

## SOME PROPERTIES OF THE DISCONTINUOUS GALERKIN METHOD FOR ONE-DIMENSIONAL SINGULARLY PERTURBED PROBLEMS

Hans-Görg Roos<sup>1</sup>, Helena Zarin<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract.** A nonsymmetric discontinuous Galerkin method with interior penalties is considered for one-dimensional reaction-diffusion and convection-diffusion equations. Discrete problems are analyzed and some properties of the corresponding matrices are given. Beside first-order error estimate for linear elements, an  $L_2$ -error bound is also derived.

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### 1. Introduction

Although continuous Galerkin finite element methods are traditionally used for solving elliptic problems, recently new interest has arisen in applying discontinuous Galerkin finite element methods (DGFEMs). For instance, in [5] it is emphasized that the DGFEMs allow the discretization of convection-diffusion problems without invoking streamline-diffusion stabilization in order to reduce the amount of numerical dissipation. The DGFEMs belong to the class of non-conforming methods and they approximate exact solutions by piecewise polynomial functions over a finite element space without any requirement on interelement continuity – however, continuity on interelement boundaries together with boundary conditions is weakly enforced through the bilinear form.

So far not much is known on properties of the discrete problems generated by the DGFEMs. In the sequel we shall study the following one-dimensional linear singularly perturbed problem

$$(1) \quad \begin{cases} -\varepsilon u'' + bu' + cu = f & \text{in } \Omega = (0, 1), \\ u(0) = u(1) = 0, \end{cases}$$

assuming  $b, c, f$  to be smooth on  $\bar{\Omega} = [0, 1]$  and  $b(x) \geq \beta > 0$ ,  $c(x) \geq 0$ ,  $x \in \bar{\Omega}$ . Here  $0 < \varepsilon \ll 1$  represents a small perturbation parameter. Using linear finite elements for the discretization of (1), we shall compare some properties of a specially chosen DGFEM with the standard version of the finite element method.

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<sup>1</sup>Institute of Numerical Mathematics, Dresden University of Technology, Germany, e-mail: roos@math.tu-dresden.de

<sup>2</sup>Department of Mathematics and Informatics, Faculty of Science and Mathematics, University of Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro, e-mail: helena@im.ns.ac.yu

## 2. The discontinuous Galerkin method

Although there are many variants of the DGFEMs that are developed for elliptic problems (see [1] for a survey), we choose the nonsymmetric version of the DGFEM with interior penalties (the NIPG method, [5]) because of its good stability and consistency properties. For simplicity of presentation, let us consider an equidistant mesh  $\Omega_h$  with the step size  $h$  and the mesh points  $x_i = ih$ ,  $i = 0, 1, \dots, N$ ,  $Nh = 1$ . We shall use the following broken Sobolev space  $H^1(\Omega_h)$  that is given by

$$H^1(\Omega_h) = \{u \in L^2(\Omega) : u|_{(x_{i-1}, x_i)} \in H^1(x_{i-1}, x_i), \text{ for all } i\},$$

where  $H^1(x_{i-1}, x_i)$  denotes the Sobolev space of order one defined on  $(x_{i-1}, x_i)$ .

Let us first consider reaction–diffusion case ( $b \equiv 0$ ). Then, the weak form of the problem (1) that is associated with the NIPG method reads

$$(2) \quad \begin{cases} \text{find } u \in V = H^1(\Omega_h) \text{ such that} \\ a_1(u, v) = l(v), \text{ for all } v \in V, \end{cases}$$

where

$$(3) \quad \begin{aligned} a_1(u, v) &= \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} (\varepsilon u'v' + cuv) + \varepsilon (uv') \Big|_0^1 - \varepsilon (u'v) \Big|_0^1 \\ &\quad + \varepsilon \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} ([v]_i \langle u' \rangle_i - \langle v' \rangle_i [u]_i) \\ &\quad + \sigma_0(uv)(0) + \sigma_N(uv)(1) + \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \sigma_i [u]_i [v]_i, \\ l(v) &= \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} fv. \end{aligned}$$

Here  $[\cdot]_i$  denotes the jump and  $\langle \cdot \rangle_i$  the average of the corresponding discontinuous function at the mesh point  $x_i$ . Let us choose the penalty parameter  $\sigma_i$  as in [5], namely  $\sigma_i = \sigma = \varepsilon/h$ ,  $i = 0, 1, \dots, N$ .

