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by

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ABSTRACT. — In this paper we study the existence of nontrivial solutions
for the boundary value problem

\[
\begin{cases}
-\Delta u - \lambda u - u |u|^{2^*-2} = 0 & \text{in } \Omega \\
u = 0 & \text{on } \partial \Omega
\end{cases}
\]

when \( \Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n \) is a bounded domain, \( n \geq 3, 2^* = \frac{2n}{n-2} \) is the critical exponent
for the Sobolev embedding \( H^1_0(\Omega) \subset L^{n}(\Omega) \), \( \lambda \) is a real parameter.

We prove that there is bifurcation from any eigenvalue \( \lambda_j \) of \(-\Delta\) and
we give an estimate of the left neighbourhoods \( ]\lambda_j^*, \lambda_j[ \) of \( \lambda_j, j \in \mathbb{N} \), in
which the bifurcation branch can be extended. Moreover we prove that,
if \( \lambda \in ]\lambda_j^*, \lambda_j[ \), the number of nontrivial solutions is at least twice the
multiplicity of \( \lambda_j \).

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The same kind of results holds also when $\Omega$ is a compact Riemannian manifold of dimension $n \geq 3$, without boundary and $\Delta$ is the relative Laplace-Beltrami operator.

Key-words: Boundary value problem, critical Sobolev exponent, bifurcation, critical points, eigenvalue, variational problem, Riemannian manifold.

RÉSUMÉ. — Dans cet article, nous étudions l’existence de solutions non triviales pour le problème aux limites

$$\begin{cases}
- \Delta u - \lambda u - u |u|^{2^*-2} = 0 & \text{in } \Omega \\
\quad u = 0 & \text{on } \partial \Omega
\end{cases}$$

où $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ est un domaine borné, $n \geq 3$, $2^* = \frac{2n}{n-2}$ est l’exposant critique pour le plongement de Sobolev $H^1_0(\Omega) \subset L^{2^*}(\Omega)$, $\lambda$ est un paramètre réel.

Nous démontrons que toute valeur propre $\lambda_j$ de $-\Delta$ est une valeur de bifurcation, et nous donnons une estimation des voisinages $[\lambda_j^*, \lambda_j]$ de $\lambda_j$ où existent des solutions non triviales. Nous montrons en outre que le nombre de celles-ci est au moins le double de la multiplicité de $\lambda_j$.

On a les mêmes résultats quand $\Omega$ est une variété riemannienne compacte de dimension $n \geq 3$, et $\Delta$ l’opérateur de Laplace-Beltrami.

AMS (MOS) Subject Classifications: 35 A 15, 35 J 20, 58 E 99.

INTRODUCTION

Let $\Omega$ be a bounded domain in $\mathbb{R}^n$, $n \geq 3$, $2^* = \frac{2n}{n-2}$ the critical exponent for the Sobolev embedding $H^1_0(\Omega) \to L^{2^*}(\Omega)$. For a real parameter $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$ consider the boundary value problem

$$(0.1) \quad \begin{cases}
- \Delta u - \lambda u - u |u|^{2^*-2} = 0 & \text{in } \Omega \\
\quad u \big|_{\partial \Omega} = 0
\end{cases}$$

corresponding to the functional $f_{\lambda} : H^1_0(\Omega) \to \mathbb{R}$ given by

$$(0.2) \quad f_{\lambda}(u) = 1/2 \int_{\Omega} (|\nabla u|^2 - \lambda |u|^2) dx - 1/2^* \int_{\Omega} |u|^{2^*} dx .$$

Since the embedding $H^1_0(\Omega) \to L^{2^*}(\Omega)$ is not compact the functional $f_{\lambda}$ in general will not satisfy the Palais-Smale condition.

However, recently Brezis and Nirenberg [5] were able to establish
the existence of positive solutions of (0.1) for any \( \lambda \) in a certain range \( ]\lambda^*, \lambda_1[ \), where \( \lambda_j, j \in \mathbb{N} \) \((\lambda_1 < \lambda_2 < \ldots)\), denote the eigenvalues of the operator 
\[- \Delta : H^1_0(\Omega) \to H^{-1}(\Omega) = (H^1_0(\Omega))^* ,\]
and \( \lambda^* > 0 \) is some constant depending on \( n \) and \( \Omega \).

