Partial Differential Equations

PDE

Given a domain $\Omega \in \mathbb{R}^d$ where d > 1, we seek for $u : \Omega \to \mathbb{R}^s$ where $s \in \mathbb{N}_0$, solution of a **stationary PDE** of order k:

$$F(x,t,u,
abla u\dots,
abla^{(k-1)}u,
abla^{(k)}u,g)=0$$

with $g:\Omega o \mathbb{R}^s$ a given function. Or, more explicitely as

$$\mathcal{P}(u,g)\equiv F(x,u,rac{\partial u}{\partial x_1},\ldots,rac{\partial u}{\partial x_d},rac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x_1\partial x_1},\ldots,rac{\partial^{p_1+\cdots+p_d}u}{\partial^{p_1}x_1\,\partial^{p_2}x_2\ldots\partial^{p_d}x_d},g)=0,$$

where $p_1 + \cdots + p_d \leq k$.

A non stationary PDE of order k reads: find $u:\Omega imes [0,T] o \mathbb{R}^s$

$$\mathcal{P}(u,g) \equiv F(x,t,u,rac{\partial u}{\partial t},rac{\partial u}{\partial x_1},\ldots,rac{\partial u}{\partial x_d},rac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x_1\partial x_1},\ldots,rac{\partial^{p_0+p_1+\cdots+p_d}u}{\partial^{p_0}t\,\partial^{p_1}x_1\ldots\partial^{p_d}x_d},g)=0,$$

where $p_0 + \cdots + p_d \leq k$.

A classical solution of a PDE is a function $u \in \mathcal{C}^k(\Omega \times [0,T])$ that solves the previous equation.

Definition

If the PDE can be written in the form

$$\mathcal{P}(u,g) = a(x)u + b_0(x)\partial_t u + b_1(x)\partial_{x_1} u + \cdots + b_d(x)\partial_{x_d} u + c_{lpha(2,0,\ldots,0)}\partial_{tt} u + \cdots + \gamma_{lpha(p_0,\ldots,p_d)} rac{\partial^{p_0+\cdots+p_d} u}{\partial^{p_0}t\ \partial^{p_1}x_1\ldots\partial^{p_d}x_d} + \cdots - g = 0,$$

i.e., if the coefficitents of the unknown u and of its derivatives depend only on the independent variables (t, x), then the PDE is **linear**. Else, it is **nonlinear**.

Definitions

Consider a nonlinear PDE of order k

- if the coefficients of the derivatives of order k depend only on the independent variables (t, x), then the PDE is **semilinear**;
- if the coefficients of the derivates of order k depend on the independent variables (t, x) and on the partial derivatives of u of order at most k-1, then the PDE is **quasi-linear**;
- if it's not quasi-linear, its **fully nonlinear**.

Examples

• Reaction-advection-diffusion equation

$$\partial_t u = u_{xx} + cu_x + u^2,$$

is semilinear.

• Inviscid Burgers' equation

$$\partial_t u + u u_x = 0,$$

is quasi-linear but not semilinear.

• The Korteweg-de Vries (KdV) equation

$$\partial_t u + u \partial_x u + \partial_{xxx} u = 0,$$

is semilinear.

• The Monge-Ampère equation

$$u_{xx}u_{yy} - (u_{xy})^2 = 0$$

is fully nonlinear.

First order linear PDE, a.k.a. transport equation

$$u_t + u_x = 0$$

How do I found a general solution?

Let's try this change of variables

$$(x,t) o (\xi,\eta), \qquad \xi(x,t)=x+t,\, \eta(x,t)=x-t$$

with inverse

$$x=rac{\xi+\eta}{2}, t=rac{\xi-\eta}{2}.$$

I substitute the new variables: $v(\xi,\eta):=u(x(\xi,\eta),t(\xi,\eta))$

$$u_x = v_\xi \xi_x + v_\eta \eta_x = v_\xi + v_\eta \ u_t = v_\xi \xi_t + v_\eta \eta_t = v_\xi - v_\eta$$

obtaining a new PDE

$$0=u_t+u_x=2v_\xi\Longleftrightarrow v_\xi=0.$$

Implica che $v(\xi,\eta)=f(\eta)$ with $f\in\mathcal{C}^1(\mathbb{R})$. Going back to the original variables

$$u(x,t) = v(\xi(x,t),\eta(x,t)) = f(\xi(x,t)) = f(x-t)$$

Characteristic lines

$$u_t + u_x = 0, \qquad u(x,t) = v(\xi(x,t),\eta(x,t)) = f(\xi(x,t)) = f(x-t). \ X_{x_0}(t) = x_0 + t$$

