

OPTIMAL GRADIENT ESTIMATES OF HEAT KERNELS OF STABLE-LIKE OPERATORS

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ABSTRACT. In this note we show the optimal gradient estimate for heat kernels of stable-like operators by providing a counterexample.

1. INTRODUCTION

Let $\kappa : \mathbb{R}^d \rightarrow [0, \infty)$ be a bounded measurable function. For $\alpha \in (0, 2)$, consider the following nonlocal α -stable-like operator

$$\mathcal{L}_\kappa^{(\alpha)} f(x) := \int_{\mathbb{R}^d} (f(x+y) - f(x) - y^{(\alpha)} \cdot \nabla f(x)) \frac{\kappa(y)}{|y|^{d+\alpha}} dy,$$

where

$$y^{(\alpha)} := 1_{\alpha \in (1,2)} y + 1_{\alpha=1} 1_{|y| \leq 1} y.$$

It is well known that if for some $K_0 \geq 1$,

$$K_0^{-1} \leq \kappa(y) \leq K_0, \quad 1_{\alpha=1} \int_{r < |y| < R} \kappa(y) dy = 0, \quad 0 < r < R < \infty, \quad (1.1)$$

then there is a smooth fundamental solution $p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(t, x)$ to the operator $\mathcal{L}_\kappa^{(\alpha)}$ satisfying (see [3, 4, 5])

$$\partial_t p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(t, x) = \mathcal{L}_\kappa^{(\alpha)} p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(t, \cdot)(x), \quad t > 0, x \in \mathbb{R}^d.$$

Moreover, $p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(t, x)$ enjoys the following two-sided estimates: for some $K_1 = K_1(\alpha, d, K_0) \geq 1$,

$$K_1^{-1} t(t^{1/\alpha} + |x|)^{-d-\alpha} \leq p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(t, x) \leq K_1 t(t^{1/\alpha} + |x|)^{-d-\alpha},$$

and the gradient estimate: for some $K_2 = K_2(\alpha, d, K_0) \geq 1$,

$$|\nabla p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(t, x)| \leq K_2 t^{1-1/\alpha} (t^{1/\alpha} + |x|)^{-d-\alpha}. \quad (1.2)$$

2010 *Mathematics Subject Classification.* 60G52, 35K08.

Key words and phrases. Gradient estimate, heat kernel, stable-like operators.

Research of K. Du is partially supported by NSF grant of China (No. 11801084). Research of X. Zhang is partially supported by NNSFC grant of China (No. 11731009) and the DFG through the CRC 1283 ‘‘Taming uncertainty and profiting from randomness and low regularity in analysis, stochastics and their applications’’.

The above estimates can be found in [4, 5]. Notice that for $\lambda > 0$, if we let $\kappa_\lambda(y) := \kappa(\lambda^{1/\alpha}y)$, then $p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}$ has the following scaling property:

$$p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(\lambda t, \lambda^{1/\alpha}x) = \lambda^{-d/\alpha} p_{\kappa_\lambda}^{(\alpha)}(t, x).$$

Moreover, when $\kappa(y) \equiv 1$, it is well known that

$$\mathcal{L}_1^{(\alpha)} = c_{\alpha,d} \Delta^{\alpha/2},$$

where $c_{\alpha,d} > 0$ and $\Delta^{\alpha/2} := -(-\Delta)^{\alpha/2}$ is the usual fractional Laplacian. In this case, it is also well known that the sharp gradient estimate takes the following form: for some $K_3 = K_3(\alpha, d) \geq 1$,

$$|\nabla_x p_1^{(\alpha)}(t, x)| \leq K_3 t(t^{1/\alpha} + |x|)^{-d-\alpha-1}. \quad (1.3)$$

Indeed, let $S_t^{(\alpha)}$ be the $\alpha/2$ -subordinator and $\phi(t, x) = (2\pi t)^{-d/2} e^{-|x|^2/(2t)}$ be the Gaussian heat kernel. By the subordination we have

$$p_1^{(\alpha)}(t, x) = \int_0^\infty \phi(s, x) \mathbb{P} \circ (S_t^{(\alpha)})^{-1}(ds). \quad (1.4)$$

