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We obtain an improvement of the Beckner inequality $\|f\|_2^2 - \|f\|_p^2 \leq (2-p)\|\nabla f\|_2^2$ valid for $p \in [1, 2]$ and the Gaussian measure. Our improvement is essential for the intermediate case $p \in (1, 2)$, and moreover, we find the natural extension of the inequality for any real p .

1. Introduction

1.1. The history of the problem. The Poincaré inequality [Nash 1958] for the standard Gaussian measure

$$d\gamma_n = \frac{e^{-|x|^2/2}}{\sqrt{(2\pi)^n}} dx$$

states that

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^2 d\gamma_n - \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n \right)^2 \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} |\nabla f|^2 d\gamma_n \quad (1)$$

for any smooth bounded function $f : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$. Later William Beckner [1989] generalized (1) for any real power p , $1 \leq p \leq 2$, as follows:

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p d\gamma_n - \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n \right)^p \leq \frac{p(p-1)}{2} \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^{p-2} |\nabla f|^2 d\gamma_n \quad (2)$$

for any smooth bounded $f : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow (0, \infty)$. We caution the reader that in [Beckner 1989], inequality (2) was formulated in a slightly different but equivalent form (see Theorem 1, inequality (3) in that paper). It should be also mentioned that in the case $p = 2$, inequality (2) does coincide with (1) for all $f \geq 0$ but it does not imply the Poincaré inequality for the functions taking the negative values, especially when $\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n = 0$. If $p \rightarrow 1+$ then (2) provides us with log-Sobolev inequality (see [Beckner 1989]). In general, the constant $p(p-1)/2$ is sharp in the right-hand side of (2), as can be seen for $n = 1$ on the test functions $f(x) = e^{\varepsilon x}$ by sending $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$.

Later Beckner's inequality (2) was studied by many mathematicians for different measures, in different settings and for different spaces as well. We refer the reader to [Arnold et al. 2007; Da Pelo et al. 2016;

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Barthe et al. 2006; 2007; Barthe and Roberto 2003; Bobkov and Tetali 2003; Bobkov and Götze 1999; Boucheron et al. 2005; Chafaï 2004; Wang 2005; Latała and Oleszkiewicz 2000; Kolesnikov 2007].

An analysis done in [Ivanisvili and Volberg 2015c] indicates that the right-hand side of (2) can be improved. In the present paper we address this issue: what is the precise estimate of the difference given in the left-hand side of (2), and can the requirement $p \in [1, 2]$ be avoided by slightly changing the right-hand side of (2)?

We give complete answers to these questions. For example, if $p = \frac{3}{2}$ we will obtain an improvement in Beckner’s inequality (2):

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^{3/2} d\gamma_n - \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n \right)^{3/2} \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \left(f^{3/2} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(2f - \sqrt{f^2 + |\nabla f|^2})\sqrt{f + \sqrt{f^2 + |\nabla f|^2}} \right) d\gamma_n. \tag{3}$$

The left-hand side of (3) coincides with the left-hand side of (2) for $p = \frac{3}{2}$, but the right-hand side of (3) is strictly smaller than the right-hand side in (2). Indeed, notice that we have the *pointwise* inequality

$$x^{3/2} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(2x - \sqrt{x^2 + y^2})\sqrt{x + \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}} \leq \frac{3}{8}x^{-1/2}y^2 \quad \text{for all } x, y \geq 0, \tag{4}$$

which follows from the homogeneity, i.e., take $x = 1$, and the rest is a direct computation which follows by introducing a new variable

$$u := \sqrt{1 + \sqrt{1 + y^2}}.$$

As one can see, the improvement of Beckner’s inequality (2) is essential. Indeed, if $y \rightarrow \infty$ then the right-hand side of (4) increases as y^2 whereas the left-hand side of (4) increases as $y^{3/2}$. Also notice that if $x \rightarrow 0$ then the difference of both sides of (4) tends to infinity. The only place where the quantities in (4) are comparable is when $y/x \rightarrow 0$.

1.2. Main results. Let k be a real parameter. Let $H_k(x)$ be the Hermite function which satisfies the Hermite differential equation

$$H_k'' - xH_k' + kH_k = 0, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}, \tag{5}$$

and which grows relatively slowly, that is, $H_k(x) = x^k + o(x^k)$ as $x \rightarrow +\infty$. If k is a nonnegative integer then H_k is the *probabilists’* Hermite polynomial of degree k with the leading coefficient 1; for example, $H_0(x) = 1$, $H_1(x) = x$, $H_2(x) = x^2 - 1$, etc. In general, for arbitrary $k \in \mathbb{R}$ one should think that H_k is the analytic extension of the Hermite polynomials in k (existence and many other properties will be mentioned in Section 2).

