ESTIMATION OF DISCHARGE OF AMAZON RIVER AND ITS BRANCHES FROM JERS-1 SAR IMAGES

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ABSTRACT: We visualized some traces of the Amazon River and its branches, which were not found in the original SAR images, with the SFP and enhanced SFP filters. We extracted the characteristic of the river shapes such as a meandering wavelength or the amplitude with Fourier analysis. Next, we compared the quantity of characteristic of the river shapes with the existing discharge data, and obtained some regression equations. Finally, we estimated the discharge of the Amazon River and its branches from the SAR images, which were independent of the weather.

1. INTRODUCTION

The JERS-1 SAR image, which we used in this study, is all weather type sensor, and suited for observation of tropical rain forest of the Amazon. This study, by using some strong scatters lining up intermittently, a few hundred meters apart, observed to being on the riverside in this tropical rain forest, we visualized some thin rivers which were not found in the original SAR images. By this technique, it did not affect an image of low resolution of 200m and the thin river traces could be regarded as “the bright characteristic”. Besides, it was clear that the width of a river became large to 200m. In this visualized river, we extracted the quantity of characteristic of the river shapes: the meandering wavelength, amplitude, and width of river. Furthermore, we extracted the meandering wavelength with Fourier analysis. As a result, we found a good correlation among the quantities of characteristic of the river shapes, the quantitative value that was calculated by Fourier analysis, and the discharge of the Amazon River. By this technique, we estimated the discharge of the Amazon River and its branches from the SAR images independent of the weather.
2. METHODS

2-1. DATA

(a) Satellite data: We used 7 scenes of Level 2.1, 4-look JERS-1 SAR data of a tropical rain forest of the Amazon: Path=415, Row=306, 316, 318, 319 observed on March 31, 1997; Path=416, Row=315 observed on April 1, 1997; Path=419, Row=315 observed on April 4, 1997; Path=414, Row=306 observed on June 26, 1997. (Fig.1)

(b) Hydrological data: Monthly discharge data at Manaus of the Amazon River, Porto Velho of the Madeira River, and Tabajara and Ji-Parana of the Jiparana River (Table.1). But we used the mean of discharge at Porto Velho and Tabajara. On the other hand, we converted the discharge of Manaus by the basin area ratio using a Hack's rule from discharge data at Obidos.

\[ L = aA^{0.6} \]  

2-2. Extract the quantity of characteristic of the river shapes and Fourier analysis

First, in order to remove speckle noise of the original SAR images, we used the SFP (Small Feature Preserving) filter and the enhanced SFP filter, and integrated two images. By this technique, small feature was remained, while the noise was removed. Next, we emphasized difference of surroundings in order to extract a thin river from the bright characteristic. We prepared a 5 by 5 window, and calculated the sum of the absolute difference between a center pixel and the surrounding pixel values. By moving the sum value in the center pixel, we emphasized isolated string scatters. Then, we visualized the thin river, where the width of a river was around 20m, from the bright characteristic (Fig.2.1-2.5).

Next, we extracted the characteristic quantity of the river shapes: the meandering wavelength, amplitude, and width of a river (Fig.3.1-3.3). This method is that tied up the corners of the meandering of river shapes in neighborhood of measurement points of river discharge, and we calculated some means in length of the line and a wavelength of the river. In addition, I took down a perpendicular line from one corner to the line, which tied up corners of the front and back and calculated some average amplitude of the river. And about the large river with the width of more than 200m, we measured the width of the river to put about 1km and we calculated the average width of the river.

Furthermore, in the image that visualized river shapes, we binalized it (Fig.5) and carried out two-dimensional Fourier conversion (Fig.6). In a provided image, we extracted some periodical stripes and measured the number of pixel of their width and calculated the average (Fig.7). Because periodical stripes from each stripe corresponding to a half wavelength of a river, we measured two striped intervals by the number of pixel. For true distance of the original image width, we multiplied reciprocal number of provided average pixel and obtained the value of a meandering wavelength. A unit is 200m for 1 pixel. For quantitative data provided by this method, we compared the existing data in real river discharge and calculated regression equations.
3. RESULTS