Since $\mathbb{P} \circ (S_t^{(\alpha)})^{-1}(ds) \leq C t s^{-1-\alpha/2} e^{-ts^{-\alpha/2}} ds$, by elementary calculations, it follows that (see [1])

$$|\nabla_x p_1^{(\alpha)}(t, x)| \leq C t |x| \int_0^\infty s^{-2-(d+\alpha)/2} e^{-ts^{-\alpha/2}-|x|^2/(2s)} ds \leq K_3 t(t^{1/\alpha} + |x|)^{-d-\alpha-1}.$$

Notice that the right hand side of (1.3) is smaller than the one in (1.2) when x goes to ∞ . We mention that for a class of unimodal Lévy processes, Kulczycki and Ryznar [7] obtained the optimal gradient estimate (1.3). Moreover, gradient estimate (1.3) plays an important role in [6, Proposition 3.2] and [8, Theorem 1.1].

Here a natural question is that for general stable-like operator $\mathcal{L}_\kappa^{(\alpha)}$, is it possible to show the same gradient estimate (1.3)? We have the following negative answer. Thus (1.2) is optimal.

Theorem 1.1. *For $d = 1$, there is an even function $\kappa : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [1, 2]$ such that*

$$\limsup_{|x| \rightarrow \infty} |x|^{1+\alpha} |\nabla_x p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(1, x)| > 0.$$

Remark 1.2. Although we construct a symmetric example, it is in fact also easier to construct non-symmetric examples from the following proofs.

2. PROOF OF THEOREM 1.1

Below we assume $d = 1$. For simplicity, we drop the superscript α in $p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}$ and write

$$p_\kappa(x) = p_\kappa^{(\alpha)}(1, x).$$

Suppose that κ satisfies (1.1) and $f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [0, 1]$ is a measurable function so that

$$\lambda := \int_{\mathbb{R}} f(x) |x|^{-1-\alpha} dx < \infty.$$

Let N_t^λ be a Poisson process with intensity λ and $\xi_1, \dots, \xi_n, \dots$ a sequence of i.i.d. random variables with common distribution density $q(x) := f(x)|x|^{-1-\alpha}/\lambda$, which are independent of N^λ . Let $\xi_0 := 0$ and

$$Y_t^f := \xi_0 + \xi_1 + \dots + \xi_{N_t^\lambda}.$$

Then Y_t^f is a compound Poisson process with Lévy exponent

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} (e^{i\xi y} - 1) f(y) |y|^{-1-\alpha} dy.$$

Let Z_t^κ be an independent Lévy process with Lévy measure $\kappa(y)|y|^{-1-\alpha} dy$. The sum $Z_t^\kappa + Y_t^f$ is still a Lévy process with Lévy measure $(\kappa(y) + f(y))|y|^{-1-\alpha} dy$. In particular, we have

$$p_{\kappa+f}(x) = \mathbb{E} p_\kappa(x - Y_1^f). \quad (2.1)$$

For the function f and real numbers $a, \varepsilon > 0$, we denote

$$f_a^\varepsilon(x) := f\left(\frac{a+x}{\varepsilon}\right) + f\left(\frac{a-x}{\varepsilon}\right).$$

Lemma 2.1. *Suppose that*

$$\text{supp}(f) \subset [-1, 1], \quad \int_{\mathbb{R}} f(x) dx = 1,$$

and for some $z_0 \in (-1, 0)$, $\varepsilon, \delta \in (0, 1)$ and $\gamma, A \geq 1$,

$$\inf_{x \in [z_0 - \varepsilon, z_0 + \varepsilon]} p'_\kappa(x) \geq \delta, \quad \|p'_\kappa\|_\infty \leq \gamma, \quad |p'_\kappa(x)| \leq \gamma |x|^{-2-\alpha} \text{ for } x \geq A. \quad (2.2)$$

Then there are constants $C = C(\alpha, \delta, \gamma) > 0$ and $A_0 = A_0(\delta, \gamma) \geq A + 1$ such that for all $a \geq A_0$,

$$p'_{\kappa+f_a^\varepsilon}(z_0 + a) \geq C a^{-1-\alpha}. \quad (2.3)$$

Proof. For $a > 1$, let

$$\lambda := \int_{\mathbb{R}} f_a^\varepsilon(x) |x|^{-1-\alpha} dx = 2 \int_{\mathbb{R}} f\left(\frac{a+x}{\varepsilon}\right) |x|^{-1-\alpha} dx = 2 \int_{\mathbb{R}} f\left(\frac{a-x}{\varepsilon}\right) |x|^{-1-\alpha} dx.$$

