3

4

5

6

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

# Measuring acoustic glitches in the modes of solar-like oscillators using Gaussian processes

ALEXANDER J. LYTTLE 1,2 AND GUY R. DAVIES<sup>1,2</sup>

School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT, United Kingdom
The Alan Turing Institute, British Library, 96 Euston Rd, London NWI 2DB, United Kingdom

# **ABSTRACT**

*Keywords:* Asteroseismology (73), Astronomy software (1855), Helioseismology (709), Stellar interior (1500)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

- We have known physical models
- We have unknown terms in the model
- Best way to account for this is with a GP

Glitches in the mode frequencies of solar-like oscillators arise due to sharp changes in the sound-speed profile of the star. These perturb the modes from their regular spacing  $\Delta\nu$  by some small amount of the order 0.1 to  $1\,\mu\mathrm{Hz}$ . Such glitches have been observed in the Sun this (TODO: citation needed), and in several other high signal-to-noise stars (TODO: citation needed). The two dominant glitches in these stars are due to the second ionisation of helium near the stellar surface and the base of the convective zone. Fitting these glitches provide insight into the helium abundance and convective boundary respectively.

Compare the different methods already gone. Early work measuring the glitch fits a model to the second differences,  $\Delta_2 \nu = \nu_{n-1} - 2\nu_n + \nu_{n+1}$ , which removes first-order effects and amplifies the glitches. What are the issues with this? Alternatively, the glitch can be fit to the modes directly. Typically, both methods involve fitting a polynomial to the smoothly varying component of the modes. Assuming a fourth order polynomial (e.g. **TODO:** citation needed), this model has 13 parameters. The

In this work we apply a new method for fitting the glitches. Our method only requires radial mode observations and fits directly to the frequencies. Using a GP, we are able to reduce the model parameters from previous work, without sacrificing flexibility.

Corresponding author: Alexander J. Lyttle ajl573@bham.ac.uk

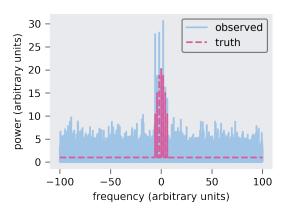


Figure 1. Example caption

A Gaussian process is a prior over function space, which allows us to fit any function as a sum of Gaussian distributions, constrained by the choice of mean and kernel functions. The function describing the mode frequencies comprises several features including an approximately regular spacing in frequency,  $\Delta\nu$ , curvature caused by the smoothy varying stellar structure, and glitches due to sharp variation in stellar structure. The latter is fairly well understood (Houdek & Gough 2007), whereas the smooth curvature is not. In most work studying acoustic glitches, a polynomial is typically fit to the smooth background. However, this has its drawbacks; the flexibility of a polynomial increases with its order, and regularisation is required to combat over-fitting. A Gaussian process offers more flexibility than a polynomial with fewer free parameters. Furthermore, these parameters are priors over the flexibility of the function, such as a typical length scale or variance.

#### 2. METHOD

# 2.1. The model

A radial mode frequency is some function of radial order,  $\nu_{n,l=0} = f(n)$  where f can be described by a Gaussian process,

$$f(\mathbf{n}) \sim \mathcal{GP}[m(\mathbf{n}), k(\mathbf{n}, \mathbf{n}')],$$
 (1)

for array n with some mean function, m(n) and kernel function, k(n, n').

The mean function comprises a background frequency as a function of n,  $f_{\rm bkg}(n)$ , and the glitches due to the second ionisation of helium,  $\delta_{\rm He}(\nu)$  and base of the convective zone  $\delta_{\rm BCZ}(\nu_{\rm bkg})$ ,

$$m(n) = f_{\text{bkg}}(n) + \delta_{\text{He}}(\nu_{\text{bkg}}) + \delta_{\text{BCZ}}(\nu_{\text{bkg}}), \tag{2}$$

where  $\nu_{\rm bkg} = f_{\rm bkg}(n)$ . For the background, we adopt the asymptotic approximation to first order in n,

$$f_{\text{bkg}}(n) = \Delta \nu (n + \epsilon),$$
 (3)

where  $\Delta\nu$  is the large frequency separation and  $\epsilon$  is some offset. We define the small change in mode frequency caused by the second ionisation of helium,  $\delta\nu_{\rm He}=\delta_{\rm He}(\nu)$  as,

$$\delta_{\rm He}(\nu) = a_{\rm He} \nu e^{-b_{\rm He} \nu^2} \sin\left(2\pi \tau_{\rm He} \nu + \phi_{\rm He}\right),\tag{4}$$

where  $a_{\rm He}$  is the frequency-dependent amplitude and  $b_{\rm He}$  relates to the acoustic width of 55 the glitch. We define the small change in frequency due to the base of the convective zone, 56  $\delta \nu_{\rm BCZ} = \delta_{\rm BCZ}(\nu)$  as, 57

$$\delta_{\rm BCZ}(\nu) = \frac{a_{\rm BCZ}}{\nu^2} \sin\left(2\pi\tau_{\rm BCZ}\nu + \phi_{\rm BCZ}\right),\tag{5}$$

where  $a_{\rm BCZ}$  is the frequency-dependent amplitude. For both glitches, parameters  $\tau$  and  $\phi$ relate to the acoustic depth and phase of the glitch respectively.

