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# An asymptotic formula for the Koornwinder polynomials<sup>☆</sup>

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## Abstract

A formula for the large-degree asymptotics of Koornwinder's multivariate Askey–Wilson polynomials is presented. In the special case of a single variable, this asymptotic formula agrees with the known leading asymptotics of the Askey–Wilson polynomials determined by Ismail and Wilson.

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## 1. Introduction

The Koornwinder polynomials [12] are a family of basic hypergeometric orthogonal polynomials in several variables, unifying the (univariate) Askey–Wilson polynomials [1] and the (multivariate) Macdonald polynomials associated with the classical root systems [13]. The polynomials in question form the top of a hierarchy of classical orthogonal polynomials in several variables [4,5,20]; this hierarchy should be looked upon as a multivariate generalization of the celebrated Askey-scheme [1,11].

In recent years, a significant part of the theory surrounding the Askey–Wilson polynomials has been extended to the multivariate level of the Koornwinder polynomials [2,3,8,12–17,19,21]. This note aims to add further onto the current body of knowledge concerning the Koornwinder polynomials, by providing a formula describing their leading asymptotics as the degree tends to infinity. For the Askey–Wilson

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polynomials, such large-degree asymptotics was computed some time ago in [10] (leading asymptotics) and in [9] (full asymptotic expansion); for the Macdonald polynomials, the leading term of the asymptotics was determined recently in [18] (for type  $A$  root systems) and in [6] (for arbitrary *reduced* root systems). The asymptotic formula presented below follows by specialization of a more general result describing the leading asymptotics of orthogonal polynomials in several variables with hyperoctahedral symmetry (associated with the *nonreduced* root systems) [7].

In the one-variable case, our asymptotic formula coincides formally with the expression for the leading asymptotics of the Askey–Wilson polynomials due to Ismail and Wilson [10]. However, while Ismail and Wilson considered pointwise convergence, here we rather study the strong convergence of the polynomials in a Hilbert space sense. The proof of our asymptotic formula becomes particularly simple in the one-variable context and will be treated here in further detail.

## 2. Koornwinder polynomials

The hyperoctahedral group is given by the semidirect product  $\Sigma_N \ltimes (\mathbb{Z}_2)^N$  of the symmetric group of  $N$  letters  $\Sigma_N$  and the  $N$ -fold product of the cyclic group of order two  $\mathbb{Z}_2$ . The hyperoctahedral monomial symmetric functions

$$m_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_N) = \sum_{\substack{\sigma \in \Sigma_N \\ \varepsilon_j \in \{1, -1\}}} \exp(i\varepsilon_1 \lambda_1 x_{\sigma_1} + \dots + i\varepsilon_N \lambda_N x_{\sigma_N}), \quad \lambda \in \Lambda, \quad (1)$$

indexed by the partitions

$$\Lambda = \{\lambda \in \mathbb{Z}^N \mid \lambda_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_N \geq 0\}, \quad (2)$$

form a basis for the space of even- and permutation-invariant Fourier polynomials on the torus

$$\mathbb{T}_N = \frac{\mathbb{R}^N}{(2\pi\mathbb{Z})^N}. \quad (3)$$

This monomial basis inherits a partial order from the following *hyperoctahedral dominance ordering* of the partitions:

$$\forall \lambda, \mu \in \Lambda : \lambda \geq \mu \iff \lambda_1 + \dots + \lambda_k \geq \mu_1 + \dots + \mu_k, \quad \text{for } k = 1, \dots, N. \quad (4)$$

The Koornwinder polynomials arise by applying a Gram–Schmidt type procedure to the partially ordered monomial basis  $m_\lambda$ ,  $\lambda \in \Lambda$  with respect to a suitable orthogonality measure  $\Delta$  on  $\mathbb{T}_N$ .

To be more specific, let us consider the following factorized weight function on the torus  $\mathbb{T}_N$

$$\Delta(x_1, \dots, x_N) = \frac{1}{2^N N! \mathcal{C}(x_1, \dots, x_N) \mathcal{C}(-x_1, \dots, -x_N)}, \quad (5)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{C}(x_1, \dots, x_N) &= \prod_{1 \leq j < k \leq N} \frac{(te^{-i(x_j+x_k)}, te^{-i(x_j-x_k)}; q)_\infty}{(e^{-i(x_j+x_k)}, e^{-i(x_j-x_k)}; q)_\infty} \\ &\times \prod_{1 \leq j \leq N} \frac{\prod_{r=1}^4 (t_r e^{-ix_j}; q)_\infty}{(e^{-2ix_j}; q)_\infty} \end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

