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Let $R = [a, b] \times [c, d]$ be a rectangle in the plane, and $f : R \to \mathbb{R}$ be a continuously differentiable function. We are interested in the area of the surface

$$S = \{(x, y, z) \mid (x, y) \in R, z = f(x, y)\}.$$

Let $\mathcal{P} = \{R_{ij} \mid 1 \leq i \leq n, 1 \leq j \leq m\}$ be a partition of R. Partition each rectangle $R_{ij} = [x_{i-1}, x_i] \times [y_{j-1}, y_j]$ into two triangles Δ^1_{ij} and Δ^2_{ij} , where Δ^1_{ij} has vertices (x_{i-1}, y_{j-1}) , $(x_i, y_{j-1}), (x_{i-1}, y_j)$ and Δ^2_{ij} has vertices $(x_i, y_j), (x_{i-1}, y_j), (x_i, y_{j-1})$. Then intuitively, the area of the surface $f(\Delta^1_{ij})$ can be approximated by the area of the triangle T^1_{ij} with vertices $(x_{i-1}, y_{j-1}, f(x_{i-1}, y_{j-1})), (x_i, y_{j-1}, f(x_i, y_{j-1}))$ and $(x_i, y_j, f(x_i, y_j))$, while the area of the surface $f(\Delta^2_{ij})$ can be approximated by the area of the triangle T^2_{ij} with vertices $(x_i, y_j, f(x_i, y_j)), (x_{i-1}, y_j, f(x_{i-1}, y_j))$ and $(x_i, y_{j-1}, f(x_i, y_{j-1}))$. Therefore, the area of the surface $f(R_{ij})$ can be approximated by the sum of area of triangles T^1_{ij} and T^2_{ij} , and the area of the surface S can be approximated by the sum of the area of the triangles T^1_{ij} and T^2_{ij} , where is sum is taken over all $1 \leq i \leq n$ and $1 \leq j \leq m$.

Now we compute the area of the triangles T_{ij}^1 and T_{ij}^2 . We remark that for a triangle T with vertices P_1 , P_2 , P_3 , letting $\boldsymbol{u} = \overrightarrow{P_1P_2} = P_2 - P_1$ and $\boldsymbol{v} = \overrightarrow{P_1P_3} = P_3 - P_1$, the area of T can be computed by $\frac{1}{2} \|\boldsymbol{u} \times \boldsymbol{v}\|$. Therefore, the area of T_{ij}^1 is given by

$$|T_{ij}^{1}| = \frac{1}{2} \left\| \left(x_{i} - x_{i-1}, 0, f(x_{i}, y_{j-1}) - f(x_{i-1}, y_{j-1}) \right) \times \left(0, y_{j} - y_{j-1}, f(x_{i-1}, y_{j}) - f(x_{i-1}, y_{j-1}) \right) \right\|.$$

By the mean value theorem, there exist $\xi_i^* \in (x_{i-1}, x_i)$ and $\eta_j^* \in (y_{j-1}, y_j)$ such that

$$f(x_i, y_{j-1}) - f(x_{i-1}, y_{j-1}) = f_x(\xi_i^*, y_{j-1})(x_i - x_{i-1}),$$

$$f(x_{i-1}, y_j) - f(x_{i-1}, y_{j-1}) = f_y(x_{i-1}, \eta_i^*)(y_j - y_{j-1});$$

thus we obtain that

$$|T_{ij}^{1}| = \frac{1}{2} \| (1, 0, f_{x}(\xi_{i}^{*}, y_{j-1})) \times (0, 1, f_{y}(x_{i-1}, \eta_{j}^{*})) \| (x_{i} - x_{i-1})(y_{j} - y_{j-1})$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \| (-f_{x}(\xi_{i}^{*}, y_{j-1}), -f_{y}(x_{i-1}, \eta_{j}^{*}), 1) \| (x_{i} - x_{i-1})(y_{j} - y_{j-1})$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{i}^{*}, y_{j-1})^{2} + f_{y}(x_{i-1}, \eta_{j}^{*})^{2}} (x_{i} - x_{i-1})(y_{j} - y_{j-1}) .$$

Similarly, there exist $\xi_i^{**} \in (x_{i-1}, x_i)$ and $\eta_j^{**} \in (y_{j-1}, y_j)$ such that the area of the triangle T_{ij}^2 is given by

$$|T_{ij}^2| = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{1 + f_x(\xi_i^{**}, y_j)^2 + f_y(x_i, \eta_j^{**})^2} (x_i - x_{i-1})(y_j - y_{j-1}).$$

Let $M = \max_{(x,y)\in R} (|f_x(x,y)| + |f_y(x,y)|)$, |R| = (b-a)(d-c), and $\varepsilon > 0$ be a given (but arbitrary) number. Suppose that

$$\left| f_x(\alpha, \beta) - f_x(\xi, \eta) \right| + \left| f_y(\alpha, \beta) - f_y(\xi, \eta) \right| < \frac{\varepsilon}{2|R|(1+M)} \quad \forall (\alpha, \beta), (\xi, \eta) \in R_{ij}. \quad (14.3.1)$$

