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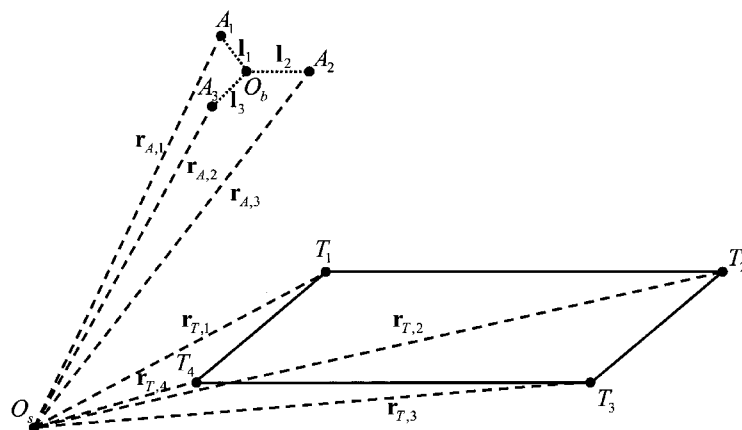


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a method for platform relative navigation using range measurements, wherein - four or more transmitter (T₁-T₄) of positioning signals are located on and/or near a platform of a first object and - a second object approaching the platform comprises three or more receivers (A₁-A₃) for receiving the positioning signals, and wherein the method comprises the acts of - performing for each received positioning signal a range measurement between the transmitter of the positioning signal and the receiver of the positioning signal, and - estimating the relative position and relative attitude of a body frame of the second object with regard to the first object by processing the range measurements with a state space estimation algorithm implementing a model of the system of the first and second object.

DESCRIPTION

TITLE

Platform relative navigation using range measurements

TECHNICAL FIELD

- 5 The invention relates to a method for platform relative navigation using range measurements according to claim 1.

BACKGROUND

For many applications, the relative position and attitude between two platforms has to be known. These applications include the automatic landing
10 of an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) on a fixed or moving platform like a ship, pilot assistance for landing, ship docking assistance, and many more. Furthermore, it is desirable that this information is available in GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System)-denied environments, too. For the sake of simplicity, one of the platforms involved is denoted in the following as ship, the
15 other platform as UAV.

A navigation system which is capable to provide the required relative position and attitude information consists of four or more transponders onboard the ship and three or more antennas onboard the UAV. The antennas transmit
interrogation signals which are replied by the transponders. Then, these
20 replies are received by the antennas. The time between transmission of an interrogation signal and the reception of a reply is measured, which allows to calculate the range between antenna and replying transponder.

The Doppler shift of the received signal can be measured, too, which can be converted to a measurement of the relative velocity between antenna and

transponder. Furthermore, instead of using transponders onboard the ship, synchronised pseudolites can be used, too. These pseudolites transmit signals similar to GNSS-signals, which are received by the antennas onboard the UAV. In such a scenario, the UAV does not have to transmit signals, but
5 the range measurements are biased by the offset of the receiver clock, and the Doppler measurements are biased by the frequency error of the receiver clock.

A relative navigation system like described above is discussed in the publication "Stand-Alone Ship-Relative Navigation System Based on
10 Pseudolite Technology"; Aulitzky, C.; Heinzinger, O.; Bestmann, U.; Hecker, P.; " AIAA Guidance, Navigation, and Control Conference, 10 -13 August 2009, Chicago, Illinois, USA. In the method presented in this paper, the relative position of each antenna with regard to the ship body frame is estimated using a non-linear least squares approach, and constraints are
15 applied to consider the relative geometry between these antennas. Then, the relative attitude is calculated from the relative antenna positions. This solution has several drawbacks:

- The number of unknowns to be estimated grows with the number of antennas.
- 20 - Doppler measurements cannot be considered.
- The range measurements made from all antennas to all transponders / pseudolites must be valid at the same point in time, otherwise systematic errors are introduced. In other words, it is not possible to sequentially perform measurements, i.e. measuring ranges between
25 the first antenna and the transponders / pseudolites, then measuring ranges with the second antenna, and after that measuring ranges with the third antenna. Such an approach provides range measurements with a different time of validity for each antenna. It is a severe

drawback that the method described in the above referenced paper introduces systematic errors in such a scenario, because many off-the-shelf range measurement systems exactly operate that way.

