SYMMETRIC GROUND STATES SOLUTIONS OF M-COUPLED NONLINEAR SCHröDINGER EQUATIONS

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Abstract. We prove the existence of radial and radially decreasing ground states of an m-coupled nonlinear Schrödinger equation with a general nonlinearity.

1. Introduction

The following Cauchy problem of an m-coupled nonlinear Schrödinger equations:

\[
\begin{aligned}
&i \partial_t \Phi_1 + \Delta \Phi_1 + g_1(|x|, |\Phi_1|^2, \ldots, |\Phi_m|^2) \Phi_1 = 0, \\
&\vdots \\
&i \partial_t \Phi_m + \Delta \Phi_m + g_m(|x|, |\Phi_1|^2, \ldots, |\Phi_m|^2) \Phi_m = 0,
\end{aligned}
\]

\[\Phi_i(0, x) = \Phi_i^0(x) \quad \text{for } 1 \leq i \leq m.\]

For \(1 \leq i \leq m\) : \(\Phi_i^0 : \mathbb{R}^N \to \mathbb{C}\) and \(g_i : \mathbb{R}_+^+ \times \mathbb{R}_+^m \to \mathbb{R}\), \(\Phi_i : \mathbb{R}_+ \times \mathbb{R}^N \to \mathbb{C}\), has numerous applications in physical problems. It appears in the study of spatial solitons in nonlinear wave-guides [30], the theory of Bose-Einstein condensates [12], interactions of m-wave packets [5], optical pulse propagation in birefringent fibers [25, 26], wavelength division multiplexed optical systems. Physically, the solution \(\Phi_i\) is the \(i\)th component of the beam in Kerr-like photorefractive media [1].

In the most relevant cases, it is possible to write (1.1) in a vectorial form as follows:

\[
\begin{aligned}
&i \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial t} = E'(\Phi) \\
&\Phi(0, x) = \Phi^0 = (\Phi_1^0, \ldots, \Phi_m^0)
\end{aligned}
\]

where

\[E(\Phi) = \frac{1}{2} \| \nabla \Phi \|^2_2 - \int G(|x|, \Phi_1, \ldots, \Phi_m) \, dx.\]

\(G : (0, \infty) \times \mathbb{R}^m \to \mathbb{R}\) satisfies the following system:

\[
\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial G}{\partial s_1} &= g_1(|x|, u_1^2, \ldots, u_m^2) u_1, \\
\vdots \\
\frac{\partial G}{\partial s_m} &= g_m(|x|, u_1^2, \ldots, u_m^2) u_m.
\end{aligned}
\]
When $m = 1$, $G$ can be easily given by the explicit expression: $G(r, s) = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^s g(r, t) \, dt$.

In the general case:

$$G(r, u_1, \ldots, u_m) = \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{u_1^2} g_1(r, u_2^2, \ldots, u_m^2) \, dt_1 + K_1(u_2, \ldots, u_m)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{u_1^2} g_i(r, u_1^2, \ldots, t_i, \ldots, u_m^2) \, dt_i + K_i(u_1, \ldots, u_{i-1}, u_{i+1}, \ldots, u_m)$$

$$= \ldots$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \int_0^{u_m^2} g_m(r, u_1^2, \ldots, t) \, dt + K_m(u_1, \ldots, u_{m-1}).$$

(1.5)

A soliton or standing wave of (1.1) is a solution of the form: $\Phi(t, x) = (\Phi_1(t, x), \ldots, \Phi_m(t, x))$, where for $1 \leq j \leq m$: $\Phi_j(t, x) = u_j(x) e^{-i\lambda_j t}$, $\lambda_j$ are real numbers. Therefore $U = (u_1, \ldots, u_m)$ is a solution of the following $m \times m$ elliptic eigenvalue problem:

$$\begin{cases} 
\Delta u_1 + \lambda_1 u_1 + g_1(|x|, u_1^2, \ldots, u_m^2) u_1 = 0, \\
\vdots \\
\Delta u_m + \lambda_m u_m + g_m(|x|, u_1^2, \ldots, u_m^2) u_m = 0.
\end{cases}$$

(1.6)

Among all the standing waves, let us mention the ground states which correspond to the least energy solutions $U$ of (1.6), defined by:

$$E(U) = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^m |\nabla u_i|^2 - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx$$

under constraints

$$S_c = \left\{ U = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \times \ldots \times H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) : \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} u_i^2 = c_i \right\}$$

(1.7)

where $c_i > 0$ are $m$ prescribed numbers.

Ground states are solutions of the minimization problem:

$$E(U) = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^m |\nabla u_i|^2 - \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx$$

(1.8)

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(1.9)

For given $c_i > 0$, $M_c = \inf_{U \in S_c} E(U)$.