For the convective part  $bu' = f$  of (1), the discontinuous Galerkin method is associated with the bilinear form

$$(4) \quad a_2(u, v) = \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} bu'v + (buv)(0) + \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} b_i [u]_i v_i^+.$$

Here  $v_i^+$  denotes  $v(x_i + 0)$  and  $b_i = b(x_i)$ .

If  $a(\cdot, \cdot)$  represents the sum of the two bilinear forms  $a_1$  and  $a_2$  defined above, the NIPG method for the problem (1) is

$$(5) \quad \begin{cases} \text{find } u_h \in V_h \subset H^1(\Omega_h) \text{ such that} \\ a(u_h, v_h) = l(v_h), \text{ for all } v_h \in V_h. \end{cases}$$

We shall study the case when  $V_h$  consists of (discontinuous) polynomials of degree one over the given mesh  $\Omega_h$ .

Based on the consistency of the method that is studied in [5] in a much more general situation, the error of the NIPG method is analyzed in the following DG–norm:

$$(6) \quad \|w\|_{\text{DG}}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} (\varepsilon(w')^2 + w^2) + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} b_i [w]_i^2 \\ + \frac{1}{2} b_0 w^2(0) + \frac{1}{2} b_N w^2(1) \\ + \sigma_0 w^2(0) + \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \sigma_i [w]_i^2 + \sigma_N w^2(1).$$

Applying the technique from [5] on the singularly perturbed problem (1), for the NIPG method with linear elements on the uniform mesh  $\Omega_h$  we obtain the following error estimate

$$(7) \quad \|u - u_h\|_{DG} \leq C \left( \varepsilon^{1/2} h + h^{3/2} + h^2 \right) \|u\|_{H^2(\Omega)},$$

with the discontinuity–penalization parameter  $\sigma_i = \sigma = \varepsilon/h$ .

**Remark 2.1.** From (7), in the nonsingular case  $\varepsilon = 1$ , we get

$$\|u - u_h\|_{\text{DG}} \leq Ch,$$

and therefore  $[u_h]_i = \mathcal{O}(h^{3/2})$ , but numerical experiments indicate that the order of the jumps is two (see also [3]).

### 3. Some properties of the discrete problem

For the given partitioning  $\Omega_h$  we can choose

$$\varphi_{i-1}^+(x) = \frac{x_i - x}{h}, \quad \varphi_i^-(x) = \frac{x - x_{i-1}}{h}, \quad x \in [x_{i-1}, x_i],$$

for the basis functions and introduce

$$(8) \quad u_h(x) = u_{i-1}^+ \varphi_{i-1}^+(x) + u_i^- \varphi_i^-(x), \quad x \in [x_{i-1}, x_i].$$

The discontinuous Galerkin method generates a difference scheme for a vector–valued grid function. In the nonsingular case, for the reaction–diffusion equation (1) with  $b \equiv 0$  and with a constant function  $c(x) = c$ , the generated discretization stencil reads

$$(9) \quad \begin{array}{cc|cc|cc} -\frac{1}{h^2} & -\frac{2}{h^2} & \frac{4}{h^2} + \frac{2c}{3} & -\frac{2}{h^2} + \frac{c}{3} & \frac{1}{h^2} & \\ \frac{1}{h^2} & -\frac{2}{h^2} + \frac{c}{3} & \frac{4}{h^2} + \frac{2c}{3} & -\frac{2}{h^2} & -\frac{1}{h^2} & \end{array}.$$







### 3.1. A different basis

Now, let us use the shape functions

$$\psi_1(x) = 1, \quad \psi_{2,i}(x) = \frac{x - x_{i+1/2}}{h},$$

instead of  $\varphi_{i-1}^+, \varphi_i^-$ . To simplify the following, let us denote the mesh points by  $x_{i+1/2}$ . Then,

$$(12) \quad u_h(x) = u_i + u'_i \frac{x - x_i}{h}, \quad x \in [x_{i-1/2}, x_{i+1/2}].$$

The NIPG method then generates a difference scheme for the approximation of the function values as well as for the derivatives.

