

A Generalization of The Taxicab Metric And Related Isometries

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Abstract

In this paper, we define a family of distance functions in the real plane, m -generalized taxicab distance function, which includes the generalized taxicab distance and so the taxicab distance functions as special cases, and we show that the m -generalized taxicab distance function determines a metric. Then we give some properties of the m -generalized taxicab metric, and determine Euclidean isometries that preserve the m -generalized taxicab metric.

Keywords: metric, taxicab distance, m -generalized taxicab distance, isometry.

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1. Introduction

The taxicab metric was given in a family of metrics of the real plane by Minkowski. Using this metric, taxicab geometry was introduced by Menger [5], and developed by Krause [4]. In the taxicab geometry, circles are squares in which each diagonal is parallel to a coordinate axis. In [8], Lawrance J. Wallen altered the taxicab metric by redefining in order to get rid of imperative symmetry, and called it *the (slightly) generalized taxicab metric*. In the generalized taxicab geometry, circles are rhombuses in which each diagonal is also parallel to a coordinate axis.

In this work, we define a new distance function in the real plane \mathbb{R}^2 , m -generalized taxicab distance function $d_{T_g(m)}$, which includes the generalized taxicab distance and so the taxicab distance functions as special cases, and we show that the m -generalized taxicab distance function determines a metric in \mathbb{R}^2 . We see that the m -generalized taxicab metric can have any rhombus as a circle, instead of rhombuses with diagonal parallel to a coordinate axis. Then we give some properties of the m -generalized taxicab metric, and determine Euclidean isometries of the plane which also preserve m -generalized taxicab metric. We also see that there are transformations which preserve the m -generalized taxicab distance, but not preserve the Euclidean distance for some case.

2. The m -generalized taxicab distance in \mathbb{R}^2

The m -generalized taxicab distance and the m -taxicab distance between two points in the Cartesian plane are defined as follows:

Definition 2.1. Let $P_1 = (x_1, y_1)$ and $P_2 = (x_2, y_2)$ be two points in \mathbb{R}^2 . For any real number m and positive real numbers a and b , the function $d_{T_g(m)} : \mathbb{R}^2 \times \mathbb{R}^2 \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ defined by

$$d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = (a|(x_1 - x_2) + m(y_1 - y_2)| + b|m(x_1 - x_2) - (y_1 - y_2)|) / (1 + m^2)^{1/2} \quad (2.1)$$

is called the m -generalized taxicab distance function in \mathbb{R}^2 , and the real number $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2)$ is called the m -generalized taxicab distance between points P_1 and P_2 . As a special case, if $a = b = 1$, then the function $d_{T(m)} : \mathbb{R}^2 \times \mathbb{R}^2 \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ defined by

$$d_{T(m)}(P_1, P_2) = (|(x_1 - x_2) + m(y_1 - y_2)| + |m(x_1 - x_2) - (y_1 - y_2)|) / (1 + m^2)^{1/2} \quad (2.2)$$

is called the m -taxicab distance function in \mathbb{R}^2 , and the real number $d_{T(m)}(P_1, P_2)$ is called the m -taxicab distance between points P_1 and P_2 .

Remark 1. We are quite familiar to the notation of d_T for the taxicab distance function. In [2] and [3], d_{T_g} was used to state the generalized taxicab distance. Here, we choose the notation $d_{T_g(m)}$ to state the m -generalized taxicab distance function, and $d_{T(m)}$ to state the m -taxicab distance function for compatibility. Clearly, there are infinitely many different distance functions in the family of distance functions $d_{T_g(m)}$, depending on values a, b and m . One can find the definition of $d_{T_g(m)}$ not to be well-defined since the m -generalized taxicab distance between two points can change also according to values a and b . To remove this confusion, we have to use values a and b in the name of the distance, just as we use m . This can be done easily; for example by using the notation $m(a, b)$ instead of m in phrases $d_{T_g(m)}$ and m -generalized taxicab distance. But we keep on using m for the sake of shortness, supposing values a and b are initially determined and fixed, unless otherwise stated.