The kernel function describes the covariance between modes at different n. We expect consecutive modes to correlate more strongly than modes further apart. Therefore, we adopt the squared-exponential (or radial basis) kernel function,

$$k(\boldsymbol{n}, \boldsymbol{n}') = \alpha \exp\left(-\frac{\|\boldsymbol{n} - \boldsymbol{n}'\|^2}{2\lambda^2}\right),\tag{6}$$

where  $\alpha$  is the amplitude and  $\lambda$  is the length scale. The amplitude characterises the typical deviation in frequency from the mean function. The length scale is the distance in n over which the correlation between modes reduces by one third.

The model described above comprises 11 parameters,

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

83

$$\boldsymbol{\theta} = [\Delta \nu, \epsilon, a_{\text{He}}, b_{\text{He}}, \tau_{\text{He}}, \phi_{\text{He}}, a_{\text{BCZ}}, \tau_{\text{BCZ}}, \phi_{\text{BCZ}}, \alpha, \lambda]. \tag{7}$$

Using Bayes' theorem, we write the posterior probability density function for the model given some observation of radial mode frequencies  $\nu$ ,

$$p(\boldsymbol{\theta} \mid \boldsymbol{\nu}) \propto p(\boldsymbol{\theta}) p(\boldsymbol{\nu} \mid \boldsymbol{\theta}),$$
 (8)

where  $\Pi(\theta)$  is the a priori probability of the model and  $\mathcal{L}(\nu \mid \theta)$  is the likelihood of the data given the model.

The prior for the model can be separated into a product of the priors for each individual parameter,

$$p(\boldsymbol{\theta}) = \prod_{i=0}^{10} p(\theta_i). \tag{9}$$

In the following sections we write our choice of prior for each of  $\theta_i$ .

# 2.2.1. Background parameters

The prior for  $\Delta \nu$  is provided as the location and scale of a normal distribution,  $\Delta \nu \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu_{\Delta \nu}, \sigma_{\Delta \nu})$ . The prior for  $\epsilon$  is chosen to be a log-normal distribution,  $\epsilon \sim$ 82  $\ln \mathcal{N}(\ln(1.4), 0.4).$ 

## 2.2.2. Glitch parameters

The glitch parameters' priors should encompass at least two things; the first is that the glitch amplitudes are approximately 0.1 to  $1.0\,\mu\mathrm{Hz}$ , and the second is that the acoustic depths are in physically sensible regions of the star. We determined the prior in two steps. The first was to give weakly informative priors on the parameters from physical intuition and scaling relations with global stellar parameters (nu max etc.). Subsequently, we updated the prior by fitting to stellar model frequencies (TODO: add grid details).

- Stellar model grid
- Extract acoustic depths
- Fit Gaussian mixture to  $(\log \nu_{\rm max}, T_{\rm eff}, \log \tau_{\rm He}, \log \tau_{\rm BCZ})$
- Sample from the conditional distribution of  $(\log \tau_{\rm He}, \log \tau_{\rm BCZ})$  given  $(\log \nu_{\rm max}, T_{\rm eff})$
- This gives the prior for  $(\log \tau_{\rm He}, \log \tau_{\rm BCZ})$

# 2.2.3. Kernel parameters

We chose to fix the kernel parameters to  $\lambda=5.0$  and  $\alpha=0.1\,\mu_{\Delta\nu}$ . **TODO:** Explain why these values. The length scale ensures that the GP does not fit to the glitch, and reflects the typical scale of curvature of the radial mode frequencies with respect to n. The amplitude is fixed at  $10\,\%$  of  $\Delta\nu$  which represents the typical deviation in frequency from a vertical line on an echelle diagram.

#### 2.2.4. Average amplitude

The average amplitude of the glitches has been used in previous work as a proxy for the helium abundance in the star. The average amplitude between frequencies x and y is,

$$\langle A \rangle = \frac{\int_x^y A(\nu) \, \mathrm{d}\nu}{\int_x^y \, \mathrm{d}\nu} \tag{10}$$

where  $A(\nu)$  is the amplitude of the glitch at frequency  $\nu$ . We derive this for the helium glitch,

$$\langle A_{\text{He}} \rangle = \frac{a_{\text{He}} \left( e^{-b_{\text{He}} x} - e^{-b_{\text{He}} y} \right)}{2b_{\text{He}} (y - x)},$$
 (11)

and BCZ glitch,

$$\langle A_{\rm BCZ} \rangle = \frac{a_{\rm BCZ}}{x \, y}.$$
 (12)

