

MULTIPLE SIGN-CHANGING SOLUTIONS FOR AN ASYMPTOTICALLY LINEAR ELLIPTIC PROBLEM

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1. INTRODUCTION

We consider the problem

$$(1) \quad \begin{cases} -d^2 \Delta u + u = f(u) & \text{in } \Omega, \\ u = 0 & \text{on } \partial\Omega, \end{cases}$$

where $d > 0$, $f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is an appropriate function, and Ω is a bounded domain in $\mathbb{R}^N$. (For the sake of simplicity, we consider the case $N \geq 3$.) By using the Lusternik-Schnirelmann category theory, we will give a lower estimate of the number of sign-changing solutions of (1). Such a research was first studied for positive solutions by Benci and Cerami [4]. In [6], they obtained the following result; see also [5].

Theorem 1 (Benci-Cerami). *Assume*

- (i) $f \in C^1(\mathbb{R}, \mathbb{R})$, $f(0) = 0$, $f'(0) = 0$,
- (ii) *there exist* $p \in (2, 2^*)$ *and* $C > 0$ *such that* $|f'(t)| \leq C(1 + |t|^{p-2})$ *for all* $t \in \mathbb{R}$, *where* $2^* = 2N/(N-2)$,
- (iii) $f'(t) > f(t)/t$ *for all* $t \neq 0$,
- (iv) *there exists* $\theta > 2$ *such that* $0 < \theta \int_0^t f(s) ds \leq tf(t)$ *for all* $t \neq 0$.

If $d > 0$ *is small enough, then problem (1) has at least* $\text{cat } \Omega$ *positive solutions. Moreover if* Ω *is not contractible, then it has at least one other positive solution.*

Recently, Bartsch and Weth [2, 3] studied sign-changing solutions of (1). For each $\rho > 0$ and $A \subset \mathbb{R}^N$, we set

$$\begin{aligned} \Omega_\rho &= \{x \in \Omega : \text{dist}_{\mathbb{R}^N}(x, \partial\Omega) \geq \rho\}, & \Omega^\rho &= \{x \in \mathbb{R}^N : \text{dist}_{\mathbb{R}^N}(x, \Omega) \leq \rho\}, \\ C_\rho A &= \{(x, y) \in A \times A : |x - y| \geq \rho\}, & CA &= \{(x, y) \in A \times A : x \neq y\}. \end{aligned}$$

In [3], they showed the following result:

Theorem 2 (Bartsch-Weth). *Assume (i)–(iv). If* $d > 0$ *is small, then problem (1) has at least* $\text{cat}(j_\rho) + 1$ *(with* $\rho > 0$ *small) sign-changing solutions and it is greater than or equal to* $\text{cupl}(C\Omega) + 2$, *where* j_ρ *is the embedding*

$$\begin{aligned} j_\rho : (C_{2\rho}\Omega_\rho \times [-1, 1]^2, C_{2\rho}\Omega_\rho \times \partial[-1, 1]^2) \\ \hookrightarrow (C\Omega^\rho \times \mathbb{R}^2, C\Omega^\rho \times (\mathbb{R}^2 \setminus \{(0, 0)\})). \end{aligned}$$

In this paper, we study the case that f is asymptotically linear. We show a lower estimate of the number of the sign-changing solutions of (1), which is obtained in [12]. We note that we do not assume the differentiability of f , and that since we consider the case that f is asymptotically linear, f does not satisfy the so-called Ambrosetti-Rabinowitz superlinear condition (iv). Now, we show our result:

Theorem 3. *Assume*

- (f1) $f \in C(\mathbb{R}, \mathbb{R})$, $f(0) = 0$,
- (f2) $t \mapsto f(t)/t$ is strictly increasing on $(0, \infty)$ and strictly decreasing on $(-\infty, 0)$,
- (f3) $f'_+(0), f'_-(0) \in [0, 1)$, where $f'_\pm(0) = \lim_{t \rightarrow \pm 0} f(t)/t$,
- (f4) $(f_+, f_-) \in (0, \infty) \times (0, \infty)$, where $f_\pm = \lim_{t \rightarrow \pm \infty} f(t)/t$.