In this paper we study the existence of nontrivial solutions for (0.1) also for \( \lambda > \lambda_j \) to obtain bifurcation from any eigenvalue \( \lambda_j \). We give an estimate of the left neighbourhoods \( ]\lambda^*, \lambda_j[ \) of \( \lambda_j \) in which the bifurcation branch « can be extended »; moreover we prove that, if \( \lambda \in ]\lambda^*, \lambda_j[ \), the number of nontrivial solutions of (0.1) is at least twice the multiplicity of \( \lambda_j \) (cp. Theorem 1.1).

Our results are based on the observation that although the Palais-Smale condition does not hold globally for \( f_\lambda \) (cp. Remark 2.3) it is satisfied locally in a certain energy range (cp. Lemma 2.1 or [5, Remark 2.2]).

We observe that the tools used in proving the above results do not depend on the shape of \( \Omega \) and on the dimension \( n \).

With suitable modifications the existence and bifurcation results also apply to problem (0.1) posed on a compact Riemannian manifold without boundary of dimension \( n \geq 3 \) (cp. Theorem 1.3).

We thank Prof. H. Brezis for his useful comments.

1. RESULTS

Let \( \| u \| = \left( \int_\Omega |\nabla u|^2 \, dx \right)^{1/2} \), \( u = \left( \int_\Omega |u|^p \, dx \right)^{1/p} \) denote the norms in \( H^1_0(\Omega), L^p(\Omega) \), respectively, and let 
\[ S = \inf \{ \| u \|^2 / \| u \|^2_{\infty} : u \in H^1_0(\Omega) \setminus \{ 0 \} \} \]
denote the best constant for the embedding \( H^1_0(\Omega) \to L^{2^*}(\Omega) \).

**THEOREM 1.1.** — For \( \lambda > 0 \) let \( \lambda_+ = \min \{ \lambda_j | \lambda < \lambda_j \} \), and suppose 
\[ \lambda_+ - \lambda < S \left[ \text{meas} \left( \Omega \right) \right]^{-2/n}. \]

Let \( m \) be the multiplicity of \( \lambda_+ \). Then problem (0.1) admits at least \( m \) pairs of nontrivial solutions 
\[ \{ u_k(\lambda), - u_k(\lambda) \} \quad k = 1, \ldots, m \]
such that 
\[ \| u_k(\lambda) \| \to 0 \quad \text{as} \quad \lambda \to \lambda_+. \]

**REMARK 1.2.** — If \( \Omega \) is starshaped, it is well known that (0.1) admits only the trivial solution for \( \lambda \leq 0 \) (cp. [5] [8]).
A result analogous to Theorem 1.1 holds for the problem

\[ - \Delta_M u - \lambda u - u |u|^{2^* - 2} = 0 \]

on a compact Riemannian manifold \( M \) of dimension \( \geq 3 \) and without boundary. Here \( \Delta_M \) is the Laplace-Beltrami operator on \( M \), \( \lambda \geq 0 \) a parameter and \( 2^* = \frac{2n}{n-2} \) as before. Denote by \( H^1(M) \) the closure of \( C^\infty(M) \) with respect to the norm

\[ \| u \|_M^2 = \left( \int_M (|\nabla u|^2 + |u|^2) dM \right)^{1/2} \]

which in local coordinates on a covering \( \{ T_h \} \) of \( M \) is given by

\[ \| u \|_M^2 = \left( \sum_h \int_{T_h} \left( \sum_{i,j=1}^n g^{ij} \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_i} \frac{\partial u}{\partial x_j} + |u|^2 \right) g dx \right)^{1/2} \]

g\( i j \) denoting the metric tensor, and \( g = \det(g^{ij}) \). Note that the quadratic form \( \int_M |\nabla u|^2 dM \) is only positive semidefinite in \( H^1(M) \), then the operator

\[ - \Delta_M : H^1(M) \to H^{-1}(M) = (H^1(M))' \]

possesses eigenvalues \( \mu_1 < \mu_2 < \ldots \mu_k < \ldots \) which are \( \geq 0 \) (cp. Appendix 1 of [4]).

