

Normal families of meromorphic functions with sharing functions *

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Abstract

Let \mathcal{F} be a family of meromorphic functions in a domain D , let k be a positive integer, and let $h(z)(\neq 0, \infty)$ be a meromorphic function in D such that any $f \in \mathcal{F}$ have neither common zeros nor common poles with $h(z)$. If, for each $f \in \mathcal{F}$, the multiplicity of the zeros f is at least k , and $f = 0 \Leftrightarrow f^{(k)} = 0$, and $f^{(k)}(z) = h(z) \Rightarrow f(z) = h(z)$, then \mathcal{F} is normal in D . This improves the results due to Xia and Xu.

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1 Introduction and main result

Let f and g be two meromorphic functions on a domain D in \mathbb{C} , and let a be a complex number. If $g(z) = a$ whenever $f(z) = a$, we denote it by $f = a \Rightarrow g = a$. $f = a \Leftrightarrow g = a$ means $f(z) = a$ if and only if $g(z) = a$, and we say that f and g share a .

Let D be a domain in \mathbb{C} and \mathcal{F} a family of meromorphic functions in D . \mathcal{F} is said to be normal in D , in the sense of Montel, if each sequence $\{f_n\} \subset \mathcal{F}$ has a subsequence $\{f_{n_j}\}$ which converges spherically locally uniformly in D , to a meromorphic function or ∞ (see Hayman [5], Schiff [10], Yang [16]).

In 1992, Schwick [11] found a connection between normality and shared values, and proved the following well-known result.

Theorem A *Let \mathcal{F} be a family of meromorphic functions defined in D , and let a_1, a_2, a_3 be distinct complex numbers. If for each $f \in \mathcal{F}$, $f = a_i \Leftrightarrow f' = a_i, i = 1, 2, 3$, then \mathcal{F} is normal in D .*

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Since then, many scholars studied the normality criteria concerning shared values, such as X. C. Pang and L. Zalcman [8], X. C. Pang [7], C. Meng [6], J. M. Qi, J. Ding and L. Z. Yang [9], etc, and have got several more general normality criteria concerning shared values.

In 2001, Fang [2] improved Theorem A from sharing values to sharing functions, and proved.

Theorem B *Let \mathcal{F} be a family of meromorphic functions in a domain D , and let $\psi(z)(\neq 0)$ be an analytic function in D . If for each $f \in \mathcal{F}$, $f = 0 \Leftrightarrow f'(z) = 0$, and $f'(z) = \psi(z) \Rightarrow f(z) = \psi(z)$, then \mathcal{F} is normal in D .*

In 2006, Xu [14] proved the following result.

Theorem C *Let \mathcal{F} be a family of meromorphic functions in a domain D , and let $\psi(z)(\neq 0)$ be an analytic function in D such that $f \in \mathcal{F}$ and $\psi(z)$ has no common zeros and $\psi(z)$ has no simple zeros in D . If for each $f \in \mathcal{F}$, all zeros of f have multiplicity at least k , $f = 0 \Leftrightarrow f^{(k)}(z) = 0$, and $f^{(k)}(z) = \psi(z) \Rightarrow f(z) = \psi(z)$, then \mathcal{F} is normal in D .*

In [14], an example was given to show that the condition any $f \in \mathcal{F}$ and $\psi(z)$ have no common zeros is necessary. In fact, the condition $\psi(z)$ has no simple zeros is not necessary.

In 2010, Xia and Xu [12] proved that Theorem C still holds for a meromorphic function $\psi(z)(\neq 0)$ as following,

Theorem D *Let \mathcal{F} be a family of meromorphic functions in a domain D , let k be a positive integer, and let $\psi(z)(\neq 0, \infty)$ be an meromorphic function in D such that $f \in \mathcal{F}$ and $\psi(z)$ have no common zeros and $\psi(z)$ has no simple zeros in D , and all poles of $\psi(z)$ have multiplicity at most k . If for each $f \in \mathcal{F}$, all zeros of f have multiplicity at least k , $f = 0 \Leftrightarrow f^{(k)}(z) = 0$, and $f^{(k)}(z) = \psi(z) \Rightarrow f(z) = \psi(z)$, then \mathcal{F} is normal in D .*

In [12], Xia and Xu also proposed a conjecture that the restriction "all poles of $\psi(z)$ have multiplicity at most k " can be relaxed to that $\psi(z)$ has no common poles with any function $f \in \mathcal{F}$. We study this problem, and prove the following result.

