

MA612L-Partial Differential Equations

Lecture 14 : Reynolds Transport Theorem

Panchatcharam Mariappan¹

¹Associate Professor
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
IIT Tirupati, Tirupati

September 10, 2025





Recap

Reynolds Transport Theorem



Consider the integration of $\mathbf{f} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}, t)$ over a time-dependent region $\Omega(t)$ with boundary $\partial\Omega(t)$, then the Reynolds Transport theorem relates taking the derivative with respect to time as follows.

Theorem 1 (Reynolds Transport Theorem)

Let $\Omega(t) \subset \mathbb{R}^3$ and $\mathbf{f} : \Omega(t) \times [0, \infty) \rightarrow U$, then

$$\frac{D}{Dt} \left(\int_{\Omega(t)} \mathbf{f} dV \right) = \int_{\Omega(t)} \frac{\partial \mathbf{f}}{\partial t} dV + \int_{\partial\Omega(t)} (\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{n}) \mathbf{f} dS \quad (1)$$

Here $\mathbf{x}(t)$ is the position of the points in $\Omega(t)$. $\mathbf{n}(\mathbf{x}, t)$ is the outward unit normal vector to $\partial\Omega(t)$. dV and dS are volume and surface elements at \mathbf{x} . $\mathbf{v}(\mathbf{x}, t)$ denotes the velocity of the area element. The function \mathbf{f} may be scalar-valued or vector-valued, or tensor-valued. $\frac{D}{Dt}$ is usually called as total derivative or material derivative.

Reynolds Transport Theorem



In fluid dynamics or continuum mechanics, this can be written as follows:
Let B be any property of the fluid and $\beta = \frac{dB}{dm}$ be the intensive value of B (amount of B per unit mass) in any small element of the fluid, then

$$\left(\frac{dB}{dt} \right)_{\Omega(t)} = \int_{\Omega(t)} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho\beta) + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla(\rho\beta) + \rho\beta \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} \right] dV \quad (2)$$

For the Pictorial Proof using fluid dynamics continuum mechanics approach, refer to the lecture notes of Hyunse Yoon, University of Iowa.



Conservation Laws

Conservation of Mass



Use $B = m$ in (2) then

$$\left(\frac{dm}{dt}\right)_{\Omega(t)} = 0, \quad \beta = \left(\frac{dm}{dm}\right) = 1$$

$$\begin{aligned}\left(\frac{dm}{dt}\right)_{\Omega(t)} &= \int_{\Omega(t)} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho\beta) + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla(\rho\beta) + \rho\beta \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} \right] dV \\ \implies 0 &= \int_{\Omega(t)} \left[\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla(\rho) + \rho \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} \right] dV\end{aligned}$$

Hence

$$\boxed{\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{v}) = 0}$$

(3)

Conservation of Momentum



Use $B = m\mathbf{v}$ in (2) then

$$\left(\frac{dm\mathbf{v}}{dt}\right)_{\Omega(t)} = \int_{\Omega(t)} \mathbf{f} dV, \quad \beta = \left(\frac{dm\mathbf{v}}{dm}\right) = \mathbf{v}$$

Here f is an external force.

$$\int_{\Omega(t)} \mathbf{f} dV = \int_{\Omega(t)} \left[\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho\mathbf{v}) + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla(\rho\mathbf{v}) + \rho\mathbf{v} \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} \right] dV$$

$$\boxed{\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho\mathbf{v}) + \nabla \cdot (\rho\mathbf{v}\mathbf{v}) = \nabla \cdot T_s + \mathbf{f}_b} \quad (4)$$

Here $T_s = [(-p + \lambda \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v})I + 2\mu D]$, $D = \frac{1}{2}(\nabla \mathbf{v} + \nabla \mathbf{v}^T)$, p is the pressure, f_b is the body force and T_s is the stress tensor.

