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Abstract

EXponential Integrators FOR QUANTUM-CLASSICAL MOLECULAR DYNAMICS

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Abstract.

We study time integration methods for equations of mixed quantum-classical molecular dynamics in which Newtonian equations of motion and Schrödinger equations are nonlinearly coupled. Such systems exhibit different time scales in the classical and thermal quantum evolution, and the systems are typically highly oscillatory. The numerical methods we use exploit the exponential of the quantum Hamiltonian whose product with a state vector is approximated using Lanczos' method. This allows time steps that are much larger than the inverse of the highest frequencies.

We describe various integration schemes and analyze their error behaviour, without assuming smoothness of the solution. As preparation and as a problem of independent interest, we study also integration methods for Schrödinger equations with time-dependent Hamiltonian.

AMS subject classification: 65L05, 65L70, 65M12, 65M20.

Key words: Numerical integrator, oscillatory solutions, Schrödinger equation, quantum-classical coupling, error bounds, stability.

1. Introduction.

The inclusion of quantum behaviour in molecular dynamics simulations is a topic of considerable current interest; see the contributions in the recent volume [4]. Since a full quantum simulation of molecules is out of question, mixed quantum-classical models offer feasible alternatives. A widely used model couples Newtonian equations of motion and Schrödinger equations in the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} My'' &= -\nabla_y(\psi^* H(y)\psi), \\ iv' &= H(y)\psi. \end{aligned} \quad (1.1)$$

Here, y denotes the positions of the classical particles and ψ represents the wave function. M is the mass matrix and $H(y)$ is the Hamilton operator or—as will be assumed here—its spatial discretization. The typical situation is that $H(y)$ is a sum of a (discretized) negative Laplacian and a position-dependent

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