Then there exists $d_0 > 0$ such that for each $d \in (0, d_0)$ such that $(f_+ - 1, f_- - 1)$ is not a Fučík spectrum of $-\Delta$ on $H_0^1(\Omega/d)$, problem (1) has at least $\text{cat}(C\Omega \times [0, 1]^2, C\Omega \times \partial[0, 1]^2) + 1$ sign-changing solutions.

Remark 1. As in [3], we can give the following estimate:

$$\text{cat}(C\Omega \times [0, 1]^2, C\Omega \times \partial[0, 1]^2) + 1 \geq \text{cupl } C\Omega + 2 \geq \max\{\text{cupl } \Omega + 2, 2\text{cupl } \Omega\} + 1 \geq 3.$$

In the next section, we give some preliminaries. In Section 3, we give sketch of proofs for Theorems 1 and 3.

2. PRELIMINARIES

First, we recall the category in the sense of Lusternik-Schnirelmann. Let A be a topological space and let $B \subset A$. The category $\text{cat}_A B$ is defined to be the least integer $n \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ such that there exist open subsets $\{A_1, \dots, A_n\}$ (not $\{A_0, A_1, \dots, A_n\}$ as in other definitions below) of A such that $B \subset \bigcup_{i=1}^n A_i$ and each A_i is contractible in A . If there is no such open covering, we set $\text{cat}_A B = \infty$. We set $\text{cat } A = \text{cat}_A A$ and we understand $\text{cat}_A \emptyset = 0$.

By the proposition below, we can see that the category gives a lower estimate of the number of critical points in a level set of a functional which is bounded from below.

Proposition 1. *Let H be a Hilbert space and let $I \in C^1(H, \mathbb{R})$ be a functional such that it is bounded from below and it satisfies (CPS), i.e., each sequence $\{u_n\} \subset H$ satisfying $\sup_n |I(u_n)| < \infty$ and $(1 + \|u_n\|)\|\nabla I(u_n)\| \rightarrow 0$ has a convergent subsequence. Assume that $c \in \mathbb{R}$ is not a critical value for I . Then $I^c \equiv \{u \in H : I(u) \leq c\}$ has at least $\text{cat } I^c$ critical points of I .*

We give simple examples for this proposition. In the figures below, we consider the case $H = \mathbb{R}^2$.



However, in general, it is difficult to find the value $\text{cat } I^c$. So the conclusion of Proposition 1 may not make sense. In some cases, by the lemma below, we may give an estimate of $\text{cat } I^c$.

Lemma 1. *Let Y be topological space. Assume that there exist $\alpha \in C(Y, I^c)$ and $\beta \in C(I^c, Y)$ such that $\beta \circ \alpha \simeq \text{Id}_Y$, i.e., $\beta \circ \alpha$ is homotopic to Id_Y . Then $\text{cat } I^c \geq \text{cat } Y$.*

Now, we recall relative category for a pair of sets. Let A be a topological space and let $B \subset A$. The relative category $\text{cat}(A, B)$ is defined to be the least integer $n \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ such that there exists an open covering $\{A_0, A_1, \dots, A_n\}$ of A satisfying

- (i) $B \subset A_0$,
- (ii) there exists $h_0 \in C([0, 1] \times A_0, A)$ such that $h_0(0, x) = x$ and $h_0(1, x) \in B$ for all $x \in A_0$, and $h_0(t, x) \in B$ for all $(t, x) \in [0, 1] \times B$,
- (iii) each A_i is contractible in A for $i = 1, \dots, n$.

If there is no such open covering, we set $\text{cat}(A, B) = \infty$.

Remark 2. It holds that $\text{cat } A = \text{cat}(A, \emptyset)$.

By the proposition below, we can understand that the relative category also gives a lower estimate of the number of critical points.

Proposition 2. *Let H be a Hilbert space and let $I \in C^1(H, \mathbb{R})$ satisfying (CPS). Assume that $a, b \in \mathbb{R}$ ($a < b$) are not critical values of I . Then $I^b \setminus I^a$ has at least $\text{cat}(I^b, I^a)$ critical points of I .*

We also give some examples for this proposition. We consider the same functionals as before; see the examples just after Proposition 1. On the right hand side example, we can understand that it has at least two critical points from Propositions 1 and 2.



