

# A Note on Pointwise Convergence for Expansions in Surface Harmonics of Higher Dimensional Euclidean Spaces

Ming-gang Fei and Tao Qian

**Abstract.** We study the Fourier-Laplace series on the unit sphere of higher dimensional Euclidean spaces and obtain a condition for convergence of Fourier-Laplace series on the unit sphere. The result generalizes Carleson's Theorem to higher dimensional unit spheres.

## §1. Introduction

We start with reviewing the basic notations and results. Let  $f \in L^1([-\pi, \pi])$ , then the Fourier coefficients  $c_k$  are all well-defined by

$$c_k = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} f(t) e^{-ikt} dt, \quad k \in \mathbf{Z}, \quad (1)$$

where  $\mathbf{Z}$  denotes the set of all integers.

By  $s_N(f)(x)$  we denote the partial sum

$$s_N(f)(x) = \sum_{|k| \leq N} c_k e^{ikx}, \quad x \in [-\pi, \pi], \quad N \in \mathbf{N}_0, \quad (2)$$

of the Fourier series of  $f$ , where  $\mathbf{N}_0$  denotes the set of all natural numbers.

Then we have,

$$s_N(f)(x) = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} f(t) D_N(x-t) dt, \quad (3)$$

where

$$D_N(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{\sin(N+\frac{1}{2})x}{2 \sin \frac{x}{2}} & \text{for } x \in [-\pi, \pi] \setminus \{0\}, \\ N + \frac{1}{2} & \text{for } x = 0, \end{cases}$$

is the  $N$ -th *Dirichlet kernel*.

Since  $L^2([-\pi, \pi]) \subset L^1([-\pi, \pi])$ , the Fourier coefficients of  $L^2$  functions are also well-defined. The famous Carleson's Theorem is stated as follows.

**Theorem 1.**[Ca] If  $f \in L^2([-\pi, \pi])$ , then

$$s_N(f)(x) \rightarrow f(x) \quad a.e. \quad x \in [-\pi, \pi], \text{ as } N \rightarrow +\infty.$$

L. Carleson proved this theorem in 1966. The next year, R.A. Hunt[Hu] further extended this result to  $f \in L^p([-\pi, \pi])$ ,  $1 < p < \infty$ .

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One naturally asks what is the analogous result for the unit sphere  $\Omega_n$  in the  $n$ -dimensional Euclidean space  $\mathbf{R}^n$ ? For any  $f \in L^2(\Omega_n)$ , there is an associated *Fourier-Laplace series*:

$$f \sim \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} f_k, \quad (4)$$

where  $f_k$  is the homogeneous spherical harmonics of degree  $k$ . There has been literature for the study of convergence and summability of Fourier-Laplace series of various kinds on unit sphere of higher dimensional Euclidean spaces (see [Ro], [Ka], [WL]). However, except for the very lowest dimensional case, pointwise convergence, being the initial motivation of various summabilities, could be said to be very little known. The case  $n = 2$  seems to be the only well studied case ([Zy], [Ca]). Dirichlet ([Di]) gave the first detailed study on the case  $n = 3$ , on the so called Laplace series. Koschmieder ([Ko]) studied the case  $n = 4$ . Roetman ([Ro]) and Kalf ([Ka]) considered the general cases, and, under certain conditions, reduced the convergence problem for  $n = 2k + 2$  to  $n = 2$ ; and  $n = 2k + 3$  to  $n = 3$ . Among others, Meaney ([Me]) addressed some related topics, including the  $L^p$  cases. In this note, we further study convergence of the series (4) in view of the classical Carleson's Theorem and the fundamental properties of Legendre polynomials. Based on the results obtained in [Ro] and [Ka], we further obtain a weaker condition that ensures the pointwise convergence of the Fourier-Laplace series of functions in Sobolev spaces. The result is a generalization of Carleson's Theorem to higher dimensional Euclidean spaces.

