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Evaluation of Function Derivatives in Boundary Integral Analysis

L. J. Gray [*], Oak Ridge National Laboratory
T. Kaplan, Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Summary

A fast and accurate boundary integral method for evaluating function derivatives has been developed. This is a key step in many boundary integral applications, most notably for computing surface velocities in moving boundary simulations.

Boundary integral equations are particularly well suited for an important class of applications known as 'moving boundary problems'. The goal in these simulations is to track the evolution of a surface, and the boundary integral approach only requires remeshing of the new surface; this is significantly easier than remeshing the entire volume. Example applications are void growth in computer chip interconnects (electromigration), propagation of water waves, crystallization of solids, etc. The key task in these calculations is an accurate determination of the surface velocity function, and this generally requires knowing all first order function derivatives, e.g. gradient of potential or complete stress tensor, on the surface.

These derivatives can be expressed as boundary integrals of known quantities, but there are two main difficulties in their numerical evaluation. The first is that the integrals involve highly singular functions, termed hypersingular. As a consequence the integrals do not exist unless conditions are placed on the numerical approximations, and these conditions are very difficult to enforce. The second problem is that the expressions for the derivatives involve a complete integration over the boundary, and this is computationally very expensive.

A previously developed derivative evaluation algorithm [1] was able to eliminate the difficulty with the hypersingular integrals. This was achieved by recasting the integral expressions using a weighted average (Galerkin) formulation. However, the computational cost of this approach is quite high, requiring a double integration over the boundary.

We have recently shown [2] that the work involved in this Galerkin method can be significantly reduced: instead of the full double boundary integration, only a few integrals over the local neighborhood of each point need to be computed. This is achieved by writing the derivative equations as the difference between interior and exterior boundary limits, and exploiting the ability to evaluate these limits [3].

An added benefit of this new algorithm is accuracy: by limiting the calculation to the local integrals, which are evaluated partly analytically, many sources of error

[*] (865) 574-8189, ljg@ornl.gov

(numerical quadrature, function interpolation) are eliminated. As a result, test calculations indicate that the method is superconvergent: a linear element approximation achieves quadratic convergence.

A technologically important example of a moving boundary problem is the simulation of crystal growth. In order to follow the crystal evolution, an accurate determination of the interface velocity is essential. The recrystallization of amorphous silicon (see in Fig 1), which has significant implications for electronic device fabrication, is one such application.

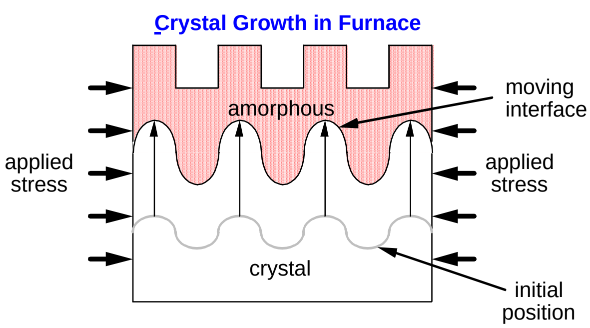

Fig 1. Experimental set up for the recrystallization of amorphous silicon. This is an example of an experiment in which the surface derivative technique will be employed to calculate the interface velocity.

[1] L. J. Gray, D. Maroudas and M. N. Enmark, "Galerkin Evaluation of Surface Derivatives," *Computational Mechanics*, **22**(2), 187-193, 1998.

[2] L .J. Gray, A.-V. Phan, and T. Kaplan, "Boundary Integral Evaluation of Surface Derivatives," *SIAM J. Scientific Computing* (submitted)

[3] L. J. Gray, J. M. Glaeser, and T. Kaplan, "Direct Evaluation of Hypersingular Galerkin Surface Integrals," *SIAM J. Scientific Computing* (in press)

For further information on this subject contact:
Dr.Chuck Romine, Program Manager
Mathematical, Information, and Computational Sciences Division
Office of Advanced Scientific Computing Research
Phone: 301-903-5152
romine@er.doe.gov