

Nonhomogeneous Linear Systems of
Differential Equations:
the method of variation of parameters

Xu-Yan Chen

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where $\vec{x}_p(t)$ is a particular solution of of nonhomog system $(*)_{nh}$, and $\vec{x}_c(t)$ are general solutions of the homog system

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If the solutions $\vec{x}_c(t)$ of the homogeneous system $(*)_h$ have been provided or prepared,

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- ▶ The fundamental matrices are not unique.

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- ▶ Substitute this in $(*)_{nh}$. It simplifies to $\vec{u}'(t) = M(t)^{-1}\vec{f}(t)$.

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Proof: $(M(t)\vec{u}(t))' = A(t)M(t)\vec{u}(t) + \vec{f}(t)$

$$\Rightarrow M'(t)\vec{u}(t) + M(t)\vec{u}'(t) = A(t)M(t)\vec{u}(t) + \vec{f}(t).$$

Since $M'(t) = A(t)M(t)$, we obtain $M(t)\vec{u}'(t) = \vec{f}(t)$.

Take the inverse: $\vec{u}'(t) = M(t)^{-1}\vec{f}(t)$.

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$$\text{Take the inverse: } \vec{u}'(t) = M(t)^{-1}\vec{f}(t).$$

- ▶ Integrate to get $\vec{u}(t)$.

- ▶ Finally, multiply to get $\vec{x}(t) = M(t)\vec{u}(t)$.

Example 1: Solve $\vec{x}' = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 4 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \vec{x} + \begin{bmatrix} -1 + 21t + e^{3t} \tan t \\ 2 + 30t + 2e^{3t} \tan t \end{bmatrix}$

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► Eigenvalues & eigenvectors of $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 4 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ (details skipped here)

⇒ Complementary solutions: $\vec{x}_c(t) = C_1 e^{-t} \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix} + C_2 e^{3t} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix}$

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► Set $\vec{x}(t) = M(t)\vec{u}(t)$

► The original system is simplified to $\vec{u}'(t) = M(t)^{-1} \vec{f}(t)$:

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{u}'(t) &= \begin{bmatrix} -e^{-t} & e^{3t} \\ 2e^{-t} & 2e^{3t} \end{bmatrix}^{-1} \begin{bmatrix} -1 + 21t + e^{3t} \tan t \\ 2 + 30t + 2e^{3t} \tan t \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \frac{1}{-4e^{2t}} \begin{bmatrix} 2e^{3t} & -e^{3t} \\ -2e^{-t} & -e^{-t} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -1 + 21t + e^{3t} \tan t \\ 2 + 30t + 2e^{3t} \tan t \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} (1 - 3t)e^t \\ 18te^{-3t} + \tan t \end{bmatrix}. \end{aligned}$$

Example 1 (continued): $\vec{x}' = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 4 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \vec{x} + \begin{bmatrix} -1 + 21t + e^{3t} \tan t \\ 2 + 30t + 2e^{3t} \tan t \end{bmatrix}$

► Integrate $\vec{u}'(t) = \begin{bmatrix} (1 - 3t)e^t \\ 18te^{-3t} + \tan t \end{bmatrix}$:

$$\begin{aligned} \int (1 - 3t)e^t dt &= (1 - 3t)e^t - \int (-3)e^t dt = (1 - 3t)e^t + 3e^t + C, \\ \int 18te^{-3t} dt &= -6te^{-3t} - \int (-6)e^{-3t} dt = -6te^{-3t} - 2e^{-3t} + C, \\ \int \tan t dt &= -\ln |\cos t| + C. \end{aligned}$$

$$\Rightarrow \vec{u}(t) = \begin{bmatrix} (4 - 3t)e^t + C_1 \\ (-2 - 6t)e^{-3t} - \ln |\cos t| + C_2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

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► Finally, the solutions $\vec{x}(t)$ are obtained from $\vec{x}(t) = M(t)\vec{u}(t)$:

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{x}(t) &= \begin{bmatrix} -e^{-t} & e^{3t} \\ 2e^{-t} & 2e^{3t} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} (4 - 3t)e^t + C_1 \\ (-2 - 6t)e^{-3t} - \ln |\cos t| + C_2 \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} -6 - 3t - e^{3t} \ln |\cos t| \\ 4 - 18t - 2e^{3t} \ln |\cos t| \end{bmatrix} + C_1 e^{-t} \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix} + C_2 e^{3t} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix}. \end{aligned}$$

Example 2: Solve $2y'' - y' - y = \frac{3e^{\frac{3}{2}t}}{1 + e^t}$.

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► Set $\vec{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} y \\ y' \end{bmatrix}$:

$$2y'' - y' - y = \frac{3e^{\frac{3}{2}t}}{1+e^t} \Leftrightarrow \vec{x}' = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ \frac{1}{2} & \frac{1}{2} \end{bmatrix} \vec{x} + \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{3e^{\frac{3}{2}t}}{2(1+e^t)} \end{bmatrix}$$

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▶ Set $\vec{x}(t) = M(t)\vec{u}(t)$. The system simplifies to:

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{u}'(t) &= M(t)^{-1} \vec{f}(t) = \begin{bmatrix} e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} & e^t \\ -\frac{1}{2}e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} & e^t \end{bmatrix}^{-1} \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{3e^{\frac{3}{2}t}}{2(1+e^t)} \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \frac{1}{\frac{3}{2}e^{\frac{1}{2}t}} \begin{bmatrix} e^t & -e^t \\ \frac{1}{2}e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} & e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{3e^{\frac{3}{2}t}}{2(1+e^t)} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} -\frac{e^{2t}}{1+e^t} \\ \frac{e^{\frac{1}{2}t}}{1+e^t} \end{bmatrix}. \end{aligned}$$

Example 2 (continued): $2y'' - y' - y = \frac{3e^{\frac{3}{2}t}}{1+e^t}$

► Integrate $\vec{\mathbf{u}}'(t) = \begin{bmatrix} -\frac{e^{2t}}{1+e^t} \\ \frac{e^{\frac{1}{2}t}}{1+e^t} \end{bmatrix}$:

$$\int \frac{e^{2t}}{1+e^t} dt = \int \frac{s}{1+s} ds = \int \left(1 - \frac{1}{1+s}\right) ds = s - \ln|1+s| + C$$

(substituted $s = e^t$),

$$\int \frac{e^{\frac{1}{2}t}}{1+e^t} dt = \int \frac{2}{1+s^2} ds = 2 \arctan s + C$$

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$$\Rightarrow \vec{\mathbf{u}}(t) = \begin{bmatrix} -e^t + \ln(1+e^t) + C_1 \\ 2 \arctan(e^{\frac{1}{2}t}) + C_2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

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► Finally, the solutions $\vec{\mathbf{x}}(t)$ are obtained from $\vec{\mathbf{x}}(t) = M(t)\vec{\mathbf{u}}(t)$:

$$\vec{\mathbf{x}}(t) = \begin{bmatrix} e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} & e^t \\ -\frac{1}{2}e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} & e^t \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -e^t + \ln(1+e^t) + C_1 \\ 2 \arctan(e^{\frac{1}{2}t}) + C_2 \end{bmatrix} = \dots,$$

$$\begin{aligned} y(t) &= x_1(t) \\ &= -e^{\frac{1}{2}t} + e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} \ln(1+e^t) + 2e^t \arctan(e^{\frac{1}{2}t}) + C_1 e^{-\frac{1}{2}t} + C_2 e^t. \end{aligned}$$

Example 3: Solve $(1 + t)y'' + (-1 - 2t)y' + ty = \frac{e^t}{1 + t}$,

given that $y_0(t) = e^t$ satisfies $(1 + t)y_0'' + (-1 - 2t)y_0' + ty_0 = 0$.