For $k \in \mathbb{R}$, let R_k be the rightmost zero of $H_k(x)$ (see Lemma 7). If $k \leq 0$ then we set $R_k = -\infty$. Define $F_k(x)$ as

$$F_k \left(\left| \frac{H_k'(q)}{H_k(q)} \right| \right) = \frac{H_{k+1}(q)}{H_k^{1+1/k}(q)} \quad \text{for } q \in (R_k, \infty). \tag{6}$$

We will see in the next section that $F_k \in C^2([0, \infty))$ is well defined and $F_k(0) = 1$. Moreover, if $k > -1$ then F_k will be a decreasing concave function, and if $k < -1$ then F_k will be an increasing convex function.

One may observe that

$$F_1(y) = 1 - y^2, \quad F_2(y) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(2 - \sqrt{1 + y^2})\sqrt{1 + \sqrt{1 + y^2}}.$$

If $k = 0$ then definition (6) should be understood in the limiting sense as

$$F_{\text{exp}}(H_{-1}(q)) = q \exp\left(\alpha - \int_1^q H_{-1}(s) ds\right) \quad \text{for all } q \in \mathbb{R}, \tag{7}$$

where

$$\alpha = \int_1^\infty \left(H_{-1}(s) - \frac{1}{s}\right) ds \approx -0.266 \dots \tag{8}$$

Theorem 1. For any $p \in \mathbb{R} \setminus [0, 1]$ and any smooth bounded $f \geq 0$ with $\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p d\gamma_n < \infty$ we have

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p F_{1/(p-1)}\left(\frac{|\nabla f|}{f}\right) d\gamma_n \leq \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n\right)^p. \tag{9}$$

The inequality is reversed if $p \in (0, 1)$.

Proposition 2. We have

$$1 - \frac{p(p-1)}{2}t^2 \leq F_{1/(p-1)}(t) \quad \text{for all } t \geq 0, \quad p \in (1, 2]. \tag{10}$$

It remains to notice that estimate (10) applied to (9) immediately gives (2).

The improvement will be essential when $t \rightarrow \infty$. For example, it will become clear in the next section that as $t \rightarrow \infty$ we have

$$F_{1/(p-1)}(t) \sim -t^p (H'_{1/(p-1)}(R_{1/(p-1)}))^{1-p} \quad \text{for } p > 1. \tag{11}$$

Another immediate application of Theorem 1 is the following corollary.

Corollary 3. For any $p \in (1, 2]$ and any smooth bounded $f \geq 0$ we have

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p d\gamma_n - \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n\right)^p \leq (H'_{1/(p-1)}(R_{1/(p-1)}))^{1-p} \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} |\nabla f|^p d\gamma_n. \tag{12}$$

Estimate (12) will follow by showing that, for any $y \geq 0$, the map

$$x \rightarrow x^p - x^p F_{1/(1-p)}\left(\frac{y}{x}\right) \tag{13}$$

is decreasing for $x > 0$, and the limit $x \rightarrow 0$ gives (12) by (11).

Appearance of the roots of Hermite functions in (12) seems quite unexpected, especially when these estimates are obtained on the Hamming cube. For example, in [Ivanisvili and Volberg 2016] we were able to extend (12) to the Hamming cube but for a particular power $p = \frac{3}{2}$:

$$\mathbb{E} f^{3/2} - (\mathbb{E} f)^{3/2} \leq \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \mathbb{E} |\nabla f|^{3/2}, \quad f : \{-1, 1\}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+. \tag{14}$$

We refer the reader to that paper for the notations, and we notice that the result announced there is a counterpart of (9) for $p = \frac{3}{2}$ on the Hamming cube, where the identity $x^{3/2} F_2(y/x) = \mathfrak{H}(x + iy)^{3/2}$

was used. Next, let $A \subset \{-1, 1\}^n$, and let $w_A(x)$ denote the number of edges containing x between the set A and its complement. Clearly $w_A(x)$ lives on the *boundary* of the set A : $w_A(x) = 4|\nabla \mathbb{1}_A|^2$. If A has cardinality 2^{n-1} then the classical edge-isoperimetric inequality [Harper 1966] states that $\sum_{x \in \{-1, 1\}^n} w_A(x) \geq 2^n$. On the other hand, taking $f = \mathbb{1}_A$ in (14) gives

$$\sum_{x \in \{-1, 1\}^n} w_A(x)^{3/4} \geq (2 - \sqrt{2})2^n,$$

which is a new edge-isoperimetric inequality and does not follow from the classical one.

Theorem 1 generates several inequalities. If $p \rightarrow 1+$ then (9) gives the log-Sobolev inequality. If $p = 2$ then (9) provides us with the Poincaré inequality. If $p \rightarrow \pm\infty$ then we obtain a new Sobolev inequality:

Corollary 4. *For any smooth bounded f we have*

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \exp(f) F_{\exp}(|\nabla f|) d\gamma_n \leq \exp\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n\right),$$

where F_{\exp} is defined in (7).

