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SUB-EXPONENTIAL DECAY OF OPERATOR KERNELS FOR FUNCTIONS OF GENERALIZED SCHRÖDINGER OPERATORS

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Abstract. We study the decay at large distances of operator kernels of functions of generalized Schrödinger operators. We prove sub-exponential decay for functions in Gevrey classes and exponential decay for real analytic functions.

1. Introduction and result

In a previous paper two of the authors proved that operator kernels of smooth functions of generalized Schrödinger operators decay faster than any polynomial [GK2]. The operator kernel of a bounded operator A acting on $\mathrm{L}^2(\mathbb{R}^d, \mathrm{d}q; \mathbb{C}^k)$ is defined as $\chi_x A \chi_y$, where

$$\chi_x(q) = \chi_0(q-x), \qquad q, x \in \mathbb{R}^d, \tag{1}$$

and χ_0 is the characteristic function of the cube centered at 0 with side 1. We use the standard notation $\langle x \rangle = (1+|x|^2)^{1/2}$ for $x \in \mathbb{R}^d$. Given a generalized Schrödinger operator H (see [GK2] and Remark 1.3 below) and a C^∞ function f with sufficiently fast decay at ∞, namely,

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} |f^{(k)}(u)| \langle u \rangle^{k-1} \mathrm{d}u < \infty \ \text{ for } k = 0, 1, 2, \ldots, \tag{2}$$

it is shown in [GK2, Theorem 2] that for all $n = 0, 1, 2, \ldots$ one has

$$\|\chi_x f(H) \chi_y\| \leq C_{n,f} \langle x-y \rangle^{-n}, \qquad x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d \tag{3}$$

(with a control on $C_{n,f}$ in terms of integrals as in (2)). Such kernel decay estimates are of interest from a purely mathematical point of view (see [Si, Da1, Da2]). Moreover, controls like (3) have already been quite useful in applications, e.g., [GK3, GK4, ElGr, Tc].

The purpose of this paper is to improve on (3) and show that if the C^∞ function f belongs to a Gevrey-like class (see Definition 1.1), then

$$\|\chi_x f(H) \chi_y\| \leq C \mathrm{e}^{-c|x-y|^\alpha}, \qquad x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d, \tag{4}$$

for some $\alpha \in (0, 1]$ depending on f. This extension was motivated by some applications which are discussed at the end of this section.

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We recall that a function f belongs to the Gevrey class of order $a \geq 1$, denoted by $G^a(\mathbb{R})$ (e.g., [Ho]), if $f \in C^\infty(\mathbb{R})$ and for each compact subset $K \subset \mathbb{R}$ there exists a constant C_K such that

$$|f^{(k)}(u)| \leq C_K(C_K(k+1)^a)^k, \qquad k = 0, 1, 2, \ldots, \quad u \in K. \tag{5}$$

Note that being Gevrey is thus a *local* property. The class $G^1(\mathbb{R})$ is the set of real analytic functions, and authors sometimes refer to Gevrey classes only for $a > 1$.

We emphasize that for any $a > 1$ the Gevrey class $G^a(\mathbb{R})$ contains compactly supported functions. (For example, the function $f_a(x) = \exp(-(1-x^2)^{-\frac{1}{a-1}})$ for $|x| < 1$ and $f_a(x) = 0$ for $|x| \geq 1$ belongs to $G^a(\mathbb{R})$.) In fact, most of the smooth cut-off functions that are commonly used can be chosen in $G^a(\mathbb{R})$ with a arbitrarily close to 1. We will denote the class of compactly supported functions in $G^a(\mathbb{R})$ by $G^a_{comp}(\mathbb{R})$. Of course many interesting functions are non-compactly supported, especially analytic ones, and we need to consider a larger set of functions.

To allow functions supported either on $\mathbb{R}$ or on a half-line, we combine the local Gevrey estimate (5) with the condition of decay at ∞ given by (2), and make the following definition. (By $C_{a,b,\ldots}$ we always denote a constant depending on $a, b, \ldots$.)

Definition 1.1. Let I be an open interval and $a \geq 1$. A function $f \in C^\infty(\mathbb{R})$ is L^1-*Gevrey of class* a *on* I if for all $k = 0, 1, 2, \ldots$ we have

$$\left\| f^{(k)} \langle u \rangle^{k-1} \right\|_{\mathrm{L}^1(I)} = \int_I |f^{(k)}(u)| \langle u \rangle^{k-1} \mathrm{d}u \leq C_{f,I}(C_{f,I}(k+1)^a)^k \,. \tag{6}$$

As far as the self-adjoint operator H is concerned, the sole property we shall require is that a suitable Combes-Thomas estimate [CoTh, GK2] holds. We state it as a definition.

