

Optimal relaxation parameter for the Uzawa Method

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Summary. We consider the Uzawa method to solve the stationary Stokes equations discretized with stable finite elements. An iteration step consists of a velocity update \mathbf{u}^{n+1} involving the (augmented Lagrangian) operator $-\nu\Delta - \rho\nabla\text{div}$ with $\rho \geq 0$, followed by the pressure update $p^{n+1} = p^n - \alpha\nu\text{div } \mathbf{u}^{n+1}$, the so-called Richardson update. We prove that the inf-sup constant β satisfies $\beta \leq 1$ and that, if $\sigma = 1 + \rho\nu^{-1}$, the iteration converges linearly with a contraction factor $\beta^2\alpha\sigma^{-1}(2\sigma - \alpha)$ provided $0 < \alpha < 2\sigma$. This yields the optimal value $\alpha = \sigma$ regardless of β .

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1 Introduction

Given an open bounded polygon Ω in \mathbb{R}^d , with $d \geq 2$, we consider the stationary Stokes equations, namely the simplest model for incompressible viscous flows:

$$(1.1) \quad -\nu\Delta\mathbf{u} + \nabla p = \mathbf{f}, \quad \text{in } \Omega,$$

$$(1.2) \quad \text{div } \mathbf{u} = 0, \quad \text{in } \Omega,$$

with vanishing Dirichlet boundary condition $\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{0}$ on $\partial\Omega$ and pressure mean-value $\int_{\Omega} p = 0$. Here the unknowns are the (vector) velocity field $\mathbf{u} \in \mathbf{H}_0^1(\Omega)$ and the (scalar) pressure $p \in L_0^2(\Omega)$; the forcing function satisfies $\mathbf{f} \in \mathbf{L}^2(\Omega)$ and $\nu = Re^{-1}$ is the reciprocal of the Reynolds number.

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In view of the incompressibility constraint (1.2), the momentum equation (1.1) is equivalent to the *augmented Lagrangian* formulation with $\rho \geq 0$

$$-\nu \Delta \mathbf{u} - \rho \nabla \operatorname{div} \mathbf{u} + \nabla p = \mathbf{f}, \quad \text{in } \Omega.$$

This equivalence is no longer true at the discrete level, where the additional operator $-\rho \nabla \operatorname{div}$ may improve the convergence of iterative methods [3]. We provide a quantitative measure of such improvement in this paper.

The following (infinite-dimensional) Uzawa algorithm to solve the Stokes system is known to converge for appropriate values of the *relaxation parameter* α [2–6].

Algorithm 1 (Uzawa Method) *Given a suitable relaxation parameter $\alpha > 0$ and initial guess p^0 :*

Step 1: Find $\mathbf{u}^{n+1} \in \mathbf{H}_0^1(\Omega)$ as the solution of

$$-\nu \Delta \mathbf{u}^{n+1} - \rho \nabla \operatorname{div} \mathbf{u}^{n+1} + \nabla p^n = \mathbf{f}, \quad \text{in } \Omega;$$

Step 2: Find $p^{n+1} \in L_0^2(\Omega)$ from the Richardson update

$$p^{n+1} = p^n - \alpha \nu \operatorname{div} \mathbf{u}^{n+1}.$$

Convergence of Algorithm 1 for $\rho = 0$ is proved via boundedness and coercivity of the Schur complement operator $S = -\operatorname{div} (-\Delta^{-1}) \nabla$ with sufficiently small $\alpha < 1$ in [2,4]. In [6] Temam shows the convergence range $0 < \alpha < 2$ also for $\rho = 0$, but does not quite prove that Algorithm 1 is a contraction and thus cannot find the optimal value of α . For the case $\rho > 0$, Fortin and Glowinski prove convergence for $0 < \alpha \leq 2\rho/\nu$ using a spectral analysis [3].

The choice of relaxation parameter $\alpha > 0$ is crucial for the convergence of Uzawa method because a small value of α yields a large contraction factor whereas a large value may lead to divergence. It is the purpose of this note to show convergence for all $0 < \alpha < 2(1 + \rho/\nu)$ and that $\alpha = 1 + \rho/\nu$ is an optimal choice. This has been already instrumental in [1] for $\rho = 0$. Our analysis is in the spirit of that in [6] for $\rho = 0$, but it gives rise to more precise bounds.

