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An effective proof of the p -curvature conjecture
for order one linear differential equations
joint work with Florian Fürnsinn.

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UFR des Sciences
CAMPUS DE VERSAILLES

Combinatorics and Arithmetic for Physics, IHES

Power series hierarchy

$$y(x) = \sum_{n \geq 0} u_n x^n \in \mathbb{Q}[[x]]$$

Rational

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$y(x)$ is **algebraic** over $\mathbb{Q}(x)$ if $\exists P(x, Y) \in \mathbb{Z}[x, Y], P(x, y(x)) = 0$.

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D-finite series

$y(x)$ is **D-finite** if $\exists a_0(x), \dots, a_r(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$ not all zero such that $a_r(x)y^{(r)}(x) + \dots + a_0(x)y(x) = 0$.

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$\rightarrow y(x) = \exp(x^2 + 1)$ satisfies $y'(x) - 2xy(x) = 0$.

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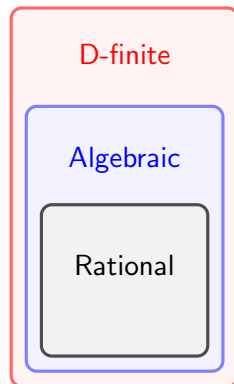
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Theorem (Abel, 1827)

Algebraic series are D-finite.



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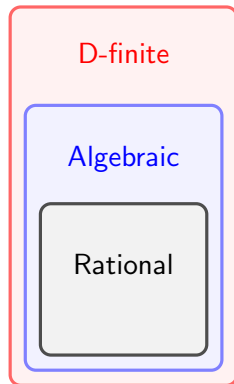
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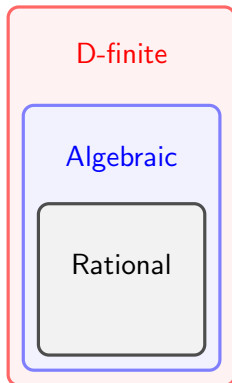
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Algebraic series are *D-finite*.

→ $y(x) = (1 - x)^{2/5}$, $5(1 - x)y' + 2y = 0$.

→ $y(x) = \exp(x^2 + 1)$ is not algebraic.

Given a *D-finite* power series, *decide* if it is *algebraic*.



Deciding algebraicity

Fuchs' problem

Let $\mathcal{L} = a_n(x) \left(\frac{d}{dx}\right)^n + \cdots + a_1(x) \frac{d}{dx} + a_0(x)$, $a_i(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$.

Decide if the differential equation $\mathcal{L}y(x) = 0$ has a basis of algebraic solutions.

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Let $u(x) \in \overline{\mathbb{Q}(x)}$, decide if the nonzero solutions of $y'(x) = u(x)y(x)$ are algebraic.

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Differential equations in positive characteristic

$$\mathcal{L} = a_n(x) \left(\frac{d}{dx} \right)^n + \cdots + a_1(x) \frac{d}{dx} + a_0(x), \quad a_i(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x], \quad \mathcal{L}_p := \mathcal{L} \bmod p.$$

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Grothendieck's conjecture

$\mathcal{L}y(x)$ has a basis of **algebraic** solutions over $\mathbb{Q}(x)$ *if and only if* for almost all prime numbers p , $\mathcal{L}_p y(x)$ has a basis of **algebraic** solutions over $\mathbb{F}_p(x)$.

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Grothendieck's p -curvature conjecture

$\mathcal{L}y(x)$ has a basis of **algebraic** solutions over $\mathbb{Q}(x)$ *if and only if* for almost all prime numbers p , the **p -curvature** of the equation vanishes.

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Indefinite integration - Inhomogeneous case

Let $u(x) \in \mathbb{Q}(x)$, **decide** if $y(x) := \int u(x)dx$ is **algebraic**.

