

## Superconvergence analysis of bi- $k$ -degree rectangular elements for two-dimensional time-dependent Schrödinger equation\*

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**Abstract** Superconvergence has been studied for long, and many different numerical methods have been analyzed. This paper is concerned with the problem of superconvergence for a two-dimensional time-dependent linear Schrödinger equation with the finite element method. The error estimate and superconvergence property with order  $O(h^{k+1})$  in the  $H^1$  norm are given by using the elliptic projection operator in the semi-discrete scheme. The global superconvergence is derived by the interpolation post-processing technique. The superconvergence result with order  $O(h^{k+1} + \tau^2)$  in the  $H^1$  norm can be obtained in the Crank-Nicolson fully discrete scheme.

**Key words** superconvergence, elliptic projection, Schrödinger equation, interpolation post-processing

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### 1 Introduction

We shall consider a linear Schrödinger equation as follows. Let  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^2$  be a bounded rectangular-type domain with a smooth boundary  $\partial\Omega$ . We find a complex-valued function  $u(\mathbf{x}, t)$  defined on  $\Omega \times [0, T]$  and satisfying

$$\begin{cases} iu_t(\mathbf{x}, t) = -\frac{1}{2}\Delta u(\mathbf{x}, t) + V(\mathbf{x})u(\mathbf{x}, t) + f(\mathbf{x}, t) & \text{in } \Omega \times [0, T], \\ u(\mathbf{x}, t) = 0 & \text{on } \partial\Omega \times [0, T], \\ u(\mathbf{x}, 0) = u_0(\mathbf{x}) & \text{in } \Omega, \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

where  $u_0(\mathbf{x})$  is a given initial complex-valued function, and the trapping potential function  $V(\mathbf{x})$  is non-negative bounded and real-valued.

The Schrödinger equation is an important equation in quantum mechanics. There are many numerical methods to solve the Schrödinger equation in the literature, such as the spectral

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method<sup>[1–2]</sup>, the finite difference method<sup>[3–5]</sup>, the finite element method<sup>[6–12]</sup>, the discontinuous Galerkin method<sup>[13–15]</sup>, and the local discontinuous Galerkin method<sup>[16–18]</sup>. Bao et al.<sup>[1]</sup> studied the performance of time-splitting spectral approximations for the general nonlinear Schrödinger equation in the semiclassical regimes. Han et al.<sup>[5]</sup> introduced an artificial boundary condition to reduce the one-dimensional time-dependent Schrödinger equation into an initial-boundary value problem in a finite computational domain. Antonopoulou et al.<sup>[7]</sup> considered an initial and boundary-value problem for a general Schrödinger-type equation posed on a two space-dimensional noncylindrical domain with mixed boundary conditions. Karakashian and Makridakis<sup>[14]</sup> analyzed the convergence of the discontinuous Galerkin method for the nonlinear Schrödinger equation. Guo and Xu<sup>[16]</sup> presented a fully discrete scheme by discretizing the space with the local discontinuous Galerkin method and the time with the Crank-Nicolson scheme to simulate the multi-dimensional Schrödinger equation with wave operator.

Superconvergence has been studied for long. Many different numerical methods have been analyzed. It is a powerful tool to improve the approximation accuracy and efficiency. There are numerous studies by many famous scholars<sup>[19–22]</sup>. At present, superconvergence results were obtained widely for elliptic, parabolic, Maxwell's equations, and optimal control problems<sup>[23–31]</sup>. However, there were not many superconvergence results for the Schrödinger equation<sup>[32–36]</sup>. In 1998, Lin and Liu<sup>[32]</sup> studied a time-dependent linear Schrödinger equation and analyzed the superconvergence error results. In 2014, Shi et al.<sup>[33]</sup> considered a nonlinear Schrödinger equation by the finite element method in the triangular anisotropic meshes and proved the superconvergence result in the semi-discrete scheme. Later, Wang et al.<sup>[35]</sup> conducted the superconvergence analysis for a time-dependent Schrödinger equation by using the interpolation operator and obtained the error result in the  $H^1$  norm with  $O(h^{p+1})$  in the semi-discrete scheme and  $O(h^{p+1} + \tau^{\frac{3}{2}})$  in the Crank-Nicolson scheme, respectively. Recently, Zhou et al.<sup>[36]</sup> studied the superconvergence properties of the local discontinuous Galerkin method for the one-dimensional linear Schrödinger equation.

In this paper, we study a general complex linear Schrödinger equation (1) and extend the previous work<sup>[35]</sup>. We analyze the error estimate using the elliptic projection operator. We obtain the error result with  $O(h^{k+1})$  in the  $L^2$  norm and the  $H^1$  norm in the semi-discrete finite element scheme. The global superconvergence result is presented by use of the interpolation post-processing technique. Next, we analyze the error estimate in the  $L^2$  norm with order  $O(h^{k+1} + \tau^2)$  in the Crank-Nicolson fully discrete scheme. We extend the idea<sup>[37]</sup> and certify that the time-difference of error  $\eta^n = U^n - P_h u^n$  has a high order error in the  $L^2$  norm, that is,  $\|\eta^n - \eta^{n-1}\| \leq C\tau(h^{k+1} + \tau^2)$ , where  $U^n$  is the fully discrete solution of Crank-Nicolson scheme. At last, we obtain the superconvergence result in the  $H^1$  norm with  $O(h^{k+1} + \tau^2)$  on this basis.

The paper is organized as follows. The notations and the projection operator are given in Section 2. In Section 3, we present a finite element semi-discrete scheme with bi- $k$ -degree rectangular elements. Furthermore, we obtain error results with  $O(h^{k+1})$  in the  $L^2$  norm and the  $H^1$  norm by use of the elliptic projection operator, respectively. In Section 4, we prove the global superconvergence result with  $O(h^{k+1})$ . In Section 5, we obtain the superconvergence result in the  $H^1$  norm with  $O(h^{k+1} + \tau^2)$  in the Crank-Nicolson fully discrete scheme. In Section 6, numerical examples are given to partly verify the theoretical results.

## 2 Notation and preliminaries

For an integer  $m \geq 0$  and  $1 \leq p \leq \infty$ , we shall use  $W^{m,p}$  to denote the standard Sobolev space of complex-valued measurable functions defined on  $\Omega$  with the norm  $\|\phi\|_{m,p}^p = \sum_{|\alpha| \leq m} \|D^\alpha \phi\|_{L^p(\Omega)}^p$ . When  $p = 2$ , we shall also use the symbol  $H^m$  for  $W^{m,2}$ ,  $\|\cdot\|_m$  instead of  $\|\cdot\|_{m,2}$ , and  $\|\cdot\|$  instead of  $\|\cdot\|_{0,2}$ .

For complex-valued functions  $\omega(\mathbf{x})$  and  $\nu(\mathbf{x})$ , we define the inner product  $(\omega, \nu)$  with

$$(\omega, \nu) = \int_{\Omega} \omega(\mathbf{x})\bar{\nu}(\mathbf{x})d\mathbf{x},$$

where  $\bar{\nu}$  denotes the complex conjugate of function  $\nu$ .

Then, we can define the weak solution  $u(\mathbf{x}, t)$  of problem (1): find a function  $u(\mathbf{x}, t) \in H_0^1(\Omega)$  such that

$$\begin{cases} i(u_t, v) = a(u, v) + (f, v), & \forall v \in H_0^1(\Omega), \quad 0 \leq t \leq T, \\ u(\mathbf{x}, 0) = u_0(\mathbf{x}), & \forall \mathbf{x} \in \Omega, \end{cases} \tag{2}$$

where  $a(u, v) = \frac{1}{2}(\nabla u, \nabla v) + (Vu, v)$ .

