, which normally should not preclude acceptable operation. This measurement used rotary-vane attenuators and a diode detector, together with appropriate isolation and tuning. This result is inconsistent with Watkins-Johnson's claim that the
The square-law detector was also calibrated and a few new cables were built and tested.

Additional work was done on the circular-to-linear polarizer which will connect the antenna to the front end of the radiometer. This quarter-wave plate is being implemented by means of a suitably sized and oriented thin dielectric slab in a section of circular waveguide. A polystyrene slab has been fabricated and should be tested shortly.

3. DETECTION AND MEASUREMENT OF RADIANCE WAVES IN 118-GHZ SPECTRAL IMAGES OF THE ATMOSPHERE

The primary activities during this period were the final analysis of the search for thermal atmospheric waves in the 118-GHz ER-2 spectral imaging data, and final documentation of this research effort. The results are summarized succinctly in the abstract of P.G. Bonanni's doctoral thesis, and are suggested
in his table of contents, both of which are attached here as Appendix A.

The most important results of this thesis were 1) development of sensitive new methods for detecting faint waves in spectral imagery and for discarding certain wavelike interference, 2) use of these methods to place an upper limit of 0.17K on thermal waves in a large set of 118-GHz ER-2 spectral data from GALE and COHMEX, and 3) adaptation of these methods to ground-based use to yield vertical resolution of wave behavior in microwave absorption of only a few kilometers.
APPENDIX A


by

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Submitted to the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science on December 21, 1990
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

Abstract

Measurements of atmospheric thermal emission near the 118.75-GHz (1) oxygen line were made with a scanning multi-channel spectrometer and used to measure thermodynamic effects of buoyancy wave motions in the lower atmosphere. A system model incorporating the physics of radiative transfer with the geometry and timing of the observation process is derived and then interpreted for small perturbations in atmospheric temperature and composition. A set of properties specific to plane wave inputs, which include an altitude-dependent distortion of the planar wavefronts and a viewing-angle-dependent amplitude attenuation, is developed, and the implications of these properties on the mathematical inversion process are investigated.

The wave detection and parameter estimation problems are posed in a maximum-likelihood (ML) framework whose structure is similar to that used in the classical bearing estimation problem. The wavefront distortion and attenuation effects are accommodated using a signal model in which individual spatial frequency components are mapped to distinct altitudes in the atmosphere. The strict ML solution and two suboptimal but efficient variants of this method are derived. A complete analytical evaluation of estimator performance and minimum detection thresholds follows. For a typical 8-channel, 10-minute observation segment, assuming a single-spot brightness accuracy of 0.5 K rms, theoretical detection thresholds of \( \sim 0.05 \) K and vertical profile accuracies of 0.1 K (at 4-km resolution) are achieved for a 10-km wavelength disturbance. Three methods for discriminating between the radiometric signatures of atmospheric waves and periodic interference are also developed and evaluated.

The detection and parameter estimation methods are applied to an extensive database of 118-GHz imagery gathered from high-altitude aircraft and ground-based platforms. A statistical survey of the aircraft-based database elicits fewer than 14 wave candidates in a 33-hour statistical sample, and no evidence of wave activity above 0.17 K amplitude. Ground-based imagery from the New Hampshire White Mountains region reveals an abundance of \( \sim 5-10 \) K periodic brightness structure which is demonstrated to be consistent with 2-10 km-wavelength modulations in either relative humidity or cloud liquid density.

Thesis Supervisor: David H. Staelin
Title: Professor of Electrical Engineering
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