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Author(s)	Kosaka, Wataru; Oikawa, Shun-ichi; Chan, Poh Kam
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# Numerical Analysis of Quantum-Mechanical Non-uniform $E \times B$ Drift: Non-uniform electric field

Wataru Kosaka <sup>a,\*</sup>, Shun-ichi Oikawa<sup>b</sup> and Poh Kam Chan<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Graduate School of Engineering, Hokkaido University, Sapporo 060-8628, Japan <sup>b</sup> Faculty of Engineering, Hokkaido University, Sapporo 060-8628, Japan

**Abstract.** We have numerically solved the two-dimensional time-dependent Schrödinger equation for a charged particle in the presence of a non-uniform electric field  $\mathbf{E} = E(1 - y/L_E)\mathbf{e}_y$  as well as a non-uniform magnetic field  $\mathbf{B} = B(1 - y/L_B)\mathbf{e}_z$ . It is shown that such a non-uniformity of the electric field does not affect the time rate of the variance, or uncertainty, changes in position and momentum, while that of the magnetic field does.

Kewords: Schrödinger equation, uncertainty, non-uniform magnetic field, non-uniform electric field, quantum mechanical effect, expansion rate, GPU parallel computing

# 1. Introduction

The charged particles drift in the presence of a magnetic field B, the drifts include  $\nabla B$  drift, curvature drift and  $E \times B$  drift if there exist an electric field E. The two-dimensional time-dependent Schrödinger equation have been already solved for a charged particle in the presence of a non-uniform magnetic field and a uniform electric field, in which it was shown that the variance, or the uncertainty, in position  $\sigma_r^2(t)$  grows with time [1–5]. For the typical fusion plasma with a temperature  $T \sim 10$  keV and a number density of  $n \sim 10^{20}$  m<sup>-3</sup>, the standard deviation  $\sigma_r(t)$  would reach the interparticle separation  $n^{-1/3}$  in a time interval of the order of  $10^{-4}$  sec. After this time the wavefunctions of neighboring particles would overlap, as a result the conventional classical analysis may lose its validity [1]. In Ref. [1] mentioned above, the uniform electric field have been assumed. In this paper, quantum mechanical effects of a non-uniform electric field and a non-uniform magnetic field will be studied. In section 2, methods of numerical analysis of time-dependent Schrödinger equation is briefly described. In section 3, time evolution of the variances and their dependence on physical parameters, e.g.  $m, q, v_0, B, L_B, E$ , and  $L_E$  are shown. Section 4 summarizes the study.

## 2. Schödinger equation

The unsteady Schrödinger equation for wavefunction  $\psi(\mathbf{r}, t)$ , at a position  $\mathbf{r}$  and a time t, is given by

<sup>\*</sup>Corresponding author: Wataru Kosaka, Graduate School of Engineering, Hokkaido University, Sapporo 060-8628, Japan, E-mail: wataru\_k@fusion.qe.eng.hokudai.ac.jp

W. Kosaka et al. /Numerical Analysis of Quantum-Mechanical Non-uniform  $E \times B$  Drift /

$$i\hbar\frac{\partial\psi}{\partial t} = \left[\frac{1}{2m}\left(-i\hbar\nabla - qA\right)^2 + qV\right]\psi,\tag{1}$$

where V = V(r) and A = A(r) stand for the scalar and vector potentials, *m* and *q* the mass and electric charge of the particle, and  $i \equiv \sqrt{-1}$  the imaginary unit,  $\hbar$  the reduced Planck constant.

#### 2.1. Numerical analysis

In the Cartesian coordinate system (x, y, z), we assume the magnetic field  $B \parallel e_z$  and the electric field  $E \perp e_z$ , where  $e_z$  is z-direction unit vector. In this case, the wavefunction  $\psi(x, y, z, t)$  is decomposed into  $\psi(x, y, t)$  which corresponds to cyclotron motion in x-y plane and  $\psi(z, t)$  which corresponds to free particle motion in z-direction.

We will solve Eq. (1) with an appropriate initial condition in x-y plane, using the finite difference method (FDM) in space with the Crank-Nicolson scheme [1–5].

