Ecole Prédoctorale de Physique des Houches

26 août - 6 septembre 2002

Numerical methods for air quality modelling with application to one model (CHIMERE).

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1 Introduction

In this paper about air pollution modelling we emphasize mainly for models on air quality forecasting which is a challenging scientific problem, which has recently undergone considerable pressure in many industrialised countries due to the increasing consciousness of the effect, on health and environment, of the emissions of pollutants, especially volatile organic compounds (VOC's) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) into the urban atmospheres. The environmental benefits of reliable air quality forecasts are obvious : populations can be more efficiently protected by means of information or real-time emission abatement strategies. The scientific aspects of air-quality forecasting are also of major scientific interest, since prediction lies at the end of the understanding process. Here, in this presentation we insist about models based on the physical equations (often called "deterministic models") driving the chimistry and the transport of pollutants. These models require numerous accurate input data (emissions, meteorology, input cover) which are difficult to collect in real time. These latter problems should become less and less significant with time, due to both increase in computer capabilities and to improvements in the data bases required for the deterministic approach of forecasting. Evidently the methods presented here are generic and valid for any problem related to air quality modelling.

Air pollution modelling begins always by modelling atmospheric chemical kinetics systems which describe chemical reactions between trace gases, such as ozone, nitrogen oxides, methane, hydrocarbons, etc. One often studies ozone levels in the lower atmosphere, as ozone is dangerous for humans and animals during short term smog episodes and can damage crops when over longer seasonals periods levels are too high. Ozone is also a greenhouse gas, similar as methane, carbon dioxide and other species. Air pollution models are therefore also used in connection with climate studies. Ozone itself is not emitted but formed in very many different reactions. A nice introduction to the field of atmospheric chemistry can be found in Graedel and Crutzen [17]. First in this paper we present in the next section a very simple illustration of chemical mechanism for any tropospheric air pollution model.

Air pollution modelling is based on the assumption of no reciprocal effect of the chemical species on flow fields (wind velocity, turbulent diffusivity, temperature). After having preprocessed the flow fields by meteorological computations or parametrizations, ones solves thereafter a reaction-advection-diffusion PDE (Partial Differential Equation), the mass continuity equation, for the concentrations of chemical species :

$$\frac{\partial \vec{C}}{\partial t} + div(\vec{V}\vec{C}) = div(\mathbf{K}\vec{C}) + P(\vec{C},t) - L(\vec{C},t). \tag{1.1}$$

In this equation, characteristic for the Eulerian approach, $\vec{C}$ is a vector containing all the concentrations of all model species depending of x and t, $\vec{V}$ is the three dimensional wind vector, $\mathbf{K}$ is the turbulent diffusive matrix, and P and L represent production and loss terms due to chemical reactions, emissions and depositions. The wind field $\vec{V}$ and the diffusion coefficient matrix $\mathbf{K}$ are given, so that the problem is linear with respect to the transport part ; $\vec{C}$ represents a vector of m concentrations of trace gases like ozone, methane, nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, radicals, etc. The chemical reactions between these species are of first of second order, so that the contribution of the chemical mechanism in terms P and L is quadratically non-linear (it is by this mechanism that P and L depend on, for a specific concentration specie c, the concentrations of other constituants). Without the chemical mechanism the m equations (1.1) are uncoupled.

Solution methods often used in air pollution modelling follow the method of lines approach. That's means the PDE system with its boundary conditions is first discretized in space on a three-dimensional Eulerian grid, resulting in a huge continuous-time integration Ordinary Differential

Equation (ODE) system. On the discretized space grid the system of ODE's is then solved in time by a numerical integration technique. That is this approach than we principally propose in this paper.

The major transport mechanism in air pollution models is advective transport in a wind field. Hence the quality of the advection computation is crucial. In section 3 we consider, for simplicity of presentation, the modelization of the scalar advection problem in one space dimension. First we present a survey of finite difference methods with an introduction of concepts, definitions and tools for the field of the theory, then we propose several finite volume methods in the Godunov framework, as pioneered by Godunov, van Leer and others (see for instance [23]). The modelling of the 3D advection problem is presented in the section 4 with a short description of the splitting methods.

The wide range of the chemical timescale ($10^{-9}s$ for excited oxygen radical O^{1D} to be compared with several months for methane) induces the well-known stiffness of the resulting equations as seen in section 2. The time integration of such PDE's (and the resulting discretized ODE's) has then to be performed carefully if a (rather) low CPU cost is required. Furthermore implicit numerical schemes are highly recommended even if they are however associated with CPU costs which can remain large (due to inversions of matrices whose dimension is large : currently the number m of constituants is about one hundred). Due to the dimension and stiffness of the ODE's system together which the great number of cells in 3D, ODE integrators based on standard numerical routines are not feasible in a operational way.

This has led to the use of special time integration techniques dedicated to this problem.