(with the standard conventions for the  $q$ -shifted factorials  $(z; q)_\infty := \prod_{m=0}^\infty (1 - zq^m)$  and  $(z_1, z_2, \dots, z_k; q)_\infty := (z_1; q)_\infty (z_2; q)_\infty \cdots (z_k; q)_\infty$ ). Here and below it is always assumed that the nome  $q$  and the parameters  $t$  and  $t_r, r = 1, \dots, 4$  lie in the domain

$$0 < q < 1, \quad -1 < t, t_r < 1. \tag{7}$$

These parameter restrictions ensure in particular that the weight function  $\Delta$  is positive and smooth on  $\mathbb{T}_N$ . The standard inner product of the Hilbert space  $L^2(\mathbb{T}_N, (2\pi)^{-N} \Delta d\mathbf{x})$  is given by

$$\langle f, g \rangle_\Delta = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^N} \int_{\mathbb{T}_N} f(x_1, \dots, x_N) \overline{g(x_1, \dots, x_N)} \Delta(x_1, \dots, x_N) dx_1 \cdots dx_N \tag{8}$$

(where  $\overline{g(x_1, \dots, x_N)}$  denotes the complex conjugate of  $g(x_1, \dots, x_N)$ ).

The (normalized) *Koornwinder polynomials* are now defined as the polynomials of the form [12]

$$P_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_N) = \sum_{\mu \in A, \mu \leq \lambda} a_{\lambda\mu} m_\mu(x_1, \dots, x_N), \quad \lambda \in A \tag{9}$$

with coefficients  $a_{\lambda\mu} \in \mathbb{C}$  such that

$$\langle P_\lambda, m_\mu \rangle_\Delta = 0 \quad \text{if } \mu < \lambda \quad \text{and} \quad \langle P_\lambda, P_\lambda \rangle_\Delta = 1, \tag{10}$$

(where  $a_{\lambda\lambda}$  is chosen positive by convention).

It is obvious from this definition that the polynomials  $P_\lambda$  are orthogonal with respect to the inner product  $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_\Delta$  when comparable in the partial order. A fundamental result of Koornwinder states that in fact  $\langle P_\lambda, P_\mu \rangle_\Delta = 0$  for all partitions  $\lambda \neq \mu$  [12]. In other words, the Koornwinder polynomials  $P_\lambda, \lambda \in A$  constitute an orthonormal basis for the hyperoctahedral-symmetric sector of the Hilbert space  $L^2(\mathbb{T}_N, (2\pi)^{-N} \Delta d\mathbf{x})$ .

### 3. Asymptotic formula

The leading asymptotics of the Koornwinder polynomial  $P_\lambda(x_1, \dots, x_N)$ , as the partition  $\lambda \in A$  grows to infinity, turns out to be governed by the functions

$$\begin{aligned} P_\lambda^\infty(x_1, \dots, x_N) &= \sum_{\substack{\sigma \in \Sigma_N \\ \varepsilon_j \in \{1, -1\}}} \mathcal{C}(\varepsilon_1 \lambda_1 x_{\sigma_1}, \dots, \varepsilon_N \lambda_N x_{\sigma_N}) \exp(i\varepsilon_1 \lambda_1 x_{\sigma_1} + \cdots + i\varepsilon_N \lambda_N x_{\sigma_N}) \end{aligned} \tag{11}$$

with  $\mathcal{C}(x_1, \dots, x_N)$  taken from Eq. (6). To formulate the precise result, we define

$$m(\lambda) := \min_{j=1, \dots, N} (\lambda_j - \lambda_{j+1}) \tag{12}$$

(with the convention that  $\lambda_{N+1} := 0$ ) and, for a function  $f$  in the Hilbert space  $L^2(\mathbb{T}_N, (2\pi)^{-N} \Delta \mathbf{x})$  we denote its norm by  $\|f\|_\Delta := \sqrt{\langle f, f \rangle_\Delta}$ .

**Theorem 1** (Asymptotic formula). *Let  $\varepsilon$  be (any value) in the interval  $(0, \log(1/q))$ . Then*

$$\|P_\lambda - P_\lambda^\infty\|_\Delta = \begin{cases} O(e^{-\varepsilon m(\lambda)/2}) \\ O(\lambda_1^N e^{-\varepsilon m(\lambda)}) \end{cases} \text{ as } m(\lambda) \rightarrow \infty$$

(with both error bounds holding simultaneously).

The asymptotic formula states that the Koornwinder polynomial  $P_\lambda$  converges (exponentially fast) to the asymptotic function  $P_\lambda^\infty$  (in the strong Hilbert space sense), when the parts  $\lambda_j$  of the partition  $\lambda$  grow to infinity in such a way that  $\lambda_j - \lambda_k \rightarrow \infty$  for  $j < k$ . This result follows by specialization of an analogous asymptotic formula, valid for more general multivariate orthogonal polynomials with hyperoctahedral symmetry associated to a rather broad class of factorized analytic weight functions on the torus  $\mathbb{T}_N$  [7].

