Research Article

Existence and Uniqueness of Periodic Solution for Nonlinear Second-Order Ordinary Differential Equations

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We study periodic solutions for nonlinear second-order ordinary differential problem x'' + f(t, x, x') = 0. By constructing upper and lower boundaries and using Leray-Schauder degree theory, we present a result about the existence and uniqueness of a periodic solution for second-order ordinary differential equations with some assumption.

1. Introduction

The study on periodic solutions for ordinary differential equations is a very important branch in the differential equation theory. Many results about the existence of periodic solutions for second-order differential equations have been obtained by combining the classical method of lower and upper solutions and the method of alternative problems (The Lyapunov-Schmidt method) as discussed by many authors [1–10]. In [11], the author gives a simple method to discuss the existence and uniqueness of nonlinear two-point boundary value problems. In this paper, we will extend this method to the periodic problem.

We consider the second-order ordinary differential equation

$$x'' + f(t, x, x') = 0.$$
(1.1)

Throughout this paper, we will study the existence of periodic solutions of (1.1) with the following assumptions:

(H₁) *f*, f_x , and $f_{x'}$ are continuous in $\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}$, and

$$f(t, x x') = f(t + 2\pi, x, x'),$$
(1.2)

 (H_2)

$$N^{2} < \alpha - \frac{\gamma^{2}}{4} \le \beta < (N+1)^{2},$$

$$\sin \frac{\pi \sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^{2}}}{4N} < \sqrt{1 - \frac{\gamma^{2}}{4\alpha}} \quad \text{if } N > 0,$$

$$\gamma < \frac{4(N+1)}{\pi} \left[1 - \frac{\beta}{(N+1)^{2}} \right],$$
(1.3)

where N is some positive integer,

$$\alpha = \inf_{\mathbb{R}^3} (f_x), \qquad \beta = \sup_{\mathbb{R}^3} (f_x), \qquad \gamma = \sup_{\mathbb{R}^3} |f_{x'}|.$$
(1.4)

The following is our main result.

Theorem 1.1. Assume that (H_1) and (H_2) hold, then (1.1) has a unique 2π -periodic solution.

2. Basic Lemmas

The following results will be used later.

Lemma 2.1 (see [12]). Let $x \in C^1([0,h], \mathbb{R})$ (h > 0) with

$$x(0) = x(h) = 0, \quad x(t) > 0 \quad \text{for } t \in (0, h),$$
 (2.1)

then

$$\int_{0}^{h} |x(t)x'(t)| dt \le \frac{h}{4} \int_{0}^{h} {x'}^{2}(t) dt,$$
(2.2)

and the constant h/4 is optimal.

Lemma 2.2 (see [12]). Let $x \in C^1([a,b],\mathbb{R})$ $(a,b \in \mathbb{R}, a < b)$ with the boundary value conditions x(a) = x(b) = 0, then

$$\int_{a}^{b} x^{2}(t)dt \leq \frac{(b-a)^{2}}{\pi^{2}} \int_{a}^{b} {x'}^{2}(t)dt.$$
(2.3)

Consider the periodic boundary value problem

$$x'' + p(t)x' + q(t)x = 0,$$

$$x(0) = x(2\pi), \qquad x'(0) = x'(2\pi).$$
(2.4)

Lemma 2.3. Suppose that p, q are L^2 -integrable 2π -periodic function, where p, q satisfy the condition (H_2), with

$$\alpha = \inf_{[0,2\pi]} q(t), \qquad \beta = \sup_{[0,2\pi]} q(t), \qquad \gamma = \sup_{[0,2\pi]} |p(t)|, \tag{2.5}$$

then (2.4) has only the trivial 2π -periodic solution $x(t) \equiv 0$.

Proof. If on the contrary, (2.4) has a nonzero 2π -periodic solution x(t), then using (2.4), we have

$$\left(e^{\int_{t_0}^t p(s)ds} x'\right)' + e^{\int_{t_0}^t p(s)ds} q(t)x = 0,$$
(2.6)

where $t_0 \in [0, 2\pi]$ is undetermined.

