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On approximations of solutions of
the equation $P(z, \ln z) = 0$ by algebraic numbers

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The paper is devoted to studying how well solutions of an equation $P(z, \ln z) = 0$, where $P(x, y) \in \mathbb{Z}[x, y]$, can be approximated with algebraic numbers. We prove a new bound with the help of a construction due to K. Mahler.

The length of a polynomial is the sum of the absolute values of its coefficients. The length of an algebraic number is the length of its canonical polynomial. Let $\ln z$ be an arbitrary branch of the logarithm. The main result of this paper is the following theorem.

Theorem 1. *Suppose*

$$P(x, y) \in \mathbb{Z}[x, y], \quad \deg_x P = d_1, \quad \deg_y P = d_2, \quad d_1 d_2 \neq 0, \\ \zeta \in \mathbb{C}, \quad P(\zeta, y) \neq 0, \quad P(\zeta, \ln \zeta) = 0.$$

Then, for every $\varepsilon > 0$, the inequality

$$|\zeta - \theta| < \exp\left(- (4 + \varepsilon) d_1 d_2 \frac{\ln^2 L(\theta)}{\ln \ln L(\theta)}\right) \quad (1)$$

admits only finitely many solutions in algebraic θ such that

$$\kappa = \deg \theta = o(\ln \ln L(\theta)), \quad \text{i.e.,} \quad \kappa < \alpha(L) \cdot \ln \ln L, \quad \lim_{L \rightarrow \infty} \alpha(L) = 0. \quad (2)$$

The length of θ can be replaced in (1) by its height $H(\theta)$, as

$$L(\theta) \leq (\kappa + 1)H(\theta).$$

N. I. Feldman [1964] proved a theorem on approximations of the solutions of the equation $P(z, e^z) = 0$ by algebraic numbers. His result was improved in [Galochkin 1972]. A result similar to (1) can be obtained from [Nesterenko and Waldschmidt 1996, Theorem 5] but with a constant greater than 4 in the exponent. Our proof is based on Mahler's construction [1932a; 1932b; 1967] with a special choice of parameters.

Lemma 2. *Suppose $P(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$, θ is an algebraic number, and $P(\theta) \neq 0$. Then*

$$|P(\theta)| \geq L(P)^{1 - \deg \theta} L(\theta)^{-\deg P},$$

where $L(P)$ and $L(\theta)$ are the lengths of P and θ respectively.

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The proof can be found, for instance, in [Feldman 1981].

Lemma 3. *Let m, n be positive integers. For each $k = \overline{0, n}$ set*

$$\Phi_k(t) = (t - m)^{k+1} \prod_{j=0}^{m-1} (t - j)^{n+1}, \quad R_k(z) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \oint_{\Gamma} \frac{e^{tz}}{\Phi_k(t)} dt, \quad (3)$$

where Γ is the circle $|t| = m(n + 1) + m$. Then

$$\text{ord}_{z=0} R_k(z) = m(n + 1) + k, \quad (4)$$

$$|R_k(z)| < (m(n + 1) + m)e^{(m(n+1)+m)|z|} (m(n + 1))^{-m(n+1)}, \quad (5)$$

$$R_k(z) = P_{k0}(z) + P_{k1}(z)e^z + \dots + P_{km}(z)e^{mz}, \quad P_{kj}(z) \in \mathbb{Q}[z], \quad (6)$$

$$n_{kj} = \deg P_{kj} = (\text{ord}_{t=j} \Phi_k(t)) - 1 = \begin{cases} n & \text{for } j = \overline{0, m-1}, \\ k & \text{for } j = m, k = \overline{0, n}. \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

Set $p_{kj}(z) = b^n n! (m!)^{n+1} P_{kj}(z)$, where $b = \text{lcm}(1, 2, \dots, m)$. Then

$$p_{kj}(z) \in \mathbb{Z}[z], \quad L(p_{kj}) < e^{\gamma_1 mn} n!, \quad \text{where } \gamma_1 \text{ is an absolute constant.} \quad (8)$$

Proof. We have

$$R_k(z) = \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} \frac{a_{ks}}{s!} z^s, \quad a_{ks} = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \oint_{\Gamma} \frac{t^s}{\Phi_k(t)} dt,$$

$a_{ks} = 0$ for $s < n_k$, $a_{k, n_k} \neq 0$, $n_k = m(n + 1) + k$, which proves (4).