Theorem 1 *Let \mathcal{F} be a family of meromorphic functions in a domain D , let k be a positive integer, and let $h(z)(\neq 0, \infty)$ be a meromorphic function in D such that f and $h(z)$ have neither common zeros nor common poles for all $f \in \mathcal{F}$. If, for each $f \in \mathcal{F}$, all zeros of f have multiplicity at least k , $f(z) = 0 \Leftrightarrow f^{(k)}(z) = 0$, and $f^{(k)}(z) = h(z) \Rightarrow f(z) = h(z)$, then \mathcal{F} is normal in D .*

An example was also given in [12] to show that the restriction that $h(z)$ has no common poles with any function in \mathcal{F} is indispensable.

2 Some lemmas

For the proof of Theorem 1, we require the following lemmas.

Lemma 1 ([8, 17]) *Let k be a positive integer and let \mathcal{F} be a family of meromorphic functions in a domain D , such that each function $f \in \mathcal{F}$ has only zeros of multiplicity at least k , and suppose that there exist $A \geq 1$ such that $|f^{(k)}| \leq A$ whenever $f(z) = 0$, $f \in \mathcal{F}$. If \mathcal{F} is not normal at $z_0 \in D$, then for each α , $0 \leq \alpha \leq k$, there exist*

- a) *points $z_j \in D$, $z_j \rightarrow z_0$;*
- b) *functions $f_j \in \mathcal{F}$; and*
- c) *positive numbers $\rho_j \rightarrow 0$*

such that $g_n(\xi) = \rho_j^{-\alpha} f_j(z_j + \rho_j \xi) \rightarrow g(\xi)$ locally uniformly with respect to the spherical metric, where $g(\xi)$ is a non-constant meromorphic function on \mathbb{C} , all of whose zeros have multiplicity at least k , such that $g^\#(\xi) \leq g^\#(0) = kA + 1$. Moreover, g has order at most 2.

Lemma 2 ([2]) *Let f be a meromorphic function of finite order in the plane \mathbb{C} . If $f = 0 \Leftrightarrow f^{(k)} = 0$, $f' \neq 1$, then f is a constant.*

Lemma 3 ([3]) *Let f be a meromorphic function of finite order in the plane, $k \geq 2$ be a positive integer. If all zeros of f are of order at least $k + 1$, and $f^{(k)}(z) = 0 \Leftrightarrow f(z) = 0$, then $f(z)$ is a constant.*

Lemma 4 ([14]) *Let f be a transcendental meromorphic function, let $R(z) (\neq 0)$ be a rational function, and let k be a positive integer. If all zeros of f have multiplicity at least $k + 1$, except for finitely many, and $f^{(k)} = 0 \Rightarrow f = 0$, then $f^{(k)} - R(z)$ has infinitely many zeros.*

Lemma 5 ([15]) *Let k, l be two positive integers, and let $Q(z)$ be a rational function all of whose zeros are of order at least k . If $Q^{(k)}(z) \neq z^{-l}$, then $Q(z)$ is a constant.*

3 Proof of Theorem 1

Since normality is a local property, we only need to prove that \mathcal{F} is normal at every pole of $h(z)$. Without loss of generality, we may assume that $D = \Delta = \{z : |z| < 1\}$, $h(z) = b(z)/z^l$, and $b(0) = 1, b(z) \neq 0, \infty, z \in D$, where l is a positive integer. We only need to prove that \mathcal{F} is normal at $z = 0$. Suppose that \mathcal{F} is not normal at $z = 0$. We consider two cases: $l \leq k$ and $l \geq k + 1$. In fact, the case $l \leq k$ can be proved as same as Theorem D, so we only need to prove the case $l \geq k + 1$.

Consider the family $\mathcal{G} = \{g(z) = f(z)/h(z) : f \in \mathcal{F}, z \in \Delta\}$. Since $z = 0$ is a pole of $h(z)$, and $f(z)$ and $h(z)$ have no common poles, $z = 0$ is a zero of $g(z)$ of order at least $l (\geq k + 1)$. Thus all zeros of $g(z)$ have multiplicity at least $k + 1$ for the zeros of $f(z)$ are of order at least $k + 1$.