We expect the average amplitude of the helium glitch to be greater than that of the convective zone glitch most of the time. **TODO:** Explain why this is. To encode this knowledge into the prior, we introduce the parameter for the logarithm of the ratio between the average amplitudes of the two glitches.  $\log r_A = \log \langle A_{\rm He} \rangle - \log \langle A_{\rm BCZ} \rangle$ .

$$\log r_A \sim \mathcal{N}(0.6, 0.3).$$
 (13)

The mean is chosen such that the mean lies where  $\langle A_{\rm He} \rangle = 4 \langle A_{\rm BCZ} \rangle$ . The variance is chosen such that  $\langle A_{\rm He} \rangle < \langle A_{\rm BCZ} \rangle$  and  $\langle A_{\rm He} \rangle > 16 \langle A_{\rm BCZ} \rangle$  5% of the time.

2.3. The likelihood

The GP likelihood for the true radial mode frequencies,  $\nu = f(n)$ , given the model parameters,  $\theta$ , is a multivariate normal distribution,

$$\nu \mid \boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{N}\left[m_{\theta}(\boldsymbol{n}), k_{\theta}(\boldsymbol{n}, \boldsymbol{n})\right].$$
 (14)

The likelihood of some noisy observation  $\nu_{\rm obs}$  of  $\nu$  is,

$$\nu_{\rm obs} \mid \nu \sim \mathcal{N} \left( \nu, \sigma^2 \right),$$
 (15)

where  $\sigma^2$  is the array of variances corresponding to each of  $\nu_{\rm obs}$ , characterising independent, Gaussian noise.

The marginal likelihood of  $u_{\rm obs}$  given the model is thus,

$$\mathcal{L}(\boldsymbol{\nu}_{\text{obs}} \mid \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \int p(\boldsymbol{\nu}_{\text{obs}} \mid \boldsymbol{\nu}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) p(\boldsymbol{\nu} \mid \boldsymbol{\theta}) d\boldsymbol{\nu}$$
 (16)

which given equations above is,

118

119

120

121

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

133

134

135

136

137

139

140

141

142

146

$$\mathcal{L}(\boldsymbol{\nu}_{\text{obs}} \mid \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \mathcal{N} \left[ \boldsymbol{\mu}_{\theta}, \boldsymbol{K}_{\theta} + \text{diag}(\boldsymbol{\sigma}^{2}) \right]$$
 (17)

where  $\mu_{\theta} = m_{\theta}(\mathbf{n})$ , and  $\mathbf{K}_{\theta} = k_{\theta}(\mathbf{n}, \mathbf{n})$ . In cases where  $\sigma^2 = \mathbf{0}$ , for example when fitting to model frequencies, we set  $\sigma_n^2 = 1 \times 10^{-6}$  to ensure the covariance is positive semidefinite.

See C. E. Rasmussen & C. K. I. Williams for GP conditional

3. RESULTS

- Does the model work with known truths?
- Does the model work on model stars with and without noise?
- Does the model work on real stars?

3.1. Model stars

3.2. Sun-as-a-star

3.3. 16 Cygni

3.4. KIC 4448777

Put acknowledgments here.

Software: astropy (Astropy Collaboration et al. 2018), jax (Bradbury et al. 2018), jaxns (Albert 2020), numpy (Harris et al. 2020), numpyro (Phan et al. 2019; Bingham et al. 2019), PBjam (Nielsen et al. 2021)

APPENDIX

# REFERENCES

147	Albert, J. G. 2020, arXiv e-prints,	159	Harris, C. R., Millman, K. J., van der Walt,
148	arXiv:2012.15286.	160	S. J., et al. 2020, Nature, 585, 357,
149	https://arxiv.org/abs/2012.15286	161	doi: 10.1038/s41586-020-2649-2
150	Astropy Collaboration, Price-Whelan, A. M.,	162	Houdek, G., & Gough, D. O. 2007, MNRAS,
151	Sipőcz, B. M., et al. 2018, AJ, 156, 123,	163	375, 861,
152	doi: 10.3847/1538-3881/aabc4f	164	doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2966.2006.11325.x
153	Bingham, E., Chen, J. P., Jankowiak, M., et al.	165	Nielsen, M. B., Davies, G. R., Ball, W. H.,
154	2019, J. Mach. Learn. Res., 20, 28:1	166	et al. 2021, AJ, 161, 62,
		167	doi: 10.3847/1538-3881/abcd39
155	Bradbury, J., Frostig, R., Hawkins, P., et al.	168	Phan, D., Pradhan, N., & Jankowiak, M.
156	2018, JAX: Composable Transformations	169	2019, arXiv e-prints, arXiv:1912.11554.
157	of Python+NumPy Programs.	170	https://arxiv.org/abs/1912.11554
158	http://github.com/google/jax		