- The measurements of additional sensors like an inertial measurement unit (IMU), and a radar or laser altimeter cannot be considered easily, which is also a severe drawback.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

Therefore, it is an object of the invention to provide a method for platform relative navigation using range measurements, which is able to overcome at least a part of the above mentioned drawbacks of the known relative navigation system.

This object is achieved by the subject matter of the independent claims. Further embodiments are shown by the dependent claims.

The principle idea of the invention is to estimate the relative position and attitude of the UAV body frame with regard to the ship directly instead of estimating the relative antenna positions of a UAV (second object) with regard to a ship (first object), as described in the publication "Stand-Alone Ship-Relative Navigation System Based on Pseudolite Technology"; Aulitzky, C.; Heinzinger, O.; Bestmann, U.; Hecker, P.; " AIAA Guidance, Navigation, and Control Conference, 10 -13 August 2009, Chicago, Illinois, USA, which is incorporated herein by reference. This can be done with a state space estimation algorithm such as a Kalman filter, a Sigma-Point filter, or other filters, either in a total state space or an error state space formulation. The inventive approach offers the following advantages: the number of unknowns to be estimated does not grow with the number of antennas; Doppler measurements can be considered; the range measurements made from all antennas to all transponders / pseudolites can be valid at any point in time as

long as it is known, it is not required that all antennas make synchronized measurements, which facilitates the use of off-the-shelf distance measurement systems; the measurements of additional sensors like IMU, and radar or laser altimeter can be considered easily.

- 5 An embodiment of the invention relates to a method for platform relative navigation using range measurements, wherein

four or more transmitter of positioning signals are located on and/or near a platform of a first object and

- a second object approaching the platform comprises three or more receivers
10 for receiving the positioning signals, and

wherein the method comprises the acts of

performing for each received positioning signal a range measurement between the transmitter of the positioning signal and the receiver of the positioning signal, and

- 15 estimating the relative position and relative attitude of a body frame of the second object with regard to the first object directly by processing the range measurements with a state space estimation algorithm implementing a model of the system of the first and second object.

- The estimating of the relative position and relative attitude of a body frame of
20 the second object with regard to the first object may further comprise processing measurements of one or more additional sensors, particularly a radar or laser altimeter.

The state space estimation algorithm can be a Kalman filter, a Sigma-Point filter or another filter allowing to perform state space estimation either in a

total state space or an error state space formulation.

The state space estimation algorithm may comprise an error state space formulation and perform the following iterative acts of

5 assuming a relative position and relative attitude of the second object from the range measurements,

estimating errors in the assumed relative position and relative attitude of the second object, and

correcting the assumed relative position and relative attitude of the second object based on the estimated errors.

- 10 The state space estimation algorithm can implement the following system differential equation for estimating errors in the assumed relative position and relative attitude of the second object:

$$\begin{pmatrix} \dot{\delta \mathbf{x}}^s \\ \dot{\boldsymbol{\psi}}_s^{\hat{s}} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{0} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \delta \mathbf{x}^s \\ \boldsymbol{\psi}_s^{\hat{s}} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{I} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{I} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{n}_x \\ \mathbf{n}_\omega \end{pmatrix},$$

- wherein $\delta \mathbf{x}^s$ denotes errors in the relative position, $\boldsymbol{\psi}_s^{\hat{s}}$ denotes errors in the relative attitude, $\mathbf{n}_\omega$ and $\mathbf{n}_x$ form a system noise vector.
- 15

An assumed relative attitude of the second object may be propagated in a filter prediction step of the state space estimation algorithm using measurements of additional sensors, particularly an inertial measurement unit..

The state space estimation algorithm can model a range measurement $\tilde{\rho}_{ij}$ between j-th transmitter and i-th receiver as follows:

$$\tilde{\rho}_{ij} = \sqrt{(\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s - \mathbf{r}_{T,j}^s)^T (\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s - \mathbf{r}_{T,j}^s)} + n_{\rho_{ij}}$$

wherein $\mathbf{r}_{T,j}^s$ denotes the position of the j-th transmitter, $n_{\rho_{ij}}$ denotes

- 5 range measurement noise, and wherein the position of the i-th receiver $\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s$ is given by

$$\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s = \mathbf{r}_{O_b}^s + \mathbf{C}_b^s \mathbf{l}_i^b,$$

wherein $\mathbf{r}_{O_b}^s$ denotes the position of the origin O_b of the body frame of the

second object, $\mathbf{l}_i^b$ denotes a lever arm from the origin O_b of the body frame

- 10 of the second object to the i-th receiver, and $\mathbf{C}_b^s$ denotes a direction cosine matrix that transforms from the body frame of the second object to the body frame of the first object, wherein this direction cosine matrix is related to an assumed direction cosine matrix via the relative attitude errors.

