

$$\nabla^2 u = 0$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial z^2} = 0 \quad \text{--- (1)}$$

Let $u = X(x)Y(y)Z(z)$ \rightarrow (1a)

$$u_x = X'(x)Y(y)Z(z)$$

$$u_{xx} = X''(x)YZ$$

$$u_y = XY'(y)Z$$

$$u_{yy} = XY''(y)Z$$

$$u_z = XYZ'(z)$$

$$u_{zz} = XYZ''(z)$$

Using in (1) we have

$$X''YZ + XY''Z + XYZ'' = 0$$

Dividing by XYZ we have

$$\frac{X''}{X} + \frac{Y''}{Y} + \frac{Z''}{Z} = 0$$

$$\frac{X''}{X} = -\frac{Y''}{Y} - \frac{Z''}{Z} = -n^2 \quad \text{(separable constant)} \quad \rightarrow (2)$$

From (2) we have

$$\frac{X''}{X} = -n^2 \Rightarrow X'' + n^2 X = 0 \quad \rightarrow (3)$$

$$\frac{Y''}{Y} = -\frac{Z''}{Z} + n^2 = -m^2$$

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{Y'' + m^2 Y = 0} \quad \rightarrow (4)$$

$$-Z'' + Z n^2 = -m^2 Z$$

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{Z'' - (m^2 + n^2) Z = 0} \quad \rightarrow (5)$$

From (3)

$$D^2 + n^2 = 0$$

$$D = \pm in$$

∴ $X = A_1 \cos nx + B_1 \sin nx$ → (6)

From Eq. (4) we can write

$$Y = A_2 \cos my + B_2 \sin my$$
 → (7)

From (5)

$$Z = A_3 e^{\sqrt{m^2 + n^2} z} + B_3 e^{-\sqrt{m^2 + n^2} z}$$
 → (8)

So the Eq. (1a) after using (6) - (8) yields

$$u(x, y, z) = \left. \begin{matrix} \cos nx \\ \sin nx \end{matrix} \right\} \left. \begin{matrix} \cos my \\ \sin my \end{matrix} \right\} e^{\pm \sqrt{m^2 + n^2} z}$$

This is the general solution of the Laplace equation in three dimensions.

Example Consider the steady state temperature distribution in a thin rectangular slab. Two sides are insulated. One side is kept at zero temperature and the temperature of the remaining side is $f(x)$.

Solution The diffusion equation (heat equation) in two dimensions is given by

$$\nabla^2 u = \frac{1}{k} \frac{\partial u}{\partial t}$$

Steady state means that temp u is independent of time and thus

$$\nabla_2^2 u = 0$$

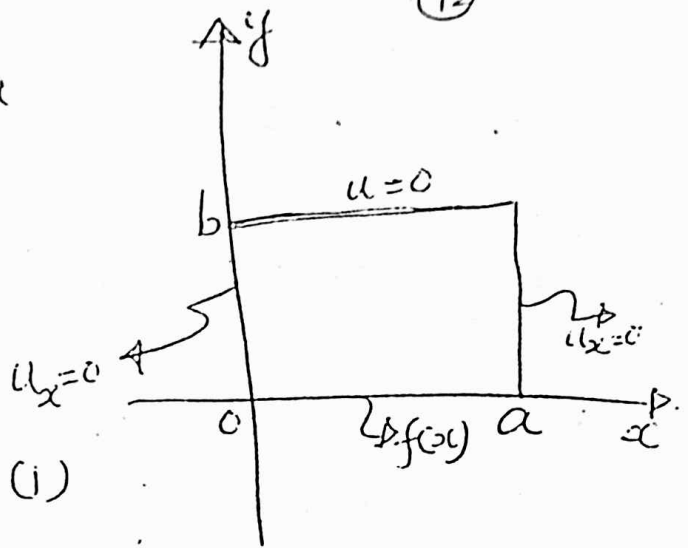
$$u(x, 0) = f(x), \quad 0 \leq x \leq a$$

$$u(x, b) = 0$$

$$u_x(0, y) = 0$$

$$u_x(a, y) = 0$$

(42)



$$u_{xx} + u_{yy} = 0 \quad (1)$$

Let $u(x, y) = X(x)Y(y)$

∴ (1) becomes

$$X''Y + XY'' = 0$$

Dividing by XY

$$\frac{X''}{X} + \frac{Y''}{Y} = 0$$

$$\frac{X''}{X} = -\frac{Y''}{Y} = -\alpha^2 \quad (2)$$

$$\boxed{X'' + \alpha^2 X = 0} \quad (3)$$

$$\boxed{Y'' - \alpha^2 Y = 0} \quad (4)$$

Solving (3) we have

$$\boxed{X(x) = A \cos \alpha x + B \sin \alpha x} \quad (4a)$$

Now $u_x(0, y) = 0$

$$\Rightarrow X'(0)Y(y) = 0$$

$$\boxed{Y(y) \neq 0}$$

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{X'(0) = 0} \quad (4b)$$

$$u'_x(a, y) = 0 \Rightarrow X'(a)Y(y) = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{X'(a) = 0}, \quad Y(y) \neq 0 \quad (4c)$$

From (4a)

(43)

$$X'(x) = -A\alpha \sin \alpha x + B\alpha \cos \alpha x$$

$$X'(0) = 0 \Rightarrow 0 + B\alpha = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{B=0}$$

\therefore (4a) gives

$$X(x) = A \cos \alpha x \longrightarrow (4d)$$

$$X'(x) = -A\alpha \sin \alpha x$$

$$X'(a) = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow -A\alpha \sin \alpha a = 0$$

$A \neq 0$ for non-trivial solution.

