

# PROPER SUBSPACES AND COMPATIBILITY

E. ANDRUCHOW, E. CHIUMENTO AND M.E. DI IORIO Y LUCERO

ABSTRACT. Let  $\mathcal{E}$  be a Banach space contained in a Hilbert space  $\mathcal{L}$ . Assume that the inclusion is continuous with dense range. Following the terminology of Gohberg and Zambickii, we say that a bounded operator on  $\mathcal{E}$  is a proper operator if it admits an adjoint with respect to the inner product of  $\mathcal{L}$ . By a proper subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  we mean a closed subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$  which is the range of a proper projection. If there exists a proper projection which is also self-adjoint with respect to the inner product of  $\mathcal{L}$ , then  $\mathcal{S}$  belongs to a well-known class of subspaces called compatible subspaces. We find equivalent conditions to describe proper subspaces. Then we prove a necessary and sufficient condition to ensure that a proper subspace is compatible. Each proper subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  has a supplement  $\mathcal{T}$  which is also a proper subspace. We give a characterization of the compatibility of both subspaces  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$ . Several examples are provided that illustrate different situations between proper and compatible subspaces.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Let  $\mathcal{E}$  be a Banach space space which is continuously and densely included in a Hilbert space  $\mathcal{L}$ . A bounded operator on  $\mathcal{E}$  is a *proper operator* if it admits an adjoint with respect to the inner product of  $\mathcal{L}$ . This definition goes back to Gohberg and Zambickii [26], and it gives a simple condition under which they obtained several results on operators in spaces with two norms. In this context, we introduce the following class of subspaces: a subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  of  $\mathcal{E}$  is called a *proper subspace* if it is the range of a proper projection. If, in addition, the proper projection is self-adjoint with respect to the inner product of  $\mathcal{L}$ , then  $\mathcal{S}$  is called a *compatible subspace*. The aim of the present work is to study proper subspaces and their relation with compatible subspaces.

The notion of compatible subspace has been studied in recent years. It was in the paper [16] by Corach, Maestripieri and Stojanoff, where the theory of compatibility was introduced and then studied systematically in the works [18, 19]. The usual setting to study problems concerning compatibility differs from our context. One has a Hilbert space  $(\mathcal{H}, \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_{\mathcal{H}})$  and a positive semidefinite  $A \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ , where  $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$  denote the algebra of bounded linear operators on  $\mathcal{H}$ . Then a bounded sesquilinear form can be defined by  $\langle f, g \rangle_A = \langle Af, g \rangle_{\mathcal{H}}$ , where  $f, g \in \mathcal{H}$ . If  $\mathcal{S}$  is a closed subspace of  $\mathcal{H}$ , the set of  $A$ -self-adjoint projections with range  $\mathcal{S}$  is given by

$$\mathcal{P}(A, \mathcal{S}) = \{ Q \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H}) : Q^2 = Q, AQ = Q^*A, R(Q) = \mathcal{S} \}.$$

The subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible if  $\mathcal{P}(A, \mathcal{S})$  is not empty. When  $A$  is an injective operator, this is a special case of the setting described in the first paragraph, where  $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{H}$  and  $\mathcal{L}$  the completion of  $\mathcal{H}$  with respect to the norm induced by the inner product defined by  $A$ . In this case, if the set  $\mathcal{P}(A, \mathcal{S})$  is not empty, then it is a singleton. We remark that a

definition of compatible subspace without assuming that  $\mathcal{E}$  is a Hilbert space was already considered in [20, Remark 5.8], but it was not studied in further works.

It is interesting to note that compatible subspaces can be found in the literature many years before. At the time when this concept was not yet developed, Sard used an equivalent definition to give an operator theoretic approach to problems in approximation theory (see [33, 15]). On the other hand, Hassi and Nordström [27] found conditions that guarantee the existence and uniqueness of self-adjoint projections with respect to an Hermitian form. More recently, the notion of compatibility has been related to different topics such as signal processing [23, 24], frame theory [6], de Branges complementation theory [1, 13, 20], sampling theory [5, 34] and abstract splines [17, 8, 12, 21].

Let us describe the contents of this paper. In Section 2 we establish notation and give the necessary background on proper operators. In Section 3 we prove elementary properties of proper subspaces. The set of all proper operators is an involutive Banach algebra, and thus, proper subspaces are ranges of projections in a Banach algebra. We find equivalent conditions to describe proper subspaces in Theorem 3.7. One of these conditions asserts that a closed subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  of  $\mathcal{E}$  is a proper subspace if and only if there is another closed subspace  $\mathcal{T}$  of  $\mathcal{E}$  satisfying

$$\mathcal{S} \dot{+} \mathcal{T} = (\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) \dot{+} (\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E},$$

where the orthogonal complement is considered with respect to  $\mathcal{L}$ . This kind of supplements  $\mathcal{T}$ , which are also proper subspaces, will be called *proper companions* of  $\mathcal{S}$ .

We address the question of when a proper subspace is a compatible subspace in Section 4. Both notions coincide if the subspace has finite codimension, but they are different in general as we shall see in concrete examples. In Theorem 4.8 we obtain a criterion for a proper subspace to be compatible. Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a proper subspace and  $\mathcal{T}$  a proper companion of  $\mathcal{S}$ , then the projection  $P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}$  with range  $\mathcal{S}$  and nullspace  $\mathcal{T}$  is well-defined and continuous on  $\mathcal{E}$ . Our criterion basically asserts that  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible if and only if the operator

$$C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}} = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} + P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}^+ - I$$

has range equal to  $\mathcal{T} \dot{+} (\mathcal{T} \cap \mathcal{E})$ . Here the symbol  $\dot{+}$  stands for the restriction to  $\mathcal{E}$  of the adjoint in  $\mathcal{L}$ .

We prove in Theorem 4.9 different conditions equivalent to the compatibility of both a proper subspace and a fixed proper companion. Among other conditions, we find that a proper subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  and a proper companion  $\mathcal{T}$  are compatible subspaces exactly when the operator  $C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ . Next we examine when the compatibility of a proper companion  $\mathcal{T}$  implies the compatibility of other proper companion  $\mathcal{T}_1$ . As we shall show with examples in the next section, this property does not hold in general. However, it holds in some special cases, for instance if the proper projections associated to a pair of companions are closed enough in a metric induced by the algebra of proper operators (Corollary 4.10). As a curious fact, we point out that the existence of non compatible proper subspaces is closely related to spectral properties of symmetrizable operators (Corollary 4.11).

In Section 5 we give several examples. In particular, if  $\mathcal{E}$  is the space of trace class operators and  $\mathcal{L}$  is the space of Hilbert-Schmidt operators, we provide examples of non compatible proper subspaces (Example 5.2). We also show that the compatibility of a proper companion does not imply compatibility of any other proper companion (Example 5.3). Finally, we exhibit examples of proper invertible operators.

2. PRELIMINARIES AND NOTATION

Let  $(\mathcal{E}, \|\cdot\|_{\mathcal{E}})$  be a Banach space contained in a Hilbert space  $(\mathcal{L}, \|\cdot\|_{\mathcal{L}})$ . Denote by  $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$  the inner product of  $\mathcal{L}$ . We assume that the inclusion  $\mathcal{E} \hookrightarrow \mathcal{L}$  is continuous with dense range. In order to simplify some computations, we further suppose that  $\|f\|_{\mathcal{L}} \leq \|f\|_{\mathcal{E}}$  for all  $f \in \mathcal{E}$ .

**Remark 2.1.** The Banach space  $\mathcal{E}$  is continuously and densely contained in some Hilbert space  $\mathcal{L}$  if and only if there exists a bounded conjugate-linear operator  $J : \mathcal{E} \rightarrow \mathcal{E}^*$  such that  $(Jf)(f) > 0$  for all  $f \in \mathcal{E}$ ,  $f \neq 0$ . If this condition is fulfilled,  $\mathcal{L}$  is the Hilbert space obtained as the completion of  $\mathcal{E}$  with respect to the norm  $\|f\|_{\mathcal{L}} = ((Jf)(f))^{1/2}$  and the inner product is given by the continuous extension of  $\langle f, g \rangle = (Jg)(f)$ , where  $f, g \in \mathcal{E}$ .

