Chapter 3 PDEs in cylindrical coordinates

Laplace's equation and applications ¹

In cylindrical coordinates we use ρ , φ , *z* instead of *x*, *y*, *z*:

$$x = \rho \cos \varphi, \quad y = \rho \sin \varphi, \quad z = z$$

In rectangular coordinates the Laplacian was given by $\Delta = \partial_x^2 + \partial_y^2 + \partial_z^2$. Here we will compute the Laplacian in cylindrical coordinates.

For a function $u(\rho, \varphi, z)$ we have

$$\begin{cases} u_x = \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial u}{\partial \rho} \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial u}{\partial \varphi} \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial x} = \cos \varphi \frac{\partial u}{\partial \rho} - \frac{\sin \varphi}{\rho} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \varphi}, \\ u_y = \frac{\partial u}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial u}{\partial \rho} \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial u}{\partial \varphi} \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial y} = \sin \varphi \frac{\partial u}{\partial \rho} + \frac{\cos \varphi}{\rho} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \varphi}, \end{cases}$$

where we used

$$\rho^{2} = x^{2} + y^{2} \quad \Rightarrow \quad 2\rho \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial x} = 2x, \quad 2\rho \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial y} = 2y \quad \Rightarrow \quad \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial x} = \frac{x}{\rho} = \cos\varphi, \quad \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial y} = \frac{y}{\rho} = \sin\varphi,$$
$$y = \rho \sin\varphi \quad \Rightarrow \quad 0 = \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial x} \sin\varphi + \rho \cos\varphi \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial x} = \cos\varphi \sin\varphi + \rho \cos\varphi \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial x} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial x} = -\frac{\sin\varphi}{\rho},$$

and

$$x = \rho \cos \varphi \quad \Rightarrow \quad 0 = \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial y} \cos \varphi - \rho \sin \varphi \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial y} = \sin \varphi \cos \varphi - \rho \sin \varphi \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial y} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial y} = \frac{\cos \varphi}{\rho}.$$

Thus the second derivatives are obtained as

$$\begin{cases} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} = \cos^2 \varphi \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \rho^2} + \frac{2 \cos \varphi \sin \varphi}{\rho^2} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \varphi} - \frac{2 \sin \varphi \cos \varphi}{\rho} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \rho \partial \varphi} + \frac{\sin^2 \varphi}{\rho} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \rho} + \frac{\sin^2 \varphi}{\rho^2} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \varphi^2} \\ \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} = \sin^2 \varphi \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \rho^2} - \frac{2 \sin \varphi \cos \varphi}{\rho^2} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \varphi} + \frac{2 \sin \varphi \cos \varphi}{\rho} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \rho \partial \varphi} + \frac{\cos^2 \varphi}{\rho} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \rho} + \frac{\cos^2 \varphi}{\rho^2} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \varphi^2} \end{cases}$$

Winter 2014 Math 454 Sec 2

Boundary Value Problems for Partial Differential Equations

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 1 This section corresponds to $\S3.1$ of the textbook.

Math 454

Hence,

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} = \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \rho^2} + \frac{1}{\rho} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \rho} + \frac{1}{\rho^2} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \phi^2}$$

The Laplacian is obtained as

$$\Delta u = \nabla^2 u = \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \rho^2} + \frac{1}{\rho} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \rho} + \frac{1}{\rho^2} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial \phi^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial z^2}$$

Example 1. Let us find separated solutions of Laplace's equation $\nabla^2 u = 0$ in cylindrical coordinates, defined for $\rho > 0$, $-\pi \le \varphi \le \pi$. Assume that *u* is smooth and is independent of *z*.

By plugging $u(\rho, \varphi) = R(\rho)\Phi(\varphi)$ into $\nabla^2 u = 0$, we obtain

$$0 = u_{\rho\rho} + \frac{1}{\rho}u_{\rho} + \frac{1}{\rho^{2}}u_{\varphi\phi} = R''\Phi + \frac{1}{\rho}R'\Phi + \frac{1}{\rho^{2}}R\Phi''.$$

Dividing by $R\Phi$ and multiplying by ρ^2 , we have

$$0 = \rho^2 \frac{R'' + (1/\rho)R'}{R} + \frac{\Phi''}{\Phi}.$$

By introducing the separation constant λ , we have

$$\begin{cases} \Phi''+\lambda\Phi=0, \quad \Phi(-\pi)=\Phi(\pi), \quad \Phi'(-\pi)=\Phi'(\pi), \\ R''+\frac{1}{\rho}R'-\frac{\lambda}{\rho^2}R=0. \end{cases}$$

