

COMPLEXITY OF PROJECTED GRADIENT METHODS FOR STRONGLY CONVEX OPTIMIZATION WITH HÖLDER CONTINUOUS GRADIENT TERMS*

XIAOJUN CHEN[†], C. T. KELLEY[‡], AND LEI WANG[§]

December 20, 2025

Abstract. This paper studies the complexity of projected gradient descent methods for a class of strongly convex constrained optimization problems where the objective function is expressed as a summation of m component functions, each possessing a gradient that is Hölder continuous with an exponent $\alpha_i \in (0, 1]$. Under this formulation, the gradient of the objective function may fail to be globally Hölder continuous, thereby existing complexity results inapplicable to this class of problems. Our theoretical analysis reveals that, in this setting, the complexity of projected gradient methods is determined by $\hat{\alpha} = \min_{i \in \{1, \dots, m\}} \alpha_i$. We first prove that, with an appropriately fixed stepsize, the complexity bound for finding an approximate minimizer with a distance to the true minimizer less than ε is $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+\hat{\alpha})})$, which extends the well-known complexity result for $\hat{\alpha} = 1$. Next we show that the complexity bound can be improved to $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})$ if the stepsize is updated by the universal scheme. We illustrate our complexity results by numerical examples arising from elliptic equations with a non-Lipschitz term.

Key words. projected gradient descent, complexity, Hölder continuity

19 MSC codes. 90C25, 65L05, 65Y20

1. Introduction. Given a closed and convex set $\Omega \subseteq \mathbb{R}^n$, this paper considers the following optimization problem,

$$22 \quad (1.1) \qquad \min_{\mathbf{u} \in \Omega} f(\mathbf{u}) := \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m f_i(\mathbf{u}),$$

23 where the objective function $f : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ satisfies the following assumption.

ASSUMPTION 1.1.

25 1. The function f is μ -strongly convex with a parameter $\mu > 0$ on Ω , that is,

$$f(\mathbf{u}) \geq f(\mathbf{v}) + \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}), \mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v} \rangle + \frac{\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}\|^2,$$

for all $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \Omega$.

28 2. For each $i \in [m] := \{1, 2, \dots, m\}$, the function $f_i : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is continuously
 29 differentiable and the gradient ∇f_i is (globally) Hölder continuous with an
 30 exponent $\alpha_i \in (0, 1]$ on Ω , namely, there exists a constant $L_i > 0$ such that

$$(1.2) \quad \|\nabla f_i(\mathbf{u}) - \nabla f_i(\mathbf{v})\| \leq L_i \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}\|^{\alpha_i},$$

for all $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \Omega$.

*Submitted to the editors DATE.

Funding: We would like to acknowledge support for this project from RGC grant JLFS/P-501/24 for the CAS AMSS-PolyU Joint Laboratory in Applied Mathematics and Hong Kong Research Grant Council project PolyU15300024.

[†]Department of Applied Mathematics, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China (maxjchen@polyu.edu.hk).

[†]Department of Mathematics, Box 8205, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-8205, USA (Tim_Kelley@ncsu.edu).

[§]Department of Applied Mathematics, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China
(lei2wang@polyu.edu.hk).

33 Here, $\|\cdot\|$ is the ℓ_2 norm and $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ is the inner product on \mathbb{R}^n . We also denote by
 34 $\mathbf{u}^* \in \Omega$ and $f^* = f(\mathbf{u}^*)$ the global minimizer and the optimal value of problem (1.1),
 35 respectively.

36 Suppose that each ∇f_i is Lipschitz continuous, which corresponds to condition
 37 (1.2) with $\alpha_i = 1$ for all $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \Omega$. Then ∇f is also Lipschitz continuous and
 38 the associated Lipschitz constant is $L = \sum_{i=1}^m L_i/m$. Let $\Pi_\Omega(\cdot)$ be the projection
 39 operator onto the set Ω . It is well known that the classical projected gradient descent
 40 method

41 (1.3)
$$\mathbf{u}_{k+1} = \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{u}_k - \tau \nabla f(\mathbf{u}_k)),$$

42 with any initial point $\mathbf{u}_0 \in \mathbb{R}^n$ and the stepsize $\tau \in (0, 2/(\mu + L)]$, achieves a linear
 43 rate of convergence [10, Theorem 2.2.14] as follows,

44
$$\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq (1 - \mu\tau)^k \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|.$$

45 Therefore, for a given $\varepsilon > 0$, method (1.3) is guaranteed to find a point $\mathbf{u}_k \in \Omega$
 46 satisfying $\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$ after at most $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1}))$ iterations. Unfortunately, this
 47 analysis fails if there exists at least one index $i \in [m]$ such that $\alpha_i < 1$. We explain
 48 the failure of the convergence of method (1.3) to \mathbf{u}^* by the following example.

49 *Example 1.2.* [5, Example 1] Consider the following univariate optimization prob-
 50 lem on $\Omega = \mathbb{R}$,

51 (1.4)
$$\min_{x \in \mathbb{R}} f(x) = \frac{1}{2}x^2 + \frac{2}{3}|x|^{3/2},$$

52 which is a special instance of problem (1.1) with $f_1(x) = x^2/2$ and $f_2(x) = 2|x|^{3/2}/3$.
 53 It is easy to see that the global minimizer is $x^* = 0$. Method (1.3) with the fixed
 54 stepsize $\tau > 0$ starting from $x_0 \neq 0$ proceeds as follows,

55
$$x_{k+1} = x_k - \tau \nabla f(x_k) = (1 - \tau)x_k - \tau \text{sign}(x_k)|x_k|^{1/2},$$

56 where $\text{sign}(x) = 1$ if $x > 0$, 0 if $x = 0$, and -1 otherwise. A straightforward verification
 57 reveals that

58
$$|x_{k+1}|^2 - |x_k|^2 = -\tau(2 - \tau)|x_k|^2 - 2\tau(1 - \tau)|x_k|^{3/2} + \tau^2|x_k|.$$

59 It is evident that, when $|x_k|$ is sufficiently small, the last term in the right-hand side
 60 becomes dominant, resulting in that $|x_{k+1}|^2 - |x_k|^2 \geq 0$. Therefore, the distance to
 61 the global minimizer ceases to decrease once it achieves a certain level.

62 Moreover, in [5] we show that ∇f is locally, but not globally, Hölder continuous.
 63 In fact, from

64
$$\nabla f(|h|) - \nabla f(0) = |h| + |h|^{1/2} = \left(|h|^{1-\alpha} + |h|^{1/2-\alpha}\right)|h|^\alpha,$$

65 we can obtain that, $|h|^{1-\alpha} \rightarrow \infty$ when $\alpha \in (0, 1)$ and $|h| \rightarrow \infty$, while $|h|^{1/2-\alpha} \rightarrow \infty$
 66 when $\alpha = 1$ and $|h| \rightarrow 0$. Therefore, ∇f cannot be globally Hölder continuous for all
 67 $\alpha \in (0, 1]$.

68 On the other hand, problem (1.4) satisfies all the conditions in Assumption 1.1.
 69 It is clear that f is strongly convex. In addition, we have

70
$$|\nabla f_1(x) - \nabla f_1(y)| = |x - y|,$$

71 and

$$72 \quad |\nabla f_2(x) - \nabla f_2(y)| = \left| \text{sign}(x) |x|^{1/2} - \text{sign}(y) |y| \right| \leq \sqrt{2} |x - y|^{1/2},$$

73 for all $x, y \in \mathbb{R}$.

74 This simple example demonstrates that, in problem (1.1), a function f expressed
 75 as a sum of component functions f_i , each endowed with a Hölder continuous gradient,
 76 may itself fail to possess a Hölder continuous gradient. This phenomenon, initially
 77 observed in our previous work [5], was later revisited and further highlighted by
 78 Nesterov (see [11, Example 1]).

79 Since ∇f may not be globally Hölder continuous, most existing complexity results
 80 are inapplicable to problem (1.1). For the special case where $m = 1$, namely, ∇f is
 81 globally Hölder continuous with an exponent $\alpha \in (0, 1]$, Devolder et al. [6] presented
 82 the following bound for method (1.3),

$$83 \quad f(\hat{\mathbf{u}}_N) - f(\mathbf{u}^*) \leq K(N) := \frac{L_\alpha \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^{1+\alpha}}{1 + \alpha} \left(\frac{2}{N} \right)^{\frac{1+\alpha}{2}},$$

84 where L_α is the Hölder constant and $\hat{\mathbf{u}}_N = \sum_{k=1}^N \mathbf{u}_k / N$. In the strongly convex case,
 85 (51) in [6] comes to

$$86 \quad \|\hat{\mathbf{u}}_N - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 \leq \frac{2}{\mu} K(N),$$

87 which implies that finding an N average of iterations $\hat{\mathbf{u}}_N$ satisfying $\|\hat{\mathbf{u}}_N - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$
 88 requires $O(\varepsilon^{-4/(1+\alpha)})$ iterations.