**2.1. Subspaces and projections.** Let  $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  denote the algebra of bounded linear operators on  $\mathcal{E}$ . The range of an operator  $T \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  is denoted by  $R(T)$ , and its nullspace by  $N(T)$ . An operator  $T \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  is a projection if  $T^2 = T$ . We denote by  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} \mathcal{T}$  the direct sum of two subspaces  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  of  $\mathcal{E}$ . If these subspaces are closed and  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} \mathcal{T} = \mathcal{E}$ , the oblique projection  $P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}$  onto  $\mathcal{S}$  along  $\mathcal{T}$  is the bounded projection with range  $\mathcal{S}$  and nullspace  $\mathcal{T}$ . Given a subset  $\mathcal{S}$  of  $\mathcal{E}$ ,  $\mathcal{S}^{\perp}$  is the usual orthogonal complement as a subspace of  $\mathcal{L}$ , that is

$$\mathcal{S}^{\perp} = \{ f \in \mathcal{L} : \langle f, g \rangle = 0, \forall g \in \mathcal{S} \}.$$

It is easily seen that  $\mathcal{S}^{\perp} \cap \mathcal{E}$  is a closed subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$ . Moreover, we have  $\mathcal{S}^{\perp} \cap \mathcal{E} = J^{-1}(\mathcal{S}^{\circ})$ , where  $J$  is the map defined in Remark 2.1 and  $\mathcal{S}^{\circ}$  is the annihilator of  $\mathcal{S}$ .

Throughout, the closure  $\overline{\mathcal{S}}$  of a closed subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  of  $\mathcal{E}$  is understood with respect to the topology of  $\mathcal{L}$ . The operator  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}$  is the orthogonal projection onto  $\overline{\mathcal{S}}$ . It will be useful to state here the following result on projections.

**Theorem 2.2** (Ando [2]). *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  be two closed subspaces of a Hilbert space  $\mathcal{L}$ . If  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} \mathcal{T} = \mathcal{L}$ , then the operator  $P_{\mathcal{S}} - P_{\mathcal{T}}$  is invertible and*

$$(P_{\mathcal{S}} - P_{\mathcal{T}})^{-1} = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} + P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}^* - I, \quad P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} = P_{\mathcal{S}}(P_{\mathcal{S}} - P_{\mathcal{T}})^{-1}.$$

We remark that the first formula above was first proved by Buckholtz [14].

**2.2. Proper operators.** In this subsection, we describe the basic properties of proper operators proved in [26]. An operator  $T \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  is a *proper operator* if and only if for every  $f \in \mathcal{E}$ , there is a vector  $g \in \mathcal{E}$  such that  $\langle Th, f \rangle = \langle h, g \rangle$  for all  $h \in \mathcal{E}$ . This allows to define  $T^+f = g$ , and it can be shown that  $T^+ \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$ .

**Theorem 2.3** (Gohberg-Zambickii [26]). *Let  $T$  be a proper operator. Then following statements hold:*

- i)  *$T$  has a bounded extension  $\bar{T}$  on  $\mathcal{L}$ . The usual operator norms of  $\bar{T} \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{L})$  and  $T \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  are related by*

$$\|\bar{T}\|_{\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{L})} \leq \min\{ \|T^+T\|_{\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})}, \|TT^+\|_{\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})} \}.$$

- ii) *If  $\sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T)$  and  $\sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(\bar{T})$  denote the spectrum of  $T$  on  $\mathcal{E}$  and the spectrum of  $\bar{T}$  on  $\mathcal{L}$ , respectively, then*

$$\sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(\bar{T}) \subseteq \sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T) \cup \overline{\sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T^+)},$$

*where the last bar indicates complex conjugation.*

- iii) *If  $T$  is a compact operator on  $\mathcal{E}$ , then  $\bar{T}$  is a compact operator on  $\mathcal{L}$ . Moreover,  $\sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(\bar{T}) = \sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T)$  and the eigenspaces of  $T$  in  $\mathcal{E}$  and  $\mathcal{L}$  corresponding to the non zero eigenvalues coincide.*

When  $T$  is a proper operator, it turns out that  $T^+ = \bar{T}^*|_E$ , where the last adjoint is the adjoint of  $\bar{T}$  with respect to the inner product of  $\mathcal{L}$ . A *symmetrizable operator* is a proper operator  $T$  such that  $T^+ = T$ . This class of operators was studied independently by Dieudonné [22], Krein [30] and Lax [31].

We denote by  $\mathfrak{P}$  the set of all proper operators. It is not difficult to see that  $\mathfrak{P}$  is not closed in  $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$ . However,  $\mathfrak{P}$  becomes an involutive unital Banach algebra with the norm defined by

$$\|T\|_{\mathfrak{P}} := \|T\|_{\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})} + \|T^+\|_{\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})}.$$

**Remark 2.4.** There are three different notions of groups of invertible operators: the group of invertible operators on  $\mathcal{E}$ , the group of invertible operators on  $\mathcal{L}$  and the group of invertible operators of the algebra  $\mathfrak{P}$ . These groups are denoted by  $Gl(\mathcal{E})$ ,  $Gl(\mathcal{L})$  and  $\mathfrak{P}^\times$ , respectively. If  $T$  is a proper operator, we write  $\sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T)$  for the spectrum in the Banach space  $\mathcal{E}$ ,  $\sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(\bar{T})$  for the spectrum of the continuous extension  $\bar{T}$  in the Hilbert space  $\mathcal{L}$  and  $\sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(T)$  for spectrum in the Banach algebra  $\mathfrak{P}$ . The relation between the first two notions of spectrum is stated in Theorem 2.3. Since  $T$  is invertible in the algebra  $\mathfrak{P}$  if and only if  $T$  and  $T^+$  are invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ , one can see that

$$\sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(T) = \sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T) \cup \overline{\sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T^+)}.$$

There are examples which show that the inclusion  $\sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T) \subseteq \sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(T)$  may be strict.

### 3. PROPER SUBSPACES

A closed subspace  $\mathcal{S} \subseteq \mathcal{E}$  is called a *proper subspace* if there exists a proper projection  $Q$  such that  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$ . In this section we prove basic facts on proper subspaces. We start with two examples of proper subspaces.

**Example 3.1.** Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a finite dimensional subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$ . We can construct a basis  $\{f_1, \dots, f_n\}$  of  $\mathcal{S}$  satisfying  $\langle f_n, f_m \rangle = \delta_{nm}$ . In fact, note that we only have to apply the Gram-Schmidt process to any basis of  $\mathcal{S}$  to get a new basis with this property. On the other hand, it is well known that as an operator on  $\mathcal{L}$ , any projection  $Q$  onto  $\mathcal{S}$  can be written as

$$(1) \quad Q = \sum_{i=1}^n \langle \cdot, h_n \rangle f_n,$$

where  $\{h_1, \dots, h_n\}$  is an orthonormal set satisfying  $\langle f_n, h_n \rangle = \delta_{nm}$ . If we restrict this projection to  $\mathcal{E}$ , we find a characterization of an arbitrary proper projection  $Q$  with finite dimensional range:  $Q$  is a proper projection if and only if  $h_1, \dots, h_n \in \mathcal{E}$ . Furthermore, by choosing  $h_i = f_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, n$ , we have proved that any finite dimensional subspace is a proper subspace.

**Example 3.2.** Let  $T$  be a proper operator. Suppose that  $\lambda$  be an isolated point in  $\sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(T)$ . For the different notions of spectrum of a proper operator see Remark 2.4. Let  $B_\epsilon(\lambda)$  be the open ball of radius  $\epsilon$  centered at  $\lambda$ . Assume that  $\epsilon$  satisfies  $B_{2\epsilon}(\lambda) \cap \sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(T) = \{\lambda\}$ . In particular, this implies that  $B_{2\epsilon}(\lambda) \cap \sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T) = \{\lambda\}$  and  $B_{2\epsilon}(\bar{\lambda}) \cap \sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(T^+) = \{\bar{\lambda}\}$ . We claim that

$$Q = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{\partial B_\epsilon(\lambda)} (z - T)^{-1} dz$$

is a proper projection, and thus,  $R(Q)$  is a proper subspace.

To prove our claim, let  $\gamma : [-\pi, \pi] \rightarrow \partial B_\epsilon(\lambda)$  be a smooth curve with the positive orientation. Pick a partition  $0 = t_0 < t_1 < \dots < t_n = \pi$  of the interval  $[0, \pi]$ , and then,

consider the partition  $t_{-k} = -t_k$  of  $[-\pi, 0]$ . For  $n$  large enough, the above defined integral can be approximated by the Riemann sum

$$\frac{1}{2\pi i} \sum_{i=-n}^n (\gamma(t_i) - T)^{-1} \dot{\gamma}(t_i) \Delta t_i.$$

On the other hand, if  $z \in \partial B_\epsilon(\lambda)$ , then  $z - T$  and  $\bar{z} - T^+$  are invertible in  $\mathcal{E}$ . We can define the following projection

$$P = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{\partial B_\epsilon(\bar{\lambda})} (\bar{z} - T^+)^{-1} dz.$$

Then the curve  $\beta(t) = \overline{\gamma(-t)}$  is positive oriented, and  $\beta([-\pi, \pi]) = \partial B_\epsilon(\bar{\lambda})$ . The projection  $P$  can be approximated by

$$\frac{1}{2\pi i} \sum_{i=-n}^n (\beta(t_i) - T^+)^{-1} \dot{\beta}(t_i) \Delta t_i.$$

Next note

$$\begin{aligned} \left\langle \frac{1}{2\pi i} \sum_{i=-n}^n (\gamma(t_i) - T)^{-1} \dot{\gamma}(t_i) \Delta t_i h, f \right\rangle &= - \left\langle h, \frac{1}{2\pi i} \sum_{i=-n}^n (\overline{\gamma(t_i)} - T^+)^{-1} \overline{\dot{\gamma}(t_i)} \Delta t_i f \right\rangle \\ &= \left\langle h, \frac{1}{2\pi i} \sum_{i=-n}^n (\beta(-t_i) - T^+)^{-1} \dot{\beta}(-t_i) \Delta t_i f \right\rangle \\ &= \left\langle h, \frac{1}{2\pi i} \sum_{i=-n}^n (\beta(t_i) - T^+)^{-1} \dot{\beta}(t_i) \Delta t_i f \right\rangle, \end{aligned}$$

where in the last step we have used that the partition is symmetric with respect to the origin. Letting  $n \rightarrow \infty$ , we get  $\langle Qh, f \rangle = \langle h, Pf \rangle$ . Thus,  $Q$  is a proper projection and  $Q^+ = P$ .