Remark 2. In \mathbb{R}^2 , the m -generalized taxicab distance function involves the generalized taxicab distance and so the taxicab distance functions as special cases: For points $P_1 = (x_1, y_1)$ and $P_2 = (x_2, y_2)$, if $m = 0$ in $d_{T_g(m)}$, then

$$d_{T_g(0)}(P_1, P_2) = d_{T_g}(P_1, P_2) = a|x_1 - x_2| + b|y_1 - y_2| \tag{2.3}$$

which is the generalized taxicab distance function d_{T_g} . And if $a = b = 1$ and $m = 0$ in $d_{T_g(m)}$, or if $m = 0$ in $d_{T(m)}$, then

$$d_{T(0)}(P_1, P_2) = d_T(P_1, P_2) = |x_1 - x_2| + |y_1 - y_2| \tag{2.4}$$

which is the well-known taxicab distance function d_T . In addition, if $a = b$, then $d_{T_g(m)}$ is equal to the m -generalized absolute value distance d_m defined in [1]. But, if $a \neq b$, then we will see in Section 2 that the m -generalized taxicab circle is a *rhombus*, while the m -generalized absolute value circle is an *octagon*.

Henceforth, we use equations $a' = a/(1+m^2)^{1/2}$ and $b' = b/(1+m^2)^{1/2}$ to shorten phrases. The following proposition shows that the m -generalized taxicab distance function satisfies the metric properties.

Proposition 2.1. *The m -generalized taxicab distance function determines a metric in \mathbb{R}^2 .*

Proof. Clearly, $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = 0$ if and only if $P_1 = P_2$, and $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = d_{T_g(m)}(P_2, P_1)$ for all P_1 and P_2 in \mathbb{R}^2 . So, we only will show that $d_{T_g(m)}$ satisfies the triangle inequality, that is, $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) \leq d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_3) + d_{T_g(m)}(P_3, P_2)$ for points $P_i = (x_i, y_i)$, $i = 1, 2, 3$ in \mathbb{R}^2 . This fact can be proven as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) &= a'|(x_1 - x_2) + m(y_1 - y_2)| + b'|m(x_1 - x_2) - (y_1 - y_2)| \\ &= a'|(x_1 - x_3) + m(y_1 - y_3) + (x_3 - x_2) + m(y_3 - y_2)| + \\ &\quad b'|m(x_1 - x_3) - (y_1 - y_3) + m(x_3 - x_2) - (y_3 - y_2)| \\ &\leq a'|(x_1 - x_3) + m(y_1 - y_3)| + b'|m(x_1 - x_3) - (y_1 - y_3)| + \\ &\quad a'|(x_3 - x_2) + m(y_3 - y_2)| + b'|m(x_3 - x_2) - (y_3 - y_2)| \\ &= d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_3) + d_{T_g(m)}(P_3, P_2). \end{aligned} \quad \square$$

3. Some properties of $d_{T_g(m)}$

Let $P_1 = (x_1, y_1)$ and $P_2 = (x_2, y_2)$ be two points in the Cartesian coordinate plane. Let l_{P_1} be the line through P_1 with slope m , and let l_{P_2} be the line through P_2 and perpendicular to the line l_{P_1} . Since the Euclidean distances from P_1 to l_{P_2} and from P_2 to l_{P_1} are $d_E(P_1, l_{P_2}) = |(x_1 - x_2) + m(y_1 - y_2)|/(1+m^2)^{1/2}$ and $d_E(P_2, l_{P_1}) = |m(x_1 - x_2) - (y_1 - y_2)|/(1+m^2)^{1/2}$, the m -generalized taxicab distance between points P_1 and P_2 can be given by

$$d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = a d_E(P_1, l_{P_2}) + b d_E(P_2, l_{P_1}). \tag{3.1}$$

If $a \geq b$, let $\frac{b}{a} = (\sec \alpha - \tan \alpha)$ for $\alpha \in [0, \pi/2)$; and if $b \geq a$, let $\frac{a}{b} = (\sec \beta - \tan \beta)$ for $\beta \in [0, \pi/2)$. Then we get the fact that if $a = b$, then $\alpha = \beta = 0$ and the m -generalized taxicab distance between points P_1 and P_2 is constant a multiple of the Euclidean length of one of the shortest paths from P_1 to P_2 composed of line segments, each parallel to one of lines with slope m or $-1/m$; if $a \geq b$, then the m -generalized taxicab distance between points P_1 and P_2 is constant a multiple of the Euclidean length of one of the shortest paths from P_1 to P_2 composed of line segments, each parallel to one of lines with slope $m, -1/m, [m(a^2 - b^2) + 2ab]/[(a^2 - b^2) - 2abm]$ or $[m(a^2 - b^2) - 2ab]/[(a^2 - b^2) + 2abm]$; if $b \geq a$, then the m -generalized taxicab distance between points P_1 and P_2 is constant b multiple of the Euclidean length of one of the shortest paths from P_1 to P_2 composed of line segments, each parallel to one of lines with slope $m, -1/m, [2abm - (a^2 - b^2)]/[m(a^2 - b^2) + 2ab]$ or $[(a^2 - b^2) + 2abm]/[2ab - m(a^2 - b^2)]$ (see Figure 1). Although there exist, in general, infinitely many shortest paths between points P_1 and P_2 , we prefer to use the ones in Figure 1, and call each of them a *basic way*. Also we call each of lines $mx - y = 0$ and $x + my = 0$ an *axis of direction*.