89 The contribution of this paper is to provide new complexity results of the pro-
 90 jected gradient descent methods for problem (1.1), which are dictated by the parame-
 91 ter $\hat{\alpha} = \min_{i \in [m]} \alpha_i \in (0, 1]$. We first show that, with an appropriately fixed stepsize,
 92 the complexity bound for finding an iterate with a distance to the global minimizer
 93 less than ε is $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+\hat{\alpha})})$, which extends the well-known complexity re-
 94 sult for $\hat{\alpha} = 1$. Next, we demonstrate that this complexity bound can be improved
 95 to $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})$ if the stepsize is updated at each iteration using the
 96 universal scheme. Even in the special case where $m = 1$, our complexity bound is
 97 at least $O(\varepsilon^{-1})$ lower than (51) in [6]. For example, when $\hat{\alpha} = 1/2$, our bound is
 98 $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{-2/5})$ but (51) in [6] is $O(\varepsilon^{-8/3})$.

99 Our study is motivated by elliptic equations with a non-Lipschitz term [2, 13],
 100 as well as optimization problems with an ℓ_p -norm ($1 < p < 2$) regularization term
 101 [1, 4]. We illustrate our complexity results by two numerical examples arising from
 102 elliptic equations with a non-Lipschitz term in section 5, after we present complexity
 103 of projected gradient methods with fixed stepsizes and updated stepsizes in sections 2
 104 to 4, respectively.

105 2. Vanilla Projected Gradient Descent Method with a Fixed Stepsize.

106 In this section, we attempt to employ the vanilla projected gradient descent method
 107 (1.3) with a fixed stepsize to solve problem (1.1), whose complexity bound is also
 108 provided. Example 1.2 illustrates that the projected gradient descent method (1.3)
 109 with a fixed stepsize will experience stagnation before reaching the global minimizer.

110 To obtain an approximate solution to problem (1.1), it is necessary to choose
 111 a sufficiently small stepsize τ in the projected gradient descent method (1.3), the

112 magnitude of which depends on the desired level of accuracy. Let $M > 0$ be a
 113 constant defined as

$$114 \quad (2.1) \quad M = \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{2(1 - \alpha_i)}{\mu(1 + \alpha_i)} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\}.$$

115 We select a specific stepsize $\tau = \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}/M$ in the projected gradient descent
 116 method, whose complete framework is presented in Algorithm 1. Two sequences $\{\mathbf{v}_k\}$
 117 and $\{\mathbf{u}_k\}$ are maintained in Algorithm 1, where \mathbf{v}_k is generated by the projected
 118 gradient descent method and \mathbf{u}_k corresponds to the iterate achieving the smallest
 119 objective function value among the first k iterations.

Algorithm 1: Projected Gradient Descent Method (PGDM).

Input: $\varepsilon > 0$.

Initialize $\mathbf{u}_0 = \mathbf{v}_0 \in \Omega$.

Choose the stepsize $\tau = \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}/M$.

for $k = 0, 1, 2, \dots$ **do**

Compute

$$\mathbf{v}_{k+1} = \Pi_{\Omega} (\mathbf{v}_k - \tau \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k)).$$

Set

$$\mathbf{u}_{k+1} = \begin{cases} \mathbf{v}_{k+1}, & \text{if } f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) \leq f(\mathbf{u}_k), \\ \mathbf{u}_k, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Output: \mathbf{u}_{k+1} .

120 Our subsequent analysis is based on the inexact oracle [6] derived from the Hölder
 121 continuity condition of gradients, which is generalized to problem (1.1) and demon-
 122 strated in the following proposition.

123 **PROPOSITION 2.1.** *Suppose that Assumption 1.1 holds. Let $\delta > 0$ and*

$$124 \quad \rho \geq \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{1 - \alpha_i}{(1 + \alpha_i)\delta} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\}.$$

125 Then for all $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \Omega$, we have

$$126 \quad f(\mathbf{v}) \leq f(\mathbf{u}) + \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{u}), \mathbf{v} - \mathbf{u} \rangle + \frac{\rho}{2} \|\mathbf{v} - \mathbf{u}\|^2 + \frac{\delta}{2}.$$

127 *Proof.* Since ∇f_i is Hölder continuous with an exponent α_i , we can obtain that

$$128 \quad f_i(\mathbf{v}) \leq f_i(\mathbf{u}) + \langle \nabla f_i(\mathbf{u}), \mathbf{v} - \mathbf{u} \rangle + \frac{L_i}{1 + \alpha_i} \|\mathbf{v} - \mathbf{u}\|^{1+\alpha_i},$$

129 for all $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \Omega$. Then, for each i , it follows from [9, Lemma 2] that

$$130 \quad f_i(\mathbf{v}) \leq f_i(\mathbf{u}) + \langle \nabla f_i(\mathbf{u}), \mathbf{v} - \mathbf{u} \rangle + \frac{\rho}{2} \|\mathbf{v} - \mathbf{u}\|^2 + \frac{\delta}{2}.$$

131 Summing the above relationship over $i \in [m]$, we immediately arrive at the assertion
 132 of this proposition. The proof is completed. \square

133 Now, we are able to derive the complexity bound of Algorithm 1 in the following
 134 theorem.

135 **THEOREM 2.2.** *Let $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$ be a sufficiently small constant. Then after at most*

$$136 \quad O\left(\log\left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon}\right) \frac{1}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}}\right)$$

137 iterations, Algorithm 1 will find an iterate $\mathbf{u}_k \in \Omega$ satisfying $\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$.

138 *Proof.* In view of Proposition 2.1, we take

$$139 \quad \rho = \frac{1}{\tau} = \frac{M}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \geq \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{2(1-\alpha_i)}{\mu(1+\alpha_i)\varepsilon^2} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\}.$$

140 Then it holds that

$$141 \quad f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) \leq f(\mathbf{v}_k) + \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle + \frac{1}{2\tau} \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2 + \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4},$$

142 which, after a suitable rearrangement, can be equivalently written as

$$143 \quad (2.2) \quad \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{v}_{k+1} \rangle \leq f(\mathbf{v}_k) - f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) + \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4} + \frac{1}{2\tau} \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2.$$

144 Recall that $f^* = f(\mathbf{u}^*)$. By virtue of the strong convexity of f , we can obtain that

$$145 \quad (2.3) \quad \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u}^* - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle \leq f^* - f(\mathbf{v}_k) - \frac{\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2.$$

146 The optimality condition of the projection problem defining \mathbf{v}_{k+1} yields that

$$147 \quad \langle \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k + \tau \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_{k+1} \rangle \geq 0,$$

148 for all $\mathbf{u} \in \Omega$. Upon taking $\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{u}^*$, we have

$$149 \quad \begin{aligned} \langle \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k, \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{u}^* \rangle &\leq \tau \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u}^* - \mathbf{v}_{k+1} \rangle \\ &= \tau \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u}^* - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle + \tau \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{v}_{k+1} \rangle, \end{aligned}$$

150 which together with (2.2) and (2.3) implies that

$$151 \quad \begin{aligned} \langle \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k, \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{u}^* \rangle &\leq \tau \left(f^* - f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) + \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4} \right) - \frac{\mu\tau}{2} \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 \\ &\quad + \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2. \end{aligned}$$

152 Moreover, it can be readily verified that

$$153 \quad (2.4) \quad \begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 &= \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k + \mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 \\ &= \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + 2 \langle \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k, \mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^* \rangle + \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2 \\ &= \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + 2 \langle \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k, \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{u}^* \rangle - \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2. \end{aligned}$$

154 Collecting the above two relationships together, we arrive at

$$155 \quad \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 \leq (1 - \mu\tau) \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + 2\tau \left(f^* - f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) + \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4} \right).$$

