ON SEPARATING TRANSCENDENCY BASES FOR DIFFERENTIAL FIELDS

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Let $F$ be an arbitrary ordinary differential field$^1$ of characteristic $p \neq 0$, and let $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_n \rangle$ be a differential extension field of $F$ of degree of differential transcendency $t$. In [1, p. 189], we stated a theorem which, as far as wording is concerned, is analogous to a well-known theorem of S. MacLane in ordinary algebra. This theorem of ours states that if $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_n \rangle/F$ is separable, then some $t$ of the $u_i$ form a separating transcendency basis, i.e., for an appropriate relettering of the $u_i$, $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_n \rangle$ is separable over $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_t \rangle$. The object of the present note is to establish the following stronger version of that theorem.$^2$

**Theorem.** If $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_n \rangle/F$ is separable, then any transcendency basis of $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_n \rangle/F$ is also a separating transcendency basis.

**Proof.** We first prove that any $t$ of the $u_i$ which form a transcendency basis also form a separating transcendency basis. The theorem will then follow for any transcendency basis $v_1, \ldots, v_t$ since obviously we may include the $v_j$ amongst the $u_i$.

For $t = 0$, there is nothing to prove. Confining ourselves to transcendency bases selected from the $u_i$, the theorem is also immediate for $t = n$. Consider next the case $t = n - 1$, and let $u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1}$ be algebraically independent over $F$. By [1, p. 188, Theorem 6, Corollary], the $u_{ij}, i = 1, \ldots, n - 1; j = 0, 1, \ldots$, are algebraically independent over $F$. By the definition in [1, p. 183], $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_n \rangle$ is finite over $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1} \rangle$, so for some $d$, $u_n$ is algebraic over $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1} \rangle(u_n^0, \ldots, u_n^{d-1})$. Let $d$ be minimal, i.e., $u_{ij}, u_{nk}, i = 1, \ldots, n - 1; j = 0, 1, \ldots; k = 0, \ldots, d - 1$, are algebraically

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$^1$ Definitions, notation, and terminology will be as in [1].

$^2$ The proof of the weaker theorem in [1; p. 189], though essentially correct, is too compressed; and we would like to add one remark to that proof. Let $G$, $U_{nr}$ be as in the proof; replacing $G$ by a derivative if necessary, we may suppose $G$ involves no proper derivative of $U_{nr}$. As $G(u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1}; u_n, \ldots, u_{n, r-1}, U_{nr}) = 0$ is not necessarily a defining equation for $u_{nr}$, the separability of $u_{nr}$ over $F\langle u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1} \rangle(u_n^0, \ldots, u_{n, r-1})$ does not yet follow from the form of $G$. That separability would follow, however, if we had that $\partial^2 G/\partial U_{nr} \neq 0$ for $U = u$: this we have because of the minimal degree of $G$. With this additional point in mind, it is not difficult to fill the slight gaps which occur in the proof as it now stands in [1].

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independent over \( F \), but \( u_{nd} \) is algebraically dependent on this set over \( F \). Let \( A \) be the set of polynomials \( \{ G \} \) in the polynomial ring \( F\{ U_1, \ldots, U_n \} \) such that \( G \neq 0 \), \( G \) is of degree 0 in \( U_{ni}, i > d \), and \( G(u_1, \ldots, u_n) = 0 \). Let \( B \) be the subset of \( A \) consisting of the polynomials of minimum total degree. Let \( G \in B \). The separability of \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_n \}/F \) implies that \( G \in F[\cdots, U^p_{ji}, \cdots] \). Not all the \( U_{ni}, i \leq d \), occurring in \( G \) occur with exponent divisible by \( p \). In fact, assume otherwise. Since not all the exponents occurring in \( G \) are divisible by \( p \), at least one of the \( U_{jh}, j = 1, \ldots, n-1 \), say \( U_{1h} \), occurs in \( G \) with exponent not divisible by \( p \); we may suppose that derivatives of \( U_{1h} \), if they occur in \( G \), occur with exponents divisible by \( p \). The derivative \( G' \) of \( G \) also is in \( A \) and in \( B \); so replacing \( G \) by a derivative if necessary, we may suppose \( G \) involves no proper derivative of \( U_{1h} \). With these assumptions on \( G \), we have: (1) degree of \( G' \) in \( U_{1,h+1} \) is 1, degree of \( G' \) in \( U_{1j}, j > h+1 \), is 0; (2) coefficient of \( U_{1,h+1} \) in \( G' \) does not vanish at \( U = u \), since it is of too small degree to be in \( A \). Hence \( u_{ij} \in F\{ u_2, \ldots, u_{n-1}\}(u_{n0}^p, \ldots, u_{nd}^p, u_{10}, \ldots, u_{1,h}), j \geq 0 \). Since \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_n\}/F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1}\} \) is finite, for some \( r, r \geq d \), we have \( u_{nj} \in F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1}\}(u_{n0}, \ldots, u_{nr}), j \geq 0 \). This last field may be written as \( F\{ u_2, \ldots, u_{n-1}\}(u_{n0}, \ldots, u_{nr}, u_{10}, \ldots, u_{1h}) \), whence \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_n\}/F\{ u_2, \ldots, u_{n-1}\} \) is finite. This contradicts the assumption \( t = n - 1 \). Hence for any given \( G \in B \), at least one \( U_{nj}, j \leq d \), occurs with exponent not divisible by \( p \). Differentiating \( G \) sufficiently often we may suppose that \( U_{nd} \) occurs in \( G \) with exponent not divisible by \( p \). Since \( u_{ij}, u_{nk}, i = 1, \ldots, n-1; j = 0, 1, \ldots; k = 0, \ldots, d-1 \), are algebraically independent over \( F \), we have that \( G(u_{ij}, u_{nk}, U_{nd}) = 0 \) is an irreducible (separable) equation for \( u_{nd} \) over \( F\{ u_{ij}, u_{nk} \} \). Hence \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_n \} \) is separable over \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1}\} \). This completes the proof for \( t = n - 1 \).