Let  $\Gamma_h$  be a quasi-uniform rectangular partition of  $\Omega$  with the mesh size  $h > 0$ , and let  $e$  be an arbitrary element of  $\Gamma_h$ . We can define the finite element space of order  $k$  as

$$V^{h,k} = \{v \in C(\Omega) : v|_e \in Q_p, \quad \forall e \in \Gamma_h\},$$

where

$$Q_p = \text{span}\{x^i y^j, \quad 0 \leq i, j \leq k\}.$$

In addition,

$$V_0^{h,k} = V^{h,k} \cap H_0^1(\Omega).$$

Let  $V_0^{h,k} \subset H_0^1(\Omega)$  be the corresponding finite element space of order  $k$ . In general given  $w(\mathbf{x}, t) \in H_0^1(\Omega)$ , the elliptic projection  $P_h w(\mathbf{x}, t) \in V_0^{h,k}$  can be defined by

$$a(P_h w, v_h) = a(w, v_h), \quad \forall v_h \in V_0^{h,k}. \tag{3}$$

Let  $\tau = T/N$  be the time step of the interval  $[0, T]$ , time nodes  $t_j = j\tau$  ( $j = 0, 1, \dots, N$ ),  $t_{j+\frac{1}{2}} = (t_{j+1} + t_j)/2$ , and time elements  $I_j = [t_j, t_{j+1}]$  ( $j = 0, 1, \dots, N - 1$ ), and set

$$\begin{aligned} \phi(\cdot, t_j) &= \phi^j, \\ \|\phi\|_{L^2(0,T;\Omega)} &= \left( \int_0^T \|\phi(\cdot, t)\|_{\Omega}^2 dt \right)^{\frac{1}{2}}. \end{aligned}$$

### 3 Superconvergence analysis for semi-discrete approximation problem

The semi-discrete finite element solution  $u_h(\mathbf{x}, t)$  of problem (1) can be defined: find  $u_h(\mathbf{x}, t) \in V_0^{h,k}$  satisfying

$$\begin{cases} i(u_{ht}, v_h) = a(u_h, v_h) + (f, v_h), & \forall v_h \in V_0^{h,k}, \quad 0 \leq t \leq T, \\ u_h(\mathbf{x}, 0) = P_h u_0(\mathbf{x}), & \forall \mathbf{x} \in \Omega, \end{cases} \tag{4}$$

where  $P_h u_0(\mathbf{x}) \in V_0^{h,k}$  is the elliptic projection of  $u_0(\mathbf{x})$ .

**Lemma 1**<sup>[34]</sup> *If for any  $t \in [0, T]$ , the functions  $u(\mathbf{x}, t), u_t(\mathbf{x}, t), u_{tt}(\mathbf{x}, t) \in H^{k+1}(\Omega)$ , then  $P_h u(\mathbf{x}, t) \in V_0^{h,k}$  has the following results:*

$$\|u - P_h u\|_q \leq Ch^{k-q+1} \|u\|_{k+1}, \quad q = 0, 1, \tag{5}$$

$$\|(u - P_h u)_t\|_q \leq Ch^{k-q+1} \|u_t\|_{k+1}, \quad q = 0, 1, \tag{6}$$

$$\|(u - P_h u)_{tt}\|_q \leq Ch^{k-q+1} \|u_{tt}\|_{k+1}, \quad q = 0, 1. \tag{7}$$

**Lemma 2**<sup>[20]</sup> *Let  $u$  be the solution to the problem (2), and let  $u_I \in V_0^{h,k}$  be the interpolation of  $u$ . If  $u \in H^{k+2}(\Omega)$ , then*

$$|(\nabla(u - u_I), \nabla v)| \leq Ch^{k+1} \|u\|_{k+2} \|v\|_1, \quad \forall v \in V_0^{h,k}. \tag{8}$$

**Theorem 1** *If  $u$  and  $u_h$  are the solutions to the problems (2) and (4), respectively, and  $u, u_t, u_{tt} \in H^{k+1}(\Omega)$ , there hold*

$$\|u_h - P_h u\| \leq Ch^{k+1}, \tag{9}$$

$$\|(u_h - P_h u)_t\| \leq Ch^{k+1}. \tag{10}$$

**Proof** It follows from (2) and (4) that

$$i((u - u_h)_t, v_h) = a(u - u_h, v_h), \quad \forall v_h \in V_0^{h,k}. \tag{11}$$

Let  $u - u_h = \rho - \xi$  with

$$\rho = u - P_h u, \quad \xi = u_h - P_h u. \tag{12}$$

Then, from (11) and (12), we have

$$i(\rho_t, v_h) - i(\xi_t, v_h) = a(\rho, v_h) - a(\xi, v_h). \tag{13}$$

From (3), we can obtain

$$a(\rho, v_h) = 0. \tag{14}$$

Substituting (14) into (13) yields

$$i(\xi_t, v_h) = i(\rho_t, v_h) + a(\xi, v_h). \tag{15}$$

Taking  $v_h = \xi$  in (15), we have

$$i(\xi_t, \xi) = i(\rho_t, \xi) + a(\xi, \xi). \tag{16}$$

Noticing

$$\frac{1}{2} \frac{d}{dt} \|\xi\|^2 = \operatorname{Re}\{(\xi_t, \xi)\}$$

and comparing the imaginary parts of (16), we get

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2} \frac{d}{dt} \|\xi\|^2 &= \operatorname{Re}\{(\rho_t, \xi)\} + \operatorname{Im}\{a(\xi, \xi)\} \\ &= \operatorname{Re}\{(\rho_t, \xi)\} \\ &\leq C \|\rho_t\| \|\xi\|. \end{aligned} \tag{17}$$

Combining (6) with (17) yields

$$\frac{d}{dt} \|\xi\| \leq Ch^{k+1} \|u_t\|_{k+1}. \tag{18}$$

Integrating from 0 to  $t$  in (18), we have

$$\|\xi\| \leq \|\xi(\cdot, 0)\| + Ch^{k+1} \int_0^t \|u_t\|_{k+1} ds. \tag{19}$$

It follows from (4) that

$$\|\xi(\cdot, 0)\| = 0. \quad (20)$$

From (19) and (20), we obtain

$$\|\xi\| \leq Ch^{k+1} \int_0^t \|u_t\|_{k+1} ds.$$

Therefore, (9) holds. Next, we prove (10). Taking  $v_h = \xi_t(\cdot, 0)$  in (15) with  $t = 0$  and combining (20), we have

$$i(\xi_t(\cdot, 0), \xi_t(\cdot, 0)) = i(\rho_t(\cdot, 0), \xi_t(\cdot, 0)).$$

Thus,

$$\|\xi_t(\cdot, 0)\|^2 \leq \|\rho_t(\cdot, 0)\| \|\xi_t(\cdot, 0)\|,$$

that is,

$$\|\xi_t(\cdot, 0)\| \leq \|\rho_t(\cdot, 0)\|. \quad (21)$$

Combining (6) with (21) gives

$$\|\xi_t(\cdot, 0)\| \leq Ch^{k+1} \|u_t(\cdot, 0)\|_{k+1}. \quad (22)$$

Differentiating (15) with respect to  $t$  and taking  $v_h = \xi_t$ , we can obtain

$$i(\xi_{tt}, \xi_t) = i(\rho_{tt}, \xi_t) + a(\xi_t, \xi_t). \quad (23)$$

Noticing

$$\frac{1}{2} \frac{d}{dt} \|\xi_t\|^2 = \operatorname{Re}\{(\xi_{tt}, \xi_t)\}$$

and comparing the imaginary parts of (23) yield

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2} \frac{d}{dt} \|\xi_t\|^2 &= \operatorname{Re}\{(\rho_{tt}, \xi_t)\} + \operatorname{Im}\{a(\xi_t, \xi_t)\} \\ &= \operatorname{Re}\{(\rho_{tt}, \xi_t)\} \\ &\leq C \|\rho_{tt}\| \|\xi_t\|. \end{aligned} \quad (24)$$

From (22) and (25), we get

$$\frac{d}{dt} \|\xi_t\| \leq Ch^{k+1} \|u_{tt}\|_{k+1}. \quad (25)$$

Integrating from 0 to  $t$  in (25), we can obtain

$$\|\xi_t\| \leq \|\xi_t(\cdot, 0)\| + Ch^{k+1} \int_0^t \|u_{tt}\|_{k+1} ds. \quad (26)$$

It follows from (22) and (26) that

$$\|\xi_t\| \leq Ch^{k+1} \left( \|u_t(\cdot, 0)\|_{k+1} + \int_0^t \|u_{tt}\|_{k+1} ds \right),$$

which completes the proof of (10).