Finally if $p \rightarrow 0$ we obtain a new “negative log-Sobolev” inequality:

Corollary 5. *For any smooth bounded $f \geq 0$ with $\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \ln f d\gamma_n > -\infty$ we have*

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} -\ln f d\gamma_n + \ln\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n\right) \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} -F_{-\ln}\left(\frac{|\nabla f|}{f}\right) d\gamma_n,$$

where $F_{-\ln}(t)$ is defined as

$$F_{-\ln}\left(\frac{H_{-2}(x)}{H_{-1}(x)}\right) = \int_1^x H_{-1}(s) ds - c + \ln H_{-1}(x), \quad x \in \mathbb{R}.$$

All these estimates extend to uniformly log-concave probability measures in the following sense (for the proof see Section 3).

Corollary 6. *Let $d\mu = e^{-U} dx$ be a probability measure, where $\text{Hess } U \geq R \cdot \text{Id}$ for some $R > 0$. For any $p \in \mathbb{R} \setminus [0, 1]$ and any smooth bounded $f \geq 0$ with $\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p d\mu < \infty$ we have*

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p F_{1/(p-1)}\left(\frac{|\nabla f|}{f\sqrt{R}}\right) d\mu \leq \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\mu\right)^p. \tag{15}$$

The inequality is reversed if $p \in (0, 1)$.

The limiting cases of (15) when $p \rightarrow \pm\infty$ and $p \rightarrow 0$ should be understood in the sense of functions F_{\exp} and $F_{-\ln}$ as in Corollary 4 and Corollary 5.

To summarize, the current paper provides us with estimates of Φ -entropy (see [Chafaï 2004])

$$\mathbf{Ent}_{\gamma_n}^{\Phi}(f) := \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \Phi(f) d\gamma_n - \Phi\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n\right)$$

for the following examples:

- $\Phi(x) = x^p$ for $p \in \mathbb{R} \setminus [0, 1]$ using [Theorem 1](#).
- $\Phi(x) = -x^p$ for $p \in (0, 1)$ using [Theorem 1](#).
- $\Phi(x) = e^x$ using [Corollary 4](#), or by taking $p \rightarrow \pm\infty$ in [Theorem 1](#).
- $\Phi(x) = -\ln x$ using [Corollary 5](#), or by taking $p \rightarrow 0$ in [Theorem 1](#).
- $\Phi(x) = x \ln x$ by taking $p \rightarrow 1$ in [Theorem 1](#).

2. The proof of the theorem

The proof of the theorem amounts to checking that the real-valued function

$$M(x, y) = x^p F_k\left(\frac{y}{x}\right), \quad k = \frac{1}{1-p}, \tag{16}$$

defined on $[\varepsilon, \infty) \times [0, \infty)$ for any $\varepsilon > 0$, obeys a necessary smoothness condition, has a boundary condition $M(x, 0) = x^p$ and satisfies the partial differential inequality

$$\begin{pmatrix} M_{xx} + M_y/y & M_{xy} \\ M_{xy} & M_{yy} \end{pmatrix} \leq 0, \tag{17}$$

with reversed inequality in (17) if $p \in (0, 1)$. Then by [Theorem 1](#) in [\[Ivanisvili and Volberg 2015c\]](#) we obtain that

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p F_k\left(\frac{|\nabla f|}{f}\right) d\gamma_n = \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} M(f, |\nabla f|) d\gamma_n \leq M\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n, 0\right) = \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n\right)^p$$

for any smooth bounded $f \geq \varepsilon$, which is the statement of the theorem we want to prove (except we need to justify the passage to the limit $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$ and this will be done later). Notice that the inequality is reversed if $p \in (0, 1)$; indeed, in this case we should work with $-M(x, y)$ instead of $M(x, y)$.

Next we will need some tools regarding the Hermite functions H_k .

2.1. Properties of Hermite functions. H_k can be defined (see [\[Hayman and Ortiz 1975\]](#)) by

$$H_k(x) = -\frac{2^{-k/2} \sin(\pi k) \Gamma(k+1)}{2\pi} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{\Gamma((n-k)/2)}{n!} (-x\sqrt{2})^n, \tag{18}$$

or in terms of the confluent hypergeometric functions (see [\[Durand 1975\]](#)) by

$$H_k(x) = \sqrt{\frac{2^k}{\pi}} \left[\cos\left(\frac{\pi k}{2}\right) \Gamma\left(\frac{k+1}{2}\right) {}_1F_1\left(-\frac{k}{2}, \frac{1}{2}; \frac{x^2}{2}\right) + t\sqrt{2} \sin\left(\frac{\pi k}{2}\right) \Gamma\left(\frac{k}{2}+1\right) {}_1F_1\left(\frac{1-k}{2}, \frac{3}{2}; \frac{x^2}{2}\right) \right]. \tag{19}$$

If k is a nonnegative integer then one should understand (18) and (19) in the limiting sense. Notice the recurrence properties

$$H'_k(x) = kH_{k-1}(x), \tag{20}$$

$$H_{k+1}(x) = xH_k(x) - H'_k(x). \tag{21}$$

These properties follow from (18) and the fact that $\Gamma(z+1) = z\Gamma(z)$.