Firstly, we prove that x(t) has at least one zero in $(0, 2\pi)$. If $x(t) \neq 0$, we may assume x(t) > 0. Since x(t) is a 2π -periodic solution, there exists a $t_0 \in [0, 2\pi]$ with $x'(t_0) = 0 = x'(t_0 + 2\pi)$. Then,

$$0 = \int_{t_0}^{t_0 + 2\pi} \left(e^{\int_{t_0}^t p(s)ds} x' \right)' dt = -\int_{t_0}^{t_0 + 2\pi} e^{\int_{t_0}^t p(s)ds} q(t) x dt < 0,$$
(2.7)

we could get a contradiction.

Without loss of generality, we may assume that $x(0) = x(2\pi) = 0$, $x'(0) = x'(2\pi) = A > 0$; then there exists a sufficiently small $\delta > 0$ such that $x(\delta/2) > 0$, $x(2\pi - \delta/2) < 0$. Since x(t) is a continuous function, there must exist a $t' \in [\delta/2, 2\pi - \delta/2]$ with x(t') = 0.

Secondly, we prove that x(t) has at least 2N + 2 zeros on $[0, 2\pi]$. Considering the initial value problem

$$\varphi'' - \gamma \varphi' + \alpha \varphi = 0, \qquad \varphi(0) = 0, \qquad \varphi'(0) = A.$$
 (2.8)

Obviously,

$$\varphi(t) = \frac{2A}{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}} e^{\gamma t/2} \sin \frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{2} t$$
(2.9)

is the solution of (2.8) and

$$\varphi'(t) = 2A\sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}e^{\gamma t/2}\sin\left(\frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{2}t + \theta\right),$$
(2.10)

where $\theta \in (0, \pi/2]$ with $\sin \theta = \sqrt{(4\alpha - \gamma^2)/4\alpha}$. Since

$$N < \frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{2} < N + 1 \tag{2.11}$$

holds under the assumptions of (H₂), there is a $t_0 \in (0, \pi)$, such that

$$\frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{2} t_0 + \theta = \pi, \qquad \text{i.e., } \frac{\pi}{2} \le \frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{2} t_0 < \pi.$$
(2.12)

Now, let N > 0. By the conditions (H₂), (2.11), and (2.12), we have

$$\sin\frac{\sqrt{4\alpha-\gamma^2}}{2}t_0 = \sin\theta = \sqrt{\frac{4\alpha-\gamma^2}{4\alpha}} > \sin\frac{\pi\sqrt{4\alpha-\gamma^2}}{4N},$$
(2.13)

$$\frac{\pi}{2} < \frac{\pi\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{4N} < \pi.$$
(2.14)

Since sin *t* is decreasing in $[\pi/2, \pi)$, we have $0 < t_0 < \pi/2N$. Therefore,

$$\varphi'(t) > 0, \quad \varphi(t) > 0, \quad \text{for } t \in (0, t_0), \ \varphi'(t_0) = 0.$$
 (2.15)

We also consider the initial value problem

$$\psi'' + \gamma \psi' + \alpha \psi = 0, \qquad \psi(t_0) = \varphi(t_0), \qquad \psi'(t_0) = 0.$$
(2.16)

Clearly,

$$\psi(t) = 2\sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}\varphi(t_0)e^{-\gamma(t-t_0)/2}\sin\left(\frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{2}(t-t_0) + \theta\right)$$
(2.17)

is the solution of (2.16), where θ is the same as the previous one, and

$$\varphi'(t) = -\frac{2\alpha}{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}\varphi(t_0)e^{-\gamma(t-t_0)/2}\sin\frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{2}(t-t_0).$$
(2.18)

Hence, there exists a $t_1 \in (0, 2\pi)$ with $t_1 - t_0 \in (0, \pi)$, such that

$$\frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{2}(t_1 - t_0) + \theta = \pi.$$
(2.19)

Then,

$$\psi(t_1) = 0.$$
(2.20)

From (2.12) and (2.19), it follows that

$$\frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{4} t_1 = \pi - \theta, \qquad \text{i.e.,} \ \frac{\pi}{2} \le \frac{\sqrt{4\alpha - \gamma^2}}{4} t_1 < \pi.$$
(2.21)

