

Luděk Zajíček

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ON THE DIFFERENTIATION OF CONVEX FUNCTIONS
IN FINITE AND INFINITE DIMENSIONAL SPACES

LUDĚK ZAJÍČEK, Praha

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1. INTRODUCTION

If f is a convex function defined in a Euclidean n -space E^n then the set $N(f)$ of all points at which f is not differentiable is small. There exist several works concerning the sets $N(f)$ ([1]) or, which is almost equivalent, the sets of all singular boundary points of convex bodies in E^n ([8], [5], [1], [3]). In the present article we give a characterization of the magnitude of sets $N(f)$ in E^n . By the same method we obtain also an infinite dimensional generalization of our result. We also characterize the magnitude of sets $S_k(f)$ defined in [1]. If we write in the sequel "Banach space", we mean "real Banach space".

We shall say that f is a convex function defined in a Banach space B if its domain D_f is an open convex subset of B and f is convex on D_f . If f is a convex function defined in E^n then for any $x \in D_f$ there exists [1] a maximal linear manifold L_x such that $x \in L_x$ and $f|_{D_f \cap L_x}$ is differentiable at x . For $0 \leq k \leq n$, S_k is the set of all $x \in D_f$ for which $\dim L_x \leq k$. It is proved in [1] that S_k is the union of countable many compact sets of finite k -dimensional Hausdorff measure. In [1] it is further proved that for $k \leq 2$ the set S_k can be covered by countably many k -cells of finite k -measure. These results were obtained in [1] as consequences of theorems concerning "upper semi-continuous collections".

In the case $n = 2$, $k = 1$ the result of Anderson and Klee [1] was improved by BESICOVITCH [3]. He proved that in E^2 any set $S_1(f) = N(f)$ is countably rectifiable.

In the infinite dimensional case we are interested in continuous convex functions defined in a separable real Banach space B . Let f be such a function. It is well-known that the set $N(f)$ of all points at which f is not Gâteaux differentiable is of the first category. Further information concerning the sets $N(f)$ follows from results on differentiation of Lipschitz functions ([4], [7]). A more precise result was proved by ARONSZAJN in [2]. He proved that $N(f)$ belongs to the class U^0 which is defined as follows:

1. Let $o \neq a \in B$, $Z(a) = \{A \subset B, A \text{ is Borel}, A \cap \{x + at, t \in R\} \text{ is countable for any } x \in B\}$.
2. For any sequence $\{a_n\}$, $a_n \neq o$, $Z\{a_n\} = \{A \subset B, A = \bigcup_n A_n, A_n \in Z(a_n)\}$.
3. $U^0 = \bigcap Z\{a_n\}$, the intersection being taken over all sequences $\{a_n\}$ complete in B .

The result of Aronszajn implies that $\mu(N(f)) = 0$ for any Gaussian measure μ on B . Now we shall state our main results.

Definition 1. We shall say that $M \subset E^n$ is a $(c - c)$ -surface of dimension k ($k = 1, \dots, n - 1$) if there exists a permutation π of the numbers $1, \dots, n$ and $2n - 2k$ convex functions $f_{k+1}, g_{k+1}, \dots, f_n, g_n$ defined on the whole space E^k such that M is the set of all $(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in E^n$ such that $y_j = f_j(y_1, \dots, y_k) - g_j(y_1, \dots, y_k)$ for $j = k + 1, \dots, n$ where $y_i = x_{\pi(i)}$ for $i = 1, \dots, n$.

Notation. If M is a subset of a vector space, then $\text{Lin } M$ is the linear hull of M .

Definition 2. Let B be an infinite dimensional Banach space. A set M is called a $(c - c)$ -hypersurface if there exist a closed subspace $H \subset B$ and a vector $v \in B$ such that $B = H + \text{Lin } \{v\}$, and two Lipschitz convex functions f, g defined on the whole H such that

$$M = \{x + (f(x) - g(x))v, x \in H\}.$$

Theorem 1. A set $M \subset E^n$ is a subset of the set $S_k(f)$ ($0 < k < n$) for a convex function f defined in E^n iff M can be covered by countably many $(c - c)$ -surfaces of dimension k .

