

***N*-Solitonic Solution in Terms of Wronskian Determinant for a Perturbed Variable-Coefficient Korteweg-de Vries Equation**

Cheng Zhang · Hong-Wu Zhu · Chun-Yi Zhang · Zhen-Zhi Yao · Xing Lü · Xiang-Hua Meng · Bo Tian

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Abstract With the help of symbolic computation, we first derive the bilinear form and an auto-Bäcklund transformation for a perturbed variable-coefficient Korteweg-de Vries equation in this paper. We also construct the N -solitonic solution in the Wronskian form and give the corresponding proof via the Wronskian technique. Furthermore, the authors verify that the $(N - 1)$ - and N -solitonic solutions indeed satisfy the auto-Bäcklund transformation.

Keywords Variable-coefficient Korteweg-de Vries equation · Auto-Bäcklund transformation · N -solitonic solution · Wronskian determinant

1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in studying variable-coefficient Korteweg-de Vries (vcKdV) models with different forms, and some exact analytic solutions and integrable properties have been established in [1–9]. Considering that coefficient functions are able to reflect the slowly-varying inhomogeneities and nonuniformities of boundaries, the vcKdV models can be used in many important physical and dynamic processes such as the propagation through fluid-filled tubes with elastic walls and tapering effects [10, 11],

C. Zhang · H.-W. Zhu · Z.-Z. Yao · X. Lü · X.-H. Meng · B. Tian (✉)
School of Science, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, P.O. Box 122, Beijing 100876, China
e-mail: gaoyt@public.bta.net.cn

B. Tian
Key Laboratory of Optical Communication and Lightwave Technologies, Ministry of Education, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, Beijing 100876, China

C.-Y. Zhang
Ministry-of-Education Key Laboratory of Fluid Mechanics and National Laboratory for Computational Fluid Dynamics, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Beijing 100083, China

C.-Y. Zhang
Meteorology Center of Air Force Command Post, Changchun 130051, China

motion of pressure pulses in fluid-filled distensible tubes [12–17], Bose–Einstein condensates in the weakly-interacting atomic gases [18–21], cylindrical dust-acoustic and dust-ion-acoustic waves in an un-magnetized dusty plasma [22–25].

As one of the most important vcKdV models, the perturbed vcKdV equation [26] is of the form:

$$u_t + f(t)uu_x + g(t)u_{xxx} + l(t)u = 0, \tag{1}$$

where the wave amplitude $u(x, t)$ is a function of the scaled “space” x and “time” t , $f(t) \neq 0$, $g(t) \neq 0$ and $l(t)$ represent the coefficients of the nonlinear, dispersive and perturbed terms, respectively. Applications of (1) include the nonlinear excitations of a Bose gas of impenetrable bosons with longitudinal confinement [11, 26], dynamics of a circular rod composed of a general compressible hyperelastic material with variable cross-sections and material density [27], propagation of weakly nonlinear solitonic waves in a varied-depth shallow-water tunnel [28, 29], and evolution of internal gravity waves in lakes of changing cross-section [30].

As we know, the Hirota’s direct method [31] and Wronskian technique [32, 33] are two important tools to deal with nonlinear evolution equations (NLEEs) and soliton problems: the former can be used to effectively construct the N -soliton solution in the form of N th-order polynomial in N exponentials for a large class of NLEEs; while the latter provides a simple and straightforward way of verifying the validity of the N -soliton solution by virtue of properties of the Wronskian determinant.

With the help of symbolic computation [34–47], the structure of this paper is organized as follows: Sect. 2 gives the bilinear form and an auto-Bäcklund transformation (BT) for (1). In Sect. 3, we construct the N -solitonic solution in the Wronskian form and prove its validity via the Wronskian technique. Furthermore, Sect. 4 verifies that the auto-BT between the $(N - 1)$ - and N -solitonic solutions is indeed satisfied. Finally, Sect. 5 offers the conclusions.

2 Bilinear Form and an Auto-BT for (1)

By introducing a potential function $w(x, t)$ for $u(x, t)$, $u = w_x$, it follows from (1) that w satisfies the equation

$$w_t + \frac{1}{2}f(t)w_x^2 + g(t)w_{xxx} + l(t)w = 0. \tag{2}$$

Through the dependent variable transformation

$$w = x^2 A(t) + 12a(t) \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \ln[F(x, t)], \tag{3}$$

