



# Remote Sensing Based Methods to Retrieve UVSQ-SAT Cubesat Attitude to Map the Earth's Radiation Budget.



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## 1 – Abstract

The terrestrial energy balance represents a measure of the excess energy stored in the climate system. A possible measurement of this variable can be made at the top of the atmosphere by quantifying the imbalance between the incoming solar flux and the outgoing reflected and infrared flux. This is the objective of the UltraViolet and infrared Sensors at high Quantum efficiency on-board a small SATellite (UVSQ-SAT) mission, validating miniaturized technologies on-board a CubeSat with 1U standards (about 11 cm x 11 cm x 11 cm). This satellite was put into orbit in January 2021 by SpaceX's Falcon 9 launcher and is totally functional. In order to measure the various fluxes with accuracy it is necessary to know precisely the orientation of the satellite at each time. Indeed, the knowledge of this orientation makes it possible to dissociate the various fluxes and to correct them from the angle to the considered source (Earth, Sun). To do so, two methods were implemented to retrieve the satellite's attitude based on Sun and Nadir pointing along with inertial measurement unit (IMU) data. To ensure more accurate knowledge of the attitude determination in every configuration (daylight and eclipse), neural networks were implemented based on the available sensors. A multilayer perceptron was thus trained in order to find the orientation of the satellite. Based on the attitude retrieved the different flux were computed at each time from the sensors signals. We present here the development and the outcomes of the neural network applied to in-orbit data recovered from the UVSQ-SAT mission.

## 2 – Introduction

**Scientific objective:**  
There are three components of the Earth Radiative Budget:  
- the incoming solar radiation  
- the reflected solar radiation  
- the outgoing longwave radiation (OLR)  
The Earth Energy Imbalance (EEI) is computed from the difference between the incoming and outgoing radiation. It is a metric to quantify climate change. It corresponds to the energy accumulated in the atmosphere per unit of time. Once integrated over a period it corresponds to the amount of energy accumulated from that period (as shown on the Figure 1).  
Satellite observation allows retrieval of high-frequency dynamics of the EEI. The UVSQ-SAT satellite is dedicated to the measurements of outgoing terrestrial radiation (shortwave and longwave radiation) that are key to determining the EEI.

