SYMMETRY OF BOUND AND ANTIBOUND STATES IN THE SEMICLASSICAL LIMIT FOR A GENERAL CLASS OF POTENTIALS

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ABSTRACT. We consider the Schrödinger operator $-h^2\partial_x^2 + V(x)$ on a half-line, where V is a compactly supported potential which is positive near the endpoint of its support. We prove that the eigenvalues and the purely imaginary resonances are symmetric up to an error $Ce^{-\delta/h}$.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we study spectral properties of the Schrödinger operator

$$P(h) = -h^2\partial_x^2 + V(x)$$

defined for x in the half-line $(-\infty, B]$. Here $h > 0$ is the semiclassical parameter and $V(x)$ is a piecewise continuous real-valued potential supported in $[0, B]$.

The operator $P(h)$ with the Neumann boundary condition at B is self-adjoint on $L^2(-\infty, B)$; therefore, its resolvent

$$R_V(\lambda) = (P(h) - \lambda^2)^{-1}, \quad \text{Im } \lambda > 0,$$

is a bounded operator from L^2 to H^2 for λ^2 not in the spectrum of $P(h)$. This resolvent can be extended meromorphically as an operator $L^2_{\text{comp}} \rightarrow H^2_{\text{loc}}$ to $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$ with isolated poles of finite rank; these poles are called **resonances**. (The reader is referred to [12] for details.) To each resonance λ corresponds a **resonant state**; that is, a nonzero $u \in H^2_{\text{loc}}(-\infty, B)$ solving the equation $(P(h) - \lambda^2)u = 0$ with the Neumann boundary condition at the right endpoint and with the following **outgoing condition** at $-\infty$:

$$u(x) = Ae^{-i\lambda x/h} \text{ for all } x < 0 \text{ and some constant } A.$$

(Note that for $x < 0$, u solves the free equation $(-h^2\partial_x^2 - \lambda^2)u = 0$, so it must be a linear combination of $e^{\pm i\lambda x/h}$.)

For $\text{Im } \lambda > 0$, the outgoing condition implies that u is exponentially decreasing on the negative half-line and thus $u \in L^2$; therefore, λ is a pole (of the resolvent) lying in the upper half-plane if and only if λ^2 is an eigenvalue of $P(h)$ on L^2 . Since $P(h)$ is self-adjoint, all poles in the upper half-plane have to lie on the imaginary axis. There may be poles λ with $\text{Im } \lambda < 0$ and $\text{Re } \lambda \neq 0$; however, we will restrict our attention to purely imaginary resonances:

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Definition 1. A positive number k is called a **bound state** if ik is a pole of the resolvent $R_V(\lambda)$, and an **antibound state** if $-ik$ is a pole.

We see from above that k is an (anti)bound state if and only if there exists a nonzero solution u of the problem

$$(1) \quad (P(h) + k^2)u = 0,$$

$$(2) \quad u_x|_{x=B} = 0,$$

$$(3) \quad hu_x \pm ku|_{x=0} = 0.$$

The plus sign in (3) corresponds to an antibound state, and the minus sign corresponds to a bound state. We will also study Neumann eigenvalues of $P(h)$ on $[0, B]$, i.e., those k for which there exists a nonzero solution to (1) with boundary conditions (2) and

$$(4) \quad u_x|_{x=0} = 0.$$

Since the space of solutions to (1) and (2) is always one dimensional, **bound states, antibound states, and Neumann eigenvalues never coincide**. However, Bindel and Zworski proved in [3] that bound and antibound states located away from zero coincide, modulo errors of order $e^{-\delta/h}$ for some $\delta > 0$, if the potential satisfies the following conditions:

$$\begin{aligned} \exists A > 0, V_0 > 0 : V(x) = V_0 \text{ for all } x \in [0, A], \\ \exists \varepsilon > 0 : V(x) = 0 \text{ for all } x \in (A, A + \varepsilon). \end{aligned}$$

In this paper, we prove a similar result with more general assumptions on the potential:

Theorem 1. Suppose that V is a piecewise continuous real-valued potential supported in $[0, B]$ and satisfying the following **bump condition**:

$$(5) \quad \exists A > 0 : V(x) > 0 \text{ for all } x \in (0, A].$$

Fix two constants $0 < c_k < C_k < \infty$. Then there exist constants $C, \delta > 0, h_0 > 0$ such that for $h < h_0$ and any $k \in [c_k, C_k]$:

1. If k is a Neumann eigenvalue, then there exist a bound state k_+ and an antibound state k_- such that $|k - k_{\pm}| \leq Ce^{-\delta/h}$.
2. If k is a bound or an antibound state, then there exists a Neumann eigenvalue k_0 such that $|k - k_0| \leq Ce^{-\delta/h}$.

