

# ISOLATED SINGULARITIES OF THE SCHRÖDINGER EQUATION WITH A GOOD POTENTIAL

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**ABSTRACT.** We study the behaviour near an isolated singularity, say 0, of non-negative solutions of the Schrödinger equation  $-\Delta u + Vu = 0$  defined in a punctured ball  $0 < |x| < R$ . We prove that whenever the potential  $V$  belongs to the Kato class  $K_n$  the following alternative, well known in the case of harmonic functions, holds: either  $|x|^{n-2}u(x)$  has a positive limit as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$  or  $u$  is continuous at 0. In the first case  $u$  solves the equation  $-\Delta u + Vu = a\delta$  in  $\{|x| < R\}$ . We discuss the optimality of the class  $K_n$  and extend the result to solutions  $u \not\equiv 0$  of  $-\Delta u + Vu = f$ .

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper we are concerned with the behaviour around an isolated singularity of the solutions of the equation

$$(1) \quad Lu \equiv -\Delta u + Vu = f,$$

where  $V$  is a potential in the Kato class,  $f$  belongs to a suitable  $L^p$  space and the solution is assumed to be not too negative. The equation is posed in a domain  $\Omega \subset \mathbf{R}^n$  with singularities at some isolated points. Without loss of generality we may assume that  $\Omega$  is the punctured ball  $B_R^* = B_R - \{0\}$ , with  $B_R = \{x \in \mathbf{R}^n : |x| < R\}$ , and we investigate the behaviour as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$ . We also assume for simplicity that  $n \geq 3$ , though the results have natural counterparts in two dimensions.

In the simplest case where  $V$  and  $f$  vanish identically this behaviour is well known. In fact, given any nonnegative harmonic function  $u = u(x)$  defined in  $B_R^*$ , there exists the limit

$$(2) \quad \lim_{|x| \rightarrow 0} |x|^{n-2}u(x) = a \geq 0.$$

Moreover, if  $a > 0$  then  $u$  exhibits a singularity at 0 and the equation

$$(3) \quad -\Delta u = c_n a \delta$$

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is satisfied in  $D'(B_R)$ . Here  $\delta$  denotes the Dirac mass at the origin and  $c_n = (n-2)s_n$ , where  $s_n$  is the  $(n-1)$ -measure of the unit sphere  $S_{n-1} = \{x \in \mathbf{R}^n : |x| = 1\}$ . Such a singularity is called a *weak* singularity. In case  $a = 0$ ,  $u$  can be extended to 0 as a harmonic function, i.e. the singularity is *removable*.

The fact that any isolated singularity is either weak or removable holds true for the nonnegative solutions of a wide class of elliptic equations, cf. [GS, S1, S2, SW]. In [S2] Serrin established the result for the Schrödinger equation

$$(4) \quad Lu \equiv -\Delta u + Vu = 0$$

with  $V \in L^q_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$ ,  $q > n/2$ .

We consider here the same problem for the class of *Kato* potentials defined as follows. A function  $V \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$  belongs to  $K_n = K_n(B_R)$  if and only if

$$(5) \quad \lim_{\alpha \downarrow 0} \left\{ \sup_{|x| \in B_R} \int_{|x-y| \leq \alpha} |x-y|^{2-n} |V(y)| dy \right\} = 0.$$

In case we replace  $x, y \in B_R$  by  $x, y \in B_{R'}$  with  $0 < R' < R$  we obtain the class  $K_{n,\text{loc}} = K_{n,\text{loc}}(B_R)$ . We may always pass from  $K_{n,\text{loc}}$  to  $K_n$  by reducing the size of the ball where we work.  $K_n$  contains the space  $L^q(B_R)$  if  $q > n/2$ , and it also contains other potentials as is easily seen in the radial case. Namely, if  $V = V(|x|)$  then  $V \in K_n$  if

$$(6) \quad \int_0^R r|V(r)| dr < \infty,$$

cf. [AS]. On the other hand  $K_n$  does not contain  $L^{n/2}(B_R)$ , as the following example shows: take  $V(y) = |y|^{-2}(\log|y|)^{-\alpha}$  with  $1 \geq \alpha > 2/n$ .