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- Reduction of Order: $y_0(t) \Rightarrow y_c(t)$.
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 - ▶ Set $y_c(t) = y_0(t)z(t) = e^t z(t)$ and substitute $y(t) = e^t z(t)$ in $(*)_h$:
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▶ Set $w(t) = z'(t)$. The eq $(*)_z$ becomes a 1st order linear eq:

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▶ $z' = w \Rightarrow z(t) = \int w(t)dt = \int \frac{C_1}{1+t} dt = C_1 \ln |1+t| + C_2$

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▶ $y_c(t) = y_0(t)z(t) = e^t z(t) = e^t [C_1 \ln|1+t| + C_2]$.

Or, equivalently, $y_c(t) = C_1 e^t \ln|1+t| + C_2 e^t$.

Example 3 (continued): $(1 + t)y'' + (-1 - 2t)y' + ty = \frac{e^t}{1 + t}.$

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• **Variation of Parameters:** $y_c(t) \Rightarrow$ Solve the nonhomog eq.

▶ $y_c(t)$ gives a fundamental matrix:

$$M(t) = \begin{bmatrix} y_1 & y_2 \\ y_1' & y_2' \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} e^t \ln |1 + t| & e^t \\ e^t \ln |1 + t| + \frac{e^t}{1+t} & e^t \end{bmatrix}$$

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▶ Set $\vec{x}(t) = M(t)\vec{u}(t)$. Then $\vec{u}(t)$ satisfies $\vec{u}'(t) = M(t)^{-1}\vec{f}(t)$.

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{u}'(t) &= \begin{bmatrix} e^t \ln|1+t| & e^t \\ e^t \ln|1+t| + \frac{e^t}{1+t} & e^t \end{bmatrix}^{-1} \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{e^t}{(1+t)^2} \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \frac{1}{-\frac{e^{2t}}{1+t}} \begin{bmatrix} e^t & -e^t \\ -e^t \ln|1+t| - \frac{e^t}{1+t} & e^t \ln|1+t| \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{e^t}{(1+t)^2} \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{1+t} \\ -\frac{\ln|1+t|}{1+t} \end{bmatrix}. \end{aligned}$$

Example 3 (continued): $(1 + t)y'' + (-1 - 2t)y' + ty = \frac{e^t}{1 + t}.$

Variation of Parameters (continued)

► Integrate $\vec{\mathbf{u}}'(t) = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{1+t} \\ -\frac{\ln|1+t|}{1+t} \end{bmatrix}:$

$$\int \frac{1}{1+t} dt = \ln|1+t| + C,$$

$$\int \frac{\ln|1+t|}{1+t} dt = \int s ds = \frac{1}{2}s^2 + C \quad (\text{substituted } s = \ln|1+t|).$$

$$\Rightarrow \vec{\mathbf{u}}(t) = \begin{bmatrix} \ln|1+t| + C_1 \\ -\frac{1}{2}(\ln|1+t|)^2 + C_2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

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$$\Rightarrow \vec{\mathbf{u}}(t) = \begin{bmatrix} \ln|1+t| + C_1 \\ -\frac{1}{2}(\ln|1+t|)^2 + C_2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

► Finally, we can get $\vec{\mathbf{x}}(t) = M(t)\vec{\mathbf{u}}(t)$ and $y(t) = x_1(t):$

$$\begin{aligned} y(t) &= u_1(t)e^t \ln|1+t| + u_2(t)e^t \\ &= \ln|1+t| \cdot e^t \ln|1+t| - \frac{1}{2}(\ln|1+t|)^2 \cdot e^t \\ &\quad + C_1 e^t \ln|1+t| + C_2 e^t \\ &= \frac{1}{2}e^t (\ln|1+t|)^2 + C_1 e^t \ln|1+t| + C_2 e^t. \end{aligned}$$