

# An Approximate Method to Build an Improved Stress Field in Local Regions

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An approximate procedure to enhance the accuracy of the continuous stress field in local regions has been proposed, based on Loubignac's iterative method and the theory of conjugate approximations. The validity of the proposed method has been tested through three examples: a thick-walled cylinder under internal pressure; an infinite plate with a central circular hole subjected to uniaxial tension; and a short cantilever beam. Analysis of the examples shows that the stress field obtained for the local region model by the proposed method agrees well with that for the whole domain model. In addition, a significant reduction in computing time to obtain the improved stress field implies that the proposed method can be an efficient alternative for the detailed stress analysis in local regions.

**Key Words :** Displacement-based Finite Element Method, Loubignac's Iterative Method, Conjugate Stress, Projection Method,  $L_2$ -norm of Force-imbalance, Total Strain Energy, Local Strain Energy Density, Strain Energy Density Index

## 1. Introduction

After more than three decades of study and development, the displacement-based finite element method has come to be an effective and widely used tool for numerical analysis in the engineering field because it has following advantages: a simple theory based on the principle of minimizing the total potential energy and a good convergence of the solution. Conventional displacement-based finite elements maintain only  $C^0$  continuity over the problem domain (Strang and Fix, 1973). In many applications, the quantities of primary interest are not the primary variables, such as displacement and temperature, but rather functions of the derivatives of the primary variables, such as stress and strain, and flux. Since these derivatives do not possess inter-element continuity, a number of post-processing techniques have been developed over the years to interpret these discontinuous fields.

Various methods to overcome these disadvan-

tages have been developed. First, mixed formulations in which the stresses and strains are interpreted independently of the displacements have been used with success in the context of fluid mechanics and visco-elastic flows. However, mixed solution methods have not achieved widespread popularity owing to the large number of solution parameters involved. Second, the projection method, i. e., the theory of conjugate approximations which yields a smooth stress field has been proposed and developed by some researchers (Hinton and Campbell, 1974; Brauchli and Oden, 1971). Even though the stress field from the projection method over the whole domain, such as a global  $L_2$ -projection (i. e., least square error method) are continuous over the whole domain, this method requires too much computing time. Therefore, a commercial code, such as ANSYS, employs local  $L_2$ -projection over each element and averages the nodal stresses at common nodes to get an improved stress field. Third, Loubignac, Cantin, and Touzot (1977) have proposed an iterative method that improves the accuracy of both stresses and displacements in finite element stress analysis. Then, this method requires too

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much computation to get an improved stress field and displacement field. In addition, Zienkiewicz, Li. and Nakazawa (1985) proved that the combining of the iterative method with the projection method was consequently identical to the mixed formulation when full convergence was reached. However, the objective of the above methods is to get an improved stress field rather over the entire structure.

In many practical cases, it is necessary to model a small portion of the structure, such as a stress critical component, in greater detail. The first approach to this end is to model the entire structure with a fine mesh. However, this is computationally expensive because large number of equations must be solved. The second approach is to transit from a refined mesh in the area of interest to coarse mesh in the rest of the structure using either triangular elements or specially formulated transition elements. The user may encounter problems generating this type of mesh, especially if a mesh generation preprocessor is being used. The third approach is to solve the problem by subregion modelling, such as the specified displacement method in ANSYS or the zooming method etc. As the stresses by these subregion modelling are also based on the conventional displacement-based finite element analysis, inter-element discontinuities in the stresses still remain.

In this study, an efficient method to build an improved and continuous stress field without further refining the grid in local regions is proposed, based on the theory of conjugate approximations and Loubignac's iterative algorithm. To check the validity of the proposed method, stress analysis on three examples has been carried out.

## 2. Displacement-based Finite Element Formulation

In the conventional displacement-based finite element method, after a grid is generated over the entire domain, a continuous displacement distribution needs to be assumed for every element (Bathe, 1982). For each element, the displacement field  $\{u\}^e$  where superscript  $e$  denotes the element, is generally assumed to be:

$$\{u\}^e = [N] \cdot \{\Delta\}^e \quad (1)$$

where  $[N]$  is the shape function matrix of the element and  $\{\Delta\}^e$  is the displacement vector of the element.

The strain vector  $\{\varepsilon\}^e$  can be derived as:

$$\{\varepsilon\}^e = [B] \cdot \{u\}^e \quad (2)$$

where  $[B]$  is the element strain matrix.

The stress vector  $\{\sigma\}^e$  can be derived as:

$$\{\sigma\}^e = [D] \cdot \{\varepsilon\}^e = [D] \cdot [B] \cdot \{u\}^e \quad (3)$$

where  $[D]$  is the constitutive matrix of the material.

The virtual work principle for an element is expressed as:

$$\int_{\Omega_e} [B]^T \{\sigma\}^e d\Omega_e = \{F\}^e \quad (4)$$

where  $\Omega_e$  is the domain of the element, and  $\{F\}^e$  is the nodal force vector of the element.

Substituting Eq. (3) into Eq. (4), we have

$$[K]^e = \int_{\Omega_e} [B]^T \cdot [D] \cdot [B] d\Omega_e \quad (6)$$

is the stiffness matrix of the element.