By (2.1) and the definition of $Y_1^{f_a^\varepsilon}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} p'_{\kappa+f_a^\varepsilon}(z_0 + a) &= p'_\kappa(z_0 + a) \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda = 0) + \mathbb{E} p'_\kappa(z_0 + a - \xi_1) \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda = 1) \\ &\quad + \mathbb{E} p'_\kappa(z_0 + a - Y_1^{f_a^\varepsilon} + \xi_1) \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda \geq 2) \\ &=: J_0 + J_1 + J_2. \end{aligned}$$

For J_0 , by (2.2) we have

$$|J_0| \leq |p'_\kappa(z_0 + a)| e^{-\lambda} \leq \gamma |z_0 + a|^{-2-\alpha}, \quad a \geq A + 1.$$

For J_1 , since $\text{supp}(f) \subset [-1, 1]$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} J_1 &= e^{-\lambda} \int_{\mathbb{R}} p'_\kappa(z_0 + a - y) \left(f\left(\frac{a+y}{\varepsilon}\right) + f\left(\frac{a-y}{\varepsilon}\right) \right) |y|^{-1-\alpha} dy \\ &\geq e^{-\lambda} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(\delta \cdot f\left(\frac{a-y}{\varepsilon}\right) - \gamma(2a - \varepsilon - |z_0|)^{-2-\alpha} f\left(\frac{a+y}{\varepsilon}\right) \right) |y|^{-1-\alpha} dy \\ &= \frac{\lambda}{2} e^{-\lambda} \left(\delta - \gamma(2a - \varepsilon - |z_0|)^{-2-\alpha} \right). \end{aligned}$$

For J_2 , we have

$$|J_2| \leq \|p'_\kappa\|_\infty (1 - e^{-\lambda} - \lambda e^{-\lambda}) \leq 2\gamma\lambda^2, \quad \lambda \in (0, 1).$$

Combining the above calculations, and thanks to

$$2\varepsilon(a + \varepsilon)^{-1-\alpha} \leq \lambda \leq 2\varepsilon(a - \varepsilon)^{-1-\alpha},$$

we obtain that for $a \geq (2\gamma/\delta)^{2+\alpha} \vee (A + 1)$,

$$p'_{\kappa+f_\varepsilon}(z_0 + a) \geq \lambda e^{-\lambda} \delta / 4 - \gamma |z_0 + a|^{-2-\alpha} - 2\gamma\lambda^2 \geq Ca^{-1-\alpha}.$$

Thus we complete the proof. \square

Recalling $p_1(x) = p_1^{(\alpha)}(1, x)$ given by (1.4), we may fix $z_0 \in (-1, 0)$ and $\varepsilon \in (0, |z_0|/2)$ in the following so that

$$\delta := \inf_{x \in [z_0 - \varepsilon, z_0 + \varepsilon]} p'_1(x) \in (0, 1). \quad (2.4)$$

Indeed, by (1.4), for $x \in [z_0 - \varepsilon, z_0 + \varepsilon]$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} p'_1(x) &= (2\pi)^{-d/2} \int_0^\infty s^{-d/2-1} (-x) e^{-|x|^2/(2s)} \mathbb{P} \circ (S_1^{(\alpha)})^{-1}(ds) \\ &\geq \frac{|z_0| - \varepsilon}{(2\pi)^{d/2}} \int_0^\infty s^{-d/2-1} e^{-(|z_0| + \varepsilon)^2/(2s)} \mathbb{P} \circ (S_1^{(\alpha)})^{-1}(ds) > 0. \end{aligned}$$

This together with the estimate (1.3) implies that the condition (2.2) is satisfied with $\kappa(y) \equiv 1$. So, by Lemma 2.1 we have

Corollary 2.2. *There are constants $C = C(\alpha, \delta, z_0) > 0$ and $A > 0$ such that for any $a > A$, one can find an even function $\kappa : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [1, 2]$ depending on a such that*

$$p'_\kappa(z_0 + a) \geq Ca^{-1-\alpha}. \quad (2.5)$$

The above corollary implies that it is not possible to find a constant C that only depends on the bound of κ so that for all $\kappa : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [1, 2]$ and $x \in \mathbb{R}$,

$$|p'_\kappa(x)| \leq C(1 + |x|)^{-2-\alpha}.$$

In fact, it has already given a negative answer to our question. Nevertheless, we are still interested in finding an even function $\kappa : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [1, 2]$ so that (2.5) holds for some sequence $a_n \rightarrow \infty$. We prepare the following lemma.