The class  $K_n$  has received much attention recently in connection with the Schrödinger equation. Thus, Kato [K] proved the selfadjointness of the operator  $L = -\Delta + V$  when  $V \in K_n$ . Aizenman and Simon [AS] have proved the Harnack inequality for nonnegative solutions of (3), cf. also [CFG]. Simon in his survey [Si] considers  $K_n$  as the natural class of good potentials for different aspects in the theory of the Schrödinger equation.

Our results show that  $K_n$  is a class of good potentials also from the point of view of isolated singularities.

Thus, our first result is

**Theorem 1.** *Let  $V \in K_n(B_R)$  and let  $u \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R^*)$  be such that*

- (i)  $u \geq 0$  in  $B_R$ ,
- (ii)  $\Delta u \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R^*)$ ,
- (iii)  $\Delta u = V \cdot u$  in  $B_R^*$ .

*Then there exists a constant  $\alpha \geq 0$  such that*

$$(7) \quad -\Delta u + Vu = \alpha \delta \quad \text{in } D'(B_R),$$

$$(8) \quad \lim_{|x| \rightarrow 0} |x|^{n-2} u(x) = \alpha/c_n.$$

Moreover, if  $\alpha = 0$  then  $u$  is a continuous solution of (4) in  $B_R$ , i.e.  $u$  satisfies (ii), (iii) in  $B_R$ .

Here  $c_n$  is the constant appearing in (3). Equalities and inequalities between integrable functions are to be understood a.e. in the corresponding domain. The theorem has as a consequence the following removability result.

*A nonnegative solution of (4) in  $B_R^*$  such that either  $u(x) = o(|x|^{2-n})$  as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$  or  $u \in L_{\text{loc}}^p(B_R)$  for  $p = n/(n-2)$  is in fact a continuous solution in  $B_R$ .*

In the work [VY2] (cf. also [VY1]) a study is made of the isolated singularities of the equation  $Lu = 0$  when the potentials  $V$  are radially symmetric<sup>1</sup>. In particular, Theorem 1 is proved under this restriction. Moreover, it is shown that the class  $K_n$  is *optimal* in the following sense. If  $V \in C(0, R]$  is nonnegative and  $V$  does not satisfy (6) then any nonnegative solution of (4) in  $B_R^*$  which is singular satisfies as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$

$$(9) \quad \lim_{|x| \rightarrow 0} |x|^{n-2} u(x) = +\infty.$$

The result actually holds for potentials with changing sign provided that  $V^-(r) = \max(-V(r), 0) \in K_n$ , cf. [VY2, Propositions 2.2, 2.3]. Moreover, if for such  $V$  and  $u$  we can assert that  $Vu \in L_{\text{loc}}^1(B_R)$  then the singularity is automatically removable, cf. [VY2, Theorem B].

Theorem 1 can be extended to solutions of possibly changing sign for equation (1) with  $f$  in some  $L^p$ -space by means of recent results in potential theory for Schrödinger operators with  $V$  in  $K_n$ , taken from Cranston, Fabes and Zhao [CFZ]. In particular, we use the fact that for  $r$  small enough there exists a *fundamental solution* for  $L$  in  $B_r$ , i.e. a function  $U \in C(B_r^*)$  which satisfies (7) and (8) with  $\alpha = 1$ . Then we obtain

**Theorem 2.** *Let  $V \in K_n(B_R)$  and let  $u \in L_{\text{loc}}^1(B_R^*)$  be such that*

- (i)  $u \geq O(|x|^{2-n})$  as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$ ,
- (ii)  $u \in L_{\text{loc}}^1(B_R^*)$  and
- (iii)  $\Delta u = Vu + f$  in  $D'(B_R^*)$  and  $f \in L^p(B_R)$  with  $p > n/2$ .