For the Crank-Nicolson scheme with the central difference method in space, partial differential equation Eq. (1) is reduced to the following matrix equation,

$$\left(I - \frac{\Delta t}{2i\hbar}H\right)\left\{\psi^{n+1}\right\} = \left(I + \frac{\Delta t}{2i\hbar}H\right)\left\{\psi^{n}\right\}.$$
(2)

Here,  $\{\psi^n\}$  stands for the discretized wavefunction, the superscript *n* represents the time-label, I and H are the unit matrix and the numerical Hamiltonian matrix [1–5]. Assuming the Coulomb gauge  $\nabla \cdot \mathbf{A} = 0$ , the numerical Hamiltonian matrix  $\mathbf{H} = \{H_{i,j}\}$  is written as follows,

$$H_{i,j} = \frac{1}{2m} \left[ \nabla_{i,j}^2 + 2i\hbar q \boldsymbol{A}_{i,j} \cdot \nabla_{i,j} + \left( q \boldsymbol{A}_{i,j} \right)^2 \right] + q V_{i,j},$$
(3)

where  $A_{i,j}$  and  $\nabla_{i,j}$  represent the discretized operators, as

$$\nabla_{i,j}^2 \psi = \frac{\psi_{i-1,j} - 2\psi_{i,j} + \psi_{i+1,j}}{\Delta x^2} + \frac{\psi_{i,j-1} - 2\psi_{i,j} + \psi_{i,j+1}}{\Delta y^2},\tag{4}$$

and the subscripts *i* and *j* represent *x*- and *y*- node numbers. Equations (2) and (3) are quadratic in accuracy over both the time step  $\Delta t$  and the grid size  $\Delta x$  and  $\Delta y$ .

The time integrator U is derived from Eq. (2) as,

$$\mathsf{U} \equiv \left(\mathsf{I} - \frac{\Delta t}{2\mathrm{i}\hbar}\mathsf{H}\right)^{-1} \left(\mathsf{I} + \frac{\Delta t}{2\mathrm{i}\hbar}\mathsf{H}\right). \tag{5}$$

It should be noted that the time integrator is not only unconditionally stable but also norm-conserving for discretized wavefunction { $\psi$ }. The latter leads to the strict particle conservation, irrespective of  $\Delta t$ ,  $\Delta x$  and  $\Delta y$ , since the matrix H is Hermitian, so that the matrix U is unitary; the Euclidean norm  $|| \{\psi\} ||_2 =$  const with time [1].

We will also adopt the successive over relaxation (SOR) scheme for time integration in Eq. (2).

$$\left\{\psi^{n+1}\right\}^{(k+1)} = \left\{\psi^{n+1}\right\}^{(k)} + \omega_{\text{SOR}}\left\{R\right\}^{(k)},\tag{6}$$

where

W. Kosaka et al. /Numerical Analysis of Quantum-Mechanical Non-uniform  $E \times B$  Drift /

$$\{R\} = \frac{1}{\alpha} \left[ \{\phi^n\} - \left( \mathsf{I} - \frac{\Delta t}{2\mathrm{i}\hbar} \mathsf{H} \right) \{\psi^{n+1}\} \right],\tag{7}$$

$$\{\phi^n\} = \left(\mathbf{I} + \frac{\Delta t}{2\mathrm{i}\hbar}\mathbf{H}\right)\{\psi^n\},\tag{8}$$

{*R*} is the residual in Eq. (2),  $\alpha$  stands for the diagonal element in LHS of Eq. (2), superscript (*k*) represents the number of iterations,  $\omega_{SOR}$  is the relaxation factor and  $\omega_{SOR} = 1.01$  is adopted in this study. For the convergence criterion, we have used the following,

$$\frac{1}{N_x N_y} \sum_{i,j=1}^{N_x, N_y} \left| R_{i,j} \right|^2 \le \epsilon_{\text{SOR}},\tag{9}$$

where  $N_x$  and  $N_y$  represent the number of nodes in x- and y-direction, and  $\epsilon_{SOR} = 5 \times 10^{-31}$  in this study.

