C¹-FINE APPROXIMATION OF FUNCTIONS ON BANACH SPACES WITH UNCONDITIONAL BASIS

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[Received 16 September 2003]

Abstract

We show that if X is a Banach space having an unconditional basis and a C p-smooth Lipschitz bump function, then for every C¹-smooth function f from X into a Banach space Y, and for every continuous function ε: X → (0, ∞), there exists a C p-smooth function g: X → Y such that ∥f − g∥ ≤ ε and ∥f′ − g′∥ ≤ ε.

1. Introduction

Given a Fréchet smooth function f between Banach spaces, we consider in this note the problem of uniformly approximating both f and its derivative by functions with a higher order of differentiability. More generally, if f: X → Y is a C k-smooth function between Banach spaces, and ε: X → (0, ∞) a continuous map, then we say that f is C k-fine approximated by a C p-smooth function g: X → Y, where p > k, if ∥f(i)(x) − g(i)(x)∥ < ε(x) holds for i = 0, 1, . . . , k on X (where the superscripts (i) on f and g represent the i-th Fréchet derivatives). The finite-dimensional case was satisfactorily solved in the classical paper of Whitney [11]. The infinite-dimensional setting has proven to be more difficult, and henceforth in this paper all spaces are taken to be infinite-dimensional.

The question of C⁰-fine approximation, that is, uniform approximation of continuous functions by smooth functions, has been well investigated over the last several decades and usually relies on the use of smooth partitions of unity. For a survey of some results in this direction see [2, Chapter VIII; 5]. The problem of C k-fine approximation when k > 0 is much less understood and not generally amenable to a solution by partitions of unity. One of the reasons why the standard partitions of unity argument fails to give (even when the identity map is concerned!) a fine approximation by

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smooth functions in infinite-dimensional spaces is that we cannot find a common bound for all the
derivatives of the functions of the family composing the partition of unity.

The most fundamental work in this direction has been by Moulis [10]. Variations on Moulis’s
results can be found in [7], although there is a gap in the proof of the generalization of [10, Theorem
2] claimed in [8] and announced in [6]. Indeed, in [6, 7] Heble makes a (correct) proof for the $C^k$-
fine approximation of $C^\infty$-smooth maps by $C^\infty$ maps on a dense subset $D$ of $X$, and then he claims
to show that in fact $D = X$, but this last part of the proof is wrong. In [8], he claims that he can
extend the result in [7] from $D$ to all of $X$; this proof is also flawed and it is not clear at all how one
could mend it.

In fact, to our knowledge the only complete results on $C^k$-fine approximation in infinite-
dimensional Banach spaces $X$ when $k > 0$ is the work of Moulis, which considers the case where
$X = l_p$ for $p \in (1, \infty)$, or $X = c_0$.

The main result of our note is to extend [10, Theorem 1] on $C^1$-fine approximation by $C^\alpha$
smooth functions in $l_p$ or $c_0$ to any Banach space which admits an unconditional Schauder basis and a
Lipschitz, $C^\alpha$-smooth bump function. This generalization is sufficient to allow for a characterization
of Banach spaces in which $C^1$-fine approximation by smoother functions is possible within the class
of Banach spaces with unconditional bases which admit a $C^1$-smooth bump function.

The notation we employ is standard, with $X$, $Y$, etc. denoting Banach spaces, and $X^*$, $Y^*$, etc.
their (continuous) duals. The collection of all continuous, linear maps between Banach spaces $X$
and $Y$ is denoted by $\mathcal{L}(X, Y)$. Smoothness in this note is meant in the Fréchet sense. A $C^p$-smooth
bump function is a $C^p$-smooth, real-valued function on $X$ with bounded, non-empty support.
Most additional notation is explained as it is introduced in the sequel. For any unexplained terms
we refer the reader to [2, 3].