**Theorem 2** *Let  $u$  and  $u_h$  be the solutions to the problems (2) and (4), respectively, and  $u, u_t, u_{tt} \in H^{k+1}(\Omega)$ . Then, we have*

$$\|u_h - P_h u\|_1 \leq Ch^{k+1}. \tag{27}$$

**Proof** Taking  $v_h = \xi_t$  in (15), we can get

$$i(\xi_t, \xi_t) = i(\rho_t, \xi_t) + a(\xi, \xi_t),$$

that is,

$$i(\xi_t, \xi_t) = i(\rho_t, \xi_t) + \frac{1}{2}(\nabla \xi, \nabla \xi_t) + (V \xi, \xi_t). \tag{28}$$

Noticing

$$\frac{1}{2} \frac{d}{dt} \|\nabla \xi\|^2 = \text{Re}\{(\nabla \xi, \nabla \xi_t)\}$$

and comparing the real parts of (28) give

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2} \frac{d}{dt} \|\nabla \xi\|^2 &= \text{Im}\{(\rho_t, \xi_t) + (\xi_t, \xi_t)\} - \text{Re}\{(V \xi, \xi_t)\} \\ &= \text{Im}\{(\rho_t, \xi_t)\} - \text{Re}\{(V \xi, \xi_t)\} \\ &\leq C(\|\rho_t\| + \|\xi\|)\|\xi_t\|. \end{aligned} \tag{29}$$

From (6), (9), (10), and (29), we can obtain

$$\frac{d}{dt} \|\nabla \xi\|^2 \leq Ch^{2k+2}. \tag{30}$$

Integrating from 0 to  $t$  in (30) yields

$$\|\nabla \xi\|^2 \leq \|\nabla \xi(\cdot, 0)\|^2 + Ch^{2k+2}. \tag{31}$$

Notice

$$\|\nabla \xi(\cdot, 0)\| = 0. \tag{32}$$

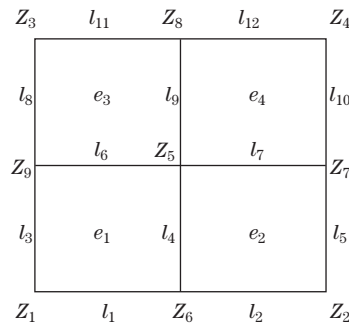
Substituting (32) into (31) yields

$$\|\nabla \xi\| \leq Ch^{k+1}. \tag{33}$$

Therefore, (27) follows from (33).

### 4 Global superconvergence analysis

Let  $\tilde{e}$  be a macro element which is the union of four elements  $e_i \in \Gamma_h$  ( $i = 1, 2, 3, 4$ ), where the intersection of  $\bar{e}_i \in \Gamma_h$  ( $i = 1, 2, 3, 4$ ) is nonempty (see Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** Structure of macro element  $\tilde{e}$

Let the interpolation operator  $\Pi_{2h}^2$  satisfy  $\Pi_{2h}^2 w \in Q_2(\tilde{e})$ , where  $Q_2$  is the space of bi-quadratic functions, and

$$\Pi_{2h}^2 w(Z_i) = w(Z_i), \tag{34}$$

where  $Z_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 9$ ) are the nodes of  $\Gamma_h$ .

When  $k \geq 2$ , let  $\Pi_{2h}^{2k} w \in Q_{2k}(\tilde{e})$  such that

$$\Pi_{2h}^{2k} w(Z_i) = w(Z_i), \tag{35}$$

$$\int_{l_i} (\Pi_{2h}^{2k} w - w) v dl = 0, \quad \forall v \in P_{k-2}(l_i), \tag{36}$$

$$\int_{e_i} (\Pi_{2h}^{2k} w - w) v dx dy = 0, \quad \forall v \in Q_{k-2}(e_i), \tag{37}$$

where  $Z_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 9$ ) are the nodes of  $\Gamma_h$ ,  $l_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 12$ ) are the edges of  $\Gamma_h$ ,  $e_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, 3, 4$ ) are the elements of  $\Gamma_h$ ,  $P_{k-2}$  is the set of polynomials of order  $k - 2$ , and  $Q_{k-2}(\tilde{e})$  is the polynomials of order  $k - 2$  in  $x$  and  $y$ .

**Lemma 3**<sup>[20,22]</sup> *The interpolation operator  $\Pi_{2h}^{2k}$  is defined in (34)–(37) such that*

$$\Pi_{2h}^{2k} w_I = \Pi_{2h}^{2k} w, \quad \forall w \in C(\tilde{e}), \tag{38}$$

$$\|\Pi_{2h}^{2k} w - w\|_{l,\tilde{e}} \leq Ch^{r+1-l} \|w\|_{r+1,\tilde{e}}, \quad 1 \leq r \leq 2k, \quad l = 0, 1, \tag{39}$$

$$\|\Pi_{2h}^{2k} v\|_{l,\tilde{e}} \leq C \|v\|_{l,\tilde{e}}, \quad \forall v \in V^{h,k}, \quad l = 0, 1, \tag{40}$$

where  $w_I \in V^{h,k}$  is the interpolant of  $w$ .

**Lemma 4** *Let  $u$  and  $u_h$  be the solutions to the problems (2) and (4), respectively. If  $u \in H^{k+2}(\Omega)$ , and  $u_t, u_{tt} \in H^{k+1}(\Omega)$ , then*

$$\|u_h - u_I\|_1 \leq Ch^{k+1}, \tag{41}$$

where  $u_I$  is the interpolant of  $u$ .

**Proof** From (14), we can obtain

$$a(u - P_h u, u_h - u_I) = 0,$$

that is,

$$(\nabla(u - P_h u), \nabla(u_h - u_I)) = -(V(u - P_h u), u_h - u_I). \tag{42}$$

It is easy to check

$$\begin{aligned} (\nabla(u_h - u_I), \nabla(u_h - u_I)) &= (\nabla(u_h - P_h u), \nabla(u_h - u_I)) - (\nabla(u - P_h u), \nabla(u_h - u_I)) \\ &\quad + (\nabla(u - u_I), \nabla(u_h - u_I)). \end{aligned} \tag{43}$$

Combining (42) with (43) yields

$$\begin{aligned} |u_h - u_I|_1^2 &= (\nabla(u_h - P_h u), \nabla(u_h - u_I)) + (V(u - P_h u), u_h - u_I) \\ &\quad + (\nabla(u - u_I), \nabla(u_h - u_I)) \\ &\leq \|u_h - P_h u\|_1 \|u_h - u_I\|_1 + C \|u - P_h u\| \|u_h - u_I\| \\ &\quad + (\nabla(u - u_I), \nabla(u_h - u_I)). \end{aligned} \tag{44}$$

It follows from (5) that

$$\|u - P_h u\| \leq Ch^{k+1} \|u\|_{k+1}, \tag{45}$$

and from (8), we have

$$(\nabla(u - u_I), \nabla(u_h - u_I)) \leq Ch^{k+1} \|u\|_{k+2} \|u_h - u_I\|_1. \tag{46}$$

In addition,

$$\|u_h - u_I\| \leq \|u_h - u_I\|_1. \tag{47}$$

Substituting (27) and (45)–(47) into (44), we can get

$$\|u_h - u_I\|_1^2 \leq C(h^{k+1} + h^{k+1} \|u\|_{k+1} + h^{k+1} \|u\|_{k+2}) \|u_h - u_I\|_1. \tag{48}$$

By the Poincaré inequality, we can obtain

$$\|u_h - u_I\|_1 \leq C \|u_h - u_I\|_1. \tag{49}$$

Therefore, (48) and (49) show the validity of (41).

**Theorem 3** *Let  $u$  and  $u_h$  be the solutions to the problems (2) and (4), respectively. If  $u \in H^{k+2}(\Omega)$ , and  $u_t, u_{tt} \in H^{k+1}(\Omega)$ , then*

$$\|u - \Pi_{2h}^{2k} u_h\|_1 \leq Ch^{k+1}, \tag{50}$$

where  $\Pi_{2h}^{2k}$  is the interpolation post-processing operator.

**Proof** It follows from (40) and (41) that

$$\|\Pi_{2h}^{2k} u_h - \Pi_{2h}^{2k} u_I\|_1 \leq C \|u_h - u_I\|_1 \leq Ch^{k+1}. \tag{51}$$

From (38) and (39), we have

$$\|\Pi_{2h}^{2k} u_I - u\|_1 = \|\Pi_{2h}^{2k} u - u\|_1 \leq Ch^{k+1}. \tag{52}$$

Notice

$$\|u - \Pi_{2h}^{2k} u_h\|_1 \leq \|\Pi_{2h}^{2k} u_h - \Pi_{2h}^{2k} u_I\|_1 + \|\Pi_{2h}^{2k} u_I - u\|_1. \tag{53}$$

Therefore, (50) follows from (51)–(53).