#### 4. The case $N = 1$ : Askey–Wilson polynomials

It is instructive to exhibit the contents of the theorem in further detail for  $N = 1$ . Koornwinder’s polynomials then specialize to the Askey–Wilson polynomials [1,11]

$$P_\ell(x) = \mathcal{N}_\ell^{-1/2} p_\ell(x), \quad \ell \in \mathbb{N} \tag{13}$$

with

$$\mathcal{N}_\ell = \frac{(t_1 t_2 t_3 t_4 q^{2\ell}; q)_\infty}{(t_1 t_2 t_3 t_4 q^{\ell-1}; q)_\ell (q^{\ell+1}; q)_\infty \prod_{1 \leq r < s \leq 4} (t_r t_s q^\ell; q)_\infty}, \tag{14}$$

$$p_\ell(x) = \frac{(t_1 t_2, t_1 t_3, t_1 t_4; q)_\ell}{t_1^\ell (t_1 t_2 t_3 t_4 q^{\ell-1}; q)_\ell} {}_4\Phi_3 \left( \begin{matrix} q^{-\ell}, t_1 t_2 t_3 t_4 q^\ell, t_1 e^{ix}, t_1 e^{-ix} \\ t_1 t_2, t_1 t_3, t_1 t_4 \end{matrix}; q, q \right), \tag{15}$$

where

$${}_s\Phi_{s-1} \left( \begin{matrix} a_1, \dots, a_s \\ b_1, \dots, b_{s-1} \end{matrix}; q, z \right) := \sum_{n=0}^\infty \frac{(a_1, \dots, a_s; q)_n}{(b_1, \dots, b_{s-1}; q)_n} \frac{z^n}{(q; q)_n}.$$

The corresponding asymptotic functions are given by

$$P_\ell^\infty(x) = c(x)e^{i\ell x} + c(-x)e^{-i\ell x}, \tag{16}$$

$$c(x) = \frac{\prod_{r=1}^4 (t_r e^{-ix}; q)_\infty}{(e^{-2ix}; q)_\infty}. \tag{17}$$

The orthogonality relations for the Askey–Wilson polynomials become in this notation [1,11]

$$\frac{1}{4\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} P_\ell(x) \overline{P_m(x)} \frac{dx}{c(x)c(-x)} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \ell \neq m, \\ 1 & \text{if } \ell = m. \end{cases} \tag{18}$$

The asymptotic formula in the theorem above now states that (upon taking the square)

$$\frac{1}{4\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} |P_\ell(x) - P_\ell^\infty(x)|^2 \frac{dx}{c(x)c(-x)} = O(\ell^2 e^{-2\varepsilon\ell}) \quad \text{as } \ell \rightarrow \infty, \tag{19}$$

with  $\varepsilon \in (0, \log(1/q))$ . The fact that the normalized Askey–Wilson polynomial  $P_\ell$  tends to the asymptotic function  $P_\ell^\infty$  for  $\ell \rightarrow \infty$  in the strong Hilbert space sense is in agreement with the formula for the pointwise asymptotics of the Askey–Wilson polynomials found in [9,10].

### 5. Proof of the asymptotic formula for $N = 1$

The proof of the asymptotic formula in the theorem, patterned after [7], simplifies considerably for  $N = 1$ . We will close by briefly detailing this simplified proof. For further simplicity, our discussion is limited to the verification of the  $O(e^{-\varepsilon\ell})$  estimate for the error term (corresponding to the  $O(e^{-\varepsilon m(\lambda)/2})$  estimate in the theorem) rather than the sharper  $O(\ell^2 e^{-2\varepsilon\ell})$  estimate given in Eq. (19) (which corresponds to the  $O(\lambda_1^N e^{-\varepsilon m(\lambda)})$  estimate in the theorem).

It is clear that the desired asymptotic formula follows from the asymptotic estimates

$$\|P_\ell^\infty\|_\Delta = 1 + O(e^{-\varepsilon\ell}), \tag{20}$$

$$\langle P_\ell^\infty, P_\ell \rangle_\Delta = 1 + O(e^{-\varepsilon\ell}), \tag{21}$$

for  $\ell \rightarrow \infty$ . Indeed, from these estimates it is immediate that

$$\|P_\ell - P_\ell^\infty\|_\Delta^2 = \langle P_\ell, P_\ell \rangle_\Delta - \langle P_\ell, P_\ell^\infty \rangle_\Delta - \langle P_\ell^\infty, P_\ell \rangle_\Delta + \langle P_\ell^\infty, P_\ell^\infty \rangle_\Delta = O(e^{-\varepsilon\ell}),$$

which amounts to Eq. (19) with the  $O(\ell^2 e^{-2\varepsilon\ell})$  error bound on the right-hand side replaced by an  $O(e^{-\varepsilon\ell})$  error bound.