The bump condition (5) cannot be disposed of completely, as illustrated by the numerical experiments performed using [2]. Figure 1 shows two potentials on the whole line, each supported in $[-2, 2]$, and the corresponding bound states (denoted by squares) and antibound states (denoted by circles). The vertical coordinate of each (anti)bound state on the picture corresponds to its value k ; the horizontal coordinate corresponds to the value of h^{-1} used. We see that the conclusion of the theorem does not appear to hold for the potential on the left, which does not satisfy the bump condition; at the same time, it is true for the potential on the right. Theorem 1, formulated for the half-line case, applies to these numerical experiments on the whole line since for even potentials, the set of their (anti)bound states is composed of these states for the positive half-line with Dirichlet condition and the same states for the Neumann condition; the theorem above can be applied with

FIGURE 1. Bound and antibound states for two spline potentials (`splinepot([0, -0.4, -1, -0.2, -1, -0.4, 0], [-2, -1.5, -1, 0, 1, 1.5, 2])` and `splinepot([0, 0.2, -1, -0.2, -1, 0.2, 0], [-2, 1.5, -1, 0, 1, 1.5, 2])`)

Dirichlet condition in place of (2). (However, condition (4) cannot be replaced by the Dirichlet condition in the theorem.)

The study of resonances in one dimension has a long tradition going back to the origins of quantum mechanics; see for instance [8]. One of the first studies of their distribution was conducted by Regge [10]; since then, there have been many mathematical results on the topic, including [1], [4], [5], [6], [7], [9], [11], and [13]. Concerning antibound states, Hitrik has shown in [6] that for a positive compactly supported potential, there are no antibound states in the semiclassical limit. This agrees with our result since there are no bound states in this case. Simon proved in [11] that between any two bound states, there must be an odd

number of antibound states; the following corollary of this result follows almost immediately using the methods we develop to prove Theorem 1:

Theorem 2. *Consider the half-line problem with a bounded compactly supported potential V (which does not need to satisfy any positivity condition). Then for each two bound states $0 < k_1 < k_2$, the interval (k_1, k_2) contains at least one antibound state. In particular, if there are n bound states in some subinterval of $(0, \infty)$, then there are at least $n - 1$ antibound states in the same subinterval.*

The proof of Theorem 1 works as follows: we study the evolution (in x) of the vectors (u, hu_x) for the three solutions of (1) with initial data at $x = 0$ satisfying the conditions (3) and (4). The idea is to look at these three vectors at $x = A$. Since $V(x) + k^2 \geq 0$ on the interval $(0, A)$, the transition matrix for the considered vectors from $x = 0$ to $x = A$ will have an expanding and a contracting direction. (In fact, if we introduce rescaling $\tilde{x} = x/h$, then the behavior of the original system for small h is similar to the behavior of the rescaled system for large $\tilde{x}$, and the latter will be similar to the behavior of the geodesic flow on a two-dimensional manifold of negative curvature.) It turns out that our three vectors lie in a certain angle between the expanding and the contracting directions, from which it follows that they will stay in this angle for later times (Lemma 2); what is more, their polar angles will get exponentially close to each other (Lemma 7). Finally, we can study how the polar angles of the considered vectors change with k (Lemma 4): it follows (Lemma 8) that the polar angle for the solution with Neumann initial data at $x = 0$ will strictly increase in k and the polar angle for the solution with the same data at $x = B$ will decrease in k . The proof is then completed by a perturbation argument (Lemma 5).

The detailed proofs of Theorems 1 and 2 are given in Section 3. Both are elementary and use certain properties of ordinary differential equations presented in Section 2.

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2. PRELIMINARIES

Throughout this section, I is an interval in $\mathbb{R}$, $V(x) \in L^\infty(I; \mathbb{R})$, $u(x), v(x) \in H^2(I; \mathbb{R})$, $h > 0$, and $P(h) = -h^2 \partial_x^2 + V(x)$. Any solution to the equation $P(h)u = 0$ is determined by the vector (u, hu_x) at any x ; we will sometimes view this vector in polar coordinates:

Definition 2. Define the **length** $L(u)$ and the **polar angle** $\theta(u)$ by the equations

$$\begin{aligned} u &= L(u) \cos \theta(u), \\ hu_x &= L(u) \sin \theta(u). \end{aligned}$$

Here $\theta(u)$ lies in the circle $\mathbb{S}^1 = \mathbb{R}/(2\pi\mathbb{Z})$.