Next, (in order to understand Theorem 2,) we recall category for a map. Let (A, B) and (A', B') be pairs of topological spaces, i.e., A, A' are topological spaces and $B \subset A, B' \subset A'$. Then $\text{cat}(g)$ is defined to be the least integer $n \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ such that there exists an open covering $\{A_0, A_1, \dots, A_n\}$ of A satisfying

- (i) $B \subset A_0$,
- (ii) there exists $h_0 \in C([0, 1] \times A_0, A')$ such that $h_0(0, x) = g(x)$ and $h_0(1, x) \in B'$ for all $x \in A_0$, and $h_0(t, x) \in B'$ for all $(t, x) \in [0, 1] \times B$,
- (iii) for each $i = 1, \dots, n$, there exists $h_i \in C([0, 1] \times A_i, A')$ such that $h_i(0, x) = g(x)$ and $h_i(1, x) = h_i(1, y)$ for all $x, y \in A_i$.

If there is no such open covering, we set $\text{cat}(g) = \infty$.

Remark 3. It holds that $\text{cat}(A, B) = \text{cat}(\text{Id}_{(A, B)})$ and $\text{cat } A = \text{cat}(A, \emptyset) = \text{cat}(\text{Id}_{(A, \emptyset)})$.

Finally, we recall excisive category for a pair of topological spaces. Let (A, B) be a pair of topological spaces. The excisive category $\text{ecat}(A, B)$ is defined to be a least integer $n \in \mathbb{N} \cup \{0\}$ such that there exists an open covering $\{A_0, \dots, A_n\}$ of A satisfying

- (i) $B \subset A_0$,
- (ii) there exists $h_0 \in C([0, 1] \times A_0, A)$ such that $h_0(0, x) = x$ and $h_0(1, x) \in B$ for all $x \in A_0$, and for $(t, x) \in [0, 1] \times A_0$ with $h_0(t, x) \in B$, $h_0(s, x) = h_0(t, x)$ for all $s \in [t, 1]$,
- (iii) for each $i = 1, \dots, n$, $A_i \cap B = \emptyset$ and A_i is contractible in $A \setminus B$.

If there is no such open covering, we set $\text{ecat}(A, B) = \infty$. From the definitions, we can easily see the following:

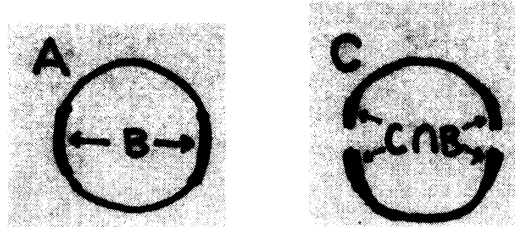
Lemma 2. $\text{ecat}(A, B) \geq \text{cat}(A, B)$.

The following is the property that ecat is named excisive category.

Lemma 3. Let A be a topological space and let B, C be closed subset of A with $C \cup B = A$. Then $\text{ecat}(A, B) = \text{ecat}(C, C \cap B)$.

We give simple examples for these lemmas. We can see that cat does not satisfy the lemma above. In the example below, we consider

$$\begin{aligned} A &= \{(\cos \theta, \sin \theta) : \theta \in [-\pi/2, 3\pi/2]\}, \\ B &= \{(\cos \theta, \sin \theta) : \theta \in [-\pi/6, \pi/6] \cup [5\pi/6, 7\pi/6]\}, \\ C &= \{(\cos \theta, \sin \theta) : \theta \in [-\pi/2, -\pi/8] \cup [\pi/8, 7\pi/8] \cup [9\pi/8, 3\pi/2]\}. \end{aligned}$$



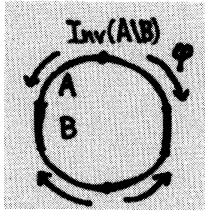
On the figures, we can easily see $\text{ecat}(A, B) = 2 > 1 = \text{cat}(A, B)$ and $\text{ecat}(C, C \cap B) = 2 = \text{cat}(C, C \cap B)$.

