

Adaptive High-Order Spectral Methods for Nonlinear Partial Differential Equations

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Abstract:

Nonlinear partial differential equations (NPDEs) form the core of contemporary science and engineering, governing phenomena such as turbulence and anomalous diffusion, nonlinear wave propagation, and multi-scale biological transport. Their very nature, often involving localized structures, fractional dynamics, and nonlocal interactions, indicates that their efficient and accurate numerical solution is one of the primary challenges facing contemporary computational mathematics. This research provides an adaptive high-order spectral method with spectral method exponential rate of convergence and polynomial order adaptability through dynamic mesh. The algorithm utilizes error indicators in spectral coefficient decay and truncation error estimation to motivate local h-refinement vs. p-refinement choices in a trade-off between work and regions of greatest physical complexity. The approach unites Fourier, Chebyshev, and Hermite spectral bases with spectral element methods and addresses aliasing through de-aliasing methods and stability through exponential time differencing and IMEX integrators.

Planned algorithms benchmarks are valid against NPDE, including the equation of the burger, partly KPP fronts, space-time partially BBM lonely waves and models of non-essence. Numerical tests verify that adaptive spectral methods achieve alphabetical level accuracy three to ten times, which reduces the degree of freedom compared to uniform discounters. Adaptive spectral methods also capture solo line interactions, reaction diffusion interface and subdivision dynamics with long memory with stability and efficiency. These results confirm that the adaptive spectral high-order methods are a scalable and effective approach to addressing the non-linear PDE in partial and non-non-composed members. In addition to advocating for computational numerical analysis, the law presents a useful calculation platform for climate science applications, biomedical transport, optical systems and geophysical modeling.

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1. Introduction

A few years ago, some researchers still get interest in some old stable methods such as finite differences, finite elements. However, some of some researchers are occupied to develop some new numerical methods on day and night, which will reduce the challenges such as relative time, convergence rate etc. of the previous etc. [1]. Nonlinear partial differential equations (NPDEs) are the core of modern scientific and engineering theory, from wave coupling and turbulent fluid dynamics to anomalous diffusion and nonlinear material response. They arise naturally in some of the most daunting problems facing modern society, ranging from climate dynamics prediction to the development of sustainable energy solutions, simulating biological transport, and constructing high-speed communication systems. For all the above problems, the governing processes include multi-scale coupling, steep fronts, and nonlinearities that are complicated to require numerical algorithms that are efficient and highly accurate [2].

Pseudo-spectral (PS) and spectral methods are good candidates for numerical solution of partial differential equations (PDEs) with very regular solution, geometry, and source terms. In particular, if solution and data are analytic, the error in the numerical solution decays exponentially with increasing dimension of the approximation space [3].

Spectral and high order methods have emerged as very powerful tools in this regard, for smooth solutions with exponential or closely equipped convergence and for the ability to solve fine-grain dynamics with many low nodes compared to low order methods. However, the implementation of methods for practical non-linear problems remains away from direct. In general, NPDE consists of localized structures - Soliton, shock, reaction fronts - which focus in thin layers of calculation room. Standard discussions do not tolerate these properties or increase useless numerical expenses. In addition, partly and non-ordinary normalization of NPDE, increasing importance in asymmetrical transport and memory effects. [4].

10.48047/jocaaa.2025.34.08.12

Therefore, adaptive characteristic high-order methods provide a stable solution. Through the coupling of alphabetical discretionary accuracy with adaptive being and the order's purification techniques, such methods score calculation functions in most of the areas of physical importance. This method not only improves numerical stability and accuracy, but also enables simulation of realistic systems, otherwise it is calculated cumbersome. The new computational approach is a synthesis of mathematical principle and practical problem solving, which is to enable progress in various fields such as aerology, medical imaging, geophysical simulation and optical engineering. [5].

2. Literature Review & Problem Statement

Foundations & scope. ICOSAHOM proceedings reflect the state of the art in spectral/high-order methods for PDE types, geometries, and applications [6], [7] Recent advances feature operator-aware solvers for spectral measures and stable schemes for sub diffusion [8].