**Theorem 1.3.** — For \( \lambda > 0 \) let \( \mu_+ = \min \{ \mu_j | \lambda < \mu_j \} \) and suppose

\[ \mu_+ - \lambda < S \left( \int_M dM \right)^{-2/n}. \]

Let \( m \) be the multiplicity of \( \mu_+ \). Then problem (1.1) admits at least \( m \) pairs of nonconstant solutions

\[ \{ u_k(\lambda), -u_k(\lambda) \} \quad k = 1, \ldots, m \]

such that

\[ \| u_k(\lambda) \|_M \to 0 \quad \text{as} \quad \lambda \to \mu_+ . \]

\[ \blacksquare \]

**2. PROOF OF THEOREMS 1.1, 1.3**

The proof of Theorem 1.1 requires some lemmata.

**Lemma 2.1.** — For any \( \lambda \in \mathbb{R} \) the functional \( f_\lambda \) (see (0.2)) satisfies the Palais-Smale condition in \( \left[ -\infty, \frac{1}{n} S^{n/2} \right] \) in the following sense:
(P. S.) If $c < \frac{1}{n} S^{n/2}$ and \{\(u_m\)\} is a sequence in $H^1_0(\Omega)$ such that as $m \to \infty$
\[ f_{\lambda}(u_m) \to c, \quad df_{\lambda}(u_m) \to 0 \text{ strongly in } H^{-1}(\Omega), \]
then \{\(u_m\)\} contains a subsequence converging strongly in $H^1_0(\Omega)$.

**Remark 2.2.** — An analogous result has been proved in [5]. Nevertheless for completeness we give here a proof of lemma 2.1 which is slightly different from that contained in [5].

**Proof.** — Let $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$, and suppose \{\(u_m\)\} is a sequence in $H^1_0(\Omega)$ such that as $m \to \infty$
\begin{align}
\tag{2.1} f_{\lambda}(u_m) & \to c_1 < \frac{1}{n} S^{n/2} \\
\tag{2.2} df_{\lambda}(u_m) & \to 0 \text{ strongly in } H^{-1}(\Omega).
\end{align}
As in [5, estimates (2.18)] from (2.1), (2.2) we obtain that
\[ \|u_m\| \] is bounded.

Hence we may extract a subsequence \{\(u_m\)\} (relabelled) such that
\begin{align}
\tag{2.4} u_m & \to u \text{ weakly in } H^1_0(\Omega) \\
\tag{2.5} u_m & \to u \text{ strongly in } L^p(\Omega) \text{ for any } p \in [1, 2^*].
\end{align}
Moreover $u$ is a solution of (0.1). Indeed, letting $\phi \in C^\infty_0(\Omega)$, by (2.4), (2.5) and (2.2) we deduce that
\[ \langle df_{\lambda}(u), \phi \rangle = \langle df_{\lambda}(u_m), \phi \rangle + o(1) = o(1). \]

Hence $u$ weakly solves (0.1). But by regularity results (cp. [5] [6] [7] and [10]) it follows that
\[ u \in L^{2^*}(\Omega) \]
and hence that $u$ is regular and is a solution of (0.1) in the classical sense.

To show that $u_m \to u$ strongly in $H^1_0(\Omega)$ as $m \to \infty$, let $v_m = u_m - u$.
Testing (2.2) with $v_m$ we obtain
\begin{equation}
\tag{2.7} o(1) = \langle df_{\lambda}(u_m), v_m \rangle = \int_\Omega (\nabla u \nabla v_m + |\nabla v_m|^2 - \lambda(u + v_m)v_m - |u + v_m|^{2^* - 2}(u + v_m)v_m)dx.
\end{equation}

By (2.4) and (2.5) we have
\begin{equation}
\tag{2.8} \int_\Omega (\nabla u \nabla v_m - \lambda(u + v_m)v_m)dx = o(1).
\end{equation}

Whence from (2.7), (2.8) we deduce that
\begin{equation}
\tag{2.9} \|v_m\|^2 = \int_\Omega |u + v_m|^{2^* - 2}(u + v_m)v_mdx + o(1).
\end{equation}

