EXERCISES

1. Verify the linearity and nonlinearity of the eight examples of PDEs given in the text, by checking whether or not equations (3) are valid.
2. Which of the following operators are linear?
   (a) $\mathscr{L}u = u_x + xu_y$
   (b) $\mathscr{L}u = u_x + uu_y$
   (c) $\mathscr{L}u = u_x + u_y^2$
   (d) $\mathscr{L}u = u_x + u_y + 1$
   (e) $\mathscr{L}u = \sqrt{1+x^2}\,(\cos y)u_x + u_{yxy} - [\arctan(x/y)]u$
3. For each of the following equations, state the order and whether it is nonlinear, linear inhomogeneous, or linear homogeneous; provide reasons.
   (a) $u_t - u_{xx} + 1 = 0$
   (b) $u_t - u_{xx} + xu = 0$
   (c) $u_t - u_{xxt} + uu_x = 0$
   (d) $u_{tt} - u_{xx} + x^2 = 0$
   (e) $iu_t - u_{xx} + u/x = 0$
   (f) $u_x(1 + u_x^2)^{-1/2} + u_y(1 + u_y^2)^{-1/2} = 0$
   (g) $u_x + e^y u_y = 0$
   (h) $u_t + u_{xxxx} + \sqrt{1+u} = 0$
4. Show that the difference of two solutions of an inhomogeneous linear equation $\mathscr{L}u = g$ with the same g is a solution of the homogeneous equation $\mathscr{L}u = 0$.
5. Which of the following collections of 3-vectors $[a, b, c]$ are vector spaces? Provide reasons.
   (a) The vectors with $b = 0$.
   (b) The vectors with $b = 1$.
   (c) The vectors with $ab = 0$.
   (d) All the linear combinations of the two vectors $[1, 1, 0]$ and $[2, 0, 1]$.
   (e) All the vectors such that $c - a = 2b$.
6. Are the three vectors $[1, 2, 3]$, $[-2, 0, 1]$, and $[1, 10, 17]$ linearly dependent or independent? Do they span all vectors or not?
7. Are the functions $1 + x$, $1 - x$, and $1 + x + x^2$ linearly dependent or independent? Why?
8. Find a vector that, together with the vectors $[1, 1, 1]$ and $[1, 2, 1]$, forms a basis of $\mathbb{R}^3$.
9. Show that the functions $(c_1 + c_2 \sin^2 x + c_3 \cos^2 x)$ form a vector space. Find a basis of it. What is its dimension?
10. Show that the solutions of the differential equation $u''' - 3u'' + 4u = 0$ form a vector space. Find a basis of it.
11. Verify that $u(x, y) = f(x)g(y)$ is a solution of the PDE $uu_{xy} = u_x u_y$ for all pairs of (differentiable) functions f and g of one variable.

12. Verify by direct substitution that

$$u_n(x, y) = \sin nx \sinh ny$$

is a solution of $u_{xx} + u_{yy} = 0$ for every $n > 0$.

1.2 FIRST-ORDER LINEAR EQUATIONS

We begin our study of PDEs by solving some simple ones. The solution is quite geometric in spirit.

The simplest possible PDE is $\partial u/\partial x = 0$ [where $u = u(x, y)$]. Its general solution is $u = f(y)$, where f is any function of *one* variable. For instance, $u = y^2 - y$ and $u = e^y \cos y$ are two solutions. Because the solutions don't depend on x, they are constant on the lines $y =$ constant in the xy plane.

THE CONSTANT COEFFICIENT EQUATION

Let us solve

$$\boxed{au_x + bu_y = 0,} \tag{1}$$

where a and b are constants not both zero.

Geometric Method The quantity $au_x + bu_y$ is the directional derivative of u in the direction of the vector $\mathbf{V} = (a, b) = a\mathbf{i} + b\mathbf{j}$. It must always be zero. This means that $u(x, y)$ must be constant in the direction of $\mathbf{V}$. The vector $(b, -a)$ is orthogonal to $\mathbf{V}$. The lines parallel to $\mathbf{V}$ (see Figure 1) have the equations $bx - ay =$ constant. (They are called the *characteristic lines*.) The solution is constant on each such line. Therefore, $u(x, y)$ depends on $bx - ay$ only. Thus the solution is

$$\boxed{u(x, y) = f(bx - ay),} \tag{2}$$

where f is any function of one variable. Let's explain this conclusion more explicitly. On the line $bx - ay = c$, the solution u has a constant value. Call

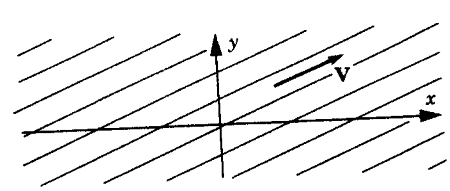

Figure 1

THE VARIABLE COEFFICIENT EQUATION

The equation

$$\boxed{u_x + yu_y = 0} \tag{4}$$

is linear and homogeneous but has a variable coefficient (y). We shall illustrate for equation (4) how to use the geometric method somewhat like Example 1.