For \( 0 < t < n - 1 \), we apply the Theorem of the Primitive Element. In the application, no separability condition is required (as in ordinary algebra—see the remarks in [1, p. 183, bottom of page]), but we do need to know, or rather, it would be sufficient to know, that \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_t\} \), where \( u_1, \ldots, u_t \) is any given transcendency basis, has no finite linear basis over its field of constants. Even if \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_t\} \) had a finite linear basis over its field of constants, we could overcome this difficulty by the well-known device of adjoining an appropriate nonconstant element to \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_n\} \). Here we may as well determine the constants of \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_t\} \). If \( F_0 \) is the constant-field of \( F \), then we shall see that the constant field of \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_t\} \) is \( F_0(\cdots, u_{nj}^p, \cdots) \). Assuming this for a moment we see that \( F\{ u_1, \ldots, u_t\} \) has no finite linear basis over its field of constants,
whence $F(u_1, \ldots, u_n) = F(u_1, \ldots, u_t; w)$. By the case $t = n - 1$, then, the basis $u_1, \ldots, u_t$ is separating.

Since $F(u_1, \ldots, u_t)/F$ is separable, the $u_{ij}$ are, as previously mentioned, algebraically independent: the converse is immediate.

**Lemma.** Let $F$ be a differential field of characteristic $p \neq 0$, $F_0$ its field of constants, and assume that $F(u_1, \ldots, u_t)/F$ is separable and of degree of differential transcendency $t$. Then $F_0(\ldots, u_{ij}, \ldots, i = 1, \ldots, t; j = 0, 1, \ldots)$, is the field of constants of $F(u_1, \ldots, u_t)$.

**Proof.** Let $P(u)/Q(u) \in F(u_1, \ldots, u_t)$ be a constant $\neq 0$, where $P(u)$, $Q(u)$ are elements of the polynomial ring $F(u_1, \ldots, u_t)$, and $P$ and $Q$ have no common factor of positive degree. We first assert that $P, Q \in F[\ldots, u_{ij}, \ldots]$. For suppose this is not the case, and say $Q \in F[\ldots, u_{ij}, \ldots]$. Then $Q'$ is not zero, and $P/Q = P'/Q'$. Since degree of $P = \text{degree of } P'$ and degree of $Q = \text{degree of } Q'$, we get $P' = dP, Q' = dQ$ for some $d \in F, d \neq 0$. Repeating the argument, we get $P^{(i)} = d_i P, Q^{(i)} = d_i Q$, where $d_i \in F$ and the superscript indicates the $i$th derivative. Since $Q^{(i)}$ for sufficiently high $i$ involves some $u_{jk}$ not occurring in $Q$, we have a contradiction. Thus $Q \in F[\ldots, u_{ij}, \ldots]$, and similarly for $P$. Let $P = \sum a_i \pi_i^p, Q = \sum b_i \pi_i^p$, where $a_i, b_i \in F, a_i b_i \neq 0$, and the $\pi_i$ are power products of the $u_{jk}$ with $\pi_i \neq \pi_j$ for $i \neq j$. If $Q' = 0$, then each $b_i$ is a constant, since $Q' = \sum b_i' \pi_i^p = 0$; and likewise the $a_i$ are constant; so $P(u)/Q(u)$ has the required form if $Q' = 0$. Assume $Q' \neq 0$: then as above we have $P' = dP, Q' = dQ, d \in F, d \neq 0$. This yields $a_i' = d a_i$, whence any two $a_i$ have a constant ratio. Thus $P = e \sum a_i \pi_i^p, Q = f \sum b_i \pi_i^p$, where now the $a_i, b_i$ are in $F_0$. Since $P/Q$ and $\sum a_i \pi_i^p / \sum b_i \pi_i^p$ are constants, so is $e/f$. Thus $P/Q$ has the desired form. This completes the proof.

**Reference**


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