Navier Stokes Equation



$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho \mathbf{v}) + \nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{v} \otimes \mathbf{v}) = -\nabla p + \mu \nabla^2 \mathbf{v} + \frac{1}{3} \mu \nabla (\nabla \cdot \mathbf{v}) + \rho \mathbf{g} \quad (5)$$

The incompressible Navier-Stokes equation is given by

$$\underbrace{\frac{\partial \mathbf{v}}{\partial t}}_{\text{Variation}} + \underbrace{(\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{v}}_{\text{Convection}} - \underbrace{\nu \nabla^2 \mathbf{v}}_{\text{Diffusion}} = \underbrace{-\nabla w}_{\text{Internal source}} + \underbrace{\mathbf{g}}_{\text{External source}} \quad (6)$$

Conservation of Energy



Use $B = E = m \left(u + \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{v} \right)$ in (2) then

$$\left(\frac{dE}{dt} \right)_{\Omega(t)} = \dot{Q} - \dot{W}, \quad \beta = \left(\frac{dE}{dm} \right) = e$$

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}(\rho e) + \nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{v} e) = -\nabla \cdot \dot{\mathbf{q}}_s - p \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} + \nabla \cdot (\boldsymbol{\tau} \cdot \mathbf{v}) + \mathbf{f}_b \cdot \mathbf{v} + \dot{q}_v \quad (7)$$

Here p : pressure, \dot{q}_s : rate of heat transfer per unit area across the surface area, \dot{q}_v : rate of heat source or sink within material volume per unit volume, \dot{Q} : net rate of heat transferred to the material element, \dot{W} : net rate of work done by the material volume, $\boldsymbol{\tau}$: viscous stress tensor

Heat Equation



The conservation of total internal energy can be written as

$$\underbrace{\frac{\partial}{\partial t} \left(\rho \left[e + \frac{1}{2} v^2 \right] \right)}_{\text{Rate of increase of Energy per unit volume}} + \underbrace{\nabla \cdot \left[\rho \mathbf{v} \left(e + \frac{1}{2} v^2 \right) \right]}_{\text{Convection energy into point by flow}} = - \underbrace{\nabla \cdot \mathbf{q}}_{\text{net heat flux}} + \underbrace{\nabla \cdot (\boldsymbol{\sigma} \cdot \mathbf{v})}_{\text{Work of Surface forces}} + \underbrace{\rho \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{F}}_{\text{Work of body forces}} \quad (8)$$

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t} (\rho c_p T) + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla T (T \mathbf{v}) = \nabla \cdot (k \nabla T) + \beta T \left(\frac{\partial p}{\partial t} + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla p \right) + \boldsymbol{\tau} : \nabla \mathbf{v} + \mathcal{Q} \quad (9)$$

Here c_p : specific heat capacity, k : thermal conductivity



d'Alembert's Formula for Wave Equation

Recall: Transport Equation in $\mathbb{R}^n \times (0, \infty)$

Consider the following inhomogeneous problem

$$\begin{cases} u_t + \mathbf{b} \cdot Du = f, \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n, t > 0 \\ u(\mathbf{x}, 0) = g(\mathbf{x}), \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n \end{cases} \quad (10)$$

Then

$$u(\mathbf{x}, t) = g(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{b}t) + \int_0^t f(\mathbf{x} + (s - t)\mathbf{b}, s) ds, \mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n, t \geq 0$$

solves the IVP (10).

d'Alembert's Formula $n = 1$



Consider the following one-dimensional wave equation

$$\begin{cases} u_{tt} - c^2 u_{xx} = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R} \times (0, \infty) \\ u = f & \text{on } \mathbb{R} \times (t = 0) \\ u_t = g & \text{on } \mathbb{R} \times (t = 0) \end{cases} \quad (11)$$

Let us try to find the solution of the wave equation in terms of f and g .
Let us rewrite the wave equation as follows:

$$\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} + c \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right) \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - c \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right) u = u_{tt} - u_{xx} = 0$$

d'Alembert's Formula



Let

$$v(x, t) = \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - c \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right) u(x, t)$$

