

*To the memory of Alexandra*

# On lineability and additivity of real functions with finite preimages

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## Abstract

We study lineability of real functions with finite preimages. In particular, we prove that the class of  $n$ -to-one functions contains a vector subspace of dimension  $n$  but not of dimension  $(n + 1)$ . Additionally, we give examples of star-like families of functions (closed under multiplication by a non-zero scalar) for which lineability is less than additivity.

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## 1. Introduction

The symbols  $\mathbb{N}$ ,  $\mathbb{Q}$ , and  $\mathbb{R}$  denote the sets of positive integers, rational and real numbers, respectively. The cardinality of a set  $X$  is denoted by the symbol  $|X|$ . In particular,  $|\mathbb{N}|$  is denoted by  $\omega$  and  $|\mathbb{R}|$  is denoted by  $\mathfrak{c}$ . We consider only real-valued functions. No distinction is made between a function and its graph. We write  $f|_A$  for the restriction of  $f$  to the set  $A \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ . The symbol  $\chi_A$  denotes the characteristic function of the set  $A$ . For any subset  $Y$  of a vector space  $V$  and any  $v \in V$  we define  $v + Y = \{v + y : y \in Y\}$ .

The problem of finding a “large” vector subspace contained in a given subset of a vector space has gained on importance in recent years and significant

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number of articles have been written on the topic (see [1–4, 6–13]). More specifically, many well known families of functions (considered as subsets of the vector space  $\mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$ ) have been studied in that context. We will recall here some of the most recent definitions related to the topic (see [1, 2, 6]). Let  $\mathcal{F} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$ ,  $E \subseteq \mathbb{R}$  be a field, and  $\kappa$  be a cardinal number. We say that  $\mathcal{F}$  is  $\kappa$ -lineable over  $E$  if  $\mathcal{F} \cup \{0\}$  contains a subspace of  $\mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  (considered as a space over  $E$ ) of dimension  $\kappa$ . The (coefficient of) lineability of the family  $\mathcal{F}$  over the field  $E$  is denoted by  $\mathcal{L}_E(\mathcal{F})$  and defined as follows

$$\mathcal{L}_E(\mathcal{F}) = \min\{\kappa: \mathcal{F} \text{ is not } \kappa\text{-lineable over } E\}.$$

In the case  $E = \mathbb{R}$  we simply write  $\mathcal{L}(\mathcal{F})$ .

In this paper we focus on the lineability of functions with finite preimages. Let us recall the definitions of the classes of functions considered in the article. A function  $f: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is a:

- *linearly independent* function if the graph of  $f$  is a linearly independent subset of  $\mathbb{R}^2$  (over  $\mathbb{Q}$ ) ( $f \in \text{LIF}$ );
- *Hamel* function if the graph of  $f$  is a Hamel basis for  $\mathbb{R}^2$  ( $f \in \text{HF}$ );
- *n-to-one* function ( $n \geq 1$ ) if for every  $y \in \mathbb{R}$ ,  $|f^{-1}(y)| = n$  or  $0$  ( $f \in \text{F}_n$ );
- *finite-to-one* function if for every  $y \in \mathbb{R}$ ,  $|f^{-1}(y)| < \omega$  ( $f \in \text{F}_{<\omega}$ ).

In addition, we introduce the symbol  $\text{F}_{<n}$  ( $n \geq 2$ ) to denote the family of functions  $f: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  such that for every  $y \in \mathbb{R}$ ,  $|f^{-1}(y)| < n$ .

The cardinal function  $\text{A}(\mathcal{F})$ , for  $\mathcal{F} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$ , is defined as the smallest cardinality of a family  $\mathcal{G} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  for which there is no  $g \in \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  such that  $g + \mathcal{G} \subseteq \mathcal{F}$  (see [15]). It was investigated for various classes of real functions. The following remark gives the values of  $\text{A}(\text{F}_n)$ ,  $\text{A}(\text{F}_{<n})$ , and  $\text{A}(\text{F}_{<\omega})$ .

**Remark 1.1.**  $\text{A}(\text{F}_1) = \text{A}(\text{F}_{<n}) = \text{A}(\text{F}_{<\omega}) = \mathfrak{c}$  and  $\text{A}(\text{F}_n) = 2$  for  $n \geq 2$ .

**Proof.** Let  $\mathcal{F} = \{f \in \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}: f|(\mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{N}) \equiv 0\}$ . Note that  $|\mathcal{F}| = \mathfrak{c}$  and  $g + \mathcal{F} \not\subseteq \text{F}_{<\omega}$  for every real function  $g$  since  $-g\chi_{\mathbb{N}} \in \mathcal{F}$  and  $g + (-g\chi_{\mathbb{N}})$  is constant on  $\mathbb{N}$ . Hence  $\text{A}(\text{F}_1) \leq \text{A}(\text{F}_{<n}) \leq \text{A}(\text{F}_{<\omega}) \leq \mathfrak{c}$ . To show that  $\text{A}(\text{F}_1) \geq \mathfrak{c}$  let  $\mathcal{H} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  be such that  $|\mathcal{H}| < \mathfrak{c}$ . Let  $g \in \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  be such that for all  $x_1, x_2 \in \mathbb{R}$  such that  $x_1 \neq x_2$  we have

$$(g(x_1) + \{h(x_1): h \in \mathcal{H}\}) \cap (g(x_2) + \{h(x_2): h \in \mathcal{H}\}) = \emptyset$$

(such a function  $g$  can easily be constructed using transfinite induction). Notice that  $g + \mathcal{H} \subseteq F_1$ .

