

## Research Article

# Value Distribution of Certain Type of Difference Polynomials

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We investigate the value distribution of difference product  $f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$ , for  $n \geq 2$  and  $n = 1$ , respectively, where  $f(z)$  is a transcendental entire function of finite order and  $a_i, c_i$  are constants satisfying  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \neq 0$ .

## 1. Introduction

In this paper, we assume that the reader is familiar with the basic notions of Nevanlinna's value distribution theory (see [1–3]). The notation  $S(r, f)$  is defined to be any quantity satisfying  $S(r, f) = o\{T(r, f)\}$  as  $r \rightarrow \infty$ , possibly outside a set of finite linear measures. In addition, we use the notation  $\sigma(f)$  to denote the order of growth of the meromorphic function  $f(z)$  and  $\lambda(f)$  to denote the exponent of convergence of zeros of  $f(z)$ .

Hayman proved the following theorem in [4].

**Theorem 1.** *Let  $f(z)$  be a transcendental integral function and let  $n \geq 2$  be an integer; then  $f^n f'(z)$  assumes all values except possibly zero infinitely often.*

Clunie proved that if  $n = 1$ , then Theorem 1 remains valid.

Recently, many papers (see [5–17]) focus on complex difference. They obtain many new results on difference using the value distribution theory of meromorphic functions.

In [12], Laine and Yang found a difference analogue of Hayman's result as follows.

**Theorem 2.** *Let  $f(z)$  be a transcendental entire function of finite order and  $c$  a nonzero complex constant. Then for  $n \geq 2$ ,  $f(z)^n f(z + c)$  assumes every nonzero value  $a \in \mathbb{C}$  infinitely often.*

Liu and Yang [14] proved the following theorem.

**Theorem 3.** *Let  $f(z)$  be a transcendental entire function of finite order and let  $c$  be a nonzero complex constant,  $\Delta f(z) =$*

*$f(z + c) - f(z) \neq 0$ . Then for  $n \geq 2$ ,  $f(z)^n \Delta f(z) - p(z)$  has infinitely many zeros, where  $p(z) \neq 0$  is a polynomial in  $z$ .*

Chen [6] proved the following theorem.

**Theorem 4.** *Let  $f(z)$  be a transcendental entire function of finite order and let  $c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$  be a constant satisfying  $f(z+c) \neq f(z)$ . Set  $H_n(z) = f(z)^n \Delta f(z)$  where  $\Delta f(z) = f(z+c) - f(z)$ , and  $n \geq 2$  is an integer. Then the following statements hold.*

- (i) *If  $f(z)$  satisfies  $\sigma(f) \neq 1$  or has infinitely many zeros, then  $H_n(z)$  has infinitely many zeros.*
- (ii) *If  $f(z)$  has only finitely many zeros and  $\sigma(f) = 1$ , then  $H_n(z)$  has only finitely many zeros.*

It is natural to ask what condition will guarantee that

$$f(z)^n L(f) \quad (1)$$

assumes every nonzero and zero value infinitely often, where  $L(f)$  is a linear  $k$ th order difference operator with varying shifts, operating on a transcendental entire function of finite order.

In this paper, we consider the above question for  $n \geq 2$  and  $n = 1$ , respectively, and obtain the following results.

**Theorem 5.** *Let  $f$  be a transcendental entire function of finite order and let  $a_i, c_i$  ( $i = 1, \dots, k$ ) be constant satisfying  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \neq 0$  and  $c_i \neq c_j$  when  $i \neq j$ . Set  $H_n(z) = f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$ , where  $n, k \geq 2$  are integers. Then the following statements hold.*

- (i) If  $f(z)$  satisfies  $\sigma(f) \neq 1$  or has infinitely many zeros, then  $H_n(z)$  has infinitely many zeros.
- (ii) If  $f(z)$  has only finitely many zeros and  $\sigma(f) = 1$ , then  $H_n(z)$  has only finitely many zeros.
- (iii)  $H_n(z) - \alpha(z)$  has infinitely many zeros, and  $\lambda(H_n(z) - \alpha(z)) = \sigma(f)$ , where  $\alpha(z) \neq 0$  is a small function of  $f$ .

