

INTERACTION OF SOME MEROMORPHIC SOLUTIONS OF THE KdV EQUATION

by M. KOVALYOV and K. M. LEE

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A necessary and sufficient condition for confluence of two poles of a class of meromorphic solutions of the KdV equation is introduced and proved.

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1. Introduction and statement of the main result

In this paper we study interaction of some meromorphic solutions of the Korteweg-de Vries equation

$$u_t - 6uu_x + u_{xxx} = 0, \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow \pm\infty} u(t, x) = 0. \tag{1.1}$$

These solutions, sometimes referred to as positions [11, 12, 14, 15], and sometimes as harmonic breathers [7] are of the form

$$u = \frac{8\ell^2 \sin 2\ell(4\ell^2 t + x - \gamma)}{\sin 2\ell(4\ell^2 t + x - \gamma) - 2\ell(12\ell^2 t + x - p)} + 8\ell^2 \left[\frac{1 - \cos 2\ell(4\ell^2 t + x - \gamma)}{\sin 2\ell(4\ell^2 t + x - \gamma) - 2\ell(12\ell^2 t + x - p)} \right]^2. \tag{1.2}$$

Probably first studied in [11, 12, 14, 15], (1.2) naturally arises when one generates explicit solutions of (1.1) by means of the Darboux transform [11, 12] or attempts to define solutions of (1.1) with the “simplest continuous spectrum” [7].

Solutions (1.2) possess a pole whose location depends on time. This pole may play role of a “centre” of the corresponding harmonic breather in much the same way as the local minimum of the soliton solution $-\frac{2\ell^2}{\cosh^2 \ell(x - 4\ell^2 t - \varphi)}$ plays that role for the corresponding soliton. The solution (1.2) can be written as

$$u(t, x) = -2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} \ln \tau(t, x) \tag{1.3a}$$

$$\tau(t, x) = \frac{\sin 2\ell(4\ell^2 t + x - \gamma)}{2\ell} - (12\ell^2 t + x - p) \tag{1.3b}$$

so the pole of (1.2) is exactly the zero of the τ -function in (1.3) and the study of motion of the pole of (1.2) can be reduced to the study of motion of the zero of $\tau(t, x)$. Since $\tau'(t, x) = \frac{\partial \tau(t, x)}{\partial x} = \cos 2\ell(4\ell^2 t + x - \gamma) - 1 \leq 0$, the τ -function itself is monotonically decreasing in x from $+\infty$ to $-\infty$ and thus always has exactly one zero. The zero is simple unless

$$2\ell(4\ell^2 t + x - \gamma) = 2\pi n, \quad n \in \mathbb{I} \tag{1.4a}$$

and

$$12\ell^2 t + x - p = 0 \tag{1.4b}$$

in which case the zero is of third order. The solution of (1.4) is of the form:

$$t = \frac{p - \gamma}{8\ell^2} + \frac{\pi n}{4\ell^3}, \quad x = \frac{3\gamma - p}{2} - \frac{3\pi n}{\ell}, \quad n \in \mathbb{N} \tag{1.5}$$

Such points are often referred to as resonances [14].

We can define superposition of two harmonic breathers [7, 13] and study their interaction in a way similar to that for solitons. Due to the complicated form of the two-harmonic-breather solution, the interaction of the harmonic breathers when they are close to each other has, so far, been studied only numerically [17]. Here we obtain some analytical results similar to those of [2, 5, 9, 10, 13, 16] for solitons.

To do this we use the following representation of the two-harmonic-breather solution obtained in [7]:

$$w(t, x) = -2 \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} \ln \tau(t, x), \quad \tau(t, x) = \tau_1(t, x)\tau_2(t, x) - q^2(t, x) \tag{1.6}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \tau_i(t, x) &= \frac{\sin 2\ell_i \xi_i}{2\ell_i} - \eta_i, \quad \xi_i = x + 4\ell_i^2 t - \gamma, \quad \eta_i = x + 12\ell_i^2 t - p_i, \quad i = 1, 2; \\ q &= \frac{\sin(\ell_1 \xi_1 - \ell_2 \xi_2)}{\ell_1 - \ell_2} - \frac{\sin(\ell_1 \xi_1 + \ell_2 \xi_2)}{\ell_1 + \ell_2} = \frac{2}{\ell_1^2 - \ell_2^2} (\ell_2 \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 \cos \ell_2 \xi_2 - \ell_1 \cos \ell_1 \xi_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2), \\ &\ell_1 \neq \ell_2, \quad \ell_1 > 0, \quad \ell_2 > 0. \end{aligned}$$

The analytical results are summarized in the following theorem.