As a first example we take (1) with  $\varepsilon = 1$ ,  $b \equiv 0$  and  $c \equiv 0$ . Then, the generated scheme is

$$(13) \quad \begin{aligned} -\frac{u_{i-1} - 2u_i + u_{i+1}}{h^2} &= f_i, \\ \frac{u'_{i-1} + 6u'_i + u'_{i+1}}{4h^2} - \frac{u_{i+1} - u_{i-1}}{h^3} &= \frac{1}{12}f'_i. \end{aligned}$$

**Remark 3.3.** *The decoupling of the system takes only place for an equidistant mesh. But this property also holds in 2D on a tensor-product mesh or a mesh from equilateral triangles.*

It is easy to check that the equations in (13) are consistent approximations of the second order of the equations

$$-u'' = f \quad \text{and} \quad -u''' = f'.$$

The generated scheme for  $u' = f$ , however, reads

$$(14) \quad \frac{u_i - u_{i-1}}{h} + \frac{u'_i - u'_{i-1}}{2} = f_i,$$

$$(15) \quad \frac{u'_i + u'_{i-1}}{4h} - \frac{u_i - u_{i-1}}{2h^2} = \frac{1}{12}f'_i.$$

The expression (14) is a second order approximation of  $u' = f$ . But Taylor expansion in (15) yields

$$\frac{1}{2}u'''(x_j)h + \mathcal{O}(h^2) = f'_j,$$

whereby, surprisingly, this equation makes no sense.

#### 4. A remark on $L_2$ -error estimates

From the definition of the DG-norm we can easily obtain that the  $L^2$ -error estimate satisfies the inequality (7). The question is: Is it possible to obtain an improved estimate for  $\|u - u_h\|_{L^2(\Omega)}$  that is of order  $\mathcal{O}(h^2)$ ?

In the nonsingular case and for reaction-diffusion problems, the NIPG method does not satisfy the adjoint consistency condition (see [1]) that allows the application of Nitsche's trick. Numerical experiments in [2] nevertheless indicate  $\mathcal{O}(h^2)$  errors in  $L^2$ -norm for linear/bilinear elements, but error reduction for elements of even order.

In the singularly perturbed case we cannot apply Nitsche's trick, but we try to apply superconvergent techniques. Let  $u^I$  be the continuous piecewise linear interpolating function of  $u$ ,  $\xi = u^I - u_h$  and  $\eta = u - u^I$  the interpolation error. Then,

$$\|\xi\|_{\text{DG}}^2 = -a(\eta, \xi).$$

Since  $\eta$  is continuous,  $a(\eta, \xi)$  consists of only a few terms:

$$a(\eta, \xi) = \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} c\eta\xi + \varepsilon \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \langle \eta' \rangle_i [\xi]_i + \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} b\eta'\xi.$$

Again we are assuming that the boundary conditions are fulfilled. Because the first term gives already the desired  $\mathcal{O}(h^2)$  estimate, we have to estimate the both remaining terms. First we have

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \eta' \rangle_i &= \frac{1}{2} (\eta'(x_i + 0) + \eta'(x_i - 0)) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \left( u'(x_i) - \frac{u(x_{i+1}) - u(x_i)}{h} + u'(x_i) - \frac{u(x_i) - u(x_{i-1})}{h} \right) \\ &= u'(x_i) - \frac{u(x_{i+1}) - u(x_{i-1}))}{2h} = \mathcal{O}(h^2), \end{aligned}$$

for the smooth  $u$ . Thus,

$$\varepsilon \left| \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \langle \eta' \rangle_i [\xi]_i \right| \leq \varepsilon \left( \frac{1}{\sigma} \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \langle \eta' \rangle_i^2 \right)^{1/2} \left( \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} \sigma [\xi]_i^2 \right)^{1/2} \leq C\sqrt{\varepsilon}h^2\|\xi\|_{\text{DG}}.$$