- The system model implemented by the state space estimation algorithm may
15 be augmented with relative velocity error states, and the method may further comprise the acts of

performing with each received positioning signal a Doppler measurement, and

estimating the relative velocity of the body frame of the second object with regard to the first object by processing the Doppler measurements with the

- 20 augmented state space estimation algorithm.

A further embodiment of the invention relates to a computer program, which implements a method according to the invention and as described herein and enabling platform relative navigation when executed by a computer.

5 According to a further embodiment of the invention, a record carrier storing a computer program according to the invention may be provided, for example a CD-ROM, a DVD, a memory card, a diskette, or a similar data carrier suitable to store the computer program for electronic access.

10 A further embodiment of the invention relates to a computer being configured by a computer program of the invention and as described herein for platform relative navigation. The computer may be for example located on board of a UAV and process positioning signals received via UAV antennas from transmitters located on or near a platform for controlling an automatic and autonomous landing approach procedure of the UAV.

15 A further embodiment of the invention relates to a device for platform relative navigation comprising

a range measurement unit for performing for a received positioning signal a range measurement between a transmitter of the positioning signal located on and/or near a platform of a first object and a receiver of a second object approaching the platform, with which the positioning signal is received, and

20 processing means for estimating the relative position and relative attitude of a body frame of the second object with regard to the first object by processing range measurements between transmitter of positioning signals and receiver of the positioning signals with a state space estimation algorithm implementing a model of the system of the first and second object, wherein

25 the processing means are configured to perform a method of the invention and as described herein.

A yet further embodiment of the invention relates to a vehicle, particularly a UAV, comprising

three or more receivers for receiving positioning signals emitted by four or more transmitter located on and/or near a platform of another vehicle, and

5 a device of the invention and as described herein.

A yet further embodiment of the invention relates to a system for platform relative navigation using range measurements comprising

four or more transmitter of positioning signals, which are located on and/or near a platform of a first object,

10 three or more receivers for receiving the positioning signals, which are located on board of a second object approaching the platform, and

a device of the invention and as described herein.

In the system, a transmitter of a positioning signal may be implemented as a transponder being adapted to reply to an interrogation signal transmitted by a
15 receiver with a reply signal, and a receiver may be adapted to receive as positioning signal the reply signal from the transponder and to measure the time between transmission of the interrogation signal and the reception of the reply signal, wherein the measured time is processed for a range measurement.

20 Alternatively or additionally, in the system, a transmitter of a positioning signal may be implemented as a pseudolite being adapted to emit a GNSS similar signal as positioning signal, wherein several pseudolites located on and/or near the platform of the first object are synchronized, and a receiver may be adapted to receive a positioning signal from a pseudolite and to measure the

transmission time of the positioning signal, wherein the measured transmission time is processed for a range measurement.

These and other aspects of the invention will be apparent from and elucidated with reference to the embodiments described hereinafter.

- 5 The invention will be described in more detail hereinafter with reference to exemplary embodiments. However, the invention is not limited to these exemplary embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

- Fig. 1 shows an example of the system geometry of a UAV with 3 antennas
10 approaching a landing platform on a ship, which comprises 4 transponder emitting positioning signals; and

Fig. 2 shows an embodiment of a device for platform relative navigation according to the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

- 15 In the following, functionally similar or identical elements may have the same reference numerals. Embodiments of the present invention are described with regard to a (landing) platform of a ship (first object) and a UAV (second object) approaching the landing platform. However, the invention is not restricted to this application, but can be applied to any kind of relative
20 navigation of a second object with regard to a first object. Communication between the objects is performed by means of RF (Radio Frequency), even if other communication means are also possible such as optical communication technologies.