Since Eq. (6) can be executed in parallel, we have used a graphics processing unit (GPU) [9] for this purpose.

## 3. Numerical results

In the numerical results to be presented in the following, physical parameters are normalized as; mass of the particle  $m = m_p = 1.6722 \times 10^{-27}$  kg, charge  $q = e = 1.602 \times 10^{-19}$  C, velocity v = 10 ms<sup>-1</sup> and magnetic field B = 10 T [1]. Thus, normalization constants of length  $\rho$ , time t and electric field E are  $\rho = m_p v/eB = 1.0438 \times 10^{-8}$  m,  $t = m_p/eB = 1.0438 \times 10^{-9}$  s and E = vB = 100 Vm<sup>-1</sup>. The Schrödinger equation is solved in the presence of a scalar potential of  $qV = -qEy(1 - y/2L_E)$  and a vector potential of  $qA = -qBy(1 - y/2L_B)e_y$ , where  $L_E$  and  $L_B$  stand for a gradient scale length of a electric field and magnetic field.

When the corresponding classical particle has a canonical momentum  $p_0 = mv_0 + qA(r_0)$ , where  $v_0$  is the initial velocity at a position  $r = r_0$ , initially at a time t = 0, the initial condition for the wavefunction  $\psi(r, 0)$  can be given [6,7] by

$$\psi(\mathbf{r},0) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi}\sigma_B} \exp\left[-\frac{(\mathbf{r}-\mathbf{r}_0)^2}{2\sigma_B^2} + \mathbf{i}\mathbf{k}_0 \cdot \mathbf{r}\right],\tag{10}$$

where  $k_0 = p_0/\hbar$  is the initial wavenumber vector, and  $\sigma_B \equiv \sqrt{\hbar/qB}$  is known as the magnetic length in quantum mechanics [8].

## 3.1. Numerical errors

There are three invariants of motion, the energy  $\mathcal{E} = \langle \hat{H} \rangle$ , the canonical momentum in x-direction  $P_x = \langle -i\hbar\partial/\partial x \rangle = \langle m\hat{v}_x - q\hat{A}_x \rangle$ , since the potentials V and A do not depend on x, as well as particle conservation  $\int_{\Sigma} |\psi|^2 dS = 1$ . Here,  $\langle \hat{f} \rangle$  stands for the expectation value of an operator  $\hat{f}$ , i.e.  $\langle \hat{f} \rangle = \int_{\Sigma} \psi^* \hat{f} \psi dS$ . The absolute numerical errors in these invariants are quite small as shown Fig. 1.

3



Fig. 1. Absolute errors for the invariants of a particle, energy and x-component of the canonical momentum for q = m = B = 1,  $v_0 = 5$ ,  $E = 10^{-3}$  and  $L_E = L_B = 10^{-4}$ . Their initial values are 1 (exact), ~5 and ~13.

## 3.2. Time evolution of variances

The time dependent variances in position  $\sigma_r^2(t)$  and mechanical momentum  $\sigma_{mv}^2(t)$  oscillate with each gyration period, such as  $2\pi/\omega_c$  and  $\pi/\omega_c$ , where  $\omega_c$  is the cyclotron frequency, as shown Fig. 2. In both uniform and non-uniform conditions, the variances slightly grow with time. Since the exact variances should not grow with time in the presence of a uniform electromagnetic field, these time evolution  $\sigma_{non-uniform}^2(t)$  are due purely to numerical errors. On the other hand, the time evolution  $\sigma_{uniform}^2(t)$  in the presence of the non-uniform electromagnetic field consists of physical increment and about the same numerical errors as the case of the uniform field. Thus, let us define the increment of variances,  $\Delta\sigma^2(t)$ , between  $\sigma_{non-uniform}^2(t)$  and  $\sigma_{uniform}^2(t)$ , as [1,2]

$$\Delta \sigma^2(t) = \sigma_{\text{non-uniform}}^2(t) - \sigma_{\text{uniform}}^2(t).$$
(11)

The increment  $\Delta \sigma^2(t)$  shows the physical time evolution of variances, as shown in Fig. 3. Also depicted in the figure is a fitting line, which represents the time averaged evolution of variance. Let us also define the expansion rate in position  $d\sigma_r^2/dt$  and mechanical momentum  $d\sigma_{mv}^2/dt$ , using the fitting lines' gradient.