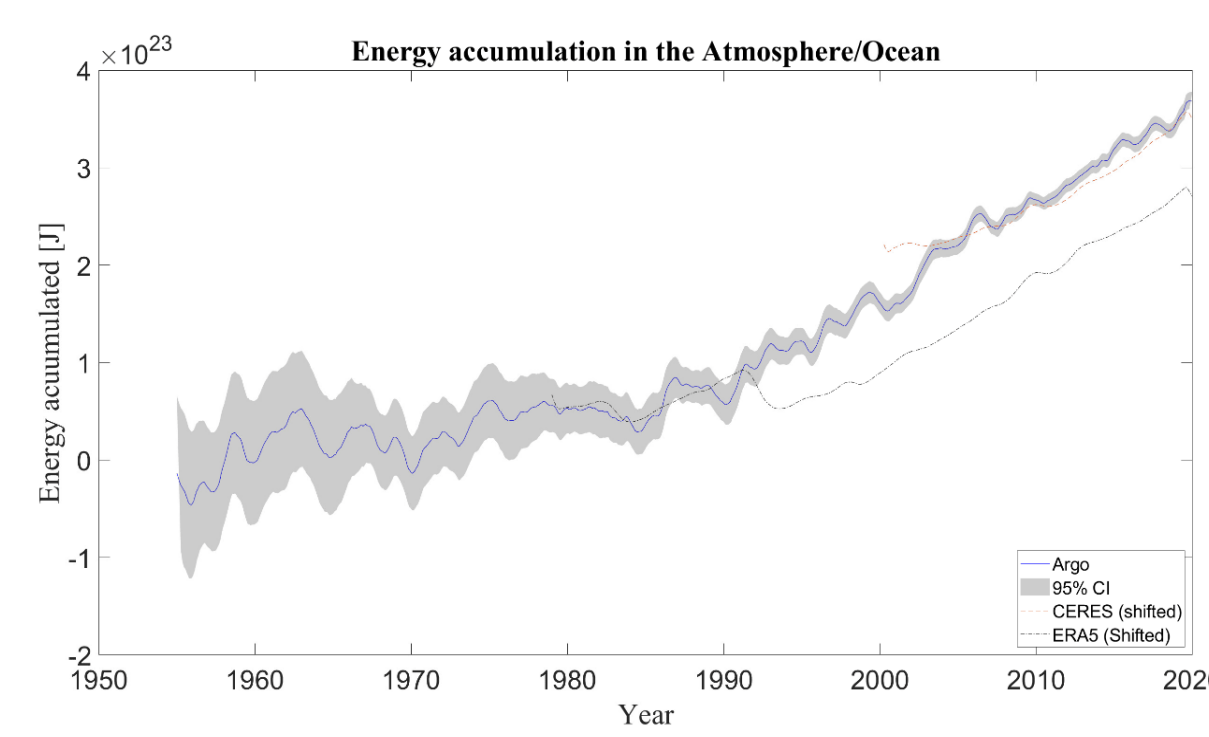


Figure 1: Energy accumulation on Earth.

### The UVSQ-SAT mission:

UltraViolet and infrared Sensors at high Quantum efficiency onboard a small SATellite (UVSQ-SAT) also called INSPIRE Sat 5 is a CubeSat that was launched on a Falcon 9 rocket into a Sun-synchronous orbit on the 24th of January 2021. First results published by Meftah et al. (2021) appear below, they correspond to the outgoing longwave radiation measured by the UVSQ-SAT satellite.

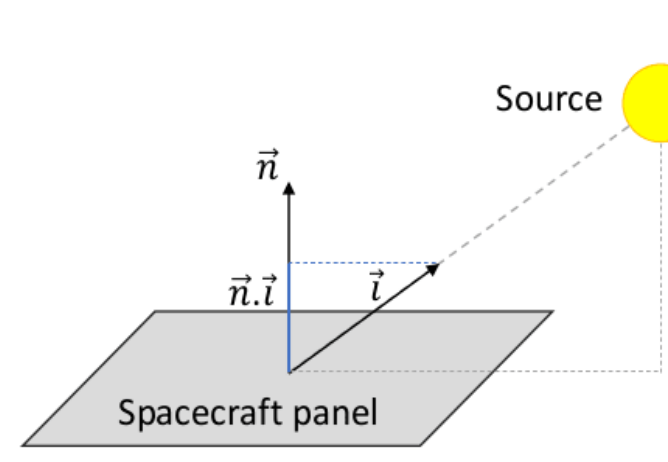


Figure 3: Incidence angle diagram.

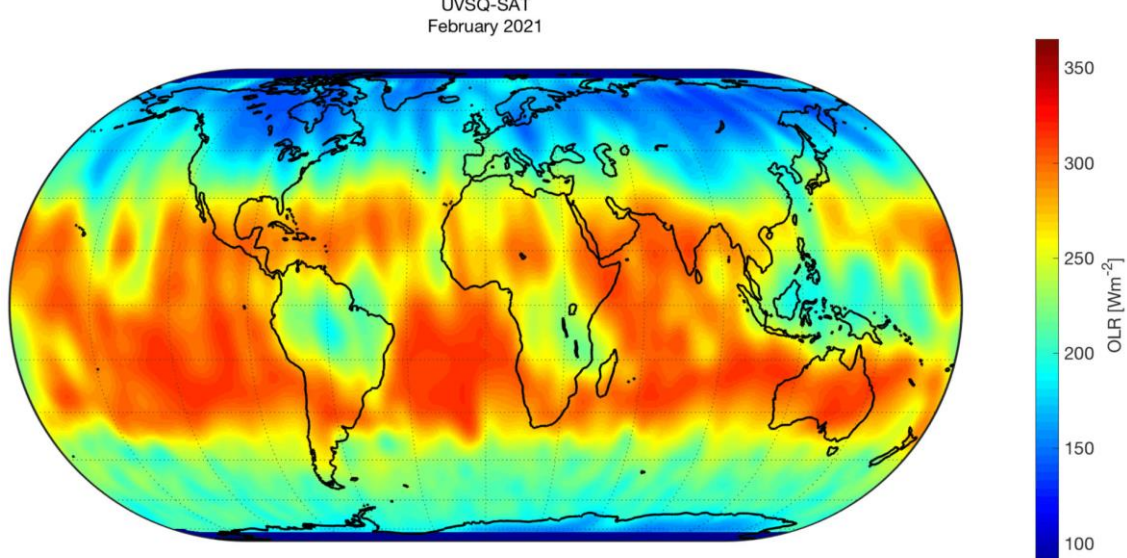


Figure 2: OLR at top-of-atmosphere measured by UVSQ-SAT instruments.