Generalization to different coefficients

$$a(t,x)u_t+b(t,x)u_x+cu(t,x)=g(t,x), (t,x)\in\Omega\subset\mathbb{R}^2.$$

Well defined (non-singular and \mathcal{C}^1) transformation $(t,x)\Leftrightarrow (\xi,\eta)$, i.e.,

$$\left|rac{\partial(\xi,\eta)}{\partial(t,x)}
ight|:=\left|egin{pmatrix} \xi_t & \xi_x \ \eta_t & \eta_x \end{pmatrix}
ight|=\xi_t\eta_x-\xi_x\eta_t
eq 0.$$

Change of variables: $u_t = v_\xi \xi_t + v_\eta \eta_t, \ u_x = v_\xi \xi_x + v_\eta \eta_x,$ giving

$$(a\xi_t+b\xi_x)v_\xi+(a\eta_t+b\eta_x)v_\eta+cv=g(t(\xi,\eta),x(\xi,\eta))$$

Goal: simplify the previous equation, we choose η such that

$$a\eta_t + b\eta_x = 0,$$

so that we obtain an ODE for every η

$$v_{\xi}+rac{c}{a\xi_t+b\xi_x}v=rac{g(t(\xi,\eta),x(\xi,\eta))}{a\xi_t+b\xi_x}.$$

Generalization to different coefficients

To obtain $a\eta_t+b\eta_x=0$, one should notice that, w.l.o.g., we are looking for a curve x(t) such that $\eta(t,x(t))=\eta_0$ constant for every t.

$$0=rac{d\eta(t,x(t))}{dt}=\eta_t+\eta_xrac{\partial x}{\partial t}\Longrightarrowrac{\eta_t}{\eta_x}=-\partial_t x(t)$$

Hence, we have

$$rac{\eta_t}{\eta_x} = -rac{b}{a} \Longleftrightarrow \partial_t x(t) = -rac{b}{a}.$$

Integrating this equation, one obtains the curve x(t), leading to the definition of $\eta(t,x)$ solving for the constant η_0 .

Example

$$xu_t - tu_x = 1$$

Example

$$xu_{t} - tu_{x} = 1$$

$$(x\xi_{t} - t\xi_{x})v_{\xi} + (x\eta_{t} - t\eta_{x})v_{\eta} = 1$$

$$(x\eta_{t} - t\eta_{x}) = 0$$

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = -\frac{t}{x}$$

$$\int x dx = \int -t dt$$

$$x = \sqrt{\eta_{0}^{2} - t^{2}}$$

$$\eta(t, x) := \sqrt{t^{2} + x^{2}}$$

$$\xi(t, x) = \arctan(x/t)$$

$$t = \eta \cos(\xi), x = \eta \sin(\xi),$$

$$(-\eta \sin(\xi) \frac{\eta \sin(\xi)}{\eta^{2}} - \eta \cos(\xi) \frac{\eta \cos(\xi)}{\eta^{2}})v_{\xi} = 1, \quad v = -\xi + f(\eta) \quad u = -\arctan(x/t) + f(x^{2} + y^{2}).$$

Homework

- ullet Solve $u_x-2u_y=0$
- ullet Solve $yu_x-xu_y+uy=xy$

Second order linear PDE in 2D

Consider the PDE on $\Omega\subset\mathbb{R}^2$

$$\mathcal{P}(u,g) = A\partial_{xx}u + Bu_{xy} + Cu_{yy} + Du_x + Eu_y + Fu - g = 0 \quad orall (x,y) \in \Omega$$

where $u\in\mathcal{C}^2(\Omega)$ and $A,B,C\in\mathcal{C}^2(\Omega)$ and they do not vanish simultaneously. Let's **classify** the PDE depending on the *discriminant*

$$\Delta := B^2 - 4AC.$$

Definition

- ullet If $\Delta>0$ the PDE is said to be hyperbolic (at a point (x,y))
- If $\Delta=0$ the PDE is said to be parabolic (at a point (x,y))
- ullet If $\Delta < 0$ the PDE is said to be elliptic (at a point (x,y))

• Hyperbolic example: wave equation

$$\partial_{tt}u - c\partial_{xx}u = 0$$
 with $c > 0$

Indeed, $\Delta=4c>0$.

