

## Research Article

# Real Interpolation of Small Lebesgue Spaces in a Critical Case

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We establish an interpolation formula for small Lebesgue spaces in a critical case.

## 1. Introduction

The small Lebesgue spaces were introduced by A. Fiorenza in [1], and they have found applications, for example, in boundary value problems [2, 3], Besov embeddings [4, 5], and dimension-free Sobolev embeddings [6]. The reader is referred to a recent survey paper [7] for more details.

Let  $\Omega$  be a bounded domain in  $\mathbb{R}^n$  with measure 1, and let  $1 < p < \infty$  and  $\alpha > 0$ . The small Lebesgue space  $L^{(p,\alpha)} = L^{(p,\alpha)}(\Omega)$  is formed by all those real-valued Lebesgue measurable functions  $f$  on  $\Omega$ , for which the norm

$$\|f\|_{L^{(p,\alpha)}} = \int_0^1 (1 - \ln t)^{-\alpha/p + \alpha - 1} \left( \int_0^t f^*(u)^p du \right)^{1/p} \frac{dt}{t} \quad (1)$$

is finite; see [8]. Here  $f^*$  denotes the nonincreasing rearrangement of  $f$  (see, for instance, [9]). For  $\alpha = 1$ , the spaces  $L^{(p,\alpha)}$  coincide with the classical small Lebesgue spaces  $L^p$  (see [10, Corollary 3.3]).

Let  $0 < \theta < 1$ ,  $1 < q < \infty$ ,  $1 < p < r < \infty$ , and  $\alpha > 0$ . The real interpolation spaces  $(L^{(p,\alpha)}, L^{(r,\alpha)})_{\theta,q}$  have been recently characterized in [11, Theorem 3.4] as the well-known Lorentz-Zygmund spaces. Here  $(\cdot, \cdot)_{\theta,q}$  denotes the classical real interpolation method (see Section 2). The critical case  $p = r$  has not been considered in [11], and the goal of the present paper is to fill this gap. More precisely, we will characterize the interpolation spaces  $(L^{(p,\alpha)}, L^{(p,\beta)})_{\theta,q}$  under an appropriate condition on  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  ( $\beta > 0$ ). Our approach is essentially different from that of [11] and allows the parameter  $q$  to lie also in the interval  $(0, 1]$ . The key ingredient of our

method is a general Holmstedt-type estimate from a recent paper [12].

The plan of the paper is simple. We collect the necessary background, along with certain weighted Hardy-type inequalities, in Section 2. The main result is contained in Section 3.

## 2. Preliminaries

Throughout the paper, we will write  $A \lesssim B$  or  $B \gtrsim A$  for two nonnegative quantities  $A$  and  $B$  to mean that  $A \leq cB$  for some positive constant  $c$  which is independent of appropriate parameters involved in  $A$  and  $B$ . We put  $A \approx B$ , if  $A \lesssim B$  and  $A \gtrsim B$ . Moreover, we will write  $X \hookrightarrow Y$  for two quasi-normed spaces  $X$  and  $Y$  to mean that  $X$  is continuously embedded in  $Y$ .

Let  $(A_0, A_1)$  be a compatible couple of quasi-normed spaces; that is, we assume that both  $A_0$  and  $A_1$  are continuously embedded in the same Hausdorff topological vector space. Peetre's  $K$ -functional  $K(t, f) = K(t, f; A_0, A_1)$  is defined, for each  $f \in A_0 + A_1$  and  $t > 0$ , by

$$K(t, f) = \inf \left\{ \|f_0\|_{A_0} + t \|f_1\|_{A_1} : f_0 \in A_0, f_1 \in A_1, f = f_0 + f_1 \right\}. \quad (2)$$

In what follows, we always assume that the couple  $(A_0, A_1)$  is ordered in the sense that  $A_1 \hookrightarrow A_0$ .

