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# Levin's type boundary behaviors for functions harmonic and admitting certain lower bounds

Zhiqiang Li[1] and Mohamed Vetro[2*]

[*]Correspondence:
m.vetro@hotmail.com
[2]Department of Mathematics, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, 451 10, Greece
Full list of author information is available at the end of the article

**Abstract**

In this paper, we prove Levin's type boundary behaviors for functions harmonic and admitting certain lower bounds, which extend Pan, Qiao and Deng's inequalities for analytic functions in a half-space.

**Keywords:** Levin's type boundary behaviors; harmonic function; half-space

## 1 Introduction and results

Let $\mathbf{R}$ and $\mathbf{R}_+$ be the set of all real numbers and the set of all positive real numbers, respectively. We denote by $\mathbf{R}^n$ $(n \geq 2)$ the $n$-dimensional Euclidean space. A point in $\mathbf{R}^n$ is denoted by $P = (X, x_n)$, $X = (x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_{n-1})$. The Euclidean distance between two points $P$ and $Q$ in $\mathbf{R}^n$ is denoted by $|P - Q|$. Also $|P - O|$ with the origin $O$ of $\mathbf{R}^n$ is simply denoted by $|P|$. The boundary and the closure of a set $S$ in $\mathbf{R}^n$ are denoted by $\partial S$ and $\overline{S}$, respectively.

We introduce a system of spherical coordinates $(r, \Theta)$, $\Theta = (\theta_1, \theta_2, \ldots, \theta_{n-1})$, in $\mathbf{R}^n$ which are related to Cartesian coordinates $(x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_{n-1}, x_n)$ by $x_n = r\cos\theta_1$.

The unit sphere and the upper half-unit sphere in $\mathbf{R}^n$ are denoted by $\mathbf{S}^{n-1}$ and $\mathbf{S}_+^{n-1}$, respectively. For simplicity, a point $(1, \Theta)$ on $\mathbf{S}^{n-1}$ and the set $\{\Theta; (1, \Theta) \in \Omega\}$ for a set $\Omega$, $\Omega \subset \mathbf{S}^{n-1}$, are often identified with $\Theta$ and $\Omega$, respectively. For two sets $\Xi \subset \mathbf{R}_+$ and $\Omega \subset \mathbf{S}^{n-1}$, the set $\{(r, \Theta) \in \mathbf{R}^n; r \in \Xi, (1, \Theta) \in \Omega\}$ in $\mathbf{R}^n$ is simply denoted by $\Xi \times \Omega$. In particular, the half-space $\mathbf{R}_+ \times \mathbf{S}_+^{n-1} = \{(X, x_n) \in \mathbf{R}^n; x_n > 0\}$ will be denoted by $T_n$.

For $P \in \mathbf{R}^n$ and $r > 0$, let $B(P, r)$ denote the open ball with center at $P$ and radius $r$ in $\mathbf{R}^n$. $S_r = \partial B(O, r)$. By $C_n(\Omega)$, we denote the set $\mathbf{R}_+ \times \Omega$ in $\mathbf{R}^n$ with the domain $\Omega$ on $\mathbf{S}^{n-1}$. We call it a cone. Then $T_n$ is a special cone obtained by putting $\Omega = \mathbf{S}_+^{n-1}$. We denote the sets $I \times \Omega$ and $I \times \partial\Omega$ with an interval on $\mathbf{R}$ by $C_n(\Omega; I)$ and $S_n(\Omega; I)$. By $S_n(\Omega; r)$ we denote $C_n(\Omega) \cap S_r$. By $S_n(\Omega)$ we denote $S_n(\Omega; (0, +\infty))$ which is $\partial C_n(\Omega) - \{O\}$.