Now we prove some elementary properties of proper operators.

**Lemma 3.3.** *Let  $T$  be a proper operator, then*

- i)  $N(T^+) = R(T)^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ .
- ii)  $\overline{R(T^+)} \cap \mathcal{E} = N(T)^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ .

*Proof.* i) Let  $f \in N(T^+)$ . Then  $\langle f, Tg \rangle = \langle T^+f, g \rangle = 0$  for all  $g \in \mathcal{E}$ , which means that  $f \in R(T)^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ . Conversely, suppose that  $f \in R(T)^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ . This is equivalent to  $0 = \langle f, Tg \rangle = \langle T^+f, g \rangle$  for all  $g \in \mathcal{E}$ , that is,  $f \in N(T^+)$ .

ii) Since  $(T^+)^+ = T$ , we know from the first item that  $N(T) = R(T^+)^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ . Then take the orthogonal complement in  $\mathcal{L}$  and the intersection with  $\mathcal{E}$ .  $\square$

**Remark 3.4.** Let  $Q$  be a proper projection. As a special case of the first item in the above lemma, we get that  $N(Q^+) = R(Q)^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ , and since  $R(Q^+) = N((Q - I)^+)$ , we also have  $R(Q^+) = N(Q)^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ .

**Remark 3.5.** It will be useful to rephrase the definition of proper operator in terms of range inclusions. Indeed, an operator  $T \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  is proper if and only if  $R(T'J) \subseteq R(J)$ , where  $J$  is the operator defined in Remark 2.1 and  $T'$  is the transpose of  $T$ .

In the case where  $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{H}$  is a Hilbert space, there is an injective positive operator  $A \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$  such that  $(Jg)(f) = \langle Af, g \rangle_{\mathcal{H}}$  for all  $f, g \in \mathcal{H}$ . Then an operator  $T \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$  is proper if and only if there exists an operator  $W \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$  such that  $AT = W^*A$ , where the last adjoint is the adjoint with respect to  $\mathcal{H}$ . In the case of projections, there is another useful characterization in [19, Lemma 2.1]: a projection  $Q$  is proper if and only

$$R(A) = (R(A) \cap R(Q^*)) \dot{+} (R(A) \cap N(Q^*)).$$

This result can also be proved in our setting with the obvious modifications.

**Lemma 3.6.** *Let  $Q \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  be a projection. Then  $Q$  is proper if and only if*

$$R(J) = (R(J) \cap R(Q')) \dot{+} (R(J) \cap N(Q')).$$

*Proof.* We state in Remark 3.5 that  $Q$  is proper if and only if  $R(Q'J) \subseteq R(J)$ . Clearly, this is equivalent to the condition  $R(J) = R(Q'J) + R((I - Q')J)$ .

On the other hand, we claim that  $Q$  is proper if and only if  $R(Q'J) = R(J) \cap R(Q')$ . In fact, note that if  $R(Q'J) = R(J) \cap R(Q')$ , then  $R(Q'J) \subseteq R(J)$ , which implies that  $Q$  is proper. Now if we suppose that  $Q$  is proper, then we have  $R(Q'J) \subseteq R(J) \cap R(Q')$ . But since  $Q'$  is a projection, any functional  $\phi = Jf = Q'\phi$ , where  $f \in \mathcal{E}$  and  $\phi \in R(Q')$ , can be written as  $\phi = Q'\phi = Q'Jf$ . Therefore we get  $R(Q'J) = R(J) \cap R(Q')$ .

Applying the same argument to  $I - Q$ , we also find that  $Q$  is a proper projection if and only if  $R((I - Q')J) = R(J) \cap N(Q')$ . It follows that a projection  $Q$  is proper if and only if  $R(J) = R(Q'J) + R((I - Q')J) = (R(J) \cap R(Q')) \dot{+} (R(J) \cap N(Q'))$ .  $\square$

We give a characterization of proper subspaces in the following result.

**Theorem 3.7.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a closed subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$ . The following conditions are equivalent:*

- i)  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace.
- ii) There exists a projection  $Q \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  such that  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$  and

$$R(J) = (R(J) \cap R(Q')) \dot{+} (R(J) \cap N(Q')).$$

- iii) There exists a closed subspace  $\mathcal{T}$  of  $\mathcal{E}$  such that

$$\mathcal{S} \dot{+} \mathcal{T} = (\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) \dot{+} (\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}.$$

*Proof.* i)  $\Leftrightarrow$  ii) This follows immediately from Lemma 3.6.

i)  $\Leftrightarrow$  iii) We suppose that  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace. Then there is a proper projection  $Q$  such that  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$ . According to Remark 3.4, we can take  $\mathcal{T} = N(Q)$ . In fact, we have  $N(Q^+) = \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$  and  $R(Q^+) = \mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ . Since  $Q^+$  is a projection in  $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$ , we get  $(\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) \dot{+} (\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}$ .

Now assume that there is a closed subspace  $\mathcal{T}$  satisfying  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} \mathcal{T} = (\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) \dot{+} (\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}$ . Then we can define the continuous projections  $Q = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}$  and  $P = P_{\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}}$ . Note that for any  $h, f \in \mathcal{E}$ , we have

$$\langle Qh, f \rangle = \langle Qh, Pf + (I - P)f \rangle = \langle Qh, Pf \rangle = \langle (I - Q)h + Qh, Pf \rangle = \langle h, Pf \rangle.$$

This shows that  $Q$  and  $P$  are proper operators and  $Q^+ = P$ . Hence  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace.  $\square$

If  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace, we have seen that there exists a closed subspace  $\mathcal{T}$  of  $\mathcal{E}$  such that  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} \mathcal{T} = (\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) \dot{+} (\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}$ . We refer to any such subspace  $\mathcal{T}$  as a *proper companion* of  $\mathcal{S}$ .

**Corollary 3.8.** *If  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$  with a proper companion  $\mathcal{T}$ . Then  $\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ ,  $\mathcal{T}$  and  $\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$  are proper subspaces.*

*Proof.* Let  $Q$  and  $P$  be the proper projections defined in the proof of Proposition 3.7. The ranges of  $I - Q$ ,  $P$  and  $I - P$  are the subspaces  $\mathcal{T}$ ,  $\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$  and  $\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ , respectively. Hence these three subspaces are proper.  $\square$

**Corollary 3.9.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a proper subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$ . Then the following assertions hold:*

- i) *If  $\mathcal{T}$  is a proper companion of  $\mathcal{S}$ , then  $\bar{P}_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} = P_{\bar{\mathcal{S}} // \bar{\mathcal{T}}}$ .*
- ii)  $\bar{\mathcal{S}} \cap \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{S}$ .