We present in section 5 a survey of numerical integration techniques for ODEs, introducing the usual definitions and notions (the essential notion of stiffness). We show that implicit methods are convenient for stiff problems (the chemical kinetic system for pollution is stiff). We begin by standard onestep methods : the explicit Euler method (the forward Euler method) and the implicit Euler method (the backward Euler method) by which we introduce consistency (and order), stability (in particular the important A-stability definition) and convergence notions. We carry on multisteps methods with order greater than one : Adams methods and Backward Differentiation Formula (BDF method). The more robust method is the BDF2 method : it is the optimal order for multisteps methods (the order two) which hold the convenient A-stability property.

Due to the production-loss form of the ODE's (taking into account the discretization of the PDE's) descended from the chemical mechanism, specific methods have been dedicated. The well-known QSSA method, long ago already advocated by Hessvedt and co-workers [21], is a traditionnal tool for modelling the chemistry, but its use ask sometimes a know-how not very easy to learn and justify ; in order to be efficient the scheme must be heavily tuned by "lumping". An other way is to use a BDF method (implicit by construction and well-suited for stiff problems) and adapt it to the special form of the chemistry modelling, for instance the BDF2 method can be write in a particular form ; the resulting implicit scheme can be solved by a Gauss-Seidel process. These algorithm (BDF2 applied to production-loss form, with resolution of the implicit scheme by Gauss-Seidel), is proposed by Verwer [38] like the TWOSTEP method. This TWOSTEP method is more or less comparable to the QSSA method. The TWOSTEP and QSSA methods are presented in the subsection 5.3.

Finally in a last section we present one example of the modelling of the air pollution problem : the CHIMERE software. By that we precise one possible chemical mechanism, together with the emissions and dry depositions modelling. The advection, diffusion mechanisms and boundary layer (where essentially the pollution exits, furthermore it is the domain of interest for health and environment) modelling are also described with any details. Taking into account the advection and diffusion operators together with the chemical mechanisms (included emissions and deposition), the resulting ODE's system is solved by TWOSTEP.

Evidently a good approach is the search for efficient numerical solvers with a good compromise between accuracy and CPU requirements. We hope that this presentation give any possibilities for that.

2 A fundamental chemical kinetics system

Consider the following reactions which are basic to any tropospheric air pollution model :

$$\begin{aligned} NO_2 + h\nu &\xrightarrow{k_1} NO + O(^{3P}) \\ O(^{3P}) + O_2 &\xrightarrow{k_2} O_3 \\ NO + O_3 &\xrightarrow{k_3} O_2 + NO_2 \end{aligned} \tag{2.1}$$

In this system $O(^{3P})$ is the oxygen atom in its fundamental state. The second equation is the single way for formation of ozone. The first equation is the principal source for $O(^{3P})$ by photolyze of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) in the troposphere. Finally the ozone formation is balanced simultaneously by its reaction with nitrogen monoxyde (NO) with formation of NO_2. We note that the ozone formation is associated to its principal trap NO. In normal situation NO, NO_2 and $O(^{3P})$ are in equilibrium and the ozone concentration is moderated. The formation of high ozone concentrations require therefore a mecanism which consume quickly NO and regenerate NO_2. In pollutant environment this is realized by coupling $NO|NO_2$ cycle with weathering hydrocarbons (HC) : attacked by a hydroxyl radical (OH) the HC undergoes at alkyl radical (R) which, by a sequence of quick reactions with air-oxygen, produce peroxy radical (RO_2) and hydroperoxyl radical (HO_2) whom, in turn, quickly oxydate NO to NO_2 with radical OH regeneration. These oxydation reaction from NO to NO_2 short-circuit those for NO by O_3 (see (2.1)) and ozone can accumulate it.

The motor of this complex chemistry is therefore the photolysis of any species (O_3, NO_2, etc.). By which it is during intensive solar irradiation that high levels of ozone can be met. But this condition is not sufficient : it is also necessary that the precursors sources let be sufficiently important, especially in HC and that the atmospheric dynamic favor the accumulation for precursors and products with a weak dispersion and dilution. Therefore it is during anticyclonique period that pollution episode are the more frequent.

An other good reference for the chemistry of the troposphere can be found in Seinfeld and Pandis [29].

It is useful for illustration to show the associated ODE system. Putting $c_1 = [O(^{3P})]$, $c_2 = [NO]$, $c_3 = [NO_2]$, $c_4 = [O_3]$, the dynamic of the species in (2.1) is governed by :

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{c_1} &= k_1c_3 - k_2c_1 \\ \dot{c_2} &= k_1c_3 - k_3c_2c_4 \\ \dot{c_3} &= k_3c_2c_4 - k_1c_3 \\ \dot{c_4} &= k_2c_1 - k_3c_2c_4 \end{aligned}$$

The unit for time is seconds and for concentrations number of molecules per cm^3. Note that oxygen is taken constant, which is a natural assumption. Typically, the first of the reactions is photochemical, giving rise to rapid changes in concentrations values in sunset and sunrise.