

# Essential Spectrum of Schrödinger Operators with no Periodic Potentials on Periodic Metric Graphs

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The main aim of the talk is the investigation of the essential spectrum of the quantum graphs. For this aim we use *the limit operators method* (see for instance the book)

- *V.S.Rabinovich, S. Roch, B.Silbermann, Limit Operators and its Applications in the Operator Theory, In ser. Operator Theory: Advances and Applications, vol 150, ISBN 3-7643-7081-5, Birkhäuser Verlag, 2004, 392 pp.*

Earlier this method was successfully applied to the study of the essential spectrum of electromagnetic Schrödinger and Dirac operators on  $\mathbb{R}^n$  for wide classes of potentials. In particular, a very simple and transparent proof of the Hunziker-van Winter-Zhislin Theorem (HWZ-Theorem) for multi-particle Hamiltonians has been obtained.

- *V. Rabinovich, Essential spectrum of perturbed pseudodifferential operators. Applications to the Schrödinger, Klein-Gordon, and Dirac operators, Russian Journal of Math. Physics, Vol.12, No.1, 2005, p. 62-80*

The limit operators method also was applied to the study of the location of the essential spectrum of discrete Schrödinger and Dirac operators on  $\mathbb{Z}^n$ , and on periodic combinatorial graphs.

- *V.S. Rabinovich, S. Roch, The essential spectrum of Schrödinger operators on lattice, Journal of Physics A, Math. Theor. 39 (2006) 8377-8394*
- *V.S. Rabinovich, S. Roch, Essential spectra of difference operators on  $\mathbb{Z}^n$ -periodic graphs, J. of Physics A: Math. Theor. ISSN 1751-8113, 40 (2007) 10109–10128*

# Periodic metric graphs

We consider a periodic metric graph  $\Gamma$  embedded in  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . We suppose that a graph  $\Gamma$  consists of a countably infinite set of vertices  $\mathcal{V} = \{v_i\}_{i \in \mathcal{I}}$  and a set  $\mathcal{E} = \{e_j\}_{j \in \mathcal{J}}$  of edges connecting these vertices. Each edge  $e$  is a line segment

$$[\alpha, \beta] = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^2 : x = (1 - \theta)\alpha + \theta\beta, \theta \in [0, 1]\} \subset \mathbb{R}^2$$

connecting its endpoints (vertices  $\alpha, \beta$ ), and we suppose that for the every pair of vertices  $\{\alpha, \beta\}$  there exists not more than one edge connecting this pair. Let  $\mathcal{E}_v$  be a set of edges incident to the vertex  $v$  (i.e., containing  $v$ ). We will always assume that the degree (valence)  $d(v)$  (the number of points of  $\mathcal{E}_v$ ) of any vertex  $v$  is finite and positive. Vertices with no incident edges are not allowed.

For each edge  $e = [\alpha, \beta]$  we assign its length  $l_e = \|\alpha - \beta\|_{\mathbb{R}^n} < \infty$ . We also suppose that the graph  $\Gamma$  is a connected set. The graph is a metric space with a metric induced by the standard metric of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . The topology on  $\Gamma$  is induced also by the topology on  $\mathbb{R}^n$ , and the measure  $d\ell$  on  $\Gamma$  is the line Lebesgue measure on every edge.

We suppose that on the graph  $\Gamma \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  acts a group  $\mathbb{G}$  isomorphic to  $\mathbb{Z}^m$ ,  $1 \leq m \leq n$ , that is

$$\mathbb{G} = \left\{ g \in \mathbb{R}^n : g = \sum_{j=1}^m \alpha_j \mathbf{e}_j, \alpha_j \in \mathbb{Z}, \mathbf{e}_j \in \mathbb{R}^n \right\}$$

where the system  $\{\mathbf{e}_1, \dots, \mathbf{e}_m\}$  is linear independent. The group  $\mathbb{G}$  acts on  $\Gamma$  by the shifts