To see that  $A(F_n) = 2$  for  $n \geq 2$ , recall first that  $A(\mathcal{F}) \geq 2$  for every non-empty family  $\mathcal{F} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$ . To justify the inequality  $A(F_n) \leq 2$  define  $f_1 \equiv 0$  and  $f_2 = \chi_{\{0\}}$  and note that for every function  $g$  we have  $g + \{f_1, f_2\} \not\subseteq F_n$ .  $\square$

Gómez-Merino, Muñoz-Fernández, and Seoane-Sepúlveda (see [8]) established a connection between the two cardinal functions  $A$  and  $\mathcal{L}$ . Namely, they proved the following theorem.

**Theorem 1.2.** [8, Theorem 2.4] *If  $\mathcal{F} \subsetneq \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  is star-like (i.e.,  $c\mathcal{F} \subseteq \mathcal{F}$  for every  $c \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ ) and  $A(\mathcal{F}) > \mathfrak{c}$ , then  $\mathcal{L}(\mathcal{F}) > A(\mathcal{F})$ .*

The above theorem was generalized by Bartoszewicz and Głąb [2, Theorem 2.2]: *If  $\mathcal{F} \subsetneq \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  is star-like,  $E \subseteq \mathbb{R}$  is an infinite field, and  $A(\mathcal{F}) > |E|$ , then  $\mathcal{L}_E(\mathcal{F}) > A(\mathcal{F})$ .* Theorem 1.2 guarantees that families of functions with large additivity (greater than  $\mathfrak{c}$ ) contain a subspace of large dimension (greater than or equal to additivity). The authors asked a question whether the above theorem can be extended to classes of functions with lower additivity. Specifically, does Theorem 1.2 remain true if  $2 < A(\mathcal{F}) \leq \mathfrak{c}$ ? A negative answer to this question was given by Bartoszewicz and Głąb in [2]. In particular, they proved that for every  $\kappa \leq \mathfrak{c}$  there exists a family  $\mathcal{F} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  such that  $A(\mathcal{F}) = \kappa$  and  $\mathcal{L}(\mathcal{F}) = 2$ . It still may be of interest to find such families among those that were previously defined and studied in other contexts. We identify three of such classes of functions.

**Remark 1.3.** The families HF, LIF, and  $F_1$  are all star-like. In addition,  $A(\text{HF}) = \omega$ ,  $A(F_1) = A(\text{LIF}) = \mathfrak{c}$  and  $\mathcal{L}(\text{HF}) = \mathcal{L}(F_1) = \mathcal{L}(\text{LIF}) = 2$ .

**Proof.** The equalities  $A(\text{HF}) = \omega$  and  $A(\text{LIF}) = \mathfrak{c}$  were proved in [16, 17]. For  $A(F_1) = \mathfrak{c}$  see Remark 1.1 and for  $\mathcal{L}(F_1) = 2$  see Theorem 2.3. (See also [9].) To see  $\mathcal{L}(\text{HF}) = \mathcal{L}(\text{LIF}) = 2$  note that for any two functions  $f, g$  we have  $(g(0)f - f(0)g)(0) = 0$ , hence  $g(0)f - f(0)g \notin \text{LIF}$ . The fact that the classes HF, LIF, and  $F_1$  are star-like easily follows from the definitions of these classes.  $\square$

## 2. Main results

We first determine  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{HF})$  and  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{LIF})$ . To do that we will make use of the following lemma.

**Lemma 2.1.** [18, Lemma 3] *Let  $B \subseteq \mathbb{R}$  be a Hamel basis. Assume that  $h: \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is such that  $h|_B \equiv 0$ . Then  $h$  is a Hamel function iff  $h|_{(\mathbb{R} \setminus B)}$  is one-to-one and  $h[\mathbb{R} \setminus B] \subseteq \mathbb{R}$  is a Hamel basis.*

**Theorem 2.2.**  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{HF}) = \mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{LIF}) = \mathfrak{c}^+$ .

**Proof.** First observe that since  $\text{HF} \subseteq \text{LIF}$  we have  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{HF}) \leq \mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{LIF})$ . Therefore it suffices to show  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{LIF}) \leq \mathfrak{c}^+$  and  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{HF}) \geq \mathfrak{c}^+$ . The inequality  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{LIF}) \leq \mathfrak{c}^+$  follows from the fact that in any collection of functions of cardinality  $> \mathfrak{c}$ , there are two distinct functions  $f_1, f_2$  such that  $f_1(0) = f_2(0)$  and then  $f_1 - f_2 \notin \text{LIF}$ . (Note here that the inequality  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{LIF}) \geq \mathfrak{c}^+$  follows from theorem of Bartoszewicz and Głab [2, Theorem 2.2].)