(2) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{x^2}{6a(t)} [F^2 l(t) A(t) + F^2 A'(t) + 2f(t) F^2 A^2(t)] + \left[2l(t) + \frac{2a'(t)}{a(t)} \right] F F_x \\ & + 2F F_{xt} - 2F_x F_t + 2x f(t) A(t) (2F F_{xx} - 2F_x^2) \\ & + g(t) (6F_{xx}^2 - 8F_x F_{xxx} + 2F F_{xxxx}) = 0, \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

where $a(t) = \frac{g(t)}{f(t)}$. If we set $A(t) = \frac{e^{-\int l(t) dt}}{2c_1 + 2 \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt}$, (4) can be written as the following variable-coefficient bilinear form

$$\left[D_x D_t + g(t) D_x^4 + h(t) x D_x^2 + h(t) \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right] (F \cdot F) = 0, \tag{5}$$

with the constraint condition

$$g(t) = c_2 f(t) e^{-\int l(t) dt} \left[c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt \right], \tag{6}$$

where $h(t) = \frac{f(t)e^{-\int l(t) dt}}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt}$, c_1 and $c_2 \neq 0$ are both arbitrary constants, while constraint (6) is just the condition for (1) to pass the Painlevé test [48], and $D_x D_t$, D_x^4 and D_x^2 are all bilinear derivative operators [49–51] defined by

$$D_x^m D_t^n a \cdot b \equiv \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial}{\partial x'} \right)^m \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - \frac{\partial}{\partial t'} \right)^n a(x, t) b(x', t') \Big|_{x'=x, t'=t}. \tag{7}$$

Therefore, under constraint (6), the bilinear form for (1) is obtained, i.e., (5).

Based on (5), a bilinear auto-BT for (1) with constraint (6) can be presented as

$$\begin{cases} [D_t + g(t) D_x^3 + 3\lambda(t) g(t) D_x + h(t) x D_x + \delta(t)] F' \cdot F = 0, \\ [D_x^2 - \lambda(t)] F' \cdot F = 0, \end{cases} \tag{8}$$

where $F(x, t)$ and $F'(x, t)$ are two different solutions for (5), and $\lambda(t)$ and $\delta(t)$ are both arbitrary functions of t .

It is noted that the obtained bilinear auto-BT is very useful in deriving the N -solitonic solution in Wronskian form. To illustrate, we can calculate the one-solitonic solution from the seed solution $F' = 1$. Without loss of generality, the function $\delta(t)$ in (8) is assumed to zero. Substituting $F' = 1$ into (8) yields

$$\begin{cases} F_t + g(t) F_{xxx} + 3\lambda(t) g(t) F_x + h(t) x F_x = 0, \\ F_{xx} - \lambda(t) F = 0, \end{cases} \tag{9}$$

from which the one-solitonic solution of (5) is obtained as

$$F = e^\theta + e^{-\theta}, \tag{10}$$

$$\theta = \frac{kx}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt} + \frac{4k^3 c_2}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt}, \tag{11}$$

where k is an arbitrary constant. Moreover, according to (10, 11) and $u = w_x$, the one-solitonic solution of (1) in explicit form can be expressed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} u &= \frac{x e^{-\int l(t) dt}}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt} + 12a(t) [\ln F(x, t)]_{xx} \\ &= \frac{x e^{-\int l(t) dt}}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt} + \frac{12k^2 c_2 e^{-\int l(t) dt}}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt} \operatorname{Sech}^2 \left[\frac{k(x + 4k^2 c_2)}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt} \right]. \end{aligned} \tag{12}$$

3 Wronskian Form of the N -Solitonic Solution

Using the Wronskian technique developed by Freeman and Nimmo, we assume that the N -solitonic solution of (1) can be written in the Wronskian form,

$$F^{(N)} = W(\phi_1, \phi_2, \dots, \phi_N) = \begin{vmatrix} \phi_1 & \phi_1^{(1)} & \phi_1^{(2)} & \dots & \phi_1^{(N-1)} \\ \phi_2 & \phi_2^{(1)} & \phi_2^{(2)} & \dots & \phi_2^{(N-1)} \\ \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dots & \cdot \\ \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dots & \cdot \\ \phi_{N-1} & \phi_{N-1}^{(1)} & \phi_{N-1}^{(2)} & \dots & \phi_{N-1}^{(N-1)} \\ \phi_N & \phi_N^{(1)} & \phi_N^{(2)} & \dots & \phi_N^{(N-1)} \end{vmatrix}, \tag{13}$$

with

$$\phi_i^{(j)} = \frac{\partial^j \phi_i}{\partial x^j} \quad (j = 1, 2, \dots, N - 1), \quad \phi_i = e^{\theta_i} + (-1)^{i+1} e^{-\theta_i},$$

$$\theta_i = \frac{k_i x}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt} + \frac{4k_i^3 c_2}{c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt},$$

and ϕ_i ($i = 1, 2, \dots, N$) satisfy the partial differential equations

$$\begin{cases} \phi_{ixx} = \lambda_i(t)\phi_i, \\ \phi_{it} = -4g(t)\phi_{ixxx} - h(t)x\phi_{ix}, \end{cases} \tag{14}$$