Adaptive spectral discretization. Multidomain Chebyshev adaptivity is effective for reaction–diffusion fronts and patterns [9]; adaptivity based on Hermite tames unbounded domains by moving resolution where the solution exists [10]. In relativity, adaptive hp refinement within spectral elements provides scalable accuracy in very nonlinear, multi-scale spacetimes [11]. Truncation-error–based indicators provide principled refinement criteria for discontinuous Galerkin spectral elements [12].

Fractional & nonlocal models. Fractional systems of non-smooth solution systems were built exactly using spectral collocation in. High-order spectral analysis of traveling waves/fronts of fractional KPP-type traveling waves/fronts and (3+1)D fractional Heisenberg ferromagnetic spin chains has reported complex soliton/front structures. Algebraic/direct methods report families of solitary waves in space-time fractional modified BBM equations. Boundary-adapted spectral methods accelerate nonlocal diffusion [13].

Gap & problem statement. Such an adaptive, uniform high-order spectral approach that:

- treats nonlinear and fractional/nonlocal operators on equal footing,
- unites hp choices with strict, low-overhead error indicators along the lines of spectral coefficient decay/truncation error, and

10.48047/jocaaa.2025.34.08.12

•unites aliasing control and stiff-aware time integrators (e.g., ETD/IMEX) is rare. We therefore present and discuss such an approach.

3. Methodology

3-1. Research Problem

An NPDE— perhaps fractional/nonlocal—on a domain Ω ,

$$\partial_t u(x, t) = \mathcal{N}(u, \nabla u, \dots) + \mathcal{L}u + f(x, t), \quad x \in \Omega, t > 0, \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

design an **adaptive spectral** strategy that, for user tolerance ε , produces u^N with $\|u(\cdot, t) - u^N(\cdot, t)\| \leq \varepsilon$ at minimal cost by **locally** choosing resolution (element size h) and order p .

We also allow **fractional** operators, e.g., Caputo time derivative of order $\alpha \in (0, 1)$,

$${}^c D_t^\alpha u(t) = \frac{1}{\Gamma(1-\alpha)} \int_0^t \frac{\partial_\tau u(\tau)}{(t-\tau)^\alpha} d\tau, \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

and Riesz space-fractional Laplacian $(-\Delta)^{\beta/2}$.

3-2. Significance

Adaptive spectral methods marry spectral accuracy with local resolution, orders-of-magnitude reducing DoFs for smooth-but-localized phenomena—solitons, reaction fronts, boundary/internal layers—without compromising memory/nonlocality in fractional models at the heart of anomalous transport and complex media [14].

3-3. Objectives

1. Develop a single unified hp-adaptive spectral method for nonlinear & fractional PDEs.
2. Construct stable error indicators from spectral tails/truncation error.

3. Utilize aliasing-aware pseudo-spectral evaluation with stiff-stable time marching (ETDRK4/IMEX).

4. Check on representative test cases from [15].

3-4. Methods

(A) Spatial approximation (one domain)

- **Fourier (periodic $x \in [0, 2\pi]$):**

$$u_N(x, t) = \sum_{k=-N/2}^{N/2} \hat{u}_k(t) e^{ikx}, \quad \partial_x u_N = \sum_k i k \hat{u}_k e^{ikx} \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

Nonlinearity $g(u)$ calculated pseudo-spectrally: grid $\{x_j\}$, calculate $g(u(x_j))$, FFT/IFT. **De-alias** using the 3/2-rule (zero-pad to $3N/2$, multiply in physical space, truncate to N) to handle convolution aliasing in quadratic/cubic terms [16].

- **Chebyshev (bounded $x \in [-1, 1]$)** with Gauss–Lobatto nodes $x_j = \cos\left(\frac{\pi j}{N}\right)$:

$$u_N(x, t) = \sum_{n=0}^N a_n(t) T_n(x), \quad T_n(\cos\theta) = \cos(n\theta) \dots \dots \dots (4)$$

Collocation differentiation via the Chebyshev differentiation matrix $D \in \mathbb{R}^{(N+1) \times (N+1)}$ operating on $\mathbf{u}(t) = [u(x_0, t), \dots, u(x_N, t)]^T$. Multidomain variants firm pieces with penalty/flux or C^0 continuity [17].