2. Main results

**Theorem 1** Let $X$ be a Banach space with unconditional basis, and $Y$ be an arbitrary Banach
space. Assume that $X$ has a $C^p$-smooth, Lipschitz bump function. Let $G$ be an open subset
of $X$. Then, for every $C^1$-smooth function $f : G \to Y$ and for every continuous function
$\varepsilon : G \to (0, \infty)$, there exists a $C^p$-smooth function $g : G \to Y$ such that $\|f(x) - g(x)\|_Y \leq \varepsilon(x)$
and $\|f'(x) - g'(x)\|_{\mathcal{L}(X, Y)} \leq \varepsilon(x)$ for $x \in G$.

Here, as throughout the paper, $p \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{\infty\}$, $p \geq 1$. We will say that the map $g$ is a $C^1$-fine
approximation of $f$. As noted in the Introduction, this result provides a characterization, within the
class of Banach spaces possessing unconditional bases and $C^1$-smooth bump functions, of those
spaces in which $C^1$-fine approximation by smoother functions occurs. Specifically we have the
following.

**Corollary 2** Let $X$ be a Banach space with an unconditional basis and a $C^1$-smooth bump
function, $G \subseteq X$ an open set, and $Y$ a Banach space. The following statements are equivalent:

1. $X$ has a $C^p$-smooth Lipschitz bump function;
2. every $C^1$-smooth function $f : G \to Y$ can be $C^1$-finely approximated by $C^p$-smooth functions
   $g : G \to Y$.

Proof. (1) $\Rightarrow$ (2) is Theorem 1. The proof of (2) $\Rightarrow$ (1) is very simple and does not require fine
approximation; it is enough to know that the composition of a $C^1$ smooth equivalent norm of
X (which always exists under these assumptions) with a suitable real function can be uniformly approximated by a $C^p$ smooth function with a bounded derivative. We leave the details to the reader.

**Remark 3** We do not know whether a Banach space $X$ with no $C^1$-smooth bump function (for instance, $X = c_0$) might have the property that every $C^1$-smooth function $f : X \to \mathbb{R}$ can be $C^1$-finely approximated by $C^p$-smooth functions, with $p \geq 2$. Some results on approximation in Banach spaces with no $C^1$-smooth bump functions can be found in [4].

2.1. **Proof of Theorem 1**

We will need to use the following result, which is implicitly proved in [2, Proposition II.5.1]; see also [9].

**Proposition 4** Let $Z$ be a Banach space. The following assertions are equivalent.

1. $Z$ admits a $C^p$-smooth Lipschitz bump function.

2. There exist numbers $a, b > 0$ and a Lipschitz function $\psi : Z \to [0, \infty)$ which is $C^p$-smooth on $Z \setminus \{0\}$, homogeneous (that is $\psi(tx) = |t|\psi(x)$ for all $t \in \mathbb{R}, x \in Z$), and such that $a\|\cdot\| \leq \psi \leq b\|\cdot\|$.

For such a function $\psi$, the set $A = \{z \in Z : \psi(z) \leq 1\}$ is what we call a $C^p$-smooth Lipschitz starlike body, and the Minkowski functional of this body, $\mu_A(z) = \inf\{t > 0 : (1/t)z \in A\}$, is precisely the function $\psi$ (see [1] and the references therein for further information on starlike bodies and their Minkowski functionals).

We will denote the open (resp. closed) ball of centre $x$ and radius $r$, with respect to the norm $\|\cdot\|$ of $X$, by $B(x, r)$ (resp. $\overline{B}(x, r)$). If $A$ is a bounded starlike body of $X$, we define the open $A$-pseudoball of centre $x$ and radius $r$ as

$$B_A(x, r) := B(x, r; \mu_A) := \{y \in X : \mu_A(y - x) < r\},$$

and we define $\overline{B}_A(x, r)$ to be the closure of $B_A(x, r)$.