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Theorem (Rothstein, 1976; Trager, 1976)

Let $u(x) \in \mathbb{Q}(x)$ be a rational function of the form

$$u(x) = \frac{a(x)}{b(x)} = F'(x) + \sum_{i=1}^r \frac{\alpha_i}{x - \beta_i},$$

with $a(x), b(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$, $F(x) \in \mathbb{Q}(x)$. Then the residues α_i are precisely the roots of

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Theorem (Kronecker, 1880; Chebotarev, 1926)

Let $R(w) \in \mathbb{Q}[w]$ be irreducible. If for almost all prime numbers p the polynomial $R(w) \bmod p$ has a root in \mathbb{F}_p , then $R(w)$ has a root in \mathbb{Q} , hence is linear.

Recap: proof of Honda's Theorem

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Proposition (Folklore; Honda, 1981)

The following are equivalent:

- (1) (Eq) has an *algebraic* solution.
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Can we deduce (2) from (2)_p for a *finite* number of primes?

Examples

Example

The equation $y'(x) = y(x)$ has no solution in $\mathbb{F}_p[[x]]$, and $\exp(x)$ is transcendental. Moreover, $1^p + 1^{(p-1)} = 1 \neq 0$ for all primes p .

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Example

Consider $y(x) = \exp(\arctan(x))$ satisfies $y'(x) = \frac{1}{1+x^2} \cdot y(x)$. We have

$$u(x)^p + u^{(p-1)}(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } p \equiv 1 \pmod{4} \\ \frac{2}{(x+1)^p} & \text{if } p \equiv 3 \pmod{4}. \end{cases}$$

So $y(x)$ is not algebraic.

Effective Kronecker

Theorem (Chudnovsky², 1985)

Let $R(w) \in \mathbb{Z}[w]$ with leading coefficient $\Delta \in \mathbb{Z}$.

There exists $\sigma \in \mathbb{N}$ such that $R(w)$ splits completely over \mathbb{Q} if and only if $R(w) \bmod p$ splits completely over \mathbb{F}_p for all primes p :

- not dividing Δ ,
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Theorem (Fürnsinn-P., 2025+)

In the previous theorem, one can choose $\sigma = (2M + 1)N + 2M$ with $M := \lceil 2.826 \cdot \Delta^3 \cdot t(\Delta) \rceil$, $N := \lceil 6.076BM \rceil$, where $t(\Delta) := \prod_{p|\Delta} p^{1/(p-1)}$ and $B \in \mathbb{R}$ is an upper bound on the modulus of all complex roots of $R(w)$.

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Criterion: If $p \leq \sigma$, $p \nmid \Delta$ and $R(w) \bmod p$ does not split completely in \mathbb{F}_p , then $R(w)$ does not split completely in \mathbb{Q} .

Hermite-Padé approximation

Given power series $f_1(x), \dots, f_r(x) \in \mathbb{Q}[[x]]$ and $n, s \in \mathbb{N}$, find polynomials $P_i(x) \in \mathbb{Q}[x]$ such that $\deg(P_i(x)) \leq n$ and

$$P_1(x)f_1(x) + \dots + P_r(x)f_r(x) \in x^s\mathbb{Q}[[x]].$$

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Hermite-Padé approximation

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$$P_1(x)f_1(x) + \dots + P_r(x)f_r(x) \in x^s\mathbb{Q}[[x]].$$

- $r(n+1)$ indeterminates, s linear homogeneous equations $\Rightarrow s = r(n+1) - 1$.
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Idea to prove algebraicity: With $f_i(x) = f^{i-1}(x)$, $f(x)$ is algebraic if and only if for the optimal P_i 's, the remainder $P_1(x) + P_2(x)f(x) + \dots + P_r(x)f^{r-1}(x)$ vanishes for large n, r .