### 5 Superconvergence analysis in fully discrete scheme

For the function series  $U^n(\mathbf{x})$  ( $n = 0, 1, \dots$ ), let

$$\begin{aligned} \partial_t U^{n+\frac{1}{2}} &= \frac{1}{\tau} (U^{n+1}(\mathbf{x}) - U^n(\mathbf{x})), \\ U^{n+\frac{1}{2}} &= \frac{1}{2} (U^{n+1}(\mathbf{x}) + U^n(\mathbf{x})). \end{aligned}$$

Then, the Crank-Nicolson fully discrete finite element solution  $U^n(\mathbf{x}) \in V_0^{h,k}$  ( $n = 0, 1, \dots, N$ ) to the problem (1) can be defined by

$$\begin{cases} i(\partial_t U^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h) = a(U^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h) + (f^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h), & \forall v_h \in V_0^{h,k}, \\ U^0(\mathbf{x}) = P_h u_0(\mathbf{x}). \end{cases} \tag{54}$$



**Theorem 4** Let  $u(\mathbf{x}, t)$  be the solution to the problem (2), and let the function series  $U^n(\mathbf{x})$  be the solution to the problem (54). Then, we have

$$\|U^n - P_h u^n\| \leq Ch^{k+1} + C\tau^2. \tag{55}$$

**Proof** From (2) and (54), we can get

$$i(u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t U^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h) = a(u^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - U^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h). \tag{56}$$

Let  $u - U = \rho - \eta$  with

$$\rho = u - P_h u, \quad \eta = U - P_h u. \tag{57}$$

Combining (56) with (57) and (14), we have

$$i(\partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h) - i(\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h) - i(u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h) = a(\eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v_h). \tag{58}$$

Taking  $v_h = \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}$  in (58), we can obtain

$$i(\partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) - i(\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) - i(u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) = a(\eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}). \tag{59}$$

Notice

$$\frac{1}{2\tau}(\|\eta^{n+1}\|^2 - \|\eta^n\|^2) = \operatorname{Re}\{(\partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}})\}.$$

Comparing the imaginary parts of (59) yields

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2\tau}(\|\eta^{n+1}\|^2 - \|\eta^n\|^2) &= \operatorname{Re}\{(\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) + (u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}})\} \\ &\leq |(\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}})| + |(u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}})| \\ &\leq (\|\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\| + \|u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\|)\|\eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\| \\ &= \frac{1}{2}(\|\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\| + \|u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\|)\|\eta^{n+1} + \eta^n\| \\ &\leq \frac{1}{2}(\|\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\| + \|u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\|)(\|\eta^{n+1}\| + \|\eta^n\|). \end{aligned}$$

Thus,

$$\|\eta^{n+1}\| - \|\eta^n\| \leq C\tau(\|\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\| + \|u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\|). \tag{60}$$

It follows from (5) that

$$\begin{aligned} \|\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\| &= \|\partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t P_h u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\| \\ &= \|\tau^{-1}(u^{n+1} - u^n) - \tau^{-1}(P_h u^{n+1} - P_h u^n)\| \\ &= \tau^{-1}\|(u^{n+1} - u^n) - P_h(u^{n+1} - u^n)\| \\ &\leq C\tau^{-1}h^{k+1}\|u^{n+1} - u^n\|_{k+1} \\ &= C\tau^{-1}h^{k+1}\left\|\int_{t_n}^{t_{n+1}} u_t(\cdot, t)\right\|_{k+1} dt \\ &\leq C\tau^{-1}h^{k+1}\int_{t_n}^{t_{n+1}} \|u_t(\cdot, t)\|_{k+1} dt. \end{aligned} \tag{61}$$

In addition,

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \|u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}\| \\
 &= \frac{1}{2\tau} \left\| \int_{t_n}^{t_{n+\frac{1}{2}}} (t - t_n)^2 u_{ttt}(\cdot, t) dt + \int_{t_{n+\frac{1}{2}}}^{t_{n+1}} (t - t_{n+1})^2 u_{ttt}(\cdot, t) dt \right\| \\
 &\leq \frac{1}{2\tau} \left\| \int_{t_n}^{t_{n+\frac{1}{2}}} \left(\frac{\tau}{2}\right)^2 u_{ttt}(\cdot, t) dt + \int_{t_{n+\frac{1}{2}}}^{t_{n+1}} \left(\frac{\tau}{2}\right)^2 u_{ttt}(\cdot, t) dt \right\| \\
 &= \frac{\tau}{8} \left\| \int_{t_n}^{t_{n+1}} u_{ttt}(\cdot, t) dt \right\| \\
 &\leq C\tau \int_{t_n}^{t_{n+1}} \|u_{ttt}(\cdot, t)\| dt.
 \end{aligned} \tag{62}$$

Substituting (61) and (62) into (60), we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 \|\eta^{n+1}\| - \|\eta^n\| &\leq Ch^{k+1} \int_{t_n}^{t_{n+1}} \|u_t(\cdot, t)\|_{k+1} dt \\
 &\quad + C\tau^2 \int_{t_n}^{t_{n+1}} \|u_{ttt}(\cdot, t)\| dt.
 \end{aligned} \tag{63}$$

Summing up for  $n$  in (63) yields

$$\begin{aligned}
 \|\eta^n\| - \|\eta^0\| &\leq Ch^{k+1} \int_0^{t_n} \|u_t(\cdot, t)\|_{k+1} dt \\
 &\quad + C\tau^2 \int_0^{t_n} \|u_{ttt}(\cdot, t)\| dt.
 \end{aligned} \tag{64}$$

From (54), we can see

$$\|\eta^0\| = 0. \tag{65}$$

Therefore, (55) follows from (64) and (65).

**Lemma 5** *Let  $u(\mathbf{x}, t)$  be the solution to the problem (2), and let the function series  $U^n(\mathbf{x})$  be the solution to the problem (54). Then, the time-difference of error  $\eta^n = U^n - P_h u^n$  has a high order error*

$$\|\eta^n - \eta^{n-1}\| \leq C\tau(h^{k+1} + \tau^2). \tag{66}$$

**Proof** It follows from (2) that

$$\int_0^t (i(u_t, v) - a(u, v) - (f, v)) dt = 0, \quad \forall v \in V_0^{h,k}. \tag{67}$$

Integrating (67) in  $I_n$  by trapezoid and mid-point formulae, respectively, we can obtain

$$i(u^{n+1} - u^n, v) - \frac{\tau}{2} a(u^{n+1} + u^n, v) = \tau(f^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v) + r_1^n(v) + r_2^n(v), \tag{68}$$

where

$$r_1^n(v) = O(\tau^2) \int_{I_n} \|f_{tt}\| \|v\| dt, \tag{69}$$

$$r_2^n(v) = O(\tau^2) \int_{I_n} (\|u_{tt}\|_2 + \|Vu_{tt}\|) \|v\| dt. \tag{70}$$

From (54), we have

$$i(U^{n+1} - U^n, v) - \frac{\tau}{2}a(U^{n+1} + U^n, v) = \tau(f^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, v). \tag{71}$$

Combining (68) with (71) yields

$$\begin{aligned} & i(u^{n+1} - U^{n+1} - (u^n - U^n), v) - \frac{\tau}{2}a(u^{n+1} - U^{n+1} + u^n - U^n, v) \\ &= r_1^n(v) + r_2^n(v). \end{aligned} \tag{72}$$

From (57), (14), and (72), we get

$$i(\eta^{n+1} - \eta^n, v) - \frac{\tau}{2}a(\eta^{n+1} + \eta^n, v) = r_1^n(v) + r_2^n(v) + r_3^n(v), \tag{73}$$

where

$$r_3^n(v) = i(\rho^{n+1} - \rho^n, v) = i \int_{I_n} (\rho_t, v) dt. \tag{74}$$

Further, combining (7) and (74) gives

$$\begin{aligned} |r_3^n(v) - r_3^{n-1}(v)| &= \left| \int_{I_n} (\rho_t, v) dt - \int_{I_{n-1}} (\rho_t, v) dt \right| \\ &= O(\tau) \int_{I_n+I_{n-1}} |(\rho_{tt}, v)| dt \\ &= O(\tau h^{k+1}) \int_{I_n+I_{n-1}} \|u_{tt}\|_{k+1} \|v\| dt. \end{aligned} \tag{75}$$