We use the standard notations $u^+ = \max\{u, 0\}$ and $u^- = -\min\{u, 0\}$. Further, we denote by $w_n$ the surface area $2\pi^{n/2}\{\Gamma(n/2)\}^{-1}$ of $\mathbf{S}^{n-1}$, by $\partial/\partial n_Q$ the differentiation at $Q$ along the inward normal into $C_n(\Omega)$, by $dS_r$ the $(n-1)$-dimensional volume elements induced by the Euclidean metric on $S_r$ and by $dw$ the elements of the Euclidean volume in $\mathbf{R}^n$.

Let $\Omega$ be a domain on $\mathbf{S}^{n-1}$ with smooth boundary. Consider the Dirichlet problem

$$(\Lambda_n + \lambda)\varphi = 0 \quad \text{on } \Omega,$$

$$\varphi = 0 \quad \text{on } \partial\Omega,$$

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where $\Lambda_n$ is the spherical part of the Laplace operator

$$\Delta_n = \frac{n-1}{r}\frac{\partial}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial r^2} + \frac{\Lambda_n}{r^2}.$$

We denote the least positive eigenvalue of this boundary value problem by $\lambda$ and the normalized positive eigenfunction corresponding to $\lambda$ by $\varphi(\Theta)$,

$$\int_\Omega \varphi^2(\Theta)\,dS_1 = 1.$$

In order to ensure the existence of $\lambda$ and smooth $\varphi(\Theta)$, we put a rather strong assumption on $\Omega$: if $n \geq 3$, then $\Omega$ is a $C^{2,\alpha}$-domain ($0 < \alpha < 1$) on $\mathbf{S}^{n-1}$ surrounded by a finite number of mutually disjoint closed hypersurfaces for the definition of $C^{2,\alpha}$-domain. Then $\varphi \in C^2(\overline{\Omega})$ and $\partial\varphi/\partial n > 0$ on $\partial\Omega$ (here and below, $\partial/\partial n$ denotes differentiation along the interior normal).

We note that each function $r^{\aleph^\pm}\varphi(\Theta)$ is harmonic in $C_n(\Omega)$, belongs to the class $C^2(C_n(\Omega)\backslash\{O\})$ and vanishes on $S_n(\Omega)$, where

$$2\aleph^\pm = -n + 2 \pm \sqrt{(n-2)^2 + 4\lambda}.$$

In the sequel, for the sake of brevity, we shall write $\chi$ instead of $\aleph^+ - \aleph^-$. If $\Omega = \mathbf{S}_+^{n-1}$, then $\aleph^+ = 1$, $\aleph^- = 1 - n$ and $\varphi(\Theta) = (2nw_n^{-1})^{1/2}\cos\theta_1$.

Let $G_\Omega(P,Q)$ ($P = (r,\Theta), Q = (t,\Phi) \in C_n(\Omega)$) be the Green function of $C_n(\Omega)$. Then the ordinary Poisson kernel relative to $C_n(\Omega)$ is defined by

$$\mathcal{PI}_\Omega(P,Q) = \frac{1}{c_n}\frac{\partial}{\partial n_Q}G_\Omega(P,Q),$$

where $Q \in S_n(\Omega)$, $c_n = 2\pi$ if $n = 2$ and $c_n = (n-2)w_n$ if $n \geq 3$.

The estimate we deal with has a long history which can be traced back to Levin's type boundary behaviors for functions harmonic from below (see, for example, Levin [1], p.209).

**Theorem A** *Let $A_1$ be a constant, $u(z)$ ($|z| = R$) be harmonic on $T_2$ and continuous on $\partial T_2$. Suppose that*

$$u(z) \leq A_1 R^\rho, \quad z \in T_2, R > 1, \rho > 1$$

*and*

$$\bigl|u(z)\bigr| \leq A_1, \quad R \leq 1, z \in \overline{T}_2.$$

*Then*

$$u(z) \geq -A_1 A_2\bigl(1 + R^\rho\bigr)\sin^{-1}\alpha,$$

*where $z = Re^{i\alpha} \in T_2$ and $A_2$ is a constant independent of $A_1$, $R$, $\alpha$ and the function $u(z)$.*

Recently, Pan *et al.* [2] considered Theorem A in the $n$-dimensional case and obtained the following result.