We also notice that

$$H_k(x) := e^{x^2/4} D_k(x), \tag{22}$$

where $D_k(x)$ is the *parabolic cylinder function*; i.e., it is the solution of the equation

$$D_k'' + \left(k + \frac{1}{2} - \frac{x^2}{4}\right) D_k = 0.$$

Since $H_k(x)$ is an entire function in x and k (see [Temme 2015] for the parabolic cylinder function), sometimes it will be convenient to write $H(x, k)$ instead of $H_k(x)$. The precise asymptotic for $x \rightarrow +\infty$, $x > 0$ and any $k \in \mathbb{R}$ is given by

$$H_k(x) \sim x^k \cdot \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-1)^n \frac{(-k)_{2n}}{n! (2x^2)^n}. \tag{23}$$

Here $(a)_n = 1$ if $n = 0$, and $(a)_n = a(a + 1) \cdots (a + n - 1)$ if $n > 0$. When $x \rightarrow -\infty$ we have

$$H_k(x) \sim |x|^k \cos(k\pi) \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-1)^n \frac{(-k)_{2n}}{n! (2x^2)^n} + \frac{\sqrt{2\pi}}{\Gamma(-k)} |x|^{-k-1} e^{x^2/2} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(1+k)_{2n}}{n! (2x^2)^n}. \tag{24}$$

We refer the reader to [Temme 2015; Olver et al. 2010]. For instance, for (23) we can use the asymptotic formula (12.9.1) in [Olver et al. 2010] for the parabolic cylinder function. To verify (24) we can express $H_k(-x)$ as a linear combination of two parabolic cylinder functions but with argument x instead of $-x$, see (12.2.15) in [Olver et al. 2010], and then we can use (12.9.1) and (12.9.2) in the same paper.

Next we will need the result of Elbert and Muldoon [1999] which describes the behavior of the real zeros of $H_k(x)$ for any real k .

Lemma 7. *For $k \leq 0$, the function $H_k(x)$ has no real zeros, and it is positive on the real axis. For $n < k \leq n + 1$, $n = 0, 1, \dots$, the function $H_k(x)$ has $n + 1$ real zeros. Each zero is increasing function of k on its interval of definition.*

The proof of the lemma is Theorem 3.1 in [Elbert and Muldoon 1999]. It is explained in the paper that as k passes through each nonnegative integer n a new leftmost zero appears at $-\infty$, while the rightmost zero passes through the largest zero of $H_k(x)$. They also include more precise information about the asymptotic behavior of the zeros as $k \rightarrow \infty$.

Further we will need Turán’s inequality for H_k for any real k .

Lemma 8. *We have Turán’s inequality:*

$$H_k^2(x) - H_{k-1}(x)H_{k+1}(x) > 0 \quad \text{for all } k \in \mathbb{R}, x \geq L_k, \tag{25}$$

where L_k denotes the leftmost zero of H_k . If $k \leq 0$ then $L_k = -\infty$.

The lemma is known as Turán’s inequality when k is a nonnegative integer. Unfortunately we could not find the reference in the case when k is different from a positive integer; therefore we decided to include the proof of the lemma.

The following is borrowed from [Madhava Rao and Thiruvenkatachar 1949].

Proof. Take $f(x) = e^{-x^2/2}(H_k^2(x) - H_{k-1}(x)H_{k+1}(x))$. Asymptotic formulas (23) and (24) imply that

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{x \rightarrow +\infty} f(x) &= 0 \quad \text{for all } k \in \mathbb{R}, \\ f(x) &\sim \sqrt{2\pi}|x| > 0 \quad \text{for } x \rightarrow -\infty, \quad k = 0, \\ f(x) &\sim \frac{2\pi e^{x^2/2}}{\Gamma(-k)\Gamma(-k+1)}|x|^{-2k-2} \quad \text{for } x \rightarrow -\infty, \quad k \notin \{0\} \cup \mathbb{N}. \end{aligned} \tag{26}$$

On the other hand, notice that by (20) and (21) we have

$$f'(x) = -e^{-x^2/2}H_kH_{k-1}. \tag{27}$$

If $k \leq 0$ then by Lemma 7 we have $f' < 0$, and because of the conditions $f(-\infty) = +\infty$ and $f(\infty) = 0$ we obtain that $f > 0$ on \mathbb{R} . To verify the statement for $k > 0$ we notice that

$$f''(x) = e^{-x^2/2}(H_k^2 - kH_{k-1}^2). \tag{28}$$

Now we notice that if $H_k(c) = 0$ then $H_{k-1}(c) \neq 0$. Indeed, assume to the contrary that $H_{k-1}(c) = 0$. Then by (20) we have $H'_k(c) = 0$ and by (5) we obtain $H''_k(c) = 0$, and again taking derivatives in (20) we obtain that $H_{k-2}(c) = 0$. Repeating this process we obtain that $H_{k-N}(c) = 0$ for any large integer $N > 0$. But this contradicts Lemma 7.