Let  $0 < q \leq \infty$ ,  $0 \leq \theta \leq 1$ , and  $\gamma \in \mathbb{R}$ . The real interpolation space  $\overline{A}_{\theta,q;\gamma} = (A_0, A_1)_{\theta,q;\gamma}$  consists of all  $f \in A_0$  for which the quasi-norm

$$\|f\|_{\overline{A}_{\theta,q;\gamma}} = \left( \int_0^1 t^{-\theta q} (1 - \ln t)^{q\gamma} K^q(t, f) \frac{dt}{t} \right)^{1/q} \quad (3)$$

is finite (with usual modification when  $q = \infty$ ). When  $\gamma = 0$  and  $0 < \theta < 1$ , we put  $\overline{A}_{\theta,q} = \overline{A}_{\theta,q;\gamma}$ . Since  $A_1 \hookrightarrow A_0$ , we have  $K(t, f) \approx \|f\|_{A_0}$ ,  $t > 1$ . Combining this with the fact that, as a function of  $t$ ,  $K(t, f)/t$  is nonincreasing, we can easily check that

$$\|f\|_{\overline{A}_{\theta,q}} \approx \left( \int_0^\infty t^{-\theta q} K^q(t, f) \frac{dt}{t} \right)^{1/q}. \quad (4)$$

Thus, the spaces  $\overline{A}_{\theta,q}$  are in fact the classical Lions-Peetre spaces (see [9, 13, 14]).

In the sequel, we will work with the limiting spaces  $\overline{A}_{0,q;\gamma}$  and the classical spaces  $\overline{A}_{\theta,q}$ . It is not hard to verify that the limiting spaces  $\overline{A}_{0,q;\gamma}$  are intermediate, without any condition on  $\gamma$  and  $q$ , for the couple  $(A_0, A_1)$ , that is,

$$A_1 \hookrightarrow \overline{A}_{0,q;\gamma} \hookrightarrow A_0. \quad (5)$$

However, in order to exclude the trivial case  $\overline{A}_{0,q;\gamma} = A_0$ , we have to work under the assumption  $\gamma \geq -1/q$  (if  $q < \infty$ ) or  $\gamma > 0$  (if  $q = \infty$ ). This observation immediately follows from the elementary fact that, as a function of  $t$ ,  $K(t, f)$  is nondecreasing.

We close this section with the following weighted Hardy-type inequalities which will be needed in order to prove our main result in the next section.

**Lemma 1** ([15, Lemma 3.2]). *Let  $1 \leq s < \infty$ , and assume that  $w$  and  $\phi$  are nonnegative functions on  $(0, \infty)$ . Put*

$$v(t) = (w(t))^{1-s} \left( \phi(t) \int_t^\infty w(u) du \right)^s. \quad (6)$$

Then

$$\int_0^\infty \left( \int_0^t \phi(u) h(u) du \right)^s w(t) dt \leq \int_0^\infty h^s(t) v(t) dt \quad (7)$$

holds for all nonnegative functions  $h$  on  $(0, \infty)$ .

By an obvious change of variable, we get the following variant of the previous result.

**Lemma 2.** *Let  $1 \leq s < \infty$ , and assume that  $w$  and  $\phi$  are nonnegative functions on  $(0, \infty)$ . Put*

$$v_0(t) = (w(t))^{1-s} \left( \phi(t) \int_0^t w(u) du \right)^s. \quad (8)$$

Then

$$\int_0^\infty \left( \int_t^\infty \phi(u) h(u) du \right)^s w(t) dt \leq \int_0^\infty h^s(t) v_0(t) dt \quad (9)$$

holds for all nonnegative functions  $h$  on  $(0, \infty)$ .

**Lemma 3** ([16, Theorem 3.3 (b)]). *Let  $0 < s < 1$ . Assume  $w$  and  $v$  are positive functions on  $(0, 1)$ , and  $\psi$  is a positive function on  $(0, 1) \times (0, 1)$ . Then*

$$\int_0^1 \left( \int_0^1 \psi(t, u) g(u) du \right)^s w(t) dt \leq \int_0^1 g^s(t) v(t) dt \quad (10)$$

holds for all positive and nondecreasing functions  $g$  on  $(0, 1)$  and only if

$$\int_0^1 \left( \int_x^1 \psi(t, u) du \right)^s w(t) dt \leq \int_x^1 v(t) dt \quad (11)$$

holds for all  $0 < x < 1$ .

### 3. Interpolation Formula

First we compute the  $K$ -functional for the couple  $(L^{(p,\alpha)}, L^{(p,\beta)})$ ,  $0 < \alpha < \beta$ . To this end, we need the following Holmstedt-type estimate.