According to Proposition 4 and the preceding remarks, because $X$ has a $C^p$-smooth Lipschitz bump function, there is a bounded starlike body $A \subset X$ whose Minkowski functional $\mu_A = \psi$ is Lipschitz and $C^p$-smooth on $X \setminus \{0\}$, and there is a number $M \geq 1$ such that $(1/M)\|x\| \leq \mu_A(x) \leq M\|x\|$ for all $x \in X$, and $\|\mu_A'(x)\| \leq M$ for all $x \in X \setminus \{0\}$. Notice that in this case we have that

$$B\left(x, \frac{r}{M}\right) \subseteq B_A(x, r) \subseteq B(x, Mr)$$

for every $x \in X$, $r > 0$.

We next introduce some other notation used throughout the proof. Let $\{e_j, e_j^*\}$ be an unconditional Schauder basis on $X$, and $P_n : X \to X$ the canonical projections given by $P_n(x) = P_n(\sum_{j=1}^{\infty} x_j e_j) = \sum_{j=1}^{n} x_j e_j$. Let the unconditional basis constant be $C_1 \geq 1$.

Following Moulis [10], we put $E_n = P_n(X)$, and $E^\infty = \cup_n E_n$, noting that $\dim \ E_n \ = n$ and $\overline{E^\infty} = X$.

In the sequel the symbol $\|\cdot\|$ stands for any of the different norms of the spaces $X, X^*$, and $\mathcal{L}(X, Y)$.

The following lemma gives us the key to proving Theorem 1.

Lemma 5. Let $X, Y, G$ be as in the statement of Theorem 1. There exists a constant $C > 0$, depending only on the space $X$ and the basis constant, such that, for every open ball $B_0 = B(z_0, r_0)$ with $B(z_0, 3r_0) \subseteq G$, and for every $C^1$ function $f : G \to Y$ and numbers $\epsilon, \eta > 0$ with $\sup_{x \in B(z_0, 2r_0)} \| f'(x) \| < \eta$, there exists a $C^p$-smooth map $g : G \to Y$ such that

$$\sup_{x \in B_0} \| f(x) - g(x) \| < C\epsilon \quad \text{and} \quad \sup_{x \in B_0} \| g'(x) \| < C\eta.$$ 

Proof. We may assume that $z_0 = 0$ and $2r_0 < 1$. Choose $r > 0$ with $r < \min\{\epsilon/C_1 M \eta, r_0/C_1 M\}$. Let $\phi : \mathbb{R} \to [0, 1]$ be a $C^\infty$-smooth function such that $\phi(t) = 1$ if $|t| < \frac{1}{2}$, $\phi(t) = 0$ if $|t| > 1$, $\phi'(\mathbb{R}) \subseteq [-3, 0]$. We now construct $C^1$-fine smooth approximations to $f$ on the finite-dimensional subspaces $E_n$. This classical integral-convolution method already appears in Whitney [11], but we follow Moulis [10] for consistency.

Consider the map $\tilde{f}_n : G \to Y$, defined by

$$\tilde{f}_n(x) = \frac{(a_n)^n}{c_n} \int_{E_n} f(x - y)\phi(a_n \mu) \psi(y) dy,$$

where we understand that $f(x - y) = 0$ if $x - y \notin G$, $c_n = \int_{E_n} \phi(\mu \psi(y)) dy$, and we have chosen the constants $a_n > 0$ large enough so that $\tilde{f}_n$ is $C^1$-smooth on $B(z_0, 2r_0)$, and

$$\sup_{x \in B(z_0, 2r_0) \cap E_n} \left\| \tilde{f}_n(x) - f(x) \right\| < \frac{\epsilon}{2^n} \quad \text{and} \quad \sup_{x \in B(z_0, 2r_0) \cap E_n} \left\| f'_n(x) - f'(x) \right\| < \frac{\eta}{2^n}.$$

With these choices one can also check that restricting $\tilde{f}_n$ to $E_n$ gives rise to a $C^p$-smooth map.