Inequality (5) follows from the estimate

$$|\Phi_k(t)| \geq (m(n + 1))^{m(n+1)}$$

and an obvious estimate on the integral in (3).

We have

$$R_k(z) = \sum_{j=0}^m I_{kj}, \quad I_{kj} = \frac{1}{2\pi i} e^{jz} \oint_{|t-j|=1/2} \frac{e^{(t-j)z}}{\Phi_k(t)} dt = e^{jz} \sum_{s=0}^{n_{kj}} \frac{a_{kjs}}{s!} z^s,$$

where

$$a_{kjs} = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \oint_{|t-j|=1/2} \frac{(t-j)^s}{\Phi_k(t)} dt, \quad a_{k, j, n_{kj}} \neq 0, \quad P_{kj}(z) = \sum_{s=0}^{n_{kj}} \frac{a_{kjs}}{s!} z^s. \quad (9)$$

This proves both (6) and (7).

Since $|t - j| = \frac{1}{2}$, we have

$$|\Phi_k(t)| > (m!)^{n+1} e^{-\gamma_2 mn}.$$

Thus, by (9)

$$|a_{kjs}| < (m!)^{-n-1} e^{\gamma_3 mn}. \quad (10)$$

Let us use the substitution $t - j = bu$, where $b = \text{lcm}(1, 2, \dots, m) = e^{O(m)}$, in order to transform the integral in (9). Then for $l \neq j$

$$t - l = bu + j - l = (j - l) \left(1 - \frac{bu}{l - j} \right).$$

This substitution gives $a_{kjs} = A_{kjs} B_{kjs}$, where

$$A_{kjs} = b^{s-nkj} \prod_{l=0, l \neq j}^m (j-l)^{-nkl-1},$$

$$B_{kjs} = \oint_{|u|=(2b)^{-1}} \prod_{l=0, l \neq j}^m \left(1 - \frac{bu}{l-j} \right)^{-nkl-1} u^{s-nkj-1} du,$$

with n_{lj} defined by (7).

The coefficients of the series

$$\left(1 - \frac{bu}{l-j} \right)^{-1} = \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \left(\frac{b}{l-j} \right)^r u^r$$

are integers; hence $B_{kjs} \in \mathbb{Z}$ and $b^n(m!)^{n+1} A_{kjs} \in \mathbb{Z}$. Taking into account (9) and (10), we get (8). \square

Lemma 4. *There exist polynomials $B_{ks}(u)$ which, together with the corresponding form*

$$V_k(u) = \sum_{s=0}^n B_{ks}(u) (\ln u)^s,$$

enjoy the properties

$$B_{ks}(u) \in \mathbb{Z}[u], \quad k = \overline{0, n}, \tag{11}$$

$$\deg B_{ks} = \begin{cases} m & \text{for } k \leq s, \\ m-1 & \text{for } k > s, \end{cases} \tag{12}$$

$$\Delta(u) = \det |B_{ks}|_{k,s=\overline{0,n}} = \lambda(u-1)^{m(n+1)}, \quad \lambda \neq 0, \tag{13}$$

$$L(B_{ks}(u)) < e^{\gamma_4 mn} n!, \tag{14}$$

$$|V_k(u)| < e^{\gamma_5 |u| mn} n^{-mn}. \tag{15}$$

Proof. Let us set

$$V_k(u) = b^n (n!) (m!)^{n+1} R_k(\ln u) = \sum_{j=0}^m p_{kj} (\ln u) u^j = \sum_{s=0}^n B_{ks}(u) (\ln u)^s. \tag{16}$$

Statements (11), (12), (14), and (15) follow from Lemma 3. Thus, it remains to prove (13).