**Theorem 4.** *Let  $-1 < \gamma_0 < \gamma_1$ , and let  $f \in A_0$ . Then*

$$\begin{aligned} & K\left((1 - \ln t)^{\gamma_0 - \gamma_1}, f; \overline{A}_{0,1;\gamma_0}, \overline{A}_{0,1;\gamma_1}\right) \\ & \approx I(t, f) + (1 - \ln t)^{\gamma_0 - \gamma_1} J(t, f), \quad 0 < t < 1, \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

where

$$I(t, f) = \int_0^t (1 - \ln u)^{\gamma_0} K(u, f) \frac{du}{u}, \quad (13)$$

and

$$J(t, f) = \int_t^1 (1 - \ln u)^{\gamma_1} K(u, f) \frac{du}{u}. \quad (14)$$

*Proof.* Let  $j = 0, 1$ . Put

$$g_j(t) = t \left( 1 + \int_t^1 (1 - \ln u)^{\gamma_j} \frac{du}{u} \right), \quad 0 < t < 1, \quad (15)$$

and

$$h_j(t) = \int_0^t u (1 - \ln u)^{\gamma_j} \frac{du}{u}, \quad 0 < t < 1. \quad (16)$$

According to case 4 in [12, Theorem 4], we have

$$\begin{aligned} & K\left(\frac{g_0(t)}{g_1(t)}, f; \overline{A}_{0,1;\gamma_0}, \overline{A}_{0,1;\gamma_1}\right) \\ & \approx I(t, f) + (1 - \ln t)^{\gamma_0 - \gamma_1} J(t, f), \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

provided that

$$\int_0^t \frac{u (1 - \ln u)^{\gamma_0}}{g_1(u) + h_1(u)} \frac{du}{u} \leq \frac{g_0(t)}{g_1(t)}, \quad 0 < t < 1, \quad (18)$$

and

$$1 + \int_t^1 \frac{u (1 - \ln u)^{\gamma_1}}{g_0(u) + h_0(u)} \frac{du}{u} \leq \frac{g_1(t)}{g_0(t)}, \quad 0 < t < 1. \quad (19)$$

Since  $\gamma_j > -1$ , then  $g_j(t) \approx t(1 - \ln t)^{\gamma_j + 1}$ . Moreover, note that  $h_j \leq g_j$ . Finally, the condition  $\gamma_0 < \gamma_1$  implies that both (18) and (19) hold. The proof is complete.  $\square$

*Remark 5.* If  $\gamma_0 < \gamma_1$ , then we have  $\bar{A}_{0,1;\gamma_1} \hookrightarrow \bar{A}_{0,1;\gamma_0}$ . Thus, in this case, we trivially have

$$K(t, f; \bar{A}_{0,1;\gamma_0}, \bar{A}_{0,1;\gamma_1}) \approx \|f\|_{\bar{A}_{0,1;\gamma_0}}, \quad t > 1. \quad (20)$$

**Corollary 6.** Let  $1 < p < \infty$ ,  $0 < \alpha < \beta$ , and let  $f \in L^p(\Omega)$ . Then, for all  $0 < t < 1$ , we have

$$K\left((1 - \ln t)^{(1-1/p)(\alpha-\beta)}, f; L^{(p,\alpha)}, L^{(p,\beta)}\right) \approx I_1(t, f) + (1 - \ln t)^{(1-1/p)(\alpha-\beta)} J_1(t, f), \quad (21)$$

where

$$I_1(t, f) = \int_0^t (1 - \ln u)^{-\alpha/p+\alpha-1} \left( \int_0^u f^*(\tau)^p d\tau \right)^{1/p} \frac{du}{u}, \quad (22)$$

and

$$J_1(t, f) = \int_t^1 (1 - \ln u)^{-\beta/p+\beta-1} \left( \int_0^u f^*(\tau)^p d\tau \right)^{1/p} \frac{du}{u}. \quad (23)$$

*Proof.* First observe that  $L^\infty(\Omega) \hookrightarrow L^p(\Omega)$  as  $\Omega$  has finite measure. We put  $L^p = L^p(\Omega)$  and  $L^\infty = L^\infty(\Omega)$ . Since (see [13, Theorem 5.2.1])

$$K(t^{1/p}, f; L^p, L^\infty) \approx \left( \int_0^t f^*(u)^p du \right)^{1/p}, \quad (24)$$

it follows immediately that  $L^{(p,\eta)} = (L^p, L^\infty)_{0,1;-\eta/p+\eta-1}$ , where  $\eta > 0$ . Thus, the proof simply follows by applying Theorem 4 to  $A_0 = L^p$ ,  $A_1 = L^\infty$ ,  $\gamma_0 = -\alpha/p + \alpha - 1$ , and  $\gamma_1 = -\beta/p + \beta - 1$ .  $\square$