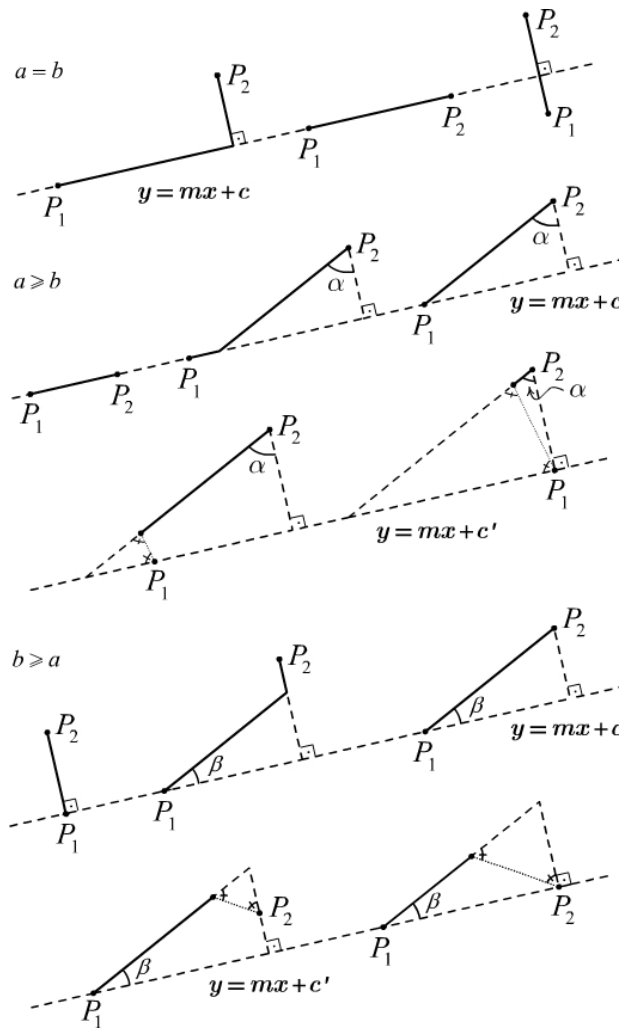


Figure 1: The basic ways between points P_1 and P_2 with respect to the m -generalized taxicab metric.

Now, we examine the minimum distance set of points P_1 and P_2 in $\mathbb{R}_{T_g(m)}^2$. The *minimum distance set* of P_1 and P_2 , $M(P_1, P_2)$, is defined by

$$M(P_1, P_2) = \left\{ X : d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, X) + d_{T_g(m)}(X, P_2) = d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) \right\}. \tag{3.2}$$

In Euclidean plane, the minimum distance set of P_1 and P_2 is the line segment joining points P_1 and P_2 . It is not difficult to see that the minimum distance set of points P_1 and P_2 with respect to the m -generalized taxicab metric is generally a rectangular region (or a line segment) with diagonal P_1P_2 bounded by the lines through P_1 and P_2 being parallel to an axis of direction, which are $mx - y - mx_i + y_i = 0$ and $x + my - x_i - my_i = 0$ for $i \in \{1, 2\}$, as shown in Figure 2.

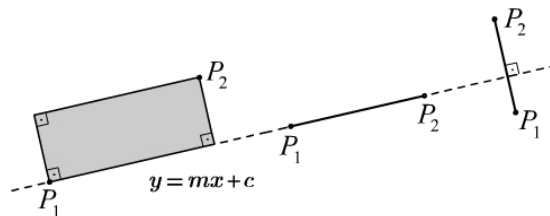


Figure 2: Minimum distance set of P_1 and P_2 with respect to the m -generalized taxicab metric.