Thus by (27) and (28) we obtain that c is a local minimum of f if and only if $H_{k-1}(c) = 0$. Then $f(c) = e^{-x^2/2}H_k^2(c) > 0$. Finally we obtain that $f : [L_k, \infty) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is positive on its local minimum points, $f(\infty) = 0$ and $f(L_k) > 0$ (because H_{k-1} and H_{k+1} have opposite signs at zeros of H_k by (21)). Therefore $f > 0$ on $[L_k, \infty) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ and the lemma is proved. □

Remark 9. If $k \in \mathbb{N}$ then H_k is the probabilists' Hermite polynomial of degree k , so $f(x)$ will be even and inequality (25) will hold for all $x \in \mathbb{R}$, which confirms the classical Turán's inequality. However, if $k > 0$ but $k \notin \mathbb{N}$ then (25) fails when $x \rightarrow -\infty$; see (26).

Finally the next corollary together with Lemma 7 implies that

$$\left| \frac{H'_k}{H_k} \right| = \text{sign}(k) \frac{H'_k(q)}{H_k(q)}$$

is positive and decreasing for $q \in (R_k, \infty)$ and $k \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$.

Corollary 10. For any $x \geq L_k$ and any $k \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ we have

$$\text{sign}[(H'_k)^2 - H_kH''_k] = \text{sign}(k).$$

Proof. The proof follows from Lemma 8 and the identity

$$k(H_k^2 - H_{k-1}H_{k+1}) = (H'_k)^2 - H_kH''_k \tag{29}$$

by (5), (20) and (21). □

2.2. Checking the partial differential inequality. Let $p = 1 + 1/k$. Further we assume $k \neq 0, -1$. Define $F = F_k$ as in the [Introduction](#):

$$F(t) = \frac{H_{k+1}(q)}{H_k^{1+1/k}(q)}, \quad \text{where } \left| \frac{H'_k(q)}{H_k(q)} \right| = t, \quad q \in (R_k, \infty), \quad t \in (0, \infty). \tag{30}$$

Notice that by [Corollary 10](#), the function

$$\left| \frac{H'_k(q)}{H_k(q)} \right| = \text{sign}(k) \frac{H'_k(q)}{H_k(q)}$$

is positive decreasing in q for $q \in (R_k, \infty)$; moreover, by [\(23\)](#) and [\(20\)](#) we have $H'_k(q)/H_k(q) \sim k/q$ when $q \rightarrow +\infty$. From the same asymptotic formulas it follows that when $t \rightarrow 0+$ we have

$$F(t) = 1 - \frac{p(p-1)}{2} t^2 + O(t^4).$$

Therefore F is a well-defined function and $F \in C^2([0, \infty))$.

Take a positive $\varepsilon > 0$ and define $M(x, y)$ as in [\(16\)](#):

$$M(x, y) := x^p F\left(\frac{y}{x}\right) \quad \text{for } y \geq 0, \quad x > \varepsilon > 0. \tag{31}$$

Clearly $M(x, \sqrt{y}) \in C^2([\varepsilon, \infty) \times [0, \infty))$. By Theorem 1 in [\[Ivanisvili and Volberg 2015c\]](#) we have the inequality

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} M(f, |\nabla f|) d\gamma_n \leq M\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n, 0\right) \tag{32}$$

for all smooth bounded $f \geq \varepsilon$ if [\(17\)](#) holds. In terms of F (see [\(31\)](#)) condition [\(17\)](#) takes the form

$$tFF''p(p-1) + F'F'' - t(p-1)^2(F')^2 \geq 0, \quad \text{i.e., the determinant of (17) is nonnegative,} \tag{33}$$

$$F''(t+t^3) + F'(2t^2+1-2pt^2) + Fp(p-1)t \leq 0, \quad \text{i.e., the trace of (17) is nonpositive,} \tag{34}$$

where $t = y/x$ is the argument of F . In fact we will show that we have equality in [\(33\)](#) instead of inequality; therefore the sign of [\(17\)](#) will depend on the sign of the trace in [\(34\)](#). We will see that inequality [\(34\)](#) will be reversed for $p \in (0, 1)$.

From [\(30\)](#), [\(29\)](#), [\(20\)](#) and [\(21\)](#) we obtain

$$F'(t) = -\frac{k+1}{|k|} \frac{1}{H_k^{1/k}}, \tag{35}$$

$$F''(t) = \frac{F'}{|k|} \frac{H_k H_{k-1}}{H_k^2 - H_{k+1} H_{k-1}}, \tag{36}$$

$$F(t) = -\frac{|k|}{k+1} \frac{H_{k+1}}{H_k} F'. \tag{37}$$

If we plug (36) and (37) into (33) we obtain that the left-hand side of (33) is zero. If we plug (36) and (37) into (34) we obtain

$$\text{left-hand side of (34)} = \left[\frac{(kH_{k-1}^2 - H_k^2 + H_{k-1}H_{k+1})^2 + H_{k-1}^2 H_k^2}{H_k^2(H_k^2 - H_{k+1}H_{k-1})} \right] F'.$$

Thus the sign of left-hand side of (34) coincides with the sign of F' , which coincides with $\text{sign}(-(k+1))$. The condition $p \in \mathbb{R} \setminus [0, 1]$ implies that $k > -1$ and therefore (17) holds. The condition $p \in (0, 1)$ implies that $k < -1$ and therefore the inequality in (17) is reversed.