Lemma 1. Define the **Wronskian** $W(u, v)$ by

$$W(u, v) = h(uv_x - vu_x).$$

Then

$$(6) \quad W(u, v) = L(u)L(v) \sin(\theta(v) - \theta(u)),$$

$$(7) \quad h\partial_x W(u, v) = v \cdot P(h)u - u \cdot P(h)v.$$

Note that $W(u, v)$ is just the oriented area of the parallelogram spanned by the vectors (u, hu_x) and (v, hv_x) . The next lemma tells us that if the vector (u, hu_x) falls inside a certain angle in the plane at the initial time, then it will stay inside that angle for all later times:

Lemma 2. *Suppose that $a^2 \leq V(x) \leq b^2$ for all $x \in I$ and some constants $a, b > 0$. Let u be a solution to $P(h)u = 0$ and define*

$$W_+(u) = W(u, e^{bx/h}), \quad W_-(u) = W(e^{-ax/h}, u).$$

Let x_0 be a point in I and assume that $W_+(u), W_-(u) \geq 0$ at x_0 . Then for $x \geq x_0$, the functions $W_{\pm}(u)$ are increasing in x and

$$(8) \quad u \geq \frac{L(u)}{\sqrt{1+b^2}}.$$

Proof. We have

$$e^{-bx/h}W_+(u) = bu - hu_x, \quad e^{ax/h}W_-(u) = au + hu_x.$$

Therefore, $W_+(u), W_-(u) \geq 0$ yields $|hu_x| \leq bu$ and thus (8). Next,

$$\begin{aligned} P(h)e^{bx/h} &= e^{bx/h}(V(x) - b^2) \leq 0, \\ P(h)e^{-ax/h} &= e^{-ax/h}(V(x) - a^2) \geq 0. \end{aligned}$$

Using (7), we see that $\partial_x W_{\pm} \geq 0$ as long as $u \geq 0$. It remains to prove that $u(x) \geq 0$ for $x \geq x_0$. Suppose this is false and let $x_1 = \inf\{x \geq x_0 \mid u(x) < 0\}$. Then u is not identically zero; since it solves a second order linear ODE, $L(u) > 0$ everywhere. But $u \geq 0$ on $[x_0, x_1]$, so $W_{\pm}$ are increasing on this interval. In particular, $W_{\pm} \geq 0$ at x_1 and thus (8) holds at this point. However, by the choice of x_1 we have $u(x_1) = 0$, which contradicts $L(u) > 0$. $\square$

In the next section, we will use the following crude estimate on how fast the solutions of an ODE can grow:

Lemma 3. *Assume that $|V(x)| \leq M$ for $x \in I$ and that u is a solution to $P(h)u = 0$. Take $x_0, x_1 \in I$; then*

$$L(u)|_{x=x_1} \leq e^{(1+M)|x_0-x_1|/(2h)} \cdot L(u)|_{x=x_0}.$$

Proof. Without loss of generality we may assume that $x_1 > x_0$. We have $L(u)^2 = u^2 + (hu_x)^2$; thus

$$h\partial_x(L(u)^2) = 2huu_x(1+V(x)) \leq (1+M)L(u)^2,$$

and the lemma is proven by Gronwall's inequality. $\square$

Lemma 4. *Assume that $u(x, k)$ is a family of solutions to $(P(h) + k^2)u = 0$, $x_0, x_1 \in I$, and $u(x_0, k)$ and $u_x(x_0, k)$ are independent of k . Let $\Theta_1(k) = \theta(u(x, k))|_{x=x_1}$, $L_1(k) = L(u(x, k))|_{x=x_1}$. Then*

$$\Theta_1'(k) = \frac{2k}{hL_1(k)^2} \int_{x_0}^{x_1} u(x, k)^2 dx.$$

Proof. We have $W(u, u_k)|_{x=x_1} = L_1(k)^2\Theta_1'$. (To see that, differentiate the formulas in Definition 2 in k and use the definition of the Wronskian.) Now, we differentiate the equation $(P(h) + k^2)u = 0$ in k to get $(P(h) + k^2)u_k = -2ku$. It remains to apply (7) together with $W(u, u_k)|_{x=x_0} = 0$. $\square$

Lemma 5. Assume that Φ is a C^1 map from the interval $I = [K_0, K_1]$ to the circle $S^1 = \mathbb{R}/2\pi\mathbb{Z}$ and $\Phi'(k) \geq \delta > 0$ for all $k \in I$. Suppose that $\Psi : I \rightarrow S^1$ is a continuous map such that $|\Psi(k)| \leq \varepsilon < \pi$ for all k . Put $\nu = \varepsilon/\delta$ and $I_\nu = [K_0 + \nu, K_1 - \nu]$. Then:

1. If $k_0 \in I_\nu$ has $\Phi(k_0) = 0$, then there exists $k_1 \in I$ with $\Phi(k_1) = \Psi(k_1)$ and $|k_0 - k_1| \leq \nu$.
2. If $k_1 \in I_\nu$ has $\Phi(k_1) = \Psi(k_1)$, then there exists $k_0 \in I$ with $\Phi(k_0) = 0$ and $|k_0 - k_1| \leq \nu$.