The PDE (4) itself asserts that *the directional derivative in the direction of the vector* $(1, y)$ *is zero*. The curves in the xy plane with $(1, y)$ as tangent vectors have slopes y (see Figure 3). Their equations are

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \frac{y}{1} \tag{5}$$

This ODE has the solutions

$$y = Ce^x. \tag{6}$$

These curves are called the *characteristic curves* of the PDE (4). As C is changed, the curves fill out the xy plane perfectly without intersecting. On each of the curves $u(x, y)$ is a constant because

$$\frac{d}{dx}u(x, Ce^x) = \frac{\partial u}{\partial x} + Ce^x\frac{\partial u}{\partial y} = u_x + yu_y = 0.$$

Thus $u(x, Ce^x) = u(0, Ce^0) = u(0, C)$ is independent of x. Putting $y = Ce^x$ and $C = e^{-x}y$, we have

$$u(x, y) = u(0,\ e^{-x}y).$$

It follows that

$$\boxed{u(x, y) = f(e^{-x}y)} \tag{7}$$

is the *general solution* of this PDE, where again f is an arbitrary function of only a single variable. This is easily checked by differentiation using the chain rule (see Exercise 4). Geometrically, the "picture" of the solution $u(x, y)$ is that it is *constant on each characteristic curve* in Figure 3.

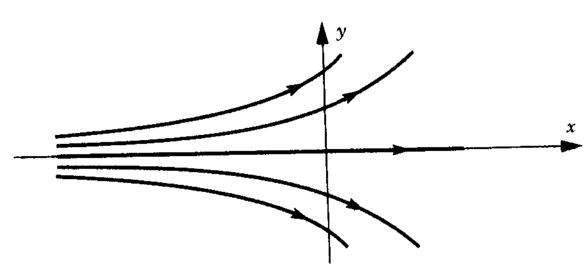

Figure 3

Example 2.

Find the solution of (4) that satisfies the auxiliary condition $u(0, y) = y^3$. Indeed, putting $x = 0$ in (7), we get $y^3 = f(e^{-0}y)$, so that $f(y) = y^3$. Therefore, $u(x, y) = (e^{-x}y)^3 = e^{-3x}y^3$. □

Example 3.

Solve the PDE

$$\boxed{u_x + 2xy^2u_y = 0.} \tag{8}$$

The characteristic curves satisfy the ODE $dy/dx = 2xy^2/1 = 2xy^2$. To solve the ODE, we separate variables: $dy/y^2 = 2x\,dx$; hence $-1/y = x^2 - C$, so that

$$y = (C - x^2)^{-1}. \tag{9}$$

These curves are the characteristics. Again, $u(x, y)$ is a constant on each such curve. (Check it by writing it out.) So $u(x, y) = f(C)$, where f is an arbitrary function. Therefore, the general solution of (8) is obtained by solving (9) for C. That is,

$$\boxed{u(x, y) = f\left(x^2 + \frac{1}{y}\right).} \tag{10}$$

Again this is easily checked by differentiation, using the chain rule: $u_x = 2x \cdot f'(x^2 + 1/y)$ and $u_y = -(1/y^2) \cdot f'(x^2 + 1/y)$, whence $u_x + 2xy^2u_y = 0$. □

In summary, the geometric method works nicely for any PDE of the form $a(x, y)u_x + b(x, y)u_y = 0$. It reduces the solution of the PDE to the solution of the ODE $dy/dx = b(x, y)/a(x, y)$. If the ODE can be solved, so can the PDE. Every solution of the PDE is constant on the solution curves of the ODE.

Moral Solutions of PDEs generally depend on arbitrary functions (instead of arbitrary constants). You need an auxiliary condition if you want to determine a unique solution. Such conditions are usually called *initial* or *boundary* conditions. We shall encounter these conditions throughout the book.

EXERCISES

1. Solve the first-order equation $2u_t + 3u_x = 0$ with the auxiliary condition $u = \sin x$ when $t = 0$.
2. Solve the equation $3u_y + u_{xy} = 0$. (*Hint*: Let $v = u_y$.)

3. Solve the equation $(1 + x^2)u_x + u_y = 0$. Sketch some of the characteristic curves.
4. Check that (7) indeed solves (4).
5. Solve the equation $xu_x + yu_y = 0$.
6. Solve the equation $\sqrt{1 - x^2}u_x + u_y = 0$ with the condition $u(0, y) = y$.
7. (a) Solve the equation $yu_x + xu_y = 0$ with $u(0, y) = e^{-y^2}$.
   (b) In which region of the xy plane is the solution uniquely determined?
8. Solve $au_x + bu_y + cu = 0$.
9. Solve the equation $u_x + u_y = 1$.
10. Solve $u_x + u_y + u = e^{x+2y}$ with $u(x, 0) = 0$.
11. Solve $au_x + bu_y = f(x, y)$, where $f(x, y)$ is a given function. If $a \neq 0$, write the solution in the form

$$u(x, y) = (a^2 + b^2)^{-1/2} \int_L f\, ds + g(bx - ay),$$

where g is an arbitrary function of one variable, L is the characteristic line segment from the y axis to the point (x, y), and the integral is a line integral. (*Hint:* Use the coordinate method.)
12. Show that the new coordinate axes defined by (3) are orthogonal.
13. Use the coordinate method to solve the equation

$$u_x + 2u_y + (2x - y)u = 2x^2 + 3xy - 2y^2.$$

1.3 FLOWS, VIBRATIONS, AND DIFFUSIONS

The subject of PDEs was practically a branch of physics until the twentieth century. In this section we present a series of examples of PDEs as they occur in physics. They provide the basic motivation for all the PDE problems we study in the rest of the book. We shall see that most often in physical problems the independent variables are those of space x, y, z, and time t.

Example 1. Simple Transport

Consider a fluid, water, say, flowing at a constant rate c along a horizontal pipe of fixed cross section in the positive x direction. A substance, say a pollutant, is suspended in the water. Let $u(x, t)$ be its concentration in grams/centimeter at time t. Then

$$\boxed{u_t + cu_x = 0.} \qquad (1)$$

(That is, the rate of change u_t of concentration is proportional to the gradient u_x. Diffusion is assumed to be negligible.) Solving this equation as in Section 1.2, we find that the concentration is a function of $(x - ct)$