156 From the construction of \mathbf{u}_k in Algorithm 1, it then follows that $f(\mathbf{v}_l) \geq f(\mathbf{u}_k)$ for
157 all $l \in \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$. Let $C_k = \sum_{l=1}^k (1 - \mu\tau)^{l-1}$ be a constant. Applying the above
158 relationship recursively for k times leads to that

$$159 \quad \begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 &\leq (1 - \mu\tau)^k \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + 2\tau \sum_{l=1}^k (1 - \mu\tau)^{l-1} \left(f^* - f(\mathbf{v}_l) + \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4} \right) \\ &\leq (1 - \mu\tau)^k \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + 2\tau \left(f^* - f(\mathbf{u}_k) + \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4} \right) C_k, \end{aligned}$$

160 which together with $\|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \geq 0$ and $C_k \geq 1$ implies that

$$161 \quad f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^* \leq \frac{(1 - \mu\tau)^k}{2\tau C_k} \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4} \leq \frac{(1 - \mu\tau)^k}{2\tau} \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4}.$$

162 According to the strong convexity of f and the optimality condition of problem (1.1),
163 we have

$$164 \quad (2.5) \quad f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^* \geq \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{u}^*), \mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^* \rangle + \frac{\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 \geq \frac{\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2.$$

165 Hence, it holds that

$$166 \quad \begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 &\leq \frac{2}{\mu} (f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^*) \leq \frac{(1 - \mu\tau)^k}{\mu\tau} \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + \frac{\varepsilon^2}{2} \\ &\leq \frac{M \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2}{\mu\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \left(1 - \frac{\mu}{M} \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \right)^k + \frac{\varepsilon^2}{2}. \end{aligned}$$

167 We denote by K_ε^* the smallest iteration number k such that $\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$. Then
168 solving the inequality $M \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 \varepsilon^{-2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} (1 - \mu\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}/M)^k / \mu \leq \varepsilon^2/2$
169 indicates that

$$170 \quad \begin{aligned} K_\varepsilon^* &\leq \frac{4 \log((2M \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 / \mu)^{(1+\hat{\alpha})/4} / \varepsilon)}{-\log(1 - \mu\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}/M)(1 + \hat{\alpha})} \\ &\leq \frac{4M \log((2M \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 / \mu)^{(1+\hat{\alpha})/4} / \varepsilon)}{\mu(1 + \hat{\alpha})\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}}. \end{aligned}$$

171 The proof is completed. \square

172 Theorem 2.2 demonstrates that the iteration complexity of Algorithm 1 with a
173 fixed stepsize is $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+\hat{\alpha})})$ for problem (1.1). This complexity result
174 generalizes the classical linear convergence when $\hat{\alpha} = 1$, which highlights the perfor-
175 mance degradation incurred by non-Lipschitz gradients.

176 **3. Universal Primal Gradient Method.** The fixed stepsize τ chosen in Algo-
177 rithm 1 depends on the parameters α_i and L_i for all $i \in [m]$, which are often unknown
178 and hard to estimate in practice. To address this issue, we adopt the universal pri-
179 mal gradient method (UPGM) proposed by Nesterov [9] to solve problem (1.1). This

Algorithm 2: Universal Primal Gradient Method (UPGM).**Input:** $\varepsilon > 0$.Initialize $\mathbf{u}_0 = \mathbf{v}_0 \in \Omega$ and $\rho_0 > 0$.**for** $k = 0, 1, 2, \dots$ **do** **for** $j_k = 0, 1, 2, \dots$ **do**
 Compute

$$\mathbf{v}_{k+1} = \Pi_{\Omega} \left(\mathbf{v}_k - \frac{1}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k) \right).$$

If \mathbf{v}_{k+1} satisfies the following line-search condition,

$$(3.1) \quad \begin{aligned} f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) &\leq f(\mathbf{v}_k) + \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle \\ &+ \frac{2^{j_k} \rho_k}{2} \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2 + \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4}, \end{aligned}$$

then break. Update $\rho_{k+1} = 2^{j_k} \rho_k$.

Set

$$\mathbf{u}_{k+1} = \begin{cases} \mathbf{v}_{k+1}, & \text{if } f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) \leq f(\mathbf{u}_k), \\ \mathbf{u}_k, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Output: \mathbf{u}_{k+1} .

180 method incorporates a line-search procedure to adaptively determine the stepsize at
 181 each iteration, and its overall framework is outlined in Algorithm 2.

182 Next, we establish the iteration complexity of Algorithm 2, which remains on the
 183 same order as that of the projected gradient descent method with a fixed stepsize.

184 **THEOREM 3.1.** *Let $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$ be a sufficiently small constant. Then after at most*

$$185 \quad O \left(\log \left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon} \right) \frac{1}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \right)$$

186 iterations, Algorithm 2 will attain an iterate $\mathbf{u}_k \in \Omega$ satisfying that $\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$.

187 *Proof.* Obviously, there exists $j_k \in \mathbb{N}$ such that

$$188 \quad 2^{j_k} \rho_k \geq \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{2(1-\alpha_i)}{\mu(1+\alpha_i)\varepsilon^2} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\}.$$

189 By invoking the results of Proposition 2.1, we know that condition (3.1) is satisfied.

190 Hence, the line-search step in Algorithm 2 can be terminated after a finite number of
 191 trials and the required number of trials j_k satisfies

$$192 \quad (3.2) \quad 2^{j_k} \rho_k \leq 2 \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{2(1-\alpha_i)}{\mu(1+\alpha_i)\varepsilon^2} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\} \leq \frac{2M}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}},$$

193 where $M > 0$ is a constant defined in (2.1). Moreover, the line-search condition (3.1)

194 directly yields that

195 (3.3)
$$\langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{v}_{k+1} \rangle \leq f(\mathbf{v}_k) - f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) + \frac{2^{j_k} \rho_k}{2} \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2 + \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4}.$$

196 According to the optimality condition of the projection problem defining \mathbf{v}_{k+1} , we
197 have

198
$$\left\langle \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k + \frac{1}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u}^* - \mathbf{v}_{k+1} \right\rangle \geq 0,$$

199 which further implies that

200
$$\begin{aligned} \langle \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k, \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{u}^* \rangle &\leq \frac{1}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u}^* - \mathbf{v}_{k+1} \rangle \\ &\leq \frac{1}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u}^* - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle + \frac{1}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{v}_{k+1} \rangle. \end{aligned}$$

201 Substituting (2.3) and (3.3) into the above relationship leads to that

202
$$\begin{aligned} \langle \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k, \mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{u}^* \rangle &\leq \frac{1}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \left(f^* - f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) + \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4} \right) \\ &\quad + \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2 - \frac{\mu}{2^{j_k+1} \rho_k} \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2, \end{aligned}$$

203 Thus, it follows from relationship (2.4) that

204
$$\begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{v}_{k+1} - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 &\leq \left(1 - \frac{\mu}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \right) \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + \frac{2}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \left(f^* - f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) + \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4} \right) \\ &\leq \left(1 - \frac{\mu \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}}{2M} \right) \|\mathbf{v}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 + \frac{2}{\rho_0} \left(f^* - f(\mathbf{v}_{k+1}) + \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4} \right), \end{aligned}$$

205 where the last inequality comes from (3.2) and $2^{j_k} \rho_k \geq \rho_0$. The remaining part of
206 the proof follows the same line of reasoning as that of Theorem 2.2 and is therefore
207 omitted here for the sake of brevity. \square

208 We end this section by estimating the total number of line-search steps required
209 by Algorithm 2.

210 COROLLARY 3.2. *Let $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$ be a sufficiently small constant. Then Algorithm 2
211 requires at most*

212
$$O \left(\log \left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon} \right) \frac{1}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \right)$$

213 line-search steps for the generated sequence $\{\mathbf{u}_k\}$ to satisfy $\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$.

214 *Proof.* Let N_k be the total number of line-search steps after k iterations in Algo-
215 rithm 2. From the update rule $\rho_{k+1} = 2^{j_k} \rho_k$, we can obtain that $j_k = \log \rho_{k+1} - \log \rho_k$.
216 Then a straightforward verification reveals that

217 (3.4)
$$N_k = \sum_{l=0}^k (j_l + 1) = k + 1 + \log \rho_{k+1} - \log \rho_0,$$

218 which together with relationship (3.2) implies that

$$\begin{aligned} 219 \quad N_k &\leq k + \log\left(\frac{2M}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}}\right) - \log\rho_0 \\ &\leq k + \frac{2(1-\hat{\alpha})}{1+\hat{\alpha}} \log\left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon}\right) + \log\left(\frac{2M}{\rho_0}\right) + 1. \end{aligned}$$

220 By invoking the results of Theorem 3.1, we conclude that Algorithm 2 requires at
221 most $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+\hat{\alpha})})$ line-search steps, which completes the proof. \square

222 At each iteration of Algorithm 2, we evaluate both the function value and the
223 gradient at \mathbf{v}_k . In addition, an extra function evaluation at \mathbf{v}_{k+1,j_k} is involved during
224 each line-search step. Therefore, Theorem 3.1 and Corollary 3.2 together reveal that
225 the total number of function and gradient evaluations required by Algorithm 2 is
226 $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+\hat{\alpha})})$.

