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CONJUGACY AND DISCONJUGACY CRITERIA FOR SECOND ORDER LINEAR ORDINARY DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS

T. CHANTLADZE, A. LOMTATIDZE, AND D. UGULAVA

ABSTRACT. Conjugacy and disconjugacy criteria are established for the equation

$$u'' + p(t)u = 0,$$

where $p :] - \infty, +\infty[\rightarrow] - \infty, +\infty[$ is a locally summable function.

INTRODUCTION

Consider the equation

$$(1) \quad u'' + p(t)u = 0,$$

where $p : R \rightarrow R$ ($R =] - \infty, +\infty[$) is Lebesgue integrable on every compact subinterval of R . By a solution of the equation (1) we understand the function $u : R \rightarrow R$ which is absolutely continuous together with its first derivative on every segment contained in R , and almost everywhere satisfies the equation (1).

The equation (1) is said to be *conjugate* if it has a nontrivial solution with at least two zeros, and *disconjugate* otherwise. If there exists a nontrivial solution of (1) with a sequence of zeros tending to $+\infty$ (to $-\infty$), then the equation (1) is said to be *oscillatory* in the neighbourhood of $+\infty$ (in the neighbourhood of $-\infty$).

The history of the problem on conjugacy of (1) begins from the paper of S. W. Hawking and R. Penrose [8], where has been proved that conditions $p(t) \geq 0$ for $t \in R$ and $p \not\equiv 0$, guarantee conjugacy of (1). In [13] F. J. Tipler pointed out an interesting relevance of the study of conjugacy of (1) to general relativity and improved Hawking–Penrose’s criterion, showing that (1) is conjugate whenever

$$\liminf_{t \rightarrow -\infty} \liminf_{\tau \rightarrow +\infty} \int_t^\tau p(s) ds > 0$$

is fulfilled. Later these results were generalized in various directions (see, e.g., [1, 2, 5, 6, 9 - 12]). However, the investigation of conjugacy of the equation (1) is not

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still completed. Below we establish new conditions for conjugacy and disconjugacy of the equation (1) which generalize and make the results obtained in [1, 5, 6, 8 - 10] more complete.

Put

$$c(t) = \frac{1}{|t|} \int_0^t \int_0^s p(\xi) d\xi ds \quad \text{for } t \in R \setminus \{0\}.$$

According to Theorem 7.3 in [7, p. 367], if either

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow +\infty} c(t) = +\infty \quad \text{or} \quad -\infty < \liminf_{t \rightarrow +\infty} c(t) < \limsup_{t \rightarrow +\infty} c(t),$$

resp. if either

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} c(t) = +\infty \quad \text{or} \quad -\infty < \liminf_{t \rightarrow -\infty} c(t) < \limsup_{t \rightarrow -\infty} c(t),$$

then the equation (1) is oscillatory in the neighbourhood of $+\infty$, resp. in the neighbourhood of $-\infty$. Therefore, below we suppose that there exist finite limits

$$c(-\infty) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} c(t), \quad c(+\infty) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow +\infty} c(t).$$

Denote

$$Q_1(t) = \int_0^t p(s) ds - c(+\infty), \quad Q_2(t) = \int_0^t p(s) ds + c(-\infty) \quad \text{for } t \in R,$$

$$F_i(t) = \exp \left(2 \int_0^t Q_i(s) ds \right) \quad \text{for } t \in R, \quad i = 1, 2.$$

To formulate the main results, we need two propositions. The first one is the special case of Theorem 1.2 proved in [14], and the second one we prove in §3.

Proposition 1. *Let*

$$\int_0^{+\infty} \frac{Q_1^2(s)}{F_1(s)} ds = +\infty, \quad \text{resp.} \quad \int_{-\infty}^0 \frac{Q_2^2(s)}{F_2(s)} ds = +\infty.$$

Then the equation (1) is oscillatory in the neighbourhood of $+\infty$, resp. in the neighbourhood of $-\infty$.

