

Numerical Analysis & Scientific Computing II

Lesson 4

Numerical Solution of PDE

4.2 Parabolic PDE



Akash Anand
MATH, IIT KANPUR

Numerical Methods for PDE: Parabolic PDE



As a model problem, consider the heat equation on a spatial domain Ω for a time interval $[0, T]$. The solution u satisfies

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial t} = c\Delta u + f, \quad \mathbf{x} \in \Omega, t \in [0, T], \quad c > 0.$$

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To obtain a well-posed problem, we need to give boundary conditions

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and an initial condition

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- Semi-discretization



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The process of reducing the evolutionary PDE to a system of ODEs by using a finite difference approximation of the spatial operator is called **semi-discretization** or the **method of lines**.

This is not a full discretization as we still have to choose a numerical method to solve the ODEs.

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- *Semi-discretization*
- ***Finite difference discretization***



Numerical Methods for PDE: Parabolic PDE



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Writing $u_n^j = u_h(nh, jk)$, the fully discrete system reads

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{u_n^{j+1} - u_n^j}{k} &= c \frac{u_{n+1}^j - 2u_n^j + u_{n-1}^j}{h^2} + f_n^j, & 0 < n < N, j = 0, 1, \dots, M-1, \\ u_0^j &= u_N^j = 0, & j = 0, 1, \dots, M-1, \\ u_n^0 &= u_0(nh), & 0 < n < N. \end{aligned}$$

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We call this the **forward-centered difference method** for the heat equation. Since the Euler's method is explicit, we don't need to solve a linear system:

$$u_n^{j+1} = (1 - 2\lambda)u_n^j + \lambda u_{n+1}^j + \lambda u_{n-1}^j + k f_n^j, \quad j = 0, 1, \dots, M-1,$$

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To analyze the method, consider the local (truncation) error

$$\ell_n^j = \frac{u(nh, (j+1)k) - u(nh, jk)}{k} - c \frac{u((n+1)h, jk) - 2u(nh, jk) + u((n-1)h, jk)}{h^2} - f_n^j.$$

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By Taylor's theorem,

$$\ell_n^j = \frac{k}{2} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} - c \frac{h^2}{12} \frac{\partial^4 u}{\partial x^4}$$

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$$\max_{n,j} |e_n^j| \leq T\ell \leq C(k + h^2) \leq C(1 + 1/(2c))h^2.$$

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- *Semi-discretization*
- *Full finite difference discretization*
- ***Fourier Analysis***



Numerical Methods for PDE: Parabolic PDE



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Recall that, on $L(I_h)$, we define the inner product

$$\langle u, v \rangle_h = h \sum_{k=1}^{N-1} u(kh)v(kh)$$

with the corresponding norm $\|v\|_h$ and $\varphi_m(x) = \sin \pi m x$, $m = 1, \dots, N-1$, form an orthogonal basis.

Also,

$$D_h^2 \varphi_m = -\lambda_m \varphi_m, \quad \lambda_m = \frac{2}{h^2} (\cos \pi m h - 1) = \frac{4}{h^2} \sin^2 \frac{\pi m h}{2},$$

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The difference equation then gives

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The difference equation then gives

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yielding

$$A_m^{j+1} = (1 - ck\lambda_m) A_m^j.$$

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Numerical Methods for PDE: Parabolic PDE

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If we assume $ck/h^2 \leq 1/2$, then $ck\lambda_m \leq ck(4/h^2) \leq 2$ and hence $|1 - ck\lambda_m| \leq 1$ for all m and the solution remains bounded. On the other hand, if $|1 - ck\lambda_m| > 1$ for some m , the initial data will increase exponentially.