By (H_2) and (2.21), we have

$$\sin\frac{\sqrt{4\alpha-\gamma^2}}{4}t_1 = \sin\theta = \sqrt{\frac{4\alpha-\gamma^2}{4\alpha}} > \sin\frac{\pi\sqrt{4\alpha-\gamma^2}}{4N}.$$
(2.22)

Since sin *t* is decreasing on $[\pi/2, \pi)$, we have $0 < t_1 < \pi/N$, and

$$\psi'(t) < 0, \quad \psi(t) > 0, \quad \text{for } t \in (t_0, t_1).$$
 (2.23)

We now prove that x(t) has a zero point in $(0, t_1]$. If on the contrary x(t) > 0 for $t \in (0, t_1]$, then we would have the following inequalities:

$$x(t) \le \varphi(t), \text{ for } t \in [0, t_0],$$
 (2.24)

$$x(t) \le \psi(t), \text{ for } t \in [t_0, t_1].$$
 (2.25)

In fact, from(2.4), (2.8), and (2.15), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \left(\varphi'(t)x(t) - \varphi(t)x'(t)\right)' \\ &= \varphi''(t)x(t) + \varphi'(t)x'(t) - \varphi'(t)x'(t) - \varphi(t)x''(t) \\ &= \left(\gamma\varphi'(t) - \alpha\varphi(t)\right)x(t) - \varphi(t)\left(-p(t)x'(t) - q(t)x(t)\right) \\ &= \left(\gamma + p(t)\right)\varphi'(t)x(t) + \left(-p(t)\right)\left(\varphi'(t)x(t) - \varphi(t)x'(t)\right) + \left(q(t) - \alpha\right)\varphi(t)x(t) \\ &\ge \left(-p(t)\right)\left(\varphi'(t)x(t) - \varphi(t)x'(t)\right), \end{aligned}$$
(2.26)

with $t \in [0, t_0]$. Setting $y = \varphi'(t)x(t) - \varphi(t)x'(t)$, and since

$$y' \ge -p(t)y, \tag{2.27}$$

we obtain

$$\left(ye^{\int_0^t p(s)ds}\right)' \ge 0, \quad t \in [0, t_0].$$
 (2.28)

Notice that $\varphi(0) = x(0) = 0$, which implies

$$y(0) = 0, \quad ye^{\int_0^t p(s)ds} \ge 0, \quad t \in [0, t_0].$$
 (2.29)

So, we have

$$\varphi'(t)x(t) - \varphi(t)x'(t) \ge 0, \quad t \in [0, t_0], \quad \text{i.e., } \left(\frac{\varphi(t)}{x(t)}\right)' \ge 0, \quad t \in (0, t_0].$$
 (2.30)

Integrating from 0 to $t \in (0, t_0]$, we obtain

$$0 \le \int_0^t \left(\frac{\varphi(s)}{x(s)}\right)' ds = \frac{\varphi(t)}{x(t)} - \lim_{t \to 0^+} \frac{\varphi(t)}{x(t)} = \frac{\varphi(t)}{x(t)} - \frac{\varphi'(0)}{x'(0)}.$$
(2.31)

Therefore,

$$\frac{\varphi(t)}{x(t)} \ge 1, \quad t \in (0, t_0], \tag{2.32}$$

which implies (2.24). By a similar argument, we have (2.25). Therefore, $0 < x(t_1) \le \psi(t_1) = 0$, a contradiction, which shows that x(t) has at least one zero in $(0, t_1]$, with $t_1 < \pi/N$.

We let $x(t^1) = 0$, $t^1 \in (0, t_1]$. If $t^1 + t_1 < 2\pi$, then from a similar argument, there is a $t^2 \in (t^1, t^1 + t_1)$, such that $x(t^2) = 0$ and so on. So, we obtain that x(t) has at least 2N + 2 zeros on $[0, 2\pi]$.