Proposition 2. *If*

$$(2) \quad \int_{-\infty}^0 F_1(s) ds < +\infty, \quad \text{resp.} \quad \int_0^{+\infty} F_2(s) ds < +\infty$$

and

$$(3) \quad \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{[Q_1(s) \int_{-\infty}^s F_1(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_1(s)} ds = +\infty, \quad \text{resp.}$$

$$\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \frac{[Q_2(s) \int_s^{+\infty} F_2(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_2(s)} ds = +\infty,$$

then the equation (1) is oscillatory in the neighbourhood of $-\infty$, resp. in the neighbourhood of $+\infty$.

1. MAIN RESULTS

Theorem 1. Let $p \neq 0$ and

$$(4) \quad c(-\infty) + c(+\infty) \geq 0.$$

Then the equation (1) is conjugate.

Remark 1. It can be easily seen that Theorem 1 generalizes above-mentioned Tipler’s result as well as Corollary 1 in [6] and Corollary 3.2 and Proposition 3 in [9].

Remark 2. From Theorem 1 and above-mentioned Theorem 7.3 in [7] it follows that at least one of the equations $u'' + p(t)u = 0$ and $u'' - p(t)u = 0$, where $p \neq 0$, is conjugate whenever either

$$\liminf_{t \rightarrow -\infty} c(t) > -\infty \quad \text{or} \quad \limsup_{t \rightarrow -\infty} c(t) < +\infty$$

or

$$\liminf_{t \rightarrow +\infty} c(t) > -\infty \quad \text{or} \quad \limsup_{t \rightarrow +\infty} c(t) < +\infty.$$

According to Theorem 1, it is natural to assume in the following that

$$(5) \quad c(-\infty) + c(+\infty) < 0.$$

Note that the inequality (5) guarantees the conditions (2). Consequently, in view of Propositions 1 and 2 it is also natural to assume that

$$(6) \quad \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \frac{Q_1^2(s)}{F_1(s)} ds < +\infty, \quad \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{[Q_1(s) \int_{-\infty}^s F_1(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_1(s)} ds < +\infty,$$

$$(7) \quad \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \frac{Q_2^2(s)}{F_2(s)} ds < +\infty, \quad \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \frac{[Q_2(s) \int_s^{+\infty} F_2(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_2(s)} ds < +\infty.$$

Theorem 2. *Let the conditions (5), (6), and*

$$(8) \quad \sup \left\{ \int_{-\infty}^t F_1(s) ds \int_t^{+\infty} \frac{Q_1^2(s)}{F_1(s)} ds + \frac{1}{\int_{-\infty}^t F_1(s) ds} \int_{-\infty}^t \frac{[Q_1(s) \int_{-\infty}^s F_1(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_1(s)} ds : t \in R \right\} > 1$$

be fulfilled. Then the equation (1) is conjugate.

Theorem 2'. *Let the conditions (5), (7), and*

$$\sup \left\{ \int_t^{+\infty} F_2(s) ds \int_{-\infty}^t \frac{Q_2^2(s)}{F_2(s)} ds + \frac{1}{\int_t^{+\infty} F_2(s) ds} \int_t^{+\infty} \frac{[Q_2(s) \int_s^{+\infty} F_2(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_2(s)} ds : t \in R \right\} > 1$$

be fulfilled. Then the equation (1) is conjugate.

Finally we formulate disconjugacy theorems.

Theorem 3. *Let the conditions (5) and (6) hold. Let, moreover, at least one of the following three inequalities be fulfilled:*

$$(9) \quad \sup \left\{ \int_{-\infty}^t F_1(s) ds \int_t^{+\infty} \frac{Q_1^2(s)}{F_1(s)} ds : t \in R \right\} \leq \frac{1}{4};$$

$$(10) \quad \sup \left\{ \frac{1}{\int_{-\infty}^t F_1(s) ds} \int_{-\infty}^t \frac{[Q_1(s) \int_{-\infty}^s F_1(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_1(s)} ds : t \in R \right\} \leq \frac{1}{4};$$

$$(11) \quad \sup \left\{ \int_{-\infty}^t F_1(s) ds \int_t^{+\infty} \frac{Q_1^2(s)}{F_1(s)} ds + \frac{1}{\int_{-\infty}^t F_1(s) ds} \int_{-\infty}^t \frac{[Q_1(s) \int_{-\infty}^s F_1(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_1(s)} ds : t \in R \right\} \leq \sqrt{2} - 1.$$

Then the equation (1) is disconjugate.