*Then (7) and (8) hold for some  $\alpha \in \mathbf{R}$ . Moreover, for  $r$  small enough we may write*

$$(10) \quad u(x) = \alpha U(x) + g(x) \quad \text{in } B_r,$$

*where  $U$  is the fundamental solution for  $L$  in  $B_r$  and  $g$  is a continuous solution of (4) in  $B_r$ .*

## 2. PROOF OF THEOREM 1

We begin with some convenient notation and definitions. A solution of  $Lu \equiv -\Delta u + Vu = f$  in a domain  $\Omega \subset \mathbf{R}^n$  is a function  $u \in L_{\text{loc}}^1(\Omega)$  such that

<sup>1</sup> They are also assumed to be continuous for  $0 < |x| < R$  but this restriction is inessential for the results.

$Vu \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(\Omega)$  and the equation holds in the sense of distributions in  $\Omega$ . In this paper  $\Omega$  will be a ball or a punctured ball. We shall often use *averages* over spheres: if  $u \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R^*)$  we define its *angular average*,  $\bar{u}: (0, R) \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$  by

$$(11) \quad \bar{u}(r) = s_n^{-1} \int_{S_{n-1}} u(r, \sigma) d\sigma,$$

where  $(r, \sigma)$  are spherical coordinates in  $B_R$ . Clearly  $\bar{u} \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(0, R)$  and  $\Delta \bar{u} = \Delta(\bar{u})$ .

The proof of Theorem 1 proceeds in three steps. First, we use a sharp version of the continuity results of [AS]. In fact, a careful scrutiny of their proofs of the Harnack inequality plus a scaling argument gives

**Lemma 3.** *Let  $u$  be a nonnegative solution of  $Lu = 0$  in  $B_R^*$  with  $V \in K_n$ . Then there exists a constant  $c$ , depending only on  $n$  and the local norms of  $V$  in  $K_n$ , such that for  $0 < r < R/2$*

$$(12) \quad \max_{|x|=r} u(x) \leq c \min_{|x|=r} u(x).$$

*Proof.* Let us prove first that there exists  $a \in (0, 1)$  such that for every  $x_0$ ,  $0 < |x_0| < R/2$ , we have

$$(13) \quad \sup\{u(x): x \in B_{a\rho}(x_0)\} \leq C \inf\{u(x): x \in B_{a\rho}(x_0)\},$$

where  $\rho = |x_0|/2$ ,  $B_{a\rho}(x_0)$  is the open ball of center  $x_0$  and radius  $a\rho$ , and  $C$  depends on  $n$ ,  $a$ , the norm of  $V$  in  $K_n$ , but not on  $x_0$ . To do this we rescale the problem and consider the function  $v = v_{x_0}$  defined by

$$(14) \quad v(x) = u(\rho(x + x_0)).$$

$v$  is a solution of  $-\Delta v + W(x)v = 0$  in  $B_1$ , with  $W(x) = \rho^2 V(\rho(x + x_0))$ . By Theorem 3.10 of [AS] we get

$$(15) \quad \sup_{B_a} v(x) \leq C \inf_{B_a} v(x).$$

Moreover, (cf. Theorems 1.2, 1.6, 2.4, 3.7, 3.8 and Proposition 2.2 of [AS])  $C$  may be taken as  $C = K/(1 - \beta)$ , where  $K = K(n, a)$  and  $\beta$  is any number less than 1 such that

$$\beta \geq K_1(n) \cdot \sup_{x \in B_1} \int_{|x-y| \leq 2a} |x-y|^{2-n} |W(y)| dy.$$

This choice of  $\beta$  is possible for  $a$  small enough since

$$\begin{aligned} & \sup_{x \in B_1} \int_{|x-y| \leq 2a} |x-y|^{2-n} |W(y)| dy \\ &= \sup_{x \in B_\rho(x_0)} \int_{|x-y| \leq 2a\rho} |x-y|^{2-n} V(y) dy \\ &\leq \sup_{x \in B_{3R/2}} \int_{|x-y| \leq aR/2} |x-y|^{2-n} |V(y)| dy \end{aligned}$$

and this integral tends to 0 as  $a \rightarrow 0$ . This proves (15) and with it (13).