Thirdly, we prove that x(t) has at least 2N + 3 zeros on $[0, 2\pi]$. If, on the contrary, we assume that x(t) only has 2N + 2 zeros on $[0, 2\pi]$, we write them as

$$0 = t^0 < t^1 < \dots < t^{2N+1} = 2\pi.$$
(2.33)

Obviously,

$$x'(t^i) \neq 0, \quad i = 0, 1, \dots, 2N+1.$$
 (2.34)

Without loss of generality, we may assume that $x'(t^0) > 0$. Since

$$x'(t^i)x'(t^{i+1}) < 0, \quad i = 0, 1, \dots, 2N,$$
 (2.35)

we obtain $x'(t^{2N+1}) < 0$, which contradicts $x'(t^{2N+1}) = x'(t^0) > 0$. Therefore, x(t) has at least 2N + 3 zeros on $[0, 2\pi]$.

Finally, we prove Lemma 2.3. Since x(t) has at least 2N + 3 zeros on $[0, 2\pi]$, there are two zeros ξ_1 and ξ_2 with $0 < \xi_2 - \xi_1 \le \pi/(N+1)$. By Lemmas 2.1 and 2.2, we have

$$\int_{\xi_1}^{\xi_2} x'^2(t) dt = -\int_{\xi_1}^{\xi_2} x(t) x''(t) dt = \int_{\xi_1}^{\xi_2} p(t) x(t) x'(t) dt + \int_{\xi_1}^{\xi_2} q(t) x^2(t) dt$$

$$\leq \left[\frac{\gamma}{4} (\xi_2 - \xi_1) + \frac{\beta}{\pi^2} (\xi_2 - \xi_1)^2 \right] \int_{\xi_1}^{\xi_2} x'^2(t) dt.$$
(2.36)

From (H_2) , it follows that

$$\frac{\gamma}{4}(\xi_2 - \xi_1) + \frac{\beta}{\pi^2}(\xi_2 - \xi_1)^2 \le \frac{\pi\gamma}{4(N+1)} + \frac{\beta}{(N+1)^2} < 1.$$
(2.37)

Hence,

$$\int_{\xi_1}^{\xi_2} {x'}^2(t) dt = 0, \qquad (2.38)$$

which implies x'(t) = 0 for $t \in [\xi_1, \xi_2]$. Also $x(\xi_1) = 0$. Therefore, $x(t) \equiv 0$ for $t \in [0, 2\pi]$, a contradiction. The proof is complete.

3. Proof of Theorem 1.1

Firstly, we prove the existence of the solution. Consider the homotopy equation

$$x'' + \alpha x = \lambda \left(-f\left(t, x, x'\right) + \alpha x \right) \equiv \lambda F\left(t, x, x'\right), \tag{3.1}$$

where $\lambda \in [0,1]$ and $\alpha = \inf_{\mathbb{R}^3}(f_x)$. When $\lambda = 1$, it holds (1.1). We assume that $\Phi(t)$ is the fundamental solution matrix of $x'' + \alpha x = 0$ with $\Phi(0) = I$. Equation (3.1) can be transformed into the integral equation

$$\binom{x}{x'}(t) = \Phi(t) \left(\binom{x(0)}{x'(0)} + \int_0^t \Phi^{-1}(s) \binom{0}{\lambda F(s, x(s), x'(s))} ds \right).$$
(3.2)

From (H₁), x(t) is a 2π -periodic solution of (3.2), then

$$(I - \Phi(2\pi)) \binom{x(0)}{x'(0)} = \Phi(2\pi) \int_0^{2\pi} \Phi^{-1}(s) \binom{0}{\lambda F(s, x(s), x'(s))} ds.$$
(3.3)

For $(I - \Phi(2\pi))$ is invertible,

$$\binom{x(0)}{x'(0)} = (I - \Phi(2\pi))^{-1} \Phi(2\pi) \int_0^{2\pi} \Phi^{-1}(s) \binom{0}{\lambda F(s, x(s), x'(s))} ds.$$
(3.4)