We next define a sequence of functions $\overline{f}_n : X \to Y$ as follows. Put $\overline{f}_0 = f(0)$, and supposing that $\overline{f}_0, \ldots, \overline{f}_{n-1}$ have been defined, we set

$$\overline{f}_n(x) = \overline{f}_n(x) + (\overline{f}_{n-1}(P_{n-1}(x)) - \overline{f}_n(P_{n-1}(x))).$$

One can verify by induction that

(i) the restriction of $\overline{f}_n$ to $E_n$ is $C^p$-smooth and $\overline{f}_n$ is an extension of $\overline{f}_{n-1}$;

(ii) $\sup_{x \in E_n \cap B(z_0, 2r_0)} \left\| \overline{f}_n(x) - f(x) \right\| < 2\epsilon (1 - 1/2^n)$;

(iii) $\sup_{x \in E_n \cap B(z_0, 2r_0)} \left\| f'_n(x) - f'(x) \right\| < 2\eta (1 - 1/2^n)$.

We now define the map $\bar{f} : E^\infty \to Y$ by

$$\bar{f}(x) = \lim_{n \to \infty} \overline{f}_n(x).$$

Fact 6. The function $\bar{f}$ has the following properties:

(i) the restriction of $\bar{f}$ to every subspace $E_n$ is $C^p$-smooth;

(ii) $\sup_{x \in E_n \cap B(z_0, 2r_0)} \left\| \bar{f}(x) - f(x) \right\| < 2\epsilon$;

(iii) $\sup_{x \in E_n \cap B(z_0, 2r_0)} \left\| \bar{f}'(x) - f'(x) \right\| < 2\eta.$
This is easily checked by using properties (i)–(iii) above.

Next, let us write \( x = \sum_{n} x_{n} e_{n} \in X \), and define the map

\[
\varphi_{n}(x) = 1 - \varphi \left( \frac{\mu_{A}(x - P_{n-1}(x))}{r} \right)
\]

(here we use the convention that \( P_{0} = 0 \)), and now set

\[
\Psi(x) = \sum_{n} \varphi_{n}(x) x_{n} e_{n}.
\]

**FACT 7** The mapping \( \Psi : X \rightarrow E^{\infty} \) is well defined, \( C^{p} \)-smooth on \( X \), and has the following properties:

1. \( \| \Psi'(x) \| \leq 4M^{2}C_{1}(1 + C_{1}) \) for all \( x \in X \);
2. \( \| x - \Psi(x) \| \leq C_{1}Mr \) for all \( x \in X \);
3. \( \Psi(B_{0}) \subseteq B(z_{0}, 2r) \).

**Proof.** For any \( x_{0} \), because \( P_{n}(x_{0}) \rightarrow x_{0} \) and the \( \| P_{n} \| \) are uniformly bounded, there exist a neighbourhood \( N_{0} \) of \( x_{0} \) and an \( n_{0} \) such that \( \varphi_{n}(x) = 0 \) for all \( x \in N_{0} \) and \( n \geq n_{0} \), and so \( \Psi(N_{0}) \subseteq E_{n_{0}} \). Thus, \( \Psi : X \rightarrow E^{\infty} \) is a well-defined \( C^{p} \)-smooth map. We next estimate its derivative.

We have that

\[
(\varphi_{n}(x) x_{n})' = \varphi_{n}'(x) x_{n} + \varphi_{n}(x) e_{n}^{*}.
\]

Now, since \( |\varphi'(t)| \leq 3, \| \mu'_{A}(x) \| \leq M \) and \( \| (I - P_{n-1})'(x) \| \leq 1 + C_{1} \) for all \( x, t \), we get that, for any \( n \),

\[
\| \varphi_{n}'(x) \| \leq \varphi' \left( \frac{\mu_{A}(x - P_{n-1}(x))}{r} \right) \cdot r^{-1} \| \mu_{A}'(x - P_{n-1}(x)) \| = \| (I - P_{n-1})'(x) \| \leq 3M(1 + C_{1})r^{-1}.
\]