Definition 1.2. The self-adjoint operator H on $\mathrm{L}^2(\mathbb{R}^d, \mathrm{d}q; \mathbb{C}^k)$ has *property (CT)* if there exists a constant C (depending on H, d and k) such that for all $z \notin \sigma(H)$ and all $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d$ we have

$$\|\chi_x (H - z)^{-1} \chi_y\| \leq \frac{C}{\eta_z} \exp\left(-\frac{C\eta_z}{1 + \eta_z + |z|} |x - y| \right) , \tag{7}$$

where $\eta_z = \mathrm{d}(z, \sigma(H))$.

Remark 1.3. The inequality (7) is proven in [GK2, Corollary 1] for generalized Schrödinger operators, a class of semibounded second-order partial differential operators of mathematical physics which includes the Schrödinger operator, magnetic Schrödinger operator, and the classical wave operators (i.e., acoustic operator, Maxwell operator, and other second-order partial differential operators associated with classical wave equations). Specific examples of operators with property (CT) are given by the *Schrödinger operator*

$$H = -\Delta + V^{(1)} + V^{(2)} \ \text{ on } \ \mathrm{L}^2(\mathbb{R}^d, \mathrm{d}x) \,, \tag{8}$$

with $0 \leq V^{(1)} \in \mathrm{L}^1_{\mathrm{loc}}$ and $V^{(2)}$ relatively form bounded with respect to $-\Delta$ with relative bound < 1, the *acoustic operator*

$$A = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{\kappa}} \nabla \cdot \frac{1}{\rho} \nabla \frac{1}{\sqrt{\kappa}} \ \ \textit{on} \ \ \mathrm{L}^2(\mathbb{R}^d, \mathrm{d}x), \tag{9}$$

where $\kappa(x)$ is the compressibility and $\varrho(x)$ is the mass density, and the *Maxwell operator*

$$M = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\mu}}\nabla \times \frac{1}{\varepsilon}\nabla \times \frac{1}{\sqrt{\mu}} \quad on \quad \mathrm{L}^2(\mathbb{R}^3, \mathrm{d}x; \mathbb{C}^3), \tag{10}$$

where $\mu(x)$ is the magnetic permeability and $\varepsilon(x)$ is the dielectric constant, with $\kappa(x)$, $\varrho(x)$, $\mu(x)$, $\varepsilon(x)$ bounded, uniformly strictly positive, measurable functions.

Our results are stated in the following theorem.

Theorem 1.4. *Let H be a self-adjoint operator on $\mathrm{L}^2(\mathbb{R}^d, \mathrm{d}q; \mathbb{C}^k)$ with property (CT), I an open interval containing the spectrum of H. Then, given a real number $a \geq 1$, we have:*

(i) *If $a > 1$, then for each $a' > a$ there exists $C_{I,a,a'} > 0$, such that for all L^1-Gevrey functions f of class a on I,*

$$\|\chi_x f(H)\chi_y\| \leq C_{I,a,a'}(\mathrm{e}C_{f,I})^{3+|x-y|^{\frac{1}{a'}}} \exp\left(-\tfrac{a'-a}{4a'}|x-y|^{\frac{1}{a'}} \ln|x-y|\right) \tag{11}$$

for all $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d$. As a consequence, for each $a' > a$, there exist constants $C_{f,I,a,a'} > 0$ and $c_{a,a'} > 0$ such that

$$\|\chi_x f(H)\chi_y\| \leq C_{f,I,a,a'} \exp\left(-c_{a,a'}|x-y|^{\frac{1}{a'}}\right) \quad \text{for all } x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d\,. \tag{12}$$

(ii) *If $a = 1$, then there exist constants $C_I, c_I > 0$ such that for all L^1-Gevrey functions f of class a on I,*

$$\|\chi_x f(H)\chi_y\| \leq C_I \frac{C_{f,I}\langle x-y\rangle}{1+\ln C_{f,I}} \exp\left(-\frac{c_I}{C_{f,I}(1+\ln C_{f,I})}|x-y|\right) \tag{13}$$

for all $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d$.

