

**STOKES' FIRST PROBLEM  
FOR LINEAR VISCOELASTIC FLUIDS  
WITH FINITE MEMORY**

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## Abstract

We consider Stokes' first problem for a viscoelastic fluid. The memory of the fluid is truncated to a finite time interval, and discontinuities in the stress relaxation modulus or its derivatives are allowed at the point of truncation. We investigate secondary waves which are generated by the interaction of these singularities in the memory with earlier waves.

## 1. Introduction

The memory of viscoelastic materials is usually modelled as infinite, e.g. the memory function is assumed to be a linear combination of exponentials. For purposes of approximation, however, one may want to truncate the memory at a finite time  $T$ . Depending on how such a truncation is carried out, discontinuities in the stress relaxation modulus or in its higher derivatives are introduced. In wave propagation problems, these discontinuities will generate secondary waves; any discontinuous wavefront will produce an "echo" after a time interval of length  $T$  has elapsed. In the present note, we discuss the nature of such echo waves in Stokes' first problem.

We consider a viscoelastic fluid filling the half-space  $x > 0$ . The fluid is at rest for  $t \leq 0$ . For  $t > 0$ , the boundary of the half space moves with constant unit velocity. For simplicity, we set the fluid density equal to 1. With  $u$  denoting the velocity and  $G$  the stress relaxation modulus, the equations governing the problem are as follows:

$$u_t(x, t) = \int_{-\infty}^t G(t-s)u_{xx}(x, s) ds; \quad x > 0, \quad t > 0,$$
$$u(x, t) = 0, \quad x > 0, \quad t \leq 0; \quad u(0, t) = 1, \quad t > 0. \quad (1)$$

We are interested in the situation where  $G$  has a finite interval of support; we assume that  $G(\tau) = 0$  for  $\tau > T$ , and that  $G(\tau)$  is a  $C^\infty$ -function on the interval  $[0, T]$ , but we allow for a jump in  $G$  or its derivatives at  $\tau = T$ . We shall see that a jump in  $G$  itself leads to pathological behavior; subsequent echo waves have singularities of increasing strength and the solution is physically meaningless. We discuss this situation in Section 2. For the sake of simplicity, we shall limit the discussion to the case where  $G$  is a step function.

In Section 3, we discuss the case where only derivatives of  $G$  are discontinuous. If the discontinuity is in the first derivative, we find an infinite sequence of jumps in  $u$ . If the discontinuity is in higher derivatives of  $G$ , the strength of the echo waves is progressively weakening.

## 2. A step relaxation function

In this section, we shall consider the relaxation function

$$G(\tau) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{for } 0 \leq \tau \leq T, \\ 0, & \text{for } \tau > T. \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

With this relaxation function, equation (1) yields, after differentiation with respect to time,

$$u_{tt}(x, t) = u_{xx}(x, t) - u_{xx}(x, t - T). \quad (3)$$

As long as the point  $(x, t - T)$  lies inside the region where  $u$  vanishes, we simply have the wave equation, which, under the boundary conditions given in (1), has the solution

$$u(x, t) = H(t - x). \quad (4)$$

Here  $H$  denotes the Heaviside function, which equals 1 for positive argument and 0 for negative argument. It follows that (4) is the solution of (3) for  $t < x + T$ . However, when  $t$  reaches  $x + T$ , the term  $u_{xx}(x, t - T)$  involves the second derivative of the Heaviside function, which is equal to the first derivative of the Dirac delta function. That is, for  $t < x + 2T$  equation (3) reduces to

$$u_{tt} = u_{xx} - \delta'(t - T - x), \quad (5)$$

which can be shown to have the solution

$$u(x, t) = H(t - x) - \frac{t - T + x}{4} \delta(t - T - x). \quad (6)$$

Note that (6) satisfies the boundary condition  $u(0, t) = 1$ , even at  $t = T$ . Proceeding in the same fashion, we find the equation

$$u_{tt} = u_{xx} - \delta'(t - T - x) - \frac{1}{2} \delta'(t - 2T - x) + \frac{t - 2T + x}{4} \delta''(t - 2T - x) \quad (7)$$

for  $t < x + 3T$ , which yields the solution

$$u(x, t) = H(t - x) - \frac{t - T + x}{4} \delta(t - T - x) - \frac{t - 2T + x}{8} \delta(t - 2T - x) + \frac{(t - 2T + x)^2}{32} \delta'(t - 2T - x). \quad (8)$$