Then

$$\left| \sqrt{1 + f_x(\alpha, \beta)^2 + f_y(\alpha^*, \beta^*)^2} - \sqrt{1 + f_x(\xi, \eta)^2 + f_y(\xi, \eta)^2} \right| \\
= \left| \frac{f_x(\alpha, \beta)^2 + f_y(\alpha^*, \beta^*)^2 - f_x(\xi, \eta)^2 - f_y(\xi, \eta)^2}{\sqrt{1 + f_x(\alpha, \beta)^2 + f_y(\alpha^*, \beta^*)^2} + \sqrt{1 + f_x(\xi, \eta)^2 + f_y(\xi, \eta)^2}} \right| \\
\leqslant \frac{1}{2} \left[\left| f_x(\alpha, \beta) - f_x(\xi, \eta) \right| \left| f_x(\alpha, \beta) + f_x(\xi, \eta) \right| + \left| f_y(\alpha^*, \beta^*) - f_y(\xi, \eta) \right| \right] \\
+ \left| f_y(\alpha^*, \beta^*) - f_y(\xi, \eta) \right| \left| f_y(\alpha^*, \beta^*) + f_y(\xi, \eta) \right| \right] \\
\leqslant \frac{2M}{2} \left[\left| f_x(\alpha, \beta) - f_x(\xi, \eta) \right| + \left| f_y(\alpha^*, \beta^*) - f_y(\xi, \eta) \right| \right] \leqslant \frac{M\varepsilon}{2|R|(1+M)} < \frac{\varepsilon}{2|R|}.$$

Therefore, if (14.3.1) holds for all $1 \le i \le n$ and $1 \le j \le m$, then for $(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij}) \in R_{ij}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \left| |T_{ij}^{1}| + |T_{ij}^{2}| - \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2} + f_{y}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2}} (x_{i} - x_{i-1})(y_{j} - y_{j-1}) \right| \\ & \leq \left| \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{i}^{*}, y_{j-1})^{2} + f_{y}(x_{i-1}, \eta_{j}^{*})^{2}} + \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{i}^{**}, y_{j})^{2} + f_{y}(x_{i}, \eta_{j}^{**})^{2}} \right. \\ & - \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2} + f_{y}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2}} \left| (x_{i} - x_{i-1})(y_{j} - y_{j-1}) \right. \\ & \leq \frac{\varepsilon}{2|R|} (x_{i} - x_{i-1})(y_{j} - y_{j-1}); \end{aligned}$$

thus if (14.3.1) holds for all $1 \le i \le n$ and $1 \le j \le m$, then for $(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij}) \in R_{ij}$,

$$\left| \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \left(|T_{ij}^{1}| + |T_{ij}^{2}| \right) - \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2} + f_{y}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2}} (x_{i} - x_{i-1}) (y_{j} - y_{j-1}) \right|$$

$$\leq \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \left| |T_{ij}^{1}| + |T_{ij}^{2}| - \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2} + f_{y}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2}} (x_{i} - x_{i-1}) (y_{j} - y_{j-1}) \right|$$

$$\leq \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \frac{\varepsilon}{2|R|} (x_{i} - x_{i-1}) (y_{j} - y_{j-1}) = \frac{\varepsilon}{2}.$$

Finally, we state as a fact that there exists $\delta_1 > 0$ such that (14.3.1) holds as long as $\|\mathcal{P}\| < \delta_1$. This property is called the *uniform continuity* of continuous functions on closed and bounded sets.

On the other hand, since the function $z = \sqrt{1 + f_x(x,y)^2 + f_y(x,y)^2}$ is continuous on R (and R has area), it is Riemann integrable on R. Let

$$I = \iint_{R} \sqrt{1 + f_x(x, y)^2 + f_y(x, y)^2} \, dA.$$

Then there exists $\delta_2 > 0$ such that if \mathcal{P} is a partition of R satisfying $\|\mathcal{P}\| < \delta_2$, then any Riemann sum of f for the partition \mathcal{P} belongs to $\left(I - \frac{\varepsilon}{2}, I + \frac{\varepsilon}{2}\right)$. Therefore,

$$\left| \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sqrt{1 + f_x(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^2 + f_y(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^2} (x_i - x_{i-1}) (y_j - y_{j-1}) - I \right| < \frac{\varepsilon}{2}$$

Let $\delta = \min\{\delta_1, \delta_2\}$. Then $\delta > 0$, and if $\mathcal{P} = \{R_{ij} \mid R_{ij} = [x_{i-1}, x_i] \times [y_{j-1}, y_j], 1 \leqslant i \leqslant n, 1 \leqslant j \leqslant m\}$ is a partition of R satisfying $\|\mathcal{P}\| < \delta$, then by choosing a collection of points $\{(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})\}_{1 \leqslant i \leqslant n, 1 \leqslant j \leqslant m}$ such that $(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij}) \in R_{ij}$, we conclude that

$$\left| \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \left(|T_{ij}^{1}| + |T_{ij}^{2}| \right) - I \right|$$

$$\leq \left| \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \left(|T_{ij}^{1}| + |T_{ij}^{2}| \right) - \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2} + f_{y}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2}} (x_{i} - x_{i-1}) (y_{j} - y_{j-1}) \right|$$

$$+ \left| \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} \sqrt{1 + f_{x}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2} + f_{y}(\xi_{ij}, \eta_{ij})^{2}} (x_{i} - x_{i-1}) (y_{j} - y_{j-1}) - I \right| < \varepsilon.$$