Now we claim that

\[(2.10) \quad ||v_m||^2 = |v_m|^{2^*} + o(1).\]

In fact, by using (2.5) and (2.6), we have

\[(2.11) \quad \left| \int_\Omega (u + v_m) |u + v_m|^{2^* - 2} v_m dx - \int_\Omega |v_m|^{2^*} dx \right| = \left| \int_\Omega \int_0^u \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi} [(v_m + \xi) |v_m + \xi|^{2^* - 2} v_m d\xi dx \right|

= \left| (2^* - 1) \int_\Omega \int_0^1 |v_m + tu|^{2^* - 2} v_m u dt dx \right|

\leq \text{const.} \left[ \int_\Omega (|u| + |v_m|^{2^* - 1} + |v_m||u|^{2^*}) dx \right] = o(1)\]

and (2.10) easily follows from (2.9) and (2.11).

Since

\[\langle df_{\lambda}(u_m), u_m \rangle = o(1)\]

we have

\[|u_m|^{2^*} = \int_\Omega (|\nabla u_m|^2 - \lambda |u_m|^2) dx + o(1).\]

Inserting into the expression for \(f_{\lambda}(u_m)\) we obtain

\[(2.12) \quad f_{\lambda}(u_m) = \frac{1}{n} \int_\Omega (|\nabla u_m|^2 - \lambda |u_m|^2) dx + o(1)

= \frac{1}{n} \int_\Omega (|\nabla u|^2 - \lambda |u|^2) dx + \frac{1}{n} \int_\Omega |\nabla v_m|^2 dx + o(1).\]

Moreover, since \(u\) is a solution of (0.1)

\[\int_\Omega (|\nabla u|^2 - \lambda |u|^2) dx - \int_\Omega |u|^{2^*} dx = \langle df_{\lambda}(u), u \rangle = 0.\]

Whence in particular

\[(2.13) \quad \int_\Omega (|\nabla u|^2 - \lambda |u|^2) dx \geq 0.\]

From (2.12) and (2.13) we now infer

\[||v_m||^2 \leq nf_{\lambda}(u_m) + o(1).\]

Then, by (2.1), for \(m\) sufficiently large we obtain

\[(2.14) \quad ||v_m||^2 \leq c_2 < S^{n/2}.\]

Now, by (2.10)

\[||v_m||^2 \leq S^{-2^{*}/2} ||v_m||^{2^*} + o(1).\]
Or equivalently
\[ \| v_m \|^2 (S^{2^{*}/2} - \| v_m \|^{2^{*}-2}) \leq o(1). \]
Taking account of (2.14) this implies that \( v_m \to 0 \) strongly in \( H^1_0(\Omega) \), concluding the proof.

**Remark 2.3.** — Complementing the preceding lemma we have a non-compactness result for energies \( \geq \frac{1}{n} \frac{S^{n/2}}{n^{n/2}} \). In fact we now show that for any \( \lambda \in \mathbb{R} \) there exists a sequence \( \{ u_m \} \subset H^1_0(\Omega) \) satisfying the P-S assumptions in \( c = \frac{1}{n} \frac{S^{n/2}}{n^{n/2}} \), which is not relatively compact in \( H^1_0(\Omega) \).