We first prove that \mathcal{G} is normal in Δ . Suppose that \mathcal{G} is not normal at $z_0 \in D$. By Lemma 1, there exist a sequence of functions g_n , a sequence of points $z_n \rightarrow z_0$, and a sequence of positive numbers $\rho_n \rightarrow 0^+$, such that

$$G_n(\zeta) = \frac{g_n(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n^k} \rightarrow G(\zeta)$$

converges spherically uniformly on compact subsets of \mathbb{C} , where $G(\zeta)$ is a non-constant meromorphic function on \mathbb{C} , and $G(\zeta)$ is of order at most two. By Hurwitz's theorem, all zeros of $G(\zeta)$ have multiplicity at least $k+1$.

Two cases are considered in the following.

Case 1 $z_n/\rho_n \rightarrow \infty$.

Since $f_n(z) = g_n(z)h(z)$ and $h(z) = b(z)/z^l$, by simple calculation, we have

$$g_n^{(k)}(z) = \frac{f_n^{(k)}(z)}{h(z)} - \sum_{j=1}^k C_k^j g_n^{(k-j)}(z) \frac{h^{(j)}(z)}{h(z)}.$$

By mathematical induction, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{h^{(j)}(z)}{h(z)} &= \frac{(-1)^j l(l+1) \cdots (l+j-1)}{z^j} + \frac{C_j^1 (-1)^{j-1} l(l+1) \cdots (l+j-2)}{z^{j-1}} \frac{b'(z)}{b(z)} \\ &+ \cdots + \frac{C_j^{j-1} (-1) l b^{(j-1)}(z)}{z} \frac{b(z)}{b(z)} + \frac{b^{(j)}(z)}{b(z)}. \end{aligned}$$

and

$$G_n^{(k)}(\zeta) = g_n^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta) \rightarrow G^{(k)}(\zeta)$$

uniformly on compact subsets of \mathbb{C} disjoint from the poles of G .

Thus

$$\begin{aligned} G_n^{(k)}(\zeta) &= \frac{f_n^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} - C_k^1 g_n^{(k-1)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta) \left[\frac{-l}{z_n + \rho_n \zeta} + \frac{b'(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{b(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} \right] \\ &- \cdots - g_n(z_n + \rho_n \zeta) \left[\frac{(-1)^k l(l+1) \cdots (l+k-1)}{(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)^k} + \right. \\ &\quad \left. \frac{C_k^1 (-1)^{k-1} l(l+1) \cdots (l+k-2)}{(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)^{k-1}} \frac{b'(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{b(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} + \cdots + \frac{b^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{b(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} \right] \\ &= \frac{f_n^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} - C_k^1 \frac{g_n^{(k-1)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n} \left[\frac{-l}{z_n/\rho_n + \zeta} + \frac{\rho_n b'(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{b(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} \right] \\ &- \cdots - \frac{g_n(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n^k} \left[\frac{(-1)^k l(l+1) \cdots (l+k-1)}{(z_n/\rho_n + \zeta)^k} + \right. \\ &\quad \left. \frac{k(-1)^{k-1} l(l+1) \cdots (l+k-2)}{(z_n/\rho_n + \zeta)^{k-1}} \frac{\rho_n b'(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{b(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} + \cdots + \frac{\rho_n^k b^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{b(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} \right]. \end{aligned}$$

On the other hand,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{z_n/\rho_n + \zeta} = 0,$$

and

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\rho_n^j b^{(j)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{b(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} = 0 (j = 1, 2, \dots, k),$$

uniformly on compact subsets of \mathbb{C} . Noting that $g^{(k-j)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)/\rho_n^j$ is locally bounded on \mathbb{C} disjoint from the poles of $G(\zeta)$ since $g_n(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)/\rho_n^k \rightarrow G(\zeta)$.

Therefore,

$$\frac{f_n^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)}{h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta)} \rightarrow G^{(k)}(\zeta)$$

uniformly on compact subsets of \mathbb{C} disjoint from the poles of $G(\zeta)$.

We claim that

- (i) $G(\zeta) = 0 \Leftrightarrow G^{(k)}(\zeta) = 0$, and
- (ii) $G^{(k)}(\zeta) \neq 1$.