*Proof.* i) First note that the bounded projection  $Q := P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}$  is well defined because  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} \mathcal{T} = \mathcal{E}$ . In the proof of Theorem 3.7 we have seen that  $Q$  is a proper operator. Then,  $Q$  has a bounded extension  $\bar{Q}$  to the Hilbert space  $\mathcal{L}$ . Note that  $\mathcal{S} \subseteq R(\bar{Q}) \subseteq \bar{\mathcal{S}}$ , and  $\bar{Q}$  has closed range, which implies  $R(\bar{Q}) = \bar{\mathcal{S}}$ . Similarly, one can check that  $N(\bar{Q}) = \bar{\mathcal{T}}$ .

ii) The nontrivial inclusion is  $\bar{\mathcal{S}} \cap \mathcal{E} \subseteq \mathcal{S}$ . Pick  $f \in \bar{\mathcal{S}} \cap \mathcal{E}$ . Since  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace, there is a proper projection  $Q$  with range  $\mathcal{S}$  and nullspace  $\mathcal{T}$ . By the first item, we know that  $\bar{Q} = P_{\bar{\mathcal{S}} // \bar{\mathcal{T}}}$ , so we get  $f = \bar{Q}f = Qf \in \mathcal{S}$ .  $\square$

**Corollary 3.10.** *Let  $\mathcal{T}$  be a proper companion of a proper subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $G \in \mathfrak{B}^\times$ , then  $G(\mathcal{S})$  and  $G(\mathcal{T})$  are proper companions. Moreover, if  $\mathcal{T}_1$  is another proper companion of  $\mathcal{S}$ , then there exists an operator  $G \in \mathfrak{B}^\times$  such that  $G(\mathcal{T}) = \mathcal{T}_1$  and  $G(\mathcal{S}) = \mathcal{S}$ .*

*Proof.* For the first assertion, we only have to note that the projection  $P = GP_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}G^{-1}$  is a proper operator with range  $G(\mathcal{S})$  and nullspace  $G(\mathcal{T})$ . In order to show the second assertion, consider the bounded operator

$$G_0 = (P_{\mathcal{T}_1 // \mathcal{S}})|_{\mathcal{T}} : \mathcal{T} \rightarrow \mathcal{T}_1.$$

It is easy to check that  $G_0$  is an isomorphism. Then the operator defined by

$$G(f_1 + f_2) = f_1 + G_0f_2, \quad f_1 \in \mathcal{S}, f_2 \in \mathcal{T},$$

is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ ,  $G(\mathcal{T}) = \mathcal{T}_1$  and  $G(\mathcal{S}) = \mathcal{S}$ . To show that  $G$  is a proper operator, we note that it can be rewritten as

$$G = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} + P_{\mathcal{T}_1 // \mathcal{S}} P_{\mathcal{T} // \mathcal{S}}.$$

Since each projection in this expression is a proper operator, we get that  $G$  is a proper operator and

$$G^+ = P_{\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}} + P_{\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}} P_{\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{T}_1^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}}.$$

What remains is to prove that  $G$  is invertible in the Banach algebra  $\mathfrak{B}$ . Since  $G$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ , we have to show that  $G^+$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ . Clearly,  $G^+$  is injective. To see that  $G^+$  is surjective, given  $g \in \mathcal{E}$ , write  $g = g_1 + g_2$ , where  $g_1 \in \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$  and  $g_2 \in \mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ . Then note that one can also write  $g_2 = g_{2,1} + g_{2,2}$ , where  $g_{2,1} \in \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$  and  $g_{2,2} \in \mathcal{T}_1^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ . Therefore, the vector  $f = g - g_{2,1}$  satisfies  $G^+f = g$ .  $\square$

#### 4. PROPER AND COMPATIBLE SUBSPACES

A closed subspace  $\mathcal{S} \subseteq \mathcal{E}$  is called a *compatible subspace* if there exists a proper projection  $Q$  such that  $Q = Q^+$  and  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$ . The following elementary characterizations of compatible subspaces will be useful later.

**Lemma 4.1.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a closed subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$ . The following conditions are equivalent:*

- i)  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible.
- ii)  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} (\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}$ .
- iii) *There exists a proper projection  $Q$  such that  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$  and  $N(Q) \subseteq \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ .*

- iv)  $R(J) = J(\mathcal{S}) \dot{+} (R(J) \cap \mathcal{S}^\circ)$ .
- v)  $\overline{\mathcal{S}} \cap \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{S}$  and  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ .

*Proof.* i)  $\Leftrightarrow$  ii) Suppose that  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible subspace. Then there is a proper projection  $Q$  such that  $Q = Q^+$  and  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$ . Using Remark 3.4, we get  $N(Q) = N(Q^+) = \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ , which yields  $\mathcal{E} = R(Q) \dot{+} N(Q) = \mathcal{S} \dot{+} (\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E})$ . To prove the converse, now assume that  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} (\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}$ . Then the projection  $Q = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}}$  is continuous on  $\mathcal{E}$ , and note that  $\langle Qh, f \rangle = \langle Qh, Qf \rangle = \langle h, Qf \rangle$  for all  $f, h \in \mathcal{E}$ . Thus,  $Q$  is a proper projection,  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$  and  $Q^+ = Q$ .

i)  $\Leftrightarrow$  iii) This is a direct consequence of a result of Krein [28]. We refer to [19, Lemma 2.5] for a proof when  $\mathcal{E}$  is a Hilbert space. It is not difficult to see that this proof can also be carried out in the Banach setting.

i)  $\Leftrightarrow$  iv) We only need to follow the proof in [19, Prop. 2.14 2.], taking into account the map  $J$  that shows up in the Banach setting.

i)  $\Leftrightarrow$  v) This was proved in [3, Prop. 3.5] in the setting of Hilbert spaces. The proof in our setting goes exactly the same line.  $\square$

**Remark 4.2.** If  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace, there exists a unique proper projection  $Q$  such that  $Q^+ = Q$  and  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$ . This follows immediately from the fact that  $Q$  is uniquely determined as  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}})|_{\mathcal{E}}$ . We denote this projection by  $Q_{\mathcal{S}}$ .

Note that in Example 3.1 we actually show that every finite dimensional subspace is compatible. Subspaces of finite codimension in  $\mathcal{E}$  may not be compatible or proper, but both notions coincide for this type of subspaces.

**Proposition 4.3.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a closed subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$  with finite codimension. Then  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace if and only if  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace.*

*Proof.* The “if” part is trivial. To prove the “only if” part, suppose that  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace. Any supplement of  $\mathcal{S}$  in  $\mathcal{E}$  has to be finite dimensional. In particular, a proper companion  $\mathcal{T}$  is finite dimensional, and then  $\overline{\mathcal{T}} = \mathcal{T}$ . Let  $Q$  be a proper projection such that  $R(Q) = \mathcal{S}$ . Then  $P = I - Q$  is a proper projection with range  $\mathcal{T}$ . In Example 3.1 we see that  $P$  can be described by formula (1). Note that  $R(P) = \mathcal{T} = \text{span}\{f_1, \dots, f_n\}$  and  $R(P^+) = N(P)^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} = \text{span}\{h_1, \dots, h_n\}$ . From these facts, we get  $\dim \mathcal{T} = \dim \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ .

On the other hand, recall that  $\overline{\mathcal{S}} \dot{+} \mathcal{T} = \mathcal{L}$  by Corollary 3.9. Since  $\mathcal{S}^\perp$  is a supplement for  $\overline{\mathcal{S}}$  in  $\mathcal{L}$ , it follows that  $\dim \mathcal{T} = \dim \mathcal{S}^\perp$ . Therefore, we obtain that  $\dim \mathcal{S}^\perp = \dim \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ . Hence  $\mathcal{S}^\perp = \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ .

To prove that  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible, it suffices to show that  $\overline{\mathcal{S}} \cap \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{S}$  and  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$  by Lemma 4.1. According to Corollary 3.9, we have  $\overline{\mathcal{S}} \cap \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{S}$ . To prove the second condition, we use that  $\mathcal{S}^\perp = \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ . We thus get  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}(\mathcal{E}) = (I - P_{\mathcal{S}^\perp})(\mathcal{E}) = (I - P_{\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}})(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ . This completes the proof.  $\square$

**Example 4.4.** Given a vector  $g \in \mathcal{L} \setminus \mathcal{E}$ ,  $\|g\|_{\mathcal{L}} = 1$ , the subspace

$$\mathcal{S} = \{f \in \mathcal{E} : \langle f, g \rangle = 0\} = \{g\}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$$

is neither a compatible nor a proper subspace. Note that  $\mathcal{S}$  has finite codimension, so it is enough to prove that  $\mathcal{S}$  is not compatible by Proposition 4.3. The first condition in Lemma 4.1 v), that is,  $\overline{\mathcal{S}} \cap \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{S}$ , clearly holds for this subspace. On the other hand, the orthogonal projection onto  $\overline{\mathcal{S}}$  is given by

$$P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}(f) = f - \langle f, g \rangle g.$$



Apparently, it follows that  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}(\mathcal{E}) \not\subseteq \mathcal{E}$  by our choice of the function  $g$ . Hence  $\mathcal{S}$  is not compatible.

**Example 4.5.** In [18, Example 4.3] the authors gave the following example of a non compatible subspace. Let  $A$  be a positive injective non invertible operator acting on  $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{H}$ . As usual,  $\mathcal{L}$  is the Hilbert space obtained by completing  $\mathcal{H}$  with respect to the inner product  $\langle f, h \rangle_A = \langle Af, h \rangle_{\mathcal{H}}$ . Pick any vector  $g \in \mathcal{H} \setminus R(A)$ . Then they proved that the subspace  $\mathcal{S} = \{g\}^{\perp_{\mathcal{H}}}$  is not compatible. Furthermore, the subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  has finite codimension in  $\mathcal{H}$ . Thus, by Proposition 4.3, we also know that  $\mathcal{S}$  is not a proper subspace.