Substituting  $n$  by  $n - 1$  in (73), we have

$$i(\eta^n - \eta^{n-1}, v) - \frac{\tau}{2}a(\eta^n + \eta^{n-1}, v) = r_1^{n-1}(v) + r_2^{n-1}(v) + r_3^{n-1}(v). \tag{76}$$

Let

$$\epsilon^{n+1} = \eta^{n+1} - \eta^n.$$

We can see

$$(\eta^{n+1} + \eta^n) - (\eta^n + \eta^{n-1}) = \epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n. \tag{77}$$

Subtracting (76) from (73) and combining (77) yield

$$i(\epsilon^{n+1} - \epsilon^n, v) - \frac{\tau}{2}a(\epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n, v) = r_h^n(v), \tag{78}$$

where

$$r_h^n(v) = \sum_{i=1}^3 (r_i^n(v) - r_i^{n-1}(v)). \tag{79}$$

From (69), (70), (75), and (79), we can obtain

$$\begin{aligned} |r_h^n(v)| &\leq \sum_{i=1}^3 |r_i^n(v) - r_i^{n-1}(v)| \\ &\leq C\tau(h^{k+1} + \tau^2) \int_{I_n+I_{n-1}} (\|f_{ttt}\| + \|u_{ttt}\|_2 \\ &\quad + \|Vu_{ttt}\| + \|u_{tt}\|_{k+1}) \|v\| dt. \end{aligned} \tag{80}$$

Taking  $v = \epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n$  in (78), we get

$$i(\epsilon^{n+1} - \epsilon^n, \epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n) - \frac{\tau}{2}a(\epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n, \epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n) = r_h^n(\epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n). \tag{81}$$

Comparing the imaginary parts of (81), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \|\epsilon^n\|^2 - \|\epsilon^{n-1}\|^2 &= \text{Re}\{(\epsilon^{n+1} - \epsilon^n, \epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n)\} \\ &= \text{Im}\{r_h^n(\epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n)\} \\ &\leq |r_h^n(\epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n)|. \end{aligned} \tag{82}$$

Combining (80) with (82) gives

$$\begin{aligned} \|\epsilon^n\|^2 - \|\epsilon^{n-1}\|^2 &\leq C\tau(h^{k+1} + \tau^2) \int_{I_n + I_{n-1}} (\|f_{ttt}\| + \|u_{ttt}\|_2 \\ &\quad + \|Vu_{ttt}\| + \|u_{tt}\|_{k+1}) \|\epsilon^{n+1} + \epsilon^n\| dt. \end{aligned} \tag{83}$$

Without loss of generality, we assume that there is an integer  $1 \leq K \leq N$  such that

$$\|\epsilon^K\| = \max_{1 \leq n \leq N} \|\epsilon^n\|. \tag{84}$$

Summing up for  $n$  from 2 to  $K$  in (83) and combining (84), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \|\epsilon^K\|^2 &\leq \|\epsilon^1\|^2 + C\tau(h^{k+1} + \tau^2) \int_I (\|f_{ttt}\| + \|u_{ttt}\|_2 \\ &\quad + \|Vu_{ttt}\| + \|u_{tt}\|_{k+1}) dt \|\epsilon^K\|. \end{aligned} \tag{85}$$

Taking  $n = 1$  in (64) and combining (65) yield

$$\|\epsilon^1\| = \|\eta^1\| \leq C\tau(h^{k+1} + \tau^2). \tag{86}$$

Substituting (86) into (85) and using Young's inequality, we can get

$$\|\epsilon^K\| \leq C\tau(h^{k+1} + \tau^2). \tag{87}$$

Therefore, (66) follows from (84) and (87).

**Theorem 5** *Let  $u(\mathbf{x}, t)$  be the solution to the problem (2), and let the function series  $U^n(\mathbf{x})$  be the solution to the problem (54). Then, we have*

$$\|U^n - P_h u^n\|_1 \leq Ch^{k+1} + C\tau^2. \tag{88}$$

**Proof** Taking  $v_h = \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}$  in (58), we have

$$\begin{aligned} &i(\partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) - i(\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) - i(u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) \\ &= \frac{1}{2}(\nabla \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \nabla \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) + (V \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}). \end{aligned} \tag{89}$$

Notice

$$\frac{1}{2\tau}(\|\nabla \eta^{n+1}\|^2 - \|\nabla \eta^n\|^2) = \text{Re}\{(\nabla \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \nabla \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}})\}.$$

Comparing the real parts of (89), we get

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{4\tau}(\|\nabla \eta^{n+1}\|^2 - \|\nabla \eta^n\|^2) &= \text{Im}\{(\partial_t \rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) + (u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}})\} \\ &\quad - \text{Re}\{(V \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t \eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}})\}, \end{aligned}$$

that is,

$$\begin{aligned} \|\nabla\eta^{n+1}\|^2 - \|\nabla\eta^n\|^2 &= 4\tau\text{Im}\{(\partial_t\rho^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t\eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}}) + (u_t^{n+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{n+\frac{1}{2}}, \partial_t\eta^{n+\frac{1}{2}})\} \\ &\quad - 2V(\|\eta^{n+1}\|^2 - \|\eta^n\|^2). \end{aligned} \tag{90}$$

Summing up for  $n$  in (90) and combining (65), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \|\nabla\eta^n\|^2 &\leq C \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} \|\partial_t\rho^{j+\frac{1}{2}}\| \|\eta^{j+1} - \eta^j\| \\ &\quad + C \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} \|u_t^{j+\frac{1}{2}} - \partial_t u^{j+\frac{1}{2}}\| \|\eta^{j+1} - \eta^j\| + C\|\eta^n\|^2. \end{aligned} \tag{91}$$

Substituting (61), (66), (62), and (55) into (91), we can obtain

$$\|\nabla\eta^n\|^2 \leq (Ch^{k+1} + C\tau^2)^2,$$

that is,

$$\|\nabla\eta^n\| \leq Ch^{k+1} + C\tau^2,$$

which completes the proof.

Similar to Theorem 3, we can obtain the following result.

**Theorem 6** *Assume that  $u(\mathbf{x}, t)$  is the solution to the problem (2), and the function series  $U^n(\mathbf{x})$  is the solution to the problem (54). Then, we have the global superconvergence estimate*

$$\|u^n - \Pi_{2h}^{2k}U^n\|_1 \leq Ch^{k+1} + \tau^2, \tag{92}$$

where  $\Pi_{2h}^{2k}$  is the interpolation post-processing operator.

### 6 Numerical examples

In this section, we carry out some numerical examples with  $k = 1$  and  $k = 2$  to demonstrate the validity of the theoretical analysis.

Example 1 We consider the following linear Schrödinger equation:

$$\begin{cases} iu_t(\mathbf{x}, t) = -\frac{1}{2}\Delta u(\mathbf{x}, t) + u(\mathbf{x}, t) + f(\mathbf{x}, t) & \text{in } \Omega \times [0, 1], \\ u(\mathbf{x}, t) = 0 & \text{on } \partial\Omega \times [0, 1], \\ u(\mathbf{x}, 0) = u_0(\mathbf{x}) & \text{in } \Omega, \end{cases} \tag{93}$$

where  $\Omega = [0, 1] \times [0, 1]$ , and let the function  $f(\mathbf{x}, t)$  be chosen that

$$u(x, y, t) = e^t(1 + i)(1 - x)(1 - y) \sin x \sin y$$

is the exact solution.

We have solved the Schrödinger equation on the uniformly rectangular meshes with the mesh size  $h$  by the bilinear finite element. First, we calculate the errors with fixing  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  by varying  $h$ . The error results are presented in Tables 1–4, where Order<sub>1</sub>, Order<sub>2</sub>, Order<sub>3</sub>, and Order<sub>4</sub> denote the convergence orders of  $\|u_I - U^n\|$ ,  $\|u - U^n\|_1$ ,  $\|u_I - U^n\|_1$ , and  $\|u - \Pi_{2h}^2U^n\|_1$ , respectively. Moreover, we have shown convergence orders by slopes in Figs. 2–5. Results in all tables show  $O(h)$  in  $\|u - U^n\|_1$ , and  $O(h^2)$  convergence rate clearly in  $\|u_I - U^n\|$ ,  $\|u_I - U^n\|_1$ , and  $\|u - \Pi_{2h}^2U^n\|_1$ .