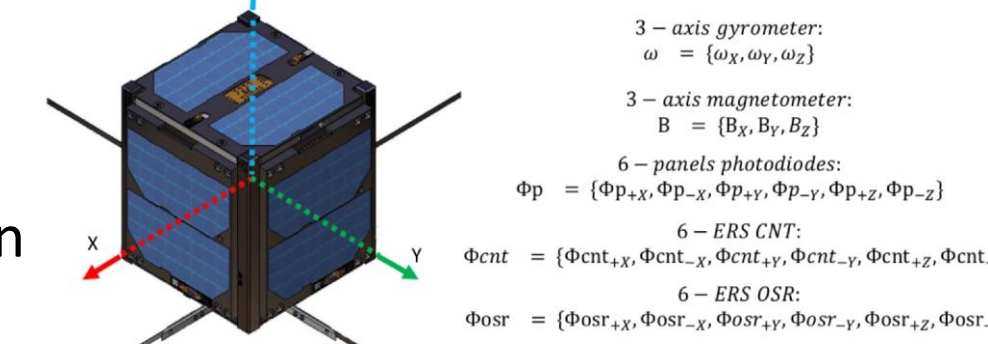


Figure 4: UVSQ-SAT reference frame and instruments.

## 3 – TRIAD and MEKF methods

The knowledge of the satellite attitude is necessary to determine the different components of the Earth radiation budget as presented by Meftah et al. (2020). Attitude determination can be realized based on different instruments and methods. A global overview of the recent studies (along with the following descriptions of the methods) is presented by Finance et al. (2021b). Two methods have been used. They have an accuracy of 3 degrees in sunlight and 10 degrees in eclipse (at 1 sigma). To improve the results in eclipse we propose the neural network method. This work was initiated by a ground calibration to be able to do a training. However, there were some limitations in the realization of a test in conditions different from those of the orbit. Therefore, we propose to train the neural network in sunlight to improve the accuracy of the nadir determination in eclipse.