To obtain (12) from (13) we only have to cover the sphere  $|x| = |x_0|$  with a finite number of balls  $B_{a\rho}(x_i)$  with  $|x_i| = |x_0|$ . Their number depends only on  $a$ .  $\square$

The second step begins by writing  $Lu = 0$  in the form

$$(16) \quad \Delta u = V^+ \cdot u - V^- \cdot u$$

where  $V^+$  and  $V^-$  are the positive and negative parts of  $V$ , i.e.  $V^+ = \frac{1}{2}(V + |V|)$ ,  $V^- = \frac{1}{2}(-V + |V|)$ . Since  $V^- \cdot u \geq 0$  we have  $\Delta u \leq V^+ \cdot u$  and we are reduced to study the behaviour at 0 of nonnegative *supersolutions* of  $Lu = 0$  with a nonnegative potential in  $K_n$ . This is done in the following result, which may have an independent interest and is therefore labeled as

**Theorem 4.** *Let  $V$  be a nonnegative potential in  $K_n(B_R)$  and let  $u \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R^*)$  satisfy:  $u \geq 0$ ,  $\Delta u \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R^*)$ ,  $V \cdot u \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R^*)$  and*

$$(17) \quad \Delta u \leq V \cdot u + f \quad \text{in } B_R^*$$

*for some  $f \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$ . If either  $V$  is radially symmetric or  $u$  satisfies (12), then  $u$  is a solution in  $B_R$  of the equation*

$$(18) \quad -\Delta u + Vu = \alpha\delta + \varphi$$

*for some  $\alpha \in [0, \infty)$  and  $\varphi \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$ . In particular  $u, Vu \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$  and*

$$(19) \quad r^{n-2}\bar{u}(r) \rightarrow \alpha/c_n, \quad r^{n-1}\bar{u}_r(r) \rightarrow -\alpha/s_n.$$

This theorem extends a result by Brezis and Lions [BL], which consider the case  $V = \text{constant}$ . As in Theorem 1, it happens that  $V \in K_n$  is the necessary and sufficient condition for the result to hold in the class of nonnegative and radially symmetric potentials.

*Proof of Theorem 4.* The proof of (18) in [BL] begins by obtaining that  $Vu \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$  and  $\bar{u}(r) = O(r^{2-n})$  as  $r \rightarrow 0$ . Then it is concluded that the function  $\varphi$  defined a.e. in  $B_R$  as  $\varphi(x) = -\Delta u(x)$  belongs to  $L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$ . Finally they prove that the distribution  $T = \Delta u + \varphi$  must be a Dirac mass at 0.

Our proof consists in establishing  $Vu \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$ . We then write (17) as

$$\Delta u \leq g \equiv Vu + f \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$$

and apply [BL] with  $V \equiv 0$  to get the conclusion. We proceed as follows. Averaging (17) on the sets  $|x| = r$  for  $0 < r < R/2$ , we get

$$(20) \quad -(r^{n-1}\bar{u}_r)_r \leq r^{n-1}(\overline{Vu}(r) + \bar{f}(r)).$$

It is at this stage that we need an extra assumption on  $V$  or  $u$  in order to relate  $\overline{Vu}$  to  $\overline{V} \cdot \bar{u}$ . If  $V$  is radially symmetric we get  $\overline{Vu} = \overline{V} \cdot \bar{u}$ ; on the other hand if (12) holds then  $\overline{Vu} \leq c\overline{V} \cdot \bar{u}$ . Since  $c > 1$  we get after substituting into (20)

$$(21) \quad -(r^{n-1}\bar{u}_r)_r \leq cr^{n-1}\overline{V}(r)\bar{u}(r) + r^{n-1}\bar{f}(r).$$