**Table 1** Numerical results at  $t = 0.01$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  in Example 1

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/8$	$9.9357 \times 10^{-5}$	-	$3.3771 \times 10^{-2}$	-	$6.2778 \times 10^{-4}$	-	$1.7558 \times 10^{-3}$	-
$h = 1/16$	$2.5160 \times 10^{-5}$	1.982	$1.6790 \times 10^{-2}$	1.008	$1.6956 \times 10^{-4}$	1.888	$4.4138 \times 10^{-4}$	1.992
$h = 1/32$	$6.3085 \times 10^{-6}$	1.996	$8.3827 \times 10^{-3}$	1.002	$4.3226 \times 10^{-5}$	1.972	$1.1028 \times 10^{-4}$	2.001
$h = 1/64$	$1.5782 \times 10^{-6}$	1.999	$4.1898 \times 10^{-3}$	1.001	$1.0848 \times 10^{-5}$	1.994	$2.7565 \times 10^{-5}$	2.000

**Table 2** Numerical results at  $t = 0.1$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  in Example 1

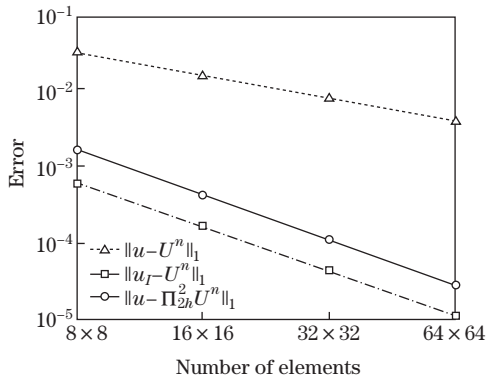
Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/8$	$7.4107 \times 10^{-4}$	-	$3.6917 \times 10^{-2}$	-	$3.6604 \times 10^{-3}$	-	$4.2636 \times 10^{-3}$	-
$h = 1/16$	$1.8832 \times 10^{-4}$	1.976	$1.8367 \times 10^{-2}$	1.007	$9.4003 \times 10^{-4}$	1.961	$1.0656 \times 10^{-3}$	2.001
$h = 1/32$	$4.7298 \times 10^{-5}$	1.993	$9.1716 \times 10^{-3}$	1.002	$2.3603 \times 10^{-4}$	1.994	$2.6585 \times 10^{-4}$	2.003
$h = 1/64$	$1.1840 \times 10^{-5}$	1.998	$4.5844 \times 10^{-3}$	1.001	$5.9199 \times 10^{-5}$	1.995	$6.6513 \times 10^{-5}$	1.999

**Table 3** Numerical results at  $t = 0.5$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  in Example 1

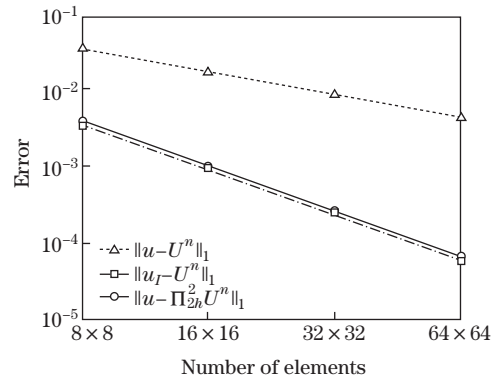
Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/8$	$8.1293 \times 10^{-4}$	-	$5.4966 \times 10^{-2}$	-	$4.3017 \times 10^{-3}$	-	$5.2665 \times 10^{-3}$	-
$h = 1/16$	$2.0388 \times 10^{-4}$	1.995	$2.7386 \times 10^{-2}$	1.005	$1.0057 \times 10^{-3}$	2.097	$1.2577 \times 10^{-3}$	2.066
$h = 1/32$	$5.0843 \times 10^{-5}$	2.004	$1.3681 \times 10^{-2}$	1.001	$2.4988 \times 10^{-4}$	2.009	$3.1505 \times 10^{-4}$	1.997
$h = 1/64$	$1.2719 \times 10^{-5}$	1.999	$6.8388 \times 10^{-3}$	1.000	$6.2097 \times 10^{-5}$	2.009	$7.8531 \times 10^{-5}$	2.004

**Table 4** Numerical results at  $t = 1.0$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  in Example 1

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/8$	$2.2407 \times 10^{-3}$	-	$9.0525 \times 10^{-2}$	-	$1.0416 \times 10^{-2}$	-	$1.1400 \times 10^{-2}$	-
$h = 1/16$	$5.8743 \times 10^{-4}$	1.932	$4.5140 \times 10^{-2}$	1.004	$2.7423 \times 10^{-3}$	1.925	$2.9351 \times 10^{-3}$	1.958
$h = 1/32$	$1.4809 \times 10^{-4}$	1.988	$2.2554 \times 10^{-2}$	1.001	$6.8316 \times 10^{-4}$	2.005	$7.2953 \times 10^{-4}$	2.008
$h = 1/64$	$3.7118 \times 10^{-5}$	1.996	$1.1275 \times 10^{-2}$	1.000	$1.7124 \times 10^{-4}$	1.996	$1.8269 \times 10^{-4}$	1.998



**Fig. 2** Log of errors at  $t = 0.01$  with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$



**Fig. 3** Log of errors at  $t = 0.1$  with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$

To test the convergence rate in terms of  $\tau$ , we fix the time step  $\tau = h$ . The error results are shown in Tables 5 and 6. In addition, we also show the convergence orders by slopes in Figs. 6 and 7. Results show the convergence rate  $O(\tau^2)$  clearly in  $\|u_I - U^n\|$ ,  $\|u_I - U^n\|_1$ , and  $\|u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\|_1$ .

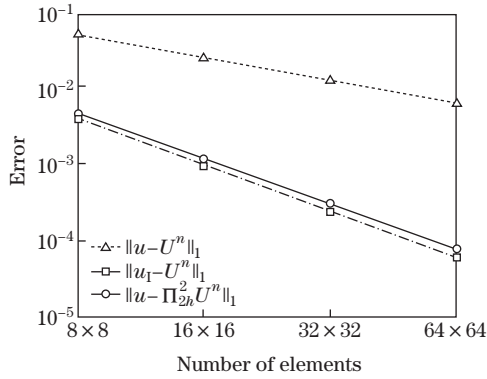


Fig. 4 Log of errors at  $t = 0.5$  with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$

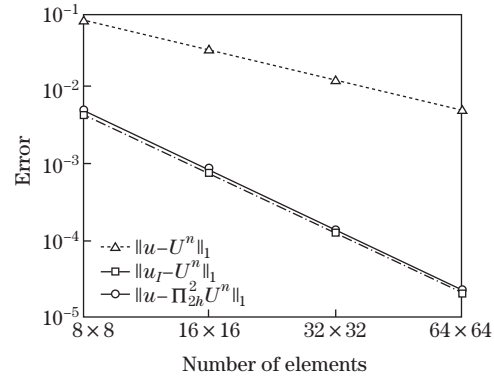


Fig. 5 Log of errors at  $t = 1.0$  with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$

Table 5 Numerical results at  $t = 0.5$  obtained with  $\tau = h$  in Example 1

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/16$	$2.3683 \times 10^{-4}$	–	$1.2063 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$1.4383 \times 10^{-3}$	–
$h = 1/32$	$5.5499 \times 10^{-5}$	2.093	$2.9039 \times 10^{-4}$	2.055	$3.4131 \times 10^{-4}$	2.075
$h = 1/64$	$1.2667 \times 10^{-5}$	2.131	$6.0799 \times 10^{-5}$	2.256	$7.9066 \times 10^{-5}$	2.110
$h = 1/128$	$3.1574 \times 10^{-6}$	2.004	$1.5300 \times 10^{-5}$	1.991	$1.9665 \times 10^{-5}$	2.007

Table 6 Numerical results at  $t = 1.0$  obtained with  $\tau = h$  in Example 1

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/16$	$6.6849 \times 10^{-4}$	–	$3.1022 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$3.2531 \times 10^{-3}$	–
$h = 1/32$	$1.5319 \times 10^{-4}$	2.126	$7.0814 \times 10^{-4}$	2.131	$7.5231 \times 10^{-4}$	2.112
$h = 1/64$	$3.7462 \times 10^{-5}$	2.032	$1.7432 \times 10^{-4}$	2.022	$1.8561 \times 10^{-4}$	2.019
$h = 1/128$	$9.2826 \times 10^{-6}$	2.013	$4.2735 \times 10^{-5}$	2.028	$4.5631 \times 10^{-5}$	2.024