$$\mathbb{G} \times \Gamma \ni (g, x) \rightarrow g + x \in \Gamma,$$

where  $g + x$  is the sum of the vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . We suppose that the group  $\mathbb{G}$  acts *freely* on  $X$ , that is if  $g + x = x$  for some  $x \in \Gamma$ , then  $g = 0$ . Moreover we suppose that the action of  $\mathbb{G}$  on  $\Gamma$  is co-compact, that is the fundamental domain  $\Gamma_0 = \Gamma/\mathbb{G}$  of  $\Gamma$  with respect to the action of  $\mathbb{G}$  on  $\Gamma$  is a compact set in the corresponding quotient topology. Let  $G_0 \subset \Gamma$  be a measurable set with the compact closure which contains for every  $x \in \Gamma$  exactly one element of the quotient class  $x + \mathbb{G} \in \Gamma/\mathbb{G}$ . There exists a natural one-to-one mapping  $G_0 \rightarrow \Gamma/\mathbb{G}$  which is the composition of the inclusion mapping  $G_0 \subset \Gamma$  and the canonical projection  $\Gamma \rightarrow \Gamma/\mathbb{G}$ .

Let  $G_h = G_0 + h$ ,  $h \in \mathbb{G}$ . Then

$$G_{h_1} \cap G_{h_2} = \emptyset \text{ if } h_1 \neq h_2,$$

and

$$\bigcup_{h \in \mathbb{G}} G_h = \Gamma.$$

We say that the graph  $\Gamma$  is *periodic with respect to*  $\mathbb{G}$  if the above given conditions are satisfied.

We denote by  $L^2(\Gamma)$  the space of measurable functions on  $\Gamma$  with the norm

$$\|u\|_{L^2(\Gamma)} = \left( \int_{\Gamma} |u(x)|^2 dx \right)^{1/2} = \left( \sum_{e \in \mathcal{E}} \int_e |u(x)|^2 dx \right)^{1/2}$$

and the scalar product

$$\langle u, v \rangle = \sum_{e \in \mathcal{E}} \int_e u(x) \bar{v}(x) dx.$$



# Schrödinger operators on on the periodic graph

Let  $\Gamma \subset \mathbb{R}^n$  be a periodic with respect to  $\mathbb{G}$  metric graph. We denote by  $H^s(e)$ ,  $e \in \mathcal{E}$ ,  $s \in \mathbb{R}$  the Sobolev space on the edge  $e$ , and let

$$H^s(\Gamma) = \bigoplus_{e \in \mathcal{E}} H^s(e)$$

with the norm

$$\|u\|_{H^s(\Gamma)} = \left( \sum_{e \in \mathcal{E}} \|u_e\|_{H^s(e)}^2 \right)^{1/2}.$$

We denote  $\mathcal{E}_v$  the set of edges incident  $v$ , and let  $d(v) \in \mathbb{N}$  be a number of the edges in  $\mathcal{E}_v$  (The periodicity of the graph  $\Gamma$  implies that  $d(v + g) = d(v)$  for every  $v \in \mathcal{V}$  and  $g \in \mathbb{G}$ ).

We consider the Schrödinger operator on  $\Gamma$

$$Hu(x) = -\frac{d^2u(x)}{dx^2} + q(x)u(x), x \in \Gamma \setminus \mathcal{V}, \quad (1)$$

where  $q \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$ . We provide the operator  $H$  by the Kirchhoff-Neumann conditions at the every vertex  $v \in \mathcal{V}$ .

$$u_e(v) = u_{e'}(v), \text{ if } e, e' \in \mathcal{E}_v, \text{ and } \sum_{e \in \mathcal{E}_v} u'_e = 0 \quad (2)$$

where the orientations of the edges  $e \in \mathcal{E}_v$  are taken as outgoing from  $v$ .

By the usual way we obtain that

$$\operatorname{Re} \langle Hu, u \rangle \geq m_q \|u\|_{L^2(\Gamma)}^2, u \in \tilde{H}^2(\Gamma), m_q = \inf_{x \in \Gamma} \operatorname{Re} q(x). \quad (3)$$

This property implies that the operator  $H$  provided by the Kirchhoff-Neumann conditions (2) defines an unbounded closed operator  $\mathcal{H}$  in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  with the domain  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$ , and  $\mathcal{H}$  is a selfadjoint operator if the potential  $q$  is a real-valued function.