We can continue the calculation and get an explicit expression for  $u$  on any time interval. The singularities get progressively worse; we have a jump at  $t = x$ , a delta function at  $t = x + T$ , a derivative of a delta function at  $t = x + 2T$ , etc. Clearly, this solution is not physically reasonable. Indeed, a sufficient condition for stability of the rest state of viscoelastic fluids is that  $G$  is positive, monotone decreasing and convex [2]. A function which jumps from a positive value to zero at a finite time is not convex. The preceding calculation should be viewed as a dramatic example of an instability. In fact, it is an example of ill-posedness; since arbitrarily high derivatives of the delta function occur, the solution does not remain within any Sobolev class.

### 3. Relaxation functions with discontinuities in higher derivatives

We shall deduce the singularities of  $u$  from the asymptotic behavior of its Laplace transform (cf. e.g. [1]). Let  $\hat{u}(x, \lambda)$  denote the Laplace transform of  $u$ :

$$\hat{u}(x, \lambda) = \int_0^{\infty} e^{-\lambda t} u(x, t) dt. \quad (9)$$

Equation (1) becomes

$$\lambda \hat{u}(x, \lambda) = \hat{G}(\lambda) \hat{u}_{xx}(x, \lambda), \quad \hat{u}(0, \lambda) = \frac{1}{\lambda}, \quad (10)$$

which has the solution

$$\hat{u}(x, \lambda) = \frac{1}{\lambda} \exp\left(-x \sqrt{\frac{\lambda}{\hat{G}(\lambda)}}\right). \quad (11)$$

The solution  $u$  is given by the inverse transform

$$u(x, t) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{\gamma-i\infty}^{\gamma+i\infty} e^{\lambda t} \hat{u}(x, \lambda) d\lambda, \quad (12)$$

where  $\gamma$  is any positive real number.

We assume that  $G$  is given by a smooth ( $C^\infty$ ) function on the interval  $[0, T]$ , that  $G(T) = 0$ , and  $G(t) = 0$  for  $t > T$ . For large  $\lambda$ , we use repeated integration by parts to expand  $\hat{G}(\lambda)$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{G}(\lambda) &= \int_0^T e^{-\lambda t} G(t) dt = \frac{1}{\lambda} G(0) + \frac{1}{\lambda} \int_0^T e^{-\lambda t} G'(t) dt \\ &= \frac{1}{\lambda} G(0) + \frac{1}{\lambda^2} (G'(0) - G'(T)e^{-\lambda T}) + \dots + \frac{1}{\lambda^{n+1}} (G^{(n)}(0) - G^{(n)}(T)e^{-\lambda T}) + O(|\lambda|^{-(n+2)}). \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

By inserting this into (11), we obtain

$$\hat{u}(x, \lambda) = \frac{1}{\lambda} \exp\left(\frac{-\lambda x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) \exp\left(\frac{G'(0)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right) \exp\left(-\frac{G'(T)e^{-\lambda T}x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right) + O(|\lambda|^{-2}). \quad (14)$$

Terms of order  $|\lambda|^{-2}$  lead to an absolutely convergent integral in (12) and hence to a continuous contribution to  $u$ . Any jump discontinuities in  $u$  are hence determined by the terms included in (14). We analyze (14) further by expanding the last exponential:

$$\exp\left(-\frac{G'(T)e^{-\lambda T}x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!} \left(-\frac{G'(T)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right)^n e^{-n\lambda T}. \quad (15)$$

Hence we find

$$\hat{u}(x, \lambda) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{\lambda} \frac{1}{n!} \left( -\frac{G'(T)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}} \right)^n \exp\left(\frac{-\lambda x}{\sqrt{G(0)}} - n\lambda T\right) \exp\left(\frac{G'(0)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right) + O(|\lambda|^{-2}). \quad (16)$$