We substitute (3.4) into (3.2),

$$\binom{x}{x'}(t) = \Phi(t)(I - \Phi(2\pi))^{-1}\Phi(2\pi) \int_{0}^{2\pi} \Phi^{-1}(s) \binom{0}{\lambda F(s, x(s), x'(s))} ds + \Phi(t) \int_{0}^{t} \Phi^{-1}(s) \binom{0}{\lambda F(s, x(s), x'(s))} ds.$$
(3.5)

Define an operator

$$P_{\lambda}: C^{1}[0, 2\pi] \longrightarrow C^{1}[0, 2\pi], \qquad (3.6)$$

such that

$$P_{\lambda}\left[\binom{x}{x'}\right](t) \equiv \Phi(t)(I - \Phi(2\pi))^{-1}\Phi(2\pi) \int_{0}^{2\pi} \Phi^{-1}(s)\binom{0}{\lambda F(s, x(s), x'(s))} ds + \Phi(t) \int_{0}^{t} \Phi^{-1}(s)\binom{0}{\lambda F(s, x(s), x'(s))} ds.$$
(3.7)

Clearly, P_{λ} is a completely continuous operator in $C^{1}[0, 2\pi]$.

There exists B > 0, such that every possible periodic solution x(t) satisfies $||x|| \le B$ ($||\cdot||$ denote the usual normal in $C^1[0, 2\pi]$). If not, there exists $\lambda_k \to \lambda_0$ and the solution $x_k(t)$ with $||x_k|| \to \infty$ ($k \to \infty$).

We can rewrite (3.1) in the following form:

$$x_k'' + \alpha x_k = -\lambda_k \int_0^1 f_{x'}(t, x_k, \theta x_k') d\theta x_k' - \lambda_k \int_0^1 f_x(t, \theta x_k, 0) d\theta x_k - \lambda_k f(t, 0, 0) + \lambda_k \alpha x_k.$$
(3.8)

Let $y_k = x_k / ||x_k||$ $(t \in \mathbb{R})$, obviously $||y_k|| = 1$ (k = 1, 2, ...). It satisfies the following problem:

$$y_{k}'' + \alpha y_{k} = -\lambda_{k} \int_{0}^{1} f_{x'}(t, x_{k}, \theta x_{k}') d\theta y_{k}' - \lambda_{k} \int_{0}^{1} f_{x}(t, \theta x_{k}, 0) d\theta y_{k} - \lambda_{k} f(t, 0, 0) / ||x_{k}|| + \lambda_{k} \alpha y_{k},$$
(3.9)

in which we have

$$\frac{f(t,0,0)}{\|x_k\|} \longrightarrow 0 \quad (k \longrightarrow \infty).$$
(3.10)

Since $\{y_k\}$, $\{y'_k\}$ are uniformly bounded and equicontinuous, there exists continuous function u(t), v(t) and a subsequence of $\{k\}_1^\infty$ (denote it again by $\{k\}_1^\infty$), such that $\lim_{k\to\infty} y_k(t) = u(t)$, $\lim_{k\to\infty} y'_k(t) = v(t)$ uniformly in \mathbb{R} . Using (H₁) and (H₂), $\{\int_0^1 f_x(t, \theta x_k, 0)d\theta\}_1^\infty$ and

 $\{\int_{0}^{1} f_{x'}(t, x_k, \theta x'_k) d\theta\}_{1}^{\infty}$ are uniformly bounded. By the Hahn-Banach theorem, there exists L^2 -integrable function p(t), q(t), and a subsequence of $\{k\}_{1}^{\infty}$ (denote it again by $\{k\}_{1}^{\infty}$), such that

$$\int_{0}^{1} f_{x}(t,\theta x_{k},0)d\theta \xrightarrow{\omega} q(t), \qquad \int_{0}^{1} f_{x'}(t,x_{k},\theta x'_{k})d\theta \xrightarrow{\omega} p(t), \qquad (3.11)$$

where $\xrightarrow{\omega}$ denotes "weakly converges to" in $L^2[0, 2\pi]$. As a consequence, we have

$$u''(t) + \alpha u(t) = -\lambda_0 p(t)u'(t) - \lambda_0 q(t)u(t) + \lambda_0 \alpha u(t),$$
(3.12)

that is,

$$u''(t) + \lambda_0 p(t)u'(t) + (\lambda_0 q(t) + (1 - \lambda_0)\alpha)u(t) = 0.$$
(3.13)