Thus we have obtained (32) for smooth bounded functions $f \geq \varepsilon$. Next we claim that for an arbitrary smooth bounded $f \geq 0$ with $\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p d\gamma_n < \infty$, we can apply the inequality to $f_\varepsilon := f + \varepsilon$ and send ε to 0 in (9). Indeed, it follows from (6) and (23) that as $t \rightarrow \infty$ we have

$$F(t) \sim \begin{cases} -t^{1+1/k} (H'_k(R_k))^{-1/k} & \text{for } k > 0, \\ \text{sign}(-1-k) \left(\frac{e^{t^2/2} \sqrt{2\pi}}{t|\Gamma(-1-k)|} \right)^{-1/k} |1+k|^{1+1/k} & \text{for } k < 0, k \neq -1. \end{cases} \tag{38}$$

Thus for $p > 1$, that is, $k > 0$, the claim about the limit follows from the estimate $|F(t)| \leq C_1 + C_2 t^p$ together with the Lebesgue dominated convergence theorem.

If $p < 0$, that is, $k \in (-1, 0)$, we rewrite (9) in a standard way as

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f_\varepsilon^p d\gamma_n - \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f_\varepsilon d\gamma_n \right)^p \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f_\varepsilon^p \left(1 - F\left(\frac{|\nabla f|}{f_\varepsilon} \right) \right) d\gamma_n. \tag{39}$$

Since f is bounded, $f \geq 0$ and $\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p d\gamma_n < \infty$, there is no issue with the left-hand side of (39) when $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$. For the right-hand side of (39) we notice that the function $x^p(1 - F(y/x))$ is nonnegative and decreasing in x . Then the claim follows from the monotone convergence theorem. The nonnegativity follows from the observation that $F(0) = 1$ and $F' < 0$ (see (35) where we have $k > -1$). The monotonicity follows from (6), (35), (20) and the straightforward computations

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x} (x^p(1 - F(y/x))) = x^{p-1} (p - pF(t) + tF'(t)) = x^{p-1} p \left[1 - \frac{q}{H_k^{1/k}(q)} \right], \tag{40}$$

where

$$|k| \frac{H_{k-1}(q)}{H_k(q)} = t = \frac{y}{x}$$

and $q \in (R_k, \infty)$. The last expression in (40) is negative because

$$1 \geq F(t) = \frac{H_{k+1}}{H_k^{1+1/k}} = \frac{qH_k - kH_{k-1}}{H_k^{1+1/k}} > \frac{q}{H_k^{1/k}}.$$

Finally if $p \in (0, 1)$, that is, $k < -1$, we have the opposite inequality in (39). In this case the situation is absolutely the same as for $k \in (-1, 0)$ except now we should consider the function $x^p(F(y/x) - 1)$, which is nonnegative and decreasing in x ; see (40). This finishes the proof of the theorem.

Now let us show Proposition 2. Since $F(0) = 1$, it is enough to show a stronger inequality, namely $F' + p(p-1)t \geq 0$. From (35) and the fact that $k > 1$ since $p \in (1, 2)$, we obtain that it is enough to

show the inequality

$$-\frac{p}{H_k^{1/k}} + p(p-1)\frac{H'_k}{H_k} \geq 0 \quad \text{for all } k \geq 1, \quad q \in (R_k, \infty).$$

Using (20) and $p = 1 + 1/k$ we notice that the inequality can be rewritten as $1 \geq H_k(q)/H_{k-1}^{k/(k-1)}(q)$ for all $q \in (R_k, \infty)$. To verify the last inequality recall that $F(0) = 1$ and $F'(t) < 0$. Therefore $F(t) \leq 1$. We also recall the definition of $F(t)$; see (30). It follows that $1 \geq F = H_{k+1}/H_k^{1+1/k}$ for all $k > 0$. The last inequality is the same as

$$1 \geq \frac{H_k(q)}{H_{k-1}^{k/(k-1)}(q)} \quad \text{for all } q \in (R_k, \infty), \quad k > 1. \tag{41}$$

This finishes the proof of Proposition 2.

To verify Corollary 3 we only need to prove the monotonicity of the map (13) for $p \in (1, 2]$, that is, $k \geq 1$, and the rest will follow from (38). If $k = 1$ there is nothing to prove; therefore we assume $k > 1$. By (40) it is enough to show that $L(q) := H_k^{1/k}(q) - q \leq 0$ for $q \in (R_k, \infty)$. The growth condition (24) on H_k implies that $\lim_{q \rightarrow \infty} L(q) = 0$. If $L'(q) \geq 0$ then we are done. Using (20) we notice that $L'(q) \geq 0$ is equivalent to (41), which was already proved.