The following is an important property that shows why excisive category appears; see [3]. In the following, we understand that B is an “exit” set for A .

Lemma 4. Let A be a metric space and let $\varphi : [0, \infty) \times A \rightarrow A$, a semiflow. Let B be a closed subset of A such that B is strictly positively invariant by φ , i.e., $\varphi(t, u) \in \text{Int}(B)$ for each $u \in B$ and $t > 0$. Then $\text{cat}_{A \setminus B}(\text{Inv}(A \setminus B)) \geq \text{ecat}(A, B)$, where

$$\text{Inv}(A \setminus B) = \{u \in A \setminus B : \varphi(t, u) \in A \setminus B \text{ for all } t \geq 0\}.$$

We also give a simple example for this lemma. On the figure below, we consider that A and B as in the example above and $\varphi : [0, \infty) \times A \rightarrow A$ is a semiflow as in the figure whose fixed points are $(0, -1)$, $(1, 0)$, $(0, 1)$ and $(-1, 0)$. Then we can see $\text{Inv}(A \setminus B) = \{(0, -1), (0, 1)\}$ and the following:



$$\text{cat}_{A \setminus B}(\text{Inv}(A \setminus B)) = 2 = \text{ecat}(A, B).$$

3. SKETCH OF PROOFS OF THEOREMS 1 AND 3

In this section, we give sketch of proofs of Theorems 1 and 3. For $a \in \mathbb{R}$, we set $a^+ = \max\{a, 0\}$ and $a^- = \min\{a, 0\}$. We note that $a = a^+ + a^-$. For each domain $G \subset \mathbb{R}^N$, we consider $H_0^1(G) \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$. For $u \in H_0^1(G)$, we set $(u, v) = \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} (\nabla u \nabla v + uv) dx$ and $\|u\|^2 = (u, u)$. We recall a generalized barycenter map β on $L^2(\mathbb{R}^N)$ defined in [2]. For $u \in L^2(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\}$, we define a bounded continuous function $\tilde{u}$ on $\mathbb{R}^N$ by $\tilde{u}(x) = \int_{B_1(x)} |u(y)|^2 dy$ for $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$, and we set $\Lambda(u) = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^N : \tilde{u}(x) \geq |\tilde{u}|_\infty/2\}$. We define $\beta : L^2(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^N$ by

$$\beta(u) = \frac{\int_{\Lambda(u)} x (\tilde{u}(x) - |\tilde{u}|_\infty/2) dx}{\int_{\Lambda(u)} (\tilde{u}(x) - |\tilde{u}|_\infty/2) dx} \quad \text{for } u \in L^2(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\}.$$

We note that β is continuous from $L^2(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\}$ into $\mathbb{R}^N$.

We note that problem (1) is equivalent to

$$(2) \quad \begin{cases} -\Delta u + u = f(u) & \text{in } \Omega/d, \\ u = 0 & \text{on } \partial\Omega/d. \end{cases}$$

We set

$$F_+(t) = \int_0^t f^+(s) ds \quad \text{for } t \in \mathbb{R}.$$

For each domain G (we consider $G = \mathbb{R}^N$ or $G = \Omega/d$), we set

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi_{G,+}(u) &= \int_G \left(\frac{1}{2} (|\nabla u|^2 + |u|^2) - F_+(u) \right) dx, \quad u \in H_0^1(G), \\ \mathcal{N}_{G,+} &= \{u \in H_0^1(G) : u^+ \neq 0, (\nabla \Phi_{G,+}(u), u) = 0\}, \\ c_{G,+} &= \inf\{\Phi_{G,+}(u) : u \in \mathcal{N}_{G,\pm}\}, \\ \mathcal{K}^+ &= \{u \in \mathcal{N}_{\mathbb{R}^N,+} : \Phi_{\mathbb{R}^N,+}(u) = c_{\mathbb{R}^N,+}, u(0) = \max_{x \in \mathbb{R}^N} u(x)\}. \end{aligned}$$