Theorem 2. A subset M of a separable real Banach space B is a subset of the set $N(f)$ for a continuous convex function f defined in B iff M can be covered by countably many $(c - c)$ -hypersurfaces.

These theorems are quite analogous to each other and their proofs are almost identical. We shall also prove a generalization of Theorem 2 which is an analogue of Theorem 1 in the separable infinite dimensional case.

Theorem 1 immediately implies the results of [1] mentioned above since any difference of two convex functions in the finite dimensional space is locally Lipschitz and any Lipschitz image of a set of a finite k -dimensional Hausdorff measure is of a finite k -dimensional Hausdorff measure. The fact that S_k can be covered by countably many k -cells which is proved in [1] for $k \leq 2$ clearly follows from Theorem 1 for any $0 < k < n$. It is almost obvious that Theorem 1 improves the results of [1] also in the cases $k = 1, 2$, as well as the result of [3] (see Example 1).

The proof of Theorem 1 immediately yields a result on singular boundary points of convex bodies in Euclidean spaces (Theorem 3).

Theorem 2 and the result of [2] mentioned above imply that any $(c - c)$ -hypersurface belongs to U^0 . We can obtain this fact also directly from the proof of Theorem 2 without using the results of [2]. Thus the Aronszajn's result mentioned above follows from Theorem 2. However, we do not know any example of a set from U^0 which cannot be covered by countably many $(c - c)$ -hypersurfaces. Therefore we do not know whether Aronszajn's result characterizes the magnitude of sets $N(f)$.

Added in the proof. Let $f(x)$ be a continuously differentiable function defined on $(0, 1)$ for which the derivative $f'(x)$ is of unbounded variation on each subinterval $I \subset (0, 1)$. Then $\text{Graph } f \subset E^2$ is from U^0 but cannot be covered by countably many $(c - c)$ -hypersurfaces. This example shows that our Theorem 2 improves Aronszajn's result.

2. LEMMAS

Let B be a Banach space, f a real function defined in B and $a \in B$, $v \in B$. We shall denote the derivative of f at the point a in the direction v by $D_v f(a)$. Thus

$$D_v f(a) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} (1/h) (f(a + hv) - f(a)).$$

The assertions of the following proposition are well known.

Proposition 1. *Let B be a Banach space. Let f be a continuous convex function defined on an open convex set $D_f \subset B$. Let $a \in D_f$. Denote by L_a the set of all $v \in B$ such that there exists $D_v f(a)$. Then the following assertions hold:*

(i) *Let S be the set of all continuous affine functions s defined on B whose graphs support the graph of f at the point $(a, f(a))$ (in other words: $s(a) = f(a)$ and $s(x) \leq f(x)$ for $x \in B$). Then*

$$L_a = \{v : s_1(a + v) = s_2(a + v) \text{ for any } s_1 \in S, s_2 \in S\}$$

and $D_v f(a) = s(a + v) - s(a)$ for any $s \in S$ and $v \in L_a$.

(ii) L_a is a closed linear subspace of B .

(iii) f is Gâteaux differentiable at a iff $L_a = B$. In this case and only in this case $S = \{s\}$ and the graph of s is the unique supporting hyperplane of the graph of f at the point $(a, f(a))$.

(iv) If B is finite dimensional then f is Gâteaux differentiable at a iff it is Fréchet differentiable at a .

Proof. The assertion (i) follows easily from Theorem 43A from [9]. The assertions (ii), (iii) are easy consequences of (i). The assertion (iv) is well known (see e.g. Theorem 42D from [9]).

Lemma 1. *Let B be a Banach space and let $M \subset B \times \mathbb{R}$ be a set such that for any point $m = (e, t) \in M$ there exists a continuous affine function g_m defined on B such*

that $g_m(e) = t$ and $g_m(x) \leq y$ for any point $(x, y) \in M$ (in other words: the closed hyperplane $\text{Graph } g_m$ "supports" M at (e, t)). Then there exists a sequence $\{f_n\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$ of convex Lipschitz functions defined on the whole B such that $M \subset \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \text{Graph } f_n$.

Proof. For any integer n denote by A_n the set of all points $m \in M$ for which g_m is Lipschitz with the constant n . Then clearly $M \subset \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n$, the function $f_n(x) = \sup_{m \in A_n} g_m(x)$ is a convex Lipschitz function on B and $A_n \subset \text{Graph } f_n$. Therefore $M \subset \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \text{Graph } f_n$.