We found a good correlation between the discharge of the Amazon River and the characteristic of river geomorphology: the extracted meandering wavelength, amplitude, and width of river. The wavelength was also calculated by Fourier analysis (Table.2). By this method, the following regression equations were obtained for river discharge, $Q$ (m$^3$/s), meandering wavelength, $\lambda$ (m), amplitude, $A$ (m), and width of river, $B$ (m).

$$\lambda = 136B^{0.69} \quad \left( R^2 = 0.98 \right) \quad (2)$$
$$A = 0.083\lambda^{1.12} \quad \left( R^2 = 0.96 \right) \quad (3)$$
$$Q = 0.0004A^{2.17} \quad \left( R^2 = 0.99 \right) \quad (4)$$
$$Q = 0.17B^{1.75} \quad \left( R^2 = 0.997 \right) \quad (5)$$
$$Q = 0.0000004\lambda^{2.46} \quad \left( R^2 = 0.99 \right) \quad (5)$$

The meandering wavelength of river calculated by Fourier analysis became the following value.

The average pixel numbers of an interval of the stripe in a Fourier conversion image at Tabajara (Path=416, Row=315) in the Jiparana River = 13.728 (pixels)

$$400 \times \frac{1}{13.728} = 29.138 \text{ (pixels)}$$

$$\lambda = 29.138 \times 200 = 5827.5 \text{ (m)}$$

4. DISCUSSION

We analyzed the SAR images about 7 scenes observed in 1997, and found out characteristic of river geomorphology and discharge of the Amazon River correlated well. However, in visualizing a thin river, where the width of the river is about 20m, by processing to emphasize a difference of surroundings, the width of a thin river is not suited as a quantity of characteristic because of an error of approximately 200m.

Besides, it is hard to think about a big change of quantity of characteristic to estimate such a small change as a season change of the discharge. However, we can estimate the minute change that coped with a seasonal change if we take precipitation data, branch length, the number of branches, brightness of a river and a basin area into account. Moreover, meandering wavelength calculated by Fourier analysis is near to a value measured by a manual way. Therefore, it is also an effective method to estimate river discharge.
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<p>| Table.1 | Monthly discharge data in each points |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>River name</th>
<th>Point name</th>
<th>Observation period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MADEIRA</td>
<td>Porto Velho</td>
<td>May, 1977 to Dec, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMAZON</td>
<td>Obidos</td>
<td>Jan, 1928 to Dec, 1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIPARANA</td>
<td>Tabajara</td>
<td>Jan, 1973 to Jun, 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIPARANA</td>
<td>Ji-Parana</td>
<td>Jan, 1978 to May, 1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Table.2 | Quantity of characteristic of river shapes and estimated discharge |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>River (city)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Wavelength A(m)</th>
<th>Amplitude A(m)</th>
<th>Width of river B(m)</th>
<th>Discharge Q (m³/s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jiparana river (TABAJARA)</td>
<td>April 1, 1997</td>
<td>5250</td>
<td>1456</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>2652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiparana river (JIPARANA)</td>
<td>March 31, 1997</td>
<td>5576</td>
<td>1252</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeira river (PORTO VELHO)</td>
<td>April 4, 1997</td>
<td>18724</td>
<td>3746</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>30420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazon river (MANAUS)</td>
<td>June 26, 1997</td>
<td>31239</td>
<td>10770</td>
<td>2656</td>
<td>174286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 1  SAR original image, Tabajara (Path=415, Row=316)

Fig. 2-1  Tabajara (Path=415, Row=316)

Fig. 2-2 Ji-Parana (Path=415, Row=319)

Fig. 2-3 Tabajara (Path=416, Row=315)

Fig. 2-4 Porto Velho (Path=419, Row=315)

Fig. 2-5 Manaus (Path=414, Row=306)
Fig. 3-1 Characteristic of extraction image (Ji-Parana)

Fig. 3-2 Characteristic of extraction image (Manaus)

Fig. 3-3 Characteristic of extraction image (Porto Velho)

Fig. 4 Method of extraction for river characteristic

Fig. 5 Tabajara (Path=416, Row=315)

Fig. 6 Two-dimensional Fourier image Binarized image
Fig. 7 Enlarged image

Fig. 8 Seasonal change of discharge of the Amazon River

Fig. 9 Seasonal change of discharge of the Madeira River

Fig. 10 Seasonal change of discharge of the Jiparana River