Exercise 1. In class, you have seen examples of infinite-dimensional spaces: Notably, (infinite) sequences of numbers and function spaces. But one can come up with many other sets of objects that

(i) satisfy the vector space axioms, and

(ii) are infinite-dimensional.

Come up with your own example of an infinite-dimensional space that doesn't fit the examples you have seen in class. Show that it is a vector space (if you define scalar multiplication and vector addition appropriately) and why you think that the set is infinite-dimensional.

Answer

Consider a set A, its power set $\mathcal{P}(A)$ and the operation $\triangle$ as symmetric difference. Observe the following:

- The symmetric difference of two subsets of A is yet again a subset of A.

$$X, Y \subseteq A \Rightarrow X \cup Y \subseteq A \quad \text{and} \quad X \triangle Y = (X \cup Y) \backslash (X \cap Y) \subseteq X \cup Y.$$

  This means that, as a binary operation, the symmetric difference is closed in A,

- As an operation, it is associative: For $X, Y, Z \subseteq A$ we have

$$(X \triangle Y) \triangle Z = X \triangle (Y \triangle Z).$$

  The proof of this fact is attached at the end of this exercise. For now, this allows us to say that "$3X$" is well defined, because if it wasn't associative, then the expression $X \triangle X \triangle X$ would be ambiguous.

- There is an additive identity for this operation, recall that the empty set is a subset of all sets. Observe then that for all $X \subseteq A$ we have

$$X \triangle \varnothing = (X \cup \varnothing) \backslash (X \cap \varnothing) = X \backslash \varnothing = X.$$

- Finally observe that every element has an inverse. This is, there is an element Y for each X such that $X \triangle Y = \varnothing$. In this case, Y is the same as X because

$$X \triangle X = (X \cup X) \backslash (X \cap X) = X \backslash X = \varnothing.$$

Now arises the question, about uniqueness of solutions to the equation $X \triangle Y = \varnothing$.[a]

The previous statements show that $(\mathcal{P}(A), \triangle)$ is a group. From the last fact we also deduce that every element has order 2. Now, observe that our operation is commutative:

$$X \triangle Y = (X \backslash Y) \cup (Y \backslash X) = (Y \backslash X) \cup (X \backslash Y) = Y \triangle X.$$

Thus this is an Abelian group where every element has order 2. Let us now define a scalar multiplication on this set via $\mathbb{F}_2$. We declare that

$$0 \cdot X = \varnothing, \quad \text{and} \quad 1 \cdot A = A.$$

This makes sense as $2 \equiv 0 \pmod 2$ and $2A = A \triangle A = \varnothing$. The preceding operation satisfies all four axioms of scalar multiplication:

- $1 \cdot X = X$ by definition.
- Scalar multiplication is associative with the field multiplication: $c(dX) = (cd)X$. To prove this, it must be done by cases, we will do it at the end.
- Scalar multiplication distributes with respect to field multiplication: $(c + d)X = cX + dX$. And once again as this must be done in four cases, we leave it for the end.
- Finally scalar multiplication distributes with respect to vector space addition: $c(X + Y) = cX + cY$. This we can verify in two cases:

  When $c = 0$ we have
  $$\varnothing = \varnothing \triangle \varnothing$$
  and $\varnothing \triangle \varnothing = \varnothing$. In the other case when $c = 1$ we have
  $$1(X \triangle Y) = 1X \triangle 1Y \Rightarrow X \triangle Y = X \triangle Y.$$

Thus this operation is a well defined scalar multiplication over $\mathcal{P}(A)$. This can be seen also in another way by recalling that any Abelian group is a $\mathbb{Z}$-module. In this case, because every element has order 2, it's a $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$-module which means its an $\mathbb{F}_2$-vector space.

Let us now consider two different non-empty elements $X, Y \subseteq A$ and the equation

$$aX + bY = 0$$

If either a, b are non-zero then the equation has no solutions:

- ⋄ $X + Y = 0$ can't occur as $Y \neq X$.
- ⋄ $X = 0$ also can't occur as X is non-empty, similarly for Y.