Theorem. (a) *The τ -function of (1.6) always has at most two zeros, i.e. for each value of $t \in \mathbb{R}$, there are at most two values of x satisfying $\tau(t, x) = 0$.*

(b) *Two distinct roots of $\tau(t, x) = 0$, which we denote by $x_1(t)$ and $x_2(t)$, merge into one for some value of t if and only if the quantities*

$$\begin{aligned}
 n_1 &= \frac{2\ell_1}{3\pi(\ell_2^2 - \ell_1^2)} [6\ell_2^2(p_1 - \gamma_1) - 6\ell_1^2(p_2 - \gamma_2) - \ell_1^2(3\gamma_2 - p_2 - 3\gamma_1 + p_1)] \\
 n_2 &= \frac{2\ell_2}{3\pi(\ell_1^2 - \ell_2^2)} [6\ell_1^2(p_2 - \gamma_2) - 6\ell_2^2(p_1 - \gamma_1) - \ell_2^2(3\gamma_1 - p_1 - 3\gamma_2 + p_2)]
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{1.7}$$

are integers and are either both even or both odd. If n_1 and n_2 are both even, then at time $t = \frac{p_2 - \gamma_2}{8\ell_2^2} + \frac{\pi n_2}{16\ell_2^2} = \frac{p_1 - \gamma_1}{8\ell_1^2} + \frac{\pi n_1}{16\ell_1^2}$, $\tau(t, x)$ has a single root $x = \frac{3\gamma_1 - p_1}{2} - \frac{3\pi n_1}{4\ell_1} = \frac{3\gamma_2 - p_2}{2} - \frac{3\pi n_2}{4\ell_2}$ of order 10. If n_1 and n_2 are both odd then at time $t = \frac{p_1 - \gamma_1}{8\ell_1^2} + \frac{\pi n_1}{16\ell_1^2} = \frac{p_2 - \gamma_2}{8\ell_2^2} + \frac{\pi n_2}{16\ell_2^2}$, $\tau(t, x)$ has a single root $x = \frac{3\gamma_1 - p_1}{2} - \frac{3\pi n_1}{4\ell_1} = \frac{3\gamma_2 - p_2}{2} - \frac{3\pi n_2}{4\ell_2}$ of order 6.

2. Proof of the Theorem

We break up the proof into a sequence of lemmas.

Lemma 1. *The τ -function defined in (1.6) and its components satisfy the following identities:*

$$\tau = \tau_1 \tau_2 - q^2 \tag{2.1}$$

$$\tau_i = \frac{\sin 2\ell_i \xi_i}{2\ell_i} - \eta_i, \quad \xi_i = x + 4\ell_i^2 t - \gamma_i, \quad \eta_i = x + 12\ell_i^2 t - p_i, \quad i = 1, 2 \tag{2.2}$$

$$q = \frac{2}{\ell_1^2 - \ell_2^2} (\ell_2 \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 \cos \ell_2 \xi_2 - \ell_1 \cos \ell_1 \xi_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2) \tag{2.3}$$

$$q' = \frac{\partial q}{\partial x} = 2 \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 \tag{2.4}$$

$$q'' = \frac{\partial^2 q}{\partial x^2} = 2\ell_1 \cos \ell_1 \xi_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 + 2\ell_2 \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 \cos \ell_2 \xi_2 \tag{2.5}$$

$$\tau'_i = \frac{\partial \tau_i}{\partial x} = \cos 2\ell_i \xi_i - 1 = -2 \sin^2 \ell_i \xi_i, \quad i = 1, 2 \tag{2.6}$$

$$\tau''_i = \frac{\partial^2 \tau_i}{\partial x^2} = -4\ell_i \sin \ell_i \xi_i \cos \ell_i \xi_i, \quad i = 1, 2 \tag{2.7}$$