We shall need the following algebraic result by Maestripieri. Its proof can be found in [8, Prop. 2.8].

**Lemma 4.6.** *Let  $T_1, T_2 \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  such that  $R(T_1) \cap R(T_2) = \{0\}$ . Then  $\mathcal{E} = N(T_1) + N(T_2)$  if and only if  $R(T_1) + R(T_2) = R(T_1 + T_2)$ .*

**Remark 4.7.** It will be useful to state the last condition of the above lemma in a slightly different way. We notice that  $R(T_1) + R(T_2) = R(T_1 + T_2)$  if and only if  $R(T_1) \subseteq R(T_1 + T_2)$  (see [9, Prop. 2.4]).

Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a proper subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  a proper companion. As we shall see, the compatibility of these subspaces is related to properties of the following symmetrizable operator

$$C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}} = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} + P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}^+ - I.$$

We observe that its extension  $\bar{C}_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{L}$  if and only if  $\bar{V} + \bar{V}^*$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{L}$ , where  $V = 2P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} - I$ . Since  $V$  is a symmetry, this is equivalent to  $-1 \notin \sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(\bar{V}^* \bar{V})$ , which clearly holds since  $\bar{V}^* \bar{V}$  is positive on  $\mathcal{L}$ . Thus,  $\bar{C}_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{L}$ . In particular,  $C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}$  is injective as an operator on  $\mathcal{E}$ .

Our main result to decide when a proper subspace is compatible now follows. Its proof is based on Lemma 4.6. This idea has been used in [8, Prop. 2.9] to relate compatible subspaces in Hilbert spaces and Bott-Duffin inverses.

**Theorem 4.8.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a proper subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  a proper companion of  $\mathcal{S}$ . The following assertions are equivalent:*

- i)  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace.
- ii)  $\mathcal{T} \dot{+} (\mathcal{T}^{\perp} \cap \mathcal{E}) = R(C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}})$ .
- iii)  $\mathcal{T}^{\perp} \cap \mathcal{E} \subseteq R(C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}})$ .
- iv)  $\mathcal{T} \subseteq R(C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}})$ .

*If any of these statements is satisfied, the unique proper projection  $Q_{\mathcal{S}}$  such that  $Q_{\mathcal{S}} = Q_{\mathcal{S}}^{\perp}$  and  $R(Q_{\mathcal{S}}) = \mathcal{S}$  is given by*

$$Q_{\mathcal{S}} = C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}^{-1} P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}^+.$$

*Proof.* i)  $\Leftrightarrow$  ii) Set  $Q = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}$ . We shall use Lemma 4.6 with  $T_1 = Q^+$  and  $T_2 = Q - I$ . Note that  $R(Q^+) = \mathcal{T}^{\perp} \cap \mathcal{E}$  and  $R(Q - I) = \mathcal{T}$  have trivial intersection, and thus the lemma applies. Then, as it is shown before

$$N(Q^+) = R(Q)^{\perp} \cap \mathcal{E} = \mathcal{S}^{\perp} \cap \mathcal{E}; \quad N(Q - I) = R(Q) = \mathcal{S}.$$

According to Lemma 4.1, the fact that  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible is equivalent to  $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{S} + (\mathcal{S}^{\perp} \cap \mathcal{E})$ .

Clearly, the equivalence between ii), iii) and iv) follows from Remark 4.7.

Now we assume that  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible. Before the statement of this theorem, we have shown that the operator  $C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}} = Q + Q^+ - I$  is injective. Since we know that  $R(Q^+) =$

$\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}$ , by condition iii) the operator  $(Q + Q^+ - I)^{-1}Q^+$  is everywhere defined in  $\mathcal{E}$ . Apparently, it has closed graph: let  $f_n \rightarrow f$  in  $\mathcal{E}$  with  $(Q + Q^+ - I)^{-1}Q^+f_n \rightarrow g$ . Then  $Q^+f_n \rightarrow (Q + Q^+ - I)g$ . Also  $Q^+f_n \rightarrow Q^+f$ . It follows that

$$(Q + Q^+ - I)g = Q^+f, \quad \text{i.e. } g = (Q + Q^+ - I)^{-1}Q^+f.$$

Thus, the operator  $(Q + Q^+ - I)^{-1}Q^+$  is bounded. We claim that  $(Q + Q^+ - I)^{-1}Q^+ = Q_S$ . This is equivalent to proving that  $Q^+ = (Q + Q^+ - I)Q_S$ . Since  $R(Q) = R(Q_S) = \mathcal{S}$ , one has  $QQ_S = Q_S$ , and thus

$$(Q + Q^+ - I)Q_S = Q^+Q_S.$$

Note also that  $Q^+(I - Q_S) = 0$ :  $R(I - Q_S) = N(Q_S) = \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} = N(Q^+)$ . Then

$$Q^+Q_S = Q^+(Q_S + (I - Q_S)) = Q^+. \quad \square$$

Of course, the operator  $C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}$  may be not invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ , and  $\mathcal{S}$  can be a compatible subspace (see Example 5.2). In fact,  $C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$  exactly when  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  are both compatible subspaces.

**Theorem 4.9.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a proper subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  a proper companion of  $\mathcal{S}$ . The following conditions are equivalent:*

- i)  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  are compatible subspaces.
- ii)  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} + P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ .
- iii)  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ .
- iv)  $C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ .

*Proof.* i)  $\Rightarrow$  ii) This implication follows from Lemma 4.1 v).

ii)  $\Leftrightarrow$  iii) Since  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace, we know that  $\overline{\mathcal{S}} \dot{+} \overline{\mathcal{T}} = \mathcal{L}$  by Corollary 3.9 i). Then, the following formula (see Theorem 2.2) for the projection on a Hilbert space with range  $\overline{\mathcal{S}}$  and nullspace  $\overline{\mathcal{T}}$  can be used:

$$P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}//\overline{\mathcal{T}}} = P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})^{-1}.$$

Equivalently,  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}//\overline{\mathcal{T}}}(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}}) = P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}$ . Interchanging the roles of the subspaces, we can also get that  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}//\overline{\mathcal{S}}}(P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}}) = P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}}$ . Then, we obtain

$$(2) \quad P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}} = (2P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}//\overline{\mathcal{T}}} - I)(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} + P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}}).$$

Since  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper subspace, we have  $\overline{P}_{\mathcal{S}}//\overline{\mathcal{T}} = P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}//\overline{\mathcal{T}}}$  by Corollary 3.9 i). Then, the symmetry  $2P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}//\overline{\mathcal{T}}} - I$  acting on  $\mathcal{L}$  is an extension of the symmetry  $2P_{\mathcal{S}}//\mathcal{T} - I$ , which is an invertible operator on  $\mathcal{E}$ . From Eq. (2), it is now clear that  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$  if and only if  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} + P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ .

iii)  $\Rightarrow$  i): We have shown that  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$  is equivalent to  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} + P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ . If we add or subtract  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}}$  and  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} + P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}}$ , we prove this implication.

iii)  $\Leftrightarrow$  iv) Set  $Q := P_{\mathcal{S}}//\mathcal{T}$ . By Corollary 3.9 i), we have  $\overline{\mathcal{S}} \dot{+} \overline{\mathcal{T}} = \mathcal{L}$ . Therefore  $P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}}$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{L}$ , and its inverse is given by

$$(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})^{-1} = \overline{Q} + \overline{Q}^* - I.$$

These facts can be found again in Theorem 2.2. If the operator  $Q + Q^+ - I$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ , then its extension  $\overline{Q} + \overline{Q}^* - I$  to  $\mathcal{L}$  maps  $\mathcal{E}$  onto  $\mathcal{E}$ . Therefore we get  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) = (P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(Q + Q^+ - I)(\mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}$ . To prove the converse, we assume that  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ . Note that  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})^{-1}(\mathcal{E}) = (\overline{Q} + \overline{Q}^* - I)(\mathcal{E}) = (Q + Q^+ - I)(\mathcal{E}) \subseteq \mathcal{E}$ , which implies that  $\mathcal{E} \subseteq (P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E})$ . Therefore  $(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}$ . Now we have  $(Q + Q^+ - I)(\mathcal{E}) = (\overline{Q} + \overline{Q}^* - I)(\mathcal{E}) = (\overline{Q} + \overline{Q}^* - I)(P_{\overline{\mathcal{S}}} - P_{\overline{\mathcal{T}}})(\mathcal{E}) = \mathcal{E}$ .  $\square$

Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a compatible subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$ . By Corollary 3.10 any proper companion of  $\mathcal{S}$  arises as the image of other proper companion by an invertible operator in the Banach algebra  $\mathfrak{P}$  given by the proper operators. In general, this invertible operator does not extend to a unitary operator on  $\mathcal{L}$ . Thus, if  $\mathcal{T}$  and  $\mathcal{T}_1$  are two proper companions of  $\mathcal{S}$ , and  $\mathcal{T}$  is a compatible subspace, the subspace  $\mathcal{T}_1$  may be not compatible. For a concrete example of this situation see Example 5.3. However, we shall give below two sufficient conditions to ensure the compatibility of  $\mathcal{T}_1$ . We first have to introduce the following metric in the set of all proper companions of  $\mathcal{S}$ :

$$d(\mathcal{T}_1, \mathcal{T}_2) = \|P_{\mathcal{T}_1//\mathcal{S}} - P_{\mathcal{T}_2//\mathcal{S}}\|_{\mathfrak{P}},$$

where  $\mathcal{T}_i$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ , are proper companions of  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\|\cdot\|_{\mathfrak{P}}$  is the norm of the algebra  $\mathfrak{P}$ .