Theorem 3'. *Let the conditions (5) and (7) hold. Let, moreover, at least one of the following three inequalities be fulfilled:*

$$\begin{aligned} & \sup \left\{ \int_t^{+\infty} F_2(s) ds \int_{-\infty}^t \frac{Q_2^2(s)}{F_2(s)} ds : t \in R \right\} \leq \frac{1}{4}; \\ & \sup \left\{ \frac{1}{\int_t^{+\infty} F_2(s) ds} \int_t^{+\infty} \frac{[Q_2(s) \int_s^{+\infty} F_2(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_2(s)} ds : t \in R \right\} \leq \frac{1}{4}; \\ & \sup \left\{ \int_t^{+\infty} F_2(s) ds \int_{-\infty}^t \frac{Q_2^2(s)}{F_2(s)} ds + \right. \\ & \quad \left. + \frac{1}{\int_t^{+\infty} F_2(s) ds} \int_t^{+\infty} \frac{[Q_2(s) \int_s^{+\infty} F_2(\xi) d\xi]^2}{F_2(s)} ds : t \in R \right\} \leq \sqrt{2} - 1. \end{aligned}$$

Then the equation (1) is disconjugate.

2. AUXILIARY PROPOSITIONS

Lemma 1. *Let the equation (1) be disconjugate. Then it has a solution not having a zero.*

Proof. Let \tilde{v}_n and \tilde{w}_n , where $n \in N$, be solutions of the equation (1) satisfying the initial conditions

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{v}_n(-n) &= 0, & \tilde{v}'_n(-n) &= 1, \\ \tilde{w}_n(n) &= 0, & \tilde{w}'_n(n) &= -1. \end{aligned}$$

Evidently, $\tilde{v}_n(0) \neq 0$ and $\tilde{w}_n(0) \neq 0$ for $n \in N$. Put

$$v_n(t) = \frac{\tilde{v}_n(t)}{\tilde{v}_n(0)}, \quad w_n(t) = \frac{\tilde{w}_n(t)}{\tilde{w}_n(0)} \quad \text{for } t \in R, \quad n \in N.$$

It is clear that for any $n \in N$, v_n and w_n are solutions of the equation (1) and

$$(12) \quad \begin{aligned} v_n(t) \operatorname{sgn}(t+n) &> 0 & \text{for } t \in R \setminus \{-n\}, \\ w_n(t) \operatorname{sgn}(t-n) &< 0 & \text{for } t \in R \setminus \{n\}, \end{aligned}$$

$$(13) \quad v_n(0) = 1, \quad w_n(0) = 1.$$

Since the equation (1) is disconjugate, we can easily verify that for $t \in R \setminus \{0\}$ and $n, m \in N$,

$$(14) \quad (v_{n+1}(t) - v_n(t)) \operatorname{sgn} t < 0, \quad (w_{n+1}(t) - w_n(t)) \operatorname{sgn} t > 0,$$

$$(15) \quad (v_n(t) - w_m(t)) \operatorname{sgn} t > 0.$$

(14) and (15) result in

$$(16) \quad v'_{n+1}(0) < v'_n(0), \quad w'_{n+1}(0) > w'_n(0) \quad \text{for } n \in N,$$

$$(17) \quad v'_n(0) > w'_m(0) \quad \text{for } n, m \in N.$$

Put $\lambda = |w'_1(0)| + |v'_1(0)|$ and

$$M_a = \max\{w_1(t) : -a \leq t \leq 0\} + \max\{v_1(t) : 0 \leq t \leq a\},$$

where $a > 0$. Then by (14), (16), and (17) we have

$$(18) \quad |v'_n(0)| \leq \lambda, \quad |w'_n(0)| \leq \lambda \quad \text{for } n \in N,$$

$$(19) \quad |v_n(t)| \leq M_a, \quad |w_n(t)| \leq M_a \quad \text{for } -a \leq t \leq a, \quad n > a.$$