## 3. Conjugate Approximation

Brauchli and Oden (1971) proposed the theory of conjugate approximations and applied the theory for continuous stress field representation in the conforming finite element model. To be brief, the conjugate stress idea is summarized as follows:

1) Consider a finite element model of an elastic body which consists of a collection of  $E$  elements connected together at  $G$  nodes, and suppose that the finite element model of the displacement components ( $u_i(x)$ ) is of the form

$$u_i = u_i^\Delta \Phi_\Delta(x) \quad (7)$$

where the repeated index  $\Delta$  is summed from 1 to  $G$ .

Here  $u_i^\Delta$  are the components of displacement at node  $\Delta$ ,  $i=1, 2, 3$ ,  $\Delta=1, 2, \dots, G$  and  $\Phi_\Delta(x)$  are interpolation functions which have the properties  $\Phi_\Delta(x^r) = \delta_\Delta^r$ ;  $\Delta, r=1, 2, \dots, G$ .

2) From the constitutive equations, the conventional stress tensor ( $\sigma^{ij}$ ) is obtained from finite element analysis.

$$\sigma^{ij} = E^{ijmn} u_m^{\Delta} \Phi_{\Delta,n}(x) \quad (8)$$

where  $E^{ijmn}$  is the elasticity tensor and  $\Phi_{\Delta,n}(x) \equiv \frac{\partial \Phi_{\Delta}}{\partial x_n}$ ,  $x_n$  being the material (Cartesian) co-ordinates of  $x$ .

3) Conjugate stresses,  $S^{ij\Delta}$ , and the consistent nodal average,  $S_{\Delta}^{ij}$ , are defined as follows:

$$S_{\Delta}^{ij} = \langle \sigma^{ij}, \Phi_{\Delta}(x) \rangle = \int_{\Omega} \sigma^{ij} \Phi_{\Delta}(x) d\Omega \quad (9)$$

$$S^{ij\Delta} = \langle \sigma^{ij}, \Phi^{\Delta}(x) \rangle = \int_{\Omega} \sigma^{ij} \Phi^{\Delta}(x) d\Omega \quad (10)$$

The conjugated approximation functions,  $\Phi^{\Delta}(x)$  are given by

$$\Phi^{\Delta}(x) = C^{\Delta T} \Phi_F(x) \quad (11)$$

Here  $C^{\Delta T}$  is the inverse of the matrix  $C_{\Delta F}$ , defined as follows:

$$C_{\Delta F} S^{ij\Delta} = S_{\Delta}^{ij} \quad (12)$$

where  $C_{\Delta F}$  is the fundamental matrix defined as the inner product of the shape functions over the whole domain.

$$C_{\Delta F} = \langle \Phi_{\Delta}(x), \Phi_F(x) \rangle = \int \Phi_F(x) \cdot \Phi_{\Delta}(x) d\Omega \quad (13)$$

The major difficulty encountered in applying the theory of consistent stress approximations concerns the matrix  $C_{\Delta F}$  of Eq. (12).

### 4. Stress Improvement in the Local Region

Figure 1 represents the whole domain, which consists of the local region, the outer region, and

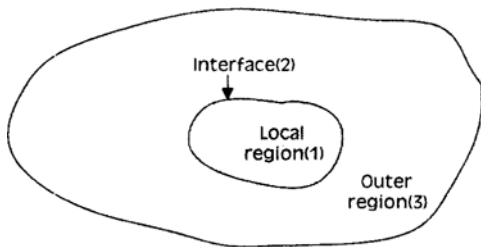


Fig. 1 Illustration of the whole domain and the local region.

the interface. The finite element equation for the whole domain can be expressed as follows, where the subscripts 1, 2, and 3 represent the local region, the interface, and the outer region, respectively.

$$\begin{bmatrix} K_{11} & K_{12} & 0 \\ K_{21} & K_{22} & K_{23} \\ 0 & K_{32} & K_{33} \end{bmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} u_1 \\ u_2 \\ u_3 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} f_1 \\ f_2 \\ f_3 \end{pmatrix} \quad (14)$$

Discarding the third equation in Eq. (14), the finite element equation, involving only the local region and interface, expressed as subscript  $L$ , is as follows:

$$[K]_L u_L = f_L \quad (15)$$

where,

$$[K]_L = \begin{bmatrix} K_{11} & K_{12} \\ K_{21} & K_{22} \end{bmatrix}, \quad u_L = \begin{pmatrix} u_1 \\ u_2 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$f_L = \begin{pmatrix} f_1 \\ f_2 - K_{23} u_3 \end{pmatrix}$$

Jara-Almonte and Knight(1988) showed that by refining the mesh in only the local region and solving Eq. (15), an improved finite element solution could be obtained in the local region. However, in this study, a method to improve the finite element solution in the local region has been proposed by combining the theory of conjugate approximations and Loubignac's iterative method without further refining the grid in the local region (Song, 1997). Applying the conjugate approximation to the whole domain, as in Fig. 1, Eq. (12) can be expressed as follows:

$$\begin{bmatrix} C_{11} & C_{12} & 0 \\ C_{21} & C_{22} & C_{23} \\ 0 & C_{32} & C_{33} \end{bmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} S^1 \\ S^2 \\ S^3 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} S_1 \\ S_2 \\ S_3 \end{pmatrix} \quad (16)$$

where  $S^i$  represents the conjugate stress,  $S^{ij\Delta}$  defined in Eq. (10) and  $S_i$  represents the consistent nodal average,  $S_{\Delta}^{ij}$  defined in Eq. (9).

