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FINITE-DIFFERENCE METHODS FOR SINGULAR  
PERTURBATION AND NAVIER-STOKES PROBLEMS

BY

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Abstract. The linear equation  $u_{xx} + xu_x = 0$ ,  $0 < x < 1$ , is proposed as a model for investigating interesting features of the behavior of difference methods for realistic multidimensional nonlinear elliptic problems, especially Navier-Stokes problems. We give an analytic and experimental comparison of several difference schemes for this model problem. An unusual scheme for the Navier-Stokes equations is suggested by these results. An experiment shows that this scheme performs better than a more obvious one.

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## 1. Introduction.

This report attempts to elucidate some of the interesting and poorly understood phenomena that have been observed when solving steady nonlinear problems, including Navier-Stokes problems, by finite-element and finite-difference methods. The phenomena in question include unwarranted oscillations (especially of derivatives of the solution) which are most severe in boundary layers, a relationship between accuracy and a cell Reynolds number, a relationship between difficulty in obtaining solutions to the discrete equations and a cell Reynolds number, and spurious multiple solutions of the discrete equations. We find that difference schemes for the linear two-point boundary value problem

$$(1a) \quad Lu \equiv \epsilon u_{xx} + \kappa u_x = 0$$

$$(1b) \quad u(0) = 1, \quad u(1) = 0$$

exhibit similar features and offer possible explanations.

Examples of difficulties with discretizations of fluids problems abound. They include nonphysical solutions ([1], [5], [7]) and failure of the given methods to find any solution [6]. The second problem is often the result of a limit point in the solution curve of the discrete equations; an example is given in Section 4 of this paper.

We consider four difference schemes for (1): an upwind scheme, the standard, centered, second-order scheme, and two other centered second-order schemes. We give extensive numerical results, and also analyze their behavior as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$  for fixed mesh spacing  $h$ . We find that the standard centered scheme has solutions which grow without bound; a condition  $h/\sqrt{\epsilon} < \text{const.}$  is required to bound them. The form of this condition is reasonable: the solution to (1),  $u(x, \epsilon) = 1 - \text{erf}(x/\sqrt{2\epsilon})/\text{erf}(1/\sqrt{2\epsilon})$  varies rapidly in a boundary layer of thickness  $O(\sqrt{\epsilon})$ . All the other schemes yield bounded solutions for fixed  $h$  and small  $\epsilon$ . One of them, however, appears to be more accurate.

Abrahamsson, Kreiss, and Keller [3] investigated difference methods for  $\epsilon u_{xx} + cu_x = 0$ . For this problem the boundary layer thickness is  $O(\epsilon)$ , and a cell Reynolds number restriction  $h/s \leq \text{const}$  is necessary for a nonoscillatory solution.

A more obvious one-dimensional model for Navier-Stokes is the steady Burgers' equation  $\epsilon u_{xx} - uu_x = 0$ . (Our concern with multiple solutions, a nonlinear phenomenon, argues for this model.) Kellogg, Shubin, and Stephens [1] showed that any reasonable three-point second-order-accurate centered scheme leads to multiple solutions unless a condition  $h/c \leq \text{const}$  is imposed. The solution has boundary layers  $O(\epsilon)$  in thickness, so this isn't surprising. They also showed that an  $O(h)$  upwind scheme can give spurious multiple solutions, which is.

We do not believe that these pessimistic results hold for Navier-Stokes problems. First, boundary layers in Navier-Stokes are  $O(\sqrt{\epsilon})$  thick ( $\epsilon^{-1} = \text{Reynolds number}$ ) [2]. Second, we give numerical results in Section 4 for the driven cavity flow that do not exhibit these problems. We use two second-order, centered schemes. One seems to give a unique solution for  $h/\sqrt{\epsilon} \leq \text{const}$ . The other appears to have a unique solution for all  $h$  and  $\epsilon$

and is more accurate than the first. This nonobvious scheme was suggested by the best of the schemes for (1).

Some notation for finite differences will be useful. Let  $h > 0$  be given. For a function  $u(x)$ , let

$$D_+ u(x) \equiv (u(x+h) - u(x))/h$$

$$D_- u(x) \equiv (u(x) - u(x-h))/h$$

$$D_+ D_- u(x) \equiv (u(x+h) - 2u(x) + u(x-h))/h^2$$

$$D_0 u(x) \equiv (u(x+h) - u(x-h))/2h .$$

We shall consider schemes that approximate  $u(x_i)$  for a uniform grid  $x_i = ih$ ,  $0 \leq i < n + 1$ , where  $h = 1/(n+1)$ .

2. Difference Schemes for the Model Problem.

We consider four schemes for (1): an upwind scheme, two centered schemes of "convective" type, and a centered scheme of "divergence" type. All four treat the term  $ux_x$  the same way:

$$(3) \quad \epsilon u_{xx} \approx \epsilon D_+ D_- u(x) .$$

The schemes differ in their approximation to  $xu_x$ :

Scheme 1.

$$(4a) \quad xu_x(x) \approx xD_+ u(x) .$$

Scheme 2.

$$(4b) \quad xu_x(x) \approx xD_0 u(x) .$$

Scheme 3.

$$(4c) \quad xu_x(x) \approx (x+\frac{h}{2})D_+ u(x) + (x-\frac{h}{2})D_- u(x) .$$

Scheme 4.

$$(4d) \quad xu_x(x) \approx D_0(xu)(x) - u(x) .$$

Scheme 3 can be derived by applying Galerkin's method to a variational form of (1) using continuous piecewise - linear approximations, the usual "hat function" basis, and one-point Gauss quadrature (the midpoint rule) to evaluate the integrals. Scheme 4 is based on the identity  $xu_x = (xu)_x - u$ .

The three centered schemes are closely related. In fact, all lead to tridiagonal systems

$$T_s \underline{u} = \underline{f} , \quad s = 1,2,3,4 ,$$

where  $u_i$  approximates  $u(x_i)$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq n$ . (We take  $u_0 = 1$  and  $u_{n+1} = 0$  as boundary conditions.) Let

$$(5) \quad T_s = \epsilon A + B_s ,$$





the schemes behave differently. Scheme 1 and 4 find the "outer solution"  $u \approx 0$ . Scheme 2 apparently "blows-up" as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ . Scheme 3 doesn't get the outer solution, but neither does the error blow-up. Rather, it approaches a bound which depends on  $n$ , but not  $\epsilon$ .

2.1 Properties of the differential equation.

A variational form of problem (1) is obtained in this section. The existence and uniqueness of solutions of (1) follow from the Lax-Milgram theorem using the  $H_0^1$ -ellipticity of a bilinear form. This, in turn, holds because the symmetric part  $M = (L+L^*)/2$  of the operator  $L$  is just  $\epsilon \partial_x^2 - \frac{1}{2}$ , which is  $H$ -elliptic.