First, let us assume that $|u-1| < 1$ and that $\ln 1 = 0$. In this case we have by (4)

$$R_k(z) = z^{m(n+1)+k} T_k(z), \quad T_k(0) \neq 0,$$

whence, taking into account that $\ln 1 = 0$, we get

$$V_k(u) = (\ln u)^{m(n+1)+k} F_k(u) = (u-1)^{m(n+1)+k} G_k(u), \quad G_k(1) \neq 0.$$

It follows from (12) that $\Delta(u) \neq 0$ and that

$$\deg \Delta(u) = m(n + 1).$$

Replacing the first column with the one consisting of $V_0(u), V_1(u), \dots, V_n(u)$ preserves the determinant. Hence

$$\text{ord}_{u=1} \Delta(u) \geq m(n + 1),$$

which implies (13).

Moving along a path around the origin changes $\ln u$, but it does not change $B_{k_s}(u)$. Therefore, it does not change $\Delta(u)$. Thus, (13) holds for every branch of the logarithm. \square

Theorem 5. *Suppose*

$$P(x, y) \in \mathbb{Z}[x, y], \quad \deg_x P = d_1, \quad \deg_y P = d_2, \quad d_1 d_2 \neq 0.$$

Then, for every $\varepsilon > 0$ and every $r > 0$, the inequality

$$|P(\theta, \ln \theta)| < \exp\left(- (4 + \varepsilon) d_1 d_2 \frac{\ln^2 L(\theta)}{\ln \ln L(\theta)}\right) \tag{17}$$

admits only finitely many solutions in algebraic θ such that

$$|\theta| < r \quad \text{and} \quad \kappa = \deg \theta = o(\ln \ln L(\theta)) \quad \text{as } L(\theta) \rightarrow \infty. \tag{18}$$

Note that Theorem 1 follows from Theorem 5. Indeed, for all but finitely many θ Theorem 5 provides

$$|P(\theta, \ln \theta)| \geq \exp\left(- (4 + \varepsilon) d_1 d_2 \frac{\ln^2 L(\theta)}{\ln \ln L(\theta)}\right).$$

Hence

$$|P(\theta, \ln \theta)| = |P(\zeta, \ln \zeta) - P(\theta, \ln \theta)| = \left| \int_{\theta}^{\zeta} P'(t, \ln t) dt \right| < \gamma_6 |\zeta - \theta|,$$

and we can assume that $|\zeta - \theta| < 1$, $r = |\zeta| + 1$. Thus, it remains to prove Theorem 5.

Proof of Theorem 5. Let us take

$$m = \left\lceil \frac{d_1}{d_2} n \right\rceil, \quad n > d_2. \tag{19}$$

Then by (14) and (15) we have

$$L(B_{k_s}(u)) < e^{\gamma_4 m n} n! < e^{\gamma_7 n^2}, \quad |V_k(u)| < e^{\gamma_7 n^2} n^{-d_1 d_2^{-1} n^2}. \tag{20}$$

Let θ be an algebraic number, $\kappa = \deg \theta$, $L = L(\theta)$. We may assume that

$$\theta \neq 0, \quad \theta \neq 1, \quad P(\theta, y) \neq 0.$$

This excludes finitely many values of θ . The values

$$W_k(\theta) = (\ln \theta)^k P(\theta, \ln \theta) = \sum_{s=0}^n A_{k_s}(\theta) (\ln \theta)^s, \quad k = \overline{0, v}, \quad v = n - d_2, \tag{21}$$

of the corresponding forms at $1, \ln \theta, \dots, (\ln \theta)^n$ are linearly independent. Moreover, we have $|A_{k_s}(\theta)| < e^{\gamma_8 n}$. Hence we can choose d_2 values among $V_0(\theta), \dots, V_n(\theta)$ (say, $V_1(\theta), \dots, V_{d_2}(\theta)$) which are linearly

independent with the values from (21) and such that

$$D(\theta) = \begin{vmatrix} A_{00}(\theta) & A_{01}(\theta) & \cdots & A_{0n}(\theta) \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ A_{v0}(\theta) & A_{v1}(\theta) & \cdots & A_{vn}(\theta) \\ B_{10}(\theta) & B_{11}(\theta) & \cdots & B_{1n}(\theta) \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ B_{d_2,0}(\theta) & B_{d_2,1}(\theta) & \cdots & B_{d_2,n}(\theta) \end{vmatrix} \neq 0. \tag{22}$$