$\alpha = 0$ gives trivial solution so $\alpha \neq 0$.

$$\Rightarrow \text{Thus } \sin \alpha a = 0 = \sin n\pi \quad (n = 0, 1, 2, \dots)$$

$$\alpha_n a = n\pi$$

$$\boxed{\alpha_n = \frac{n\pi}{a}} \longrightarrow (4e)$$

With (4e), Eq. (4d) takes the following form.

$$\boxed{X(x) = A_n \cos \frac{n\pi}{a} x} \longrightarrow (4f)$$

Now solving (4) we get.

$$Y = A e^{\alpha y} + B e^{-\alpha y}$$

$$= \left(\frac{A}{2} e^{\alpha y} + \frac{A}{2} e^{\alpha y} + \frac{B}{2} e^{+\alpha y} - \frac{B}{2} e^{\alpha y} \right)$$

$$+ \left(\frac{B}{2} e^{-\alpha y} + \frac{B}{2} e^{-\alpha y} + \frac{A}{2} e^{-\alpha y} - \frac{A}{2} e^{-\alpha y} \right)$$

$$Y = \left(\frac{A+B}{2}\right) e^{\alpha y} + \left(\frac{A-B}{2}\right) e^{-\alpha y} + \left(\frac{A+B}{2}\right) e^{-\alpha y} - \left(\frac{A-B}{2}\right) e^{\alpha y} \quad (49)$$

$$Y = \frac{C}{2} e^{\alpha y} + \frac{D}{2} e^{-\alpha y} + \frac{C}{2} e^{-\alpha y} - \frac{D}{2} e^{\alpha y}$$

$$= C \left(\frac{e^{\alpha y} + e^{-\alpha y}}{2} \right) + D \left(\frac{e^{-\alpha y} - e^{\alpha y}}{2} \right)$$

$$Y = C \cosh \alpha y + D \sinh \alpha y$$

Let $C = E \sinh \alpha \epsilon$, $D = E \cosh \alpha \epsilon$

$$Y = E \left[\sinh \alpha \epsilon \cosh \alpha y + \cosh \alpha \epsilon \sinh \alpha y \right]$$

$$Y = E \sinh (\alpha y + \alpha \epsilon)$$

$$Y = E \sinh \alpha (y + \epsilon) \quad \rightarrow (5)$$

$$u(x, b) = 0 \Rightarrow X(x) Y(b) = 0 \quad (X(x) \neq 0)$$

$$Y(b) = 0 \quad \rightarrow (6)$$

Making use of (6) in (5) we obtain

$$Y(b) = 0 = E \sinh \alpha (b + \epsilon)$$

$E \neq 0$ this is true only if $b + \epsilon = 0$

$$b = -\epsilon$$

$$\Rightarrow \epsilon = -b$$

\therefore (5) gives

$$Y_n = E_n \sinh \alpha_n (y - b) \quad \rightarrow (7)$$

$$u(x, y) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} u_n(x, y) \quad (5)$$

$$= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} X_n(x) Y_n(y)$$

$$u(x, y) = \frac{a_0}{2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} a_n \cos \frac{n\pi x}{a} \sinh \frac{n\pi}{a} (y-b)$$

$$u(x, 0) = \frac{a_0}{2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} a_n \cos \frac{n\pi x}{a} \sinh \frac{n\pi(-b)}{a} \quad \left(a_n = A_n E_n \right) \quad (6)$$

$$f(x) = \frac{a_0}{2} + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} a_n \cos \frac{n\pi x}{a} \sinh \frac{n\pi(-b)}{a}$$

$$\Rightarrow a_0 = \frac{2}{a} \int_0^a f(x) dx$$

$$a_n = \frac{-2}{a \sinh \frac{n\pi b}{a}} \int_0^a f(x) \cos \frac{n\pi x}{a} dx$$

Example

By separating the variables show that the equation $\nabla^2 u = 0$

has solutions of the form $A \exp(\pm nx \pm iny)$ where A and n are constants. Deduce that the functions of the form

$$u(x, y) = \sum_n A_n e^{-\frac{n\pi x}{a}} \sin \frac{n\pi y}{a} \quad \begin{matrix} x > 0 \\ 0 \leq y \leq a \end{matrix}$$

where A 's are constant, are plane harmonic functions satisfying the conditions

$$u(x, 0) = 0, \quad u(x, a) = 0, \quad u(x, y) \rightarrow 0 \text{ as } x \rightarrow \infty.$$