Chudnovskys' proof of Kronecker's Theorem

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We know **explicit** Hermite-Padé approximants $P_i(z) \in L[z]$, $\deg(P_i(z)) \leq N$ to the powers of $(1 - z)^\alpha$

$$P_0(z) + P_1(z)(1 - z)^\alpha + \cdots + P_{2M}(z)(1 - z)^{2M\alpha} = gz^\sigma + O(z^{\sigma+1})$$

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Construct $\gamma_{M,N} \in L$, $\gamma_{M,N} \neq 0$, such that when $N \gg M \gg 0$,

$$\left| \text{den}(\gamma_{M,N})^{[L:\mathbb{Q}]} \text{Norm}_{L/\mathbb{Q}}(\gamma_{M,N}) \right| < 1.$$

Effective Honda

Corollary [Chudnovsky², 1985; Fürnsinn-P., 2025+]

Let $a(x), b(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$, $\deg(a(x)) < n := \deg(b(x))$ and

$R(w) := \operatorname{res}_x(b(x), a(x) - w \cdot b'(x)) \in \mathbb{Q}[w]$,

with leading coefficient $\Delta := \operatorname{res}_x(b(x), -b'(x))$, $t := \prod_{p|\Delta} p^{1/(p-1)}$.

Let $B \in \mathbb{R}$ be an upper bound on the modulus of all complex roots of $R(w)$.

Let $M := \lceil 2.826 \cdot \Delta^3 \cdot t(\Delta) \rceil$ and $N := \lceil 6.076BM \rceil$.

All **solutions** of $y'(x) = \frac{a(x)}{b(x)}y(x)$ are **algebraic** if and only if the **p -curvatures** of the differential equation vanish for all primes p :

- not dividing Δ ;
- at most $\sigma := (2M + 1)N + 2M$.

The smallest prime that does not split

Theorem (Kronecker, 1880; **Chebotarev, 1926**)

Let $R(w) \in \mathbb{Z}[w]$, $R(w)$ splits completely in $\mathbb{Q}[w]$ if and only if for almost all prime number p , $R(w) \bmod p$ splits completely in $\mathbb{F}_p[w]$.

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Proposition

Let $R(w) \in \mathbb{Z}[w]$, Δ its leading coefficient, and let L/\mathbb{Q} be the splitting field of $R(w)$ and $D = \text{Disc}(L)$, $n = [L : \mathbb{Q}]$.

The smallest prime $p \in \mathbb{Z}$, $p \nmid \Delta D$, such that $R(w) \bmod p$ does not split completely in $\mathbb{F}_p[w]$ is the smallest prime $p \in \mathbb{Z}$, $p \nmid \Delta D$, that does not split completely in L .

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Theorem (Effective Chebotarev, Vaaler, Voloch, 2000)

If $\exp(\max\{105, 25(\log(n))^2\}) \leq 8D^{\frac{1}{2(n-1)}}$ then there exists a prime p such that p does not split completely in L and $p \leq 26n^2 D^{\frac{1}{2(n-1)}}$.

New algorithm and complexity

Input $a(x), b(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$, $b(x)$ squarefree, $\deg(a(x)) < \deg(b(x))$.

Output The nature (algebraic or transcendental) of the solutions of $y'(x) = \frac{a(x)}{b(x)}y(x)$.

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Other approach: finding rational roots

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What did we do that for?

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$\frac{3x-4}{2x^2-6x+4}$	265	algebraic	120 ms	45 ms	< 1 ms	25 ms
$\frac{2x+1}{x^2+x+1}$	1926284	algebraic	8 min 9 s	19 ms	< 1 ms	24 ms
$\frac{1}{x^2-4}$	$\approx 10^{11}$	algebraic	DNF	15 ms	< 1 ms	22 ms
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Observation 2: Random inputs return **transcendental**.

Timings on random examples

Degree	Height	p -curv	ist	RT+RR
10	2^{10}	1 ms	12 ms	3 ms
20	2^{10}	2 ms	24 ms	10 ms
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Table: Average computation time of algorithms deciding transcendence of solutions on random rational function inputs of prescribed degree and height.

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Takeaway

Proving transcendence is efficient.

Perspectives

Make all proved cases of Grothendieck's p -curvature conjecture effective.

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Thank you for your attention.