227 **4. Universal Fast Gradient Method.** To obtain a sharper complexity bound,
228 we devise in this section a universal fast gradient method (UFGM) tailored to prob-
229 lem (1.1). The proposed scheme, summarized in Algorithm 3, exhibits slight but
230 essential differences from the algorithm introduced by Nesterov [9] to exploit the
231 strong convexity of the objective function.

232 The following lemma illustrates that the line-search process in (4.4) is well-defined,
233 which is guaranteed to terminate in a finite number of trials.

234 **LEMMA 4.1.** *There exists an integer $j_k \in \mathbb{N}$ such that the line-search condition
235 (4.4) is satisfied in Algorithm 3.*

236 *Proof.* It follows from the definition of η_k and $\nu_k \leq 1$ that

$$237 \quad \eta_k = \frac{\nu_k}{1+\nu_k} \geq \frac{\nu_k}{2}, \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\mu}{\nu_k^2} = 2^{j_k} \rho_k.$$

238 Recall that $\hat{\alpha} = \min_{i \in [m]} \alpha_i \in (0, 1]$. Then we have

$$\begin{aligned} 239 \quad \frac{\mu}{\nu_k^2} \eta_k^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} &\geq \frac{2^{j_k} \rho_k}{2^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \nu_k^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \\ &= \frac{2^{j_k} \rho_k}{2^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \left[\frac{\mu}{2^{j_k} \rho_k} \right]^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(2(1+\hat{\alpha}))} \\ &= \frac{\mu^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(2(1+\hat{\alpha}))}}{2^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} [2^{j_k} \rho_k]^{(1+3\hat{\alpha})/(2(1+\hat{\alpha}))}, \end{aligned}$$

240 where the first equality comes from the definition of ν_k . Now it is clear that

$$241 \quad \frac{\mu}{\nu_k^2} \eta_k^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \rightarrow \infty,$$

242 as $j_k \rightarrow \infty$. Thus, there exists $j_k \in \mathbb{N}$ such that

$$243 \quad (4.6) \quad \frac{\mu}{\nu_k^2} \eta_k^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \geq \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{2(1-\alpha_i)}{\mu(1+\alpha_i)\varepsilon^2} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\},$$

Algorithm 3: Universal Fast Gradient Method (UFGM).**Input:** $\varepsilon > 0$.Initialize $\mathbf{u}_0 = \mathbf{w}_0 \in \Omega$ and $\rho_0 \geq \mu$.**for** $k = 0, 1, 2, \dots$ **do** **for** $j_k = 0, 1, 2, \dots$ **do** Set $\nu_k = \sqrt{\mu/(2^{j_k} \rho_k)}$ and $\eta_k = \nu_k/(1 + \nu_k)$.

Compute

(4.1)
$$\mathbf{v}_k = (1 - \eta_k)\mathbf{u}_k + \eta_k \Pi_{\Omega}(\mathbf{w}_k),$$

and

(4.2)
$$\mathbf{z}_k = \Pi_{\Omega} \left(\Pi_{\Omega}(\mathbf{w}_k) - \frac{\nu_k}{\mu} \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k) \right).$$

Set

(4.3)
$$\mathbf{u}_{k+1} = (1 - \eta_k)\mathbf{u}_k + \eta_k \mathbf{z}_k.$$

If \mathbf{u}_{k+1} satisfies the following line-search condition,

(4.4)
$$\begin{aligned} f(\mathbf{u}_{k+1}) &\leq f(\mathbf{v}_k) + \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle \\ &+ \frac{\mu}{2\nu_k^2} \|\mathbf{u}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2 + \frac{\eta_k \mu \varepsilon^2}{4}, \end{aligned}$$

then break.Set $\rho_{k+1} = 2^{j_k} \rho_k$ and update \mathbf{w}_{k+1} by

(4.5)
$$\mathbf{w}_{k+1} = (1 - \eta_k)\mathbf{w}_k + \eta_k \mathbf{v}_k - \frac{\eta_k}{\mu} \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k).$$

Output: \mathbf{u}_{k+1} .

244 which further implies that

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\mu}{\nu_k^2} &\geq \frac{1}{\eta_k^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{2(1-\alpha_i)}{\mu(1+\alpha_i)\varepsilon^2} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\} \\ 245 \quad &\geq \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{2(1-\alpha_i)}{\eta_k \mu(1+\alpha_i)\varepsilon^2} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\}. \end{aligned}$$

246 As a direct consequence of Proposition 2.1, we can proceed to show that the line-search
247 condition (4.4) is satisfied, which completes the proof. \square 248 *Remark 4.2.* When the parameters of problem (1.1) are fully specified, Algo-
249 rithm 3 may alternatively be implemented with a fixed stepsize. Recall that $M > 0$
250 is a constant defined in (2.1). By invoking the result of Lemma 4.1, we can fix

251
$$\nu_k = 2 \left[\frac{\mu}{4M} \right]^{(1+\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})} \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})},$$

252 and dispense with the parameter ρ_k and the line-search procedure in (4.4). Under

253 this choice, Algorithm 3 continues to enjoy the same iteration complexity established
 254 later.

255 We now introduce the estimating sequences associated with Algorithm 3, which
 256 play a crucial role in our subsequent analysis.

257 LEMMA 4.3. *Let $\{\sigma_k\}$ be a sequence of positive constants defined recursively by*

258 (4.7)
$$\sigma_{k+1} = (1 + \nu_k)\sigma_k,$$

259 with $\sigma_0 = 1$. And let $\{\phi_k\}$ be a sequence of functions defined recursively by

260 (4.8)
$$\begin{aligned} \phi_{k+1}(\mathbf{u}) &= \phi_k(\mathbf{u}) - \nu_k\sigma_k f^* + \nu_k\sigma_k f(\mathbf{v}_k) + \nu_k\sigma_k \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle \\ &\quad + \frac{\nu_k\sigma_k\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2, \end{aligned}$$

261 with $\phi_0(\mathbf{u}) = c_0 + \sigma_0\mu \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{w}_0\|^2 / 2$ for $c_0 = f(\mathbf{u}_0) - f^* - \mu\varepsilon^2/4$ and $\mathbf{w}_0 \in \Omega$. Then,
 262 for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$, the function ϕ_k preserves the following canonical form,

263 (4.9)
$$\phi_k(\mathbf{u}) = c_k + \frac{\sigma_k\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{w}_k\|^2,$$

264 where $\{c_k\}$ is a sequence of real numbers and $\{\mathbf{w}_k\}$ is defined recursively by (4.5).

265 Proof. We first prove that $\nabla^2\phi_k = \sigma_k\mu I$ for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$ by induction. It is evident
 266 that $\nabla^2\phi_0 = \sigma_0\mu I$. Now we assume that $\nabla^2\phi_k = \sigma_k\mu I$ for some k . Then relationships
 267 (4.7) and (4.8) imply that

268
$$\nabla^2\phi_{k+1} = \nabla^2\phi_k + \nu_k\sigma_k\mu I = \sigma_k\mu I + \nu_k\sigma_k\mu I = \sigma_{k+1}\mu I.$$

269 Thus, we know that $\nabla^2\phi_k = \sigma_k\mu I$ for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$, which, in turn, justifies the canonical
 270 form of ϕ_k in (4.9).

271 Next, by combining two relationships (4.8) and (4.9) together, we can obtain that

272
$$\begin{aligned} \phi_{k+1}(\mathbf{u}) &= c_k + \frac{\sigma_k\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{w}_k\|^2 - \nu_k\sigma_k f^* + \nu_k\sigma_k f(\mathbf{v}_k) \\ &\quad + \nu_k\sigma_k \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle + \frac{\nu_k\sigma_k\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2. \end{aligned}$$

273 Since \mathbf{w}_{k+1} is a global minimizer of ϕ_{k+1} over \mathbb{R}^n , the first-order optimality condition
 274 yields that

275
$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \nabla\phi_{k+1}(\mathbf{w}_{k+1}) = \sigma_k\mu(\mathbf{w}_{k+1} - \mathbf{w}_k) + \nu_k\sigma_k\nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k) + \nu_k\sigma_k\mu(\mathbf{w}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k) \\ &= (1 + \nu_k)\sigma_k\mu\mathbf{w}_{k+1} - \sigma_k\mu\mathbf{w}_k - \nu_k\sigma_k\mu\mathbf{v}_k + \nu_k\sigma_k\nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \end{aligned}$$

276 from which the closed-form expression of \mathbf{w}_{k+1} in (4.5) can be derived. The proof is
 277 completed. \square

278 The following lemma characterizes the relationship between the objective function
 279 of problem (1.1) and the estimating sequences.