**Remark 6.** The result of Theorem 5 may be false if  $k = 1$ . For example, if  $f(z) = e^{z^2}$ , we have that  $f(z)^2 f(z+c) = e^{3z^2+2cz+c^2}$  (where  $c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$  is a constant satisfying  $f(z+c) \neq f(z)$ ) has no zero, but  $f(z)^2(f(z+c) - f(z)) = e^{3z^2}(e^{2cz+c^2} - 1)$  has infinitely many zeros. This also shows that the restriction  $\sigma(f) = 1$  in Theorem 5(ii) is sharp. The following example shows that the assumption  $\sigma(f) \neq 1$  in Theorem 5(i) cannot be deleted. In fact, let  $f(z) = e^z$ ; we have  $H_2 = f^2(f(z+c) - f(z)) = e^{2z}(e^{z+1} - e^z) = e^{3z}(e - 1) \neq 0$ .

By (i) and (iii) of Theorem 5, we can easily obtain the following corollary.

**Corollary 7.** Let  $f$  be a transcendental entire function of finite order and let  $a_i, c_i$  ( $i = 1, \dots, k$ ) be constants satisfying  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \neq 0$  and  $c_i \neq c_j$  when  $i \neq j$ . Set  $H_n(z) = f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$ , where  $n, k \geq 2$  are integers. If  $\sigma(f) \neq 1$  or has infinitely many zeros, then  $H_n(z)$  takes every value  $a \in \mathbb{C}$  infinitely often.

**Theorem 8.** Let  $f$  be a finite-order transcendental entire function with a finite Borel exceptional value  $d$ , and let  $a_i, c_i$  be constants satisfying  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \neq 0$  where  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i = 0$ . Set  $H(z) = f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$ . Then the following statements hold.

- (i)  $H(z)$  takes every nonzero value  $a \in \mathbb{C}$  infinitely often and satisfies  $\lambda(H - a) = \sigma(f)$ .
- (ii) If  $d \neq 0$ , then  $H(z)$  has no finite Borel exceptional value.
- (iii) If  $d = 0$ , then  $0$  is also the Borel exceptional value of  $H(z)$ . So that  $H(z)$  has no nonzero finite Borel exceptional value.

**Theorem 9.** Let  $f$  be a transcendental entire function of finite order and let  $a_i, c_i$  be constants satisfying  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \neq 0$ . Set  $H(z) = f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$ .

If there exists an infinite sequence  $\{z_n\}$  satisfying  $f(z_n) = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z_n + c_i) = 0$ , then  $H(z)$  takes every value  $a \in \mathbb{C}$  (including  $a = 0$ ) infinitely often.

**Theorem 10.** Let  $f$  be a transcendental entire function of finite order and let  $c_i$  be distinct constants satisfying  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \neq 0$ . Set  $H(z) = f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$ , where  $k \geq 2$  is an integer.

- (i) If  $f(z)$  has only finitely many zeros and  $\sigma(f) \neq 1$  or has infinitely many zeros, then  $H(z)$  has infinitely many zeros.
- (ii) If  $f(z)$  has only finitely many zeros and  $\sigma(f) = 1$ , then  $H(z)$  has only finitely many zeros.

**Example 11.** An entire function  $f(z) = e^{z^2}$  satisfies Theorem 8 (iii), it has Borel exceptional value  $0$ , and let  $a_1 = a_2 = 1, a_3 = -2, a_4 = \dots = a_k = 0, c_1 = 1, c_2 = -1$ , and  $c_3 = 0$ . Then

$$H(z) = f(z)(f(z+1) + f(z-1) - 2f(z)) = e^{2z^2} \left( \left( e + \frac{1}{e} \right) e^{2z} - 2 \right) \tag{2}$$

has also the Borel exceptional value  $0$  since  $\lambda(H) = 1 < \sigma(H) = 2$ .

Simultaneously,  $f(z) = e^{z^2}$  also satisfies Theorem 10(i), although  $f(z)$  has no zero, we can also get  $H(z)$  has infinitely many zeros since  $\sigma(f) \neq 1$ .