We recall that a closed unbounded operator  $A$  acting in the Hilbert space  $X$  with dense domain  $D_A$  is called a Fredholm operator if  $\ker A$  is a finite dimensional sub-space of  $X$ ,  $\text{Im } A$  is closed in  $X$ , and  $X/\text{Im } A$  is a finite-dimensional space. We introduce in  $X_1 = D_A$  the norm of the graphics

$$\|u\|_{D_A} = \left( \|u\|_X^2 + \|Au\|_X^2 \right)^{1/2}. \quad (4)$$

Since  $A$  is closed,  $X_1$  is a Banach space. Then  $A$  is a Fredholm operator as unbounded operator in  $X$  if and only if  $A : X_1 \rightarrow X$  is a Fredholm operator as a bounded operator.

Note that the norm in  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$  equivalent to the graphic norm in  $D_{\mathcal{H}}$

$$\|u\|_{D_{\mathcal{H}}} = \left( \|u\|_{L^2(\Gamma)}^2 + \|Hu\|_{L^2(\Gamma)}^2 \right)^{1/2}$$

since the potential  $q \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$ . Hence the Fredholmness of the operator  $\mathcal{H}$  as an unbounded operator in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  with domain  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$  is equivalent to the Fredholmness of  $\mathcal{H}$  as a bounded operator from  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$  into  $L^2(\Gamma)$ .

We recall that the essential spectrum  $sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}$  of  $\mathcal{H}$  is the set of all  $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$  such that the operator  $\mathcal{H} - \lambda I$  is not Fredholm operator as unbounded in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  with domain  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$ . Note that for a self-adjoint operator  $\mathcal{H}$

$$sp_{dis} \mathcal{H} = sp \mathcal{H} \setminus sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}.$$

Let  $h \in \mathbb{G}$ . Then the shift (translation) operators

$$V_h u(x) = u(x - h), x \in \Gamma, h \in \mathbb{G}$$

are isometric operators in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  and  $H^2(\Gamma)$ . Moreover if  $u \in H^2(\Gamma)$  satisfies the Kirchhoff-Neumann conditions at the every vertex  $v \in \mathcal{V}$  the function  $V_h u$  also satisfies these conditions for every  $v \in \mathcal{V}$ . Hence  $V_h$  is an isometric operator in  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$ .

Let  $\mathbb{G} \ni h_k \rightarrow \infty$ . We consider the family of operators

$$V_{-h_k} \mathcal{H} V_{h_k} : \tilde{H}^2(\Gamma) \rightarrow L^2(\Gamma)$$

defined by the Schrödinger operators

$$V_{-h_k} \mathcal{H} V_{h_k} u(x) = \left( -\frac{d^2 u(x)}{dx^2} + q(x + h_k) \right) u(x), x \in \Gamma \setminus \mathcal{V}.$$

We say that the potential  $q \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$  is rich, if for every sequence  $\mathbb{G} \ni h_k \rightarrow \infty$  there exists a subsequence  $\mathbb{G} \ni g_k \rightarrow \infty$  and a limit function  $q^g \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$  such that

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \sup_{x \in K \subset \Gamma} |q(x + g_k) - q^g(x)| = 0 \quad (5)$$

for every compact set  $K \subset \Gamma$ .

## Example

Let  $q \in C_{b,u}(\Gamma)$  the space of bounded uniformly continuous functions on  $\Gamma$ . If  $q \in C_{b,u}(\Gamma)$  the sequence  $\{q(x + h_k), x \in \Gamma, h_k \in \mathbb{G}\}$  is uniformly bounded and equicontinuous. Then by Arzela-Ascoli Theorem there exists a subsequence  $\{q(x + g_k), x \in \Gamma, g_k \in \mathbb{G}\}$  such that (5) holds.



# Essential spectrum of Schrödinger operators on periodic graphs and limit operators

Let  $q \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$  be a potential and a sequence  $\mathbb{G} \ni g_k \rightarrow \infty$  is such

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \sup_{x \in K \subset \Gamma} |q(x + g_k) - q^g(x)| = 0 \quad (6)$$

for every compact set  $K \subset \Gamma$  and a function  $q^g \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$ . Then the unbounded in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  operator  $\mathcal{H}^g$  with domain  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$  generated by the Schrödinger operator

$$H^g u(x) = -\frac{d^2 u(x)}{dx^2} + q^g(x)u(x), x \in \Gamma \setminus \mathcal{V}$$

is called the limit operator of  $\mathcal{H}$  defined by the sequence  $\mathbb{G} \ni g_k \rightarrow \infty$ . We denote by  $Lim(\mathcal{H})$  the set of all limit operators of the the operator  $\mathcal{H}$ .