280 LEMMA 4.4. *Let σ_k and $\{\phi_k\}$ be the sequences defined in Lemma 4.3. Then we
 281 have*

282 (4.10)
$$\phi_k(\mathbf{u}) \leq \sigma_k(f(\mathbf{u}) - f^*) + \phi_0(\mathbf{u}),$$

283 for all $\mathbf{u} \in \Omega$ and $k \in \mathbb{N}$.

284 *Proof.* We prove that $\{\phi_k\}$ and $\{\sigma_k\}$ satisfy relationship (4.10) by induction. It
 285 is obvious that (4.10) holds for $k = 0$ since $f(\mathbf{u}) \geq f^*$ for any $\mathbf{u} \in \Omega$. Now we assume
 286 that (4.10) holds for some $k \in \mathbb{N}$. It follows from the strong convexity of f that

$$287 \quad f(\mathbf{u}) \geq f(\mathbf{v}_k) + \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle + \frac{\mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2,$$

288 for all $\mathbf{u} \in \Omega$. Then substituting the above relationship into (4.8) leads to that

$$\begin{aligned} 289 \quad \phi_{k+1}(\mathbf{u}) &\leq \phi_k(\mathbf{u}) - \nu_k \sigma_k f^* + \nu_k \sigma_k f(\mathbf{u}) \\ &\leq \sigma_k(f(\mathbf{u}) - f^*) + \phi_0(\mathbf{u}) + \nu_k \sigma_k(f(\mathbf{u}) - f^*) \\ &= \sigma_{k+1}(f(\mathbf{u}) - f^*) + \phi_0(\mathbf{u}), \end{aligned}$$

290 which indicates that (4.10) also holds for $k + 1$. We complete the proof. \square

291 Next, we proceed to show that the function value error of Algorithm 3 is controlled
 292 by the estimating sequences.

293 PROPOSITION 4.5. *Let $\{\sigma_k\}$ and $\{\phi_k\}$ be the sequences defined in Lemma 4.3.
 294 Then the sequence $\{\mathbf{u}_k\}$ generated by Algorithm 3 satisfies*

$$295 \quad (4.11) \quad f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^* \leq \frac{1}{\sigma_k} \phi_0(\mathbf{u}^*) + \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4},$$

296 for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$.

297 *Proof.* Let $\phi_k^* := \min_{\mathbf{u} \in \Omega} \phi_k(\mathbf{u})$. We first prove by induction that

$$298 \quad (4.12) \quad \sigma_k \left(f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^* - \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4} \right) \leq \phi_k^*,$$

299 for any $k \in \mathbb{N}$. It is clear that (4.12) holds for $k = 0$ since $\sigma_0 = 1$ and $\phi_0^* = \phi_0(\mathbf{w}_0) =$
 300 $f(\mathbf{u}_0) - f^* - \mu \varepsilon^2 / 4$. Now we assume that (4.12) holds for some $k \in \mathbb{N}$ and investigate
 301 the situation for $k + 1$.

302 From the canonical form (4.9), it follows that ϕ_k is a strongly convex function
 303 and $\Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k) = \arg \min_{\mathbf{u} \in \Omega} \phi_k(\mathbf{u})$. By invoking the result of [10, Corollary 2.2.1], we
 304 have

$$\begin{aligned} 305 \quad \phi_k(\mathbf{u}) &\geq \phi_k^* + \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k)\|^2 \\ &\geq \sigma_k \left(f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^* - \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4} \right) + \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k)\|^2, \end{aligned}$$

306 for all $\mathbf{u} \in \Omega$. Then relationship (4.8) yields that

$$\begin{aligned} 307 \quad \phi_{k+1}(\mathbf{u}) &\geq \sigma_k \left(f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^* - \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4} \right) + \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k)\|^2 - \nu_k \sigma_k f^* \\ &\quad + \nu_k \sigma_k f(\mathbf{v}_k) + \nu_k \sigma_k \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle + \frac{\nu_k \sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2 \\ &\geq \sigma_{k+1} (f(\mathbf{v}_k) - f^*) - \frac{\sigma_k \mu \varepsilon^2}{4} + \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \sigma_k \mathbf{u}_k - \sigma_{k+1} \mathbf{v}_k \rangle \\ &\quad + \nu_k \sigma_k \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u} \rangle + \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k)\|^2 \\ &= \sigma_{k+1} (f(\mathbf{v}_k) - f^*) - \frac{\sigma_k \mu \varepsilon^2}{4} + \nu_k \sigma_k \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u} - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k) \rangle \\ &\quad + \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k)\|^2, \end{aligned}$$

308 where the second inequality comes from the strong convexity of f and (4.7), and the
 309 last equality holds due to the definition of \mathbf{v}_k in (4.1). According to the definition of
 310 \mathbf{z}_k in (4.2), we can obtain that

$$\begin{aligned} & \nu_k \sigma_k \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u} - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k) \rangle + \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{u} - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k)\|^2 \\ &= \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \left\| \mathbf{u} - \left(\Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k) - \frac{\nu_k}{\mu} \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k) \right) \right\|^2 - \frac{\nu_k^2 \sigma_k}{2\mu} \|\nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k)\|^2 \\ &\geq \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \left\| \mathbf{z}_k - \left(\Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k) - \frac{\nu_k}{\mu} \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k) \right) \right\|^2 - \frac{\nu_k^2 \sigma_k}{2\mu} \|\nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k)\|^2 \\ &= \nu_k \sigma_k \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{z}_k - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k) \rangle + \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{z}_k - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k)\|^2. \end{aligned}$$

312 As a result, it holds that

$$\begin{aligned} & \phi_{k+1}(\mathbf{u}) \geq \sigma_{k+1} (f(\mathbf{v}_k) - f^*) - \frac{\sigma_k \mu \varepsilon^2}{4} + \nu_k \sigma_k \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{z}_k - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k) \rangle \\ & \quad + \frac{\sigma_k \mu}{2} \|\mathbf{z}_k - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k)\|^2, \end{aligned} \tag{4.13}$$

314 for all $\mathbf{u} \in \Omega$. From the definitions of \mathbf{v}_k and \mathbf{u}_{k+1} in (4.1) and (4.3), it can be derived
 315 that $\mathbf{z}_k - \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_k) = (\mathbf{u}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k)/\eta_k$. Substituting this relationship into (4.13) and
 316 taking $\mathbf{u} = \Pi_\Omega(\mathbf{w}_{k+1})$, we arrive at

$$\frac{\phi_{k+1}^*}{\sigma_{k+1}} \geq f(\mathbf{v}_k) - f^* + \langle \nabla f(\mathbf{v}_k), \mathbf{u}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k \rangle + \frac{\mu}{2\nu_k^2} \|\mathbf{u}_{k+1} - \mathbf{v}_k\|^2 - \frac{(1 - \eta_k)\mu\varepsilon^2}{4},$$

318 which together with the line-search condition (4.4) implies that

$$\frac{\phi_{k+1}^*}{\sigma_{k+1}} \geq f(\mathbf{u}_{k+1}) - f^* - \frac{\eta_k \mu \varepsilon^2}{4} - \frac{(1 - \eta_k)\mu\varepsilon^2}{4} = f(\mathbf{u}_{k+1}) - f^* - \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4}.$$

320 Therefore, relationship (4.12) also holds for $k + 1$.

321 Finally, by collecting two relationships (4.10) and (4.12) together, we can obtain
 322 that

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma_k \left(f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^* - \frac{\mu\varepsilon^2}{4} \right) &\leq \min_{\mathbf{u} \in \Omega} \phi_k(\mathbf{u}) \leq \min_{\mathbf{u} \in \Omega} \{ \sigma_k(f(\mathbf{u}) - f^*) + \phi_0(\mathbf{u}) \} \\ &\leq \sigma_k(f(\mathbf{u}^*) - f^*) + \phi_0(\mathbf{u}^*) \\ &= \phi_0(\mathbf{u}^*), \end{aligned}$$

324 which completes the proof. \square

325 With the above preparatory results in place, we are now in a position to establish
 326 the iteration complexity of Algorithm 3, as articulated in the theorem below.