Fig. 1 shows a system geometry example, with which the present invention

can be used. A UAV is denoted by O_b , which is the origin of the UAV's body frame. The UAV further comprises 3 antennas A_1 - A_3 as receivers for positioning signals. The distances between the antennas A_1 - A_3 and the body frame origin O_b are denoted with l_1 - l_3 , which are lever arms of the antennas

5 A_1 - A_3 with regards to the origin O_b . A landing platform for the UAV on a ship is marked with 4 transmitters T_1 - T_4 , which are located at the corners of the platform. The origin of the ship and of a common coordinate system for relative navigation is denoted with O_s . The positions of the antennas A_1 - A_3 in the common coordinate system are denoted with the vectors $r_{A,1}$ - $r_{A,3}$ and the

10 positions of the transmitters T_1 - T_4 are denoted with the vectors $r_{T,1}$ - $r_{T,4}$.

The transmitters T1-T4 can be implemented as transponders, which transmit positioning signals upon receipt of interrogation signals transmitted by the UAV via the antennas A_1 - A_3 . The transmitters T1-T4 can also be implemented as pseudolites, which transmit their positioning signals without receiving an

15 interrogation signal.

The positioning signals transmitted by the transmitters T1-T4 can be similar to or even identical with GNSS signals such as positioning signals from the GNSS GPS (Global Positioning System) or the planned European GNSS GALILEO. Particularly, the positioning signals can be code multiplexed signals

20 containing a navigation message with the positions $r_{T,1}$ - $r_{T,4}$ of the transmitters T_1 - T_4 . Each transmitter may possess its own unique code sequence for coding a transmitted positioning signal so that a receiver of a positioning signal can determine its transmitter.

According to the present invention, the relative position and attitude of the

25 UAV body frame with regard to the ship is estimated directly. This can be done with a Kalman filter, a Sigma-Point filter, or other state space estimation filters (algorithms), either in a total state space or an error state space formulation. The application of a Kalman filter for relative navigation is described in the publication "Stand-Alone Ship-Relative Navigation System

Based on Pseudolite Technology"; Aulitzky, C.; Heinzinger, O.; Bestmann, U.; Hecker, P.; " AIAA Guidance, Navigation, and Control Conference, 10 -13 August 2009, Chicago, Illinois, USA, in detail.

The applied filter or state space estimation algorithm can be implemented
 5 either at least partly in software, for example in a computer program, which can be executed by a processor, or in hardware, for example in an integrated circuit such as a navigation processor. The implementation of the filter receives as inputs range measurements and outputs relative navigation data, which can for example be processed by an automatic positioning system of
 10 the UAV for automatically landing the UAV on the platform of the ship.

In the following, an error state space formulation of an implementation of a state space estimation algorithm (filter) according to the invention shall be considered for illustrating the inventive concept. When one or more range measurements performed as described below are available, the filter
 15 estimates the errors in the assumed relative position and attitude of the UAV. These estimated errors are then used to correct the assumed relative position and attitude. A suitable system differential equation implemented by the filter is given by

$$\begin{pmatrix} \dot{\delta \mathbf{x}}^s \\ \dot{\boldsymbol{\psi}}_s^{\hat{s}} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{0} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \delta \mathbf{x}^s \\ \boldsymbol{\psi}_s^{\hat{s}} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{I} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{I} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{n}_x \\ \mathbf{n}_\omega \end{pmatrix}$$

20 (equation 1),

where $\delta \mathbf{x}^s$ denotes the three errors in the relative position, $\boldsymbol{\psi}_s^{\hat{s}}$ denotes the three errors in the relative attitude, $\mathbf{n}_\omega$ and $\mathbf{n}_x$ form the system noise vector. The latter is required to allow for changes in relative position and attitude.

If an IMU is available, the assumed relative attitude can be propagated in the filter prediction step using the IMU measurements, for example gyroscope measurements, which prevents that rapid UAV attitude changes contribute to the relative attitude which has to be tracked by the filter.