Remark 1.5. The mass $\frac{a'-a}{4a'}$ in (11) can be chosen arbitrarily close to $\frac{a'-a}{a'}$. This is done by modifying the proof by choosing $1 - s = \frac{1+\gamma(a'-a)}{a'}$ in (42) with γ close to zero.

Remark 1.6. If f has an analytic continuation to a region where one can use a suitable contour, then (13) is a rather simple consequence of the Combes-Thomas estimate and the Cauchy integral formula. In our theorem, no condition on the form of the domain of analyticity of f in $\mathbb{C}$ is assumed. We nevertheless obtain exponential decay in $|x-y|$.

To discuss the range of application of Theorem 1.4, and more precisely of condition (6), we introduce the weighted Gevrey class $G^a_\gamma(I)$ in the following way: given $\gamma \in \mathbb{R}$, $a \geq 1$, and an open interval I, we say that $f \in G^a_\gamma(I)$ if $f \in C^\infty$ and there exists $C \geq 0$ such that

$$\sup_{u\in I}\left|f^{(k)}(u)\langle u\rangle^{k+\gamma}\right| \leq C(C(k+1)^a)^k, \qquad k = 0, 1, 2, \ldots. \tag{14}$$

The class $G^a_\gamma(I)$ is never trivial (i.e., reduced to 0): if $a > 1$ it contains all functions of $G^a_{comp}(\mathbb{R})$ that are supported in I, and if $a = 1$ it can be easily seen that for $t > 0$ and $z \notin I$, the functions

$$\exp(-tu^2)\,, \qquad \exp(-tu)\,, \qquad \exp(-iut)\exp(-u^2)\,, \qquad \frac{1}{u-z}$$

belong to $G^1_\gamma((\lambda,+\infty))$ for all λ and all γ for the first three, and to $G^1_1(\mathbb{R})$ for the last one.

Functions in $G^a_\gamma(I)$, $\gamma > 0$, clearly satisfy (6). Moreover, if $f_1 \in G^{a_1}_{\gamma_1}(I)$ and $f_2 \in G^{a_2}_{\gamma_2}(I)$, $\gamma_1, \gamma_2 \in \mathbb{R}$, $a_1, a_2 \geq 1$, then one can verify that

$$f_1 f_2 \in G^a_\gamma(I), \qquad a = \max(a_1, a_2), \quad \gamma = \gamma_1 + \gamma_2. \tag{15}$$

This is of interest since in applications we often have to consider cutoffs of the resolvent (see for instance [GK3]), that is, $f(H)$ with

$$f(u) = (1 - f_1(u))\frac{1}{u - \lambda_0}, \qquad f_1 \in C^\infty_{comp}(\mathbb{R}), \quad f_1 \equiv 1 \text{ near } \lambda_0 \in \mathbb{R}.$$

By choosing $f_1 \in G^a_{comp}(\mathbb{R})$ with a arbitrarily close to 1, we can deduce from our remarks that $f \in G^a_1(\mathbb{R})$, and hence get the sub-exponential decay of $\|\chi_x f(H)\chi_y\|$ by (12).

We end this section by discussing some applications of Theorem 1.4 to the theory of Schrödinger operators:

(1) In the context of random Schrödinger operators, Theorem 1.4 can be used to extend the results of [GK3] to models where only a Wegner estimate with sub-exponential controls is available, as in the case of Bernoulli-Anderson models and polymers [CKM, KLS, DBG, DSS, JSBS]. In particular, it allows the definition of the strong insulator region in these cases, similar to what is done in [GK3] for models with a Wegner estimate with polynomial controls.

(2) Still in the context of random Schrödinger operators, Theorem 1.4, combined with [GK1, Theorem 3.8], provides a simple and quick proof of sub-exponential decay of any order of the operator kernel of the Fermi projector $P_{E_F} = \chi_{(-\infty,E_F]}(H)$, provided the Fermi energy E_F lies inside the strong insulator region (equivalently, provided E_F lies in the region of applicability of the multiscale analysis).

(3) In [GKT], an approximation lemma shows that the weight given to balls of radius ε by spectral measures of Hamiltonians that coincide on a region of size $\mathcal{O}(\varepsilon^{-1})$ are close up to a polynomial term in ε. Combining the methods of the present paper with the ones of [GKT] improves the latter by showing that the error term is actually sub-exponentially small. It moreover allows one to treat more general potentials, since they could be assumed to be sub-exponentially bounded rather than polynomially.