**Example 12.** An entire function  $f(z) = e^z + 1$  satisfies Theorem 8(ii), it has Borel exceptional value  $1$ , and let  $a_1 = a_2 = 1, a_3 = -2, a_4 = \dots = a_k = 0, c_1 = 1, c_2 = -1$ , and  $c_3 = 0$ . Then

$$H(z) = f(z)(f(z+1) + f(z-1) - 2f(z)) = e^z(e^z + 1) \left( e + \frac{1}{e} - 2 \right) \tag{3}$$

has no finite Borel exceptional value.

## 2. Some Lemmas

**Lemma 13** (see [9]). Let  $f(z)$  be a meromorphic function of finite order,  $c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$ ,  $\delta < 1$ . Then

$$m \left( r, \frac{f(z+c)}{f(z)} \right) = o \left( \frac{T(r+|c|, f)}{r^\delta} \right) = S(r, f), \tag{4}$$

for all  $r$  outside an exceptional set of finite logarithmic measures.

**Lemma 14** (see [7]). Let  $f(z)$  be a nonconstant, finite-order meromorphic solution of

$$f^n P_1(z, f) = Q_1(z, f), \tag{5}$$

where  $P_1(z, f), Q_1(z, f)$  are difference polynomials in  $f(z)$  with meromorphic coefficients  $a_j(z)$  ( $j = 1, \dots, s$ ), and let  $\delta < 1$ . If the degree of  $Q_1(r, f)$  as a polynomial in  $f(z)$  and its shifts is at most  $n$ , then

$$m(r, P_1(z, f)) = o \left( \frac{T(r+|c|, f)}{r^\delta} \right) + o(T(r, f)) + O \left( \sum_{j=1}^s m(r, a_j) \right) = S(r, f) + O \left( \sum_{j=1}^s m(r, a_j) \right), \tag{6}$$

for all  $r$  outside an exceptional set of finite logarithmic measures.

**Lemma 15** (see [3]). Let  $f_j(z)$  ( $j = 1, \dots, n$ ) ( $n \geq 2$ ) be meromorphic functions, and let  $g_j(z)$  ( $j = 1, \dots, n$ ) be entire functions that satisfy the following:

- (i)  $\sum_{j=1}^n f_j(z)e^{g_j(z)} \equiv 0$ ;
- (ii) when  $1 \leq j < k \leq n$ ,  $g_j(z) - g_k(z)$  is not a constant;
- (iii) when  $1 \leq j \leq n$ ,  $1 \leq h < k \leq n$ ,

$$T(r, f_j) = o\{T(r, e^{g_h - g_k})\} \quad (r \rightarrow \infty, r \notin E), \quad (7)$$

where  $E \subset (1, \infty)$  is of finite linear measure or finite logarithmic measure. Then  $f_j(z) \equiv 0$  ( $j = 1, \dots, n$ ).

**Lemma 16.** Let  $f$  be a transcendental entire function of finite order and let  $a_i, c_i$  be constants satisfying  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \not\equiv 0$ . Then  $H_n(z) = f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$  ( $n \geq 1$ ) is transcendental.

*Proof.* If  $H_n(z) \equiv 0$ , then  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \equiv 0$  which contradicts our condition  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \not\equiv 0$ . Now we suppose that

$$H_n(z) = f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) = P(z), \quad (8)$$

where  $P(z) \not\equiv 0$  is a polynomial. Applying Lemma 14 to (8), we obtain that

$$T\left(r, \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)\right) = m\left(r, \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)\right) = S(r, f). \quad (9)$$

Thus by (8), (9), and the first fundamental theorem of Nevanlinna theory, we obtain that

$$T(r, f(z)^n) = T\left(r, \frac{P(z)}{\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)}\right) = S(r, f). \quad (10)$$

Since  $n \geq 1$ , this is a contradiction. Hence  $H_n(z)$  is a transcendental entire function.  $\square$

**Lemma 17** (see [17]). Let  $f(z)$  be a nonconstant finite-order meromorphic function and let  $c \neq 0$  be an arbitrary complex number. Then

$$T(r, f(z + c)) = T(r, f(z)) + S(r, f). \quad (11)$$

### 3. Proof of Theorems 5 and 10

*Proof of Theorem 5.* (i) If  $f(z)$  has infinitely many zeros, then  $H_n(z)$  has infinitely many zeros since  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$  is an entire function and  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \not\equiv 0$ .