Discarding the third equation in Eq. (16), and supposing that the conventional nodal stress averages ( $\sigma_3$ ) in the outer region can replace the conjugate stresses ( $S^3$ ), Eq. (16) can be approximately reduced as follows:

$$\begin{bmatrix} C_{11} & C_{12} \\ C_{21} & C_{22} \end{bmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} S^1 \\ S^2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} S_1 \\ S_2 - C_{23} S^3 \end{pmatrix} \approx \begin{pmatrix} S_1 \\ S_2 - C_{23} \sigma_3 \end{pmatrix} \quad (17)$$

Using Eq. (15) and Eq. (17), an improved stress field which is continuous can be obtained iteratively as follows:

- i) Solve Eq. (15) to obtain  $u_L$
- ii) Calculate the conventional stress field  $\sigma_L = [D] \cdot [B] u_L$
- iii) Solve Eq. (17) to obtain the conjugate stress  $S^i$
- iv) Interpolate the continuous stress field using  $S^i$  and the shape function  $N^*$

$$\sigma^* = N_i^* S^i \quad (18)$$

- v) Compute the nodal force vector that corresponds to the continuous stress field,  $\sigma^*$

$$f_e = \int_{\Omega_e} [B]^T \sigma^* d\Omega_e = \int_{\Omega_e} [B]^T N_i^* d\Omega_e S^i \quad (19)$$

$$\begin{aligned} f^* &= \sum_{element} f_e = \sum_{element} \int_{\Omega_e} [B]^T \sigma^* d\Omega_e \\ &= \sum_{element} \int_{\Omega_e} [B]^T N_i^* d\Omega_e S^i \end{aligned} \quad (20)$$

The  $L_2$ -norm of force-imbalance,  $\|\Delta f\|_i$  and the ratio of the  $L_2$ -norm of force-imbalance,  $R_i$ , at the  $i$ -th iteration are defined as follows:

$$\|\Delta f\|_i^2 = \int_{\Omega} (f - f^*)^T \cdot (f - f^*) d\Omega$$

$$R_i \equiv \frac{\|\Delta f\|_i}{\|\Delta f\|_0}$$

$$\text{vi) Solve } \Delta u_i^i = K_L^{-1} (f_L - f^*) \quad (21)$$

- vii) Update  $u_L$  and  $\sigma_L$

$$u_L^{i+1} = u_L^i + \Delta u_i^i \quad (22)$$

$$\sigma_L^{i+1} = [D] \cdot [B] u_L^{i+1} \quad (23)$$

- viii) Go to step iii) unless  $\|\Delta u_L^i\|$  is less than a predefined value.

The total strain energy ( $U_{total}$ ) expression from the continuous stress field is obtained as:

$$U_{total} = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega} \sigma^{*T} \cdot \varepsilon^* d\Omega = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega} \sigma^{*T} \cdot D^{-1} \cdot \sigma^* d\Omega$$

## 5. Determination of the Location and Size of the Local Regions

For a given element  $i$ , the *local strain energy density*, denoted by  $LSED_i$  is defined as:

$$LSED_i = \frac{U_i}{A_i}$$

where  $U_i$  and  $A_i$  are the strain energy and the area(or volume) in an element  $i$ , which are from the conventional finite element solution, respectively.

Similarly, for the whole domain, the *global strain energy density*,  $GSED$  is defined as:

$$GSED = \frac{\text{Total strain energy of the system}}{\text{Total volume(or area) of the system}}$$

Many a researcher (Febres-Cedillo and Bhatti, 1988; Botkin and Bennet, 1986; Lee and Lo, 1988) has proposed the strain energy density as an indicator for looking for the location of high-stress concentration or singularities. In this study, the *strain energy density index* ( $SEDI: \beta_i$ ) for each element is used to discern the location and the size of the local region model.

$$\beta_i \equiv \frac{LSED_i}{GSED}$$

## 6. Numerical Examples

### 6.1 Thick-walled cylinder

To show that the present method is effective for smooth problems, a thick-walled cylinder subjected to uniform internal pressure under plane strain conditions is considered. Due to symmetry, one quarter of the cylinder is taken for analysis, as shown in Fig. 2. Poisson's ratio ( $\nu$ ) and Young's modulus ( $E$ ) are taken to be 0.3 and 1.0, respectively. The finite element model of the problem is shown in Fig. 2 and the shaded region in Fig. 2 represents the local region model discerned by the  $SEDI$  whose value is above 1.0. Table 1 represents the value of  $SEDI$  in each element layer along radius. The quadrilateral plane strain element has been used in the finite element model. The exact solution (Timoshenko, 1970) is compared with various stress solutions, which come from ANSYS and the present method, over the whole domain and the local region model.