## §2. Preliminaries

Referring the reader to Erdélyi ([Er]), Müller ([Mu]) and Roetman ([Ro]) for details, we recall here some notations and main results for surface spherical harmonics that we shall need. Let  $(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  be the coordinates of a point of  $\mathbf{R}^n$  with norm

$$|x|^2 = r^2 = x_1^2 + \dots + x_n^2.$$

Then  $x = r\xi$ , where  $\xi = (\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n)$  is a point on the unit sphere  $\Omega_n$  in  $\mathbf{R}^n$ . Denote by  $A_n$  the total surface area of  $\Omega_n$  and by  $d\omega_n$  the usual Hausdorff surface measure on the  $(n - 1)$ -dimensional unit sphere,

$$A_n = \int_{\Omega_n} d\omega_n.$$

If  $e_1, \dots, e_n$  denote the orthonormal basis vectors in  $\mathbf{R}^n$ , then we can represent the points of  $\Omega_n$  by

$$\xi = te_n + (1 - t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \tilde{\xi}, \quad (5)$$

where  $-1 \leq t \leq 1$ ,  $t = \xi \cdot e_n$  and  $\tilde{\xi}$  is a vector in the subspace  $\mathbf{R}^{n-1}$  generated by  $e_1, \dots, e_{n-1}$ . In the coordinates  $(r, t, \xi)$  the surface measure has the form

$$d\omega_n = (1 - t^2)^{\lambda - \frac{1}{2}} dt d\omega_{n-1}, \quad (6)$$

where  $\lambda = \frac{n-2}{2}$ .

In accordance with (4), there associates a function  $f \in L^2(\Omega_n)$  with a series of surface harmonics

$$S(f; n; \xi) \sim \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} Y_k(f; n; \xi), \quad (7)$$

where

$$Y_k(f; n; \xi) = \alpha_k(n) \int_{\Omega_n} P_k(n; \xi \cdot \eta) f(\eta) d\omega_n(\eta), \quad (8)$$

$P_k(n; s)$  are Legendre polynomials[Mu] defined by the generating relation

$$(1 + x^2 - 2xs)^{-\lambda} = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} c_k(n) x^k P_k(n; s),$$

where

$$c_k(n) = \frac{(n-2)N(n, k)}{2k + n - 2}, \quad \alpha_k(n) = \frac{N(n, k)}{A_n},$$

and

$$N(n, k) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{for } k = 0, \\ \frac{(2k+n-2)\Gamma(k+n-2)}{\Gamma(k+1)\Gamma(n-1)} & \text{for } k \geq 1. \end{cases}$$

The Legendre polynomials of dimension  $n > 3$  are related to the Gegenbauer polynomials by  $C_k^\lambda(s) = c_k(n)P_k(n; s)$ .

In particular, we have

$$N(2, k) = 2; \quad N(3, k) = 2k + 1, \quad k \in \mathbf{N}_0 \cup \{0\}; \quad (9)$$

and

$$P_k(2; t) = \cos(k \cos^{-1} t), \quad t \in [-1, 1], \quad (10)$$

being the well-known Chebyshev polynomial; and

$$P_k(3; t) = \frac{(-1)^k}{2^k k!} \left( \frac{d}{dt} \right)^k (1 - t^2)^k \quad (11)$$

being the ordinary Legendre polynomial. For  $n \geq 3$ , Müller[Mu], p.15, gives that the Legendre polynomials are orthogonal polynomials in the sense

$$\int_{-1}^1 P_k(n; t) P_l(n; t) (1 - t^2)^{\frac{n-3}{2}} dt = \frac{A_n}{A_{n-1}} \cdot \frac{1}{N(n, k)} \cdot \delta_{kl}. \quad (12)$$

Let  $S_N(f; n; \xi)$  denote the partial sum through the term with index  $N$  for the series (7). Then

$$S_N(f; n; \xi) = \int_{\Omega_n} f(\eta) \left\{ \sum_{k=0}^N \alpha_k P_k(n; \xi \cdot \eta) \right\} d\omega_n(\eta). \quad (13)$$