Consider now the derivative of the map \( \Psi \). We have

\[
\Psi'(x)(\cdot) = \sum_{n} \varphi_{n}'(x)(\cdot) x_{n} e_{n} + \sum_{n} \varphi_{n}(x) e_{n}^{*}(\cdot).
\]

For a fixed \( x \), define \( n_{0} = n_{0}(x) \) to be the smallest integer with \( \mu_{A}(x - P_{n_{0}-1}(x)) \leq r \). Then for all \( m < n_{0}, \varphi_{m}(x) = 1, \varphi_{m}'(x) = 0 \), and so, using [3, Lemma 6.33] since \( \{e_{n}\} \) is unconditional with basis constant \( C_{1} \), and our estimate above, we have that for every \( h \in B_{X} \),

\[
\| \Psi'(x)(h) \| \leq \sum_{n} \varphi_{n}'(x)(h) x_{n} e_{n} + \sum_{n} \varphi_{n}(x) h_{n} e_{n} \\
= \sum_{n \geq n_{0}} \varphi_{n}'(x)(h) x_{n} e_{n} + \sum_{n} \varphi_{n}(x) h_{n} e_{n} \\
\leq C_{1} \sup_{n} \| \varphi_{n}'(x)(h) \| \left( \sum_{n \geq n_{0}} x_{n} e_{n} \right) + C_{1} \sup_{n} \| \varphi_{n}(x) \| \left( \sum_{n} h_{n} e_{n} \right).
\]
Lastly, we have, again using Facts 6 and 7, that, for every \( x \) with centres \( x_j \) and radii \( r_j \) with \( B(x_j, 3M r_j) \subset G \), and such that \( \| T'_j(x) - f'(x) \| < \varepsilon_j/8C \) and \( \varepsilon(x) \geq \varepsilon_j/2 \) for all \( x \in B(x_j, 2M r_j) \), where \( T_j \) is the first-order Taylor polynomial to \( f \) at \( x_j \) and \( \varepsilon_j = \varepsilon(x_j) \) (note in particular that \( T'_j(x) \) is simply \( f'(x_j) \)).

Since \( B(x, r/M) \subseteq B_A(x, r) \subseteq B(x, Mr) \) for every \( x, r \), we have that

\[
G = \bigcup_{j=1}^{\infty} B_A(x_j, r_j), \quad \text{and} \quad \| T'_j(x) - f'(x) \| < \frac{\varepsilon_j}{8C} \text{ on } B_A(x_j, 2r_j).
\]
Next, let \( \varphi_j \in C^p([0, 1]) \) with bounded derivative so that \( \varphi_j = 1 \) on \( B_A(x_j, r_j) \) and \( \varphi_j = 0 \) outside \( B_A(x_j, 2r_j) \) (such a function can easily be defined as \( \varphi_j(x) = \theta_j(\mu_A(x - x_j)) \)), where \( \theta_j \) is a suitable smooth real function. Now, via Lemma 5, we may choose \( C^p \)-smooth maps \( \delta_j : G \to Y \) such that on each ball \( B(x_j, 2Mr_j) \) we have both \( \|T_j(x) - f(x) - \delta_j(x)\| < 2^{-j-2}\varepsilon_jM_j^{-1} \), and \( \|\delta_j'(x)\| < \varepsilon_j/8 \), where \( M_j = \sum_{k=1}^j \tilde{M}_k \) and \( \tilde{M}_k = \sup_{x \in B(x_k, 2M_r)} \|\varphi'_k(x)\| \). Then we also have

\[
\left\|T_j'(x) - f'(x) - \delta_j'(x)\right\| \leq \left\|T_j'(x) - f'(x)\right\| + \|\delta_j'(x)\| < \varepsilon_j/8C + \varepsilon_j/8 \leq \varepsilon_j/4.
\]

Next, we define

\[
h_j = \varphi_j \prod_{k < j} (1 - \varphi_k) \quad \text{and} \quad g(x) = \sum_{j} h_j(x) (T_j(x) - \delta_j(x)).
\]

