

Simulation of time dependent hamiltonian

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Parametres

The 1D time dependent Schrödinger equation is given by

$$\hat{H}\Psi(x, t) = i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \Psi(x, t), \quad \hat{H} = -\frac{\hbar}{2m} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} + V(x, t),$$

for some potential $V(x)$. However, it is cumbersom to walk with dimensionfull constants, especially numerically, when values for \hbar in the si-system is of order 10^{-34} . This can lead to inaccuracies when doing numerical simulations. But, by choosing some defining, problem-dependent sizes and grouping together the constants, this can be liminated by the introduction of dimensionless variables. We are going to be working with potentials which are infinit outside som local region, i.e. the boundary conditions $\psi(0 > x > L) = 0$, so it is natural to choose the length of the potential, L , as a defining quantity. Noticing that

$$\left[\frac{\hbar}{2mL^2} \right] = \frac{\text{kg m}^2 \text{s}^{-1}}{\text{kg m}^2} = \text{s}^{-1},$$

we make the variable change

$$\frac{\hbar}{2mL^2} t \rightarrow t, \quad \frac{1}{L} x \rightarrow x.$$

This gives the new, dimensionless schrödinger equation

$$\hat{H}\Psi(x, t) = -i \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \Psi(x, t), \quad \hat{H} = -\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} + V(x, t), \quad (1)$$

where I have done the change $2mL/\hbar^2 V(x, t) \rightarrow V(x, t)$. All sizes now is in units defined by the problem and the constants of the equation, and the new boundary condition is

$$\Psi(0 > x > 1) = 0.$$

Time independent problems

Assuming, for now, that the potential is independent of time, we can get the time independent schrödinger equation from (1) by separation of variables. Assuming

$\Psi(x, t) = \psi(x)\phi(t)$ yields the time independent schrödinger equation and the equation for the time dependence:

$$\left[-\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} + V(x) \right] \psi(x) = \hat{H}\psi = E\psi(x), \quad \frac{\partial}{\partial t}\phi(t) = -iE\phi(t). \quad (2)$$

The equation for time is elementary, and gives the solution

$$\phi(t) = \exp(-iEt).$$

The time independent schrödinger equation is a eigenvalue problem, and can be solved by discretizing the hamiltonian, and thus also ψ . We are first going to look at a particle in a box, i.e. $V(0 < x < 1) = 0$. The equation to discretize is thus

$$\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2}\psi(x) = E\psi(x).$$

Using a finite difference scheme with $N + 1$ nodes, there will be $N - 1$ possibly non-zero nodes. The end nodes are given by the boundary conditions $\psi(0) = \psi(1) = 0$, and the interior points are given by the matrix equation

$$D\psi_n = E_n\psi_n, \quad D_{ii} = 2N^2, D_{ii\pm 1} = -N^2.$$

Here, ψ_n is a vector such that $\psi_n^{(j)} = \psi_n((j+1)/N)$. This is shown in the figure below.

$$\psi_n^{(0)} = 0 \quad \psi_n^{(1)} \quad \dots \quad \psi_n^{(N)} \quad \psi_n^{(N+1)} = 0$$

The result of the simulation, together with the analytical solution, is shown in figure 1. The normalization is such that the sum $\psi_n^{j\dagger}\psi_n^j = 1$ holds. The analytical solution for the eigenvalues are $E_n = (n\pi)^2$. By the finite nature of this simulation, the values are going to be less accurate for the higher energies, as they are waves where the wave length is short, and is approaching the resolution of the discretization. Figure 2 shows the numerically computed eigenvalues, and compares them to the analytical solution. We see the error always will increase rapidly for higher values, but we also get rapidly more accurate values by increasing N , i.e. decreasing the step length $\Delta x = 1/N$. In figure 3, we can see the trend of the error as the step size decreases. It is evident that the error decreases as the square of the step length, or the inverse of the square of the number of points.

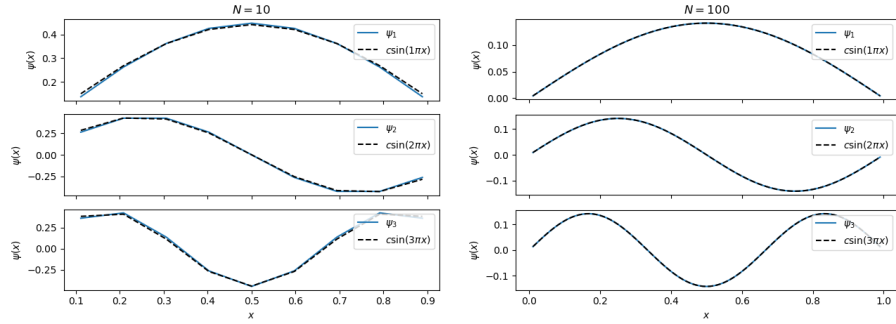


Figure 1: The numerical simulation and analytical solution to a particle in a box

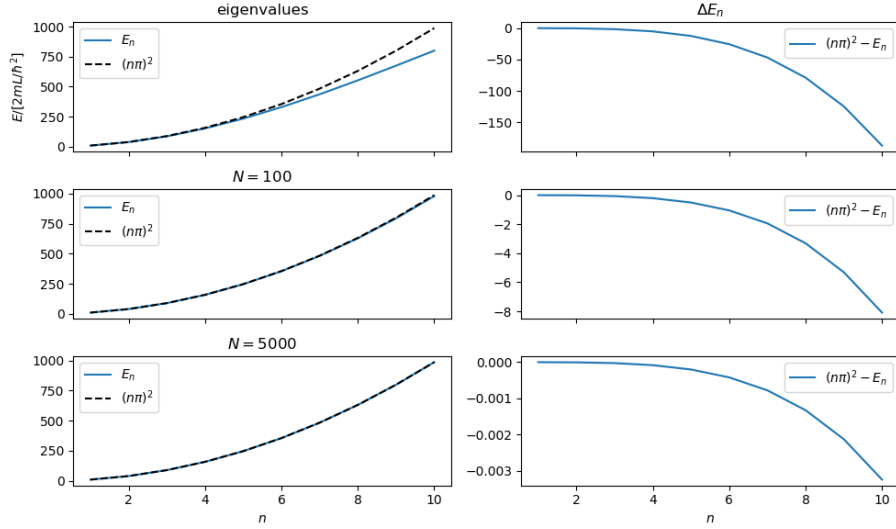


Figure 2: The numerical eigenvalues, compared with the analytical solution.

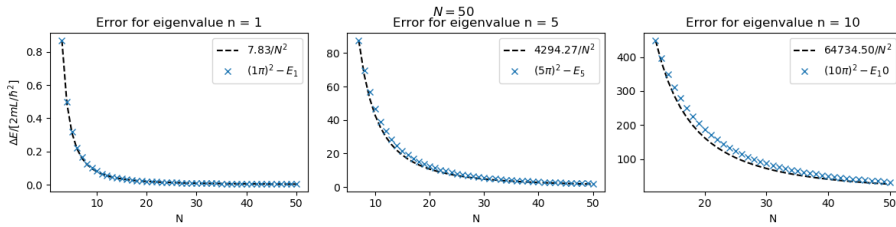


Figure 3: The errors for some of the few first eigenvalues, compared to the square of the steplength