Now we remark that  $V \in K_n$  implies  $\bar{V} \in K_n$ , i.e. (cf. (6))  $\int_0^{R/2} \bar{V}(r)r \, dr < \infty$ . On the other hand  $\bar{u} \in C^1(0, R)$ . Take  $0 < R_1 < R/2$  and integrate (21) over  $(r, R_1)$  to obtain

$$(22) \quad r^{n-1} \bar{u}_r(r) \leq c\psi(r) + C, \quad 0 < r < R_1,$$

where  $\psi$  is defined by  $\psi(r) = \int_r^{R_1} \bar{V}(s)\bar{u}(s)r^{n-1} \, ds$  and  $C$  denotes a constant that depends on  $R_1$  but not on  $r$ . Dividing (22) by  $r^{n-1}$  and integrating again we have

$$(23) \quad \bar{u}(r) \leq c \int_r^{R_1} \psi(s)s^{1-n} \, ds + Cr^{2-n} + C.$$

Now multiply by  $r^{n-1}\bar{V}(r)$ , integrate once again and use the fact that  $\psi$  is nonincreasing to arrive at

$$(24) \quad \psi(r) \leq \left( \frac{c}{n-2} \psi(r) + C \right) \int_r^{R_1} s \bar{V}(s) \, ds, \quad 0 < r < R_1.$$

Since  $r\bar{V}(r) \in L^1(0, R/2)$ , if we choose  $R_1$  small enough we conclude that  $\psi$  is bounded in  $(0, R_1)$ . This implies that  $Vu \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$  since  $\bar{V}u \leq c\bar{V}u$  for  $0 < r < R/2$ . From (23) it follows then that  $\bar{u}(r) = O(r^{2-n})$  as  $r \rightarrow 0$ . As explained above, we obtain in this way (18).

Estimate (19) is easy to obtain from (18) by Gauss' theorem. Indeed for  $0 < r < R$

$$\begin{aligned} s_n r^{n-1} \bar{u}_r(r) &= \int_{|x|=r} \frac{\partial u}{\partial r}(r, \sigma) r^{n-1} \, d\sigma = \int_{|x|<r} \Delta u \, dx \\ &= -\alpha + \int_{|x|<r} (Vu - \varphi) \, dx \rightarrow -\alpha \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0. \quad \square \end{aligned}$$

One of the good points of Theorem 4 is that the inequality in (17) allows to replace a potential  $V$  by any upper bound. In particular, the negative part of  $V$  plays no role in the result. This has for instance the following consequence.

**Proposition 5.** *Let  $V$  be a radially symmetric potential such that  $V^+ \in K_n$  but  $V^- \notin K_n$  and let  $u$  be a nonnegative solution of (1) in  $B_R^*$  with  $-\Delta u + Vu \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$ . Then the singularity at 0 is removable. (In other words, all singularities are of oscillatory type.)*

*Proof.* We apply Theorem 4 with potential  $V^+$  to conclude that  $\bar{u}(r) \approx (\alpha/c_n)r^{2-n}$  near the origin and  $u, \Delta u - \alpha\delta$  and  $V^+u \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$ . On the other hand, if  $\alpha > 0$  we get

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{|x|<R/2} V^-(x)u(x) \, dx &= C \int_0^{R/2} V^-(r)\bar{u}(r)r^{n-1} \, dr \\ &\geq C \int_0^{R/2} rV^-(r) \, dr = \infty. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $V^- \cdot u = V^+ u - \Delta u$  we arrive at a contradiction. Hence  $\alpha = 0$  and the singularity is removable.  $\square$