We consider now a finite element discretization. Let $\mathfrak{T} = \{K\}$ be a shape-regular partition of Ω of local meshsize h into closed elements K ; \mathfrak{T} can be highly graded though. The finite element spaces to be used for approximating the velocity space $\mathbf{H}_0^1(\Omega)$ and pressure space $L_0^2(\Omega)$ are:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{V}_h &:= \{\mathbf{v}_h \in \mathbf{H}_0^1(\Omega) : \mathbf{v}_h|_K \in \mathcal{P}(K), \text{ for all } K \in \mathfrak{T}\}, \\ \mathbb{P}_h &:= \{p_h \in L^2(\Omega) : p_h|_K \in \mathcal{Q}(K), \text{ for all } K \in \mathfrak{T}\}, \end{aligned}$$

where $\mathcal{P}(K)$ and $\mathcal{Q}(K)$ are spaces of polynomials with degree bounded uniformly with respect to $K \in \mathfrak{T}$ [2,4]. These spaces are compatible, namely

they satisfy the following discrete *inf-sup condition*: *There exists a constant $\beta > 0$ such that [2,4]*

$$(1.3) \quad \inf_{p_h \in \mathbb{P}_h} \sup_{\mathbf{v}_h \in \mathbb{V}_h} \frac{\langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h, p_h \rangle}{\|\nabla \mathbf{v}_h\| \|p_h\|} \geq \beta;$$

hereafter $\|\cdot\|$ indicates the L^2 -norm in Ω . Hence, there is a unique solution $(\mathbf{u}_h, p_h) \in \mathbb{V}_h \times \mathbb{P}_h$ to the following discrete Stokes problem [2,4]:

$$(1.4) \quad \begin{aligned} \nu \langle \nabla \mathbf{u}_h, \nabla \mathbf{w}_h \rangle - \langle p_h, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{w}_h \rangle &= \langle \mathbf{f}, \mathbf{w}_h \rangle, & \forall \mathbf{w}_h \in \mathbb{V}_h, \\ \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{u}_h, q_h \rangle &= 0, & \forall q_h \in \mathbb{P}_h. \end{aligned}$$

Proposition 1 (Inf-Sup Constant) *Let β be the inf-sup constant of (1.3). Then we have*

$$(1.5) \quad \beta \leq 1.$$

The discrete Uzawa method, a discrete version of Algorithm 1, is known to be an effective iteration to compute (\mathbf{u}_h, p_h) , and reads as follows [2,4].

Algorithm 2 (Discrete Uzawa Method) *For a suitable $\alpha > 0$ and initial guess $p_h^0 \in \mathbb{P}_h$:*

Step 1: Find $\mathbf{u}_h^{n+1} \in \mathbb{V}_h$ as the solution of

$$(1.6) \quad \begin{aligned} \nu \langle \nabla \mathbf{u}_h^{n+1}, \nabla \mathbf{w}_h \rangle + \rho \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{u}_h^{n+1}, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{w}_h \rangle - \langle p_h^n, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{w}_h \rangle \\ = \langle \mathbf{f}, \mathbf{w}_h \rangle, \quad \forall \mathbf{w}_h \in \mathbb{V}_h; \end{aligned}$$

Step 2: Find $p_h^{n+1} \in \mathbb{P}_h$ from the Richardson update

$$(1.7) \quad \langle p_h^{n+1}, q_h \rangle = \langle p_h^n, q_h \rangle - \alpha \nu \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{u}_h^{n+1}, q_h \rangle.$$

In §§3 and 4, we prove the following sharp decay estimates.

Theorem 1 (Convergence Rate for Pressure) *If $0 < \alpha < 2\sigma$, then Algorithm 2 satisfies*

$$(1.8) \quad \|p_h - p_h^{n+1}\| \leq (1 - \alpha\beta^2\sigma^{-2} (2\sigma - \alpha))^{1/2} \|p_h - p_h^n\|,$$

where $\sigma := 1 + \frac{\rho}{\nu}$. The same estimate is valid for Algorithm 1.