By Lemma 2.1, the inequality  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\text{HF}) \geq \mathfrak{c}^+$  follows from the existence of a family of Hamel bases  $H_\alpha = \{h_\xi^\alpha : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\} \subseteq \mathbb{R}$  ( $\alpha < \mathfrak{c}$ ) such that

$$(\Delta) \{p_1 h_\xi^{\alpha_1} + \cdots + p_k h_\xi^{\alpha_k} : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\} \text{ is a Hamel basis}$$

for all  $\alpha_1 < \cdots < \alpha_k < \mathfrak{c}$  and  $p_1, \dots, p_k \in \mathbb{Q} \setminus \{0\}$ ,  $k \geq 1$ . Indeed, if such a family exists then functions defined by

$$f_\alpha = (B \times \{0\}) \cup \{(x_\xi, h_\xi^\alpha) : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\}$$

(where  $B$  is a Hamel basis and  $\mathbb{R} \setminus B = \{x_\xi : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\}$ ) are linearly independent over  $\mathbb{Q}$  and  $\text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}\{f_\alpha : \alpha < \mathfrak{c}\} \subseteq \text{HF} \cup \{0\}$ .

Let  $V = \{H_\alpha\}$  be a maximal set of Hamel bases with the property  $(\Delta)$  and assume that  $|V| < \mathfrak{c}$ . Using transfinite induction we will define a Hamel basis  $H = \{h_\xi : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\}$  such that  $V \cup \{H\}$  still possesses the property  $(\Delta)$ . Let  $\mathbb{R} = \{y_\gamma : \gamma < \mathfrak{c}\}$  and fix  $\lambda_0 < \mathfrak{c}$ . Assume that the construction has been carried out for every  $\lambda < \lambda_0$  satisfying the following conditions:

- (i)  $\lambda \in I_\lambda$ , where  $I_\lambda = \{\xi < \mathfrak{c} : h_\xi$  is defined after stage  $\lambda\}$ ,
- (ii)  $|I_\lambda| \leq \max(\omega, \lambda, |V|)$ ,
- (iii) for all  $k \geq 1$ ,  $\alpha_1 < \cdots < \alpha_k < |V|$ , and  $p_1, \dots, p_k \in \mathbb{Q}$  we have that  $\{h_\xi + p_1 h_\xi^{\alpha_1} + \cdots + p_k h_\xi^{\alpha_k} : \xi \in I_\lambda\}$  is linearly independent over  $\mathbb{Q}$  and  $y_\lambda \in \text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}\{h_\xi + p_1 h_\xi^{\alpha_1} + \cdots + p_k h_\xi^{\alpha_k} : \xi \in I_\lambda\}$ .

Put  $I = \{\xi < \mathfrak{c} : h_\xi \text{ is defined before the step } \lambda_0\} = \bigcup_{\lambda < \lambda_0} I_\lambda$  and observe that  $|I| \leq \max(\omega, \lambda_0, |V|)$ . If  $\lambda_0 \notin I$  then choose

$$h_{\lambda_0} \notin \text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\{h_\xi : \xi \in I\} \cup \{h_\xi^\kappa : \xi \in I, \kappa < |V|\}).$$

This can be done because the cardinality of this span is not bigger than  $\max(\omega, \lambda_0, |V|) < \mathfrak{c}$ . Hence the condition (i) is satisfied for  $\lambda_0$ .

Next we will assure that the condition (iii) holds for  $\lambda_0$  using an additional induction process. Fix a well ordering

$$\{(k^\tau, \alpha_1^\tau, \dots, \alpha_{k^\tau}^\tau, p_1^\tau, \dots, p_{k^\tau}^\tau) : \tau < \max(\omega, |V|)\} \text{ of}$$

$$\{(k, \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_k, p_1, \dots, p_k) : k \geq 1, \alpha_1 < \dots < \alpha_k < |V|, p_1, \dots, p_k \in \mathbb{Q}\}$$

and an ordinal number  $\beta < \max(\omega, |V|)$ . Suppose that the induction process has been performed for every  $\tau < \beta$ . Let  $I^\tau = \{\xi < \mathfrak{c} : h_\xi \text{ is defined after step } \tau\}$  (observe here that  $I \cup \{\lambda_0\} \subseteq I^0$ ) and assume that

- (a)  $|I^\tau| \leq \max(\omega, \lambda_0, |V|)$ ,
- (b) for all  $k \geq 1$ ,  $\alpha_1 < \dots < \alpha_k < |V|$ ,  $p_1, \dots, p_k \in \mathbb{Q}$  we have that  $\{h_\xi + p_1 h_\xi^{\alpha_1} + \dots + p_k h_\xi^{\alpha_k} : \xi \in I^\tau\}$  is linearly independent over  $\mathbb{Q}$ ,
- (c)  $y_{\lambda_0} \in \text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}\{h_\xi + p_1^\tau h_\xi^{\alpha_1^\tau} + \dots + p_{k^\tau}^\tau h_\xi^{\alpha_{k^\tau}^\tau} : \xi \in I^\tau\}$ .