Lemma 2.3. *Let $\kappa(x) = 1 + f(x)$, where $f : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [0, 1]$ is an even function so that*

$$\lambda := \int_{\mathbb{R}} f(x)|x|^{-1-\alpha} dx < \infty.$$

(i) *Under (2.4), there is a $\lambda_0 = \lambda_0(\alpha, \delta) > 0$ such that for all the above f with $\lambda \leq \lambda_0$,*

$$\inf_{x \in [z_0 - \varepsilon, z_0 + \varepsilon]} p'_{\kappa}(x) \geq \delta/2. \quad (2.6)$$

(ii) *There exists a constant $\gamma = \gamma(\alpha, d) > 0$ such that for all $A \geq 1$ and all the above f with $\text{supp}(f) \subset [-A, A]$ and $\lambda \leq 1$,*

$$|p'_{\kappa}(x)| \leq \gamma|x|^{-2-\alpha}, \quad |x| \geq A^2. \quad (2.7)$$

Proof. (i) By (2.1) with $\kappa = 1$ there, we have

$$\begin{aligned} p'_{1+f}(x) &= \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda = 0)p'_1(x) + \sum_{k \geq 1} \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda = k) \int_{\mathbb{R}} p'_1(x-y)q^{*k}(y)dy \\ &\geq e^{-\lambda}p'_1(x) - \|p'_1\|_{\infty} \sum_{k \geq 1} \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda = k) \\ &= e^{-\lambda} \left(p'_1(x) - \|p'_1\|_{\infty} (e^{\lambda} - 1) \right), \end{aligned}$$

where $q(x) := f(x)|x|^{-1-\alpha}/\lambda$ and q^{*k} stands for the k -order convolution. In particular, one can choose λ_0 small enough so that

$$(1 \vee \|p'_1\|_{\infty})(e^{\lambda_0} - 1) \leq \delta/3.$$

Estimate (2.6) then follows by definition (2.4).

(ii) We make the following decomposition:

$$p'_{\kappa}(x) = \left(\sum_{k \leq \sqrt{|x|}/2} + \sum_{k > \sqrt{|x|}/2} \right) \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda = k) \int_{\mathbb{R}} p'_1(x-y)q^{*k}(y)dy =: J_1(x) + J_2(x).$$

For J_1 , noticing that $\text{supp}(q^{*k}) \subset [-kA, kA]$, by (1.3) and $|x| \geq A^2$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} |J_1(x)| &\leq \sum_{k \leq \sqrt{|x|}/2} \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda = k) \int_{\mathbb{R}} |p'_1(x-y)|q^{*k}(y)dy \\ &\leq K_3 \sum_{k \leq \sqrt{|x|}/2} \mathbb{P}(N_1^\lambda = k) \left(|x| - \sqrt{|x|}A/2 \right)^{-2-\alpha} \\ &\leq K_3 2^{2+\alpha} |x|^{-2-\alpha}. \end{aligned}$$

For J_2 , by Stirling's formula and $\lambda \leq 1$, we have

$$|J_2(x)| \leq \|p'_1\|_{\infty} e^{-\lambda} \sum_{k > \sqrt{|x|}/2} \lambda^k/k! \leq C|x|^{-2-\alpha}.$$

Combining the above calculations, we obtain (2.7). \square

Now we are in a position to give

Proof of Theorem 1.1. Let $h : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [0, 1]$ be a measurable function with

$$\text{supp}(h) \subset [-1, 1], \quad \int_{\mathbb{R}} h(x) dx = 1.$$

Let $A \geq A_0$ be a large number, whose value will be determined later, where A_0 is from Lemma 2.1. For $k \in \mathbb{N}$, define

$$A_1 := A, \quad A_{k+1} := (A_k + \varepsilon)^2, \quad k \geq 1,$$

$$h_k(x) := h\left(\frac{A_k - x}{\varepsilon}\right) + h\left(\frac{A_k + x}{\varepsilon}\right), \quad \kappa(x) := 1 + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} h_k(x).$$