Corollary 1 (Convergence Rate for Velocity) *Both Algorithms 1 and 2 satisfy*

$$(1.9) \quad \|\nabla(\mathbf{u}_h - \mathbf{u}_h^{n+1})\| \leq \nu^{-1} (1 - \alpha\beta^2\sigma^{-2} (2\sigma - \alpha))^{n/2} \|p_h - p_h^0\|.$$

Remark 1.1 (Optimal relaxation Parameter) Consider now the function $f(\alpha) = \left(1 - \frac{\alpha\beta^2}{\sigma^2}(2\sigma - \alpha)\right)$. We see that Algorithm 2 converges *linearly* with contraction factor $0 < f(\alpha) < 1$ provided $0 < \alpha < 2\sigma$. Since the minimum of $f(\alpha)$ is $1 - \beta^2$ at $\alpha = \sigma$, we conclude that the *optimal* value of α is

$$\alpha = 1 + \frac{\rho}{\nu}.$$

We observe that this result is independent of the domain Ω , and valid for both Algorithms 1 and 2, whereas the eigenvalues of the Schur complement operator, the discrete version of $S := \operatorname{div} (\Delta + \rho\nu^{-1}\nabla\operatorname{div})^{-1}\nabla$, depend on Ω . It is plausible that for a given Ω and finite element pair $(\mathbb{V}_h, \mathbb{P}_h)$, a special analysis would yield a better value for α since Uzawa is simply a Richardson iteration for the Schur complement. It is also plausible that for a rectangular domain with high aspect ratio, $\alpha = \sigma$ is the only choice valid for all aspect ratios. This deserves further investigation.

We also point out that (1.9) improves upon [6], where \mathbf{u}^n is shown to converge weakly in $\mathbf{H}_0^1(\Omega)$.

2 Proof of Proposition 1

In this section, we prove a couple of crucial properties of the divergence operator, in particular an upper bound for the inf-sup constant β of (1.3). Since the following known result plays a pivotal role in our subsequent discussion, we present its elementary proof; we refer to [6, p.140].

Lemma 2.1 (Div-Grad Relation) *For all $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{H}_0^1(\Omega)$, we have*

$$(2.1) \quad \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}\| \leq \|\nabla \mathbf{v}\|.$$

Proof Given $\mathbf{v} = (v_i)_{i=1}^d \in \mathbf{H}_0^1(\Omega)$, there exists a sequence $\{\mathbf{v}^n\} \in \mathbf{C}_0^\infty(\Omega)$ such that

$$(2.2) \quad \|\nabla(\mathbf{v}^n - \mathbf{v})\| \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{as } n \rightarrow \infty.$$

Since $\mathbf{v}^n \in \mathbf{C}_0^\infty(\Omega)$, integration by parts implies

$$\begin{aligned} \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}^n\|^2 &= \int_{\Omega} \left(\sum_{i=1}^d \partial_{x_i} v_i^n \right)^2 d\mathbf{x} \\ &= \int_{\Omega} \sum_{i=1}^d \sum_{j=1}^d \partial_{x_i} v_i^n \partial_{x_j} v_j^n d\mathbf{x} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \int_{\Omega} \sum_{i=1}^d \sum_{j=1}^d \partial_{x_i} v_j^n \partial_{x_j} v_i^n d\mathbf{x} \\
 &\leq \int_{\Omega} \sum_{i=1}^d \sum_{j=1}^d (\partial_{x_i} v_j^n)^2 d\mathbf{x} = \|\nabla \mathbf{v}^n\|^2.
 \end{aligned}$$

The assertion (2.1) follows from (2.2) upon passing to the limit $n \rightarrow \infty$. \square

Applying Lemma 2.1, we can find an upper bound of the inf-sup constant β of (1.3).