$$\tau' = \frac{\partial \tau}{\partial x} = -2\tau_1 \sin^2 \ell_2 \xi_2 - 2\tau_2 \sin^2 \ell_1 \xi_1 - 2q \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 \tag{2.8}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \tau'' = \frac{\partial^2 \tau}{\partial x^2} = & -2\ell_1 \tau_2 \sin 2\ell_1 \xi_1 - 2\ell_2 \tau_1 \sin 2\ell_2 \xi_2 \\ & - \frac{8}{\ell_1^2 - \ell_2^2} (\ell_2^2 \sin^2 \ell_1 \xi_1 \cos^2 \ell_2 \xi_2 - \ell_1^2 \sin^2 \ell_2 \xi_2 \cos^2 \ell_1 \xi_1) \end{aligned} \tag{2.9}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \tau''' = & -4\ell_1^2 \tau_2 \cos 2\ell_1 \xi_1 - 4\ell_2^2 \tau_1 \cos 2\ell_2 \xi_2 + \frac{4\ell_2}{\ell_1^2 - \ell_2^2} \sin 2\ell_2 \xi_2 (\ell_1^2 + \ell_1^2 \cos^2 \ell_1 \xi_1 + \ell_2^2 \sin^2 \ell_1 \xi_1) \\ & - \frac{4\ell_1}{\ell_1^2 - \ell_2^2} \sin 2\ell_1 \xi_1 (\ell_2^2 + \ell_2^2 \cos^2 \ell_2 \xi_2 + \ell_1^2 \sin^2 \ell_2 \xi_2) \end{aligned} \tag{2.10}$$

$$\tau = -\frac{\tau' \tau_1}{2 \sin^2 \ell_1 \xi_1} - \left(\frac{\sin \ell_2 \xi_2}{\sin \ell_1 \xi_1} \tau_1 + q \right)^2 \tag{2.11a}$$

$$\tau = -\frac{\tau' \tau_2}{2 \sin^2 \ell_2 \xi_2} - \left(\frac{\sin \ell_1 \xi_1}{\sin \ell_2 \xi_2} \tau_2 + q \right)^2. \tag{2.11b}$$

Proof of (2.1)-(2.10) is by direct computations. Equation (2.11a) is obtained by solving (2.8) for τ_2 and then substituting $\tau_2 = -\frac{\tau'}{2 \sin^2 \ell_1 \xi_1} - \frac{\sin^2 \ell_2 \xi_2}{\sin^2 \ell_1 \xi_1} \tau_1 - \frac{2q \sin \ell_2 \xi_2}{\sin \ell_1 \xi_1}$ into (2.1); (2.11b) is obtained in a similar manner.

Lemma 2. *If $\tau(t, x) = \tau'(t, x) = 0$, then $\tau''(t, x) = 0$.*

Proof. If neither $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = 0$ nor $\sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$, (2.11) gives us $\tau_1 = -\frac{\sin \ell_1 \xi_1}{\sin \ell_2 \xi_2} q$, $\tau_2 = -\frac{\sin \ell_2 \xi_2}{\sin \ell_1 \xi_1} q$. Substituting these into (2.9) we obtain $\tau'' = 0$. If $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = 0$ ($\sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ is handled in exactly the same manner), then $\tau' = 0$ and (2.8) implies $\tau_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ and therefore either $\sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ or $\tau_1 = 0$. If $\sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ then substituting $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ into (2.9) we obtain $\tau'' = 0$. If $\tau_1 = 0$, then substituting this and $\tau = 0$ into (2.1) we obtain $q = 0$, which together with $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = 0$ yields $\sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$, substituting $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ into (2.9) again gives us $\tau'' = 0$.

Lemma 3. *Let $\tau(t, x)$, considered as a function of x for an arbitrary but fixed value of t , have an extremum at $x = x_0$. Then $\tau(t, x_0) \leq 0$.*

Proof. If $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 \neq 0$ at (t, x_0) , then $\tau'(t, x_0) = 0$ and (2.11a) yields

$$\tau = -\left(\frac{\sin \ell_2 \xi_2}{\sin \ell_1 \xi_1} \tau_1 + q \right)^2 \leq 0.$$

If $\sin \ell_2 \xi_2 \neq 0$ at (t, x_0) , (2.11b) yields the result.