Note that λ and Φ are an eigenvalue and an eigenfunction of the Sturm-Liouville problem: $\lambda = m^2$ and $\Phi(\varphi) = A_m \cos m\varphi + B_m \sin m\varphi$ (m = 0, 1, 2, ...). Separated solutions are obtained as

$$u(\rho, \varphi) = \begin{cases} \rho^m (A_m \cos m\varphi + B_m \sin m\varphi), & m = 1, 2, \dots, \\ A_0 + B_0 \ln \rho, & m = 0, \\ \rho^{-m} (C_m \cos m\varphi + D_m \sin m\varphi), & m = 1, 2, \dots. \end{cases}$$

In the last two cases we have $|u| \rightarrow \infty$ as $\rho \rightarrow 0$ and u is not smooth. Therefore,

$$u(\rho, \varphi) = \rho^m (A_m \cos m\varphi + B_m \sin m\varphi), \quad m = 1, 2, \dots$$

Bessel functions²

Let us begin with

$$R''(\rho) + \frac{1}{\rho}R'(\rho) + \left(\lambda - \frac{m^2}{\rho^2}\right)R(\rho) = 0.$$
 (3.1)

Let $x = \rho \sqrt{\lambda}$ and $y(x) = R(\rho)$. Then, (3.1) becomes

$$y'' + \frac{1}{x}y' + \left(1 - \frac{m^2}{x^2}\right)y = 0.$$
 (3.2)

Equation (3.2) is Bessel's equation (recall Example 8 in Chapter 2). Therefore $y(x) = J_m(x)$ or

$$R(\rho) = J_m(\rho\sqrt{\lambda}).$$

Definition 1.

$$J_m(x) = \frac{1}{2\pi i^m} \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} e^{ix\cos\theta} e^{-im\theta} d\theta, \quad m = 0, 1, 2, \dots.$$
(3.3)

Bessel functions $J_m(x)$ behave as shown in Fig. 3.1. We will show in the end of this section that $J_m(x)$ in (3.3) satisfies (3.2).

The following recurrence formula holds.

$$J_m(x) = \frac{x}{2m} \left[J_{m-1}(x) + J_{m+1}(x) \right], \quad m = 1, 2, \dots$$
(3.4)

Derivatives are given as (the differentiation formula)

$$J'_{m}(x) = \frac{1}{2} \left[J_{m-1}(x) - J_{m+1}(x) \right], \quad m = 0, 1, 2, \dots$$
(3.5)

By considering $[(3.5)+(m/x)(3.4)]x^m$ and $[(3.5)-(m/x)(3.4)]x^{-m}$, we have

$$\frac{d}{dx} [x^m J_m(x)] = x^m J_{m-1}(x), \quad m = 1, 2, \cdots,$$
(3.6)

$$\frac{d}{dx}\left[x^{-m}J_m(x)\right] = -x^{-m}J_{m+1}(x), \quad m = 0, 1, 2, \cdots.$$
(3.7)

Let $\{x_n\}$ be the nonnegative solutions of the equation

$$J_m(x_n)\cos\beta + x_n J'_m(x_n)\sin\beta = 0, \qquad (3.8)$$

where $m \ge 0$ and $0 \le \beta \le \pi/2$.

 $^{^2}$ This section corresponds to §3.2 of the textbook.



Fig. 3.1 Bessel functions $J_0(x)$, $J_1(x)$, and $J_2(x)$ are plotted.

Then we have the following orthogonality relations.

$$\begin{cases} \int_{0}^{1} J_{m}(xx_{n_{1}}) J_{m}(xx_{n_{2}}) x dx = 0, & n_{1} \neq n_{2}, \\ \int_{0}^{1} J_{m}(xx_{n})^{2} x dx = \frac{1}{2} J_{m+1}(x_{n})^{2}, & \text{if } \beta = 0, \\ \int_{0}^{1} J_{m}(xx_{n})^{2} x dx = \frac{x_{n}^{2} - m^{2} + \cot^{2}\beta}{2x_{n}^{2}} J_{m}(x_{n})^{2}, & \text{if } 0 < \beta \leq \frac{\pi}{2}. \end{cases}$$
(3.9)

From the Sturm-Liouville theory, the first equation (orthogonality) holds. For the second and third equations, we multiply (3.1) by $2\rho^2 R'$ and set $\lambda = x_n^2$.