Following [4], we define small Lebesgue spaces in a slightly general way as follows. Let  $1 \leq p < \infty$ ,  $0 < q \leq \infty$ , and  $b > -1/q$ . The small Lebesgue space  $L^{(p,b,q)} = L^{(p,b,q)}(\Omega)$  is formed by all those real-valued Lebesgue measurable functions  $f$  on  $\Omega$ , for which the quasi-norm

$$\|f\|_{L^{(p,b,q)}} = \left( \int_0^1 (1 - \ln t)^{qb} \left( \int_0^t f^*(u)^p du \right)^{q/p} \frac{dt}{t} \right)^{1/q} \quad (25)$$

is finite. The spaces  $L^{(p,b,q)}$  are a particular case of more general  $GF(p, m, w)$  spaces introduced and studied in [17–19]. Note that if  $1 < p < \infty$ ,  $q = 1$ , and  $b = -\alpha/p + \alpha - 1$  with  $\alpha > 0$ , then we recover the spaces  $L^{(p,\alpha)}$ .

The following interpolation formula is the main contribution of this paper.

**Theorem 7.** Let  $1 < p < \infty$ ,  $0 < \alpha < \beta$ ,  $0 < \theta < 1$ , and  $0 < q \leq \infty$ . Then

$$\left( L^{(p,\alpha)}, L^{(p,\beta)} \right)_{\theta,q} = L^{(p,b,q)}, \quad (26)$$

where  $b = (1 - 1/p)((1 - \theta)\alpha + \theta\beta) - 1/q$ .

*Proof.* First note that  $L^{(p,\beta)} \hookrightarrow L^{(p,\alpha)}$  as  $\alpha < \beta$ . Put  $X = (L^{(p,\alpha)}, L^{(p,\beta)})_{\theta,q}$  and  $Y = L^{(p,b,q)}$ . Let  $f \in L^p$ . Assume that  $0 < q < \infty$ . By making an appropriate change of variable and using Corollary 6, we arrive at

$$\|f\|_X^q \approx C_1 + C_2, \quad (27)$$

where

$$C_1 = \int_0^1 (1 - \ln t)^{\theta q(1-1/p)(\beta-\alpha)-1} \cdot \left( \int_0^t (1 - \ln u)^{-\alpha/p+\alpha-1} F(u) \frac{du}{u} \right)^q \frac{dt}{t}, \quad (28)$$

and

$$C_2 = \int_0^1 (1 - \ln t)^{(1-\theta)q(1-1/p)(\alpha-\beta)-1} \cdot \left( \int_t^1 (1 - \ln u)^{-\beta/p+\beta-1} F(u) \frac{du}{u} \right)^q \frac{dt}{t}, \quad (29)$$

with

$$F(t) = \left( \int_0^t f^*(u)^p du \right)^{1/p}. \quad (30)$$

Thus, the proof will be complete, in the case  $0 < q < \infty$ , if we show that  $C_1 \leq \|f\|_Y^q$  and  $C_2 \approx \|f\|_Y^q$ . Since  $F$  is nondecreasing, we get

$$C_2 \geq \int_0^1 (1 - \ln t)^{(1-\theta)q(1-1/p)(\alpha-\beta)-1} F^q(t) \cdot \left( \int_t^1 (1 - \ln u)^{-\beta/p+\beta-1} \frac{du}{u} \right)^q \frac{dt}{t}, \quad (31)$$

or

$$C_2 \geq \int_0^1 (1 - \ln t)^{(1-\theta)q(1-1/p)(\alpha-\beta)-1} F^q(t) \cdot \left( (1 - \ln t)^{-\beta/p+\beta-1} - 1 \right)^q \frac{dt}{t}, \quad (32)$$

whence we obtain  $C_2 \geq \|f\|_Y^q$  as  $(1 - \ln t)^{-\beta/p+\beta-1}$  and  $(1 - \ln t)^{-\beta/p+\beta}$  are asymptotically the same as  $t \rightarrow 0^+$ .