We need

$$y_{\lambda_0} \in \text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}\{h_\xi + p_1^\beta h_\xi^{\alpha_1^\beta} + \dots + p_{k^\beta}^\beta h_\xi^{\alpha_{k^\beta}^\beta} : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau\}.$$

If this is not the case, choose  $\gamma \in \mathfrak{c} \setminus \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau$  such that for all  $m \geq 1$ ,  $p_1, \dots, p_m \in \mathbb{Q} \setminus \{0\}$ , and  $\alpha_1 < \dots < \alpha_m < |V|$  we have that  $p_1 h_\gamma^{\alpha_1} + \dots + p_m h_\gamma^{\alpha_m}$  is not an element of

$$\text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\{h_\xi : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau\} \cup \{h_\xi^\kappa : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau, \kappa < |V|\} \cup \{y_{\lambda_0}\}).$$

Such a  $\gamma$  exists as the above span has cardinality less than  $\mathfrak{c}$  and by the condition  $(\Delta)$  the set  $\{p_1 h_\xi^{\alpha_1} + \dots + p_m h_\xi^{\alpha_m} : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\}$  is a Hamel basis for all  $m \geq 1$ ,  $p_1, \dots, p_m \in \mathbb{Q} \setminus \{0\}$ , and  $\alpha_1 < \dots < \alpha_m < |V|$ .

Set  $h_\gamma = y_{\lambda_0} - (p_1^\beta h_\gamma^{\alpha_1^\beta} + \dots + p_{k^\beta}^\beta h_\gamma^{\alpha_{k^\beta}^\beta})$  and  $I^\beta = \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau \cup \{\gamma\}$ . Obviously  $|I^\beta| \leq |\bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau| + 1 \leq \max(\omega, \lambda_0, |V|)$  and

$$y_{\lambda_0} \in \text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}\{h_\xi + p_1^\beta h_\xi^{\alpha_1^\beta} + \dots + p_{k^\beta}^\beta h_\xi^{\alpha_{k^\beta}^\beta} : \xi \in I^\beta\}.$$

Now, to verify that condition (b) holds for  $\beta$  suppose that for some  $k \geq 1$ ,  $\alpha_1 < \dots < \alpha_k < |V|$ ,  $p_1, \dots, p_k \in \mathbb{Q}$ ,  $\{h_\xi + p_1 h_\xi^{\alpha_1} + \dots + p_k h_\xi^{\alpha_k} : \xi \in I^\beta\}$  are linearly dependent over  $\mathbb{Q}$ . Then  $h_\gamma + p_1 h_\gamma^{\alpha_1} + \dots + p_k h_\gamma^{\alpha_k}$  would be in

$$\text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\{h_\xi : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau\} \cup \{h_\xi^\kappa : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau, \kappa < |V|\})$$

which in turn would imply that  $p_1 h_\gamma^{\alpha_1} + \dots + p_k h_\gamma^{\alpha_k} - (p_1^\beta h_\gamma^{\alpha_1^\beta} + \dots + p_k^\beta h_\gamma^{\alpha_k^\beta})$  is in

$$\text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\{h_\xi : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau\} \cup \{h_\xi^\kappa : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau, \kappa < |V|\} \cup \{y_{\lambda_0}\}).$$

Based on the way  $\gamma$  was selected, the latter could only happen if (1)  $p_1 = \dots = p_k = p_1^\beta = \dots = p_k^\beta = 0$  or (2)  $k = k^\beta$ ,  $\alpha_i = \alpha_i^\beta$ , and  $p_i = p_i^\beta$  ( $i = 1, \dots, k$ ). If (1) was true then  $y_{\lambda_0} \in \text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}\{h_\xi : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau\}$  which we assumed was not the case when defining  $h_\gamma$ . If (2) was true then  $y_{\lambda_0} = h_\gamma + p_1^\beta h_\gamma^{\alpha_1^\beta} + \dots + p_k^\beta h_\gamma^{\alpha_k^\beta}$  would be in

$$\text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}(\{h_\xi + p_1^\beta h_\xi^{\alpha_1^\beta} + \dots + p_k^\beta h_\xi^{\alpha_k^\beta} : \xi \in \bigcup_{\tau < \beta} I^\tau\})$$

which, again, would result in a contradiction.

Hence, we can assume that the above induction process has been carried out for all  $\beta < \max(\omega, |V|)$  and consequently that the condition (iii) holds for  $\lambda_0$ . Note that  $I_{\lambda_0} = \bigcup_{\beta < \max(\omega, |V|)} I^\beta$  and therefore  $|I_{\lambda_0}| \leq \max(\omega, \lambda_0, |V|)$ . This completes the step  $\lambda_0$  of the definition of  $H$ . It follows from the condition (iii) of the inductive construction that  $H$  is a Hamel basis (use  $p_1 = \dots = p_k = 0$ ) and that  $V \cup \{H\}$  possesses the property  $(\Delta)$ . This contradicts the assumption that  $V = \{H_\alpha\}$  is a maximal family of Hamel bases satisfying  $(\Delta)$ . Hence we conclude that  $|V| = \mathfrak{c}$ .  $\square$

The following theorem gives the lineability of the functions with finite preimages ( $F_n$  and  $F_{<\omega}$ ).

**Theorem 2.3.**

- (i)  $\mathcal{L}(F_n) = n + 1$  and  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(F_n) = \mathfrak{c}^+$  for  $n \geq 1$ .
- (ii)  $\mathcal{L}(F_{<\omega}) = \mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(F_{<\omega}) = \mathfrak{c}^+$ .

In the proof of the above theorem we will use the following lemma.