327 **THEOREM 4.6.** *Let $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$ be a sufficiently small constant. Then after at most*

$$O \left(\log \left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon} \right) \frac{1}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})}} \right)$$

329 iterations, Algorithm 3 will reach an iterate \mathbf{u}_k satisfying $\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$.

330 *Proof.* In view of relationship (4.6), the number of line-search steps j_k in (4.4)
 331 satisfies

$$332 \quad \frac{\mu}{\nu_k^2} \eta_k^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \leq 2 \max_{i \in [m]} \left\{ \left[\frac{2(1-\alpha_i)}{\mu(1+\alpha_i)\varepsilon^2} \right]^{(1-\alpha_i)/(1+\alpha_i)} L_i^{2/(1+\alpha_i)} \right\} \leq \frac{2M}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}},$$

333 where $M > 0$ is a constant defined in (2.1). Since $\eta_k = \nu_k/(1+\nu_k) \geq \nu_k/2$, we arrive
 334 at

$$335 \quad (4.14) \quad \frac{\nu_k^2}{\mu} \geq \frac{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}}{2M} \eta_k^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \geq \frac{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}}{2^{2/(1+\hat{\alpha})} M} \nu_k^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}.$$

336 Let $\omega > 0$ be a constant defined as

$$337 \quad \omega = \frac{1}{2^{2/(1+3\hat{\alpha})}} \left[\frac{\mu}{M} \right]^{(1+\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})}.$$

338 Then it follows from relationship (4.14) that

$$339 \quad (4.15) \quad \nu_k \geq \omega \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})},$$

340 which further infers that

$$341 \quad \sigma_{k+1} = (1 + \nu_k) \sigma_k \geq \left(1 + \omega \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})} \right) \sigma_k.$$

342 Applying the above inequality for k times recursively yields that

$$343 \quad \sigma_k \geq \left(1 + \omega \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})} \right)^k.$$

344 As a direct consequence of (2.5) and (4.11), we can show that

$$345 \quad \begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 &\leq \frac{2}{\mu} (f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^*) \leq \frac{2}{\mu} \left(\frac{1}{\sigma_k} \phi_0(\mathbf{u}^*) + \frac{\mu \varepsilon^2}{4} \right) \\ &\leq \chi \left(1 + \omega \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})} \right)^{-k} + \frac{\varepsilon^2}{2}, \end{aligned}$$

346 where $\chi = 2(f(\mathbf{u}_0) - f^*)/\mu + \|\mathbf{u}_0 - \mathbf{u}^*\|^2 > 0$ is a constant. Let K_ε^* be the small-
 347 est iteration number k such that $\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$. By solving the inequality $\chi(1 + \omega \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})^{-k} \leq \varepsilon^2/2$, we have

$$349 \quad K_\varepsilon^* \leq \log \left(\frac{\sqrt{2\chi}}{\varepsilon} \right) \frac{2}{\log(1 + \omega \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})} \leq \log \left(\frac{\sqrt{2\chi}}{\varepsilon} \right) \frac{4}{\omega \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})}}.$$

350 The proof is completed. \square

351 The complexity bound established in Theorem 4.6 is markedly lower than those
 352 presented in Theorems 2.2 and 3.1, thereby highlighting the acceleration effect at-
 353 tained by Algorithm 3. Finally, we demonstrate that the number of line-search steps
 354 required by Algorithm 3 is also $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})$.

355 COROLLARY 4.7. *Let $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$ be a sufficiently small constant. Then, to achieve
 356 an iterate \mathbf{u}_k satisfying $\|\mathbf{u}_k - \mathbf{u}^*\| \leq \varepsilon$, Algorithm 3 requires at most*

$$357 \quad O \left(\log \left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon} \right) \frac{1}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})}} \right)$$

358 line-search steps.

359 *Proof.* It follows from relationship (4.14) that

$$360 \quad \rho_{k+1} = 2^{j_k} \rho_k = \frac{\mu}{\nu_k^2} \leq \frac{2^{2/(1+\hat{\alpha})} M}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \left[\frac{1}{\nu_k} \right]^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})},$$

361 which together with (4.15) implies that

$$362 \quad \rho_{k+1} \leq \frac{2^{2/(1+\hat{\alpha})} M}{\varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})}} \left[\frac{1}{\omega \varepsilon^{2(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})}} \right]^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} = \frac{2^{2/(1+\hat{\alpha})} M}{\omega^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \varepsilon^{4(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})}}.$$

363 Let N_k be the total number of line-search steps after k iterations in Algorithm 3. In
364 view of (3.4), we have

$$365 \quad \begin{aligned} N_k &\leq k + \log \left(\frac{2^{2/(1+\hat{\alpha})} M}{\omega^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \varepsilon^{4(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+3\hat{\alpha})}} \right) - \log \rho_0 \\ &\leq k + \frac{4(1-\hat{\alpha})}{1+3\hat{\alpha}} \log \left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon} \right) + \log \left(\frac{2^{2/(1+\hat{\alpha})} M}{\omega^{(1-\hat{\alpha})/(1+\hat{\alpha})} \rho_0} \right) + 1. \end{aligned}$$

366 Consequently, Theorem 4.6 indicates that the total number of line-search steps in
367 Algorithm 3 is at most $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})$, which completes the proof. \square

368 *Remark 4.8.* By an analogous argument, we can also prove that Algorithm 3
369 requires at most $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})$ iterations to generate an iterate \mathbf{u}_k such
370 that $f(\mathbf{u}_k) - f^* \leq \varepsilon$ for problem (1.1). Very recently, Doikov [7] has shown that,
371 in the case $m = 2$, where f_1 is a convex function with a Hölder continuous gradient
372 and $f_2(\mathbf{u}) = \|\mathbf{u}\|^2$, the lower complexity bound for first-order methods is precisely
373 $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})$ in terms of function value accuracy. This finding confirms
374 that Algorithm 3 achieves the optimal iteration complexity.

375 **5. Numerical Experiments.** Preliminary numerical results are presented in
376 this section to provide additional insights into the performance guarantees of the
377 gradient descent method (1.3). We aim to elucidate that the final error attained by
378 the gradient descent method (1.3) is influenced by both the stepsize τ and the Hölder
379 exponent p .

380 We generated the results using Julia [3] version 1.12 on an Apple Macintosh Mini
381 with a M2 processor, 8 performance cores, and 32GB of memory.

382 We have placed the Julia codes for the results in the GitHub repository https://github.com/ctkelley/Grad_Des_CKW.jl with instructions for reproducing the figures.

384 **5.1. Two-dimensional PDE with a non-Lipschitz term.** Hölder continuous
385 gradients arise naturally in partial differential equations (PDEs) involving non-
386 Lipschitz nonlinearity [2, 13]. In this subsection, we introduce a numerical example
387 from [2]. This problem is to solve the following two-dimensional PDE,

$$388 \quad (5.1) \quad \mathcal{F}(u) = -\Delta u + \nu u_+^p = 0,$$

389 where $p \in (0, 1)$, $\nu > 0$ is a constant and $u_+ = \max\{u, 0\}$. It should be noted that \mathcal{F}
390 is the gradient of the following energy functional,

$$391 \quad \hat{f}(u) = \frac{1}{2} \|\nabla u\|^2 + \frac{\nu}{p+1} \int_D u_+^{p+1}(y) dy.$$

392 Discretizing (5.1) with the standard five point difference scheme [8] leads to the

393 following nonlinear system,

394 (5.2)
$$\mathbf{F}(\mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{u} + \nu\mathbf{u}_+^{1/2} - \mathbf{b} = 0,$$

395 where $\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ is the discretization of $-\Delta$ with zero boundary conditions, $\mathbf{b} \in$
 396 \mathbb{R}^n encodes the boundary conditions, and $\mathbf{u}_+^{1/2} = \max\{\mathbf{u}, 0\}^{1/2}$ is understood as a
 397 component-wise operation. Problem (5.2) is equivalent to optimization problem (1.1)
 398 with $\Omega = \mathbb{R}^n$, and

399
$$f(\mathbf{u}) = \frac{1}{2}(f_1(\mathbf{u}) + f_2(\mathbf{u})) \quad \text{with} \quad f_1(\mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{u}^\top \mathbf{A}\mathbf{u} - 2\mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{u}, \quad f_2(\mathbf{u}) = \frac{\nu}{p+1} \mathbf{e}^\top \mathbf{u}_+^{1+p},$$

400 where $\mathbf{e} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ is the vector of all ones.