**Problematic: The main objective is to improve the accuracy of the attitude determination in eclipse.**

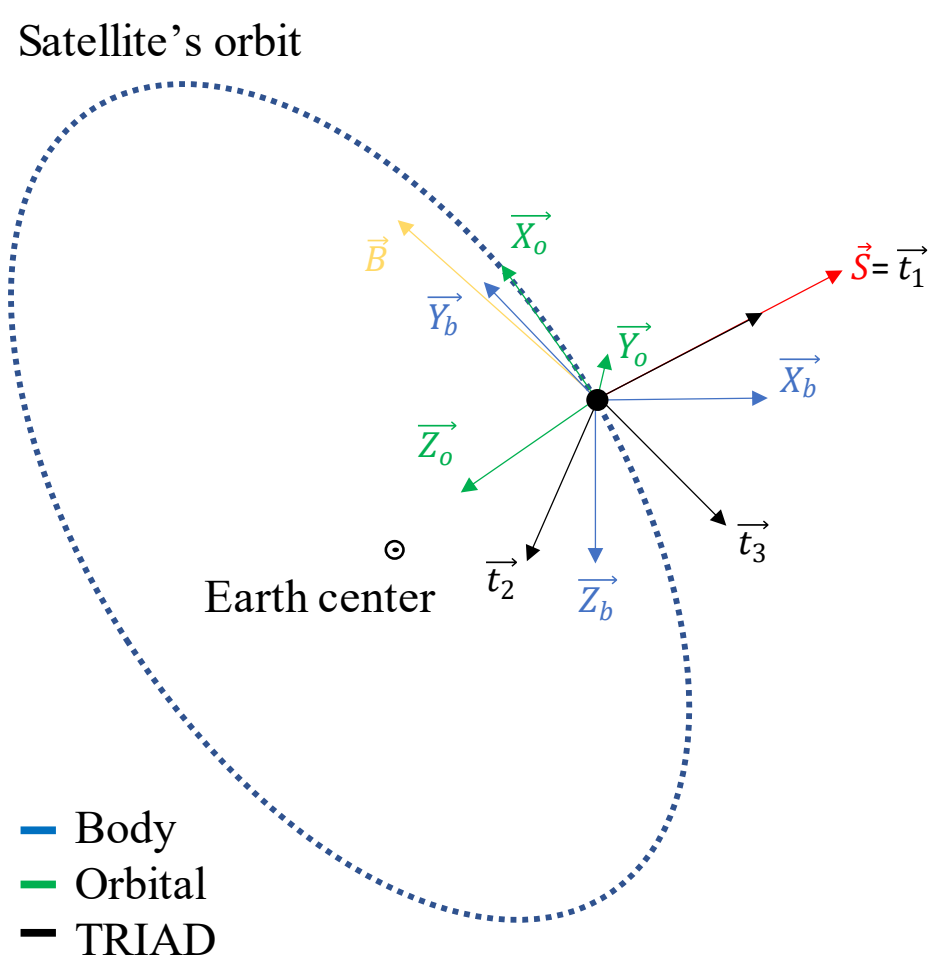


Figure 5: TRIAD reference frame.

### Tri-Axial Attitude Determination (TRIAD) method:

The TRIAD method is a determinist and direct method. It consists in creating a new reference frame that can easily be defined from models at the location and time of the satellite. It can also be defined from the measurements onboard the satellite. The magnetometer and photodiodes as Sun sensors are used (or Infrared red sensors for Earth sensors purposes).  
- More computationally efficient than other methods.  
- Lack of data does not introduce incoherency in attitude determination.  
- But it does not include calibration or noise reduction.

### Multiplicative Extended Kalman Filter (MEKF) method:

The MEKF method is a recursive method. It consists of the correction of the measurement noise of the instruments by the development of a linearized Kalman filter method.  
- Calibrate in real-time the instrument (such as the gyrometer).  
- Reduce instrument noise.  
- Lack of data introduces divergence of the system and incoherent attitude.

## 4 – Neural Network Architecture

### General method:

The algorithm detailed in this section uses neural networks to predict the UVSQ-SAT attitude based on the instruments onboard and models.  
The neural network will be trained based on the attitude determination realized with TRIAD and MEKF methods.  
Data processing:  
The data processing is realized on-ground. Instruments that can be calibrated are calibrated (based on a magnetic field model for the example of the magnetometer). Once the inputs are available, different methods can be implemented to determine the UVSQ-SAT attitude.

### Main objectives:

- To avoid the recursive loop of the Kalman filter
- To improve the accuracy of the attitude determination in eclipse

### Inputs and outputs:

- Inputs:  
Measurements from the satellite (counting for 136 features)  
Data from models at the location and time of the satellite (counting for 6 features)
- Outputs:  
Nadir coordinates (counting for 3)  
Sun coordinates (counting for 3)

## 5 – First Results and Perspectives

### Performance of the UVSQ-SAT Multi-layer perceptron in sunlight:

It is important to mention that the accuracy is estimated based on the TRIAD results and is not absolute accuracy.  
Sun vector: 1° (at 1σ) compared to test set.  
Nadir vector: 2° (at 1σ) compared to test set.

### Results:

Figures representing the performance of the neural network for two different cases. It uses the TRIAD training set based on random samples in the data from launch and the optimized neural network. The continuous blue curve illustrates the ideal case where the observed values exactly match the predicted values.  
- Sun's coordinates in sunlight versus the reference coordinates.  
- Nadir's coordinates in sunlight versus the reference coordinates.