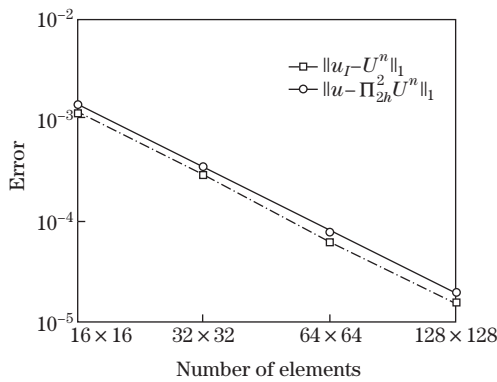


Fig. 6 Log of errors at  $t = 0.5$  with  $\tau = h$

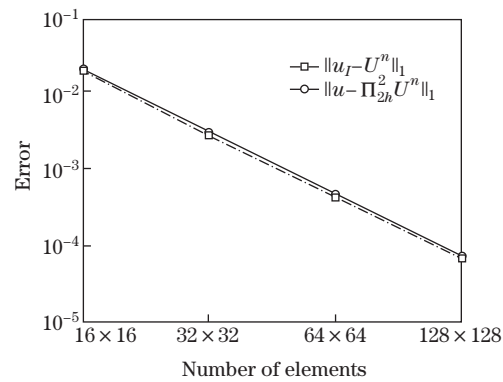


Fig. 7 Log of errors at  $t = 1.0$  with  $\tau = h$

Example 2 We consider the problem (93) with  $\Omega = [-1, 1] \times [-1, 1]$ , and function  $f(\mathbf{x}, t)$  is chosen corresponding to the exact solution

$$u(x, y, t) = e^t x(1+x)(1-x)(1+y)(1-y) + ie^t x \sin(\pi x) \sin(\pi y).$$

Similarly, we have solved the Schrödinger equation by the bilinear finite element. We calculate the errors with fixing  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  by varying  $h$ . The error results at the time level  $t_n = 0.01, 0.1, 0.5, 1.0$  are presented in Tables 7–10, respectively. Results in all tables show  $O(h)$  in  $\|u - U^n\|_1$ , and  $O(h^2)$  convergence rate clearly in  $\|u_I - U^n\|$ ,  $\|u_I - U^n\|_1$ , and  $\|u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\|_1$ .

Then, we take the time step  $\tau = h$ . The error results are listed in Tables 11 and 12. Results show the convergence rate  $O(\tau^2)$  clearly in  $\|u_I - U^n\|$ ,  $\|u_I - U^n\|_1$ , and  $\|u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\|_1$  as well, which are coincident with theoretical results.

The profiles of the exact solution and the numerical solution at  $t = 1.0$  on the  $64 \times 64$  mesh grid are plotted in Figs. 8–11.

**Table 7** Numerical results at  $t = 0.01$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  in Example 2

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/8$	$1.3695 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$4.3513 \times 10^{-1}$	–	$8.8605 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$8.3676 \times 10^{-2}$	–
$h = 1/16$	$3.4678 \times 10^{-4}$	1.982	$2.1675 \times 10^{-1}$	1.005	$2.2779 \times 10^{-3}$	1.960	$2.1245 \times 10^{-2}$	1.978
$h = 1/32$	$8.6958 \times 10^{-5}$	1.996	$1.0827 \times 10^{-1}$	1.001	$5.7318 \times 10^{-4}$	1.991	$5.3302 \times 10^{-3}$	1.995
$h = 1/64$	$2.1756 \times 10^{-5}$	1.999	$5.4123 \times 10^{-2}$	1.000	$1.4353 \times 10^{-4}$	1.998	$1.3337 \times 10^{-3}$	1.999

**Table 8** Numerical results at  $t = 0.1$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  in Example 2

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/8$	$1.2188 \times 10^{-2}$	–	$4.7595 \times 10^{-1}$	–	$7.0779 \times 10^{-2}$	–	$1.1561 \times 10^{-1}$	–
$h = 1/16$	$3.0903 \times 10^{-3}$	1.980	$2.3714 \times 10^{-1}$	1.005	$1.7818 \times 10^{-2}$	1.990	$2.9078 \times 10^{-2}$	1.991
$h = 1/32$	$7.7531 \times 10^{-4}$	1.995	$1.1847 \times 10^{-1}$	1.001	$4.4659 \times 10^{-3}$	1.996	$7.2819 \times 10^{-3}$	1.998
$h = 1/64$	$1.9400 \times 10^{-4}$	1.999	$5.9220 \times 10^{-2}$	1.000	$1.1171 \times 10^{-3}$	1.999	$1.8211 \times 10^{-3}$	2.000

**Table 9** Numerical results at  $t = 0.5$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  in Example 2

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/8$	$2.0535 \times 10^{-2}$	–	$7.0896 \times 10^{-1}$	–	$1.1175 \times 10^{-1}$	–	$1.7606 \times 10^{-1}$	–
$h = 1/16$	$5.1357 \times 10^{-3}$	1.999	$3.5363 \times 10^{-1}$	1.004	$2.7709 \times 10^{-2}$	2.012	$4.4016 \times 10^{-2}$	2.000
$h = 1/32$	$1.2836 \times 10^{-3}$	2.000	$1.7671 \times 10^{-1}$	1.001	$6.9144 \times 10^{-3}$	2.003	$1.1005 \times 10^{-2}$	2.000
$h = 1/64$	$3.2085 \times 10^{-4}$	2.000	$8.8343 \times 10^{-2}$	1.000	$1.7270 \times 10^{-3}$	2.001	$2.7508 \times 10^{-3}$	2.000

**Table 10** Numerical results at  $t = 1.0$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-4}$  in Example 2

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/8$	$2.1954 \times 10^{-2}$	–	1.1672	–	$1.2333 \times 10^{-1}$	–	$2.5572 \times 10^{-1}$	–
$h = 1/16$	$6.0520 \times 10^{-3}$	1.859	$5.8284 \times 10^{-1}$	1.002	$3.3824 \times 10^{-2}$	1.866	$6.5942 \times 10^{-2}$	1.955
$h = 1/32$	$1.5509 \times 10^{-3}$	1.964	$2.9132 \times 10^{-1}$	1.001	$8.6926 \times 10^{-3}$	1.960	$1.6636 \times 10^{-2}$	1.987
$h = 1/64$	$3.9009 \times 10^{-4}$	1.991	$1.4565 \times 10^{-1}$	1.000	$2.1879 \times 10^{-3}$	1.990	$4.1682 \times 10^{-3}$	1.997

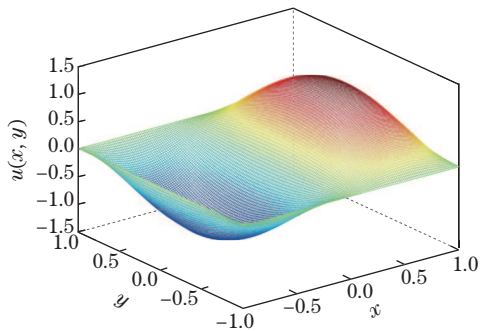
**Table 11** Numerical results  $t = 0.5$  obtained with  $\tau = h$  in Example 2

Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/16$	$4.3946 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$2.3066 \times 10^{-2}$	–	$4.1306 \times 10^{-2}$	–
$h = 1/32$	$1.2460 \times 10^{-3}$	1.818	$6.7001 \times 10^{-3}$	1.784	$1.0876 \times 10^{-2}$	1.925
$h = 1/64$	$3.1896 \times 10^{-4}$	1.966	$1.7114 \times 10^{-3}$	1.969	$2.7413 \times 10^{-3}$	1.988
$h = 1/128$	$8.0206 \times 10^{-5}$	1.992	$4.3034 \times 10^{-4}$	1.992	$6.8686 \times 10^{-4}$	1.997