One is interested in the convergence properties of  $S_N(f; n; \xi)$  at  $\xi$  as  $N$  goes to infinity. Hold  $\xi$  fixed and write  $\eta = t\xi + (1 - t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \tilde{\eta}$ , where  $\tilde{\eta}$  is orthogonal to  $\xi$ . Let  $\Omega(\xi)$  denote the unit ball in the  $(n - 1)$ -dimensional space orthogonal to  $\xi$ . Equation (13) then yields

$$S_N(f; n; \xi) = \int_{-1}^1 \left\{ \sum_{k=0}^N \alpha_k A_{n-1} P_k(n; t) \right\} \Phi_\xi(t) (1 - t^2)^{\lambda - \frac{1}{2}} dt, \quad (14)$$

where

$$\Phi_\xi(t) = \frac{1}{A_{n-1}} \int_{\Omega(\xi)} f(t\xi + (1 - t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \tilde{\eta}) d\omega_{n-1}(\tilde{\eta}) \quad (15)$$

is the average of  $f$  over the  $(n-1)$ -sphere of radius  $(1-t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}}$  centered at  $t\xi$  in the hyperplane orthogonal to  $\xi$ .

By [Mu] and [Ro], we have

$$S_N(f; 2; \xi) = \int_{-1}^1 D_N(t) \Phi_\xi(t) (1-t^2)^{-\frac{1}{2}} dt, \quad (16)$$

where

$$D_N(t) = \frac{\sin((N + \frac{1}{2}) \cos^{-1} t)}{\pi \sin \frac{1}{2} \cos^{-1} t} \quad (17)$$

is a substitution of the Dirichlet kernel (see section 1 or [Zy]),

and if  $n = 2l + 2$ ,  $l \in \mathbf{N}_0$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} S_N(f; 2l + 2; \xi) &= \frac{2^{-l}}{\sqrt{\pi} \Gamma(l + \frac{1}{2})} \\ &\cdot \int_{-1}^1 \frac{d^{l+1}}{dt^{l+1}} \left[ \frac{1}{N+l} P_{N+l}(2; t) + \frac{1}{N+l+1} P_{N+l+1}(2; t) \right] \Phi_\xi(t) (1-t^2)^{l-\frac{1}{2}} dt; \end{aligned} \quad (18)$$

$$S_N(f; 3; \xi) = \int_{-1}^1 K_N(t) \Phi_\xi(t) dt, \quad (19)$$

where

$$K_N(t) = \frac{1}{2} (P'_N(3; t) + P'_{N+1}(3; t)), \quad (20)$$

and if  $n = 2l + 3$ ,  $l \in \mathbf{N}_0$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} S_N(f; 2l + 3; \xi) &= \frac{2^{-l-1}}{\Gamma(l+1)} \\ &\cdot \int_{-1}^1 \frac{d^{l+1}}{dt^{l+1}} [P_{N+l}(3; t) + P_{N+l+1}(3; t)] \Phi_\xi(t) (1-t^2)^l dt. \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

### §3. Main Results

Let  $n > 3$ . We use  $W^{[\frac{n-1}{2}]}([-1, 1])$  for the Sobolev space

$$W^{[\frac{n-1}{2}]}([-1, 1]) = \{g \in L^2([-1, 1]; d\mu(t)) \mid \frac{d^l}{dt^l} g \in L^{2-\mu}([-1, 1]; d\mu(t)), l = 1, 2, \dots, [\frac{n-1}{2}]\},$$

where  $d\mu(t) = (1-t^2)^{-\frac{\mu}{2}} dt$ ,  $\mu$  is defined by the relation  $1 - \mu = n \bmod 2$ , i.e.,  $\mu$  equals to 0 or 1. This definition is also valid when  $n$  is 2 or 3, ( $l = 0$ ).