The following two propositions follow directly from Equation (3.1) which is the geometric interpretation of the m -generalized taxicab distance.

Proposition 3.1. Let P_1, P_2 and P_3 be three points in \mathbb{R}^2 such that $P_3 \in M(P_1, P_2)$. Then, $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_3) \leq d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2)$. In addition, $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_3) = d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2)$ if and only if $P_3 = P_2$.

Proposition 3.2. Let P_1, P_2, P_3 and P_4 be four points in \mathbb{R}^2 . For $a = b$, if $M(P_1, P_2)$ and $M(P_3, P_4)$ are congruent, then $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = d_{T_g(m)}(P_3, P_4)$. For $a \neq b$, if $M(P_1, P_2)$ and $M(P_3, P_4)$ are congruent and equal sides of $M(P_1, P_2)$ and $M(P_3, P_4)$ are parallel, then $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = d_{T_g(m)}(P_3, P_4)$.

Let us denote the real plane endowed with the m -generalized taxicab metric by $\mathbb{R}_{T_g(m)}^2$. Then m -generalized taxicab unit circle in $\mathbb{R}_{T_g(m)}^2$ is the set of points (x, y) satisfying the equation

$$(a|x + my| + b|mx - y|)/(1 + m^2)^{1/2} = 1. \tag{3.3}$$

One can see by calculation that m -generalized taxicab unit circle is a rhombus with a diagonal having slope of m , and with vertices $A_1 = (\frac{1}{ak}, \frac{m}{ak})$, $A_2 = (\frac{-m}{bk}, \frac{1}{bk})$, $A_3 = (\frac{-1}{ak}, \frac{-m}{ak})$ and $A_4 = (\frac{m}{bk}, \frac{-1}{bk})$, where $k = (1+m^2)^{1/2}$ (see Figure 3). If $a = b$, then m -generalized taxicab unit circle is a square with vertices A_1, A_2, A_3 and A_4 . In $\mathbb{R}_{T_g(m)}^2$, it is easy to see that the ratio of the circumference of an m -generalized taxicab circle to its diameter is $\pi_{T_g(m)} = 4$.

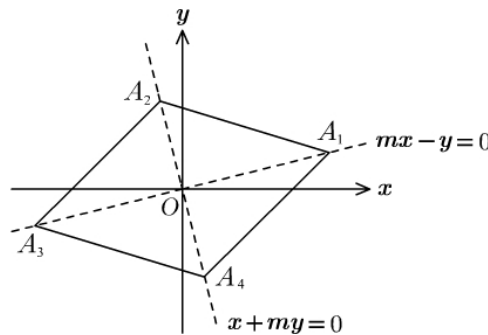


Figure 3: The m -generalized taxicab unit circle for $m = 1/4, a = 1/5, b = 1/3$.

Thus, the m -generalized taxicab metric has rhombuses with diagonal having slope of m , as circles, instead of rhombuses with diagonal parallel to a coordinate axis, and the m -taxicab metric has squares with diagonal having slope of m , as circles, instead of squares with diagonal parallel to a coordinate axis.

The following proposition gives an equation which relates the Euclidean distance to the m -generalized taxicab distance between two points in the Cartesian coordinate plane:

Proposition 3.3. For any two points P_1 and P_2 in \mathbb{R}^2 that do not lie on a vertical line, if n is the slope of the line through P_1 and P_2 , then

$$d_E(P_1, P_2) = \mu(n)d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) \tag{3.4}$$

where $\mu(n) = (1+n^2)^{1/2}/(a'|1+mn| + b'|m-n|)$. If P_1 and P_2 lie on a vertical line, then

$$d_E(P_1, P_2) = [1/(a'|m| + b')]d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2). \tag{3.5}$$

Proof. Let $P_1 = (x_1, y_1)$ and $P_2 = (x_2, y_2)$ such that $x_1 \neq x_2$. Then $n = (y_2 - y_1)/(x_2 - x_1)$. Clearly, $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = |x_1 - x_2|(a'|1+mn| + b'|m-n|)$ and $d_E(P_1, P_2) = |x_1 - x_2|(1+n^2)^{1/2}$, thus we have $d_E(P_1, P_2) = \mu(n)d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2)$, where $\mu(n) = (1+n^2)^{1/2}/(a'|1+mn| + b'|m-n|)$. If $x_1 = x_2$, then $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = |x_1 - x_2|(a'|m| + b')$ and we have Equation (3.5). \square