Let  $H^1$  be the space of continuous functions on  $[0,1]$  with square-integrable first derivative. Let  $H_0^1 \equiv \{u \in H^1 \mid u(0) = u(1) = 0\}$ , and  $H_E^1 \equiv \{u \in H^1 \mid u(0) = 1, u(1) = 0\}$ . We associate with (I) the problem (VI): Find  $u \in H_E^1$  such that

$$a(u, v) \equiv \int_0^1 (-\epsilon u_x v_x + x u_x v) dx = 0$$

for all  $v \in H_0^1$ .

Let  $u_0$  be an arbitrary element of  $H_E^1$  (for example,  $u_0(x) = 1-x$ ). Then  $H_E^1 \equiv \{w + u_0 \mid w \in H_0^1\}$ . Thus, (VI) is equivalent to

(V2): Find  $w \in H_0^1$  such that

$$a(w + u_0, v) = 0$$

for all  $v \in H_0^1$ . Equivalently, since  $a(\cdot, \cdot)$  is bilinear,

$$a(w, v) = -a(u_0, v)$$

for all  $v \in H_0^1$ .

Define norms

$$\|u\|_0^2 \equiv \int_0^1 u^2(x) dx, \quad u \in L^2$$

and

$$\|u\|_1^2 \equiv \int_0^1 (u_x^2(x) + u^2(x)) dx,$$

$u \in H^1$ . Note that the mapping  $v \rightarrow a(u_0, v)$  is a bounded linear functional on  $H^1$ :

by the Cauchy-Schwartz inequality,

$$(7) \quad |a(u_0, v)| \leq \epsilon \|u_{0x}\|_1 \|v\|_1 + \|u_0\|_1 \|v\|_0 \\ \leq C \|v\|_1 .$$

Also, for  $v \in H_0^1$ ,

$$- a(v, v) = \epsilon \|v_x\|_0^2 - \int_0^1 (xv_x v) dx \\ = \epsilon \|v_x\|_0^2 + \frac{1}{2} \|v\|_0^2 \\ \geq \frac{\epsilon}{1+\pi-2} \|v\|_1^2$$

where we have integrated by parts and used the Rayleigh-Ritz inequality ([9]).

This lower bound on  $a(v, v)$ , together with (7), allows the Lax-Milgram theorem ([13]) to be used, showing that (V2) has a unique solution. The key is that for smooth  $v (v \in H^2 \cap H_0^1)$ ,

$$a(v, v) = \int_0^1 (\epsilon v_{xx} + xv_x) v dx \\ = \int_0^1 (Mv) v dx$$

where

$$(8) \quad M: v \rightarrow \epsilon v_{xx} - \frac{1}{2} v$$

is the symmetric part of the operator L.

We call M the **symmetric** part of L because if  $L = M + N$ , then M is self-adjoint: for all  $u, v \in H_0^1$ ,

$$\int_0^1 Mu v dx = \int_0^1 u Mv dx$$

(just integrate by parts), and  $N: u \rightarrow xu_x + \frac{1}{2}u$  is skew-adjoint: for all  $u, v \in H_0^1$

$$\int_0^1 Nu v dx = - \int_0^1 u NV dx .$$

Such a decomposition is unique.

3. An analysis of the methods.

In this section we consider two questions about each scheme:

Question 1.

Is the symmetric part,

$$M_s(h, \epsilon) \equiv \frac{1}{2} \left[ T_s + T_s^T \right]$$

negative definite? In other words, does a bound

$$M_s(h, \epsilon) \leq \delta(h) < 0$$

hold uniformly as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ ?

Question 2.

Does there exist a bound

$$\|T_s^{-1}\| \leq K(h)$$

uniform as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ ?

The significance of question 2 is clear - bounds on  $\|T^{-1}\|$  are an essential part of the error estimates of all the schemes.

Question 1 is motivated by the consideration of nonlinear problems. Suppose a nonlinear equation  $F(u, \epsilon) = 0$  has a "basic" solution  $u_0(\epsilon)$  such that the linear problem  $F_u[u_0(\epsilon), \epsilon] v = 0$  has only the trivial solution for all  $\epsilon > 0$ . Then we can "continue" the solution  $u_0(\epsilon)$  to arbitrarily small values of  $\epsilon$  without any bifurcation or limit points occurring. A sufficient condition for this is that the symmetric part of the operator  $F_u[u_0(\epsilon), \epsilon]$  be negative (or positive) definite in some appropriate sense - for a second-order differential operator with Dirichlet boundary conditions, the associated bilinear form

should be H&elliptic.

Now suppose the original problem is to be approximated by a family of discrete problems  $F^h(u, \epsilon) = 0$ . Then it is desirable that for  $h$  sufficiently small these problems possess solutions  $u_0^h(\epsilon)$  that are (locally) unique as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ . Again, the invertibility of the Jacobian matrices  $F_u^h[u_0^h(\epsilon), \epsilon]$  suffices for existence and local uniqueness, and definiteness of the symmetric part of  $F_u^h$  suffices for invertibility. Moreover, uniform definiteness precludes the possibility that the solution blows up as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ , is essential if the condition number of the **Jacobians** is to be bounded, and is desirable if iterative methods will be used to solve the discrete problems.

Here are the answers to question 1. In each case,  $T_S = \epsilon A + B_S$ , so

$$M_S = \epsilon A + C_S,$$

where

$$C_S \equiv \frac{1}{2}(B_S + B_S^T).$$

Scheme 1.

$$B_1 = \left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} -1 & 1 & & & \\ & -2 & 2 & \bigcirc & \\ & & & \bigcirc & \\ & & & & n-1 \\ & & & & -n \end{array} \right]$$

$$C_1 = \left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} -1 & \frac{1}{2} & & & \bigcirc \\ \frac{1}{2} & -\frac{j-1}{2} & -j & j/2 & \frac{n-1}{2} \\ & & & & \bigcirc \\ & & & \frac{n-1}{2} & -n \end{array} \right]$$

By **the** Gershgorin theorem,  $C_1 \leq -\frac{1}{2}$ , so  $M_1 \leq -\frac{1}{2}$ . (**A is negative definite.**)

Scheme 2.

$$C_2 = \frac{1}{4} \left[ \begin{array}{ccc} \bigcirc & -1 & \bigcirc \\ -1 & & \\ \bigcirc & & \bigcirc \end{array} \right] \equiv -\frac{h^2}{4} A - \frac{1}{2} I .$$

Therefore,  $M_2 = (\epsilon - \frac{h^2}{4})A - \frac{1}{2}I$ . This is negative definite for  $h$  sufficiently small; in other words we have a "cell Reynolds number" condition for negative definiteness. In fact, if  $\epsilon > h^2/4$ , then  $M_2 < -\frac{1}{2}$ . If  $(\epsilon - h^2/4) < 0$ , then definiteness depends on whether or not  $(\epsilon - h^2/4) \lambda_1 > \frac{1}{2}$ , where  $\lambda_1$  is the (negative) eigenvalue of  $A$  of largest magnitude. It is well known that  $\lambda_1 = \frac{-4}{h^2} (\sin \frac{n-1}{2n} \pi)^2$ , so the condition for definiteness is this. If

$$\epsilon \begin{cases} > \\ = \\ < \end{cases} \frac{h^2}{8} \left( 2 - \frac{1}{(\sin \frac{(n-1)\pi}{2n})^2} \right) \sim \frac{h^2}{8}$$

then

$$M_2 \text{ is } \begin{cases} \text{negative definite} \\ \text{negative semi definite} \\ \text{indefinite} \end{cases}$$

Scheme 3.

$$C_3 = -\frac{1}{2} I .$$

Thus, this scheme gets the symmetric part exactly right, in view of (8).  $M_3$  is uniformly negative, and its eigenvalues approach  $-\frac{1}{2}$  as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ .

Scheme 4.

$$C_4 = \frac{h^2}{4} A - \frac{1}{2} I .$$

Again, the symmetric part is uniformly negative definite. For small  $\epsilon$ , however,  $M_4$  is a poor approximation to the operator  $M$ .

Here are the answers to question 2. In each case the question is addressed by obtaining an upper bound on  $\|T^{-1}\|_2$ , the spectral norm of  $T^{-1}$ ,

or showing that none exists. Of course,

$$\|T^{-1}\|_2 = 1 / \inf_{\|x\|_2=1} \|Tx\|_2,$$

where, for  $x = (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)^T$

$$\|x\|_2^2 \equiv \sum x_i^2.$$

Moreover,  $\|T^{-1}\|_2 = 1/\sigma_1$  where  $0 < \sigma_1 \leq \sigma_2 < \dots \leq \sigma_n$  are the singular values of  $T$ . \* Finally, since  $T = \epsilon A + B$ , the singular values of  $T$  converge, as  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ , to those of  $B$ . Thus, question 2 is answered in the affirmative if a lower bound on the smallest singular value of  $B$  can be obtained.

Scheme 1.

$$B_1 B_1^T = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & -2 & & & & & \\ -2 & 8 & -6 & & & & \bigcirc \\ & -j(j-1) & 2j^2 & -j(j+1) & & & \\ & & & & -n(n-1) & & \\ & & & & -n(n-1) & & \\ & & & & & n^2 & \\ & & & & & & \bigcirc \end{bmatrix}$$

The Taussky theorem [8] states that if an eigenvalue lies on the boundary of the union of the Gershgorin disks, then it is a point of intersection of all the disks. Since the disk of the last row of  $B_1 B_1^T$  doesn't include zero, and zero is on the boundary of the other disks,  $B_1 B_1^T$  is positive definite.

Scheme 2.

$$B_2 B_2^T = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & & -3 & & & & \\ \bigcirc & & & & & & \bigcirc \\ -3 & & -j(j-2) & 2j^2 & -j(j+2) & & -n(n-2) \\ & & & & & & \\ \bigcirc & & & & & & \\ & & & & & -n(n-2) & \\ & & & & & & n^2 \end{bmatrix}$$

Permute rows and columns so that odd numbered equations and unknowns precede all

\* The singular values of a square matrix  $A$  are the positive roots of the eigenvalues of  $A^T A$ , which are the same as those of  $A A^T$ .

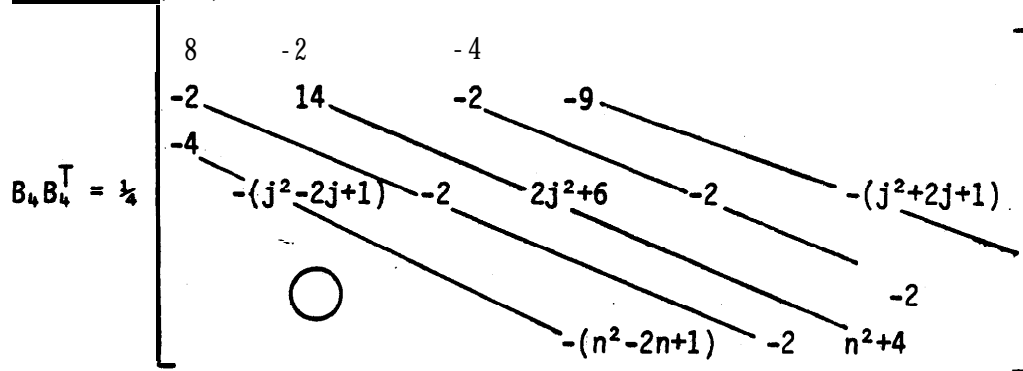




Since

is bounded uniformly in  $\epsilon$  and  $h$ .

Scheme 4 (cdd).



Again, the Taussky theorem shows that  $B_4 B_4^T$  is positive definite.

#### 4. Navier-Stokes Equations.

The driven cavity problem, a standard test problem in numerical fluid dynamics, is to solve the equations governing the flow of a viscous **incompressible** fluid in a square, two-dimensional box with a wall that slides over the fluid. Figure 9 shows the flow and the boundary conditions.

The equations are

$$(8a) \quad -\Delta \Psi = \omega, \quad A \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y^2}$$

$$(8b) \quad \epsilon \Delta \omega = u \omega_x + v \omega_y$$

where  $\Psi$  is the streamfunction,  $\omega$  the vorticity, and  $\epsilon$  the kinematic viscosity.  $\begin{pmatrix} u \\ v \end{pmatrix}$  is the velocity field,

$$\omega \equiv \begin{pmatrix} \Psi_y \\ -\Psi_x \end{pmatrix} .$$

The vorticity can be eliminated from (8b) using (8a); a single equation for the streamfunction,

$$\Delta^2 \Psi - \frac{1}{\epsilon} (\Psi_y \Delta \Psi_x - \Psi_x \Delta \Psi_y) = 0 .$$

The appropriate boundary conditions are shown in figure 9.

A standard finite-difference scheme for (8) is (assuming as uniform grid)

$$-\Delta_h \Psi = \omega$$

$$\epsilon \Delta_h \omega = D_{0y} \Psi D_{0x} \omega - D_{0x} \Psi D_{0y} \omega ,$$

where  $D_{0x} \Psi = (\Psi(x+h,y) - \Psi(x-h,y))/2h$  ,

$D_{0y} \Psi = (\Psi(x,y+h) - \Psi(x,y-h))/2h$  ,

$\Delta_h \Psi = (\Psi(x+h,y) + \Psi(x-h,y) + \Psi(x,y+h) + \Psi(x,y-h) - \Psi(x,y))/h^2$  .

The boundary conditions are implemented in an obvious way:  $\Psi = 0$  at gridpoints on the boundary, and the normal derivatives at the boundary are approximated by either  $\pm D_{0x} \Psi$  or  $\pm D_{0y} \Psi$  as appropriate. Thus, e. g. ,

$$\omega(x,0) \doteq \Delta_h \Psi(x,0) \doteq 2\Psi(x,h)/h^2 .$$

The difference equations were solved over a range of values of the Reynolds number  $R \equiv 1/\epsilon$ , using several different grids. Results for  $20 \times 20$ ,  $30 \times 30$ , and  $40 \times 40$  grids are given in figure 10, which shows  $\|\Psi\|_\infty \equiv \max_{i,j} |\Psi_{ij}|$ . The curve labeled "best known results" was obtained with very fine grids, at least  $100 \times 100$ . The values shown agree very well with those of other calculations using fine grids [11], [12]. Details will appear later [10].