Profiles of stable electromagnetic waves traveling along a medium are given by (1.9). Note that in (1.7), $|x|$ is the position relative to the optical axis, $G$ is related to the index of refraction of the medium. In the most relevant cases, $G$ has jumps at interfaces between layers of different media (core and claddings). Therefore, $G$ is not continuous with respect to the first variable in many practical cases.

The existence of ground states has been investigated by many authors following different methods. In [2, 14–17, 21, 27, 31–34] by numerical arguments; in [3, 4, 22–24, 28], the mathematical analysis
using the variational approach has been pursued to prove the existence of ground states. These works addressed the special case \( m = 2 \) and

\[
\begin{align*}
\begin{cases}
g_1(|x|, u_1^2, u_2^2) &= (|u_1|^{2p-2} + \beta |u_1|^{p-2}|u_2|^p), \\
g_2(|x|, u_1^2, u_2^2) &= (|u_2|^{2p-2} + \beta |u_2|^{p-2}|u_1|^p).
\end{cases}
\end{align*}
\]

This is a very interesting case where we can easily determine \( G \), indeed using (1.5) it is obvious that

\[
G(r, s_1, s_2) = \frac{1}{2p} s_1^{2p} + \frac{\beta}{p} s_1^p s_2^p + K_1(u_1) = \frac{1}{2p} s_2^{2p} + \frac{\beta}{p} s_1^p s_2^p + K_2(u_1). 
\]

A straightforward computation implies:

\[
G(r, s_1, s_2) = \frac{1}{2p} s_1^{2p} + \frac{\beta}{p} s_1^p s_2^p.
\]

In [3, 24], not only the existence of ground states has been established, for (1.1) with \( g_i \) given by (1.10), but also the orbital stability has been discussed. Of course, we are interested in the orbital stability of ground states of (1.1) with general non-linearities. However, an inescapable step consists in the establishment of suitable assumptions of \( g_i \) under which (1.1) admits a unique solution. This is a very challenging open question under investigation.

Following a self-contained approach, we establish the existence of radial and radially decreasing ground states [Theorem 3.1]. Our main assumptions are that \( G \) satisfies a growth condition and it is a supermodular function, that is to say:

\[
G(y + he_i + ke_j) + G(y) \geq G(r, y + he_i) + G(r, y + ke_j)
\]

(1.11)

\[
G(r_0, y + he_i) + G(r_0, y) \leq G(r_1, y) + G(r_1, y + he_i)
\]

(1.12)

for every \( i \neq j, h, k > 0; y = (y_1, \ldots, y_m) \) and \( e_i \) denotes the \( i \)th standard basis vector in \( \mathbb{R}^m, r > 0 \) and \( 0 < r_0 < r_1 \).

These inequalities are connected to the cooperativity of (1.6). When \( \lambda_i \equiv 0 \), W.C. Troy proved in [35] the necessity of this hypothesis. Contrary to previous works, we will not use minimization under the so-called Nehari Manifold; neither results involving the Palais-Smale condition. Instead, we take advantage of some recent results of symmetrization inequalities. More precisely, in [13], it has been proved that if \( G \) satisfies (1.11) and (1.12), then:

\[
\int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx \leq \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G(|x|, u_1^*(x), \ldots, u_m^*(x)) \, dx.
\]

(1.13)

Here \( u^* \) denotes the Schwarz symmetrization of a function \( u \) vanishing at infinity. It is well known that the norm of the gradient does not increase under Schwarz symmetrization in \( L^2 \). Moreover rearrangements preserve the \( L^2 \) norm:

\[
\int |\nabla u^*|^2 \leq \int |\nabla u|^2
\]

\[
\int u^2 = \int (u^*)^2.
\]
Finally let us point out that, as mentioned in [11], in many valuable papers the study of (1.9) with \( m = 1 \) relied on the fact that one could look for minima in the class of radial functions using rearrangement inequalities. The compact embedding of such functions in \( L^p \) enables us to conclude [6–10, 36, 37]. H. Brezis and E.H. Lieb [11] concluded this remark saying “It is not known whether the minimum action lies in the class of radial solutions for \( m > 1 \) because rearrangement inequalities are not applicable.” In this paper we build on a method enabling us to use such vectorial inequalities to solve (1.9).

Thanks to these inequalities, we first prove that: Given \( c_1, \ldots, c_m > 0 \):

1. (1.9) always admits a minimizing sequence \( U_n = (u_{n,1}, \ldots, u_{n,m}) \) such that each component \( u_{n,i} \) is radial and radially decreasing.

2. Noticing that any minimizing sequence of (1.9) is bounded, we will prove that if \( U_n = U_n^* \rightharpoonup U \) then

\[
\lim_{n \to +\infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G(|x|, u_{n,1}, \ldots, u_{n,m}) \, dx = \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx
\]

which implies that \( U = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \) is such that \( E(U) \leq M_c \).