2.3. Proof of Corollaries 4 and 5. Notice that as $y \rightarrow 0$ we have

$$F_{\text{exp}}(y) = 1 - \frac{y^2}{2} + O(y^4) \quad \text{and} \quad F_{-\ln}(y) = -\frac{y^2}{2} + O(y^4).$$

One can check that

$$M_{\text{exp}}(x, y) := e^x F_{\text{exp}}(y), \quad M_{\text{exp}}(x, 0) = e^x, \quad M_{\text{exp}}(x, \sqrt{y}) \in C^2(\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}_+),$$

$$M_{-\ln}(x, y) := -\ln(x) + F_{-\ln}\left(\frac{y}{x}\right), \quad M_{-\ln}(x, 0) = -\ln x, \quad x > 0,$$

and $M_{-\ln}(x, \sqrt{y}) \in C^2([\varepsilon, \infty) \times \mathbb{R}^+)$ for any $\varepsilon > 0$. By straightforward computations we notice that if we set $\psi(q) = \alpha - \int_1^q H_{-1}(s) ds$ then using the identity $1 = qH_{-1}(q) + H_{-2}(q)$ we obtain

$$F_{\text{exp}}(H_{-1}) = qe^\psi, \quad F'_{\text{exp}}(H_{-1}) = -e^\psi \quad \text{and} \quad F''_{\text{exp}}(H_{-1}) = -\frac{H_{-1}}{H_{-2}}.$$

Similarly we compute that

$$F'_{-\ln}\left(\frac{H_{-2}}{H_{-1}}\right) = -H_{-1} \quad \text{and} \quad F''_{-\ln}\left(\frac{H_{-2}}{H_{-1}}\right) = -\frac{H_{-2}H_{-1}^2}{H_{-1}^2 - H_{-2}}.$$

Next one notices that M_{exp} and $M_{-\ln}$ satisfy (17) (in fact the determinant of (17) is zero). Then by Theorem 1 in [Ivanisvili and Volberg 2015c] we obtain the corollaries. The passage to the limit for $M_{-\ln}(x, y)$ when $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$ follows from the monotone convergence theorem. Indeed, we notice that $-F_{-\ln}(y/x) \geq 0$ is decreasing in x . We apply Corollary 5 to $f_\varepsilon = f + \varepsilon$ and send $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$.

2.3.1. *How we guessed the functions M_{exp} and $M_{-\text{ln}}$.* One may ask how to find the functions M_{exp} and $M_{-\text{ln}}$. To find M_{exp} we should apply (9) to functions $f = e^{g/p}$, where g is some fixed function. Then (9) takes the form

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} e^g F_{1/(p-1)}\left(\frac{|\nabla g|}{p}\right) d\gamma_n \leq \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} e^{g/p} d\gamma_n\right)^p. \tag{42}$$

Now we take $p \rightarrow \infty$. The right-hand side of (42) tends to $\exp(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} g d\gamma_n)$. For the left-hand side of (42) we should compute the limit

$$F_{\text{exp}}(t) := \lim_{p \rightarrow \infty} F_{1/(p-1)}\left(\frac{t}{p}\right) = \lim_{p \rightarrow \infty} F_{1/(p-1)}\left(\frac{t}{p-1}\right) = \lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} F_k(tk).$$

In fact all equalities can be justified by direct calculations using the fact that $H_k(x) = H(x, k)$ is the entire function of x and k ; see [Temme 2015] for the parabolic cylinder function and formula (22).

It is clear that $F_{\text{exp}}(0) = 1$. Next if we take $k \rightarrow 0+$ in (6) we obtain

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} F_k\left(\left|\frac{H'_k}{H_k}\right|\right) = \lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} F_k\left(k \frac{H_{k-1}}{H_k}\right) = \lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} F_k\left(k \frac{H_{-1}}{H_0}\right) = F_{\text{exp}}(H_{-1}).$$

On the other hand, for the right-hand side of (6) we have

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} \frac{H_{k+1}(q)}{H_k^{1+1/k}} = q \lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} H_k^{-1/k}.$$

Here we have used $H_0(q) = 1$ and $H_1(q) = q$. Thus it remains to find $\lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} H_k^{-1/k}$. If we take the derivative in k of (20) we obtain $H_{xk}(x, k) = H(x, k-1) + kH_k(x, k)$ (here subindices denote partial derivatives). Now taking $k = 0$ we obtain $H_{xk}(x, 0) = H(x, -1)$. Thus $H_k(x, 0)$ is an antiderivative of $H(x, -1) = H_{-1}$. So

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} H_k^{-1/k} = \lim_{k \rightarrow 0+} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{k} \ln(1 + kH_k(x, 0) + o(k))\right) = \exp\left(-\int H_{-1}(s) ds\right).$$

Finally we obtain

$$F_{\text{exp}}(H_{-1}(q)) = q \exp\left(C - \int_1^q H_{-1}\right). \tag{43}$$

In order to satisfy the condition $F_{\text{exp}}(0) = 1$, the constant c must be chosen as $C = \int_1^\infty (H_{-1} - 1/s) ds$; indeed send $q \rightarrow \infty$ in (43). This gives Corollary 4. It is worth mentioning that we have also obtained

$$H_k(x, 0) = \int_1^x H_{-1}(s) ds - \alpha;$$

see (8).