**Corollary 4.10.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a proper subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  a proper companion of  $\mathcal{S}$ . Suppose that  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$  are compatible subspaces. The following assertions hold:*

- i) *There exists a constant  $r > 0$ , depending only on  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{T}$ , such that  $\mathcal{T}_1$  is a compatible subspace whenever  $d(\mathcal{T}, \mathcal{T}_1) < r$ .*
- ii) *Let  $G \in \mathfrak{P}^\times$  such that  $G - I$  and  $G^+ - I$  are compact operators on  $\mathcal{E}$ , then  $G(\mathcal{S})$  and  $G(\mathcal{T})$  are compatible subspaces.*

*Proof.* i) In order to prove our assertion, it is enough to show that the map

$$(3) \quad \{ \mathcal{T}_1 \subseteq \mathcal{E} : \mathcal{T}_1 \text{ is a proper companion of } \mathcal{S} \} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E}), \quad \mathcal{T}_1 \mapsto C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}_1}$$

is continuous at  $\mathcal{T}$ , when the first space is endowed with the metric  $d$  defined above and  $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{E})$  is considered with its usual operator norm  $\|\cdot\|$ . In fact, note that if this map is continuous, then there is constant  $r > 0$  depending on  $P_{\mathcal{T}//\mathcal{S}}$ , such that

$$\|C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}_1} - C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}\| \leq 1/\|C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}^{-1}\|,$$

whenever  $d(\mathcal{T}, \mathcal{T}_1) < r$ . This latter inequality above implies that  $C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}_1}$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ , and by Theorem 4.9, this is equivalent to the compatibility of  $\mathcal{S}$  and  $\mathcal{T}_1$ .

Let  $(\mathcal{T}_n)$  be proper companions of the compatible subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  such that  $d(\mathcal{T}_n, \mathcal{T}) \rightarrow 0$ . This means that

$$(4) \quad \|P_{\mathcal{T}_n//\mathcal{S}} - P_{\mathcal{T}//\mathcal{S}}\| \rightarrow 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \|P_{\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{T}_n^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}} - P_{\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}}\| \rightarrow 0.$$

On the other hand, we recall from Corollary 3.10 that there exist operators  $G_n \in \mathfrak{P}^\times$  such that  $G_n(\mathcal{T}) = \mathcal{T}_n$  and  $G(\mathcal{S}) = \mathcal{S}$ . In particular, it follows that  $G_n P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} G_n^{-1} = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}_n}$ . As we have shown in the proof of this corollary,  $G_n$  and  $G_n^+$  are given by

$$G_n = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} + P_{\mathcal{T}_n // \mathcal{S}} P_{\mathcal{T} // \mathcal{S}}$$

and

$$G_n^+ = P_{\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}} + P_{\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}} P_{\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{E} // \mathcal{T}_n^\perp \cap \mathcal{E}}.$$

Using Eq. (4), we see that  $\|G_n - I\| \rightarrow 0$  and  $\|G_n^+ - I\| \rightarrow 0$ . Therefore, we obtain that

$$\|C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}_n} - C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}\| = \|G_n P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} G_n^{-1} + (G_n^+)^{-1} P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}^+ G_n^+ - P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}} - P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}^+\| \rightarrow 0.$$

This completes the proof of the continuity of the map defined in (3).

ii) We set  $\mathcal{T}_1 = G(\mathcal{T})$ ,  $\mathcal{S}_1 = G(\mathcal{S})$  and  $Q = P_{\mathcal{S} // \mathcal{T}}$ . Then we note that

$$\begin{aligned} C_{\mathcal{S}_1, \mathcal{T}_1} &= G Q G^{-1} + (G^+)^{-1} Q^+ G^+ - I \\ &= (G - I) Q G^{-1} + Q (G^{-1} - I) + ((G^+)^{-1} - I) Q^+ G^+ + (G^+)^{-1} Q^+ (G^+ - I) + C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}} \\ &= K + C_{\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{T}}, \end{aligned}$$

for some compact operator  $K$  on  $\mathcal{E}$ . This implies that the essential spectrum  $\sigma_{ess,\mathcal{E}}(C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1})$  of  $C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1}$  coincides with that of  $C_{\mathcal{S},\mathcal{T}}$ . Thus, we get that  $0 \notin \sigma_{ess,\mathcal{E}}(C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1})$ .

Now we recall that the essential spectrum of a symmetrizable operator consists of those numbers in the spectrum over  $\mathcal{E}$  which are not isolated eigenvalues of finite multiplicity (see [32, Thm. 1]). Applying this result to the operator  $C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1}$ , we have that its spectrum can be written as following disjoint union:

$$\sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1}) = \sigma_{ess,\mathcal{E}}(C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1}) \cup \sigma_{p,\mathcal{E}}(C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1}),$$

where  $\sigma_{p,\mathcal{E}}(C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1})$  is the point spectrum of  $C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1}$  on  $\mathcal{E}$  consisting on isolated eigenvalues of finite multiplicity. Since  $\bar{C}_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1}$  is always invertible on  $\mathcal{L}$ , we have that zero does not belong to its point spectrum on  $\mathcal{L}$ . But the point spectrum of a symmetrizable operator coincides with the point spectrum of its extension (see [30, 31]). Therefore,  $0 \notin \sigma_{p,\mathcal{E}}(C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1})$ . Hence  $C_{\mathcal{S}_1,\mathcal{T}_1}$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{E}$ , and thus,  $\mathcal{S}_1$  and  $\mathcal{T}_1$  are compatible subspaces.  $\square$

As it is shown in Example 5.2, there are proper subspaces which are not compatible subspaces. These kind of subspaces must have infinite dimension and infinite codimension. Now we shall see that each proper projection onto a proper subspace which is not compatible gives rise a symmetrizable operator with non real spectrum as an operator in  $\mathcal{E}$ . Up to best of our knowledge, the first example of such kind of symmetrizable operator was constructed in [22]. Other examples were given in [26, 11, 4]. All of them rely on a fundamental result by Krein on the spectrum of Toeplitz matrices (see [29, Thm. 13.2]).

**Corollary 4.11.** *Let  $\mathcal{S}$  be a proper subspace of  $\mathcal{E}$  which is not a compatible subspace. Let  $Q$  be a proper projection with range  $\mathcal{S}$ . Then  $X = VV^+$ , where  $V = 2Q - I$ , is a symmetrizable operator with non real points in the spectrum  $\sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(X)$ .*

*Proof.* If the proper subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  is not compatible, and  $Q$  is a proper projection with range  $\mathcal{S}$ , then by Theorem 4.9 the operator  $Q + Q^+ - I$  is not invertible in  $\mathcal{E}$ . Equivalently, we have that  $V + V^+$  is not invertible, where  $V = 2Q - I$ . Since  $V^2 = I$ , we get that  $-1 \in \sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(VV^+)$ . Now consider the continuous unital monomorphism given by

$$\varphi : \mathfrak{P} \rightarrow \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{L}), \quad \varphi(X) = \bar{X}.$$

Since  $\varphi$  is a unital morphism, it follows that  $\sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(\bar{X}) \subseteq \sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(X)$  (see also Theorem 2.3). Moreover, each connected component  $\Delta$  of  $\sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(X)$  satisfies  $\Delta \cap \sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(\bar{X}) \neq \emptyset$  (see [10, Thm. 4.5]). If we apply this result to  $X = VV^+$ , and we take into account that  $\sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(\bar{X}) \subseteq (0, \infty)$  and  $0 \notin \sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(X)$ , then we find that there is some  $z \in \Delta$  with non trivial imaginary part. Thus, we get that  $\sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(X)$  has non real points. Hence  $\sigma_{\mathcal{E}}(X)$  also has non real points.  $\square$

## 5. EXAMPLES

**5.1. Trace class and Hilbert-Schmidt operators.** In the examples of this subsection, we take  $\mathcal{E} = (\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}), \|\cdot\|_1)$  and  $\mathcal{L} = (\mathcal{B}_2(\mathcal{H}), \|\cdot\|_2)$  the spaces of trace class operators and Hilbert-Schmidt operators on a Hilbert space  $\mathcal{H}$ , respectively. Recall that  $\mathcal{B}_2(\mathcal{H})$  is a Hilbert space with inner product given by  $\langle x, y \rangle = Tr(xy^*)$ , where  $Tr$  denotes the usual trace and  $x, y \in \mathcal{B}_2(\mathcal{H})$ .