3. To conclude, it is sufficient to prove that \( U \in S_c \).

This paper contains four more sections. In the next section, we introduce the notation and definitions. In the third section, we state our main result and give a detailed proof. The fourth part is dedicated to a variant of our approach. The last section is dedicated to some challenging open problems.

2. Preliminaries and Notation

- In the sequel, \( m, N \in \mathbb{N}^* \).
- For \( 1 \leq p < \infty \), \( | \cdot |_p \) denotes the norm in \( L^p(\mathbb{R}^N) \).
- If \( V = (v_1, \ldots, v_m) \) with \( v_i \in L^2(\mathbb{R}^N) \) : \( \|V\|_2^2 = |v_1|^2 + \ldots + |v_m|^2 \).
- If \( V = (v_1, \ldots, v_m) \) with \( v_i \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \) : \( \|\nabla V\|_2^2 = |\nabla v_1|^2 + \ldots + |\nabla v_m|^2 \).
- \( [H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)]^m = H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \times \ldots \times H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \).
- All statements about measurability refer to the Lebesgue measure, \( \mu \), on \( \mathbb{R}^N \) or \( (0, \infty) \).
- When no domain of integration is indicated, the integral extends over \( \mathbb{R}^N \).
- \( M(\mathbb{R}^N) \) is the set of measurable functions on \( \mathbb{R}^N \).
- \( F(\mathbb{R}^N) \) is the set of symmetrizable functions:

\[
\{ u \in M(\mathbb{R}^N) : u \geq 0 \text{ and } \mu \{ x \in \mathbb{R}^N : u(x) > t \} < \infty \ \forall t > 0 \}.
\]

- For \( u \in F(\mathbb{R}^N) \), \( u^* \) denotes the Schwarz symmetrization of \( u \). For more details, see [13].
- We say that \( u \) is Schwarz symmetric if \( u \equiv u^* \).
SYMMETRIC GROUND STATES SOLUTIONS OF M-COUPLED NONLINEAR SCHRÖDINGER EQUATIONS

• For $V \in F(\mathbb{R}^N) \times \ldots \times F(\mathbb{R}^N)$, $V$ is Schwarz symmetric if each of its components has its property.

• For the convenience of the reader, let us recall some important symmetrization inequalities [18]:

\begin{align}
\forall u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) : |\nabla u|^2_2 &= \left| \nabla |u|^2_2 \right| \\
\forall u \in L^2(\mathbb{R}^N) : |u|^2_2 &= |u^*|^2.
\end{align}

Definition 2.1. A function $G : (0, \infty) \times \mathbb{R}^m \to \mathbb{R}$ is an $m$-Carathéodory function if

(1) $G(\cdot, s_1, \ldots, s_m) : (0, \infty) \to \mathbb{R}$ is measurable on $(0, \infty) \setminus \Gamma$, where $\Gamma$ is a subset of $(0, \infty)$ having one dimensional measure zero, for all $s_1, \ldots, s_m \geq 0$,

(2) For all $1 \leq n \leq m$, every $(m - 1)$ tuple $s_i \geq 0$ and $r \in (0, \infty) \setminus \Gamma$, the function:

\begin{align*}
\mathbb{R} &\to \mathbb{R} \\
s_n &\mapsto G(r, s_n, \ldots)
\end{align*}

is continuous on $\mathbb{R}$.

This definition establishes the standard context for handling the measurability of the composite functions $G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x))$, $u_i \in M(\mathbb{R}^N)$. An important property of an $m$-Carathéodory function is that $x \mapsto G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x))$ is measurable on $\mathbb{R}^N$ for every $u_1, \ldots, u_m \in M(\mathbb{R}^N)$.

• For the convenience of the reader, let us also recall that for an $m$-Carathéodory function satisfying (1.11) and (1.12), we have (1.13); [13].

• For $r > 0 : B(0, r) = \{ x \in \mathbb{R}^N : |x| < r \}$, $|x|$ is the euclidean norm in $\mathbb{R}^N$, there is a constant $V_N$ such that $\mu(B(0, r)) = V_N r^N$ for all $r > 0$.

3. Main result

Theorem 3.1. Let $G : (0, \infty) \times \mathbb{R}^m \to \mathbb{R}$ be such that:

(G0) $G$ is an $m$-Carathéodory function such that

$G(r, s_1, \ldots, s_m) \leq G(r, |s_1|, \ldots, |s_m|)$

for every $r > 0$ and $s_1, \ldots, s_m \in \mathbb{R}$,

(G1) For all $r > 0; s_1, \ldots, s_m \geq 0$, we have

$0 \leq G(r, s_1, \ldots, s_m) \leq K \left( |s|^2 + \sum_{i=1}^m s_i^{\ell_i + 2} \right) : s = (s_1, \ldots, s_m); K > 0$ and $0 < \ell_i < \frac{4}{N},$

(G2) $G$ satisfies (1.11) and (1.12),
that any minimizing sequence of (1.9) is bounded in $H^1$.