Notation. If X is a Banach space, then X' is its dual space.

The main idea of the present article is contained in the following lemma.

Lemma 2. Let B a Banach space (finite or infinite dimensional). Let K be a proper subspace of B of a finite dimension u , let $\{e_1, \dots, e_u\}$ be a basis of K . Let $x_i \in B'$, $i = 1, \dots, u$ be continuous linear functionals for which $x_i(e_j) = \delta_{ij}$. Let $H = \{v \in B : x_i(v) = 0, i = 1, \dots, u\}$. Then $B = K + H$ and for any $v \in B$ we have $v = x_i(v)e_i + \pi(v)$ where π is the projection on H "in the direction of K ". Let f be a continuous convex function defined on a convex subset D_f of B . Let $A \subset D_f$ be a set such that for any point $a \in A$ and any $v \in K$ the derivative $D_v f(a)$ does not exist. Then there exist convex Lipschitz functions $Z_i^j(h)$, $T_i^j(h)$, $i = 1, \dots, u$, $j = 1, 2, \dots$, defined on the whole subspace H such that any point $a \in A$ fulfils the equations

$$\begin{aligned} x_1(a) &= Z_1^j(\pi(a)) - T_1^j(\pi(a)), \\ &\dots\dots\dots \\ x_u(a) &= Z_u^j(\pi(a)) - T_u^j(\pi(a)) \end{aligned}$$

for some integer j .

Proof. Let $a \in A$ and let M_a be the set of all functionals $g \in K'$ such that $f(a) + g(x) \leq f(a + x)$ for any $x \in K$. The set M_a is evidently convex and closed. We shall prove that it is a u -dimensional convex set. Suppose on the contrary that this is not true. Then there exists $g_0 \in M_a$ and $g_1 \in K', \dots, g_{u-1} \in K'$ such that for any $g \in M_a$ there exist real numbers c_1, \dots, c_{u-1} such that $g = g_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{u-1} c_i g_i$. Therefore there exists a nonzero $v \in K$ such that $g(v) = g_0(v)$ for any $g \in M_a$. Therefore by Proposition 1, (i) $D_v f(a)$ exists and this is a contradiction. Since M_a is u -dimensional there exist points $m_i \in M_a$, $i = 0, 1, \dots, u$, such that the vectors $m_j - m_0$, $j = 1, \dots, u$, are linearly independent and m_i have rational coordinates with respect to the basis x_i/K , $i = 1, \dots, u$. Since there are only countably many possibilities for $\{m_i, i = 0, 1, \dots, u\}$ we can suppose without any loss of generality that the vectors m_i ,

$i = 0, 1, \dots, u$, lie in M_a for any $a \in A$. Let p_i , $i = 0, \dots, u$, be continuous linear functionals on B (they exist by Theorem 43A from [9]) such that p_i extends m_i and $p_i(x) \leq f(a+x) - f(a)$ for any $x \in B$ and $i = 0, 1, \dots, u$. Let $G = \{(x, f(x)) \in B \times R, x \in A\}$. Let $V_i \subset B \times R$ be the graph of p_i , $i = 0, \dots, u$. Clearly $B \times R = H \times R + V_i$ for $i = 0, \dots, u$. Let π_i be the projection of $B \times R$ on $H \times R$ "in the direction of V_i ". Thus if $z \in B \times R$ and $z = (h+k, y)$ where $h \in H, k \in K$, we have $\pi_i(z) = (h, y - m_i(k))$. Let $b = (a, f(a)) \in G, a = h_0 + k_0$. Since the closed hyperplane $T_i = b + V_i, i = 0, \dots, u$ supports the graph of f at the point $b, \pi_i(T_i) = T_i \cap H \times R$ is a closed hyperplane in $H \times R$ which "supports" the set $\pi_i(G)$ at the point $\pi_i(b)$ in the sense of Lemma 1. In fact, $\pi_i(T_i)$ is the graph of the continuous affine function $s(h) = f(a) + p_i(h - a), \pi_i(b) = (h_0, f(a) - m_i(k_0))$ and $s(h_0) = f(a) - m_i(k_0)$. Further, any point $c \in \pi_i(G)$ is of the form $(h_1, f(h_1 + k_1) - m_i(k_1)), h_1 \in H, k_1 \in K$, and we have $s(h_1) = f(a) + p_i(h_1 - a) \leq f(h_1 + k_1) - m_i(k_1)$. By Lemma 1 there exist convex Lipschitz functions $C_i^j(h), j = 1, 2, \dots$, defined on H such that $\pi_i(G)$ is covered by the union of the graphs of the functions $C_i^j(h)$. Consequently, for any point $(a, y) \in G, a = h + k$, the equations