**Example 5.1.** A projection  $q$  acting on  $\mathcal{H}$  gives rise to a projection on  $\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$  by left multiplication, i.e.

$$L_q : \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}), \quad L_q(x) = qx.$$

We note that  $\langle L_q(x), y \rangle = \langle x, L_{q^*}(y) \rangle$  for all  $x, y \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$ . Thus,  $L_q$  is proper projection, and  $L_q^+ = L_{q^*}$ . Then, the range of  $L_q$ , that is

$$\mathcal{S} = \{ qx : x \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}) \},$$

is a proper subspace. Now we prove that  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace. Let  $\sigma(L_x)$  denote that spectrum of  $L_x$  in  $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}))$  and  $\sigma(x)$  denote the spectrum of  $x$  in  $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ . If  $\lambda \notin \sigma(x)$ , then there exists  $y \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$  such that  $(x - \lambda)y = y(x - \lambda) = 1$ . This implies  $(L_x - \lambda)L_y = L_y(L_x - \lambda) = I$ , so that  $\sigma(L_x) \subseteq \sigma(x)$ . Using this fact with  $x = q - q^*$ , we see that  $\sigma(L_q - L_{q^*}) \subseteq \sigma(q - q^*) \subseteq i\mathbb{R}$ . Also note that  $(L_q + L_q^+ - I)^2 = I - (L_q - L_q^+)^2$ , then  $\sigma((L_q + L_q^+ - I)^2) = \sigma(I - (L_q - L_q^+)^2) \subseteq [1, \infty]$ . We conclude that  $L_q + L_q^+ - I$  is invertible on  $\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$ , and by Theorem 4.9, it follows that  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace.

**Example 5.2.** Let  $q$  be a projection in  $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ . Denote by  $C_q$  the following operator

$$C_q : \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}), \quad C_q(x) = qxq.$$

Clearly,  $C_q$  is a continuous projection. It is easily seen that  $C_q^+ = C_{q^*}$ , so we have that  $C_q$  is a proper projection and its range

$$\mathcal{S} = \{ qxq : x \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}) \}$$

is a proper subspace. We shall see below that the compatibility of this subspace depends on our election of the projection  $q$ . In particular, we shall prove that  $\mathcal{S}$  is not compatible for infinitely many different choices of  $q$ .

Assume that  $R(q) = \mathcal{K}$  is an infinite dimensional subspace of  $\mathcal{H}$  satisfying  $\mathcal{K} \oplus \mathcal{K} = \mathcal{H}$  (orthogonal sum). We write  $q$  as a matrix with respect to this decomposition of  $\mathcal{H}$  as

$$q = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & z \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Now we prove the following:

- i) If  $z \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{K})$ ,  $\|z\| < 1$ , then  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace.
- ii) If  $z \in Gl(\mathcal{K})$ ,  $z$  normal, then  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace if and only if  $\bar{\lambda}\mu \neq -1$  for all  $\lambda, \mu \in \sigma(z)$ . In particular,  $\mathcal{S}$  is non compatible if  $z$  is a self-adjoint symmetry.

i) We consider the matrix representation of two arbitrary operators  $x, y \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$  with respect to the decomposition  $\mathcal{K} \oplus \mathcal{K} = \mathcal{H}$ :

$$x = \begin{pmatrix} x_{11} & x_{12} \\ x_{21} & x_{22} \end{pmatrix}, \quad y = \begin{pmatrix} y_{11} & y_{12} \\ y_{21} & y_{22} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Then,

$$(5) \quad qxq = \begin{pmatrix} x_{11} + zx_{21} & (x_{11} + zx_{21})z \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

and

$$qxqy^* = \begin{pmatrix} (x_{11} + zx_{21})y_{11}^* + (x_{11} + zx_{21})zy_{12}^* & * \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Thus,  $y$  is orthogonal to  $\mathcal{S}$  if and only if  $Tr((x_{11} + zx_{21})(y_{11}^* + zy_{12}^*)) = 0$  for all  $x \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$ . Therefore, we obtain

$$\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}) = \{ y \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}) : y_{11} + z^*y_{12} = 0 \}.$$

The subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible if and only if  $\mathcal{S} \dot{+} (\mathcal{S}^\perp \cap \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})) = \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$ . This means that any operator  $w \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$  can be written as

$$w = \begin{pmatrix} w_{11} & w_{12} \\ w_{21} & w_{22} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} x_{11} + zx_{21} - z^*y_{12} & (x_{11} + zx_{21})z + y_{12} \\ y_{21} & y_{22} \end{pmatrix}.$$

The only non trivial equations to solve are the following

$$w_{11} = x_{11} + zx_{21} - z^*y_{12}, \quad w_{12} = (x_{11} + zx_{21})z + y_{12}.$$

Put  $a = x_{11} + zx_{21}$ ,  $b = y_{12}$ ,  $x = w_{11}$  and  $y = w_{12}$ . Then  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace if and only if

$$x = a - z^*b, \quad y = az + b$$

have a solution  $a, b \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K})$  for each pair  $x, y \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K})$ . By the first equation,  $b = y - az$ , so we have to solve  $x + z^*y = a + zaz^* = (I + Ad_z)(a)$ , where  $Ad_z : \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K}) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K})$  is defined by  $Ad_z(x) = z^*xz$ . It is not difficult to see that  $\|Ad_z\| = \|z\|^2$ . Since we suppose  $\|z\| < 1$ , then we have  $0 \notin \sigma_{\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K})}(I + Ad_z)$ . Therefore,  $I + Ad_z$  is surjective, and  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace.

ii) We now assume that  $z$  is an invertible normal operator. In the preceding paragraph, we can rewrite the operator  $I + Ad_z$  using the left and right multiplication operators on  $\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K})$  given by  $L_{z^*}(x) = z^*x$  and  $R_{-z}(x) = -xz$ . Thus, we have  $I + Ad_z = L_{z^*}(L_{(z^*)^{-1}} - R_{-z})$ . Since  $L_{z^*}$  is invertible, the equation  $x + z^*y = (I + Ad_z)(a)$  has a solution if and only if the operator  $L_{(z^*)^{-1}} - R_{-z} : \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K}) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K})$  is surjective.

Among several equivalent conditions, it was proved in [25, Thm. 3.2] that the operator

$$\tau_1 : \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K}) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K}), \quad \tau_1(x) = cx - xd,$$

is surjective if and only if  $\sigma_r(c) \cap \sigma_l(d) = \emptyset$ . Here  $\sigma_r(c)$  is the right spectrum of  $c$  and  $\sigma_l(d)$  is the left spectrum of  $d$ . Applying this result to our situation, where  $c = (z^*)^{-1}$  and  $d = -z$ , and using that the right and left spectra of a normal operator coincide with its usual spectrum, we find that  $L_{(z^*)^{-1}} - R_{-z}$  is surjective when  $\sigma((z^*)^{-1}) \cap \sigma(-z) = \emptyset$ . This latter condition can be also written as  $\bar{\lambda}\mu \neq -1$  for all  $\lambda, \mu \in \sigma(z)$ .

**Example 5.3.** From Eq. (5) in the previous example, we know that

$$\mathcal{S} = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & az \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} : a \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K}) \right\}.$$

A proper companion of the subspace  $\mathcal{S}$  is given by

$$\mathcal{T} = N(C_q) = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} -za & b \\ a & c \end{pmatrix} : a, b, c \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K}) \right\}.$$

We shall prove the following facts:

- i) The subspace  $\mathcal{T}$  is compatible for all  $z \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{K})$ .
  - ii) Let  $z \in Gl(\mathcal{K})$  be a normal operator such that  $\mathcal{S}$  is a compatible subspace. Then there exists an operator  $G \in \mathfrak{P}^\times$  such that  $G(\mathcal{T}) = \mathcal{T}$  and  $G(\mathcal{S})$  is a non compatible proper companion of  $\mathcal{T}$ .
- i) The orthogonal supplement of  $\mathcal{T}$  in  $\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$  can be computed:

$$\mathcal{T}^\perp \cap \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}) = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} a & 0 \\ z^*a & 0 \end{pmatrix} : a \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K}) \right\}.$$

Then  $\mathcal{T}$  is a compatible subspace if and only if it is possible to solve in  $\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$  the following equation:

$$\begin{pmatrix} w_{11} & w_{12} \\ w_{21} & w_{22} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a_0 & 0 \\ z^*a_0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} -za_1 & b_1 \\ a_1 & c_1 \end{pmatrix},$$

for every  $w_{ij} \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K})$ ,  $i, j = 1, 2$ . The only non trivial equations to solve are

$$w_{11} = a_0 - za_1, \quad w_{21} = z^*a_0 + a_1,$$

which always have solutions given by  $a_1 = w_{21} - z^*a_0$  and  $a_0 = (1 + zz^*)^{-1}(w_{11} + zw_{21})$ .

ii) Suppose that  $x \in Gl(\mathcal{H})$  has the matrix representation

$$x = \begin{pmatrix} z & 0 \\ 0 & t \end{pmatrix},$$

where  $t$  is a self-adjoint symmetry on  $\mathcal{K}$ . We take  $G = R_x : \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H}) \rightarrow \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$ ,  $G(y) = yx$ . Clearly,  $G$  is a proper operator,  $G^+ = R_{x^*}$ , and both  $G$  and  $G^+$  are invertible on  $\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$ . Thus, we get  $G \in \mathfrak{P}^\times$ .