**Remark 3.3.**

Suppose additionally that $M_c < 0$, then:

$\forall c_1, \ldots, c_m > 0$ there exist $V_c = (v_1^{c_1}, \ldots, v_m^{c_m})$ such that $V_c \in S_c$ and $E(V_c) = M_c$.

The proof of the result is divided in three parts: (step 1 → step 3):

**Lemma 3.2.** Suppose that $G$ satisfies (G0) and (G1), then all the minimizing sequences of (1.9) are bounded in $[H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)]^m$.

**Proof:** Let $U = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \in S_c$, (G0) and (G1) imply that

$$
\int G(|x|, U(x)) \, dx \leq Kc + K \int \sum_{i=1}^{m} |u_i(x)|^{\ell_i+2} \, dx.
$$

For $1 \leq i \leq m$, the Gagliardo-Nirenberg inequality tells us that:

$$
|u_i|_{\ell_i+2} \leq C|u_i|_2^{1-\sigma_i} \cdot |\nabla u_i|_2^{\sigma_i}; \sigma_i = \frac{N \ell_i}{2 \ell_i + 2}.
$$

Now let $\varepsilon > 0, p_i = \frac{1}{N\ell_i}, q_i$ is such that $\frac{1}{p_i} + \frac{1}{q_i} = 1$. Applying Young’s inequality, we obtain:

$$
|u_i|_{\ell_i+2} \leq \left\{ \frac{C_i^{\ell_i+2}}{\varepsilon} |u_i|_2^{(1-\sigma_i)(\ell_i+2)} \right\}^{q_i} \frac{1}{q_i} + \frac{N \ell_i}{4} \left\{ \varepsilon^{N\ell_i} |\nabla u_i|_2^2 \right\}.
$$

Consequently:

$$
E(U) \geq \left\{ \frac{1}{2} - Km \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{N \ell_i}{4} \varepsilon^{N\ell_i} \right\} \|\nabla U\|^2_2 - Kc - \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{1}{q_i} C_i^{\ell_i+2} e^{(1-\sigma_i)(\ell_i+2)/2}.
$$

Taking $\varepsilon$ such that $\frac{1}{2} - Km \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{N \ell_i}{4} \varepsilon^{N\ell_i} \geq 0$, we prove that $E$ is bounded from below. To show that any minimizing sequence of (1.9) is bounded in $[H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)]^m$, it is enough to take the latter inequality with the strict sign.

**Remark 3.3.**

- The lemma remains true if we replace (G1) by the more general growth condition:

$$
G(r, s_1, \ldots, s_m) \leq K \left( |s|^2 + \sum_{k=0}^{a} (\xi_{1,k}s_1 + \ldots + \xi_{m,k}s_m)^{\ell_k+2} \right),
$$

for all $r > 0$ and $s_1, \ldots, s_m \geq 0$, where $K$ is a positive constant, $\alpha \in \mathbb{N}^*$ and for $0 \leq k \leq \alpha, 0 < \ell_k < \frac{4}{N}$. For $0 \leq k \leq \alpha, 1 \leq j \leq m : \xi_{j,k}$ can take arbitrarily the value 0 or 1.
The growth condition stated in our lemma is optimal, in the sense that if \( \ell > \frac{4}{N} \), we can prove that \( M_c = -\infty \).

Under the hypotheses of Theorem 3.1, we will first prove that:

**Step 1:**

(3.1) For any \( \mathcal{U} = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \in [H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)]^m : E(\mathcal{U}) \geq E(\mathcal{U}^*) \).

This inequality enables us to assert that for any \( m \)-tuple \( c_1, \ldots, c_m > 0 \), (1.9) always admits a Schwarz symmetric minimizing sequence. For such minimizing sequence, we have the following compactness property:

**Step 2:** If \( \mathcal{U}_n = \mathcal{U}_n^* \rightharpoonup \mathcal{U} \) in \([H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)]^m : E[\mathcal{U}] \leq \liminf E(\mathcal{U}_n) \).

Finally we will show that this \( \mathcal{U} \) belongs to the constraint when \( M_c < 0 \).

**Step 1:**

**Lemma 3.4.** Suppose that \( G \) satisfies (G0), (G1) and (G2). If \( (\mathcal{U}_n) \) is a minimizing sequence of (1.9), (\[\mathcal{U}_n^*\]) also has this property.

**Proof:** Let \( \mathcal{U} = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \in [H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)]^m \). First note that for any \( u_i \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \) and \( |\nabla u_i|_2 = |\nabla u_i|^2 \), thus using (G0); \( E(\mathcal{U}) = E(|u_1|, \ldots, |u_m|) \leq E(u_1, \ldots, u_m) \).