Since v_n and w_n are solutions of the equation (1), in view of (18) and (19), we obtain

$$(20) \quad |v'_n(t)| \leq \lambda_a, \quad |w'_n(t)| \leq \lambda_a \quad \text{for } -a \leq t \leq a, \quad n > a,$$

where $\lambda_a = \lambda + M_a \int_{-a}^a |p(s)| ds$.

By (19) and (20), it is clear that the sequences $(v_k^{(i)})_{k=1}^{+\infty}$ and $(w_k^{(i)})_{k=1}^{+\infty}$, $i = 0, 1$, are uniformly bounded and equicontinuous in R (i.e., on every segment contained in R). Therefore, according to the Arzelà–Ascoli lemma, without loss of generality we can assume that

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow +\infty} v_k^{(i)}(t) = v^{(i)}(t), \quad \lim_{k \rightarrow +\infty} w_k^{(i)}(t) = w^{(i)}(t) \quad , i = 0, 1$$

uniformly in R . It is easy to see that the functions v and w are solutions of the equation (1).

In view of (12), (14), and (15) we have

$$v(t) > 0 \quad \text{for } t < 0, \quad w(t) > 0 \quad \text{for } t > 0, \\ (v(t) - w(t)) \operatorname{sgn} t \geq 0 \quad \text{for } t \neq 0.$$

Consequently, $v(t) > 0$ for $t \neq 0$. However, according to (13), $v(0) = 1$. Thus v has no zero. □

Lemma 2. *Let a solution u of the equation (1) have no zero in the interval $[a, +\infty[$, resp. in the interval $]-\infty, a]$. Then*

$$\int_a^{+\infty} \rho^2(s) ds < +\infty, \quad \text{resp.} \quad \int_{-\infty}^a \rho^2(s) ds < +\infty,$$

and the equality

$$\rho(t) = c(+\infty) - \int_0^t p(s) ds + \int_t^{+\infty} \rho^2(s) ds \quad \text{for } t \geq a, \quad \text{resp.} \\ \rho(t) = -c(-\infty) + \int_t^0 p(s) ds - \int_{-\infty}^t \rho^2(s) ds \quad \text{for } t \leq a$$

holds, where $\rho(t) = \frac{u'(t)}{u(t)}$ for $t \geq a$, resp. for $t \leq a$.

For the proof of this lemma see [7], p. 365, Lemma 7.1.

Lemma 3. *Let the function $g :]a, b[\rightarrow [0, +\infty[$ be integrable on every segment contained in $]a, b]$, and*

$$\int_a^b (s - a)^2 g(s) ds = +\infty.$$

Then every nontrivial solution of the equation $v'' + g(x)v = 0$ has a sequence of zeros tending to a .

Lemma 3 immediately follows from Theorem 1.1 in [3].

3. PROOFS

Proof of Proposition 2. Put

$$(21) \quad \varphi(t) = \int_0^t F_1(s) ds \quad \text{for } t \in R.$$

According to (2) there exists a finite limit

$$(22) \quad a \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} \varphi(t),$$

and $a < 0$.