By the concentration compactness principle, we have the following:

Proposition 3. *Let $d_n \rightarrow 0$ and $\{u_n\} \subset \mathcal{N}_{\Omega/d_n,+}$ such that $\Phi_{\Omega/d_n,+}(u_n) \rightarrow c_{\mathbb{R}^N,+}$. Then there exist a subsequence $\{u_{n_m}\}$ of $\{u_n\}$, $\{y_m\} \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ and $v \in \mathcal{K}^+$ such that*

- (i) $y_m \in \Omega/d_{n_m}$ for all $m \in \mathbb{N}$, and $\text{dist}(y_m, \partial\Omega/d_{n_m}) \rightarrow \infty$,
- (ii) $\|u_{n_m} - v(\cdot - y_m)\| \rightarrow 0$.

Remark 4. In the proposition above, we note that $d_n \rightarrow 0$ and $\{u_n\} \subset \mathcal{N}_{\Omega/d_n,+}$ imply $\|\Phi_{\Omega/d_n,+}(u_n)\| \rightarrow 0$. Indeed, in Theorem 1, we treat the case that f is superlinear. We note that in the case of f is asymptotically linear, the proposition above may not hold.

We also know the following.

Lemma 5. *For each $d > 0$, $\Phi_{\Omega/d,+}$ satisfies Palais-Smale condition on $\mathcal{N}_{\Omega/d,+}$.*

Now, we give the sketch of proof of Theorem 1. Let $0 < \delta_0 \ll 1$, $0 < d \ll 1$ and set $X = \{u \in \mathcal{N}_{\Omega/d,+} : \Phi_{\Omega/d,+}(u) \leq c_{\Omega/d,+} + \delta_0\}$. By the following steps, we can give the proof of Theorem 1.

- (I) Since $\Phi_{\Omega/d,+}$ satisfies Palais-Smale condition on $\mathcal{N}_{\Omega/d,+}$, by a similar proof of that of Proposition 1, we can show that X has at least $\text{cat } X$ critical points of $\Phi_{\Omega/d,+}$.
- (II) By Proposition 3, for each $u \in X$, there exist $v \in \mathcal{K}^+$ and $y \in \Omega/d$ such that $\text{dist}(y, \partial\Omega/d) \approx \infty$ and $\|u - v(\cdot - y)\| \approx 0$. Hence we have $\beta(u) \approx dy$.
- (III) Fix $w \in \mathcal{K}^+$ and define $\alpha \in C(\Omega, X)$ by $\alpha(z) \approx w(\cdot - z/d)$. Then by (II), we can infer that $\beta \circ \alpha \simeq \text{Id}_\Omega$. Hence by Lemma 1, we have $\text{cat } X \geq \text{cat } \Omega$. (Technically, α should be a continuous function from Ω_ρ (for the definition of Ω_ρ , see Section 1) into X with small $\rho > 0$ and we need a precise argument.)
- (IV) In the case when Ω is not contractible, we can find a critical point u of $\Phi_{\Omega/d,+}$ such that $\Phi_{\Omega/d,+}(u) > c_{\Omega/d,+} + \delta_0$.

From (I)–(III), we can see that problem (1) has at least $\text{cat } \Omega$ positive solutions, and from (IV), we can see that if Ω is not contractible, problem (1) has at least one other positive solution.

Next, we go to Theorem 3. Although f has changed to a function satisfying (f1)–(f4), we also set

$$F(t) = \int_0^t f(s) ds \quad \text{and} \quad F_\pm(t) = \int_0^t f^\pm(s) ds \quad \text{for } t \in \mathbb{R},$$