To achieve the proof, it is sufficient to show that for any \( V = (v_1, \ldots, v_m) \) with \( v_i \geq 0 \), \( E(v_1^*, \ldots, v_m^*) \leq E(v_1, \ldots, v_m) \), which follows immediately from (2.1) and (1.13). Note finally that by (2.2): if \( \int v_i^2 = c_i \) then \( \int (v_i^*)^2 = c_i \), this completes the proof.

**From now on:**

(3.2) \( \mathcal{U}_n = (u_{n,1}, \ldots, u_{n,m}) \) is a minimizing sequence of (1.9), which is Schwarz symmetric.

By Lemma 3.2 it is bounded in \([H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)]^m \). We know that (up to a subsequence) there exists \( \mathcal{U} = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \) such that

(3.3) \( u_{n,j} \rightharpoonup u_j \) \( \forall 1 \leq j \leq m \).

**Step 2:**

**Lemma 3.5.** Let \( G \) be a function satisfying (G0), (G1) and (G3). \( (\mathcal{U}_n) \) be a minimizing sequence satisfying (3.2) and (3.3) then \( E(\mathcal{U}) \leq \liminf E(\mathcal{U}_n) \).

**Proof:** \( \forall 1 \leq i \leq m \), we know that \( |\nabla u_i|_2^2 \leq |\nabla u_{n,i}|_2^2 \). Let us prove that

\[
\lim_{n \to +\infty} \int G(|x|, u_{n,1}(x), \ldots, u_{n,m}(x)) \, dx = \int G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx.
\]
Let $R > 0$, we first show that
\[
\lim_{n \to +\infty} \int_{|x| \leq R} G(|x|, u_{n,1}(x), \ldots, u_{n,m}(x)) \, dx = \int_{|x| \leq R} G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx.
\]
For $1 \leq i \leq m$, $(u_{n,i})$ converges weakly to $u_i$ in $H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$, it then converges to $u_i$ in $L^{\ell_i+2}(|x| \leq R)$. Therefore, up to a subsequence (which we also denote by $u_{n,i}$), $u_{n,i} \to u_i$ for almost every $|x| \leq R$, $|u_{n,i}| < h_i$ where $h_i \in L^{\ell_i+2}(|x| \leq R)$.

Now using (G1):
\[
G(|x|, u_{n,1}(x), \ldots, u_{n,m}(x)) \leq K \left( \sum_{i=1}^m h_i^2(x) + \sum_{i=1}^m h_i^{\ell_i+2}(x) \right).
\]
All functions involved in this sum are in $L^1(|x| \leq R)$. By the dominated convergence theorem, it follows that
\[
\lim_{n \to +\infty} \int_{|x| \leq R} G(|x|, u_{n,1}(x), \ldots, u_{n,m}(x)) \, dx = \int_{|x| \leq R} G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx.
\]
Now fix $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $1 \leq i \leq n$. Since $u_{n,i}$ is Schwarz symmetric:
\[
V_N|x|^N u_{n,i}^2(x) \leq \int_{|y| \leq |x|} u_{n,i}^2(y) \, dy \leq c_i.
\]
Consequently $u_{n,i}(x) \leq \frac{c_i^{1/2}}{V_N^{i/2}|x|^{N/2}} \leq \frac{c_i^{1/2}}{R^{N/2}}$ for all $|x| > R$.

Let $\varepsilon > 0$, choose $R$ large enough, (G3) implies that
\[
\int_{|x| > R} G(|x|, u_{n,1}(x), \ldots, u_{n,m}(x)) \, dx \leq \varepsilon \sum_{i=1}^m \int_{|x| > R} u_{n,i}^2(x) \, dx \leq \varepsilon c,
\]
where $c = \sum_{i=1}^m c_i$.

Proving that:
\[
\lim_{R \to \infty} \lim_{n \to \infty} \int_{|x| > R} G(|x|, u_{n,1}(x), \ldots, u_{n,m}(x)) \, dx = 0.
\]

The two properties we need to prove (3.5) are: $\int u_{n,i}^2(x) \leq c_i$ and $(u_{n,i})$ is Schwarz symmetric $\forall 1 \leq i \leq m$.