The last step in the proof of Theorem 1 starts from the application of Theorem 4 to  $\Delta u \leq V^+ \cdot u$ . By (12) and (19) we have

$$(25) \quad u(x) \leq C\alpha|x|^{2-n}$$

if  $|x|$  is small. Here in the sequel  $C$  will denote different positive constants depending on  $n$ ,  $u$ ,  $V$  and  $R$  but not on  $|x|$ . Since  $V \in K_n$  (25) implies that  $Vu \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(B_R)$ . Now the function  $\varphi$  in (18) equals  $V^- \cdot u$  a.e. in  $B_R$ , therefore we have

$$(26) \quad -\Delta u + Vu = \alpha\delta \quad \text{in } D'(B_R)$$

and the proof ends once we establish the asymptotic behaviour (8). For that we let  $v$  be the solution of the problem

$$-\Delta v = \alpha\delta \quad \text{in } D'(B_{R/2}), \quad v = u \quad \text{on } |x| = R/2.$$

It is clear that  $v \in C(B_{R/2}^*)$  and  $v(x)|x|^{n-2} \rightarrow \alpha/c_n$  as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$ . Therefore, we have to prove that  $w \equiv u - v$  is  $o(|x|^{2-n})$  as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$ . Notice that  $w$  solves

$$\Delta w = Vu \quad \text{in } D'(B_{R/2}), \quad w = 0 \quad \text{on } |x| = R/2,$$

hence it can be represented in the form

$$(27) \quad w(x) = - \int_{B_{R/2}} G(x, y) V(y) u(y) dy,$$

where  $G$  is the Green function for the Laplace operator  $-\Delta$  in  $B_{R/2}$ . It is well known that  $G(x, y)$  is a  $C^\infty$ -function for  $x, y \in \overline{B}_{R/2}$ ,  $x \neq y$ . Moreover

$$0 \leq G(x, y) \leq c_n |x - y|^{2-n}$$

and  $G$  is positive for  $x, y \in B_{R/2}$ . We shall estimate  $w(x)$  for  $|x|$  small using all these data. In fact, let  $R_1 = \min(4, R/2, R^2/4)$ . For  $|x| \leq R_1$  we have

$$\begin{aligned} w(x) &\leq c_n \int_{|y| \leq R/2} |x - y|^{2-n} |V(y)| u(y) dy \\ &\leq \int_{|y| \leq |x|/2} |x - y|^{2-n} |V(y)| u(y) dy \\ &\quad + \int_{|x|/2 < |y| \leq |x|^{1/2}} |x - y|^{2-n} |V(y)| u(y) dy \\ &\quad + \int_{|x|^{1/2} < |y| \leq R/2} |x - y|^{2-n} |V(y)| u(y) dy \\ &= I_1 + I_2 + I_3. \end{aligned}$$

A bound for  $I_1$  for  $|x| \approx 0$  is obtained as follows. Since  $|y| \leq |x|/2$ , we have  $|x - y|^{2-n} \leq 2^{n-2}|x|^{2-n}$ , so that

$$\begin{aligned} I_1 &\leq 2^{n-2}|x|^{2-n} \int_{|y| \leq |x|/2} |V(y)|u(y) dy \\ &= C|x|^{2-n} \int_{|y| \leq |x|/2} |y|^{2-n} V(y) dy = o(|x|^{2-n}) \end{aligned}$$

since  $V \in K_n$ . Likewise

$$I_3 \leq (|x|^{1/2} - |x|)^{2-n} \int_{|y| \leq R} u(y)|V(y)| dy = O(|x|^{1-n/2}).$$

Finally let  $D = \{y \in B_R : |x|/2 \leq |y| \leq |x|^{1/2}\}$ . We have

$$\begin{aligned} I_2 &\leq C \int_D |x - y|^{2-n} |y|^{2-n} |V(y)| dy \\ &= C|x|^{2-n} \int_D |x - y|^{2-n} |V(y)| dy. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $V \in K_n$  the last integral vanishes as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$ , hence  $I_2 = o(|x|^{2-n})$ . We conclude that  $w = o(|x|^{2-n})$ , which ends the proof of Theorem 1.  $\square$