and for each domain G (we consider $G = \mathbb{R}^N$ or $G = \Omega/d$), we set

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi_G(u) &= \int_G \left(\frac{1}{2}(|\nabla u|^2 + |u|^2) - F(u) \right) dx, \quad u \in H_0^1(G), \\ \Phi_{G,\pm}(u) &= \int_G \left(\frac{1}{2}(|\nabla u|^2 + |u|^2) - F_\pm(u) \right) dx, \quad u \in H_0^1(G), \\ \mathcal{N}_G &= \{u \in H_0^1(G) \setminus \{0\} : (\nabla \Phi_G(u), u) = 0\}, \\ \mathcal{N}_{G,\pm} &= \{u \in H_0^1(G) : u^\pm \neq 0, (\nabla \Phi_{G,\pm}(u), u) = 0\}, \\ c_G &= \inf\{\Phi_G(u) : u \in \mathcal{N}_G\}, \\ c_{G,\pm} &= \inf\{\Phi_{G,\pm}(u) : u \in \mathcal{N}_{G,\pm}\}, \\ \mathcal{K}^+ &= \{u \in \mathcal{N}_{\mathbb{R}^N,+} : \Phi_{\mathbb{R}^N,+}(u) = c_{\mathbb{R}^N,+}, u(0) = \max_{x \in \mathbb{R}^N} u(x)\}, \\ \mathcal{K}^- &= \{u \in \mathcal{N}_{\mathbb{R}^N,-} : \Phi_{\mathbb{R}^N,-}(u) = c_{\mathbb{R}^N,-}, u(0) = \min_{x \in \mathbb{R}^N} u(x)\}. \end{aligned}$$

For a domain $G \subset \mathbb{R}^N$, we say $(a, b) \in \mathbb{R}^2$ is a Fučík spectrum of $-\Delta$ on $H_0^1(G)$ if there exists $u \in H_0^1(G) \setminus \{0\}$ such that

$$\begin{cases} -\Delta u = au^+ + bu^- & \text{in } G, \\ u = 0 & \text{on } \partial G. \end{cases}$$

In the case that f is asymptotically linear in Theorem 3, we know that Fučík spectrum plays an important role to show the existence of solutions; for example see [1, 7–11]. First, we show the following which is obtained in [12].

Theorem 4. *Either $-\Delta$ on $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ or $-\Delta$ on $H_0^1(\mathbb{R}_+^N)$ does not have a Fučík spectrum, where $\mathbb{R}_+^N = \{x = (x_1, \dots, x_N) \in \mathbb{R}^N : x_N > 0\}$.*

From the theorem above, we can show the following:

Lemma 6. *Let $d_n \rightarrow 0$ and $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ such that $u_n \in H_0^1(\Omega/d_n)$ for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $\{(1 + \|u_n\|)\|\nabla\Phi_{\Omega/d_n}(u_n)\|\}$ is bounded and $\{\Phi_{\Omega/d_n}(u_n)\}$ is bounded from above. Then $\{\|u_n\|\}$ is bounded.*

For each $\varepsilon, d > 0$, we set

$$(3) \quad \mathcal{M}_{\varepsilon,d} = \{u \in \Phi_{\Omega/d}^{3c_{\mathbb{R}^N}} : u^+, u^- \in \mathcal{N}_{\Omega/d}, \|\nabla\Phi_{\Omega/d}(u)\| \leq \varepsilon\},$$

where

$$\Phi_{\Omega/d}^c = \{u \in H_0^1(\Omega/d) : \Phi_{\Omega/d}(u) \leq c\}, \quad c \in \mathbb{R}.$$

Using Lemma 6, we can show the following property.

Proposition 4. *Let $\varepsilon_n \rightarrow 0$, $d_n \rightarrow 0$ and $\{u_n\} \subset H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ such that $u_n \in H_0^1(\Omega/d_n)$ for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$, $\text{dist}(u_n, \mathcal{M}_{\varepsilon_n, d_n}) \rightarrow 0$ and $\overline{\lim}_{n \rightarrow \infty} \Phi_{\Omega/d_n}(u_n) \leq c_{\mathbb{R}^N}$. Then there exist a subsequence $\{u_{n_m}\}$ of $\{u_n\}$, $\{y_m^1\}, \{y_m^2\} \subset \mathbb{R}^N$, and $v^1 \in \mathcal{K}^+, v^2 \in \mathcal{K}^-$ such that*

- (i) $|y_m^1 - y_m^2| \rightarrow \infty$,
- (ii) $y_m^i \in \Omega/d_{n_m}$ for all $m \in \mathbb{N}$, and $\text{dist}(y_m^i, \partial\Omega/d_{n_m}) \rightarrow \infty$ ($i = 1, 2$),
- (iii) $\|u_{n_m} - v^1(\cdot - y_m^1) - v^2(\cdot - y_m^2)\| \rightarrow 0$,
- (iv) $|u_{n_m}^+ - v^1(\cdot - y_m^1)|_{L^2} \rightarrow 0$ and $|u_{n_m}^- - v^2(\cdot - y_m^2)|_{L^2} \rightarrow 0$.