Then the wave equation can be written as

$$v_t(x, t) + cv_x(x, t) = 0 \text{ in } \mathbb{R} \times (0, \infty)$$

This is a simple transport equation. We know the solution to this problem, which is given by

$$v(x, t) = a(x - ct)$$

where

$$v(x, 0) = a(x)$$

d'Alembert's Formula



Therefore, we have

$$u_t(x, t) - cu_x(x, t) = a(x - ct) \text{ in } \mathbb{R} \times (0, \infty)$$

This is once again the transport equation. Therefore,

$$u(x, t) = f(x + ct) + \int_0^t a(x - cs - c(s - t))ds, x \in \mathbb{R}, t \geq 0$$

$$u(x, t) = f(x + ct) + \int_0^t a(x - 2cs + ct)ds, x \in \mathbb{R}, t \geq 0$$

d'Alembert's Formula



Use $y = x - 2cs + ct$, then $dy = -2cds$, $s = 0 \implies y = x + ct$,
 $s = t \implies y = x - ct$

$$u(x, t) = f(x + ct) + \frac{1}{2c} \int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} a(y) dy, x \in \mathbb{R}, t \geq 0$$

Now,

$$\begin{aligned} a(x) &= v(x, 0) = u_t(x, 0) - cu_x(x, 0) = g(x) - cf'(x) \\ \implies \frac{1}{2c} \int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} a(y) dy &= \frac{1}{2c} \int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} g(y) dy - \frac{1}{2} \int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} f'(y) dy \\ &= \frac{1}{2c} \int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} g(y) dy - \frac{1}{2} f(x + ct) + \frac{1}{2} f(x - ct) \end{aligned}$$

d'Alembert's Formula



$$u(x, t) = \frac{1}{2}[f(x + ct) + f(x - ct)] + \frac{1}{2c} \int_{x-ct}^{x+ct} g(y) dy$$

is called d'Alembert's formula. This can be written as

$$u(x, t) = F(x + ct) + G(x - ct)$$

for appropriate F and G . Conversely, any function of this form solves $u_{tt} - c^2 u_{xx} = 0$. Observe the beauty of this equation, the general solution of the one-dimensional wave equation is a sum of the general solution of the transport equations

$$u_t + cu_x = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad u_t - cu_x = 0$$

Wave Equation: Separation Variables

Recollect the solution obtained from the Separation of Variables. (Of course, this was on domain $[0, L] \times (0, \infty)$)

$$u(x, t) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[A_n \cos \left(\frac{cn\pi}{L} t \right) + B_n \sin \left(\frac{cn\pi}{L} t \right) \right] \sin \left(\frac{n\pi}{L} x \right) \quad (12)$$

Using $\sin(A \pm B) = \sin A \cos B \pm \cos A \sin B$ and $\cos(A \pm B) = \cos A \cos B \mp \sin A \sin B$, we can rewrite this as

$$\begin{aligned} u(x, t) = & \frac{1}{2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[A_n \sin \left(\frac{n\pi}{L} (x + ct) \right) + A_n \sin \left(\frac{n\pi}{L} (x - ct) \right) \right] \\ & + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left[B_n \cos \left(\frac{n\pi}{L} (x - ct) \right) - B_n \cos \left(\frac{n\pi}{L} (x + ct) \right) \right] \end{aligned}$$

d'Alembert's Formula



Again, you can see that

$$u(x, t) = F(x + ct) + G(x - ct)$$

When $c = 1$, g is an odd function and f is an even function, then

$$u(0, t) = f(t)$$

When $c = 1$, g is an an even function and f is an odd function, then

$$u(0, t) = \int_0^t g(y) dy$$

When $g = 0$, you can observe that the initial displacement splits into two parts, one moving to the right with speed c and the other to the left with speed c .

d'Alembert's Formula



Theorem 2

Assume $f \in C^2(\mathbb{R})$, $g \in C^1(\mathbb{R})$, $c = 1$ and define u by d'Alembert's. Then,

1. $u \in C^2(\mathbb{R} \times [0, \infty))$
2. $u_{tt} - u_{xx} = 0$ in $\mathbb{R} \times [0, \infty)$
3. $\lim_{\substack{(x,t) \rightarrow (x^0,0) \\ t > 0}} u(x,t) = f(x^0)$
4. $\lim_{\substack{(x,t) \rightarrow (x^0,0) \\ t > 0}} u_t(x,t) = g(x^0)$

In (3) and (4) for each point $x^0 \in \mathbb{R}$

The proof follows immediately from the above discussion and is left as an exercise.