$$(1) \quad \begin{aligned} y - m_0(k) &= C_0^{j_0}(h), \\ &\dots\dots\dots \\ y - m_u(k) &= C_u^{j_u}(h) \end{aligned}$$

hold for a multiindex (j_0, \dots, j_u) . The equations

$$(2) \quad \begin{aligned} (m_1 - m_0)(k) &= (C_0^{j_0} - C_1^{j_1})(h), \\ &\dots\dots\dots \\ (m_u - m_0)(k) &= (C_0^{j_0} - C_u^{j_u})(h) \end{aligned}$$

follow immediately from (1). The linear functionals $m_1 - m_0, \dots, m_u - m_0$ are linearly independent and the set of all multiindices (j_0, \dots, j_u) is countable. Thus if we solve the equations (2) with respect to the unknowns $x_1(a) = x_1(k), \dots, x_u(a) = x_u(k)$ we obtain the assertion of Lemma 2 since the set of all functions on H of the form $C - C'$ where C, C' are Lipschitz convex functions forms a linear space.

3. THE INFINITE DIMENSIONAL SEPARABLE CASE

Definition. 3 Let B be an infinite dimensional Banach space. Let $M \subset B$. We shall say that M is an $(\infty - u)$ -dimensional $(c - c)$ -surface if there exist $K, H, x_1, \dots, x_u, \pi$ as in Lemma 2 and Lipschitz convex functions $Z_1, T_1, \dots, Z_u, T_u$ defined on H such that M is the set of all points $y \in B$ for which

$$\begin{aligned} x_1(y) &= Z_1(\pi(y)) - T_1(\pi(y)), \\ &\dots\dots\dots \\ x_u(y) &= Z_u(\pi(y)) - T_u(\pi(y)). \end{aligned}$$

Evidently the notion of the $(\infty - 1)$ -dimensional $(c - c)$ -surface coincides with the notion of the $(c - c)$ -hypersurface defined in the first part of the present article.

Proposition 2. *Let B be an infinite dimensional separable Banach space. Let f be a continuous convex function defined on an open convex subset D_f of B . Let u be an integer. Let $A \subset D_f$ be the set of all points $a \in A$ for which there exists a u -dimensional subspace $K_a \subset B$ such that for any $o \neq v \in K_a$, $D_v f(a)$ does not exist. Then A can be covered by a countable union of $(\infty - u)$ -dimensional $(c - c)$ -surfaces.*

Proof. Let C be a countable dense subset of B . Let L_a be the set of all $v \in B$ for which there exists $D_v f(a)$. The set L_a is a closed linear subspace of B by Proposition 1, (ii). Since $L_a \cap K_a = \{o\}$, there exists a u -dimensional subspace K_a^* such that $L_a \cap K_a^* = \{o\}$ and K_a^* has a basis c_1, \dots, c_u where $c_1 \in C, \dots, c_u \in C$. For any u -tuple (c_1, \dots, c_u) of linearly independent elements of C , denote by $A(c_1, \dots, c_u)$ the set of all $a \in A$ for which $L_a \cap \text{Lin}(c_1, \dots, c_u) = \{o\}$. Clearly $A = \bigcup A(c_1, \dots, c_u)$. By Lemma 2 any set $A(c_1, \dots, c_u)$ can be covered by a countable union of $(\infty - u)$ -dimensional $(c - c)$ -surfaces. This implies the assertion of Proposition 2 immediately.