Let \( x_0 \in \Omega \) and choose a function \( \phi \in C^\infty_0(\Omega) \) such that \( \phi \equiv 1 \) in a neighbourhood \( \mathcal{N} \) of \( x_0 \). The functions \( u_\mu : \mathbb{R}^n \to \mathbb{R} \)
\[ u_\mu(x) = \frac{[n(n-2)\mu^2]^{-\frac{n-2}{4}}}{[\mu^2 + |x-x_0|^2]^{-\frac{n-2}{2}}} \]
solve the equation
\[ -\Delta u_\mu = u_\mu |u_\mu|^{2^{*}-2} \quad \text{in } \mathbb{R}^n. \]
Let
\[ u_m = \phi u_{\mu_m}, \quad \mu_m = \frac{1}{m}. \]
Note that \( u_m \in H^1_0(\Omega) \) and moreover
\[ \{ u_m \} \text{ is uniformly bounded in } H^1_0(\Omega). \]
Also we easily derive that as \( m \to +\infty \)
\[ \nabla u_{\mu_m} \to 0 \quad \text{in } L^2(\mathbb{R}^n \setminus \mathcal{N}) \]
\[ u_m \to 0 \quad \text{in } L^\infty_{\text{loc}}(\Omega \setminus \{ x_0 \}). \]
Hence also
\[ u_m \to 0 \text{ weakly in } H^1_0(\Omega) \quad (m \to \infty). \]
Using (2.17) and (2.18) we deduce that
\[ f_\mu(u_m) = 1/2 \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} |\nabla u_{\mu_m}|^2 dx - 1/2 \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} |u_{\mu_m}|^{2^{*}} dx + o(1) \]
\[ = \frac{1}{n} \frac{S^{n/2}}{n^{n/2}} + o(1) \quad (\text{cp. } [1] \ [9]). \]
Also using (2.15)-(2.18) we obtain
\[ \| df_\mu(u_m) \|_{H^{-1}(\Omega)} = \sup \left\{ v \in H^1_0(\Omega) : \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} (\nabla u_{\mu_m} \nabla v - u_{\mu_m} |u_{\mu_m}|^{2^{*}-2} v) dx + o(1) = o(1) \right\} \]
Hence \( \{ u_m \} \) satisfies the (P-S) assumptions with \( c = -\frac{1}{n} S^{n/2} \), however, by (2.19) and (2.20), \( \{ u_m \} \) cannot be relatively compact in \( H_0^1(\Omega) \).

**Lemma 2.4.** — For \( \lambda > 0 \) let \( \lambda_+ = \inf \{ \lambda_j | \lambda < \lambda_j \} \) and set

\[
M_+ = \bigoplus_{\lambda_j \geq \lambda_+} M(\lambda_j) \quad \text{(the closure is taken in } H_0^1(\Omega))
\]

\[
M_- = \bigoplus_{\lambda_j \leq \lambda_+} M(\lambda_j)
\]

where \( M(\lambda_j) \) denotes the eigenspace of \( -\Delta \) corresponding to \( \lambda_j \). Then

\[
\beta_\lambda = \sup_{u \in M_-} f_\lambda(u) \leq (\lambda_+ - \lambda)^{n/2} \frac{\text{meas}(\Omega)}{n}
\]

moreover, there exist constants \( \rho_\lambda > 0, \delta_\lambda \in ]0, \beta_\lambda [ \) such that

\[
f_\lambda(u) \geq \delta_\lambda \quad \text{for any } u \in M_+, ||u|| = \rho_\lambda.
\]

**Proof.** — For any \( u \in M_- \) we have

\[
f_\lambda(u) = 1/2 \int_\Omega (|\nabla u|^2 - \lambda |u|^2) dx - 1/2 \int_\Omega |u|^{2^*} dx
\]

\[
\leq 1/2(\lambda_+ - \lambda) \int_\Omega |u|^2 dx - 1/2 \int_\Omega |u|^{2^*} dx
\]

\[
\leq 1/2(\lambda_+ - \lambda) \text{meas}(\Omega)^{2/n} \left\{ \int_\Omega |u|^{2^*} dx \right\}^{2/2^*} - 1/2 \int_\Omega |u|^{2^*} dx.
\]

Let

\[
g(\rho) = 1/2(\lambda_+ - \lambda) \text{meas}(\Omega)^{2/n} \rho^2 - 1/2 \rho^{2^*}
\]

Then

\[
\sup_{u \in M_-} f_\lambda(u) \leq \sup_{\rho > 0} g(\rho) = \frac{1}{n} (\lambda_+ - \lambda)^{n/2} \text{meas}(\Omega)
\]

proving the first part of the lemma.

Since for \( u \in M_+ \) we obtain

\[
\int_\Omega (|\nabla u|^2 - \lambda |u|^2) dx \geq \left( 1 - \frac{\lambda}{\lambda_+} \right) ||u||^2
\]

while

\[
||u||^{2^*}_{2^*} \leq \text{const} ||u||^2.
\]

The second part of the claim is immediate.