**Lemma 2.4.** *Let  $\zeta < \mathfrak{c}$  and  $\mathcal{E}_m (m \geq 1)$  be a collection of  $(m-1)$ -dimensional subspaces of  $\mathbb{R}^m$  such that  $|\mathcal{E}_m| < \mathfrak{c}$  and  $v_E \in \mathbb{R}^m$  for  $E \in \mathcal{E}_m$ . Then there exists  $(y_0, y_1, \dots) \in (\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\})^\zeta$  such that for every  $m \geq 1$  and all  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_m < \zeta$  we have  $(y_{\xi_1}, \dots, y_{\xi_m}) \notin \bigcup_{E \in \mathcal{E}_m} (v_E + E)$ .*

**Proof.** Choose  $y'_0 \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$ . Next pick  $\gamma < \zeta$  and assume that  $y'_\xi$  is defined for every  $\xi < \gamma$  and that the sequence  $(y'_0, y'_1, \dots) \in (\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\})^\gamma$  has the following property:

- ( $\star$ ) for every  $k \geq 2$  and all  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_k < \gamma$  we have that for every  $m \geq k$  and  $E \in \mathcal{E}_m$  if  $\mathbb{R}^k \times \{0\}^{m-k} \not\subseteq E$  then  $(y'_{\xi_1}, \dots, y'_{\xi_k}, \underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_{(m-k) \text{ 0's}}) \notin E$ .

Now fix  $m \geq k \geq 2$ ,  $E \in \mathcal{E}_m$ , and  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_{k-1} < \gamma$ . Assume that  $\mathbb{R}^k \times \{0\}^{m-k} \not\subseteq E$ . We claim that there is at most one  $y \in \mathbb{R}$  such that  $(y'_{\xi_1}, \dots, y'_{\xi_{k-1}}, y, \underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_{(m-k) \text{ 0's}}) \in E$ . If that was not the case then we would have

that  $(\underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_{(k-1) \text{ 0's}}, 1, \underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_{(m-k) \text{ 0's}}) \in E$  and consequently

$$(y'_{\xi_1}, \dots, y'_{\xi_{k-1}}, \underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_{(m-k+1) \text{ 0's}}) \in E.$$

If  $k = 2$  then the latter would imply that  $\mathbb{R}^k \times \{0\}^{m-k} \subseteq E$ . If  $k \geq 3$  then using the inductive assumption ( $\star$ ) we would conclude that  $\mathbb{R}^{k-1} \times \{0\}^{m-k+1} \subseteq E$ , which in combination with  $(\underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_{(k-1) \text{ 0's}}, 1, \underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_{(m-k) \text{ 0's}}) \in E$  would

imply again that  $\mathbb{R}^k \times \{0\}^{m-k} \subseteq E$ . In either case ( $k = 2$  or  $k \geq 3$ ) we would get a contradiction with our assumption about  $E$ . Let us denote the  $y$  from above by  $y_{k,m,\xi_1,\dots,\xi_{k-1},E}$  (if the  $y$  doesn't exist then we can set  $y_{k,m,\xi_1,\dots,\xi_{k-1},E} = 0$ ). Now choose  $y'_\gamma$  to be a non-zero element of

$$\mathbb{R} \setminus \bigcup_{k \leq m, \xi_1 < \dots < \xi_{k-1}, E} \{y_{k,m,\xi_1,\dots,\xi_{k-1},E}\}.$$

One can easily observe that the constructed sequence  $(y'_0, y'_1, \dots) \in (\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\})^\zeta$  satisfies the following property: for every  $m \geq 1$  and all  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_m < \alpha$  we have  $(y'_{\xi_1}, \dots, y'_{\xi_m}) \notin \bigcup_{E \in \mathcal{E}_m} E$ .

Now pick  $E \in \mathcal{E}_m$  and  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_m < \alpha$ . There exists at most one  $c_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_m, E} \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\}$  such that

$$c_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_m, E}(y'_{\xi_1}, \dots, y'_{\xi_m}) \in v_E + E.$$

Choose  $c$  to be a non-zero element of  $\mathbb{R} \setminus \bigcup_{m, \xi_1 < \dots < \xi_m, E} \{c_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_m, E}\}$  and observe that  $(y_0, y_1, \dots) = c(y'_0, y'_1, \dots)$  has the desired property.  $\square$

**Proof of Theorem 2.3.**

(i) To prove the inequality  $\mathcal{L}(F_n) \leq n + 1$ , let  $f_1, f_2, \dots, f_{n+1} \in \mathbb{R}^{\mathbb{R}}$  and  $x_1 < x_2 < \dots < x_{n+1} \in \mathbb{R}$ . Consider the following homogeneous system of  $n$  linear equations with  $(n + 1)$  unknowns  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{n+1}$ :

$$\begin{aligned} a_1 f_1(x_1) + \dots + a_{n+1} f_{n+1}(x_1) &= a_1 f_1(x_2) + \dots + a_{n+1} f_{n+1}(x_2) \\ &\vdots \\ a_1 f_1(x_n) + \dots + a_{n+1} f_{n+1}(x_n) &= a_1 f_1(x_{n+1}) + \dots + a_{n+1} f_{n+1}(x_{n+1}) \end{aligned}$$

There exists a non-trivial solution  $(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_{n+1}) \in \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$  to the above system. Hence, if  $f_1, \dots, f_{n+1}$  are linearly independent then  $\text{span}\{f_1, \dots, f_{n+1}\} \not\subseteq F_{<(n+1)} \cup \{0\}$ .