$$2\rho^2 R' R'' + 2\rho (R')^2 + (x_n^2 \rho^2 - m^2) 2RR' = 0.$$

We can rewrite this as

$$\left[(\rho R')^2 \right]' + (x_n^2 \rho^2 - m^2) (R^2)' = 0.$$

By integrating both sides and using integration by parts, we get

$$(\rho R')^2 \big|_{\rho=1} - (\rho R')^2 \big|_{\rho=0} + (x_n^2 \rho^2 - m^2) R^2 \big|_0^1 - \int_0^1 2x_n^2 \rho R^2 d\rho = 0.$$

Note that $R(\rho) = J_m(\rho x_n)$ and $R'(\rho) = x_n J'_m(x)|_{x=\rho x_n}$. Hence $R(0) = J_m(0) = 0$ $(m = 1, 2, \dots)$. We obtain

$$\left[x_n J'_m(x_n)\right]^2 + (x_n^2 - m^2) J_m(x_n)^2 - 2x_n^2 \int_0^1 J_m(\rho x_n)^2 \rho d\rho = 0.$$

Therefore, when $\beta = 0$ or $J_m(x_n) = 0$, we have

$$\int_0^1 J_m(\rho x_n)^2 \rho d\rho = \frac{x_n^2 [J_m'(x_n)]^2}{2x_n^2} = \frac{\left[\frac{m}{x_n} J_m(x_n) - J_{m+1}(x_n)\right]^2}{2} = \frac{J_{m+1}(x_n)^2}{2},$$

and when $0 < \beta \le \pi/2$ or $J_m(x_n) \cot \beta + x_n J'_m(x_n) = 0$, we have

$$\int_0^1 J_m(\rho x_n)^2 \rho d\rho = \frac{x_n^2 \left[\frac{-1}{x_n} J_m(x_n) \cot\beta\right]^2 + (x_n^2 - m^2) J_m(x_n)^2}{2x_n^2}$$
$$= \frac{(x_n^2 - m^2 + \cot^2\beta) J_m(x_n)^2}{2x_n^2}.$$

Let us consider the expansion of a piecewise smooth function f(x), 0 < x < 1, in a series of the form

$$f(x) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n J_m(xx_n), \quad 0 < x < 1,$$
(3.10)

where $\{x_n\}$ are the nonnegative solutions of $J_m(x) \cos \beta + xJ'_m(x) \sin \beta = 0$. This is called a Fourier-Bessel expansion. By multiplying (3.10) by $J_m(xx_n)$ and integrating both sides, we obtain

$$A_n = \frac{\int_0^1 f(x) J_m(xx_n) x dx}{\int_0^1 J_m(xx_n)^2 x dx}, \quad n = 1, 2, \cdots.$$
(3.11)

Theorem 1. Let $m \ge 0$, $0 \le \beta \le \pi/2$, and let $\{x_n : n \ge 1\}$ be the nonnegative solutions of (3.8). If f(x), 0 < x < 1, is a piecewise smooth function, define $\{A_n : n \ge 1\}$ by (3.11). Then the series $\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n J_m(xx_n)$ converges for each $x \in [0, 1]$, and the sum is $\frac{1}{2} [f(x+0) + f(x-0)]$ for 0 < x < 1.

Example 2. Let us compute the Fourier-Bessel expansion of the function f(x) = 1, 0 < x < 1, where m = 0 and $\beta = 0$. We have $1 = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n J_0(xx_n)$, where $J_0(x_n) = 0$ and

$$\int_0^1 x J_0(xx_n) dx = A_n \int_0^1 J_0(xx_n)^2 x dx, \quad n = 1, 2, \cdots.$$

Using (3.6) and (3.9), we obtain

$$A_n = \frac{\frac{1}{x_n^2} \int_0^{x_n} t J_0(t) dt}{\int_0^1 J_0(xx_n)^2 x dx} = \frac{\frac{1}{x_n^2} t J_1(t) \Big|_0^{x_n}}{\int_0^1 J_0(xx_n)^2 x dx} = \frac{\frac{1}{x_n} J_1(x_n)}{\frac{1}{2} J_1(x_n)^2} = \frac{2}{x_n J_1(x_n)}$$

Therefore,

$$1 = 2\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{J_0(xx_n)}{x_n J_1(x_n)}.$$

Finally we show that Bessel functions (3.3) are solutions to Bessel's equation. Let $y = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} a_n x^{n+\gamma}$ ($a_0 \neq 0$, $\gamma \ge 0$) be a solution to (3.2). We obtain

$$(\gamma^2 - m^2) a_0 x^{\gamma} + ((1+\gamma)^2 - m^2) a_1 x^{\gamma+1} + \sum_{n=2}^{\infty} \left[((n+\gamma)^2 - m^2) a_n + a_{n-2} \right] x^{n+\gamma} = 0.$$