• Parabolic example: heat equation

$$\partial_t u - c \partial_{xx} u = 0 \text{ with } c > 0$$

Indeed, $\Delta=0$.

• Elliptic example: Poisson equation

$$-c\partial_{xx}u - c\partial_{yy}u = -c\Delta u = f \text{ with } c > 0$$

Indeed, $\Delta=-4c^2<0$.

• Changing sign example: Tricomi equation

$$yu_{xx} + u_{yy} = 0$$

$$\Delta = -4y$$
.

Theorem

The sign of the discriminant Δ is invariant under smooth non-singular transformation of coordinates (i.e. under a change of variables).

Proof 1/2

We focus only on the second order terms as the first order ones do not contribute to the discriminant. Suppose we perform a smooth change of variables $(x,y)\mapsto (\xi,\eta)$, given by a diffeomorphism. Under this transformation, the second-order derivatives transform as follows:

$$egin{align} u_{xx} &= lpha^2 u_{\xi\xi} + 2lphaeta u_{\xi\eta} + eta^2 u_{\eta\eta}, \ u_{xy} &= lpha\gamma u_{\xi\xi} + (lpha\delta + eta\gamma)u_{\xi\eta} + eta\delta u_{\eta\eta}, \ u_{yy} &= \gamma^2 u_{\xi\xi} + 2\gamma\delta u_{\xi\eta} + \delta^2 u_{\eta\eta}, \ \end{aligned}$$

where

$$lpha = rac{\partial x}{\partial \xi}, \quad eta = rac{\partial x}{\partial \eta}, \quad \gamma = rac{\partial y}{\partial \xi}, \quad \delta = rac{\partial y}{\partial \eta}.$$

Proof 2/2

Rewriting the PDE in the new coordinates, the transformed coefficients $A^\prime, B^\prime, C^\prime$ are given by

$$A' = Alpha^2 + 2Blpha\gamma + C\gamma^2, \ B' = Alphaeta + B(lpha\delta + eta\gamma) + C\gamma\delta, \ C' = Aeta^2 + 2Beta\delta + C\delta^2.$$

Now, computing the transformed discriminant:

$$egin{aligned} \Delta' &= B'^2 - A'C' \ &= (Alphaeta + B(lpha\delta + eta\gamma) + C\gamma\delta)^2 \ &- (Alpha^2 + 2Blpha\gamma + C\gamma^2)(Aeta^2 + 2Beta\delta + C\delta^2). \end{aligned}$$

Expanding both terms and simplifying, we find that

$$\Delta' = (B^2 - AC)(\alpha\delta - \beta\gamma)^2 = \Delta \det(J)^2,$$

where J is the Jacobian matrix of the transformation. Since $\det(J)^2 \geq 0$, the sign of Δ remains unchanged. This proves the invariance of the discriminant sign under a change of variables.

Hyperbolic canonical form

Consider the wave equation

$$\partial_{tt}u - c\partial_{xx}u = 0$$

with c>0. We can find a change of variables $(x,t)\mapsto (\xi,\eta)$ such that the PDE simplifies to

$$\partial_{\xi\eta}v=0.$$

The map is defined by

$$\eta = x + t, \quad \xi = x - t.$$

This is the canonical form of a hyperbolic PDE. The general solution is given integrating in ξ and then in η , i.e.,

$$v(\xi,\eta) = \int^{\xi} \int^{\eta} \partial_{wz} v(w,z) \, dz \, dw = \int^{\xi} f(w) dw = F(\xi) + G(\eta),$$

where $\partial_{\xi}F(\xi)=f(\xi)$.

So, the general solution of the wave equation is

$$u(x,t) = F(x-t) + G(x+t).$$

Hyperbolic canonical form: can we always get it?