The inequality  $\mathcal{L}(F_n) \geq n + 1$  is obvious for  $n = 1$  so we can assume that  $n \geq 2$ . We will define  $f_1, \dots, f_n \in F_n$  on  $\mathbb{R} = \{x_\xi : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\}$  by induction on  $\xi$  such that  $f_1, \dots, f_n$  are linearly independent and  $\text{span}\{f_1, \dots, f_n\} \subseteq F_n \cup \{0\}$ . We will proceed as follows. Let  $\mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{(0, \dots, 0)\} = \{(a_1^\beta, \dots, a_n^\beta) : \beta < \mathfrak{c}\}$ . Set  $f_1(x_0), \dots, f_n(x_0)$  arbitrarily and pick  $\alpha < \mathfrak{c}$ . Assume that the construction has been carried out for all  $\xi < \alpha$ . Let  $D_\xi = \text{dom}(f_1) = \dots = \text{dom}(f_n)$  after stage  $\xi$  and assume that

- (a)  $\{x_\gamma : \gamma \leq \xi\} \subseteq D_\xi$ ,  $|D_\xi| \leq \max(\omega, |\xi|)$ , and  $D_{\xi_1} \subseteq D_\xi$  for  $\xi_1 \leq \xi$ ,
- (b) for every  $\beta < \mathfrak{c}$  we have that  $|(a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)^{-1}(y)| \leq n$  for all  $y \in \mathbb{R}$ ,
- (c) for every  $\beta \leq \xi$  we have that  $|(a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)^{-1}(y)| = n$  for all  $y \in (a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)[\{x_\gamma : \gamma < \xi\}]$ .

Put  $D = \bigcup_{\xi < \alpha} D_\xi$  and define  $P(A) = \{(x'_1, \dots, x'_k) \in A^k : x'_i \neq x'_j \text{ for } i < j \leq k, k \geq 2\}$  for any  $A \subseteq \mathbb{R}$ . Note that the condition (b) is equivalent to the following statement: for all  $(x'_1, \dots, x'_{n+1}) \in P(D)$  the set of vectors

$$\{(f_1(x'_i) - f_1(x'_{i+1}), \dots, f_n(x'_i) - f_n(x'_{i+1})) : i \leq n\}$$



is linearly independent. Indeed, the latter is equivalent to the fact that for all  $(x'_1, \dots, x'_{n+1}) \in P(D)$  the following homogeneous system of linear equations

$$\begin{aligned} a_1 f_1(x'_1) + \dots + a_n f_n(x'_1) &= a_1 f_1(x'_2) + \dots + a_n f_n(x'_2) \\ &\vdots \\ a_1 f_1(x'_n) + \dots + a_n f_n(x'_n) &= a_1 f_1(x'_{n+1}) + \dots + a_n f_n(x'_{n+1}) \end{aligned}$$

has only the trivial solution ( $a_1 = \dots = a_n = 0$ ) since the vectors  $(f_1(x'_i) - f_1(x'_{i+1}), \dots, f_n(x'_i) - f_n(x'_{i+1}))$  ( $i \leq n$ ) are the row vectors of the matrix of coefficients of the above system.

If  $x_\alpha \notin D$  then we need to define  $f_1(x_\alpha), \dots, f_n(x_\alpha)$  preserving the condition (b). Choose

$$(f_1(x_\alpha), \dots, f_n(x_\alpha)) \in \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \bigcup_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n) \in P(D)} ((f_1(x'_1), \dots, f_n(x'_1)) + E_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n)}),$$

where  $E_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n)} = \text{span}\{(f_1(x'_i) - f_1(x'_{i+1}), \dots, f_n(x'_i) - f_n(x'_{i+1})) : i \leq n-1\}$ . The above choice is possible by Lemma 2.4 (use  $\zeta = n$ ,  $m = n$ ,  $\mathcal{E}_n = \{E_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n)} : (x'_1, \dots, x'_n) \in P(D)\}$ , and  $v_E = (f_1(x'_1), \dots, f_n(x'_1))$  for  $E = E_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n)}$ ; note that  $|\mathcal{E}_n| < \mathfrak{c}$  since  $|P(D)| \leq \max(\omega, |\alpha|)$ ).

Now pick  $\beta \leq \alpha$  and assume that for every  $\beta' < \beta$  we have

$$|(a_1^{\beta'} f_1 + \dots + a_n^{\beta'} f_n)^{-1}(y)| = n \text{ for all } y \in (a_1^{\beta'} f_1 + \dots + a_n^{\beta'} f_n)[\{x_\gamma : \gamma < \alpha\}].$$

We will extend the functions  $f_1, \dots, f_n$  so that

$$|(a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)^{-1}(y)| = n \text{ for all } y \in (a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)[\{x_\gamma : \gamma < \alpha\}].$$