Several facts stand out. All grids produce inaccurate results; the courser grids are less accurate at a given Reynolds number than the finer. On

the  $20 \times 20$  grid there is, apparently, only one solution for all values of  $R$  shown, but on the other two grids there are values of  $R$  (an interval) for which three solutions to the difference equations were found. The curves were traced by a continuation procedure of Keller which has no trouble at limit points, where the solution path turns around (as it does on the two finer grids.)

Motivated by the results for one model problem, we investigate the difference scheme

$$\begin{aligned} \epsilon \Delta_h \omega = & \frac{1}{2} \{ D_{0y} \Psi(x+\frac{1}{2}h, y) D_{+x} \omega + D_{0y} \Psi(x-\frac{1}{2}h, y) D_{-x} \omega \\ & - D_{0x} \Psi(x, y+\frac{1}{2}h) D_{+y} \omega - D_{0x} \Psi(x, y-\frac{1}{2}h) D_{-y} \omega \} \end{aligned}$$

where  $\Psi(x+\frac{1}{2}h, y) \equiv \frac{1}{2}(\Psi(x, y) + \Psi(x+h, y))$  and  $\Psi(x-\frac{1}{2}h, y)$ ,  $\Psi(x, y+\frac{1}{2}h)$ , and  $\Psi(x, y-\frac{1}{2}h)$  are defined similarly. Thus, for example,

$$\begin{aligned} u(x+\frac{1}{2}h, y) &= \Psi_y(x+\frac{1}{2}h, y) \\ &\approx \frac{1}{4h} (\Psi(x, y+h) - \Psi(x, y-h) + \Psi(x+h, y+h) - \Psi(x+h, y-h)) . \end{aligned}$$

Note that this scheme has the same stencil as the previous scheme.

These difference equations were solved on  $20 \times 20$  and  $30 \times 30$  grids. The results shown in figure 11 are substantially better than those for the previous scheme. Not only are the solutions more accurate, there are no spurious multiple solutions on the  $30 \times 30$  grid. This scheme appears to be significantly better, at least for computations of modest accuracy on fairly coarse grids. A comparison of results for fine grids is planned. Compare also the results for Reynolds number 40 shown in Table 1.

<u>s &amp; me</u>	<u>grid</u>	<u><math>\ \psi\ _1</math></u>	error in $\ \psi\ _\infty$
old	40	.09982	$.78 \times 10^{-4}$
new	40	.10003	$.57 \times 10^{-4}$
old	121	.10060	_____

Table 1. Errors at  $Re = 40$ .

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FIGURE 1 L-norm of error, Scheme 1