We observe that

$$\begin{pmatrix} -za & b \\ a & c \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} z & 0 \\ 0 & t \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -zaz & bt \\ az & ct \end{pmatrix},$$

hence, we get  $G(\mathcal{T}) \subseteq \mathcal{T}$ . Similarly,  $G^{-1}(\mathcal{T}) \subseteq \mathcal{T}$ , so we obtain  $G(\mathcal{T}) = \mathcal{T}$ . According to Proposition 3.10, the subspace

$$G(\mathcal{S}) = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} b & bt \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} : b \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{K}) \right\}$$

is a proper companion of  $\mathcal{T}$ . By the item ii) of Example 5.2 we get that  $G(\mathcal{S})$  is not compatible.

**5.2. Proper invertible operators.** Proper operators have three different notions of inverses (see Remark 2.4). In this subsection we study proper invertible operators.

**Example 5.4.** Invertible operators in  $\mathcal{E}$  which are isometric for the  $\mathcal{L}$  inner product. We shall call them *unitarizable operators*. In the special case when  $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{H}$  is a Hilbert space, these were studied in [4] and [3]. They can be obtained, for instance, as exponentials  $A = e^{iX}$ , with  $X$  a symmetrizable operator. But not every  $\mathcal{L}$ -isometric operator is an exponential (see [4, Example 4.9]).

**Example 5.5.** A special case of the above example occurs if we take  $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$  and  $\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{B}_2(\mathcal{H})$ . Let  $u, v$  be unitary operators in  $\mathcal{H}$ , and denote by  $x^t$  the transpose of  $x \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$  with respect to a given orthonormal basis of  $\mathcal{H}$ . Then the operators

$$\mu_{u,v}, \theta_{u,v} \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})), \quad \mu_{u,v}(x) = uxv \text{ and } \theta_{u,v}(x) = ux^tv$$

are isometric for the norms  $\|\cdot\|_p$  for any  $1 \leq p \leq \infty$  (for  $p \neq 2$ , any isometry for the  $p$  norm is of this type [7]). Thus  $\mu_{u,v}$  and  $\theta_{u,v}$  are invertible in  $\mathfrak{P}$  (in fact they are unitarizable). If one replaces the unitaries  $u, v$  by invertible operators  $g, h$  in  $\mathcal{H}$ , then  $\mu_{g,h}$  and  $\theta_{g,h}$  are proper and invertible operators in  $\mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})$  with inverses  $\mu_{g^{-1},h^{-1}}$  and  $\theta_{g^{-1},h^{-1}}$  which are also proper operators.

**Example 5.6.** Let  $\mathcal{E} = H_0^1(\Omega)$  be the Sobolev space of the domain  $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ , i.e. the completion of  $C_0^\infty(\Omega)$  with the inner product norm

$$\|f\|_1 = \int_{\Omega} |f(x)|^2 + |(\nabla f)(x)|^2 dx.$$

Let  $\mathcal{L} = L^2(\Omega, dx)$  be the Lebesgue space of square-integrable functions endowed with its usual inner product. Pick a function  $\varphi$ , which is  $C^1$  in  $\Omega$ , continuous and bounded in  $\bar{\Omega}$  and satisfies  $|\varphi(x)| \geq r > 0$  for  $x \in \Omega$ . Then the multiplication operator

$$M_\varphi f = \varphi f,$$

preserves  $\mathcal{E}$ . Its adjoint in  $\mathcal{L}$ , which is  $M_{\bar{\varphi}}$ , also preserves  $\mathcal{E}$ . Thus  $M_\varphi$  is a proper operator. Its inverse  $M_{\frac{1}{\varphi}}$  also belongs to  $\mathfrak{P}$ . Thus,  $M_\varphi \in \mathfrak{P}^\times$ . Moreover, apparently

$$\sigma_{\mathcal{L}}(M_\varphi) = \sigma_E(M_\varphi) = \sigma_{\mathfrak{P}}(M_\varphi) = \varphi(\bar{\Omega}).$$

There is another situation in which the three spectra coincide.

**Proposition 5.7.** *Let  $G \in \mathfrak{P}$  such that  $G - I$  and  $G^+ - I$  are compact operators on  $\mathcal{E}$ . Assume that its extension  $\bar{G}$  is invertible in  $\mathcal{L}$ , then  $G \in \mathfrak{P}^\times$ .*

*Proof.* The set of invertible operators  $G$  in  $\mathcal{E}$  such that  $G - I$  is compact form a closed subgroup of the invertible group of  $\mathcal{E}$  (it is sometimes called the Fredholm group of  $\mathcal{E}$ ). Let  $G = I + K$  for some  $K$  compact in  $\mathcal{E}$ . The operator  $K$  is proper, and therefore  $\bar{K}$  is compact in  $\mathcal{L}$ , with the same (non nil) eigenvalues as  $K$ . Furthermore, the multiplicity of each nonzero eigenvalue is the same over  $\mathcal{E}$  and  $\mathcal{L}$  (see Theorem 2.3). Thus 0 does not belong to the spectrum of  $G$ . Since  $K^+ = \bar{K}^*|_{\mathcal{E}}$  is also compact on  $\mathcal{E}$ ,  $\bar{K}^*$  is compact on  $\mathcal{L}$ , and its eigenvalues are the conjugates of the eigenvalues of  $K$ . It follows that  $G^+ = I + K^+$  has trivial kernel, and thus, by the Fredholm alternative, it is invertible in  $\mathcal{E}$ .  $\square$

**Remark 5.8.** Unitarizable operators preserve compatible subspaces: if  $G$  is unitarizable and  $\mathcal{S}$  is compatible, then  $G(\mathcal{S})$  is also compatible. This allows to produce more examples of proper subspaces which are not compatible. Namely, if  $\mathcal{S}$  is a proper non compatible subspace and  $G$  is unitarizable, then  $G(\mathcal{S})$  is a proper non compatible subspace.

**Example 5.9.** Consider again Example 5.2 for some projection  $q$  such that  $\mathcal{S}$  is non compatible. Let  $u, v$  be unitary operators in  $\mathcal{H}$ . Then by the above remark, if

$$\mathcal{S} = \{qxq : x \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})\},$$

then  $\mu_{u,v}(\mathcal{S})$  is proper but non compatible. Explicitly, this subspace is the range of the idempotent  $\mu_{u,v}C_q\mu_{u^*,v^*}$ . Then

$$\mu_{u,v}(\mathcal{S}) = \{(uqu^*)x(vqv^*) : x \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})\}.$$

Thus the subspaces  $\mathcal{S}_{q_1, q_2} = \{q_1 x q_2 : x \in \mathcal{B}_1(\mathcal{H})\}$  are proper and non compatible, if  $q_i$  are chosen in the unitary orbit of  $q$ .

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(ESTEBAN ANDRUCHOW) Instituto de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional de Gral. Sarmiento, J.M. Gutierrez 1150, (1613) Los Polvorines, Argentina and Instituto Argentino de Matemática, ‘Alberto P. Calderón’, CONICET, Saavedra 15 3er. piso, (1083) Buenos Aires, Argentina.

e-mail: eandruch@ungs.edu.ar

(EDUARDO CHIUMIENTO) Departamento de de Matemática, FCE-UNLP, Calles 50 y 115, (1900) La Plata, Argentina and Instituto Argentino de Matemática, ‘Alberto P. Calderón’, CONICET, Saavedra 15 3er. piso, (1083) Buenos Aires, Argentina.

e-mail: eduardo@mate.unlp.edu.ar

(MARÍA EUGENIA DI IORIO Y LUCERO) Instituto de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional de Gral. Sarmiento, J.M. Gutierrez 1150, (1613) Los Polvorines, Argentina and Instituto Argentino de Matemática, ‘Alberto P. Calderón’, CONICET, Saavedra 15 3er. piso, (1083) Buenos Aires, Argentina.

e-mail: mdiiorio@ungs.edu.ar