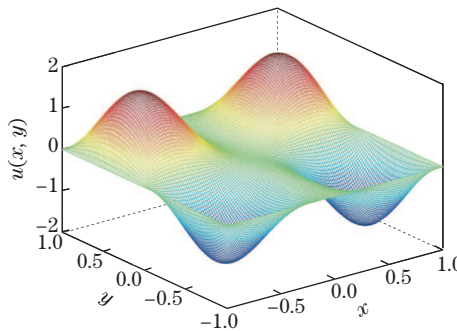


**Table 12** Numerical results at  $t = 1.0$  obtained with  $\tau = h$  in Example 2

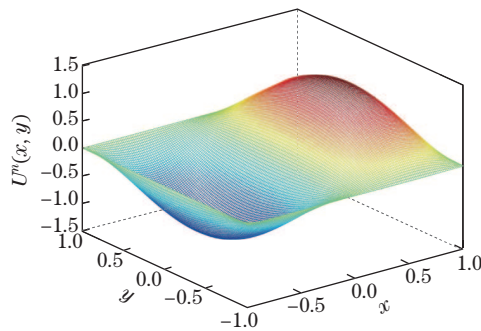
Mesh	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>	$\ u - \Pi_{2h}^2 U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>4</sub>
$h = 1/16$	$7.2718 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$4.1379 \times 10^{-2}$	–	$7.0050 \times 10^{-2}$	–
$h = 1/32$	$1.6874 \times 10^{-3}$	2.108	$9.5410 \times 10^{-3}$	2.117	$1.7083 \times 10^{-2}$	2.036
$h = 1/64$	$4.0062 \times 10^{-4}$	2.075	$2.2545 \times 10^{-3}$	2.081	$4.2027 \times 10^{-3}$	2.023
$h = 1/128$	$9.8441 \times 10^{-5}$	2.025	$5.5237 \times 10^{-4}$	2.029	$1.0449 \times 10^{-3}$	2.008



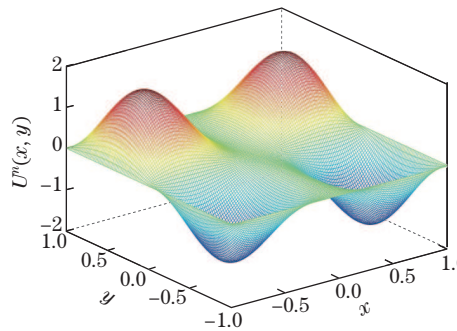
**Fig. 8** Real parts of exact solution (color online)



**Fig. 9** Imaginary parts of exact solution (color online)



**Fig. 10** Real parts of numerical solution (color online)



**Fig. 11** Imaginary parts of numerical solution (color online)

**Example 3** We consider the problem (93) with  $\Omega = [-1, 1] \times [-1, 1]$ , and function  $f(\mathbf{x}, t)$  is chosen corresponding to the same exact solution with Example 2.

The domain  $\Omega$  is uniformly divided into families  $\Gamma_h$  of quadrilaterals with mesh size  $h$ , and  $V^{h,2}$  is the biquadratic rectangular element space defined on  $\Gamma_h$ . The Schrödinger equation is solved by the biquadratic rectangular element. We calculate the errors with fixing  $\tau = 10^{-3}$  by varying  $h$ . The error results at time level  $t_n = 0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 1.0$  are presented in Tables 13–16, respectively. Results in all tables also show  $O(h^2)$  in  $\|u - U^n\|_1$ , and  $O(h^3)$  convergence rate clearly in  $\|u - U^n\|$  and  $\|u_I - U^n\|_1$ , which are consistent with our theoretical analysis. In addition, the results show  $O(h^4)$  in  $\|u_I - U^n\|$ . When  $k \geq 2$ , there is the superclose property also in the  $L^2$  norm between the numerical solution with the interpolant of exact solution.

**Table 13** Numerical results at  $t = 0.1$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-3}$ 

Mesh	$\ u - U^n\ $	Order	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>
$h = 1/4$	$2.8434 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$3.0951 \times 10^{-4}$	–	$9.0911 \times 10^{-2}$	–	$4.9860 \times 10^{-3}$	–
$h = 1/8$	$3.6930 \times 10^{-4}$	2.945	$2.0733 \times 10^{-5}$	3.900	$2.3106 \times 10^{-2}$	1.976	$6.7424 \times 10^{-4}$	2.887
$h = 1/16$	$4.6680 \times 10^{-5}$	2.984	$1.2780 \times 10^{-6}$	4.020	$5.7986 \times 10^{-3}$	1.995	$7.8974 \times 10^{-5}$	3.094
$h = 1/32$	$5.8523 \times 10^{-6}$	2.996	$7.2122 \times 10^{-8}$	4.147	$1.4510 \times 10^{-3}$	1.999	$3.9969 \times 10^{-6}$	4.304

**Table 14** Numerical results at  $t = 0.2$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-3}$ 

Mesh	$\ u - U^n\ $	Order	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>
$h = 1/4$	$3.0812 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$4.3760 \times 10^{-4}$	–	$1.0047 \times 10^{-1}$	–	$7.1099 \times 10^{-3}$	–
$h = 1/8$	$4.0784 \times 10^{-4}$	2.917	$2.6292 \times 10^{-5}$	4.057	$2.5536 \times 10^{-2}$	1.976	$6.8993 \times 10^{-4}$	3.365
$h = 1/16$	$5.1558 \times 10^{-5}$	2.984	$1.6869 \times 10^{-6}$	3.962	$6.4084 \times 10^{-3}$	1.995	$9.2336 \times 10^{-5}$	2.902
$h = 1/32$	$6.4665 \times 10^{-6}$	2.995	$1.0013 \times 10^{-7}$	4.075	$1.6036 \times 10^{-3}$	1.999	$7.0384 \times 10^{-6}$	3.714

**Table 15** Numerical results at  $t = 0.5$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-3}$ 

Mesh	$\ u - U^n\ $	Order	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>
$h = 1/4$	$4.2589 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$4.3852 \times 10^{-4}$	–	$1.3557 \times 10^{-1}$	–	$5.2243 \times 10^{-3}$	–
$h = 1/8$	$5.5136 \times 10^{-4}$	2.949	$2.9882 \times 10^{-5}$	3.875	$3.4468 \times 10^{-2}$	1.976	$7.9431 \times 10^{-4}$	2.718
$h = 1/16$	$6.9627 \times 10^{-5}$	2.985	$1.9090 \times 10^{-6}$	3.968	$8.6503 \times 10^{-3}$	1.994	$1.0669 \times 10^{-4}$	2.896
$h = 1/32$	$8.7270 \times 10^{-6}$	2.996	$1.2394 \times 10^{-7}$	3.945	$2.1646 \times 10^{-3}$	1.999	$1.4431 \times 10^{-5}$	2.886

**Table 16** Numerical results at  $t = 1.0$  obtained with  $\tau = 10^{-3}$ 

Mesh	$\ u - U^n\ $	Order	$\ u_I - U^n\ $	Order <sub>1</sub>	$\ u - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>2</sub>	$\ u_I - U^n\ _1$	Order <sub>3</sub>
$h = 1/4$	$6.9955 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$6.2494 \times 10^{-4}$	–	$2.2348 \times 10^{-1}$	–	$1.0268 \times 10^{-2}$	–
$h = 1/8$	$9.0956 \times 10^{-4}$	2.943	$4.0484 \times 10^{-5}$	3.948	$5.6826 \times 10^{-2}$	1.976	$1.2887 \times 10^{-3}$	2.994
$h = 1/16$	$1.1487 \times 10^{-4}$	2.985	$2.4265 \times 10^{-6}$	4.060	$1.4262 \times 10^{-2}$	1.994	$1.3386 \times 10^{-4}$	3.267
$h = 1/32$	$1.4392 \times 10^{-5}$	2.997	$1.5049 \times 10^{-7}$	4.011	$3.5688 \times 10^{-3}$	1.999	$1.4348 \times 10^{-5}$	3.222

## 7 Conclusions

In this paper, we consider a two-dimensional time-dependent linear Schrödinger equation with the finite element method. We present the finite element semi-discrete scheme and the Crank-Nicolson fully discrete scheme in the rectangular Lagrange type finite element space of order  $k$ . We also obtain the superconvergence result in the  $H^1$  norm by use of the elliptic projection in the semi-discrete scheme and the fully discrete scheme, respectively. Some numerical examples with the order  $k = 1$  and  $k = 2$  are provided to partly verify our theoretical results. In the future, we shall try to study the problem of superconvergence in the  $L^2$  norm for the two-dimensional time-dependent Schrödinger equation and the superconvergence in the  $H^1$  norm for the three-dimensional Schrödinger equation with the finite element method.

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