Proof. We can lift Φ and Ψ to continuous maps $\bar{\Phi}, \bar{\Psi} : I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$; then $|\bar{\Psi}| \leq \varepsilon$ and $\bar{\Phi}(k') - \bar{\Phi}(k) \geq \delta(k' - k)$ for $k' \geq k$.

1. We have $\bar{\Phi}(k_0) = 2\pi m$ for some $m \in \mathbb{Z}$. Then $\bar{\Phi}(k_0 + \nu) \geq 2\pi m + \delta\nu \geq 2\pi m + \bar{\Psi}(k_0 + \nu)$ and $\bar{\Phi}(k_0 - \nu) \leq 2\pi m + \bar{\Psi}(k_0 - \nu)$; it remains to apply the intermediate value theorem.

2. Similar to the previous statement, we have $\bar{\Phi}(k_1) = 2\pi m + \bar{\Psi}(k_1)$ for some $m \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $\bar{\Phi}(k_1 + \nu) \geq 2\pi m \geq \bar{\Phi}(k_1 - \nu)$. $\square$

Lemma 6. Assume that Φ is a C^1 map from some interval I to the circle $S^1 = \mathbb{R}/(2\pi\mathbb{Z})$ with $\Phi'(k) > 0$ for all $k \in I$. Let $\Psi : I \rightarrow S^1$ be a continuous map such that $\Psi(k) \neq 0$ for all $k \in I$. If $k_1 < k_2$ are two roots of the equation $\Phi = 0$, then the interval (k_1, k_2) contains at least one root of the equation $\Phi = \Psi$.

Proof. As in the previous lemma, lift Φ and Ψ to maps $\bar{\Phi}, \bar{\Psi} : I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$; we can make $0 < \bar{\Psi}(k) < 2\pi$ for all $k \in I$. Since $\bar{\Phi}' > 0$ everywhere, we have $\bar{\Phi}(k_j) = 2\pi m_j$, where $m_1 < m_2$ are some integers. Therefore, $\bar{\Phi}(k_1) < 2\pi m_1 + \bar{\Psi}(k_1)$ and $\bar{\Phi}(k_2) > 2\pi m_1 + \bar{\Psi}(k_2)$; it remains to apply the intermediate value theorem. $\square$

3. PROOFS OF THE THEOREMS

We assume in this section that $0 < c'_k \leq k \leq C'_k$ for some constants $c'_k < c_k$ and $C'_k > C_k$; the constants in our estimates will depend on c'_k and C'_k . (We need to expand the interval $[c_k, C_k]$ a little bit to be able to apply Lemma 5.)

Consider the solutions $u_\pm, u_0, u_1(x, k)$ to the equation (1) in $[0, B]$ with the initial data

$$\begin{aligned} u_{\pm 0}(0, k) &= 1, \quad \partial_x u_0(0, k) = 0, \quad h\partial_x u_\pm(0, k) = \pm k, \\ u_1(B, k) &= 1, \quad \partial_x u_1(B, k) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

Define $\Theta_0(k)$, $\Theta_\pm(k)$, and $\Theta_1(k)$ to be the polar angles of vectors (u, hu_x) at $x = A$ for $u = u_0, u_\pm, u_1$. Then $k > 0$ is

- a Neumann eigenvalue if u_0 and u_1 are linearly dependent; that is (recalling that they solve the same second order ODE), if $2(\Theta_0(k) - \Theta_1(k)) = 0$;
- a bound state if $2(\Theta_+(k) - \Theta_1(k)) = 0$;
- an antibound state if $2(\Theta_-(k) - \Theta_1(k)) = 0$.

Here we count angles modulo 2π .