**Theorem B** *Let $A_3$ be a constant, $u(P)$ ($|P| = R$) be harmonic on $T_n$ and continuous on $\overline{T}_n$. If*

$$u(P) \leq A_3 R^{\rho}, \quad P \in T_n, R > 1, \rho > n-1 \tag{1.1}$$

*and*

$$\left|u(P)\right| \leq A_3, \quad R \leq 1, P \in \overline{T}_n, \tag{1.2}$$

*then*

$$u(P) \geq -A_3 A_4 \left(1 + R^{\rho}\right) \cos^{1-n} \theta_1,$$

*where $P \in T_n$ and $A_4$ is a constant independent of $A_3$, $R$, $\theta_1$ and the function $u(P)$.*

Now we have the following.

**Theorem 1** *Let $K$ be a constant, $u(P)$ ($P = (R, \Theta)$) be harmonic on $C_n(\Omega)$ and continuous on $\overline{C_n(\Omega)}$. If*

$$u(P) \leq K R^{\rho(R)}, \quad P = (R, \Theta) \in C_n\big(\Omega; (1, \infty)\big), \rho(R) > \aleph^{+} \tag{1.3}$$

*and*

$$u(P) \geq -K, \quad R \leq 1, P = (R, \Theta) \in \overline{C_n(\Omega)}, \tag{1.4}$$

*then*

$$u(P) \geq -KM\big(1 + \rho(R) R^{\rho(R)}\big) \varphi^{1-n} \theta,$$

*where $P \in C_n(\Omega)$, $\rho(R)$ is nondecreasing in $[1, +\infty)$ and $M$ is a constant independent of $K$, $R$, $\varphi(\theta)$ and the function $u(P)$.*

By taking $\rho(R) \equiv \rho$, we obtain the following corollary, which generalizes Theorem B to the conical case.

**Corollary** *Let $K$ be a constant, $u(P)$ ($P = (R, \Theta)$) be harmonic on $C_n(\Omega)$ and continuous on $\overline{C_n(\Omega)}$. If*

$$u(P) \leq K R^{\rho}, \quad P = (R, \Theta) \in C_n\big(\Omega; (1, \infty)\big), \rho > \aleph^{+}$$

*and*

$$u(P) \geq -K, \quad R \leq 1, P = (R, \Theta) \in \overline{C_n(\Omega)},$$

*then*

$$u(P) \geq -KM\bigl(1 + R^{\rho}\bigr)\varphi^{1-n}\theta,$$

*where* $P \in C_n(\Omega)$, $M$ *is a constant independent of* $K$, $R$, $\varphi(\theta)$ *and the function* $u(P)$.

**Remark** (see [2]) From corollary, we know that conditions (1.1) and (1.2) may be replaced with weaker conditions

$$u(P) \leq A_3 R^{\rho}, \quad P \in T_n, R > 1, \rho > 1$$

and

$$u(P) \geq -A_3, \quad R \leq 1, P \in \overline{T}_n,$$

respectively.

## 2 Lemma

Throughout this paper, let $M$ denote various constants independent of the variables in question, which may be different from line to line.

**Lemma 1** (see [3–5])

$$\mathcal{PI}_{\Omega}(P,Q) \leq M r^{\aleph^-} t^{\aleph^+ - 1}\varphi(\Theta)\frac{\partial\varphi(\Phi)}{\partial n_{\Phi}} \tag{2.1}$$

*for any* $P = (r,\Theta) \in C_n(\Omega)$ *and any* $Q = (t,\Phi) \in S_n(\Omega)$ *satisfying* $0 < \frac{t}{r} \leq \frac{4}{5}$;

$$\mathcal{PI}_{\Omega}(P,Q) \leq M\frac{\varphi(\Theta)}{t^{n-1}}\frac{\partial\varphi(\Phi)}{\partial n_{\Phi}} + M\frac{r\varphi(\Theta)}{|P-Q|^{n}}\frac{\partial\varphi(\Phi)}{\partial n_{\Phi}} \tag{2.2}$$

*for any* $P = (r,\Theta) \in C_n(\Omega)$ *and any* $Q = (t,\Phi) \in S_n(\Omega;(\frac{4}{5}r,\frac{5}{4}r))$.