(4) We note that if f is a real analytic function, then it follows from (13) that the moments $\|\langle X\rangle^{p/2} \mathrm{e}^{-iHt} f(H)\chi_0\|^2$ cannot grow faster than $(t(\ln t)^3)^p$. (This can be seen by cutting $\mathbb{R}^d$ into two regions: $F(|x|) \leq t \ln t$ and $F(|x|) \geq t \ln t$, where $F(u) = u(\ln u)^{-2}$.)

2. Proof

In order to use the Combes-Thomas estimate (7), we need to express $f(H)$ in terms of the resolvent $R(z) = (H - z)^{-1}$. This is done by the Helffer-Sjöstrand formula [HeSj, DiSj]

$$f(H) = \frac{1}{\pi}\iint \bar\partial \tilde f(u+iv) R(u+iv)\mathrm{d}u\mathrm{d}v, \qquad \bar\partial = \frac{1}{2}\left(\partial_u + i\partial_v\right), \tag{16}$$

where $\tilde{f}$ is a quasi-analytic extension of f, i.e., $\bar{\partial}\tilde{f} = \mathcal{O}(v)$ near $v = 0$, with conditions ensuring the convergence of the integral. Here we use an extension $\tilde{f}$ of f similar to the one in [GK2], with one difference: we add a smooth cutoff $\varphi(u)$ around the spectrum of H (we can thus allow for a larger class of functions f, such as e^{-x} if the operator H is bounded from below):

$$\tilde{f}_n(u+iv) = \varphi(u)\tau(v/\langle u\rangle)S_n\tilde{f}(u+iv), \tag{17}$$

$$\text{with} \quad S_n\tilde{f}(u+iv) = \sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}f^{(k)}(u)(iv)^k, \tag{18}$$

where the function τ is smooth such that $\tau(t) = 1$ for $|t| \leq 1/2$ and $\tau(t) = 0$ for $|t| \geq 1$; the function φ is smooth as well and satisfies $\varphi(u) = 1$ near $\sigma(H)$, and $\operatorname{supp}\varphi \subset I$.

In all that follows, we set $\rho(u,v) = \varphi(u)\tau(v/\langle u\rangle)$. Then we have

$$\bar{\partial}\tilde{f}_n(u+iv) = \bar{\partial}\rho(u,v)\sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}f^{(k)}(u)(iv)^k + \frac{\rho(u,v)}{2}\frac{1}{n!}f^{(n+1)}(u)(iv)^n. \tag{19}$$

Note that we have

$$\bar{\partial}\tau\left(v/\langle u\rangle\right) = \frac{1}{2\langle u\rangle}\left(-\frac{u}{\langle u\rangle}\frac{v}{\langle u\rangle}\tau'(v/\langle u\rangle) + i\tau'(v/\langle u\rangle)\right). \tag{20}$$

The main idea of the proof is to write

$$\begin{aligned} f(H) &= \frac{1}{\pi}\iint_{|v|<\epsilon\langle u\rangle}\bar{\partial}\tilde{f}_n(u+iv)R(u+iv)\mathrm{d}u\mathrm{d}v \\ &\qquad + \frac{1}{\pi}\iint_{|v|\geq\epsilon\langle u\rangle}\bar{\partial}\tilde{f}_n(u+iv)R(u+iv)\mathrm{d}u\mathrm{d}v \qquad (21)\\ &= \mathrm{I} + \mathrm{II}, \qquad (22)\end{aligned}$$

with appropriate choices of ϵ and n.

In all that follows, the constants C, c may depend on I but never on ϵ, n, f or x, y.

Lemma 2.1. *There exist $C, c > 0$ such that*

$$\begin{aligned} &\|\chi_x\ \mathrm{I}\ \chi_y\| \\ &\quad \leq C\mathrm{e}^{-c|x-y|}\sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}\left\|f^{(k)}\langle u\rangle^{k-1}\right\|_{\mathrm{L}^1(I)} + \frac{C\epsilon^n}{n!}\left\|f^{(n+1)}\langle u\rangle^n\right\|_{\mathrm{L}^1(I)} \end{aligned} \tag{23}$$

for all $n \geq 1$, $0 < \epsilon \leq 1/2$ and $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d$. The constant c in the exponent depends only on the choice of φ (through its support and the distance of its support to the open interval I).