Remark 5. Since we define $\mathcal{M}_{\varepsilon,d}$ by (3), we can show the proposition above. See Remark 4.

Fix $0 < \varepsilon_0 \ll 1$.

Lemma 7. *There exist $\delta_0 \in (0, \varepsilon_0)$ and $d_0 > 0$ such that*

$$\|\nabla\Phi_d(u)\| \geq \frac{24\delta}{\varepsilon_0}$$

for each $\delta \in (0, \delta_0)$, $d \in (0, d_0)$ and $u \in \Phi_d^{c_{\Omega/d}+2\delta}$ with $\varepsilon_0/2 < \text{dist}(u, \mathcal{M}_{\varepsilon_0,d}) \leq \varepsilon_0$.

Fix $0 < d \ll 1$ such that $(f_+ - 1, f_- - 1)$ is not a Fučík spectrum of $-\Delta$ on $H_0^1(\Omega/d)$. Then we can show the following:

Lemma 8. $\Phi_{\Omega/d}$ satisfies (CPS).

Let $\varphi : [0, \infty) \times H_0^1(\Omega/d) \rightarrow H_0^1(\Omega/d)$ defined by

$$\begin{cases} \varphi(0, u) = u, \\ \frac{\partial \varphi}{\partial t}(t, u) = -\frac{(1 + \|\varphi(t, u)\|)^2 \nabla\Phi_d(\varphi(t, u))}{(1 + \|\varphi(t, u)\|)^2 \|\nabla\Phi_d(\varphi(t, u))\|^2 + 1}. \end{cases}$$

Here, for the sake of simplicity, we assume that $\nabla\Phi_d$ is locally Lipschitz. Technically, we need to approximate $\nabla\Phi_d$ by a pseudo-gradient vector field.

Fix $0 < a_0 \ll 1$, and we set

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{P} &= \{u \in H_0^1(\Omega/d) : u \geq 0\}, \\ \mathcal{D}_{a_0} &= \{u \in H_0^1(\Omega/d) : \text{dist}(u, \mathcal{P} \cup -\mathcal{P}) \leq a_0\}.\end{aligned}$$

Since $0 < a_0 \ll 1$, we can show the following:

Lemma 9. $\mathcal{D}_{a_0}$ is strictly positively invariant by φ .

We fix $T_0 \gg 1$ and we set

$$\begin{aligned}A_0 &= \{u \in \Phi_{\Omega/d}^{c_{\Omega/d} + \delta_0} : \text{dist}(u, \mathcal{M}_{\varepsilon_0, d}) \leq \varepsilon_0\}, \\ \mathcal{E}_{T_0} &= \{u \in H_0^1(\Omega/d) : \varphi(T_0, u) \in \mathcal{D}_{a_0} \cup \Phi_d^{c_d - \delta_0}\}.\end{aligned}$$

Since $T_0 \gg 1$, we can show the following by using Lemma 7:

Lemma 10. $\Phi_{\Omega/d}^{c_d + \delta_0} \cup \mathcal{E}_{T_0} = A_0 \cup \mathcal{E}_{T_0}$.

Since for each $v \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \setminus \{0\}$, $t \mapsto \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} f(tv)v/t \, dx : [0, \infty) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is strictly increasing, for each $u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$, we can define $\tau(u) \in (0, \infty]$ by

$$\tau(u) = \begin{cases} t \in (0, \infty) \text{ satisfying } \|u\|^2 = \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \frac{f(tu)u}{t} \, dx & \text{if } \|u\|^2 < \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} \frac{f(tu)}{t} u \, dx, \\ \infty & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Now, we give the sketch of proof of Theorem 3.