Consider just the second order terms of the hyperbolic PDE $\Delta=B^2-4AC>0$.

$$A\partial_{xx}u + Bu_{xy} + Cu_{yy} = 0.$$

We look for a change of variables $(x,y)\mapsto (\xi,\eta)$ such that the PDE simplifies to

$$\partial_{\xi\eta}v=0.$$

The transformation can be applied noting that

$$egin{aligned} u_{xx} &= v_{\xi\xi}(\xi_x)^2 + 2v_{\xi\eta}\xi_x\eta_x + v_{\eta\eta}(\eta_x)^2, \ u_{xy} &= v_{\xi\xi}\xi_x\xi_y + v_{\xi\eta}(\xi_x\eta_y + \xi_y\eta_x) + v_{\eta\eta}\eta_x\eta_y, \ u_{yy} &= v_{\xi\xi}(\xi_y)^2 + 2v_{\xi\eta}\xi_y\eta_y + v_{\eta\eta}(\eta_y)^2, \end{aligned}$$

The transformed PDE reads

$$(A\xi_x^2 + B\xi_x\xi_y + C\xi_y^2)v_{\xi\xi} + (2A\xi_x\eta_y + B(\xi_x\eta_y + \xi_y\eta_x) + 2C\xi_y\eta_x)v_{\xi\eta} + (A\eta_x^2 + B\eta_x\eta_y + C\eta_y^2)v_{\eta\eta} = 0.$$

Computation space

$$(A\xi_x^2 + B\xi_x\xi_y + C\xi_y^2)v_{\xi\xi} + (2A\xi_x\eta_y + B(\xi_x\eta_y + \xi_y\eta_x) + 2C\xi_y\eta_x)v_{\xi\eta} + (A\eta_x^2 + B\eta_x\eta_y + C\eta_y^2)v_{\eta\eta} = 0.$$

We want to find the change of variables such that

$$\left\{egin{aligned} A\xi_x^2+B\xi_x\xi_y+C\xi_y^2&=0\ A\eta_x^2+B\eta_x\eta_y+C\eta_y^2&=0 \end{aligned}
ight.$$

These are first order PDE, so we are looking for characteristics curves such that $\xi(x,y) = \text{const}$, if we find a curve, for example y(x) such that $\xi(x,y(x)) = \text{const}$, then

$$rac{d\xi}{dx} = rac{\partial \xi}{\partial x} + rac{\partial \xi}{\partial y} rac{dy}{dx} = 0 \Longrightarrow rac{dy}{dx} = -rac{\partial_x \xi}{\partial_y \xi}.$$

From the first PDE, we then get

$$Aigg(rac{dy}{dx}igg)^2+Brac{dy}{dx}+C=0,$$

which is called the characteristic equation for the original PDE. This is quadratic equation in $\frac{dy}{dx}$ with $\Delta = B^2 - 4AC > 0$. The two distinct solutions are

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{-B \pm \sqrt{\Delta}}{2A}.$$

From this we can get the transformation $(x,y)\mapsto (\xi,\eta)$ as we did in the linear PDE.

Computation space

Example

$$u_{tt} + u_{tx} = 0 \ (\xi_t^2 + \xi_t \xi_x) u_{\xi\xi} + (2\xi_t \eta_t + \xi_t \eta_x + \xi_x \eta_t) u_{\xi\eta} + (\eta_t^2 + \eta_t \eta_x) u_{\eta\eta} = 0$$

The equations for ξ and η are the same equations.

We look for a curve y(x) such that $\xi(x,y(x))=\mathrm{const}$, i.e., $\xi(x,y(x))=x+y(x)=\mathrm{const}$ and that

$$egin{aligned} & \xi_t^2 + \xi_t \xi_x = 0 \ & rac{\xi_t^2}{\xi_x^2} + rac{\xi_t}{\xi_x} = 0 \ & \left(rac{dx}{dt}
ight)^2 - rac{dx}{dt} = 0 \ & rac{dx}{dt} = \left\{ egin{aligned} 0 & \Longrightarrow x(t) = \left\{ egin{aligned} \xi_0 & \eta_0 + t \end{aligned}
ight. \end{aligned} \ & \Longrightarrow \eta = x - t, \quad \xi = x. \end{aligned}$$

What if we try to do the same with a parabolic PDE?

$$rac{dx}{dt} = -rac{B\pm\sqrt{\Delta}}{2A} = -rac{B}{2A}.$$

There is only one characteristic curve. So, choosing $\xi=2Ax+Bt$ and $\eta=x$ we get the canonical form

$$A\frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial \xi^2} = 0,$$

with the general solution $v(\xi,\eta)=F(\eta)+\xi G(\eta)$.