*Let* $G_{\Omega,R}(P,Q)$ *be the Green function of* $C_n(\Omega,(0,R))$. *Then*

$$\frac{\partial G_{\Omega,R}(P,Q)}{\partial R} \leq M r^{\aleph^+} R^{\aleph^- - 1}\varphi(\Theta)\varphi(\Phi), \tag{2.3}$$

*where* $P = (r,\Theta) \in C_n(\Omega)$ *and* $Q = (R,\Phi) \in S_n(\Omega;R)$.

## 3 Proof of theorem

Applied Carleman's formula (see [6–8]) to $u = u^+ - u^-$ gives

$$\begin{aligned} &\chi\int_{S_n(\Omega;R)}\frac{u^+\varphi}{R^{1-\aleph^-}}\,dS_R + \int_{S_n(\Omega;(1,R))}u^+\left(\frac{1}{t^{-\aleph^-}} - \frac{t^{\aleph^+}}{R^{\chi}}\right)\frac{\partial\varphi}{\partial n}\,d\sigma_Q + d_1 + \frac{d_2}{R^{\chi}} \\ &\quad = \chi\int_{S_n(\Omega;R)}\frac{u^-\varphi}{R^{1-\aleph^-}}\,dS_R + \int_{S_n(\Omega;(1,R))}u^-\left(\frac{1}{t^{-\aleph^-}} - \frac{t^{\aleph^+}}{R^{\chi}}\right)\frac{\partial\varphi}{\partial n}\,d\sigma_Q. \end{aligned} \tag{3.1}$$

It immediately follows from (1.3) that

$$\chi\int_{S_n(\Omega;R)}\frac{u^+\varphi}{R^{1-\aleph^-}}\,dS_R \leq MKR^{\rho(R)-\aleph^+} \tag{3.2}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}
&\int_{S_n(\Omega;(1,R))} u^+\left(\frac{1}{t^{-\aleph^-}}-\frac{t^{\aleph^+}}{R^\chi}\right)\frac{\partial\varphi}{\partial n}\,d\sigma_Q\\
&\quad\le MK\int_1^R\left(r^{\rho(r)-\aleph^+-1}-\frac{r^{\rho(r)-\aleph^--1}}{R^\chi}\right)\frac{\partial\varphi}{\partial n}\,dr\\
&\quad\le MKR^{\rho(R)-\aleph^+}.
\end{aligned}\tag{3.3}$$

Notice that

$$d_1+\frac{d_2}{R^\chi}\le MKR^{\rho(R)-\aleph^+}.\tag{3.4}$$

Hence from (3.1), (3.2), (3.3) and (3.4) we have

$$\chi\int_{S_n(\Omega;R)}\frac{u^-\varphi}{R^{1-\aleph^-}}\,dS_R\le MKR^{\rho(R)-\aleph^+}\tag{3.5}$$

and

$$\int_{S_n(\Omega;(1,R))} u^-\left(\frac{1}{t^{-\aleph^-}}-\frac{t^{\aleph^+}}{R^\chi}\right)\frac{\partial\varphi}{\partial n}\,d\sigma_Q\le MKR^{\rho(R)-\aleph^+}.\tag{3.6}$$

And (3.6) gives

$$\begin{aligned}
&\int_{S_n(\Omega;(1,R))} u^-t^{\aleph^-}\frac{\partial\varphi}{\partial n}\,d\sigma_Q\\
&\quad\le MK\frac{(\rho(R)+1)^\chi}{(\rho(R)+1)^\chi-(\rho(R))^\chi}\left(\frac{\rho(R)+1}{\rho(R)}R\right)^{\rho(\frac{\rho(R)+1}{\rho(R)}R)-\aleph^+}.
\end{aligned}$$