The main result of the talk is:

## Theorem

Let  $\Gamma$  be a periodic with respect to the group  $\mathbb{G}$  metric graph and  $\mathcal{H}_q$  be a Schrödinger operator in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  with domain  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$  with a rich potential  $q \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$ . Then

$$sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}_q = \bigcup_{\mathcal{H}_q^g \in \text{Lim}(\mathcal{H}_q)} sp \mathcal{H}_q^g.$$

# Periodic potentials

Let  $\Gamma$  be a graph periodic with respect to the action of the group  $\mathbb{G}$

$$\mathbb{G} = \left\{ g \in \mathbb{R}^n : g = \sum_{j=1}^m \alpha_j \epsilon_j, \alpha_j \in \mathbb{Z}, \epsilon_j \in \mathbb{R}^n \right\},$$

provided by the Schrödinger operator

$$H_q u(x) = -\frac{d^2 u(x)}{dx^2} + q(x)u(x), x \in \Gamma \setminus \mathcal{V}, \quad (7)$$

with the potential  $q \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$  periodic with respect to the action of the group  $\mathbb{G}$

$$q(x + g) = q(x), x \in \Gamma, g \in \mathbb{G}.$$

Since  $\mathcal{H}_q$  is invariant with respect to shifts all limit operators  $\mathcal{H}_q^h$  coincide with  $\mathcal{H}_q$ . Hence by Theorem 2

$$sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}_q = sp \mathcal{H}_q,$$

and the periodic operator does not have the discrete spectrum.

Let the potential  $q \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$  be a periodic with respect to  $\mathbb{G}$  *real-valued function*. Then  $\mathcal{H}_q$  with domain  $\tilde{H}^2(\Gamma)$  is a self-adjoint operator in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  with the spectrum which has a band structure

$$sp\mathcal{H}_q = sp_{ess}\mathcal{H}_q = \bigcup_{j=1}^{\infty} [\alpha_j, \beta_j] .$$

# Degenerated at infinity perturbations

Let

$$q = q_0 + q_1,$$

where  $q_0 \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$  is a periodic real-valued function, and  $q_1 \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$  is a real valued functions such that

$$\lim_{\Gamma \ni x \rightarrow \infty} q_1(x) = 0.$$

Then

$$\mathcal{H}_q^g = \mathcal{H}_{q_0}$$

and hence

$$sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}_q^g = sp \mathcal{H}_{q_0}.$$

Hence only the discrete spectrum can be arise in the gaps of the spectrum of the periodic operator  $\mathcal{H}_{q_0}$  under such sort impurities (pertrubations).

# Slowly oscillating perturbations

We say that a function  $a \in C_b(\Gamma)$  is slowly oscillating at infinity and belongs to the class  $SO(\Gamma)$  if for every sequence  $\mathbb{G} \ni g^m \rightarrow \infty$

$$\lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} \sup_{\{x_1, x_2 \in \Gamma: |x_1 - x_2| \leq 1\}} |a(x_1 + g_m) - a(x_2 + g_m)| = 0. \quad (8)$$

One can prove that  $SO(\Gamma) \subset C_{b,u}(\Gamma)$ .

## Example

Let  $f \in C_b^1(\mathbb{R})$ ,  $a(x) = f((1 + |x|)^\alpha)$ ,  $0 < \alpha < 1$ ,  $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . Then  $a|_\Gamma \in SO(\Gamma)$ .

Let  $a \in SO(\Gamma)$ . Then every sequence  $\mathbb{G} \ni h_m \rightarrow \infty$  has a subsequence  $g_m \in \mathbb{G}$  such that for every  $x \in \Gamma$  there exists a limit

$$a^g = \lim_m a(x + g_m),$$

and  $a^g$  independent of  $x$ .