Now we suppose that  $f(z)$  has only finitely many zeros and  $\sigma(f) \neq 1$ . Thus since  $f$  is transcendental,  $f(z)$  can be written as follows:

$$f(z) = g(z)e^{h(z)}, \quad (12)$$

where  $g(z) (\neq 0)$ ,  $h(z)$  are polynomials,  $\deg h(z) \geq 2$ . Thus

$$f(z + c_i) = g(z + c_i)e^{h(z+c_i)}. \quad (13)$$

Now we suppose that  $H_n(z)$  has only finitely many zeros. By Lemma 16, we see that  $H_n(z)$  is transcendental. So  $H_n(z)$  can be written as

$$\begin{aligned} H_n(z) &= g(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i g(z + c_i) e^{nh(z)+h(z+c_i)} \\ &= g_1(z)e^{h_1(z)}, \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

where  $g_1(z) (\neq 0)$ ,  $h_1(z)$  are polynomials,  $\deg h_1(z) \geq 1$ . Set

$$h(z) = b_m z^m + b_{m-1} z^{m-1} + \dots + b_0, \quad b_m \neq 0, \quad (15)$$

where  $b_m, \dots, b_0$  are constants and  $m \geq 2$ . Thus

$$\begin{aligned} h(z + c_i) &= b_m z^m + (b_m m c_i + b_{m-1}) z^{m-1} \\ &\quad + b'_{m-2} z^{m-2} + \dots + b'_0, \end{aligned} \quad (16)$$

where  $b'_{m-2}, \dots, b'_0$  are constants. Since  $m \geq 2$  and

$$h(z + c_i) - h(z + c_j) = b_m m (c_i - c_j) z^{m-1} + \dots \quad (i \neq j), \quad (17)$$

we see that  $nh(z) + h(z + c_i) - (nh(z) + h(z + c_j))$  ( $i \neq j$ ) are not constants.

*Case 1.* If for any  $i$ ,  $nh(z) + h(z + c_i) - h_1(z)$  are not constants, then by Lemma 15 and (14), we see that

$$a_i g(z)^n g(z + c_i) \equiv 0, \quad g_1(z) \equiv 0, \quad (18)$$

which is a contradiction.

*Case 2.* If there exists a  $j$  satisfying  $nh(z) + h(z + c_j) - h_1(z) = \delta$  where  $\delta$  is a constant, then by (14), we have

$$\begin{aligned} &(g(z)^n a_j g(z + c_j) - e^{-\delta} g_1(z)) e^{nh(z)+h(z+c_j)} \\ &\quad + g(z)^n \sum_{i \neq j} a_i g(z + c_i) e^{nh(z)+h(z+c_i)} = 0. \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

By (19), Lemma 15, and  $k \geq 2$ , we obtain that

$$\begin{aligned} a_i g(z)^n g(z + c_i) &\equiv 0 \quad (i \neq j), \\ g(z)^n a_j g(z + c_j) - e^{-\delta} g_1(z) &\equiv 0, \end{aligned} \quad (20)$$

which is also a contradiction. Hence,  $H_n(z)$  has infinitely many zeros.

(ii) Suppose that  $f(z)$  has only finitely many zeros and  $\sigma(f) = 1$ . Then  $f(z)$  can be written as

$$f(z) = g_2(z)e^{bz+d}, \quad (21)$$

where  $g_2(z) (\neq 0)$  is a polynomial and  $b (\neq 0), d$  are constants. Thus

$$f(z + c_i) = g_2(z + c_i) e^{bc_i} e^{bz+d},$$

$$H_n(z) = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i g_2(z)^n g_2(z + c_i) e^{bc_i} e^{(n+1)(bz+d)}. \tag{22}$$

By the condition  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z+c_i) \neq 0$ , we see that  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i g_2(z+c_i) e^{bc_i} \neq 0$ .