So the only solution is $a = b = 0$. This means that any two distinct elements are linearly independent.
Observe now that singleton sets are a generating set for our vector space as any set A can be seen as

$$A = \bigtriangleup_{x \in A} \{ x \}.$$

Singletons in particular are all linearly independent from one another. Observe that this doesn't necessarily occur when we have 3 different arbitrary sets, as we could have

$$X + Y + (X + Y) = 0.$$

If we assume that A is uncountably infinite, then singletons are a set as big as A which generates our vector space and is linearly independent. This means that our space is infinite-dimensional.

[a] astrall recall to uniqueness of inverses.

Exercise 2. Defining what the "dimension" of a space is is intuitively obvious, but *technically* perhaps not quite as much.

For $\mathbb{R}^n$ and other finite-dimensional spaces, if you have a basis of the space with n elements, then we say that the space has dimension n[1]. Importantly, every other basis you can find will then also have exactly n elements. This also means that the operation that converts one basis to another can be written as a square matrix/operator that is invertible. This all will turn out to be more complicated for infinite-dimensional spaces.

[1] Recall: A basis of a space V is a set of vectors $\{ \mathbf{a}_i \}$ so that every vector $\mathbf{v} \in V$ can be written as a unique linear combination $v = \sum_i \alpha_i \mathbf{a}_i$. Note that the basis vectors do not need to be normalized (we are only working with a vector space, no norms so far) and they do not have to be orthogonal (again, we are only working with a vector space, no inner products have been defined so far).

(i) Take $V = \mathbb{R}^3$. Provide a basis $\{ \mathbf{a}_i \}_{i=1}^3$ (that is, a set of three vectors) for this space. Then provide another basis $\{ \mathbf{b}_i \}_{i=1}^3$.

(ii) There is an operator R (here, a 3×3 matrix) that converts from one basis to another. That is, if I give you a vector $x \in \mathbb{R}^3$, it can be written as $\mathbf{x} = \sum_{i=1}^3 \alpha_i \mathbf{a}_i$ and as $\mathbf{x} = \sum_{i=1}^3 \beta_i \mathbf{b}_i$. The operator R is then the one that translates between expansion coefficients:

$$\begin{pmatrix} \beta_1 \\ \beta_2 \\ \beta_3 \end{pmatrix} = R \begin{pmatrix} \alpha_1 \\ \alpha_2 \\ \alpha_3 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Provide the form of R for your choice of basis and show that it is invertible.

(iii) Repeat the previous two steps if V is the space of symmetric 2×2 matrices.

Answer

(i) Consider the vectors

$$\mathbf{a}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \mathbf{a}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{a}_3 = \begin{pmatrix} -1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

which form a basis because the matrix whose columns are the $\mathbf{a}_i$'s is invertible. The other basis we will pick is the canonical basis $\mathbf{b}_i = (\delta_{ij})_{j=1}^3$.

(ii) Suppose we have a vector

$$\mathbf{x} = \alpha_1 \mathbf{a}_1 + \alpha_2 \mathbf{a}_2 + \alpha_3 \mathbf{a}_3$$

which means $\mathbf{x}$ is written in $\mathbf{a}_i$ coordinates. Implicitly we claiming that we know the $\mathbf{a}_i$'s coordinates in canonical basis. If we wish to write $\mathbf{x}$ in canonical coordinates, then it suffices to expand the $\mathbf{a}_i$'s in terms of the canonical basis as follows:

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \alpha_1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \alpha_2 \\ \alpha_2 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} -\alpha_3 \\ \alpha_3 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \alpha_1 \\ \alpha_2 \\ \alpha_3 \end{pmatrix}.$$

This means that the matrix whose columns are the $\mathbf{a}_i$'s is the change of basis matrix which goes from $\mathbf{a}_i$ coordinates to $\mathbf{b}_i$ or canonical coordinates.

The operator is invertible because $\{\, \mathbf{a}_i \,\}_{i=1}^{3}$ is a basis of $\mathbb{R}^3$. We can also see it is invertible because the matrix has non-zero determinant:

$$\det \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = -1.$$

(iii) Now let us consider the space of symmetric 2×2 matrices:

$$\left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ b & c \end{pmatrix} : \; a, b, c \in \mathbb{R} \right\}.$$