Define the function g by the equalities

$$(23) \quad g(x) = \frac{Q_1^2(t)}{F_1^2(t)}, \quad x = \varphi(t) \quad \text{for } t \in R,$$

and in the interval $]a, 0[$ consider the equation

$$(24) \quad v'' + g(x)v = 0.$$

In view of (23), from (3) we get

$$\int_a^0 (x - a)^2 g(x) dx = +\infty.$$

Consequently, by Lemma 3, every nontrivial solution of the equation (24) has a sequence of zeros tending to a . It can be directly verify that if v is a solution of the equation (24), then the function u defined by the equality

$$(25) \quad u(t) = v(\varphi^{-1}(t)) \exp \left(- \int_0^t Q_1(s) ds \right) \quad \text{for } t \in R$$

is a solution of the equation (1). Obviously, u has a sequence of zeros tending to $-\infty$. □

Proof of Theorem 1. According to Lemma 1, to prove the theorem it is sufficient to show that the equation (1) has no solution without zeros. Assume the contrary.

Suppose u is a solution of the equation (1) with no zero in R . Then, by virtue of Lemma 2, the equalities

$$\rho(t) = c(+\infty) - \int_0^t p(s) ds + \int_t^{+\infty} \rho^2(s) ds \quad \text{for } t \geq 0,$$

$$\rho(t) = -c(-\infty) + \int_t^0 p(s) ds - \int_{-\infty}^t \rho^2(s) ds \quad \text{for } t \leq 0$$

are fulfilled, where $\rho(t) = \frac{u'(t)}{u(t)}$ for $t \in R$. Set in the latter equalities $t = 0$. If we subtract the second equality from the first one, we obtain

$$(26) \quad c(+\infty) + c(-\infty) = - \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \rho^2(s) ds.$$

Since $p \not\equiv 0$, then $\rho \not\equiv 0$ and, consequently, $\int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \rho^2(s) ds > 0$. Hence, on account of (4) and (26), we get the contradiction $0 < 0$. \square

Proof of Theorem 2. According to Theorem 1.1 in [4], if

$$\limsup_{t \rightarrow +\infty} \frac{t}{\ln t} \left(c(+\infty) - c(t) \right) > \frac{1}{4},$$

then the equation (1) is oscillatory in the neighbourhood of $+\infty$. Therefore we assume that

$$(27) \quad \limsup_{t \rightarrow +\infty} \frac{t}{\ln t} \left(c(+\infty) - c(t) \right) \leq \frac{1}{4}.$$

Define the function φ by (21). Due to (27), it is easy to see that

$$(28) \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow +\infty} \varphi(t) = +\infty.$$

According to (5) we have

$$(29) \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow -\infty} \frac{|t|}{\ln |t|} \left(-c(+\infty) - c(t) \right) = +\infty.$$

Therefore there exists a finite limit (22). Consequently, the function φ monotonically transforms R into $]a, +\infty[$.

Define the function g by (23), and in the interval $]a, +\infty[$ consider the equation (24). It is clear that if v is a solution of the equation (24), then the function u defined by (25) is a solution of the equation (1). Therefore, according to Lemma 1, to prove the theorem it is sufficient to show that the equation (24) has no solution without zeros in $]a, +\infty[$. Assume the contrary, let v be a solution of the equation (24) with no zero in $]a, +\infty[$. Put $\sigma(x) = \frac{v'(x)}{v(x)}$ for $x > a$. Taking into account (6)

and Lemma 2, we find

$$(30) \quad \sigma(x) = \int_x^{+\infty} g(\tau)d\tau + \int_x^{+\infty} \sigma^2(\tau)d\tau \quad \text{for } x > a.$$

Evidently, $\sigma'(x) = -g(x) - \sigma^2(x)$ for $x > a$. Multiplying both sides of the last equality by $x - \lambda$, where $\lambda > a$, and integrating from λ to x , we get

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma(x) &= -\frac{1}{(x-\lambda)^2} \int_{\lambda}^x (\tau-\lambda)^2 g(\tau)d\tau + \frac{1}{(x-\lambda)^2} \int_{\lambda}^x (\tau-\lambda)\sigma(\tau)(2 - (\tau-\lambda)\sigma(\tau))d\tau \\ &\leq -\frac{1}{(x-\lambda)^2} \int_{\lambda}^x (\tau-\lambda)^2 g(\tau)d\tau + \frac{1}{x-\lambda} \quad \text{for } x > \lambda. \end{aligned}$$