where $\lambda_i(t) = \frac{k_i^2}{[c_1 + \int e^{-\int l(t) dt} f(t) dt]^2}$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots, N$) are the functions of t with k_i as arbitrary parameters. If we choose the notation $W(\phi_1, \phi_2, \dots, \phi_N) = (0, 1, 2, \dots, N - 1) = \widehat{(N - 1)}$, then, $F^{(N)} = \widehat{(N - 1)}$ and the derivatives of $F^{(N)}$ can be easily computed out:

$$F^{(N)} = \widehat{(N - 1)}, \tag{15}$$

$$F_x^{(N)} = \widehat{(N - 2, N)}, \tag{16}$$

$$F_{xx}^{(N)} = \widehat{(N - 3, N - 1, N)} + \widehat{(N - 2, N + 1)}, \tag{17}$$

$$F_{xxx}^{(N)} = \widehat{(N - 4, N - 2, N - 1, N)} + 2\widehat{(N - 3, N - 1, N + 1)} + \widehat{(N - 2, N + 2)}, \tag{18}$$

$$F_{xxxx}^{(N)} = \widehat{(N - 5, N - 3, N - 2, N - 1, N)} + 3\widehat{(N - 4, N - 2, N - 1, N + 1)} + 2\widehat{(N - 3, N, N + 1)} + 3\widehat{(N - 3, N - 1, N + 2)} + \widehat{(N - 2, N + 3)}, \tag{19}$$

and using the second formula of (14), we have

$$F_t^{(N)} = -4g(t) [\widehat{(N - 4, N - 2, N - 1, N)} - \widehat{(N - 3, N - 1, N + 1)} + \widehat{(N - 2, N + 2)}] - h(t)x\widehat{(N - 2, N)} - \frac{N(N - 1)}{2}h(t)\widehat{(N - 1)}, \tag{20}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 F_{xt}^{(N)} &= -4g(t)[\widehat{(N-5, N-3, N-2, N-1, N)} - \widehat{(N-3, N, N+1)} \\
 &\quad + \widehat{(N-2, N+3)}] - h(t)\widehat{(N-2, N)} - h(t)x\widehat{(N-3, N-1, N)} \\
 &\quad - h(t)x\widehat{(N-2, N+1)} - \frac{N(N-1)}{2}h(t)\widehat{(N-2, N)}.
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{21}$$

For verifying solution (13) satisfies (5), we substitute (15–21) into (5), yielding

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\left[D_x D_t + g(t)D_x^4 + h(t)x D_x^2 + h(t)\frac{\partial}{\partial x} \right] (F^{(N)} \cdot F^{(N)}) \\
 &= 2F^{(N)}F_{xt}^{(N)} - 2F_t^{(N)}F_x^{(N)} + g(t)[2F^{(N)}F_{xxx}^{(N)} - 8F_x^{(N)}F_{xxx}^{(N)} + 6(F_{xx}^{(N)})^2] \\
 &\quad + h(t)x[2F^{(N)}F_{xx}^{(N)} - 2(F_x^{(N)})^2] + 2h(t)F^{(N)}F_x^{(N)} \\
 &= 24g(t)[\widehat{(N-1)(N-3, N, N+1)} - \widehat{(N-2, N)(N-3, N-1, N+1)} \\
 &\quad + \widehat{(N-3, N-1, N)(N-2, N+1)}] \\
 &= 12g(t) \begin{vmatrix} \widehat{N-3} & \mathbf{0} & N-2 & N-1 & N & N+1 \\ \mathbf{0} & \widehat{N-3} & N-2 & N-1 & N & N+1 \end{vmatrix} = 0,
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{22}$$

which suggests that solution (13) is indeed an exact analytic solution of (5).

4 An Application of the Wronskian Technique to the Auto-BT

It is known that the auto-BT can give a hierarchy of explicit solutions including the N -solitonic solution. In this section, we will employ the Wronskian technique to verify that the auto-BT (8) between the $(N-1)$ - and N -solitonic solutions is indeed satisfied.

Similarly, if we choose $F^{(N)} = \widehat{(N-1)}$ and

$$\begin{aligned}
 F^{(N-1)} &= W(\phi_1, \phi_2, \dots, \phi_{N-1}, \tau) = \begin{vmatrix} \phi_1 & \phi_1^{(1)} & \phi_1^{(2)} & \dots & \phi_1^{(N-2)} & 0 \\ \phi_2 & \phi_2^{(1)} & \phi_2^{(2)} & \dots & \phi_2^{(N-2)} & 0 \\ \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dots & \cdot & \cdot \\ \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dots & \cdot & \cdot \\ \cdot & \cdot & \cdot & \dots & \cdot & \cdot \\ \phi_{N-1} & \phi_{N-1}^{(1)} & \phi_{N-1}^{(2)} & \dots & \phi_{N-1}^{(N-2)} & 0 \\ \phi_N & \phi_N^{(1)} & \phi_N^{(2)} & \dots & \phi_N^{(N-2)} & 1 \end{vmatrix} \\
 &= \widehat{(N-2, \tau)},
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{23}$$