Figures 3 and 4 show the variation of the "ratio of  $L_2$ -norm of force imbalance,"  $R_i$ , as iteration numbers in the whole domain and the local region model, respectively. Figures 3 and 4 show that  $R_i$  is monotonously decreasing and rapidly converging in a few iterations. This means that

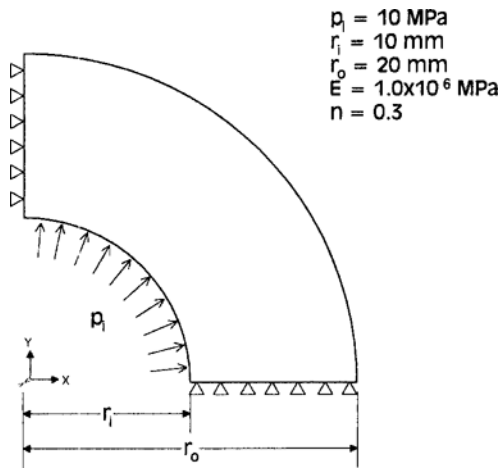


Fig. 2(a) Thick-walled cylinder under internal

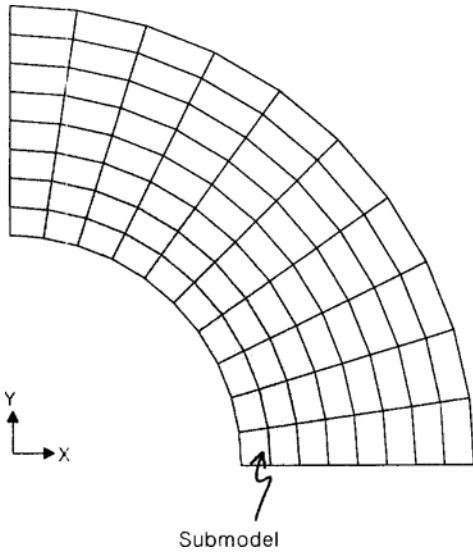


Fig. 2(b) Finite element model of thick-walled cylinder.

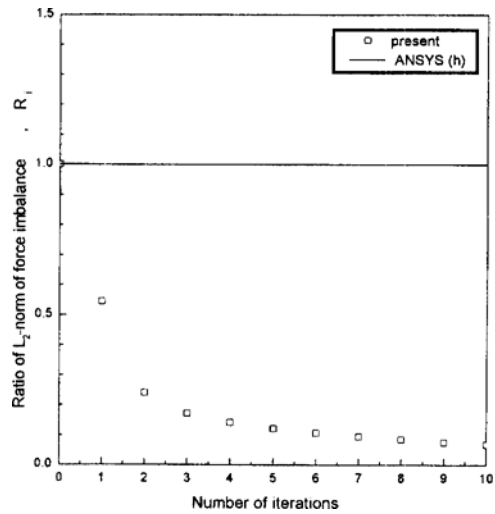


Fig. 3 Ratio of  $L_2$ -norm of force imbalance vs. number of iterations in the whole domain.

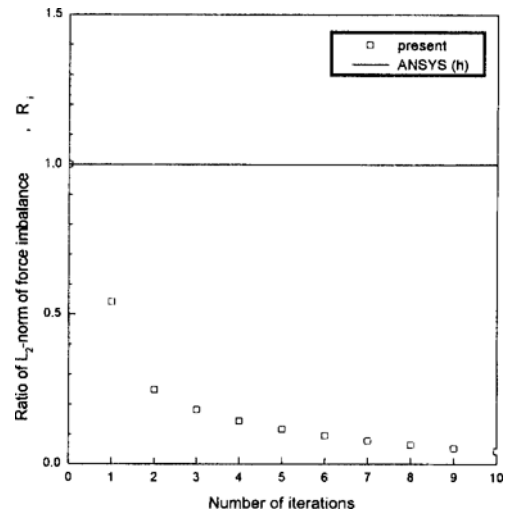


Fig. 4 Ratio of  $L_2$ -norm of force imbalance vs. number of iterations in the local region.

Table 1 *SEDI* in the element layer along the radial direction for the thick-walled cylinder.

Element layer from the inner surface	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Strain energy density index ( $\beta$ )	2.937	1.918	1.317	0.945	0.703	0.542	0.430	0.351

the iterative procedure could effectively improve the stress and displacement field, both for the whole domain and the local region model to meet the original finite element equilibrium equation.