The following two corollaries follow directly from Proposition 3.2 or Proposition 3.3:

Corollary 3.1. Let P_1, P_2, P_3 and P_4 be four points in \mathbb{R}^2 . If lines P_1P_2 and P_3P_4 are coincident or parallel or symmetric about a line parallel to an axis of direction; in addition P_1P_2 and P_3P_4 are perpendicular to each other for $a = b$, then

$$d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = d_{T_g(m)}(P_3, P_4) \text{ if and only if } d_E(P_1, P_2) = d_E(P_3, P_4). \tag{3.6}$$

Corollary 3.2. If P_1, P_2 and X are three distinct collinear points in \mathbb{R}^2 , then

$$d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, X)/d_{T_g(m)}(X, P_2) = d_E(P_1, X)/d_E(X, P_2). \tag{3.7}$$

As a consequence of Corollary 3.2, it is clear that Thales, Menelaus, and Ceva theorems are true in $\mathbb{R}_{T_g(m)}^2$.

4. Isometries of $\mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)}$

Notice that by Proposition 3.2 and Corollary 3.1, the m -generalized taxicab distance between two points is invariant under all translations. In addition, the m -generalized taxicab distance between two points is invariant under rotation of π radian around a point for $a \neq b$; and rotations of $\pi/2, \pi$ and $3\pi/2$ radians around a point for $a = b$. Besides, if $a \neq b$, then the m -generalized taxicab distance between two points is invariant under the reflections in lines parallel to $mx - y = 0$ or $x + my = 0$; if $a = b$, then the m -generalized taxicab distance between two points is invariant under reflections in lines parallel to $mx - y = 0, x + my = 0, (1 + m)x - (1 - m)y = 0$, or $(1 - m)x + (1 + m)y = 0$. On the other hand, if we denote reflection in line l by σ_l , and rotation about a point C through angle θ by $\rho_{C,\theta}$, using coordinate definition of the m -generalized taxicab distance for any points P_1 and P_2 , one can get that $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = d_{T_g(m)}(\sigma_l(P_1), \sigma_l(P_2))$ for $l \in \{mx - y = 0, x + my = 0\}$ and $d_{T_g(m)}(P_1, P_2) = d_{T_g(m)}(\rho_{O,\theta}(P_1), \rho_{O,\theta}(P_2))$ for $\theta \in \{0, \pi\}$; in addition if $a = b$ then the equations holds also for $l \in \{(1 + m)x - (1 - m)y = 0, (1 - m)x + (1 + m)y = 0\}$ and $\theta \in \{\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{3\pi}{2}\}$.

Now, we state following three propositions as results of our observations above:

Proposition 4.1. Every translation is an isometry of $\mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)}$.

Proposition 4.2. In $\mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)}$, the set of isometric reflections in lines through origin is

$$S_{T_g(m)} = \begin{cases} \sigma_{mx-y=0}, \sigma_{x+my=0} & , \text{ if } a \neq b \\ \sigma_{mx-y=0}, \sigma_{x+my=0}, \sigma_{(1+m)x-(1-m)y=0}, \sigma_{(1-m)x+(1+m)y=0} & , \text{ if } a = b \end{cases}$$

Proposition 4.3. In $\mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)}$, the set of isometric rotations about origin for $\theta \in [0, 2\pi)$ is

$$R_{T_g(m)} = \begin{cases} \rho_{O,0}, \rho_{O,\pi} & , \text{ if } a \neq b \\ \rho_{O,0}, \rho_{O,\frac{\pi}{2}}, \rho_{O,\pi}, \rho_{O,\frac{3\pi}{2}} & , \text{ if } a = b \end{cases}$$

The following proposition states that there is no other Euclidean isometry preserving the m -generalized taxicab distance:

Proposition 4.4. Let $\phi : \mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)}$ be a Euclidean isometry preserving the m -generalized taxicab distance such that $\phi(O) = O$. Then $\phi \in R_{T_g(m)}$ or $\phi \in S_{T_g(m)}$.

