



Full Length Article

Polynomial approximation on a compact subset of the real line

Vladimir Andrievskii

Department of Mathematical Sciences, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242, United States

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Abstract

We prove an analogue of the classical Bernstein theorem concerning the rate of polynomial approximation of piecewise analytic functions on a compact subset of the real line.

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1. Introduction and the main result

Let $E \subset \mathbb{R}$ be a compact subset of the real line \mathbb{R} and let \mathbb{P}_n be the set of all (real) polynomials of degree at most $n \in \mathbb{N} := \{1, 2, \dots\}$. Also, let for $x_0 \in E$ and $\alpha > 0$,

$$\mathcal{E}_n(|x - x_0|^\alpha, E) := \inf_{p \in \mathbb{P}_n} \sup_{x \in E} |x - x_0|^\alpha - p(x).$$

The starting point of our analysis is the classical Bernstein theory [6,8,7]. According to this theory, for any $x_0 \in (-1, 1)$ and $\alpha > 0$, where α is not an even integer, there exists a finite nonzero limit

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} n^\alpha \mathcal{E}_n(|x - x_0|^\alpha, [-1, 1]) := (1 - x_0^2)^{\alpha/2} \sigma_\alpha.$$

E-mail address: andriyev@math.kent.edu.

The question as to what happens to the best polynomial approximations for a general set $E \subset \mathbb{R}$ is investigated in monographs [16] and [15, Chapter 10] where the reader can also find a comprehensive survey of this subject.

Now, we consider E to be a set in the complex plane \mathbb{C} and use the notions of potential theory in the plane (see [13,14] for details). Let E be non-polar, i.e., be of positive (logarithmic) capacity $\text{cap}(E) > 0$ and let $g_{\overline{\mathbb{C}} \setminus E}(z) = g_{\overline{\mathbb{C}} \setminus E}(z, \infty)$, $z \in \overline{\mathbb{C}} \setminus E$ be the Green function of $\overline{\mathbb{C}} \setminus E$ with pole at infinity, where $\overline{\mathbb{C}} := \mathbb{C} \cup \{\infty\}$ is the extended complex plane.

Our main objective is to prove the following result.

Theorem 1. *Let $x_0 \in E \subset \mathbb{R}$. If for some $\alpha > 0$,*

$$\limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} n^\alpha \mathcal{E}_n(|x - x_0|^\alpha, E) > 0, \tag{1.1}$$

then

$$\sup_{z \in \overline{\mathbb{C}} \setminus E} \frac{g_{\overline{\mathbb{C}} \setminus E}(z)}{|z - x_0|} < \infty. \tag{1.2}$$

Comparing Theorem 1 with [4, Corollary 1] we obtain the following result.

Theorem 2. *Let $x_0 \in E \subset \mathbb{R}$. Then for any $\alpha > 0$, which is not even integer,*

$$\liminf_{n \rightarrow \infty} n^\alpha \mathcal{E}_n(|x - x_0|^\alpha, E) > 0$$

if and only if (1.2) holds.

For the geometry of E satisfying (1.2), we refer the reader to [9,15,10,3] and the many references therein.

2. Auxiliary results

In this section we assume that

$$E = \bigcup_{j=1}^m [a_j, b_j], \quad x_0 \in \bigcup_{j=1}^m (a_j, b_j) =: \text{Int}(E),$$

where $-1 = a_1 < b_1 < a_2 < \dots < b_{m-1} < a_m < b_m = 1$, $m > 1$.

It is known (for example, see [17, pp. 224–226], [5, pp. 409–412] or [2]) that there exists a conformal mapping $w = F(z) = F_E(z)$ of the upper half-plane $\mathbb{H} := \{z : \Im z > 0\}$ onto the domain

$$G = G_E = \{z : 0 < \Re z < \pi, \Im z > 0\} \setminus \bigcup_{j=1}^{m-1} [u_j, u_j + i v_j],$$

where $0 =: u_0 < u_1 < u_2 < \dots < u_{m-1} < u_m := \pi$ and $v_j > 0$, $j = 1, \dots, m - 1$, which can be extended continuously to $\overline{\mathbb{H}}$ satisfying the following boundary correspondence

$$\begin{aligned} F(\infty) &= \infty, \quad F((-\infty, -1]) = \{z : \Re z = 0, \Im z \geq 0\}, \\ F([1, \infty)) &= \{z : \Re z = \pi, \Im z \geq 0\}, \\ F([a_j, b_j]) &= [u_{j-1}, u_j], \quad j = 1, \dots, m, \\ F([b_j, a_{j+1}]) &= [u_j, u_j + i v_j], \quad j = 1, \dots, m - 1. \end{aligned}$$

Moreover,

$$\begin{aligned} g_{\overline{\mathbb{C}} \setminus E}(z) &= \Im(F(z)), \quad z \in \overline{\mathbb{H}}, \\ \pi \mu_E([a, b]) &= |F([a, b] \cap E)|, \quad [a, b] \subset [-1, 1], \end{aligned}$$

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