Hence  $H_n(z)$  has only finitely many zeros.

(iii) Case 1.  $\sigma(f) = 0$ . From  $0 \leq \lambda(H_n(z) - \alpha(z)) \leq \sigma(H_n(z) - \alpha(z)) \leq \sigma(f) = 0$ , we get  $\lambda(H_n(z) - \alpha(z)) = \sigma(H_n(z) - \alpha(z)) = \sigma(f) = 0$ . If  $H_n(z) - \alpha(z)$  has only finitely zeros, then  $H_n(z) - \alpha(z)$  can be written as

$$H_n(z) - \alpha(z) = p(z), \quad \text{i.e., } H_n(z) = p(z) + \alpha(z), \tag{23}$$

where  $p(z)$  is a polynomial. By using a similar method as in the proof of Lemma 16, we get a contradiction. Thus  $H_n(z) - \alpha(z)$  has infinitely many zeros.

Case 2.  $\sigma(f) > 0$ . Suppose on contrary to the assertion that  $\lambda(H_n(z) - \alpha(z)) < \sigma(f)$ . If  $f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) - \alpha(z) \equiv 0$ , that is,  $f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \equiv \alpha(z)$ . By using a similar method as in the proof of Lemma 16, we get a contradiction. So we have  $f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) - \alpha(z) \neq 0$ . Thus, by Hadamard's theorem,  $H_n(z) - \alpha(z)$  can be written as

$$H_n(z) - \alpha(z) = f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) - \alpha(z)$$

$$= \frac{P(z)}{Q(z)} e^{h(z)}, \tag{24}$$

where  $h(z)$  is a polynomial and  $P(z) (\neq 0), Q(z) (\neq 0)$  are the canonical products formed by zeros and poles of  $H_n(z) - \alpha(z)$ , respectively, such that

$$\lambda(P(z)) = \sigma(P(z)) = \lambda(H_n(z) - \alpha(z)) < \sigma(f) = \sigma. \tag{25}$$

Since  $T(r, \alpha(z)) = S(r, f)$ , we get that

$$\lambda(Q(z)) = \sigma(Q(z)) = \lambda\left(\frac{1}{\alpha(z)}\right) < \sigma(f) = \sigma. \tag{26}$$

We set  $g(z) = P(z)/Q(z)$ ; then from (25) and (26), we get

$$\sigma(g) = \max\{\sigma(P(z)), \sigma(Q(z))\} < \sigma(f) = \sigma. \tag{27}$$

Differentiating (24) and eliminating  $e^{h(z)}$ , we get

$$f(z)^{n-1} F(z, f) = \alpha'(z) g(z) - \alpha(z) (g(z) h'(z) + g'(z)), \tag{28}$$

where

$$F(z, f) = n f'(z) g(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i)$$

$$+ f(z) g(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f'(z + c_i)$$

$$- (g(z) h'(z) + g'(z)) f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i). \tag{29}$$

Case 2.1.  $F(z, f) \equiv 0$ . Then from (28), we have

$$\alpha'(z) g(z) - \alpha(z) (g(z) h'(z) + g'(z)) \equiv 0. \tag{30}$$

By integrating, we have

$$\alpha(z) = c g(z) e^{h(z)}, \tag{31}$$

where  $c$  is a nonzero constant. From (24) and (31), we have

$$f(z)^n \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) = \left(1 + \frac{1}{c}\right) \alpha(z). \tag{32}$$

By using a similar method as in the proof of Lemma 16, we get a contradiction.

Case 2.2.  $F(z, f) \neq 0$ . Let

$$F^*(z, f) = \frac{F(z)}{f(z)^2} = n \frac{f'(z)}{f(z)} g(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i \frac{f(z + c_i)}{f(z)}$$

$$+ g(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i \frac{f'(z + c_i)}{f(z + c_i)} \cdot \frac{f(z + c_i)}{f(z)}$$

$$- (g(z) h'(z) + g'(z)) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i \frac{f(z + c_i)}{f(z)}. \tag{33}$$

Then from (28), we have

$$f(z)^{n+1} F^*(z, f) = \alpha'(z) g(z) - \alpha(z) (g(z) h'(z) + g'(z)). \tag{34}$$