- 5 For estimating the relative position and attitude of the UAV, range measurements are processed by the filter. A range measurement is performed for each positioning signal received by the UAV from the positioning signal transmitter. A range measurements results in a pseudorange between the transmitter of a received positioning signal and the
10 receiving antenna of the UAV. A range measurement $\tilde{\rho}_{ij}$ (pseudorange) between transmitter j and receiving antenna i can be modelled as follows (the superscript “s” denotes “ship” as the origin of the common coordinate system which is the ship’s origin O_s):

$$\tilde{\rho}_{ij} = \sqrt{(\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s - \mathbf{r}_{T,j}^s)^T (\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s - \mathbf{r}_{T,j}^s)} + n_{\rho_{ij}}$$

- 15 (equation 2)

Hereby, the range measurement noise is denoted with $n_{\rho_{ij}}$, and the position of the i-th antenna is given by

$$\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s = \mathbf{r}_{O_b}^s + \mathbf{C}_b^s \mathbf{l}_i^b$$

(equation 3),

- 20 where $\mathbf{C}_b^s$ denotes the direction cosine matrix that transforms from the UAV body frame to the ship body frame. This direction cosine matrix is related to the assumed direction cosine matrix via the relative attitude errors of the UAV.

The above equation allows determining the relative position r_{Ob} of the UAV body frame directly with regard to the ship.

Also, the above described system and measurement models allow developing a suitable filter implementation.

- 5 In order to allow for the processing of Doppler measurements, the system model can be augmented with three relative velocity error states leading to a nine-state filter. If range and Doppler measurements are biased by UAV clock and frequency error, the system and measurement models can be augmented accordingly, too. It is understood that if the absolute UAV attitude is known,
10 the relative position and velocity information can be transformed easily to e.g. a local level coordinate system.

Fig. 2 shows a relative navigation device 10, which can for example be installed on board of a UAV and used to generate relative navigation data, which can be processed for controlling an automatic landing of the UAV on
15 the landing platform of a ship.

Device 10 comprises a range measurement unit 12 and processing means 14. It receives as input positioning signals received via antennas A_1 - A_3 and measurements from an IMU 16. The range measurements unit 12 performs for each received positioning signal a range measurement $\tilde{\rho}_{ij}$ in order to
20 determine a pseudorange between the transmitter of the positioning signal and the receiving antenna. The performed range measurements $\tilde{\rho}_{ij}$ are supplied by the range measurement unit to the processing means 14 for generating relative navigation data 18. The processing means 14 comprise a Kalman filter as state space estimation algorithm implementing a model of the
25 system of the ship and the UAV. The Kalman filter implements the above equations 1-3 for processing the range measurements and, furthermore, uses the measurements received from the IMU 16 for assuming a relative attitude

of the UAV for propagation in the Kalman filter prediction step. The range measurement unit 12 and/or the processing means 14 can be implemented in soft- or hardware.

5 The present invention platform enables a relative navigation using range measurements, wherein the number of unknowns to be estimated does not grow with the number of antennas, Doppler measurements can be considered, and the measurements of additional sensors like IMU, and radar or laser altimeter can be considered easily.

REFERENCE NUMERALS AND ACRONYMS

	10	platform relative navigation device
	12	range measurement unit
	14	Kalman filter
5	16	IMU
	18	relative navigation data
	A_1-A_3	antennas
	T_1-T_4	transponder/pseudolites
	GNSS	Global Navigation Satellite System
10	GPS	Global Positioning System
	IMU	Inertial Measurement Unit
	UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

CLAIMS

1. Method for platform relative navigation using range measurements, wherein

- 5 - four or more transmitter (T_1 - T_4) of positioning signals are located on and/or near a platform of a first object and
- a second object approaching the platform comprises three or more receivers (A_1 - A_3) for receiving the positioning signals, and

wherein the method comprises the acts of

- 10 - performing for each received positioning signal a range measurement between the transmitter of the positioning signal and the receiver of the positioning signal, and
- estimating the relative position and relative attitude of a body frame of the second object with regard to the first object directly by processing the range measurements with a state space estimation
- 15 algorithm implementing a model of the system of the first and second object.

2. The method claim 1, wherein the estimating of the relative position and relative attitude of a body frame of the second object with regard to the first object further comprises processing measurements of one or more
- 20 additional sensors, particularly a radar or laser altimeter.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the state space estimation algorithm is a Kalman filter, a Sigma-Point filter or another filter allowing to perform state space estimation either in a total state space or an error state space formulation.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the state space estimation algorithm comprises an error state space formulation and performs the following iterative acts of

- 5 - assuming a relative position and relative attitude of the second object from the range measurements,
- estimating errors in the assumed relative position and relative attitude of the second object, and
- correcting the assumed relative position and relative attitude of the second object based on the estimated errors.