Proof of Proposition 1 Let $q_h \in \mathbb{P}_h$ be an arbitrary function. Then, the discrete inf-sup condition (1.3) is equivalent to the existence of a function $\mathbf{v}_h \in \mathbb{V}_h$ such that [2, 4]

$$(2.3) \quad \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h, q_h \rangle = \|q_h\|^2 \quad \text{and} \quad \|\nabla \mathbf{v}_h\| \leq \frac{1}{\beta} \|q_h\|.$$

Then, by virtue of (2.3) and Lemma 2.1, we obtain

$$\|q_h\|^2 = \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h, q_h \rangle \leq \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h\| \|q_h\| \leq \|\nabla \mathbf{v}_h\| \|q_h\| \leq \frac{1}{\beta} \|q_h\|^2,$$

which implies the asserted estimate (1.5). \square

3 Proof of Theorem 1: Case $\rho = 0$

In this section we prove Theorem 1 for $\rho = 0$. To this end, we use the following error functions:

$$\mathbf{E}_h^{n+1} = \mathbf{u}_h - \mathbf{u}_h^{n+1}, \quad e_h^{n+1} = p_h - p_h^{n+1}.$$

We proceed in several steps. Upon subtracting (1.6) (with $\rho = 0$) from (1.4), we have

$$(3.1) \quad v \langle \nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}, \nabla \mathbf{w}_h \rangle - \langle e_h^n, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{w}_h \rangle = 0, \quad \forall \mathbf{w}_h \in \mathbb{V}_h.$$

Since \mathbf{u}_h is a discrete divergence free function, (1.7) can be written by

$$(3.2) \quad \langle e_h^{n+1}, q_h \rangle = \langle e_h^n, q_h \rangle - \alpha v \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}, q_h \rangle, \quad \forall q_h \in \mathbb{P}_h.$$

If we choose $\mathbf{w}_h = \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}$, then (3.1) becomes

$$(3.3) \quad v \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 - \langle e_h^n, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1} \rangle = 0.$$

In light of (3.2) and (3.3), we obtain

$$(3.4) \quad \begin{aligned} \nu \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 &= -\frac{1}{\alpha\nu} \langle e_h^n, e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n \rangle \\ &= -\frac{1}{2\alpha\nu} \left(\|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 - \|e_h^n\|^2 - \|e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n\|^2 \right). \end{aligned}$$

Consequently, we arrive at

$$(3.5) \quad 2\alpha\nu^2 \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 = \|e_h^n\|^2 + \|e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n\|^2.$$

The next step is to estimate $\|e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n\|^2$. Choosing $q_h = e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n$ in (3.2) gives

$$\|e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n\|^2 = -\alpha\nu \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}, e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n \rangle \leq \alpha\nu \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\| \|e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n\|,$$

whence

$$(3.6) \quad \|e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n\| \leq \alpha\nu \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\| \leq \alpha\nu \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|.$$

Replacing (3.6) into (3.5) immediately leads to

$$(3.7) \quad \nu^2\alpha(2-\alpha) \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 \leq \|e_h^n\|^2.$$

We finally prove (1.8) for $\rho = 0$. Since $e_h^n \in \mathbb{P}_h$, there exists a function $\mathbf{v}_h \in \mathbb{V}_h$ such that

$$(3.8) \quad \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h, e_h^n \rangle = \|e_h^n\|^2 \quad \text{and} \quad \|\nabla \mathbf{v}_h\| \leq \frac{1}{\beta} \|e_h^n\|,$$

which is equivalent to (1.3) [2,4]. In view of (3.1) and (3.8), we get

$$\begin{aligned} \|e_h^n\|^2 &= \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h, e_h^n \rangle \\ &= \nu \langle \nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}, \nabla \mathbf{v}_h \rangle \\ &\leq \nu \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\| \|\nabla \mathbf{v}_h\| \\ &\leq \frac{\nu}{\beta} \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\| \|e_h^n\|. \end{aligned}$$

Consequently,

$$(3.9) \quad \beta \|e_h^n\| \leq \nu \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|.$$

In light of (3.7) and (3.9), we easily obtain

$$\beta^2\alpha(2-\alpha) \|e_h^n\|^2 + \|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 \leq \|e_h^n\|^2,$$

which implies (1.8) for $\rho = 0$, and thus completes the proof of Theorem 1.

On the other hand, Corollary 1 follows from (3.3) together with Proposition 1 and Theorem 1.