Since all zeros of $G(\zeta)$ are of multiplicity at least $k+1$, $G^{(k)}(\zeta) = 0$ whenever $G(\zeta) = 0$. Suppose that $G^{(k)}(\zeta_0) = 0$. Clearly, $G^{(k)}(\zeta) \not\equiv 0$. Otherwise, $G(\zeta)$ would be a polynomial of degree less than k , which contradicts the condition that the multiplicity of the zeros of $G(\zeta)$ is at least $k+1$. Then by Hurwitz's theorem, there exist $\zeta_n, \zeta_n \rightarrow \zeta_0$, such that, for n sufficiently large,

$$\frac{f_n^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)}{h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)} = 0.$$

Thus $f_n(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) = 0$ or $h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) = \infty$. If $h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) = \infty$, then $z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n = 0$, and $\zeta_n = -z_n/\rho_n \rightarrow \infty$, which contradicts the fact that $\zeta_n \rightarrow \zeta_0$, ζ_0 is a finite number. So we have $f_n(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) = 0$. Since f_n and $f_n^{(k)}$ share 0. It follows that

$$G(\zeta_0) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} G_n(\zeta_n) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f_n(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)}{\rho_n^k h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)} = 0.$$

This shows that $G(\zeta) = 0$ whenever $G^{(k)}(\zeta) = 0$.

Next we prove (ii). Suppose that $G^{(k)}(\zeta_0) = 1$. We claim that $G^{(k)}(\zeta) \not\equiv 1$. Otherwise, $G(\zeta)$ would be a polynomial of degree k , which is a contradiction with the fact that the zeros of $G(\zeta)$ have multiplicity at least $k+1$. Then by Hurwitz's theorem, there exist $\zeta_n, \zeta_n \rightarrow \zeta_0$, such that, for n sufficiently large,

$$\frac{f_n^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) - h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)}{h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)} = 0.$$

Thus $f_n^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) = h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)$ or $h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) = \infty$. As the same as the previous proof, we know that $h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) \neq \infty$. Thus $f_n^{(k)}(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n) = h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)$ for $f_n^{(k)}(z) = h(z) \Rightarrow f_n(z) = h(z)$. It follows that

$$G(\zeta_0) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} G_n(\zeta_n) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f_n(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)}{\rho_n^k h(z_n + \rho_n \zeta_n)} = \infty,$$

which contradicts that $G^{(k)}(\zeta_0) = 1$. This prove (ii).

However, it follows by Lemma 2 and Lemma 3 that $G(\zeta)$ is a constant, a contradiction.

Case 2 $z_n/\rho_n \rightarrow \alpha$, where α is a finite complex number.

We have

$$\frac{g_n(\rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n^k} = \frac{g_n[z_n + \rho_n(\zeta - z_n/\rho_n)]}{\rho_n^k} = G_n(\zeta - \frac{z_n}{\rho_n}) \rightarrow G(\zeta - \alpha) = \tilde{G}(\zeta)$$

spherically uniformly on compact subsets of \mathbb{C} . Since $f(z)$ and $h(z)$ have neither common zeros nor common poles, and the zeros of $f(z)$ have multiplicity at least $k+1$, then $\zeta = 0$ is a zero of $\tilde{G}(\zeta)$ with multiplicity $l(\geq k+1)$, or $l+m(m \geq k+1)$. So all zeros of $\tilde{G}(\zeta)$ have multiplicity at least $k+1$.

Set

$$H_n(\zeta) = \frac{f_n(\rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n^{k-l}}.$$

Then

$$H_n(\zeta) = \frac{f_n(\rho_n \zeta)}{h(\rho_n \zeta) \rho_n^k} \cdot \frac{h(\rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n^{-l}} = \frac{g_n(\rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n^k} \cdot \frac{h(\rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n^{-l}}.$$

Noting that

$$\frac{h(\rho_n \zeta)}{\rho_n^{-l}} \rightarrow 1/\zeta^l$$

uniformly on every compact subset of $\mathbb{C}/\{0\}$, thus

$$H_n(\zeta) \rightarrow 1/\zeta^l \cdot \tilde{G}(\zeta) = H(\zeta)$$

uniformly on compact subsets of $\mathbb{C}/\{0\}$. Since $z = 0$ is the zero of $\tilde{G}(\zeta)$ with multiplicity at least l , and the multiplicity of the other zeros of $\tilde{G}(\zeta)$ is at least $k+1$, the zeros of $H(\zeta)$ have multiplicity at least $k+1$, and $H(0) \neq \infty$.

We claim that

(iii) $H(\zeta) = 0 \Leftrightarrow H^{(k)}(\zeta) = 0$, and

(iv) $H^{(k)}(\zeta) \neq 1/\zeta^l$.