Clearly $\int u_i^2 \leq c_i$. The second property is inherited by $u_i$ almost everywhere. Indeed for $R > 0$, there exists $n_k(R)$ such that $(u_{n_k,i})$ converges to $u_i$ almost everywhere and we obtain:
\[
\lim_{R \to \infty} \int_{|x| > R} G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx = 0.
\]
Consequently
\[
\lim_{n \to \infty} \int G(|x|, u_{n,1}(x), \ldots, u_{n,m}(x)) \, dx = \int G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)) \, dx.
\]

Thanks to our lemmas, we know that \( E(\mathcal{U}) \leq M_c \); (\( \mathcal{U} = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \) is given by (3.3)):
\[
(3.6) \quad |u_i|^2 \leq c_i \quad \forall 1 \leq i \leq m.
\]

**Step 3:** To conclude that the infimum is achieved, we have to prove that \( \mathcal{U} \in S_c \). Suppose that \( M_c < 0 \), set \( t_i = \frac{c_i^{1/2}}{|u_i|^2} \) by (3.6):
\[
(3.7) \quad t_i \geq 1 \text{ and } (t_1 u_1, \ldots, t_m u_m) \in S_c \quad t_{\text{max}} = \max_{1 \leq i \leq m} t_i \geq 1.
\]

By (G4):
\[
E(t_1 u_1, \ldots, t_m u_m) \leq t_{\text{max}}^2 E(u_1, \ldots, u_m).
\]

Set \( M_c \leq E(t_1 u_1, \ldots, t_m u_m) \leq t_{\text{max}}^2 E(u_1, \ldots, u_m) \leq t_{\text{max}}^2 M_c \),

since \( t_i \geq 1 \) by Lemma 3.5, it follows that \( M_c \leq t_{\text{max}}^2 M_c \Rightarrow t_{\text{max}}^2 \leq 1 \), hence \( t_i = 1 \) for any \( 1 \leq i \leq m \). This ends the proof of Theorem 3.1.

**On the hypothesis \( M_c < 0 \):**

Inspired by [29] and closely following the approach therein, we prove that if \( G \) satisfies:

\[ (G5) \text{ There exist } R_1 > 0, S_1 > 0. \text{ For any } 1 \leq i \leq m, \text{ there exist } A_i > 0, t_i \in [0, 2) \text{ and } 0 \leq \sigma_i \leq \frac{2(2-t_i)}{N} \text{ such that } \]
\[ G(r, s_1, \ldots, s_m) \geq \sum_{i=1}^{m} A_i r^{-t_i} s_i^{\sigma_i+2} \text{ for all } r > R_1, 0 < s < S_1 \]

then \( M_c < 0 \).

Set \( d(N) = \int e^{-2|y|^2} \, dy, D(N) = \frac{4}{\sigma^2(N)} \int |y|^2 e^{-2|y|^2} \, dy \). For \( \alpha \in (0, 1) \), we set \( w_\alpha : \mathbb{R}^N \to \mathbb{R} \) defined by \( w_\alpha(x) = s^{N/4} e^{-\alpha s^2} \frac{d(N)}{s^2} \). A straightforward computation shows that \( |w_\alpha|_2 = 1 \) and \( |\nabla w_\alpha|_2^2 = \alpha D(N) \).

On the other hand, there exists \( B > R_1 \) such that for any \( |x| > B \), \( w_\alpha(x) \leq S_1 \).
\[
\int G(|x|, w_\alpha(x), \ldots, w_\alpha(x)) \geq \int_{|x| \geq B} \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{A_i}{d(N)_{\sigma_i+2}} |x|^{-t_i} e^{-\alpha(s_i+2)|x|^2} \alpha_{\sigma_i+2} \, dx.
\]
By the change of variable \( y = \alpha^{\frac{1}{2}}x \), we obtain:

\[
= \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{A_i}{d(N)^{\sigma_i+2}} \alpha^{\frac{N\sigma_i+1}{2}} \int_{|y| \geq B \alpha^{\frac{1}{2}}} |y|^{-t_i} e^{-(\sigma_i+2)|y|^2} dy \geq \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{A_i}{d(N)^{\sigma_i+2}} \alpha^{\frac{N\sigma_i+1}{2}} \int_{|y| \geq B} |y|^{-t_i} e^{-(\sigma_i+2)|y|^2} dy
\]

Set \( I_i = \int_{|y| \geq B} |y|^{-t_i} e^{-(\sigma_i+2)|y|^2} dy \), it follows that:

\[
E(w_\alpha, \ldots, w_\alpha) \leq \alpha \left\{ mD(N) - \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{A_i}{d(N)^{\sigma_i+2}} I_i \alpha^{\frac{N\sigma_i+1}{2}+1} \right\}.
\]

The fact that \( \sigma_i < 2(2 - t_i)/N \) enables us to conclude that \( E(w_\alpha, \ldots, w_\alpha) < 0 \) for \( \alpha \) sufficiently small. Taking \( u_i = \frac{c^{1/2}w_{\alpha}}{|w_{\alpha}|^2} \), we can easily see that \( E(u_1, \ldots, u_m) < 0 \) with \( (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \in S_c \), thus \( M_c < 0 \).