Denote that $\tilde{p}(t) = \lambda_0 p(t)$, $\tilde{q}(t) = \lambda_0 q(t) + (1 - \lambda_0) \alpha$, then we get

$$\left|\widetilde{p}(t)\right| = \lambda_0 \left| p(t) \right| \le \gamma, \qquad \lambda_0 \alpha + (1 - \lambda_0) \alpha \le \widetilde{q}(t) \le \lambda_0 \beta + (1 - \lambda_0) \alpha, \tag{3.14}$$

which also satisfy the condition (H₂). Notice that $\tilde{p}(t)$ and $\tilde{q}(t)$ are L^2 -integrable on $[0, 2\pi]$, so u(t) satisfies Lemma 2.3. Hence, we have $u(t) \equiv 0$ for $t \in [0, 2\pi)$, which contradicts ||u|| = 1. Therefore, PC¹[0, 2 π] is bounded.

Denote

$$\Omega = \left\{ x \in C^{1}[0, 2\pi], \|x\| < B + 1 \right\},$$

$$h_{\lambda}(x) = x - P_{\lambda}x.$$
(3.15)

Because $0 \notin h_{\lambda}(\partial \Omega)$ for $\lambda \in [0, 1]$, by Leray-Schauder degree theory, we have

$$\deg(x - Px, \Omega, 0) = \deg(h_1(x), \Omega, 0) = \deg(h_0(x), \Omega, 0) \neq 0.$$
(3.16)

So, we conclude that *P* has at least one fixed point in Ω , that is, (1.1) has at least one solution.

Finally, we prove the uniqueness of the equation when the condition (H₁) and (H₂) holds. Let $x_1(t)$ and $x_2(t)$ be two 2π -periodic solutions of the problem. Denote $x_0(t) = x_1(t) - x_2(t)$, $t \in [0, 2\pi]$, then $x_0(t)$ is a solution of the following problem:

$$x'' + \int_{0}^{1} f_{x'}(t, x_{2} + x_{0}, x_{2}' + \theta x_{0}') d\theta x' + \int_{0}^{1} f_{x}(t, x_{2} + \theta x_{0}, x_{2}') d\theta x = 0,$$

(3.17)
$$x(0) = x(2\pi), \qquad x'(0) = x'(2\pi).$$

By Lemma 2.3, we have $x_0(t) \equiv 0$ for $t \in [0, 2\pi]$.

Let $\tilde{x}(t+2k\pi) = x(t), t \in [0, 2\pi], k \in \mathbb{Z}$. We have

$$\tilde{x}''(t+2k\pi) = x''(t) = -f(t, x, x') = -f(t, \tilde{x}, \tilde{x}') = -f(t+2k\pi, \tilde{x}, \tilde{x}'),$$
(3.18)

with $t \in [0, 2\pi]$, $k \in \mathbb{Z}$. Denote $\tilde{x}(t + 2k\pi)$ ($t \in [0, 2\pi]$) by x(t) ($t \in \mathbb{R}$). So, x(t) is the solution of the problem (1.1). The proof is complete.

4. An Example

Consider the system

$$x'' + \frac{2}{3}\sin tx' + 6x + \cos x = p(t), \tag{4.1}$$

where $p(t) = p(t + 2\pi)$ is a continuous function. Obviously,

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha &= \inf_{\mathbb{R}^{3}} (f_{x}) = \inf_{\mathbb{R}^{3}} (6 - \sin x) = 5, \\ \beta &= \sup_{\mathbb{R}^{3}} (f_{x}) = \sup_{\mathbb{R}^{3}} (6 - \sin x) = 7, \\ \gamma &= \sup_{\mathbb{R}^{3}} \left| f_{x'} \right| = \sup_{\mathbb{R}^{3}} \left| \frac{2}{3} \sin t \right| = \frac{2}{3} \end{aligned}$$
(4.2)

satisfy Theorem 1.1, then there is a unique 2π -periodic solution in this system.

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