Hence,

$$\gamma = m, \quad a_1 = 0, \quad a_n = \frac{-a_{n-2}}{n(n+2m)} \ (n \ge 2).$$

We obtain

$$y = a_0 x^m \left[1 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n x^{2n}}{2(2+2m)4(4+2m)\cdots 2n(2n+2m)} \right]$$

Let us choose $a_0 = 1/m!2^m$. Then,

$$y(x) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n x^{2n+m}}{2^{m+2n} (m+n)! n!}.$$
(3.12)

We rewrite (3.3) using $e^{ix\cos\theta} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (ix\cos\theta)^n/n!$ and introducing j as n = m+2j.

$$J_m(x) = \frac{1}{2\pi i^m} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(ix)^n}{n!} \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} \cos^n \theta e^{-im\theta} d\theta.$$

The integral is nonzero only for n = m, m + 2, m + 4, ... We introduce j (n = m + 2j).

$$J_m(x) = \frac{1}{2\pi i^m} \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{(ix)^{m+2j}}{(m+2j)!} \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} \cos^{m+2j} \theta e^{-im\theta} d\theta$$
$$= \frac{1}{i^m} \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{(ix)^{m+2j}}{(m+2j)!} \frac{1}{2^{m+2j}} \binom{m+2j}{j} = \frac{1}{i^m} \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \frac{(ix)^{m+2j}}{2^{m+2j}(m+j)!j!} = (3.12).$$

The vibrating drumhead ³

Let us consider small transverse vibrations of a circular membrane.

$$\begin{cases} u_{tt} = c^2 \nabla^2 u = c^2 \left(u_{\rho\rho} + \frac{1}{\rho} u_{\rho} + \frac{1}{\rho^2} u_{\phi\phi} \right), & 0 \le \rho < a, \quad t > 0, \\ u(\rho, \phi, t) = 0, & \rho = a, \quad t > 0, \\ u(\rho, \phi, 0) = 1, \quad u_t(\rho, \phi, 0) = 0, & 0 \le \rho < a. \end{cases}$$

where $c^2 = T_0 / \rho$ (cf. Chapter 2).

We look for separated solutions in the form

$$u(\rho, \varphi, t) = R(\rho)\Phi(\varphi)T(t).$$

By introducing separation constants as $-\lambda = (1/c^2)T''/T$ and $-\mu = \Phi''/\Phi$, we obtain

$$\Phi''(\phi) + \mu \Phi(\phi) = 0, \quad \Phi(-\pi) = \Phi(\pi), \quad \Phi'(-\pi) = \Phi'(\pi), \quad (3.13)$$

$$R''(\rho) + \frac{1}{\rho}R'(\rho) + \left(\lambda - \frac{\mu}{\rho^2}\right)R(\rho) = 0, \quad R(a) = 0, \quad (3.14)$$

$$T''(t) + \lambda c^2 T(t) = 0.$$
 (3.15)

In (3.13), nontrivial solutions are obtained when (i) $\mu > 0$, $\sqrt{\mu} = 1, 2, \cdots$, and (ii) $\mu = 0$:

$$\Phi(\varphi) = A\cos m\varphi + B\sin m\varphi, \quad m = 0, 1, 2, \cdots.$$

With $\mu = m^2$ $(m = 0, 1, 2, \cdots)$, we obtain $R(\rho) = J_m(\rho\sqrt{\lambda})$. For R(a) = 0, we obtain $\sqrt{\lambda} = x_n^{(m)}/a$ where $x_n^{(m)} > 0$, $J_m(x_n^{(m)}) = 0$. The separated solutions are obtained as

$$u(\rho, \varphi, t) = J_m\left(\frac{\rho x_n^{(m)}}{a}\right) \left(A\cos m\varphi + B\sin m\varphi\right) \left(\tilde{A}\cos\frac{ct x_n^{(m)}}{a} + \tilde{B}\sin\frac{ct x_n^{(m)}}{a}\right).$$
(3.16)

We will now take the initial conditions into account. The general solution is given as a linear combination (superposition) of (3.16). To satisfy $u_t(\rho, \varphi, 0) = 0$, we set $\tilde{B} = 0$. Now the solution is written as

$$u(\rho,\varphi,t) = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left\{ \left[A_{mn} J_m\left(\frac{\rho x_n^{(m)}}{a}\right) \right] \cos m\varphi + \left[B_{mn} J_m\left(\frac{\rho x_n^{(m)}}{a}\right) \right] \sin m\varphi \right\} \cos \frac{ct x_n^{(m)}}{a}$$

Consider the Fourier series $u(\rho, \varphi, 0) = 1 = A_0 + \sum_{m=1}^{\infty} A_m \cos(mx) + B_m \sin(mx)$. We can readily find $A_0 = 1$, $A_m = B_m = 0$ $(m \ge 1)$. (Of course we can also obtain them as $A_0 = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} 1 dx$, $A_m = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} \cos(mx) dx$, and $B_m = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} \sin(mx) dx$.) Therefore,

³ This section corresponds to $\S3.3$ of the textbook.