Finally we consider

$$(16) \quad \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} b(u - u^I)'\xi.$$

In the nonsingular case, integration by parts results into an  $\mathcal{O}(h^2)$  estimate. In the sequel it suffices to assume a constant  $b$  on  $(x_{i-1}, x_i)$ , for otherwise we

have  $b(x) = \tilde{b}_i + \mathcal{O}(h)$  and further have no difficulties with the additional term. Introducing

$$\xi(x) = \xi(x_{i-1/2}) + (x - x_{i-1/2})\xi'(x) = \xi(x_{i-1/2}) + E'(x)\xi'(x),$$

with  $E(x) = ((x - x_{i-1/2})^2 - h^2)/2$ , Lin's technique from [6] results in

$$(17) \quad \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} (u - u^I)' \xi = \frac{h^2}{3} (u'' \xi)|_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} - \frac{h^2}{3} \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} u''' \xi + \frac{1}{6} \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} u''' (E^2)' \xi'.$$

For the continuous function  $\xi$ , summation results in an estimate of the type  $\mathcal{O}(h^2) \|u\|_{H^3(\Omega)} \|\xi\|_{L^2(\Omega)}$ . But for a discontinuous  $\xi$  we loose an  $h^{1/2}$  due to

$$\xi(x_i) \leq \frac{C}{h^{1/2}} \left( \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} \xi^2 \right)^{1/2}.$$

Therefore we get

$$\left| \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} b \eta' \xi \right| \leq Ch^{3/2} \|\xi\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq Ch^{3/2} \|\xi\|_{\text{DG}}.$$

Alternatively, we can use the part  $\varepsilon^{1/2} \|\nabla \xi\|_{L^2(\Omega)}$  of the DG-norm or also

$$\sigma^{1/2} \left( \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} [\xi]_i^2 \right)^{1/2} = \frac{\varepsilon^{1/2}}{h^{1/2}} \left( \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} [\xi]_i^2 \right)^{1/2}$$

to obtain

$$\left| \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{x_{i-1}}^{x_i} b \eta' \xi \right| \leq C \frac{h^2}{\varepsilon^{1/2}} \|\xi\|_{\text{DG}}.$$

Combining both estimates, we conclude the following:

**Lemma 4.1.** *For a smooth solution  $u$ , in the singularly perturbed case the discretization with discontinuous linear elements leads to an  $L^2$ -error estimate of the type*

$$\|u - u_h\|_{L^2(\Omega)} \leq C \frac{h^{\gamma/2+3/2}}{h^{\gamma/2} + \varepsilon^{\gamma/2}},$$

with some  $\gamma \in [0, 1]$ .

Nevertheless, numerically we observe second-order convergence in the  $L^2$ -norm independently of the perturbation parameter for the test example

$$(18) \quad \begin{cases} -\varepsilon u'' + (2-x)u' + u = f & \text{in } (0, 1), \\ u(0) = u(1) = 0, \end{cases}$$

with the exact solution  $u(x) = (1-x)\sin x$  and for  $\varepsilon = 1, 10^{-1}, \dots, 10^{-8}$ , see Table 1.

$N$	$\varepsilon = 1$		$\varepsilon = 10^{-4}$		$\varepsilon = 10^{-8}$	
	<i>error</i>	<i>rate</i>	<i>error</i>	<i>rate</i>	<i>error</i>	<i>rate</i>
8	2.073(-3)	2.088	4.318(-3)	1.993	4.322(-3)	1.992
16	4.876(-4)	2.047	1.085(-3)	2.000	1.087(-3)	1.998
32	1.180(-4)	2.024	2.713(-4)	2.003	2.721(-4)	1.999
64	2.900(-5)	2.012	6.770(-5)	2.007	6.805(-5)	2.000
128	7.188(-6)	2.006	1.684(-5)	2.014	1.701(-5)	2.000
256	1.789(-6)	2.003	4.170(-6)	2.027	4.254(-5)	2.000
512	4.463(-7)	–	1.023(-6)	–	1.063(-6)	–

Table 1:  $L^2$ -norm of the error for the test problem (18)

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