Carrying out the inverse Laplace transform, we find

$$u(x, t) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!} \left( -\frac{G'(T)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}} \right)^n \exp\left(\frac{G'(0)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right) H\left(t - nT - \frac{x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) + \dots, \quad (17)$$

where the dots indicate a remainder term given by a continuous function. Hence  $u$  has a jump across  $t = nT + x/\sqrt{G(0)}$  with amplitude

$$\frac{1}{n!} \left( -\frac{G'(T)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}} \right)^n \exp\left(\frac{G'(0)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right). \quad (18)$$

If  $G'(T) = 0$ , then the only jump discontinuity of  $u$  is at  $t = x/\sqrt{G(0)}$ . Only higher derivatives of  $u$  have jumps at later times. The jumps in these higher derivatives can be computed by carrying out the expansion of  $\hat{u}(x, \lambda)$  to higher orders. If  $G(T) = G'(T) = 0$ , but  $G''(T) \neq 0$ , we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{u}(x, \lambda) = \exp\left(-\frac{\lambda x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) \exp\left(\frac{G'(0)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right) & \left( \frac{1}{\lambda} - \frac{3G'(0)^2 x}{8G(0)^{5/2} \lambda^2} + \frac{G''(0)x}{2G(0)^{3/2} \lambda^2} \right. \\ & \left. - \frac{G''(T)e^{-\lambda T} x}{G(0)^{3/2} \lambda^2} + O(|\lambda|^{-3}) \right). \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

We carry out the Laplace transform inversion, and obtain

$$\begin{aligned} u(x, t) = \exp\left(\frac{G'(0)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}}\right) & \left[ H\left(t - \frac{x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) - \frac{3G'(0)^2 x}{8G(0)^{5/2}} \left(t - \frac{x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) H\left(t - \frac{x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) \right. \\ & \left. + \frac{G''(0)x}{2G(0)^{3/2}} \left(t - \frac{x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) H\left(t - \frac{x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) - \frac{G''(T)x}{G(0)^{3/2}} \left(t - T - \frac{x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) H\left(t - T - \frac{x}{\sqrt{G(0)}}\right) \right] + \dots, \end{aligned} \quad (20)$$

where the dots indicate a remainder term which is continuously differentiable. We can see that the derivative of  $u$  rather than  $u$  itself jumps across  $t = T + x/\sqrt{G(0)}$ . By carrying the expansion further, it can be seen that across  $t = nT + x/\sqrt{G(0)}$  there is a jump in the  $n$ th derivative of  $u$ .

If  $G(T) = G'(T) = \dots = G^{(m)}(T) = 0$ , but  $G^{(m+1)}(T) \neq 0$ , a similar analysis shows that the  $nm$ th derivative of  $u$  has a jump across  $t = nT + x/\sqrt{G(0)}$ .

If  $G(T) \neq 0$ , we find

$$\hat{G}(\lambda) = \frac{1}{\lambda} (G(0) - e^{-\lambda T} G(T)) + \frac{1}{\lambda^2} (G'(0) - G'(T)e^{-\lambda T}) + O(|\lambda|^{-3}), \quad (21)$$

and hence

$$\exp\left(-x\sqrt{\frac{\lambda}{\hat{G}(\lambda)}}\right) = \exp\left(-\frac{\lambda x}{\sqrt{G(0) - G(T)e^{-\lambda T}}}\right) \exp\left(\frac{1}{2}x\frac{G'(0) - G'(T)e^{-\lambda T}}{(G(0) - G(T)e^{-\lambda T})^{3/2}}\right) \\ \left(1 + O(|\lambda|^{-1})\right). \quad (22)$$

The singularities of the solution can now be worked out by expanding (22) in powers of  $e^{-\lambda T}$  and inverting the transform term by term. In this fashion, it is possible to recover the results which we found by a more explicit method in Section 2. We omit the details of the calculation.

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