#### 3.3. Rate of changes in variances

For various combinations of physical parameters, such as m, q,  $v_0$ , E, B,  $L_B$  and  $L_E$ , similar analyses to that in the preceding section give us the relationship between the expansion rate of variances in position  $d\sigma_r^2(t)/dt$  as a function of  $\hbar v_0/qBL_B$ , as shown in the left panel of Fig. 4, and in mechanical momentum  $d\sigma_{mv}^2(t)/dt$  as a function of  $\hbar qBv_0/L_B$  in the right panel of Fig. 4. Also depicted are the fitting lines. It is noted that the variances clearly on the respective fitting lines of

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\sigma_r^2}{\mathrm{d}t} = (2.00 \pm 0.03) \,\frac{\hbar}{qB} \frac{v_0}{L_B},\tag{12}$$

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}\sigma_{mv}^2}{\mathrm{d}t} = (1.030 \pm 0.005)\,\hbar q B \frac{v_0}{L_B},\tag{13}$$



Fig. 2. Time evolution of variance in position  $\sigma_r^2(t) = \langle \mathbf{r}^2 \rangle - \langle \mathbf{r} \rangle^2$  (left) and in mechanical momentum  $\sigma_{mv}^2(t) = \langle (mv)^2 \rangle - \langle mv \rangle^2$  (right), for initial velocity  $v_0 = 5$ , charge q = 1, mass m = 1, electric field  $E = 10^{-3}$  with  $L_E = 10^{-4}$ , magnetic field B = 1, thus  $\omega_c = 1$ , with  $L_B = 10^{-4}$  or  $\infty$ .



Fig. 3. Time evolution of increment of variance in position  $\Delta \sigma_r^2(t)$  (left), and mechanical momentum  $\Delta \sigma_{mv}^2(t)$  (right). Ave.  $\Delta \sigma_r^2(t)$  and Ave.  $\Delta \sigma_{mv}^2(t)$  stand for the time average over the cyclotron period, for the case presented in Fig. 2.

both of which do not depend on the particle mass *m*, the magnitude of electric field *E* nor the gradient scale length of electric field  $L_E$ . Therefore, it is shown that the non-uniform electric field  $E = E(1 - y/L_E)e_y$  does not affect the expansion rates while the non-uniform magnetic field  $B = B(1 - y/L_B)e_z$  does.

Let us apply the expansion rate to the typical fusion plasma with a temperature T = 10 keV, number density  $n = 10^{20} \text{ m}^{-3}$ , a magnetic field B = 5 T and a gradient scale length of magnetic field  $L_B = 3 \text{ m}$ , which is the major axis of a torus. When we take a proton for the charged particle and the thermal velocity  $v_{\text{th}} \sim 1.352 \times 10^6 \text{ m/s}$  for  $v_0$  in Eq. (13), the standard deviation  $\sigma_r^2(t)$  of the proton reaches the interparticle separation  $n^{-1/3}$  in a time interval 0.38 msec. In contrast, the ion-ion collision time is about 20 msec [10]. Thus, overlapping of wavefunctions of neighboring protons would occur before the conventional collision time.



Fig. 4. Expansion rate of variance in position vs.  $\hbar v_0/qBL_B$  (left) and in mechanical momentum vs.  $\hbar qBv_0/L_B$  (right). Each point shape, such as  $\diamond$  and  $\Box$ , corresponds to the same gradient scale length of electric field  $L_E$ .

#### 4. Summary

We have solved the two-dimensional time-dependent Schödinger equation for a charged particle in the presence of a non-uniform electric field  $\mathbf{B} = B(1 - y/L_B)\mathbf{e}_z$  and magnetic field  $\mathbf{E} = E(1 - y/L_E)\mathbf{e}_y$ . It is shown that the particle mass and the electric field do not affect the expansion rate as long as the electric field has the uniform gradient.

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