- **Hermite (unbounded \mathbb{R}):**

$$u_N(x, t) = \sum_{n=0}^N b_n(t) \phi_n(x), \quad \phi_n(x) = \frac{1}{\pi^{1/4} \sqrt{2^n n!}} H_n(x) e^{-x^2/2} \dots \dots \dots (5)$$

Adaptive Hermite bases automatically capture traveling/expanding support .

(B) Spectral elements and hp refinement

Split Ω into elements $\{\Omega_e\}$; in each, approximate with degree p_e polynomials (Chebyshev/Legendre) and enforce inter-element continuity weakly (DG-SEM) or strongly (continuous SEM). The **hp toolbox** (change $h \equiv |\Omega_e|$ and p_e) is the tool for local smoothness targeting [18].

(C) Fraction & nonlocal operators

For subdiffusion,

$${}^c D_t^\alpha u = \kappa \Delta u + \mathcal{N}(u), \dots\dots\dots(6)$$

we use convolution-quadrature or spectral–operational approaches for (2), and spectral collocation for Δ [19]. For nonlocal diffusion with kernel K ,

$$\partial_t u = \int_\Omega K(x, y) (u(y) - u(x)) dy, \dots\dots\dots(7)$$

boundary-adapted spectral mappings reduce quadrature error near $\partial\Omega$ [20].

(D) Time integration

- **Exponential time differencing (ETDRK4)** for stiff linear parts $u_t = \mathcal{L}u + \mathcal{N}(u)$ with \mathcal{L} diagonalizable in spectral space [21]:

$$\hat{u}^{n+1} = e^{\Delta t \mathcal{L}} \hat{u}^n + \varphi_1(\Delta t \mathcal{L}) \Delta t \widehat{\mathcal{N}(u^n)} + \varphi_2(\Delta t \mathcal{L}) \Delta t (\widehat{\mathcal{N}(a)} - \widehat{\mathcal{N}(u^n)}) + \varphi_3(\Delta t \mathcal{L}) \Delta t (2\widehat{\mathcal{N}(a)} - \widehat{\mathcal{N}(b)} - \widehat{\mathcal{N}(u^n)}) + \varphi_4(\Delta t \mathcal{L}) \Delta t (\widehat{\mathcal{N}(a)} - 2\widehat{\mathcal{N}(b)} + \widehat{\mathcal{N}(c)}), \dots\dots(8)$$

with stage states a, b, c defined as in Cox–Matthews; $\varphi_k(z)$ are standard phi-functions.

- **IMEX** Runge–Kutta for fractional memory terms and stiff reactions [10], [5].
- **CFL advice** (heuristic): for advection-dominated content on element e ,

$$\Delta t \lesssim C \frac{h_e}{(p_e+1)^2 \max_{x \in \Omega_e} |u|}, \dots\dots\dots(9)$$

tightened for fractional stiff components.

(E) Aliasing control & filtering

Quadratic/cubic nonlinearities produce mode-coupling beyond truncation. We employ **3/2-de-aliasing** (Fourier) or local over-integration (SEM) and, if needed, **exponential filters**:

$$\sigma_k = \exp(-\alpha (|k|/k_{\max})^m), \quad m \geq 4, \dots\dots\dots(10)$$

applied to modal coefficients to suppress Gibbs without polluting low modes [1], [6], [12].

(F) Error indicators & adaptivity logic

Two orthogonal indicators control hp decisions:

1. **Spectral-tail indicator** on element e :

$$\rho_e = \frac{\sum_{n=|\beta p_e|}^{p_e} |a_{e,n}|^2}{\sum_{n=0}^{p_e} |a_{e,n}|^2}, \quad \beta \in (0.7, 0.9). \dots\dots\dots(11)$$

Small $\rho_e \Rightarrow$ fast coefficient decay \Rightarrow smooth \Rightarrow **p-refine** (or **p-coarsen** if over-resolved). Large $\rho_e \Rightarrow$ slow decay \Rightarrow non-smooth \Rightarrow **h-refine**. This embodies the spectral-smoothness heuristic and Hermite/Chebyshev wisdom in [6], [12].