Proposition 3. *Let B be an infinite dimensional Banach space. Let u be an integer. Let $A = \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} A_n$ where any A_n is an $(\infty - u)$ -dimensional $(c - c)$ -surface. Then there exists a continuous convex function f such that for any $a \in A$ there exists a u -dimensional subspace K_a such that for any $o \neq v \in K_a$, $D_v f(a)$ does not exist.*

Proof. Let u be an integer. Let $K, H, x_1, \dots, x_u, Z_1, T_1, \dots, Z_u, T_u$ be as in Definition 3 and

$$A_n = \{y : x_i(y) = Z_i(\pi(y)) - T_i(\pi(y)), i = 1, \dots, u\}.$$

Put

$$g_0(y) = T_1(\pi(y)) + \dots + T_u(\pi(y)) + x_1(y) + \dots + x_u(y)$$

and

$$g_i(y) = Z_i(\pi(y)) + g_0(y) - T_i(\pi(y)) - x_i(y)$$

for $i = 1, \dots, u, y \in B$.

The functions g_0, \dots, g_u are clearly Lipschitz and convex. Put $f_n = \max(g_0, \dots, g_u)$. Then f_n is Lipschitz and convex and for any point $a \in A_n$ and any $o \neq v \in K$, $D_v f_n(a)$ does not exist. In fact, if $a \in A_n$, then we have $g_0(a) = g_1(a) = \dots = g_u(a) = f_n(a)$ and therefore for $y = a + k, k \in K$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} f_n(y) &= f_n(a) + \max((x_1(k) + \dots + x_u(k)) - x_1(k), \dots \\ &\quad \dots, (x_1(k) + \dots + x_u(k)) - x_u(k), x_1(k) + \dots + x_u(k)) = \\ &= f_n(a) + h_n(k). \end{aligned}$$

If $v \in K$, then $D_v f_n(o)$ exists iff $D_v h_n(o)$ exists. Further, $D_v h_n(o)$ exists for $v = v_1 e_1 + \dots + v_u e_u$ iff there exists $D_w h(0, \dots, 0)$, where $w = (v_1, \dots, v_u)$ and $h(x_1, \dots, x_u) = \max((x_1 + \dots + x_u) - x_1, \dots, (x_1 + \dots + x_u) - x_u, x_1 + \dots + x_u) = x_1 + \dots + x_u - \min(0, x_1, \dots, x_u)$.

This follows from the fact that the function h_n corresponds to the function h in the isomorphism between E^n and K defined by the identification $(c_1, \dots, c_u) = c_1 e_1 + \dots + c_u e_u$. If we put $g(x_1, \dots, x_u) = \min(0, x_1, \dots, x_u)$ then it is easy to see that $D_w g(0, \dots, 0)$ exists for no $o \neq w \in E^n$. Therefore $D_w h(0, \dots, 0)$ exists for no $o \neq w \in E^n$. Now it is clearly sufficient to put $f = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} c_n f_n$, where $c_n > 0$ are sufficiently small numbers. It is possible to put $c_n = n^{-2} (\sup_{\|x\| \leq n} |f_n(x)|)^{-1}$. Theorem 2 which is stated in the first part is a consequence of Proposition 2 and Proposition 3 in the case $u = 1$.

Note 1. If we write in the definition of the $(c - c)$ -hypersurface (Definition 2) "continuous convex functions f, g " instead of "convex Lipschitz functions f, g ", Theorem 2 also holds. It follows easily from Lemma 1.

4. THE FINITE DIMENSIONAL CASE

Proof of Theorem 1. We must prove the following assertions:

(A) Let f be a convex function defined in E^n . Then $S_k(f)$ can be covered by countably many $(c - c)$ -surfaces of dimension k .

(B) Let $M \subset E^n$ be a countable union of $(c - c)$ -surfaces of dimension k . Then there exists a convex function f defined on E^n such that $M \subset S_k(f)$.

Let f be a convex function defined in E^n . Let $x \in S_k(f)$. Since $\dim L_x \leq k$ there exists a permutation π of the numbers $1, \dots, n$ such that $L_x \cap \text{Lin}(e_{\pi(k+1)}, \dots, e_{\pi(n)}) = \{o\}$ where e_j is the j -th unit coordinate vector. If we use Lemma 2 for $K_\pi = \text{Lin}(e_{\pi(k+1)}, \dots, e_{\pi(n)})$, $H_\pi = \text{Lin}(e_{\pi(1)}, \dots, e_{\pi(k)})$ and for all possible permutations π we obtain the assertion (A).