Consider the determinant

$$D(u) = \begin{vmatrix} A_{00}(u) & A_{01}(u) & \cdots & A_{0n}(u) \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ A_{v0}(u) & A_{v1}(u) & \cdots & A_{vn}(u) \\ B_{10}(u) & B_{11}(u) & \cdots & B_{1n}(u) \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ B_{d_2,0}(u) & B_{d_2,1}(u) & \cdots & B_{d_2,n}(u) \end{vmatrix}$$

as a polynomial of u . By (11), (12), (19), (20), and (22),

$$D(u) \in \mathbb{Z}[u], \quad D(\theta) \neq 0, \quad \deg D(u) \leq nd_1 + md_2 \leq 2nd_1, \quad L(D(u)) < e^{\gamma_9 n^2}. \tag{23}$$

By Lemma 2,

$$|D(\theta)| \geq e^{(1-x)\gamma_9 n^2} L^{-2d_1 n} > e^{-\gamma_9 x n^2} L^{-2d_1 n}, \quad L = L(\theta). \tag{24}$$

On the other hand,

$$D(\theta) = \begin{vmatrix} W_0(\theta) & A_{01}(\theta) & \cdots & A_{0n}(\theta) \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ W_v(\theta) & A_{v1}(\theta) & \cdots & A_{vn}(\theta) \\ V_1(\theta) & B_{11}(\theta) & \cdots & B_{1n}(\theta) \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ V_{d_2}(\theta) & B_{d_2,1}(\theta) & \cdots & B_{d_2,n}(\theta) \end{vmatrix};$$

i.e.,

$$D(\theta) = \sum_{k=0}^v W_k(\theta) M_k(\theta) + \sum_{l=1}^{d_2} V_l(\theta) N_l(\theta),$$

where $M_k(\theta)$ and $N_l(\theta)$ are the cofactors of the first column of $D(\theta)$. It follows from (20), (21), and (23) that

$$\begin{aligned} |W_k(\theta)| &< e^{\gamma_8 n} |P(\theta, \ln \theta)|, & |V_l(\theta)| &< e^{\gamma_7 n^2} n^{-d_1 d_2^{-1} n^2}, \\ |M_k(\theta)| &< e^{\gamma_{10} n^2}, & |N_l(\theta)| &< e^{\gamma_{10} n^2}. \end{aligned}$$

Hence

$$|D(\theta)| < e^{\gamma_{11} n^2} |P(\theta, \ln \theta)| + e^{\gamma_{11} n^2} n^{-d_1 d_2^{-1} n^2}.$$

Taking into account (24), we get

$$e^{-2d_1 n \ln L} < e^{\gamma_{12} x n^2} |P(\theta, \ln \theta)| + e^{\gamma_{12} x n^2 - d_1 d_2^{-1} n^2 \ln n}. \tag{25}$$

Given an arbitrary $\varepsilon > 0$, let us set

$$n = \left\lceil \left(2 + \frac{\varepsilon}{4} \right) d_2 \frac{\ln L}{\ln \ln L} \right\rceil.$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} 2d_1 n \ln L &\sim \left(4 + \frac{\varepsilon}{2} \right) d_1 d_2 \frac{\ln^2 L}{\ln \ln L} && \text{as } L \rightarrow \infty, \\ d_1 d_2^{-1} n^2 \ln n &\sim \left(4 + \varepsilon + \frac{\varepsilon^2}{16} \right) d_1 d_2 \frac{\ln^2 L}{\ln \ln L} && \text{as } L \rightarrow \infty. \end{aligned}$$

Hence due to restrictions (18),

$$\gamma_{12} x n^2 = o\left(\frac{\ln^2 L}{\ln \ln L} \right).$$

Thus, for L large enough we have $e^{\gamma_{12} x n^2 - d_1 d_2^{-1} n^2 \ln n} < \frac{1}{2} e^{-2d_1 n \ln L}$. Combining this with (25), we get

$$|P(\theta, \ln \theta)| > \frac{1}{2} e^{-\gamma_{12} x n^2 - 2d_1 n \ln L} > \exp\left(-(4 + \varepsilon) d_1 d_2 \frac{\ln^2 L}{\ln \ln L} \right),$$

which implies that inequality (17) has finitely many solutions.

Theorems 5 and 1 are proved. □

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