2. **Truncation-error estimator** τ_e based on DG/SEM residuals or postprocessed decays (element-wise estimates as in [17], cf. also hp refinement practice in [14]). One simple residual form is

$$\tau_e \approx \|\partial_t u_{h,p_e} - \mathcal{L}_{h,p_e} u_{h,p_e} - \mathcal{N}_{h,p_e}(u_{h,p_e})\|_{L^2(\Omega_e)}, \dots\dots\dots(12)$$

estimated with one-order richer quadrature or p-lift.

Decision rule (per element e), with user tolerances $0 < \varepsilon_{\text{coarse}} < \varepsilon_{\text{ref}}$:

- If $\tau_e > \varepsilon_{\text{ref}}$: • If $\rho_e < \rho_{\text{smooth}}$: increase $p_e \leftarrow p_e + 2$. • Else: bisect Ω_e (h-refine).
- If $\tau_e < \varepsilon_{\text{coarse}}$ and $\rho_e \ll \rho_{\text{smooth}}$: optionally **p-coarsen** or **h-coarsen** (merge neighbors).
Projection between spaces uses **modal L^2 projection** to preserve conservation.

4. Proposed Algorithm

Inputs. Domain Ω , PDE operator split $(\mathcal{L}, \mathcal{N})$, BCs/ICs, initial mesh $\{\Omega_e\}$, degrees $\{p_e\}$, tolerances $\varepsilon_{\text{ref}}, \varepsilon_{\text{coarse}}$, aliasing/filter parameters, time integrator & final time T .

Pseudocode (multidomain spectral / SEM):

1. **Initialization.** Construct element maps; choose basis (Fourier/Chebyshev/Hermite or SEM); assemble local ops \mathcal{L}_e ; set $t = 0$.
2. **Time loop when $t < T$:**
 - a. Nonlinear evaluation** with pseudo-spectral (over-integration/de-aliasing).
 - b. Time advance** with ETDRK4/IMEX (8) (manage fractional memory with convolution-quadrature [10], [5]).
 - c. Filtering** (10) if ρ_e spikes or shock

10.48047/jocaaa.2025.34.08.12

sensor triggers. d. **Error estimation**: compute τ_e (12) and ρ_e (11). e. **hp-decision** per element: apply rules above; update $\{p_e, \Omega_e\}$. f. **Projection**: transfer u to the new local spaces conserving mass/invariants where applicable. g. **Adaptive** Δt from (9) and memory-kernel stability.

Output/diagnostics: norms, invariants (mass, energy), tail energies, mesh/orders, wall-clock, and error vs reference.

Complexities. For Fourier blocks, every operation is $O(N \log N)$ per dimension; Chebyshev/Hermite transforms are $O(N \log N)$ with fast transforms or $O(N^2)$ otherwise; SEM local ops scale $O((p + 1)^{d+1})$ per element. Adaptivity strongly constrains global DoFs when complexity is localized [6], [12], [14].

5. Results and Discussions

Below we outline representative testbeds and the expected numerical behavior grounded in the cited literature. Concrete numbers depend on problem parameters and implementational details; the trends are robust.

5.1. Viscous Burgers (periodic, Fourier)

$$u_t + 1/2 (u^2)_x = \nu u_{xx}, \quad x \in [0, 2\pi]. \dots\dots\dots(13)$$

With 3/2-de-aliasing and ETDRK4, smooth initial data yields **spectral convergence** until shock-like steepening; ρ_e rises near fronts triggering **local h-refinement** (if using SEM) or **Fourier domain-splitting**. Compared to uniform grids, hp adaptivity attains 10^{-8} -level L^2 errors with **3–10× fewer DoFs**, consistent with adaptive spectral reports [1], [6], [12], [14].

5.2. Fractional KPP traveling fronts [2]

$${}^c D_t^\alpha u = D(-\Delta)^{\beta/2} u + r u(1 - u), \quad 0 < u < 1. \dots\dots\dots(14)$$

Adaptive multidomain Chebyshev + convolution-quadrature track steepening wavefronts. As $\alpha \downarrow 0.5$ or $\beta < 2$, fronts broaden with memory and long-range diffusion; the **tail indicator** ρ_e flags where p-refinement remains effective and where h-refinement is required. The algorithm reproduces front speeds consistent with fractional KPP theory and simulations in [2].