10 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the state space estimation algorithm implements the following system differential equation for estimating errors in the assumed relative position and relative attitude of the second object:

$$\begin{pmatrix} \delta \mathbf{x}^s \\ \boldsymbol{\psi}_s^{\hat{s}} \end{pmatrix}^{\bullet} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{0} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \delta \mathbf{x}^s \\ \boldsymbol{\psi}_s^{\hat{s}} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{I} & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{I} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{n}_x \\ \mathbf{n}_\omega \end{pmatrix},$$

15 wherein $\delta \mathbf{x}^s$ denotes errors in the relative position, $\boldsymbol{\psi}_s^{\hat{s}}$ denotes errors in the relative attitude, $\mathbf{n}_\omega$ and $\mathbf{n}_x$ form a system noise vector.

20 6. The method of any of claim 2, 3, 4 or 5, wherein an assumed relative attitude of the second object is propagated in a filter prediction step of the state space estimation algorithm using measurements of additional sensors, particularly an inertial measurement unit.

7. The method of claim 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6, wherein the state space estimation algorithm models a range measurement $\tilde{\rho}_{ij}$ between j-th transmitter and i-th receiver as follows:

$$\tilde{\rho}_{ij} = \sqrt{(\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s - \mathbf{r}_{T,j}^s)^T (\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s - \mathbf{r}_{T,j}^s)} + n_{\rho_{ij}}$$

- 5 wherein $\mathbf{r}_{T,j}^s$ denotes the position of the j-th transmitter, $n_{\rho_{ij}}$ denotes range measurement noise, and wherein the position of the i-th receiver $\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s$ is given by

$$\mathbf{r}_{A,i}^s = \mathbf{r}_{O_b}^s + \mathbf{C}_b^s \mathbf{l}_i^b,$$

- 10 wherein $\mathbf{r}_{O_b}^s$ denotes the position of the origin O_b of the body frame of the second object, $\mathbf{l}_i^b$ denotes a lever arm from the origin O_b of the body frame of the second object to the i-th receiver, and $\mathbf{C}_b^s$ denotes a direction cosine matrix that transforms from the body frame of the second object to the body frame of the first object, wherein this direction cosine matrix is related to an assumed direction cosine matrix via the relative attitude errors.
- 15

8. The method of any of the preceding claims, wherein the system model implemented by the state space estimation algorithm is augmented with relative velocity error states, and the method further comprises the acts of

- 20
- performing with each received positioning signal a Doppler measurement, and
 - estimating the relative velocity of the body frame of the second object with regard to the first object by processing the Doppler measurements with the augmented state space estimation

algorithm.

9. A computer program implementing a method of any of the claims 1 to 8.

10. A record carrier storing a computer program according to claim 9.

5 11. A computer being configured by a computer program of claim 9 for platform relative navigation.

12. A device (10) for platform relative navigation comprising

- 10 - a range measurement unit (12) for performing for a received positioning signal a range measurement between a transmitter (T_1 - T_4) of the positioning signal located on and/or near a platform of a first object and a receiver (A_1 - A_3) of a second object approaching the platform, with which the positioning signal is received, and
- 15 - processing means (14) for estimating the relative position and relative attitude of a body frame of the second object with regard to the first object by processing range measurements between transmitter (T_1 - T_4) of positioning signals and receiver (A_1 - A_3) of the positioning signals with a state space estimation algorithm implementing a model of the system of the first and second object, wherein the processing means are configured to perform a method
20 of any of the claims 1 to 7.

13. A vehicle, particularly a UAV, comprising

- three or more receivers (A_1 - A_3) for receiving positioning signals emitted by four or more transmitter (T_1 - T_4) located on and/or near a platform of another vehicle, and

- a device (10) of claim 12.

14. A system for platform relative navigation using range measurements comprising

- 5 - four or more transmitter (T_1 - T_4) of positioning signals, which are located on and/or near a platform of a first object,
- three or more receivers (A_1 - A_3) for receiving the positioning signals, which are located on board of a second object approaching the platform, and
- a device (10) of claim 12.