From Lemma 13 and Lemma 14, we have

$$m(r, f(z)^k F^*(z, f)) \leq S(r, f) + O(m(r, g))$$

$$+ O\left(\sum_{i=1}^k m\left(r, \frac{f'(z + c_i)}{f(z + c_i)}\right)\right), \quad k = 1, 2. \tag{35}$$

Now for any given  $\varepsilon$  ( $0 < \varepsilon < 1$ ), we obtain from Lemma 17 and (27) that

$$m\left(r, \frac{f'(z + c_i)}{f(z + c_i)}\right) = S(r, f(z + c_i))$$

$$= S(r, f(z)), T(r, g) = O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}). \tag{36}$$

It follows from (35) and (36) that

$$m(r, f(z)F^*(z, f)) = O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}) + S(r, f), \tag{37}$$

$$m(r, f(z)^2F^*(z, f)) = O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}) + S(r, f). \tag{38}$$

We obtain from the definition of  $F(z, f)$  that

$$N(r, F(z, f)) = O(N(r, g(z))) = O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}). \tag{39}$$

Thus from (38) and (39), we have

$$\begin{aligned} T(r, f(z)^2F^*(z, f)) &= T(r, F(z, f)) \\ &= O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}) + S(r, f). \end{aligned} \tag{40}$$

Note that a zero of  $f(z)$  which is not a pole of  $g(z)$  is a pole of  $f(z)F^*(z, f)$  with the multiplicity at most 1, so from (34) and (27) we get that, for  $\varepsilon (> 0)$  sufficiently small,

$$\begin{aligned} &(n-1)N\left(r, \frac{1}{f(z)}\right) \\ &\leq N\left(r, \frac{1}{\alpha'(z)g(z) - \alpha(z)(g(z)h'(z) + g'(z))}\right) \\ &\quad + O(N(r, g(z))) = O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}) + S(r, f). \end{aligned} \tag{41}$$

Hence from (33) and the above formula, we have

$$\begin{aligned} N(r, f(z)F^*(z, f)) &= O\left(N\left(r, \frac{1}{f(z)}\right) + N(r, g(z))\right) \\ &= O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}) + S(r, f). \end{aligned} \tag{42}$$

It follows from (37) and (42) that

$$T(r, f(z)F^*(z, f)) = O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}) + S(r, f). \tag{43}$$

Therefore, from (40) and (43), we have

$$T(r, f(z)) = O(r^{\sigma-\varepsilon}) + S(r, f), \tag{44}$$

which contradicts the assumption that  $f(z)$  is a transcendental entire function of finite order  $\sigma$ . This completes the proof of Theorem 5.

By using the same methods as in the proof of Theorem 5 (i) and (ii), we complete the proof of Theorem 10.  $\square$

#### 4. Proof of Theorem 8

*Proof.* Firstly, we prove (ii) and (iii). (ii) Suppose that  $d (\neq 0)$  is the Borel exceptional value of  $f(z)$ . Then  $f(z)$  can be written as follows:

$$f(z) = d + p(z)e^{\alpha z^k}, \tag{45}$$

where  $k$  is a positive integer,  $\alpha (\neq 0)$  is a constant, and  $p(z) (\neq 0)$  is an entire function satisfying

$$\sigma(p) < \sigma(f) = k. \tag{46}$$

Thus

$$f(z + c_i) = d + p(z + c_i)p_i(z)e^{\alpha z^k}, \tag{47}$$

where  $p_i (\neq 0)$  is an entire function satisfying  $\sigma(p_i) = k - 1$ . So by using  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i = 0$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} H(z) &= \sum_{i=1}^k a_i (d + p(z)e^{\alpha z^k}) (d + p(z + c_i)p_i(z)e^{\alpha z^k}) \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^k da_i p(z + c_i)p_i(z)e^{\alpha z^k} \\ &\quad + \sum_{i=1}^k a_i p(z)p(z + c_i)p_i(z)e^{2\alpha z^k}. \end{aligned} \tag{48}$$