Proof. Given a Euclidean isometry $\phi : \mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)}$ such that $\phi(O) = O$. Assume that $\phi(A_1) \in (A_1, A_2)$, then $\phi(A_2) \in [A_3, A_4]$ since $d_{T_g}(\phi(A_1), \phi(A_2)) = 2$. Then $\phi(A_3) \in [A_1, A_2]$, and we have $d_{T_g}(\phi(A_1), \phi(A_3)) < 2$, which is a contradiction since $d_{T_g}(A_1, A_3) = 2$. Thus, $\phi(A_1) \notin (A_1, A_2)$. Similarly, one can see that $\phi(A_i) \notin (A_j, A_{j+1})$ for $i, j \in \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ and (assume that $A_5 = A_1$). Now, it is clear that $\phi(A_i) \in \{A_1, A_2, A_3, A_4\}$ for $i \in \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$. For $a \neq b$, if $\phi(A_1) = A_i$, then $\phi(A_2) = A_{i+1}$ for $i \in \{1, 3\}$, and ϕ is a rotation with the angle $\theta = \frac{(1-i)\pi}{2}$. If $\phi(A_1) = A_{i+1}$, then $\phi(A_2) = A_i$ for $i \in \{2, 4\}$, and ϕ is a reflection in line $mx - y = 0$ or $x + my = 0$. For $a = b$, if $\phi(A_1) = A_i$, then $\phi(A_2) = A_{i+1}$ for $i \in \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$, and ϕ is a rotation with the angle $\theta = \frac{(1-i)\pi}{2}$. If $\phi(A_1) = A_{i+1}$, then $\phi(A_2) = A_i$ for $i \in \{2, 4\}$, and ϕ is a reflection in line $mx - y = 0, x + my = 0, (1 + m)x - (1 - m)y = 0$ or $(1 - m)x + (1 + m)y = 0$. \square

Consequently, we have the orthogonal group $O_{T_g(m)}(2) = R_{T_g(m)} \cup S_{T_g(m)}$. Note that there are four more isometries of $\mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)}$ such that $\Psi_1(A_1, A_2, A_3, A_4) = (A_2, A_1, A_4, A_3)$, $\Psi'_1(A_1, A_2, A_3, A_4) = (A_4, A_3, A_2, A_1)$, $\Psi_2(A_1, A_2, A_3, A_4) = p(A_2, A_3, A_4, A_1)$, $\Psi'_2(A_1, A_2, A_3, A_4) = (A_4, A_1, A_2, A_3)$ and $\Psi_i(O) = \Psi'_i(O) = O$: $\Psi_i(x, y) = (U_i, V_i)$, $\Psi'_i(x, y) = (-U_i, -V_i)$, where $U_1 = \frac{(b^2 - a^2 m^2)y - m(a^2 + b^2)x}{ab(1 + m^2)}$, $V_1 = \frac{m(a^2 + b^2)y + (a^2 - b^2 m^2)x}{ab(1 + m^2)}$, $U_2 = \frac{(-b^2 - a^2 m^2)y - m(a^2 - b^2)x}{ab(1 + m^2)}$, $V_2 = \frac{m(a^2 - b^2)y + (a^2 + b^2 m^2)x}{ab(1 + m^2)}$. One can check that these transformations do not preserve the Euclidean distance for $a \neq b$, while they preserve the m -generalized taxicab distance! If $a = b$, then $\Psi_1 = \sigma_{(1+m)x-(1-m)y=0}$, $\Psi'_1 = \sigma_{(1-m)x+(1+m)y=0}$, $\Psi_2 = \rho_{O,\frac{\pi}{2}}$ and $\Psi'_2 = \rho_{O,\frac{3\pi}{2}}$.

Theorem 4.1. Let $f : \mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^2_{T_g(m)}$ be a Euclidean isometry preserving the m -generalized taxicab distance. Then there exists a unique $T_a \in T(2)$ and $\phi \in O_{T_g(m)}(2)$ such that $f = T_a \circ \phi$.

Proof. Suppose that $f(O) = A$ where $a = (a_1, a_2)$. Define $\phi = T_{-a} \circ f$. It is clear that ϕ is an isometry and $\phi(O) = O$. Thus, we get $\phi \in O_{T_g(m)}(2)$ by Proposition 4.4, and $f = T_a \circ \phi$. The proof of uniqueness is trivial. \square

Finally, by Theorem 4.1 we determine the group of Euclidean isometries preserving the m -generalized taxicab distance is semidirect product of the translation group $T(2)$ consisting of all translations and the symmetry group of the m -generalized taxicab unit circle $O_{T_g(m)}(2)$.

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