We consider potentials of the form

$$q = q_0 + q_1,$$

where  $q_0 \in L^\infty(\Gamma)$  is a periodic real-valued function, and  $q_1$  is a real-valued function of the class  $SO(\Gamma)$ . Then the potential  $q$  is rich, and all limit operators are of the form

$$\mathcal{H}_q^g = \mathcal{H}_{q_0 + q_1^g}$$

where  $q_1^g = \lim_{m \rightarrow \infty} q(x + g_m)$  and  $q_1^g \in \mathbb{R}$  are independent of  $x \in \Gamma$ .



Then

$$sp\mathcal{H}_q^g = \bigcup_{j=1}^{\infty} [\alpha_j + q_1^g, \beta_j + q_1^g].$$

Let

$$m_{q_1}^{\infty} = \liminf_{G \ni g \rightarrow \infty} q_1(x + g), M_{q_1}^{\infty} = \limsup_{G \ni g \rightarrow \infty} q_1(x + g), x \in \Gamma,$$

where  $m_{q_1}, M_{q_1}$  are independent of the choice of  $x \in \Gamma$ .

Let  $m > 1$ . Then the set of the partial limits of the function  $G \in g \rightarrow q_1(x + g) \in \mathbb{R}$  is a segment  $[m_{q_1}^\infty, M_{q_1}^\infty]$ . Applying formula

$$sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}_q = \bigcup_{\mathcal{H}_q^g \in Lim(\mathcal{H}_q)} sp \mathcal{H}_q^g$$

we obtain that

$$sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}_q = \bigcup_{j=1}^{\infty} [\alpha_j + m_{q_1}^\infty, \beta_j + M_{q_1}^\infty].$$

In the case  $n = 1$  the set of the partial limits has two components  $[m_{q_1}^{\pm\infty}, M_{q_1}^{\pm\infty}]$  and we obtain that

$$sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}_q = \bigcup_{j=1}^{\infty} [\alpha_j + m_{q_1}^{+\infty}, \beta_j + M_{q_1}^{+\infty}] \cup [\alpha_j + m_{q_1}^{-\infty}, \beta_j + M_{q_1}^{-\infty}].$$

We consider the gaps in the essential spectrum of  $\mathcal{H}_q$

$$(\beta_j + M_{q_1}^\infty, \alpha_{j+1} + m_{q_1}^\infty), j = 1, \dots, \dots$$

Let

$$\text{osc}_\infty(q_1) = M_{q_1}^\infty - m_{q_1}^\infty > \alpha_{j_0+1} - \beta_{j_0}. \quad (9)$$

Then the gap  $(\beta_{j_0} + M_{q_1}^\infty, \alpha_{j_0+1} + m_{q_1}^\infty)$  disappears. If condition (9) is satisfied for all  $j \in \mathbb{N}$  all gaps in the essential spectrum of  $\mathcal{H}_q$  are disappear and all bands of the  $sp_{\text{ess}} \mathcal{H}_q$  are overlapping. Hence

$$sp_{\text{ess}} \mathcal{H}_q = [\alpha_1, +\infty),$$

and

$$sp_{\text{dis}} \mathcal{H}_q \subset (m_q, \alpha_1 + m_{q_1}^\infty).$$

# Fredholm theory of bounded operators on graphs

Let  $\varphi$  be a function defined on  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . Then we denote by  $\widehat{\varphi}$  the restriction of  $\varphi$  on the graph  $\Gamma$ .

## Definition

We say that  $A \in \mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))$  belongs to the class  $\mathcal{A}(\Gamma)$  if for every function  $\varphi \in C_{b,u}(\mathbb{R}^n)$

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \|[A, \widehat{\varphi}_t I]\|_{\mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))} = \lim_{R \rightarrow 0} \|A \widehat{\varphi}_t I - \widehat{\varphi}_t A\|_{\mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))} = 0. \quad (10)$$

It is easy to prove that  $\mathcal{A}(\Gamma)$  is a  $C^*$ -subalgebra of  $\mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))$ .

Let  $N \in \mathbb{N}$ ,  $[-N, N]_{\mathbb{Z}} = \{\alpha \in \mathbb{Z} : |\alpha| \leq N\}$ , and

$$\mathbb{G}_N = \left\{ g \in \mathbb{R}^m : g = \sum_{i=1}^m \alpha_i e_i, \alpha_i \in [-N, N]_{\mathbb{Z}} \right\}.$$

We set

$$\Gamma_N = \bigcup_{g \in G_N} G_g$$

and let  $\mathbb{P}_N \in \mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))$  be the operator of the multiplication by the characteristic function of  $\Gamma_N$ , and  $\mathbb{Q}_N = I - \mathbb{P}_N$ .