Assume that  $|(a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)^{-1}(y^\gamma)| = n - k_\gamma$  ( $0 < k_\gamma < n$ ) for  $y^\gamma = (a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)(x_\gamma)$ . Pick  $(x_1^\gamma, \dots, x_{k_\gamma}^\gamma) \in P(\mathbb{R} \setminus f_1^{-1}[\mathbb{R}])$ . We can inductively (with respect to  $i$ ) define  $f_1(x_i^\gamma), \dots, f_n(x_i^\gamma)$  such that  $(a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)(x_i^\gamma) = y^\gamma$  for  $i = 1, \dots, k_\gamma$ . Indeed, choose

$$(f_1(x_i^\gamma), \dots, f_n(x_i^\gamma)) \in \{(y_1, \dots, y_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n : a_1^\beta y_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta y_n = y^\gamma\}$$

such that

$$(f_1(x_i^\gamma), \dots, f_n(x_i^\gamma)) \notin \bigcup_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n) \in P(f_1^{-1}[\mathbb{R}])} (f_1(x'_1), \dots, f_n(x'_1)) + E_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n)},$$

where  $E_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n)} = \text{span}\{(f_1(x'_i) - f_1(x'_{i+1}), \dots, f_n(x'_i) - f_n(x'_{i+1})) : i \leq n-1\}$ . Note that the above choice is possible since for each  $(x'_1, \dots, x'_n) \in P(f_1^{-1}[\mathbb{R}])$ ,  $\{(y_1, \dots, y_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n : a_1^\beta y_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta y_n = y^\gamma\}$  and  $(f_1(x'_1), \dots, f_n(x'_1)) + E_{(x'_1, \dots, x'_n)}$  are two distinct affine hyperplanes (as otherwise we would have  $|(a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)^{-1}(y^\gamma)| = n$ ).

This finishes the proof of the statement: for every  $\beta \leq \alpha$

$$|(a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)^{-1}(y)| = n \text{ for all } y \in (a_1^\beta f_1 + \dots + a_n^\beta f_n)[\{x_\gamma : \gamma < \alpha\}].$$

Hence the condition (c) holds for  $\alpha$  and the inductive step of the definition of  $f_1, \dots, f_n$  is completed. It follows from the construction that the conditions (a)–(c) are preserved. The condition (a) assures that the functions  $f_1, \dots, f_n$  are defined on  $\mathbb{R}$  and the condition (c) assures that any nontrivial linear combination of  $f_1, \dots, f_n$  is an  $n$ -to-one function. Hence the proof of  $\mathcal{L}(F_n) = n+1$  is completed.

To prove  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(F_n) = \mathfrak{c}^+$  first observe that in any family of functions of cardinality  $> \mathfrak{c}$  there are two functions equal on a set of size  $n+1$  (this follows from the fact that there are only  $\mathfrak{c}$ -many functions from a set of size  $n+1$  into  $\mathbb{R}$ ). Their difference is not in  $F_n$ . Hence  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(F_n) \leq \mathfrak{c}^+$ . To see that  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(F_n) \geq \mathfrak{c}^+$  consider a partition  $\{A_\xi : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\}$  of  $\mathbb{R}$  into subsets of size  $n$  and a partition  $\{H_\alpha : |H_\alpha| = \mathfrak{c}, \alpha < \mathfrak{c}\}$  of a Hamel basis. Define  $f_\alpha \in F_n$  such that  $f_\alpha(\mathbb{R}) \subseteq H_\alpha$  and  $f_\alpha|_{A_\xi}$  is constant for each  $\xi < \mathfrak{c}$ . It can be seen that  $f_\alpha$  are linearly independent over  $\mathbb{Q}$  and  $\text{span}_{\mathbb{Q}}\{f_\alpha : \alpha < \mathfrak{c}\} \subseteq F_n \cup \{0\}$ .

(ii) First, to see that  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(F_{<\omega}) \leq \mathfrak{c}^+$ , observe that, similarly like above (at the end of proof of (i)), in any family of functions of cardinality  $> \mathfrak{c}$  there are two functions equal on a set of size  $\omega$ . Their difference is not in  $F_{<\omega}$ .

To prove that  $\mathcal{L}(F_{<\omega}) \geq \mathfrak{c}^+$  we will construct a family  $\{f_\xi : \xi < \mathfrak{c}\}$  of functions such that for all  $n \geq 1$ ,  $(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{(0, \dots, 0)\}$ ,  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_n < \mathfrak{c}$ , and  $y \in \mathbb{R}$  we have  $|(a_1 f_{\xi_1} + \dots + a_n f_{\xi_n})^{-1}(\{y\})| \leq n$ . Fix  $\alpha < \mathfrak{c}$  and assume that for every  $\xi < \alpha$  the function  $f_\xi$  is defined on  $\{x_\beta : \beta < \alpha\}$  and for all  $n \geq 1$ ,  $(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{(0, \dots, 0)\}$ ,  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_n < \alpha$ , and  $y \in \mathbb{R}$  we have  $|(a_1 f_{\xi_1} + \dots + a_n f_{\xi_n})^{-1}(\{y\})| \leq n$ . We will now define  $f_\xi(x_\alpha)$  for every  $\xi < \alpha$ . Fix an  $n \geq 1$ ,  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_n < \alpha$ ,  $\beta_1 < \dots < \beta_n < \alpha$ . For  $n=1$  define  $E_{\xi_1, \beta_1} = \{0\}$  and for  $n \geq 2$  set

$$E_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_n} = \text{span}\{(f_{\xi_1}(x_{\beta_i}) - f_{\xi_1}(x_{\beta_{i+1}}), \dots, f_{\xi_n}(x_{\beta_i}) - f_{\xi_n}(x_{\beta_{i+1}})) : i < n\}.$$