401 It is clear that ∇f_1 is Lipschitz continuous with the Lipschitz constant $L_1 = \|\mathbf{A}\|$,
 402 and ∇f_2 is locally Hölder continuous with $\alpha = 1/2$ and $L_2 = \nu n^{1/4}$ from

403
$$\|\nabla f_2(\mathbf{u}) - \nabla f_2(\mathbf{v})\| = \nu \left\| \mathbf{u}_+^{1/2} - \mathbf{v}_+^{1/2} \right\| \leq \nu n^{1/4} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}\|^{1/2},$$

404 for all $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{R}^n$. The function f is $\lambda(\mathbf{A})$ -strongly convex, where $\lambda(\mathbf{A})$ is the smallest
 405 eigenvalue of the symmetric positive definite matrix \mathbf{A} .

406 We now modify the problem to enable direct computation of the errors in the
 407 iteration. To this end we follow Example 4.4 in [12] and take as the exact solution
 408 the function

409
$$u^*(x, y) = \left(\frac{3r-1}{2} \right)^2 \max(0, r - 1/3)$$

410 where $r = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}$, and let \mathbf{u}^* be u^* evaluated at the interior grid points. We
 411 enforce the boundary conditions

412
$$u(x, 1) = u^*(x, 1), u(x, 0) = u^*(x, 0), u(1, y) = u^*(1, y), u(0, y) = u^*(0, y)$$

413 for $0 < x, y < 1$ and encode this into \mathbf{b} . Letting $\mathbf{c}^* = \mathbf{F}(\mathbf{u}^*)$ out modified equation is

414 (5.3)
$$\mathbf{F}(\mathbf{u}) - \mathbf{c}^* = 0.$$

415 Equation 5.3 is the necessary condition for the optimization problem

416 (5.4)
$$\min_{\mathbf{u} \in \mathbb{R}^n} f(\mathbf{u}) = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{u}^\top \mathbf{A}\mathbf{u} + \frac{1}{1+p} \mathbf{e}^\top \mathbf{u}_+^{1+p} - (\mathbf{c}^*)^\top \mathbf{u}.$$

417 In the iteration we use the solution of $\mathbf{A}\mathbf{u}_0 = -\mathbf{b}$ as the initial iterate. This is the
 418 discretization of Laplace's equation with the problem boundary conditions. In this
 419 way we ensure that the entire iteration satisfies the boundary conditions. We use a
 420 $n \times n$ grid with $n = 15$ for the examples in this section

421 We then examine the effects of grid refinement in § 5.2.

422 **5.2. Algorithm 1.** In the first experiment, we scrutinize the performance of
 423 the gradient descent method (1.3) under different stepsizes. Specifically, with the
 424 parameters p and ν fixed at 0.5.

425 We test the algorithm is tested for stepsizes of the form $\tau = \tau_0 h^2$, where $h =$
 426 $1/(n+1)$ is the spatial meshwidth and τ_0 is taken from the set $\{.2, .1, .05, .01\}$.

427 The corresponding numerical results, presented in Figure 1(a), illustrate the decay
 428 of the distance between the iterates and the global minimizer over iterations. It can

429 be observed that a larger stepsize facilitates a more rapid descent in the early stage
 430 of iterations, albeit at the expense of a greater asymptotic error. This phenomenon
 431 corroborates our theoretical predictions.

432 In the second experiment, we fix τ_0 is fixed at 0.01, while the parameter p is
 433 varied over the values $\{0.2, 0.4, 0.6, 0.8\}$. Figure 1(b) similarly tracks the decay of
 434 the distance to the global minimizer over iterations. It is evident that, as the value
 435 of p decreases, the final error attained by the algorithm increases under the same
 436 stepsize. Therefore, the associated optimization problems become increasingly ill-
 437 conditioned and thus more challenging to solve for smaller values of p . These findings
 438 offer empirical support for our theoretical analysis.

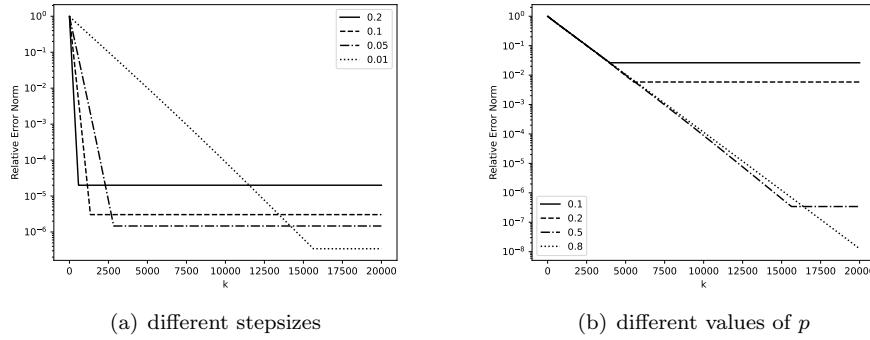


FIG. 1. Numerical performance of Algorithm 1 for problem (5.4).

439 We now repeat the experiment with $n = 31$, so we reduce the mesh width by a
 440 factor of 2 and increase the norm of \mathbf{A} by a factor of four. As one would expect the
 441 stepsize must decrease by a factor of four for stability.

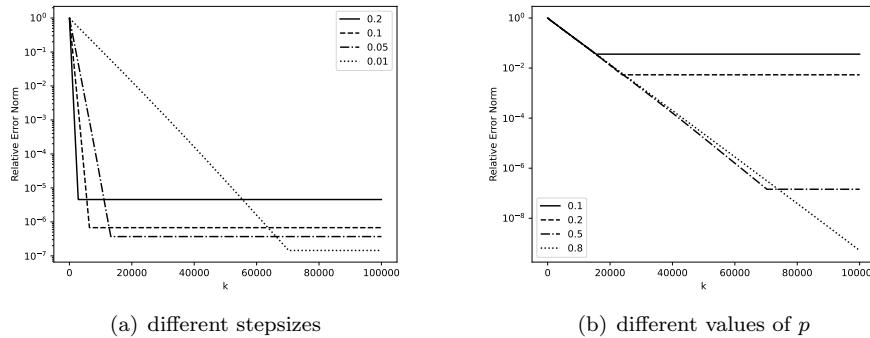


FIG. 2. Numerical performance of Algorithm 1 for problem (5.4).

442 **5.3. Algorithm 2.** We repeat the study for varying the exponent p for Algo-
 443 rithm 2. We set the parameter

$$444 \quad \mu = \frac{1}{4h^2}$$

445 which is a lower estimate for the actual value. We initialized the step length to $.01h^2$.
Comparing Figure 3 to Figure 2(b) shows the benefits of the linesearch.

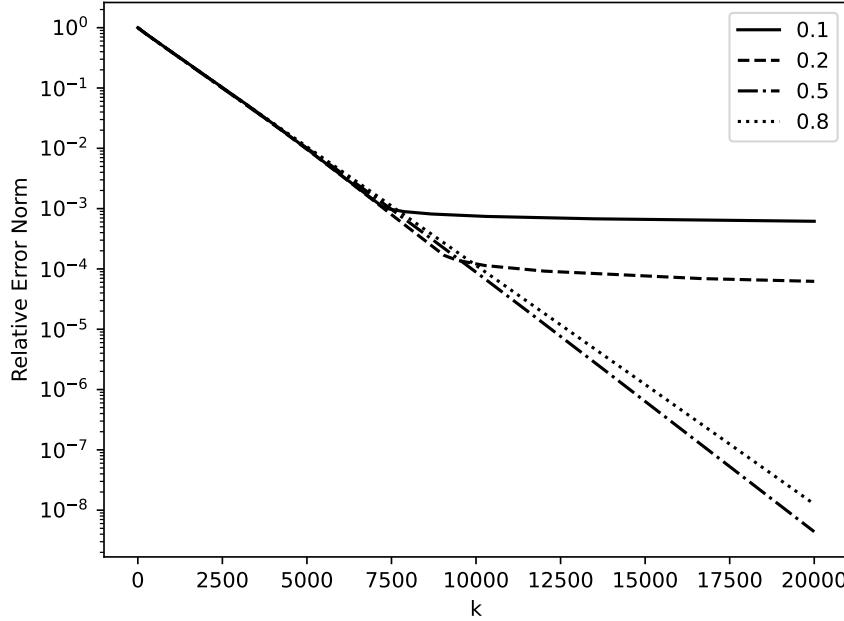


FIG. 3. Numerical performance of Algorithm 2 for problem (5.4).