What if we try to do the same with an elliptic PDE?

There is no characteristics that is conserved. But, one can instead eliminate the coefficient of $u_{\xi\eta}$ to obtain the canonical form for the elliptic PDE. Using $\eta=t$ and $\xi=\frac{2Ax-Bt}{\sqrt{\Lambda}}$, we get

$$A\left(rac{\partial^2 v}{\partial \xi^2} + rac{\partial^2 v}{\partial \eta^2}
ight) = 0.$$

Existence, uniqueness and well-posedness

For the PDEs above we have found classes of solutions. How can we find unique solutions to specific problems? What should we need to specify?

Definition (Cauchy problem)

Consider a PDE of order k in $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ and let S be a given smooth surface on \mathbb{R}^d . Let also n=n(x) denote the unit normal vector to the surface S at a point $x=(x_1,x_2,\ldots,x_d)\in S$. Suppose that on any point x of the surface S the values of the solution u and of all its directional derivatives up to order k-1 in the direction of n are given, i.e., we are given functions $f_0,f_1,\ldots,f_{k-1}:S\to\mathbb{R}$ such that

$$u(x)=f_0(x), ext{ and } rac{\partial u}{\partial n}(x)=f_1(x), ext{ and } rac{\partial^2 u}{\partial n^2}(x)=f_2(x), \ldots, ext{ and } rac{\partial^{k-1} u}{\partial n^{k-1}}(x)=f_{k-1}(x).$$

The **Cauchy problem** consists of finding the unknown function(s) u that satisfy simultaneously the PDE and the conditions above, which are called the **initial conditions** (ICs) and the given functions $f_0, f_1, \ldots, f_{k-1}$, will be referred to as the initial data.

According to the role of the ICs they can be called also **boundary conditions** (BCs).

Examples (Cauchy problem for transport equation)

$$egin{cases} u_t+u_x=0, & (x,t)\in\mathbb{R}^2,\ u(0,x)=\sin(x), & x\in\mathbb{R}. \end{cases}$$

Here, $S = \{(t,x) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : t = 0\}$.

The general solution of the transport equation is u(x,t)=f(x-t), so that the initial condition reads $f(x)=\sin(x)$, i.e., $u(x,t)=\sin(x-t)$.

Examples (Cauchy problem for wave equation)

$$egin{cases} u_{tt} - u_{xx} = 0, & (x,t) \in \mathbb{R}^2, \ u(t,0) = \sin(t), & t \in \mathbb{R}, \ u_x(t,0) = 0, & t \in \mathbb{R}. \end{cases}$$

In this case, $S=\{(t,x)\in\mathbb{R}^2:x=0\}$ and $n=(n_t,n_x)=(0,-1)$. The general solution of the wave equation is u(t,x)=f(x-t)+g(x+t), so that the initial (boundary) conditions read $f_0(t)=\sin(t)$ and $f_1(t)=0$, so

$$egin{cases} f(-t)+g(t)=\sin(t),\ f'(-t)+g'(t)=0, \end{cases} \Longrightarrow f(\xi)=rac{1}{2}\sin(-\xi), \quad g(\eta)=rac{1}{2}\sin(\eta),$$

so,
$$u(t,x) = \frac{1}{2}(\sin(x+t) + \sin(-x+t))$$
.

Theorem (Cauchy-Kovalesvskaya Theorem)

Consider a Cauchy problem for a linear PDE, let x^0 be a point of the initial surface S, which is assumed to be analytic (very regular). Suppose that S is not a characteristic surface at the point x^0 . Assume that all the coefficients of the linear PDE, the right-hand side g, and all the initial data $f_0, f_1, \ldots, f_{k-1}$ are analytic functions on a neighbourhood of the point x^0 . Then, the Cauchy problem has a solution u, defined in the neighbourhood of x^0 . Moreover, the solution u is analytic in a neighbourhood of x^0 and it is unique in the class of analytic functions.