To infer the estimates in Eqs. (20), (21), we first observe that for  $\ell > 0$

$$\langle P_\ell^\infty, m_k \rangle_\Delta = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{e^{i\ell x}}{c(-x)} (e^{ikx} + e^{-ikx}) dx = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } k < \ell, \\ 1 & \text{if } k = \ell. \end{cases} \tag{22}$$

Notice in this connection that the evaluation of the integral in Eq. (22) readily follows from the fact that  $1/c(-x)$  has a uniformly converging Fourier series expansion of the form  $1 + \sum_{n \geq 1} c_n e^{inx}$  (whence the constant term in the Fourier series expansion of the integrand is equal to 0 for  $k < \ell$  and equal to 1 for  $k = \ell$ ).

Next, we rewrite the asymptotic function as

$$P_\ell^\infty(x) = \frac{\hat{c}(x)e^{i(\ell+1)x} - \hat{c}(-x)e^{-i(\ell+1)x}}{e^{ix} - e^{-ix}} \tag{23}$$

with

$$\hat{c}(x) = \frac{\prod_{r=1}^4 (t_r e^{-ix}; q)_\infty}{(q e^{-2ix}; q)_\infty}. \quad (24)$$

It is not difficult to see that the function  $\hat{c}(x)$  has a Fourier series expansion of the form

$$\hat{c}(x) = 1 + \sum_{n \geq 1} \hat{c}_n e^{-inx}$$

with coefficients  $\hat{c}_n$  that are  $O(e^{-\varepsilon n/2})$  as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  (since the function in question is holomorphic in the lower half-plane  $\text{Im}(x) < \log(q^{-1/2})$  and it converges to 1 for  $\text{Im}(x) \rightarrow -\infty$ ). Let  $P_\ell^{\text{tr}}(x)$  denote the truncated asymptotic function obtained by replacing  $\hat{c}(x)$  (24) in  $P_\ell^\infty(x)$  (23) by its Fourier polynomial of degree  $2\ell$

$$P_\ell^{\text{tr}}(x) = \frac{\hat{c}^{\text{tr}}(x) e^{i(l+1)x} - \hat{c}^{\text{tr}}(-x) e^{-i(l+1)x}}{e^{ix} - e^{-ix}}, \quad \hat{c}^{\text{tr}}(x) = 1 + \sum_{n=1}^{2\ell} \hat{c}_n e^{-inx}.$$

Since  $|\hat{c}(x) - \hat{c}^{\text{tr}}(x)| = O(e^{-\varepsilon \ell})$ , it readily follows that

$$\|P_\ell^\infty - P_\ell^{\text{tr}}\|_\Delta = O(e^{-\varepsilon \ell}) \quad \text{as } \ell \rightarrow \infty. \quad (25)$$

We are now in the position to derive the estimates in Eqs. (20) and (21). Indeed, from Eq. (22) and the fact that the truncated asymptotic function  $P_\ell^{\text{tr}}(x)$  is a monic polynomial of degree  $\ell$  (in  $e^{ix} + e^{-ix}$ ), it is clear that  $\langle P_\ell^\infty, P_\ell^{\text{tr}} \rangle_\Delta = 1$ . Hence, we have that

$$\begin{aligned} \|P_\ell^\infty\|_\Delta - \frac{1}{\|P_\ell^\infty\|_\Delta} &= \frac{1}{\|P_\ell^\infty\|_\Delta} \langle P_\ell^\infty, P_\ell^\infty - P_\ell^{\text{tr}} \rangle_\Delta \\ &\leq \|P_\ell^\infty - P_\ell^{\text{tr}}\|_\Delta \stackrel{\text{Eq. (25)}}{=} O(e^{-\varepsilon \ell}), \end{aligned}$$

which implies Eq. (20). Furthermore, once more invoking of Eq. (22) combined with the orthonormality of the normalized Askey–Wilson polynomials  $P_\ell(x)$  (13)–(15) reveals that  $\langle P_\ell^\infty, P_\ell \rangle_\Delta = 1 / \langle P_\ell^{\text{tr}}, P_\ell \rangle_\Delta$  ( $= a_{\ell\ell} > 0$ , cf. Eqs. (9), (10)). Hence, we have that

$$\begin{aligned} \langle P_\ell^\infty, P_\ell \rangle_\Delta - \frac{1}{\langle P_\ell^\infty, P_\ell \rangle_\Delta} &= \langle P_\ell^\infty - P_\ell^{\text{tr}}, P_\ell \rangle_\Delta \\ &\leq \|P_\ell^\infty - P_\ell^{\text{tr}}\|_\Delta \stackrel{\text{Eq. (25)}}{=} O(e^{-\varepsilon \ell}), \end{aligned}$$

which implies Eq. (21).

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