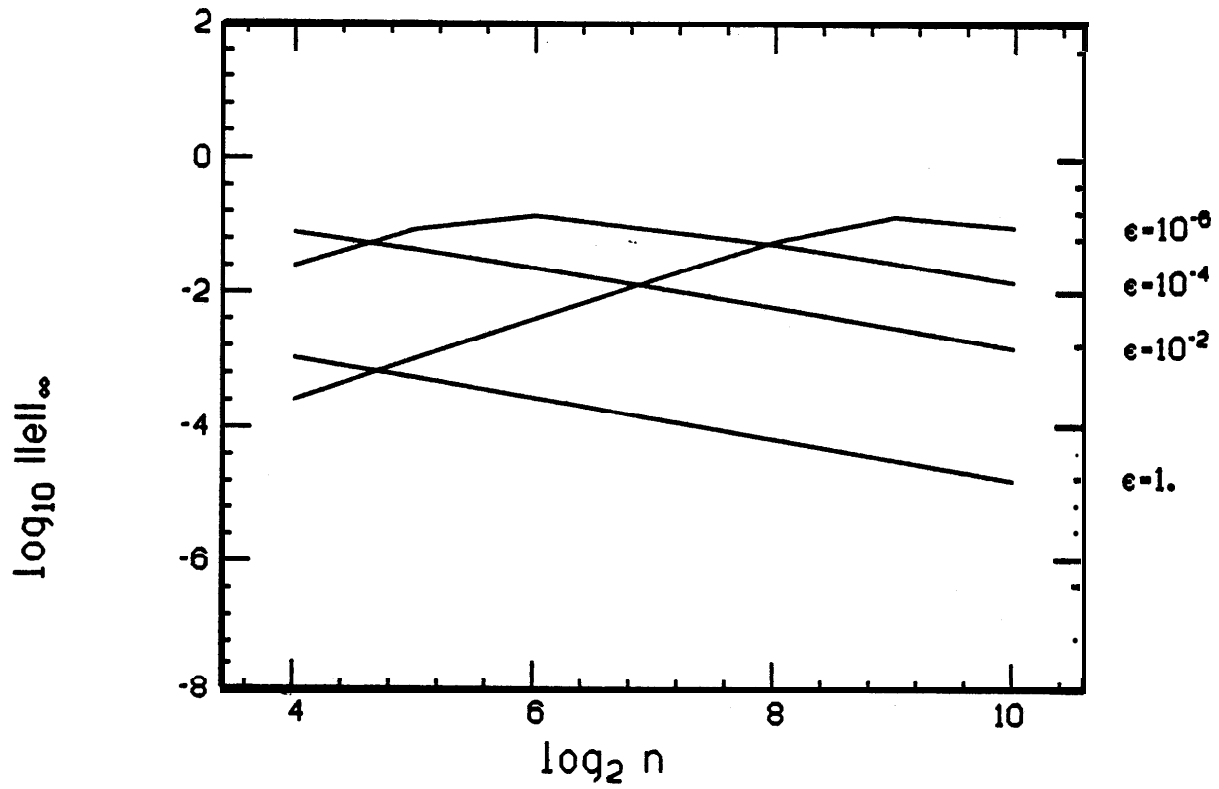


FIGURE 2 L-norm of error, Scheme 2

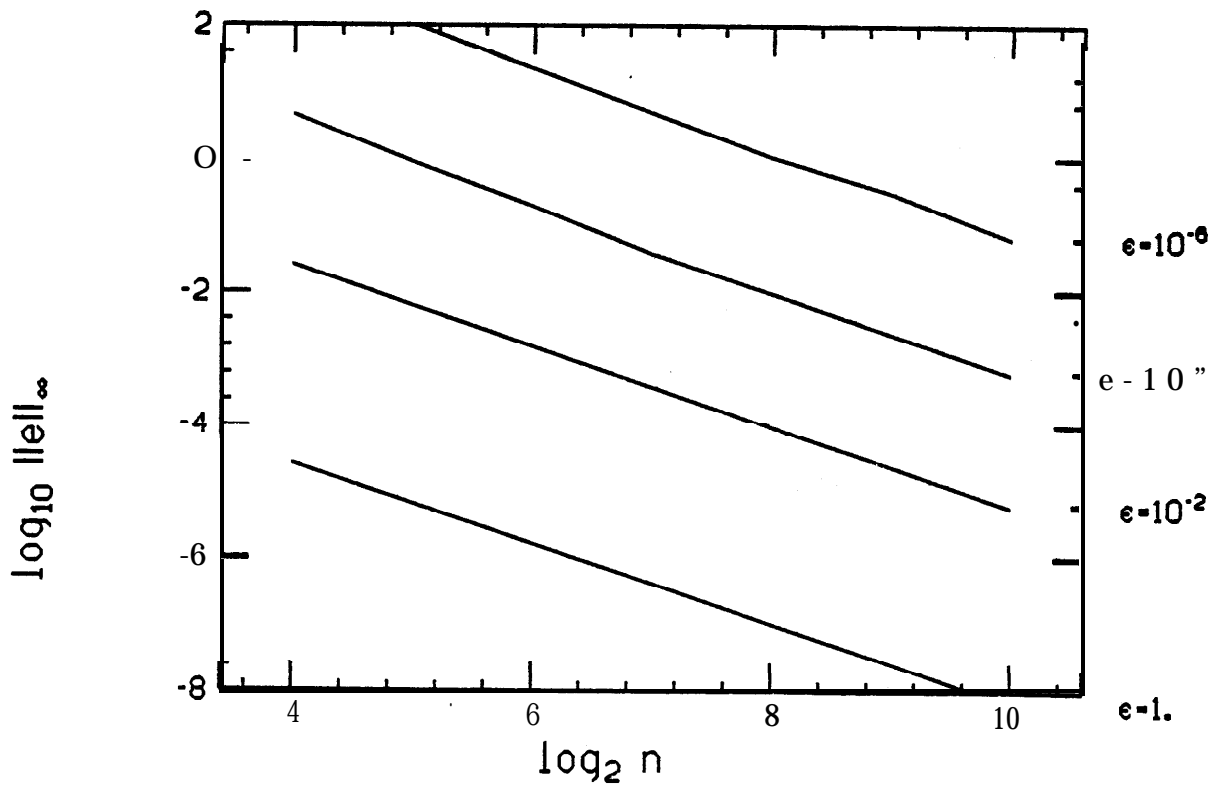


FIGURE 3  $L^\infty$ -norm of error, Scheme 3

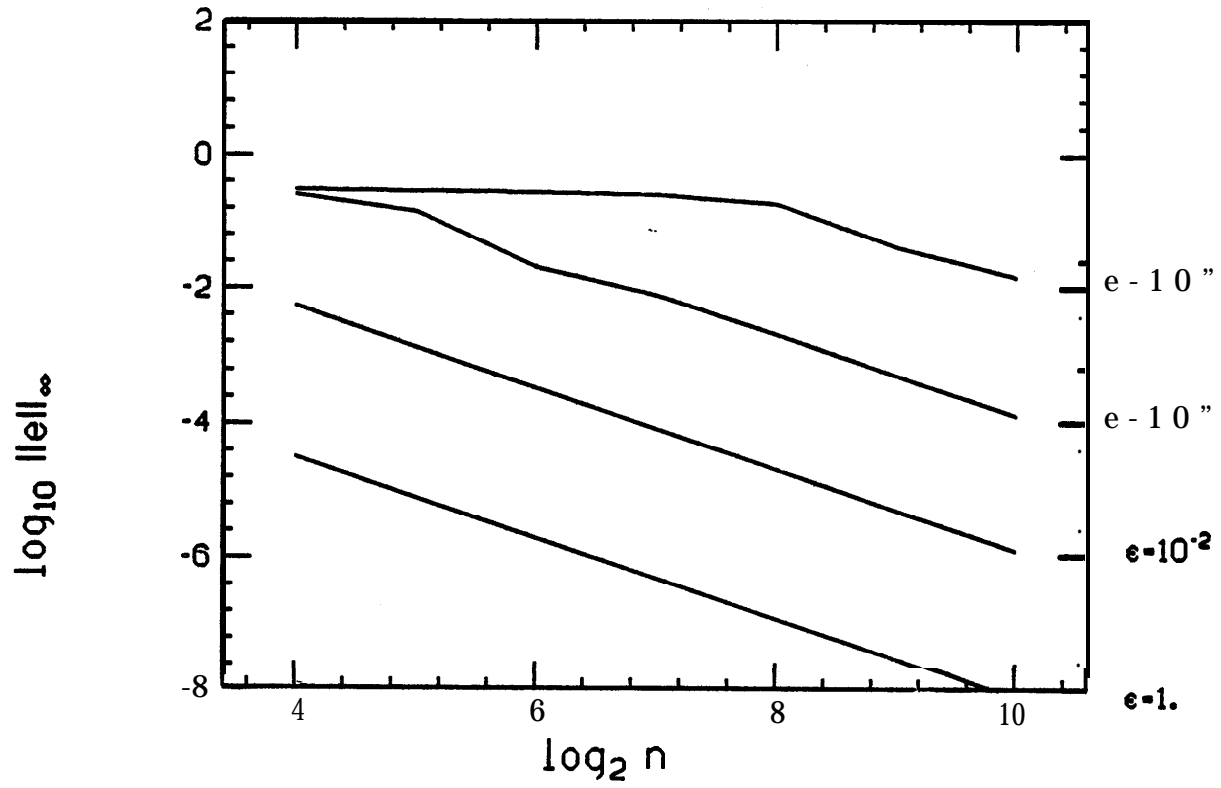