- (I) Since $\Phi_{\Omega/d}$ satisfies (CPS) and $\mathcal{E}_{T_0}$ is a closed subset of $\Phi_{\Omega/d}^{c_{\Omega/d} + \delta_0} \cup \mathcal{E}_{T_0}$ which is strictly positively invariant by φ , by a similar proof of that of Proposition 2, we can show that there exist at least $\text{cat}_{\Phi_{\Omega/d}^{c_{\Omega/d} + \delta_0} \setminus \mathcal{E}_{T_0}}(\text{Inv}(\Phi_{\Omega/d}^{c_{\Omega/d} + \delta_0} \setminus \mathcal{E}_{T_0}))$ critical points of $\Phi_{\Omega/d}$.
- (II) For each $u \in A_0$, there exist $v^1 \in \mathcal{K}^+$, $v^2 \in \mathcal{K}^-$, $y^1, y^2 \in \Omega/d$ such that $|y^1 - y^2| \approx \infty$, $\text{dist}(y^i, \partial\Omega/d) \approx \infty$, $\|u^+ - v^1(\cdot - y^1)\| \approx 0$ and $\|u^- - v^2(\cdot - y^2)\| \approx 0$ by Proposition 4. Hence, we have $(\beta(u^+), \beta(u^-)) \approx (dy^1, dy^2)$ for all $u \in A_0$.
- (III) By Lemmas 9, 4, 3 and 2, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\text{cat}_{\Phi_{\Omega/d}^{c_{\Omega/d} + \delta_0} \setminus \mathcal{E}_{T_0}}(\text{Inv}(\Phi_{\Omega/d}^{c_{\Omega/d} + \delta_0} \setminus \mathcal{E}_{T_0})) &\geq \text{ecat}(\Phi_{\Omega/d}^{c_{\Omega/d} + \delta_0} \cup \mathcal{E}_{T_0}, \mathcal{E}_{T_0}) \\ &= \text{ecat}(A_0, A_0 \cap \mathcal{E}_{T_0}) \geq \text{cat}(A_0, A_0 \cap \mathcal{E}_{T_0}).\end{aligned}$$

We fix $w_+ \in \mathcal{K}^+$, $w_- \in \mathcal{K}^-$, and we define $h : \{u \in H_0^1(\Omega/d) : u^\pm \neq 0\} \rightarrow C\Omega \times [0, 1]^2$ and $\alpha : C\Omega \times [0, 1]^2 \rightarrow \{u \in H_0^1(\Omega/d) : u^\pm \neq 0\}$ by

$$\begin{aligned}h(u) &= (d\beta(u^+), d\beta(u^-), \chi(\tau(\varphi(T_0, u)^+)), \chi(\tau(\varphi(T_0, u)^-))), \\ \alpha(x_1, x_2, s_1, s_2) &\approx s_1 w_+(\cdot - x_1/d) + s_2 w_-(\cdot - x_2/d),\end{aligned}$$

where $\chi : (0, \infty) \rightarrow [0, 1]$ is an appropriate strictly decreasing function with $\chi(1) = 1/2$. Using (II) and some properties of τ , we can show $\beta \circ \alpha$ is homotopic

to the identity mapping on $(C\Omega \times [0, 1]^2, C\Omega \times \partial[0, 1]^2)$. Then by a similar proof of that of Lemma 1, we can also show

$$\text{cat}(A_0, A_0 \cap \mathcal{E}_{T_0}) \geq \text{cat}(C\Omega \times [0, 1]^2, C\Omega \times \partial[0, 1]^2).$$

(For the precise argument, we need to define h and α in a little bit different way.)

- (IV) There exists at least one other critical point $u \in H_0^1(\Omega/d)$ such that it is sign-changing and $\Phi_{\Omega/d}(u) > c_{\Omega/d} + \delta_0$.

From these steps, we can find that problem 1 has at least $\text{cat}(C\Omega \times [0, 1]^2, C\Omega \times \partial[0, 1]^2) + 1$ sign-changing solutions.

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