Solution The given equation is

$$\nabla^2 u = 0$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} = 0 \quad \text{--- (1)}$$

Let $u(x, y) = X(x) Y(y)$

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} = X''(x) Y(y)$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y^2} = X(x) Y''(y)$$

using in (1) we have

$$X'' Y + X Y'' = 0$$

Dividing by XY , we get

$$\frac{X''}{X} + \frac{Y''}{Y} = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{X''}{X} = -\frac{Y''}{Y} = n^2 \quad \text{--- (2)}$$

From (2), we have

$$X'' - n^2 X = 0$$

$$(D^2 - n^2) X = 0$$

$X(x) = A_1 e^{nx} + \frac{B}{1} e^{-nx}$

 --- (2a)

Again $X(x)$ should be bounded $\Rightarrow A_1 = 0$.
from (2)

$$Y'' + n^2 Y = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow Y(y) = A_2 e^{\pm iny}$$

$u(x, y) = A e^{\pm nx \pm iny}$

 --- (3)

$$u(x, 0) = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \left. \begin{array}{l} u(x, a) = 0 \\ X(x) Y(a) = 0 \\ \Rightarrow \boxed{Y(a) = 0}; X(x) \neq 0 \end{array} \right\} \dots (47)$$

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{Y(0) = 0} \quad \text{as } X(x) \neq 0$$

Now $Y = A_2 e^{\pm i n y}$

$$Y = B_1 \cos n y + B_2 \sin n y$$

$$Y(0) = 0 \Rightarrow B_1 = 0$$

$$\therefore Y = B_2 \sin n y$$

$$Y(a) = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow B_2 \sin n a = 0$$

$B_2 \neq 0$ for non-trivial solution so

$$\sin n a = 0 = \sin k \pi$$

$$n = \frac{k \pi}{a}, \quad k = 1, 2, \dots$$

$$\therefore \boxed{Y_k = B_{k2} \sin \frac{k \pi}{a} y}$$

Now as from (2a) $A_1 = 0$ after using $X(x) \rightarrow 0$

$$\boxed{X_k(x) = B_{1k2} e^{-\frac{k \pi}{a} x}}$$

$$\text{so } \boxed{u = \sum_k A_{k2} e^{-\frac{k \pi}{a} x} \sin \frac{k \pi}{a} y; \quad x > 0, \quad 0 \leq y \leq a}$$

$$A_{k2} = B_{k2} B_{1k2}$$

This solution is called plane harmonic function.

Q Solve $u_{xx} = \alpha^2 u_t$ — (1)

(48)

$u(x, t) = X(x)T(t)$

(1) becomes

$X''T = \alpha^2 X T'$

Dividing by XT

$\frac{X''}{X} = \alpha^2 \frac{T'}{T} = -n^2$ (say) — (2)

$\Rightarrow X'' + n^2 X = 0$

$T' + \frac{n^2}{\alpha^2} T = 0$

$X(x) = A \cos nx + B \sin nx$ — (3)

$(D^2 + \frac{n^2}{\alpha^2}) T = 0$

$D^2 = -\frac{n^2}{\alpha^2}$

$T = C e^{-\frac{n^2}{\alpha^2} t}$

(4)

$\therefore u(x, t) = (A \cos nx + B \sin nx) e^{-\frac{n^2}{\alpha^2} t}$

$= A_1 e^{\pm inx - \frac{n^2}{\alpha^2} t}$

Q Solve $u_{xx} + u_{yy} = \frac{1}{c^2} u_t$ — (1)

Let $u(x, y, t) = X(x)Y(y)T(t)$

$u_{xx} = X''YT$

$u_{yy} = XY''T$

$u_t = XY T'$

(1) gives

$$X''Y + XY'' = \frac{1}{c^2} XY T''$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{X''}{X} + \frac{Y''}{Y} = \frac{1}{c^2} \frac{T''}{T}$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{X''}{X} = -\frac{Y''}{Y} + \frac{1}{c^2} \frac{T''}{T} = -n^2 \quad (2)$$

From (2) $X'' + n^2 X = 0$

$$D = \pm in$$

$\therefore X = A e^{\pm inx}$ $\rightarrow (2a)$

From (2) $-\frac{Y''}{Y} + \frac{1}{c^2} \frac{T''}{T} = -n^2$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{1}{c^2} \frac{T''}{T} = \frac{Y''}{Y} - n^2 = m^2 \quad (3)$$

$$T'' - m^2 c^2 T = 0$$

$T = B e^{\pm mct}$ $\rightarrow (4)$

From (3)

$$Y'' - (m^2 + n^2) Y = 0$$

$$Y = C e^{\pm \sqrt{m^2 + n^2} y} \quad \rightarrow (5)$$

o from Eqs. (2a), (4) and (5) we get

$$1 = \left. \begin{matrix} \cos nx \\ \sin nx \end{matrix} \right\} e^{\pm mct} \left. \begin{matrix} e^{\pm \sqrt{m^2 + n^2} y} \\ e^{-\sqrt{m^2 + n^2} y} \end{matrix} \right\}$$