Proof. Assuming that $\epsilon \leq 1/2$ implies that the term involving τ' in (19) does not contribute. Actually we only have to consider $\varphi'(u)\tau(v/\langle u\rangle)S_n\tilde{f}$ and the last term of (19). We first estimate the contribution of the last term by using the basic

estimate $\|R(u+iv)\| \leq |v|^{-1}$, and we get

$$\left\| \iint_{|v|<\epsilon\langle u\rangle} \frac{\rho(u,v)}{n!} f^{(n+1)}(u)(iv)^n R(u+iv)\mathrm{d}u\mathrm{d}v \right\| \tag{24}$$

$$\leq \frac{C}{n!}\int_I \int_{-\epsilon\langle u\rangle}^{\epsilon\langle u\rangle} \left| f^{(n+1)}(u)\right| |v|^{n-1}\mathrm{d}v\mathrm{d}u$$

$$\leq \frac{2C}{n!}\int_I \left| f^{(n+1)}(u)\right| (\epsilon\langle u\rangle)^n \mathrm{d}u$$

$$\leq \frac{2C}{n!}\epsilon^n \left\| f^{(n+1)}\langle u\rangle^n \right\|_{\mathrm{L}^1(I)} . \tag{25}$$

Note that we have not used the Combes-Thomas estimate for this part. Next we consider the term involving $\varphi'(u)$. This term is compactly supported outside $\sigma(H)$ with respect to $z = u+iv$, so that $\eta_z = \mathrm{dist}(z,\sigma(H))$ is uniformly bounded away from 0 and $\langle u\rangle$ is bounded. The Combes-Thomas estimate (7) implies that

$$\left\| \iint_{\frac{|v|}{\langle u\rangle}<\epsilon} \varphi'(u)\tau(v/\langle u\rangle) S_n \tilde{f}(u+iv)\chi_x R(u+iv)\chi_y \mathrm{d}u\mathrm{d}v \right\| \tag{26}$$

$$\leq C\mathrm{e}^{-c|x-y|}\int_{\mathrm{supp}\ \varphi'}\int_{-\epsilon\langle u\rangle}^{\epsilon\langle u\rangle} \sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}\left| f^{(k)}(u)\right| |v|^k \mathrm{d}v\mathrm{d}u$$

$$\leq C\mathrm{e}^{-c|x-y|}\sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}\left\| f^{(k)}\langle u\rangle^{k-1}\right\|_{\mathrm{L}^1(I)} , \tag{27}$$

where we used the fact that φ' is compactly supported and $\epsilon \leq 1/2$. □

We consider now the estimates for II.

Lemma 2.2. *There exist $C, c > 0$ such that*

$$\|\chi_x \ \mathrm{II}\ \chi_y\| \leq C\mathrm{e}^{-c|x-y|}\sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}\left\| f^{(k)}\langle u\rangle^{k-1}\right\|_{\mathrm{L}^1(I)} + \frac{C}{n!}\mathrm{e}^{-c\epsilon|x-y|}\left\| f^{(n+1)}\langle u\rangle^n\right\|_{\mathrm{L}^1(I)} , \tag{28}$$

for all $\epsilon > 0,\ n \geq 1,\ x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d$.

Proof. On the domain of integration that we are considering, one has $|v| \leq \eta = \mathrm{dist}(u+iv,\sigma(H))$ and $\epsilon\langle u\rangle \leq |v| \leq \langle u\rangle$. Thus the Combes-Thomas estimate (7) reduces to

$$\|\chi_x R(u+iv)\chi_y\| \leq \frac{C}{|v|}\mathrm{e}^{-c\frac{|v|}{\langle u\rangle}|x-y|} \leq \frac{C}{|v|}\mathrm{e}^{-c\epsilon|x-y|}, \tag{29}$$

for all $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^d$, with $C, c > 0$ constants independent of x, y, u, v. To evaluate $\|\chi_x \ \mathrm{II}\ \chi_y\|$ we use (19) and treat separately the sum and the last term. We use (29) only for the latter, getting

$$\|\chi_x \ \mathrm{II}\ \chi_y\| \leq \frac{1}{\pi}\iint |\bar{\partial}\rho(u,v)| \left\{ \sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}\left| f^{(k)}(u)\right| |v|^k \right\} \|\chi_x R(u+iv)\chi_y\| \mathrm{d}v\mathrm{d}u$$

$$+C\mathrm{e}^{-c\epsilon|x-y|}\int_I\int_{-\langle u\rangle}^{\langle u\rangle}\left\{\frac{1}{n!}\left| f^{(n+1)}(u)\right| |v|^{n-1}\right\}\mathrm{d}v\mathrm{d}u\,. \tag{30}$$

The last term clearly yields the second term in (28).