To find $M_{-\text{ln}}$, let $F(x, k) := F_k(x)$. Let $F_k(x, k)$ denote the partial derivative in k of $F(x, k)$. If we send $p \rightarrow 0$, $p < 0$ in (9) and compare the terms of order p we obtain

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} \left(\ln f - F_k\left(\frac{|\nabla f|}{f}, -1\right)\right) d\gamma_n \geq \ln\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\gamma_n\right).$$

It remains to find the function $F_k(x, -1)$. Let us equate terms of order $(k + 1)$ as $k \rightarrow -1$, $k < -1$ in

$$F\left(\frac{|H_x(x, k)|}{H(x, k)}, k\right) = \frac{H(x, k + 1)}{H(x, k)^{1+1/k}}.$$

Straightforward computation shows that

$$F_k\left(\frac{H_{-2}(x)}{H_{-1}(x)}, -1\right) = H_k(x, 0) + \ln H_{-1}(x) = \int_1^x H_{-1}(s) ds - \alpha + \ln H_{-1}(x),$$

where

$$\alpha = \int_1^\infty \left(H_{-1}(s) - \frac{1}{s}\right) ds.$$

3. Concluding remarks

The reader may wonder how we guessed the choice (16). Of course it was not a random guess. Function (16) is the best possible in the sense that the determinant of (17) is identically zero:

$$\begin{aligned} M_{yy}\left(M_{xx} + \frac{M_y}{y}\right) - M_{xy}^2 &= 0, \\ M(x, 0) &= x^p \quad \text{for } x \geq 0. \end{aligned} \tag{44}$$

Initially this was the way we started looking for $M(x, y)$ as the solution of the Monge–Ampère equation with a drift (44). By a proper change of variables, the equation reduces to the backwards heat equation (see [Ivanisvili and Volberg 2015c] for more details where the connection with the theory of exterior differential systems of R. Bryant et al. [1991] was exploited)

$$u_{xx} + u_t = 0, \tag{45}$$

$$u(x, 0) = Cx^{p/(p-1)} \quad \text{for } x \geq 0. \tag{46}$$

One can notice that the Hermite polynomials do satisfy (45) and (46) when $p/(p - 1)$ is a positive integer. In general, one should invoke Hermite functions and this is the reason for the appearance of these functions in our theorem.

Another possibility is to assume that $M(x, y)$ should be homogeneous of degree p , which forces M to have the form (31) for some F . Next setting $h = F/F'$ and further by a subtle change of variables, one obtains Hermite differential equation (5).

Nevertheless, for the formal proof of Theorem 1 we do not need to go through the details. We have $M(x, y)$ defined by (16) and we just need to check that it satisfies the desired properties.

That $M(x, y)$ satisfies (17) makes it possible to extend Theorem 1 in a semigroup setting for uniformly log-concave probability measures. Indeed, let $d\mu = e^{-U} dx$, where $\text{Hess } U \geq R \cdot \text{Id}$, $R > 0$. Let $L = \Delta - \nabla U \cdot \nabla$ and $P_t = e^{tL}$ be the semigroup with generator L ; see [Ivanisvili and Volberg 2015c; Bakry et al. 2014].

Corollary 11. *For any $p \in \mathbb{R} \setminus [0, 1]$ and any smooth bounded $f \geq 0$ with $\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^p d\mu < \infty$ we have*

$$P_t \left[f^p F_{1/(p-1)} \left(\frac{|\nabla f|}{f\sqrt{R}} \right) \right] \leq (P_t f)^p F_{1/(p-1)} \left(\frac{|\nabla P_t f|}{P_t f\sqrt{R}} \right).$$

The inequality is reversed if $p \in (0, 1)$.

Proof. Notice that $\tilde{M}(x, y) = M(x, y/\sqrt{R})$ satisfies (17). Now it remains to use inequality (2.3) from [Ivanisvili and Volberg 2015c]. \square

By taking $t \rightarrow \infty$ and using the fact that $|\nabla P_t f| \leq e^{-tR} P_t |\nabla f|$, we obtain Corollary 6.

Finally we would like to mention that having characterization (17) of functional inequalities (32) makes our approach to problem (9) systematic. Very similar *local estimates* happen to rule some *global inequalities*. We refer the reader to our recent papers on this subject [Ivanisvili and Volberg 2015a;2015b; Ivanisvili 2016].

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