Assumptions: Regularity

Outcome: Existence

• Outcome: Uniqueness

Outcome: Regularity of the solution

• Is this enough? No, the solution might still mis-behave

Well-posedness

Definition

A PDE problem is well-posed if:

- 1. The PDE has a solution
- 2. The solution is unique
- 3. The solution depends continuously on the PDE coefficients and on the problem data (IC/BC)

If the PDE problem is not well-posed, we say it is ill-posed.

Exercise

Show that the solution of the Cauchy problem for the wave equation

$$egin{cases} \partial_{tt}u-\partial_{xx}u=0,\ u(t,0)=f(t),\ u_x(t,0)=g(t) \end{cases}$$

for some known BCs f and g is given by the d'Alembert's formula

$$u(t,x) = rac{1}{2}(f(t-x) + f(t+x)) + rac{1}{2}\int_{t-x}^{t+x} g(s)\mathrm{d}s.$$

Show that the Cauchy problem is well-posed (skipping the uniqueness). *

Exercise *

1. Find the solution of the Laplace equation on $\Omega = [0,2\pi]$ for various k

$$egin{cases} \partial_{tt}u+\partial_{xx}u=0,\ u(0,x)=0,\ u_t(0,x)=rac{\sin(kx)}{k},\ u(0,t)=u(2\pi,t). \end{cases}$$

Steps:

- $ullet u_k = rac{a_0(t)}{2} + \sum_{n=1}^\infty [a_n(t)\cos(nx) + b_n(t)\sin(nx)]$
- Substitute in the equation and find the general solution using the method of separation of variables
- $\partial_{tt}a_n(t)=n^2a_n(t)$ for all n with $a_n(0)=0, \partial_ta_n(0)=0$
- $\partial_{tt}b_n(t)=n^2b_n(t)$ for all n with $b_n(0)=0,$ $\partial_tb_n(0)=0$ for n
 eq k, $\partial_tb_k(0)=1/k$.
- $u_k(t,x) = \frac{1}{k^2}\sin(kx)\sinh(kt)$
- 2. Even if $\sup_x |u_k(0,x)| + |\partial_t u_k(0,x)|$ is small, we can find large enough k so that for any time $t_0 > 0$ $\sup_x |u_k(t_0,x)| + |\partial_t u_k(t_0,x)|$ is large.

Theorem *

Let $u_k(t,x)=\frac{1}{k^2}\sin(kx)\sinh(kt)$. For any positive ε,M,t_0 there exists an integer K such that for any k>K the initial data satisfies $\sup_x|u_k(0,x)|+|\partial_t u_k(0,x)|<\varepsilon$ but the solution at the time t_0 satisfies $\sup_x|u_k(t_0,x)|+|\partial_t u_k(t_0,x)|>M$.

Proof: Choosing an integer K_1 satisfying $K_1>\frac{1}{\epsilon}$ we will have the initial condition inequality for any $k\geq K_1$. In order to obtain a lower estimate of the second form at time t_0 let us first observe that

$$\sup_{x \in [0,2\pi]} (|u_k(x,t)| + |\partial_t u_k(x,t)|) = rac{1}{k^2} \mathrm{sinh}(kt) + rac{1}{k} \mathrm{cosh}(kt) > rac{1}{k^2} e^{kt}$$

where we have used an obvious inequality $\frac{1}{k} > \frac{1}{k^2}$ for k > 1.

The function $y=rac{e^x}{x^2}$ is monotone increasing for x>2 and $\lim_{x o +\infty}rac{e^x}{x^2}=+\infty$.

Hence for any $t_0>0$ there exists x_0 such that $rac{e^x}{x^2}>rac{M}{t_0^2}$ for $x>x_0$.

Let K_2 be a positive integer satisfying $K_2 > \frac{x_0}{t_0}$.

Then for any $k>K_2$

$$rac{e^{kt_0}}{k^2} = t_0^2 rac{e^{kt_0}}{k^2 t_0^2} > t_0^2 rac{e^{x_0}}{x_0^2} > M.$$

Choosing $K = \max(K_1, K_2)$ we complete the proof of the Theorem.

Take home message

Not all boundary conditions are suitable for having a well-posed problem.