Then we have our main theorem,

**Theorem 2.** Let  $\Phi_\xi(t) \in W^{[\frac{n-1}{2}]}([-1, 1])$ , if  $\Phi_\xi(1) = \lim_{t \rightarrow 1} \Phi_\xi(t)$  exists, then

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} S_N(f; n; \xi) = \Phi_\xi(1).$$

If, in particular,  $f$  is continuous at  $\xi$ , then

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} S_N(f; n; \xi) = f(\xi).$$

**Proof.** Define on  $-1 \leq t \leq 1$

$$\Psi_\xi^\mu(t) = \frac{(-1)^l \Gamma(\frac{\mu}{2}) 2^{-l}}{\Gamma(l+1-\frac{\mu}{2})} (1-t^2)^{\frac{\mu}{2}} \frac{d^l}{dt^l} [\Phi_\xi(t) (1-t^2)^{l-\frac{\mu}{2}}], \quad (22)$$

By integration by parts, the partial sums of (18) and (21) reduce to

$$S_N(f; 2l+2; \xi) = \int_{-1}^1 D_{N+l}(t) \Psi_\xi^1(t) (1-t^2)^{-\frac{1}{2}} dt \quad (23)$$

and

$$S_N(f; 2l+3; \xi) = \int_{-1}^1 K_{N+l}(t) \Psi_\xi^0(t) dt. \quad (24)$$

Now we distinguish two cases.

a) **n even.** Let  $n = 2l+2$ ,  $l \in \mathbf{N}_0$ . From (22), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \Psi_\xi^1(t) &= \frac{(-1)^l \Gamma(\frac{1}{2})}{2^l \Gamma(l+\frac{1}{2})} (1-t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \frac{d^l}{dt^l} [\Phi_\xi(t) (1-t^2)^{l-\frac{1}{2}}] \\ &= \frac{(-1)^l \Gamma(\frac{1}{2})}{2^l \Gamma(l+\frac{1}{2})} (1-t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \left\{ \Phi_\xi(t) \frac{d^l}{dt^l} (1-t^2)^{l-\frac{1}{2}} + \sum_{j=1}^l C_l^j \Phi_\xi^{(j)}(t) \frac{d^{l-j}}{dt^{l-j}} (1-t^2)^{l-\frac{1}{2}} \right\} \\ &= \Phi_\xi(t) t^l + (1-t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \sum_{j=1}^l C_l^j \Phi_\xi^{(j)}(t) (1-t^2)^{j-\frac{1}{2}} P_{l-j}(t) \\ &= \Phi_\xi(t) t^l + (1-t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \sum_{j=1}^l \Phi_\xi^{(j)}(t) (1-t^2)^{j-\frac{1}{2}} Q_{l-j}(t), \end{aligned}$$

where  $P_{l-j}(t)$  and  $Q_{l-j}(t)$  are polynomials of degree  $\leq l-j$ .

Then (23) becomes

$$\begin{aligned} S_N(f; 2l+2; \xi) &= \int_{-1}^1 D_{N+l}(t) \Phi_\xi(t) t^l (1-t^2)^{-\frac{1}{2}} dt \\ &\quad + \int_{-1}^1 D_{N+l}(t) \sum_{j=1}^l \Phi_\xi^{(j)}(t) (1-t^2)^{j-\frac{1}{2}} Q_{l-j}(t) dt \\ &= \frac{1}{\pi} \int_0^\pi \frac{\sin(N+l+\frac{1}{2})\theta}{\sin \frac{1}{2}\theta} \Phi_\xi(\cos \theta) (\cos \theta)^l d\theta \\ &\quad + \frac{2}{\pi} \sum_{j=1}^l \int_0^\pi \sin(N+l+\frac{1}{2})\theta \Phi_\xi^{(j)}(\cos \theta) (\sin \theta)^{2j-1} Q_{l-j}(\cos \theta) \cos \frac{1}{2}\theta d\theta. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $\Phi_\xi(t) \in W^{[\frac{n-1}{2}]}([-1, 1])$ , then

$$\Phi_\xi(\cos \theta) \in L^2([0, \pi]) \text{ and } \Phi_\xi^{(j)}(\cos \theta) \in L^1([0, \pi]), \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, l.$$