Consider now the case $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ at (t, x_0) . Substituting $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ into (2.8) and (2.9) we obtain $\tau'(t, x_0) = \tau''(t, x_0) = 0$. The fact that $x = x_0$ is an extremum then implies $\tau'''(t, x_0) = 0$, which, using (2.10), gives us $\ell_1^2 \eta_2 + \ell_2^2 \eta_1 = 0$,

with η_1, η_2 evaluated at (t, x_0) according to (2.2). Then $\ell_1^2 \eta_2 + \ell_2^2 \eta_1 = 0$ implies $\eta_1 \eta_2 \leq 0$. Substituting now $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ into (2.1) we obtain $\tau = \eta_1 \eta_2 \leq 0$.

Lemma 4. *Let x_0 be a local maximum of $\tau(t, x)$ considered as a function of x for an arbitrary but fixed value of t . Then $\tau(t, x_0) < 0$.*

Proof. In view of Lemma 3, it suffices to show that $\tau(t, x_0) \neq 0$. Assume $\tau(t, x_0) = 0$ and consider

$$f(\lambda_1, \lambda_2, t, x) = \left[\frac{\sin 2\ell_1 \xi_1}{2\ell_1} - (x + 12\ell_1^2 t - \lambda_1) \right] \left[\frac{\sin 2\ell_2 \xi_2}{2\ell_2} - (x + 12\ell_2^2 t - \lambda_2) \right] - q^2.$$

Due to continuity of f in all of its arguments, $f(\lambda_1, \lambda_2, t, x_0) \leq 0$ for λ_1 and λ_2 satisfying $|\lambda_1 - p_1| + |\lambda_2 - p_2| < \varepsilon$ for some sufficiently small ε . Thus $f(\lambda_1, \lambda_2, t, x_0)$ attains a local maximum as a function of λ_1 and λ_2 at $\lambda_1 = p_1$ and $\lambda_2 = p_2$ and therefore $\frac{\partial f}{\partial \lambda_1} = \tau_2 = 0$, $\frac{\partial f}{\partial \lambda_2} = \tau_1 = 0$ and the matrix $\| \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial \lambda_i \partial \lambda_j} \|$ is nonnegative definite. On the other hand direct computations give us $\| \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial \lambda_i \partial \lambda_j} \| = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 2 \\ 2 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$ which is not nonnegative definite. The obtained contradiction proves that the assumption $\tau(t, x_0) = 0$ is false.

Lemma 5. *Let x_0 be a local minimum of $\tau(t, x)$ (considered as a function of x for an arbitrary but fixed value of t) and $\tau(t, x_0) = 0$. Then*

$$\tau_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = \tau_2 \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = q \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0.$$

Proof. Substituting $\tau' = 0$ into (2.8) we obtain

$$\tau_1 \sin^2 \ell_2 \xi_2 + \tau_2 \sin^2 \ell_1 \xi_1 = -q \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 \sin \ell_2 \xi_2.$$

Squaring both sides and replacing $\tau_1 \tau_2$ with q^2 gives us

$$\tau_1^2 \sin^4 \ell_2 \xi_2 + \tau_2^2 \sin^4 \ell_1 \xi_1 = -q^2 \sin^2 \ell_1 \xi_1 \sin^2 \ell_2 \xi_2.$$

Since the left-hand side is nonnegative and the right-hand side is nonpositive, they both must be zero, yielding the result.

Lemma 6. *Let x_0 be a local minimum of $\tau(t, x)$ (considered as a function of x for an arbitrary but fixed value of t) and $\tau(t, x_0) = 0$. Then either*

$$\tau_1(t, x_0) = \tau_2(t, x_0) = \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$$

or

$$\tau_1(t, x_0) = \tau_2(t, x_0) = \cos \ell_1 \xi_1 = \cos \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0.$$

Proof. By Lemma 5 one of (a) $\tau_1 = \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = 0$, (b) $\tau_2 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$, (c) $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ or (d) $\tau_1 = \tau_2 = 0$ must hold. Consider each case separately.

(a) $\tau_1 = \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = 0$. Since x_0 is a local extremum and $\tau(t, x_0) = 0$, Lemma 2 implies $\tau'' = 0$. Substituting $\tau_1 = \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \tau'' = 0$ into (2.9) we obtain $\sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$. Again since x_0 is a local extremum and $\tau'' = 0$ we also have $\tau''' = 0$, which along with (2.10) implies $\tau_2 = 0$.

(b) Similar to (a).