Figure 5 shows the comparison of the radial stresses ( $\sigma_r$ ) along the inner radius, which are computed iteratively in the local region and the whole domain model from the present study with

the exact solution and the conventional finite element solution (ANSYS results). Three observations are inferred from Fig. 5. First, the nodal stress averages from ANSYS are 21.53% lower than the exact solution for the finite element model of Fig. 2(b), whose maximum node number is 99 and element length is  $h$ . In the refined finite element model whose maximum node number is 357 and element length is  $\frac{1}{2}h$ , the nodal stress averages from ANSYS are 11.31% lower than the exact solution. The stress results from the present study, whether they are from the whole domain model or local region model, are at most 3.47% lower than the exact solution. This shows that the present study can improve the accuracy of the stress figures greatly. Second, the radial stresses ( $\sigma_r$ ) from the pure conjugate approximations, i. e., without iteration, are not only 13.6% lower than the exact solution but also 2.3% lower than the nodal stress averages from the refined finite element model. This matches other research (Oden and Reddy, 1973; Brauchli and Oden, 1971) in that conjugate approximations could improve the accuracy of the stress figures. Third, the stress from the local region model is in agreement with that of the whole domain model, except for the presence of a few more oscillations, even though oscillations are also observed in the whole

domain model. It seems that the additional oscillations in the local region model are attributed to the assumption that the displacement field ( $u_3$ ) and stress field ( $\sigma_3$ ) in the outer region are fixed, while in fact they may vary at each iteration. In addition, the computing time of the local region model is significantly reduced, compared with that of the whole domain model. Based on the Cyber-960, the computing time for the local region model, whose maximum node number is 33, is 7.076 sec., while that for the whole domain model, whose maximum node number is 99, is

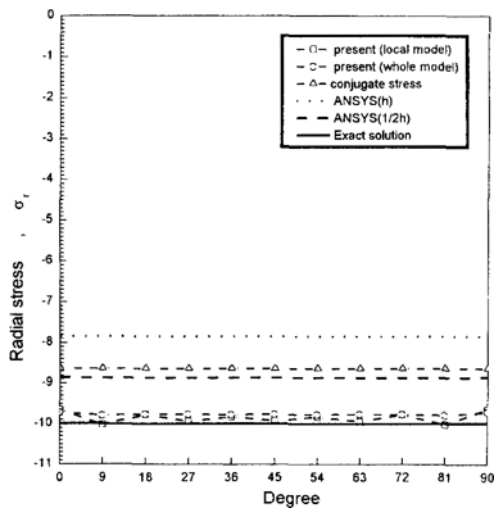


Fig. 5 Variation of the radial stresses along the inner radius.

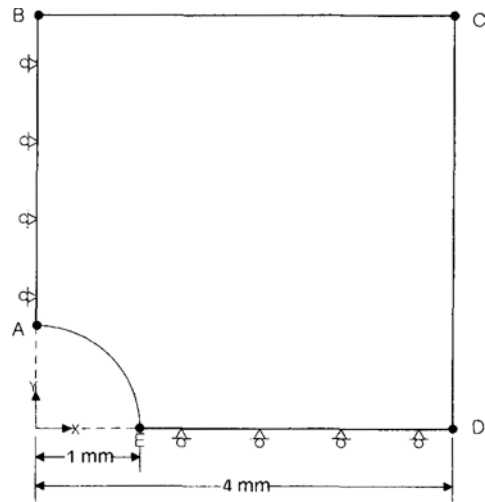


Fig. 6(a) Infinite plate with a central circular hole subjected to unidirectional tension.

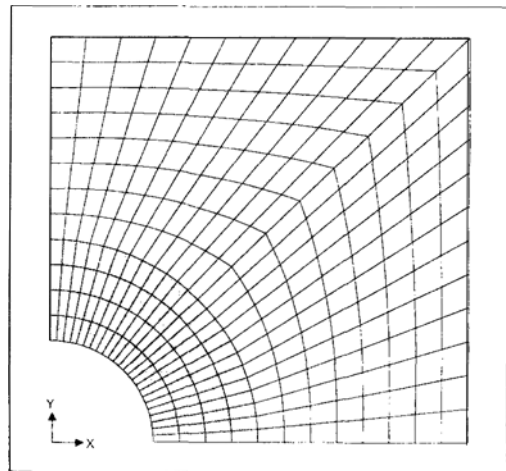


Fig. 6(b) Finite element model of infinite plate with a central circular hole.

316.052 sec. until  $R_i$  reaches below 0.1.

**6.2 Infinite plate with a central circular hole subjected to uniaxial tensile loads**

In the second example, an infinite plate with a central circular hole subjected to a far-field tensile load,  $\sigma=1.0$ , is considered. Due to symmetry, one-quarter of the cylinder is taken for analysis, as shown in Fig. 6(a). Poisson's ratio and Young's modulus are taken to be 0.3 and 1000, respectively. Plane stress conditions are assumed and boundary conditions are described so that the symmetry conditions are satisfied. The stress boundary conditions (Timoshenko, 1970) are specified along each boundary as follow:

Along BC and CD

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_x &= 1 - \frac{a^2}{r^2} \left( \frac{3}{2} \cos 2\theta + \cos 4\theta \right) + \frac{3}{2} \frac{a^4}{r^4} \cos 4\theta \\ \sigma_y &= -\frac{a^2}{r^2} \left( \frac{1}{2} \cos 2\theta - \cos 4\theta \right) - \frac{3}{2} \frac{a^4}{r^4} \cos 4\theta \\ \tau_{xy} &= -\frac{a^2}{r^2} \left( \frac{1}{2} \sin 2\theta + \sin 4\theta \right) + \frac{3}{2} \frac{a^4}{r^4} \sin 4\theta \\ a &= 1.0 \end{aligned}$$

Along AB and ED

$$\tau_{xy} = 0$$

Along AE

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_r &= 0 \\ \tau_{r\theta} &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

Figure 6(b) represents the finite element model with quadrilateral plane stress elements, where the shaded region represents the local region model. Figures 7 and 8 represent the variation of  $R_i$  as iteration numbers for the whole domain model whose maximum number is 325 and for the local region model whose maximum number is 125, respectively. Figures 7 and 8 show that  $R_i$  significantly decreases and converges in a few iterations. This denotes that the stress fields are being improved to satisfy the original finite element equilibrium equation at a little additional cost of computing time.