Thus

$$\int_{S_n(\Omega;(1,R))} u^-t^{\aleph^-}\frac{\partial\varphi}{\partial n}\,d\sigma_Q\le MK\rho(R)R^{\rho(R)-\aleph^+}.\tag{3.7}$$

By the Riesz decomposition theorem (see [7]), for any $P=(r,\Theta)\in C_n(\Omega;(0,R))$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
-u(P)={}&\int_{S_n(\Omega;(0,R))}\mathcal{PI}_\Omega(P,Q)-u(Q)\,d\sigma_Q\\
&+\int_{S_n(\Omega;R)}\frac{\partial G_{\Omega,R}(P,Q)}{\partial R}-u(Q)\,dS_R.
\end{aligned}\tag{3.8}$$

Now we distinguish three cases.

*Case* 1. $P=(r,\Theta)\in C_n(\Omega;(\frac{5}{4},\infty))$ and $R=\frac{5}{4}r$.

Since $-u(x)\le u^-(x)$, we obtain

$$-u(P)=\sum_{i=1}^4 I_i(P)\tag{3.9}$$

from (3.8), where

$$I_1(P) = \int_{S_n(\Omega;(0,1])} \mathcal{PI}_\Omega(P,Q) - u(Q)\,d\sigma_Q,$$

$$I_2(P) = \int_{S_n(\Omega;(1,\frac{4}{5}r])} \mathcal{PI}_\Omega(P,Q) - u(Q)\,d\sigma_Q,$$

$$I_3(P) = \int_{S_n(\Omega;(\frac{4}{5}r,R))} \mathcal{PI}_\Omega(P,Q) - u(Q)\,d\sigma_Q,$$

$$I_4(P) = \int_{S_n(\Omega;R)} \mathcal{PI}_\Omega(P,Q) - u(Q)\,d\sigma_Q.$$

Then from (2.1) and (3.7) we have

$$I_1(P) \le MK\varphi(\Theta) \tag{3.10}$$

and

$$I_2(P) \le MK\rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\varphi(\Theta). \tag{3.11}$$

By (2.2), we consider the inequality

$$I_3(P) \le I_{31}(P) + I_{32}(P), \tag{3.12}$$

where

$$I_{31}(P) = M\int_{S_n(\Omega;(\frac{4}{5}r,R))} \frac{-u(Q)\varphi(\Theta)}{t^{n-1}}\frac{\partial\varphi(\Phi)}{\partial n_\Phi}\,d\sigma_Q$$

and

$$I_{32}(P) = Mr\varphi(\Theta)\int_{S_n(\Omega;(\frac{4}{5}r,R))} \frac{-u(Q)r\varphi(\Theta)}{|P-Q|^n}\frac{\partial\varphi(\Phi)}{\partial n_\Phi}\,d\sigma_Q.$$

We first have

$$I_{31}(P) \le MK\rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\varphi(\Theta) \tag{3.13}$$

from (3.7). Next, we shall estimate $I_{32}(P)$. Take a sufficiently small positive number $k$ such that

$$S_n\left(\Omega;\left(\frac{4}{5}r,R\right)\right) \subset B\left(P,\frac{1}{2}r\right)$$

for any $P = (r,\Theta) \in \Pi(k)$, where

$$\Pi(k) = \left\{P = (r,\Theta) \in C_n(\Omega);\ \inf_{(1,z)\in\partial\Omega}\left|(1,\Theta)-(1,z)\right| < k, 0 < r < \infty\right\},$$

and divide $C_n(\Omega)$ into two sets $\Pi(k)$ and $C_n(\Omega) - \Pi(k)$.