Now the term $|\bar\partial\rho| = |\varphi'\tau + \varphi\bar\partial\tau|$ will be yielding a factor $1/\langle u\rangle$, coming either from (20) or from the fact that φ' is compactly supported. In other terms, we will use the bound

$$|\bar\partial\rho(u,v)| \le \frac{C}{\langle u\rangle}\,. \tag{31}$$

Moreover, on the support of $\bar\partial\rho$ the distance to the spectrum of H is uniformly bounded away from zero. Indeed, on the support of φ', a compact set disjoint from the spectrum of H, we have $\eta = \mathrm{dist}(u+iv,\sigma(H)) \ge C\langle u\rangle$ for some constant $C>0$. On the support of $\bar\partial\tau$ we have $\eta \ge |v| \ge \langle u\rangle/2$. As a consequence, it follows by (7) that on the support of $\bar\partial\rho$ we have

$$\|\chi_x R(u+iv)\chi_y\| \le \frac{C}{\langle u\rangle}\mathrm{e}^{-c|x-y|}\,. \tag{32}$$

Plugging (31) and (32) into the first integral on the right-hand side of (30) leads to

$$\begin{aligned}
&\iint |\bar\partial\rho(u,v)| \left\{\sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}\left|f^{(k)}(u)\right||v|^k\right\}\|\chi_x R(u+iv)\chi_y\|\mathrm{d}v\mathrm{d}u \\
&\le\ C\mathrm{e}^{-c|x-y|}\int_I\int_{-\langle u\rangle}^{\langle u\rangle}\frac{1}{\langle u\rangle^2}\left\{\sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}\left|f^{(k)}(u)\right||v|^k\right\}\mathrm{d}v\mathrm{d}u \qquad (33)\\
&\le\ C\mathrm{e}^{-c|x-y|}\sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}\left\|f^{(k)}\langle u\rangle^{k-1}\right\|_{\mathrm{L}^1(I)}\,, \qquad (34)
\end{aligned}$$

giving the first term in (28). □

The next lemma gives an estimate on the following quantity, which appears in the last two lemmas, after controlling the norms by (6):

$$A_{n,a} = \sum_{k=0}^{n}\frac{1}{k!}C_{f,I}(C_{f,I}(k+1)^a)^k + \frac{1}{n!}C_{f,I}(C_{f,I}(n+2)^a)^{(n+1)}. \tag{35}$$

It will motivate the choice of ϵ and n in the proof of Theorem 1.4.

Lemma 2.3. *For all $a \ge 1$, one has*

$$A_{n,a} \le 3\,\mathrm{e}^{4a}n^a(\mathrm{e}C_{f,I})^{n+2}n^{(a-1)n}, \qquad \forall\ n\ge 1.$$

Proof. First note that $k! \ge (k/\mathrm{e})^k$ for $k\ge 1$, and estimate $\mathrm{e}^kC_{f,I}^k$ by $(\mathrm{e}C_{f,I})^n$ for $k\le n$ (recall that $C_{f,I}\ge 1$). Moreover, we have $(k+1)^{ak}/k^k \le \mathrm{e}^a k^{(a-1)k}$ and, recalling that $a\ge 1$, we can therefore estimate each term of the sum by the one for $k=n$. In a similar way, $(n+2)^{a(n+1)}/n^n \le \mathrm{e}^{4a}n^{a(n+1)-n}$. The result now follows easily. □

Proof of Theorem 1.4. The last three lemmas show clearly that we have to consider, with $K_{f,I} = \mathrm{e}C_{f,I}$,

$$n^a(K_{f,I})^{n+2}\exp\left((a-1)n\ln n - c|x-y|\right), \tag{36}$$

$$n^a(K_{f,I})^{n+2}\exp\left((a-1)n\ln n + n\ln\epsilon\right), \tag{37}$$

$$n^a(K_{f,I})^{n+2}\exp\left((a-1)n\ln n - c\epsilon|x-y|\right). \tag{38}$$

To simplify, and with no loss of generality, we may assume that the constants c appearing in (36) and (38) are the same. In both cases $a = 1$ and $a > 1$, we will choose $n = \mathcal{O}(|x-y|^a)$; thus, if we can show that the exponential terms listed above have the decay announced in the theorem, we shall get the result.