(c) $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$. Substituting these into (2.9) we obtain $\tau'' = 0$ which along with the fact that x_0 is an extremum yields $\tau''' = 0$. Substituting $\tau''' = \sin \ell_1 \xi_1 = \sin \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$ into (2.10) gives us $\ell_1^2 \tau_2 + \ell_2^2 \tau_1 = 0$ and therefore $\tau_1 \tau_2 \leq 0$. On the other hand substituting $\tau = 0$ into (2.1) results in $\tau_1 \tau_2 = q^2 \geq 0$ implying that either τ_1 or τ_2 is 0. But $\ell_1^2 \tau_2 + \ell_2^2 \tau_1 = 0$ and therefore once one of them vanishes so does the other one.

(d) $\tau_1 = \tau_2 = 0$. Substituting $\tau_1 = \tau_2 = \tau = 0$ into (2.1) we obtain $q = 0$ and thus if either one of $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1$ or $\sin \ell_2 \xi_2$ is zero then so must the other one, yielding the result.

Let us now assume that neither $\sin \ell_1 \xi_1$ nor $\sin \ell_2 \xi_2$ vanish at (t, x_0) . Substituting $\tau = \tau_2 = q = 0$ into the expressions for τ''' and $\tau^{(4)}$ we obtain $\tau''' = \tau^{(4)} = 0$. Since $x = x_0$ is an extremum we must have $\tau^{(5)} = 0$ which combined with $\tau_1 = \tau_2 = q = 0$ yields $\cos \ell_1 \xi_1 = \cos \ell_2 \xi_2 = 0$.

Lemma 7. *Let x_0 be a local minimum of $\tau(t_0, x)$ (considered as a function of x) and let $r(t_0, x_0) = 0$. Then there exist two integers n_1 and n_2 either both even or both odd such that*

$$t_0 = \frac{p_1 - \gamma_1}{8\ell_1^2} - \frac{\pi n_1}{16\ell_1^3} = \frac{p_2 - \gamma_2}{8\ell_2^2} - \frac{\pi n_2}{16\ell_2^3} \tag{2.12a}$$

$$x_0 = \frac{3\gamma_1 - p_1}{2} + \frac{3\pi n_1}{4\ell_1} = \frac{3\gamma_2 - p_2}{2} + \frac{3\pi n_2}{4\ell_2}. \tag{2.12b}$$

Proof. Lemma 6 implies that there exist two integers n_1 and n_2 either both even or both odd such that

$$\begin{cases} \eta_1 = x_0 + 12\ell_1^2 t_0 - p_1 = 0 \\ \xi_1 = x_0 + 4\ell_1^2 t_0 - \gamma_1 = \frac{\pi n_1}{2\ell_1} \end{cases} \quad \begin{cases} \eta_2 = x_0 + 12\ell_2^2 t_0 - p_2 = 0 \\ \xi_2 = x_0 + 4\ell_2^2 t_0 - \gamma_2 = \frac{\pi n_2}{2\ell_2}. \end{cases}$$

Solving the first system we obtain

$$t_0 = \frac{p_1 - \gamma_1}{8\ell_1^2} - \frac{\pi n_1}{16\ell_1^3}, \quad x_0 = \frac{3\gamma_1 - p_1}{2} - \frac{3\pi n_1}{4\ell_1}$$

whereas solving the second system we get

$$t_0 = \frac{p_2 - \gamma_2}{8\ell_2^2} - \frac{\pi n_2}{16\ell_2^3}, \quad x_0 = \frac{3\gamma_2 - p_2}{2} + \frac{3\pi n_2}{4\ell_2}.$$

Proof of the Theorem. Part (a) If $\tau(t, x)$ had more than two zeros it would also have a nonnegative local maximum but that contradicts Lemma 4.

Part (b) Two zeros of the τ -function merge into one if and only if for some t_0 $\tau(t_0, x)$ has a single zero x_0 which is also a local (as well as global) minimum. But according to Lemma 7 this can happen only if (2.12) holds. Vice versa if (2.12) holds then one can verify by direct computations that $\tau(t_0, x)$ has a local minimum at $x = x_0$ as well as $\tau(t_0, x_0) = 0$. By solving (2.12) for n_1 and n_2 we obtain (1.7).

The order of zero at $x = x_0$ is easily verified by direct computations.

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M. KOVALYOV
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
EDMONTON, ALBERTA
CANADA T6G 2G1

K. M. LEE
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY
HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1226 TOWANDA AVENUE
BLOOMINGTON
ILLINOIS 61701
USA