Figures (9) ~ (11) represent the variation of  $\sigma_r$ ,  $\tau_{r\theta}$ , and  $\sigma_\theta$  along the boundary AE, respectively. Two observations are inferred from Figs. 9 and 10. First, the conjugate stresses are more accurate in approximating the exact solution than the conventional finite element solution. Second, the lack of significant stress differences in the local region model and whole domain model implies that the present study is effective in building an improved and continuous stress field in the local region. Figure 11 shows that there are no significant differences of  $\sigma_\theta$  between from the conventional finite element method and the pres-

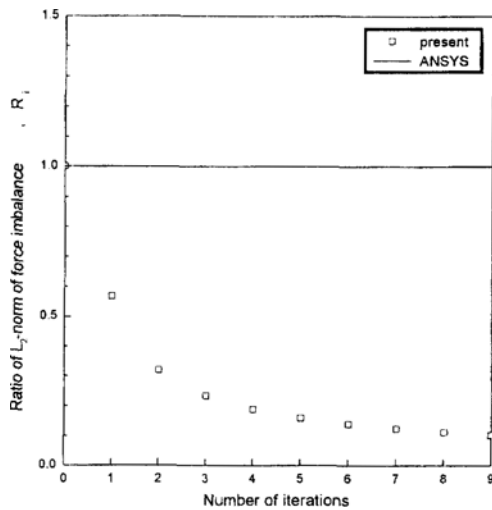


Fig. 7 Ratio of  $L_2$ -norm of force imbalance vs. number of iterations in the whole domain.

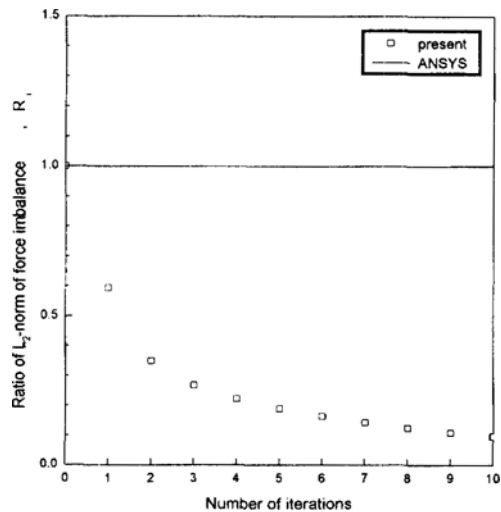


Fig. 8 Ratio of  $L_2$ -norm of force imbalance vs. number of iterations in the submodel.

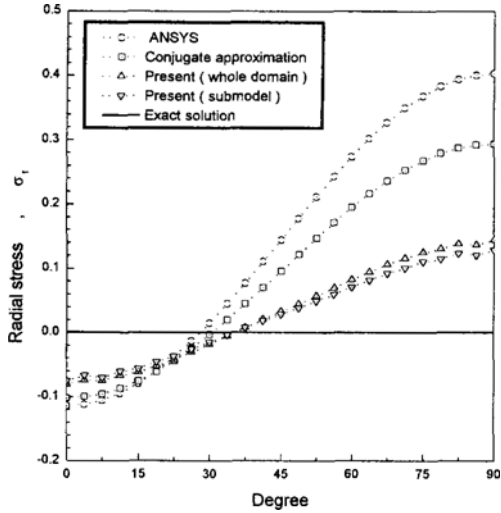


Fig. 9 Variation of the radial stresses along the boundary AE.

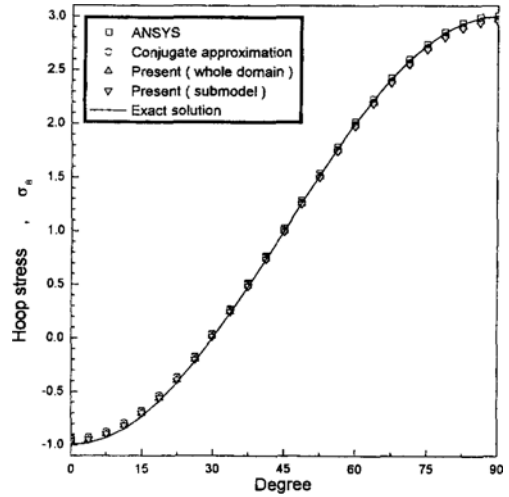


Fig. 11 Variation of the hoop stresses along the boundary AE.