If $P = (r,\Theta) \in C_n(\Omega) - \Pi(k)$, then there exists a positive $k'$ such that $|P - Q| \geq k'r$ for any $Q \in S_n(\Omega)$, and hence

$$I_{32}(P) \leq MK\rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\varphi(\Theta), \tag{3.14}$$

which is similar to the estimate of $I_{31}(P)$.

We shall consider the case $P = (r,\Theta) \in \Pi(k)$. Now put

$$H_i(P) = \left\{Q \in S_n\left(\Omega; \left(\frac{4}{5}r, R\right)\right); 2^{i-1}\delta(P) \leq |P - Q| < 2^i\delta(P)\right\},$$

where

$$\delta(P) = \inf_{Q\in\partial C_n(\Omega)} |P - Q|.$$

Since

$$S_n(\Omega) \cap \left\{Q \in \mathbf{R}^n : |P - Q| < \delta(P)\right\} = \varnothing,$$

we have

$$I_{32}(P) = M\sum_{i=1}^{i(P)} \int_{H_i(P)} \frac{-u(Q)r\varphi(\Theta)}{|P - Q|^n} \frac{\partial\varphi(\Phi)}{\partial n_\Phi}\, d\sigma_Q,$$

where $i(P)$ is a positive integer satisfying $2^{i(P)-1}\delta(P) \leq \frac{r}{2} < 2^{i(P)}\delta(P)$.

Since $r\varphi(\Theta) \leq M\delta(P)$ $(P = (r,\Theta) \in C_n(\Omega))$, similar to the estimate of $I_{31}(P)$ we obtain

$$\int_{H_i(P)} \frac{-u(Q)r\varphi(\Theta)}{|P - Q|^n} \frac{\partial\varphi(\Phi)}{\partial n_\Phi} d\sigma_Q \leq MK\rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\varphi^{1-n}(\Theta)$$

for $i = 0, 1, 2, \ldots, i(P)$.

So

$$I_{32}(P) \leq MK\rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\varphi^{1-n}(\Theta). \tag{3.15}$$

From (3.12), (3.13), (3.14) and (3.15) we see that

$$I_3(P) \leq MK\rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\varphi^{1-n}(\Theta). \tag{3.16}$$

On the other hand, we have from (2.3) and (3.5) that

$$I_4(P) \leq MKR^{\rho(R)}\varphi(\Theta). \tag{3.17}$$

We thus obtain from (3.10), (3.11), (3.16) and (3.17) that

$$-u(P) \leq MK\left(1 + \rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\right)\varphi^{1-n}(\Theta). \tag{3.18}$$

*Case* 2. $P = (r,\Theta) \in C_n(\Omega; (\frac{4}{5}, \frac{5}{4}])$ and $R = \frac{5}{4}r$.

Equation (3.8) gives that $-u(P) = I_1(P) + I_5(P) + I_4(P)$, where $I_1(P)$ and $I_4(P)$ are defined in Case 1 and

$$I_5(P) = \int_{S_n(\Omega;(1,R))} \mathcal{PI}_\Omega(P,Q) - u(Q)\, d\sigma_Q.$$

Similar to the estimate of $I_3(P)$ in Case 1 we have

$$I_5(P) \le MK\rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\varphi^{1-n}(\Theta), \tag{3.19}$$

which together with (3.10) and (3.17) gives (3.18).

*Case* 3. $P = (r,\Theta) \in C_n(\Omega; (0, \frac{4}{5}])$.

It is evident from (1.4) that we have $-u \le K$, which also gives (3.18).

From (3.18) we finally have

$$u(P) \ge -KM\bigl(1 + \rho(R)R^{\rho(R)}\bigr)\varphi^{1-n}\theta,$$

which is the conclusion of Theorem 1.

**Competing interests**
The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Authors' contributions**
The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

**Author details**
[1]Institute of Management Science and Engineering, Henan University, Kaifeng, 475001, China. [2]Department of Mathematics, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, 451 10, Greece.

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