Proof in the case $a = 1$. We choose $n \sim \delta|x-y|$ with $\delta > 0$ small enough and a fixed $\epsilon > 0$ small enough as well. Then (37) gives the following first condition:

$$\epsilon K_{f,I} < 1. \tag{39}$$

Now, by choosing n such that $\delta|x-y|-1 \leq n+2 < \delta|x-y|$, (38) yields the second condition:

$$\delta \ln K_{f,I} - c\epsilon < 0\,. \tag{40}$$

Similarly, we obtain the third condition from (36):

$$\delta \ln K_{f,I} - c < 0. \tag{41}$$

The existence of $\epsilon, \delta > 0$ such that these three conditions are satisfied is clear since we may first choose $\epsilon < 1$ satisfying (39) and then δ small enough satisfying (40), and thus (41) as well. We may choose ϵ such that $\epsilon K_{f,I} = \mathrm{e}^{-1}$ and $\delta = (c\epsilon)/(2\ln K_{f,I})$. Since $K_{f,I} \geq \mathrm{e}$, each term (36), (37), (38) is bounded by the bound of (37), namely $nK_{f,I}^2 \exp(-n)$. The estimate (13) follows. □

Proof in the case $a > 1$. In this part n and ϵ will both depend on $|x-y|$. Pick $a' > a$ as in the theorem. Precisely, we write $\nu = a' - a > 0$, and set

$$\begin{aligned} &\epsilon = |x-y|^{-s}, \qquad |x-y|^\delta \leq n < |x-y|^\delta + 1, \\ &\text{with} \qquad \delta = \frac{1}{a'}\,, \qquad 1-s = \frac{1+\frac{1}{2}\nu}{a+\nu}\,. \end{aligned} \tag{42}$$

Note that $|x-y| \sim n^{1/\delta}$ and $\epsilon \leq n^{-s/\delta}$; moreover, since we consider large $|x-y|$, we may assume that $|x-y| \geq (n/2)^{1/\delta}$. We now have, for n large enough (depending only on s, δ, a),

$$\begin{aligned}
&\text{(Eq. 36)} && \leq && n^a (K_{f,I})^{n+2} \exp\left(-\frac{c}{2} n^{\frac{1}{\delta}} + (a-1) n \ln n\right) && (43)\\
& && \leq && (K_{f,I})^{n+2} \exp\left(-\frac{c}{4} n^{\frac{1}{\delta}}\right), && (44)\\
&\text{(Eq. 37)} && \leq && n^a (K_{f,I})^{n+2} \exp\left(-(\frac{s}{\delta} - a + 1) n \ln n\right) && (45)\\
& && \leq && (K_{f,I})^{n+2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}(\frac{s}{\delta} - a + 1) n \ln n\right), && (46)\\
&\text{(Eq. 38)} && \leq && n^a (K_{f,I})^{n+2} \exp\left(-\frac{c}{2} n^{\frac{1-s}{\delta}} + (a-1) n \ln n\right) && (47)\\
& && \leq && (K_{f,I})^{n+2} \exp\left(-\frac{c}{4} n^{\frac{1-s}{\delta}}\right), && (48)
\end{aligned}$$

provided

$$\frac{1-s}{\delta} > 1 \qquad \text{and} \qquad \frac{s}{\delta} - a + 1 > 0.$$

But (42) ensures the latter, since

$$\frac{1-s}{\delta} = 1+\nu \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{s}{\delta} - a + 1 = \frac{1}{2}\nu\,. \tag{49}$$

Thus the estimate of the theorem depends only on the slowest term (46), and we obtain

$$\|\chi_x f(H)\chi_y\| \le C_{a,a'}(K_{f,I})^{n+2} \exp\left(-\frac{a'-a}{4} n \ln n\right). \tag{50}$$

We get the result since $n \sim |x-y|^{\delta} = |x-y|^{\frac{1}{a'}}$ and $K_{f,I} = \mathrm{e}C_{f,I}$. □

This finishes the proof of Theorem 1.4. □

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