Further,

$$\Phi_\xi(\cos \theta)(\cos \theta)^l \in L^2([0, \pi])$$

and

$$\Phi_\xi^{(j)}(\cos \theta)(\sin \theta)^{2j-1} Q_{l-j}(\cos \theta) \cos \frac{1}{2} \theta \in L^1([0, \pi]), \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, l.$$

Therefore, using Carleson's Theorem for the first part of the above expression and using Riemann-Lebesgue Lemma for the second part, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} S_N(f; 2l+2; \xi) &= \Phi_\xi(\cos 0)(\cos 0)^l + 0 \\ &= \Phi_\xi(1). \end{aligned}$$

**b) n odd.** Let  $n = 2l + 3$ ,  $l \in \mathbf{N}_0$ . From (22), we have

$$\Psi_\xi^0(t) = \frac{(-1)^l}{2^l \Gamma(l+1)} \frac{d^l}{dt^l} [\Phi_\xi(t)(1-t^2)^l].$$

Let  $G_\xi(t) = \Phi_\xi(t)(1-t^2)^l$ , then (24) becomes

$$S_N(f; 2l+3; \xi) = \frac{(-1)^l}{2^{l+1} \Gamma(l+1)} \int_{-1}^1 [P'_{N+l}(3; t) + P'_{N+l+1}(3; t)] G_\xi^{(l)}(t) dt.$$

Since  $\Phi_\xi(t) \in W^{[\frac{n-1}{2}]}$ , i.e.  $\frac{d^k}{dt^k} \Phi_\xi(t) \in L^2([-1, 1])$ ,  $k = 0, 1, \dots, l+1$ .

Then

$$\frac{d^k}{dt^k} G_\xi(t) \in L^2([-1, 1]), \quad k = 0, 1, \dots, l+1.$$

Thus, we can integrate the above integral by parts to obtain

$$\begin{aligned} S_N(f; 2l+3; \xi) &= \frac{(-1)^l}{2^{l+1} \Gamma(l+1)} \{ [P_{N+l}(3; t) + P_{N+l+1}(3; t)] G_\xi^{(l)}(t) \Big|_{-1}^1 \\ &\quad - \int_{-1}^1 [P_{N+l}(3; t) + P_{N+l+1}(3; t)] G_\xi^{(l+1)}(t) dt \} \\ &= \Phi_\xi(1) - \frac{(-1)^l}{2^{l+1} \Gamma(l+1)} \int_{-1}^1 [P_{N+l}(3; t) + P_{N+l+1}(3; t)] G_\xi^{(l+1)}(t) dt. \end{aligned}$$

So, the assertion of the theorem follows if we can show

$$\int_{-1}^1 |P_m(3; t) G_\xi^{(l+1)}(t)| dt \rightarrow 0, \quad \text{as } m \rightarrow \infty.$$

From (12) we have

$$\int_{-1}^1 |P_m(3; t)|^2 dt = \frac{2}{2m+1}, \quad m \in \mathbf{N}_0.$$

By Hölder's inequality, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-1}^1 |P_m(3; t) G_\xi^{(l+1)}(t)| dt &\leq \left( \int_{-1}^1 |P_m(3; t)|^2 dt \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \cdot \left( \int_{-1}^1 |G_\xi^{(l+1)}(t)|^2 dt \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \\ &= \|G_\xi^{(l+1)}\|_{L^2} \cdot \sqrt{\frac{2}{2m+1}}. \end{aligned}$$

Owing to the assumption of  $\Phi_\xi(t)$ , we have  $G_\xi^{(l+1)}(t) \in L^2([-1, 1])$ , then

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \int_{-1}^1 |P_m(3; t) G_\xi^{(l+1)}(t)| dt = 0.$$

Thus,

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} S_N(f; 2l+3; \xi) = \Phi_\xi(1). \quad \square$$