Exercise



Exercise 1: CSIR-June-2019

Let u be the solution of (11) where $c = 1$, f, g are in $C^2(\mathbb{R})$ and satisfy the following conditions:

(1) $f(x) = g(x) = 0$ for $x \leq 0$ (2) $0 < f(x) \leq 1$ for $x > 0$

(3) $g(x) > 0$ for $x > 0$ (4) $\int_0^{\infty} g(x) dx < \infty$

Then, which of the following statements are true? Justify your answer

1. $u(x, t) = 0$ for all $x \leq 0$ and $t > 0$
2. u is bounded on $\mathbb{R} \times (0, \infty)$
3. $u(x, t) = 0$ whenever $x + t < 0$
4. $u(x, t) = 0$ for some (x, t) satisfying $x + t > 0$

d'Alembert's Formula in the half-line



Let us consider the following wave equation on the half-line \mathbb{R}_+ . Note $c = 1$ here.

$$\begin{cases} u_{tt} - u_{xx} = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R}_+ \times (0, \infty) \\ u = f & \text{on } \mathbb{R}_+ \times \{t = 0\} \\ u_t = g & \text{on } \mathbb{R}_+ \times \{t = 0\} \\ u = 0 & \text{on } \{x = 0\} \times (0, \infty) \end{cases} \quad (13)$$

where f and g are given, with $f(0) = g(0) = 0$.

d'Alembert's Formula in the half-line



Let us convert (13) by extending u, g, h to all \mathbb{R} by **odd reflection**. That is, we set

$$\tilde{u}(x, t) := \begin{cases} u(x, t) & (x \geq 0, t \geq 0) \\ -u(-x, t) & (x \leq 0, t \geq 0) \end{cases}$$

$$\tilde{f}(x) := \begin{cases} f(x) & (x \geq 0) \\ -f(-x) & (x \leq 0) \end{cases}$$

$$\tilde{g}(x) := \begin{cases} g(x) & (x \geq 0) \\ -g(-x) & (x \leq 0) \end{cases}$$

d'Alembert's Formula in the half-line

Then (13) becomes

$$\begin{cases} \tilde{u}_{tt} - \tilde{u}_{xx} = 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R} \times (0, \infty) \\ \tilde{u} = \tilde{f} & \text{on } \mathbb{R} \times \{t = 0\} \\ \tilde{u}_t = \tilde{g} & \text{on } \mathbb{R} \times \{t = 0\} \end{cases} \quad (14)$$

Hence d'Alembert's formula becomes

$$\tilde{u}(x, t) = \frac{1}{2}[\tilde{f}(x+t) + \tilde{f}(x-t)] + \frac{1}{2} \int_{x-t}^{x+t} \tilde{g}(y) dy \quad (15)$$

d'Alembert's Formula in the half-line



The solution obtained from the **reflection method** for (13) becomes

$$u(x, t) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2}[f(x+t) + f(x-t)] + \frac{1}{2} \int_{x-t}^{x+t} g(y) dy, & \text{if } x \geq t \geq 0 \\ \frac{1}{2}[f(x+t) - f(t-x)] + \frac{1}{2} \int_{-x+t}^{x+t} g(y) dy, & \text{if } 0 \leq x \leq t \end{cases} \quad (16)$$

1. If $g \equiv 0$, we can understand the formula (16) as saying that an initial displacement f splits into two parts. One moving to the right with speed one and another moving to the left with speed one
2. The latter reflects off the point $x = 0$, where the vibrating string is held fixed.

Thanks

Doubts and Suggestions

panch.m@iittp.ac.in