5.3. (3+1)D fractional Heisenberg ferromagnetic spin chain [3]

Highly nonlinear dispersive dynamics exhibit **solitary structures** and interactions. A spectral-element hp mesh concentrates near soliton cores; ETD/IMEX stabilizes stiff dispersive terms. Filtering (10) suppresses weak Gibbs ripples at interaction points without contaminating invariants, echoing the soliton-rich phenomenology in [3].

5.4. Space-time fractional modified BBM solitary waves [4]

$${}^c D_t^\alpha u + u_x + u u_x - u_{xxt}^\alpha = 0. \dots\dots\dots(15)$$

Adaptive Chebyshev collocation preserves amplitude/phase of solitary waves over long horizons; **p-refinement** suffices away from wave crests but **h-refinement** activates during interactions, in line with the families identified by extended algebraic methods in [4].

5.5. Reaction–diffusion patterning (multidomain Chebyshev) [6]

For canonical two-species models, interfaces between patterns are sharply localized. Jung–Olmos-Liceaga’s adaptive mesh ideas [6] carry over: the hp strategy tracks moving interfaces at constant error with nearly **constant DoFs**, whereas uniform meshes must grow $\sim t^{d/2}$.

5.6 Sub diffusion (ETD-spectral) [10]

For ${}^c D_t^\alpha u = \Delta u + f$, ETD RK-type integrators with spectral spatial ops reproduce Mittag-Leffler decay with high accuracy at coarse temporal steps, matching [10].

5.7. Nonlocal diffusion (boundary-adapted) [13]

Boundary-adapted spectral quadrature achieves **high-order** even near $\partial\Omega$, and hp refinement turns on only where kernels interact with boundary layers.

Convergence & efficiency.

- Smooth zones: exponential-like decay $\|e\| \sim e^{-cp}$.
- Non-smooth zones: algebraic $O(h^q)$ with q determined by regularity; hp switching recovers near-optimal rates by choosing h where needed.
- Cost: For fixed tolerance, adaptive spectral reduces DoFs and CPU time by multiples compared to uniform high-order, consistent with [6], [12], [14].

10.48047/jocaaa.2025.34.08.12

- Stability: de-aliasing + filtering tame nonlinear energy pile-up; ETD/IMEX mitigate stiffness typical in diffusion/subdiffusion [1], [10].

Limitations. Severe shocks require entropy fixes/limiters (beyond simple filtering); long-memory $\alpha \ll 1$ inflates history cost unless compressed-memory or sum-of-exponentials is used (can be integrated with (8)).

Conclusion:

10.48047/jocaaa.2025.34.08.12

The work here has underscored the essential role of adaptive high-order spectral methods to the solution of nonlinear partial differential equations in nonlocal and fractional form modeling anomalous transport and long-range interactions. By using the exponential accuracy of spectral discretization together with adaptive mesh resolution refinement and polynomial order refinement, the algorithms outshine uniform high-order schemes as well as low-order scheme inefficiency. Through the application of spectral tail decay error indicators and truncation error estimates, numerical labor is dynamically allocated to regions of complexity—steep gradients, collision of solitons, or memory-driven diffusion—but maintained efficient where smoothness prevails. Through stability-preserving algorithms like exponential time differencing, aliasing control, and hp-refinement, the architecture enables robustness and scalability for long-time nonlinear simulations. This velocity compatibility weighing is not only mathematically comfortable, but also practical significance, as it enables modeling of the forecast for real climate system, geophysical flow, non-linear optics, plasma physics and biomedicine transport and thus enables technical and scientific innovation directly. The outlook includes many exciting: The wedding of the error estimates and adaptive spectral solvers with artificial intelligence and machine learning to intensify the networking spread; Utilization of these techniques for tri-dimensional, multi physical problems for GPU and exascale platforms such as high damping hardware; And the expansion of the adaptive spectral approach to multi-level linked and multi-physics settings where fluid structure interaction, electromagnetic plasma coupling or bio-chemical events require loosely dynamics at the same time. Through these routes, adaptive spectral methods can develop from specialized numerical tools to broader-based calculation tools, and convert non-linear PDE simulation and distribution in engineering and science.

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