4. Variant of Our Result

Our approach also applies to the following variational problem:

\[
\tilde{M}_c = \inf_{\mathcal{U} \in \tilde{S}_c} \tilde{E}(\mathcal{U}), \quad \text{for } \mathcal{U} = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) \in \left[H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)\right]^m,
\]

\[
\tilde{E}(\mathcal{U}) = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^{m} |\nabla u_i|^2 - \frac{1}{2} \int p(|x|) \sum_{i=1}^{m} u_i^2(x) - \int G(|x|, u_1(x), \ldots, u_m(x)).
\]

For a prescribed \( c > 0 \): \( \tilde{S}_c = \{ \mathcal{U} = (u_1, \ldots, u_m) : \|\mathcal{U}\|^2_2 = c \} \). Then we have the following result:

**Theorem 4.1.** Suppose that \( p : (0, \infty) \to \mathbb{R} \) satisfies

1. (P1) \( p \) is non-negative, non-increasing and \( \lim_{r \to \infty} p(r) = 0 \);
2. (P2) If \( N = 1, 2 \), there exists \( a \in (0, 1) \) such that \( p(a) > 0 \);
3. If \( N \geq 3 \), there exists \( R > 0 \) such that \( p(r) > \frac{j_{N/2-1,1}^2}{R^2} \) where \( j_{N/2-1,1} \) is the first zero of the Bessel function \( J_{N/2-1} \).

Suppose that \( G \) satisfies \( (G0) \to (G4) \) in which each \( t_i \) is replaced by \( t \), then, for any \( c > 0 \), there exists \( \mathcal{U}_c = (u^c_1, \ldots, u^c_m) \) Schwarz symmetric such that \( \tilde{E}(\mathcal{U}_c) = \tilde{M}_c \).

**Proof:** Following the same approach as in the previous Theorem, step 1, step 2 and step 3 can be proven under minor modifications. Therefore we are done if \( \tilde{M}_c < 0 \). Since \( G \) is non-negative, it is sufficient to prove that we can construct \( v \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \) such that

\[
\frac{1}{2} |\nabla v|^2 - \frac{1}{2} \int p(|x|) v^2 < 0.
\]
For the convenience of the reader, we will mention all the details. These test functions were constructed in [19] and used in [20].

- **Case** $N = 1$:
  Take $w(x) = e^{-|x|}$, $\alpha \in (0, 1), 0 < d \leq a$ and $w_\alpha(x) = w(\alpha x)$

  \begin{align}
  &\frac{1}{2} \int |\nabla w_\alpha|^2 - p(|x|)w_\alpha^2(x) \, dx = \frac{1}{2} \alpha^2 |\nabla w(\alpha x)|^2 - p(|x|)w^2(\alpha x) \, dx.
  \end{align}

  By the change of variables $y = \alpha x$, we obtain:

  \begin{align}
  (4.2) &\leq \frac{1}{2\alpha} \left\{ \alpha^2 |\nabla w|^2 - \int p \left( \frac{|y|}{\alpha} \right) w^2(y) \, dy \right\} \leq \frac{1}{2\alpha} \left\{ \alpha^2 |\nabla w|^2 - w^2(d) \int_{|y| \leq d} p \left( \frac{|y|}{\alpha} \right) \, dy \right\} \\
  (4.2) &\leq \frac{\alpha}{2} \left\{ |\nabla w|^2 - \frac{w^2(d)p(d)2d}{\alpha} \right\}.
  \end{align}

  In the last inequality, we have used the change of variables $z = \frac{y}{\alpha}$, then used the monotonicity of $p$.

  Therefore for $\alpha$ small enough, $(4.2) < 0$. Now for $c > 0$ and $\alpha$ small enough take: $v_i = \frac{e^{1/2w_\alpha}}{m^{1/2}|w_\alpha|^2}$, then $\frac{1}{2} \int |\nabla v_i|^2 - \frac{1}{2} \int p(|x|)v_i^2 < 0$, $v = (v_1, \ldots, v_m) \in \tilde{S}_c$ and $\tilde{E}(v_1, \ldots, v_m) < 0$.

- **Case** $N = 2$:
  Let $u(x) = \begin{cases} \left( \log \frac{1}{|x|} \right)^{1/3} & \text{if } |x| < 1, \\
  0 & \text{otherwise}. \end{cases}$

  $u \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^2)$ but it is an unbounded function because of its singularity in 0. Let $K = \left( \int_{|x| \leq 1} p(|x|) \, dx \right)^{-1}$, there exists $d \in \mathbb{R}^2$ such that

  \begin{align}
  (4.3) u^2(d) > K|\nabla u|^2.
  \end{align}

  Set $w_d(x) = u(|d|x), w_d \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^2)$ and:

  \begin{align}
  &\frac{1}{2} |\nabla w_d|^2 - \frac{1}{2} \int p(|x|)w_d^2(x) \, dx \leq \frac{1}{2} \int |d|^2 |\nabla u(|d|x)|^2 - p(|x|)u^2(|d|x) \, dx \\
  &\leq \frac{1}{2} \int |\nabla u(y)|^2 - \frac{1}{|d|^2p \left( \frac{|y|}{|d|} \right) u^2(y) \, dy \leq \frac{1}{2} \int |\nabla u(y)|^2 - \frac{1}{2|d|^2} \int_{|y| \leq d} p \left( \frac{|y|}{|d|} \right) u^2(y) \, dy \\
  &\leq \frac{1}{2} \left\{ |\nabla u|^2 - u^2(d) \int_{|z| \leq 1} p(|z|) \, dz \right\} < 0 \text{ by (4.3)}.
  \end{align}

  The proof goes as previously setting $v_i = \frac{e^{1/2w_\alpha}}{m^{1/2}|w_d|^2}$ for $1 \leq i \leq n$.