FIGURE 4 L-norm of error, Scheme 4

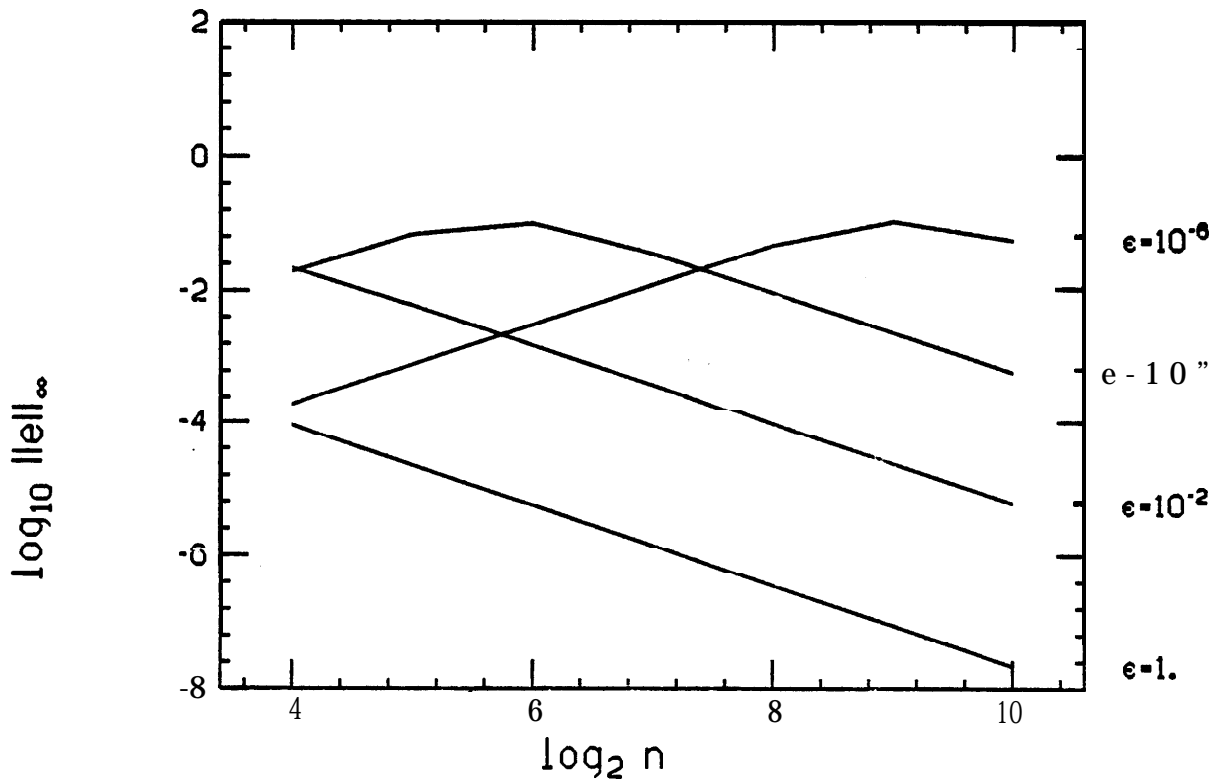




FIGURE 5  $L^2$ -norm of error, Scheme 1

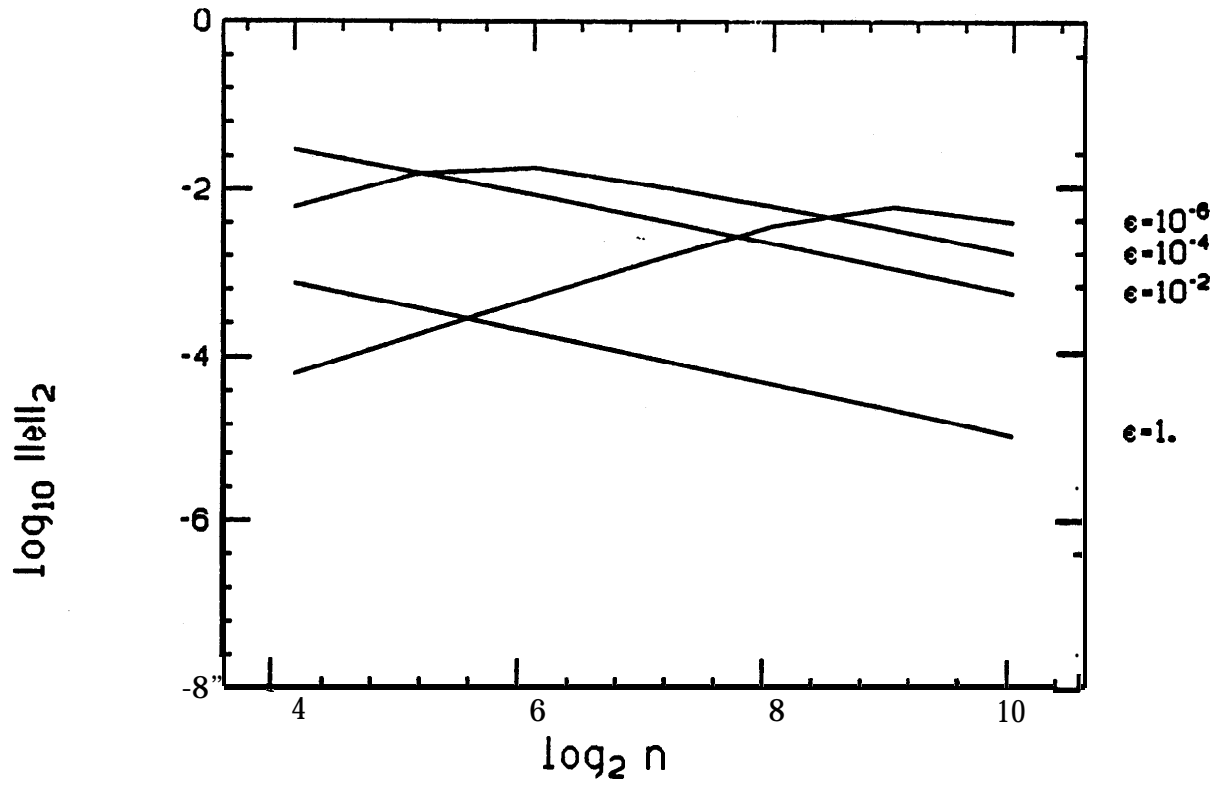