where $\tau = (0, \dots, 0, 1)^T$, then $F^{(N)}$ denotes the N -solitonic solution and $F^{(N-1)}$ is the $(N-1)$ -solitonic solution. Meanwhile, the derivatives of $F^{(N-1)}$ can be written as:

$$F_x^{(N-1)} = \widehat{(N-3, N-1, \tau)},
 \tag{24}$$

$$F_{xx}^{(N-1)} = \widehat{(N-4, N-2, N-1, \tau)} + \widehat{(N-3, N, \tau)},
 \tag{25}$$

$$F_{xxx}^{(N-1)} = (\widehat{N-5}, N-3, N-2, N-1, \tau) + 2(\widehat{N-4}, N-2, N, \tau) + (\widehat{N-3}, N+1, \tau), \tag{26}$$

$$F_t^{(N-1)} = -4g(t)[(\widehat{N-5}, N-3, N-2, N-1, \tau) - (\widehat{N-4}, N-2, N, \tau) + (\widehat{N-3}, N+1, \tau)] - h(t)x(\widehat{N-3}, N-1, \tau) - \frac{(N-1)(N-2)}{2}h(t)(\widehat{N-2}, \tau). \tag{27}$$

Substitution of (15–21) and (23–27) into the auto-BT (8) gives

$$\begin{aligned} & [D_t + g(t)D_x^3 + 3\lambda(t)g(t)D_x + h(t)x D_x + \delta(t)](F^{(N)} \cdot F^{(N-1)}) \\ &= F_t^{(N)} F^{(N-1)} - F^{(N)} F_t^{(N-1)} + \delta(t)F^{(N)} F^{(N-1)} \\ &+ g(t)(F_{xxx}^{(N)} F^{(N-1)} - 3F_{xx}^{(N)} F_x^{(N-1)} + 3F_x^{(N)} F_{xx}^{(N-1)} - F^{(N)} F_{xxx}^{(N-1)}) \\ &+ 3\lambda(t)g(t)(F_x^{(N)} F^{(N-1)} - F^{(N)} F_x^{(N-1)}) + h(t)x(F_x^{(N)} F^{(N-1)} - F^{(N)} F_x^{(N-1)}) \\ &= 6g(t) \begin{vmatrix} \widehat{N-4} & N-2 & \mathbf{0} & 0 & N-3 & N-1 & N & \tau \\ \mathbf{0} & 0 & \widehat{N-4} & N-2 & N-3 & N-1 & N & 0 \end{vmatrix} \\ &+ 6g(t) \begin{vmatrix} \widehat{N-3} & \mathbf{0} & N-2 & N-1 & N+1 & \tau \\ \mathbf{0} & \widehat{N-3} & N-2 & N-1 & N+1 & 0 \end{vmatrix} = 0, \end{aligned} \tag{28}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} & [D_x^2 - \lambda(t)](F^{(N)} \cdot F^{(N-1)}) \\ &= F_{xx}^{(N)} F^{(N-1)} - 2F_x^{(N)} F_x^{(N-1)} + F^{(N)} F_{xx}^{(N-1)} - \lambda(t)F^{(N)} F^{(N-1)} \\ &= 2(\widehat{N-2}, \tau)(\widehat{N-3}, N-1, N) - 2(\widehat{N-2}, N)(\widehat{N-3}, N-1, \tau) \\ &+ 2(\widehat{N-1})(\widehat{N-3}, N, \tau) \\ &= \begin{vmatrix} \widehat{N-3} & \mathbf{0} & N-2 & N-1 & N & \tau \\ \mathbf{0} & \widehat{N-3} & N-2 & N-1 & N & \tau \end{vmatrix} = 0, \end{aligned} \tag{29}$$

provided that $\lambda(t) = \frac{K_N^2}{[c_1 + \int e^{-\int \lambda(t) dt} f(t) dt]^2}$ and $\delta(t) = (1 - N)h(t)$. The above results show that the auto-BT (8) is indeed satisfied.

5 Conclusions

In this paper, we have derived the bilinear form and auto-BT for a perturbed vcKdV equation under a more generalized constraint condition. We have also constructed the N -solitonic solution in the Wronskian form and proved it by direct substitution into the bilinear equation. Further, we have verified that the $(N - 1)$ - and N -solitonic solutions satisfy the obtained

auto-BT. Based on the results above, it has been shown that the Hirota's direct method and the Wronskian technique are also useful in the study of vKdV models and other variable-coefficient NLEEs.

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