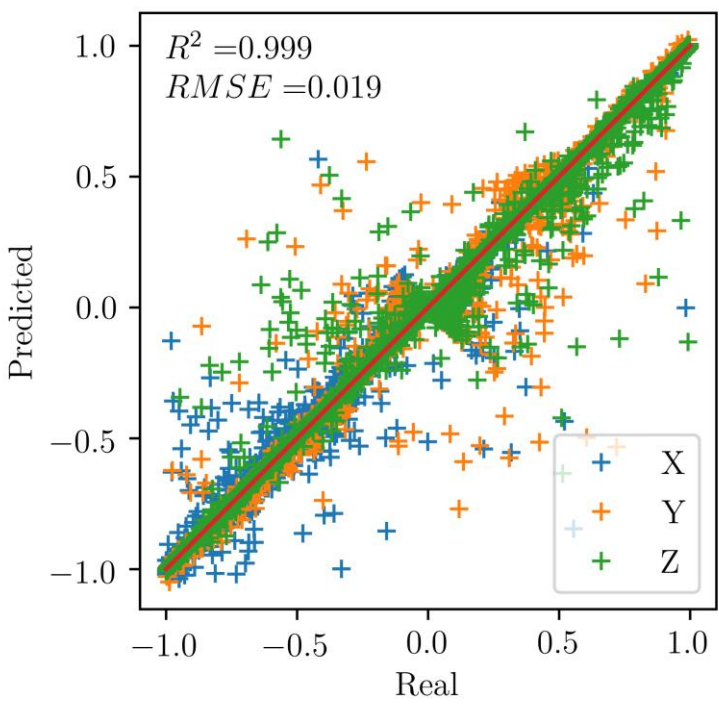


Figure 6: Predicted and real coordinate of the Sun vector in daylight.

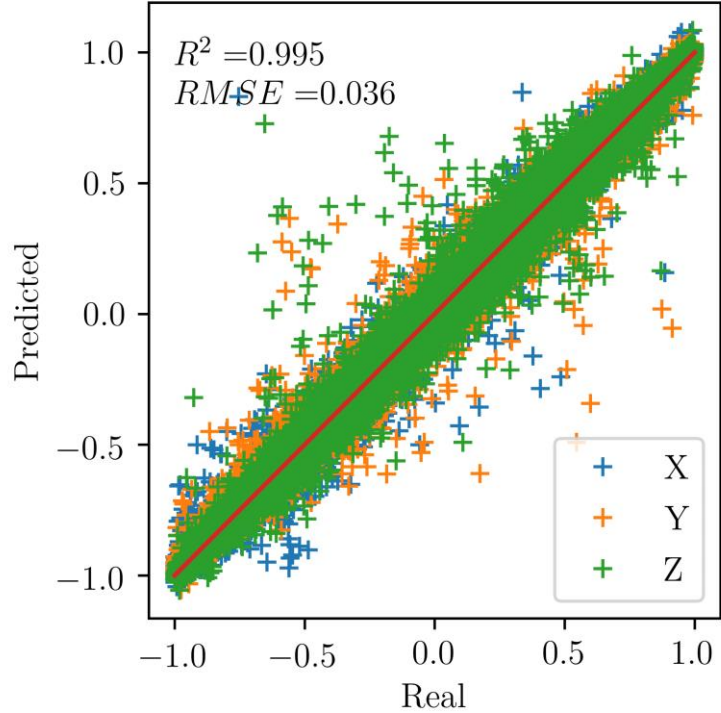


Figure 7: Predicted and real coordinate of the Sun vector in eclipse.

We have tested the ability of the neural network to predict the sun and nadir direction based on the available sensors. Those results are preliminary and allow quantifying the accuracy of the algorithm compared to the values computes from the TRIAD method in sunlight.  
Perspectives:

Based on the feature selection presented previously it is possible to select only the information needed for attitude determination in eclipse. Therefore, to train the neural network with only those features in sunlight to improve the attitude determination in eclipse. The methods presented in part 2 are currently used to compute the components of the radiative budget.

| Method | Uncertainty (1 σ) |              | Advantage                                  |
|--------|-------------------|--------------|--|
|        | Sunlight          | Eclipse      |  |
| TRIAD  | ±3°               | ±14°         | Instantaneous                              |
| MEKF   | ±3°               | ±10°         | Correct noise and calibrate instruments    |
| MLP    | ±3*               | ±3° to ±10** | Instantaneous and more accurate in eclipse |

Figure 8: Attitude determination methods comparison.

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