4 Proof of Theorem 1: Case $\rho > 0$

In this section, we prove Theorem 1 for $\rho > 0$. We note that both (3.2) and (3.6) are still valid for $\rho > 0$, because they are solely based on the Richardson update (1.7). Upon subtracting (1.6) (with $\rho > 0$) from (1.4), we have

$$(4.1) \quad \nu \langle \nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}, \nabla \mathbf{w}_h \rangle + \rho \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{w}_h \rangle - \langle e_h^n, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{w}_h \rangle = 0, \quad \forall \mathbf{w}_h \in \mathbb{V}_h.$$

Choosing $\mathbf{w}_h = \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}$ and applying (3.2), (4.1) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \nu \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \rho \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 &= \langle e_h^n, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h \rangle \\ &= -\frac{1}{\alpha \nu} \langle e_h^n, e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n \rangle \\ &= -\frac{1}{2\alpha \nu} \left(\|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 - \|e_h^n\|^2 - \|e_h^{n+1} - e_h^n\|^2 \right), \end{aligned}$$

instead of (3.4). In light of (3.6), we thus obtain

$$(4.2) \quad 2\alpha \nu^2 \left(\|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \frac{\rho}{\nu} \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 - \frac{\alpha}{2} \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 \right) + \|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 \leq \|e_h^n\|^2.$$

Replacing now

$$-\frac{\alpha}{2} \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 = -\frac{\alpha \nu}{2\rho} \left(\|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \frac{\rho}{\nu} \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 \right) + \frac{\alpha \nu}{2\rho} \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2,$$

into (4.2), we end up with

$$(4.3) \quad 2\alpha \nu^2 \left(1 - \frac{\alpha \nu}{2\rho} \right) \left(\|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \frac{\rho}{\nu} \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 \right) + \frac{\alpha^2 \nu^3}{\rho} \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 \leq \|e_h^n\|^2.$$

Using inf-sup property (3.8), we deduce

$$\begin{aligned} \|e_h^n\|^2 &= \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h, e_h^n \rangle \\ &= \nu \langle \nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}, \nabla \mathbf{v}_h \rangle + \rho \langle \operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}, \operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h \rangle \\ &\leq \nu \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\| \|\nabla \mathbf{v}_h\| + \rho \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\| \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h\| \\ &\leq \left(\nu \|\nabla \mathbf{v}_h\|^2 + \rho \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{v}_h\|^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \left(\nu \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \rho \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \\ &\leq \frac{\nu \sqrt{\sigma}}{\beta} \|\nabla e_h^n\| \left(\|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \frac{\rho}{\nu} \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}}, \end{aligned}$$

where we have used (2.1) for $\mathbf{v} = \mathbf{v}_h$ and $\sigma = 1 + \frac{\rho}{\nu}$. Consequently, we infer that

$$\|e_h^n\|^2 \leq \frac{\nu^2 \sigma}{\beta^2} \left(\|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 + \frac{\rho}{\nu} \|\operatorname{div} \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2 \right)$$

and, making use of (2.1) again for $\mathbf{v} = \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}$, that

$$\|e_h^n\|^2 \leq \frac{\nu^2 \sigma^2}{\beta^2} \|\nabla \mathbf{E}_h^{n+1}\|^2.$$

Replacing these two inequalities into (4.3), we obtain

$$\left(\frac{2\alpha\beta^2}{\sigma} \left(1 - \frac{\alpha\nu}{2\rho} \right) + \frac{\alpha^2\beta^2\nu}{\rho\sigma^2} \right) \|e_h^n\|^2 + \|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 \leq \|e_h^n\|^2,$$

or equivalently,

$$\begin{aligned} \|e_h^{n+1}\|^2 &\leq \left(1 - \frac{\alpha\beta^2}{\sigma^2} \left(2\sigma - \frac{\alpha\nu}{\rho} (\sigma - 1) \right) \right) \|e_h^n\|^2 \\ &= \left(1 - \frac{\alpha\beta^2}{\sigma^2} (2\sigma - \alpha) \right) \|e_h^n\|^2. \end{aligned}$$

This is the asserted estimate (1.8). The proof of Theorem 1 for $\rho > 0$ is thus complete. Finally, the proof of Corollary 1 for $\rho > 0$ is identical to the case $\rho = 0$.

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