Since all zeros of $H(\zeta)$ are of multiplicity at least $k+1$, $H^{(k)}(\zeta) = 0$ whenever $H(\zeta) = 0$. Suppose that $H^{(k)}(\zeta_0) = 0$. Clearly, $H^{(k)}(\zeta) \not\equiv 0$. Otherwise $H(\zeta)$ would be a polynomial of degree less than k , which contradicts the fact that the multiplicity of the zeros of $H(\zeta)$ is at least $k+1$. Then by Hurwitz's theorem there exist $\zeta_n, \zeta_n \rightarrow \zeta_0$, such that, for n sufficiently large,

$$H_n^{(k)}(\zeta_n) = f_n^{(k)}(\rho_n \zeta_n) \rho_n^l = 0,$$

so we have $f_n^{(k)}(\rho_n \zeta_n) = 0$. Thus $f_n(\rho_n \zeta_n) = 0$ since f_n and $f_n^{(k)}$ share 0. It follows that

$$H(\zeta_0) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} H_n(\zeta_n) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f_n(\rho_n \zeta_n)}{\rho_n^{k-l}} = 0.$$

This shows that $H(\zeta) = 0$ whenever $H^{(k)}(\zeta) = 0$. This completes the proof of (iii).

Next we prove (iv). Suppose $H^{(k)}(\zeta_0) = 1/\zeta_0^l$. Obviously, $H^{(k)}(\zeta) \neq 1/\zeta^l, \zeta_0 \neq 0$ for $H(0) \neq \infty$. Then $H(\zeta)$ is holomorphic at ζ_0 and noting that

$$\rho_n^l [f_n^{(k)}(\rho_n \zeta) - h(\rho_n \zeta)] \rightarrow H^{(k)}(\zeta) - 1/\zeta^l$$

uniformly on compact subset of $\mathbb{C}/\{0\}$ disjoint from the poles of $H(\zeta)$, then by Hurwitz's theorem there exist $\zeta_n, \zeta_n \rightarrow \zeta_0$, such that, for n sufficiently large, $f_n^{(k)}(\rho_n \zeta_n) = h(\rho_n \zeta_n)$. Thus $f_n(\rho_n \zeta_n) = h(\rho_n \zeta_n)$ for $f^{(k)}(z) = h(z) \Rightarrow f(z) = h(z)$. It follows that

$$H(\zeta_0) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} H_n(\zeta_n) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f_n(\rho_n \zeta_n) b(\rho_n \zeta_n)}{\rho_n^k h(\rho_n \zeta_n)} = \infty,$$

which contradicts that $H^{(k)}(\zeta_0) = 1/\zeta_0^l$. This proves (iv).

It follows from Lemma 4 that $H(\zeta)$ is a rational function. Noting that $H(0) \neq \infty$, by Lemma 5, $H(\zeta)$ is a constant. Since $H(\zeta) = 0 \Leftrightarrow H^{(k)}(\zeta) = 0$, $H \equiv 0$. For $H(\zeta) = 1/\zeta^l \cdot \tilde{G}(\zeta)$, thus we have $\tilde{G}(\zeta) = G(\zeta - \alpha) = 0$, which is a contradiction. We thus prove \mathcal{G} is normal on Δ .

It remains to prove that \mathcal{F} is normal at 0. Since \mathcal{G} is normal on Δ , then the family \mathcal{G} is equicontinuous on Δ with respect to the spherical distance. On the other hand, $g(0) = 0$ for each $g \in \mathcal{G}$, so there exists $\delta > 0$ such that $|g(z)| \leq 1$ for all $g \in \mathcal{G}$ and each $z \in \Delta_\delta = \{z : |z| < \delta\}$. It follow that $f(z)$ is holomorphic on Δ_δ for all $f \in \mathcal{F}$. Since \mathcal{F} is normal on Δ' , but it is not normal at $z = 0$, there exists a sequence $\{f_n\} \subset \mathcal{F}$ which converges locally uniformly on Δ'_δ , but not on Δ_δ . By the maximum modulus principle, we have $f_n \rightarrow \infty$ on Δ'_δ , and hence so does $\{g_n\} \subset \mathcal{G}$, where $g_n = f_n/h$. But $|g_n(z)| \leq 1$ for $z \in \Delta_\delta$, a contradiction. Thus \mathcal{F} is normal in D . Thus this completes the proof of Theorem 1.

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