By lemmata 2.1, 2.4, Theorem 1.1 can be deduced by the following result of Bartolo, Benci, Fortunato (cp. Theorem 2.4 of [3]), which is a variant of some results contained in [0].

**Theorem 2.5.** — Let \( H \) be a real Hilbert space with norm \( || \cdot || \) and suppose \( I \in C^1(H, \mathbb{R}) \) is a functional on \( H \) satisfying the following conditions:

- \( I(u) = I(-u), I(0) = 0; \)
- \( I(u) = \frac{1}{n} (\lambda_+ - \lambda)^{n/2} \text{meas}(\Omega) \)

Annales de l'Institut Henri Poincaré - Analyse non linéaire
I2) There exists a constant $\beta > 0$ such that the Palais-Smale condition (P-S) holds in $]0, \beta[;$

I3) There exist two closed subspaces $V, W \subset H$ and positive constants $\rho, \delta, \beta'$, with $\delta < \beta' < \beta$ such that

i) $I(u) \leq \beta'$ for any $u \in W$

ii) $I(u) \geq \delta$ for any $u \in V$, $\|u\| = \rho$

iii) $\text{codim} V < +\infty$ and $\dim W \geq \text{codim} V$.

Then there exists at least

$$\dim W - \text{codim} V$$

pairs of critical points of $I$ with critical values belonging to the interval $[\delta, \beta']$.

We are now ready to prove Theorem 1.1.

**Proof of Theorem 1.1.** — Let $H = H^1_0(\Omega)$, $I = f_\lambda$, $V = M_+$, $W = M_-$, $\beta = \frac{1}{n} \frac{\pi^2}{2}$, $\beta' = \beta_\lambda$, $\delta = \delta_\lambda$, $\rho = \rho_\lambda$ and apply Theorem 2.5 together with lemmata 2.1, 2.4.

For the proof of Theorem 1.3 the following result from [2] is needed.

**Lemma 2.6.** — If $\{v_m\}$ is a sequence in $H^1(M)$ such that $v_m \rightharpoonup 0$ weakly in $H^1(M)$ as $m \to \infty$, then

$$\left(\int_M |v_m|^2 dM\right)^{2/2^*} \leq S^{-1} v_m^2 + o(1).$$

**Proof.** — By [2, Theorem 2.21] for all $\phi \in H^1(M)$, $\varepsilon > 0$

$$\left(\int_M |\phi|^2 dM\right)^{2/2^*} \leq (S^{-1} + \varepsilon) \int_M |\nabla \phi|^2 dM + A(\varepsilon) \int_M |\phi|^2 dM$$

with a constant $A(\varepsilon)$ independent of $\phi$. Applying this inequality with $\phi = v_m$, and noting that by weak convergence $v_m \to 0$ ($m \to +\infty$) we have

$$\int_M |v_m|^2 dM \to 0 \quad m \to +\infty$$

we deduce that for any $\varepsilon > 0$

$$\left(\int_M |v_m|^2 dM\right)^{2/2^*} \leq (S^{-1} + \varepsilon) v_m^2 + o(1).$$

The lemma follows on letting $\varepsilon \to 0$.  

**Proof of Theorem 1.3.** — Going through the proof of Lemma 2.1 — keeping in mind Lemma 2.6 and the fact that, for any sequence $\{v_m\}$

in $H^1(M)$ tending to 0 weakly in this space, $\|v_m\|_2 = o(1)$ — it is now immediate that also for the functional on $H^1(M)$

$$f_\lambda(u) = \frac{1}{2} \int_M (|\nabla u|^2 - \lambda |u|^2) dM - \frac{1}{2} \int |u|^{2^*} dM$$

corresponding to problem (1.1) the Palais-Smale condition is satisfied in the interval $\left[-\infty, \frac{1}{n} S^{n/2}\right]$. Moreover it is easy to see that the same estimates of lemma 2.4 continue to hold (obviously $\lambda_+, H^1_0(\Omega), \text{meas } \Omega$ replaced respectively by $\mu_j, \mu_+$).

Then Theorem 1.3 can be proved by using again the abstract critical point Theorem 2.5.

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