This means that the approximation of the area of the surface S can be made arbitrarily closed to I; thus the area of the surface S must be I. In general, we have the following

Theorem 14.11

Let R be a closed region in the plane, and $f: R \to \mathbb{R}$ be a continuously differentiable function. Then the area of the surface $S = \{(x, y, z) \mid (x, y) \in R, z = f(x, y)\}$ is given by

$$\iint\limits_R \sqrt{1 + \|(\nabla f)(x, y)\|^2} \, dA = \int_R \sqrt{1 + f_x(x, y)^2 + f_y(x, y)^2} \, dA.$$

Example 14.12. In this example we consider the surface area of the upper hemi-sphere $z = \sqrt{r^2 - x^2 - y^2}$ that lies above the disk $R = \{(x,y) \mid x^2 + y^2 \leq \sigma^2\}$, where $0 < \sigma \leq r$. Since R can also be expressed by

$$R = \left\{ (x, y) \,\middle|\, -r\sigma \leqslant x \leqslant \sigma, -\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2} \leqslant y \leqslant \sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2} \right\},\,$$

the computations from the previous example, as well as the Fubini Theorem, implies that the surface area of interest is given by

$$\iint\limits_{R} \frac{r}{\sqrt{r^2 - x^2 - y^2}} \, dA = r \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \left(\int_{-\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}}^{\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{r^2 - x^2 - y^2}} \, dy \right) dx \, .$$

Using $\int \frac{1}{\sqrt{a^2-u^2}} du = \arcsin \frac{u}{a} + C$, we find that

$$\int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \left(\int_{-\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}}^{\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}} \frac{1}{\sqrt{r^2 - x^2 - y^2}} dy \right) dx = \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \left(\arcsin \frac{y}{\sqrt{r^2 - x^2}} \Big|_{y = -\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}}^{y = \sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}} \right) dx$$

$$= 2 \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \arcsin \frac{\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}}{\sqrt{r^2 - x^2}} dx = 2 \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \arctan \frac{\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}}{\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2}} dx$$

$$= 2 \left[x \arctan \frac{\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}}{\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2}} \Big|_{x = -\sigma}^{x = \sigma} - \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} x \frac{d}{dx} \arctan \frac{\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}}{\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2}} dx \right]$$

$$= -2 \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \frac{x \cdot \frac{1}{\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2}} \frac{-x}{\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}}}{1 + \frac{\sigma^2 - x^2}{r^2 - \sigma^2}} dx = 2\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2} \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \frac{x^2 - r^2 + r^2}{(r^2 - x^2)\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}} dx$$

$$= -2\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2} \pi + 2\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2} \int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \frac{r^2}{(r^2 - x^2)\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}} dx.$$

Using the substitution $x = \sigma \sin \frac{\theta}{2}$, we find that

$$\int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \frac{r^2}{(r^2 - x^2)\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}} dx = \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} \frac{r^2}{2(r^2 - \sigma^2 \sin^2 \frac{\theta}{2})} d\theta = \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} \frac{r^2}{2r^2 - \sigma^2(1 - \cos \theta)} d\theta$$
$$= r^2 \int_{-\pi}^{\pi} \frac{1}{(2r^2 - \sigma^2) + \sigma^2 \cos \theta} d\theta.$$

and further substitution $\tan \frac{\theta}{2} = t$ implies that

$$\int_{-\sigma}^{\sigma} \frac{r^2}{(r^2 - x^2)\sqrt{\sigma^2 - x^2}} \, dx = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{r^2}{(2r^2 - \sigma^2) + \sigma^2 \frac{1 - t^2}{1 + t^2}} \frac{2dt}{1 + t^2}$$

$$= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{2r^2}{2r^2(1 + t^2) - \sigma^2(1 + t^2) + \sigma^2(1 - t^2)} \, dt$$

$$= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{r^2}{r^2 + (r^2 - \sigma^2)t^2} \, dt$$

$$= \frac{r}{\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2}} \arctan\left(\frac{\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2}}{r}t\right)\Big|_{t = -\infty}^{\infty} = \frac{\pi r}{\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2}}.$$

Therefore, the surface area of interest is given by

$$\iint\limits_{R} \frac{r}{\sqrt{r^2 - x^2 - y^2}} \, dA = 2r \sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2} \Big[-\pi + \frac{\pi r}{\sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2}} \Big] = 2\pi r \big(r - \sqrt{r^2 - \sigma^2} \big) \, .$$

We also note that the surface area that we obtain approaches $2\pi r^2$ as $\sigma \to r$. This value $2\pi r^2$ is exactly the surface area of the upper hemi-sphere with radius r.