FIGURE 6  $L^2$ -norm of error, Scheme 2

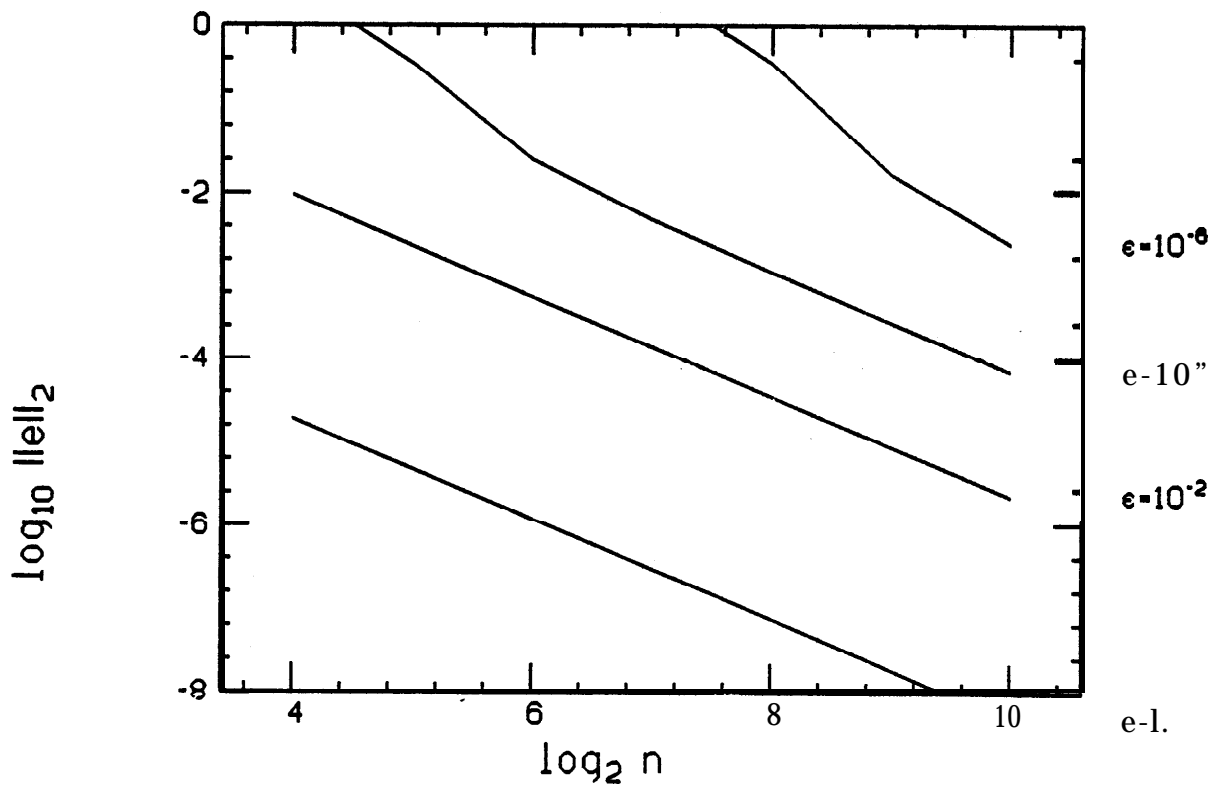


FIGURE 7  $L^2$ -norm of error, Scheme 3

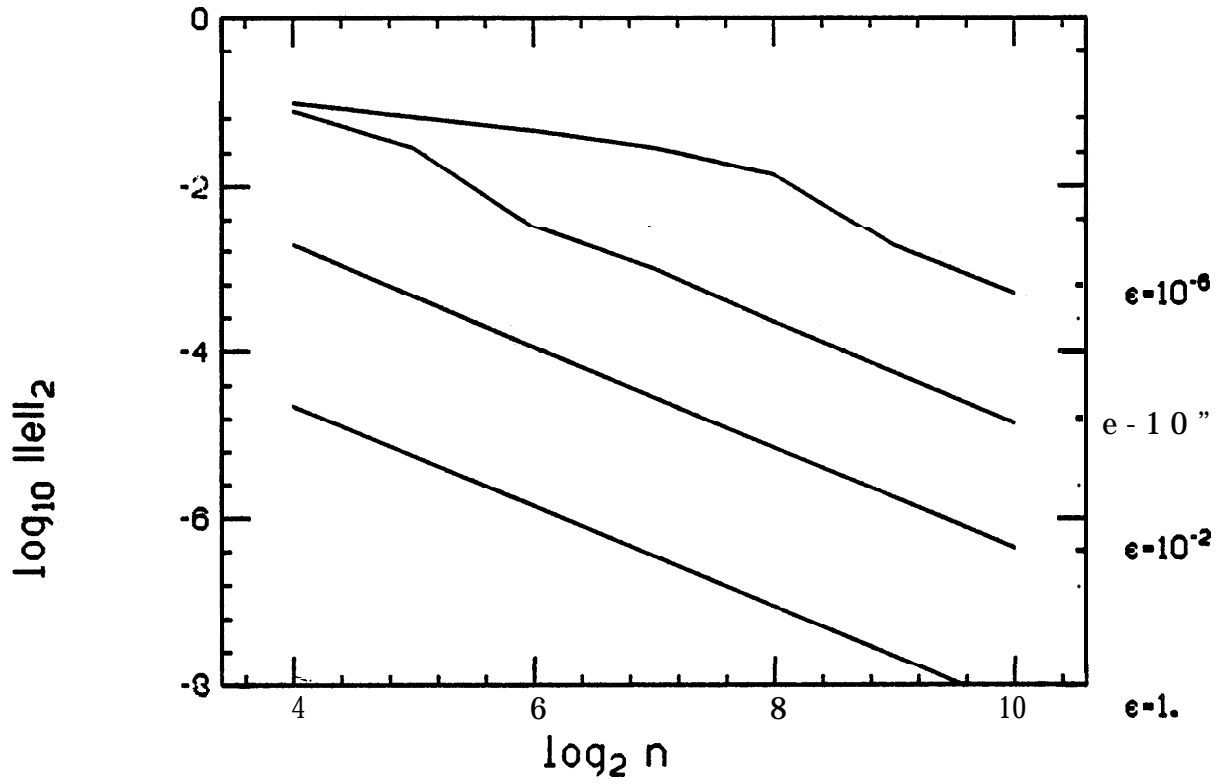
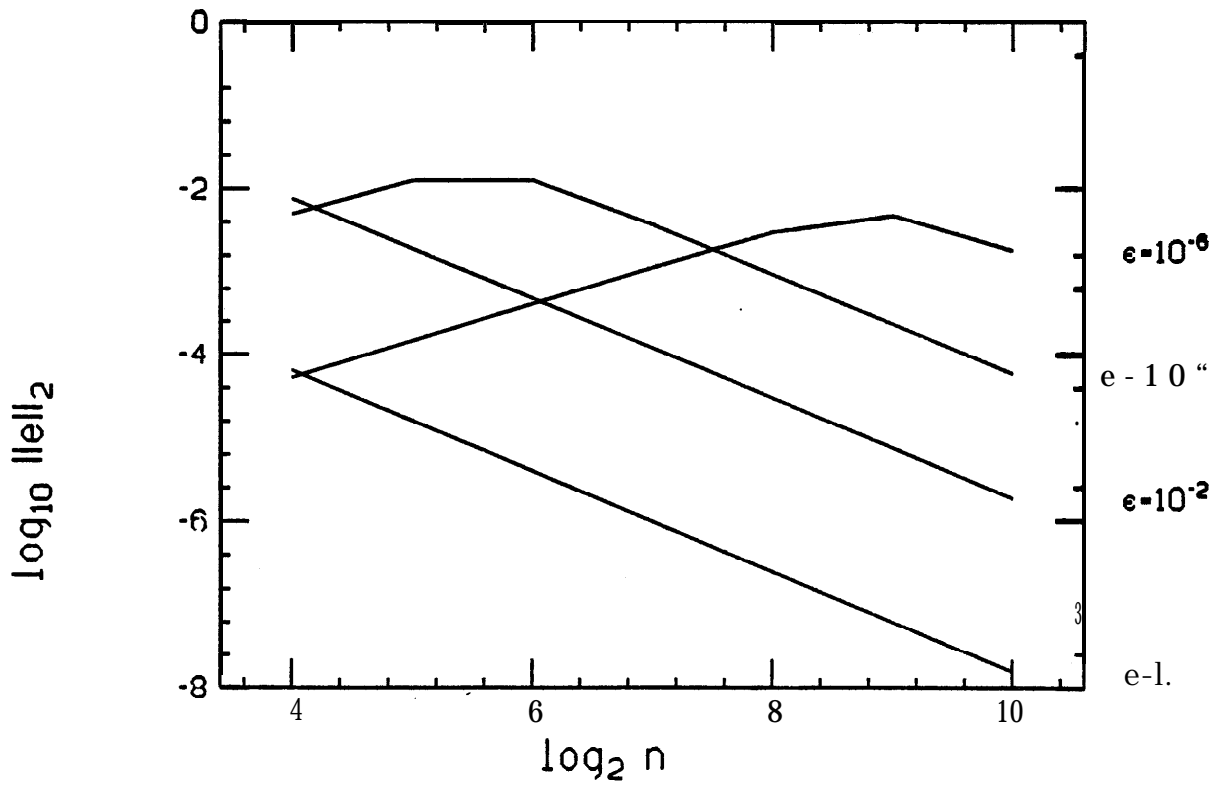