Next we establish the estimates  $C_1 \leq \|f\|_Y^q$  and  $C_2 \leq \|f\|_Y^q$ . To this end, we distinguish two cases:  $q \geq 1$  and  $q < 1$ . Assume first that  $q \geq 1$ . Then,  $C_1 \leq \|f\|_Y^q$  follows from Lemma 1, applied with  $s = q$ ,  $h = F$ ,  $\phi(t) = t^{-1}(1 - \ln u)^{-\alpha/p+\alpha-1}$ , and  $w(t) = t^{-1}(1 - \ln t)^{\theta q(1-1/p)(\beta-\alpha)-1} \chi_{(0,1)}(t)$ . Similarly,  $C_2 \leq \|f\|_Y^q$  follows from Lemma 2. Next assume that  $q < 1$ . Since  $F$  is nondecreasing, we can apply Lemma 3 with  $s = q$ ,  $g = F$ ,  $w(t) = t^{-1}(1 - \ln t)^{\theta q(1-1/p)(\beta-\alpha)-1}$ ,  $\psi(t, u) = u^{-1}(1 - \ln u)^{-\alpha/p+\alpha-1} \chi_{(0,t)}(u)$ , and  $v(t) = t^{-1}(1 - \ln t)^{q(1-1/p)((1-\theta)\alpha+\theta\beta)-1}$ . Note that (10) turns into  $C_1 \leq \|f\|_Y^q$ . Thus, we have to verify (11) for all  $0 < x < 1$ . Observe that (11) holds trivially for all  $1/2 \leq x < 1$ , and thus we may

assume that  $0 < x < 1/2$ . Let us put  $\eta = -\alpha/p + \alpha$  and  $\delta = \theta q(1 - 1/p)(\beta - \alpha)$ . Now we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_0^1 \left( \int_x^1 \psi(t, u) du \right)^s w(t) dt \\ &= \int_x^1 \left( \int_x^t (1 - \ln u)^{\eta-1} \frac{du}{u} \right)^q (1 - \ln t)^{\delta-1} \frac{dt}{t} \\ &\leq \left( \int_x^1 (1 - \ln u)^{\eta-1} \frac{du}{u} \right)^q \int_x^1 (1 - \ln t)^{\delta-1} \frac{dt}{t} \\ &\approx (1 - \ln x)^{q\eta+\delta} \approx \int_x^1 v(t) dt \end{aligned} \quad (33)$$

which proves the validity of (11). Hence, the estimate  $C_1 \leq \|f\|_Y^q$  follows from (10). Similarly, we can obtain  $C_2 \leq \|f\|_Y^q$  from Lemma 3. This completes the proof in the case  $0 < q < \infty$ . Next we assume that  $q = \infty$ . This time we have

$$\|f\|_X \approx D_1 + D_2, \quad (34)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} D_1 &= \sup_{0 < t \leq 1} (1 - \ln t)^{\theta(1-1/p)(\beta-\alpha)} \\ &\quad \cdot \int_0^t (1 - \ln u)^{-\alpha/p+\alpha-1} F(u) \frac{du}{u}, \end{aligned} \quad (35)$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} D_2 &= \sup_{0 < t \leq 1} (1 - \ln t)^{(1-\theta)(1-1/p)(\alpha-\beta)} \\ &\quad \cdot \int_t^1 (1 - \ln u)^{-\beta/p+\beta-1} F(u) \frac{du}{u}. \end{aligned} \quad (36)$$

In order to estimate  $D_1$ , we note that

$$\begin{aligned} D_1 &\leq \|f\|_Y \sup_{0 < t \leq 1} (1 - \ln t)^{\theta(1-1/p)(\beta-\alpha)} \\ &\quad \cdot \int_0^t (1 - \ln u)^{\theta(1-1/p)(\alpha-\beta)-1} \frac{du}{u}, \end{aligned} \quad (37)$$

whence we get  $D_1 \leq \|f\|_Y$ . Similarly, we can show that  $D_2 \leq \|f\|_Y$ . On the other hand, again using the fact that  $F$  is nondecreasing, we get  $D_2 \geq \|f\|_Y$ . Altogether, we have  $D_1 + D_2 \approx \|f\|_Y$  which gives  $\|f\|_X \approx \|f\|_Y$  in view of (34). The proof of the theorem is complete.  $\square$

## Data Availability

No data were used to support this study.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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