The proof of the assertion (B) is essentially the same as the proof of Proposition 3.

Note 2. If we write in the definition of the $(c - c)$ -surface of dimension k (Definition 1) "convex continuous functions $f_{k+1}, g_{k+1}, \dots, f_n, g_n$ " instead of "convex Lipschitz functions $f_{k+1}, g_{k+1}, \dots, f_n, g_n$ ", Theorem 1 also holds. It follows immediately from Lemma 1.

We shall now prove that for any $0 < k < n$ there exists a countably k rectifiable set (for definition see [6]), which cannot be covered by a countable union of $(c - c)$ -surfaces of dimension k . Thus Theorem 1 improves the results of [1] and [3].

Example 1. Let $0 < k < n$. Let g be a Lipschitz function defined on $\langle 0, 1 \rangle$ which is not differentiable at any point of a perfect set $P \subset \langle 0, 1 \rangle$. It is well known that such a function g exists. For example, the function f from [10], p. 136, Remarque 3 is such a function. Define $f: \langle 0, 1 \rangle^k \rightarrow E^{n-k}$ by the equation $f(x_1, \dots, x_k) = (g(x_1), 0, \dots, 0)$. Clearly f is Lipschitz. Put $M = \text{Graph } f \subset \langle 0, 1 \rangle^k \times E^{n-k} \subset E^n$. The set M is clearly countably k rectifiable. We shall prove that M cannot be covered by a countable union of $(c - c)$ -surfaces of dimension k . Suppose that $M \subset \bigcup_{s=1}^{\infty} A_s$, where A_s is a $(c - c)$ -surface of dimension k for any integer s . Since M is a complete subspace of E^n and any set $M \cap A_s$ is closed in M there exists an open ball B in E^n and an index s_0 such that $M \cap B \subset A_{s_0} \cap B$. Let D be the set of all $x \in M \cap B$ for which $\text{Tan}(M, x)$ ([6], p. 233) is a linear space (in other words: there exists a linear tangent manifold of M at x). From the definition of M it follows easily that D is not of σ -finite $(k - 1)$ -dimensional Hausdorff measure. But Theorem 1 easily implies that D is of σ -finite $(k - 1)$ -dimensional measure and this is a contradiction.

Note 3. Let $M \subset E^n$, $0 < k < n$ and let there exist $2n - 2k$ convex functions $f_{k+1}, g_{k+1}, \dots, f_n, g_n$ defined on the whole space E^k and such a system of orthonormal coordinates y_1, \dots, y_n that M is the set of all points of E^n for which

$$y_j = f_j(y_1, \dots, y_k) - g_j(y_1, \dots, y_k) \quad \text{for } j = k + 1, \dots, n.$$

From the proof of Proposition 3 it is easily seen that M is the set $S_k(f)$ for a convex function f in E^n . Therefore M can be covered by countably many $(c - c)$ -surfaces of dimension k .

5. SINGULAR BOUNDARY POINTS OF CONVEX BODIES IN E^n

Theorem 3. *Suppose C is a convex body in E^{n+1} and for each boundary point x of C , let H_x be the intersection of all hyperplanes which support C at x . For $0 < k < n$ let $B_k = \{x : x \in \text{Bd}(C) \text{ and } \dim H_x \leq k\}$. Then B_k can be covered by countably many $(c - c)$ -surfaces of dimension k .*

Proof. Near to a boundary point x , the surface of the body can be represented by means of a convex function defined on a hyperplane supporting the body at x . Note 3 implies that it is sufficient to prove that for any convex function f in E^n the set $\{[x, y] : x \in S_k(f), y = f(x)\}$ can be covered by countably many $(c - c)$ -surfaces of dimension k in E^{n+1} . We shall show that the last proposition follows from the proof of Lemma 2. For this it is sufficient to prove from (1) and (2) that $y = C(h) - C^*(h)$ where C, C^* are Lipschitz convex functions defined on H . But this immediately follows from the equation $y = m_0(k) + C_0^{j_0}(h)$ since $m_0(k)$ is a fixed linear combination of $x_1(a), \dots, x_d(a)$.

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Author's address: 186 00 Praha 8 - Karlín, Sokolovská 83, ČSSR (Matematicko-fyzikální fakulta UK).