Hence, on account of (6) and (23), it immediately follows

$$(31) \quad \sigma(x) \leq -\frac{1}{(x-a)^2} \int_a^x (\tau-a)^2 g(\tau)d\tau + \frac{1}{x-a} \quad \text{for } x > a.$$

From (30) and (31) we have

$$(x-a) \int_x^{+\infty} g(\tau)d\tau + \frac{1}{(x-a)^2} \int_a^x (\tau-a)^2 g(\tau)d\tau \leq 1 - (x-a) \int_x^{+\infty} \sigma^2(\tau)d\tau \quad \text{for } x > a.$$

Consequently,

$$\sup \left\{ (x-a) \int_x^{+\infty} g(\tau)d\tau + \frac{1}{(x-a)^2} \int_a^x (\tau-a)^2 g(\tau)d\tau : x > a \right\} \leq 1.$$

Taking now into account (8) and (23), we obtain the contradiction $1 < 1$. □

The proof of Theorem 2' is analogous to that of Theorem 2.

Proof of Theorem 3. Define the function φ by (21) and show that (28) is fulfilled. Indeed, if there exists $M > 0$ such that

$$(32) \quad \varphi(t) \leq M \quad \text{for } t > 0,$$

then according to (6) and the Hölder inequality we have

$$\left| \int_0^t Q_1(s) ds \right| \leq \sqrt{\varphi(t)} \sqrt{\int_0^t \frac{Q_1^2(s)}{F_1(s)} ds} \leq \sqrt{M} \sqrt{\int_0^{+\infty} \frac{Q_1^2(s)}{F_1(s)} ds} < +\infty \quad \text{for } t > 0,$$

which contradicts (32). Consequently, (28) is fulfilled.

In view of (5) we have (29). Therefore there exists a finite limit (22). Thus the function φ monotonically transforms R into $]a, +\infty[$.

Define the function g by (23), and in the interval $]a, +\infty[$ consider the equation (24). It is clear that if v is a solution of the equation (24), then the function u

defined by (25) is a solution of the equation (1). Therefore, to prove the theorem it is sufficient to show that the equation (24) has a solution with no zero in $]a, +\infty[$. However, to prove this fact it is sufficient to show that there exists a function $\rho :]a, +\infty[\rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ which is absolutely continuous on every segment contained in $]a, +\infty[$ and satisfies the inequality

$$(33) \quad \rho'(x) \leq -g(x) - \rho^2(x) \quad \text{for } x > a.$$

Suppose that (9) is fulfilled. On account of (23), from (9) we obtain

$$(x-a) \int_x^{+\infty} g(s) ds \leq \frac{1}{4} \quad \text{for } x > a.$$

It can be easily verified that the function

$$\rho(x) = \frac{1}{4(x-a)} + \int_x^{+\infty} g(s) ds \quad \text{for } x > a$$

satisfies the inequality (33).

Now suppose that (10) is fulfilled. Then in view of (23) we have

$$\frac{1}{x-a} \int_a^x (s-a)^2 g(s) ds \leq \frac{1}{4} \quad \text{for } x > a.$$

It is easy to verify that the function

$$\rho(x) = \frac{3}{4(x-a)} - \frac{1}{(x-a)^2} \int_a^x (s-a)^2 g(s) ds \quad \text{for } x > a$$

satisfies the inequality (33).

Finally suppose that (11) is fulfilled. Then by (23) we get

$$(x-a) \int_x^{+\infty} g(s) ds + \frac{1}{x-a} \int_a^x (s-a)^2 g(s) ds \leq \sqrt{2} - 1 \quad \text{for } x > a.$$

We can easily verify that the function

$$\rho(x) = \frac{1}{2(x-a)} + \frac{1}{2} \left(\int_x^{+\infty} g(s) ds - \frac{1}{(x-a)^2} \int_a^x (s-a)^2 g(s) ds \right) \quad \text{for } x > a$$

satisfies the inequality (33). \square

Theorem 3' can be proved analogously.

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