Math 454

$$A_{mn}=B_{mn}=0, \qquad \text{for} \quad m\geq 1,$$

and

$$u(\rho,\varphi,t) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_{0n} J_0\left(\frac{\rho x_n^{(0)}}{a}\right) \cos\frac{ct x_n^{(0)}}{a}.$$

In Example 2, we calculated the Fourier-Bessel expansion $1 = 2\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{J_0(xx_n^{(0)})}{x_n^{(0)}J_1(x_n^{(0)})}$. By comparison, finally we obtain

$$u(\rho, \varphi, t) = 2\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{x_n^{(0)} J_1(x_n^{(0)})} J_0\left(\frac{\rho x_n^{(0)}}{a}\right) \cos\frac{ct x_n^{(0)}}{a}.$$

Heat flow in the infinite cylinder ⁴

Let us consider the heat transfer in the infinite cylinder $0 \le \rho < \rho_{max}$. We will solve the heat equation in polar coordinates

$$\begin{cases} u_t = K \nabla^2 u, & t > 0, \quad 0 \le \rho < \rho_{\max}, \quad -\pi \le \varphi \le \pi, \\ u(\rho_{\max}, \varphi, t) = T_1, & t > 0, \quad -\pi \le \varphi \le \pi, \\ u(\rho, \varphi, 0) = T_2, & 0 \le \rho < \rho_{\max}, \quad -\pi \le \varphi \le \pi, \end{cases}$$

where T_1 and T_2 are positive constants.

Step 1

To find the steady-state solution, we try $U(\rho)$ because the b. c. is independent of φ .

$$K\nabla^2 U = K\left(\frac{\partial^2 U}{\partial \rho^2} + \frac{1}{\rho}\frac{\partial U}{\partial \rho} + \frac{1}{\rho^2}\frac{\partial^2 U}{\partial \phi^2}\right) = K\left(U'' + \frac{1}{\rho}U'\right) = 0.$$

The general solution is obtained as

$$U(\rho) = A + B \ln \rho.$$

Let us exclude the second term and set B = 0 (otherwise U(0) diverges and the initial condition in Step 2 will also diverge). To satisfy $U(\rho_{\text{max}}) = T_1$, we choose $A = T_1$. We thus obtain

$$U(\boldsymbol{\rho}) = T_1.$$

⁴ This section corresponds to $\S3.4$ of the textbook.

Step 2

Define $v(\rho, \varphi, t) = u(\rho, \varphi, t) - U(\rho)$. We have

$$\begin{cases} v_t = K \nabla^2 v, & t > 0, \quad 0 \le \rho < \rho_{\max}, \quad -\pi \le \varphi \le \pi, \\ v(\rho_{\max}, \varphi, t) = 0, & t > 0, \quad -\pi \le \varphi \le \pi, \\ v(\rho, \varphi, 0) = T_2 - U(\rho), & 0 \le \rho < \rho_{\max}, \quad -\pi \le \varphi \le \pi, \end{cases}$$

Step 3

Using separation of variables with $u(\rho, \varphi, t) = R(\rho)\Phi(\varphi)T(t)$, we obtain

$$u(\rho,\varphi,t) = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} J_m\left(\frac{\rho x_n^{(m)}}{\rho_{\max}}\right) (A_{mn}\cos m\varphi + B_{mn}\sin m\varphi) \exp\left[-\frac{\left(x_n^{(m)}\right)^2 Kt}{\rho_{\max}^2}\right].$$

Noting that $1 = 2\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{J_0(xx_n)}{x_n J_1(x_n)}$ (0 < x < 1, $J_0(x_n) = 0$), the solution is obtained as

$$u(\rho, \varphi, t) = T_1 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n J_0\left(\frac{\rho x_n}{\rho_{\max}}\right) \exp\left[-\frac{x_n^2 K t}{\rho_{\max}^2}\right],$$

where $A_n = \frac{2(T_2 - T_1)}{x_n J_1(x_n)}$, $J_0(x_n) = 0$, $n = 1, 2, \cdots$.