446

447 5.4. Algorithm 3.

448 5.5. Example 2. We consider a numerical example motivated by a semi-linear
449 elliptic problem with a constraint on the solution in a certain set [13]. Let $D = (0, 1)^3$
450 and

451 (5.5)
$$\mathcal{H}(u) = -\Delta u + \lambda|u|^\nu - |u|^{p-1}u$$

452 on D with the boundary condition $u = 1$ on the boundary ∂D , where $p > 1$, $\nu \in (0, 1)$
453 and $\lambda > p/\nu$ are constants. We consider the variational inequality that is to find
454 $u^* \in [-1, 1]$ such that for any $u \in [-1, 1]$,

455
$$\mathcal{H}(u^*)(u - u^*) \geq 0.$$

456 This problem is equivalent to the nonlinear equation

457 (5.6)
$$0 = \mathcal{F}(u) := \begin{cases} \mathcal{H}(u) & \text{if } u - \mathcal{H}(u) \in [-1, 1], \\ u - 1 & \text{if } u - \mathcal{H}(u) \geq 1, \\ u + 1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

458 Discretizing (5.5) with the standard five point difference scheme [8], problem (5.6)
459 leads to the following system of nonlinear equations

460 (5.7)
$$\mathbf{F}(\mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{u} - \Pi_{\mathbf{U}} \left(\mathbf{u} - \tau (\mathbf{A}\mathbf{u} + \lambda|\mathbf{u}|^\nu - |\mathbf{u}|^{p-1}\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{b}) \right) = 0,$$

461 where $\mathbf{U} = [-1, 1]^n$, $\tau > 0$ is a constant, $\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ is a symmetric positive defi-
 462 nite matrix and $\mathbf{b} \in \mathbb{R}^n$. Note that (5.7) is the first-order optimal condition of the
 463 minimization problem

464 (5.8)
$$\min_{\mathbf{u} \in [-1, 1]^n} f(\mathbf{u}) := \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{u}^\top \mathbf{A} \mathbf{u} + \frac{\lambda}{1+\nu} \mathbf{e}^\top |\mathbf{u}|^{\nu+1} - \frac{1}{1+p} \mathbf{e}^\top \max(\mathbf{u}, -\mathbf{u})^{p+1} + \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{u}.$$

The Hessian matrix of f at \mathbf{u} with $\mathbf{u}_i \neq 0$, $i = 1, \dots, n$ has the form

$$\nabla^2 f(\mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{A} + \lambda\nu |\mathbf{u}|^{\nu-1} - p \text{diag}\left(\max(-\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{u})^{p-1}\right),$$

465 Since $\lambda\nu > p$, $\nabla^2 f(\mathbf{u})$ is symmetric positive definite for any $\mathbf{u} \in [-1, 1]^n$ with $\mathbf{u}_i \neq 0$,
 466 $i = 1, \dots, n$. Hence f is μ -strongly convex in $[-1, 1]^n$ with $\mu = \lambda_{\min}(\mathbf{A})$ and the
 467 system (5.7) has a unique solution in $[-1, 1]^n$. However, ∇f is not Lipschitz continuous
 468 in $[-1, 1]^n$.

Let

$$f_1(\mathbf{u}) = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{u}^\top \mathbf{A} \mathbf{u} + \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{u}, f_2(\mathbf{u}) = \frac{\lambda}{1+\nu} \mathbf{e}^\top |\mathbf{u}|^{\nu+1}, f_3(\mathbf{u}) = -\frac{1}{1+p} \mathbf{e}^\top \max(\mathbf{u}, -\mathbf{u})^{p+1}$$

469 This example satisfies Assumption 1.1 (ii) with $L_1 = \lambda_{\max}(\mathbf{A})$, $L_2 = \lambda\nu$, $L_3 =$
 470 $pn^{\frac{1}{2}}$, $\alpha_1 = \alpha_3 = 1$, $\alpha_2 = 1 - \nu$.

471 **6. Conclusion.** In this paper, we consider a class of strongly convex constrained
 472 optimization problems of the form (1.1). Example 1.1 shows that although each com-
 473 ponent function f_i of the objective function f admits a Hölder continuous gradient with
 474 an component $\alpha_i \in (0, 1]$, the gradient of f is not necessarily Hölder continuous. To
 475 establish the iteration complexity of the projected gradient descent methods for this
 476 class of problems, we use the parameter $\hat{\alpha} = \min_{i \in [m]} \alpha_i$ to determine the complex-
 477 ity bound. Algorithm 1 is a new version of projected gradient method for problem
 478 (1.1) with an appropriately fixed stepsize. Theorem 2.2 shows that Algorithm 1 can
 479 find an iterate in the feasible set Ω with a distance to the global minimizer less than
 480 ε at most $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+\hat{\alpha})})$ iterations. This recovers the classical complex-
 481 ity result when $\hat{\alpha} = 1$ and reveals the additional difficulty imposed by the weaker
 482 smoothness of the objective function for $\hat{\alpha} < 1$. Algorithm 2 is a modification of
 483 Algorithm 1 for problems where the parameters α_i and L_i are difficult to estimate
 484 for the stepsize. In Algorithm 3, the stepsize is updated by the universal scheme at
 485 each iteration, which improves the complexity bound to $O(\log(\varepsilon^{-1})\varepsilon^{2(\hat{\alpha}-1)/(1+3\hat{\alpha})})$.
 486 Numerical experiments are conducted to validate our theoretical findings, demon-
 487 strating the expected behavior of projected gradient descent methods under different
 488 stepsizes and Hölder exponents. These results offer new insights into the performance
 489 guarantees of the classic projected gradient descent methods for a broader class of
 490 optimization problems with non-Lipschitz gradients.

491

REFERENCES

- 492 [1] J.-C. BARITAUX, K. HASSELER, AND M. UNSER, *An efficient numerical method for general L_p*
 493 *regularization in fluorescence molecular tomography*, IEEE Trans. Med. Imaging, 29 (2010),
 494 pp. 1075–1087.
 495 [2] J. W. BARRETT AND R. M. SHANAHAN, *Finite element approximation of a model reaction-*
 496 *diffusion problem with a non-lipschitz nonlinearity*, Numer. Math., 59 (1991), pp. 217–242.
 497 [3] J. BEZANSON, A. EDELMAN, S. KARPINSKI, AND V. B. SHAH, *Julia: A fresh approach to nu-*
 498 *merical computing*, SIAM Rev., 59 (2017), pp. 65–98.

- 499 [4] L. S. BORGES, F. S. V. BAZÁN, AND L. BEDIN, *A projection-based algorithm for ℓ_2 - ℓ_p Tikhonov*
- 500 regularization, Math. Methods Appl. Sci., 41 (2018), pp. 5919–5938.
- 501 [5] X. CHEN, C. T. KELLEY, AND L. WANG, *A new complexity result for strongly convex optimization*
- 502 *with locally α -hölder continuous gradients*, arXiv:2505.03506v1, (2025).
- 503 [6] O. DEVOLDER, F. GLINEUR, AND Y. NESTEROV, *First-order methods of smooth convex opti-*
- 504 *mization with inexact oracle*, Math. Program., 146 (2014), pp. 37–75.
- 505 [7] N. DOIKOV, *Lower complexity bounds for minimizing regularized functions*, Optim. Lett.,
- 506 (2025), pp. 1–20.
- 507 [8] R. J. LEVEQUE, *Finite Difference Methods for Ordinary and Partial Differential Equations:*
- 508 *Steady-State and Time-Dependent Problems*, Society for Industrial and Applied Mathe-
- 509 matics, 2007.
- 510 [9] Y. NESTEROV, *Universal gradient methods for convex optimization problems*, Math. Program.,
- 511 152 (2015), pp. 381–404.
- 512 [10] Y. NESTEROV, *Lectures on Convex Optimization*, Springer, 2018.
- 513 [11] Y. NESTEROV, *Universal complexity bounds for universal gradient methods in nonlinear opti-*
- 514 *mization*, arXiv:2509.20902, (2025).
- 515 [12] X. QU, W. BIAN, AND X. CHEN, *An extra gradient Anderson-accelerated algorithm for pseu-*
- 516 *domonotone variational inequalities*, Math. Comput., (2025).
- 517 [13] M. TANG, *Uniqueness of bound states to $\Delta u - u + |u|^{p-1}u = 0$ in \mathbb{R}^n , $n \geq 3$* , Invent. Math.,
- 518 (2025), pp. 1–47.