Clearly, $\kappa(-x) = \kappa(x)$. We want to show that for some $C_0 = C_0(\alpha) > 0$,

$$p'_{\kappa}(z_0 + A_n) \geq C_0 A_n^{-1-\alpha}, \quad \forall n \in \mathbb{N}. \quad (2.8)$$

First of all, by definition we have

$$\text{supp}(h_k) \subset [A_k - \varepsilon, A_k + \varepsilon] \cup [-A_k - \varepsilon, -A_k + \varepsilon] \quad (2.9)$$

and

$$2\varepsilon(A_k + \varepsilon)^{-1-\alpha} \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}} h_k(x) |x|^{-1-\alpha} dx$$

$$= 2 \int_{\mathbb{R}} h\left(\frac{A_k - x}{\varepsilon}\right) |x|^{-1-\alpha} dx \leq 2\varepsilon(A_k - \varepsilon)^{-1-\alpha}.$$

For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, define

$$\kappa_n(x) := 1 + \sum_{k=1}^n h_k(x) =: 1 + f_n(x).$$

By (1.2), there is a constant $M > 0$ such that for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$,

$$|p'_{\kappa_n}(x)| \leq M, \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^d.$$

Noticing that $\text{supp}(f_n) \subset \cup_{k=1}^n \text{supp}(h_k) \subset [-A_n - \varepsilon, A_n + \varepsilon]$ and

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} f_n(x) |x|^{-1-\alpha} dx \leq 2\varepsilon \sum_{k=1}^n (A_k - \varepsilon)^{-1-\alpha} \leq C A^{-1-\alpha},$$

by Lemma 2.3, if $C A^{-1-\alpha} \leq \lambda_0$, then

$$\inf_{x \in [z_0 - \varepsilon, z_0 + \varepsilon]} p'_{\kappa_n}(x) \geq \delta/2, \quad (2.10)$$

and for some $\gamma = \gamma(\alpha) \geq M$,

$$|p'_{\kappa_n}(x)| \leq \gamma |x|^{-2-\alpha}, \quad |x| \geq (A_n + \varepsilon)^2 = A_{n+1}. \quad (2.11)$$

Using these two estimates, and by Lemma 2.1 we derive that for some $C_1 = C_1(\alpha, \delta) > 0$,

$$p'_{\kappa_{n+1}}(z_0 + A_{n+1}) = p'_{\kappa_n + h_{n+1}}(z_0 + A_{n+1}) \geq C_1 A_{n+1}^{-1-\alpha}.$$

Finally, let $\tilde{f}_n(x) := \kappa(x) - \kappa_n(x) = \sum_{k>n} h_k(x)$ and

$$\tilde{\lambda} := \int_{\mathbb{R}} \tilde{f}_n(x) |x|^{-1-\alpha} dx \leq 2\varepsilon \sum_{k=n+1}^{\infty} (A_k - \varepsilon)^{-1-\alpha} \leq C_2 A_{n+1}^{-1-\alpha}.$$

As above, we have

$$\begin{aligned} p'_{\kappa}(z_0 + A_n) &= \mathbb{P}(N_1^{\tilde{\lambda}} = 0) p'_{\kappa_n}(z_0 + A_n) + \sum_{k \geq 1} \mathbb{P}(N_1^{\tilde{\lambda}} = k) \int_{\mathbb{R}} p'_{\kappa_n}(z_0 + A_n - y) \tilde{q}^{*k}(y) dy \\ &\geq e^{-\tilde{\lambda}} p'_{\kappa_n}(z_0 + A_n) - M \sum_{k \geq 1} \mathbb{P}(N_1^{\tilde{\lambda}} = k) \\ &= e^{-\tilde{\lambda}} (p'_{\kappa_n}(z_0 + A_n) - M(e^{\tilde{\lambda}} - 1)) \\ &\geq e^{-\tilde{\lambda}} (C_1 A_n^{-1-\alpha} - 2C_2 M A_{n+1}^{-1-\alpha}) \geq C_3 A_n^{-1-\alpha}, \end{aligned}$$

provided A large enough. Thus we get (2.8), which means

$$\limsup_{x \rightarrow \infty} x^{1+\alpha} p'_{\kappa}(x) \geq C_0 > 0.$$

By symmetry, we obtain the desired estimate. \square

Acknowledgement: The authors would like to thank Peng Jin and Guohuan Zhao for their useful discussions.

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