Note that for each \( x \), if \( n := n(x) := \min \{m : x \in B_A(x_n, r_n)\} \) then, because \( 1 - \varphi_n(x) = 0 \) and \( B_A(x_n, r_n) \) is open, it follows from the definition of the \( h_j \) that there is a neighbourhood \( N \) of \( x \) such that for \( y \in N \), \( g(y) = \sum_{j \leq n} h_j(y) (T_j(y) - \delta_j(y)) \), and \( \sum_{j} h_j(y) = \sum_{j \leq n} h_j(y) \). Also, by a straightforward calculation, again using the fact that \( \varphi_n = 1 \) on \( B_A(x_n, r_n) \), we have that \( \sum_{j} h_j(y) = 1 \) for \( y \in B_A(x_n, r_n) \) (hence for every \( y \in G \)).

Now, fix any \( x_0 \in G \), and let \( n_0 = n(x_0) \) and a neighbourhood \( N_0 \) of \( x_0 \) be as above. Then for any \( x \in N_0 \), since \( \text{supp}(h_j) \subseteq B_A(x_j, 2r_j) \subseteq B(x_j, 2Mr_j) \),

\[
\|g(x) - f(x)\| = \left\| \sum_{j \leq n_0} h_j(x) (T_j(x) - \delta_j(x)) - f(x) \right\|
\]

\[
= \left\| \sum_{j \leq n_0} h_j(x) (T_j(x) - \delta_j(x)) \right\| - \left\| \sum_{j \leq n_0} h_j(x) f(x) \right\|
\]

\[
\leq \sum_{j \leq n_0} h_j(x) \left\| (T_j(x) - f(x) - \delta_j(x)) \right\|
\]

\[
< \sum_{j \leq n_0} h_j(x) \frac{\varepsilon_j}{4} \leq \varepsilon(x).
\]

A straightforward calculation shows that \( \|h_j'(x)\| \leq M_j \), and so we have

\[
\left\|g'(x) - f'(x)\right\| = \left\| \sum_{j \leq n_0} h_j'(x) (T_j(x) - f(x) - \delta_j(x)) + h_j(x) (T_j(x) - f(x) - \delta_j(x))' \right\|
\]

\[
\leq \sum_{j \leq n_0} \left\| h_j'(x) \right\| \left\| T_j(x) - f(x) - \delta_j(x) \right\| + \sum_{j \leq n_0} h_j(x) \left\| (T_j(x) - f(x) - \delta_j(x))' \right\|
\]

\[
< \sum_{j \leq n_0, x \in B_A(x_j, 2r_j)} M_j (2^{-j-2}\varepsilon_jM_j^{-1}) + \sum_{j \leq n_0} h_j(x) \frac{\varepsilon_j}{4}
\]

\[
\leq \sum_{j \leq n_0, x \in B_A(x_j, 2Mr_j)} 2^{-j}\frac{\varepsilon_j}{4} + \frac{\varepsilon(x)}{2} \leq \varepsilon(x).
\]
REMARK 8 By using Moulis’s ideas [10] and some refinements of the techniques deployed above, one can also show the following result: if $X$ is a Banach space with an unconditional basis and a $C^\infty$ smooth bump function with bounded derivatives, then every $C^{2k-1}$-smooth function can be $C^k$-finely approximated by $C^\infty$-smooth functions. We do not feel that this statement justifies the inclusion of its (necessarily technically involved) proof in this note. It is also worth recalling that the assumption that the second derivative of a bump function is bounded is very strong and implies super-reflexivity of the space.

Of course, the natural problem as to whether $C^k$ functions can be $C^k$-finely approximated by $C^\infty$ functions on such spaces $X$ remains open, even in the case where $X = \ell_2$.

Acknowledgments

R. Fry wishes to thank P. Reynolds for his valuable research assistance. He is partly supported by NSERC (Canada).

The main result of this note was independently proved by two and three of the authors respectively. In order to avoid unnecessary duplication we all agreed to make a joint paper.

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