FIGURE 8  $L^2$ -norm of error, Scheme 4



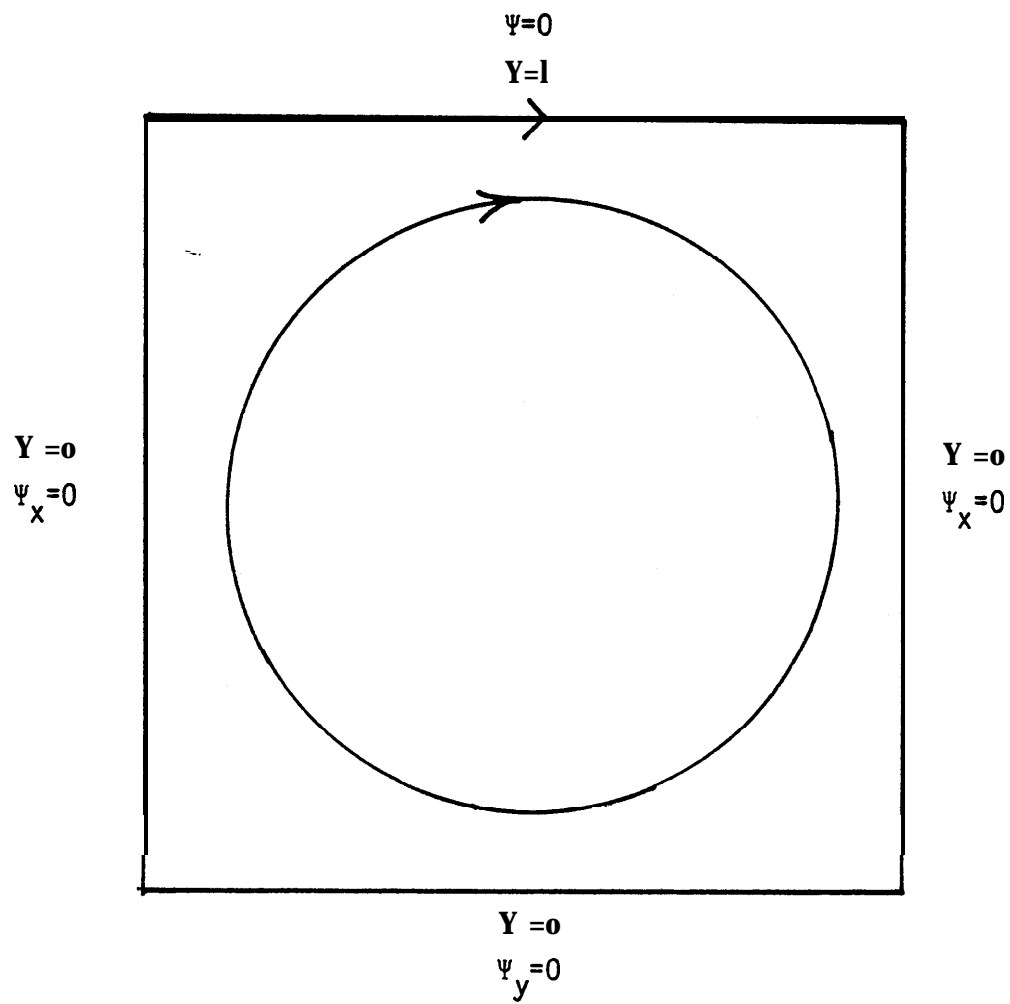


Fig. 9. Driven cavity: boundary conditions.

FIGURE 10  
Driven cavity solutions with old scheme

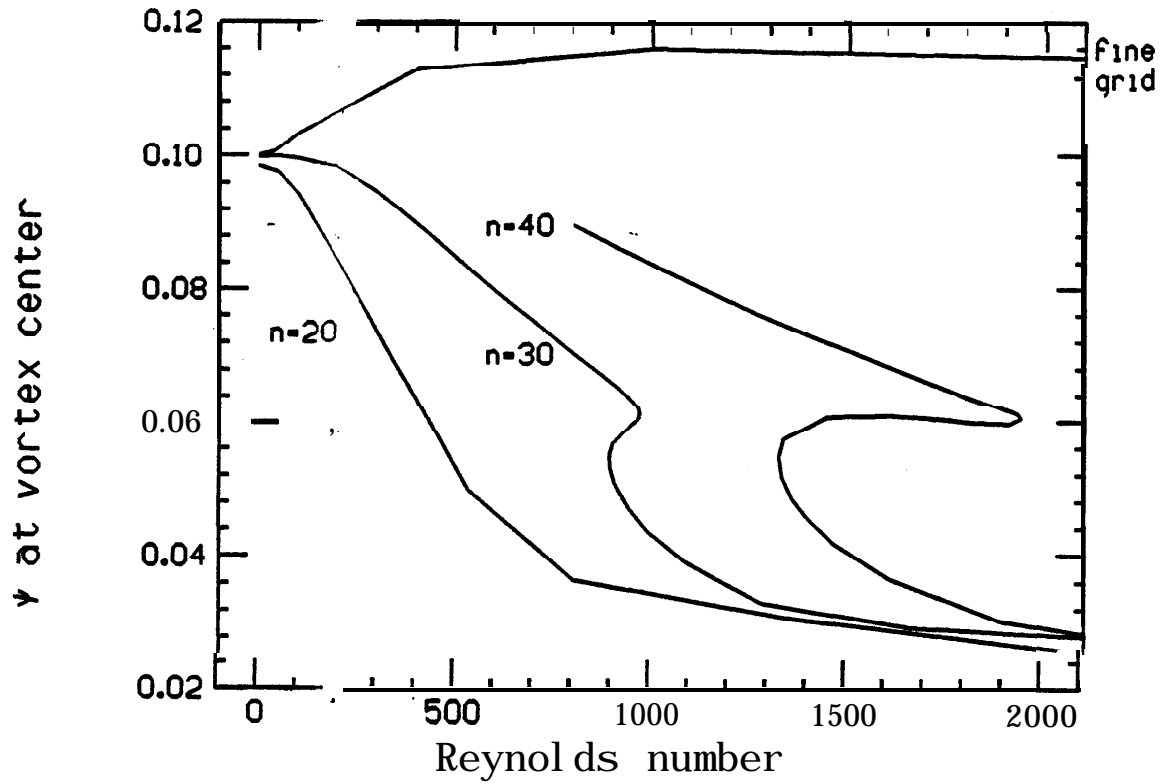


FIGURE 11  
Driven cavity solutions with new scheme