- **Case** $N \geq 3$: Let $x \in B(0, 1)$, set $\varphi_1(x) = |x|^{-\left(\frac{N}{2} - 1\right)}J_{N/2-1} \left( j_{N/2-1,1} |x| \right)$. It is easy to check that $\varphi_0 \in H^1_0(|x| < 1)$ and $-\Delta \varphi_1 = j_{N/2-1,1} \varphi_1$. For $R$ given by (P2), set $\varphi_R(x) = \varphi_1 \left( \frac{R}{R} \right)$ then $\varphi_R \in H^1_0(|x| < R)$ and $-\nabla \varphi_R = \frac{j_{N/2-1,1}}{R^2} \varphi_R$. 
Now set \( w_R = \begin{cases} \varphi_R & \text{if } |x| < R \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \)

\( w_R \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \) and \( \frac{1}{2} \int |\nabla w_R| - \frac{1}{2} \int p(|x|)w_R^2(x) \, dx \leq \frac{1}{2} \int_{|x| \leq R} \left\{ \frac{\beta_{p/2-1,1}}{R^2} - p(|x|) \right\} w_R^2(x) \, dx < 0 \) by (P2).

We conclude in the same way as in the previous cases.

**Remark 4.2.** Theorem 4.1 holds true when (P2) is replaced by (G5).

### Examples of functions \( G \) satisfying \((G0) \to (G5)\):

Let \( m = 2, k \in \mathbb{N}^* \):

\( (R) \quad G(r, s) = b(r)|s|^2 + a(r) \sum_{j=1}^{k} |s_1|^{\ell_{1,j}+1}|s_2|^{\ell_{2,j}+1} \)

(R1) \( \ell_{1,j} \) and \( \ell_{2,j} > 1 \) with \( \ell_{1,j} + \ell_{2,j} < \frac{1}{N} \) for \( 1 \leq j \leq k \).

(R2) \( a(r) \) is a non-negative, non-increasing function bounded from above and below by two positive constants.

(R3) \( b(r) \) is a non-negative, non-increasing bounded function tending to zero as \( r \) goes to infinity.

Then \( G \) satisfies \((G0) \to (G5)\).

**Remarks:**

- For \( m > 2 \), functions \( G \) satisfying \((G0) \) to \((G5)\) are given in a similar way as \((R)\) with a sum involving products of all \( s_i, 1 \leq i \leq m \). This ensures \((G4)\).
- Note that in \((R)\), \( |s|^2 \) can be replaced by \( |s|^\sigma^2 \) with \( 0 < \sigma < \frac{4}{N} \). In this case \( b(r) \) can be taken as a positive constant: \((R')\)
- Finally when one deals with functions \( G \) that are not necessarily sums of products involving all \( s_i \) with \( 1 \leq i \leq m \), we should apply Theorem 4.1 from which we can easily see that \((1.10)\) is a particular case of this result. More precisely, take \( a \equiv \frac{2}{p}, b = \frac{1}{2p}, \ell_1 = \ell_2 = \ell = \frac{p}{2} = p - 1 \) with \( 1 < p < \frac{2}{N} \) in \((R')\).

5. **Concluding remarks**

In this paper, we have determined suitable assumptions of the operator \( G \), involved in the \( m \)-coupled nonlinear Schrödinger equations such that \((1.1)\) admits a radial and radially decreasing ground state with respect to each component. Moreover, if \((1.11)\) and \((1.12)\) hold true with strict inequality [21, Theorem 2], it follows that \( E(\mathcal{U}^*) < E(\mathcal{U}) \) for any \( \mathcal{U} \in [H^1(\mathbb{R}^N)]^m \). Consequently all the ground states of \((1.1)\) are Schwarz symmetric. A challenging question is the establishment of the uniqueness of these least energy solutions. Until now, we are not aware of any result in this direction when \( N > 1 \) and \( m > 1 \). Another very interesting question is the study of the
orbital stability of these standing waves. We expect that for $\ell_i < 4/N$, the ground states are stable. A crucial step to establish such a result is to prove the uniqueness of the solutions of (1.1). For more general nonlinearities $g_i$, this open problem, under investigation, seems to be extremely complicated.

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