## Definition

Let  $A \in \mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))$  and  $\mathbb{G} \ni h_k \rightarrow \infty$ . An operator  $A^h \in \mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))$  is called a *limit operator* of  $A$  defined by the sequence  $h_k \in \mathbb{G}$ , if for every  $N \in \mathbb{N}$

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \left\| \left( V_{-h_k} A V_{h_k} - A^h \right) \mathbb{P}_N \right\|_{\mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))} = 0, \quad (11)$$

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \left\| \mathbb{P}_N \left( V_{-h_k} A V_{h_k} - A^h \right) \right\|_{\mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))} = 0.$$

We say that the operator  $A$  is **rich** if every sequence  $\mathbb{G} \ni h_k \rightarrow \infty$  has a subsequence  $\mathbb{G} \ni g_k \rightarrow \infty$  defining a limit operator  $A^g$ . We denote by  $\text{Lim}(A)$  the set of all limit operators of  $A$ .

## Definition

An operator  $A \in \mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))$  is called locally invertible at infinity if there exist  $R \in \mathbb{N}$  and operators  $\mathcal{L}_R, \mathcal{R}_R \in \mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))$  such that

$$\mathcal{L}_R A \mathcal{Q}_R = \mathcal{Q}_R, \mathcal{Q}_R A \mathcal{R}_R = \mathcal{Q}_R.$$

## Theorem

*Let  $A \in \mathcal{A}(\Gamma)$  and be rich. Then  $A$  is locally invertible at infinity if and only if all limit operators  $A^h \in \text{Lim}(A)$  are invertible in  $L^2(\Gamma)$ .*



## Definition

We say that  $A \in \mathcal{B}(L^2(\Gamma))$  is a locally Fredholm operator if for every  $R \in \mathbb{N}$  there exists operators  $\mathcal{L}_R, \mathcal{R}_R$  such that

$$\mathcal{L}_R A \mathbb{P}_R = \mathbb{P}_R + T_R^1, \mathbb{P}_R A \mathcal{R}_R = \mathbb{P}_R + T_R^2,$$

where  $T_R^j \in \mathcal{K}(L^2(\Gamma)), j = 1, 2$ .

## Theorem

Let  $A \in \mathcal{A}(\Gamma)$ . Then  $A$  is a Fredholm operator in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  if and only if:

- (i)  $A$  is a locally Fredholm operator;
- (ii) All limit operators  $A^h \in \text{Lim}(A)$  are invertible.

## Corollary

Let  $A \in \mathcal{A}(\Gamma)$ , and  $A^h$  be a locally Fredholm operator. Then

$$sp_{ess}A = \bigcup_{A^h \in Lim(A)} spA^h, \quad (12)$$

where  $sp_{ess}A$  is the essential spectrum of  $A$  in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  that is the set of  $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$  such that  $A - \lambda I$  is not Fredholm operator in  $L^2(\Gamma)$ .

The proof of the main theorem on the essential spectrum of quantum graphs is reduced to the this corollary.

We denote by  $\Lambda$  the unbounded operator generated by the Schrödinger operator  $-\frac{d^2}{dx^2}$  on  $\Gamma \setminus \mathcal{V}$  with domain  $\tilde{\mathcal{H}}^2(\Gamma)$ . Note that  $\Lambda$  is a nonnegative self-adjoint operator in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  and  $sp\Lambda \subset [0, \infty)$ . Hence the operator  $\Lambda_{k^2} = \Lambda + k^2 I : \tilde{\mathcal{H}}^2(\Gamma) \rightarrow L^2(\Gamma)$  is an isomorphism.

Then we prove that

$$A = \mathcal{H}_q \Lambda_{k^2}^{-1} \in \mathcal{A}(\Gamma), \text{Lim}(A) = \text{Lim}(\mathcal{H}_q),$$

$$sp_{ess} A = sp_{ess} \mathcal{H}_q,$$

and the theorem on the essential spectrum of the operator  $\mathcal{H}_q$  as unbounded in  $L^2(\Gamma)$  follows from Corollary 10.