10 15. The system of claim 14, wherein

- a transmitter (T_1 - T_4) of a positioning signal is implemented as a transponder being adapted to reply to an interrogation signal transmitted by a receiver with a reply signal, and
- 15 - a receiver (A_1 - A_3) is adapted to receive as positioning signal the reply signal from the transponder and to measure the time between transmission of the interrogation signal and the reception of the reply signal, wherein the measured time is processed for a range measurement.

16. The system of claim 14 or 15, wherein

- 20 - a transmitter (T_1 - T_4) of a positioning signal is implemented as a pseudolite being adapted to emit a GNSS similar signal as positioning signal, wherein several pseudolites located on and/or near the platform of the first object are synchronized, and

- a receiver (A_1 - A_3) is adapted to receive a positioning signal from a pseudolite and to measure the transmission time of the positioning signal, wherein the measured transmission time is processed for a range measurement.

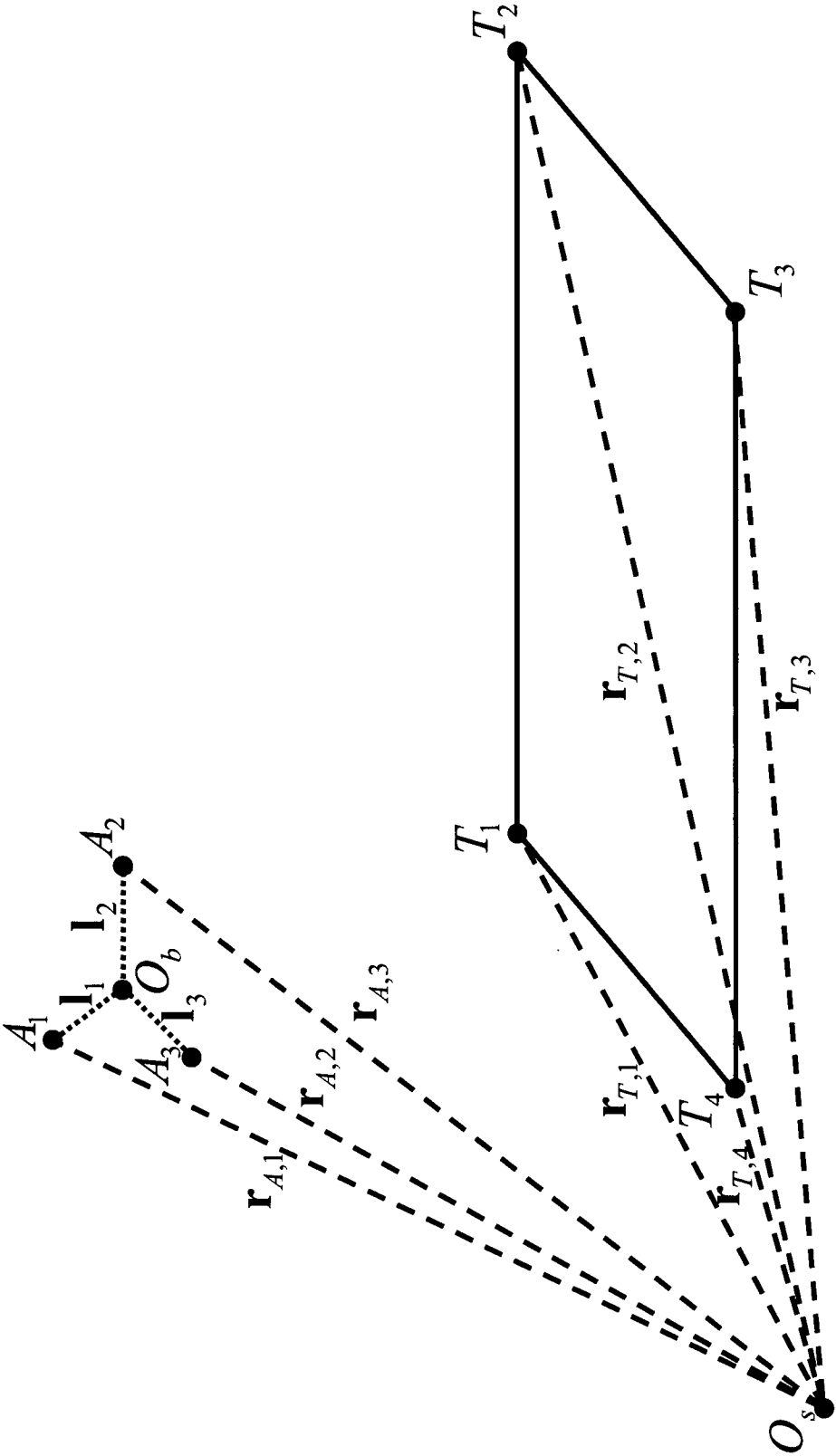


Fig. 1

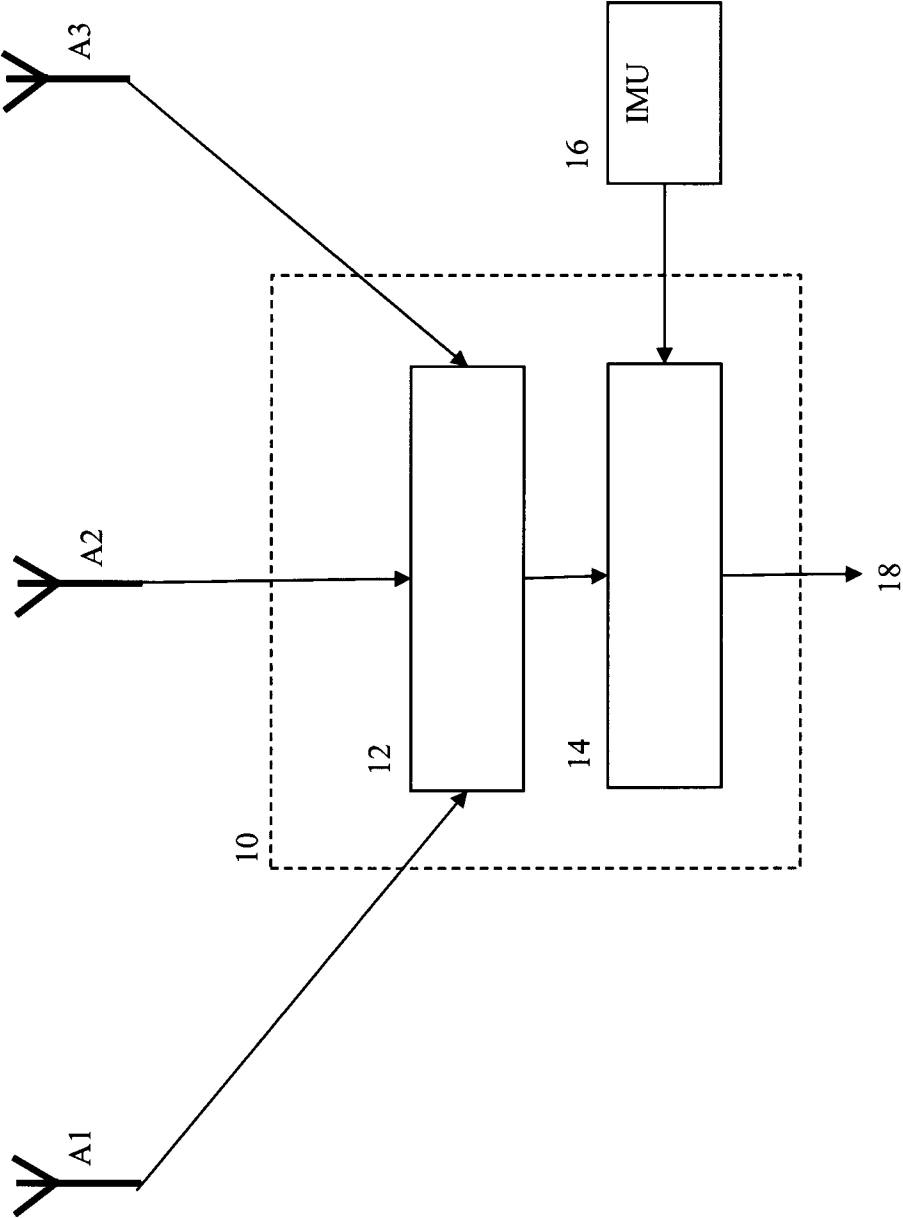


Fig. 2