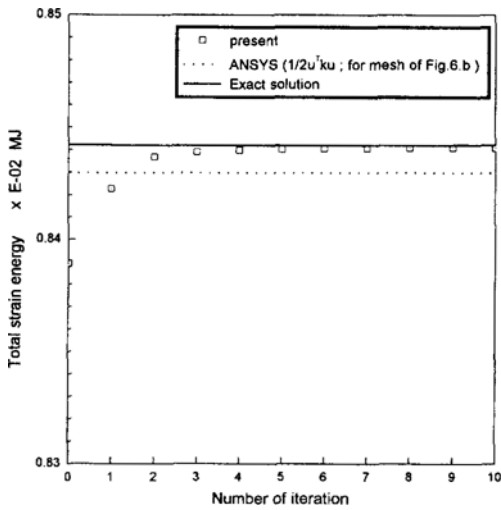


Fig. 10 Variation of the shear stresses along the boundary AE.

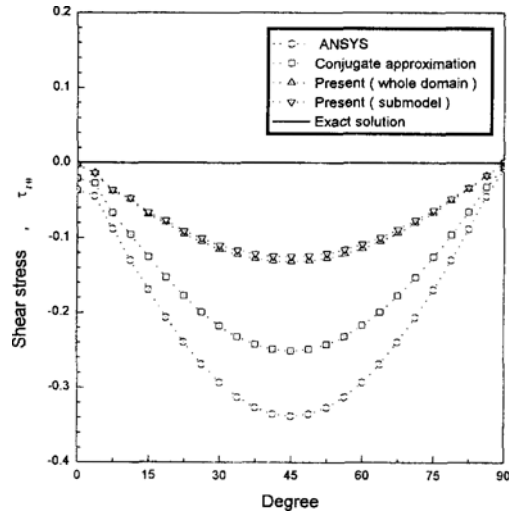


Fig. 12 Total strain energy vs. number of iterations in the whole domain.

ent study.

Figure 12 shows the variation of the total strain energy as iteration numbers increases. The fact that the total strain energy is monotonously increasing as iteration number does and rapidly converging in a few iterations shows that the continuous stress field from this study is continuously being improved to meet the original finite element equilibrium equation.

### 6.3 Short cantilever beam

A short cantilever beam under plane strain conditions is taken as an example where there are singularities present. The dimensions and the loading and support conditions of the beam are shown in Fig. 13(a). Poisson's ratio and Young's modulus are taken to be 0.3 and 1.0, respectively. Figures 13(b~e) show the various finite element models on quadrilateral elements using bilinear basis functions. Total strain energy and  $R_i$  at the 5-th iteration is shown in Table 2.



Elastic modulus  
 $E = 1.0$   
 Poisson's ratio  
 $\nu = 0.3$   
 Thickness  
 $t = 1.0$   
 Plane strain condition

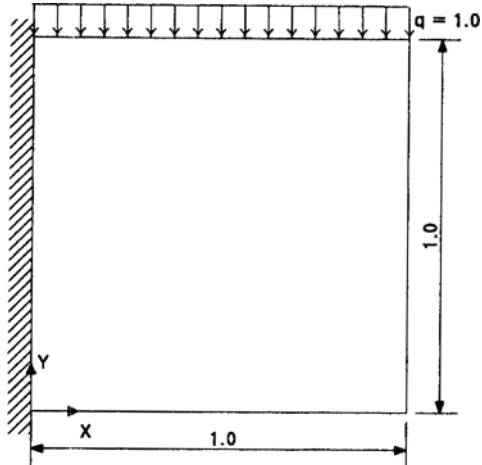


Fig. 13(a) Short cantilever beam

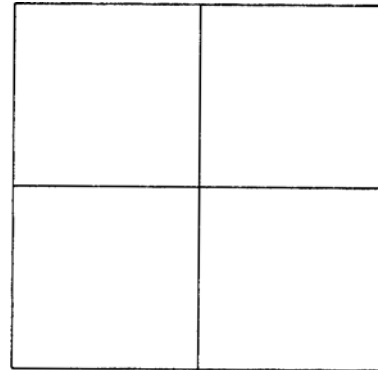


Fig. 13(b) Model 1 (12 DOF)

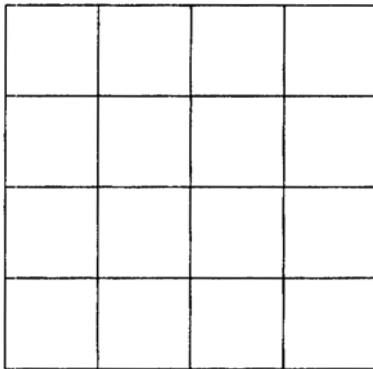


Fig. 13(c) Model 2 (30 DOF)

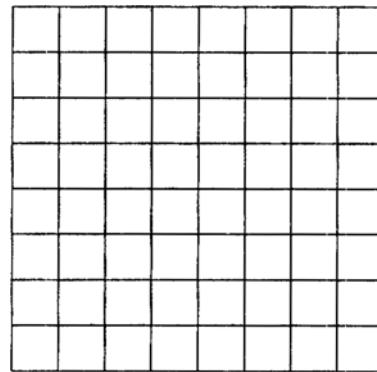


Fig. 13(d) Model 3 (144 DOF)