Note that  $\dim(E_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_n}) = n-1$ . If  $\dim(E_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_n}) < n-1$  then we would get a contradiction with the inductive assumption as

$$(a_1 f_{\xi_1} + \dots + a_{n-1} f_{\xi_{n-1}})(x_{\beta_i}) = (a_1 f_{\xi_1} + \dots + a_{n-1} f_{\xi_{n-1}})(x_{\beta_{i+1}})$$

for  $i \leq n - 1$  and some  $(a_1, \dots, a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{(0, \dots, 0)\}$ . Indeed, the latter is equivalent to  $\det([(f_{\xi_j}(x_{\beta_i}) - f_{\xi_j}(x_{\beta_{i+1}}))]_{i \leq n-1, j \leq n-1}) = 0$  which obviously is equivalent to  $\dim(E_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_n}) < n - 1$ . Define

$$\mathcal{E}_n = \{E_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_n} : \xi_1 < \dots < \xi_n < \alpha, \beta_1 < \dots < \beta_n < \alpha\} \text{ and}$$

$$v_E = (f_{\xi_1}(x_{\beta_1}), \dots, f_{\xi_n}(x_{\beta_1}))$$

for  $E = E_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_n}$ . Next apply Lemma 2.4 ( $\zeta = \alpha$ ) to obtain  $(y_0, y_1, \dots) \in (\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\})^\alpha$  such that for every  $n \geq 1$  and all  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_n < \alpha$  we have  $(y_{\xi_1}, \dots, y_{\xi_n}) \notin \bigcup_{E \in \mathcal{E}_n} v_E + E$ . Define  $f_\xi(x_\beta) = y_\xi$ .

As the next step we will define  $f_\alpha(x_\beta)$  for every  $\beta \leq \alpha$ . Fix  $\gamma \leq \alpha$  and assume that  $f_\alpha(x_\beta)$  has been defined for every  $\beta < \gamma$  in such a way that for all  $n \geq 1$ ,  $(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{(0, \dots, 0)\}$ ,  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_{n-1} < \alpha$ , and  $y \in \mathbb{R}$  we have  $|(a_1 f_{\xi_1} + \dots + a_n f_\alpha)^{-1}(\{y\})| \leq n$ . Pick  $\beta_1 < \dots < \beta_n < \gamma$  and notice that

$$\dim(\text{span}\{(f_{\xi_1}(x_{\beta_i}) - f_{\xi_1}(x_{\beta_{i+1}})), \dots, f_\alpha(x_{\beta_i}) - f_\alpha(x_{\beta_{i+1}})) : i \leq n - 1\}) = n - 1.$$

This implies that there exists exactly one  $y = y_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_{n-1}, \alpha, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_n}$  such that  $(f_{\xi_1}(x_{\beta_n}) - f_{\xi_1}(x_\gamma), \dots, f_\alpha(x_{\beta_n}) - y)$  is in

$$\text{span}\{(f_{\xi_1}(x_{\beta_i}) - f_{\xi_1}(x_{\beta_{i+1}})), \dots, f_\alpha(x_{\beta_i}) - f_\alpha(x_{\beta_{i+1}})) : i \leq n - 1\}.$$

Choose

$$f_\alpha(x_\gamma) \in \mathbb{R} \setminus \{y_{\xi_1, \dots, \xi_{n-1}, \alpha, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_n} : \xi_1 < \dots < \xi_{n-1} < \alpha, \beta_1 < \dots < \beta_n < \gamma\}.$$

This completes the step  $\alpha$  of the definition of the family of functions  $\{f_\xi : \xi < \mathbf{c}\}$ . It follows from the construction that the functions satisfy the desired property, namely: for all  $n \geq 1$ ,  $(a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n \setminus \{(0, \dots, 0)\}$ ,  $\xi_1 < \dots < \xi_n < \mathbf{c}$ , and  $y \in \mathbb{R}$  we have  $|(a_1 f_{\xi_1} + \dots + a_n f_{\xi_n})^{-1}(\{y\})| \leq n$ . Hence  $\text{span}\{f_\xi : \xi < \mathbf{c}\} \subseteq F_{<\omega} \cup \{0\}$ .  $\square$

**Corollary 2.5.**  $\mathcal{L}(F_{<n}) = n$  and  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(F_{<n}) = \mathbf{c}^+$  for  $n \geq 2$ .

**Proof.** The inequality  $\mathcal{L}(F_{<n}) \geq n$  is implied by the fact that  $F_{(n-1)} \subseteq F_{<n}$  and Theorem 2.3 (i). The opposite inequality  $\mathcal{L}(F_{<n}) \geq n$  follows from the proof of the inequality  $\mathcal{L}(F_n) \leq n + 1$  in part (i) of Theorem 2.3 (page 8).

The equality  $\mathcal{L}_{\mathbb{Q}}(F_{<n}) = \mathbf{c}^+$  for  $n \geq 2$  follows from Theorem 2.3 and the following observation  $F_{(n-1)} \subseteq F_{<n} \subseteq F_{<\omega}$ .  $\square$

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