## Why

When is a linear transformation between $V$ and $W$ one-to-one? In other words, when does

$$Tx = Ty \Rightarrow x = y$$

Rearranging, and using additivity, we ask when

$$T(x - y) = 0 \Rightarrow x - y = 0$$

Clearly we are interested in vectors $z$ for which $Tz = 0$.

## Definition

Suppose $T \in \mathcal{L}(V, W)$. The *null space* (or *kernel*) of $T$ is the set of vectors in $V$ which are mapped to 0 under $T$. In symbols, the null space of $T$ is the set

$$T = \{v \in V \mid Tv = 0\}$$

The word "null" means "zero" in German.

### A subspace

Why use the term *space*? Well, $T$ is a *subspace* of $V$.

**Proposition 1.** *Suppose $T \in \mathcal{L}(V, W)$. Then $(T)$ is a subspace of $V$.*

*Proof.* We verify that $(T)$ contains 0 and is closed under vector addition and scalar multiplication. First, $0 \in T$ since $T0 = 0$ by homogeneity. Second, by additivity, if $x, y \in T$, then

$$T(x + y) = Tx + Ty = 0 + 0 = 0$$

Third, if $u \in T$ and $\alpha \in \mathbf{F}$, then

$$T(\lambda u) = \lambda(Tu) = \lambda 0 = 0$$

□

### Characterization of injectivity

**Proposition 2.** *Suppose $T \in \mathcal{L}(V, W)$. Then*

$$T = \{0\} \longleftrightarrow T \text{ is one-to-one}$$

If $T = \{0\}$ we say that $T$ has *zero nullspace* or *trivial nullspace.*

### Examples

*Zero map.* Suppose $T$ is the zero map from $V$ to $W$. In other words,

$$Tv = 0 \quad \text{for all } v \in V$$

Then $T = V$. I.e., the null space is the whole space.

*Simple function on* $\mathbf{C}^3$. Define $\phi \in \mathcal{L}(\mathbf{C}^3, \mathbf{C})$ by

$$\phi(z_1, z_2, z_3) = z_1 + 2z_2 + 3z_3$$

Then $\phi$ is

$$\{(z_1, z_2, z_3) \in \mathbf{C}^3 \mid z_1 + 2z_2 + 3z_3 = 0\}$$

This is the *solution set* of a linear equation.

*Polynomial differentiation.* Suppose $D \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}), \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}))$ is the linear map defined by

$$Dp = p' \quad \text{for all } p \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R})$$

In other words, $Dp$ is the derivative of the polynomial $p$. Then $(D)$ is the set of constant functions.

*Multiplication by* $x^2$. Define $T \in \mathcal{L}(\mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}), \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R}))$ by

$$(Tp)(x) = x^2 p(x) \quad \text{for all } x \in \mathbf{R} \text{ and } p \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbf{R})$$

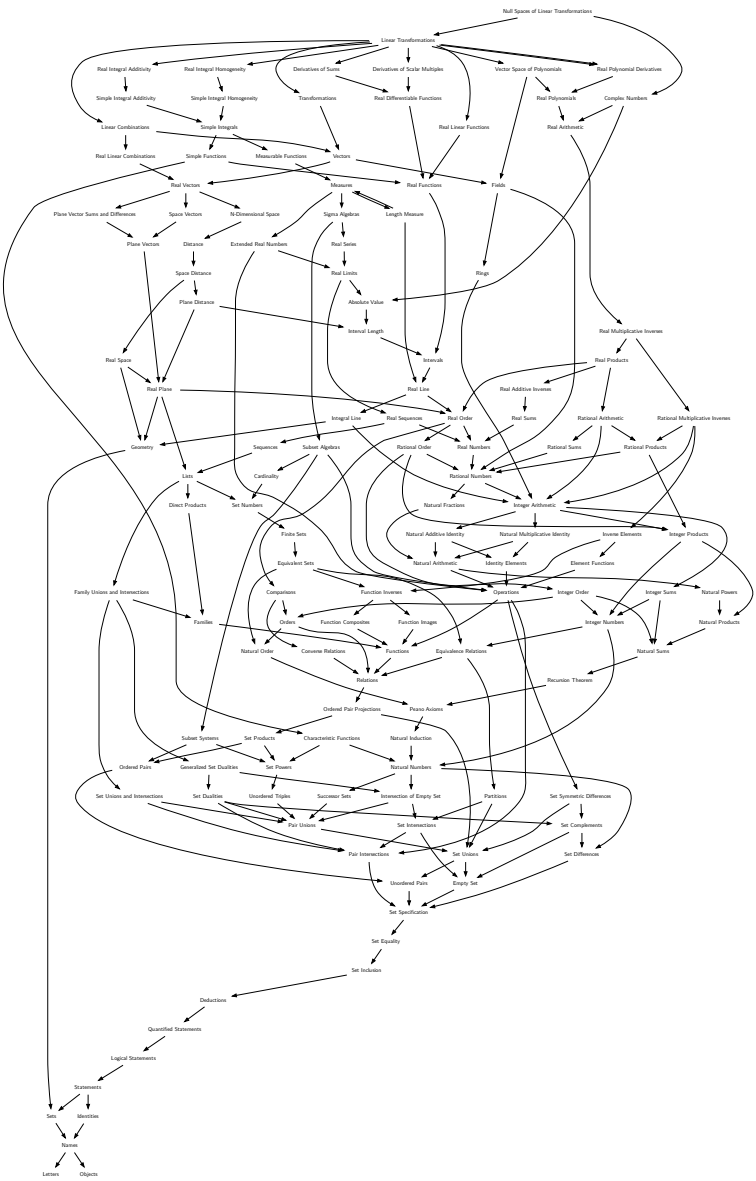
Then $(T) = \{0\}$, since no other polynomial satisfies $x^2 p(x) = 0$ for all $x \in \mathbf{R}$.

*Backward shift.* Define $T \in \mathcal{L}(\mathbf{F}^{\mathbf{N}}, \mathbf{F}^{\mathbf{N}})$ by

$$T(x_1, x_2, x_3, \ldots,) = (x_2, x_3, \ldots,)$$

so that $T$ is the backward shift Then $T(x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots) = 0$ if and only $x_2 = x_3 = \cdots = 0$. So

$$T = \{(\alpha, 0, 0, \dots, ) \mid \alpha \in \mathbf{F}\}$$


Null Spaces of Linear Transformations
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Real Space
Intervals
Real Products
Real Plane
Real Line
Real Additive Inverses
Integral Lists
Real Sequences
Real Order
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Pair Unions
Set Intersections
Set Complements
Pair Intersections
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