To prove Theorem 1, it suffices to use Lemma 5 (for $\Phi = 2(\Theta_0 - \Theta_1)$ and $\Psi = 2(\Theta_0 - \Theta_\pm)$) together with the following two facts:

Lemma 7. For some constants C_1 and $\delta_1 > 0$ independent of h and k ,

$$|2(\Theta_0(k) - \Theta_\pm(k))| \leq C_1 e^{-\delta_1/h} \text{ for all } k \in [c'_k, C'_k].$$

Lemma 8. We have $\Theta'_0(k) - \Theta'_1(k) \geq 1/C_2 > 0$ for all $k \in [c'_k, C'_k]$ and some constant C_2 independent of h and k .

We first prove Lemma 7. Put $b = \max_{[0,A]} V(x)$, $k_b = \sqrt{k^2 + b}$, $\psi_0(x) = e^{-kx/h}$, $\psi_+(x) = e^{k_b x/h}$, and consider the Wronskians

$$W_+(u) = W(u, \psi_+), \quad W_0(u) = W(\psi_0, u).$$

These are nonnegative for $u = u_0, u_{\pm}$ at $x = 0$. Then by Lemma 2, all these six functions are nonnegative and increasing in x for $0 \leq x \leq A$.

Our first goal is to get an exponential lower bound on the length $L(u)$ for $u = u_0, u_{\pm}$ at $x = A$. For u_0 , note that by (6)

$$L(u_0) \geq \frac{W(\psi_0, u_0)}{L(\psi_0)} \geq \frac{W_0(u_0)|_{x=0}}{L(\psi_0)} \geq \frac{1}{C} e^{kx/h}.$$

The same applies to u_+ . However, u_- needs more careful analysis since $W_0(u_-) = 0$ at $x = 0$. For that, take $0 < t < 1$ and put $a = \min_{[tA, A]} V(x) > 0$, $k_a = \sqrt{k^2 + a}$, $\psi_-(x) = e^{-k_a x/h}$, and $W_-(u) = W(\psi_-, u)$. First, we have by Lemma 3

$$L(u_-) \geq e^{-(1+k^2+b)x/(2h)} \cdot L(u_-)|_{x=0}.$$

Next, $W_0(u_-) \geq 0$ and $W_+(u_-) \geq 0$, so by (8)

$$W_-(u_-) \geq (k_a - k)u_- \psi_- \geq \frac{1}{C} L(u_-) \psi_-.$$

Finally, we apply Lemma 2 on the interval $[tA, A]$ to get

$$L(u_-)|_{x=A} \geq \frac{W_-(u_-)|_{x=tA}}{L(\psi_-)|_{x=A}} \geq \frac{1}{C} e^{(k(1-t) - (1+k^2+b)t)A/h}.$$

For t small enough and all k , $k(1-t) - (1+k^2+b)t \geq 0$, so we have

$$L(u_-)|_{x=A} \geq \frac{1}{C} > 0.$$

The next step is to use that u_0 and $u_{\pm}$ solve the same equation (1) and thus $W(u_0, u_{\pm})$ is constant in x . Therefore, at $x = A$ we have by (6)

$$|\sin(\theta(u_{\pm}) - \theta(u_0))| = \frac{|W(u_0, u_{\pm})|}{L(u_0)L(u_{\pm})} \leq C e^{-kA/h}.$$

That finishes the proof of Lemma 7.

To prove Lemma 8, first note that by Lemma 4, $\Theta'_1(k) \leq 0$ and

$$\Theta'_0(k) \geq \frac{1}{ChL(u_0)^2|_{x=A}} \int_0^A |u_0(x, k)|^2 dx.$$

By (8), $u_0 \geq L(u_0)/C$. Also, by Lemma 3, $L(u_0) \geq e^{C(x-A)/h} L(u_0)|_{x=A}$ for $0 \leq x \leq A$; thus

$$\int_0^A |u_0(x, k)|^2 dx \geq \frac{1}{C} \int_0^A e^{C(x-A)/h} (L(u_0)^2|_{x=A}) dx \geq \frac{h}{C} L(u_0)^2|_{x=A}$$

and Lemma 8 is proven, which finishes the proof of Theorem 1.

To prove Theorem 2, let $\Phi_{\pm}(k) = \theta(u_{\pm})|_{x=B}$; a bound state corresponds to $2\Phi_+ = 0$ and an antibound state corresponds to $2\Phi_- = 0$. Since $\theta(u_+)|_{x=0}$ is increasing with k , by an argument similar to the proof of Lemma 4 we get $\Phi'_+(k) > 0$ for all k . Moreover, $2(\Phi_+(k) - \Phi_-(k))$ is never zero, as this would correspond to u_+ and u_- being linearly dependent. We may now apply Lemma 6 with $\Phi = 2\Phi_+$ and $\Psi = 2(\Phi_+ - \Phi_-)$.

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