### 3. PROOF OF THEOREM 2

The proof relies on some properties of the Green function for the operator  $L = -\Delta + V$  in a small enough ball  $B_R$ . In [CFZ] (see also [CFZ2]) Cranston, Fabes and Zhao study the *conditional gauge*  $F$  associated to the diffusion process generated by  $L$  in a bounded Lipschitz domain  $D$  of  $\mathbf{R}^n$  and its relation with the Green function,  $G_L$ , of  $L$  in  $D$ . We take the following results from [CFZ].

(a) Either  $F$  is infinite everywhere or there exist positive constants  $c_1, c_2$  such that

$$(28) \quad 0 < c_1 \leq F(X, Y) \leq c_2$$

for all  $x, y \in D$  (cf. Theorem 2.2).

(b) In the latter case  $F$  is continuous in  $\overline{D} \times \overline{D}$  (Theorem 4.9) and

$$(29) \quad G_L(x, y) = F(x, y)G(x, y)$$

in  $D * D$ ,  $G$  being the Green function for  $-\Delta$  (Theorem 4.7).

(c)  $F$  is finite if and only if  $\inf(\text{spec}(L|_D)) > 0$ .

Now, the infimum of the spectrum of  $L$  in  $D$  can be made positive by choosing  $D$  to be a sufficiently small ball. This is a consequence of the following embedding result for Kato potentials proved by Fabes [F], cf. also [CFG].

**Lemma 6.** *For every  $\varepsilon > 0$  there exists  $r > 0$  such that*

$$(30) \quad \int u^2 |V| dx \leq \varepsilon \int |\nabla u|^2$$

for every  $u \in H_0^1(B_r)$ .



In the sequel we fix  $D = B_r$  with such an  $r$ . We also put  $U(x) = G_L(x, 0)$ . Then  $U \in C(B_r^*)$ ,  $U$  vanishes for  $|x| = r$ ,  $VU \in L^1(B_r)$  and (7), (8) hold with  $\alpha = 1$ .

Assume that  $u$  is a function as in Theorem 2 and let  $f = \Delta u - Vu \in L^p(B_r)$ . We define

$$u_1(x) = \int_{B_r} G_L(x, y) f(y) dy.$$

It is clear that  $u_1 \in C(B_r)$  and  $Lu_1 = f$ . Put  $v = u - u_1$ . It satisfies  $Lv = 0$  in  $B_r^*$  and

$$v(x) \geq -c|x|^{2-n}$$

for some constant  $c$  and  $|x| \leq r' < r$ . Therefore the function  $w = v + (c/c_n)U$  is a nonnegative solution of  $Lw = 0$  in a small punctured neighbourhood of 0. By Theorem 1 there exists  $\alpha_1 \geq 0$  such that

$$Lw = \alpha_1 \delta \quad \text{in } D'(B_{r'})$$

and

$$w(x)|x|^{n-2} \rightarrow \alpha_1/c_n \quad \text{as } |x| \rightarrow 0.$$

Put now  $\alpha = \alpha_1 - (c/c_n)$  and let  $g = u - \alpha U = w - \alpha_1 U + u_1$ . The proof will be complete if we show that  $g$  is continuous for  $x \approx 0$ . For this observe that

$$L(g - u_1) = L(w - \alpha_1 U) = 0 \quad \text{in } D'(B_{r'})$$

and  $g - u_1 = o(|x|^{2-n})$  as  $|x| \rightarrow 0$ , hence  $g - u_1 \in L^1(B_{r'})$ . In this situation Theorem 15 of [AS] implies that  $g - u_1$  is a continuous function in  $B_{r'}$  and we are done.  $\square$

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