**Remark 1.** The above proof of Theorem 2 is also valid for  $n = 2$  and, in fact, directly reduced to Carleson's Theorem. It is observed that for  $n = 2$ , i.e.,  $l = 0$ . In the first part of Theorem 2, the average  $\Phi_\xi(t)$  becomes simply evaluation at two endpoints of the interval  $(-\cos^{-1} t, \cos^{-1} t)$ ,

$$\Phi_\xi(t) = \frac{1}{2} [f(\theta_\xi + \cos^{-1} t) + f(\theta_\xi - \cos^{-1} t)],$$

where  $\theta_\xi$  is the angle between  $\xi$  and  $e_1$ . The required Sobolev space reduces to  $L^2$  space. From the condition of Theorem 2, let  $t = \cos \theta$ , the Dirichlet kernel is just the same as the one in the complex plane, and  $\Phi_\xi \in L^2([0, \pi])$  if and only if  $\frac{1}{2} [f(\theta_\xi + \theta) + f(\theta_\xi - \theta)] \in L^2([0, \pi])$ . In particular, if  $\xi = 1$ , Theorem 2 reduces to the classical Carleson's Theorem.

**Remark 2.** By the result of R.A. Hunt[Hu], we can obviously extend the first part of Theorem 2, which  $n$  is an even number, to  $L^p$  cases,  $1 < p < \infty$ .

**Remark 3.** We prefer to impose the condition on the average of  $f$ , but not on  $f$ , since the former is weaker than the latter. By the definition of  $\Phi_\xi(t)$  and the Whitney's extension theorem(see [Wh] or [Ro]), the continuity property of  $\Phi_\xi(t)$  can be inherited from  $f$ . But the  $L^2$ -bounded property can not. In general,  $f \in L^p(\Omega_n)$ ,  $p \geq 1$ , implies  $\Phi_\xi(t) \in L^p([-1, 1]; (1 - t^2)^{\lambda - \frac{1}{2}} dt)$ , in fact, by Jensen's Inequality, since  $x^p$ ,  $p \geq 1$ , is a convex function when  $x \geq 0$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-1}^1 |\Phi_\xi(t)|^p (1 - t^2)^{\lambda - \frac{1}{2}} dt &= \int_{-1}^1 \left| \int_{\Omega(\xi)} f(t\xi + (1 - t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \tilde{\eta}) d\omega_{n-1}(\tilde{\eta}) / A_{n-1} \right|^p (1 - t^2)^{\lambda - \frac{1}{2}} dt \\ &\leq \int_{-1}^1 \left( \int_{\Omega(\xi)} |f(t\xi + (1 - t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \tilde{\eta})| d\omega_{n-1}(\tilde{\eta}) / A_{n-1} \right)^p (1 - t^2)^{\lambda - \frac{1}{2}} dt \\ &\leq \int_{-1}^1 \int_{\Omega(\xi)} |f(t\xi + (1 - t^2)^{\frac{1}{2}} \tilde{\eta})|^p d\omega_{n-1}(\tilde{\eta}) / A_{n-1} (1 - t^2)^{\lambda - \frac{1}{2}} dt \\ &= \int_{\Omega_n} |f(\eta)|^p d\omega_n(\eta). \end{aligned}$$

In particular, when  $n = 3$ , for any  $p \geq 1$ ,  $f \in L^p(\Omega_n)$  implies  $\Phi_\xi(t) \in L^p([-1, 1])$  since  $\lambda - \frac{1}{2} = 0$  in the case. Note that,  $\Phi_\xi(t) \in L^p([-1, 1])$  implies  $\Phi_\xi(t) \in L^p([-1, 1]; (1 - t^2)^{\lambda - \frac{1}{2}} dt)$  for any  $p \geq 1$ , but not vice versa.

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Ming-gang Fei and Tao Qian  
Faculty of Science and Technology  
University of Macau  
P. O. Box 3001  
Macao (via Hong Kong)  
E-mail: ya47402@umac.mo, fsttq@umac.mo