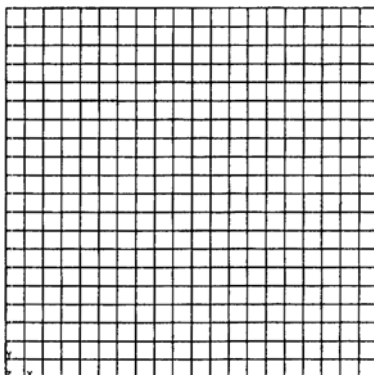


Fig. 13(e) Model 4 (840 DOF)

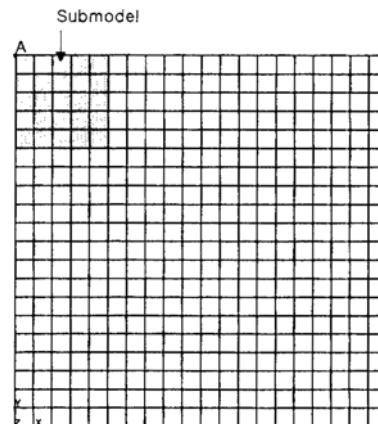


Fig. 13(f) Finite element model.

**Table 2** Comparisons of strain energy and  $R_i$  for various FE models of the short cantilever beam.

FE Model (DOF)		Total strain energy		$R_i$
		SE	SE/SE <sub>exact</sub>	
12	Conventional FEM	0.69511	0.7303	1.000
	Conjugate approximation	0.73866	0.7760	0.47930
	Present study	0.82087	0.8624	0.674E-3
40	Conventional FEM	0.80959	0.8505	1.000
	Conjugate approximation	0.85155	0.8946	0.5725
	Present study	0.90771	0.9536	0.514E-1
144	Conventional FEM	0.88862	0.9336	1.000
	Conjugate approximation	0.91120	0.9573	0.5828
	Present study	0.93613	0.9835	0.1074
840	Conventional GEM	0.93340	0.9806	1.000
	Conjugate approximation	0.94057	0.9881	0.5849
	Present study	0.94769	0.9956	0.927E-1

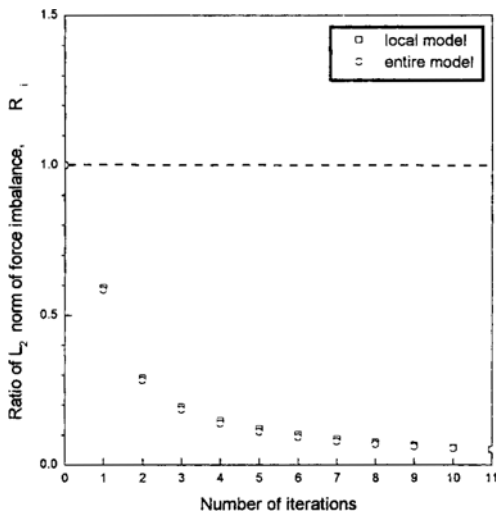
**Fig. 14** Ratio of  $L_2$ -norm of force imbalance vs. iteration numbers for the short cantilever model.

Table 2 shows that the total strain energy does indeed tend towards the exact value (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1989) as the mesh is refined. Even though the present study employs an iterative method, the present method seems to be a cost effective process since the total strain energy rapidly converges to a certain greater than that of the conventional stress fields in a few iterations.

The shaded region in Fig. 13(f) represents the local region model, which is determined from a

**Table 3** Comparisons of maximum normal stress,  $\sigma_x$  at A for the local and whole model.

	Short cantilevers beam	
	Local model	Whole model
Conventional F. E. M.	7.25458	7.25458
Conjugate approximation	7.89336	8.44189
Present study	8.70953	8.74296

conventional finite element solution over the whole domain model. Figure 14 shows the variation of  $R_i$  as the iteration number changes for the local region model and whole domain model. Figure 14 shows that  $R_i$  is monotonously and rapidly decreasing as the iteration proceeds, which indicates that the stress field is improving to meet the original finite element equations. The maximum normal stress at A in Fig. 13(f) is represented in Table 3, which shows that the maximum stress from the local region model well approximates a value from the whole domain model.

## 7. Conclusions

Combining the theory of conjugate approximations for the stress field and an iterative procedure for the improvement of the displacement field, a

new procedure to build an improved and continuous stress field in the local region has been proposed without further refining the grid. The proposed procedure has been applied to three test examples: two smooth problems and one example where there are singularities. Numerical test results show that the stress fields from the whole domain model and the local region model were both improved to meet the original finite element equilibrium equation and converged in a few iterations. In addition, numerical test results show that not only the stress field from the local region model is seldom different from that of the whole domain model, but also, the computing time to obtain the stress field for the local region model is considerably reduced compared with that for the whole domain model. Therefore, the present method can be used to predict an improved and continuous stress field, both effectively and economically, in the local region where detailed stress analysis is required.

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