Since  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z + c_i) \neq 0$ , we see that

$$\sum_{i=1}^k a_i p(z + c_i)p_i(z) \neq 0. \tag{49}$$

By (48) and (49), we see that

$$\sigma(H) = \sigma(f) = k. \tag{50}$$

If  $H(z)$  has the Borel exceptional value  $d^*$ , then

$$H(z) = d^* + p^*(z)e^{\beta z^k}, \tag{51}$$

where  $\beta (\neq 0)$  is a constant and  $p^*(z) (\neq 0)$  is an entire function satisfying

$$\sigma(p^*(z)) < \sigma(H) = k. \tag{52}$$

By (48) and (51), we have

$$\begin{aligned} &\sum_{i=1}^k da_i p(z + c_i)p_i(z)e^{\alpha z^k} + \sum_{i=1}^k a_i p(z)p(z + c_i)p_i(z)e^{2\alpha z^k} \\ &\quad - p^*(z)e^{\beta z^k} - d^* = 0. \end{aligned} \tag{53}$$

*Case 1.* If  $\beta \neq 2\alpha$  and  $\beta \neq \alpha$ , then by Lemma 15 and (53), we can obtain that

$$\sum_{i=1}^k da_i p(z + c_i)p_i(z) \equiv 0. \tag{54}$$

This contradicts with (49).

*Case 2.* If  $\beta = 2\alpha$  or  $\beta = \alpha$ , then using the same method as above, we can also obtain a contradiction. Hence  $H(z)$  has no Borel exceptional value.

(iii) Suppose that  $d = 0$  is the Borel exceptional value of  $f(z)$ . Using the same method as above, we obtain

$$H(z) = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i p(z)p(z + c_i)p_i(z)e^{2\alpha z^k}. \tag{55}$$

From (49) and

$$\sigma \left( \sum_{i=1}^k a_i p(z) p(z+c_i) p_i(z) \right) < k, \quad (56)$$

we see that 0 is the finite Borel exceptional value of  $H(z)$ . Thus,  $H(z)$  has no nonzero finite Borel exceptional value.

Finally, we prove (i). By the assertion of (ii) and (iii), we see that if  $f(z)$  has the finite Borel exceptional value, then any nonzero finite value  $a$  must not be the Borel exceptional value of  $H(z)$ . Hence  $H(z)$  takes the value  $a$  infinitely often. By (50), we obtain  $\lambda(H-a) = \sigma(H) = \sigma(f)$ .  $\square$

## 5. Proof of Theorem 9

*Proof.* Clearly, if  $a = 0$ , then  $H(z)$  has infinitely many zeros since  $\sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z+c_i) (\neq 0)$  is an entire function and  $f(z)$  has infinitely many zeros.

Now we suppose that  $a \neq 0$ . Suppose that  $H(z)-a$  has only finitely many zeros. Then  $H(z)-a$  can be written as follows:

$$H(z) - a = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z) f(z+c_i) - a = p(z) e^{q(z)}, \quad (57)$$

where  $p(z), q(z)$  are polynomials. By Lemma 16, we see that  $p(z) \neq 0$ ,  $\deg q(z) \geq 1$ . Differentiating (57) and eliminating  $e^{q(z)}$ , we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{(f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z+c_i))'}{f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z+c_i)} &= \frac{p'(z) + p(z)q'(z)}{p(z)} \\ &\times \left( 1 - \frac{a}{f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z+c_i)} \right). \end{aligned} \quad (58)$$

Since there exists an infinite sequence  $\{z_n\}$  satisfying  $f(z_n) = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z_n+c_i) = 0$ , we see that there is a sufficiently large point  $z_0$  such that  $f(z_0) = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z_0+c_i) = 0$  and  $p'(z_0) + p(z_0)q'(z_0) \neq 0$ ,  $p(z_0) \neq 0$  at the same time.

From observation, we have the following:  $(f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z+c_i))' / f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z+c_i)$  has a simple pole at  $z_0$  and  $a / f(z) \sum_{i=1}^k a_i f(z+c_i)$  has pole at  $z_0$  of multiplicity at least 2. This shows that (58) is a contradiction. Hence  $H(z)$  takes every value  $a$  infinitely often.  $\square$

## Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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